

On April 4, 1930, a census enumerator recorded the household of Dezera B. and Elizabeth Cameron in Logan County, West Virginia. Their entry preserves details of family, work, and housing that rarely appear in broader histories of the coal industry. It also places them within a sequence of Black and white households whose experiences were not identical.

A portion of the original record

1930 U.S. Census, West Virginia, Logan County, Enumeration District 23-19, Sheet 4A; the Cameron family appears at dwelling/family 62, lines 3–8. Crop from the census image supplied for this research. The complete page provides essential context.

What the document establishes: Six people were listed in the household. The family rented for \$15 per month, had no radio recorded, and Dezera worked as a shoe cobbler on his own account. The census does not supply their street address or business earnings.

Six People and a Shoemaker's Trade

The following names, ages, and birthplaces are transcribed from the 1930 record. Spellings and handwritten ages should be checked against the original before use as definitive biographical facts.

Name	Relationship	Age recorded	Birthplace
Dezera B. Cameron	Head	38	Alabama
Elizabeth Cameron	Wife	28	Alabama
Ruth L. Cameron	Daughter	9	Alabama
John L. Cameron	Son	6	Ohio
Ruby M. Cameron	Daughter	3	Alabama
Dorthie Cameron	Daughter	1 yr., 10 mos.*	West Virginia

*The youngest child's fractional age is a best reading of the handwriting. The source does not verify an exact birth date.

Work and home

Dezera's occupation was entered as "shoe cobbler," and his industry and worker-status fields indicate an "own shop" and own-account work. Those labels document his trade and employment arrangement; they do *not* prove that he owned the building where he worked. The schedule does not record his income or identify his customers.

The household rented its home for \$15 per month. The schedule marks it as not being a farm and records no radio. Elizabeth's occupation field lists no paid occupation; it does not measure childcare, household management, or other unpaid labor.

Reading the birthplaces

Four family members were recorded as Alabama-born, one child as Ohio-born, and the youngest as West Virginia-born. The entries suggest regional movement or connections, but birthplace alone cannot establish the family's full migration route or the dates at which they occupied particular towns.

A caution about age: The census records Elizabeth as 28. The broader research notes report a different birth year in other documents, but those records are not evaluated in this public guide. The discrepancy is left unresolved rather than assigned a motive.

The Households Around the Camerons

On the same census sheet, dwellings 62–70 appear in the order visited by the enumerator. These entries show people employed in mining and in services that supported everyday life. The route is not a street map, and successive dwelling numbers do not establish which buildings shared property lines.

Dwelling	Census race*	Housing entry	Work and household detail
62 — Cameron	Black	Rent \$15	Shoe cobbler; four children
63	White	Rent ~\$20	Garage mechanic; six children
64	Black	Own ~\$4,000	Mine driller; several adult workers
65	White	Rent ~\$11	Mine tippie worker; five children
66 — Mixon	Black	Own ~\$1,500	Coal-mine laborer
67	Black	Rent ~\$20	Coal-mine laborer
68	White	Rent ~\$10	Occupation unclear in transcription
69 — Weaver	White	Rent ~\$20	Seamstress; two daughters
70 — Jones	Black	Rent ~\$20	Coal laborers; large household

*"Black" and "White" here summarize the enumerator's race classifications, not verified personal self-identification. Several names and amounts in the working transcription remain tentative.

What the housing figures mean

Of these nine household entries, seven are marked as renters and two as owners. The estimated \$4,000 and \$1,500 figures describe the *values of owned homes*, not wages, savings, or salaries. They indicate that Black homeownership existed in this local census sequence; they cannot tell us how the owners acquired their property.

The list also reveals a varied local economy: miners and a tippie worker appear beside a cobbler, garage mechanic, seamstress, and a person employed in domestic service. The mines were central, but not everyone's livelihood was recorded as mining.

Race, Migration, and Unanswered Questions

A mixed census sequence in a segregated era

Black and white households occur in an interspersed order from dwellings 62 through 70. That observation complicates a simple picture of entirely separate residential runs on this particular census page. It does not prove that institutions were integrated or that families maintained close social relationships. Regional histories document segregation in housing, schooling, and church life in numerous West Virginia coal camps.

The Alabama connection

A working line-by-line count identifies at least 12 of the 50 people recorded on Sheet 4A as Alabama-born—approximately 24% of the individuals on that one page. Several of the Cameron family’s recorded neighbors also had Alabama connections. This is evidence of a notable pattern on this sheet, not a population estimate for Shamrock, Mount Gay, or Logan County as a whole.

Historians have documented Black migration into southern West Virginia from Virginia and neighboring states and, increasingly around World War I, from Alabama and other Deep South states. The census alone does not explain who recruited or encouraged the Camerons or what route they followed.

Questions for further research

Where did Dezera operate his shop? Which Alabama communities did the adults come from? Did residents on adjacent census sheets share surnames, occupations, or earlier addresses? Answers require additional records; the 1930 census provides a foundation, not a complete narrative.

Sources and reading notes

Primary: U.S. Census, 1930, population schedule, West Virginia, Logan County, ED 23-19, Sheet 4A, lines 1–50; Cameron household at lines 3–8. Image supplied by the family researcher.

Methods: U.S. Census Bureau, 1930 Instructions to Enumerators, paragraphs 136–143 (home tenure, home values, rents).

Historical context: National Park Service, “African American Life in a Coal Camp: Nuttallburg”; Joe William Trotter Jr., “African American Coal Miners,” *West Virginia Encyclopedia*.

Editorial note: The transcription and neighborhood sequence are based on a working interpretation of the original document. Uncertain readings have not been presented as verified. Personal family recollections and fictional drafting notes have intentionally been excluded.