

## **CENSUS PROGRAM**

### **Federal Population Census—**

- A mainstay of genealogists and the backbone of research--1<sup>st</sup> place to start
- Conducted every 10 years since 1790
- Confidential for 72 years before made public--latest available 1930
- Places person in specific place at a specific time
  - Available online, CD-Rom or microfilm rental from an LDS Family History Center
  - Can go to [www.censusmicrofilm.com/fedcens.htm](http://www.censusmicrofilm.com/fedcens.htm) if need to know census contents and roll numbers
- Photocopy of specific page available from Nat'l Archives (NATF Form 82)
  - Request online at [www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html](http://www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html)

### **Objective of Census—**

- Accounts for every individual in US on given day
- Information collected to be as of census day even if taken at later date
  - Was to record household where person regularly sleeps on that date
  - Enumerators did not always follow instructions so can be double enumeration
- Persons moving on census day sometimes enumerated at new location

### **Census Days Varied Over Years—**

- 1790-1820 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in Aug
- 1830-1900 June 1
- 1910 April 15
- 1920 Jan 1
- 1930-1960 April 1
- Be sure to record actual date of enumeration when family was enumerated

### **Census Years in General—**

- 1790-1840 census
  - Names head of household
  - Age group of others only
  - 1820 census clue
    - If male not in 16-18 bracket but in 16-26 bracket means over 18
  - 1840 notes if received Rev. War pension
- 1850-1880 census
  - Names each person
  - Age as of census day
  - Sex, race, place birth, profession
  - 1870 indicated if parents foreign born
  - 1850-1870 filmed by both FHC & NA (NA easier to read but some faded)
  - 1880 began listing streets in left margin
- 1890 census
  - Mostly destroyed by fire Jan. 1921
  - Surviving pages list 6,000 people (4 states, AL, IL, NC, TX and DC)
  - Index on NA film M-496/2 rolls
- 1900-1930 Census
  - These schedules contain more information
  - These schedules essential to research
  - 1900 copies Nat'l Archives film poor quality
  - 1900 & 1910 requested new info

- Month/year birth
- Number years married
- Number children mother had & number living
- Use this information cautiously-due to war misinformation often given
- Try to corroborate birth dates from other records
  - Vital events usually estimated by respondent
  - Not known who gave information to enumerator
- 1900-1930 also dealt with immigration questions
- 1910 dealt with veterans of Civil War question
- 1870-1930 enumerated military abroad in different ways (see handout)

### **Enumerators Pay in 1800 \$1 for—**

- Every 50 people in sparsely populated areas
- Every 100 people in rural areas
- Every 300 people in town/city population over 3,000

### **Points to Remember to Search Census Effectively—**

- Frontier people suspicious of government
- Families would leave home on census day
- Info could come from neighbor
- Incorrect info given to enumerator
- Make list of likely head of household
- Know time period to search
- List probably state and county to search
- Start with most recent census of ancestor and work backwards
- Search all years to compare data & check composition of household
- Each year has different information & can lead to other records
- People listed next to your ancestor not always neighbor
  - Depended on census taker route
  - Use land records/city directories to find true neighbors if needed/other family

### **Published Indexes—**

- Exist for 1790-1870 census
- Some by state/region
- Good tool to use to speed search
- Found in most libraries
- Write down information found for use at library, FHC or online
- No name in index—don't assume family not in census
  - Mistakes made in transcribing indexes

### **Soundex/Miracode— (See handout for coding)**

- Was a WPA project
- Sound system results by page # in census
- Find ED, vol & pg #'s in upper right corner—census has this info in top left corner
- 1880 soundex only included households with children 10 & under at home
  - Reason is reaching retirement age (under SS Act), person had to prove birth
  - Census record could be used to prove age (if no other way)
- 1900 & 1920 have complete Soundex of all states
- 1910 has only 21 states indexed
  - 1910 uses Miracode same sound system as Soundex
  - Arranges results by visitation number rather than page number
- 1930 has only 12 states indexed
- No results found in Soundex
  - Check coding again
  - Check if card filmed out of order

### **On-line US Census Records—** (See Web Sites handout)

- More transcribed and scanned coming online everyday
  - Heritage Quest has digital images 1790-1820,1860-1870,1890-1920
  - Ancestry has digital images for 1790-1880 & 1910-1930
  - LDS has 1880 transcribed images at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
  - Roots Web, US Gen Web & US-Census abstracted and some scanned images
  - Transcribed census has no search function-have to skim page
- Some sites have only portion of complete census
  - Usually covering a geographical area for period of time
- Often difficult to read due to age/handwriting/filming (See handwriting handout)
- Most records are US but more foreign coming online
- If can't read columns at top of page
  - Check a form for that census year (download forms from web)
  - See book–Twenty Censuses: Population & Housing Questions (pub 1979)
- If a transcribed record, verify findings with original record

### **If Can't Find Ancestor—**

- Use spelling variations–census taker wrote what heard
- Use finding aids
  - County records like tax roll/voter list
  - City directories
- Make sure have right county & state
  - Check parent county
  - Check for boundary changes
- Make sure using correct microfilm roll
- Are you looking at right place and right page on film
  - Check end of county–stuck pages filmed here if caught during filming
- Read census for entire county
- Use other records to verify family location in census year (like land records)
- Read census for nearest county
- Check for relatives etc., in finding aids & census (as groups moved together)

### **Tips—** (See Misc. information handout)

- Be aware of making false assumptions - as to who listed and relationship to head
- Consider the extra people in household as can give clues to other sources
- If find occupation don't understand look for similar entries
- Check other types census
- Use finding aids where lack of soundex available
- Use State census records if available as can offer more detailed information
- Fill in 1890 gap with state census
- Watch use of "Sr" & " Jr" in records
- Always cite your source
- Always corroborate what you learn with other records

## **MISC. CENSUS INFORMATION**

### **Special Census Web Sites--**

[www.stevemorse.org/census](http://www.stevemorse.org/census) This is an online index to selected city streets including more cities than the LDS microfilm M1283 as an aid for finding the 1910 enumeration district to search for a person. And also the 1930 enumeration district.

[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/overseas/twps0062.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/overseas/twps0062.html) Use this site for more information on military personnel and the census.

### **Census Indexes—**

Federal census indexes as well as county indexes are available. Just remember that these indexes are not always complete. Be creative and persistent when using an index. Names can be spelled differently than expected—such as, JNO for John, JENS for James or JACK for Zachary.

### **City Directories As An Aid—**

You can use city directories to help find elusive ancestors' census records. Since some censuses are not indexed or if only an enumeration district description is available in a finding aid knowing an address is crucial to finding a person in the census especially in the more populated cities.

### **Use Of Senior And Junior In Early Censuses—**

These words often vary as to how they are written. It is not uncommon to find a mother and daughter designated in this way. Keep in mind that "junior" does not always mean that he is a son of a man by the same given name and surname living in the same locality. This naming custom was true in particular with Quakers. A "senior" could be an uncle, cousin or no relation at all.

### **US Military Personnel Stationed Abroad Or At Sea—**

In 1870, 1880 and 1900 military personnel were enumerated at their stateside home and may also be included in an overseas population in 1900.

In 1910-1990 military personnel were enumerated in the overseas population and not at a stateside home.

In 1920 special forms were used to enumerate the population abroad.

In 1930 officers were enumerated at their stateside home but not the crews.

### **Citing A Census Record Source—**

This is always important because of the value of these records. A source should include: 1) a descriptive title 2) civil division information (i.e., county, state or territory, city/ward or town/township name or numbers; 3) page number and other specific designations such as family number, dwelling number, house number and line number; 4) location and form of the record used.

## **SOUNDEX CODE**

Soundex/Miracode is an alpha-numeric coding system to keep together names of the same or similar sounds but of different spellings. It is based on the phonetic sound of consonants in a surname. Each name is assigned a letter and 3 numbers. The letter is always the first letter of the surname.

### **Code Key Letters**

<u>Number</u>	<u>Letter Equivalent</u>
1	B, P, F, V
2	C, S, K, G, J, Q, X, Z
3	D, T
4	L
5	M, N

The letters A, E, I, O, U, W, Y, H are discarded and not coded.

### **To Code A Surname:**

- Use first letter of a surname and cross out vowels and W, Y, H in the surname.
- Using table above, assign the equivalent number to first 3 letters left in surname.
- Disregard any remaining letters.
- If name has less than 3 letters left assign zero to those places.
- Double letters are coded as 1 number (ex., 2 L's=4, not 44).
- Two or more letters with same code number that appear in sequence are assigned 1 number (ex., CK in Dickinson is coded 2, not 22).
- Every code must have 3 digits following the initial letter.
- Names with no codeable letters are coded as 3 zeros (ex., CHU = C000).
- Code names with prefixes like De, La, Von, etc., are sometimes disregarded in alphabetizing and coding so you could find it either way.
- Soundex cards without a given name are filed at the beginning of the soundex.
  - Within code groups, heads of household are listed alphabetically by FIRST name.

### **Soundex Applies To Census' For:**

- **1880** - but only lists households with children 10 years old or under.
- **1890** - no soundex.
- **1900** and **1920** have soundex for all states
- **1910** only has soundex for 21 states: AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, IL, KS, KY, LA, MI, MS, MO, NC, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV.
- **1910** census uses miracode - same system as soundex but arranges results by visitation number assigned by the enumerator rather than page number of census as in soundex.

### **Soundex Converter Website:**

<http://www.bradandkathy.com/genealogy/yasc.html>

- **If you don't want to do it yourself use this site and just put in the name doing.**
- **Make a list of the conversions to use then for your research.**

[www.bradandkathy.com/genealogy/yasc.html](http://www.bradandkathy.com/genealogy/yasc.html)

### **AVAILABLE ONLINE CENSUS RECORDS:**

#### At Chapin Library

Has Ancestry Library Edition with census years 1790-1930 name indexed  
 Has Heritage Quest with 1790-1930 census years with some name indexed but all years searchable.  
 Allowed 1 hour on computer with a Chapin Library card.

#### Census Finder

[www.censusfinder.com](http://www.censusfinder.com)

A portal more than database. Will have to sift through paid links to track down free census records.

#### 1880 US Census

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

Click search for ancestors then select census in left frame. Every name national index as of June 1880.  
 Searchable by name or head of household.

Note: Once you find your family look up original record to check accuracy and get added details.

#### Roots Web Census Index <http://userdb.rootsweb.com/census/index>

Volunteer transcribers uploaded 456,000 records from federal and state censuses. Note: If you find an ancestor the index will tell you census page where name will appear.

#### Sources 2 Go

[www.sources2go.com](http://www.sources2go.com)

Digitized census records of all 1790 census records and portions of 1800-1860. Links arranged by roll

number and frame and provide county names but can't search record content.

US Gen Web Census Project                      [www.us-census.org](http://www.us-census.org)    [www.rootsweb.com/~census](http://www.rootsweb.com/~census)

Two separate projects aim to transcribe all US Census schedules. Digital images at-  
[www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/cen\\_img.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/cen_img.htm)

Linkpendium                                      [www.linkpendium.com](http://www.linkpendium.com)

Click on localities then state then county to see if any census records available online here.

Census-online                                      [www.census-online.com](http://www.census-online.com)

Click on the link to online census records. On next screen click state wanted then next screen county wanted then in last screen choose either census year or county name.

Gengateway                                      [www.gengateway.com/index.cfm?GID=28](http://www.gengateway.com/index.cfm?GID=28)

Portal to hundreds of online US state and county census records.

Free Lookups                                      [www.genealogylookups.com/page03.htm](http://www.genealogylookups.com/page03.htm)

### **CENSUS FORMS**

Family Tree Magazine    [www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html)

Scroll to section on census forms (3<sup>rd</sup> section down in main body) then down load appropriate form as a PDF. Other resources and forms available here also.

Ancestry    [www.ancestry.com/trees/charts/census.aspx](http://www.ancestry.com/trees/charts/census.aspx)

Forms available as PDF select year wanted and print.

### **MICROFILM READER HELP**

- Place transparent film like used for report covers on reader to reduce glare.
- Enlarge the image.
- Make a negative and positive copy to compare pen strokes.
- Study other handwriting for the same neighborhood (same enumerator) and compare it to the word or name that you can't read.
- Stand up to look at the reader as distance can help.
- Put paper on each side of the word to block out other words.
- Try a different reader which might have better light, etc.
- Try a different medium, i.e., fiche, etc.
- In the case of a double "s", the first "s" is written like a backward "f" and often taken as an "f" or "p".
- Upper case letters that are commonly misinterpreted for each other:

**A & H**

**B, P & R**

**C, G, O & Q**

**F & T**

**G, J & Y**

**H & N**

**I & J**

**H & K**

**K & R**

**L & S**

**M & W**

**T & Y**

**U, V & W**

**X & H**

**Z & Q**

### **HAND WRITING HELPS**

● Reading documents, census pages, wills, deeds and other hand written documents can be difficult. Here are some web sites that can be helpful.

- Deciphering Old Handwriting:

<http://amberskyline.com/treasuremaps/oldhand.html>

- Guidelines For Reading Old Documents

[http://www.genealogy.com/68\\_sperry.html?Welcome=1084162301](http://www.genealogy.com/68_sperry.html?Welcome=1084162301)

- Reading Old Handwriting

<http://www.moonzstuff.com/handwriting.html>

<http://www.moonzstuff.com/handwriting-p2.html>

- Old English Writing

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/oldenglish/oldenglish.htm>

- Ancestry- Tips for Reading Early American Handwriting

<http://www.ancestry.com/library/view/columns/tips/796.asp?rc=locale~&us=0>

- Deciphering Handwriting

<http://www.genealogy.com/00000010.html><http://www.genealogy.com/00000010.html>

- How to Read 18<sup>th</sup> Century British - American Writing

[http://www.dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/writing.html](http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/writing.html)