

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Mifflin 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.

Mifflin 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 Knights of Malta Home in Mifflin County

### Learn More:

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

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Mifflin County was created from portions of Northumberland and Cumberland Counties on September 19, 1789. It is comprised of 15 municipalities and as of the 2010 federal census, the total population was 46,682. The first recorded federal population census in Mifflin County occurred in 1790. A total of 7,562 inhabitants were recorded, 59 of whom were enslaved Black people and 42 of whom were “Other Free Persons”. In general, the population of Mifflin County has trended upward from 1790 to 1960 with one short period of decrease from 1830 to 1840. This decrease is likely related to the formation of Juniata County from the southeastern portion of Mifflin County in 1831.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Mifflin County represented anywhere from 1% to 3.4% of the total population between 1790 and 1960. The BIPOC population in Mifflin County were predominantly Black from 1790 to 1960. The Black population increased dramatically from 1820 (177 residents) to 1840 (448 residents) and remained high until 1860. In 1870, the Black population decreased to 223 individuals and continued a downward trend through 1910. In 1920, the Black population increased again to 352 individuals before slowly declining again through 1960.

Native Americans were documented in the Mifflin County censuses of 1890, 1900, 1920, and 1930. Asians were living in Mifflin County from 1890 to 1930, and again in 1960, five of whom were Chinese and 10 of whom were Japanese. No people of Hispanic descent were documented in Mifflin County from 1790 to 1960. The “Other” category has been used to describe different status groups through time. 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>	7461	59	0	0	0	42
<b>1800</b>	13460	23	0	0	0	126
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	16501	177	0	0	0	0
<b>1830</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	12644	448	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	14570	410	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	15925	415	0	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	17285	223	0	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	19362	215	0	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	19823	169	2	2	0	0
<b>1900</b>	22994	162	2	2	0	0
<b>1910</b>	27612	172	0	1	0	0
<b>1920</b>	31085	352	1	1	0	0
<b>1930</b>	40048	283	1	1	0	0
<b>1940</b>	42717	272	0	0	0	4
<b>1950</b>	43543	138	0	0	0	10
<b>1960</b>	44205	119	0	15	0	9

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

No data is available prior to 1790 as the first federal census had taken place in that year. No data is available for 1810 because that census is not digitized. The 1830 census only distinguished the total population by their status as "Free" or Black "Slave." No enslaved Black people were living in Mifflin County at the time but there is no reliable data to determine how many free Black residents were in Mifflin County in 1830.

