



Patients and Staff at St. Elizabeths Hospital (The Government Hospital for the Insane) in the Federal Census, 1860–1940

In 1855, the Government Hospital for the Insane began operations to provide treatment to the mentally ill. Congress originally established the hospital to care for soldiers, sailors, and indigent residents of the District of Columbia. If vacancies existed, the hospital also accepted additional patients for a fee. Early on, people referred to the hospital as St. Elizabeths after a nearby tract of land, and in July 1916, Congress officially named it St. Elizabeths.

Enumerating the Staff and Patients

When enumerators took the Federal census for the District of Columbia, they recorded information about who was living at institutions in the District as well as the District's fulltime residents. The enumerations included the staff and patients at St. Elizabeths Hospital. The hospital appears in the 1860–1910 census schedules as either the Government Hospital for the Insane or the National Asylum for the Insane. The 1890 census schedule is no longer extant. In the 1920, 1930, and 1940 censuses, the hospital appears as St. Elizabeths Hospital.

The 1860–1920 censuses identify people as employees or patients. Sometimes the enumerator identified patients as inmates. The 1930 and 1940 censuses identify hospital staff. The patients are listed as “patient,” and there is no occupation listed.

The following gives specific information on finding St. Elizabeths on the census:

- 1860 Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, **roll 103**) 4th Ward, second division, pages 49–54.
- 1870 Census. *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, **roll 127**) Subdivision east of 7th Street, pages 125–139.
- 1880 Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T9, **roll 121**) ED 91, pages 1–23.
- 1900 Census. *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T623, **roll 164**) ED 143, pages 1A–27A.
- 1910 Census. *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T624, **roll 149**) ED 235, pages 1A–34B.
- 1920 Census. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T625, **roll 211**) ED 361, pages 1A–41A.

- 1930 Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930* (National Archives Microfilm Publication T626, **roll 302**) ED 344, pages 1A–45B.
- 1940 Census. Available online only. ED 1–462, pages 1A–84B.

For more information, see the following reference reports:

- *Annual Reports of St. Elizabeths Hospital (the Government Hospital for the Insane)*
- *St. Elizabeths Hospital, 1907–1940: The Central Classified Files of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior*

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