

A Note on Census Age Reports and Birthdate

After 1850 the U.S. Federal Census reports the age of each member of a household (as of the date of the census). What can we say about the birth date of that individual?

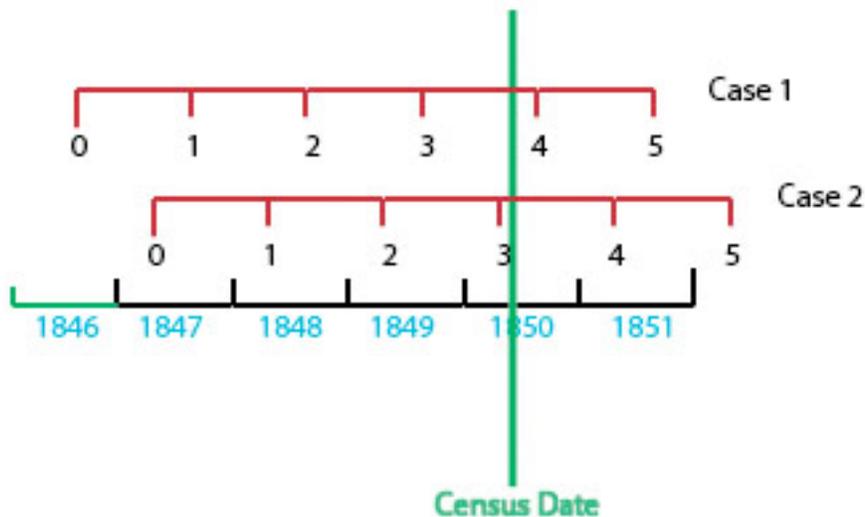
There are two possibilities The individual has a birthday:

1. prior to the date the census data was recorded, or
2. on or after the census date.

For these two cases the birth year would be:

1. Census Year - Age - 1
2. Census Year - Age

In the year 1850 a child reported to be of age 3 then could have been born between the years 1846 and 1847.



Throughout this website I will use the following notation 1846 OR 1847. The census reports on Ancestry.com use about. I will use ABT to represent greater uncertainty.

If, as in the older census reports, we don't have a reported age, but rather a range of ages, we can use the same logic to determine a range of birthdates. If the range is given as

$$A1 \leq \text{Age} < A2$$

By the reasoning illustrated above the upper and lower bounds can be computed:

$$\text{CY} - A2 - 1 \leq \text{Age} < \text{CY} - A1$$

Here CY is the year of the census