

The 1892 Census

The following documents all come from the 1892 NYS Census Enumerators Blotter for Town of DeKalb Election District 2. Election District Two comprises the entire western end of the township including the village of Richville (see included map). The 1892 Census of NYS is a bit of an anomaly. The NYS Census were ordinarily taken every ten years (1835, 1845, 1855 etc.) Archivists at the NYS Archives speculate that, prior to the 1894 State Constitutional Convention, there was a need for an accurate population count to determine election districts and wards in New York. This was doubly important because much of the 1890 Federal Census of NYS was destroyed in a fire. Ironically, the 1892 NYS censuses for St Lawrence County were destroyed when the County courthouse burned. Thus, the 1892 DeKalb census enumerator's book is a unique local document. The entire sixteen page text is included in the additional census pages folder.

The census documents show what types of occupations women and men held at that time as well as the place of birth of the citizenry. The included map can be used to help students locate the areas included in the census. The 1892 NYS Census Enumerators Blotter for Election District #2 and the portion of the 1896 Blankman's Map are part of the DeKalb Town Historian's collection.

Categories listed on 1892 census: NAME, MALE OR FEMALE, AGE, COLOR, IN WHAT COUNTRY BORN, CITIZEN OR ALIEN, OCCUPATION.

Suggested Lessons:

Disciplines: Social Studies and Language Arts

Grade Levels: 4-8

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Materials Needed:

- Copy 1892 Enumerators Blotter cover(provided)
- Map of DeKalb Election District 2 (provided)
- Copy of 1892 Census pages 14 to 16. (provided)8 by 14
- 3 worksheets (provided)
- Newsprint or poster board.

Learning Objectives: The students will:

1. Gather, label, categorize, and analyze information from a census.
2. Define pertinent vocabulary including enumerator, census and blotter.
3. Create a modern class census modeled after a historical one.

Procedures:

Lesson one

1. Distribute copies of the worksheet, 1892 Enumerators Blotter, 1892 census cover and pages 14 –16, and the election district map.
2. Introduce the students to the concept of a census.
3. Direct the students to complete worksheet, 1892 Enumerators Blotter by analyzing the two documents.
4. When the students are finished go over their answers together.
5. Discuss with the class why governments gather census data. Collect and save the census documents to be reused in lesson two.
6. At the close of the lesson, distribute the Family Census data worksheet to be completed at home. Explain the purpose of the worksheet. (This should be an optional activity so no one feels forced to divulge the information.)

Lesson two

1. Have children put their family census data on the sheets of poster paper. This should be done before the lesson begins. (Note: This should be an optional activity as some families may be sensitive about sharing this information.)
2. Review the class census data together to make sure it is legible to all. Distribute the 1892 census documents and the 1892 vs. Current Class Census worksheet.
3. Have the students complete the worksheet using the documents and the class census.
4. When all the children have finished the worksheet, ask some to share their predictions with the class.

Follow Up Activities:

Further research and discussion of Census data and your town:
Arrange a field trip to the county clerks office and use the 1905, 1915 or 1925 NYS to compare changes over time in your community.
Compare census data from your community with that from a different type of community.

For further information:

Visit the US Bureau of the Census web sight for free teaching ideas maps charts and more using the current census.
<www.census.gov/dmd/wwwteachr2a.html>

NYS Social Studies Standards correlation:

Standard 1: Key Idea 4

- Consider different interpretations of key events and /or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts.
- Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State.

-View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music and artifacts.

-Consider the sources of historic documents, narratives, or artifacts and evaluate their reliability

-Describe historic events through the eyes and experiences of those who were there.

Standard 5: Key Idea 4

-Explain the role that civility plays in promoting effective citizenship in preserving democracy.