

1940 Census



Dale Willenborg talked at the Treynor Optimist Club on March 17 about the 1940 Federal Census. On April 2 the 1940 census will be released as free digital images. Federal law doesn't allow the census to be released until 72 years after it is taken.

Dale showed information from the 1930 census that are available on several websites, including FamilySearch.org (free) and Ancestry.com (paid subscription). For example, as shown in the 1930 census, his father, Leo Willenborg, lived in Eden township, Carroll, County, Iowa. He was 5 years old and had two older sisters, a younger sister, and two younger brothers.

The 1930 census also shows the age of each person, where they were born, whether they owned or rented their house, whether they had a radio, at what age they got married, their occupation, what year they immigrated (if not born in the United States), and other information. The 1940 census included much of that information, along with where the people lived 5 years earlier, their highest educational grade, and detailed income and occupation information.

The 1930 census included 123 million people. The 1940 census included 132 million people.

Dale also showed information available on Ancestry.com. A two week trial or a paid membership will give non-census information about addresses and phone numbers for people, their birthday, World War I and II draft information, death records, and other public information. Every address where you have lived is available.

Every census since 1790 is available on the internet. The 1880 census was one of the most popular census since it was the first census to be fully indexed and access to the index is free.

Dale didn't talk about it but Iowa also conducted its own census several times, especially in 1856, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1925. The Iowa Census includes much of the census information from the Federal Census, but also provides a value for people's homes.