

How To Read An 1880 Soundex Card

Created by Tracey Carrington Converse

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Head of Household **Description** **Volume Number-only used when searching a large city** **Enumeration District-Most important number used to find family in any size county.**

County **City**

Clark, Joseph Paul
(Head of Family)
W **M** **40**
(Color) (Sex) (Age)

Garland County
(County)

Royal
(City)

Vol. **2** E.D. **97**
Sheet **12** Line **14**
Kentucky
(Birthplace)

(M.C.D.)*

(Street) (House No.)

(Other Members of Family)

Name	Relation	Age	Birthplace
Clark, Clarissa	W	36	Tennessee
Clark, Thomas	S	16	Tennessee
Clark, Clarissa	D	14	Tennessee
Clark, John	S	9	Arkansas
Anderson, Priscilla	ML	62	North Carolina

Sheet Number-Used to locate correct page of census after finding the ED.

Line Number-Once the correct sheet is found, use the line number to locate the family.

Birthplace of Head of Family.

If the family lives inside the city limits, you will find the street address listed here.

How Do I Read This Card?

So many people only look at the Soundex Card but miss the extra information found on the census. Always look at the actual census record. To locate the record, think of the Soundex information like a book. The Enumeration District or ED is similar to chapter numbers in a book. You need this number to narrow your search. The sheet number is the page that the record is found on and the line number is just that, the line the family is located. I suggest copying both the Soundex card and the census record for future reference.

What Does This Card Say About the Family?

This is the fictitious card of the Joseph P. Clark family. First, it lists some important family information. All of the children are listed, as well as, J.P. Clark's mother in law. You see the ages and the birthplaces of all family members but there is additional information that you may have missed. For instance, from the above information we can speculate that the Joseph and Clarissa were married in Tennessee. Because, Clarissa and Thomas were born there. And, because of the 20 year age difference in Clarissa and her son Thomas, remember there maybe an older sibling who is already out of the house. We also know that the Clark's moved to Arkansas sometime between 1866 and 1874 from the ages and birthplaces of the younger children. You will also note that Priscilla Anderson is listed as Joseph's mother in law. This does not mean that Clarissa's maiden name was Anderson. Remember, Priscilla may have been a widow and remarried.

What's the Next Step?

After pulling the 1880 Arkansas Census record on this family, track the family back to the 1870 Tennessee Census. Remember, only the older two children will show up. The others have not been born. Also, keep in mind, that there maybe a third child who had already moved out of the home by 1880. While you are searching look for an Anderson family with Priscilla. You may find her as head of household if she were widowed during the Civil War. Another tip is to look for a naming pattern! There is a good chance that the male children were named for both Joseph and Clarissa's fathers.

How To Read An 1900 Soundex Card

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Head of Household Description Volume Number-only used when searching a large city Enumeration District-Most important number used to find family in any size county.

Clark, J. P.
(Head of Family)

W Feb 1840 60 Kentucky
(Color) (Month) (Year) (Age) (Birthplace) (Citizenship)

Garland
(County)

12
(M.C.D.)*

(City) (Street) (House No.)
(Other Members of Family)

ARKANSAS
Vol. 10 E.D. 103
Sheet 15 Line 3

Sheet Number-Used to locate correct page of census after finding the ED.
Line Number-Once the correct sheet is found, use the line number to locate the family.
Birthplace of Head of Family.
If the family lives inside the city limits, you will find the street address listed here.

Name	Relation	Month ^{Birth}	Year	Age	Birthplace	Citizenship
Clark, Clarissa	W	Aug	1843	56	TN	
Clark, Amy	D	Jul	1880	19	AR	
Clark, Sarah	DL	Feb	1864	36	LA	
Clark, Thomas	GS	Nov	1883	17	AR	
James, Clarissa	D	Mar	1866	34	TN	

What Does This Card Say About the Family?

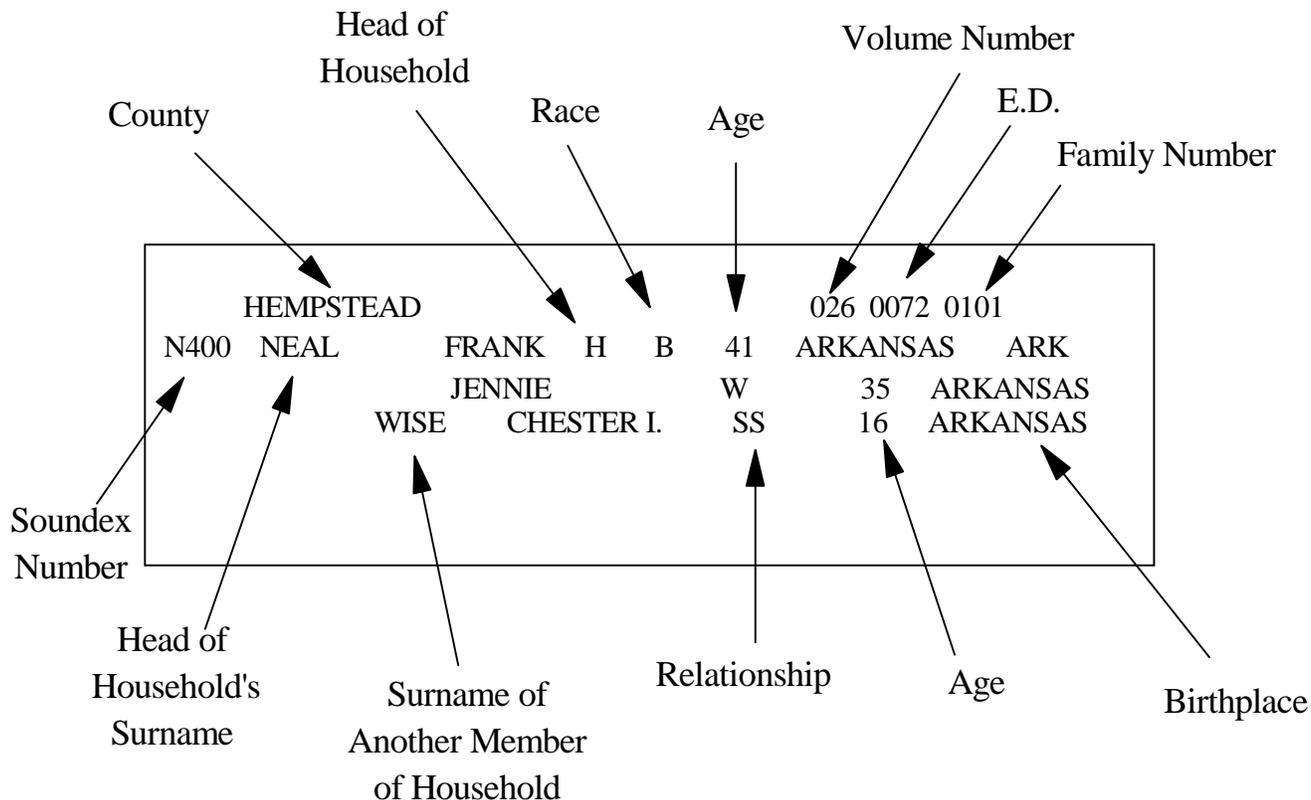
In the 1900 Census, we find the Clark family still living in Garland County. But, in the household, we find more information. Joseph and Clarissa had another child, Amy, in July of 1880. Clarissa must have been pregnant when the census taker came. Remember, the only people counted on the 1880 census were those born before June 1880. Also, Priscilla Anderson is missing. She either died in the past 20 years or is living in another household. You should check the Garland County Cemetery Records or other forms of death records for a date of death. One of the Clark sons married Sarah and had a son named Thomas. By checking the census you will discover whether Sarah's husband is dead or living elsewhere. Most likely she will be listed as a widow. And finally, living in the same household is Clarissa James. This is a daughter of J.P. and Clarissa. She must have married into the James family. Her husband is also not listed.

What's the Next Step?

Remember, county records are the most important documents in your research. From the county records you should find all kinds of information. I've found that folks did a lot more suing back before the turn of the century and you find more details about the people not just the names. Also, judging by Joseph's age, I would also suggest checking the Tennessee Civil War Service records, both CSA and Union, and the ARKANSAS pension records, if he was a Confederate.

1910 Miracode Soundex

Just when you thought you had all the terms and strange forms memorized, the U. S. Government added yet another strange puzzle. On a few states during the 1910 Soundex, the Miracode was attempted. It stumps even the best researchers from time to time. Below you will find a research aid to help you interpret the Miracode Soundex.



From this information, you know know that the Frank Neal household was located in Hempstead County, Arkansas on the 1910 census. You will also find the family in Enumeration District 72. They are listed as family number 101. Also listed in the household is Frank's wife, Jennie and his step son, Chester I. Wise. From this information you should be able to identify the family and locate the record in the census which will provide you with more information on the family.