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# Genealogy Notes from Emily December 2015

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# Genealogy Notes from Emily

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## Key Websites

MSL Genealogy-  
[www.maine.gov/msl/  
services/genealogy/  
index.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/msl/services/genealogy/index.shtml)

Vital Records Researcher  
Card-[www.maine.gov/dhhs/  
forms.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/forms.shtml)

MSL Classes-  
[www.maine.gov/msl/  
services/classes.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/msl/services/classes.shtml)

Maine Genealogical Society-  
[www.maineroots.org](http://www.maineroots.org)

Maine Historical Society-  
[www.mainehistory.org](http://www.mainehistory.org)

Maine State Archives-  
[www.maine.gov/sos/arc](http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc)

Maine State Library  
64 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

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## What Census Records Can Do For You... Another Look

The counting of people (and the accounting of our possessions) goes back thousands of years, it seems. We have the insatiable need to know "how many" and "how much". Thankfully, for those interested in genealogy, valuable records have been kept which pinpoint where our ancestors were, and when. In Maine, we can trace back to 1764, when a very rudimentary count was taken of the then-district, for the purpose of seeing just how many could be taxed. The total estimated population of Maine at that point was about 24,000. (For more details, see William D. Williamson's The History of the State of Maine..., Vol. 2, pp. 372-3.) The next count of note, right after the first federal census, was the Direct Tax Census of 1798. The U.S. Senate and House determined that the country owed back taxes, and each state was apportioned an amount; for Massachusetts, it came out to be \$260,435.31, and 2 mills (1/10 of a cent). The State Library has microfilm of the surviving records for Maine, including portions of Hancock, Lincoln and Cumberland counties; and all of Washington and York. The remaining towns' records were destroyed by an overzealous janitor who needed fuel for the furnace in Boston. The New England Historic Genealogical Society stepped in and saved what we now have on microfilm! (See [Index and Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Massachusetts and Maine Direct](#)

[Tax Census of 1798.](#)) This brings us to the year 1837, the Surplus Revenue Census, where the federal government was in the unprecedented position of voting to return a surplus of funds collected from tariffs and sale of public lands to towns, once their census had been completed. Eliot, Maine was special; they voted to divide their balance among their residents, each to receive \$1.91. This account is located at Maine Historical Society; for the remainder of the state, contact the Maine State Archives.

We can now turn our attention to the federal censuses, hopefully at least somewhat familiar to you as a valuable resource. They've been taken every ten years since 1790, and it's highly unlikely that they will ever be suspended. Here are some of the high points...the years 1790 through 1840 only named the head of the household; everyone else got a hatch mark depending on their gender and age group. From 1800 to 1840, slaves were counted under the name of the owner, by their ages. In 1820, race was added, and the number of those not naturalized as U.S. citizens was counted. By 1830: number of aliens; those over 100 in age; deaf, dumb or blind, were added categories. For the next census: deaf, dumb, blind, insane or idiotic; number of aliens continued. Categories were added for military pensioners and widows; the number attending school, and those over 21 who could not read or write. The 1850

census was most important, particularly for genealogists; everyone in the household was named; also added was exact occupation, birthplace of each person, age, if the person had been married within the past year, or if they were over 20 and were unable to read or write. Separate slave schedules were begun, but the number of slaves could still be reported on the general form. Another interesting question was whether the person was a fugitive from the state. The value of real estate became important to report that year as well. For 1860: value of personal estate; number attending school; whether pauper or convict; Indians considered "civilized"-living off a reservation; and, in this year only, the value of slaves if it amounted to at least \$100.00. In 1870: foreign-born parents; ability to vote; total blindness (one eye didn't count) or insanity. By 1880: permanent disability with reason; ill at the time of the census or temporarily disabled; relationship to the head of household; birthplaces of parents; and, full address were added. I'm skipping the 1890 census as it was mostly destroyed by fire in 1921. The State Library has the 1890 census of Union veterans and widows on microfilm, which includes Maine. For more on the census, get in touch!