ICPSR | INTER-UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

ICPSR 28501

The 1915 Iowa State Census Project

Description

Inter-university Consortium for
Political and Social Research
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
www.icpsr.umich.edu

Bibliographic Description

ICPSR Study No.: 28501

Title: The 1915 Iowa State Census Project

Principal Investigator(s): Claudia Goldin, Harvard University, and National Bureau of Economic Research

Lawrence Katz, Harvard University, and National Bureau of Economic Research

Bibliographic Citation: Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence Katz. The 1915 Iowa State Census Project [Computer file]. ICPSR28501-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2010-12-14. doi:10.3886/ICPSR28501.v1

Scope of Study

Summary: The 1915 Iowa State Census is a unique document. It was the first census in the United States to include information on education and income prior to the United States Federal Census of 1940. It contains considerable detail on other aspects of individuals and households, e.g., religion, wealth and years in the United States and Iowa. The Iowa State Census of 1915 was a complete sample of the residents of the state and the returns were written by census takers (assessors) on index cards. These cards were kept in the Iowa State Archives in Des Moines and were microfilmed in 1986 by the Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City. The census cards were sorted by county, although large cities (those having more than 25,000 residents) were grouped separately. Within each county or large city, records were alphabetized by last name and within last name by first name. This data set includes individual-level records for three of the largest Iowa cities (Des Moines, Dubuque, and Davenport; the Sioux City films were unreadable) and for ten counties that did not contain a large city. (Additional details on sample selection are available in the documentation). Variables include name, age, place of residence, earnings, education, birthplace, religion, marital status, race, occupation, military service, among others. Data on familial ties between records are also included.

Subject Term(s): census data, family structure, fertility, health, households, immigration, migration, mortality, population characteristics

Smallest Geographic Unit: town/ward

Geographic Coverage: Iowa, United States

Time Period: 1915

Date(s) of Collection: 1914

Unit of Observation: individual

Universe: The 1915 Iowa State Census is a complete survey of Iowa residents in 1914. This data set, however, takes as its universe only three of the largest Iowa cities (Des Moines, Dubuque, and Davenport; the Sioux City films were unreadable) and ten counties that did not contain a large city. The counties were chosen by grouping the ninety-nine counties in Iowa into four equal units by the mean educational levels of their adult population and then randomly taking three from each of the four groups. None of the counties contained a large city. The ten resulting counties were determined by the quality of the microfilm. These rural counties span the geography of the state: Clay and Lyon in the northwest, Mitchell in the north central, Johnson and Buchanan in the east central, Marshall in the central, Wayne in the south central, Adair and Montgomery in the southwest, and Carroll in the west central. In the urban sample, we sampled every-other family name on each roll of microfilm chosen for the sample. This means that ALL of the Jones would be done and all of the Goldschlagers, should those names appear. When a roll of microfilm is started, it is begun with the SECOND name on the film. The reason is that we do not know whether the first name on the film was left over from the previous film. The same thing applies to the LAST name on a film -- it was not taken. The underlying rationale for this is that the names are alphabetically arranged. With some care, family ties can be established (using name, age, sex, marital status, address and card number), but only if we know that we have all persons in the city (or county) with the same last name. On occasion the cards do not go in alphabetical order and we attempted to re-alphabetize the order, continuing to take all persons having every other last name. For the rural sample, we sampled all names on each roll of microfilm chosen for the sample, and inferred familial relations as described for the urban sample. Altogether, the urban sample contains 26,768 observations or 5.5 percent of Iowa's population in large cities. The rural sample contains 33,305 observations or 1.8 percent of the population in counties without large cities.

Data Type: census/enumeration data

Data Collection Notes: This data collection was originally produced in 1914 by the Iowa State Archives, Des Moines, IA; the microfilm version was produced in 1986 by the Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City, UT; the digital version was produced in 1997 by Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Methodology

Purpose of the Study: Historical state census data for residents of Iowa in 1915.

Study Design: n/a

Sample: Data set consists of an urban and rural sample. As described, urban sample includes residents of three of the largest Iowa cities: Davenport, Des Moines, and Dubuque. For the urban sample, we sampled every-other family name one each relevant roll of microfilm. This means that ALL of the Jones would be done and all off the Goldschlagers, should those names appear. When a roll of microfilm is started, it is begun with the SECOND name on the film. The reason is that we do not know whether the first name on the film was left over from the previous film. The same thing applies to the LAST name on a film -- it was not taken. The underlying rationale for this is that the names are alphabetically arranged. With some care, family ties can be established (using name, age, sex, marital status, address and card number), but only if we know that we have all persons in the city (or county) with the same last name. On occasion the cards do not go in alpha order and we attempted to re-alpha order, continuing to take all persons having every other last name. The total urban sample contains 26,768 observations or 5.5 percent of Iowa's large cities (25,000+) population. The rural sample includes records from ten counties that did not contain a large city. These counties were chosen by grouping the ninety-nine counties in Iowa into four equal units by the mean educational levels of their adult population and then randomly taking three from each of the foru groups. The ten resulting counties were determined by the quality of the microfilm. The ten resulting counties were determined by the quality of the microfilm. These rural counties span the geography of the state: Clay and Lyon in the northwest, Mitchell in the north central, Johnson and Buchanan in the east central, Marshall in the central, Wayne in the south central, Adair and Montgomery in the southwest, and Carroll in the west central. The rural sample includes 33,305 observations or 1.8 percent of the population in counties without large cities.

Weight: Using the variable 'wt,' the sample can be weighted such that tabulations based on each sample will be representative of the entire state of Iowa (minus the rural areas of counties containing large cities).

Data Source: Original version: Iowa State Archives, Des Moines, IA, 1914; microfilm version: Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City, UT, 1986; digital version: Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1997.

Mode of Data Collection: coded on-site observation

on-site questionnaire

Description of Variables: Variables include name (for the rural subsample), age, place of residence, earnings, education, birthplace, church affiliation, marital status, race, occupation, military service, among others. Data on familial relationships within households can also be inferred.

Response Rates: The urban sample represents 5.5 percent (n = 26,768 observations) of Iowa's population in large cities in 1914. The rural sample represents 1.8 percent (n = 33,305) of the population in counties without large cities.

Presence of Common Scales: Occupations were coded using the 1940 Census of Population Codes (see U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Alphabetical Index of Occupations and Industries," 16th Census, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1940).

Extent of Processing: Created variable labels and/or value labels.

Standardized missing values.

Checked for undocumented or out-of-range codes.

Access and Availability

Note: A list of the data formats available for this study can be found in the summary of holdings. Detailed file-level information (such as record length, case count, and variable count) is listed in the file manifest.

Original ICPSR Release: 2010-12-14

Dataset(s):

- DS1: The 1915 Iowa State Census Project