

# Baseline Survey Census Research Schuylkill 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.

Schuylkill 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 houses in Tamaqua, Schuylkill County

## Learn More:

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

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Schuylkill County

Schuylkill County was formally established on March 1, 1811. It is comprised of 67 municipalities and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population was 143,049. The population of Schuylkill County was first counted during the 1820 census. A total of 11,339 inhabitants were recorded, 95 of whom were Black people and 28 of whom were mixed-race people. No enslaved Black people were recorded in the 1820 census in Schuylkill County. The total population of Schuylkill County continued to grow, peaking in 1930 at 235,505 individuals. Starting in 1940, the population of Schuylkill County entered a period of steady decline. This decline appears closely related to the decline in anthracite coal mining that was the foundation of Schuylkill County's economy since the 19th century.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Schuylkill County has historically represented around 1 percent of the total population. The population of BIPOC in Schuylkill County has an irregular growth pattern that loosely mirrors the population trends of Schuylkill County as a whole. The BIPOC population of Schuylkill County was at its highest in 1930 at 613 individuals, the majority of whom were Black. The BIPOC population of Schuylkill County today is predominantly Black.

Asians were recorded living in Schuylkill County beginning in 1890 when 9 Chinese residents and 1 Japanese resident were documented. Chinese was the dominant Asian ethnicity in Schuylkill County until 1950, when there was an even number of both Chinese and Japanese people living in the county. Although the county is within the ancestral homeland of the Lenape people, Native Americans were only recorded in the 1890, 1910, 1950 and 1960 censuses. Nineteen people of Hispanic descent, then categorized as Mexican in the census reports, were recorded in the 1930 census. The "Other" category has been used to describe different 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> | 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> | 11216  | 95    | 0               | 0     | 0        | 28    |
| <b>1830</b> | 0      | 0     | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1840</b> | 28728  | 325   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1850</b> | 60305  | 408   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1860</b> | 89153  | 357   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1870</b> | 116044 | 384   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1880</b> | 129616 | 358   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1890</b> | 153778 | 374   | 1               | 10    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1900</b> | 172664 | 252   | 0               | 11    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1910</b> | 207641 | 242   | 1               | 10    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1920</b> | 217489 | 253   | 0               | 12    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>1930</b> | 234892 | 583   | 0               | 11    | 19       | 0     |
| <b>1940</b> | 227903 | 427   | 0               | 0     | 0        | 1     |
| <b>1950</b> | 200355 | 190   | 13              | 14    | 0        | 5     |
| <b>1960</b> | 172615 | 358   | 10              | 39    | 0        | 5     |



# Baseline Survey Census Research Schuylkill County

This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Schuylkill County from 1820 to 1960. Significant events that had a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Schuylkill County's total populations at these important points in time.

No data is available for Schuylkill County prior to 1820 because the county was not yet formally organized. The 1830 census only provided the total population, total number of free persons, and total number of enslaved persons. There were no enslaved people in Schuylkill County in 1830 and no distinction of race among free people, therefore there are no BIPOC totals for that decade.

