

Baseline Survey Census Research Elk 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.

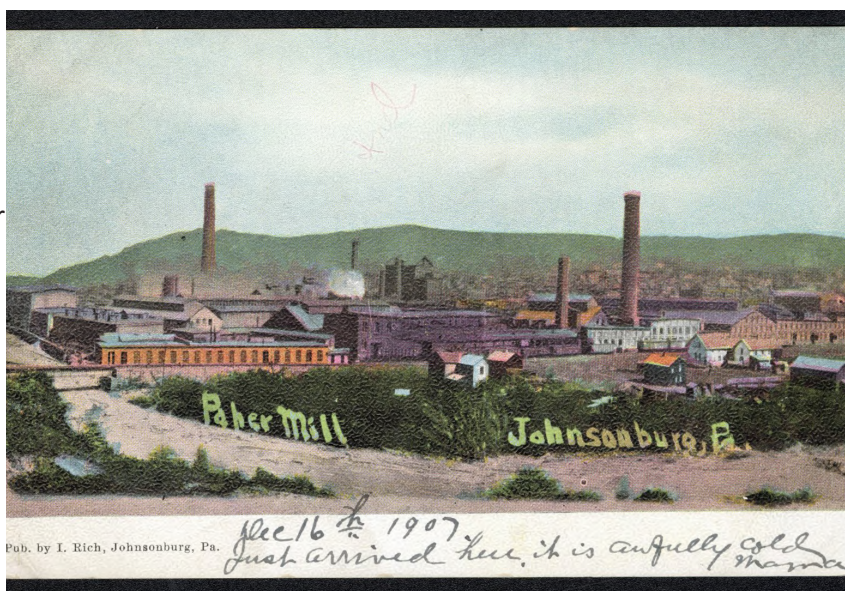
Pennsylvania's historical racial and ethnic diversity and the surviving older and historic places that embody that diversity is not well understood or well documented. By understanding what populations were present, when, and where they lived, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) 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.

Elk County is one of the fifty-two counties in Pennsylvania where PA SHPO and its contractors will be working over the next three 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 Johnsonburg, Elk County

Learn More:

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

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Elk County

Elk County was created on April 18, 1843. There are 12 municipalities in Elk County and as of the 2010 federal census, the total population was 31,946. The first recorded federal population census in Elk County occurred in 1850. A total of 3,531 inhabitants were recorded, two of which were free Black people. Over time, the total population of Elk County steadily increased until plateauing around 30,000 at the turn of the twentieth century.

The population of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) of Elk County experienced a steady increase, coming to a peak between 1920 and 1930 before steadily decreasing. BIPOC in Elk County are predominantly made up of Black people.

Native Americans in Elk County were documented in the 1890 and 1920 censuses. Asians in Elk County were documented from 1900 to 1920. No people of Hispanic descent had been documented in the studied census dates.

	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	Other
1790	0	0	0	0	0	0
1800	0	0	0	0	0	0
1810	0	0	0	0	0	0
1820	0	0	0	0	0	0
1830	0	0	0	0	0	0
1840	0	0	0	0	0	0
1850	3,529	2	0	0	0	0
1860	5,904	8	0	0	0	3
1870	8,424	64	0	0	0	0
1880	12,779	12	0	0	0	0
1890	22,199	38	2	0	0	0
1900	32,868	32	0	3	0	0
1910	35,836	34	0	1	0	0
1920	34,766	210	1	4	0	0
1930	33,296	133	0	0	0	2
1940	34,856	85	0	0	0	0
1950	34,477	25	0	0	0	1
1960	37,289	24	0	0	0	15

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This graph shows the relationship between total BIPOC populations (left side axis) and total population (right side axis) in Elk County from 1790 to 1960. Significant events that have a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Elk County's total populations at these important points in time.

No data is available prior to 1850 because Elk County was not yet established.

