

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.

... *Uprooting*, p. 9

Uprooting of Historical Sites

from page 3

Another version of the same approach made the London headlines three months ago. Short of funds, the administration of the *Royal Opera* seriously considered installing an amusement complex and "historic site" on its valuable property in the heart of the city. The planning with prospective American developers had progressed so far that, if it had not been for the early detection by the *Guardian*, and for the irregular method the Opera administration planned to use to circumvent zoning regulations, Cajun, Chinese and Mexican "corners" would have popped up in the shadow of Nelson's column. Meanwhile, developers in other parts of the world are going crazy trying to recreate a bit of olde England. Soon, like the sign on the King's Road Men's Store which reads "for men who would be boys; and for boys who would be men", the whole world will be something that it is not.

The same malaise, it seems to me, controls the fate of the *Rose*, the *Dungeon*, and the *Royal Opera* - promoters behave as if historic sites and historic objects are not sufficiently valuable in

their own right. It is as if we need to interpose, between history and tourists, the techniques of inflation, as if reality is too small, too simple, too trivial.

Although I have only seen them in photographs, I can understand why the pieces of wood from the *Rose* have moved those who fight for its preservation - the shape of the stage, its surprising modesty, and the amazing train of images it sets in motion. It is no coincidence that actors and producers are among the most touched. Fetishism, a deranged cult of ancient objects, some say. Shakespeare's plays have been passed down to us and that is all that is important. Perhaps. But it is only on the site of the *Rose* that certain things can happen. It is as though there, an idol is made mortal, heroes again approach the human. It is probably this humanity that is the most unbearable to those who care less about the site.

I am willing to wager that there will soon be a Shakespeare attraction park somewhere in London, complete with a replica of the *Rose*, but cleaner, more

sparkling, with a giant statue of the playwright. Unless Enoch Powell has his way. This former conservative member of parliament wants the existing images of Shakespeare denounced, "This butcher's face cannot be Shakespeare."

This tendency to place authors of important works among the ranks of demigods, among an aristocracy that is larger than life, leaves no room today for the imagination to continue to flourish. Indeed, the return to real proportions of these so-called geniuses is required not only for historical honesty but to encourage young creators.

OBITUARY

James A. Tague, former head of the History Department, President of the Faculty Association, and Coordinator of introductory history courses at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, passed away on June 8, 1989. He had been a member of the CHA since 1965.

Regionalism versus Parochialism

from page 7

David Alexander suggests that the effort is worthwhile. For the mainland historian, writing about Prince Edward Island too can be difficult. Smaller can be beautiful but not necessarily easier to understand. As Buckner observes, "regionalism and other 'limited identities' will make the study of our history less easy and the history we write more complex". Yet the excellence of the product justifies the effort. Regionalism as a counter to parochialism at national and local levels works against human nature. In the name of better history, it deserves encouragement through education, promotion and constructive criticism.

1 See Mason Wade (ed.), *Regionalism in the Canadian Community 1867-1967: Canadian Historical Association Centennial Seminars* (Toronto, 1969), pp. v-vii.

2 Ramsay Cook, "Canadian Centennial Celebrations", *International Journal*, XXXII (Autumn 1967), p. 663 and J.M.S. Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, L (March 1969), pp. 2, 3.

3 See "Abstracts for a Colloquium on Maritime Provinces History" compiled for the CHA annual meeting, June 7, 1972 by the History Division, National Museum of Man; G.A. Rawlyk, "A New Golden Age of Maritime Historiography?", *Queen's Quarterly*, LXXVI, 1 (Spring 1969), pp. 55-65.

4 Ramsay Cook, "Regionalism Unmasked", *Acadiensis*, XIII, 1 (Autumn 1983), p. 141; Ramsay Cook, *Canada, Quebec and the Uses of Nationalism* (Toronto, 1986), p. 11; J.M.S. Careless, "Limited

Identities — ten years later", *Manitoba History*, I (1980), p. 3.

5 W.G. Godfrey, "A New Golden Age: Recent Historical Writing on the Maritimes", *Queen's Quarterly*, 91/2 (Summer 1984), p. 372; Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (2nd ed., Toronto, 1986), p. 267.

6 John Reid, "Towards the Elusive Synthesis: The Atlantic Provinces in the Recent General Treatments of Canadian History", *Acadiensis*, XVI, 2 (Spring 1987), p. 113.

7 Phil Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces' Perspective", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, v. 23, 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 1988), p. 184.