

by Terry Moore, CG

On Wednesday evenings I volunteer at the Raleigh Family History Center assisting patrons with their family history research. One question I usually ask is if every census has been searched during their ancestor's lifetime, especially for those who died before the 1850 census when the names and ages of each member of the household were first recorded. A few patrons answer yes, but most assure me that the 1790–1840 census records don't tell you anything.

But those early census records can speak to us. Most importantly they reveal where a family lived and what the household looked like through the sex and age range of the members. It is true that we don't know the names of every individual, but the 1820 through 1840 censuses have nuggets of information. In 1820 we learn if the head of household was of foreign birth and not naturalized, and how many in the household were involved in agriculture, commerce, or manufacturing. In 1830 we learn if anyone in the household was deaf, dumb, blind, or alien. In 1840, there is so much more, like

how many in the household were involved in mining, agriculture, commerce, manufacturing and trade, navigation on oceans or rivers, or if one were a learned professor or engineer; whether someone was deaf, dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, over twenty years old and illiterate; and whether one was naturalized or not. And did I forget the 1840 census also included the name and age of Revolutionary War pensioners. Whether the answers are positive or negative they tell a story about the family.

Each census also provides information about slaves and free people of color. Only the number of slaves is given in the 1790 through 1810 censuses, but the 1820 census provides more details, such as sex and age range. The 1830 and 1840 censuses provide even more details.

By using the 1790 through 1830 census information, the birth year of the head of household can be narrowed nicely. As an example, John Avery died in 1832 and the 1830 census gave his age as between 60 and 69 years. He was listed in the following census records.

1790 1 free white male 16 years and older 1800 1 free white male 26 to 44 years old

Comparing these two censuses narrows the birth year.

[born 1774 or before] [born1756-1774]

1810 1 free white male

45 years or older

[born 1765 or earlier]

We now know that John was born between 1756 and 1765.

1820 1 free white male

45 years or older

[born 1775 or earlier]

This census does not help narrow John's birth year.

1830 1 free white male

60-69 years old

[born 1761-1770]

It now becomes clear that John Avery was born between 1761 and 1765, which might help us differentiate between two men of the same name and of similar ages.

Calculating the birth years from age ranges can be used for each family member, even though their names are not known. Because I don't like to calculate birth years each time I use the early census records, the following charts help me easily determine when someone in a certain age bracket was born. Hopefully the charts will prove useful to you and encourage you to converse with the 1790 through 1840 census records.

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### 1790 census

Free white males

Free white females

Age in years	16 & up	0-16	all ages	All other free persons	Slaves
Born	1774 or before	1775-1790	1790 or before		

#### 1800 census

Free white males

Free white females

Age	6-0	10 -15	16 -25	16 -25   26-44   45 &	45 &	6 - 0	0-9   10-15   16-25   26-44   45 &	16 -25	26-44	45 &	All other	Slaves
.u					over					over	free persons	
years												
Born	1791-	1785-	1775-	1756-	1775-   1756-   1755 or   1791-	1791-	1785-	1775-	1756-	1755 or		
	1800	1790	1784	1774	1774 hefore 1800		1790	1784 1774	1774	hefore		

#### 1810 census

Free white males

Free white females

1801- 1795- 1810 1800	or 1801 or 1810	1766- 1765 or 1801- 1795- 1784 before 1810 1800

1820 census

	No. of persons in commerce	
	No. of persons in agriculture	
	Foreign not Maturalized	
	15 & over	1775 or 194
nales	77-97	t6LI-9LLI
Free white females	SZ - 9I	t081-2671
whit	\$1-01	0181-2081
Free	6-0	1811-1820
	45 & over	1775 or before
	<i>tt</i> -97	t6LI-9LLI
es	57-91	t081-2671
e ma]	LI-9I	1803-1804
Free white males	\$1-01	0181-2081
Free	6-0	1811-1820
	Age in years	Born

persons in manufacturing

To .oV

Free Colo	
Female slaves	
Male slaves	

ree Colored Males Free Colored Females

All other free persons, except ludians not taxed	
15 & over	10 STTI 19d
<i>tt</i> -97	†6LI-9LLI
14-25	9081-\$641
61-0	1807-1820
45 & over	1775 or 19d
<i>tt-</i> 97	76LI-9LLI
14-25	9081-\$641
61-0	1807-1820
15 & over	10 STT1 19d
<i>tt</i> -97	<b>⊅6</b> ∠I-9∠∠I
14-25	9081-56/1
61-0	1807-1820
15 & over	1775 or 19d
<i>7</i> 7-97	76LI-9LLI
14-25	9081-\$641
61-0	1807-1820
Age in years	Born

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**1830** census

Age in years

Born

1731-1740 66-06 0571-1471 68-08 0941-1541 6L-0L 69-09 0221-1921 6S-0S 0871-1771 0671-1871 67-07 **30-38** 1791-1800 50-29 0181-1081 Free white females 61-51 1811-1815 10-14 1816-1820 1871-1872 6-S 1856-1830 **7-0** Jəd du & 001 10 0£71 1731-1740 66-06 0541-1441 68-08 6L-0L 0941-1541 69-09 0441-1941 65-05 0871-1771 0671-1871 67-07 **6€-0€** 1791-1800 0181-1081 50-29 Free white males 61-51 1811-1815 1816-1820 10-14 6-*S* 1871-1872 1856-1830 **7-**0

1730 or 19d

2771-1571

76LI-9LLI

9081-56/1

1807-1820

1821-1830

Jəd

10 OE/I

qu \$ 001

66-55

7**5-**9£

24-35

10-53

6-0

qu & 001

Male Slaves

Ð	Blind	
Slaves & Colored Deaf & Dumb	dn 🕉 57	1805 or 19d
es & O &	14-24	9181-9081
Slav Oeaf	61-0	1817-1830
1	Aliens	
	Blind	
White persons	dn 🕉 57	1805 or bef
White per Deaf & Do	14-24	9181-9081
Whit Oeaf	61-0	1817-1830
	Total snos19q	
SS	qu 🕉 001	10 0£71
male	66-55	2771-1571
д Fe	75-98	†6LI-9LLI
Free Colored Females	24-35	9081-2671
Co	10-23	1807-1820
Fre	6-0	1821-1830
	qu & 001	10 0£71
ee Colored Males	66-55	SLLI-IELI
Д	75-98	<del>1</del> 621-9221
lore	24-35	9081-5671
e Co	10-23	1807-1820
Free	6-0	1821-1830
	qu & 001	10 0£71
	66-55	SLL1-18L1
es	<i>\$</i> 9-98	†6LI-9LLI
Slav	24-35	9081-5671
ale	10-23	1807-1820
Female Slaves	6-0	1821-1830
	Age in years	Born

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Free white females Free White Males 1839-1840 **7-0** Age in years

,,,,	,00,00
24-35	9181-2081
10-23	1817-1830
6-0	1831-1840
du 28 00 I	1731 or 19d
66-06	0571-1471
68-08	09/1-15/1
64-04	0771-1871
69-09	0871-1771
65-05	0671-1871
67-07	0081-1671
30-38	1801-1810
50-29	1811-1820
61-51	1821-1825
10-14	1876-1830
6-5	1831-1835
<i>t</i> -0	1836-1840
qu & 001	1731 or 19d
66-06	0571-1471
68-08	09/1-15/1
64-04	0//1-19/1
69-09	0871-1771
65-05	0671-1871
67-07	1791-1800
30-39	0181-1081
57-07	1811-1820
61-51	1821-1825
10-14	1876-1830
6-5	1831-1835

Born

1740 or 19d

5871-1471

t081-987I

Total. No. of Persons Employed in

Female Slaves

Male Slaves

Free Colored Females

qu 30 00 I

Free Colored Males

66-55

*τ*ς-9ε

Learned professor or Engineer	
Navigation/ Rivers	
Navigation/ Sceans	
Manufacture & trade	
Соттегсе	
Agriculture	
gniniM	
qu 3 001	1740 or 19d
66-55	5871-1471
79-98	1786-1804
24-35	9181-\$081
10-23	1817-1830
6-0	1831-1840
qu 3 001	10 047 I 19d
66-55	5871-1471
ts-9£	1786-1804
24-35	9181-2081
10-23	1817-1830
6-0	1831-1840
qu 2 001	1740 or 19d
66-55	5871-1471
75-98	1786-1804
24-35	9181-2081
10-23	1817-1830
6-0	1831-1840
Age in years	Born

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Census Records before 1850 Really Can Speak

	No. of white persons over 20 years, in each family, who are illiterate	
	No. of scholars in public charge	
	No. of scholars	
	Primary & Common schools	
	No. of scholars	
ls	Academies or grammar schools	
Schools	No. of scholars	
	Universities or colleges	
Slaves & Colored	Io oitoibI insane	
8 & (	Blind	
Slave	Deaf & Dumb	
	Vot Naturalized	
	Illiterate males over 21	Born 1819 or over
	Idiotic or insane	
	bnila	
White Persons Deaf & Dumb	dn 🕉 ç7	1815 or 19d
e Pe f & I	14-24	1816-1826
Whit Deaf	0-13	1827-1840
0	Age in years	Born
Name & Age of Rev War Pensioners		

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