



1950 US Census Explained

By Karen L. Newman

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MADE THE 1950 U.S. census available to the public on 1 April 2022. The April Fool's joke is the census is not fully available and/or searchable on Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org, as of this writing, nor is it complete. If you can't wait, what can you do?

Ancestry

I searched for my grandfather, Clarence Newman of Ashland, Boyd County, Kentucky, on Ancestry in the 1950 U.S. census. One result yielded a Clarence J. Newman living in Powell, Park County, Wyoming. However, you can find Ashland, Boyd County, Kentucky on Ancestry to see what's available. To search the 1950 U.S. census, you go to Special Record Collections and press 1950 under U.S. Census Records. Under National Archives on the right-hand side of the page, enter the state, county, and city you wish to search. The enumeration districts are located under Ashland, Boyd County, Kentucky. If you know the street address of your family in 1950, you can find the street in the enumeration districts and then search page by page until you find your family. I found Clarence M. Newman living with his wife and son on 2327 29th Street, next door to his wife's brother Addison R. Tate. I saved the link to my grandfather Clarence on my Ancestry Family Tree.



Clarence M. Newman, ca 1950 (Photo from Author's Collection)

FamilySearch

According to FamilySearch, the 1950 census for the state of Kentucky is unavailable on their site, along with all the other states except Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Florida, which are

all about 35% indexed. Virginia, Illinois, and Louisiana are about 1% indexed.

National Archives

On www.archives.gov/research/census/1950 you click "Search the 1950 Census." On the page that comes up click "Begin Search." You can enter your state, county, name, and enumeration district. I entered Kentucky, Boyd, and Newman. Clarence did not appear in the results. When I entered Kentucky, Boyd, and Tate, Jate showed in enumeration district 10-31. My grandfather Clarence Newman is Neurnan in that result. I tried Ne*, but special search characters don't appear to work with optical character recognition. I had much better luck with my grandmother in Middletown, Butler County, Ohio. I entered Ohio, Butler County, and Helen Taylor. Helen Taylor was in enumeration district 9-70.

What Can You Learn from the 1950 US Census Right Now?

From the 1950 U.S. census, I learned that my grandfather, Clarence M. Newman, lived at 2327 29th Street in Ashland, Kentucky. The house was not a farm or ranch, and the property was less than three acres. If he had lived on a farm, he would have had to fill out an agricultural questionnaire [www.census.gov/history/pdf/1950instructions.pdf]. He was a