



The US Census in the Past and Present

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April 1, 2010 is “Census Day” in the United States. Conducted every 10 years, the U.S. Census is an attempt to count all persons residing within the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. Every household will receive a questionnaire by mail in *March 2010*. Information received from these households will be tabulated. These state population totals will be submitted to President Barack Obama by *December 31, 2010*. The counts obtained through the census are used to determine each state’s Congressional representation, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

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The U.S. CENSUS

United States™ Census 2010

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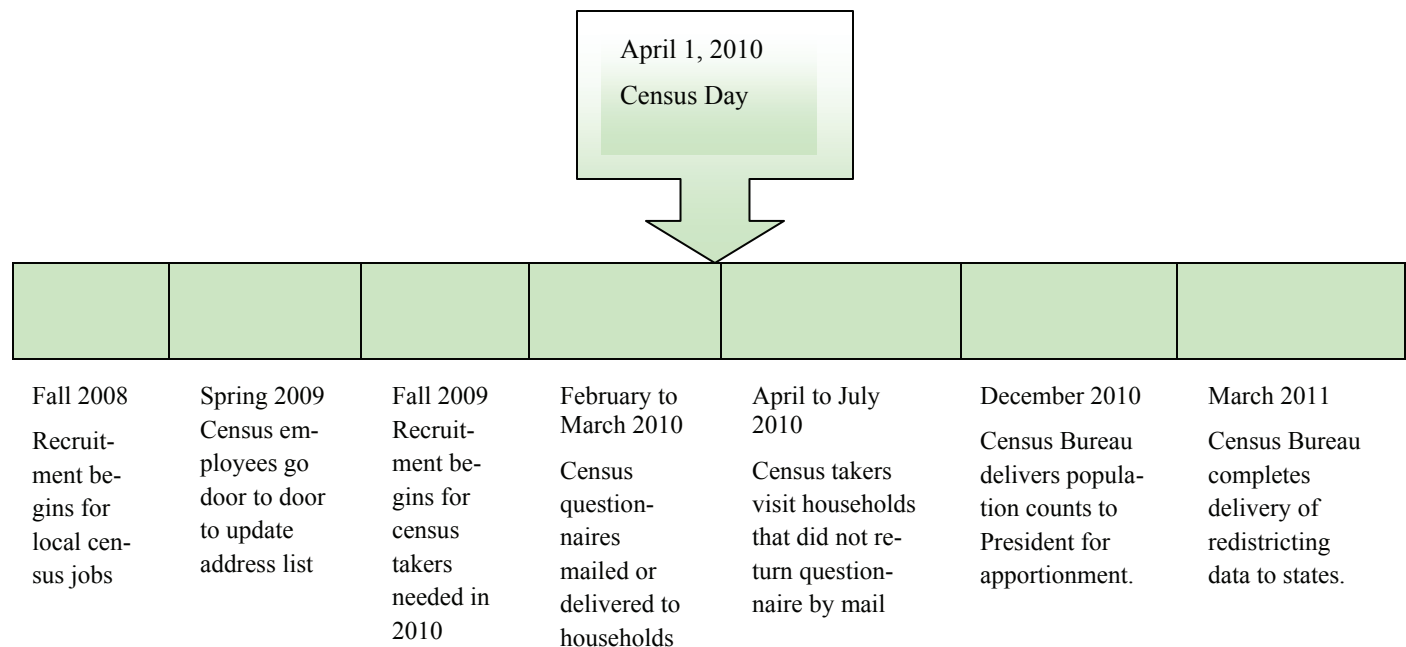
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Census Information Center

Resources

- www.census.gov
- www.cdc.gov/scientific.htm
- www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html
- www.scorecard.org/env-releases/state.tcl?fips_state_code=13

Figure 1 Timeline of US Census 2010



Source: US Census 2009

Historical Overview of Past Censuses

First taken in 1790, the U.S. Census has been carried out every 10 years since then (US Census 2008). For the first census, a marshal recorded the name of every householder and counted the occupants in each house. Only two racial categories existed in 1790: White and Black (Negro) (Gibson and Jung 2005). The category of “Black” was divided between freedmen (and women) and enslaved persons. In 1790 enslaved Blacks were not considered whole people by the federal government. Rather, enslaved persons were counted as three-fifths of a person. Some American Indians were included in the count; however, those who were not subject to taxation were excluded. According to the US Census, these census categories are not based on biological or genetic classification (Gibson and Jung 2005), instead, the categories are based on “social usage”.

Other interesting information emerges when one examines the history of constructions of race and the U.S. Census. Take, for example, the identification of Mexicans in the 1930 Census. During this census only, Mexican became a separate *race* category. The classification was generally meant to identify individuals of Mexican origin or ancestry. However, the government suggests interpreting this data with some caution because “the resulting count of the Mexican population was undoubtedly low because some people of Mexican ancestry did not want to be identified as such” (Chapa 2000, as cited in Gibson and Jung 2005) and some even identified themselves as “white”. The race category of Mexican was eliminated in the 1940 census and was never used again. For a detailed treatment of the history of the United States, please visit <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.html> or your local library for more information. See Figure 2 for a map of local libraries in Fulton County and a listing, by branch (Table 1).

Figure 2 Map of Fulton County Libraries



Source: Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System 2009

Table 1 Listing of Libraries in Fulton County, A to Z

Location	Address	Phone Number
Adams Park Branch	2231 Campbellton Road SW, Atlanta GA 30311	404-752-8763
Adamsville-Collier Heights Branch	3424 Martin Luther King Jr., Dr., Atlanta GA 30331	404-699-4206
Alpharetta Branch	238 Canton Street, Alpharetta GA 30004	770-740-2425
Auburn Avenue Research Library	101 Auburn Avenue NE, Atlanta GA 30303	404-730-4001
Bankhead Courts Branch	1415 Maynard Road NW, Atlanta GA 30331	404-699-8959
Bowen Homes Branch	2880 Yates Drive, N.W., Atlanta GA 30318	404-792-4950
Buckhead Branch	269 Buckhead Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30305	404-814-3500
Carver Homes Branch	215 Lakewood Way, Suite 104, Atlanta, GA 30315	404-635-4012
Central Library & Library System Headquarters	One Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta, GA 30303	404-730-1700
Cleveland Avenue Branch	47 Cleveland Avenue SW, Atlanta GA 30315	404-762-4116
College Park Branch	3647 Main Street, College Park, Georgia 30337	404-762-4060
Dogwood Branch	1838 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy NW (formerly Bankhead Ave), Atlanta GA 30318	404-792-4961
East Atlanta Branch	400 Flat Shoals Ave. SE, Atlanta, GA 30316	404-730-5438
East Point Branch	2757 Main Street, East Point GA 30344	404-762-4842
Fairburn Branch	60 Valley View Drive, Fairburn, GA 30213	770-306-3138
Georgia Hill Branch	250 Georgia Avenue SE, Atlanta, Georgia 30312	404-730-5427
Hapeville Branch	525 King Arnold Street, Hapeville, GA 30354	404-762-4065
Kirkwood Branch	11 Kirkwood Road SE, Atlanta GA 30317	404-377-6471

Libraries, continued

Location	Address	Phone Number
Martin Luther King Jr., Branch	409 John Wesley Dobbs Ave, Atlanta GA 30312	404-730-1185
Mechanicsville Branch	400 Formwalt St SW, Atlanta GA 30312	404-730-4779
Northeast/Spruill Oaks Branch	9560 Spruill Road, Johns Creek GA 30022	770-360-8820
Northside Branch	3295 Northside Parkway NW, Atlanta GA 30327	404-814-3508
Ocee Branch	5090 Abbotts Bridge Rd., Johns Creek GA 30005-4601	770-360-8897
Peachtree Branch	1315 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30309	404-885-7830
Perry Homes Branch	2121 Hollywood Rd NW, Atlanta GA 30318	404-792-4994
Ponce de Leon Branch	980 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE, Atlanta GA 30306	404-885-7820
Roswell Branch	115 Norcross St, Roswell GA 30075	770-640-3075
Sandy Springs Branch	395 Mount Vernon Hwy NE, Atlanta, GA 30328	404-303-6130
South Fulton Branch	4055 Flat Shoals Road, Union City, GA 30291-1590	770-306-3092
Southwest Branch	3665 Cascade Road SW, Atlanta, GA 30331	404-699-6363
Stewart-Lakewood Branch	2893 Lakewood Ave. SW, Atlanta GA 30315	404-762-4054
Thomasville Heights Branch	1700 Thomasville Dr SE, Atlanta GA 30315	404-624-0620
Washington Park Branch	1116 Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr., Atlanta GA 30314	404-752-8760
West End Branch	525 Peoples St SW, Atlanta GA 30310	404-752-8740

Race in Atlanta

Race (physical characteristics or phenotype) / ethnicity (cultural or national background) statistics for Atlanta are only available from 1850 and onward because 1850 marked the first year that the census was taken in the city of Atlanta. Atlanta was founded in 1837 (City of Atlanta 2009). In Table 2, the racial breakdown of the city of Atlanta is displayed, from 1850 to 1990. Unavailable information is denoted by (NA).

Table 2

Census year	Total Population		Race					
			White		Black		American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1850	2572	100	2060	80.1	512	19.9	NA	-
1860	9554	100	7615	79.7	1939	20.3	-	-
1870	21789	100	11860	54.4	9929	45.6	-	-
1880	37409	100	21079	56.3	16330	43.7	-	-
1890	65533	100	37416	57.1	28098	42.9	1	-
1900	89872	100	54090	60.2	35727	39.8	-	-
1910	154839	100	102861	66.4	51902	33.5	1	-
1920	200616	100	137785	68.7	62796	31.3	5	-
1930	270366	100	180248	66.7	90075	33.3	2	-
1940	302288	100	197686	65.4	104533	34.6	9	-
1950	331314	100	209898	63.4	121285	36.6	31	-
1960	487455	100	300635	61.7	188464	38.3	84	-
1970	496973	100	240503	48.4	255051	51.3	365	0.1
1980	425022	100	137879	32.4	282911	66.6	422	0.1
1990	394017	100	122327	31.0	264262	67.1	563	0.1

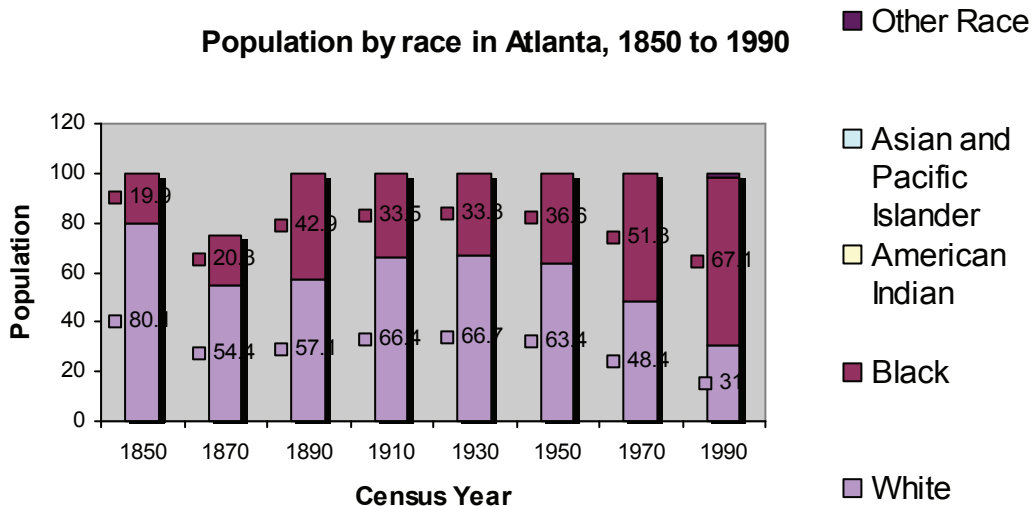
Race (continued)

Census year	Total Population		Race			
			Asian and Pacific Islander		Other race	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1850	2572	100	NA	NA	512	100
1860	9554	100	-	-	1939	100
1870	21789	100	-	-	-	-
1880	37409	100	-	-	-	-
1890	65533	100	18	-	-	-
1900	89872	100	55	-	-	-
1910	154839	100	75	-	-	-
1920	200616	100	30	-	-	-
1930	270366	100	41	-	-	-
1940	302288	100	60	-	-	-
1950	331314	100	77	-	23	-
1960	487455	100	191	-	81	-
1970	496973	100	628	0.1	426	0.1
1980	425022	100	2000	0.5	1810	0.4
1990	394017	100	3498	0.9	3367	0.9

Source: Gibson and Jung 2005

As Table 2 shows, the vast majority of the population (80.1 percent) in Atlanta during 1850 was “white”. Nineteen (19.9) percent of the population during this same year was identified as “Black”. During the fourth census, the first American Indian in Atlanta was counted during 1890. This was also the year that the first Asian/Pacific Islander was counted in Atlanta. One hundred years later, this population breakdown changed dramatically. In 1950, 63.4 percent of the population was white and 38.3 percent was Black. Still, forty years later, the demography of the city continued to change. Blacks made up the majority of the population in the city of Atlanta in 1990. Numbering 264,262 people in 1990, blacks represented 67.1 percent of Atlanta’s population. The 122,327 whites living in the city of Atlanta during the 1990 census counted as 31.0 percent of the total population. Figure 3 depicts the graphical representation of data from Table 2.

Figure 3 Racial composition of Atlanta















Source: Gibson and Jung 2005

The U.S. Census in the present: Census 2010

The most recent census data obtained during Census 2000 was significant for a number of reasons. Prior to Census 2000, adults filling out the Census Bureau questionnaires for themselves and their children were only able to identify themselves using 1 racial category. For example, if a person of Asian, white and Black ancestry filled out the 1990 census, they could only select one race. This changed during Census 2000. After the 1990 census, all residents surveyed through the census were able to select multiple racial categories. The same individual who had to choose between Asian, white, and Black during Census 1990 could select all three categories during Census 2000. Table 3 shows the choices that a hypothetical mixed-race individual of Black, white and Asian heritage had in 1990, 2000, and will have in 2010.

Another addition to the Census that occurred in 2000 and will remain in 2010 is the inclusion of ethnicity. The U.S. government only includes two categories for ethnicity: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."

Table 3 Racial categories and the US Census

Racial Category	1990	2000	2010
Black or African American			
	<i>or</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>and</i>
Asian (not available until 2000)			
	<i>or</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>and</i>
White			
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (not available until 2000)			
American Indian or Alaska Native			
	<i>or</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>or</i>
Other			

Census 2010

is HIRING! Part-time, temporary census takers are wanted for local work in your area.* Please visit

<http://2010.census.gov/2010censusjobs/index.php> or call 1-866-861-2010 for more information.

There are job opportunities available especially for

- Retirees
- Students and Graduates
- Job Seekers
- Community Leaders
- Full time Workers

References

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What is the Census Information Center???

Spelman College

Census Information Center

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*Spelman CIC Serves Its
Community*

The Census Information Center (CIC) is a cooperative program between the U.S. Census Bureau and 52 national, regional, and local non-profit organizations. This program represents the interest of underserved communities. The centers serve as repositories of census data and reports, making census information and data available to the public and the communities they serve. The CICs use census data in areas such as program planning, assessing advocacy needs, defining service areas, public policy development, developing new business enterprises, and conducting race/ethnic related research. Individually, and in concert with other community service organizations, the Spelman College's CIC focuses on strengthening community development organizations by improving access to information and national resources for Atlanta University Center (AUC) faculty and students, local activists, minority low income groups, housing, and neighborhood development organizations. Most of the Spelman's CIC projects involve assessment of area needs and local population characteristics.



Spelman College

Census Information Center History

The Spelman College Census Information Center (CIC) was established in 2000 by economics professor Dr. Romie Tribble, and is now directed by Dr. Bruce Wade, professor and former chair of the [Department of Sociology and Anthropology](#).

The CIC is a cooperative program between the U.S. Bureau of the Census and 52 national, regional and local non-profit organizations, and represents the interests of underserved communities.

The centers serve as repositories of census data and reports, making census information and data available to the public and the communities they serve. The CICs use census data in areas such as program planning, needs assessments, defining service areas, developing new business enterprises, and con-

ducting demographic and social research.



The Primary Objectives are:

- ⇒ Make the Spelman's CIC a resource for information on Census related data for diverse community groups.
- ⇒ Promote university community involvement in community development.
- ⇒ Promote AUC student and faculty development and involvement in community services.
- ⇒ Promote awareness of the Census as a resource base.
- ⇒ Encourage AUC students and faculty to integrate Census material in their classrooms, research and career plans.