

“The Home of many Devoted and Noble Men and Women”: A Look at the Changing
Complexion of The Northern Half of Harrisburg’s Old Eighth Ward 1870-1900

by

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Abstract

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The following paper examines a ten-block section of Harrisburg’s Old Eighth Ward during the years 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900 primarily using public records. United States Census records, Harrisburg City Directories, and historic maps were analyzed in an attempt to paint a picture of the selected study area. Information gathered included data on the ethnic, economic, and educational attributes of the population. This was done in order to discover if Harrisburg’s Old Eighth Ward was not an area completely inhabited by the lower class but was an area of economic success and stability during the end of the nineteenth century.

Results indicate that the study area population steadily grew along with the population of Harrisburg from 1870 to 1900. Pennsylvania-born whites were consistently the majority in the neighborhood. Significant migrations of African-Americans and Russian-born Jews took place that slightly altered the cultural landscape, but neither group totaled more than twenty percent of the population. Former African-American slaves from Maryland and Virginia continued to migrate into the area, peaking in 1880. Russian Jews began appearing around 1890, building a synagogue and opening new businesses within the locale. Data on race and ethnicity displays stability among the populace over a forty-year time span.

The economic data from the area provided the most surprising results in the study. Although unskilled labor is predominant, the area displays a high rate of skilled laborers, which can be associated with the proximity of nearby railroad facilities. Unemployment rates

were extremely low in 1880 and 1900 among laborers in the neighborhood as well. Average real estate values in the area for 1870 averaged higher than almost half of the rest of the city.

Children might have attended school from ages six to sixteen. Households were well off enough that children did not need to quit school and find work to supplement household incomes. The illiteracy rate within the neighborhood was extremely low when compared to the national average over the 1870 to 1900 time period. Youth in the study area were able to attend school for multiple years and become educated members of Harrisburg's community.

All of these results indicate that this particular neighborhood was better off than most areas of Harrisburg during this period. The researcher can begin to see that a portion of the Old Eighth Ward, with all its negative connotations, was capable of producing a stable, lower-middle class, White community. This study does not claim that the entire Eighth Ward resembled the selected study area, but it does claim that more in-depth analysis is needed on the subject.

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Introduction

This project tested the proposition that Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward was not an area completely inhabited by the lower class but was an area of surprising economic success and stability during the end of the Nineteenth Century. A random area of the Eighth Ward was chosen for this test. This project employed the use of U.S. Census records along with city directories and historic maps.

Books produced by both Michael Barton and Gerald Eggert have shed light upon the city of Harrisburg and its population. Michael Barton and Jessica Dorman's work, *Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward*, contributed heavily to his project. The compilation of editorials written by J. Howard Wert and the associated pictures of the Eighth before its destruction helped to give a real feel for the former neighborhood as well as valuable information difficult to find elsewhere.

Stories written by J. Howard Wert in the *Harrisburg Patriot* brought to life the infamous individuals and happenings of this section of town, which was nicknamed "the Bloody Eighth". Wert described the area as having been densely developed with narrow roadways that were difficult to drive through with a car (Barton et al 23). His stories tell of an area filled with good men and women but also with vice and violence. My purpose was to see what life was like for those good men and women who called the Eighth Ward home.

Gerald Eggert's book *Harrisburg Industrializes: The Coming of Factories to an American Community* proved to be an extremely valuable asset in the production of this paper. Within this volume Eggert examined the process of industrialization in Harrisburg and its effect on the population. Eggert uses census data extensively to prove his points. Eggert's

data provided context for my own data and also gave evidence to which I could compare to my census results.

The case study that influenced my work the most was published in *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* by Josephine McIlvain. Her look at twelve blocks of Pittsburgh's South Side during 1880 to 1915 examined the effect the city's industrialization had on the local laborers that resided within her study area. The entire study was done with public records, using U.S. Census, city directories, and historic maps. This article gave me a model for this paper in both form and content.

The Eighth Ward was examined using public records in order to gain a better understanding of the resident population. Statistics on ethnicity, economic life, and education of individuals was accumulated in order to prove that the Eighth Ward was not just inhabited by those of the lower class, such as Wert suggests in his articles, but by a stable, economically successful population.

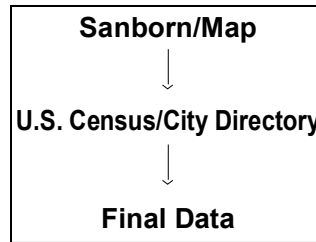
Methods

Public records such as the U.S. Census, city directories, and Sanborn Insurance maps were used in an attempt to gain a better picture of the men and women who lived in this section of Harrisburg. The methodology employed here can be considered representative, since public records formed the foundation of the conclusions reached, and they can be employed in studies of other areas of Harrisburg.

The population of the selected study area during the years 1870, 1880, and 1900 was primarily examined through the use of United States Census records. Addresses had to be gathered from various map sources before Census records could be studied. Due to

problems described later in this section, data from the year 1890 needed to be gathered from Boyd's Harrisburg's City Directory. City directories were also used to collect information on neighborhood businesses.

Figure 1: Research Process



First, Sanborn maps of the selected project area as well as *Roe's 1889 Atlas of the City of Harrisburg* were consulted in order to gather the appropriate house numbers. There was obviously a need to make sure that only the individuals with addresses within the selected study area were collected. The Sanborn maps were an indispensable tool in this task. Other important historic maps consulted included the Hopkins 1871 and the Hage 1861 maps of Harrisburg.

Examining the US Census records between 1870 and 1900 was problematic in several respects. The 1870 census did not record specific addresses of surveyed individuals on the form. The specific house number was never written down on paper; instead, dwellings were assigned numbers in order of their visitation by the enumerator (see Appendix 1). This missing address data was retrieved from Boyd's 1870-1872 City Directory. Names were gathered that were listed within the study area's boundaries from the directory, and then these names were searched within the 1870 Census to obtain the needed data.

The 1890 US Census records were destroyed in a fire at the Commerce Department in Washington, D.C., in January of 1921 (Luebking et al 234). Only fragmented sections

survived this disaster; unfortunately, none are from the state of Pennsylvania. Once again I needed to examine the Harrisburg City Directory, this time for 1890. The names gathered from there were searched within the 1880 and 1900 census records in an attempt to record the population's required data.

Searching the US Census records was completed with the help of an on-line genealogy service called Ancestry.com. This on-line service contains several searchable census records for the years 1790 to 1930 and scanned images of all of the original records. The years 1870 and 1880 were completely searchable, while 1900 had only the census images.

The on-line genealogical service Ancestry.com was very useful and saved a great deal of time, but it also had several problems. First, sometimes an individual's race was inaccurately entered on the census summary page (see Appendix 5). Discovering this issue rather early on, I decided to avoid gathering data from the summary forms and instead compiled the information directly from the census document images.

I encountered two major problems with using city directories as a source. First, I noticed that using age data from the directories skewed the age data. The average age of forty years old was much higher for those from the 1890 city directory than among the individuals gathered from the census records. This is most likely because those that were home when the directory agent came around were the older widows or retired people. The younger workers were out working during the day and not able to give their names for entry into the directory. Also, spelling of names in the directories was often very inaccurate when compared to the census records. These spelling mistakes made searching census records difficult and time consuming.

Problems With Using Public Records

Census records allow the researcher to examine closer the families and neighborhoods of an area. Patterns of ethnicity, race, occupation, and wealth can be identified with these documents. Few public documents contain such a vast array of economic and ethnic information. However, there are several problems that the researcher needs to be aware of when using U.S. Census records.

First, no census was ever absolutely complete or accurate (Kyvig et al 93). This was not entirely the fault of the enumerator who gathered the data. Interviewees often withheld or did not know particular information. The misspelling of families' last names is often a problem along with an enumerator's poor handwriting. Sam Bass Warner concluded in his various studies on the cities of Boston and Philadelphia that census records cannot be depended on to be more accurate than +/-6% (Kyvig et al 94).

Census data is still considered a valuable source for study even with the mentioned inaccuracies. The data gathered creates a snapshot of the neighborhood during one particular period in time. Errors may have occurred during the collection of information, but there is no other public record with more scholarly potential than the U.S. Census. Careful attention must be paid to the record checking for any unusual patterns while performing research. Numerous scholars such as Tyler Anbinder, Sam Bass Warner Jr., and Gerald Eggert have successfully based large parts of their works on census data.

City directories can be useful in retrieving information on individuals as well as the business community. While directories are useful in this sense, care must be used when accessing this particular source. Misspelled names and sometimes even repeated names are

often present in these volumes. City directories should be used in conjunction with census records to create a more accurate data set.

Historic maps are an invaluable source for any research project. Historic atlases and Sanborn maps were used within this study. Sanborn maps were created for fire insurance purposes and give great detail on buildings and street locations. Even though Sanborn maps offer little detail on undeveloped land, they are excellent in tracking changes in the city landscape.

Study Area

The project study area was a randomly-selected ten blocks of Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward, which were located in the northern half of the neighborhood. Poplar Avenue borders the area to the east while North Fourth Street borders the neighborhood to the west. North Street marks the northern boundary and State Street the southern limit. Several street names changed between 1870 and 1900 as Table 1 illustrates. This was important to note early on in the research, and that is why it was important to begin the research process by investigating both the historic and Sanborn maps.

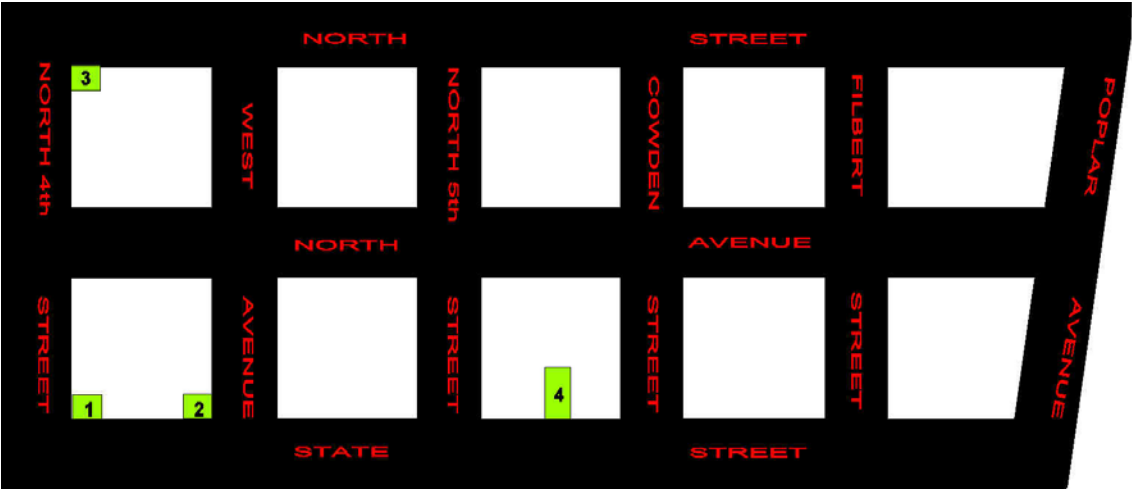
Table 1: Changes in Street Names 1870-1900

<u>Year</u>	<u>Street Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Changed Street Name</u>
1870	Poplar Lane	1880	Poplar Avenue
1870	Spruce Street	1884	North Fifth Street
1870	Fourth Street	1884	North Fourth Street
1870	West Alley	1880	West Avenue
1870	North Alley	1880	North Avenue

Major landmarks surrounding the study area include the state capitol building along the western edge of the area and the Hickok Eagle Works to the north directly across Poplar Avenue. The map below illustrates the street and neighborhood layout. Even though street names may have changed, no new roadways appeared or were destroyed until the Capital Extension. State Street, a main artery of the city of Harrisburg, includes a large commercial sector that has always been present in this area.

Several buildings of note are located within the study's vicinity. The First Free Baptist Church, located on the corner of North Fourth and State Streets, served several congregations until it became a Jewish synagogue in 1894 (Coleman 39). Located on the same block on the corner of State Street and West Avenue was the Bethel A.M.E. Church. This congregation was one of oldest congregations in the city; however, the church was not built in the study area until 1891 (Barton et al 43). The Lincoln School, a school for African-American children, was located on the corner of North and North Fourth Streets. Lafayette Hall located along State Street in the study area was intended to be a saloon/hotel/burlesque club by its owner, the infamous Harry Cook (Barton et al 47). Unfortunately for him, the city did not allow him to get a liquor license, and the building sat vacant after his death. The building was then sold and converted into a rescue mission that served the area until 1903 (Barton et al 52).

Figure 2: Map of Study Area



Key

- 1=First Free Baptist Church
- 2=Bethel A.M.E. Church
- 3=Lincoln School
- 4=Lafayette Hall



Photograph 1: First Free Baptist Church on Left Bethel A.M.E. Church Two Houses Down to Right (HSDC)

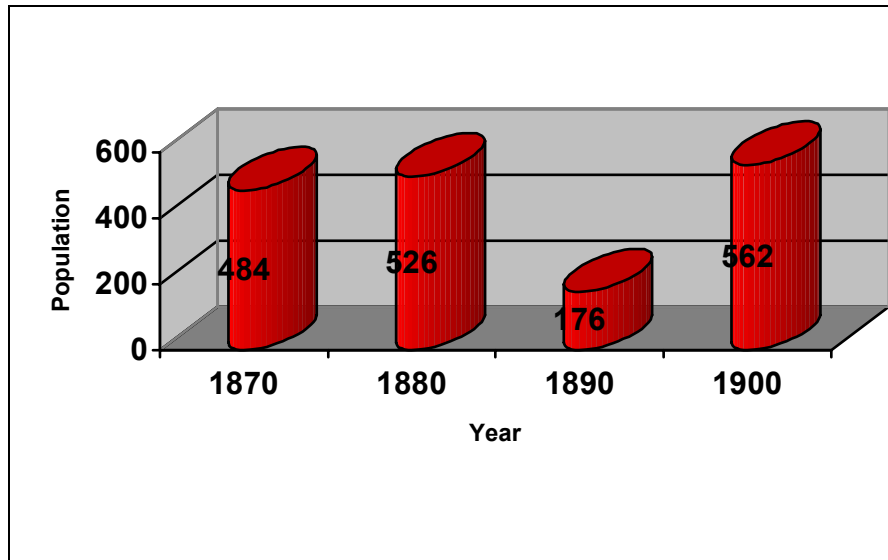
Race and Study Area Statistics

The population of the neighborhood increases consistently as the population of the city of Harrisburg increases. Harrisburg's population more than doubles from 23,104 in 1870 to 50,164 in 1900 (Eggert 346). While the neighborhood population does not display that high a rate of growth, it does increase over time. This data means that in a period of frequent movement of people from one area to another this neighborhood continued to attract individuals, and in some cases, even retained them. Other cities in the region display similar growth patterns.

Table 2: Harrisburg Population Compared With Other Cities in Region

Year	Reading	Lancaster	Harrisburg
1870	33,930	20,233	23,104
1880	43,278	25,769	30,762
1890	58,661	32,011	39,385
1900	78,961	41,464	50,167

Figure 3: Study Area Population By Year 1870-1900

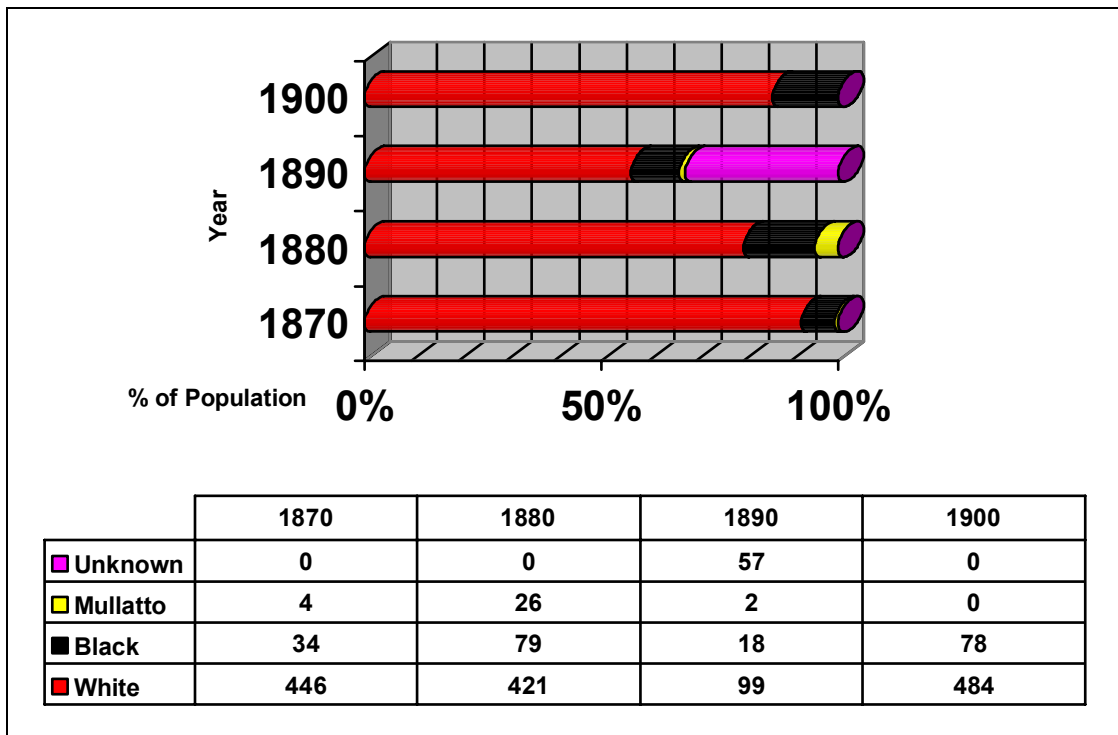


As I mentioned in the methodology section, the average age for the neighborhood population was skewed in 1890 (n=40), but is consistent when using census data. The

average age ranged from 25 years in 1870, up to 27 years in 1880, and then rose again to 29 years old in 1900. This displays a population that remained settled within the neighborhood. More and more of the same individuals remain in the area from decade to decade raising the median age.

One of the major goals of this research was to determine the racial make-up of the selected neighborhood and to see how that compared with the city of Harrisburg as a whole. The result was as expected--a white majority in all four years with a fluctuating black/mulatto minority. What was surprising was the peak population of black/mulattos during 1880. Unfortunately, we have only incomplete data concerning 1890, or we would be able to see if this rising trend continued or ceased.

Figure 4: Study Area Population by Race 1870-1900



Ethnicity

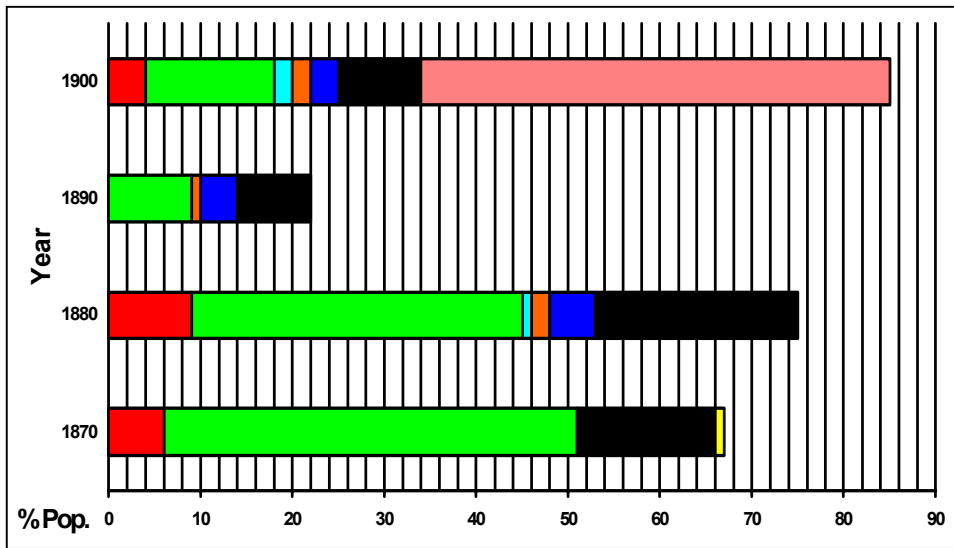
Data suggests that native-born Pennsylvanians drastically out-numbered all of the immigrant groups combined in the study area during the years 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900. The 1870 census records also show that nearly seventy-nine percent of Harrisburg's population was born in Pennsylvania. Harrisburg attracted far fewer immigrants than other industrial centers of the time (Eggert 150). Individuals from Russia, Ireland, and Germany represent the main immigrant groups within the study area.

The most interesting spike occurred in those of Russian birth and of the Jewish faith during the 1900 census. It is unfortunate that we do not have complete data for the 1890 census, as I am confident that we would witness a similar surge among that group during that period as well. Along with the Russian-born individuals we should also examine the other foreign-born groups, most notably the Irish and German born. The trends found here match the overall city trends in immigration, with the Irish and Germans being the most predominant groups.

When we look at where foreign individuals were born, we see that these follow the expected trends for central Pennsylvania. The Irish dominate the first two decades of the study period before tapering off in 1900. Irish-born peoples made up sixty-seven percent of the foreign-born population in the neighborhood in 1870, forty-eight percent in 1880, and then dropped drastically to seventeen percent in 1900. A distant second are those born in Germany. German-born peoples made up twenty-two percent of the neighborhood's foreign-born population in 1870, twenty-nine percent in 1880, and then dropped to eleven percent in 1900. The largest jump in the make-up of the neighborhood population occurred in 1900 with the arrival of a large Jewish contingent born in Russia (n=51).

Figure 5: Study Area Population By Country of Birth 1870-1900

Country of Birth	1870	1880	1890	1900
Russia	0	0	0	51
Germany	15	22	8	9
Ireland	45	36	9	14
British Isles	6	9	0	4
Canada	0	5	4	3
Western Europe	0	1	0	2
Southern Europe	0	2	1	2
Dominica	1	0	0	0



The Russian Jewish Immigration to Harrisburg

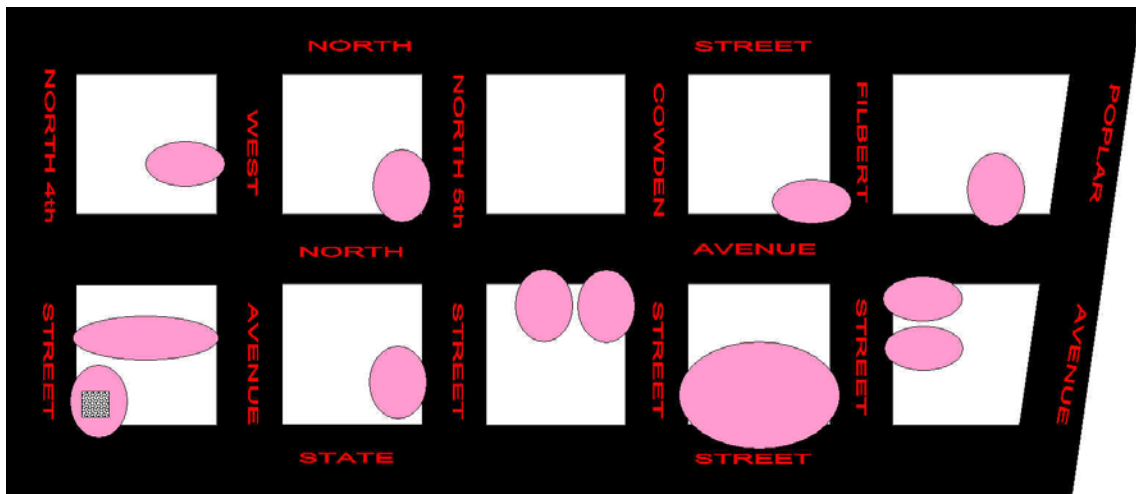
A large influx of Russian immigrants was noted in Figure 5 during 1900, but this was by no means the beginning of the Jewish migration to Harrisburg or to the rest of the United States. Russian and other eastern European Jews began their exodus from their native lands to the United States in 1881 due to government persecution, marking one of the greatest population shifts in Jewish history since biblical times (Ashton 34). The former First Free Baptist church, on the corner of North and Filbert Streets, was purchased by a Jewish Orthodox congregation in 1894 (Coleman 38). Here the group built a synagogue named

Chisuk Emuna B'nai Russia, which was used until a fire destroyed the structure in 1905 (Coleman 40).

The construction of the Orthodox Jewish synagogue within the study area explains the sudden spike of Russian-born individuals during 1900. Occupations in this area suggest that this immigrant population formed their own section of town. Grocers, butchers, jewelers, and liquor stores with Russian-born owners are all included within the neighborhood. The major occupations of most of the fifty-one Russian-born people were related to the clothing industry, including such occupations as tailor and shirt factory operator. Figure 6 below shows the distribution of the Russian-born individuals throughout the area.

Does this suggest an area where Russian born Jews began to construct a distinct neighborhood? I am not claiming the formation of a Jewish ghetto, but we do see them constituting almost eleven percent of the area's population. Looking at the distribution map below we notice that they are living in almost every section of the study area. The obvious answer is that they were settling around the newly constructed synagogue. What would be interesting to see is if this occurred in other sections of Harrisburg as well. I believe this is the most interesting finding to come out of my research on this section of the Old Eighth and deserves more scholarly attention in the future.

Figure 6: Russian Jewish Population Distribution in Study Area 1900



German Immigration

Oddly enough, when German immigration to the United States and Pennsylvania reached its zenith between the years 1871 and 1880, it cannot be distinguished in Harrisburg or the surrounding area. Over two and a-half million German immigrants arrived on the shores of the United States during the late nineteenth century (Curran 91).

However, German-born peoples never make up more than five percent of this neighborhood's population during the selected time period.

Table 3: Percentage of Population German*

Year	Study Area	City of Harrisburg ¹
1870	5	5
1880	4	N/A
1890	5	3
1900	2	2

The settlement of German born individuals was fairly widespread throughout Pennsylvania, with a particular concentration in the eastern half of the state and in Erie, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. Dauphin County's population during 1880 contained between four to six percent German-born individuals (Muller 89). Although

¹Data gathered from Eggert *Harrisburg Industrializes*

some Germans were attracted to large cities, those who settled in the Susquehanna Valley looked more towards a rural setting and undertook farming as an occupation (Glatfelter 9).

Irish Immigration

Many Irish immigrated to the US between 1850 and 1900 (approximately 3,800,000) as a result of the poverty brought on by the potato famine (Smylie 28). The decreasing Irish-born population figures in the study area coincide with what is happening within the city of

Harrisburg. Fewer Irish-born individuals are moving into the city and the study area over the selected period. Irish immigration into Pennsylvania was more prevalent in the northeastern section of the state where coal

Table 4: Percentage of Population Irish

Year	Study Area	City of Harrisburg¹
1870	9	4
1880	7	N/A
1890	5	1
1900	2	0.8

mining was the common occupation. The large cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh also attracted large numbers of Irish-born individuals. Harrisburg did not have the large industrial base of those large cities, nor did it have nearby mining facilities with established Irish communities. That is probably why in 1880 the Irish make up less than two percent of Dauphin County's population (Muller 89).

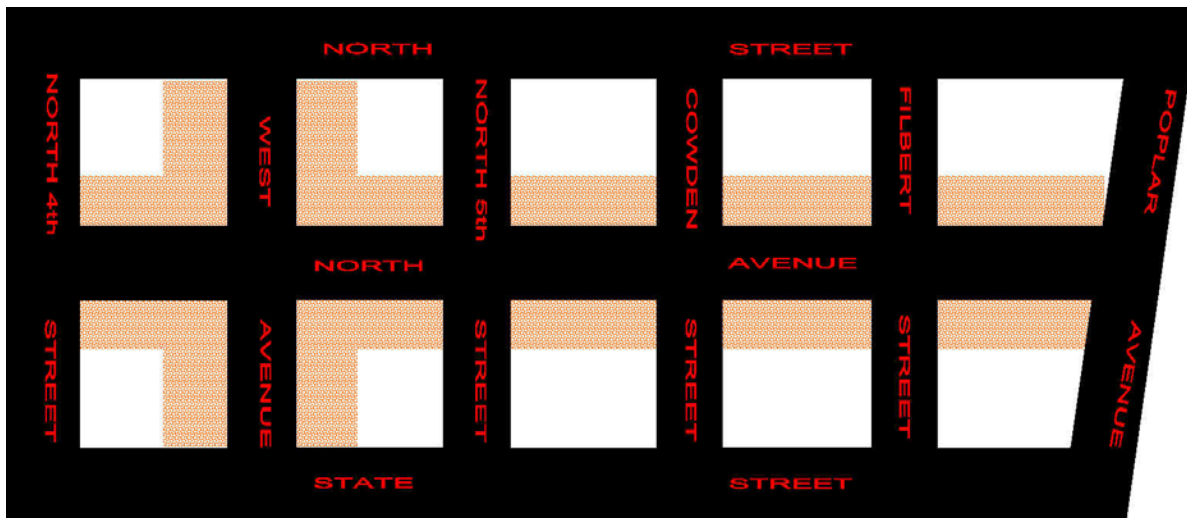
African-American Migration

The migration of southern blacks to northeastern states involved the movement of 190,000 persons in the period between 1870 and 1910 (Ward 59). This migration consisted mainly of former slaves from Maryland and Virginia (Eggert 251, Muller 109). This migration is well illustrated when we look at the data gathered on the native state of birth (Figure 7). The infusion of these migrant blacks into the existing black population is most likely what made the ethnic group grow until 1900. The study shows a steady increase of African-Americans, in contrast with the marked decline in the percentage of African-Americans in the rest of Harrisburg over this period (Table 3). This data suggests that a relatively high African-American population consistently lived in this neighborhood.

Table 5: Percentage of Population African-American

Year	Study Area	City of Harrisburg ¹
1870	8	12
1880	20	8
1890	11	6
1900	14	5

Figure 7: African-American Population Density, Streets Where Population is Over 10%



Eggert suggests that blacks were the only self-perpetuating ethnic group in Harrisburg after 1870 (Eggert 257), and the data here suggests the same within this area. The study vicinity contained a regular concentration of African-Americans living along North Avenue,, which dropped below twenty-eight percent of the total population only once--to six percent in 1880. A marked increase in African-Americans took place on practically all of the streets within the neighborhood in 1900 (see Appendix A).

The Lincoln School, located within the study area on the corner of North and North Fourth Streets, was built in 1876 to educate the area's African-American children (Barton et al 53). This no doubt helps to account for some of the concentration of blacks within the neighborhood. Practically all of the African-American children in the area attended school, according to the 1880 and 1900 census records, and it is a good bet that they went to the Lincoln School.

Photograph 2: Picture of the Lincoln School, an all black institution, circa 1912 or later (PSA)

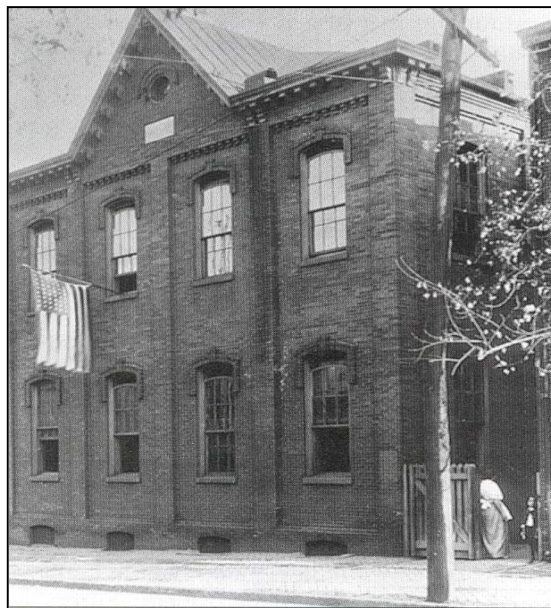
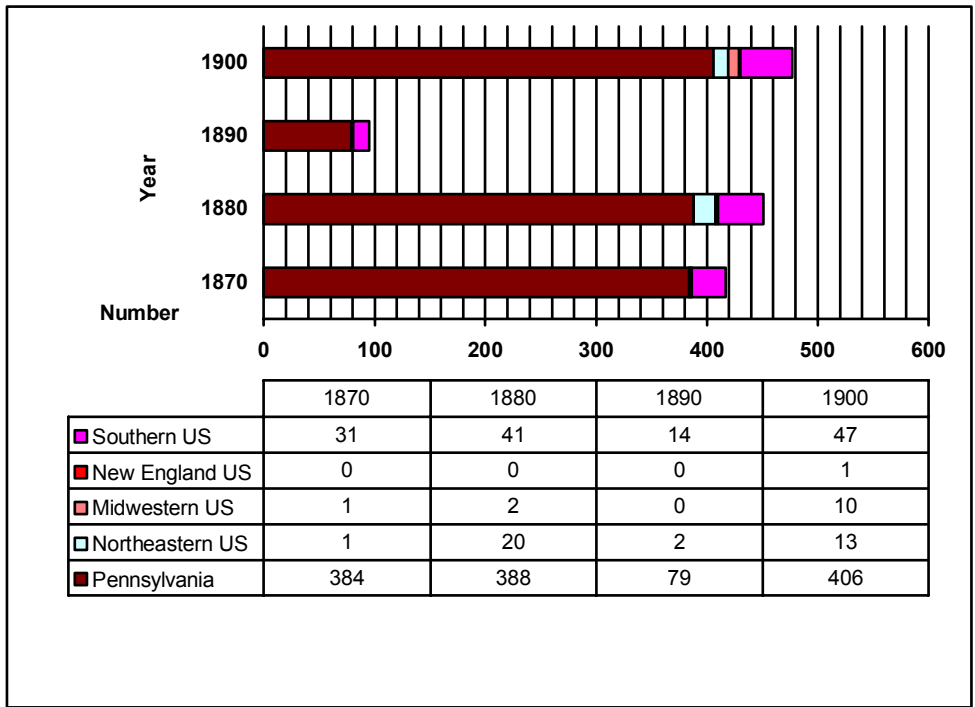


Figure 8: Study Area Population State of Birth



Breaking down individuals to their state of origin proved to be an interesting exercise as well. Here we see how the neighborhood's complexion changed over a period of forty years. The largest group, those born within the state of Pennsylvania, remained consistent ranging from three hundred eighty-four to four hundred and six individuals according to U.S. Census records. There was always a large native population within the area while various other groups fluctuated. Even the 1890 city directory lists those born within Pennsylvania as the majority, with seventy-nine individuals. Those persons born in the southern U.S. make up the next largest group (n=31 to 47). The majority of the individuals migrating into the area from the southern states were African-American. As the railroad expanded and developed there was a noticeable increase in people born in the Northeastern and Midwestern states living in the neighborhood.

Economics

Several categories of data can be used to recreate the economic standings of the study area as a whole. Occupation, wages, property values, house ownership, and months of unemployment are some of these important categories. Unfortunately, not all of the census forms over the selected study period asked these questions. Property and personal value were only on the 1870 census form. Months of unemployment was included only on the 1880 and 1900 census forms. House ownership information was only asked on the 1900 census form. Although it is not possible to trace all of these topics collectively, this data together forms an overall economic picture of the study area.

A large unskilled labor force was present within the neighborhood. The majority of the unskilled labor force consisted of day laborers, who were men taking any job available to support themselves and their families. However, we do see a large segment of skilled labor within the study area primarily associated with the nearby railroad industry. Since the study area was located only a few blocks south of the railway maintenance facilities, this had to be an attractive neighborhood to live in for these individuals. Blacksmiths, machinists, conductors, engineers and car builders are all very common occupations within this locale.

Table 6: Study Area Labor Force By Year 1870-1900

1870		1880		1890		1900	
Unskilled	101	Unskilled	144	Unskilled	81	Unskilled	146
Skilled	68	Skilled	77	Skilled	56	Skilled	91
At Home*	239	At Home*	215	At Home*	17	At Home*	244
At School	76	At School	90	Unknown	22	At School	81
*Youth, widow, keeping house							

A common theme throughout this study has been how important the railroad industry was to this neighborhood. During 1870 the railroad industry accounted for twenty-seven percent of all skilled laborers in the study area, in 1880 thirteen percent, and in 1900 seventeen percent. This only accounts for those professions listed as “railroad” on the census, such as conductors, engineers, fireman, etc. There are almost assuredly other professions such as blacksmith, tinner, and machinist that could have worked on building or fixing railway cars. Railroading itself employed substantial numbers of all Harrisburg residents, almost four percent of the population, according to the 1870 census (Eggert 41). New facilities for fixing and servicing railroad cars had been in place northeast of the study area for some time, as well as companies that built cars such as the Harrisburg Car Works (Eggert 39).

The *Annual Report by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Internal Affairs 1872-1873* listed the average earnings of skilled and unskilled labor. Results indicate that those occupations employed by the railroad were paid relatively high daily rates, from \$3.00 for a skilled engineer to \$1.50 for a railroad general laborer (Annual Report SIA 409). General laborers in other occupations would have been lucky to get over \$1.50 a day in wages. Women and child laborers often got under a dollar for a days work.

Skilled Wages	1.75-3.00 a day
Unskilled Wages	1.25-1.82 a day
Women laborers	.86-1.03 a day
Youth/Apprentices	.75-.90 a day

Local businesses within the neighborhood remained steady in number, with over eighty-five percent being based along State Street, a major artery running in back of the Capitol building. Saloons within the vicinity dropped drastically from five in 1870 to none in 1900. These businesses either moved to another part of the city or disappeared from the

² Wage data from *The Annual Report by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Internal Affairs 1872-1873*

record entirely. Businesses in highest demand by the local populace during this period were saloons/liquor stores, grocers, and tobacco shops.

During 1900 the local business scene explodes from eight businesses in 1890 to twenty-three. The number of grocers jumps drastically, while businesses such as saloons disappear totally from the neighborhood. What is more important to notice is how this shift in local business illustrates the change in the complexion of the neighborhood. The disappearance of saloons and the advent of professional occupations such as druggist and physician suggests a rise in the area’s desirability over time. A growth in commercial businesses takes place to support the growing population of the locale.

Table 8: Local Businesses Located Within Study Area As Listed In Boyd’s City Directory

1870	#	1880	#	1890	#	1900	#
Saloons	5	Saloon	2	Saloon/Hotel	1	Liquor Store	1
Grocers	3	Grocer	2	Grocer	1	Grocer	5
Tobacco	2	Coal/Wood/Feed	1	Dry goods	1	Butcher	2
Boots/Shoes	1	Printer	1	Druggist	1	Jeweler	2
Butcher	1	Barber	1	Laundry	1	Dry goods	1
Restaurant	1	Physician	1	Clothing	1	Physician	3
Hotel	1	Clerk	1	Tobacco	1	Tobacco	2
		Notions	1	Shoemaker	1	Produce Vender	2
						Blacksmith	1
						Barber	3
						Boarding House	1
Total:	14	Total:	10	Total:	8	Total:	23

The most notable change in the business complexion of the neighborhood took place between 1884 and 1890 in the six hundred block of State Street. The Wilson Brothers and Agricultural Implements Company sprawled out over the entire area as early as 1871(Hopkins Map). However, sometime between the publications of the 1884 and 1890 Sanborn maps it

was abandoned, the facility destroyed, and a series of twenty-four row-homes built in its place. There was great difficulty in getting any accurate information on this company but one thing is certain--a major industrial facility within the study area closed and a residential complex took the company's place.

The real estate values of the study area average \$3,509 in the year 1870. Twenty percent of all residents of the city during this period had similar real estate values, compared to the forty-eight percent that had a value of less than \$2,499 (Eggert 248). This means that the neighborhood's value was relatively high when compared to almost half of the city.

Unemployment data within the 1880 U.S. Census lists only five individuals as having been unemployed during the year. Two people listed months of unemployment due to sicknesses such as heart disease and diarrhea. Three were of a skilled profession and the other an unskilled occupation. The year 1900 lists the number of unemployed as totaling twenty-five persons. All of these individuals were involved in unskilled positions such as day laborer, housekeeper, or waiter.

Listed within the 1900 census was the category of whether an individual's house was rented or owned. There are one hundred and twenty-three households listed within the study area on the 1900 census. Eighty percent of these households are renting the property, while a much smaller percent, twenty, are owners of the property. Even though the majority of the population rented their property, twenty-six of those households still needed boarders to supplement family incomes. Those people who owned their houses needed to take on boarders less often, and only three such households are listed as having them in 1900. Boarders can be a good measure of the self-sufficiency of a household. If more income was needed, boarders would be added to the house in order to help pay expenses.

Table 9: Number of Boarders 1870-1900

Year	Number of Boarders	% of Area Population
1870	81	17
1880	26	5
1900	61	11

Education

The education level of the neighborhood can help illustrate the economic status of the area. There is a noticeable rise in the rate of illiteracy in 1880; this is due to the large group of migrant southern African-Americans. When compared to the nation as a whole, the study area falls well below national averages for each year. Even though illiteracy was a problem, this area was evidently educated with the basics of reading and writing.

Table 10: Illiteracy in Study Area

Year	# Illiterate	% of Area Population Illiterate	Percent U.S. Illiterate³
1870	24	5	20
1880	60	11	17
1890	N/A	N/A	13
1900	28	5	11

The public school system was in place for the entire state by the end of the 1873-1874 school year (Glatfelter 52). Children in the study area from ages six to sixteen attended school. When a child reached the twelve to sixteen age range, they stood a much better chance of entering into the work force. Pulling a child from school was often done in households where income was needed from as many sources as possible. Census data for 1870 shows that about forty

Table 11 : School Withdrawals Age 6-16

Year	# Youth Left School	% Youth Left School
1870	10	13
1880	17	19
1890	N/A	N/A
1900	7	9

³ Data from Arthur Hu's Index of Diversity (<http://www.arthurhu.com/index/literacy>)

percent of Harrisburg’s children aged six to sixteen were attending school. Youth within the study area during this same period display an eighty-seven percent enrollment rate and average eighty-six percent enrollment throughout the study period. The majority of children in the neighborhood were able to attend school, something that was not a norm within the city of Harrisburg.

Comparisons

The growth of Reading Pennsylvania was very similar to that of the city of Harrisburg. Both cities were hubs of railroad companies, the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in Reading and the Pennsylvania Railroad in Harrisburg. Transportation was the impetus that spurred the growth of industry in both areas (Eggert 122).

The latter half of the nineteenth century was an era of industrial development in Reading. Companies established were similar to those located within Harrisburg. The major difference between the two cities was location. Reading was located only fifty-eight miles west of Philadelphia, while Harrisburg was located much farther away from any major city. Reading’s proximity to Philadelphia gave the city better availability to large markets as well as a large labor force. This is why Reading’s industrialization began

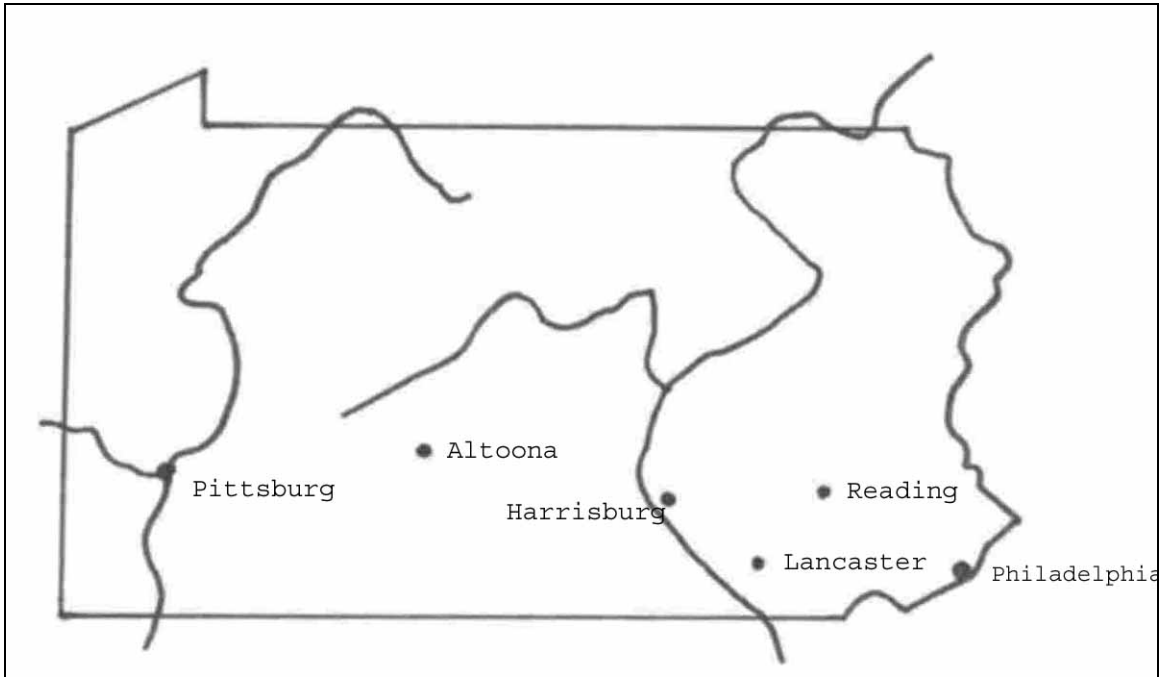
<i>Table 12: Reading Industries⁴</i>	
Year Est.	Reading
1849	Cotton Mill
1865	Reading Bolt and Nut Works
1869	Enterprise Furniture Factory
1871	A Wilhelm and Co (paint maker)
1872	Jackson and Son Company (Rope works)
1877	Penn Hardware Company
1878	Reading Iron Company
1878	JG Mohn and Bros. Hat factory
1882	Reading Hardware Company
1885	Reading Engine Works

almost a decade earlier than that of Harrisburg (Eggert 124). One would expect similar living

⁴ Albright 263-265

conditions for laborers in Reading and Harrisburg. However, lack of similar studies on cities such as Reading make this difficult to determine.

Figure 9: Map of Pennsylvania



Conclusions

This study has shown, by the use of public records, that Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward was not an area completely inhabited by the lower class but was an area of surprising economic stability during the end of the nineteenth century. Ethnic, economic, and educational data was gathered from the U.S. Census and city directories. Data suggests that this ten-block study vicinity was better off than most of the city of Harrisburg at this time.

A picture of a neighborhood located within the Eighth Ward has been painted through the use of public records. Problems always arise from using such historic records; however, they still provide an invaluable source of data on neighborhoods and cities. By using census

and directory data together, researchers can gain more accurate information on a population's ethnic make-up and economic standing. Using historic maps gives the researcher the opportunity to see change in neighborhood structure.

Ethnic data within the area is similar to data throughout the rest of Harrisburg during this period. A large Pennsylvania-born population dominates the area through 1870 to 1900. Migrants from other states never made up more than twenty percent of the locale's population. This resulted from a large migration of blacks from the southern United States, specifically Maryland and Virginia. Immigrants never made up more than eleven percent of the neighborhood's population. The largest influx of foreign-born peoples occurred in 1900 with the arrival of Russian-born Jews. Their arrival seemed to stabilize the area further at the end of the nineteenth century by bringing in new businesses.

The average real estate value of homes listed within the neighborhood falls near the median value of real estate in the city. This illustrates that housing within this area did not consist of run-down tenement buildings but was possibly a desirable location for citizens at that time. However, eighty percent of the households still rented their properties from much more affluent landlords.

The need for boarders to supplement household incomes was never a widespread trend in this neighborhood. Boarders never made up more than seventeen percent of the area's population. The rise in the population usually coincided with the operation of a boarding house, as in 1900.

Numbers of unskilled laborers only slightly outnumber those in skilled professions within the neighborhood. An average of forty-five percent of individuals listed a skilled occupation on census records. The high amount of skilled labor was no doubt the result of

being close to railroad facilities and industrial plants such as the Hickok Eagle Works. Skilled positions typically meant higher wages for workers. Along with a very low occurrence of unemployment, five individuals in 1880 and twenty-five in 1900, the average laborer in the area seemed to be in good shape economically.

Local businesses within the vicinity grew and evolved from saloons in 1870 to grocers, butchers, and physicians in 1900. New craft occupations were developing in clothing and jewelry-making in the neighborhood. The changing data on these local businesses suggests a continuing development of the community

Children within the study vicinity were able to attend school from the ages of six to sixteen without fear of being pulled out to work. Eighty-seven percent of youth were going to school in 1870, as opposed to the forty percent average in the city of Harrisburg during this period. Consistently high enrollment rates, an average of eighty-six percent, are present in 1870, 1880, and 1900.

The conclusion to be drawn for this work is that by using public records a more accurate picture can be obtained of a particular community. This section of “The Bloody Eighth” was as stable, if not more stable, economically than most sections of the city during the years 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900. Similar studies such as those done on Harrisburg need to be completed for other cities in the region such as Lancaster and Reading.

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Photographs are from The Pennsylvania State Archives (PSA), RG-17 Records of the Department of Land Records and the Historical Society of Dauphin County (HSDC). The same photos can be seen in:

Barton, Michael and Jessica Dorman. Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward. The Making of America Series. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002.