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HANDOUT: Joel Weintraub's 72 Year Rule Talk

-Website for links to important sources: <http://members.cox.net/census1940/>

-Talk Outline: QUESTIONS PRIVACY CONFIDENTIALITY HISTORY OF 72 YEAR RULE

~~~~~TIMELINE~~~~~

- 1787: US Constitution adopted; provides for a census every 10 years
- 1790: First census taken; marshals did the work; 6 columns for information; two copies posted in public places; requires all 16 years and older to answer questions
- 1810: Every dwelling had to be visited on census
- 1850: Members of family named on schedules; Census Board formed for input of questions; privacy directives towards census takers; original to County courthouse
- 1860: Privacy concerns again for census takers
- 1880: Privacy oath for enumerators/fines; original to Washington DC but County gets short list of names/ages/sex/race; 13,010 questions; census information from other sources allowed; examples of Defective, Dependent and Delinquent Classes Schedules for New Jersey; enumerators
- IPUMS Website for Enumerator Instructions
- 1890: Enumerator handbook indicates confidentiality of specific information
- 1902: Census Bureau formed as permanent agency, moved to Commerce in 1903
- 1910: Start of Presidential Proclamations on behalf of the decennial Census
- 1925: Last New York State Census taken
- 1930: Census arrests... the jokester and the forgetful
- 1934: National Archives agency formed
- 1935: National Archives building opens; inventory of documents main concern initially
- 1940: Senator Tobey Revolt; start of sampling (long and short form); use of census information for internment of Japanese during WW II
- Census Bureau Age Search Unit (started 1903)
- 1942: 1790-1870 census population schedules moved to Archives and opened to public; precedent for 72 year rule; life expectancy for those born 1942 is 66.2 years and for 1870 under 50 years
- 1949: National Archives moved to General Services Administration, becomes the National Archives and Records Service
- 1950: New federal law requires 50 year privacy period for documents unless Archivist decides otherwise
- 1952: Completion of microfilming brittle 1880 census population schedules; microfilm now considered "archival"
- 1952: Agreement (Oct 10, 1952) between Bureau Director Roy Peel and Archivist Wayne Grover for 72 year release of Census schedules and restricted research access to those documents; 1880 census released to public; life expectancy for those born in 1952 is 68.6 years and below 50 years for 1880
- 1970: Census taken that year had more than its share of public criticism
- 1972: Census Bureau forces postponement of opening of 1900 census by Archives
- 1973: Attorney General supports Archives right to release 1900 census; released

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under new stringent research conditions; Census Bureau supports legislation (dies) to seal census records from public

1975: Bills die that would codify 50 or 75 year census privacy period; Archives starts to relax restrictions on 1900 census research

1977: Archives (Archivist James Rhoads) relaxes all 1900 census restrictions; S1265 bill introduced, goes through hearings

1978: Census Bureau suggests for S1265, 72 year confidentiality for 1910 through 1950 censuses, 102 years after that

1978: S 1265 passes and becomes law, modifies how Archives treats the Census record confidentiality, 30 year privacy for other federal documents; life expectancy for those born in 1978 is 73.5 years

1985: National Archives moved out of GSA and becomes the National Archives and Records Administration

2009: Laws are like sausages: You should know how they are made!!