

The 'new' 1890 census fragment for Delaware

Just when you (perhaps) thought there wasn't anything more to learn about the 1890 census ... there is! A small but useful fragment of the 1890 census for Delaware is now available as part of the new National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Microfilm Publication M1919, *List of Selected African Americans from the 1890 and 1900 Federal Population Censuses of Delaware and Related Census Publications* "Agriculture in the State of Delaware" (1901) and *Negroes in the United States* (1904). 1 roll.

The history of this census fragment

The Delaware census fragment was buried deep within the Bureau of the Census administrative records that were transferred to the National Archives decades ago. Let me tell you the story of how and why this fragment was created in 1901.

Following the taking of the Twelfth Census in 1900, the Census Office (as it was then called) published a variety of statistical reports based upon data collected in that and previous censuses. These reports included a series called *Census Bulletin*, of which

247 individual titles were published. By the way, the Bureau of the Census was permanently established on 1 July 1903 and it will be referred to as the Census Bureau in the rest of the article. Temporary census offices supervised the taking of the 1790–1900 censuses, submitting returns to the

President (1790), Secretary of State (1800–40), and Secretary of the Interior (1850–1900).

In 1901, Le Grand Powers was the Chief Statistician for Agriculture. In September 1901, Powers, or clerks under his supervision, drafted proposed *Census Bulletin No. 100 on Agriculture in the State of Delaware*, published 30 September 1901. It appears that, a few days before publication of this bulletin, someone within the Census Bureau disagreed with or questioned the conclusions reached about "Negro" farmers. As a result, a search was undertaken to locate all African-American ("Negro") farmers in the Twelfth Census of the United States (1900) for Delaware, and then locate as many of them as possible in the Eleventh Census of the United States (1890) for Delaware. On 28 December 1901, Henry Gannett, the Chief of the Geographer's Division, summarized the search results in a letter to Professor Walter F. Willcox, another chief statistician for the 1900 census. Of the 818 "Negro" farmers in Delaware in 1900, the Bureau was able to locate 454 in the 1890 Delaware population and agricultural schedules. The Geographer retained these lists in his files, which were accessioned into NARA decades later.

Since the results of the Geographer's 1890–1900 compilation were not available until De-

Name	Address
Richard Allen	ED 53 Little Creek, Kent Co. Delaware
Allen, Wm H	ED 72 New Castle, Del. New Castle Co
Anderson, John	ED 46 Dutch Creek, Kent Co
Newton	ED 2 Taylor Bridge, New Castle Co
Bayless, Robt	ED 25 Dogelors, Sussex
Chapman, Samuel	ED 15 Millington, Kent Co
Blackstone	ED 2 Green Spring, New Castle Co
Boyer, Frank	ED 44 E Dover, Del. Kent Co. Farm, Delaware
Brown, James C	ED 44 Red Lane, New Castle Co. Farm, Delaware
Boston, George C	ED 01 Dover, Kent Co
Cannon, Jeremiah	ED 04 Farmington, Kent Co
Carney, Jas A	ED 01 Newton, Del
Cason, John W	
Caster, John	ED 98 E Dover, Del. Kent Co
Chase, James	ED 24 Broad Creek, Kent Co
Clark, John	ED 41 Dutch Creek, Kent Co
Collins, Ben J	ED 3 School District, New Castle Co
Copier, John C	ED 49 E Dover, Del. Kent Co
Coverdale, Albert J	ED 46 Longview, Kent Co
Crochet, Daniel	ED 77 Nanticoke, Sussex Co
Crowder, Emory H	ED 75
Crummer, George H	ED 77 Nanticoke, Sussex Co
Davis, John	ED 01 W. Dover, Del. Kent Co
Delany, James S	ED 1 - Upper Meriden, New Castle Co
Denny, George	ED 01 W. Dover, Del. Kent Co
Duffy, Wm	ED 41 Dover
Durham, Emory	ED 21 W. Dover, Del
Emory, Jeremiah	ED 45 E Dover, Del
Emory, George H	ED 02
Emory, John	ED 2 Green Springs, New Castle Co
Emory, John	ED 01 E Dover, Del. Kent Co

Figure 1: 1890 List.

Year	Name	Address/Notes
1890	Cassey, Charles	73
1890	Charles, Thomas	74
1890	Chandler, Chas	75 ED: Appogunimuch New Castle to Salom
1890	Chase, James	76
1890	Alpha, Robt	77
1890	Carruth, Rebecca	78
1890	Clark, Arthur	79
1890	Clark, Alfonso	80
1890	Clark, Benj	81 ED: Duck Creek Mt. Pleasant to Farm Salom
1890	Clark, John	82 ED: School Districts Newark to Farm Salom
1890	Clark, George	83
1890	Clark, John	84
1890	Clark, Wm	85 ED: Hollyville - Sussex to Farm Salom
1890	Clayton, James	86
1890	Clifton, Andrew	87 ED: Appogunimuch New Castle to Salom
1890	Collins, Benj. Jr	88 ED: Duck Creek Mt. Pleasant to Farm Salom
1890	Collins, Albert	89
1890	Conroy, Morris	90
1890	Conroy, James P	91
1890	Conroy, Robert	92
1890	Conroy, Wm	93
1890	Conroy, James W	94
1890	Conroy, Robt	95
1890	Conroy, David	96
1890	Cooper, Anderson	97
1890	Cooper, Charles	98
1890	Cooper, John	99
1900	John	100 ED: Duck Creek - Farm Salom

Figure 2: 1890–1900 Consolidated List.

ember, it is likely that the “rejected paragraph”—as the problem language was called—was published unaltered in the *Bulletin*. “Negro” farmers are mentioned several places throughout the publication, so it is difficult to guess whether specific published language was questioned. However, since the results of the search of the 1890 census included each person’s occupation, most likely the “disputed text” consists of these sentences, which speak to improvement in occupational status:

Of the farms in 1900, 818, or 8.4 percent, were operated by negroes or those of negro descent. In 1850 the negroes owning farms in Delaware, as in the other slave states, were so few in number as to be a negligible quantity. Hence it can be said that practically none of the negroes operating farms in 1900, or of their negro ancestors, were farm owners at the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1900, 332 farms were operated by negroes who owned the whole or a part of the land contained therein; 471 were operated by negro tenants; and 15 by salaried negro managers. A very small number of these farmers were the descendants

of men who had risen in their lifetime from wage service or slavery to farm tenancy or ownership. The great majority were born in families that occupied industrial positions much lower than the ones in which they now stand.¹

It is significant that the list of “Negroes” in Delaware in 1890 has survived, since it fills a gap for the otherwise nonexistent Delaware 1890 Federal population census schedules. On 10 January 1921, a significant portion of all the 1890 census schedules were either burned (25 percent) or significantly damaged by water (50 percent) in a fire at the Commerce Department Building, Washington, DC. On 21 February 1933, Congress authorized their disposal, and they were finally destroyed either in 1934 or 1935. In 1942 and 1953, NARA accessioned the remaining fragments of the 1890 census discov-

ered in Census Bureau offices. Those fragments, containing some 6,160 names from Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, and the District of Columbia, have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M407,

Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890 (3 rolls), and are indexed by National Archives Microfilm Publication M496, *Index to the Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890* (2 rolls). For more information, see Kellee Blake, “First in the Path of the Firemen”: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration* 28 (Spring 1996): 64–81, online at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/spring_1996_1890_census_1.html> (Part 1) and <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/spring_1996_1890_census_2.html> (Part 2).

What records are included in M1919?

First, M1919 includes the entire folder, “Delaware: Negro Farmers Named and Located by Enumeration Districts and Hundreds as

Reported in the Censuses of 1890 and 1900” from the large record series called the “Geography Division Subject File, 1889–1950” in the Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. The folder has these items:

- ◆ The “1890 List,” a roughly alphabetical list of 454 African Americans giving the surname, first name, 1890 Enumeration District (ED) number, 1890 ED description, and occupation for each.
- ◆ The “1890–1900 Consolidated List,” an alphabetized list of African Americans giving surname, first name, 1900 ED number, 1890 ED number, 1890 ED description, and occupation for each.
- ◆ The “1900 List” of 818 African Americans found in the 1900 census giving the surname, first name, 1900 ED number, 1900 ED description, occupation, and name of Hundred in which located (geographic unit in Delaware) for each. Two Census Bureau employees worked on this project, so there are actually two lists.
- ◆ A letter and memorandum that together describe what these lists are and how they came to be created.

Second, M1919 includes three related Census Bureau publications from Publications of the U.S. Government, Record Group 287.

- ◆ *Census Bulletin No. 100, Agriculture in the State of Delaware* (Washington, DC: Census Office, 1901). As noted above, this 10-page Bulletin was authored by or under the direction of Le Grand Powers, chief statistician for Agriculture. This bulletin’s language resulted in

the compilation of the census fragment described above.

- ◆ Excerpt from *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900*, vol. 5, Agriculture, part I (Washington, D.C.: Census Office, 1902). Agricultural statistics comprised the fifth and sixth volumes of the Census Office’s national comprehensive six-volume statistical report derived from the data collected during the 1900 census. Volume 5, pages xciii (93) thru cxx (120), compared whites and “colored” farmers in a section called “Farms Classified by Color or Race of Farmer,” which is reproduced in M1919.
- ◆ *Bureau of Census Bulletin No. 8, Negroes in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904). The Bureau published this comprehensive 333-page report because the Bureau frequently received requests for information on this subject. The bulk of the data and analysis was done by W. C. Hunt, the Bureau’s chief statistician, and Professor W. F. Wilcox of Cornell University, a special agent of the Bureau. W.E.B. DuBois, Ph.D., of Atlanta University, compiled pages 69–98 relating to “The Negro Farmer.” The statistical data and analysis were compiled not only from the 1900 census, but also the 1870–1890 censuses.

Who will find M1919 helpful?

M1919 serves several research audiences. First, for African American genealogists with Delaware ancestors, M1919 reproduces heretofore “lost” data from the 1890 census of Delaware regarding 454 African Americans and corre-

lates those individuals to their 1900 census location (enumeration district). It includes a list of all 818 African American farmers in Delaware in 1900.

Second, for persons researching Delaware farmers of any race, *Agriculture in the State of Delaware* (1901), provides interesting and useful background data.

Third, persons researching African American history and genealogy anywhere in the United States during the 1870–1900 era will find *Negroes in the United States* (1904) full of useful statistics and analysis.

For more information

For more information about surviving 1890 census fragments and statistics, see “1890 Census” at <http://www.archives.gov/research_room/genealogy/census/1890_census.html>.

For more detailed information about the Delaware 1890 census fragment (M1919), see <http://www.archives.gov/research_room/genealogy/census/1890_census_delaware.html>.

Note

1. *Census Bulletin No. 100, Agriculture in the State of Delaware* (Washington, D.C.: Census Office, Department of the Interior, 1901): 3.

Claire Prechtel-Klusdens, a microfilm projects archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, D.C., served as NGS registrar (1996–98) and director (1998–2000).