

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Carbon County

The Federal population census is an important tool for understanding the history of a community and how that community has changed over time. The census provides data that can help us to better understand Pennsylvania's diverse racial and ethnic populations (referred to as underrepresented communities for purposes of this Baseline Survey effort), where these populations settled historically, and how they left their mark on the Commonwealth's landscape.

Pennsylvania has a history of being ethnically diverse in both the urban areas of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and in the commonwealth's smaller cities and rural areas. Native Americans have called Pennsylvania's lands home for centuries. Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish settlers moved to Pennsylvania in the late 17th century, and were quickly followed by English, German and other Europeans by the turn of the 18th century. Both enslaved and free Africans and African Americans lived in Pennsylvania as early as 1690 and the commonwealth's Black communities grew exponentially with the First Great Migration in the early 20th century. By the mid-20th century, people from almost all racial and ethnic groups had settled in Pennsylvania.

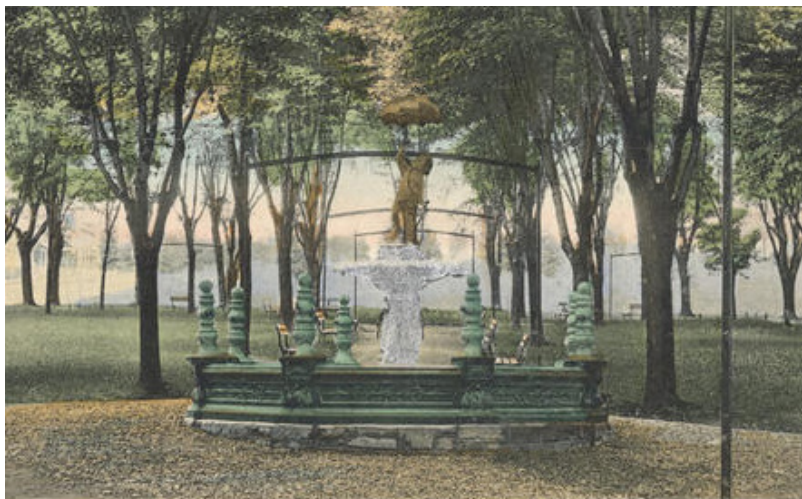
Pennsylvania's historical racial and ethnic diversity and the surviving older and historic places that embody that diversity is not well understood or well documented. By understanding what populations were present, when, and where they lived, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) can identify and document the older and historic places associated with these underrepresented communities through targeted survey work.

Once this information is collected and added to PA-SHARE, Pennsylvania's online database of older and historic places, this important information will be available to professionals and the public alike, providing everyone with data to support the need to tell broader and more inclusive stories.

It is important to note that census data is only one part of the extensive research that is necessary to understand Pennsylvania's varied and changing communities over the last four hundred years. The information collected, methods for collecting it, and categories and definitions changed from census taker to census taker and from year to year.

Carbon County is one of the fifty-two counties in Pennsylvania where PA SHPO and its contractors will be working over the next two years to collect information about historic places that are underrepresented in Pennsylvania's statewide historic inventory.

It is important that PA SHPO collects information about the older and historic places that Pennsylvanian's value in their communities. PA SHPO welcomes public recommendations for places that should be documented in this survey. If you would like to provide your feedback, please fill out this [short survey form](#).



Historic Postcard of Town Park Fountain, Leighton, Carbon County

### Learn More:

[Historic Resources Survey in Pennsylvania](#)  
[PA SHPO's Baseline Survey Project](#)  
[PA-SHARE](#)

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Carbon County was formed on March 13, 1843 from a portion of Northampton County. It has 23 municipalities and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population was 64,749. The population of Carbon County was first recorded in the 1850 US Census. A total of 15,686 inhabitants were recorded, 15,656 of whom were White and 30 of whom were Black, none of whom were enslaved. The total population of Carbon County grew consistently from 1850 to 1920, peaking in the early 20th century before slowly dipping down into the mid-20th century.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Carbon County have historically represented less than 1% of the total population from 1850 to 1980. The BIPOC population in Carbon County was predominantly Black, except in 1930 and 1980, when the number of Hispanic residents was more numerous. The Black population was at its largest in 1870 and 1970, both with 65 individuals.

Asians were documented as living in Carbon County beginning in 1890 and were predominantly of Chinese descent until 1960. In 1960, there was one Japanese resident and no Chinese or Filipino residents. Native Americans were recorded in Carbon County in the 1930, 1960, and 1980 censuses. Sixty-four people of Hispanic descent were recorded in Carbon County in the 1930 census. In the 1980 census, the number of Hispanic people were the most numerous BIPOC group in Carbon County. The "Other" category has been used to describe different groups through time. In 1790 and 1800, "Other" specifically noted BIPOC people, predominantly Black Americans, who were not enslaved. In later decades, it is inconclusive whether "Other" includes only mixed-race people or people of Black, Native American, Asian, or Hispanic descent during any given decade.

	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	Other
<b>1790</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1800</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1830</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	15656	30	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	21024	9	0	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	28079	65	0	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	31882	41	0	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	38584	36	0	4	0	0
<b>1900</b>	44493	12	0	5	0	0
<b>1910</b>	52816	27	0	0	0	3
<b>1920</b>	62536	25	0	4	0	0
<b>1930</b>	63279	33	2	2	64	0
<b>1940</b>	61729	6	0	0	0	0
<b>1950</b>	57533	16	0	0	0	9
<b>1960</b>	52849	34	1	1	0	4
<b>1970</b>	50446	65	0	0	0	58
<b>1980</b>	53051	43	25	156	319	0



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This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Carbon County from 1790 to 1980. Significant events that had a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Carbon County's total populations at these important points in time.

