



THE SOUNDIX

The Soundex is an index which groups surnames by sound. There is a Soundex code number for every surname. It begins with the letter of the surname followed by three digits. The first census to have a Soundex was the 1880. There are Soundexes for the 1900, 1910 (for only 21 states), and 1920 censuses.

CODING A SURNAME

<u>Code</u>	<u>Key Letters and Equivalents</u>
1	b, p, f, v
2	c, s, k, g, j, q, x, z
3	d, t
4	l
5	m, n
6	r

- The letters a, e, i, o, u, y, w and h are not coded. Nor is the first letter of a name.
EXAMPLE: Smithfield = S531 (i.e., S m t f)
- Every Soundex number must be three digits. A name that has no letters that can be coded uses three zeroes. If a name has only one or two letters that can be coded, zeroes fill the remaining digits.
EXAMPLES: Lee = L000
Field = F430
- Double letters are counted as one number. When two different key letters having the same number appear next to each other, only one number is counted.
EXAMPLES: Willamette = W453
Sumner = S560
- Within a Soundex number, names are arranged alphabetically by first name.
EXAMPLE: In code number B630, "Byrd, Andrew" would come *before* "Bird, Benjamin".

Web-based Soundex converters are available at ourancestry.com/soundex.html and resources.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/soundexconverter