

## How to Search the 1950 Census Before it's Indexed

### [Video Link](#)

As with everything we do in genealogy, we want to work from the known to the unknown. When looking for your ancestors in the 1950 census, we want to try and pinpoint records closest in time and the most likely location where your “target ancestor” was in 1950.

Target Ancestor(s) – Your Target Ancestor is a term I coined to help you focus on your research question and the people within it. This could be one person or a family group.

### Before You Begin the Search

Identify who (Target Ancestors) you want to search for in the 1950 U.S. Census. Look at their timeline to see the closest possible residence (if you don't know it already) just before and or after 1950. You may have to search other family members where your Target Ancestor might have lived.

Keep in mind:

- Know the county boundaries in 1950. Borders changed over time.
- The age of your Target Ancestor in 1950.
- Know the siblings and parents (especially if your Target Ancestor was a minor). You're looking for other family that might be living in the same household too.

### Places to Look for Residence in and Around 1950

- City Directories
- Military Records
- 1940 Census
- Vital Records
- Land Records
- Yearbooks
- Employment Records
- Social Security Records
- Obituaries
- Think about Life Events



## Step One - Starting Your Search at NARA

### 1950 Census

Official 1950 Census Website

[Search](#) [FAQs](#) [Resources](#) [About](#)



[CLICK HERE](#) to start a search by name, with the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA).

They have machine learning software that has done a pretty good job at searching the handwritten 1950 census.

Search - Use the left column to search location and name.

Look for people that look familiar to the family you are researching.

ED	State	County/City	Matched Name(s)
10-15	Ohio	Carroll	<b>Simmons Best</b>
<a href="#">Share</a> <a href="#">Population Schedules</a>			
Machine Learning (AI) Extracted Names *			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1: Simmons Best • 3: Idas Ruby Ellen • 4: Billynil • 5: Louis a • 5: Mutton • 6: Ida • 7: Taylor Harley</li> <li>• 9: Virgines • 9: Perkins Charles • 10: Sarah • 12: Jackie • 12: no one • 12: MG Hopky • 14: milistry Frank</li> <li>• 15: mary • 16: John • 16: Laylor • 17: mary • 18: Marcia • 19: Iris • 20: Carla • 22: Charles</li> <li>• 23: Batchall David • 24: Charles • 25: Clara • 26: Dean • 27: Jean • 29: many Jame • 30: marry.</li> </ul>			
10-23	Ohio	Carroll	<b>Simmons nellie; Simmons Eugened; Simmons Hazel; himmons Geneva; himmons Wander</b>
<a href="#">Share</a> <a href="#">Population Schedules</a>			
Machine Learning (AI) Extracted Names *			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1: andersou Yourld D • 2: anderson Joyce E. • 4: Banghman Clane B. • 4: Loftus Charles • 6: Lofteryula E.</li> <li>• 6: Sounders Richard L • 7: underson Donald R. • 8: Buttou Edith C. • 9: and Battle Donald L</li> <li>• 10: Chamberlain Cecil Ja • 11: seidel Paul • 12: Vance Derethy L • 13: Shimek Steven F. • 14: Shimek Joseph R.</li> <li>• 15: Jope wilber L. • 30: Vacant • 17: Hacant Vacant • 18: Harant <b>Simmons Earl</b> • 19: <b>Simmons nellie</b></li> <li>• 20: Siminons Ernest R • 22: <b>Simmons Eugened</b> • 22: <b>Simmons Hazel</b> • 22: <b>Simmons Jemmie L</b></li> <li>• 24: <b>himmons Geneva</b> • 25: Limmons Charles • 26: <b>himmons Wander</b> • 28: Bimmons shirley • 28: Brooks Elmer of</li> <li>• 29: Brooks Wayne R • Vacant • No emmo traveling Sack • Up tate • right</li> </ul>			
10-15	Ohio	Carroll	<b>George; Semmons</b>
<a href="#">Share</a> <a href="#">Population Schedules</a>			
Machine Learning (AI) Extracted Names *			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1: Gerold I • 2: Sandra J • 3: William H • 4: Kaythronic • 5: nurse William J • 6: margaret • 8: Yeagu Corwan</li> <li>• 8: minnine • 9: Tom • 10: Paul • 11: Glenn • Purl • 13: Raymond J • 14: <b>George</b> • 14: Wilbur • 15: Jean</li> <li>• 16: Wilber Is • norajian • 18: Ruth • 19: Richard • 20: Dale • 21: nency • 21: <b>Simmons</b> • 21: alive</li> <li>• 23: donald • 24: zula • 25: Ralph • 25: milntre • 26: Fae • 27: Patty • 28: Kay • 28: Catton R. F • 30: ran</li> </ul>			

When you find something that looks promising, click the blue "Population Schedules" button to see the image.

Notice in this screen shot, the name was interpreted differently by the AI results, but still found George Simmons (below). His name as it is handwritten is George E. Simmons in the image. The AI interpreted as Georgel Semmons. That's okay, we found him. 😊

The screenshot shows a search interface with filters for Ohio, Carroll, and George Simmons. The search results display a handwritten census record for ED 10-15, State Ohio, County/City Carroll. The record lists several family members, including George E. Simmons, Head, and his wife Alice. The AI has interpreted the name as 'Semmons Georgel'.

ED	State	County/City	Matched Name(s)
10-15	Ohio	Carroll	Semmons Georgel

Location: Ohio, Carroll

Name: George Simmons

Enumeration District (ED): Example 1-15

Matched Name(s): Semmons Georgel

Buttons: Share, Population Schedules, Help Us Transcribe Names

Menu: Ohio, Carroll, 10-15

Line	Serial	House	Address	Name	Relationship	Sex
235	Yes	125	Dewitt	Leonard L	Head	W
				Nora	Wife	W
				Dwight	son	W
				Dale	son	W
236	Yes	125	Simmons	George E.	Head	M
				Alice	Wife	W

OLD CONTINUED ON NEXT SHEET

Keep in mind:

- This is machine learning, so names may be misspelled or misinterpreted by the computer... sometimes badly.
- Scroll down the page and look for the groups of names of your family in the text before opening the images.

### IF YOU FIND YOUR TARGET ANCESTOR... BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE...

- **COPY THE URL LINK BEFORE YOU MOVE ON** and keep that tab open for reference.
- Take note of the **State, County, E.D. number** in the upper left corner.
- Note the **line number, serial (family), house, and address** (if there is one).
- **Download the image** in the upper right three dots. Use the 2113x 2441 size. This should give you enough resolution without distortion when you zoom in. It will be in your downloads folder or wherever you have download files defaulted.

### Check the Next Page for More Family

In many cases you cannot advance to the next page on NARA's website. So, you will need to find the same image on Ancestry, FamilySearch, or MyHeritage... But before you do...

## NOTE EVERYTHING!

Once you find your Target Ancestor you want to take note of everything at the top of the page and the information about your Target Ancestor before moving to the next step.

- Top of the Page: Note the **State, County, ED, line number, and Sheet Number!**
- Line Level: **Address, house, names, ages,** and if there is a supplemental line.

## If you Don't Find Your Target Ancestor

Try different spellings or other locations your ancestor may have lived, on NARA's website. Look for siblings, parent's or other family members that may be nearby.

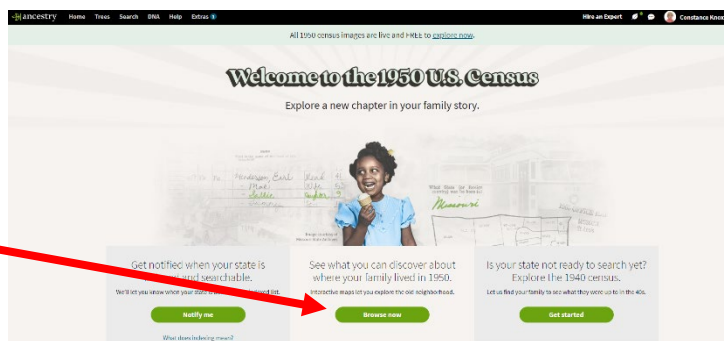
## Step Two – On Ancestry

Here on Ancestry (and FamilySearch) we want to find the same census image you found on the NARA website so we can attach it to our ancestors but also so we can scroll forward and backward looking for other family members that might be nearby.

### Ancestry's 1950 Census Page

- Sign up to get notified when your state is indexed. (optional)
- Click the **Browse** button in the center.

...Or go directly to the 1950 Census page on Ancestry. [Skip right to the search function here.](#) You may want to bookmark this page.



## Ancestry E.D. Finder

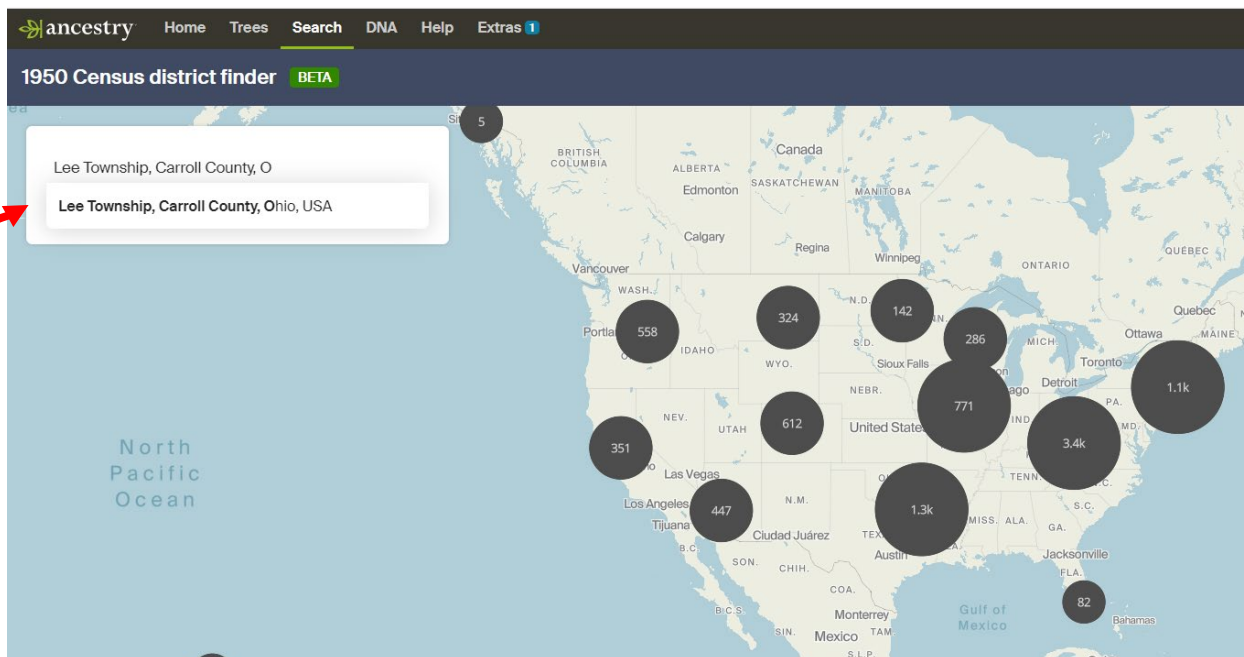
### About Enumeration Districts

You can search the enumeration districts (E.D) with Ancestry's new tool called the "1950 Census District Finder."

On the **E.D. Finder, search the location.**

Unfortunately, you can't just type the E.D. number you found at NARA in the search box, which is why we noted everything from the top of the page we found on the NARA website.

**Enter the closest address** you have for your ancestor in the **Ancestry Census District Finder.** Even without a house number or street, this works in most cases.



You'll need **at minimum the county and state... ideally the address, town/city, and E.D. Number.** Hopefully, you found your ancestor on the NARA website to get this information.

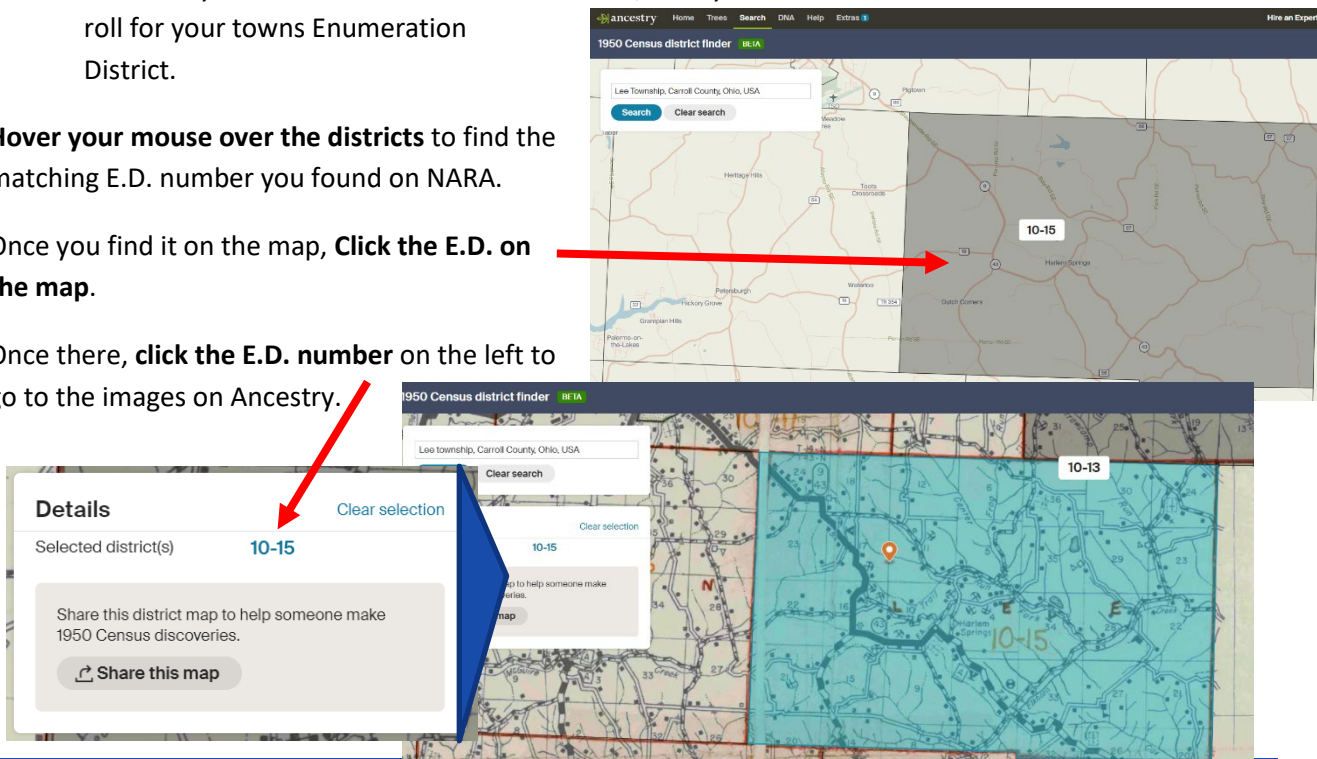
If the location starts to pop up from Ancestry, click on the suggested location to help the search.

*Alternatively,* you can search the township on the **E.D. Finder on Ancestry** without the name search on NARA as described in Step One. However, it is only a location search, *not* a name search. If you don't use the NARA name finder, then you will need to scroll then entire census roll for your towns Enumeration District.

**Hover your mouse over the districts** to find the matching E.D. number you found on NARA.

Once you find it on the map, **Click the E.D. on the map.**

Once there, **click the E.D. number on the left** to go to the images on Ancestry.



Using the **sheet number** you found on the NARA website, you can then **find the same image** on Ancestry's website. Skip ahead to the sheet number you previously noted.

Keep in Mind:

- Sheet numbers are different than image numbers. However, they should be in numerical order to a point.
- You may need to search the length of a street even if it crosses into another E.D.
- You may need to search neighboring E.D.'s.

## Add a Weblink


Currently, you cannot attach the image to someone in your tree like you can with other records on Ancestry. Once the indexing is done, you will be able to.


For now, we can add a weblink to our ancestor's profile so that we can find it again. This weblink is going to take you back to the same E.D. map, from there you can simply click on the E.D. Number and return to the sheet number.


To add a weblink in an ancestor's profile on Ancestry.

- **Copy the URL** where the image was found.
- Go to the **Ancestors profile**.
- In the center column where it says Sources, click the **Add** button and choose **weblink**.
- **Enter a URL and name it.** The name will be seen in the bottom of the Source column on the Ancestors profile.
- You can now click that URL to take you back to the map.

Web links

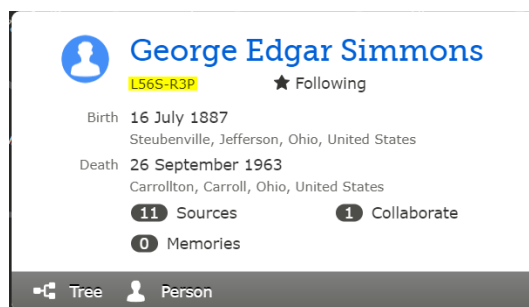
 **Wilamena**  
<https://www.ancestry.co...>

 **Ohio, County Marriages, 1774-1993 for George Edg**  
<https://www.ancestry.co...>

 **George & Alice Simmons in 1950 Image 26- Sheet 25**  
<https://www.ancestry.co...>

## Step Two – On FamilySearch

I recommend you get the Ancestor's ID (highlighted) from your Target Ancestor within the Family Tree first before proceeding... if you want to attach the 1950 census page to your ancestor's profile.



## Full Path to Searching the E.D. on FamilySearch

[Click Here to skip items 1-7.](#) I just wanted to give you the path I found to get there.

1. Go to the **Search Tab** and drop down to the **Research Wiki**.
  2. Click **North America**
  3. Scroll down to **United States**
  4. **Pick the State** you want to search.
  5. In the right-side Record Types, click **Census**
  6. Scroll down to the **Population Schedules** Section.
  7. Click the **FamilySearch Images** in the **1950 box**.
1. **Left side**, under Refine Your Search, scroll **Places Within for your state** (I know this feels redundant).
  2. **Pick your County** under Places Within.
  3. **Search for the E.D. or township** you seek in the **right column under Volume**. **Click on the E.D.** and it will open the images.

DATE	RECORD TYPE	IMAGE COUNT	TITLE	VOLUME	
Ohio, United	1950	Census Records	36 images	United States Census, 1950	ED: 10-15: Lee township
Ohio, United	1950	Census Records	30 images	United States Census, 1950	ED: 10-11: Center township - That part outside Carrollton village

4. Click the images and zoom in to find the sheet number you found on NARA. Image numbers are different than sheet numbers, so be looking in the upper right corner for the same image you found at NARA.

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

United States Census, 1950: Carroll, Census Records 1950

Image 26 of 36

233 No one at home see sheet 74

20			Carol Rae daughter	W	F	9	nee West Virginia
21	233		No one at home see sheet 74				
22	234	yes	124 Wesley James Head	W	M	59	mar West Virginia
23			Murtle Wife	W	F	43	nee West Virginia
24			Robert son	W	M	19	nee Ohio
25	235	yes	123 Revitt Leonard L Head	W	M	56	mar Pennsylvania
26			Mala Wife	W	F	58	mar Pennsylvania
27			Dwight son	W	M	29	nee Ohio
28			Dale son	W	M	19	nee Ohio
29	236	yes	125 Lemmons August Head	W	M	62	mar Ohio
30			Alice Wife	W	F	60	mar Ohio

HOUSEHOLD CONTINUED ON NEXT SHEET

Image Group Information

Carroll, Ohio, United States

Census Records 1950

Language English

Archival Reference Number 43290879

Title United States Census, 1950

Volume ED: 10-1 Lee township

Creator United States Bureau of the Census

Attach to Family Tree

5. Attach to the Family Tree with the blue button in the upper right corner.
- Search the list in the right-side panel or add the FS ID number in the search box.
  - Click your ancestor(s) highlighting them with a green check mark.
  - Click Next and add all members you wish to attach this record to and click next again.
  - Add a reason and click attached.

You can now see the attached record to your ancestors under the Sources tab within the ancestors profile.

Attach to Family Tree

2. SELECT A PERSON

Choose from your History List, or enter the Person ID of the person you would like to attach this source to.

Select Person

Person

To:

Enter ID

## No One At Home!

There have been a lot of questions about a line stating “not at home” or something similar. When no one was home or the informant was unreliable, enumerators were instructed to write “Not at Home” and reference a page and line number.

Enumerators were instructed to enumerate persons that were “out of order” because they were not at home or other reason... They were to start enumerating them **starting on page 71**. Even if there are less than 71 pages, skip to the end of the reel and work backwards to find the referenced page.

## Conclusion

Using NARA for the name search, then finding the same images on Ancestry or FamilySearch allows you to not only attach the source to your ancestors profile but allows you to scroll through the images to find other family nearby.