

Historians Gain Access To 1901 Nominal Census

by D.A. Muise

Until very recently the nominal records for the decennial census have been available to researchers only according to a rough application of a "hundred-year rule". Since the application of the Access to Information Act the rules have changed and researchers have obtained permission to examine the 1901 census manuscript.— ed.

The 1901 nominal census is on deposit with the Government Archives Division of the National Archives of Canada. Access to the manuscript is possible through Access to Information/Privacy requests under a regulation providing for confidentiality-assured access to sensitive materials for scholarly purposes. Any data bases created from this material must be anonymized before publication.

An application must be made through the Access to Information Section of the Government Archives Division (see Carol White at 613-996-1376). Decisions are made by a panel of archivists on each application based on a consideration of submitted research proposals. The decision process normally takes about a month but can take a bit longer in special circumstances, as all applications have to be adjudicated by outside authorities who recommend the appropriate action to the Archives' committee.

Two schedules of the census have survived. Schedule one includes the sort of detailed personal data available in earlier censuses, enhanced greatly by much more detailed information concerning occupations, place of employment, nature of employment and earnings during the previous twelve months. In addition, there is fuller information concerning birth dates, mother tongue, year of immigration and year of naturalization for immigrants.

This new information's utility will be immediately apparent to all demographic researchers. The information on the world of work and incomes will be directly important to all social historians interested in the work process or the dynamics of community development. A particularly useful innovation in this schedule is an

explicit question regarding relationship to the head of household, which eliminates a load of guess-work when coding.

A second schedule pertains directly to property ownership. Linkable to the first schedule through page and line references, it allows attribution on an individual basis of the sorts of property owned. In some cases accurate information regarding place of residence is given, while in others it is more sketchy, with only streets or districts named, though it is possible to make a pretty accurate guess as to the routes followed by the enumerators.

Even with these limitations, a considerable amount can still be gleaned by integrating the property materials with personal information, if only to get an accurate picture of relationships between tenancy or ownership of accommodation, or the relative densities of housing for various sections of the workforce. The type of construction and the number of rooms are the key variables, along with information pertaining to any out-buildings, etc. There is also accurate information regarding the holdings by

institutions and corporations.

The research potential for the 1901 nominal records is unlimited. It captures a population in rapid transition, detailing the state of the Canadian community at a critical juncture. As researchers begin to gain access to the material, it might be an opportunity for those interested in a more systematic approach to the utilization of this information to come forward with proposals for a common approach to its coding in machine readable formats. With so many different systems and research agendas, the danger is that there will be little compatibility or comparability amongst the various initiatives to be undertaken.

I have already completed coding for three Maritime communities and plan a number of others. I would be willing to share my experience and code-books in the hope that it might lead to improved data-gathering and, ultimately, to the exchange of raw data of a comparable nature for comparative analysis. I can be reached at: Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, N.S., B1P 6L2.

The Uprooting of Historical Sites

by Dominique Jean

Something is wrong in the historical sites business in London, England. For example, actors and art historians are having enormous difficulties convincing the Secretary of State in taking a stand regarding the conservation of the ruins of the *Rose*, the theatre in which Shakespeare and his troupe played. This site was also the last battle of Sir Laurence Olivier, who recently brought *The Bard* to life in a television series, and who inspired all of England. And still, the fate of the *Rose* hangs in the balance. At this moment, it is still a possibility that an office tower will be built on the site, or as a compromise, built over the site on pilings in order to preserve and expose the ruins.

There is, however, another genre of historical attractions that is safe from the real estate developers, one that this impasse may just encourage: those which attempt to recount a slice of history by "recreating" it without bothering too much about authentic sites or objects. Wax museums, disneylands, western villages are examples. In London, the most representative of these is the *Dungeon*, a house of horrors - in historical context, of course. This "formula" type of attraction is only as good as it is exportable, perhaps with minor cultural adaptations. The owner, a hero of Thatcher's "economic miracle", is planning to open a franchise in Paris; he need only add a few guillotines. He took advantage of the bicentennial festivities of July 1989 to do market research - selling quarts of fake blood - which yielded conclusive results.

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