

Exploring City Directories: How to Trace Your Family in Yesterday's Yellow Pages

Syllabus

Instructor: Patricia Van Skaik

Lesson 1: Introduction and Orientation

- A. Origins and Purposes of City Directories
 - I. Procedures for compiling city directories
- B. Exploring the Directories
 - I. Complexity
 - II. Alphabetic listings
 - III. Abbreviations and symbols
 - IV. Occupational and legal terminology
 - V. Location of residents
 - i. "Missing" names
 - ii. Accuracy
 - VI. Annexation and Suburban Directories
 - VII. Locating Directories
- C. Exercise

Lesson 2: Delving Deeper into Directories

- A. Business Listings in the Alphabetical Section
- B. Cluster Genealogy
 - I. Occupation
 - II. Location
- C. Index to Advertisers
 - I. Case study: Fontayne and Porter
- D. Clubs and Organizations
- E. Location
 - I. Maps
 - II. Street names
 - III. Street descriptions
 - IV. Reverse street indexes
- F. Description of the Community
- G. Miscellaneous Information
- H. Rural Areas
- I. Exercise

Lesson 3: Electronic Access

- A. Online City Directory Providers
 - I. Volunteers
 - II. Libraries
 - III. Commercial Databases
 - IV. Finding Directories
- B. Online Search Features
 - I. Indexes, abstracts and transcriptions
 - a. Challenges
 - b. Strategies
 - II. Simple scans
 - a. Challenges
 - b. Strategies
 - III. Scans with sophisticated search options
 - a. Challenges
 - b. Strategies
- C. Exercise

Lesson 4: Using City Directories as a Launching Pad

- A. City Directories and the US Census
 - I. Geographic strategy
- B. Manufacturing/Industry Census Schedules
- C. Substitute Birth Certificates
- D. Marriage Records
- E. Deeds
- F. Death Records
- G. Exercise