

The 400 Block of Walnut Street in Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward, 1890-1893

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The composition of Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward was as varied as that of many urban centers in the late nineteenth century.¹ Living in the ward were significant numbers of native-born Americans, first-generation Americans, and new immigrant Americans. By examining the inhabitants of a random city block within the Old Eighth Ward, in this case the 400 block of Walnut Street between the years of 1890 and 1893, a profile of those who once resided in this lower-class, ethnically-mixed neighborhood can be gained.

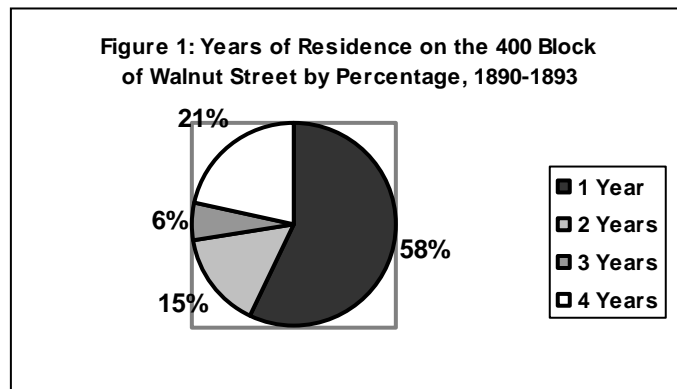
The data for this research came from the *Boyd's Harrisburg Directories* found at the Historical Society of Dauphin County in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.² These directories are similar to modern telephone books except they list residents by profession and street address instead of by phone number. The compilers of the *Boyd's Harrisburg Directories* obtained their information by sending out cards to the individual addresses in a given area, and if the residents filled out the required information and returned these cards to the publisher, the data was placed in that year's directory. Due to the possibility of human error, apathy, illiteracy, and/or laziness on the part of the publisher or the residents themselves, the information listed in the *Boyd's Harrisburg Directories* is most likely far from one-hundred percent accurate. In addition, the directories do not list minor children, making one of the larger demographic groups living within the Eighth Ward at that time absent from this study. Although teenaged children who were employed were often included in the city directories, younger children were not. In addition, adult females seem to be underrepresented; they account for a mere twenty percent of all 400

¹ This paper has been edited and expanded by Stephanie Patterson Gilbert, webmaster of *Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward*, found at <http://www.old8thward.com>.

² W. Harry Boyd, *Boyd's Harrisburg Directory: Names of Citizens, Map, and a Compendium of Government and of Public Institutions*, (Boyd's Cousins, 1890-1893). Data was obtained from the alphabetical resident directory in each volume used in this study.

block Walnut Street residents listed in the directories.³ The directories seem to have intended to list heads of households and those employed outside of their homes, which could explain the general scarcity of women found on their pages.

Although United States Federal Census data could supplement the information found in the *Boyd's Directories* for other decades, the Pennsylvania data of the 1890 Census was mostly destroyed by fire during the twentieth century. The following is a brief summary of data compiled from the *Boyd's Directories* for the 400 block of Walnut Street between the years 1890 and 1893.⁴



Overall, it seems as if the residents of the 400 block of Walnut Street were very transient. Of the 131 residents listed in the directories during the period of study, only twenty-six, or just over a fifth, of all 400 block residents lived at the same

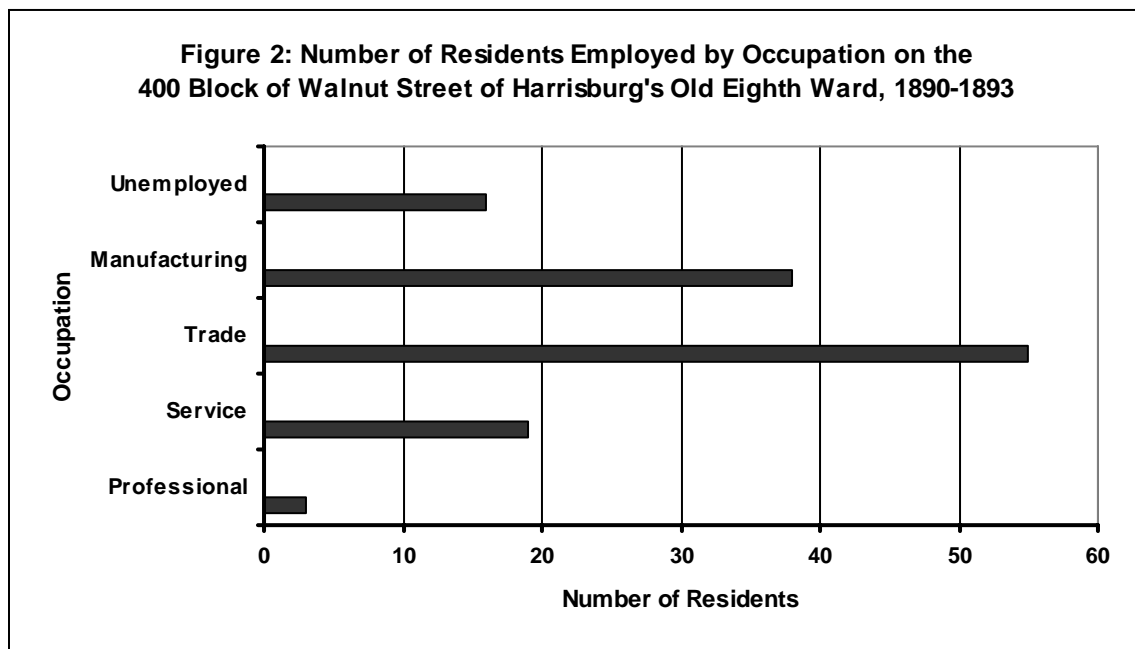
address for the entire four year period between 1890 and 1893 (Figure 1). Over half of all residents listed left the block after only one year. Although Walnut Street was a main avenue in Harrisburg in the 1890s and a major shopping district within the ward, it does not appear to have been more constant than other parts of the Old Eighth at that time. This trend of instability has been found in other block-by-block research on the Eighth Ward, and it does not appear to be affected by the size or location of the residences.⁵

³ Twenty-six women and 105 men were listed as living on the 400 block of Walnut in the directories between 1890 and 1893. Nine of those women were widows.

⁴ See Appendix A for a full listing of residents who lived on the 400 block of Walnut Street by the *Boyd's Directories* between the years of 1890 and 1893.

⁵ Data from previous research can be viewed on the resident directory tables found at the *Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward website*, <http://www.old8thward.com/residentdir.htm>, and in student research papers, found at <http://www.old8thward.com/research.htm>.

Without access to the 1890 Federal Census, the ethnic background of each of these residents could not be ascertained; however, the surnames of these individuals represent a wide range of nationalities. Irish, Italian, Dutch, German, Scottish, Russian, and African-American citizens seem to have co-existed in this community, often living in neighboring houses. People of similar ethnic backgrounds seem to have clustered within the same residences or general vicinity. For example, a large number of individuals with Italian surnames lived at 421 Walnut while a group of those with German surnames lived at 412 Walnut. In addition, several family groups of working adults appear on this block, some of whom practiced the same occupations. Throughout the period of study, the Brown family, which lived at 414 Walnut, included six adults who were employed in the haircare industry. And in 1892, five men sharing the surname



Klwansky and the occupation of “puddler” resided at 428 Walnut.

As the Eighth Ward is known to have been populated mostly by the working class, it is not surprising that an overwhelming eighty-five percent of all residents on the 400 block of Walnut were engaged in factory, service, and trade occupations (Figure 2).⁶ Only two percent of

⁶ Occupations were classified using the 1890 Federal Census guidelines found in the *Report on Population of the United States Federal Census: 1890*, Vol. 1, Part II, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 304-

the population on the block qualified as professionals as defined by the 1890 Federal Census report, and these included a lawyer, a corn doctor, and a musician. The percentage of residents engaged in any one occupation tends to follow the same trend over all four years researched, and the most prominent fields of employment between the years of 1890 and 1893 were merchants, clerks, and barbers, respectively. Workers in similar fields tended to live at the same addresses, where they were perhaps sharing accommodations as roommates. For example, three railroad workers lived at 416 Walnut in 1891 while three printers lived at 412 Walnut in 1893.

Although the *Boyd's Directories* are flawed in terms of their inclusiveness, they are one of the best available sources of information on Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward for the 1890s because of the loss of the 1890 Federal Census. The data compiled during this research seems to support the previous findings and assumptions about the residents of the ward. The inhabitants of the 400 block of Walnut Street were mostly working-class people of various ethnic backgrounds who lived a fairly transient lifestyle. Further research needs to be completed in order to reveal whether the rest of the Eighth Ward's inhabitants fit this profile.

Appendix A: Residents of the 400 Block of Walnut Street in Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward, 1891-1893						
<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Years of Occupation</i>		<i>Next Address</i>	
400	Harry J. Steel	Grocer	1890	1893		
	Anna B. Steel	Milliner	1890	1893		
401 ½	Samuel Allay	Shoemaker	1892	1892		
402	Frederick Hummel	Tobacconist	1891	1893		
	Adam H. LaRoss	Painter	1893	1893		
403	Harry A. Haas	Butcher	1892	1893		
	Horrace E. Haas	Laborer	1892	1893		
404	Charles Lack	Tailor	1892	1893		
405	Malinda Drummons	Widow of Henry	1890	1893		
406	James A. Mauger	Clerk	1890	1891	Liberty Street	
	Francis Scott	Pool Hall	1890	1891	Liberty Street	
	Harry McComskey	Bartender	1893	1893		
407	George Bear	Painter	1890	1890	Cumberland Street	
	David E. Murray	Painter	1890	1891	Boas Street	
	Martha Cratzner	Saleslady	1890	1893		
	William G. Walter	Shoemaker	1890	1893		
	Samuel M. Goodyear	Clerk	1891	1891	North Second Street	
	William M. Goodyear	Clerk	1891	1891	South Street	
	Grace Beaverson	Saleslady	1891	1893		
411	Charles F. Foltz	Clerk	1892	1893		
412	Benjamin Strouse	Clothier	1890	1893		
	William W. Strouse	Clerk	1890	1890		
	Emma Fischer	Domestic	1892	1893		
	William Manly	Collarmaker	1893	1893		
	Gustavus Wickman	Collarmaker	1893	1893		
	Meily M. McFarlan	Printer	1893	1893		
	Gustavus Scrivard	Printer	1893	1893		
	Augustus Seward	Printer	1893	1893		
	413	Charles F. Foltz	Clerk	1891	1893	
		Charles Covert	Clerk	1893	1893	
414	Cassius M. Brown	Barber	1890	1900		
	Richard S. Brown	Barber	1890	1900		
	Singleton G. Brown	Barber	1890	1895	Briggs Street	
	Mrs. A. C. Brown	Hairdresser	1890	1900		
	Howard D. Brown	Barber Student	1891	1893		
	Eli Grey	Barber	1890	1893		
	Mary E. Grey	Widow	1890	1893		
	Charlotte Jones	Widow of Samuel	1891	1891		
415	John J. Able		1890	1891		
	James Hughes	Livery	1890	1893		
	Harry Bradley	Hostler	1891	1891		
	William Newhart	Hostler	1891	1891		
	Robert Hughes	Bookkeeper	1892	1893		
	416	Hartville Wall	Telegrapher	1890	1893	
John G. Wall		Machinist	1890	1893		
John Wall		Porter	1890	1892		
		Warehouseman	1893	1893		
John Beachler		Brakeman	1890	1891	Forester Street	
	Daniel Fletcher	Conductor	1891	1891		

	Lee Kwang	Laundry Lady	1891	1893	
	Jacob O. Hoffman	Brakeman	1891	1893	
	William H. Wall	Clerk	1892	1893	
417	Ester Creamer	Widow of Alexander	1890	1893	
	Margaret C. Creamer	Milliner	1890	1893	
	Elizabeth Kernan	Book Sewer	1890	1893	
418	Samuel Allen	Boilermaker	1890	1890	
	James Farley	Agent	1890	1890	
	Charles Jacobs	Plasterer	1890	1890	
	Frederick Rowe	Blacksmith	1890	1890	
	Lewis Smith	L.G. Smith & Co.	1890	1890	
	Homer Dubree	Corn Doctor	1890	1891	
	Mary M. Smith	Boarder	1890	1892	
	Elmer J. Smith	Lawyer	1890	1893	
419	Peter G. Baptist	J. Simonetti & Co.	1890	1893	
	Lissie Sidle	Widow of Peter	1890	1891	
	John Kline	Clerk	1891	1891	
	Josiah Cadow	Cigar Manufacturer	1891	1892	
420	Isadore Santouey	Bartender	1890	1890	
	James A. Barnes	Tobacconist	1890	1893	
	James Deardorff	Clerk/Paxton Hotel	1890	1891	Balm Street
	Emanuel P. Haines	Tobacconist	1891	1893	
	Nathan Cohn	Clothier	1892	1892	
421	Louis Petano	Bartender	1891	1891	
	Americo Rovai	Hotel Americo	1891	1893	
	Vittorio Serafini	Tailor	1892	1892	
	Emma Seymoar	Domestic	1893	1893	
422	Alice V. Seiber	Saleslady	1890	1890	
424	Henry Bink	Meat Market	1890	1891	
426	Joseph Miniskey	Produce	1890	1893	
	John Miniskey	Puddler	1890	1890	Herr Street
	Louisa Weiss	Widow of John	1890	1890	
428	Anna Phillips	Widow of William A.	1891	1891	
	Henry Klwansky	Puddler	1892	1892	
	Joseph Klwansky	Puddler	1892	1892	
	Lewis Klwansky	Puddler	1892	1892	
	Michael Klwansky	Puddler	1892	1892	
	Victor Klwansky	Puddler	1892	1892	
430	John N. Smith	J.W. Smith & Sons	1890	1890	
	William K. Smith	W.K. Smith & Sons	1890	1893	
	James M. Smith	Moulder	1892	1893	
435	Edward Bailey	Steamfitter	1890	1890	
	Augustus Bashore	Moulder	1890	1890	
	John A. Blougher	Driver	1890	1890	
	Alexander Marshbank	Moulder	1890	1890	
	Elizabeth McLaughlin	Boarder	1890	1890	
	Willis G. McLaughlin	Fish Monger	1890	1890	
	Amos C. Mumma	Telegrapher	1890	1890	
	Richard Schwab		1890	1890	
	Jacob Simonetti, Jr.	Produce	1890	1890	
	Henry Zeuneman	Canvasser	1890	1890	
	Willis Hillard	Photographer	1890	1890	
	Anna Wolf	Widow of Samuel	1890	1891	
	Emanuel Clinton	Watchman	1891	1891	
	Mrs. E. Clinton	Boarder	1891	1891	
	Warren DeGonzales	Barber	1891	1891	

	Calvin DeShon	Painter	1891	1891	
	M.H. Gsell	Tree Agent	1891	1891	
	William A. Spahr	John Spahr & Bros.	1891	1891	
	Emma Sweigard	Domestic	1891	1891	
	Armen Yardum	Fancy Goods	1891	1891	
	Dempsey D. Bryan	Salesman	1893	1893	
	Jacob Keefer	Printer	1893	1893	
	Amanda Poulton	Boarder	1893	1893	
	Clarence Poulton	Telegrapher	1893	1893	
	Minerva I. Poulton	Saleslady	1893	1893	
	Wallace Willis	Printer/Telegrapher	1893	1893	
437	Margaret Hipple	Widow of John	1890	1893	
438	Grant Runkle	Clerk	1890	1890	
	Irvin R. Bomgardner	Clerk	1890	1893	
	Harry H. Baer	Salesman	1893	1893	
438	Jacob Bomgardner	Grocer	1890	1893	
439	Christian Landis Rudy	Ice Dealer	1890	1890	Thirteenth Street
	Philip Braude	Cigar Manufacturer	1893	1893	
441	Stephen Bitner	Shoemaker	1890	1892	
	Simon Cooper	Cooper & Pruss	1893	1893	
444 ½	Charles Lyon	Clerk	1892	1893	
446	Henry P. Biester	Barber	1890	1890	
	Thomas McCabe	Hostler	1890	1890	
	Amanda Holtz	Dressmaker	1891	1891	
	Emmanuel Holtz		1891	1891	
	John McCauley	Musician	1891	1891	
	Abraham Simmons	Clerk	1891	1891	