

Document B: [1850 Census](#)

Source: The Census Bureau

The 1850 census saw a dramatic shift in the way information about residents was collected. For the first time, free persons were listed individually instead of by family. There were two questionnaires: one for free inhabitants and one for slaves.

The number of population inquiries grew in the 1850 census. **Every free person's name was to be listed, not just the head of the household.** The marshals also collected additional "social statistics," including information on taxes, schools, crime, wages, value of the estate, etc. and data on mortality.

Schedule No. 1 - Free Inhabitants

Listed by column number, enumerators recorded the following information:

6. Color

This column was to be left blank if a person was White, marked "B" if a person was Black, and marked "M" if a person was Mulatto⁷.

9. Place of Birth

If a person was born in the United States, the enumerator was to enter the state they were born in. If the person was born outside of the United States, the enumerator was to enter their native country.

10. Was the person married within the last year?

11. Was the person at school within the last year?

12. If this person was over 20 years of age, could they not read and write?

13. Is the person "deaf, dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict?"

Schedule No. 2 - Slave Inhabitants

Slaves were listed by owner, not individually. Listed by column number, enumerators recorded the following information:

1. Name of owner

2. Number of slaves

Each owner's slave was only assigned a number, not a name. Numbering restarted with each new owner

5. Color

This column was to be marked with a "B" if the slave was Black and an "M" if they were Mulatto.

6. Listed in the same row as the owner, the number of uncaught escaped slaves in the past year

7. Listed in the same row as the owner, the number of slaves freed from bondage in the past year

8. Is the slave "deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic?"

*Historical context: this census shows detailed questions in regards to race and slavery.

⁷ Mulatto: an offensive word used to describe a person of mixed white and black ancestry