

(This file provided by the U.S. Census Bureau in October 2008)

The “zero obs” files are SAS® datasets that contain no records corresponding to the internal historical decennial census microdata files available in the Census Bureau’s national network of Research Data Centers (RDC). Researchers can use the zero obs files to test programs before entering an RDC, although these programs would yield no output because the zero obs files contain no data. Also, researchers can produce PROC CONTENTS of the zero obs files to obtain a complete list of all variables in the internal historical decennial census microdata files available to researchers. Doing so will provide a list of all variables within each dataset, including the variable name, type, length, label and the position of the variable within the records. For more detailed documentation on the internal versions of the historical decennial census microdata files, please refer to the documentation on the ICSPR website at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/>.

Historical decennial census microdata files are available for the 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses, but zero obs files are currently available only for the 1970, 1980 and 1990 data. The datasets available for each decennial census year are the 100 percent (or “short form”) microdata files and the sample (or “long form”) microdata files. Each of these datasets is divided into separate files for each record type: geographic, household and person records. The naming convention for the zero obs files is

`zeroobs_[census year][dataset][record type].sas7bdat`

Where

*census year* is given in four digits

1970

1980

1990

*dataset* is represented by a single character

h - 100 percent files

s - sample files

*record type* is represented by a single character

g - geographic record

h - household record

p - person record

For example, the zero obs file for the person records from the 1980 sample file is `zeroobs_1980sp.sas7bdat`