

DESCRIPTION OF THE CENSUS SCHEDULES

Introduction

This microfilm edition reproduces manuscript and published versions of population and nonpopulation census schedules and related materials for Minnesota Territory for the years 1849, 1850, 1853, and 1855. These items were compiled from government records in the Minnesota State Archives, whose collections are housed at the Minnesota Historical Society, and from the Society's manuscript, book, serials, and newspaper collections. Copyrighted materials are included with the permission of the publishers. Three additional microfilm publications, also available at the Society, reproduce related Minnesota census records for the territorial period: the federal copy of the Minnesota population schedules for the seventh census of the United States, 1850; the population schedules for the special federal census of 1857 that was conducted to determine representation in Congress for the proposed State of Minnesota; and a personal name index to the 1857 census.¹

The censuses of 1849, 1853, and 1855 were conducted by the government of Minnesota Territory; the census of 1850 was conducted by the United States Census Office. Multiple copies of the censuses for 1849 and 1850 have been microfilmed because of differences in the schedules for each year, including the individuals listed, the spelling of surnames and given names, the recording of full given names as opposed to the use of abbreviations and/or initials, and the information recorded about particular households or individuals. In items containing information other than census returns, only pages containing the census, the order to take it, or other directly related data have been filmed.

The census records for each year are described below. Two additional aids to the researcher follow this description: a map showing the boundaries of the Minnesota Territory, 1849-1851—which included not only present-day Minnesota but also areas east of the Missouri and White Earth rivers in what are now North and South Dakota—as well as the territory's nine original counties; and a roll contents list that enumerates the contents of this microfilm edition.

¹ National Archives Microfilm Publications: *Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Minnesota*. (Microcopy No. 432, Roll 367); and *Schedules of the Minnesota Territory Census of 1857*. (Microcopy No. T1175, 5 rolls). Minnesota Historical Society. *Minnesota Census, 1857. Population Schedules. Index*. 19 rolls.

Each year and each folder, volume, or item are preceded on the microfilm by an introductory “flash” target. Occasionally, additional informational targets have been filmed. A running target beneath each film frame gives the title and producer of the microfilm and the frame number.

1849

The organic act establishing the Minnesota Territory was approved by Congress on March 3, 1849. It provided for an elective legislature based on proportional representation of the territory’s population, “Indians excepted,” and mandated that prior to the first election the governor “cause a census or enumeration of the inhabitants of the several counties and districts of the territory be taken.” On June 11, 1849, Governor Alexander Ramsey directed John Morgan, Sheriff of St. Croix County, and assistants in his employ “to take an accurate enumeration of the inhabitants of the Territory of Minnesota, Indians excepted, and make a true return of such enumeration into the office of the Secretary of the Territory, on or before the fourth day of July next.”

For the purpose of taking the census Ramsey directed that the territory be divided into six enumeration districts, as follows: 1) St. Croix County; 2) La Pointe County; 3) the country west of the Mississippi River from the southern border of the territory to the Osakis Rapids; 4) the country west of the Mississippi River north of the Osakis Rapids; 5) the country on the Red River of the North; and 6) the country on the Missouri River. He further stipulated that enumerators list residents of St. Croix County by election precinct and identify settlements in the districts west of the Mississippi River and North of the Osakis Rapids; the census returns indicate that these instructions were followed in some other counties and districts as well.

The census records for 1849 begin with a folder of loose papers from the records of the territorial secretary: Ramsey’s handwritten order to take the census; what appears to be an incomplete set of census rolls that were sent to John Morgan by the enumerators and from which he made his return for the territorial secretary; Morgan’s return that was sent to the territorial secretary, which does not include the Red River of the North (Pembina) and Missouri River settlements; and enumerations for the Pembina and Missouri River settlements. These documents are followed by pages containing manuscript and/or published versions of Ramsey’s order to take the census and the census returns, selected from a minute book (manuscript) in the governor’s executive journals, the journals (manuscript and printed) of the Legislative

Assembly's Council and House of Representatives, and a printed pamphlet. The published versions were issued by three different printers.

All versions of the 1849 population census schedules are arranged generally by enumeration district/county, and within some districts/counties by election precinct and/or settlement. In some instances, however, the returns are identified by precinct and settlement rather than by enumeration district/county. Only heads of households are listed, by surname and given name(s) and/or initial(s), possibly in the order in which they were enumerated, together with the number of males, females, and total number of individuals in the household. The total number of males, females, and all inhabitants in each enumeration district/county, precinct, or settlement is given following the final entry for the jurisdiction; these totals are repeated in the recapitulation that concludes the census schedules. Despite the instructions to exclude Indian people from the census in both the organic act and Ramsey's order, some persons of mixed Indian and European ancestry apparently were listed as white if they dressed and lived in a European manner.

1850

The seventh decennial census of the United States was the first federal census to be taken under the direction of the newly created Census Office in Washington, D.C. For the purpose of conducting the census, Minnesota Territory was divided into eight subdivisions or enumeration districts, with an appointed assistant federal marshal responsible for the enumeration of each subdivision.² The boundaries of these subdivisions did not, in all cases, coincide with those of the nine counties of Minnesota Territory established by the Legislative Assembly in 1849: Benton, Ramsey, Washington, Pembina, Dahkotch, Wahnaha, Mahkahta, Itasca, and Wabashaw.³ It was these counties that, for reporting purposes, actually constituted the basic

² For additional information on the boundaries of the subdivisions/enumeration districts and the assistant marshals see the Records of the Bureau of the Census on: National Archives Microfilm Publications. *Territorial Papers of the United States: Territory of Minnesota, 1849-1858*. Microcopy No. M1050, Roll 6. (Minnesota Historical Society no. M499).

³ Benton, Ramsey, and Washington counties were declared to be "organized;" the remaining counties were organized for "judicial purposes" only and were placed administratively in three judicial districts that were attached to and served by the three organized counties, as follows: Pembina County was attached to Benton County; Dahkotch, Wahnaha, and Mahkahta counties were attached to Ramsey County; and Itasca and Wabashaw and counties were attached to Washington County.

enumeration units of the 1850 census for Minnesota Territory. These boundary differences apparently caused confusion for some census takers regarding the areas they were supposed to enumerate, which may account for some of the duplicate listings in the census rolls.

Free inhabitants residing in each county were recorded on a population schedule (Schedule 1). In addition, each enumerator was to fill out, when applicable, so-called nonpopulation census schedules. The following nonpopulation schedules were used in Minnesota Territory: Schedule 3 (Mortality), Schedule 4 (Productions of Agriculture), Schedule 5 (Products of Industry), and Schedule 6 (Social Statistics).

There are multiple manuscript copies of the 1850 population and nonpopulation census schedules for Minnesota Territory. Although the forms are all the same, they do not necessarily contain precisely the same information, the result of procedures mandated by provisions of the enabling law under which the census was taken. The law stipulated that an original and two copies of each county's census schedules be prepared and dispersed as follows: the enumerator's "original" copy was supposed to remain in the county, although this directive was not always followed; the assistant federal marshal was to make a "clean copy" of the schedules for each enumeration district/county under his jurisdiction and send it to the territorial secretary or secretary of state, where it was to remain as the "territory" or "state" copy; the territorial secretary or secretary of state was to make a "federal" copy from the territory/state copy and forward it to the Census Office in Washington, D.C.

County copies of Minnesota Territory's population and nonpopulation schedules have been identified for seven counties, as follows: Benton, Pembina, Wahnahta, Mahkahta, Wabashaw, Washington, and Itasca. Their provenance, as indicated in the roll contents list that follows this description and the map of Minnesota Territory, is the result of the unorganized counties being attached to organized counties for administrative purposes, as described in footnote 3, above. County copies of the schedules for Dakotah and Ramsey counties have not been located. The schedules for each county are arranged in numerical order, with the population schedule preceding the nonpopulation schedules.

The volume comprising the territory/state copy of the census is arranged by county in basically alphabetical order, as follows: Benton County, Dahkotoh County, Pembina County, Ramsey County, Wabashaw County, Washington and Itasca counties, and Wahnahta and Mahkahta counties. The schedules for each county are arranged in numerical order. The population returns (Schedule 1) for some counties are organized by district, precinct, or

settlement. There are nonpopulation schedules for eight counties, as follows: mortality schedules for Benton, Ramsey, Wabashaw, Washington, and Wahnahta counties; productions of agriculture schedules for Benton, Pembina, Ramsey, Wabashaw, Washington and Itasca, Wahnahta, and Mahkahta counties; products of industry schedules for Benton and Washington counties, and social statistics schedules for Benton, Wabashaw, and Washington counties. There are no nonpopulation schedules for Dahkotch County.

The National Archives and Records Administration publication *Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States*, Volume 1 (Washington, D.C.: 1995), p. 29-6, suggests that the federal copy of the 1850 population schedules for the Minnesota Territory is in the National Archives (in Record Group 29.8.1. Census Schedules and Supplementary Records, 1790-1950: Decennial population schedules.). It is these schedules, presumably, that are reproduced on Microcopy No. 432, roll 6, which is available at the Minnesota Historical Society (see page 1, above). The Minnesota State Archives holds photostatic reproductions of these schedules. They are not included in this microfilm edition because of the difficulty of producing legible microfilm images from the reverse polarity photostats, some of which are of very poor quality. The photostatic reproductions are not available for use unless information on the National Archives microfilm is illegible.

The provenance of schedules 4 (agriculture) and 6 (social statistics), which follow the territory/state copy of the population and nonpopulation schedules on the microfilm, cannot be stated with certainty. These schedules may be part of the federal copy of the nonpopulation schedules that the National Archives returned to the state. They are arranged alphabetically by county and within each county by schedule. Both schedules are present for Benton, Wabashaw, and Washington counties. Only Schedule 4 is present for Pembina and Ramsey, Itasca, Wahnahta, and Mahkahta counties; neither schedule is present for Dahkotch County.

In the population schedules (Schedule 1) inhabitants of each county or district, precinct, or settlement within the county are listed by household in the order in which the household was visited by the enumerator. The head of household is listed first; other members of the household are also listed individually by name. The entry for each member of a household gives his or her surname and given name(s) and/or initial(s), and some or all of the following information: age, sex, color (white, black, or mulatto), occupation (of each male over the age of 15), birthplace (state, territory, or country), and marital status; whether attended school during the previous year and (if over 20 years of age) whether unable to read or write; and whether deaf and dumb, blind,

insane, idiotic, a pauper, or a convict. The column for recording the value of real estate owned was not utilized. The instructions to marshals and their assistants for taking the census declared that “Indians not taxed [were] not to be enumerated.” Indian people living among whites sometimes were listed but were not necessarily identified as such. However, a number of individuals were identified in the census as “I” (Indian) or “½ B” (half breed) by the enumerator for Washington and Itasca counties.

The mortality schedules (Schedule 3) list persons who died during the year ending June 30, 1850. The entry for each decedent gives his or her surname and given name(s) or initial(s), age, sex, color (white, black, or mulatto), marital status, birthplace (state, territory, or country), and occupation; whether free or a slave; the month of death, disease or cause of death, and number of days the person was ill.

The productions of agriculture schedules (Schedule 4) provide information about farm size, value, and productivity. All or some of the following information is given for each farm: the surname and given name(s) and/or initial(s) of the farm’s owner, agent, or manager; the number of improved and unimproved acres; the farm’s cash value and the value of farming implements and machinery; the number of various kinds of livestock, their total value, and the value of slaughtered animals; the quantity and/or value of a variety of crops and other agricultural products; and the value of homemade manufactures.

The products of industry schedules (Schedule 5) document businesses whose annual production was valued at or above \$500.00. All or some of the following information is given for each business: the name of the company, corporation, or individual; type of business, manufacture, or product; amount of capital invested in the business; the quantity, kind, and value of raw material used; the type of energy, machinery, or structure utilized; the average number of males and females employed; the average monthly wages for male and female workers; and the kind, quantity, and value of its annual production.

The social statistics schedules (Schedule 6) provide information on the quantity, type, and value of certain social institutions and record other types of social, demographic, and economic data, as follows: real and personal property; annual taxes; colleges, academies, and schools, including the number of teachers and pupils; libraries, including the number of books; newspapers and periodicals, including the name, frequency of publication, and circulation; churches, including their denomination and size; native- and foreign-born paupers, including the cost of their support; native- and foreign-born criminals; the average monthly, weekly, or daily

wages (with or without board) for farm hands, day laborers, carpenters, and female domestics; and the average weekly price of board for male laborers.

The census records for 1850 conclude with two supplementary resources. *Minnesota Territorial Census, 1850*, edited by Patricia C. Harpole and Mary D. Nagle (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1972), provides annotated transcriptions of the 1850 population and mortality schedules for Minnesota Territory. Entries in the photostatic reproduction of the federal copy, the state copy and, in the case of Pembina County, the county copy in the Minnesota Historical Society's collections were consulted during the preparation of this publication. The transcribed schedules are accompanied by an introduction to the taking of the 1850 decennial census in Minnesota Territory, an appendix giving names (in alphabetical order) of additional persons known to have been in the territory in 1850 but not listed in the schedules by the census enumerators, and an index to surnames that appear in the volume.

A portion of a letter written by Albert E. Dease (1895-[1980?]) gives corrections to French surnames and given names that, according to Dease, were spelled incorrectly in the 1850 population schedule for Pembina District (County). Dease was a Pembina area mail carrier, newspaper correspondent, and railroad worker who was descended from French Canadian traders and pioneers who lived in the Red River Settlement and Pembina County in present-day North Dakota.

1853

No documentation could be located mandating a territory-wide census for 1853. However, the records of two local censuses were found. Sennses [sic] Reeport [sic] Districk [sic] No. 1, Decota [sic] County lists heads of households by surname and given name, as well as other members of each household, identified by their familial relationship to the head or their status as boarders or hired workers; the number of residents in each household; and the total number of residents in the district. The Census of the Village of Stillwater lists each resident by surname and given name and/or initial(s). Members of the same family appear to be listed sequentially.

1855

The Legislative Assembly that met in 1855 enacted legislation providing for the taking of a census of the inhabitants of Minnesota Territory during the month of June by the sheriffs of the

organized counties and their appointed deputies and assistants (*Laws*, 1855, chapter 14). The law stipulated that Indians, who were not citizens, and soldiers of the United States Army were to be omitted from the enumeration. Each census enumerator was to deliver his census returns to the sheriff who, in turn, was to make duplicate copies—one of which was to be filed in the office of the county register of deeds and the other forwarded to the secretary of the territory in St. Paul. The act provided for the following information to be recorded on the census form: the boundaries of the enumeration district; the names of the county and the enumerator; the date(s) of the enumeration; and for each household the name (surname and given name) of the head of household and the number of males, females, and total number of individuals in residence.

No copies of the 1855 census schedules could be located in the records of the territorial secretary in the Minnesota State Archives. The returns for Chisago, Doty, and Superior counties reproduced on the microfilm appear to be the copies made by the sheriff of Chisago County and filed in the office of the Chisago County register of deeds.⁴ There are separate schedules for each county; those for Chisago County are organized by precinct. The census returns for all three counties list the heads of households by surname and given name and/or initial(s) in no apparent order, along with the number of males, females, and total number of members of each household.

There are three items relating to the census of Wright County. The first is a photocopy of a photocopy in the Wright County Historical Society, which is located in the Wright County Heritage Center in Buffalo, Minnesota. It appears to be a copy of the original census return (the location of which is unknown) that was filed in the office of the Wright County register of deeds. It includes the information mandated by the law enacted by the Legislative Assembly. Due to the poor quality of the photocopy, the information it contains may be difficult to read or illegible on the microfilm. Therefore, two transcriptions of the census data also have been filmed. The first transcription is from *History of Wright County, Minnesota*, Volume 1, pages 93-95, by Franklyn Curtis-Wedge; the second is in an article by Mary Hawker Bakeman, "The 'Lost' 1855 Minnesota Census," which appeared in *Minnesota Genealogical Journal* 8 (September 1992), pages 701-708. (See the roll contents list for full citations to both publications.)

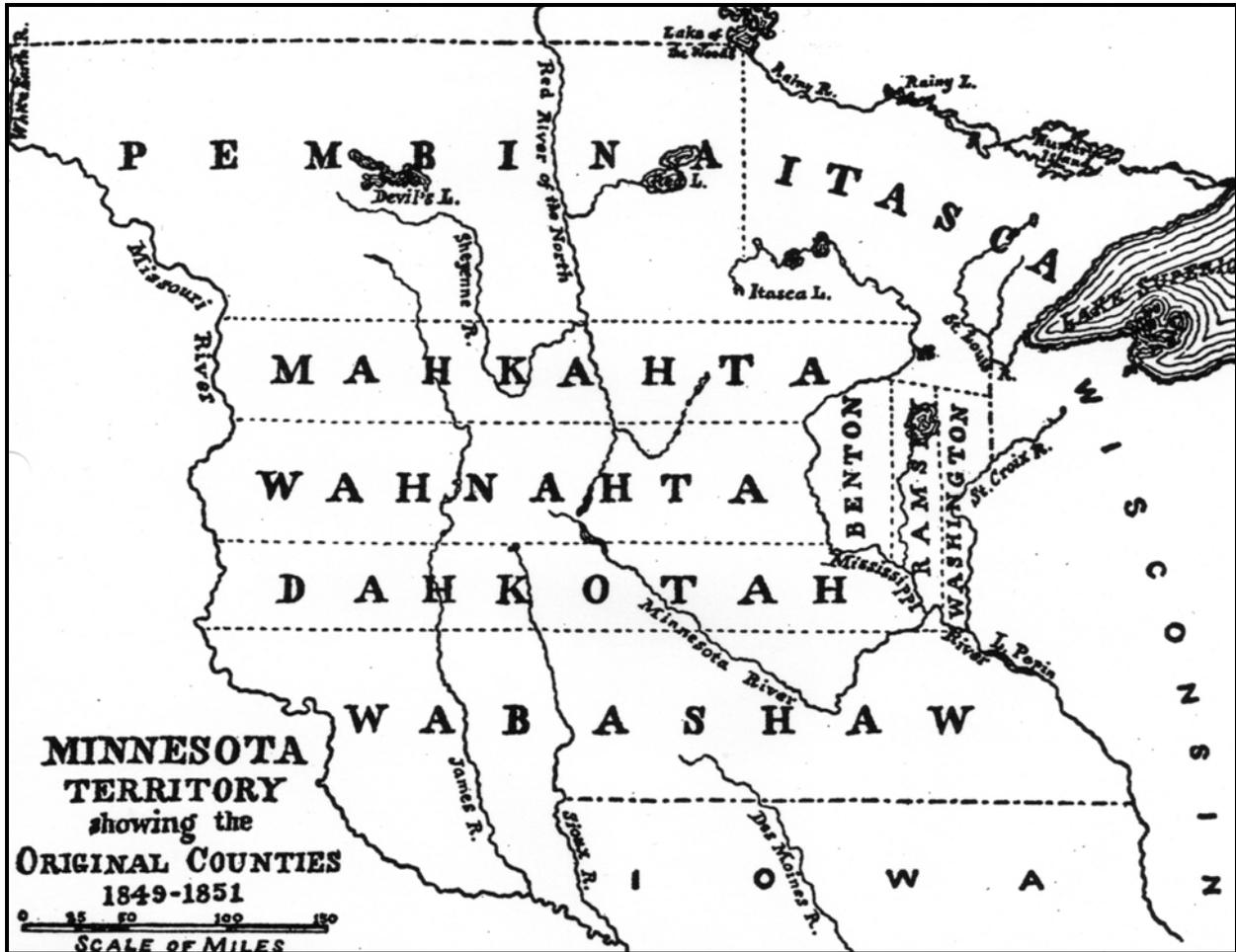
⁴Doty and Superior counties were both created from Itasca County in February, 1855. In March, 1855, Doty County was renamed Newton County and Superior County was renamed (old) St. Louis County. In March, 1856, (old) St. Louis County was renamed Lake County and Newton County became part of a newly created St. Louis County. These counties comprised parts of present-day Carlton, St.

Louis, Lake, and Cook counties.

“The Census of Winona Prairie and Town Proper,” an article published on page [2] of the *Winona Republican* on December 4, 1855, gives the results of a census taken the previous day by local residents. The article lists heads of household by surname and given name and/or initial(s) and the total number of persons in each household.

Deborah Kahn

March 2000



ROLL CONTENTS LIST

Roll 1

1849

Minnesota. Territorial Secretary. Records, 1849-1857.

Census of Minnesota Territory, 1849. 5 items in 1 folder.

Alex. Ramsey, Gov. Minn. Ter. To Jno. Morgan, Sheriff of the County of St. Croix, Minnesota Territory. [Order to take the census of the territory], June 11, 1849.

(Original) Census Rolls, Minnesota, 1849. Presented by Charles [H.?] Mix through H. H. Sibley.

Sences [sic] of the Territory of Minnesota, June 11, 1849 [excluding the Pembina and Missouri settlements], July 4, 1849.

Enumeration of inhabitants male & female (Indians not included) residing at or near Pembina, within the United States territories..., June 11, 1849.

Enumeration of inhabitants on the Missouri River in Minnesota Territory at Vermilion [and] at Cankecasa on 11 June 1849.

Minnesota. Governor. Executive journals, 1849-1858.

Minute Book-Minnesota Territory, 1849-1853. Partial volume.

Governor's order to take the Census of the Territory, June 11, 1849. Page [4].

Census of the Territory of Minnesota, June 11, 1849; certified July 4, 1849. Pages [4-12].

Minnesota. Legislative Assembly. Council. Council journals (manuscript), 1849-1857.

Council Journal, 1st Session, 1849. Partial volume.

Documents accompanying the message of his excellency the Governor to the first Legislative assembly. St. Paul, Sept. 1849:

Document C. Order to take the Census, June 11, 1849. Pages 548-549 (pages also numbered 9-10).

Document D. Census of Minnesota Territory, June 11, 1849; certified July 4, 1849. Pages 549-558 (pages also numbered 10-19).

Roll 1 (cont.)

1849 (cont.)

Minnesota. Legislative Assembly. Council. Council journals (printed), 1849-1857.

Journal of the Council, During the First Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Minnesota, ... 1849. Saint Paul: M'Lean & Owens, Territorial Printers, 1850. Partial volume.

Appendix to the Journal of the Council. Documents Accompanying the Governor's Message:

[Document] C. Order to Take the Census, June 11, 1849. Page 165.

[Document] D. Census of Minnesota Territory, June 11, 1849; certified July 4, 1849. Pages 165-184.

Minnesota. Legislative Assembly. House of Representatives. House journals (printed), 1849-1857.

Journal of the House of Representatives. First Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Minnesota; ... 1849. Saint Paul: James M. Goodhue, 1850. Partial volume.

Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives. Documents Accompanying the Governor's Message:

[Document C]. Order to Take the Census, June 11, 1849. Page 195.

[Document D]. Census of Minnesota Territory, June 11, 1849; certified July 4, 1849. Pages 196-215.

Minnesota. Governor (1849-1853 : Ramsey).

Message from the Governor of the Territory of Minnesota, to the First Legislative Assembly, September 4, 1849. Saint Paul: Chronicle and Register, Print[er], 1849. Partial pamphlet.

Documents accompanying the Governor's Message:

[Document] C. Order to Take the Census, June 11, 1849. Page iii.

[Document] D. Census of Minnesota Territory, June 11, 1849; certified July 4, 1849. Pages iv-xxiv.

Roll 1 (cont.)

1850

Minnesota federal population and nonpopulation census schedules, 1850: Benton, Pembina, and Wahnahta and Mahkahta counties.

Benton County copy. 3 folders.

Minnesota federal population and nonpopulation census schedules, 1850: Wabashaw County, and Washington and Itasca counties.

Washington County copy. 2 folders.

Minnesota federal population and nonpopulation census schedules, 1850.

Territory/State copy. 1 volume.

[The counties appear in the volume in the following order: Benton County, Dahkotch County, Pembina County, Ramsey County, Wabashaw County, Washington and Itasca counties, and Wahnahta and Mahkahta counties.]

[Minnesota federal population census schedules, 1850.]

[Federal copy.] [1 volume.]

This volume is not included in this microfilm edition.

See: National Archives Microfilm Publications. *Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Minnesota. Microcopy No. 432, Roll 367. Available at the Minnesota Historical Society.*

Minnesota federal nonpopulation census schedules, 1850: schedules 4 and 6. 1 folder.

Harpole, Patricia C. and Mary D. Nagle.

Minnesota Territorial Census, 1850. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1972.

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Dease, Albert Edward, 1895- .

[Minnesota territorial population census schedules, 1850, Pembina District: corrections to names], June 13, 1966. Pages i-iii. Partial item.

Roll 1 (cont.)

1853

Mendota Township (Minnesota). Miscellaneous records, 1853-1902.

Assessment Record and Census of Families, District 1, 1853. Partial volume.

Sennses [sic] Reeport [sic], Districk [sic] No. 1, Decota [sic] County. Pages
39-43.

Minnesota. Territorial Secretary. Records, 1849-1857.

Census of the Village of Stillwater, [M. T.], June 1853, June 23, 1853. 1 folder.

1855

Minnesota territorial population census schedules, 1855: Chisago, Doty, and Superior counties.
5 items in 1 folder.

An Act To Provide for Taking the Census of the Population of the Territory, February 27,
1855.

Census of Chisago Lake precinct, Chisago County, June 10-12, 1855; filed August 15,
1855.

Census of Taylors Falls precinct, Chisago County, June 1855; filed August 15, 1855.

Census of Doty County, June 1855; filed August 15, 1855.

Census of Superior County, June 1855; filed August 15, 1855.

Minnesota territorial population census schedules, 1855: Wright County. 3 items in 3 folders.

Census of Wright County, Minnesota Territory, A.D. 1855, taken in June of that year...;
filed September 3, 1855.

Photocopy of a photocopy in the Wright County Historical Society, Buffalo,
Minnesota. The location of the original is unknown.

Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn. *History of Wright County, Minnesota*. Vol. 1, pages 93-95.
Chicago: H. C. Cooper, Jr. & Co., 1915.

Bakeman, Mary Hawker. "The 'Lost' 1855 Minnesota Census." *Minnesota
Genealogical Journal* 8 (September 1992), pages 701-708. Published by Park
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"Census of Winona Prairie and Town Proper." *Winona Republican*, December 4, 1855.

Page [2].