

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Spring 1987

History 902/979

Research Seminar in American Urban History

Mr. Schultz

Purpose of the Seminar:

The purpose of this seminar is to acquaint participants with the basic methods and techniques of research in history, particularly with those fundamental to American urban history. The instructor assumes, whether or not correctly, that participants will not be fully familiar with some of the necessary techniques of research and writing. Part of the seminar will concentrate on some of those techniques. Participants will become familiar with the resources of the State Historical Society and learn how to use a variety of research tools. We also will devote one or more sessions of the seminar to an analysis and discussion of effective written presentation of materials.

In addition to discussion of various problems of research and writing, and, as the most important part of the seminar, each participant will prepare and present to the other members of the seminar a paper based upon primary research materials dealing with some aspect of American urban history. We will discuss in class the broad range of topics available; each participant will be free to choose his or her own topic, with the consent of the instructor. The instructor expects participants to write a research paper of publishable quality and on a subject of interest sufficient to excite more than two other graduate students and three "experts" in the field. The library contains uncounted published materials that have not yet perished, but should have. In one sense, all research is valuable, but most of it only to an academy of dullards. We will exert every effort to not add to the "Caesar's Column" of dreary research.

One significant trend in urban history over recent years has been a growing enthusiasm for quantitative research. The instructor encourages members of the seminar already familiar with or eager to experiment with quantitative methods to base part or all of their research on such techniques. Be forewarned, however, that "numbers crunching," expertly or amateurishly accomplished, is no substitute for effective writing and that any quantitative presentation must achieve the same standard of excellence of literary style as non-quantitative papers.

Each participant in the seminar is responsible for making copies of his or her paper available to all other members, for reading all of the other members' papers, and for critically commenting on those papers. In regard to the latter, we are not interested in bloodletting; at the same time, pusillanimous praises portend no promise of pertinent purpose.

Texts:

Purchase and read:

David R. Goldfield and Blaine A. Brownell, URBAN AMERICA: FROM DOWNTOWN TO NO TOWN
Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, THE MODERN RESEARCHER (rev. ed.)
William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Other readings and works assigned will be available in the State Historical Society and/or in several other libraries on campus.

Readings:

- (1,2) John Madge, The Tools of Social Science (1953), pp. 75-119
- (1,2) J. Dennis Willigan & Katherine A. Lynch, Sources and Methods of Historical Demography (1982), pp. 79-108.
- (1) John B. Sharpless and Ray M. Shortridge, "Biased Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts: Methodological Implications," Journal of Urban History, I (1975), pp. 409-439
- (2) Peter R. Knights, "City Directories as Aids to Ante-Bellum Urban Studies: A Research Note," in Historical Methods Newsletter, II (1969), pp. 1-10
- (1) Sidney Goldstein, Patterns of Mobility, 1910-1950: The Norristown Study (1958), pp. 68-89, and 90-125
- (2) Gideon Sjoberg and R. Nett, A Methodology for Social Research (1968), pp. 129-59
- (1) M. F. Jackson and R. F. Curtis, "Conceptualization and Measurement in the Study of Social Stratification," in H. M. Blalock and A. B. Blalock (eds.), Methodology in Social Research, pp. 112-149
- (2) Melvin M. Tumin and Arnold S. Freman, "Theory and Measurement of Occupational Mobility," American Sociological Review, XXII (1957), pp. 281-88

February 25

Urban Demography: Historical Applications

Readings:

- (1) Stuart Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," in Stephen Thernstrom and Richard Sennett (eds.), Nineteenth-Century Cities (1969), pp. 165-208
- (2) John Modell and Tamara K. Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families," Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXXV (1973), pp. 467-79
- (1) Richard J. Hopkins, "Status, Mobility, and the Dimensions of Change in a Southern City: Atlanta, 1870-1910," in Kenneth T. Jackson and Stanley K. Schultz (eds.), Cities in American History (1972), pp. 216-31
- (2) Paul B. Worthman, "Working Class Mobility in Birmingham, Alabama, 1880-1914," in Tamara K. Hareven, Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History (1971), pp. 172-213
- (1) Frank K. Furstenberg, Jr., John Modell, and Theodore Hershberg, "The Origins of the Female-Headed Black Family: The Impact of the Urban Experience," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, VI (1975), pp. 211-33
- (2) Elizabeth H. Pleck, "A Mother's Wages: Income Earning Among Married Italian and Black Women, 1896-1911," in Michael Gordon (ed.), The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective (2d ed., 1978), pp. 490-510

March 4

Residence in the Cities: Who Lives Where, and Why?

Assignment: Due in Class

1. go to the Eleventh Census of the U.S. (1890), volumes on "Vital Statistics" include information on various cities, including New York City, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. (information on other cities also available)
2. use a base map (ward map) for whichever city you choose to work with
3. map on a ward basis the foreign-born population. That is, show which wards have the highest concentration of foreign-born (use columns in census that list foreign-born and persons who have at least one parent who is foreign-born). To do this, you will have to: (a) compute the percentage of foreign-born in the total city population, (b) compute the percentage of foreign-born in each ward, and (c) determine which wards are over-represented and which are under-represented in foreign-born population
4. for those who wish to undertake an informative additional part of the exercise, compute a city-wide index of residential segregation and indicate which wards contributed most heavily to the index. For explanations of this simple technique (the accurate name for this is an "index of dissimilarity") see: Karl and Alma Taeuber, Negroes in Cities, p. 237; Charles Dollar and Richard Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics, p. 125; or, the appropriate section in Walter Izard, et al., Methods of Regional Analysis (1960)

Readings:

- (1) Judith E. Smith, "Our Own Kind: Family and Community Networks in Providence," Radical History Review, XVII (1978), pp. 99-120
- (2) Howard D. Chudacoff, "A New Look at Ethnic Neighborhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium-Sized City," Journal of American History, LX (1973), pp. 76-93
- (1) Stephanie W. Greenberg, "The Relationship Between Work and Residence in an Industrializing City: Philadelphia, 1880," in William W. Cutler, III and Howard Gillette, Jr., The Divided Metropolis: Social and Spatial Dimension of Philadelphia, 1800-1975 (1980), pp. 141-68
- (2) Peter R. Decker, "A Social Geography of the Urban Landscape," in his Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (1978), pp. 196-230

March 11

March 25

April 1

Discussion of Progress on Seminar Papers

Assignment: Due no later than 10 a.m., March 10, March 24, March 31

1. Prepare a detailed topic sentence outline of your research paper, presenting clearly your organization, the questions you are focusing on, the hypothesis you are testing, the answers (even if tentative at this point) you are providing. You are to write this in your best polished prose; it is, in essence, a rough draft of your paper although in outline form. On or before the above due dates, place two copies at the Reference Desk, SHSW and submit the original to the instructor.
2. Each member of the seminar will read the outlines provided by others and be prepared to comment on them in class.
3. Each participant in the seminar will have approximately 15 minutes allotted for an oral presentation of the topic. This time period must include time for discussion of the research by other members of the seminar, so keep your own presentation of your material brief.

April 8

The Nature of History

Readings: Barzun & Graff, Chs. 3-10

April 15

The Historian's Problems of Presentation

Readings: Barzun & Graff, Chs. 11-14; Strunk & White

April 22

Presentation of Seminar Papers

April 29

May 6

Due date for papers: to be announced