

Are You Using Mortality Schedules from the Census Records?

What's a mortality schedule you ask? Well, the U.S. Census Bureau, starting in 1850, began preparing special Non-population Schedules. Population schedules are the ones that we are always using and we tend to call them just "Census Records" There have been several Non-population schedules, including Agricultural Schedules, Manufacturing Schedules, Social Statistic Schedules, Business Schedules, and this topic—"Mortality Schedules"

They were important because at that time in the 1800s, there were very few state wide death registers, so even having one year was helpful.

The federal government created mortality schedules as part of the census effort in 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. The goal was to name those who were deceased in the 12 months prior to the taking of the census. For example, the mortality schedule for 1860 documented who had died between June 1, 1859 and May 31, 1860. There also were some state level mortality schedules performed as well, in 1885. These states included Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

For each person, the following information is captured:

- Name
- Age
- Sex
- Marital status (if married or widowed)
- State or country of birth
- Month of death
- Occupation
- Cause of death
- Length of final illness
- In 1870, parents birth places were added
- In 1880, the place where the disease was contracted and how long the deceased was a resident of the area was added.

Here is a list of Mortality Schedules provide for free at FamilySearch:

- [Illinois Mortality Schedules, 1850-1880](#)
- [Iowa Mortality Schedules, 1850-1880](#)
- [Massachusetts, Federal Census Mortality Schedule, 1870](#)
- [Massachusetts, Federal Census Mortality Schedule, 1880](#)
- [Michigan Mortality Schedules, 1850-1880](#)
- [Pennsylvania Mortality Schedules, 1850-1880](#)

And the [United States Census \(Mortality Schedule\), 1850](#)

Ancestry has a collection and an index:

- [U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885](#)
- [U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880](#)

And two state collections:

- [Missouri, Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850 and 1860](#)
- [New York, U.S., U.S. Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1880](#)

MyHeritage has:

- [1850 United States Federal Census \(Mortality Schedule\)](#)

If you are curious about all of the Non-population Schedules, I would read the article at the National Archives, entitled [Non-population Census Records](#)

