



Missouri State[™]
U N I V E R S I T Y

BearWorks

MSU Libraries

10-1-2011

Springfield and Greene County, Missouri Census Information, 1836-2010

Byron Stewart

Follow this and additional works at: <https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/articles-lib>

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Byron, "Springfield and Greene County, Missouri Census Information, 1836-2010" (2011). *MSU Libraries*. 129.

<https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/articles-lib/129>

This article or document was made available through BearWorks, the institutional repository of Missouri State University. The work contained in it may be protected by copyright and require permission of the copyright holder for reuse or redistribution.

For more information, please contact bearworks@missouristate.edu.

Springfield and Greene County, Missouri Census Information, 1836-2010

According to the Missouri State Archives, the earliest census taken in Missouri was actually of the Missouri Territory in the years 1814 and 1817, and only free white males were counted. In the year 1821, Missouri was granted statehood, and a state census was taken that year. Then, from 1824 and every four years after that through 1876 (except for 1872), a state census was taken throughout Missouri. Meanwhile, the decennial federal census, which began in 1790, did not begin in Missouri until 1830, but neither Springfield nor Greene County was listed until the 1840 census. Greene County was legally formed in 1833, and Springfield, the county seat, was incorporated in 1838. Boundaries were to change for both political units over the years, with the original Greene County parceled out to form other counties until the 1860 census which generally reflects present-day boundaries. Springfield and North Springfield, two separate entities, were united as Springfield in 1887, and there have been other annexations since then to the present day.

Missouri State Censuses: 1821-1876

The Missouri state census was generally printed as a fold-out sheet in the Missouri House or Senate Journals. The 1836 census was the first Missouri state census to list Greene County, and thus it is the earliest official census figure for this area. Taken just three years after Greene County was formed, the numbers for “Green” (as it was misspelled) covered “free white males,” “free white females,” “free persons of color,” and “slaves.” Greene County’s total population was 3,841 in the 1836 census, with 3,266 white persons and 575 black persons. In the attached census tables, figures for “white” include all categories mentioning “white,” and “black” includes “free colored” plus “slaves” and any other categories. American Indians were not listed as a separate racial category until the 1860 federal census. Since there were no American Indians counted in Greene County until the 1880 federal census, none were listed in the Missouri state censuses, either.

The Springfield population, when listed in the Missouri state censuses, was printed next to the county numbers for Greene County, and this occurred in seven of the ten censuses during the time period of these censuses. The earliest official Springfield population was the 1844 state census which stated, “Springfield 344”. There were no breakdowns by race or age categories as there were in the county census figures—just total population.

One caveat for these state census figures for Greene County: the numbers for 1852, 1856, 1860 and 1864 censuses do not total correctly. That is, “white” plus “black” does not equal the “total population,” with totals ranging from an undercount of 13 to an overcount of 103.

Federal Censuses: 1840-2010

Greene County’s first appearance in the federal census was 1840 when its population was listed as 5,372. Springfield was not listed in the 1840 census, but made its first appearance in the 1850 census with a total population of 415. This number included only four blacks, all of whom were “free colored,”

meaning slaves were not counted. Note, however, that Greene County in 1850 had 1,230 slaves and seven “free colored,” meaning that there almost certainly had to be slaves within Springfield. But, this was not the only example of having to cope with the numbers provided. The worse-case scenario for Springfield, unfortunately, was the 1860 census which listed no population figures for Springfield. While the county had 13,186 people, the official comment was that the city populations for Greene County were “not returned separately,” though township totals were listed. Beginning with the 2000 census, all figures for racial categories are for “one race” only, meaning people who checked only one race on their census form. Those who checked two or more races (e.g., white and American Indian) are listed in the category “all other races,” which is why there is a huge increase in that category’s figure for the 2000 census.

Why Race?

For a variety of reasons, Americans seem interested in the census categories of age, sex, and race. Most charts offer all three variables, but for space purposes, I have not used age and sex categories. Why race? Race, for better or worse, is one way of differentiating one person or group from another. Historically, this differentiation has often times led to discrimination. As Kenneth Prewitt, former director of the Census Bureau, wrote in a *USA Today* article, “The tragedies of black slavery and Indian genocide left inequalities that racial justice policies are still trying to erase. Policy responses to disparities in employment, education, health and incarceration call for statistics on groups being left behind. Diversity goals in universities and businesses use Census categories....A statistical portrait of how different groups are faring remains necessary both to erase the inequities of historical racism and to prevent discrimination as the recently arrived strive to participate fully in their new country...” (July 13, 2010, p11A)

The Census Bureau answers the race question this way: “Race is key to implementing many federal laws and is needed to monitor compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act. State governments use the data to determine congressional, state and local voting districts. Race data are also used to assess fairness of employment practices, to monitor racial disparities in characteristics such as health and education and to plan and obtain funds for public services.”

<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/text/text-form.php>

Springfield and Greene County, Missouri are not known for their racial diversity, yet as these census numbers show, there has always been some diversity in the area, and the later censuses have shown even more diversity, especially since the 2000 census when one was able to mark one or more racial categories on the census form. Perhaps we will reach the point someday where, as Kenneth Prewitt writes, “...if one day everyone simply writes “American,” the color-blind society will have arrived by public choice.” (*USA Today*, July 13, 2010, p11A)

Tables:

What follows, therefore, are two tables: 1) Federal and Missouri state censuses for Springfield, Missouri from 1830-2010 by race and Hispanic or Latino origin; and, 2) Federal and Missouri state censuses for Greene County, Missouri from 1830-2010 by race and Hispanic or Latino origin. While most

research relies only on federal census figures, having the Missouri state census figures (imperfect as they may be) for those early years may provide some assistance for future researchers. For information on racial categories and other symbols and definitions, see the “Symbols and Footnotes” section below each table.

Acknowledgements:

This project is dedicated to Sharol Neely (Springfield-Greene County Library) whose enthusiasm and passion for Springfield local history inspired me to work on this project. Sharol graciously shared with me her own work on Springfield and Greene County census data, and I hope she shares in the same joy I have in finally completing it. Thanks to the following people at Missouri State University’s Meyer Library for their assistance with this project: Whitney Austin and Alyssa Rand who assisted with the layout and design, and David Adams who helped make it available online. Thanks also to the following people for their invaluable assistance with Missouri state census materials: Nathan Neuschwander (Missouri State University’s Meyer Library), Michael Glenn (Springfield-Greene County Library), and Amy Waters (State Historical Society, Columbia, Missouri).

Any errors or mistakes in the data are strictly my responsibility. Feel free to contact me for any assistance or information.

Byron Stewart
Duane G. Meyer Library
Missouri State University
Springfield, MO 65897
ByronStewart@MissouriState.edu

October, 2011

Greene County, Missouri Population and Census Figures

Year	Total Population	White ¹	Black/African American ²	American Indian ³	Asian ⁴								All Other Races ⁵	Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race) ⁷			
					Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian ⁵		Total	Mexican ⁸	Other Hispanic	
1830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1836-S	3,841	3,266	575	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1840	5,372	4,693	679	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1840-S	5,552	4,852	700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1844-S	8,650	7,708	942	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1848-S	10,583	9,518	1,065	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1850	12,785	11,548	1,237	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1852-S	12,211	10,845	1,263	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1856-S	14,124	12,632	1,505	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1860	13,186	11,509	1,677	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1860-S	12,898	11,270	1,553	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1864-S	13,899	13,282	584	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1868-S	12,792	11,793	999	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1870	21,549	19,393	2,156	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876-S	24,693	22,352	2,341	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	28,801	25,993	2,799	9	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	48,616	45,169	3,441	1	5	-	5	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1900	52,713	49,415	3,298	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1910	63,831	61,196	2,625	10	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-
1920	68,698	66,428	2,261	4	4	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
1930	82,929	80,842	2,075	8	4	-	0	-	4	-	-	-	0	-	0	-	-
1940	90,541	88,325	2,168	36	9	-	6	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
1950	104,823	102,620	2,126	44	20	-	5	-	15	-	-	-	13	-	-	-	-
1960	126,276	123,755	2,358	67	77	-	23	14	40	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-
1970	152,929	150,034	2,421	212	161	-	58	38	65	-	-	-	101	-	-	-	-
1980	185,302	180,103	3,004	932	781	77	110	96	91	147	260	0	482	1,255	629	626	
1990	207,949	200,912	3,749	1,281	1,456	113	316	182	116	280	308	141	551	1,775	911	864	
2000 ⁹	240,391	224,859	5,426	1,583	2,720	282	538	353	161	485	554	347	5,803	4,434	2,594	1,840	
2010	275,174	250,866	7,892	1,856	4,535	586	1,200	573	190	637	747	602	10,025	8,207	5,413	2,794	

Symbols and Footnotes:

• A dash “-” means not applicable.

• “S” denotes data from Missouri state censuses, 1821-1876, though figures for 1852, 1856, 1860, and 1864 by race do not total correctly.

1) White: includes white, free white and basically any other non-black racial group until 1860.

2) Black/African American: includes colored, free colored, slave, mulatto, and Negro.

3) American Indian: includes only American Indians until 1980 census. From 1980 onward, figures also include Alaska Natives (Eskimo, Aleut, et al), though their numbers are small: for 1980, only 8 in Greene County (6 in Springfield), and for 1990, only 20 in Greene County (17 in Springfield). By the 2000 census, it became impossible to separate the two groups, as the Census question asked if you were “American Indian or Alaska Native.” Note that the 1860 census was the first census where American Indians were distinguished from either white or black races.

4) Asian: includes these groups subdivided as follows: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Other Asian. Note: Until the 1960 census, only Chinese and Japanese were separated into racial groups. The other groups were counted as “all other races.”

5) Other Asian: includes other Asian alone or two or more Asian categories.

6) All Other Races: includes Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, some other race not listed, and any combination with one or more of the other races listed in the above footnotes. Prior to the 1980 census, this category also includes Alaska Natives (Eskimo, Aleut, et al). Note: the 2000 census was the first census to account for multi-racial categories. Therefore, the huge increase in the 2000 census in this category results from those who marked two or more races on their form.

7) Hispanic or Latino Origin: Beginning with the 1980 census, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin were deemed an ethnic group of any race, e.g., white Latino, black Mexican, etc. Prior to 1980, they were generally considered in the “white” racial category.

8) Mexican: Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or other non-white race were classified as “white” until the 1980 census, with one exception. In the 1930 census, “Mexican” was considered an “other” race category, but no Mexicans were listed for Greene county or Springfield. Beginning with the 1980 census, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin were deemed an ethnic group of any race, e.g., white Latino, black Mexican, etc.

9) 2000 census: The 2000 census was the first census where persons were able to check more than one race on their census form. Therefore, figures for racial categories are for “one race” only, meaning people who checked only one race on their census form. Those who checked two or more races (e.g., white and American Indian) are listed in the category “all other races,” which is why there is a huge increase in that category’s figure for the 2000 census.

Sources: U.S. Census publications for federal censuses; Missouri General Assembly House and Senate Journals for Missouri state census figures (1836-1876).

Springfield, Missouri Population and Census Figures

Year	Total Population	White ¹	Black/African American ²	American Indian ³	Asian ⁴								All Other Races ⁶	Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race) ⁷			
					Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian ⁵		Total	Mexican ⁸	Other Hispanic	
1830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1836-S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1840	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1840-S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1844-S	344	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1848-S	649	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1850	415	411	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1852-S	775	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1856-S	721	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1860 ⁹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1860-S	1,644	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1864-S	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1868-S	1,964	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1870	5,555	4,465	1,090	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876-S ¹⁰	5,653	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1880	6,522	5,023	1,494	5	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	21,850	19,587	2,258	0	5	-	5	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1900	23,267	20,999	2,268	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1910	35,201	33,196	1,995	10	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	-
1920	39,631	37,962	1,664	2	2	-	2	-	0	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
1930	57,527	55,740	1,779	8	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	0	-	0	-	-
1940 ¹¹	61,238	59,432	1,804	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
1950	66,731	64,839	1,854	15	14	-	0	-	14	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
1960	95,865	93,405	2,312	56	74	-	23	11	40	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-
1970	120,096	117,301	2,379	180	147	-	57	35	55	147	-	-	89	-	-	-	-
1980	133,116	128,436	2,858	706	708	70	99	91	74	125	249	0	408	969	463	506	-
1990	140,494	134,384	3,527	939	1,218	91	269	138	91	206	290	133	426	1,339	657	682	-
2000 ¹²	151,580	138,987	4,961	1,142	2,060	208	379	193	118	360	514	288	4,430	3,501	2,055	1,446	-
2010	159,498	141,526	6,524	1,233	3,015	402	875	341	111	376	512	398	7,200	5,851	3,879	1,972	-

Symbols and Footnotes:

- A dash “ - ” means not applicable.
- “S” denotes data from Missouri state censuses, 1821-1876.

1) White: includes white, free white and basically any other non-black racial group until 1860.

2) Black/African American: includes colored, free colored, slave, mulatto, and Negro.

3) American Indian: includes only American Indians until 1980 census. From 1980 onward, figures also include Alaska Natives (Eskimo, Aleut, et al), though their numbers are small: for 1980, only 8 in Greene County (6 in Springfield), and for 1990, only 20 in Greene County (17 in Springfield).

By the 2000 census, it became impossible to separate the two groups, as the Census question asked if you were “American Indian or Alaska Native.” Note that the 1860 census was the first census where American Indians were distinguished from either white or black races.

4) Asian: includes these groups subdivided as follows: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Other Asian. Note: Until the 1960 census, only Chinese and Japanese were separated into racial groups. The other groups were counted as “all other races.”

5) Other Asian: includes other Asian alone or two or more Asian categories.

6) All Other Races: includes Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, some other race not listed, and any combination with one or more of the other races listed in the above footnotes. Prior to the 1980 census, this category also includes Alaska Natives (Eskimo, Aleut, et al). Note: the 2000 census was the first census to account for multi-racial categories. Therefore, the huge increase in the 2000 census in this category results from those who marked two or more races on their form.

7) Hispanic or Latino Origin: Beginning with the 1980 census, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin were deemed an ethnic group of any race, e.g., white Latino, black Mexican, etc. Prior to 1980, they were generally considered in the “white” racial category.

8) Mexican: Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or other non-white race were classified as “white” until the 1980 census, with one exception. In the 1930 census, “Mexican” was considered an “other” race category, but no Mexicans were listed for Greene county or Springfield. Beginning with the 1980 census, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin were deemed an ethnic group of any race, e.g., white Latino, black Mexican, etc.

9) 1860 Springfield federal census: The totals for Springfield were “not returned separately” from the 1860 census, though county and township totals are available. Campbell Township, which included the city of Springfield, had a population of 3,442.

10) 1876 Springfield state census: There was no 1872 state census, and the 1876 state census reports only the total figure of 5,653. Holcombe’s History of Greene County, Missouri (1883) divides the total “as follows: Whites, 4,452; colored, 1,201.” (p. 796). Springfield apparently took its own census in 1878, and Holcombe’s book reveals these numbers: 6,878 total population, divided as follows: “Total Whites 5,160 and Total Colored 1,718.” (p. 797).

11) 1940 Springfield federal census: Since Springfield did not have “10 or more Indians, Chinese, or Japanese in 1940”, “not applicable” dashes (rather than zeroes) are listed in those columns. Since “all other races” only had two persons, and based on earlier censuses, the likelihood is that those two were American Indians, but there is no definitive proof.

12) 2000 census: The 2000 census was the first census where persons were able to check more than one race on their census form. Therefore, figures for racial categories are for “one race” only, meaning people who checked only one race on their census form. Those who checked two or more races (e.g., white and American Indian) are listed in the category “all other races,” which is why there is a huge increase in that category’s figure for the 2000 census.

Sources: U.S. Census publications for federal censuses; Missouri General Assembly House and Senate Journals for Missouri state census figures (1836-1876).