We missed you!
Since 1790, the federal government has taken a count of the United States population every 10 years to gain an accurate picture of our ever-changing demographics. The 2020 count was expected to be no different. Plans for an online count, the first of its kind, were moving forward, and field operations were readying to assist people at their homes. Fast forward to today, and we know that much has changed—dates have been extended and field operations are taking extra safety precautions. But, despite the many complications of 2020, the count continues with a new deadline of October 31, 2020.

Why is the census important? The main purpose of the count is to determine how many seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives, how much more than $675 billion in federal resources will be distributed, and how congressional district boundaries are drawn. Completing the census doesn’t just mean you are living in the United States, it means that you are counted in your government.

How else is census data important?

COMMUNITY ASSETS: Census data helps determine funding for critical community health assets like hospitals, clinics and food banks. Census data also informs decisions on Medicare, Medicaid and nutrition program funding.

Many 9-1-1 emergency systems are based on census maps. And, through using these maps, health care professionals can predict the spread of disease in communities with higher risk populations, like older people or young children.

An accurate census count can benefit your favorite nonprofit too. Billions in federal funding for programs such as school nutrition, housing and health care will be determined by the outcome of the census, making it imperative to get an accurate count in historically undercounted populations.

BUSINESSES: Businesses can use census data to strategize their operations, expand and succeed. For example, real estate companies can determine housing demands, retail stores can analyze demographic shifts, and small business owners can find new customers and decide where to open additional locations.

Census data can help community planners track changing demographics, such as age, ethnicity and renter and ownership rates. Such data can also determine traffic patterns or the need for more parks, hospitals and roads.

INDIVIDUALS: Census data can be used to reconstruct your family tree—since data becomes public after 72 years, it can help with genealogy research.

The census is much more than a head count. It is a tool to ensure that representation and funding is addressing changing community needs. Despite our current challenges, it is easier than ever to complete the census online or by phone. Make a difference in your community - be counted today.
These days, I answer Western History and Genealogy reference questions by phone and email from a desk in my guest bedroom. Nothing about librarianship from home seems normal right now, but it does follow a longstanding pattern—when the going gets tough, librarians get going.

A librarian named Helen Francis Ingersoll certainly knew about the going getting tough. She served the people of Denver through some of the most major crises of the 20th century: World War I, the Spanish Flu pandemic, the Great Depression, and World War II. Her long career with the Denver Public Library spanned from 1898 to 1947, and is documented in the humble, staple-bound booklet I Remember… The Reminiscences of My Years in the Denver Public Library.

In fact, it was a global economic crisis—the Panic of 1893—that brought Helen to Denver Public Library in the first place. Up until 1893, life had been going well for the Ingersoll family. They moved from Kansas to Colorado in 1890 and settled in Montclair, a new, wealthy development east of Denver. Mr. Ingersoll, Helen’s father, made a good living investing in mining and real estate. But when the price of silver tumbled in June 1893 and banks subsequently failed, many Denverites experienced substantial financial loss, including Helen’s father.

After Helen graduated from Montclair High School in 1897, the family could not afford to send her to the University of Denver. Instead, studious Helen needed to find a job.

One morning in January 1898, Mother had read an announcement in the morning paper of an examination for a training class in the Denver Public Library to be held in the East Denver High School at Nineteenth and Stout Streets…Well, I decided to go and made an early start…I saw a few familiar faces as I looked around and I thought, “You haven’t a chance in the world with all these smart girls taking the examination.”…a letter from Mr. John Parsons, librarian, notified me that I had been chosen for the training class.”

At the time Helen was selected to be part of the library apprenticeship program (where she received a $5.00 stipend each month), Denver Public Library had been operating as a free circulating library for eight years in the south wing of the old East Denver High School (20th and Stout Streets). The library boasted, according to Helen, “a children’s room; and picture collections; and open shelves, all almost the first in the country.”

Open shelving and a welcoming atmosphere became the trademarks of the Denver Public Library under the leadership of renowned librarian John Cotton Dana. Although Helen never worked for Dana, (he departed the library in 1897), she remembered seeing him while researching her high school graduation essay on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe at the library:

…while I was working at a reference table, Mr. Dana came and stood in the doorway. I remember his voice which was very deep—I can remember him vividly, tall and rather stooped…He was a scholar…and called himself a “philosophical anarchist,” and as an example of his ‘anarchy’ believed in open shelves in public libraries long before that was put into practice by libraries in general. He encouraged browsing…”

Helen Ingersoll, second from right, breaks ground for the new Denver Public Library (now known as the McNichols Building in Civic Center Park), August 7, 1906. Left to right: Jean Dudley, F. M. Richie, Mr. Frederick Ross (architect), Mr. C. R. Dudley, Helen F. Ingersoll, B. H. Lichter (contractor)[?], and Marion Dudley (in front). X-221
A place that did not encourage browsing at that time was Denver’s Mercantile Library (also known as “City Library”). Established by the Denver Chamber of Commerce in 1884, it began as a subscription library where patrons, according to Helen, “paid $5 to $10 or more for the privilege of drawing books.” Located in the Chamber of Commerce Building at Fourteenth and Lawrence, Helen could recall the oppressive atmosphere of the Mercantile Library:

We went into a big room full of cages. No one had access to books. There were printed catalogues. You filled out a slip and handed it through a wire grating...and the books were brought from some mysterious place back of the cages. The printed catalogues were chained to a table: and there was a long hard bench where one waited for books.

By August 1898, it was agreed upon that the Mercantile Library and the Denver Public Library would consolidate. When the Denver Public Library moved its books to the Chamber of Commerce building only to find there wasn’t enough shelving, the Prudential Insurance Company built a temporary two-story building across from the courthouse on 15th Street to house the collection.

While Helen called it a “splendid location for a library,” she could remember troubles during a smallpox outbreak. In December 1899, a physician visited the library and noticed a customer with a case of smallpox using the newspaper room. He reported it immediately to then-City Librarian C. R. Dudley. Helen recalled what happened next:

The Board of Health had been vaccinating everyone. Of course, the Librarian sent for the police surgeon, who came galloping up to the library—literally galloping the horses hitched to the ambulance. A policeman was stationed at every door and unless one could show a well-developed, new vaccination mark, he was vaccinated on the spot. One very prominent woman.... then Superintendent of Schools in the State of Colorado, tried to crawl out of one of the back windows....“

In 1902, the Denver Public Library moved again, this time to a temporary location in La Veta Place, “a long terrace of residences facing Colfax and turning the corner along Bannock” (where Civic Center Park now stands). Helen commented that the move “was very hard on the staff,” adding, “The once fashionable place was grimy, and there were bats, and there were bedbugs crawling out of the layers of old wallpaper.”

Next to the La Veta Place Library, ground was broken for Denver Public Library’s new Carnegie library (now known as the McNichols building in Civic Center Park) in 1906. Helen attended the groundbreaking ceremony and held her spade while wearing “a white pique dress and a most ravishing chiffon hat with pink roses on it.” In early 1910, library staff began moving books from La Veta Place Library to the new library and were amazed at the number of empty shelves. One patron exclaimed, “You will never have enough books to fill all those shelves. The wastefulness of it!”

Of course, those shelves did get filled with books eventually. And as the years passed, Denver Public Library became more than a singular library, but rather a system of branch and mobile libraries that kept pace as Denver’s geographical size expanded and its population increased.

In this moment—130 years after its founding and during an unprecedented pandemic—Denver Public Library is much more than just a system of library buildings with books on shelves. Providing virtual storytimes, downloadable e-books, and a helpful reference phone line are just some of the many ways we are offering assistance and reassurance in a difficult time. A vision for “a strong community where everyone thrives” still holds true, even in a time of crisis.

Something Helen Ingersoll wrote in 1947 struck me because it gets at the core of the library’s vision and mission here in 2020. While reflecting on her many years of service, Helen said, “My chief interest was in people and in books; and never never did I want anybody to go without having something good—not anybody.”
Curbside Pickup now available!

- Looking for something to read or watch? Search through our catalog and place your item on hold.
- Wait until you receive notification your hold is ready to schedule your curbside pickup and location. You will receive a confirmation email, with detailed instructions. If you don’t, call 720-865-1192.
- Call to let staff know when you have arrived.
- A staff member will deliver your items out to you.
- As per City ordinance, we ask all customers to wear face masks when visiting the library for curbside pickup.

If you’re having trouble creating an appointment, call us at 720-865-1192 for help.
Finding the Joy in Craft Time

With the COVID-19 public health crisis closing everything from libraries to businesses to schools and camps, many people are now faced with a new reality—being a caregiver in a new, shelter-in-place environment. For parents, it can feel like we’re suddenly expected to be experts in things we don’t necessarily have any experience with: we’re now teachers, full-time entertainers, and IT support for small children. For those of you feeling this pressure, consider the joy of craft time.

Some people may find doing arts and crafts with children as intimidating as explaining the difference between numbers and digits, but there is a magic phrase that can change your perspective and help you enjoy this activity for the first time and every time after that: process over product.

There are what seems like an infinite number of craft and art projects for kids on the internet: make a bean bag toss game or a cardboard robot or a macaroni galaxy or your five millionth batch of slime! These are all fun projects, but the instructions, with their photos of impossibly well-groomed children creating Instagram-worthy crafts leave the adults feeling less “expert” when projects fail to live up to internet standards. A focus solely on a product implies there will be a right way and a wrong way to make something.

Nate Stone, ideaLAB Program Administrator

A “workbench” my kids and I made out of scrap wood.

Star Wars TIE Fighter my son made for the bear.
Like most of us these days, Emma misses visits to the library. A Denver resident, her library story goes back to childhood. “I have distinct memories of going to storytime with my mom at the library as well as my tan/beige paper library card.” Her more recent library memories involve attending programs like documentary viewings and “learning to knit the most complex snowflake/star ornament that I didn’t finish.” (Let’s admit it. We all have a project or two like that in our closets.) Recognizing the important role that libraries play in our communities, and in spite of library building closures, Emma decided to pay it forward. In May she became a Friend, a member of the Denver Public Library Friends Foundation, which provides ongoing funding for library programs, services and collections. Annual membership renewals from Friends provide dependable support for library offerings that nurture literacy, imagination and lifelong learning.

“I was motivated to become a Friend because the library provides so much more than access to books.”

Memberships like Emma’s provide support for library initiatives such as:
- Online courses
- Citizenship classes
- Storytimes
- Homebound services
- Business plan development
- Chromebooks & internet hot spots for circulation
- 3-D printing

Through these services and more, public libraries have the power to change lives—just ask Emma. “The library has provided me with access to computers and internet to use as I don’t have my own and I spent many hours there applying for jobs in January and February.”

Memberships make it possible for our library to remain strong and ready to support the community. If you consider yourself a library lover, we invite you to join Emma and become a Friend at this critical time.
Join Denver Public Library for Summer of Adventure! Read, make, explore to receive a free book and be entered to win gift cards to local businesses or family passes to local cultural institutions. The program is open to youth birth to 12th grade.

Start your adventure @ denverlibraryadventures.org
Program ends August 8.
Need Help Using One of These?

The Denver Public Library’s Community Technology Center is now offering Virtual Tech Help Appointments. If you have questions about navigating the web, your phone or tablet, ebooks and more, contact us to set up a 1 hour appointment.

Call 720-865-1111 or email ctc@denverlibrary.org to schedule.
Wearing his signature Hawaiian shirt and effervescent smile, librarian Dana Richardson has strummed the ukulele and delighted kids at weekly storytimes at the Smiley Branch Library for the last two and a-half decades.

“Mr. Dana,” as he affectionately known, retired from Denver Public Library at the end of May. He looks back on his 25 years with fondness and gratitude.

“I will always hold dear those good memories that the children and parents have kindly shared with me, and I will miss the smiles and laughter,” he says.

Whether he was playing a crowd favorite, such as Catalina Matalina, on one of the ukuleles from his personal collection of 30, or mesmerizing a packed house as he read and acted out a story, Dana treasured his time at the century-old, northwest Denver branch.

Dana entertained and taught hundreds and hundreds of kids over the years, and when those children grew up, in many cases, he read to their kids’ kids.

The ukulele and banjo-playing librarian shared a letter on the Smiley Branch Library Facebook page to say goodbye and express his love for his job, the library, and the community. “As I close the doors of that wonderful old library behind me for the last time,” he wrote, “I will hold dear the knowledge, wonder, laughter, and joy I discovered at that sweet Smiley Library.”

To get an idea of how much the community loved him, one only needs to read the 77 comments on Smiley’s Facebook page. Here are a few:

“Dana, you have served three generations of our family with kindness and warmth. You are such an important part of the community.”

“Mr. Dana’s story times will always be some of my favorite memories when my boys were babies.”

“This sweet, wonderful, hilarious, kind, magical man… has been the guiding rod, the glue, the joy, the moment of sanity, the resource of exactly what you need.”

“Mr. Dana had the best story time in the world! It was like a free rock concert every week. well worth fighting the crowds to grab a spot right up front. Even when my kids aged out, they loved seeing Mr. Dana around the library.”

Recognized with the Customer Loyalty Award in 2013 presented by the library, Dana is also a favorite with colleagues.

“I worked at Smiley for only a year-and-a-half, but that short time was pivotal, and it was due to Dana,” says Kristen Monroe, senior librarian at Eugene Field Branch Library. “He is incredibly special to me and to the Smiley community. Dana is an absolute legend.”

Dana’s retirement comes as the 102-year-old Smiley building begins renovations through the Elevate Denver Bond Program. Construction began in May and the branch will be closed for at least six months. Smiley Branch staff will relocate to other Denver Public Library locations during the closure, but Dana will be spending his time with his wife, their houseful of beloved pets, and memories of a wonderful career that positively impacted so many.

“Goodbyes are hard,” he says, “especially when it is to someone and something you love.”
As you wake up this morning, you take in the bright Colorado sunlight streaming through a nearby window. You stretch languidly and set your intentions for the day for relaxation and exploration. Luckily, you have a Denver Public Library card!

As your day begins and you prepare your breakfast, you decide to stream an album from VOLUME Denver, a local music project. Streaming local music reminds you of your favorite nights in darkly lit music venues when you stayed up way too late.

If you decide to make biscuits and gravy, listen to Odessa Rose
If you decide to make waffles and bacon, listen to Automatic Iris

With breakfast consumed, you look out the front window and decide to get some fresh air. You grab your face mask, hand sanitizer and headphones to listen to a downloadable audiobook as you stroll, and head out the front door.

If you decide on a long walk, listen to Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by J.K. Rowling (it’s currently available with no wait!)
For a shorter walk, listen to Aimless Love: A Collection of Poems by Billy Collins.

As you arrive home, you yearn for a good book, and feel the familiar stab of anxiety at wading through all the books in the world. Luckily, you remember that the library provides a number of speciality services that might help.

If you decide to request a Personalized Reading List, be sure to also check out an online book club!
If you decide to call LitLine, listen to both the short story/essay and the poem for the full experience.

As you ease into your afternoon, you seek mental stimulation to keep your skills sharp and help earn the nap you see in the not-too-distant future.

Want to try learning a new language? Pick one of the 70 languages that Mango Languages has to offer.
If you choose to explore local history, pick one of the many extensively researched and engagingly written Western History and Genealogy blogs.

After you arise from your well earned nap, you find yourself hungry again. Is it already time for dinner?

If you feel like cooking, try a recipe from an online magazine.
Thinking delivery instead? Place your order, then scroll through the library’s vast digital collection of photos, maps and more while you wait.

With a full belly and a desire to kick back and relax, your mind goes to something entertaining.

Maybe a comedy film from Kanopy?
Or, perhaps checking out an ebook on mindfulness techniques could guide you to a restful sleep.

As you turn in for the night, you are reminded just how many ways you can read, learn and explore throughout the day, using only your Denver Public Library card. So now the only question is... WHAT TO DO TOMORROW?
SAVE THE DATE

BOOKLOVERS ONLINE

Bookmarked

OCTOBER 24, 2020

A virtual fundraiser for Denver Public Library
If you’ve enjoyed any of the many genealogy television shows that have become popular in the past decade, you undoubtedly have been amazed at the mysteries and secrets they uncover. The details of celebrities’ heritages revealed in these shows may spark curiosity about your own family story. Who were your people? Were they successful? Where did they live and work, and what language(s) did they speak? Did they have a sense of humor? Were they pirates? (No? Just me?)

In the thralls of genealogy entertainment, most of us have paused to wonder, but then never found the right moment to investigate further. You may have assumed that your ancestors were not documented because of their country of origin, the color of their skin, their religious background, or their socio-economic standing.

We all have a familial past, and while it is true that these histories are better mapped for some people than for others, you might be surprised at the many things you can find, either in person at the library, or—in times like these—online using your Denver Public Library card (if you don’t have a library card and live in Colorado, you can apply for one at denverlibrary.org).

RESEARCH TOOLS
Many of the online resources offered through the library’s Western History and Genealogy department’s website (history.denverlibrary.org) are helpful for getting you started and keeping you going in your research. Genealogists, from professionals to the armchair variety, likely all know about digital access to the U.S. Census and newspaper obituaries.

But did you know you can also find digital records running the gamut from births in Mexico from the 1860s and Philippine deaths from the 1720s, to Freedmen’s Bureau records documenting former enslaved Americans, and Lithuanian internal passports between 1919 and 1940? This is but a small and very random sampling of the sorts of records out there, but they go to show you don’t have to have Mayflower ancestors to start mapping your family tree.

These resources are all available using three large primary resource databases we recommend to researchers:

- **Ancestry Library Edition:** available from home with a library card during the duration of our current closure, and onsite at all branches when we open again
- **MyHeritage:** always available from home with a library card
- **Familysearch.org:** a free web database accessible through creating a private profile

Within these three resources, you will find the bulk of indexed “primary source material” that is available. Primary source records—documents that were created at the time a life event actually happened—are most often collected and maintained by government entities. They are generally more reliable than family trees you might find online created by individuals, with sometimes fallible memories. (Did Aunt Lola die in 1912 or 1913? I forget. Let’s just go with 1913...)
If your family has been lucky to count Colorado home for many years, the Western History and Genealogy website also offers a number of additional tools. These include, but are not limited to: local obituary and marriage indexes, property records, cemetery and mortuary listings, online photographs, tailored research guides, and many other sources of local information. Also on our site, we offer a primer on beginning genealogy that is helpful for those just getting started.

For those of you tracing African American or Hispanic roots, you will also want to reference our research guides for these communities, linked from the aforementioned Western History and Genealogy page. If you are interested in tips on researching particular naming conventions, cultural practices that might impact genealogy research, or other contextual background to help you find ancestors from other countries and specific cultures, the FamilySearch.com website offers many helpful guides covering just this sort of information.

RESEARCH ADVICE

Turning for a moment from research tools to research advice, we generally caution against running only broad “search all” forays in the databases. While it can be fun initially to randomly poke around to see what surprises turn up, ultimately this is a bit like seeking a needle in a haystack by randomly raking in a pitchfork. It is easy to get similarly-named relatives confused, or to latch onto doppelgangers who have some matching details with your relatives, but ultimately end up being unrelated.

Ideally, for efficient and accurate genealogy research, you will need to plan a strategy and take notes. For help in the note-keeping process, the Ancestry Library Edition database offers several versions of downloadable charts and forms that allow you to record everyone’s details and relationships.

As far as forming your strategy, it is best to decide in advance which relative you want to begin researching, and exactly what you want to know about them. To use a silly analogy, you wouldn’t search for pasta in the produce section! The same principle applies here: search for information in the record sets where that type of information is stored.

In addition, while it’s tempting to begin your sleuthing with your great-great-great grandparents, it’s actually better to start with the people closest to you in time, about whom you know the most. Write down what you know is true about one relation, then decide what more you want to find about them. After you have answered all of your questions, you work backwards from there, using the clues you collect along the way.

The best resource to begin all of this work may depend on each person’s life story. However, for folks whose families have been in the U.S. since 1940, that year’s census on Ancestry would be the best place to begin. Alternatively, if your family was in Mexico in 1930, the 1930 Mexican census would be the best starting point, and so on and so forth. When in doubt, all of our “big three” sources have simple catalogs, which are searchable listings of their holdings. These are particularly useful for pinpointing records by type or country of origin.

Genealogy research often depends on trial and error, and subsequent attempts to verify the uncertain trail you are following. Remember: if you get stuck, our librarians are available via email to help direct you to the next step.

Until we are able to meet again at the physical library, we hope that these digital resources and advice will help you on your journey to find your ancestors. And please let us know if you turn up any pirates along the way!

Whether you’re searching for ancestors far afield or closer to home, you’ll find all of the resources mentioned on our Genealogy research webpage and our research guide page.

You may also reach our staff at history@denverlibrary.org
Happy Researching!
HAPPY HALF HOUR

Fridays at 5 p.m.

Happy Half Hour is a virtual concert series brought to you wherever you are. Grab a drink and relax with great, live music to end your week.
Readers are as unique as the books available to them at the Denver Public Library. But often, selecting books for yourself, or your children, can be daunting, especially now, when you cannot visit and browse for yourself. Whether open or closed, Denver Public Library has developed a team of dedicated staff, called Readers’ Advisors, who expertly pair readers with selections from DPL’s collection to take the stress out of making a perfect pick.

The process is simple—submit an online personalized reading list request, and advisors use your preferences to produce an age-appropriate list of titles to match your reading or listening needs. But while the process is simple, the magic is in the thought and preparation that goes into each customer’s personalized list.

Readers’ Advisors utilize a toolkit that includes the NoveList Plus database, in-house training, professional reviews and bookseller newsletters to make recommendations. But, advisors also employ detailed considerations based on what customers share in their like and dislike categories—things like what kinds of characters or settings interest them, what genres might be complementary to those they already like, and what formats might work best for the customer (eBooks, audiobooks, etc.). The rest, the real art, comes from readers’ advisors’ cumulative experience reading, listening to, watching and absorbing what is happening in the publishing world and being able to translate that into meaningful and thoughtful recommendations.

The Personalized Reading List form may seem more suited to a machine algorithm than a person, which delights many of our customers. “I was so surprised and happy to find a thorough response (written by a human no less!) to my request,” responded an energized reader. Caregivers looking for help finding great books that match their young readers interests and reading level are grateful for the service as well. “This list is amazing! I love all of these book recommendations, with no repeats from anything my daughter is currently reading. Love this service!”

Sometimes suggested titles may nudge customers in new directions, whether that means offering a graphic novel to someone who has always listened to audio, or finding an exciting chapter book for a fourth grader who only likes picture books. Or a response could encourage a reader to get deeper into DPL’s collection, as one requester wrote: “Your staff has recommended titles that I would never have picked up. Books that taught me a lot about remote places and people experiencing life struggles.”

Personalized reading lists help DPL fulfill its mission to welcome customers and help them explore and connect, providing an experience with a librarian in an online environment. This service has grown steadily in popularity, with advisors completing 871 adult requests and 426 childrens and young adult requests in 2019, recommending thousands of titles to requesters in English and Spanish. During the COVID-19 closure, it is even more important to be able to connect with customers, and to connect customers to engaging materials in DPL’s collection. With a turnaround time of less than a week, and direct links to the library catalog provided, the personalized reading list service is uniquely positioned to serve customers of all ages, at any time. Request a list today and see how readers’ advisors can guide you to reading and listening experiences selected specifically for you.
Listen to local music on Volume.