



Bermuda Censuses of Population & Housing

A Journey through the Centuries 1609 to 2009



Introduction

As Bermuda celebrates 400 years of settlement, this publication will examine the journey of its censuses through the centuries. It focuses primarily on the evolution of censuses in Bermuda from 1843 until the present day. It will also show how Bermuda's changing economy and society over its 400 years affected data collection during each census taken.

Why a Census?

The word 'census' was derived from the Romans and described the process of registering and rating Roman citizens and their property. Roman censuses began around 435 B.C. and were conducted every five years.

Censuses provide a snapshot of the profile of a country's people and its economy at a particular point in time. It counts the number of people living in each area of a country and measures important characteristics about its society. This allows for comparisons to be made between geographical locations and across different time periods.

Relevance of Censuses in Bermuda

Today, population and housing censuses are important for social development and economic planning. The United Nations encourages countries worldwide to conduct censuses at least every 10 years so that benchmark data is collected about its population in areas such as education, transportation, health, employment, child care, fertility, income and housing. This data is then used for objective and informed decision-making.

Evolution of Censuses in Bermuda

As Bermuda's society and economy evolved over the past 400 years, statistics were needed to measure its progress and growth. During the centuries, improved census methodology, better technology, and greater collaboration allowed for the collection of more data with greater efficiency. Initially, Bermuda censuses asked only a few questions about the size and basic characteristics of the population, but over time several more questions have been added.

Bermuda has been counting its population since the arrival of 150 shipwrecked Britons in 1609. The following timeline highlights the evolution of Bermuda censuses at specific times when census information was known and documented.

1629 – Bermuda's population comprised 2,500 white; and, 300-400 black and Native Americans.

1730 – The white population stood at 5,086 persons while the black population numbered 3,688 persons.

1811 – British colonies were encouraged to conduct a census of its slave population to monitor illegal trade. Initially slave registrations were unsuccessful in Bermuda until 1819 when persons were legislated to comply.

1833 – Prior to emancipation from slavery, Bermuda's population numbered 4,297 or 47% white; 3,612 or 39% slaves; and 1,286 or 14% free black. Slaves comprised the majority of Bermuda's workforce until freed in 1834.

1843 & 1851 – The censuses focused on collecting information about the two important drivers of Bermuda's economy during that time – agriculture and seafaring. Data collected covered the following areas:

- Age (under 15 and over 15 years)
- Racial Group & Religion
- Gender
- Marital Status
- Fertility
- Mortality
- Occupation
- Land Use & Produce Type
- Stock
- Housing
(inhabited and uninhabited)

Additionally, the 1843 and 1851 censuses gathered data on the number of seamen working at sea or at home in Bermuda; and, the number of rowing and sailing boats. This data was important due to Bermuda's established and diverse maritime connection.

1871 – This census introduced the collection of data on the number of persons, houses and land on naval and military districts. The inclusion of this information was influenced greatly by the presence of British garrisons in St. George's, Prospect and Dockyard. Approximately 20% of the population or 3,188 persons were in the navy or military.

1921 – The census data items expanded with new information gathered about the population's literacy; educational attendance; occupations such as ministers of religion, medical professionals and teachers; information about one's country of birth, and mental health condition; a count of Bermuda's institutional population; and, the number of visitors and licensed houses.

The 1921 census was also a milestone as it was the first census that mentioned Census Commissioners/Superintendents, whose primary

role was to oversee the conduct of census operations.

1939 – The first census to be administered under an Act: The Census Act, 1939. Racial categories were extended to four groups: white, coloured, Portuguese and Chinese; and, occupational categories shifted away from the agricultural-based jobs to reflect positions in the tourism and international business industries which had emerged.

1950 – This census was launched after the Second World War under the Census Act, 1950. It was the first of Bermuda's modern decennial censuses and was administered in the same manner that was established for all British colonies in the Caribbean.

1950-2000 – Since 1950, Bermuda has conducted a Census of Population & Housing every 10 years. The development of Bermuda's censuses is shown by the noted changes in areas such as the number of questions asked during past censuses, the number of enumerators hired to administer the questionnaire, and the cost incurred for census operations. See table 1.

Table 1 – Bermuda's Modern Censuses

Census Year	Number of Enumerators	Total Cost	Total Population
1950	123	£5,599	37,403
1960	227	£16,000	42,640
1970	241	\$165,000	52,976
1980	255	\$356,000	54,670
1991	323	\$1,200,000	58,640
2000	206*	\$2,100,000	62,059

* Note: There was a shortage of enumerators in 2000.

The 2010 Census is Fast Approaching!

In May 2009, the planning of Bermuda's 2010 Census of Population & Housing was officially launched. Next year, 20 May 2010, the decennial Population and Housing Census for Bermuda will be conducted by the Department of Statistics, as mandated in the Statistics Act, 2002. The United Nations Statistics Division specified a window from 2005 to 2014 during which countries worldwide should undertake and complete a census.

Confidentiality of Census Information is Guaranteed!

Since the Census is compulsory by law, every resident in Bermuda must participate. All information and data gathered from persons is protected as outlined in the Statistics Act, 2002.

Rest assured that any information you provide is collected in the strictest of confidence.

Census Interview Period

The Census interview period extends from 20 May to 31 August 2010. Interviewers will be visiting every household across the Island to administer the census questionnaire. Persons will be asked questions pertaining to health care, education, income, employment, housing, child care, migration, fertility, and technology use, just to name a few.

High quality census data is needed for use by policy makers, businesses, planners and researchers to facilitate social and economic development in Bermuda. We are depending on you to provide the interviewers with accurate information when they visit your household. The data collection phase is the heart of any population and housing census.

Remember Bermuda's next census undertaking will extend from 20 May to 31 August 2010!

Help us to help you; "Because People Count"!



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Please visit the Department of Statistics website at www.statistics.gov.bm for a more detailed account of this publication, **Bermuda Censuses – A Journey Through the Centuries**.