

# Addendum to A Note on the 25 Most Frequent Surnames from the 2000 United States Census Bureau List

FRANK NUESSEL

*Department of Classical and Modern Languages, University of Louisville, Louisville, USA*

This addendum to Nuessel discusses very recently released results on surname frequency in the US provided by the US Census Bureau. That bureau said that it would no longer prepare an updated list of the 1,000 most frequent surnames in the US because of limited resources. In late 2016, the US Census Bureau released these data from the 2010 census. This note provides information based on that unanticipated release.

KEYWORDS census data, 2010 census update, surnames

## Introduction

The US Census Bureau replied to the query on the website “Why Is There Still No 2010 Census Surnames Data Available?” (2016) when it provided the following response:

Thank you for using the US Census Bureau’s Question & Answer Center. Due to limited resources, there are no plans to produce any surname files from the 2010 Census at this time.

Contrary to its original declaration, the US Census Bureau has now released information on the 1,000 most frequently occurring surnames from the 2010 census (US Census Bureau 2017b). In this regard, Comenetz (2016) provides useful information about the methodology employed in gathering these data.

## Discussion

Table 1 shows a comparison of the 2000 (US Census Bureau 2017a) and 2010 (US Census Bureau 2017b) census data for the 25 most frequently occurring surnames in the US. This is good news for academicians in the fields of anthropology, linguistics, onomastics, and sociology as well as for genealogists. These records allow scholars to determine the increase in populations from various ethnic groups. Table 1 illustrates several interesting surname trends based on 2000 and 2010 census data.

TABLE 1  
MOST POPULAR SURNAMES IN THE US CENSUS FOR 2000 AND 2010

2000 US Census Data			2010 US Census Data		
Surname	Rank	Count	Surname	Rank	Count
SMITH	1	2376206	SMITH	1	2,444,977
JOHNSON	2	1857160	JOHNSON	2	1,932,812
WILLIAMS	3	1534042	WILLIAMS	3	1,625,252
BROWN	4	1380145	BROWN	4	1,437,026
JONES	5	1362755	JONES	5	1,425,470
MILLER	6	1127803	GARCIA	6	1,166,120
DAVIS	7	1072335	MILLER	7	1,161,120
GARCIA	8	858289	DAVIS	8	1,116,357
RODRIGUEZ	9	804240	RODRIGUEZ	9	1,094,924
WILSON	10	783051	MARTINEZ	10	1,060,159
MARTINEZ	11	775072	HERNANDEZ	11	1,043,281
ANDERSON	12	762394	LOPEZ	12	874,523
TAYLOR	13	720370	GONZALEZ		841,025
THOMAS	14	710696	WILSON		801,882
HERNANDEZ	15	706372	ANDERSON	15	784,404
MOORE	16	698671	THOMAS	16	756,142
MARTIN	17	672711	TAYLOR	17	751,209
JACKSON	18	666125	MOORE	18	724,374
THOMPSON	19	644368	JACKSON	19	708,099
WHITE	20	639515	MARTIN	20	702,625
LOPEZ	21	621536	LEE	21	693,023
LEE	22	605860	PEREZ	22	681,645
GONZALEZ	23	597718	THOMPSON	23	664,664
HARRIS	24	593542	WHITE	24	660,491
CLARK	25	548369	HARRIS	25	624,252

With the release of the US Census surname data for 2010, several observations are pertinent. First, the number of people with the 25 most frequently occurring surnames has increased, which is a reflection of the increasing number of people in the US. Here are some additional observations. Six names (Smith, Johnson, Williams, Brown, Jones, and Rodriguez) remain in the same position as 2000. Twelve names became less frequent (Miller, Davis, Wilson, Anderson, Taylor, Thomas, Moore, Martin, Jackson, Thompson, White, and Harris). Seven names have increased in frequency (García, Martínez, Hernández, López, Lee, and González). One name moved out of the top 25 surnames (Clark from # 25 to # 30). One name has moved into the top 25 surnames (Pérez # 22 from # 31). Colby and Ortman (2015, 9) project that the Hispanic population in the US will reach 28.6 % of the total population (= 114.8 million people). This trend is reflected in the increase in six of the Hispanic surnames and the addition of a seventh in the 25 most frequent surnames in the US.

## Concluding remarks

The US Census Bureau's decision to continue to provide a list of the 1,000 most frequent surnames in the US based on 2010 census data is welcome to scholars in a variety of academic disciplines and to genealogists. This information allows researchers to assess and evaluate increases in ethnic populations in a regular and consistent fashion.

## Bibliography

- Colby, Sandra L., and Jennifer M. Ortman. 2015. "Projections of the size and composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060." United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>. (accessed December 31, 2016).
- Comenetz, Joshua. 2016. "Frequently occurring surnames in the 2010 census". <https://www2.census.gov/topics/genealogy/2010surnames/surnames.pdf>. (accessed December 20, 2016).
- Nuessel, Frank. In press. "A note on the twenty-five most frequent surnames from the 2000 United States census bureau list." *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*.
- US Census Bureau. 2017a. "Frequently occurring surnames from the census of 2000." (accessed January 8, 2017).
- US Census Bureau. 2017b. "Frequently occurring surnames from the census of 2010." (accessed January 8, 2017).
- "Why Is There Still No 2010 Census Surnames Data Available?" 2016. <http://www.americanlastnames.us/why-there-is-no-2010-Census-surnames-data-available.html> (accessed December 20, 2016).

## Notes on contributor

Frank Nuessel is Editor of *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* (2008–). He was elected a member of the *Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española* in 2015. He served as President of the Semiotic Society of America (2011), and Chief Reader of AP Italian (2006–2009, 2011–2012). He was President of the American Association of Teachers of Italian (2012–2014).

Correspondence to: Frank Nuessel Department of Classical and Modern Languages, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292-0001, USA. Email: [fhnueso1@louisville.edu](mailto:fhnueso1@louisville.edu)