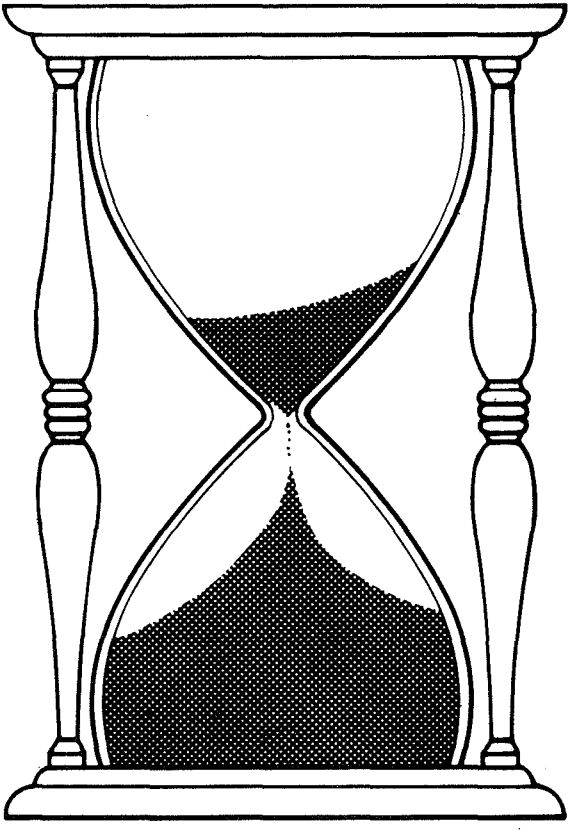
Historical Geography Research Series

British Directories as Sources in Historical Geography

Gareth Shaw



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Gareth Shaw British Directories as Sources in Historical Geography

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HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH SERIES

No. 8

BRITISH DIRECTORIES AS SOURCES IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

by

Gareth Shaw

(University of Exeter)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DIRECTORIES: A NEGLECTED DATA SOURCE

The fascination that a growing number of historical geographers have shown toward studying the urban geography of the nineteenth century city has been a trend fairly well remarked upon in the last few years. In many of these studies one factor stands out as being of particular importance, and that is the availability of reliable data in relatively large quantities. Indeed, to a very large extent the wealth of information on the nineteenth century was the trigger mechanism necessary to fire wide-scale academic interest. Closer inspection of the situation reveals that the most important and crucial stimulant was the availability of census enumerator books for the period after 1841. A review of the recent literature shows a heavy concentration of papers concerned with the social structure of the mid-nineteenth century city, often at the expense of other important features. The result of this trend has led some researchers to complain about the over-emphasis on the data rich years of the nineteenth century and the neglect of both earlier and later decades[1].

The relative abundance of census data, especially at the enumeration district level, has also had another important effect on research in historical geography, drawing attention away from the exploration of other potential data sources. Fortunately, many of these sources, such as parish registers, poll tax returns and tithe surveys, have received and continue to receive the attention of substantial numbers of academics. This is to some extent because they provide very different information at different dates from the census returns and consequently their role within historical research is well established. This is not however the case with directories. The rich data base available for some aspects of nineteenth- and to a lesser extent late eighteenth-century Britain, has served to make directories at best a stop-gap. Directories have therefore been used in many studies only when absolutely nothing else was available.

This situation contrasts markedly with that prevailing in North America, where directories have been more widely used and have formed a much more integral part of historical geography research[2]. Interest in directories as source material, especially for urban studies, has led to the re-publication of Spear's *Bibliography of American Directories Through 1860* on microfilm, and a proposal to extend the original work into the post-bellum era[3]. Similarly, in Canada more recent research involving the use of directories has stimulated the national government to publish a checklist of Canadian directories issued between 1790 and 1950[4]. The use of directories in the U.S.A. has furthermore stimulated work on their general levels of reliability to be carried out, thus increasing their usefulness[5]. In the case of Canada, directories have assumed greater importance in historical research due to the very poor quality of the nineteenth-century manuscript census[6].

The commonly held view of British historical geographers is that directories are biased in their coverage and that even the best of them contain numerous errors and internal inaccuracies[7]. The former criticism is generally held, but with little substantive evidence to back up the claims of bias and unreliability. Indeed, no systematic assessment of directory reliability exists, although some workers have recently attempted to compare directories with census returns for specific settlements[8]. To support the view that directories contain a variety of internal errors, the work of Davies, Giggs and Herbert is most often quoted[9]. This is usually done so out of context and applied to studies in a totally different time period[10]. Little thought has been given to the idea that directory reliability may have varied over time and perhaps from one place to another.

Due to this general mistrust of directories very little effort has been made to investigate their availability, use and reliability. As a consequence of this, interest has been deflected away from those other important aspects of urban life not covered by the manuscript census, for example: the changing nature of commercial and industrial patterns.

1.2 GUIDES TO BRITISH DIRECTORIES

Whilst directories have largely been neglected by a majority of historical geographers in Britain, they have fortunately received considerably more attention from local historians. This interest dates back at least to the 1930's, with the publication by Goss of a guide to *The London Directories, 1677 - 1855*; and Walkers' detailed account of *Birmingham Directories* and their evolution during the eighteenth century[11]. Indeed, Goss suitably highlighted the importance of directories to the local historian when he described the street directory as 'a perfect epitome of local history', which 'opens up a vast field of quite interesting research'[12]. Admittedly, this statement was made well before the availability of suitable manuscript census data, but nevertheless this early recognition of directories as useful data sources has had two important effects. First, the demand and use of directories by local historians has helped to preserve a fairly good stock of these publications in most county libraries[13]. Secondly, this interest has prompted a few libraries and local history societies to publish bibliographies of county and local directories[14].

In addition to local bibliographies one good national guide exists, which unfortunately only covers the English and Welsh directories published before 1856[15]. At present no such comprehensive guide exists to Scottish directories, or English and Welsh directories published during the last half of the nineteenth century. The search for directories published after 1856 in England and Wales, and for those in Scotland at any time, must be undertaken at different levels. Thus a fairly general picture of national coverage can be built-up from the catalogue of the British Library, although for a more detailed inquiry of regional or local coverage reference must be made to individual local history libraries.

Table 1. Guides to British directories

(a)	Catalogues
	Norton - English and Welsh directories before 1846 (9).
	Goss - London directories before 1855 (5).
	Tupling* - Lancashire directories before 1951 (8).
(b)	General guides
	Roberts - gives a short guide to the use of directories (10).
	Cowley - devotes some space to directory material (10).

( ) refers to reference number.

* other local guides exist but this is the most comprehensive.

As table 1 shows, only a handful of guides to directories exist, and of these only the studies by Norton, Goss and Tupling provide catalogues of numbers, dates of publication and library locations. The other works listed in this table either only account for the development of certain directories, e.g. Walkers' paper, or they give very general guidance to the use of directories as in the case of Roberts[16]. Clearly, considerable scope exists for a comprehensive guide and bibliography of British directories, that would extend Norton's work into Scotland and up to the end of the nineteenth century. This in itself would greatly facilitate the wider use of directories as data sources in historical geography.

However, it is not the aim or intention of this publication to pursue such a course useful though it may be. Rather this work will concentrate on exploring the reliability of directories and their potential uses within historical geography. However, as a background to these objectives material is also presented on the development of directories with particular reference to their changing contents. In addition, an attempt is made to assess the spatial and temporal coverage of directories during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Much of the latter work is however of a tentative nature in the absence of any comprehensive catalogue of British directories.

2. THE EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECTORIES

2.1 ORIGINS AND THE LINKS WITH REGISTRY OFFICES

The first recognisable directories made their appearance in Britain towards the end of the seventeenth century and were chiefly concerned with enumerating the numbers of traders and merchants. These early directories seemed to have originated from two main sources and followed slightly different routes of

development[17]. One set of directories had a long and slow evolution, originating from the lists of traders kept by the earliest registry offices. In contrast other directories made their appearance in a more spontaneous fashion to meet the demands of increased trading activity, especially among the London merchants. However, behind both these developments lay a common motivation, the driving force of commerce. From the seventeenth century onwards the increasing number of traders, the trend towards the separation of industrial skills and the geographical spread of business linkages were factors that created a demand for informative literature on aspects of trade and industry. Indeed, it was their commercial perspective that distinguished the earliest directories from other printed lists, which had usually been designed with some specific administrative purpose in mind.

It is extremely difficult to identify the precise moment when commercial interests were sufficient to demand the publication of a directory or indeed when a publisher appeared with enough foresight and speculative instinct to produce one. The earliest known list is one entitled 'The Componyes of all Crafts and Mysteries in London' published in 1538, which listed 2600 householders who were freemen of the City Livery Companies[18]. Much earlier versions of this type of list dated back to such organisations as the Guild Merchants who attended the Preston Guild, with records starting around 1328[19]. It was however only in 1677 that a recognisable directory appeared, with the publication by Sammuel Lee of a list of London merchants[20]. Contemporary evidence, sparse though it is, seems to suggest that this work was Lee's original idea and that he had no previous examples to draw upon[21]. Certainly the fact that it took him at least two years to complete the work may be some indication of its innovatory nature. Despite the apparent success of this publication no successor appeared until 1734, when a directory of London merchants was compiled by James Brown and finally published by Henry Kent. This directory was revised annually by Kent up to 1771 and after, by a variety of other people until being finally discontinued in 1826[22].

The earliest links between published directories and the work of registry offices is to be found in France, where a Bureau d'Addresse et de Rencontre was opened by Renaudot in 1629[23]. From these offices of information, lists of advertisements were periodically published containing names and addresses of traders and it was just such material that formed the basis of the first Paris directory in 1691. It ran to a second addition in 1692, which included new classified sections on such topics as medical wares, antique shops and amusements[24]. In Britain, although permission was granted to Sir Arthur Gorges and Sir Walter Cope to establish a registry office as early as 1611[25], it would seem such developments did not stimulate the immediate publication of directories. This is possibly because of the chequered history of registry offices in this country in the mid and late seventeenth century, and certainly before the Restoration. However, these early registry offices, which attempted to provide

information on all aspects of trade, had started to publish lists of the goods and services they offered and brought into life the first advertisements[26]. After 1695, when the Press became free, the advertising sheets of the registry offices declined, as newspapers became more common and devoted more of their space to advertisements. From this period onwards the activities of many registry offices became more restricted. Some became small employment agencies, often acquiring dubious reputations. In addition, by the eighteenth century, these agencies had spread outside London into most provincial towns, stimulated largely by the success of Fielding's Universal Register Office, which was opened in 1751[27].

It is during the eighteenth century that the link between registry offices and directories appears strongest in Britain, as many owners of employment agencies also published directories. This relationship is clearly illustrated in the case of Birmingham, where the first registry office was opened in 1752 by Thomas Juxon who the same year also compiled a catalogue of the names and addresses of the principal inhabitants and tradesmen of the city[28]. Unfortunately, no copy of this work has ever been found so it may well have never been published on a commercial basis. By 1760 a second registry office had been opened in Birmingham by James Sketchley and he also decided to produce a directory which was published in 1763. This was widely advertised as being 'Very necessary for all Merchants and Tradesmen who have any Dealings in the town of Birmingham'[29], and contained an alphabetical list of the names and addresses of merchants and tradesmen. In both instances the information and expertise gained from operating registry offices seemed to lead quite naturally onto directory publication. This is not surprising since both Juxon's 'Office of Intelligence' and Sketchley's 'Birmingham Universal Registry Office' were involved in almost every conceivable line of commerce from the buying and selling of property to the employment of apprentices and the hiring of journeymen[30].

Similar circumstances seem to have operated in Manchester, where the first directory was published by Elizabeth Raffald in 1772[31], who also ran a registry office though of a much smaller scale than those in Birmingham. The date of foundation of this office is unknown, although it certainly seems to have been in operation some time before 1774 as the following notice suggests: 'As several of Mrs Raffalds friends in the country have mistook the terms and design of her Register Office, she begs leave to inform them that she supplies Families with Servants, for any place at One shilling for each'[32]. It would also appear from this advertisement that Mrs Raffalds 'Registry for Domestic Servants' was nothing more than a simple employment exchange.

2.2 THE WORK OF EARLY DIRECTORY PUBLISHERS

The early pioneers of directories were drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds not all of which provided the necessary skills to succeed with such publications. Those drawn from

registry offices represented a small but significant number of the many people tempted to turn their hand towards the compilation and publication of directories. A great number of the authors of early directories also came from the fields of printing and publishing which did give them some insight into the problems and potentialities of directories. Probably the best known of these was Edward Baines who started his career as an apprentice printer and then founded his own printing business before becoming involved in directory publishing[33]. However, he quickly withdrew from directory publishing and devoted his attention to the printing of other peoples volumes. Other common occupations among directory compilers were land and house agents, auctioneers, post office officials and policemen, all lines of work which allowed these people to come into contact with information concerning names and addresses. A few of the early directory compilers were also attracted to the trade because of business failures elsewhere; for example, Charles Pye of Birmingham pursued at least three different occupations (watchmaker, wine merchant and collector of the window and hearth tax) before he turned to directory publishing[34].

The net effect of such a variety of experiences was twofold, first it casts some doubt on the reliability of many of the more locally produced directories and secondly, it led to a very high mortality rate among firms publishing directories. Some indication of the rate of business failure is given by the number of firms that only published one directory, these accounted for nearly 36% of all the directory publishers operating between 1760 and 1800 in England, Wales and Scotland. This trend was to intensify during the mid and late nineteenth century as the evidence from Lancashire seems to suggest. Of the eighty-one people publishing directories in that county between 1790 and 1900, almost 52% produced only one directory.

2.3 LINKS WITH THE POST OFFICE

The spread of postal services after 1764, when the Postmaster General was instructed to set up penny deliveries to houses outside London, and the attempts to improve the quality of services within the metropolis, all placed new demands on the Post Office for accurate information on the names and addresses of individuals. Information was required for many towns, that had only previously been available from directories produced for very different purposes, i.e. those of trade and commerce. Consequently, many Post Office officials turned their hand to directory publishing, both as a means of aiding their work and also to make extra money. The first recorded link between the Post Office and a directory was in 1773, when Peter Williamson published a directory of Edinburgh[35]. Curiously, his first directory was a list of inhabitants arranged alphabetically by occupation rather than a mere list of inhabitants, which is the form all the other editions took.

By 1800 the links between the Post Office and directories had become stronger with the publication that year of the London

Post Office Directory, initially entitled the *New Annual Directory*[36], compiled by two inspectors of inland letter carriers, Ferguson and Sparke. This first edition gave the names and addresses of nearly 12 000 inhabitants along with their occupations and general postal information for London. It was then published annually, changing its name in 1801 to the Post Office Annual Directory, and it also acquired a third compiler in 1803, another post office inspector by the name of Critchett, who had taken over sole authorship of the directory by 1806. Critchett edited this directory until he died in 1835, after which the copyright was sold to Frederick Kelly who was then chief inspector of the inland letter carriers.

The publication by Kelly of this directory with the aid of many post office employees certainly began to strain the relationship between the Post Office and the directory. A number of allegations were raised against Kelly and his running of the directory by Jonathan Duncan of Kennington who was proprietor of a newspaper called *The Sentinel*. The main complaints against Kelly was that he was misusing public money through using both Post Office materials and employees to carry out the production of his directory. The campaign culminated in a number of questions being asked in the House of Commons over the conduct of Kelly and a move for a select committee to inquire into the affairs of the Post Office[37]. The reports to questions put in the House give some interesting insights into the publication of directories by Post Office officials. The information contained in the directory was collected by the letter carriers, who circulated forms on their respective postal rounds. The forms themselves, on which the information was collected, were headed 'Post Office Directory' and were thereby given some official status. Indeed it must be added that the information was required by the post office whether a directory was published or not[38]. The letter carriers also delivered the completed directory and gained a commission on the number of volumes they sold. It was claimed by Kelly's opponents that he earned as much as 10 000 guineas a year from the directory, although Kelly himself claimed the fees were only around 12 000 guineas per annum. The wranglings over the production of the directory dragged on for a number of years with numerous questions being asked in the House of Commons[39], until finally Kelly had to curtail his use of Post Office employees. He did however retain the title of Post Office Directory for all his publications and there is little doubt that the title itself was some considerable boost to sales, inspiring as it did public confidence in such works that bore an official title.

Not all the relationships between Post Office officials and directories were as effective or as colourful as that of Kelly, but nevertheless the numbers of directories with Post Office links increased in the early and mid nineteenth century. The early work of Williamson in Edinburgh, already mentioned, was followed up by other Post Office employees in Glasgow, with the publication of the *Post Office Directory of Glasgow* in 1828. Similarly, the *Post Office Directory of Southampton*, published

in 1843 was compiled by a clerk in the local Post Office to aid in the correct addressing of letters[40]. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the use of the term Post Office Directory became even more widespread, and in many cases there were really no ties in any way with the Post Office.

2.4 THE RISE OF LARGE-SCALE DIRECTORY PUBLISHERS

Reference has already been made to the small and ephemeral nature of many of the directory publishing firms that existed in the eighteenth century. However, at the other end of the size spectrum some fairly large organisations were beginning to develop that attempted to cover not only individual towns and their immediate areas, but also substantial parts of the country. The first person to publish a directory covering a large geographical area was William Bailey, who in 1781 issued his *Northern Directory*, which he claimed contained 'every principal town from the River Trent to Berwick upon Tweed; with London and Westminster, Edinburgh and Glasgow'[41]. Publication of this directory continued up to 1787, with gaps in 1782 and 1786. In terms of coverage Bailey's most comprehensive directory was that published in 1784 under the title of *Bailey's British Directory*, the four volumes of which covered all the main towns of England.

After the relatively quick decline of Bailey's directories no national directory was issued until 1790, when the *Universal British Directory* was published. This was compiled largely by John Wilkes and issued in parts at irregular intervals. Wilkes was partnered and supported in the whole venture by Peter Barfoot, a relatively wealthy gentleman from Hampshire. This partnership clearly illustrated the need to draw on a fairly large capital sum to get the directory compiled and marketed. In the compilation of these large-scale directories substantial numbers of local agents needed to be recruited throughout the country. This not only took time and organisation, but was also a costly exercise.

To a great extent the success of a directory depended on its price, and therefore the costing exercise prior to publication was extremely important. This was the hard lesson that William Holden learned when his series of provincial directories ran into financial difficulties around 1814. Holden began a series of directories in 1805 but each edition became more ambitious and costly. Thus, his first *Triennial Directory*[42] for 1805 cost £1 19s 6d per volume, but this had risen to £2 12s 6d per volume just six years later[43]. Due to such increased prices sales fell and Holden went out of business in 1814.

One person to make a success of producing provincial and national directories was James Pigot, who started his career as an engraver in Manchester. His first provincial directory was issued in 1814[44], which incidentally sold for less than half the price of Holden's works. By 1820 Pigot had embarked upon the first of a series of national directories that continued until 1853. These publications may be divided into five general

surveys encompassed by some 68 different directories[45]. The scale and success of these directories was due entirely to Pigot's organisational abilities, as illustrated by the fact that he employed an agent in Paris to market his directories on the continent.

The development of the large-scale directory firms was it seems conditioned by two main factors. First, there needed to be a fairly substantial demand for such publications, a condition that was met by increasing economic and urban development. Secondly, many of the compilers of provincial and national directories required fairly sizeable quantities of capital, which was often provided from outside resources and sponsors. One notable exception to the latter trend was the business built up by Frederick Kelly in London. However, in his case the capital necessary to produce provincial directories on a large scale, from 1845 onwards, was undoubtedly accumulated from his earlier favourable link with the Post Office. By the 1850's Kelly had become the dominant provincial directory publisher within the south of England. The dominance of the firm at a national level was complete when Kelly took over the business of Pigot and Slater during the second half of the nineteenth century. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century the scale and pace of urban change was such that it prohibited the production of national directories. Thus, in the late eighteenth century Bailey had been able to publish a directory covering all the main settlements in one four volume issue, by the 1820's such a task could only be achieved over a two or three year period. In addition, by the mid nineteenth century, the large scale directory publishers had switched from producing directories for selected major towns within a region and had started to move towards county/provincial directories that attempted a coverage of all settlements. This system was especially favoured by Kelly and goes some way towards explaining his success as a directory publisher.

3. DIRECTORIES AND THEIR CONTENTS

3.1 A TYPOLOGY OF BRITISH DIRECTORIES

As we have already seen the stimulus for most directory publication came initially from the needs of merchants and traders. However, once the general concept of directories had been widely accepted, probably by the late eighteenth century, they began to take on a variety of roles. By this time directories were being produced for the private inhabitants of major towns, fashionable resorts and for specialised trades. Not all directories were issued for such specific purposes, indeed the most successful of all were the general trades directories. These contained both a list of private inhabitants and information on the main trades and retailers of the town. It is such directories, that became most common in the mid to late nineteenth century, which have survived in large numbers and

consequently have been used most by historical geographers. In addition to these general publications, Norton describes a number of rather unique directories, often only published in limited numbers, of which probably the most impressive is that issued by Bisset for Birmingham[46]. This consisted of engraved copper-plates of the names and addresses of prominent citizens and merchants all illustrated by scenes of Birmingham; it is probably one of the finest produced directories of its time and also one of the least successful due to its very high cost.

Any attempt to classify directories is a difficult task because of the limited information we have about their development. Certain generalities about their evolution are known, whilst others have been inferred from the variety of surviving directories. However, few details exist regarding the actual timing of important changes in the types and styles of different directories. Figure 1 represents one attempt to develop a typology of directories in terms of their broad scope and content, and also to place such publications in a general evolutionary framework. It must be stressed that many of the linkages between different directories are only tentative and for these no hard evidence exists to suggest that one type of development automatically led onto another. However, the surviving directories, together with the changing needs of the population, would certainly seem to add strong support to this kind of historical development.

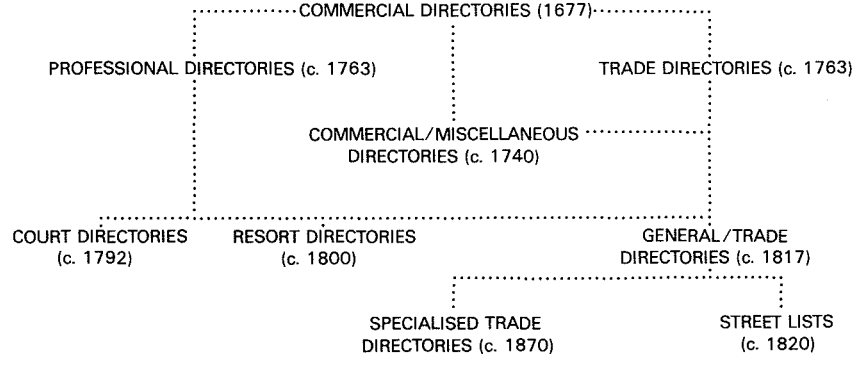

Figure 1. A classification of British directories published before 1900.

The most important and productive evolutionary line was from the trade directories through to the general directories that included both a classified trades section, and a list of private inhabitants. The earliest of these seems to have been the *Universal Director* published for London by Mortimer in 1763[47]. This contained a wide range of information, from the usual list of merchants and bankers through to the introduction of a classified list of tradesmen and shopkeepers. It also represented a move away from the directories aimed at merchants towards one

for more general use by a wide number of people. These later publications took many different forms and provided a variety of information. A probable off-shoot of the general directories was the production of street lists, published very often by small-scale firms. These usually took the form of a list of streets arranged alphabetically, together with the names and sometimes the occupations of the residents.

By the second half of the nineteenth century specialised trade directories had made their appearance on a fairly significant scale. A great number of these concentrated on the activities associated with merchants and wholesalers and were directly associated with the early commercial directories (figure 1). Others took on more specialised forms, many of which were related to the great changes that were occuring in agriculture. For example, William Kent produced *The Agricultural Implement Manufacturers Directory of England* in 1867, and the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a spate of similar publications. Other directories had themes that related to a specific trade within a particular town; thus, *The Metropolitan Dairymens Directory* was published for London in 1886. Not all these specialised publications were directly involved with commerce; some for instance focused down on a combination of cultural and commercial aspects as illustrated by the *Commercial Directory of Italians Resident in England*, published in 1893[48]. The publication of specialised trade directories reached something of a peak in the early 20th century and many went on to acquire an international scope[49].

A second major line of directory evolution was via the 18th century professional directories. These publications tended to list only the wealthy and the professional people within the community. In their most specialised form they developed into court lists that covered only the names of important private residents[50]. Associated with such information, provided as it was for society's elite, was the growth of 'resort town' directories. The earliest of these were published for established watering places and spa towns, thus Bath had a directory in the late eighteenth century[51]. However, earlier town guides, dating from 1773, contained lists of lodging houses and medical practitioners. This information was initially found as appendices to guide books before taking the form of a recognisable directory. The trend towards sea-side holidays increased the demand for such directories during the early part of the nineteenth century. Many of these directories contain only selective pieces of information concerning the better class retailers and fashionable shops, whilst some listed the addresses of villas and houses for holiday lets. By the second half of the nineteenth century most of the functions of the resort type of directories were covered by the more general trade directories, a factor which goes some way to explain the demise of the former publications.

3.2 CHANGES IN CONTENT AND FORMAT

The overall content of directories was related, as we have seen, to their specific role. However, over time all the main types of directory changed their levels of information and general layout. The most dramatic changes in content and format are associated with the development of the general trade directories (figure 1). The earliest directories were simply alphabetically arranged names of inhabitants together with their addresses. However, throughout the eighteenth century the information and layout of trade directories changed markedly, as is shown in table 2. A second major step was with the introduction of separate street sections that gave the names and occupations of residents. Such a change was followed by directories that also contained a classified trades section, giving the names and addresses of each trader (table 2). This stage of development had been reached in London by 1763 with the publication of Mortimer's *Universal Director*. However, in provincial towns such changes tended to come more slowly.

Table 2. General changes in the content of directories between 1720-1820

Approximate dates	Basic contents
1720-1750	Names, alphabetically arranged, with addresses and later occupations added.
1750-1790	Alphabetical list of names and addresses. Also alphabetical street sections with residents names.
1790-1800	Names, addresses and occupations, plus alphabetical trades section.
1800-1820	Names, addresses and occupations. Street section. Classified trades section.

In Liverpool for example, the first directory published in 1766 by John Gore was merely an alphabetical list of names, occupations and addresses[52]. This type of format continued largely unchanged into the 1790's, although by 1790 the Gore Directory had increased its level of information to cover a variety of themes (figure 2), and a list of streets had been included[53]. However, it was not until the publication, in 1814, of Pigot's *Commercial Directory* that Liverpool was provided with a classified trades directory. Generally, the switch from commercial Directories to classified trade directories was slow outside London. Indeed, despite strong attempts by Holden to produce a national directory on a classified trades basis in the early nineteenth century, this was only finally achieved by Pigot from 1814 onwards.

The changing format of Scottish directories presents a rather similar picture to that found in provincial England and

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Figure 2. List of contents in Gore's Liverpool directory (1790).

Wales. However, some notable advances did occur, in particular the publication of *Williamson's Directory for the City of Edinburgh*. The first edition of this series, published in 1774, provides an early example of an alphabetical arrangement of occupations. This style was unfortunately abandoned by Williamson, whose later directories consisted of lists of inhabitants arranged alphabetically by name. Following this it was not until the 1830's that Edinburgh had a comprehensive trades directory, containing an alphabetical list of traders[54].

The final transformation in the evolution of the general trade directories was again to take place in London. It involved in 1817 the publication by Andrew Johnstone, of a four part directory that contained the following information:-

1. An alphabetical arrangement of London streets that also listed the names and occupations of each householder.
2. An alphabetical list of people together with their occupations.

3. Trades, arranged alphabetically and with the names of persons engaged in each trade.

4. A miscellaneous section containing details on mail, coach and waggon conveyance.

As Goss points out this was the most comprehensive directory of its time, listing as it did some 27 000 names and a total of nearly 81 000 entries, since each name was repeated in the Street and Trades Sections[55]. Due to a lack of financial support the directory was discontinued after the second edition in 1818, although it had by then paved the way for other compilers to publish similar volumes. In particular the directories produced by W. Robson and James Pigot during the 1830's widely promoted the general trades directory introduced by Johnstone. A final boost to such a comprehensive format came with its adoption by Kelly in 1841 for his Post Office Directory of London. It was the work of these larger firms that led to such comprehensive directories being produced for provincial areas during the mid-nineteenth century.

In terms of the changing scope and content of directories two main periods can be identified. The first extended from 1734 to 1816 during which time the style of directories had changed only slowly and in a limited fashion as indicated in table 2. The second period from 1817 onwards, was marked by a dramatic increase in the size and content of directories, as typified by Johnstone's London directory of 1817. However, it must be stressed that such dates refer only to the situation in London, since change in provincial directories as we have seen tended to be somewhat later. The increasing size of directories was brought about not merely by changes in classificatory styles, but also through the inclusion of additional types of information. Apart from the names and addresses of residents and traders, directories also contain sections on transport, local histories, maps and town plans and a wide variety of advertisements.

Such information adds an extra dimension to the usefulness of directories in historical geography, and it is therefore worthwhile briefly considering how this other material was presented.

3.3 TOPOGRAPHY AND LOCAL HISTORY

By the nineteenth century it became common practice for directories to contain sections on local topography and history. This material usually introduced the directory and attempted to present the reader with a 'potted' history of the region. Indeed, because of their topographical information many directories are catalogued in Anderson's *The Book of British Topography*[56]. It would seem that such information was regarded as being of some considerable importance, particularly during the second part of the nineteenth century. The evidence for this stems from two facts. First, the volume and scope of topographical and historical information expanded in many directories; secondly, many of

the larger directory-publishing firms engaged well known authors to write such works.

It is hardly surprising that such regional descriptions became an integral part of most provincial directories, given the increase in personal mobility that was occurring at this time. Indeed, some directories appeared almost as regional guidebooks, such as the *Devon and Cornwall Court Guide and County Blue Book of 1896*. This presents a comprehensive series of topographical and historical sketches of the two counties, together with maps of climatological and geological conditions. However, despite the wealth of such information, little has been put to any practical use. Indeed, much of it was published elsewhere, and often in a more accurate form. This is particularly the case with regard to the early history and archaeology. Of greater interest are the sketches of local life presented in such accounts. For example, Baines's directories of Lancashire and Yorkshire provide a detailed picture of social and economic life within the two counties during the first quarter of the nineteenth century[57]. Scope for future work may be provided by some of the recent experiments to utilize topographies as sources in the study of urban historical geography, particularly through the medium of content analysis[58].

3.4 MAPS AND TOWN PLANS

A great many of the nineteenth-century directories included for reference purposes maps or town plans, the former being used in the county and national directories. The larger publishing firms usually had sufficient capital to commission the engraving of their own maps and plans. In the main the small scale maps of counties tended to be rather poorly produced and offer little competition to the first-edition Ordnance Survey maps. However, there do exist exceptions, where county maps contain data not normally existing in a cartographic form. Thus, many of Pigot's directories have maps with details on aspects such as turnpike roads, mail routes, the number of M.P.'s returned by each borough and the location of polling places (figure 3).

The town plans contained in directories are of greater value, since they quite often provide a detailed record of the form and growth of urban areas. These plans are all the more rewarding where they exist in the period before the publication of large-scale O.S. maps after 1843 and the six inches to one mile in 1840 for Northern England and Scotland[59]. Of these earlier maps some of the best town plans were issued by Edward Baines for use with his directories of Lancashire and Yorkshire[60]. For example, Baines's Lancashire directory contains a series of engraved plans for all the principal settlements. The quality of such maps is illustrated by Figure 4, which shows the extent and form of Preston in 1824. It can also be seen from this example that views of prominent streets were included, a feature taken to extreme in Bisset's directory of Birmingham[61]. This latter information provides rather unique evidence concerning the built form of the nineteenth century city. Unfortunately,

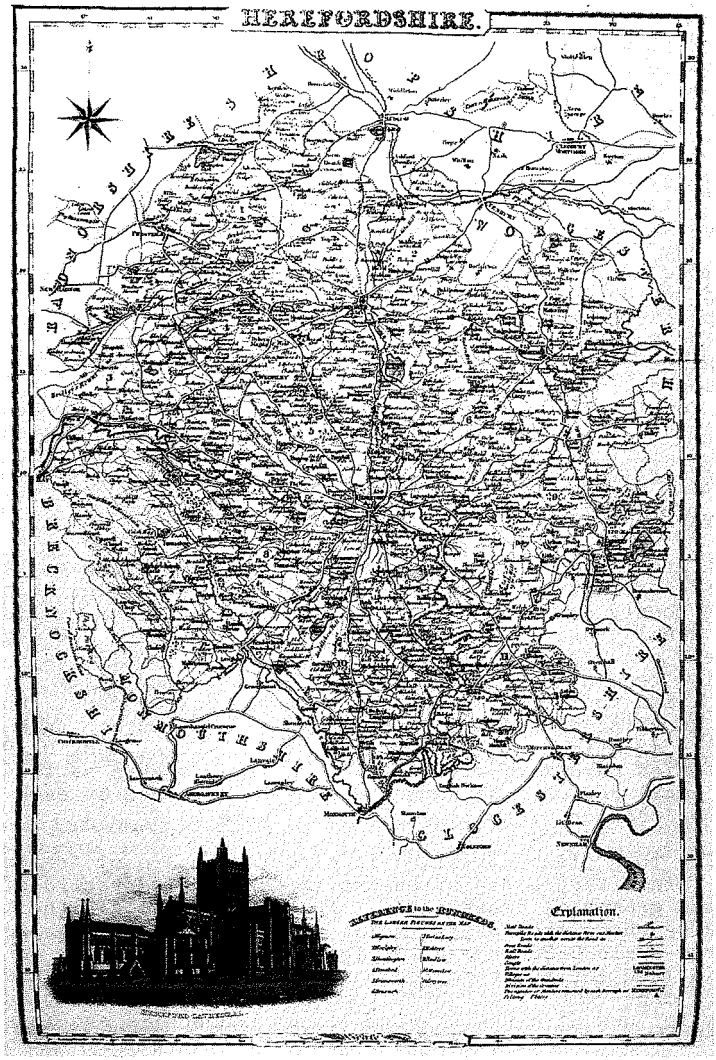

Figure 3. A map of Herefordshire from Pigot's Directory (1844).

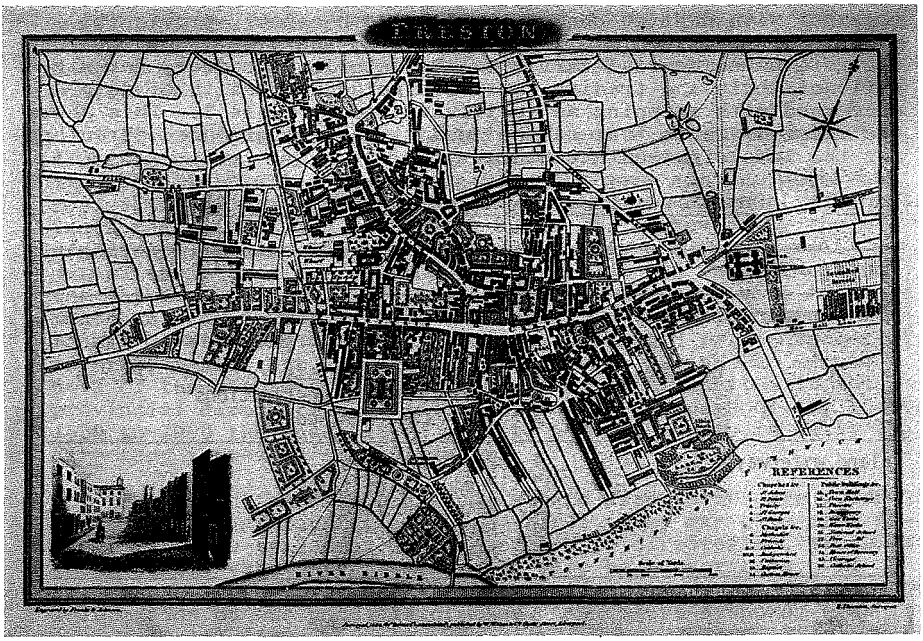

Figure 4. Baines' plan of Preston (1824).

few of the provincial directories published in the eighteenth century contained maps or plans. This was not the case in London, where after 1740 most directories contained a town plan for reference purposes.

With the publication and greater availability of O.S. town plans during the second part of the nineteenth century, directory maps become of less importance. Furthermore, the larger provincial directories published by Kelly's reduced their cartographic material to nothing more than mere street plans, that gave no details on the urban form. A final warning concerns those directories that often inserted town plans from an earlier period, such works were not usually referenced, or updated as new editions of the directory were published.

3.5 TRANSPORT AND RELATED TOPICS

Since a great majority of the directories were published for reasons of trade and commerce it is hardly remarkable that they should contain information on transport. Indeed, such data became a regular feature of many London directories from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. These publications included lists of coaches and their places of departure and destination. In

addition, the rates for hackney coaches and watermen were given, together with postage charges. Eighteenth-century provincial directories provided similar information, and also tended to concentrate on commercial carriers. Directories, produced for significant ports and trading centres, included a wealth of data concerned with shipping as is illustrated by Table 3. This shows the range of facts that can be found in a well produced directory for the late eighteenth century.

Table 3. Information on transport in Gore's Liverpool Directory

Topic		Format
Road transport:	coaches	1. Fares on mail coaches. 2. Rates of fares for hackney coaches.
	carriers	1. Frequency and costs 2. Departures and destinations 3. Sedan chairmen, costs
Inland waterways		1. List of routes 2. Frequency of trips 3. Rates and fares 4. Names of operators 5. Places of departure
Port and trading activities		1. Dock duties 2. Rates of pilotage 3. List of pilot boats and names of masters
	Carmen	1. Costs of transport by types of goods
	Porters	1. Costs by weight, type and activity

As Table 3 shows, directories provide a rich source of information relating to different aspects of the transport system at both the inter-urban and intra-urban levels[62]. The value of this information is further increased due to the fact that much of it is now only available in directories. The exceptions to this are the nineteenth-century maps showing the routes of mail coaches, and footposts for the period 1791-1843, held by the Post Office Records in London[63]. The increasing improvements in the level of transport during the nineteenth century, particularly the coming of the railways, added extra weight to the inclusion of this information in directories. Indeed, many included details of rail travel in terms of costs and sometimes a timetable.

3.6 MISCELLANEOUS MATERIAL

Apart from the previously discussed topics most directories also included a variety of rather fragmented material. This was especially true of those produced during the nineteenth century. Very broadly this miscellaneous information can be divided into two main types; namely, that relating to local public institutions

and advertisements. The former ranges from lists of educational establishments, hospitals and other public buildings. Such information, together with the trade sections of the directories, helps complete the picture of general social and economic conditions.

Advertisements figure largely in many nineteenth-century directories and were an obvious source of income to the publishers. Initially, such advertisements were nothing more than copies of traders cards, expressing, as figure 5 shows, the basic facts regarding their particular business. However, by the mid nineteenth century the power of advertising was fairly well established. A significant boost came from the abolishment of the tax on advertisements in 1853[64], this together with improvements in transportation, set the scene for the development of modern advertising. Such trends were reflected in the number of advertisements that appeared in directories during the second half of the nineteenth century, as clearly illustrated in the provincial directories published by Kelly. Throughout the period 1850 to 1900 the space given over to advertisements in Kelly's directory increased significantly.

The advertisements contained within directories are potentially important for two reasons. First, they may give some insight into the tradesmen who subscribed to directories, since it seems likely that advertisers would also be subscribers. If this is so, then a review of the main advertisers could give some information on who used directories. As figure 6 shows, even in

Figure 5. Typical traders card as used in early directory advertisements.

54 MISCELLANEOUS. [1856.

SUPERPHOSPHATE OF LIME,
PERUVIAN GUANO,
AND
NITRATE OF SODA,
SUGAR SCUM, SULPHATE OF AMMONIA,
AND
EVERY DESCRIPTION OF ARTIFICIAL MANURES,
LINSEED CAKES, &c.

WILLIAM INGLIS CARNE,
10, MARK LANE, LONDON.

W. CARDINAL & CO.,
IMPORTERS OF TURKEY CARPETS,
Levant Warehouse,
ST. HELEN'S PLACE, BISHOPSGATE,
LONDON.
A PRICE LIST AND OTHER PARTICULARS FORWARDED ON APPLICATION.

FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SEEDS.

JAMES CARTER & Co.,
SEEDSMEN,
No. 238, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON.
Have now published their Twenty-first
Annual Catalogue of Floricultural, Vegetable, & Agricultural Seeds,
Acknowledged to be the best published. Forwarded free of charge and post paid on application.

JAMES CARTER & Co., SEEDSMEN, 238, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON.
Catalogues forwarded, free of charge, to all parts of the world.

Figure 6. Typical advertisement found in a late nineteenth century directory.

a locally produced, provincial directory, advertisers were drawn from a variety of activities. Secondly, of greater importance, advertisements can be used as a data source (albeit a rather fragmented one) for historical research. Whilst newspaper advertisements have been used in the study of agricultural history[65], little work has been carried out using advertisements from directories. However, some potential does exist as Carter & Wheatley have demonstrated in their work on Aberystwyth[66]. In this study, directory advertisements were used to show the changing importance of shopping streets over a period of 80 years. Advertisements could be further used to reconstruct the prices of everyday commodities in different regions, or between urban and rural areas.

4. SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL COVERAGE

4.1 TRENDS IN DIRECTORY PUBLICATION

The conditions of increased trade, urbanisation economies and improved transport, that initiated the growth of directories also controlled developments in directory production. Together with such demand variables it was also necessary, as we have previously noted, to have entrepreneurs who were willing to undertake the risks involved in directory publication. These two groups of factors exercised control over the numbers and types of directories issued, and were responsible for the trends outlined in figure 7. This shows the number of surviving directories and their dates of publication for Britain between the years 1760 and 1900. However, before attempting to interpret these trends, it is important to note some shortcomings in the data. Thus, the information for England and Wales was derived from only three main sources, namely; Norton's work for directories published before 1856, Goss for London directories, and the British Museum Library Catalogue for publications after 1856[67]. Furthermore, the latter publication is rather erratic in its treatment of directories and does not offer a complete coverage. This becomes apparent if a comparison is made between the numbers of directories listed in Norton's work and those given in the British Library Catalogue for the period up to 1856.

In contrast the data for Scotland comes from a variety of different sources, as it is derived from the British Library Catalogue, the Scottish Record Office, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh Central Library and Glasgow Library[68]. Taken

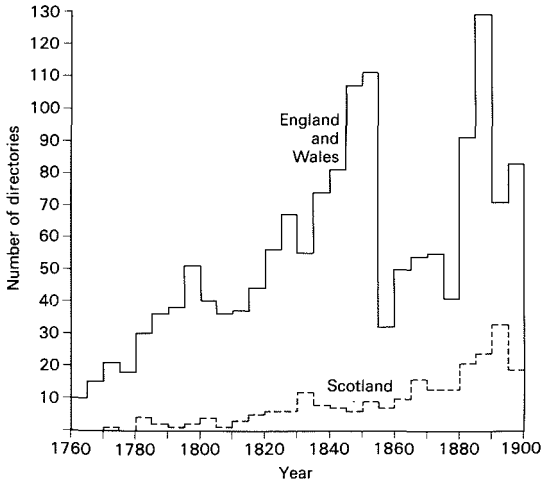

Figure 7. Trends in directory publication, 1760-1900.

together therefore these sources provide a fairly comprehensive picture of directory availability in Scotland. Obviously, because of the limited nature of the English data, figure 7 does not provide a complete view, although it should be a reasonable guide to the general trends of directory publication.

From the data in figure 7 two major trends can be identified, particularly in the case of the English and Welsh directories. First, there is a recognisable if fairly erratic build up in the number of directories issued between 1760 and 1850/51. In Scotland the growth is rather more delayed, but nevertheless of a similar nature. The second main trend is the fall-off in the numbers of directories from a peak in the period 1850/51, for England and Wales, to a low in 1860, followed by a period of rapid fluctuation in the 1860's and 1870's and a further peak in the 1880's. Once again the situation in Scotland tended to lag behind the trends experienced in England and Wales.

The task of explaining the trends highlighted in figure 7 is a difficult one, although the main determinants relate to conditions of urban and economic growth and the rise of large-scale publishing firms. Generally, the two factors tended to affect the publication of directories in slightly different ways. For example, increased urbanisation and industrialisation created constantly changing opportunities for directory publishers, mainly through the growth of new settlements. In their most extreme forms these processes led to the formation of completely new communities, as was the case with Middlesborough which grew from a population of 6000 in 1841 to 20 000 people in 1861. This was by no means a unique occurrence since the Victorian era witnessed the birth of a number of towns that had populations in excess of 10 000[69]. Obviously, such areas provided renewed opportunities for those directory publishers working during the second half of the nineteenth century. This situation can be illustrated further by comparing directory publication in two contrasting counties, Lancashire which experienced rapid urban growth, and Devon with a predominantly rural environment. In Lancashire the publication of directories followed a similar trend to that displayed at a national level, with an initial peak in 1850 followed by a decrease and then a build-up towards the end of the century. In contrast Devon had relatively few directories, none published before 1800, and furthermore did not experience a rapid increase in the numbers of directories issued in the second part of the nineteenth century.

In some ways the rise of large-scale directory firms often tended to reduce the total number of directories published and so worked against the previously mentioned factors. Thus, the larger firms generally favoured the publication of directories that covered greater areas, and encompassed a number of towns or in some cases the whole of a county. This latter type was certainly used successfully by Pigot and Slater, and more particularly by Kelly. Obviously, these county directories served to reduce the need to publish directories for individual towns. Furthermore, the larger firms gained the resources and reputations

to successfully eliminate the small local publishers. For example, in the rapidly changing socio-economic environment of nineteenth-century Lancashire the scope for new directories was sufficiently great to encourage both small and large firms to undertake directory publication, and to survive in relatively large numbers. In this environment, despite the growth of large-scale firms, the total number of publishers continued to increase up to 1900, although the number of directories published after 1840-50 outstripped the growth of publishers, thus suggesting the rise of larger firms.

The explanations behind the general trends in directory publication are both varied and somewhat tentative. Further pursuit of this theme is at this stage unrewarding, given the limited data and also the fact that what becomes really important is knowledge about the overall availability of directories. Within this context the trends illustrated in figure 7 give a broad picture of directory availability over time, but as yet we have not explored their spatial coverage. This is best viewed in terms of developments during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

4.2 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COVERAGE

Between the publication of Henry Kent's first directory in 1734 and its thirtieth edition in 1763, some 38 directories are known to have been published for the city of London. These publications provide the city with an almost complete annual coverage of directories during the first part of the eighteenth century. However, outside the capital no directories are available for this period of time, as the first provincial directory only appeared in 1763, for Birmingham. As figure 8 shows only a very limited number of directories appeared for provincial towns before the 1780's. In all such areas directory publication very much depended on individual enterprise and foresight, as was the case in towns such as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh (see chapter 2). During the 1780's the number of places publishing directories significantly increased, due partly to the introduction of the first national directory by William Bailey in 1781. This and subsequent editions had the effect of providing a fairly good coverage of provincial towns.

By the final decade of the eighteenth century the availability of directories for places outside London was significantly increased, both through the work of local publishers and the influence of Wilkes's *Universal British Directory* issued between 1790 and 1798. The publication tended to spark-off interest in directory publishing, especially from individuals who had previously been employed as local agents by Wilkes, since they were able to use their experience to compile their own directories. For example, John Bird of Cardiff supplied information to Wilkes and subsequently used this as a basis for his own *Complete Directory and Guide* to Cardiff in 1796. In other cases Wilkes did the pirating and copied an existing directory, disregarding the date at which the original material had been

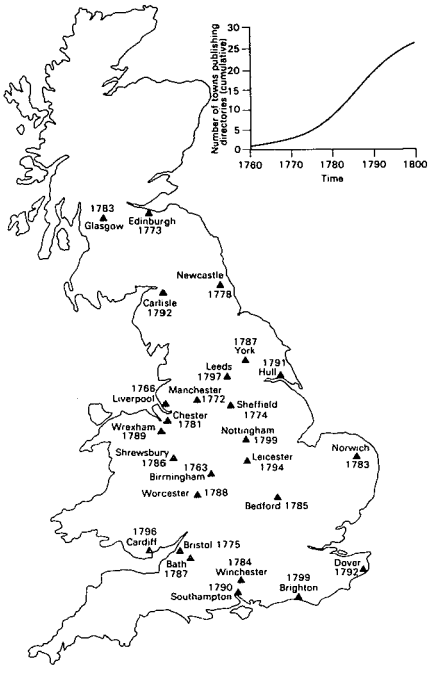

Figure 8. The evolution of local directories within eighteenth century Britain.

collected. Probably the best known example of this, is the case of *Battle's Hull Directory* of 1791, which was issued as part of *The Universal British directory* for 1793. Such practices cause difficulties in dating some of the information within Wilke's directory, a problem compounded by the fact that many parts of the directory are undated.

4.3 THE AVAILABILITY OF DIRECTORIES DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Obtaining an accurate assessment of directory coverage in the nineteenth century is extremely difficult due to the limited nature of available sources. Indeed, the attempt to map the coverage of directories on a county basis suffers from the problems outlined in section 4.1. Therefore figure 9 merely represents a sample, rather than the total number of directories, at least for the period after 1851[70]. Despite these limitations this data highlights a number of important features. First, it can be seen how during the second half of the nineteenth century it was, as expected, the more industrialised and urbanised counties that were attracting directory publishers. These areas of increased wealth and trade obviously provided the most lucrative markets for such ventures. Secondly, the effect of competition between firms can be detected, especially when one firm

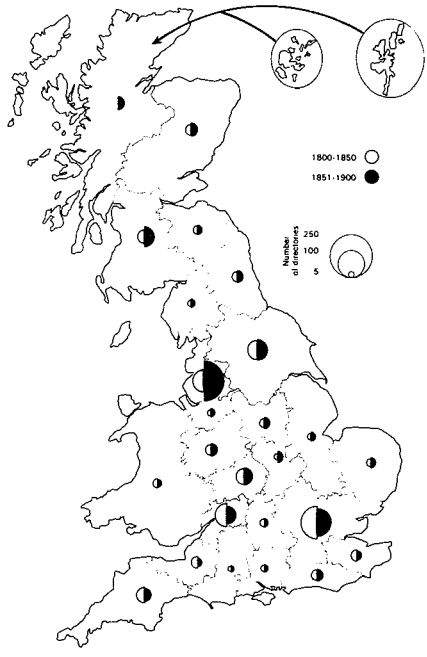

Figure 9. Geographical variations in directory availability in nineteenth century Britain.

gains a monopoly on directory publication in one region. This trend can be observed in London and the home counties, with Kelly's obtaining something of a monopoly and driving out other publishers. One outcome of this is the decline in the number of directories issued after 1851, as Kelly's rivals went out of business (figure 9).

5. THE RELIABILITY OF DIRECTORIES

5.1 ASSESSING DIRECTORY RELIABILITY

Levels of reliability can be examined from two perspectives; first, the overall level of accuracy exhibited by directories and second, the extent to which they allow information to be located. In terms of the former problem there are a number of central questions that require some thoughtful attention, not least is the fact that we need to know how representative directory information is in terms of the economic and demographic structure of a settlement. However, the evaluation of directories is problematical and has never received much attention. Indeed, beyond a fairly superficial level it becomes extremely difficult to compare directories with other data sources, either because the latter do not exist for the same dates or they have a completely different format, such as parish registers and rate

books. Perhaps some of the most worthwhile evaluations can be made with the manuscript census returns for the second part of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately no such objective comparisons can be made for the eighteenth or early nineteenth century directories.

Despite the many problems it is sometimes possible to obtain an indication of reliability by paying attention to the type of compiler and publisher involved in producing the directory. Thus, many of the more larger firms employed full-time professional agents, whose job it was to systematically collect, classify and record information. Obviously, these firms, such as Kelly's whose activities have already been outlined, provide the basis for the production of a more reliable directory, than that produced by a lone compiler undertaking a speculative, money-making venture. Furthermore, the larger firms offer a greater degree of continuity both geographically and historically. For example, probably the best earliest coverage was provided by the directories of Pigot and Slater. Pigot's first national survey was completed in 1823, with new surveys conducted between 1828-31, 1831-40, 1841-47 and 1848-51. This series provides therefore the historical geographer with a valuable and fairly consistent record for most of the early part of the nineteenth century.

A number of locally produced directories can be discounted as reliable data sources since they were nothing more than pirated editions of earlier publications by more established firms. William White suffered particularly from this practice at the hands of one Francis White, who plagiarised directory information. For example, Francis White published a directory of Norfolk in 1854 that was copied verbatim from William White's directory of 1845. These pirated editions are not always easy to identify, although the prefaces of many of the more established directories often contain warnings about such pirated publications. Thus, Kelly in the preface of his *Post Office Directory of Birmingham for 1860*, claimed that *Casseys' Directory of Worcestershire, 1860* contained entries copied directly from the Birmingham directory of 1854. Sometimes such accusations resulted in legal action, as in the case between William White and E.S. Drake[71]. Obviously, these pirated editions are of very little value since they were usually out of date at the time of publication.

The majority of directories contain errors of various kinds and also serious omissions, despite claims to cover 'all the population'. Indeed, the list of people enumerated in directories reflects to a large extent the aim of the compiler/publisher and the methods of compilation. These two main variables can give some clue as to what type of people we are likely to find listed in any directory. It is furthermore, important to recognise the effects of such factors before proceeding to compare directories with other sources of information.

The aims of the directory compiler depended on the type of directory (see chapter 3), thus court directories would collect only a small fraction of a town's population as compared with a city or general directory. Similarly, trade directories focused mainly on traders and merchants, or specialised activities and in some instances depended purely on subscriptions to meet the costs of publication. In the case of the subscription directories the list of entries tended to be reduced according to the rates that were charged.

Methods of compilation varied according to the resources available, and usually involved either visiting every house in the survey area or sending or leaving circulars to be filled in by the householders. The former method tended to be more reliable, and by the early nineteenth century the larger firms employed teams of full-time agents throughout the country. Results depended on the response and cooperation of the general public and their willingness to provide information to the agents. Initially, many of the uneducated people were very suspicious of directory agents often believing them to be employed by the government. Later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, as more directories were produced people often became annoyed at being continually pestered for information. A problem that the Eyre brothers encountered in Plymouth, where in 1880 the inhabitants were 'short in their replies to our agents inquiries, having been pestered beyond enduring in the matter of directories'[72].

5.2 THE COVERAGE OF DIRECTORIES

As previously stated the coverage given by directories may be viewed in terms of the proportion of people they contained and the type of occupations they listed. Both are difficult to measure, although the former can be gauged by making comparisons with parish registers and census data. However, due consideration must also be given to the fact that these sources often covered quite different geographical areas.

It should be recognised at the outset that for a variety of reasons directories did not cover all the population of a particular settlement. For example, the *Manchester Directory of 1811* listed approximately 11 000 names which represented only about 11% of the population of Manchester and Salford[73]. Similarly, at the other end of the settlement hierarchy, work on the small market town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch shows that in 1861, Whites' directory contained just under 17% of the working population listed by the census and 33% of the householders[74]. These quite different examples show clearly a low level of coverage for two settlements at very different dates. These results also suggest a further line of inquiry, namely; whether directory coverage varied significantly with settlement size.

In an attempt to answer some of the questions posed by the above problems a systematic analysis of directory coverage was carried out. First, attention can be focused on the role, if

any, that settlement size had on directory coverage, this was tested using data obtained from *Baines' Lancashire Directory* of 1823 and comparing these with the 1821 census returns[75]. From this study one point emerges, that the influence of settlement size operates on a number of different levels. Thus, if we simply divide settlements into three main groups according to their population size, as in table 4, we can see how, between each group, directory coverage varies. In the small villages and hamlets the coverage provided by the directory expressed as a percentage of the settlement's households returned in the census, is only 6%. However for medium sized settlements this figure increased substantially to around 34% of all households. Finally, for very large towns, in this case Liverpool and Manchester, the average coverage provided by the directory rises to about 70%.

Table 4. A comparison between Baines directory (1823) and census data (1821) for settlements in Lancashire

Settlement size (population)	Number of names recorded in directory as a % of total households	
	Number in Sample	Mean
Less than 5000	8	6%
5000 - 25 000	10	34%
over 25 000	2	70%

These trends give us some partial insight into the directory compilers motives, that is to enumerate the important people and businessmen of the community, especially those living and working in the growing industrial towns of the nineteenth century. To this end, the very small communities would receive but scant attention and hence had a very low level of coverage. In addition many of these settlements were relatively remote and inaccessible during the 1820's. A good illustration of the directory compilers' problems is presented in the preface of the *Huddersfield Directory and Yearbook*, as late as 1867, when the publisher complained that the wet weather had 'rendered it at times impossible to collect information'. Clearly, the efforts expended in collecting information from such small settlements were not rewarded in economic terms, since few sales could be expected from these areas.

At the other end of the settlement hierarchy the larger towns provided the directory publisher with a lucrative market, but quite different problems of compilation. For example, in large centres such as Liverpool, the problems of data collection were associated with the vast number of people to be counted and the rapidly changing nature of the urban population. Significant problems were also encountered with multi-occupied houses, and directories very rarely listed all the families in such dwellings. Pooley in his work on nineteenth-century Liverpool has

Table 5. The number of households recorded by the census and Gore's directory 1851 for Liverpool

(Sample of 28 streets[76])

	Number of households in directory as % of census
Streets with over 10% of court and multiple-occupied houses	65%
Streets with less than 10% of court and multiple occupied houses	109%

drawn attention to the effect of such a variable on directory coverage, together with those households located in courts off the main streets. In both instances their effect is to lower the proportion of households listed in directories, and in some extreme cases coverage fell to a mere 16% of those found in the census[77]. To illustrate this point further the overall trends in a number of sample streets for mid-nineteenth century Liverpool are shown in table 5, which indicates clearly the fall-off in directory accuracy as the number of multiple occupancy households increases. Clearly, for a variety of reasons directories fail to give a complete list of households. Furthermore, from the above discussion it is also apparent that coverage varies by settlement size and to a much lesser extent over time. A further complication, adding to such variations, is caused by the type of directory. As previously mentioned, national or regional publishing firms often had larger staffs to facilitate data collection than the smaller local organisations. Table 6 gives an example of this effect by comparing the coverage provided by three different directories for Exeter around 1890. When compared with the 1891 census the most accurate directory is that published by White in 1890, which listed 65% of all the households in Exeter. In contrast, the more locally produced directory issued by Besley, again in 1890, only recorded 51% of the city's households (table 6). However, given the slight differences in publication dates all the figures are relatively high.

Table 6. Variations in directory coverage in Exeter, by type of publication.

Publisher/date	Number of names	% of household listed in 1891 census
White, 1890	5401	65
Kelly, 1889	4817	58
Besley, 1890	4244	51

Having established the approximate nature of directory coverage, a further question that remains to be answered concerns the type of people listed and included in directories. In particular, just how much bias was there towards the middle-class groups and specific types of occupations?

In relation to the smaller end of the settlement hierarchy reference can be made to Page's detailed study of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in mid-nineteenth century Leicestershire. In this work a comparison between Whites directory of 1862 and the census enumeration books for 1861, reveals the extent of directory bias[78]. For example in the census, 35% of Ashby's householders were employed in craft activities, and 18% as tradesmen. In contrast, 33% of the names listed in Whites directory are tradesmen, and only 25% are classified as craftsmen. Similarly, labourers formed 7% of the households enumerated in the census for Ashby, whilst the directory did not list any labourers or domestic servants.

Page's study also illustrates a further problem of directory coverage that produces a bias in the listing of occupational types. Thus, by their very nature directories only list the names of householders, and therefore can only give a picture of the occupational structure of householders rather than all individuals. In practice the two pictures may be very different, since the use of householders emphasizes the relatively better off people in nineteenth-century society. For example, in the Ashby study domestic servants and labourers together represented 21% of the town's working population but only 8.5% of the householders. In this respect directories tend to be automatically biased against such classes of workers. The full degree of directory distortion is illustrated in table 7, which gives the proportion of householders and individuals listed in each occupational category.

In addition to comparisons with census materials, directories have also been related to other data sources in an attempt to determine levels of reliability. Of particular importance have been those studies which have compared directories and ratebooks; principally as a means of assessing how accurate a picture directories can give of a town's commercial structure[79]. Tests of reliability, concerning numbers of shops is especially significant given the very strong emphasis that has been placed on directories in this form of research.

It should be recognised at the outset however, that any comparison between directories and ratebooks holds numerous pitfalls. One problem is that many shops, especially in the growing working-class areas, were not rated as retail establishments. In these circumstances business was conducted from the front room of a house and consequently such premises were rated as purely residential properties.

The effect of these anomalies are shown by examining retail data from two different urban settings, Beverley an established

Table 7. The employed population of Ashby-de-la-Zouch as recorded by White's directory (1862)[80]

Occupations	Proportion of householders*	Proportion of individuals*
Clerical workers	95	17
Independent means	78	57
Professionals	76	56
Food trades	71	50
Farmers	57	54
Innkeepers	48.5	46
Cloth traders	48	37
Other trades	32	25
Crafts	25	16
Services	9.5	5
Labourers	0	0
Domestic servants	0	0

*Percentage of the total numbers within each occupational category as recorded by the 1861 census

market town and Hull, a rapidly expanding industrial centre during the nineteenth century. In Beverley the number of shops listed in White's directory of 1881 was 5.6% below the number listed in the town's ratebooks for the same year[81]. Similarly, the same directory for Hull listed 5.2% more shops than those in that city's ratebooks. This suggests that in Hull, where there was a greater number of working class areas and small 'front parlour shops', directories provide a better picture of the retail infrastructure than ratebooks. However, at the individual street level this difference between the shop recordings in directories and ratebooks appears much more complicated and variable as figure 10 shows, for a 10% sample of shopping streets in Hull. It can be seen from this data that the larger shopping streets on the whole tend to be underestimated by the directory compared with rate books. The one main exception is where the street is composed of a series of small nucleated retail centres that acts as foci in predominantly working-class environments. In such circumstances the ratebooks may be under-recording due to the effect of front room type shops, indeed a closer inspection of the directory data does reveal a high proportion of shopkeepers compared with any other type of outlet. In the streets with much smaller numbers of shops the situation is much more variable and no clear pattern emerges to explain the levels of coverage provided by different sources.

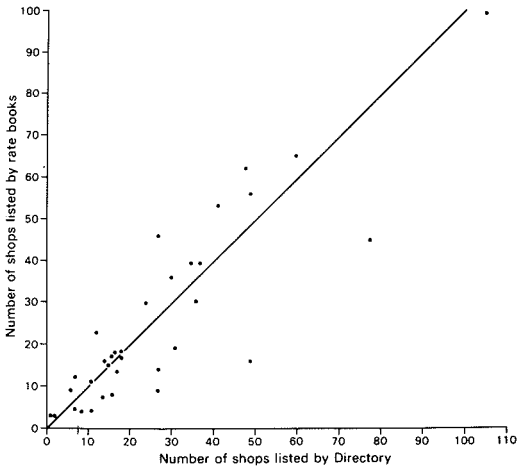

Figure 10. The number of shops recorded by city ratebooks and White's Hull directory (1881).

Clearly, such patterns require much closer inspection under a wide variety of urban environments. Furthermore, ratebooks usually do not give shop types and hence provide a very poor data base for the analysis of retail patterns, or indeed with which to assess the coverage of directories at any detailed level.

5.3 PROBLEMS OF SPATIAL BIAS

A further major problem of directory reliability concerns their usefulness in allowing information to be accurately located, and whether problems of spatial bias exist. Whether or not directories gave addresses again depends on the date of publication, the type of compiler/publisher, and in some cases the size of the settlement (see chapter 3). Indeed, within most directories the address coverage for any particular town is usually incomplete. This omission of addresses usually takes the form of missing street numbers, rather than a complete absence of a street name. The latter problem is however often encountered in the early directories published in the eighteenth century, most of which also predate the arrival of street numbers[82]. Similarly, the lack of a street numbering system posed problems for many of the early nineteenth century directory compilers. Even by the last quarter of the nineteenth century the problem remained a noticeable one as illustrated by data drawn from Kelly's directories for Yorkshire in 1879 and 1881[83]. Thus, for two different settlements York and Halifax, data were extracted on the numbers of shops without street numbers, in the case of York the figure was 17% and for Halifax 19%.

Table 8. The omission of street numbers in late nineteenth-century York (based on Kelly's directories)

Distance from Central Market (metres)	% of shops without street numbers
up to 200	5%
200 - 400	12
400 - 600	17
600 - 800	20
over 800	63

Table 9. The omission of address for selected retail types in White's Hull Directory, 1880

Trade	Shops without addresses		% falling in suburbs
	total	%	
Grocers	50	19	62
Butchers	18	11	56
Footwear	8	3	-

Perhaps more important the omission of addresses does tend to be somewhat biased, both in spatial terms and in terms of the types of retail activities being recorded. The former problem is highlighted in table 8, which shows that for York in 1880, the omission of street numbers rose fairly steadily away from the city centre, until in the more distant suburbs over 60% of shops listed in the directory had no street number. In terms of commercial activities, such address omissions tend to be biased against the food retailers (table 9). This is hardly surprising given their high levels of geographical dispersal and the rapidly changing nature of suburbs in Victorian Britain, conditions that made the accurate collection of data extremely difficult.

It has already been shown how directory coverage varies from town to town, which in turn raises another question, that of intra-urban variations. In part this problem has been touched upon with reference to Pooley's work and the above study of bias in the locatability of shops. However, it is worth taking a closer look at this theme especially in terms of the spatial coverage given to different social groups by directories. This again involves a comparison between manuscript census data and directories. In carrying out this type of work a number of limitations should be recognised, for example, one problem is that enumeration district boundaries tend to run down the centres of streets. This means that only those directories that allow

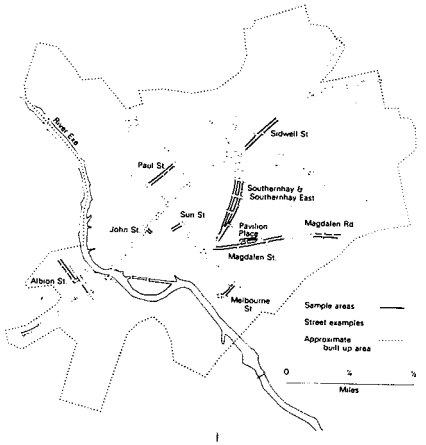

Figure 11. Location of sample streets in Exeter survey, 1871-73.

Table 10. A comparison between directory information (1873) and census data (1871) for Exeter

	Central Districts		Suburban areas
	main streets	side streets	
Number of households in directory as % of census recordings	98	75	81
% of names in directory with listed occupation	80	20	23
% of heads of household in census with listed occupations	90	87	86

an accurate location of individual households can be used in such comparisons.

Due to the problems of assembling data on a large scale, attention will be focused on intra-urban variations at a street level for the city of Exeter (figure 11). The selected sample streets can be used to build-up a picture of levels coverage in established urban districts and suburban sites, as well as providing basic information of directory accuracy at the individual street level.

The data presented in table 10 is a summary of the recordings of householders' names and occupations and shows the spatial variations in the collection of the information. Clearly with

Table 11. Comparisons between census and directory information for three sample streets in Exeter (1871)

STREET (a) Pavilion Place (part of)

Census			Directory	
1.	Reeves	accountant	1.	Reeves
2.	Mudges	clerk	2.	Mudges
3.	Prior	assistant	3.	Prior
4.	Payne	widow	4.	Payne
5.	Collings	mariner	5.	Collings
6.	Hutchings	retired	6.	Hutchings
7.	Fleetwood	assistant	7.	Fleetwood
8.	Shilson	storekeeper	8.	Shilson
9.	Sage	cabinet maker	9.	Sage
10.	Drake	pawnbrokers assistant	10.	Drake
11.	Reeves	grocers assistant	11.	White
12.	Drake	shopman	12.	no recording
13.	Harris	wife of master mariner	13.	Rose
14.	Westlake		14.	Harris
15.	Aldcroft	clerk	15.	Westlake
16.	Letherby	housewife	16.	Letherby

STREET (b) Melbourne Street

Census			Directory	
3.	Down	widow	3.	Howard
	Gosling	no occupation		Bora
8.	Horstop	decorator	8.	Stocker
9.	Bartlett	launderess	9.	Chudleigh
10.	Luxton	plasterer	10.	Chapple
11.	no recording		11.	no recording
7.	Mollow	gardener	7.	Finch
4.	Haklewall	painter/glazier	4.	no recording
16.	Voisey	baker + 1 assistant	16.	Voisey baker/grocer
15.	Treble	mariners wife	15.	Tribble
14.	Stocker	unemployed	14.	Marks
13.	Shepherd		13.	Courtney
	Courtney	carpenter		
12.	Joslin	greengrocer	12.	Joslin
11.	Dart	joiner	11.	Vodden
10.	Wellington	cooper		
9.	Chudleigh	warehouseman		

Table 11 cont.

STREET (c) Southernhay East (part of)

Census			Directory		
37.	Sercombe	market gardener	37.	Phelps	surgeon
38.	Sercombe				
38/39	Radcliffe	clerk	39.	Norman	lodging house
40.	Hull	clerk	40.	Caird	surgeon
41.	no recording		41.	Porter	
42.	Farad	lodging house keeper	43.	Hamilton	
44.	Zelley	joiner	44.	Woodgate	doctor
47.	Atkin	engraver	47.	Atkin	engraver
48.	Crump	drapers assistant	48.	Crump	woollen draper
49.	Edge	doctor	49.	Tosswill	doctor
50.	Tozer	widow	50.	Tozer	

regard to Exeter the directory is fairly good in identifying numbers of households, especially on the main central streets. Similarly, in the matter of occupational data the directory provides on average an 80% coverage of those householders living in main streets. However, this level of occupational coverage rapidly declines in the lesser important areas occupied by lower paid workers. Thus, on average only 20% of the names given in the street section of the directory (which was already under-recording the total number of households) had occupations listed. This difference between the recording of occupations in the directory as compared with the corresponding census is more clearly seen at the individual street level (table 11). Here it can be seen that, for the lower ends of the occupational scale, street directories prove very unreliable in providing adequate coverage. The fact that these types of people tended to live in off-street locations, courtyards and multiple occupied dwellings only added to the directory compilers' problems. Indeed the sum total of these factors is that directories have some occupational and geographical bias.

5.4 INTERNAL INACCURACIES.

A problem that is frequently highlighted by workers using directories is that of internal inaccuracy, with attention being focused especially on duplicated entries[84]. It is probably true to say that such double entries exist even in the best of the nineteenth-century directories and usually take a number of different forms, with the most common being the duplication of entries for shops. This arose partly because of the multiplicity of businesses carried out by some traders making it often impossible for the directory compiler to classify them under any one heading. The grocery trade was particularly prone to this and a tradesman may be listed as grocer, tea dealer, provision dealer and shopkeeper, and such listings would change from one directory to another. Pigot in an attempt to overcome this problem grouped

food trades, where specialization was not very developed, into the category 'Shopkeepers and Dealers in Groceries and Sundries'. However, this business diversity was not always limited to the same area of trade; hence we find categories such as 'Drapers and Tea Dealers' listed in *Slaters Lancashire Directory of 1851*. In the best of the directories the problem was largely solved by using these types of multiple categories, although as the total number of trade entries increased most directories abandoned these multiple listings in favour of the specific headings. In doing so they sacrificed the accuracy of description and increased the numbers of double entries, as retailers carrying on more than one specific trade activity were classified under a number of different headings. Interestingly, similar problems were being encountered by the census during the course of the nineteenth century as the nature of occupations changed in response to the processes of industrialisation[85].

Other internal inaccuracies exist, such as the double counting of names between the commercial and court sections of directories and also various printing errors and omissions. The former problem is only significant when directories are being used to enumerate the total number of households, perhaps as a guide to overall coverage. In such cases the double counting of names can inflate the number of households by on average between about 1 - 5%[86].

The omission of names in one part of a directory, for example the street section, tends to be more serious and very labourious to detect. In some cases street sections are the least accurate data base from which to construct retail patterns. First, because many streets were partially omitted from the directory, as previously discussed. Secondly, descriptions of traders often were less accurate in the street section compared with the classified trades section. This is illustrated by taking an example from the previous comparisons made between Mortimer's directory for Exeter (1874) and the 1871 census. In the case of the Magdalen street sample (figure 11), one C. Crump is listed in the street section of the directory as a woollen draper, and in the census as a drapers assistant. The two sources present an inconsistent picture, and raise the question as to whether Crump actually owned a shop. However, the problem is resolved when the classified trades section of the directory is consulted, and Crump's name is omitted from those owning drapers establishments. This simple example is by no means an isolated incident and shows clearly, if only street sections are used to reconstruct past retail patterns then shop numbers may perhaps be slightly overestimated.

5.5 PROBLEMS IN TESTING EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DIRECTORY RELIABILITY

At present the discussion over directory reliability has focused entirely on nineteenth-century publications, the coverage of which can be compared with various forms of census data. In contrast, the accuracy of earlier directories published in the

eighteenth century is more difficult to determine. Moreover, such publications take on potentially more important roles given the absence of nationally produced census data.

Since no totally reliable yardstick exists with which to compare directories in the eighteenth century, use must be made of more fragmentary sources such as parish registers. In this instance the research worker is faced with a double-edged problem, since both directories and parish registers have shortcomings regarding their reliability. In the case of parish registers some attention has been given to their levels of accuracy, although very often these studies have been impressiónistic or largely related to the problems of measuring demographic change[87]. From such work however, it is evident that the quality of information contained in parish registers varies considerably throughout the eighteenth century and to some extent regionally[88]. It would also appear from Krause's work that in terms of the reliability of parish registers certain roughly defined watersheds exist, some of which are associated with the growing problem of Dissenters. Thus, Krause argues that anglican parish registers become less complete between 1750-1780 and that the system of registration 'had virtually collapsed' between 1790 and 1820, when 'statistics for both town and country became utterly misleading'[89]. However, running counter to the Dissenter problem was the fact that after 1812 legislation attempted to ensure uniformity of registration[90].

Given the uncertain background of parish registers and the problems of non-registration[91], any comparisons with directories must at best be rather tentative. Fortunately, other fragmentary data sources also exist which can be used to test directory coverage, namely, the existence of local censuses. Law has provided a good guide to such information, and to date has catalogued 125, although for many the original documents no longer survive[92]. Taken together local censuses and parish registers provide a stronger data base with which to compare directories. In addition, all three sources allow more detailed work to be undertaken on the study of urban conditions during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

As with the nineteenth-century directories, eighteenth-century publications can be assessed in terms of overall coverage and the type of occupations they included. A comparison with local census data reveals that eighteenth-century directories covered a much smaller proportion of a settlement's population than their nineteenth-century equivalents. For example, the results of local census carried out for Lancaster in 1789 enumerated 8584 persons[93]. By comparison the *Universal British Directory* (1790) only listed 515 names for the same town, which represented only 6% of the total population. Similarly, figures can be presented for much larger settlements, such as Liverpool, where Gore's directory of 1773 contained only 6% of the people listed in a local census of the same date.

Direct comparisons with the data presented for the nineteenth century can be misleading, without recognising the fact that for the nineteenth century coverage was assessed at the household level; whereas for the eighteenth century the total population has been used, which serves to distort the picture. However, even when this factor is taken into account eighteenth century coverage is of a lower order.

To find out the types of people included in eighteenth-century directories and how representative they were of the total population it is necessary to turn away from the local censuses towards parish registers. Unfortunately, not all registers give occupations, which may be one reason why so few attempts have been made to examine this type of information for the eighteenth century[94]. However, one detailed study of the different types of data offered by parish registers has been carried out in Liverpool by Langton and Laxton[95]. This work explores a number of themes related to the changing urban structure of eighteenth-century Liverpool, using information primarily from a fine collection of local parish registers most of which give occupational data. These sources enabled a picture to be constructed of the occupational structure of the city in the second part of the eighteenth century. If the results from their analysis are compared with the occupational data derived from *Gore's Liverpool Directory of 1766*, then a certain degree of directory bias becomes evident.

Generally, the directory placed much greater emphasis on listing the names and addresses of merchants and professional people at the obvious expense of labourers. For example, the directory listed 112 professional people, which formed just over 10% of the total number of names given within the directory. In contrast, in the occupational structure derived by using the parish registers, such people formed only around 4% of the total working population. At the other end of the social spectrum, labourers made up 11% of the town's employed population according to the registers, whereas in the directory only 1.5% of the listed names were those of labourers. These variations may be compared with the situation previously outlined for nineteenth-century directories.

It would seem then that eighteenth-century directories, when compared with their nineteenth-century counterparts, are much less inclusive since they covered a smaller and often a more select sample of the total population. However, once such biases have been recognised, then directories when used in conjunction with parish registers and local censuses, can form a valuable data source for urban historical geographers interested in late eighteenth century.

6. THE USE OF DIRECTORY MATERIAL IN URBAN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

6.1 LEVELS OF DATA AVAILABILITY

The previous chapter served to demonstrate some of the specific problems associated with using directories as basic data sources. In addition to the constraints imposed by data reliability, the use of directories is also conditioned by their contents relative to other sources of historical material. As table 12 shows, the information contained within directories about individual households is rather weak compared with that in the census enumeration books. However, directories do have the advantage of providing information on work activities, and are very often available on an annual basis. On a closer inspection of table 12 it can be seen that directories also provide individual household data for a much greater time span than the manuscript census. Thus, for many places directories and parish registers can together create a strong information base for the period between 1780 and 1841 (the latter date being when enumerators' books become available). In the case of London this period can significantly be extended to 1734, with the publication of Henry Kent's directory.

The material contained in table 12 is largely concerned with socio-demographic variables, for which directories are generally inferior to parish registers and the census enumeration books. In such circumstances directories tend to play a most useful and often vital supportive role to the other major data sources. If however, the scope of our interest is widened to include economic variables then directories become more important data sources, owing to the increased amount of information they provide relative to other sources (table 13). In respect of such economic data directories would appear to have no serious rivals. Furthermore, when combined with a good collection of ratebooks they provide a significant basis with which to study commercial and industrial patterns.

It is apparent from a close inspection of tables 12 and 13, that directories can provide information on a variety of different subjects, and that their importance as data sources varies from one period to another. Thus, prior to 1841, they become potentially valuable as socio-economic sources, whilst after that date they tend to take on more of a secondary role. In contrast, directories appear as rather unique sources in the study of commercial patterns in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

These comparative strengths and weaknesses of directory data are to a large extent reflected in the major uses that historical geographers and local historians have made of such material. Any attempt to assess such uses will inevitably be selective, and only result in a partial picture being given. The remainder of this chapter will therefore consider the use of directory material in terms of four main themes, namely: social and demographic trends, commercial structures, the evolution of urban systems and industrial change. In each case the advantages and

Table 12. Common types of information available at the individual and household level for late 18th and 19th century Britain.

Type of information	Directories	Ratebooks	Parish registers	Census enumeration books (1841-1881)[1]
Name of householder	A	A	A	B
Age and sex of householder	0	0	A	B
Names of household members	0	0	0	B
Age and sex of household members	0	0	0	B
Birthplaces	0	0	A	B
Occupation of householder	A	0	A	B
Occupation of household member	0	0	0	B
Home address	A	B	A	B
Business address	A	0	0	0

(key below)

Table 13. Common types of economic data available for the late 18th and 19th century for individual firms.

Type of information	Main sources			
	Directories	Ratebooks	Parish registers	Census
Location of commercial establishments	A	B	0	0
Location of industrial establishments	A	B	0	0
Measures of property values	0	B	0	0

KEY: _ = available in 18th century

A = in some cases available annually

B = less often

0 = not available

[1] constrained by the 100 year rule in England and Wales and 75 years in Scotland

problems of preparing and using directory information will be discussed, together with an assessment of other potential uses.

6.2 DIRECTORIES AS AIDS IN SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Within the context of the study of social patterns directories have been mainly used as supportive evidence. In this respect their most common and important contributions have been made within the work on levels of residential mobility within the nineteenth-century city. Directories are especially significant since they were often published annually, or at least at fairly short intervals, and therefore allow the calculation of annual persistence rates at a number of different spatial scales. However, directories, because of the problems noted in chapter 5, do have their limitations in this type of research. One simple, but often most frustrating problem, is the lack of house numbers in the earlier publications, and the constant renumbering of streets in later directories owing to the infilling of vacant sites and housing redevelopments.

Despite these limitations, directories do compare favourably with the two other data sources of use in the study of annual rates of residential mobility, i.e. ratebooks and electoral rolls. Thus, ratebooks, although they have been used in studies of mobility often do not record the changing occupancy of rented property[96]. Similarly, electoral rolls, especially prior to the Reform Act of 1867, contained only a very select sample of adult males. In essence therefore, all three sources are biased towards recording data for middle-class social groups, at the expense of the working classes. It may well be however that directories are slightly less biased than the other two data sources.

Due to the problems of bias, few British studies have utilized directory information in the examination of residential mobility. In contrast much pioneer work has been carried out in North America, and especially in the U.S.A. Probably, the most detailed research making use of directories is Knight's study of mid-nineteenth-century Boston[97]. In this work Knight made directories the cornerstone of his research into residential change over a 30-year period, between 1830 and 1860. The directory material, coupled with census information, enabled him to produce a detailed picture of residential mobility rates. It should also be noted within the context of this study that the coverage of Boston city directories was fairly good and never fell below about 80% of the total number of households[98].

In Britain, historical geographers have been more reluctant to make use of directories in the study of residential mobility, as is illustrated by Dennis's work on nineteenth-century Huddersfield[99]. Thus, in a review of data sources Dennis mentions the possibilities of linking the census with ratebooks, maps and town plans, but fails to make any reference to the advantages of using directories. Stimulated by the work in North America, Pooley has recently explored these possibilities and carried out a similar study to that of Knight, for Victorian

Liverpool[100]. The results and tests of directory reliability are particularly encouraging, and should pave the way for similar work within Britain.

Despite such contributions, potential still exists for further research that makes use of directories. Indeed, one area that remains uncharted is an objective comparison between rate-books, electoral rolls and directories, to ascertain which is the most suitable for the study of residential mobility. Furthermore, little attention has been given to the processes of residential movement in the pre-nineteenth-century city, since present interests have focused on a fairly narrow time period. Clearly, the directories published during the second half of the eighteenth century open up good possibilities for this work. This is especially so in such cases as Bristol, London and Liverpool which have a good collection of early directories, available annually in the case of London.

A further and quite popular way in which directories have been used is to explore the changing nature of commuting in the nineteenth century, and the separation of residential and work locations. Once again the bulk of such studies emanate from N. America[101], although British examples do exist[102]. One particularly detailed N. American study is that by Jackson, who used directory information to illustrate changing journey to work patterns in nineteenth-century New York[103]. Some of Jackson's results are presented in table 14 and serve to show one of the shortcomings in using directories to plot journey to work patterns; namely, that directories only give the business addresses of professional people, merchants and retailers. Whilst directories may have contained a large number of working-class people, no directory publisher ever wasted effort in collecting their work addresses. Therefore, any attempts to construct journey to work patterns using directories is inevitably biased towards the self-employed and professional elements in society. One major exception to this is Goheen's work on Toronto, in which he made use of city directories in conjunction with the more detailed records obtainable from local assessment rolls[104].

In Britain the absence of any other published records precludes more explicit research on journey to work patterns, although one faint possibility is that directories could be linked to surviving employers' records. This would enable the commuting patterns of a much wider section of society to be examined at a fairly detailed level[106].

6.3 THE STUDY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

The use of directories in the study of commercial activities contrasts markedly with the supportive role they play in urban social research. Any work on the historical geography of commercial patterns tends to rely on the directory for primary evidence. In this area of research necessity forces the historical geographer to rely heavily on the information provided in directories. Published papers have very largely concentrated on using

Table 14. Changing journey to work patterns of attorneys in nineteenth-century Manhattan[105]

Year	Distance between home & work (miles)	Decennial increase in miles
1825	0.67	
1835	0.81	0.14
1845	1.39	0.58
1855	1.80	0.42
1865	2.43	0.62
1875	2.91	0.48
1885	2.97	0.06
1895	3.78	0.81

directory material to reconstruct past retail patterns, although some of these studies are seen as being problematical due to problems of directory reliability. Before reviewing such work it is important to note that directories can aid our understanding of a wide range of commercial activities, retailing, banking, services and wholesaling.

Work on commercial functions has been somewhat biased towards the study of retail patterns, with directories providing a useful but rather limited data base. The existing research into patterns of retailing may, in terms of methodology and approach, be divided into two main types. First, there exist many basic studies which have merely used directory information to locate shopping facilities and examine changes in such locations[107]. One of the main characteristics of these publications is their almost total reliance on directories as data sources. Because of this, some of the researchers have devoted some time to assessing the problems of directory reliability[108]. The second category of study is much broader based and ranges from work on the evolution of retail structures[109], through to more detailed examinations of changing levels of retail provision[110]. These studies are characterised by the fact that they combine the use of directory material with other sources of data. A good example is provided by Alexander's work, which uses bankruptcy records and directories to build up a picture of shop development in early nineteenth-century England[111]. The data from the directories enabled a count to be made of the changing numbers of shops, whilst the bankruptcy records allowed an insight into the organisational characteristics of certain retail firms.

Many of the studies of retailing have attempted to look at change, and have therefore needed to make use of a number of directories for different dates. This brings into play the problem of changing shop classifications within the trades

sections of the directory, as previously discussed in chapter 5. In practice two problems can be identified; one source of error can arise because of the double counting of traders due to the abandonment of multiple listings. The constant increase and diversity of the retail trade is highlighted in the ever changing classifications used in directories and creates a second problem, that of identifying specific types of shops.

Commercial activities, other than retailing, have usually only been studied as part of much broader work on central business districts. Furthermore, in Britain most of this work remains unpublished, and available only within Ph.D. theses[112]. Published material is however more commonplace for North America, where directories have been seen as primary sources for this type of research[113]. In the context of work on the evolution of central business districts, directories linked with large scale plans and ratebooks are capable of providing the basic information on urban landuse[114]. Beyond this, much remains to be done, particularly with respect to the problems of land development and patterns of ownership. In both cases directories will have a strong supporting role to play.

One particular advantage already noted about directories is that they were published fairly frequently and in many cases on an annual basis. This characteristic makes them especially useful in dynamic studies, and a few researchers have used this fact to undertake work on business mortality. Much of the work is again largely biased towards the study of retail firms, and their patterns of survival and failure. The data collection procedure is simple but tedious, since it involves tracing the names of firms from one directory to another. The results of this type of work are usually presented in the form of a business survival curve, or alternatively such information can be plotted in map form to give a picture of the spatial dynamics of retail establishments[115].

Directories have also been used, albeit in a limited way, to reconstruct patterns of business organisation for different types of economic activity. Thus, Evans was able to sketch out the changing nature of business organisation for a number of North American towns during the nineteenth century[116]. This work involved the identification of three different forms of enterprises; individual proprietorships, partnerships and corporations. These organisational types could be recognised through a search of the business or classified trades sections of directories. For example, partnerships would be listed under such titles as 'Bolles and Hastings', whereas by the end of the nineteenth century many firms had started to term themselves companies, e.g. 'The Central Coal and Ice Company'[117]. By the very end of the century Evans was able to link the directory data with census reports and give a clear account of the transformation of business organisations in different sectors of the economy. There exists considerable scope to replicate such studies in Britain, and also to link this information with landuse change within the nineteenth-century city.

6.4 DIRECTORIES AND THE ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL URBAN SYSTEMS

A number of studies exist that have used directories as basic data sources to examine the changing nature of urban systems. Two of the earliest and most notable are by Lewis, who researched the settlement hierarchy in the mid-Wales borderland between 1791-1850, and Davies working on South Wales over the period 1868 to 1926[118]. These studies used not only directory material, in the form of enumerating the number and types of functions in each settlement, but they also drew on contemporary evidence either from the town descriptions given in certain directories, or local guide books. This link between quantitative information provided by directories and more impressionistic sources has been further explored by Rowley working on market centres in parts of rural Wales[119]. Rowley tentatively explored a number of sources including, census material, rate books, directories and local topographies, but significantly only directories could provide the necessary detailed data.

All these studies have two important aspects in common. First, they are largely aimed at examining urban systems in terms of central-place theory constructs and as such tend to be fairly rigid in their approach. For example, despite focusing attention on market centres and their changing functional status, few have alluded to the importance of innovations in retailing and developments in the distributive system. In this respect there have been relatively few links with the work on retail patterns as outlined in the previous section.

The second area these studies of urban systems have in common is that of data sources, since all have used directories. Within this context they share similar problems to those outlined in relation to the work on urban retail patterns, especially doubts over double counting and changes in trade classifications between different directories. Generally, the latter problem is intensified since the work on the service centre hierarchy involves comparative studies of a large number of settlements. In an attempt to overcome the problems associated with the diversity of trade classifications Rowley only used directories issued by Pigot and Slater[120].

However, more recent work by Barker, on the evolution of central places in Somerset between 1861 and 1939 has criticised the use of Pigot's and Slater's directories in the context of Davies' study of South Wales[121]. Barker's point is that these directories omitted small villages and hamlets and therefore distort the picture of service centres in rural Wales. His solution to this was to use Kelly's directories which he argues cover all the settlements and as well as offering the longest sequence of directory information. Unfortunately, in most provincial areas Kelly's directories only made their appearance during the second part of the nineteenth century, thus necessitating the use of other less comprehensive publications. In this context further research is obviously required to ascertain the level of settlement coverage provided by directories for rural areas in the first half of the nineteenth century.

A second criticism by Barker of previous work on historical urban systems relates to the use of centrality indices, especially that developed by Davies, which are high order measurements based on total numbers of service facilities in each settlement. Since such values are derived from directory material they contain some errors through both the under and over recording of facilities. Barker assumed that such errors could quite probably be large enough to warrant a different methodology. His solution was to use a lower order of measurement, recording only whether a particular function was present or absent in each settlement[122]. The use of presence or absence information on central functions has the advantage of still retaining the essential component of centrality and therefore proves suitable to central-place studies. In addition, it substantially reduces the problems associated with directory enumeration errors. The assumption is that the directory compiler may have misrepresented the overall numbers of retailers in any particular trade but would not have missed out whole groups of functions.

These studies have perhaps proved most productive in solving some of the error problems associated with directories, whilst at the same time highlighting the singular importance of directory material in the study of past urban systems. It is however perhaps unfortunate that such work has until very recently, been strongly linked to central place theory which has proved somewhat inflexible in the field of historical analysis.

6.5 THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL CHANGE USING DIRECTORY MATERIAL

The interest historical geographers have shown in reconstructing past industrial patterns is extremely limited and mainly confined to studies of journey to work, although literature does exist on the evolution of specific manufacturing activities[123]. However, by comparison with the study of social patterns and to a lesser extent commercial facilities, industrial geography would seem to be an almost totally neglected issue especially within the context of the nineteenth-century city. One central reason for this situation is the lack of any adequate and comprehensive data source. The census, for example, fails to provide any coverage of industrial firms until the first industrial classification of 1921. This involved the compilation of a complete list of employers and also a revision of the old occupation classifications[124]. The absence of such material in the nineteenth century cannot be fully compensated for by the occupational abstracts of the census, simply because they contain different data, and are also unavailable for the period before 1841[125].

Clearly, official statistics do not provide a means of reconstructing past industrial patterns, neither do they aid in an examination of locational changes. Therefore, other sources need to be explored. To some extent directories can be used both to provide data on employment (see Chapter 5 for potential problems) and also to study locational changes, since they give the names and addresses of different firms. Furthermore, different types

of directories can be used at different spatial scales. For example, the general trades directories could be used to examine locational changes of industrial activities at a city or regional level. In contrast the specialist trade directories of the second half of the nineteenth century may be used at a regional or national level to examine the changes in specific industries. Despite this information, and some early research that used directories to reconstruct industrial linkages in Birmingham and London, little interest has been shown in the application of directory material to such areas of study[126]. One difficulty hindering the use of the more specialised directories is a lack of any guide or bibliography since they are not covered by Norton[127].

The small amount of published material that does exist is fairly general, and has focused on using directories to monitor broad changes in the size and structure of local business communities during the late and early nineteenth centuries. These approaches are typified by Rimmer's work on the changing industrial profiles of Leeds, in which directories were used to show the growth of different occupations and the overall number of business enterprises. In this instance Rimmer combined directories with information from the township poor apprentice register, which allowed him to give a picture of occupational change over the period 1728-1834[128]. Rimmer's analysis of business enterprises may be compared with similar, if less detailed studies, such as Duggan's examination of business communities in Birmingham which was also based on general trade directories[129]. Taken together these two studies present a comparable picture of the processes of business development in the early stages of industrial growth, and significantly at a time when official statistics are not available. Some of the more general characteristics are shown in table 15, illustrating the size and rates of growth of businesses in two important industrial centres. Obviously, to be more effective such information needs to be linked with employment data which would enable rough estimates to be made about the sizes of industrial establishments. Here again directories may provide some partial help as sources for deriving estimates about the working population. However, it must again be stressed that such data would only cover heads of households (see section 5.2).

However, these existing approaches have made no real inroads into the changing aspects of industrial location, since such surveys only highlight total changes in the urban economy. A great deal of work therefore still remains to be carried out. Perhaps one simple but effective way ahead would be to combine the directory material on industrial establishments with large-scale map evidence, and follow a similar route to those historical geographers working on retail patterns. A further link may be forged between more specialised historical evidence and directory material. For example, more use could be made of the early nineteenth-century factory returns in conjunction with directories[130].

Table 15. The growth of businesses in Leeds and Birmingham between 1777-1860[131]

	Number of firms	Annual % change
Leeds		
1797	1,076	
		6.8
1817	2,546	
		4.4
1834	4,453	
Birmingham		
1777	2,300	
		4.4
1830	7,700	
		5.3
1860	20,000	

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

It is important at this point to bring together the conclusions that have been reached, regarding the role of directories in historical research. Clearly, as data sources, directories have many problems and question-marks associated with their overall reliability. However, this paper has attempted to show that if the true nature and scale of these problems are recognised, then directory material can be both useful and to a good degree reliable. Furthermore, much of this information holds potential for future research into important areas that have been somewhat neglected by historical geographers, and for this reason alone directories should warrant a close inspection.

This latter point returns to a theme developed in the introduction, namely that, certain data sources have largely dictated many of the questions asked by historical geographers, especially regarding the nineteenth-century city, and its internal structure. After reviewing some of the potential of directories, we are now in a better position to put these views into perspective. Thus, few people would take issue with Lawton's statement that 'the census of population is a key source for any study of nineteenth-century England'[132]. However, what can be said is that directories add new and important dimensions to such work; and that their neglect as a data source has had some consequences on the way historical geographers have asked questions not only about the nineteenth century, but also about the late eighteenth century. In some areas recent work has tackled such omissions particularly in the research on retail change and market centres at the inter-urban level. These studies have demonstrated the importance of directories, and are now in stages of consolidating

work on directory reliability. In many other areas, especially associated with industrial patterns much remains to be done.

Finally, it is hoped that this small review will stimulate fresh interest into the use of directory material by historical geographers. However, it is recognised that further progress may to some extent be dependent on the availability of more comprehensive guides to British directories.

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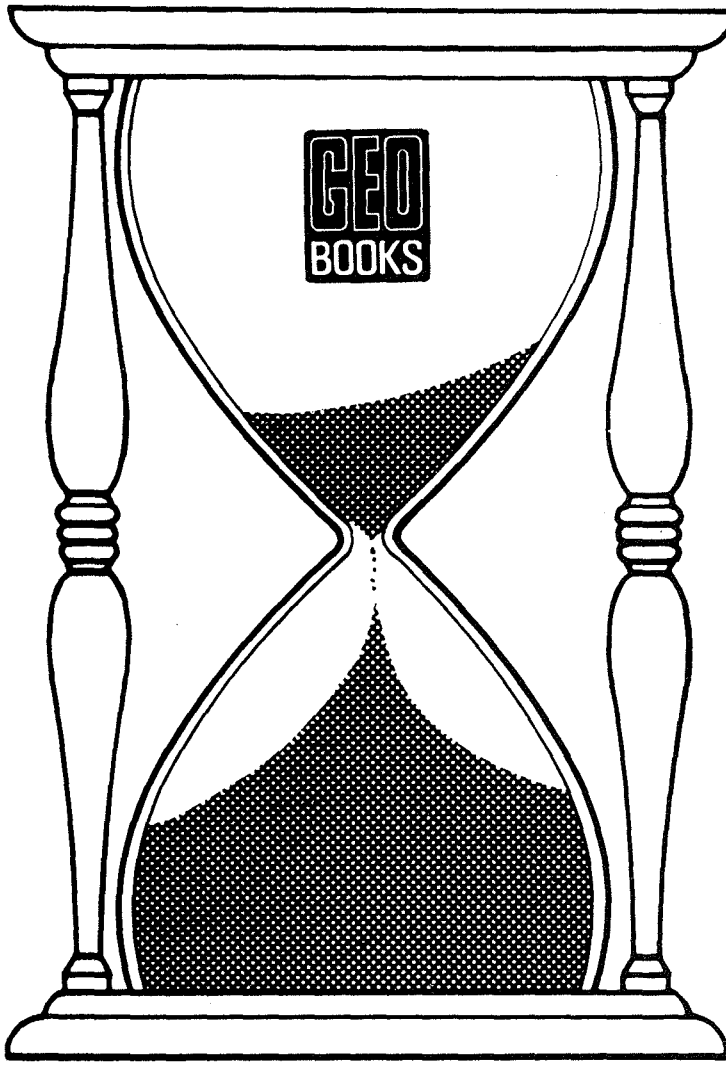

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