

USING CITY DIRECTORIES TO TEACH HISTORY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHODS

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It is often hard for students to get a feel for the explosiveness of growth and change in American cities in the nineteenth century. City directories are a rich and readily accessible source of data that may be used to concretize this experience and to test generalizations about residential and occupational mobility in the nineteenth century. This essay explains the nature and availability of city directories and suggests ways teachers may use them to allow students to test and verify for themselves the content being taught in history courses and to learn basic methods of historical research and use of primary sources. Reference is made in the text and footnotes to monographs and articles that employ methods similar to those presented in each model exercise.

The city directory was, and still is, intended primarily for business uses. It was created in a time in which messengers took communications from one place to another and it served many of the purposes of a modern telephone directory in providing addresses. Since people and businesses moved frequently it was necessary to issue an updated directory each year. The directory was also an "advertisement" to attract new businesses or residents. Before the Civil War directories were often an ancillary enterprise undertaken by a printer or a newspaper editor who hired persons to canvass the city and collect information on residents.¹ After the Civil War the production of city directories became commercialized and standardized. Some companies produced directories for numerous cities, and even cities in several states.² In 1898 directory publishers established a national organization. The officers in 1901 included R. L. Polk and Rueben H. Donnelly.³ The R. L. Polk, still produces city directories.

City directories are usually thought of as alphabetical lists of the residents of a city that provide the following information on individuals listed: name, occupation (and sometimes place of employment), address, and, in a few cases, whether the person owns or rents the residence. Directories in many parts of the country distinguished African-Americans, usually by using "c" or "col'd" after the name, but also by printing an asterisk in front of the name, by italicizing the name or by

¹ Peter R. Knights, "City Directories as Aids to Ante-Bellum Urban Studies: A Research Note," *Historical Methods Newsletter*, 2 (September 1969), 1-10; Sidney Goldstein, "City Directories as Sources of Migration Data," *American Journal of Sociology*, 60 (September 1954), 169-76.

² David B. Gould, for example, prepared directories for Peoria, Bloomington, and Springfield in Illinois and for St. Louis, Missouri. *Gould's Peoria City Directory for 1880-1, being a Complete Index to the Residents, a Classified Business Directory, and containing an Appendix of Useful Information of the Churches, Societies, Banks, City, County, and Other Miscellaneous Matter* (Peoria: David B. Gould, 1881), 9. Adams, Sampson and Co. and then Sampson, Davenport and Co. served several cities in Rhode Island, Albany and Troy in New York, several cities in Massachusetts, and produced a New England Business Directory in the 1860s. In 1867 Sampson, Davenport and Co. styled themselves "Statisticians and Publishers of Directories." *The Providence Directory, for the Year 1867: Containing a General Directory of the Citizens, and Business Directory, of the State of Rhode Island, City Record, Etc., Etc.* (Providence: Sampson, Davenport and Co, 1867), 4.

³ *Wright's Directory of Milwaukee for 1901 Containing a General Directory of the Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and a Revised Map of the City* (Milwaukee: A. G. Wright, 1901), 14.

indenting the name. Businesses and institutions are also included in the alphabetical listings. City directories also contain a classified section comparable to the yellow pages of the telephone directory. Most have lists of local public officials and officers of fraternal, civic, or charitable societies. Most also list the staff of educational institutions and hospitals, as well as executives or board members of banks or corporations. The most unusual such listing I found was of the communicants of a half-dozen or so churches in the 1867 Atlanta city directory.⁴ Often the directory contained a short history of the city, a description of the wards, a map of the city.

The limitations of the city directories as research and teaching tools are very much a function of the purpose they were created to serve. Low income groups, African-Americans, and dependent women were not important to the business community and were underrepresented. Listings were, for practical purposes, of households, and the adult breadwinner was typically the only person listed. Other employed person in the household might be listed separately, but members of the household who were not employed outside the home were invisible. Incompleteness and bias do not disqualify city directories as instructional or research materials, but we must remember those qualities.

Another problem in using city directories is in the spelling of names. Often, information was communicated orally and the directory recorder simply wrote it down as well as possible. Also, name spellings were not standardized, even when the person was writing his or her own name. Directory compilers were conscious of this problem. J. W. Norris, the editor of the *General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago . . . 1844* advised his readers:

The greatest exertion has been made to give the names of Germans and other Old County people, correctly. Notwithstanding this, mistakes will doubtless be discovered in the orthography of these names, owing to the fact, that many are unable to spell their own names, in English.⁵

This "problem" may be turned to some advantage by using it as a basis for class discussion of the Americanization of names. Students might also discuss names as a part of cultural or personal identity.

A large collection of city directories is available on microfiche and microfilm. Directories up through 1860 are on microfiche; those for the 1861-1901 period and a large number for the period from 1901 to 1935 are on microfilm.⁶ Since the microfilm for an individual city may be purchased separately, it is possible for a school to acquire an adequate body of material at a reasonable price. Many

⁴ *Barnwell's Atlanta City Directory, and Strangers Guide: Also a General Firemen's, Church, Masonic, and Odd-Fellows's Record* (Atlanta: Intelligencer Book and Job Office, 1867), 62-85.

⁵ J. W. Norris, *General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the year 1844; together with a historical sketch and statistical account to the present time* (Chicago: Ellis & Fergus, 1844), iv.

⁶ Segment I, on microfiche, includes the directories listed in Dorothy N. Spear, comp., *Bibliography of American Directories through 1860* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1961). Segments II and III include the fifty largest cities and 22 other cities chosen to round out sectional representation. Segment IV which will cover from 1901 to 1935 is in process. It is possible to purchase copies of directories for a single city. Both microfiche and microfilm are available from Research Publications, 12 Lunar Drive/Drawer AB, Woodbridge, CT 06525 (1-800-732-2477).

Lime, Cement, Salt, Lumber,
COAL, SASH, DOORS,
BLINDS, LATH, SHINGLES,

J. M. FORDICE

1001 W. MARKET ST.

114 BLOOMINGTON AND NORMAL

BLOOMINGTON
STOVES.
Holder, Milner & Co.
ACORN
STOVES.

Barton James O, hostler Kemp & Lowrey, rms same, *Normal.*

Barton John H Rev (col'd), pastor Mt Pisgah Baptist church, res 1217 S Mason.

Barton Lucinda (col'd), (wid Milton), res 310 S School, *Normal.*

Barton Olive (wid George), res 304 N School, *Normal.*

Barton Osceola (col'd), porter G Champion, res 310 S School, *Normal.*

Barton Stephen K (col'd), bricklayer, res 1104 N Center

Barton W Carey (col'd), tinner T B Kent, res 310 S School, *Normal.*

Bartz John, res n w cor Madison and Baker.

Bassett Arthur, music teacher, res 508 S Fell ave, *Normal.*

Bassett Barzilla, farmer, res 508 S Fell ave, *Normal.*

Bassett Herbert, teacher, res 508 S Fell ave, *Normal.*

Bassett Irene Miss, res 508 S Fell ave, *Normal.*

Bassett Win, lab, res 803 W Jefferson.

BATCHELDER GEORGE L, Electrician; Electrical Apparatus, 611 E Olive, res same.

GEO. L. BATCHELDER,
- Electrician. -

Electrical Apparatus put in and Repaired.

Bells, Gas Lighters, Annunciators, Burglar Alarms, Electric Matting; Furnace Regulators, Batteries of all kinds, and Speaking Tubes, Electric Light wiring and concealed work a specialty.

Wires run without Injury to Walls or Floors.

Residence: 611 East Olive Street.



Batchelder George W, trav agt, res 611 E Olive.

Bate George W, musician, bds Wait's Hotel.

Bateman Cora Miss, waitress Hotel Folsom.

Bates Eugene, student I W U, rms 1012 N Prairie.

universities already have some or all of this collection. Not all city directories were filmed and teachers should also check the public library, historical society, county clerk's office, or nearby university library for runs of local directories.

City directories are an excellent resource for teachers wishing to engage students in projects that will enhance their historical knowledge and sharpen their research skills. The assignments presented here are designed for use in senior high school and introductory survey courses at the college or university level. They are based on assignments I have used in an introductory U.S. history survey course. Teachers may adapt them to particular instructional goals or other grade levels by adjusting the focus, length, or complexity of the assignments. Assignments may also be adapted to create group projects.

City directories are important sources of evidence in answering many questions historians ask about groups of people. They are most commonly used in studies of population growth, residential mobility, occupational distribution and occupational mobility.

These projects also introduce students to historical research methods and the use of primary sources. In the course of each exercise students practice collecting and analyzing data and writing up conclusions. Learning to describe the population of a community in numerical terms can ease student fears about quantitative history and mathematics in general. The number and percent of the population that is in a particular occupational or ethnic classification represents a simple frequencies distribution (how often a phenomenon occurs). Working with these simple numerical or descriptive statistical techniques enables students to become more sophisticated readers of numerical information in textbooks, newspapers, and elsewhere even if they never design and carry out projects involving larger populations.

POPULATION GROWTH AND MOBILITY

The most obvious way to use city directories is in studying the growth and transiency of city population. Nineteenth-century American cities experienced a population explosion. The federal census gives us population figures at decennial intervals; in a few cases (Illinois, for example) state censuses give us figures at intervals between federal censuses. City directories give us more frequent indicators. Larger cities had annual directories; smaller cities like Bloomington, Illinois, had biennial (or less frequent) directories.

Many studies conducted using city directories, manuscript censuses, and other local records suggest that rapid population growth in nineteenth-century cities was accompanied by a high rate of population turnover. In such diverse nineteenth-century cities as Poughkeepsie, Atlanta, Boston, Birmingham, Omaha, and Philadelphia, the percentage of persons remaining in town from one census year to the next ranged from 30% to 64%.⁷ These data suggest a high level of population mobility. But these figures do not fully reveal the process of population turnover since they represent measurements taken at ten-year intervals. For example, the population of Atlanta grew by 71% during the 1870s, yet only 44% of the persons

⁷ Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 222-223.

listed in the 1870 census remained in 1880. Newcomers had to replace outmigrants before net growth could take place. No doubt many newcomers left before the next census.

Stephan Thernstrom combined information from city directories with census data to detail this process in Boston in the 1880s. The population increased by an impressive 24%, from 363,000 to 448,000. The turnover of Boston's population, that is, the movement of people into and out of the city, involved a much larger number of persons. In Boston and in many other cities the directories contained annotation, often in the "introduction," of how many listings had been dropped (outmigrants) and how many new listings had been added (newcomers). In Boston during the years 1881-1890, a total of 398,995 new listings had been added representing 157,816 families. Since the average size of a family in Boston was five, Thernstrom calculated that 789,080 persons moved into Boston during the decade. If people had not been leaving in comparably large numbers the population of Boston would have increased by more than 200%. People were leaving. During the years 1881-1890 a total of 351,529 listings were dropped representing 138,572 families. Thus, Thernstrom estimates, 692,860 persons moved out of Boston. Boston's net gain from a turnover of 1,481,840 people was only 96,220.⁸ It would seem that only a modest portion of the wave of people moving into Boston in those ten years remained while the rest went through Boston and on to other places. This sort of volatility in population movement raises the question of a floating proletariat.

Assignments designed to analyze population growth or turnover may be simple or sophisticated. Students may compare the names listed in a selected baseline directory with those in subsequent directories to observe not only the increase in population, but also the persistence rate (per cent of original group remaining at a given time) and the dynamic of population turnover (in-migration shown in new entries and out-migration shown in absent entries) that is a part of that growth. (See Exercise 1 in Appendix.) Out-migration is difficult to calculate with absolute certainty since death, military service, confinement in an asylum or jail, as well as simple absence when the surveyor called may explain the disappearance of an entry. One of my students using a sample population of the first fifty names in a city directory found only 27 of them (54% persistence rate) still listed eight years later. She also found that the fiftieth name on her list was the 135th name in the second list (270% increase).

INTRACITY MOBILITY

City directories also allow us to study movement within the city. Recently scholars have argued that levels of intracity mobility have been high throughout American history. Using city directories to analyze population mobility in Boston between 1830 and 1860 Peter Knights calculated that approximately one family in three moved each year and suggested that, if adjustments were made for the underrepresentation of lower income groups, it would be more accurate to suggest that 40-50% of the households moved to new Boston addresses each year.⁹ In a

⁸ Thernstrom, *Other Bostonians*, 15-20.

⁹ Peter R. Knights, "Population Turnover, Persistence, and Residential Mobility in Boston, 1830-1860," in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 267-271.

later study Knights and Stephan Thernstrom found that 28-39% of the listings in each Boston city directory from 1881 to 1890 were new Boston addresses while only 40-53% of the listings remained at the same address from one year to the next.¹⁰

Assignments may be designed to test these findings against the experience of another community (and often another time period as well). Students may use directories for several successive years to ascertain not only how many listings from the first directory persist in the city, but also how many persisters remain at the same address. (See Exercise 2 in Appendix.)

This procedure allows us to look at the rate at which people move about within the city. City directories do not explain why people move. Students may find additional reading necessary to support discussion of possible reasons. This assignment may also lead to fruitful comparison of the past with their own experiences.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Occupational information in city directories may be used to describe economic activities, or identify occupational mobility and economic change over time. Occupational information was provided by the respondent and different individuals may have used descriptors differently, but the information still gives considerable insight into the working lives of people. A simple assignment might have students count the number of persons in various occupations in a given year and develop a list of all the occupations in the community. (See Exercise 3 in Appendix.) From this profile of occupations students may readily identify the economic base of the community as agricultural, commercial, or industrial. They may also be able to identify dependency on a single industry or business and discuss the implications of that for a community.

Students might repeat this exercise to develop a series of occupational profiles of the community at five or ten-year intervals. Such occupational profiles tell us about changes in the types of jobs available and, thus, something about economic opportunity. These profiles could reflect the progress of the Industrial Revolution, imperfectly measured in the replacement of craftsmen-proprietors by wage earners, or, at least, suggest economic change through the appearance of new occupations or the decline of old ones. By observing the appearance of agents for national brands or railroad workers, students can also speculate on the growth of ties between the community and the regional or national economy.

Students may also group occupations into discrete categories (e.g., professional, clerical, semi-skilled, skilled) to study the job market. It may be useful to introduce one of several existing occupational hierarchies at the beginning of this

¹⁰ Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1 (Autumn 1970), 30.

exercise.¹¹ Alternatively, it is fun to allow students to experiment with the construction of an occupational hierarchy themselves.

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

Occupational change is often used to suggest economic and social mobility since a person's job is often taken as an indicator of income and social status. Clearly, there is no direct relationship. Neither all lawyers nor all tailors earn the same income or have the same status in their communities. Career counselors advise us that the average person will change careers (not just jobs or employers) four or more times. Information in city directories allows us to see whether that generalization describes the past as well as the present. There is a popular image that opportunity for upward economic mobility is not as great as it was in the nineteenth century. At the same time scholars have challenged the image of the nineteenth century as an age in which opportunities for economic advancement were readily available and a few decades of hard work enabled a craftsman to move from employee to owner. Stuart Blumin, in a study of Philadelphia, documents the shift from proprietorship opportunities that had been readily available for craftsmen in 1820 to the predominance of wage-earning positions for workers in 1860.¹² Occupational information in city directories helps us test these conflicting general views against the experience of real people in a particular time and place.

Students might look at occupational change by using a list of persisters (See Exercise 1.) to see how many persons changed jobs from one year to the next, or over a longer period of time. Students would select a dozen or more persons and follow them through city directories for a number of years recording occupational and residential information. (See Exercise 4 in the Appendix.) Obviously, limiting the study to persisters raises questions about representativeness and reliability. Persons who left town may have been more or less successful. Tracing specific

¹¹ Several occupational classification schemes exist that can readily be adapted for use in high school and undergraduate projects. Many have been developed in the course of mobility studies and therefore reflect the research agenda and city-specific data peculiar to that project. Yet, there is much similarity between classification schemes. A good starting place would be Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*, Appendix B "On the Socio-economic ranking of occupations," 289-302. This scheme has been adapted by other scholars, including Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 232-244. In *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City*, Michael Katz offers a scheme that is particularly appropriate for pre-industrial cities. Margo A. Conk provides an explanation of categories used by the Census Bureau in "Occupational Classification in the United States Census: 1870-1940," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9 (Summer 1978), 111-130.

¹² Stuart Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," in Thernstrom and Sennett, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Cities*, 197-199. Paul B. Worthman, "Working Class Mobility in Birmingham, Alabama, 1880-1914," in Tamara K. Hareven, ed., *Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), 172-213; Stuart Blumin, "The Historical Study of Vertical Mobility," *Historical Methods Newsletter*, 1 (September 1968), 1-13; Patrick M. Horan, "The Structure of Occupational Mobility: Conceptualization and Analysis," *Social Forces*, 53 (September 1974), 33-45; Lawrence E. Hazelrigg, "Occupational Mobility in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Cities: A Review of Some Evidence," *Social Forces*, 53 (September 1974), 21-32; Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Poughkeepsie* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Sidney Goldstein, *Patterns of Mobility, 1910-1950: The Norristown Study. A Method for Measuring Migration and Occupational Mobility in the Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958).

individuals over several years using city directories alone is a tricky business. The 1897 Minneapolis city directory contained no fewer than a hundred listings for persons named Andrew Anderson.¹³ Most of them had no middle initial listed. Thus, it is important to select relatively uncommon names.

City directories do not offer explanations of why people change jobs or careers. Yet, information on the frequency of such changes can contribute to discussions of job security, economic opportunity, career development, and other employment issues. Parallel examinations of businesses to see how many businesses failed (listings dropped) might round out student understanding of the overall precariousness of economic activities.¹⁴

To go from listing job and career changes to measuring socio-economic mobility requires a vertical occupational hierarchy that is valid over time. This is easier to discuss than to construct since occupational hierarchies are subjective indicators of the prestige attached to an occupation by contemporaries and it is difficult to reconstruct the value system of the nineteenth century. It is worth discussing and the process itself improves student understanding of society in the past. In one assignment I asked students to identify persons whose occupational changes represented upward movement and persons whose occupational changes represented downward movement. Since I had given them no occupational hierarchy, they were left to their own devices. Uniformly, they regarded a move in the 1890s from any occupation to teaching as a downward move and from teaching to any other occupation as an upward move. Perhaps this says something about the imposition of twentieth-century values on the past.

Occupation is at best only a partial indicator of socio-economic status. Nonetheless, the issue of the relationship between occupation (or wealth) and status and personal satisfaction may be fruitful for classroom discussion of values, economic opportunity, and even of personal career goals.

SPECIAL SUBSETS

City directories may also be used in projects that focus on particular subsets of the population such as women, ethnic groups, occupational groups, and neighborhoods. Although married women were rarely included in directories, widows and women in domestic occupations often were so that students can develop a profile of economic activities open to women. Using the techniques illustrated in Exercise 3 students may develop an occupational profile for women (using the first 50-75 female names). They might then construct similar profiles for women at five-year or ten-year intervals to find out what changes occurred in employment opportunities for women. Alternatively, they might develop occupational profiles for both females and males and compare the two.

Using those directories that identified African-Americans, it is often possible to look at them in isolation or in comparison to the rest of the population. The

¹³ Davison's *Minneapolis City Directory Containing an Alphabetical List of Business Firms, Corporations and Private Citizens; a Map of the City, a Miscellaneous Directory of the City, County and State Officers, Churches, Schools, Etc.* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Directory Co., 1897), 114-115.

¹⁴ R. G. and A. R. Hutchinson and Mabel Newcomer, "A Study in Business Mortality: Length of Life of Business Enterprise in Poughkeepsie, New York, 1843-1936," *American Economic Review*, 28 (September 1938), 497-514.

pervasiveness of racism hit home to one of my students when she found African-Americans identified by race in the directories of a northern city in the late nineteenth century. Ethnic groups with identifiable surnames may be treated in a similar fashion.¹⁵ Students might look for ethnic concentration in a particular occupation or industry by adapting the techniques illustrated in Exercise 3. They might also construct occupational profiles at periodic intervals to look for change in occupational opportunity over time. Students might also use a map of the city and locate ethnic neighborhoods. This is, of course, much easier if the city directory has a street directory.

Students might create other subsets of the population by looking through the directory and listing persons in "upper class" occupations such as bank or corporate presidents, lawyers, and the like. They might then locate the residences of these people on a map to see whether there were discernible enclaves of affluence and power. Similar exercises listing and locating particular types of businesses would enable students to observe the formation of a central business district or the concentration of manufacturing plants along transportation arteries.

In addition to the alphabetical lists of residents, a few city directories offered a second listing arranged by street and house number. Unfortunately, very few did in the nineteenth century. Using this listing students can study neighborhoods in terms of ethnicity, persistence rates, and occupational distribution or concentration. Such assignments might be limited to one year or might be designed to study change over time.

The model exercises in the appendix are designed to capitalize on the availability of city directories to give students projects that reinforce instructional material and strengthen research skills. By studying a unique sample population each student will have a unique vantage point from which to contribute an expert analysis to class discussion. Doing research on previously unstudied populations is often a "turn on" for students and they may well find their appetites whetted and undertake projects for History Fair or advanced courses based on these models and using a broader range of sources.

When assignments involve no more than fifty or even seventy-five individuals, students can count the number of persons in a category and readily perform the appropriate calculations. However, if a database is developed for larger and more sophisticated projects, it will be necessary to look for ways to reduce the time and labor (as well as potential for error) involved in simple counting and sorting tasks. Some inexpensive and "user friendly" statistical software is available.¹⁶

Teachers who have the inclination and the resources may use these exercises over the course of several semesters to lay the foundation for more extensive and sophisticated analyses of a community involving large populations. Students from each successive class may be given assignments that add to the database. One class

¹⁵ Help in identifying national origin of surnames may be found in J. N. Hook, *Family Names: How Our Surnames Came to America* (New York: Macmillan, 1982) or Elsdon C. Smith, *American Surnames* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Co., 1969).

¹⁶ For a good discussion of a range of software packages see James B. M. Schick, "Historical Computing: Looking Forward to 2001 from 1989," *Teaching History*, 14 (Fall 1989), 70-77 and John F. McClymer, "Using Database Software in Undergraduate Survey Courses," *Teaching History*, 12 (Fall 1987), 10-17.

of twenty students (looking at fifty entries each) can accumulate data on a thousand listings. Subsequent classes could add to the database and have the advantage of comparing their findings to those of earlier classes. Other source materials (census, tax records, etc.) may be incorporated over time in the same small-project manner. Exercise 5 allows students to compare city directories to the federal census and pose a wider range of questions. Before you know it your classroom or school has become, at its own level, a research institute. Opportunities for interdisciplinary projects are abundant. The database created by one year's projects can be analyzed from a different perspective the next year, or used in economics or sociology classes. If the local community is the focus of the ongoing research project, it will be easy to arrange public presentations, newspaper stories, walking tours in collaboration with the local historical society, and other exciting ventures.

APPENDIX

EXERCISE 1: POPULATION GROWTH

Select a city for which you have two or more directories at close intervals.

Step 1 Copy complete information for each of 50 entries in the earliest directory. (List A)

Step 2 From a subsequent directory copy complete information for as many entries as are required to include the last name from your first list. (List B) Entry No. 50 may have moved, so don't worry if the last name from List A is No. 48 or even No. 35.

These two lists form the database for this assignment and may be kept for use in subsequent assignments.

In a few paragraphs summarize your findings. What is the amount and rate of population increase? (Count the entries in List B. Divide by 50 to obtain a rate of increase or decrease expressed in a percent. Each directory entry effectively represents a household. To obtain population figures multiply by family size, say 5 persons.)

What is the overall persistence rate? (Count the entries from List A that appear in List B. These are the "persisters." Divide this number by 50 to obtain the persistence rate expressed in a percent.)

How great was population turnover? (Count the listings from List A that you did not find in List B. Count the entries in List B that were not in List A. The sum of these equals population turnover.)

Can you suggest a reason for the rate of increase, persistence, or turnover in your city? Are the rates consistent with the national trends and patterns as presented in text and in class?

EXERCISE 2: INTRACITY RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY

Select a city for which you have directories for two consecutive years.

Step 1 Copy complete information for each of 50 persons in the earlier directory. (List A)

Step 2 From the second directory copy complete information for as many entries as are required to include the last name from your first list. (List B) Step 2 may be repeated several times to generate additional lists to allow students to study a population over a longer period of time.

These two lists form the database for this assignment and may be kept for use in subsequent assignments.

In a few paragraphs summarize your findings. What is the persistence rate? (Count the entries from List A that appear in List B. These are the persisters. Divide this number by 50 to obtain the persistence rate.) How many and what percent of the persisters remain at the same address? How many and what percent of the persisters have moved? Do you have any idea why? Can you identify any difference between the persisters who moved and those who did not?

EXERCISE 3: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION PROFILE

- Step 1 Copy complete information on 75 persons listed in a city directory.
- Step 2 Count the number of persons in each occupation.
- Step 3 Create a two-column listing with the occupations from most common to least common in one column and the number of persons in that occupation in the other column. (Table I)

The list generated in step 1 and the table created in step 3 form the database for this assignment and may be kept for use in subsequent assignments.

In a few paragraphs summarize your findings. Based on Table I, is the economic base of the community commerce, agriculture, transportation, or manufacturing? What occupations and what percent of the persons in List A are concentrated in that economic sector? Is your community dependent upon a single economic activity?

Look at the list of occupations again. Group them into a few categories such as professional, clerical, skilled, or unskilled. What does this tell you about the community? Is it a blue-collar community? A white-collar community?

EXERCISE 4: OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

Select a city for which you have directories at fairly close intervals over several decades

- Step 1 Select two dozen individuals of relatively uncommon (in that directory) surnames who seem to have a middle or lower class occupation, or an entry-level job.
- Step 2 Follow those individuals through successive city directories and record residential and occupational information on each for each year. A pool of two dozen may seem large, but given the high population turnover it is necessary if you are to have any persisters after a decade or two.

The lists of residential and occupational information for each person form the database for this assignment and may be kept for use in subsequent assignments.

Using an occupational hierarchy from a published source or one that has been developed in class, describe the occupational careers of these persons. How many of them are still in town? How many have changed jobs? Careers? Have any kept the same job the whole time? How can you explain that? What is the average number of job or career changes per person? Were residential moves associated with job changes? How many moved up? How many moved down?

¹ Senior Seminar papers are on file in my office. Due to the private and confidential nature of these projects, titles are either altered or omitted by the writer.

² See Niagara University, *Disorganization Catalog*, 195-199.

³ David B. Krog and Myron A. Marty, *Your Family History: A Handbook for Research and Writing* (Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing Corp., 1978).

EXERCISE 5: EVALUATION OF SOURCES

Select a city for which you have a directory for a census year. If possible, use a directory that has a house list as well as an alphabetical list. Then students can compare the route of the census taker and that of the directory compiler more readily.

Step 1 Copy complete information on 50 *households* listed in the census. Select them from a single ward or neighborhood.

Step 2 Locate in the city directory as many persons from the census list as possible. Copy complete information on each person you find.

These two lists form the database for this assignment and may be kept for use in subsequent assignments.

In a few paragraphs summarize your findings. Did you find everyone? If not, which document is more inclusive? What kinds of people are in the census, but not in the city directory and vice versa? What sort of information about the people is included in the census and not in the directory and vice versa? Compare occupational titles in the census with those in the city directory. How would you explain any differences?

Some directory compilers stated that the ratio of directory *entries* to census *population* was 1:3 or 1:4. What is the ratio in your city? What is the average family size in your census sample? How many children did families have? Imagine several research projects and discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of each of these sources for each project.