

Handwriting Primer from 1800 Census

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~vaodcdar/script.htm>

In a search through the census schedules, it is helpful to become familiar with a few variants of spelling and letter formation. Until the turn of the century, spelling was phonetic. Words were spelled as they sounded. To obtain complete use of any census index, it is important to anticipate the different possibilities then to use the index accordingly.

Each scribe had his own peculiar style. Nevertheless, it is possible to form some generalities, the study of which will greatly improve the thoroughness of research. The guidelines to the right are based on editorial conclusions from the 1800 census and should not be taken as definitive statements on early penmanship.

Additional notes:

- terminating e is often added
- double consonants are often reduced to a single consonant
- single consonants are often doubled

Excerpted from New York in 1800: An Index to the Federal Census Schedules of the State of NY, with other aids to research edited by Phillip McMullin, Provo, UT: Gendex Corp., 1971, pgs. ix and x.

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A	A A A A A A A A	aa
B	B B B B B B B B	bb
C	C C C C C C C C	cc
D	D D D D D D D D	dd del
E	E E E E E E E E	ee
F	F F F F F F F F	ff
G	G G G G G G G G	gg
H	H H H H H H H H	hh
I	I I I I I I I I	ii
J	J J J J J J J J	jj
K	K K K K K K K K	kk
L	L L L L L L L L	ll
M	M M M M M M M M	mm
N	N N N N N N N N	nn
O	O O O O O O O O	oo
P	P P P P P P P P	pp
Q	Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q	qq
R	R R R R R R R R	rr
S	S S S S S S S S	ss
T	T T T T T T T T	tt
U	U U U U U U U U	uu
V	V V V V V V V V	vv
W	W W W W W W W W	ww
X	X X X X X X X X	xx
Y	Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y	yy
Z	Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z	zz

BEWARE!

ss -> fs	sh -> fsh	Th -> th	
ch -> ck	ai -> ea	ou -> au	ie -> ei
d -> t	tt -> ll	dd -> tt	