

How Many Clues Can You Find from One Family in the 1880 Census?

By Connie Knox

[Video Link](#)

I'm going to show you how to look at a census record like you've never looked at it before. There are so many hints and clues in this one record that I bet you can't spot them all. Just wait until you see all the details I found.

Received July 10, 1880.

Page No. 5
 Supervisor's Dist. No. 1
 Enumeration Dist. No. 30

Note A.—The Census Year begins June 1, 1879, and ends May 31, 1880.
 Note B.—All persons will be included in the Enumeration who were living on the 1st day of June, 1880. No others will. Children BORN SINCE June 1, 1880, will be OMITTED. Members of Families who have DIED SINCE June 1, 1880, will be INCLUDED.
 Note C.—Questions Nos. 13, 14, 22 and 23 are not to be asked in respect to persons under 10 years of age.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Coaling, in the County of Clay, State of Arkansas
 enumerated by me on the 7th day of June, 1880.

E. D. Ester
 Enumerator.

42	31	31	Davis	Exum	W. H.	53	1	Farmer	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				Elizabeth	W. H.	53	1	Wife	1	Virginia	Va.	1810
			Richard	Elizabeth	W. H.	22	1	Daughter	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
			Davis	Wiley J.	W. H.	20	1	Son	2	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				Agnes	W. H.	18	1	Daughter	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				Caroline	W. H.	16	1	Daughter	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				Leanna	W. H.	14	1	Daughter	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				Margaret	W. H.	13	1	Daughter	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810
				W. H.	W. H.	11	1	Grandson	1	South Carolina	S. C.	1810

NOTE D.—In making entries in columns 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 to 23, an affirmative mark only will be used—thus /—except in the case of divorced persons, column 11, when the letter "D" is to be used.
 NOTE E.—Question No. 13 will only be asked in cases where an affirmative answer has been given either to question 10 or to question 11.
 NOTE F.—Question No. 14 will only be asked in cases where a girl's occupation has been reported in column 13.
 NOTE G.—In column 7 an abbreviation in the name of the month may be used, as Jan., Apr., Dec.

The above images are for the family of Exum Davis from Clay County Arkansas in 1880.

Here's a link to the actual record on [Ancestry](#) and the same record on [FamilySearch](#).

If you want to play along, go to one of these links above and see how many clues you can find for this family starting online 42 on these images. If you're playing along, no peeking on the next pages. Stop right now and go find those records to see what you can learn from this one family in the 1880 census. Then come back and see how many you found compared to what I found.



GenealogyTV.org



YouTube.com/GenealogyTV

Okay, here is what I found starting with the header information.

1. County was Clay County, Arkansas. Important because that's where other records can be located.
2. Enumeration Date 7th of June 1880. There are different census dates for different years.
3. ED, 30. Needed for source citations and other references.
4. ED Maps for 1880 – Sadly not found, but I tried here...
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/821491>
5. Census Year began on June 1st, 1879 and ended May 31st 1880.
6. All Persons enumerated who were living on June 1st, 1880.
7. Children born since June 1st, 1880, will be *omitted*.
8. Members of the family who have died since June 1st will be *included*.
9. Questions, 13, 14, 22, and 23, are not to be asked in respect to persons under 10.
10. Town of Corning... which we learn more about toward the end.
11. Stamped Received on July 19, 1880, not relevant but noted.
12. Page 16A (stamped upper right). This is the page number for the source citation.
13. Image #1 on the microfilm. This is important because when you are searching before and after pages, in this case, there is no "before" page since it is the first image.
14. Dwelling 31, needed for source citation.
15. Family 31, needed for source citation.
16. Head of Household name, Exum Davis
17. Exum Davis was White
18. Exum Davis was Male
19. Exum Davis was 52 years old on June 1st, 1880. Birth about 1828.
20. Exum Davis was married
21. Exum Davis was a farmer
22. Exum Davis was unemployed for one month in the last year.
23. Exum Davis was born in North Carolina
24. Exum Davis's **Father was born in North Carolina**
25. Exum Davis's **Mother was born in North Carolina**
26. Exum Davis could **not read or write**
27. Elizabeth A. or M. was Exum Davis' wife
28. Elizabeth's maiden name was unknown in this census.
29. Elizabeth had a middle name that started with either an A. or M. [hard to read]
30. Elizabeth Davis was white
31. Elizabeth Davis was female
32. Elizabeth Davis was 53... a year older than her husband. Born about 1827.
33. Elizabeth Davis was listed as Keeping House
34. Elizabeth Davis *could* read and write
35. Elizabeth Davis was born in North Carolina
36. Elizabeth Davis' father was born in Virginia
37. Elizabeth Davis' mother was born in North Carolina
38. Elizabeth Roland was the daughter of Exum Davis.
39. Elizabeth Roland was white
40. Elizabeth Roland was female
41. Elizabeth Roland was 22 or 23 [smudged], born about 1857-58
42. Elizabeth Roland married someone named Roland.
43. Elizabeth Roland was a widow at 22.
44. Elizabeth Roland's occupation was a laborer.
45. Elizabeth Roland was **unemployed for 4** months.
46. Elizabeth Roland likely did not have children with her Roland husband.

47. Elizabeth Roland could read and write
48. Wiley J. Davis was the son of Exum Davis
49. Wiley J. Davis had a middle name that started with a J.
50. Wiley J. Davis was white.
51. Wiley J. Davis was male.
52. Wiley J. Davis was 20, born about 1860
53. Wiley J. Davis was single
54. Wiley J. Davis was a laborer (likely working the farm)
55. Wiley J. Davis was unemployed for two months in the past census year
56. Agelina Davis was Exum's daughter.
57. Agelina Davis was white
58. Agelina Davis was female
59. Agelina Davis was 18, born about 1862, just as the Civil War began.
60. Agelina Davis was at home (not working the farm or employed)
61. Agelina Davis was single
62. Caroline Davis was the daughter of Exum Davis.
63. Caroline Davis was white
64. Caroline Davis was female
65. Carolina Davis was single
66. Carolina Davis was "At Home" for an occupation
67. Caroline Davis was 16, born about 1864.
68. Caroline Davis was born in North Carolina
69. Caroline Davis could read and write
70. Louiza Davis was the **granddaughter** of Exum
71. Louiza Davis was white
72. Louiza Davis was female
73. Louiza Davis was 14, born about 1866
74. Louiza Davis could read and write
75. Louiza Davis was born in North Carolina
76. Louiza Davis was single
77. Louiza Davis was "At Home" for an occupation
78. Margaret Davis was the daughter of Exum
79. Margaret Davis was female
80. Margaret Davis was 13, born about 1866
81. Margaret Davis could read and write
82. Margaret Davis was born in North Carolina
83. Margaret Davis was single
84. Margaret Davis was "At Home" for an occupation
85. Margaret Davis was **attending school**
86. Wm. P. Davis (William) was the **grandson** of Exum Davis
87. Wm. P. Davis (William) was white
88. Wm. P. Davis (William) was male
89. Wm. P. Davis (William) was 11 years old, born about 1869
90. Wm. P. Davis (William) was born in North Carolina
91. Wm. P. Davis (William) was single
92. Wm. P. Davis (William) was "At Home" for an occupation
93. Wm. P. Davis (William) was NOT attending school
94. Wm. P. Davis (William) could read and write.

95. The youngest child William was born in North Carolina, which means they **migrated to Arkansas between 1869 and 1880.**
96. **Louzia was the granddaughter of Exum Davis.** The census only speaks to the relationship to the head of household, not to the wife of Exum.
97. Louzia was listed with the surname Davis. That means that Louiza is not the daughter of Elizabeth Roland (the widowed daughter of Exum), nor was William Davis because they would have had the surname of Roland.
98. **Grandchildren.** If the grandchildren Louiza and William P. Davis are 14 and 11 (respectively), then neither of the adult children of Exum (listed in this household) are Louiza and Williams parents because they would have been too young to have children. Elizabeth Roland, the oldest child in the household, would have been 8 or 9 years old when Louiza was born. Likewise, Elizabeth would have been 12 when William was born, possible yes, likely no. **This is a clue that there are older children to find nearby.**
99. We can infer that Exum Davis (and possibly his wife Elizabeth) have at least one if not more older children who are the parents of Louiza and William.
100. The **census represents information between June 1, 1879 and ends on May 31, 1880.** Instructions were to note the age of the person prior to June 1st, 1880. This would affect birth dates based on their age. **Example, Margaret Davis was 13 years old on May 31st, 1880. Therefore, her birth date would be between June 1st 1866 and May 31st, 1867** (if the census information is correct that she was 13). You could add this as additional clues for everyone in the census.



Extra Tips

History Notes: Corning County was established just seven years earlier in 1873 from Green and Randolph Counties in Arkansas.

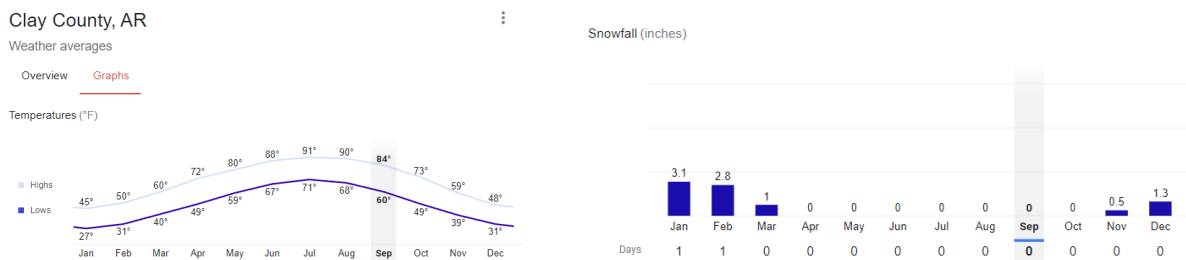
Corning, Arkansas is where the Davis family lived and ultimately became the county seat. This is a clue because the county seat often has the records if they have survived. Further investigation showed Clay County had two seats for a time.

New Railroads built in the area (map) File: [Map of the States Traversed by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway 1882 UTA.jpg](#)

“Anxious to get their railroad, the Cairo and Fulton, into operation in 1872, after the delay caused by the Civil War, bridges across the smaller Black and Little Red Rivers were being rushed to completion in 1872 and the line was opened from St. Louis to Little Rock in March 1875...” ([link with image](#)).

Weather and Unemployment

Did weather play a factor in the unemployment noted in the census? [Here is the average weather stats for Clay County, Arkansas](#). The graphs below show the weather to drop below freezing and not good for crops in the winter. Could this be a contributing factor to the unemployment noted in the census? It might add to the family story.



Age, Race & Gender

So why is each clue separated such as age, race, and gender... because paying attention to the details may also be clues about this family. Had one of the children been listed as mulatto it might clarify the relationships to the rest of the family. Remember, the relationship is only to the head of the household, not the wife who was listed. Be careful with your assumptions. Just because Elizabeth was listed as the wife of Exum, does not make her the mother of all those children.

More to Find

Why was Elizabeth Roland (daughter of Exum) a widow? What happened to her husband? She was only 22 in 1880 and already a widow. What was her husband's name? Is there a marriage record to find?

New Research Questions

Who were the parents of the grandkids that are living with Exum & Elizabeth Davis? Where were their parents? It's obvious they were not living in the household at the time.

Was there other family living nearby on other pages of the census? They might be found in neighboring counties.

Search Multiple Pages

Search more pages in this record and in the county for more family by the surnames Davis and Roland.