

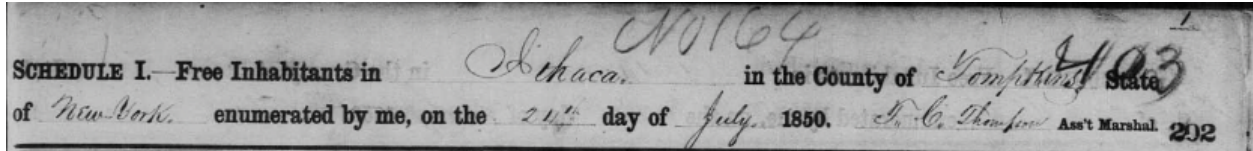


## 1850 Census Manual

## Welcome to HistoryForge!

This is your guide to transcribing records from the 1850 U.S. Census into HistoryForge.

HistoryForge is a digital history project that relies on people like you to help make all of the information on the U.S. Census available for exploration.



The 1850 Census was the first to record specific information about all free individuals, such as their name, age, sex, race, occupation, nativity, education, and health.

Traditional access to the U.S. Census, which allows the average person to search for individuals by name and location on genealogy websites, is limiting. While it provides information about that person in a specific place and time, it separates that individual from the larger context of their community.

HistoryForge enables people to search on any of the individual attributes captured on the census, including, but not limited to name. As a result, it reveals the larger community context contained in the census, allowing people to use the census to learn more about the history of their community or that of their ancestors.

By transcribing these census records into HistoryForge, you are helping to expand access to the vast amount of information about individuals and communities available in the census.

Even more: the records you transcribe are geo-addressed and markers for the buildings can be displayed on historic map overlays, allowing the information to be viewed on maps from different time periods.

Thank you for helping make local history resources such as the census available to the public,  
The HistoryForge Team  
Ithaca, NY

HistoryForge has been made possible in part by the  
National Endowment for the Humanities:  
Democracy demands wisdom



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HUMANITIES

# HistoryForge 1850 Census Manual

## Table of Contents

<b>A. Getting Started</b>	<b>4</b>
HistoryForge Transcription Conventions	4
<b>B. Transcription Instructions</b>	<b>5</b>
Census Scope	5
Page	5
Line	5
Locality	5
Street Address	6
Building	7
Dwelling and Family Nos.	8
Institution Name/Institution Type	9
Name	10
First Name, Middle Name, Last Name	10
Title, Suffix	11
Personal Description	11
Age/Age (Months)	11
Sex	11
Race	12
Occupation	12
Value of Real Estate	12
Place of Birth	13
Foreign Born	13
Married during Census Year	13
Attended School	14
Cannot Read and Write	14
Physical and Mental Condition	14
Deaf and Dumb/Blind/Insane/Idiotic/Pauper/Convict	14
Nature of Misfortune/Year of Misfortune	14
Notes	15
Saving Your Work	16
<b>C. Reviewing Your Work</b>	<b>17</b>
Self-Review Checklist	17
Finding the Records you Entered on HistoryForge	17
Displaying the Fields to Look Like the Census Sheet	17
Editing Your Records	18
	3

## A. Getting Started

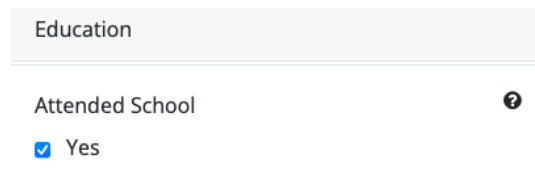
Before getting started please review the document, [Getting Started on the 1850 Census](#). This and many other helpful resources are available on the [Resources](#) page (under Data).

The “Getting Started” guide will show you how to:

- Find your census sheet online, and
- Start entering census records in HistoryForge.

### **HistoryForge Transcription Conventions**

- For consistency, enter only what appears on the census sheet, do not enter information that does not appear on the sheet. In other words, if the field is blank on the census, leave it blank on HistoryForge.
- Enter the information as written by the enumerator in the appropriate fields. The one exception is the Notes field.
- If you find additional or conflicting information about a person such as a different name spelling: In the Notes field indicate the problem, the alternative information, and the source(s) that led you to that conclusion, i.e., Last name is \_\_\_\_\_ in other HistoryForge records..
- We have employed check boxes for certain fields. Check them only when the enumerator entered Yes as a response. In all other cases, leave the box unchecked.



Education

Attended School ⓘ

Yes

- Pop-up help text is available for most fields on the data entry page. To access it, hover your mouse over the question mark icon to the right of the field name.

### **Helpful resources:**

In addition to the resources available on the Resources page, here are a few other helpful places to check for more information:

- On HistoryForge
  - other census years
  - the maps on The Forge.
- Relevant sources from sites like [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

**Always cite the sources of any additional/alternative information in the notes field.**

## B. Transcription Instructions

### Census Scope

The Census Scope on HistoryForge includes general information about the census page (Page, Line) and the location of each record within the community/enumeration process (Dwelling No., Family No.) The options for saving each record, explained under [Saving your work](#), will ensure that some, if not all, of the information under Census Scope will be automatically generated into the next record.

### Page



The 1850 census did not include a location for page numbers. Use the image number from FamilySearch.

- Enter the Page number from the image box in the **upper left corner** of FamilySearch or use the up and down arrows in the box to record the number in the **Page field** on HistoryForge.

### Line

Line numbers (1-42) are on the left and right sides of the census page.

- Enter the Line number from the **left or right side** of the census page or use the up and down arrows in the box to record the number in the **Line field** on HistoryForge.
- After you enter the first line, the line number will autofill in future records depending on how you save the record. *If the enumerator skips a line, you will need to adjust the line number on the data entry page.*

### Locality

Locality is not on the census but allows for the inclusion of multiple locations (cities, towns, villages, etc.) in one HistoryForge installation. The locality is the name of the city, town, village, for the census record.

- Select the correct locality from the drop-down menu.
- Locality is necessary to save the record. It will only need to be selected once as it will automatically populate in future records when you save the record using one of the save options.

## Street Address

Address fields were not included on the census until 1880. In some localities, however, it may be possible to determine a street address from reference sources or by other means. The address fields for this census have been included on HistoryForge so that installations which are able to determine addresses for the individuals in the census during or after the initial transcription can enter them here to make it possible to map these records.

On HistoryForge, the street address is divided into four fields: House No., Prefix, Street Name, and Suffix.

For example, 106 N Tioga St would be entered as:

House No. <span>?</span>	Prefix <span>?</span>	Street Name <span>?</span>	Suffix <span>?</span>
<input type="text" value="106"/>	<input type="text" value="N"/>	<input type="text" value="Tioga"/>	<input type="text" value="St"/>

### House No.

The historic or current house number.

- Enter the house number.
  - If the number includes a fraction, leave a space between the number and the fraction. i.e., 102 ½.
  - If the number indicates rear (as in separate dwelling in the rear) enter the number followed by a space and the word Rear, i.e., 313 Rear.
  - If the number is a range of numbers enter them as written, i.e., 102-104.

### Prefix

The North, South, East, or West preceding the street name (i.e., the N in N Tioga St).

- Enter the prefix or select the correct option from the drop-down menu.
- **Exception:** If the street name includes a directional adjective or noun. For example, the street South Hill Terrace is located in the South Hill neighborhood of the City of Ithaca, New York. In this case you would include “South” in the street address because it is part of the street name, not the prefix. If you are not sure if the directional word should be part of the prefix or street name consult the resources provided.

### Street Name

The name of the street itself (i.e., Tioga).

- Enter the name of the street only.

### **Suffix**

Avenue, Road, Street, etc., following the street name.

- Type the suffix or select the correct option from the drop-down menu.
- **Note:** Some streets have the same street name but a different suffix. Entering the wrong suffix could result in the building being mapped to the wrong address and location. If the enumerator omits the suffix, check the resources on the Resources page to find the correct address and enter accordingly.

### **Apt.**

- Enter only if applicable.

### **Building**

There is no corresponding field on the census. Attaching the census record you are entering to a building record based on the address (or creating a building record if one does not yet exist) is what connects people and places on HistoryForge and enables the census records to be mapped.

The field has been retained in HistoryForge in case an installation wishes to “house” census records after transcription. Consult your HistoryForge project coordinator for additional instructions.

## **Dwelling and Family Nos.**

(Columns 1 and 2 on the census)

To ascertain the number of occupied dwellings and the number of families in the enumeration district, the enumerator was to number each dwelling and family in the order of visitation.

**For the purposes of the census, a “Dwelling” was not limited to a traditional residence and included any place where one or more persons regularly slept.**

A dwelling with multiple families but one entrance was usually assigned a single dwelling number.

A dwelling with multiple front doors was usually assigned a dwelling number per each door.

**For the purposes of the census, a “Family” extended beyond the biological definition to include all of those who lived together in shared living quarters.**

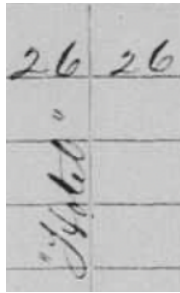
- Enter the Dwelling No., followed by the Family No. from the census.
- Dwelling and Family Nos. are generally sequential on the page. If it is hard to read either number check the numbers above and below for a pattern. However, if the enumerator had to return later to get information about one or more “family” members, the Dwelling and Family Nos. listed on later census sheets might be out of order.
- If the Dwelling/Family No. is not listed on the first line of the sheet, it can be found listed with the head of that household on the previous sheet.
- *In the case of an institution* (see example below), enter the Dwelling No. along with the Family No. in the first census record for that institution.
- Dwelling and Family Nos. only need to be entered once as they will automatically populate in future records when you save the record as “in this dwelling,” or “in this family.”

**\*For HistoryForge, all people within the same Family Number can be saved as In this family.**

## Institution Name/Institution Type

(Column 1 on the census)

For any institutions such as hotels, boarding houses, poor houses, asylums, jails, reformatories, etc., the enumerator was to enter the name and type of institution vertically in Column 1 (Dwelling No.).



Enter the Institution Name and/or Institution Type from the census into the corresponding field on HistoryForge.

If only the institution type is entered on the census, e.g. Hotel, enter that under Institution Type.

If the institution is identified by name, e.g. Union Hotel, enter that under Institution Name.

- When the record is saved as “In this family,” the Institution will automatically populate in the next record.
- *For project administrators:* If the institution is not named on the census but the address is that of an institution of interest, enter the institution’s name in the field.

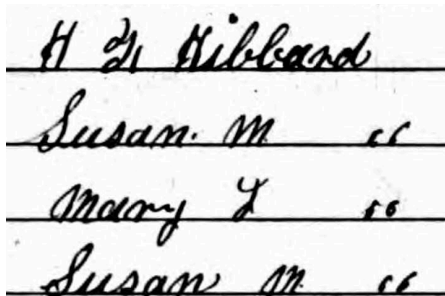
## Name

### **First Name, Middle Name, Last Name**

(Column 3 on the census)

Census question: The name of every person whose usual place of abode on June 1, 1850, was in this family.

Names appear on the census in the following order: First, Middle, Last.



After entering the last name for the head of the household, the enumerator indicated that the subsequent family members had the same last name:

- by leaving a blank space
- by using a ditto mark - “ - ”
- by using the shorthand “do” (for “ditto”)

- Enter the first name, middle name or initial, and last name *in the correct field, even if they appear in a different order on the census, such as last name first.*
- Do not enter periods after any initials or abbreviations.
- If the name is hard to read, attempt to verify the spelling with the city directory or other resources where possible and enter the information and the source in the notes field.
- First and Last Names are required fields. If a first or last name is missing:
  - Transcribers should consult city directories, HistoryForge, or other trusted resources to try to supply the missing name. Always make a note in HistoryForge explaining how you supplied the name.
  - If the missing name cannot be determined, enter the word “Blank” to save the record, e.g. “Mrs Blank Johnson” or “Sister Marie Benedict Blank.”
- Enter the word “Blank” only when the information is actually not there. If the census used a descriptive phrase in place of a name (for example, a newborn baby who has not yet been named may be enumerated as “No Name Jones” or “Infant Jones”):
  - Transcribers should consult city directories, HistoryForge, or other trusted resources to try to supply the missing name. Always make a note in HistoryForge explaining how you supplied the name.
  - If you cannot determine the eventual real first name of “No Name Jones,” transcribe what the census says—“No Name.”
- When the record is saved as “in this family,” the last name will automatically populate in the next record.
  - *If the person in this record has a different last name from the previous family member, highlight the last name and type the correct last name.*

## Title, Suffix

(Column 3 on the census)

Titles (Mr, Mrs, Doctor, etc.) and Suffixes (Jr, Sr, MD, etc.) appear occasionally after the name.

- Enter the title and/or suffix only if there is one on the census.
- Do not enter periods after any abbreviations.

## Personal Description

### Age/Age (Months)

(Column 4 on the census)

Census question: Age at last birthday.

*All children less than one year of age were to be listed by their age in months i.e., 3/ 12 or 11/12.*

- Enter the response from the census.

For example:

A child who is listed on the census as 11/12 should be entered as:

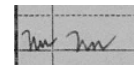
Age	Age (months)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="11"/>

A child who is listed on the census as 1 3/12 should be entered as:

Age	Age (months)
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>

- If the response entered is un (for unknown), enter 999.

The scribble for “unknown” often looks like this:



## Sex

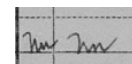
(Column 5 on the census)

Census question: Sex.

The options on the census were “M” for Male or “F” for Female.

- Select the option that corresponds to the response on the census.
- If the sex appears to be entered incorrectly on the census, indicate that in the notes field.
- If the response entered is un (for unknown), select Un-Unknown.

The scribble for “unknown” often looks like this:



## Race

(Column 6 on the census)

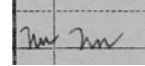
Census question: Color.

Enumerators were instructed to leave the field blank if the person was white, and to enter B if the person was Black and M if Mulato. Race was to be visually determined by the enumerator.

The options on the census were: “Blank” for White, “B” for Black, and “M” for Mulatto.

- Select the option that corresponds to the response on the census.
- If the response entered is un (for unknown), select Un-Unknown.

The scribble for “unknown” often looks like this:



## Occupation

(Column 7 on the census)

Census question: Profession, occupation, or trade of each **male** person over 15 years of age.

- Enter the response from the census.
- “None” is the default which can be overwritten by highlighting the field and typing the correct response.
- If the occupation is blank, leave the default “None.”
- If the enumerator used the shorthand “**do**” (for “ditto”) or a ditto mark -“- or wrote out the word **ditto** to indicate that the answer to a question was the same as that on the previous line, then enter the occupation from the line above.
- Do not spell out abbreviations.
- *Enter the occupation even if the person is less than 15 years old.*

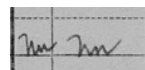
## Value of Real Estate

(Column 8 on the census)

Census question: Value of real estate owned.

- Enter the response from the census (numbers only) or leave blank if there is no response.
- If the response entered is un (for unknown), enter -1.

The scribble for “unknown” often looks like this:



- If there is a note or explanation, enter it in the Notes field.

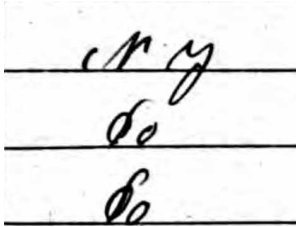
## Place of Birth

(Column 9 on the census)

Census question: Place of Birth, naming the State, Territory or Country.

**Note:** This field has a controlled vocabulary. As you enter the place of birth from the census, the term should appear as an option from the list of controlled vocabulary. If it does not appear, enter an X in the field and enter “Place of Birth is \_\_\_\_” in the notes field so it can be added to the controlled vocabulary.

- The default place of birth is based on the state of your HistoryForge location. This can be overwritten by highlighting the default and typing the response from the census.
- Enter the response from the census. ***Spell out abbreviated words in full.***
- Enter US or variants as United States.
- Enter Washington D.C. as District of Columbia.
- Enter Don't Know, Unknown, or other variants as Unknown.



If the enumerator used the shorthand “do” (for “ditto”) or a ditto mark -“- or wrote out the word **ditto** to indicate that the answer to a question was the same as that on the previous line, then enter the place of birth from the line above.

## Foreign Born

There is no corresponding field on the census.

Check this box if this person was not born in the United States or its territories.

## Married during Census Year

(Column 10 on the census)

Census question: If married within the year.

The enumerator was to enter a (/) to indicate the person was married within the census year.

- Check the box if there is a (/) in this column.

## **Attended School**

(Column 11 on the census)

Census question: If attended school within the year.

The enumerator was to enter a (/) to indicate the person attended school within the census year.

- Check the box if there is a (/) in this column.

## **Cannot Read and Write**

(Column 12 on the census)

Census question: If 20 years and older and unable to read and write.

The enumerator was to enter a (/) to indicate whether any person aged 20 or older could not read and write.

- Check the box if there is a (/) in this column.

## **Physical and Mental Condition**

### **Deaf and Dumb/Blind/Insane/Idiotic/Pauper/Convict**

(Column 13 on census)

Census question: If this person was deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, a pauper or convict.

- Select the checkbox that corresponds to the response entered on the census.

### **Nature of Misfortune/Year of Misfortune**

(Column 13 on census)

Census question: State the character of the infirmity or misfortune, or the crime for which each inmate is confined and the year of conviction.

- Enter the response from the census or leave blank if there is no response.
- If there is an [Institution Name and/or Type](#) written in Col. 1 on the census, check to make sure it is entered in the corresponding field on HistoryForge.

## Notes

The Notes field at the end of each record is a place to indicate to a reviewer that you are unsure about any of your entries and that they should carefully check the field or fields. It is also a place to enter additional or alternative information about the person's name or address, or to indicate that you verified the name spelling or address in another source such as the city directory.

Notes should be specific and succinct.

Notes should always include the name of the field on HistoryForge and a brief explanation of the issue.

For example:

- o If the last name was illegible and you were unable to verify it in the city directory or other source, enter Last name illegible.
- o If the last name was illegible and you were able to verify it in the city directory or other source, enter Last name illegible on census, verified in [year] city directory.
- o If the occupation was hard to read but you entered your best guess in the occupation field, enter Unsure of occupation.

Notes should also include the specific source of any additional or alternative information such as the specific year of a city directory (and the name if there are more than one), or the specific citation from a book or other source. If it is from a source on an external website such as FamilySearch or Google Books, always include the source name (the name of the collection in FamilySearch or the citation of a book on Google Books including the author's name, title, and year of publication) as well as the url (website address).

For example:

- o The name/address in the [year] city directory is \_\_\_\_\_.
- o Additional information about this person can be found in [collection name/book citation] on [name of website, i.e., FamilySearch/Google Books], [url].

Remember that when you find additional or alternative information about a person:

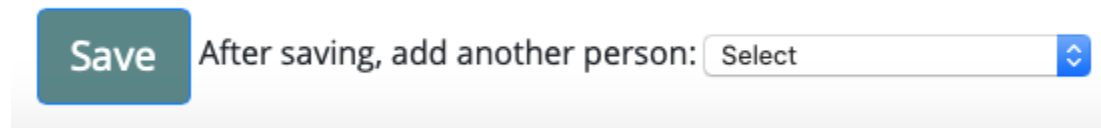
- o Always enter the information from the census sheet in the relevant field on HistoryForge.
- o Then enter the alternative information and its source in the notes field on HistoryForge.

Be aware that reviewers might change or remove notes but in case they miss something, always enter information in the notes field with the knowledge that it will become public after the record is reviewed.

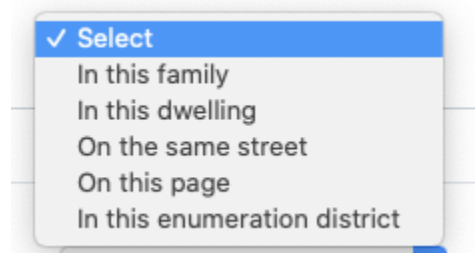
## Saving Your Work

Determine if the individual on the next line of the census is in the same family (as defined by the census), lives in the same dwelling, or is enumerated on this census page.

Before saving each record, you will be given options for how to save the record so that the program will automatically populate some of the fields at the beginning of the next record. At the bottom of each record, you will see:



Before saving, click the blue arrows select from one of the following options:



Saving as In this family will automatically repopulate the fields respective to all members of the same family in the next record including the Building and the last name.

**\*Note:** When the person in the next record has a different last name: highlight the last name and type in the correct one.

Saving as In this dwelling will automatically repopulate the fields respective to all members of the same dwelling in the next record.

[Saving as On the same street will automatically repopulate the fields respective to the same street. Because the 1850 census did not use street addresses, it is unlikely to be used in the initial HistoryForge transcription process].

Saving as On this page will automatically repopulate the fields respective to the census page.

[Saving as In this enumeration district will automatically repopulate the fields respective to the Enumeration District (ED). Because the 1850 census did not use enumeration districts, it is unlikely to be used in the transcription process].

**\*Note:** If you stop for the day in the middle of a sheet you can use the Save options to pick up where you left off without having to enter all the information in the Census Scope again. Follow the instructions for reviewing your work below to find and edit the last record you entered then Save as (the appropriate option for the next record).

## C. Reviewing Your Work

Performing a quick check of your work as the final step of transcription is imperative to this project. Reviewing your work will show you which common mistakes you might be prone to and help you improve your transcription. It will also make the actual reviewing process quicker and easier and improve the overall quality of the final product.

### Self-Review Checklist

Use the  **1850 Census Self-Review Checklist** available on your Resources page.

### Finding the Records you Entered on HistoryForge

Go to the census sheet you just entered in the 1850 census database:

- After entering the last census record on the page, click Save, then select Go to Census Sheet on the top right side of the screen.

OR

- From the 1850 census database, click Filter and enter the Page number. If there are multiple localities, filter again on your locality.

### Displaying the Fields to Look Like the Census Sheet

The fields displayed across the top of the census database are initially limited to the default fields.

Name	Census Scope	Street address	Relation...	Sex	Race	Age	Place of...	Foreign ...	Occupation	Industry
------	--------------	----------------	-------------	-----	------	-----	-------------	-------------	------------	----------

These fields should be expanded to include the fields on the Self-Review Checklist.

To add those fields to the display:

- Select the Fields button.

11 Fields

(the number of fields listed will change depending on how many are enabled)

- Enable the fields from the checklist.
- Click Submit.

## Editing Your Records

When reviewing your records using the Self-Review Checklist, you might notice that you forgot to enter a piece of information or that you entered something incorrectly. To correct any mistakes you might have made, you will need to edit those census records.

**Note:** In general, you will only be able to edit a census record that you entered. If you notice a mistake that was made by someone else, contact the project coordinator to make them aware of the mistake or flag the record (this option is available at the top of each census record).

To edit a record you can either:

- \*Preferred Method: **Open the record in a new tab** by right clicking the name and selecting Open Link in New Tab. This will create a new tab which you can close when you are finished while retaining the original tab with all the records you entered.

OR

- **Open the record in the same tab** by clicking the View button (next to the name). Once you have saved the record, you will need to hit the back button on your browser two or three times to return to the main results page.

Once you have opened that record:

- Select Edit to open the data entry page.
- Scroll down to the field(s) with missing information and enter the correct information.
- Hit the Save button to save the information.
- Return to the page containing all the records from your sheet and repeat as necessary.
  - If you used the preferred method, close out the tab with the census record to return to the tab with the main results page.
  - If you opened the record in the same tab, hit the back button several times until you return to the main results page.
- When you are done updating all of the necessary records, refresh your browser, and check that all the necessary changes were made.

HistoryForge has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.



*a more perfect*  
**UNION** NATIONAL  
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HUMANITIES