

Indians in the Oregon Census

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THE PROBLEM

Tracing your Native American ancestor is one of the more challenging genealogical research problems. People who have traditions like “Genevieve St Martin, was the daughter of a full-blooded Indian” are faced with locating sources.

One of the time-honored sources that genealogists use is the census. When it comes to Native American research, censuses have limitations. The federal censuses did not always count Indians, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs censuses were limited to those individuals who maintained a formal tribal affiliation.

FEDERAL CENSUSES

Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States authorizes a decennial (every ten years) census of the population.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and **excluding Indians not taxed**, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct.

The Native American researcher may not find their ancestors listed on the Federal population schedules because “Indians not taxed” were excluded from the federal census. Indians not taxed were those people who lived on reservations or who roamed as nomads over unsettled tracts of land. Thus, the early population censuses included Native Americans only if they lived in settled areas, did not maintain a tribal affiliation, and paid taxes. For Oregon censuses, in 1860, 25 heads of households were marked as Indians. In 1870, 147 heads of households were marked as Indians.¹

¹ Statistics taken from ProQuest, *HeritageQuestOnline* index (access through participating libraries : accessed 21 March 2008);

Native American ancestors may not be found on census indexes because Indian names were spelled phonetically. Names would be spelled one way on one census and another way on another census.

INSTRUCTIONS TO FEDERAL CENSUS ENUMERATORS. In 1860, census enumerators were told, “Indians not taxed are not to be enumerated. The families of Indians who have renounced tribal rule, and who under state or territory laws exercise the rights of citizens, are to be enumerated.”

In 1860, the color designation choices were white, black, or mulatto. However, approximately 13 percent of the Native Americans were enumerated.

In 1870, the census enumerators were told to include Indian as a choice in the color category. “In all cases write ‘Ind.’ in the column for ‘Color.’ Although no provision is made for the enumeration of “Indians not taxed,” it is highly desirable, for statistical purposes, that the number of such persons not living upon reservations should be known. Assistant marshals are therefore requested, where such persons are found within their subdivisions, to make a separate memorandum of names, with sex and age, and embody the same in a special report to the census office. “

The 1880 census act states , “Indians not taxed shall be omitted from the enumeration.” Indians in the general population were identified as “I” or “In.”

In 1880, a special federal census enumeration of “Indians not taxed” was made. It is a census of Indians who were living near military reservations in Washington Territory, Dakota Territory, and California. For Washington, that was the Yakima Agency, Tulalip Agency, Fort Simcoe, Fort Madison, Swimomosh, Muckleshoot, and Lummi Reservations. It is preserved on five microfilm rolls as National Archives publication M1791.

The 1900 and 1910 federal censuses included “special inquiries relating to Indians.” These schedules included the Indian name, the tribe of the Indian and tribe of the father and mother, and the degree of white blood.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS CENSUS ENUMERATIONS

Between 1885 and 1940, Indian agencies were required to take an annual census of Indian reservations. These censuses are preserved on 692 rolls as National Archives publication M595. The Oregon State Archives in Salem and the Pacific Alaska Region National Archives facility in Seattle holds a set of these films.

The censuses are arranged by tribe and then years.

Grande Ronde, 1885–1892, 1894–1914

Klamath (Klamath, Modoc, Paiute or Snake, and Pit River Indians), 1885–1906

Klamath (Klamath, Modoc, and Yahooskin Band of Paiute or Snake Indians), 1907–1920

Klamath (Klamath, Modoc, Paiute, and Other Indians), 1930–1939
Roseburg (Shasta, Klamath, Pit River, Winta and other Indians), 1915–1917
Sacramento (Indians of Fort Bidwell, Round Valley, and Tule River Reservation and of Modoc County), 1934–1939
Salem (Indians of Grande Ronde and Siletz Reservations, and Non-Reservation Indians), 1933–1939
Salem (Indians of Grande Ronde and Siletz Reservation and Non-Reservation Indians), 1926–1932
Siletz, 1885–1908, 1909–1925
Warm Springs (Warm Springs, John Day, Paiute, Tenino, Wasco and Other Indians), 1886–1891, 1895, 1897–1911, 1913–1939

Digital images of the censuses are on *Ancestry.com*. While this is a boon to researchers, most Indian names cannot be found on the *Ancestry.com* indexes. The most efficient way to search is to do a line-by-line search of the census microfilms.

EXAMPLE OF THE CENSUSES, ELIZA GALE AND HER HALF-BROTHER, CHIEF JOSEPH

Joseph Gale (ca. 1800-1881) was an early Oregon pioneer who married an Indian woman. A short biography provides a summary of his life and briefly mentions his wife.

Gale, Joseph²
(1800-Dec. 13, 1881), Pioneer “Mountain Man,” ship-builder, trapper, framer and active participant in formation of Oregon Provisional Government, was born in Washington, D.C. and came with Ewing Young (qv) in 1834, settling first at Gales Creek. In 1841 assisted by Felix Hathaway (qv), he built *The Star of Oregon* (qv), sailing it to Yerba Buena (San Francisco), where he traded it for 350 cows. After wintering in California and adding to his herd, he returned to the Willamette Valley, successfully driving more than 1200 head of cattle, 600 horses and mules, and 3000 sheep – an outstanding achievement that succeeded in breaking the cattle monopoly of the Hudson’s Bay Company, and bound the settlers in closer allegiance to the United States. With Alanson Beers and David Hill (qqv), he formed the first executive committee of the Provisional Government, serving through 1843-44. About 1850 he moved to Baker County, where he farmed and trapped. **He married a Nez Perce Walla Walla Indian woman, Eliza by name, who bore him five children.** He died on his farm.

What is not mentioned in Gale’s biography is that his wife was a half-sister to Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians. Chief Joseph’s biography:

² Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., *Dictionary of Oregon History* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1956), 95.

Joseph, Chief (the Younger)³

Ca. 1840-Sept. 21, 1904), In-mut-too-yah-lat-lat, “Thunder traveling over the mountains” is known simply as Chief Joseph. He is rated by historians as one of the most remarkable men of his race, and by militarists as a great general. With his father, he refused to recognize the treaty of 1863, and declined to join the rest of his tribesmen on Lapwai Reservation in Idaho, basing his refusal on the revised treaty of 1865, which gave the Nez Perces their reservation in the Wallowas. Though opposed to violence he battled for the rights of his people, but realizing that they would never again regain their land he determined to retreat into Canada in 1877 (see Nez Perce, or Chief Joseph War). With all his people and their possessions he traveled 1,300 miles, evading three detachments of troops, and got within a few miles of the border when he was cut off by General Miles’ troops. Chief Joseph was an inspired orator and what he said at that time, and again in 1897, when he was given permission to travel to Washington, D.C. in behalf of his starving people, stand with the finest speeches in world literature, for dignity and eloquence. Chief Joseph died on the Colville (Wash.) reservation.

1850 federal census. Chief Joseph was in a family of “Indians not taxed” and is therefore not found in any federal census.

Joseph and Eliza Gale are not found in the 1850 census index on *Ancestry.com*. However, three of Joseph and Eliza Gale’s children are found in the 1850 Oregon census.⁴ They were in the Alvin F. Smith household in Washington County. The children attended school within the year. Their immediate census neighbor was Tabitha Brown who founded Tualatin Academy in 1847. This is now known as Pacific University in Forest Grove.

1850 Washington County, Oregon census

Smith, Alvin T., 48, farmer, born Conn.

“ Abigail, 57, born New York

Brown, Eliza, 15, born Missouri, attended school within the year

Gale, Ellen, 15, born Ft. Hall, attended school within the year

“ Edw, 12, born Ft. Hall, attended school within the year

“ Susan, 10, born O. T., attended school within the year

1860 federal census. In 1860, Chief Joseph is an “Indian not taxed and not enumerated on a federal census. The Joseph Gale family is enumerated in the Tulare County, California, census. In the “Color” column, the census enumerator indicated that Eliza was “Ind”[ian], and her children were “M”[ulatto]. A side comment is written next to the “Color” column, “Chil of W father and Ind mother.”

³ Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., *Dictionary of Oregon History* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1956), 130.

⁴ 1850 U.S. census, Washington County, Oregon, population schedule, page 143, dwelling 273, family 273, Alvin T. Smith; digital image *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 20 March 2008), citing National Archives microfilm publication M432, roll 742.

Keeneysburg, Tulare County, California⁵

Gale, Joseph, 54, ferryman, real estate valued at \$300, personal estate valued at \$1215, born Washington, DC

- “ Eliza, 42, Ind, housekeeper, born Walla Walla, O.T.
- “ Margaret, 17, “M”, seamstress, born Oregon Territory
- “ Mary, 15, “M”, born Oregon Territory
- “ Lucinda, 7, “M” California
- “ Clara, 5, “M” California

1870 federal census. All members of the Gale family were listed as “W”[hite] in this census.⁶

Union County, Oregon

Gale, Jos, 63, male, white, farmer, real estate valued at \$200, born D.C.

- “ E., 47, keeps house, born Wash Terr
- “ M, 24, female, white, at home, born Oregon
- “ L, 17, female, white, at home, born Cal
- “ C, 14, female, white, at home, born Cal

1880 federal census. In 1880, “color” was not marked for members of the Gale family. The family was living in Lower Eagle Precinct, Union County, Oregon.⁷

Gale, Joseph, 73, farmer, born Washington City, father born Pen., mother born Md.

- “ Eliza, wife, keeping house, cannot read or write, born Washington Terr, parents born W. T.
- “ Mary, 35, daughter, at home, born Oregon, father born Washington City, mother born W. T.
- “ Clara, 25, daughter, at home, born California, father born Washington City, mother born W. T.

Darling, Grace, 16, grand-daughter, born Washington Ter, father born N.Y., mother born Oregon

- “ Clara, 7, granddaughter, born Washington Ter., father born N.Y., mother born Oregon

⁵ 1860 U.S. census, Tulare County, California, population schedule, Township No. 3, Keeneysburg Post Office, page 41 (stamped), 1 (penned), dwelling 8, family 8, Joseph Gale; digital image, ProQuest, *HeritageQuestOnline* (access through participating libraries : accessed 21 March 2008); citing National Archives microfilm publication M653, roll 71.

⁶ 1870 U.S. census, Union County, Oregon, population schedule, page 411 (stamped), 54 (penned), dwelling 514, family 516, Jos Gale; digital image, ProQuest , *HeritageQuestOnline* (access through participating libraries : accessed 21 March 2008); citing National Archives microfilm publication M593, roll 1288.

⁷ 1880 U.S. census, Union County, Oregon, population census, Lower Eagle Precinct, page 178 (stamped), 18 (penned), SD --, ED 118, dwelling 140, family 140, Joseph Gale; digital image, ProQuest , *HeritageQuestOnline* (access through participating libraries : accessed 21 March 2008); citing National Archives microfilm publication T9, roll 1084.

1900 federal census. While the 1900 census includes a Special Inquiries Relating to Indians,, the existing census indexes are not useful for locating ancestors. The best results are found by doing a line-by-line search of the reservation. Chief Joseph is found in the 1900 Colville Agency census.⁸

Chief Joseph, head, Indian, male, born June 1850, 49 years old, married for 22 years, born Oregon, parents born Oregon

Wa-nim-le-pe-Koot, wife, Indian, female, born July 1852, 47, married for 22 years, bore 0 children, 0 living, born Oregon, parents born Oregon

I-a-tu-tou-my, wife, Indian, female, born July 1851, 38 years old, married 18 years, bore 0 children, 0 living, born Oregon, parents born Oregon

Bottom half of page

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce tribe, father Nez Perce, mother Umatilla, no white blood, living in polygamy, is taxed, has not acquired [U.S.] citizenship, is living in a fixed building

Wa-mu-ti-pe-Kout, Nez Perce Tribe, father Nez Perce, mother Snake, has not acquired [U.S.] citizenship, is living in a fixed building

I-a-tu-tou-my, Nez Perce, father Nez Perce, mother Nez Perce, has not acquired [U.S.] citizenship, is living in a fixed building

⁸ 1900 U.S. census, Colville Agency, Okanogan County, Washington, population schedule, SD 2, ED 119, Indian population, page 220 (stamped), 30 (penned), dwelling 334, family 334, Chief Joseph; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1754.

Bureau of Indian Affairs censuses

Note: The online index at *Ancestry.com* was used for this example rather than the actual microfilm. The index is best used when an American name is known as it does not seem to work for Indian names.

The following illustrations are only some of the entries for Chief Joseph and Eliza Gale.

1885. Chief Joseph is enumerated in the Colville Agency census.⁹ The Colville Reservation is located in northeastern Washington.

Census of Nez Perce - June 30th 1885 -					
	En na to ya lot ki	Chief Joseph	39	Husband	
	Ja too me ya too way		35	wife	
3	Eron too ma li		15	daughter	
1	Ha kai wa tai se okit		42	single man	
	Ha wai ki fe la quat in	Ameloi	38	Joseph's wife ²²	
2	Tal to got		3	daughter	

1887. In 1887, Eliza Gale is listed as the widow of Oregon's governor.¹⁰ Joseph Gale, by his service on the three-man Executive Committee, is often called Oregon's first governor. Her tribal affiliation was given as Walla Walla.

364	"	Baul Gilhau	Mary	M	36
365	"	Abraham Gilhau	Mother	M	30
366	Full	Eliza Gale. Widow of ^{James} Gale	Widow	F	80
367	Mixed	Blora Gale	daughter	F	32
368	"	J. Ellen. Bage	Mother	F	49
369	"	Sabinia Bage	daughter	F	29

⁹ 1885 Nez Perce census, Colville Agency, unpaginated, line 1., En na to ya lot ki – Chief Joseph; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 49.

¹⁰ 1887 Umatilla census, Umatilla Agency, unpaginated, entry 367, Eliza Gale; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 616.

1888. In 1888, Eliza Gale is listed as a "Mixed blood."¹¹

360	Mixed blood	Francis Bonifer	Man	W	32
361	"	Joseph Ritchie	do	W	23
362	"	John Ritchie	do	W	22
363	"	Margaret Ritchie	Sister	F	20
364	"	Paul Gilham	Man	W	37
365	"	Abraham Gilham	Mother	W	51
366	"	Eliza Gale	Widow	F	81
367	"	Lelara Gale	daughter	F	33
368	"	J. Ellen Gale Page	Mother	F	50
369	"	Sabina Page	daughter	F	30
370	"	Mary A. Page	do	F	28
371	"	Thomas D. Page	Son	M	23
372	"	Elizabeth G. Page	daughter	F	21
373	"	Belle S. Page	do	F	19
374	"	Eleanor G. Page	do	F	13
375	"	Lucinda Simpson	Mother	F	35

1889. Again, she is listed as the widow of the first governor of Oregon.¹²

369	Widow of the 1 st Gov. of Oregon	Eliza Gale (free woman)	F	Widow	82
370		Clara Gale	F	Daughter	34
371		J. Ellen Gale Page	"	Mother	51
372		Sabina Page	"	Daughter	31
373		Mary A. Page	"	do	29
374		Thomas D. Page	M	Son	24

¹¹ 1888 Umatilla census, Umatilla Agency, unpaginated, entry 366, Eliza Gale; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 616.

¹² 1889 Umatilla census, Umatilla Agency, unpaginated, entry 366, Eliza Gale; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 616.

1890. In 1890, a 12-year-old orphan is living with Chief Joseph.¹³

18-128.1

CENSUS of the *Nez Perce* Indians of
Colville Indian Agency, *Washington* taken
 by *Hal J. Cole*, United States Indian Agent,
 June 30, 1890.

NO.	INDIAN NAME	ENGLISH NAME	SEX.	RELATION.	AGE.
1		Chief Joseph	M.	Husband	45
2	<i>Wash. Win. Jip. 40. La. Kated.</i>		F.	Wife	37
3	<i>Uh. Yoh. Sa. we. Non. 170y</i>		.	.	36
4	<i>Mark. E. m. 110. 16</i>		M.	Orphan	12

1893. In 1893, the household consists of Chief Joseph, his wives, and an orphan. The spelling of his wives' names illustrates the variety of spellings that are found.¹⁴

5-128.

CENSUS of the *Nez Perce* Indians of
Colville Agency, *Washington* taken
 by *Hal J. Cole*, United States Indian Agent,
 June 30, 1893

NO.	INDIAN NAME	ENGLISH NAME	SEX.	RELATION.	AGE.
1	<i>Uma-to-le-laket</i>	Chief Joseph	M.	Husband	50
2	<i>Whan. Win. Jip. yah lak. at. et</i>		F.	Wife	37
3	<i>Oh. Yo. to. We. Won. Moo</i>		"	Wife	41
4	<i>K. e. i. l. a. Ma. wick</i>	Stille Anderson	M.	Orphan	17

¹³ 1890 Nez Perce census, Colville Agency, unpaginated, line 1, Chief Joseph; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 49.

¹⁴ 1893 Nez Perce census, Colville Agency, unpaginated, line 1., Uma-to-le-laket; Chief Joseph; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 49

1905. Eliza Gale is last enumerated in the 1905 Umatilla Agency census.¹⁵

	Mixed Bloods,			
215	Eliza Gale	F	Widow	99
216	Frances M. G. Page	"	"	68
217	Elizabeth Page	"	Dtr	37
218	Belle "	"	"	35
219	Elinor "	"	"	29
220	Thomas D. "	M	Son	39
221	Sabina A. Pemberton	F	Dtr	46
222	Mary A. Jorgenson	"	"	45

FURTHER RESOURCES:

Collins, James P. Collins. "Native Americans in the Census, 1860-1890." *Prologue*, Summer 2006, vol. 38, No. 2. URL: <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/summer/indian-census.html>.

"American Indians in the Federal Decennial Census, 1790-1930." *The National Archives*. URL: <http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/census/native-americans/1790-1930.html>.

¹⁵ 1905 Umatilla census, Umatilla Agency, unpaginated, entry 215, Eliza Gale; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 21 March 2008); citing Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, microfilm publication M595, roll 616.