

## Directories

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**A. WHAT IS A DIRECTORY?** Family History Library's Resource Outlines - "Lists of individuals and information about them, such as name, address, and telephone number. Directories usually focus on a specific group of people, such as all people living in a city or all members of an organization." Early directories include "The Directory or List of Principal Traders in London", published 1732 and "The Following Lists of Families and Other Persons Residing in the Town of Baltimore, Was Taken in the Year 1752, By a Lady of Respectability". Directories have been published for some US cities and counties since the early 1800s.

LOCALITY DIRECTORIES list people listed by a COMMON RESIDENCE - the typical "city directory". Residents of a given locality are listed alphabetically. Other information depends on the year and publisher of the directory - at a minimum, the address of the person is given. Other information may include wife's name, occupation, occupation address and an oft-misinterpreted code designating "residential status". Locality directories can also include information such as: city maps, indices to streets, addresses of churches or cemeteries, etc. They can be compiled for a particular city, a county (or part of a county), a specific region covering two (or more) counties, etc.

ATTRIBUTE or SPECIALIZED DIRECTORIES for a given area might include business or professional directories, denominational directories, etc.

- \* Directory of Dentists in Snohomish County
- \* Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military and Naval in the Service of the US
- \* Polish Directory for the City of Chicago (a business directory)
- \* The Official Catholic Directory
- \* American Baptist Register

REMEMBER - SPECIALIZED DIRECTORIES may be disguised as "registers", "catalogs", "annuals", "yearbooks", "guides", etc.

**B. EXPLORING A TYPICAL CITY DIRECTORY** (R. L. Polk Directory for Everett 1941)

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| * TITLE PAGE              | * TABLE OF CONTENTS          |
| * ABBREVIATIONS           | * EVERETT RESIDENTS          |
| * STREET and AVENUE GUIDE | * MARYSVILLE RESIDENTS       |
| * EVERETT BUSINESSES      | * SNOHOMISH COUNTY RESIDENTS |

**C. USING DIRECTORIES**

TI = Target Individual    TF = Target Family

**1. CREATE A TIME LINE** - Use a run of directories to create a TIME LINE for a TI or surname. Check both the name AND the street sections of each directory. This TIME LINE can give many clues as to where you should search for elusive records and documents.

**2. MAKE A NEIGHBORHOOD MAP** - Many directories include street maps. A photocopy of this map (enlarged if necessary) and a handful of differently colored push-pins can give you a quick snapshot of where your TI lived with respect to his kinfolk and other important people and institutions.

**3. FIND CENSUS ENTRIES** - Sometimes the online census indices just don't work for finding your TI. You know your TF lived in a large metropolitan area, and you dread having to search through an entire city's census images to find them. Many directories for larger cities have a "street to ward" section; knowing the ward in which your TF lived, you can then focus on (hopefully) ONE census roll.

**4. FIND DEATH/PROBATE RECORDS** - Perhaps a husband (or wife) suddenly "vanishes" from your time line. Perhaps the wife of a TI is named "Mary" for the first 5 years of the time line, and the next year (and subsequent years), the wife's name is "Marguerite". Did "Mary" die, and your TI married "Marguerite"? You now have a time period in which to look for death and/or marriage records. Several years later, "Marguerite" is listed as the widow of your TI - perhaps his death date is given, perhaps not. But you at least have an approximate date of his death, and can look for death, burial and probate records.

**5. FINDING CHURCH RECORDS** - If your TI was Roman Catholic, the closest Catholic Church is most apt to be the one that holds baptism and marriage records. If any clergyman's name is found on the CIVIL record of a marriage, you can usually find his name listed in the directory for that city. If no church name or denomination is mentioned, go through the general listing of churches in the directory.

**6. FIND LAND RECORDS** - If the entry for your TI in the STREET section of the directory has a bulls-eye or other symbol indicating home ownership, you should check property records (grantor-grantee) at the local county courthouse.

**7. CENSUS SUBSTITUTE** - Directories can serve as a "tweener" census substitute OR in place of the unreleased 1940, 1950, etc. US Federal Censuses.

**8. DOUBLE CHECK QUESTIONABLE INFORMATION** - The Everett residents' section of the 1915 Polk Directory is being used to cross check information for a transcription of the 1915 Everett City Schools census.

#### **D. FINDING CITY DIRECTORIES**

##### **FINDING DIRECTORIES ONLINE**

1. CYNDI'S LIST
2. ANCESTRY.COM
3. USGENWEB PROJECT
4. USED BOOKSTORES
5. GOOGLE

##### **FINDING DIRECTORIES in ARCHIVES and LIBRARIES**

1. FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY - using FamilySearch.org Find directories listed in the LOCALITY SEARCH of the Family History Library Catalog under: [STATE], [COUNTY] or [STATE], [TOWN] Some directories list only certain types of businesses, professionals, clergymen, alumni, etc... These are listed in the Locality Search of the Family History Library Catalog under: [STATE] - OCCUPATIONS or [STATE], [COUNTY] - OCCUPATIONS

2. LOCAL FHC HOLDINGS
3. LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
4. AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY
5. STATE LIBRARY
6. ORGANIZATION ARCHIVE
7. DENOMINATION ARCHIVE
8. ASSOCIATION ARCHIVE

### ***FINDING HIDDEN DIRECTORIES***

Occasionally traditional directories are part of a larger reference work. There might be no hint from the title of the work that there is a directory included. Example: A history of a particular church - "History of Holy Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts" published in 1896 contains a directory of parishioners. Example: A cadastral atlas - "Atlas of Prince Edward Island" published in 1926 has land ownership maps for each Lot (township) AND a rural directory for the entire province.

Watch for reference works called "atlases", "yearbooks", "guides", "annuals", etc. Take a minute to thumb through general reference books for a given area, particularly if the reference book appears to be a serial publication.

### ***E. MISS MARGE'S RULES RE: DIRECTORIES***

- 1. SIT ON YOUR WALLET** - Seriously look at all the FREE (or close to free) sources of directories. If all else fails THEN consider commercial sources.
- 2. WEAR YOUR SKEPTICALS** - Directories were compiled to make money for the directory's publisher, whose first loyalty was to the person who would buy or use the directory - the area's businessman or salesman.
- 3. CHECK ABBREVIATIONS FOR EACH AND EVERY DIRECTORY YOU USE** - Abbreviations can vary from publisher to publisher and from year to year.
- 4. EVEN SMALL TOWNS (like Twisp and Sequim) HAD DIRECTORIES** - It costs NOTHING to check the FHC catalog!
- 5. ALL DIRECTORIES ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL** - Online directories MAY NOT be the full, beginning page to end page version of a published directory. Some CD collections MAY contain images of just the Residents' Section of the included directories; there may be no cross street section, advertisers, business listings, etc. If a directory lacks an ABBREVIATIONS list it is "worth less".

### ***F. OTHER RESOURCES for FINDING, USING DIRECTORIES***

#### ***FINDING DIRECTORIES ONLINE***

1. CYNDI'S LIST <http://www.cyndislist.com/citydir.htm>
2. ANCESTRY - [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) offers for a fee many city, county and other directories, both as scanned images and as transcriptions
3. USGENWEB PROJECT [usgenweb.org](http://usgenweb.org) - be sure to explore both the county AND the state levels as well as the USGenWeb Archives
4. AREA GEN SOCIETY WEB SITE - search for genealogical societies who are members of FGS at <http://www.familyhistory.com/societyhall/search.asp>
5. GOOGLE <http://www.google.com/> - Try these search strings - (city) directory online or (county) directory online

## ***FINDING DIRECTORIES IN ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES***

1. FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY - <http://www.familysearch.org>
2. LOCAL FHC HOLDINGS - SIGS site, <http://rootsweb.com/~wasigs/indexfhccat.htm>  
Shoreline and Everett Family History Centers have directories on microfilm from all over the US and Canada, as well as from the British Isles and continental Europe.
3. LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY - Google (locality) Public Library - check online catalog (keyword search directory + name of city), ask if available via Inter-library Loan Ex: Spokane Public Library has collection of city and county directories as well as organizational, institutional directories; search <http://hzportal.spokanelibrary.org/>.
4. AREA or STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY - SIGS library shelf list at <http://rootsweb.com/~wasigs/indexlibe.htm> - small collection of Everett directories and directories for other cities. Seattle Gen Society holds an excellent collection of Seattle City Directories Catalog at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~waseags/library.html>
5. AREA or STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY - Google (area) Historical Society or (state) Historical Society
6. STATE LIBRARY - Google (state) Library - some state libraries offer inter-library loan services
7. ORGANIZATION ARCHIVE/LIBRARY - County or State Medical Association can be a source of current and historical professional directories.
8. DENOMINATION ARCHIVE/LIBRARY - American Baptist Historical Society should hold clerical directories and possibly directories of individual congregations.
9. INSTITUTION ARCHIVE/LIBRARY - Google (institution + locality; example: library of Cathedral High School (Springfield MA) should hold yearbooks and alumni directories. Don't overlook nearby college and university libraries. Most have online catalogs.

## **G. FOR FURTHER READING**

RootsWeb Guide to Tracing Family Trees #20 - City Directories and Newspapers

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson20.htm>

Ask Rhonda - Rhonda McClure's Tips - City Directories

<http://www.genealogy.com/askr011702.html>

Dave Obee The end of the city directory in Canada

<http://www.interlinkbookshop.com/obee/direct.htm>

William Dollarhide - City Directories - a Genealogical Goldmine

<http://www.genealogybulletin.com/archives/HTML/current25.html>

Kory L. Meyerink, AG - Effective Use of City Directories -

<http://citydirectories.heritagecreations.com/why-city-directories-are-important-to-genealogists/>

The Source - Directories p 51-2; many references in the INDEX