Census Records for Puerto Rican Genealogy

Conectando Raíces – Celebrando Herencia

A Structured Authority Series

This free educational series teaches researchers how to locate, analyze, and correlate census records in Puerto Rican genealogy across:

- Spanish Colonial Period (1765–1898)
- U.S. Military Census (1899)
- U.S. Federal Census (1910–1950)
- Municipal & Local Enumerations

This course aligns with the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) and emphasizes responsible, source-based research. Before beginning Module 1, review the **Foundational Reference: The Genealogical Proof Standard** for an explanation of the GPS, the Three-Layer Analysis Framework (Sources / Information / Evidence), and how both apply to Puerto Rican census records.

Why Census Records Matter

Census records allow you to:

- Reconstruct household structure
- Estimate birth years
- Identify occupations
- Track migration
- Analyze race and social classification
- Correlate civil and parish records

Important Research Context

Researchers should be aware that as of 2025, the Diocese of Mayagüez (covering Mayagüez, Rincón, Añasco and surrounding municipalities) currently restricts researcher access and prohibits digitization of parish registers due to prior record abuse and limited institutional resources.

Therefore, researchers must rely on:

- Civil registration records (post-1885)
- Digitized parish records available at FamilySearch
- Census records (Spanish, 1899 Military, and U.S. Federal)
- Newspapers (Library of Congress Chronicling America)
- Land and probate records

This series provides structured alternatives.

Core Record Access URLs

- 1887 Spanish Census (PDF)
- 1899 Military Census Report (Archive.org)
- National Archives – Census Research
- FamilySearch – Puerto Rico Census Wiki
- FamilySearch – Puerto Rico Colonial Records
- Library of Congress – Chronicling America

Modules Included

1. Census History & Political Context
2. Spanish Colonial Census
3. 1899 U.S. Military Census
4. U.S. Federal Census (1910–1950)
5. Municipal & Barrio Enumerations
6. Race & Social Classification
7. Migration Patterns
8. Correlating Census with Civil Records
9. Handling Parish Access Limitations
10. Using AI to Compare Census Years

Download the Census Research Toolkit (Worksheets Included)