

## Extract Census Data into Excel

By Constance Henley Knox

### [Video Link](#)

### Why Do This?

There is no doubt that using the Friends, Associates, and Neighbors<sup>1</sup> (a.k.a. the FAN Club or Cluster Research), helps us tie the family and records together. This helps us confirm that we have the right people, in the right place, with the right records.

### Proving Ancestry

To prove our links between family members we must conduct “Reasonably Exhaustive Research.”<sup>2</sup> Part of that research is often reviewing the neighbors who lived around our ancestors. This can be found in census records (as one source).

### Extracting Census

To make the process easier, I have developed a trick to extract data from census records that surround your target ancestors. This will allow you to filter your results to explore specific surnames in a variety of ways within the data set. Thus, allowing you to research family and the F.A.N. Club of your “Target Ancestor.”

Your Target Ancestor is a term I developed to help you stay focused on your mission of your Research Question. Your Research Question should be written down to help you stay on track.

Research Question = Who do you want to know more about, and what is it you want to know?

Remember that Reasonably Exhaustive Research does not stop at the census records. While this exercise is for census records, you should be exploring all records you can find to help prove your lineage and tell the stories of your ancestors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Created by Elizabeth Shown Mills.

<sup>2</sup> Board for Certification of Genealogist, *Genealogy Standards – Second Edition*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Turner Publishing, 2019), 2.

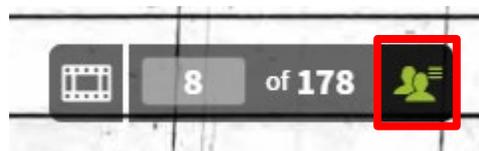


## Step-By-Step Instructions for how to Extract Data from Census Records

(Demonstrated on Ancestry.com)

### Step 1

Open a new Excel spreadsheet, name it, and **SAVE IT** where you will find it again. Do this before anything else. Save it often throughout the process. Excel does not save automatically unless you turn autosave on for cloud saving.



### Step 2 Put the Header Information from the Census

This is so you know where you got this information. Include a link to the image in your Excel file.

### Step 3 Extracting the Data from the Census Record

1. On Ancestry.com, **find your "Target Ancestor"** and a census record you want to extract.
2. **Note the image number** you are looking at.
3. Go 5 to 10 pages before your "Target Ancestor."
4. **Click on the people icon** (at the bottom) to open the transcriptions.
5. **Click anywhere in the transcriptions section.**
6. "Select All" data, by holding down the **CTRL** button on the keyboard + **A** (Windows) or **CMD + A** (on a Mac). This will highlight everything.

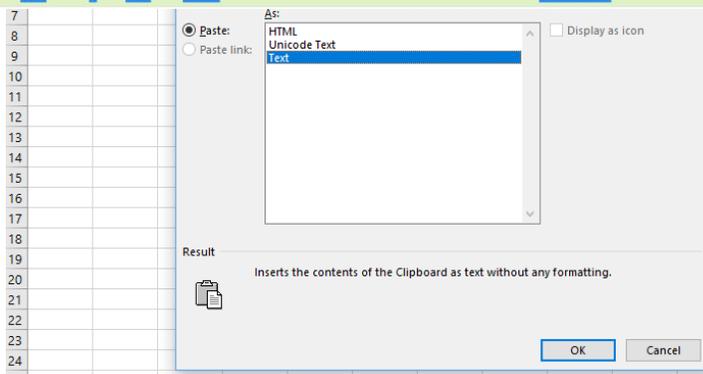
Dwelling Number	Family Number	Surname	Given Name	Age	Birth Year	Gender	Race	Occupation	Real Estate Value	Personal Estate Value	Birth Place	Married Within Year	Attended School	Cannot Read, Write	Disability Condition
64	60	Henly	Rebecca	30	1830	Female		Tailoress		200	North Carolina				
64	60	Henly	Flora	8	1852	Female					North Carolina				
64	60	Henly	Mary	5	1855	Female					North Carolina				
64	60	Henly	Ellen	1	1859	Female					North Carolina				

7. **Copy all CTRL + CMD + C**
8. **Go to**
9. **Select source entered**
10. **Right Paste Special.**

9. **Select source entered**

10. **Right Paste Special.**

11. When the **Paste Special** box pops up, (shown below) choose **Text**, click **OK**.



**the data with C** (Windows) or (Mac). Or Right choose Copy. **your new Excel spreadsheet. Cell B4.** (Below the information you in the top rows.) **Click** and choose

12. **Highlight all rows at the top you want to remove, right-click and choose “delete.”**  
This will remove unwanted data and pull up the data in one click. (Remember when you do this, to highlight the rows where the numbers are, not the cells.)
13. In cell A1 type “Image.”
14. **In column A, note the image number** from the Ancestry.com’s image on all lines pasted in each step.
15. **Drag the first image number** by grabbing the handle in the lower right corner of the cell

Dwelling No.	Family No.	Name	Age	Birth Year	Gender	Race	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal Estate	Birth Place	Married	Attended School	Cannot Read, Write	Condition	Disability
58	54	Robbins, Calvin	8	1852	Male					North Carolina					
58	54	Robbins, Manly	6	1854	Male					North Carolina					
58	54	Robbins, Mary	4	1856	Female					North Carolina					
58	54	Robbins, Angeline	1	1859	Female					North Carolina					
59	55	Newby, Nath	63	1797	Male	F	500	800		North Carolina					
59	55	Newby, Franes	42	1818	Female	H				North Carolina					
59	55	Newby, William	19	1841	Male	Student				North Carolina			Yes		
59	55	Newby, Nathan	15	1845	Male					North Carolina			Yes		
59	55	Newby, Franes	13	1847	Female					North Carolina			Yes		
59	55	Newby, Frank	10	1850	Male					North Carolina			Yes		

and drag down for the length of the data to identify this first set of data as being from image 1.

16. **Repeat these steps for 5 to 10 pages on either side of your Target Ancestor, adding them to the bottom starting in the B Column.** This will capture as many neighbors as possible.
17. **Note:** It is possible to highlight just the ancestors (click and drag to highlight) in the transcription area instead of CNTL A on every page. Highlighting just the ancestor lines will avoid the need to delete the headers on every page you paste.
18. **Remember to note the image number each time you paste new data** into your spreadsheet. The image numbers are important later.
19. **SAVE EARLY – SAVE OFTEN!**

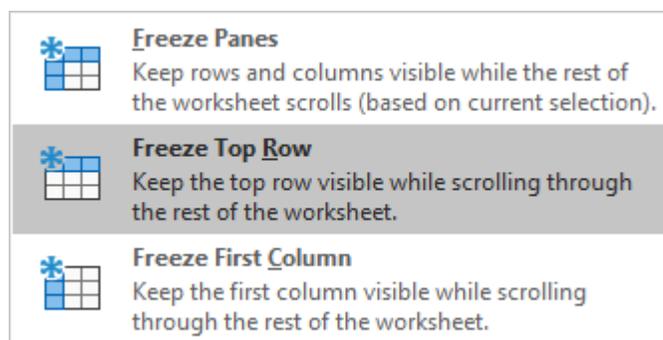
## Step 4 Locking and Formatting the Header Information.

There are two ways, demonstrated in the video, to lock the column header information. One is to use the Freeze Panes option and the other is to use the Split option. There are a variety of ways to use these tools. Below is a recap of what was shown in the video.

### To lock just the top row:

1. Select the data cell directly under the first column header on the left side where you want the headers to be locked.
2. Go to the View Tab at the top of Excel.
3. Select Freeze Panes, then select Freeze Top Row.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Image	Dwelling Number	Family Number	Surname	Given Name
2	1	1	1	Steed	J S
3	1	1	1	Steed	Rachael
4	1	1	1	Steed	Franklin
5	1	1	1	Steed	Nancy
6	1	1	1	Steed	Henry
7	1	1	1	Lewis	Nathan
8	1	2	2	Porter	David
9	1	2	2	Porter	Frances
10	1	2	2	Porter	Lenora
11	1	2	2	Porter	Julia



4. Choose Unfreeze to remove the previous action from the same area.

### To lock more than just the top row, I use the Split function.

1. Click the cell under the first column header where you want to split to begin.
2. Go to the View Tab and choose Split. This should split the top five rows if you put your cursor in cell A6 as shown here.
3. To remove the split, toggle off the Split button again.

	A	B	C	D
1	1860 U.S. Census for Randolph County, for neighbors a			
2	<a href="https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/">https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/</a>			
3				
4				
5	Image	Dwelling Number	Family Number	Surnam
6	1	1	1	1 Steed
7	1	1	1	1 Steed
8	1	1	1	1 Steed
9	1	1	1	1 Steed
10	1	1	1	1 Steed
11	1	1	1	1 Lewis

## Step 5 Filtering and Using the Spreadsheet.

Now the fun begins. Here is where we filter the columns so that we can research those Target Ancestors and FAN Club members, we are looking for.

1. **Highlight the column headers.**
  - a. (Unsplit the view if it gets confusing to see. You can always use the split again once the filters are turned on.)
2. Go to the **Home** Tab and choose **Filter**.
  - a. (If you don't see the Filter button, you may need to [customize the tools in the ribbon.](#))
3. Using the down-arrow in each column header, you can now filter by surname or any other column where you set filters.
  - a. Uncheck the Select All at the top of the filter box.
  - b. Choose the items you want to filter by.
4. **NOTE: REMEMBER TO UNFILTER EVERYTHING BEFORE YOU LEAVE.**
  - a. If you do not un-filter each column header, you may forget that it is filtered when you return.
  - b. **TRICK-** To un-filter all columns at one time.
    - i. Go to the Data Tab.
    - ii. In the Sort & Filter area there is a Clear button that will clear all filters at once.
5. **REMEMBER TO SAVE YOUR DOCUMENT!**

