

Digital Durham: Discovering Our Roots through the Census

A Teacher's Guide

Trudi Abel
tabel@duke.edu
Digital Durham Project
<http://digitaldurham.duke.edu>
Duke University

Vocabulary

Census n. An official registration of the number of the people, the value of their estates, and other general statistics of a country.

Enumerator n. One who enumerates. An individual who counts or numbers, reckons or computes.

Enumeration District n. A geographic area marked off by the Census Bureau for counting.

Microfilm n. A kind of photographic film that has traditionally held miniaturized images of original records. Since the 1930s, the federal government has preserved the original census on microfilm and these reels of film can be read on a special machine called a microfilm reader.

Manuscript n. Written with the hand; not printed. A word derived from the Latin words *manus*, meaning the hand and *scribere*, *scriptum*, to write.

Background.

Since 1790, the U.S. Federal government has conducted a census of the nation's inhabitants every ten years. In 1880, two men worked as enumerators in Durham Township, which was then a part of Orange County, North Carolina. One man, W. W. Woods, a forty-five year old farmer visited the residents who lived south of the train tracks in South Durham Township, Orange County. Another Durham Township resident, Archie E. Wilkinson, counted inhabitants who lived north of the railroad tracks. Between June 1, 1880 and July 6, 1880, these two men gathered data on 5507 residents. Each man collected data on large lined pages. These were sent to Washington and tallied by workers in the Census Bureau. In the 1930s, the government microfilmed the manuscript

Trudi Abel authored this Teacher's Guide and presented it at the "Changing Places" session of the North Carolina Social Studies Conference, 13 February 2009. Copyright 2009. This work may be used freely by individuals for research, teaching, and personal use as long as this statement of availability is included in the text. Questions regarding further distribution should be referred to tabel@duke.edu. See <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu> for the "Changing Places: Immigration and Migration and the North Carolina Experience Lesson Plan" and other complimentary materials.

census ledgers. Information in our census database was transcribed from the National Archives, Series no. T-9, reels 975 and 976.

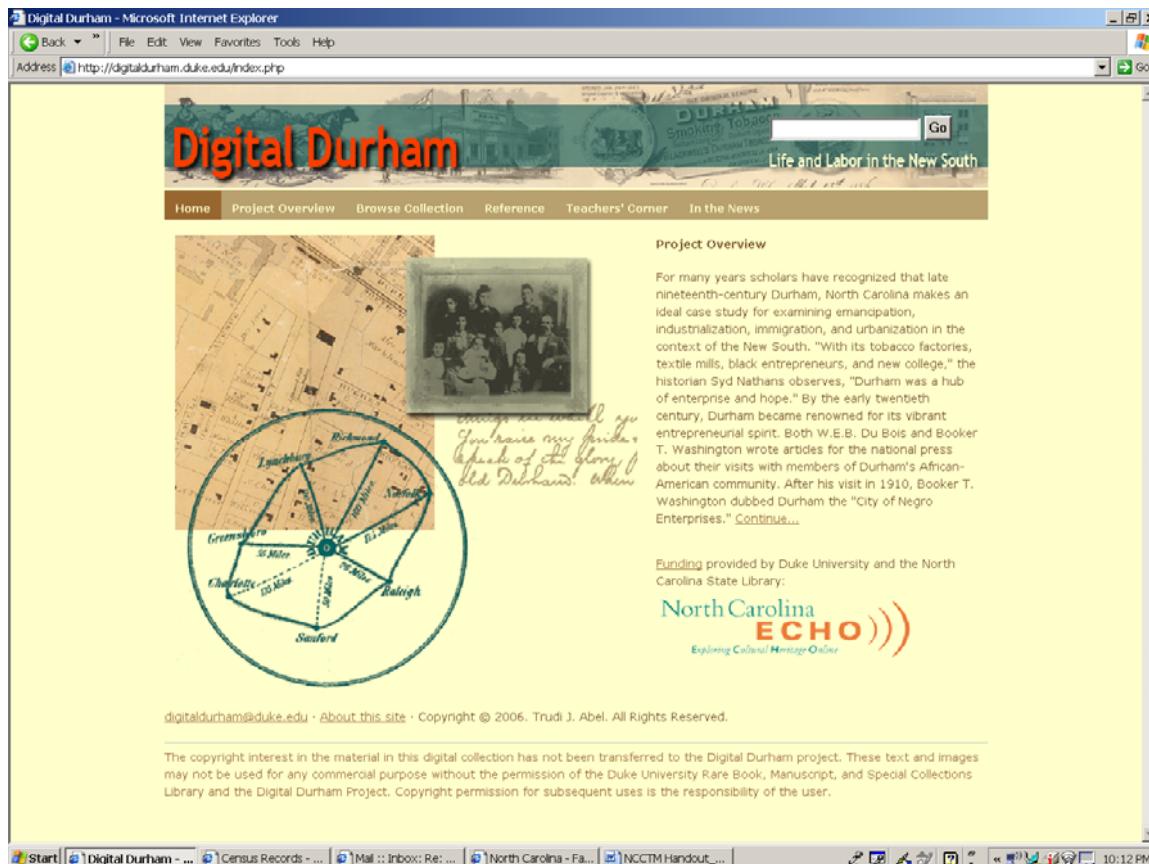
A detailed guide to searching the census data on Digital Durham is available at http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/census_help.php

This guide will help you get your class started with the “Changing Places: Immigration and Migration and the North Carolina Experience lesson plan that is in the Teachers’ Corner section of the Digital Durham web site:
<http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/teachers.php>.

Getting Started

This set of exercises introduces students to the 1880 Population Census on the Digital Durham website.

Go to the home page of the Digital Durham website. <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu>



Click on “Browse Collection.”

Select “Public Records”

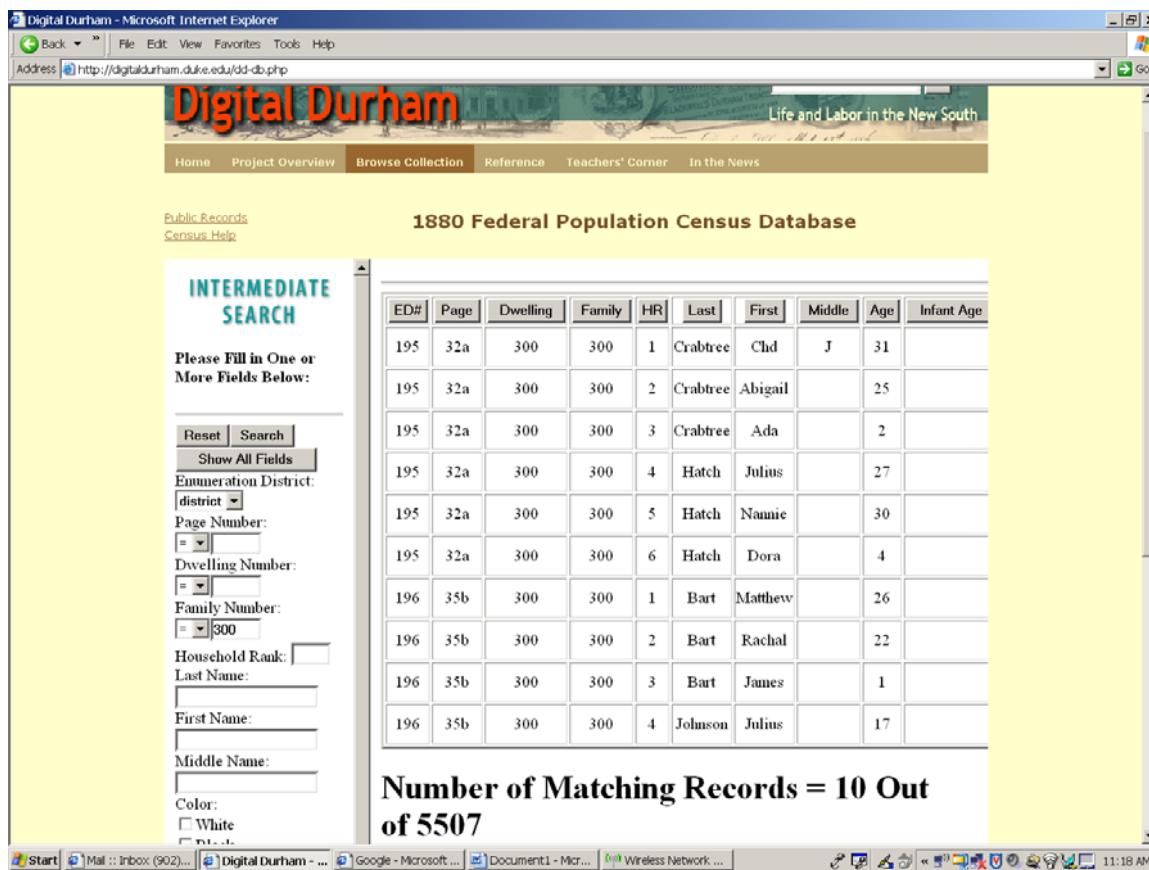
Click on the link “[1880 Federal Population Census Database](#)”

Choose the “Intermediate Search” button. This will open up a search screen for the census data.

Introductory Search

Ask each of your students to pick different numbers between 1 and 300. You'll want to encourage the students to select numbers that are unique as that will give more varied research results.

Next, have your students enter one of their numbers in the field marked "Family Number." Press the grey "Search" button to commence the search. Your research results will appear on the right side of the census search page.



ED#	Page	Dwelling	Family	HR	Last	First	Middle	Age	Infant Age
195	32a	300	300	1	Crabtree	Chd	J	31	
195	32a	300	300	2	Crabtree	Abigail		25	
195	32a	300	300	3	Crabtree	Ada		2	
195	32a	300	300	4	Hatch	Julius		27	
195	32a	300	300	5	Hatch	Nannie		30	
195	32a	300	300	6	Hatch	Dora		4	
196	35b	300	300	1	Bart	Matthew		26	
196	35b	300	300	2	Bart	Rachal		22	
196	35b	300	300	3	Bart	James		1	
196	35b	300	300	4	Johnson	Julius		17	

Number of Matching Records = 10 Out of 5507

Interpreting the results

In the example above, the student chose the family number 300. When the results are displayed, one can see that some people are listed with an ED # of 195 and others with an ED # of 196. Crabtree and Hatch family members live north of the train tracks. The Bart family and Julius Johnson live south of the train tracks. (We do not have street addresses for these individuals. That information was not collected by the U.S. Census Bureau until the early 20th century). The "family numbers" that the census taker used were arbitrary. They help historians because we don't have street addresses for these residents. The family numbers may provide clues to which families were neighbors of the selected

family. Family 299 and 301 may well have been the closest neighbors of the Crabtrees etc.

The census reveals the names and ages of the inhabitants.

If the students use the scroll bars on the pages, they can find even more information about their “families.” Have the students use the right scroll bar to move to the bottom of the page.

Dwelling Number	Household Rank	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Color	Sex	Age	Relationship	Civil Condition
196	35b	300	300	1	White	Bart	Matthew	26	Single
196	35b	300	300	2	White	Rachal			Married
196	35b	300	300	3	White	James			Widowed/Divorced
196	35b	300	300	4	Black	Johnson	Julius		Single

Use the bottom scroll bar and the census database will reveal the gender of the inhabitants, their “color,” and the nature of their employment and the relationship of the individual to the “head of household.”

A note on the term “color.”

In the 1880 census, the U.S. government gave census enumerators specific instructions as to how to classify individuals by "color." The Census Bureau directed its census takers to categorize inhabitants as either --white W, black B, Mulatto, Mu, Chinese, C, Indian, I. The directions further directed census takers use the term "mulatto" to describe "quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood." In compiling the census database, it became clear that Durham's enumerators did not follow these guidelines. The census takers used both "mulatto" and "black" to describe individuals with African ancestry. Census takers subjectively determined which residents would be categorized as "black" or "mulatto." The distinction between the two was made

purely based on appearance; census takers categorized darker-toned individuals as "black," while describing lighter-toned inhabitants as "mulatto." None of Durham's residents were described as being of Chinese or Indian background.

Digital Durham - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Back File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address Go

Dwelling Number:

Family Number:

Household Rank:

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Color: White Black Mulatto

Sex:

Either Type Age:

or Enter Range Below: -

Infant Age (in months):

Relationship:

or Enter Your Own:

Civil Condition: Single Married Widowed Divorced

Select From Occupation List:

or Type Occupation Here:

Records = 10 Out

Matthew	26		m	Black	Factory hand	
Zachal	22		f	Black	Keeping house	Wife
James	1		m	Black		Son
Julius	17		m	Black	Factory hand	Brother

digitaldurham@duke.edu · About this site · Copyright © 2006. Trudi J. Abel. All Rights Reserved.

Start Mail :: Inbox (902...) Digital Durham - ... Google - Microsoft ... NCCTM Handout... Wireless Network ... 11:39 AM

If the student moves the bottom scroll bar to the far right, she will see additional fields of information about the marital status of the individuals listed as well as their place of birth.

Digital Durham - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Back File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/dd-db.php> Go

Dwelling Number:

Family Number:

Household Rank:

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Color:

White

Black

Mulatto

Sex:

Either Type Age:

or Enter Range Below:

-

Infant Age (in months):

Relationship:

or Enter Your Own:

Civil Condition:

Single Married

Widowed/Divorced

Select From Occupation List:

or Type Occupation Here:

Carolina

	m	Black	Factory hand		Married	North Carolina
	f	Black	Keeping house	Wife	Married	North Carolina
	m	Black		Son	Single	North Carolina
	m	Black	Factory hand	Brother	Single	North Carolina

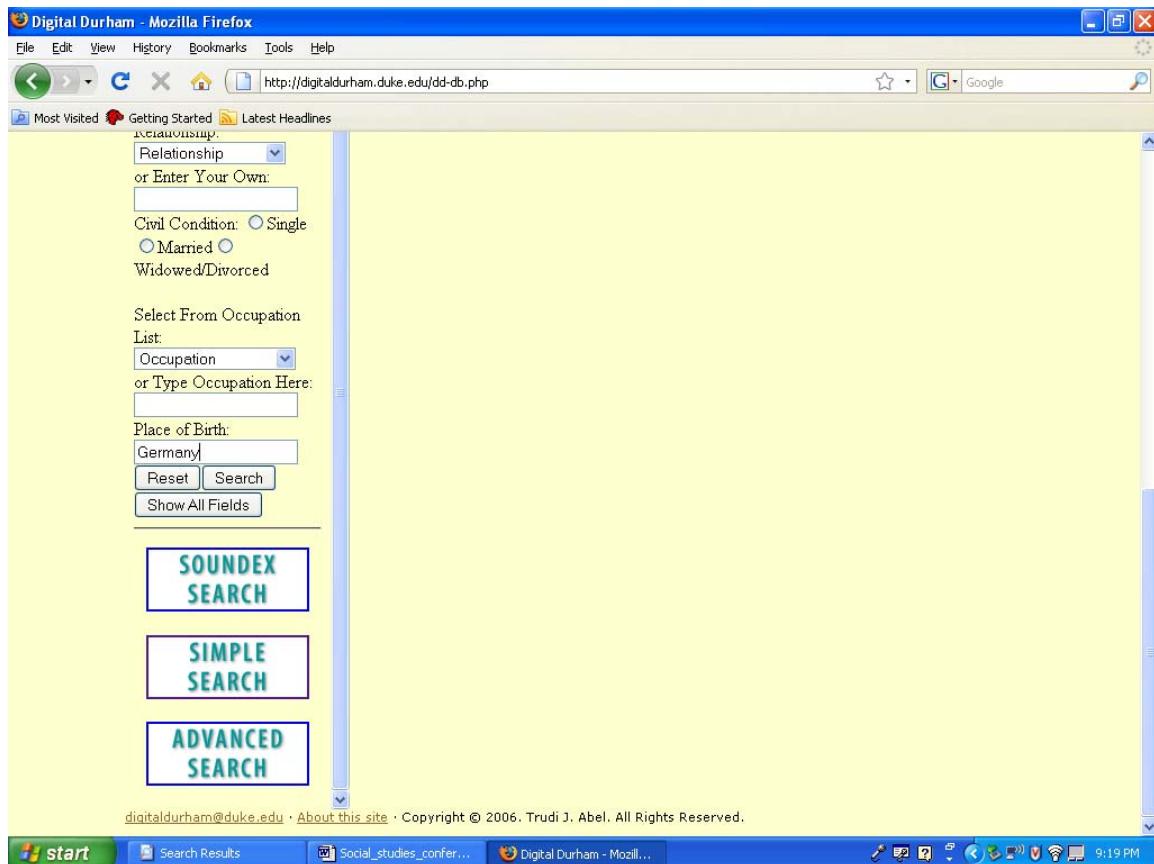
but

digitaldurham@duke.edu · [About this site](#) · Copyright © 2006. Trudi J. Abel. All Rights Reserved.

Start Digital Durham - ... Census Records - ... NCCTM Handout ... 8:58 PM

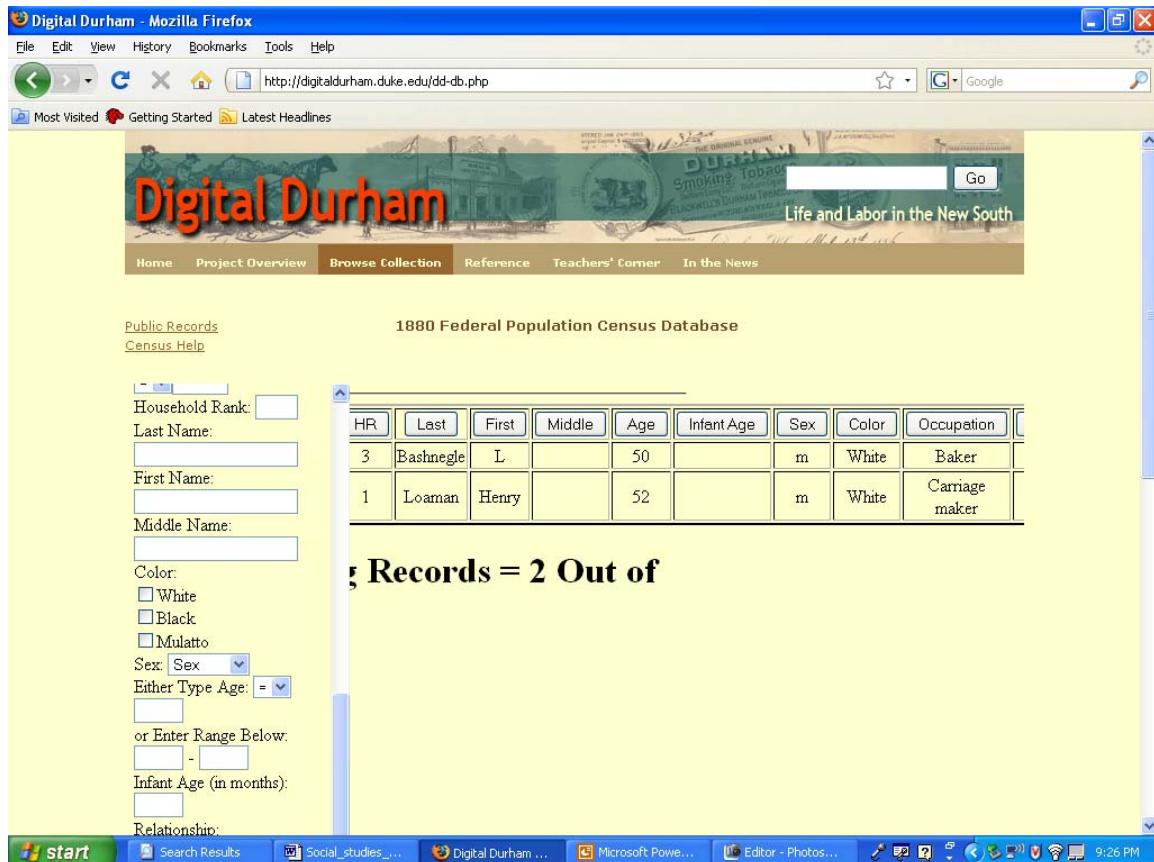
Investigating Nativity

Census takers wrote a place of birth for the individuals that they enumerated. Students can use the Intermediate or Advanced Search page to find groups of individuals who share the same place of birth. For instance, we can search for people born in particular states or countries by entering the specific name in the “Place of Birth” field.



The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window with the title bar "Digital Durham - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL "http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/dd-db.php". The main content area displays a search form for census data. The form includes fields for Relationship (dropdown menu), Civil Condition (radio buttons for Single, Married, Widowed/Divorced), Occupation (dropdown menu), and Place of Birth (text input field containing "Germany"). There are also "Reset" and "Search" buttons, and a "Show All Fields" link. Below the form are three large, blue-outlined buttons labeled "SOUNDEX SEARCH", "SIMPLE SEARCH", and "ADVANCED SEARCH". At the bottom of the page, a footer bar includes links for "digitaldurham@duke.edu", "About this site", and "Copyright © 2006. Trudi J. Abel. All Rights Reserved". The taskbar at the bottom of the screen shows the "start" button, "Search Results", "Social_studies_confer...", and the "Digital Durham - Mozilla Firefox" window. The system tray shows the date and time as "9:19 PM".

The search reveals that two German immigrants, a baker and a carriage maker, lived in Durham in 1880.



The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Digital Durham website. The title bar reads "Digital Durham - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/dd-db.php>. The page header features a banner with the text "Life and Labor in the New South" and the "Digital Durham" logo. Below the banner, a navigation menu includes "Home", "Project Overview", "Browse Collection" (which is selected), "Reference", "Teachers' Corner", and "In the News".

The main content area is titled "1880 Federal Population Census Database". On the left, there is a search form with fields for "Household Rank", "Last Name", "First Name", "Middle Name", "Color" (with options for White, Black, and Mulatto), "Sex" (with a dropdown menu), "Either Type Age" (with a dropdown menu), and "Infant Age (in months)".

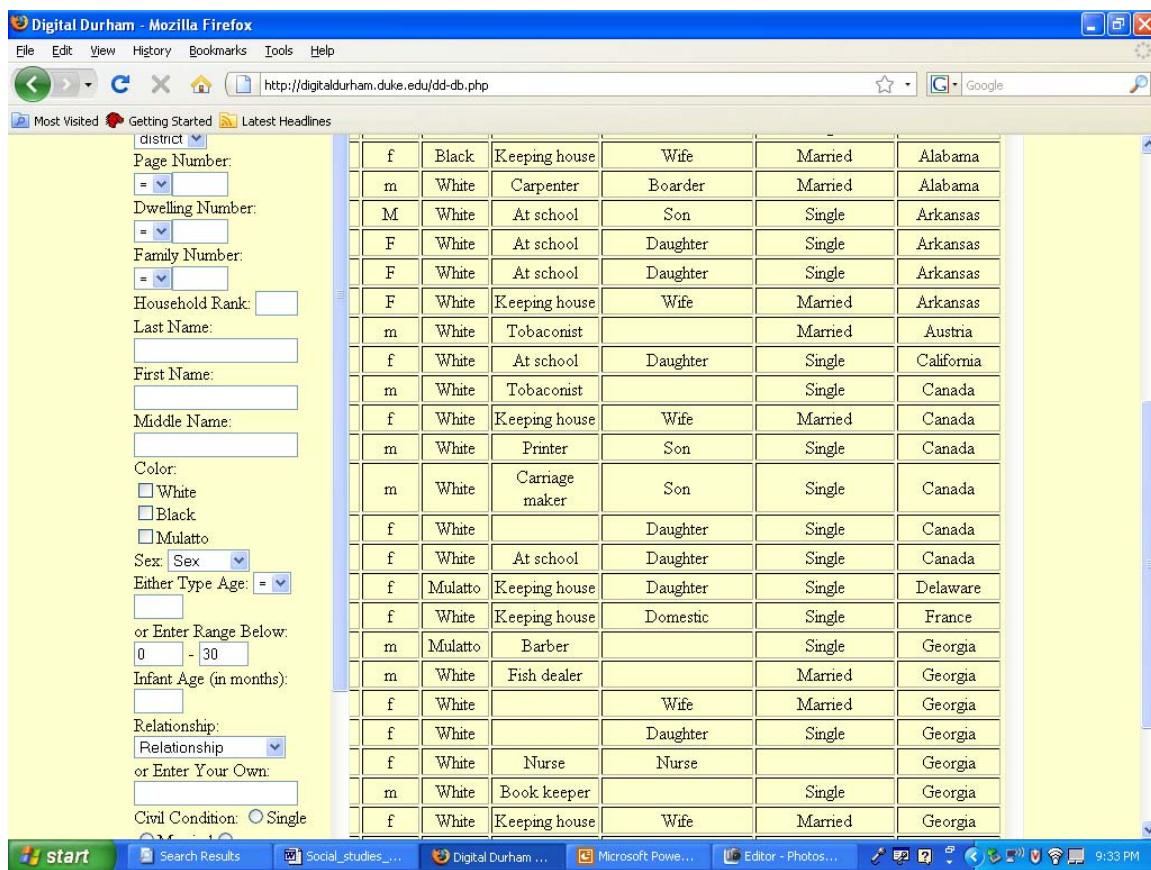
On the right, a table displays the search results:

HR	Last	First	Middle	Age	Infant Age	Sex	Color	Occupation
3	Bashnegie	L		50		m	White	Baker
1	Loaman	Henry		52		m	White	Carriage maker

Below the table, a message states "Records = 2 Out of".

The taskbar at the bottom of the screen shows several open applications: "start", "Search Results", "Social_studies_...", "Digital Durham ...", "Microsoft Powe...", "Editor - Photos...", and "9:26 PM".

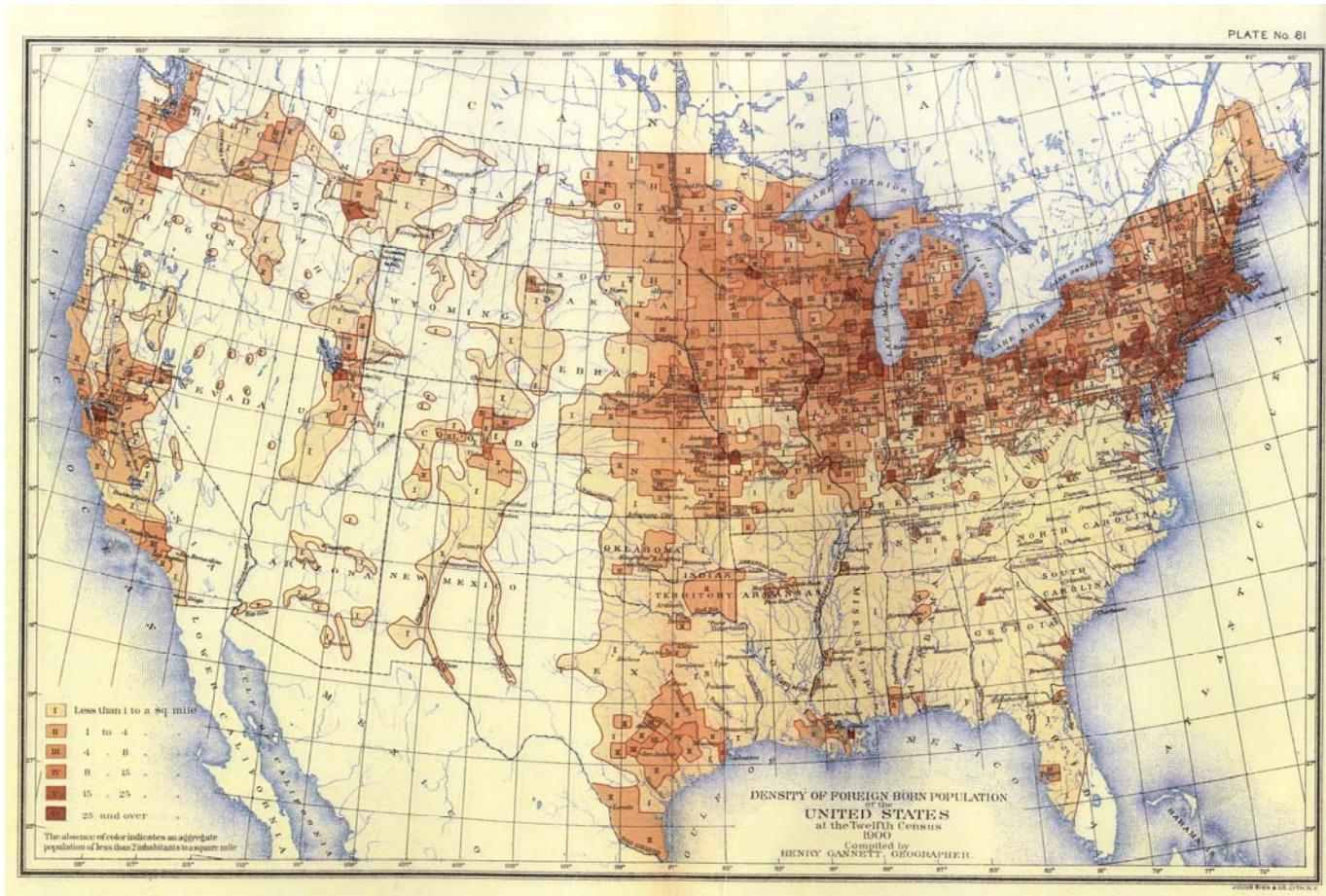
Remind your students that they can sort their results by clicking on any field name that is in the header of the results page. If you search for all men and women in the database and hit “search,” you will get page of results that contains information on everyone who lived in Durham in 1880. If you click on the place of birth field, the information will be sorted alphabetically. Thus all of the Alabama-born residents will be grouped together and they will stand at the top of the list, while the Virginia-born residents will stand towards the bottom of the list. This sorting strategy can sometimes be useful for counting data.



The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window with the title "Digital Durham - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/dd-db.php>. The left side of the screen displays a search form with various filters: "district" dropdown, "Page Number" dropdown, "Dwelling Number" dropdown, "Family Number" dropdown, "Household Rank" dropdown, "Last Name" text input, "First Name" text input, "Middle Name" text input, "Color" checkboxes for "White", "Black", and "Mulatto", "Sex" dropdown, "Either Type Age" dropdown, "or Enter Range Below" text input (0 - 30), "Infant Age (in months)" dropdown, "Relationship" dropdown, "or Enter Your Own" text input, and "Civil Condition" radio buttons for "Single" and "Married". The right side of the screen shows a table of search results with columns: Sex (f/m), Race (Black/White), Place of Birth, Occupation, Marital Status, and Place of Birth. The results are sorted by Place of Birth, with Alabama at the top and Georgia at the bottom. The table has 20 rows.

Sex	Race	Place of Birth	Occupation	Marital Status	Place of Birth
f	Black	Keeping house	Wife	Married	Alabama
m	White	Carpenter	Boarder	Married	Alabama
M	White	At school	Son	Single	Arkansas
F	White	At school	Daughter	Single	Arkansas
F	White	At school	Daughter	Single	Arkansas
F	White	Keeping house	Wife	Married	Arkansas
m	White	Tobacorist		Married	Austria
f	White	At school	Daughter	Single	California
m	White	Tobacorist		Single	Canada
f	White	Keeping house	Wife	Married	Canada
m	White	Printer	Son	Single	Canada
m	White	Carriage maker	Son	Single	Canada
f	White		Daughter	Single	Canada
f	White	At school	Daughter	Single	Canada
f	Mulatto	Keeping house	Daughter	Single	Delaware
f	White	Keeping house	Domestic	Single	France
m	Mulatto	Barber		Single	Georgia
m	White	Fish dealer		Married	Georgia
f	White		Wife	Married	Georgia
f	White		Daughter	Single	Georgia
f	White	Nurse	Nurse		Georgia
m	White	Book keeper		Single	Georgia
f	White	Keeping house	Wife	Married	Georgia

Have your students complete the Introductory Search Worksheet which is attached below.



This map entitled “Density of Foreign Born Population of the United States: 1900” was published by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1900. Areas that are pale have “less than 1” foreign born in a square mile. Areas marked in dark brown have “25 and over” foreign-born inhabitants in a square mile. Foreign-born residents of North Carolina were extremely scarce.

Source: Twelfth Census of the United States, Volume [16]: Statistical Abstract, 1900

Dubester 277

Plate 62: Density of Foreign Born Population of the United States: 1900

INTRODUCTORY SEARCH WORKSHEET

Using
the
Digital

Write down one number between 1 and 300. _____

Durham Census Database

Go to the census database on the Digital Durham website.
Follow these steps:

Type <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu> into your web browser.
At the Digital Durham home page, click on the “Browse Collection” button.
Next, click on the words “Public Records.”
Then click on the link that reads “[1880 Federal Population Census Database](#).”
Start your census search by clicking the button marked “Intermediate Search,” then type your number in the field marked “Family number.”
Press the grey “search” button on the left of your screen to get your results.

Review your research results and answer the following questions.

- 1) What is the first and last name of the head of household who lives in Enumeration district 195? _____
(Hint: Each “head of household” has a number 1 in the field labeled “HR.”)

- 2) What is the occupation of this “head of household?” _____

- 3) How many people live in this household? _____

- 4) Do all the members of the household appear to be related? Y or N

5) What terms does the census use to describe people who are not related to the “head of household”? _____

6) What is the first and last name of the head of household who lives in Enumeration district 196? _____

7) How many people live in this household? _____

8) Do all the members of the household appear to be related? Y or N

9) What terms does the census use to describe people who are not related to the “head of household”? _____

GROUP ACTIVITY

Create a tally chart on the blackboard. Poll your students and record the sizes of the households that they have found.

1 inhabitant	2 inhabitants	3 inhabitants	4 inhabitants	5 inhabitants	6 inhabitants	7 or more inhabitants

Use the table and the recorded results to determine:

- the average number of people in these Durham households in 1880
- What are the mean, median and range of these results?

Ask the students to count the number of people living in their own households.

1 inhabitant	2 inhabitants	3 inhabitants	4 inhabitants	5 inhabitants	6 inhabitants	7 or more inhabitants

Calculate the average size of their households. _____

How does this number compare to the number of people living in Durham's households in 1880?

How does this number compare to the average North Carolina household size today? (Consult the American Fact Finder Handout).

Can the students offer an explanation for why the size of households has changed over time?

TEACHER FACT SHEET

HOUSEHOLD SIZE/FAMILY SIZE

The Census Bureau estimates that the average household size in North Carolina today is 2.49 people. See the U.S. Census Bureau fact sheet for North Carolina.

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts? event=Search&geo_id=& geoContExt=& street=& county=& cityTown=& state=04000US37& zip=& lang=en& sse=0&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?event=Search&geo_id=&geoContExt=&street=&county=&cityTown=&state=04000US37&zip=&lang=en&sse=0&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010)

In 1900, the average household size in the United States was 4.60.

Your students might have some ideas as to why there has been a dramatic downward shift in the size of household. In talking with your students, you might discuss the economic affects of industrialization on families. In agrarian communities, families with large numbers of children benefited from the labor that their children contributed to the farm. With the rise of industrialization and the migration of agrarian families to urban spaces, family size began to shrink. Families—particularly urban middle class families—had fewer children. As young couples delayed marriage, they had fewer children.

Family size and household size began to decline as a result of improvements in transportation. New forms of travel encouraged migration. While early in the twentieth century it was common for a grandparent to live with her child and grandchildren, that configuration is increasingly more rare. It is much more common today for grandparents to live independently from their grandchildren. Financial success has enabled many grandparents to live independently from their offspring.

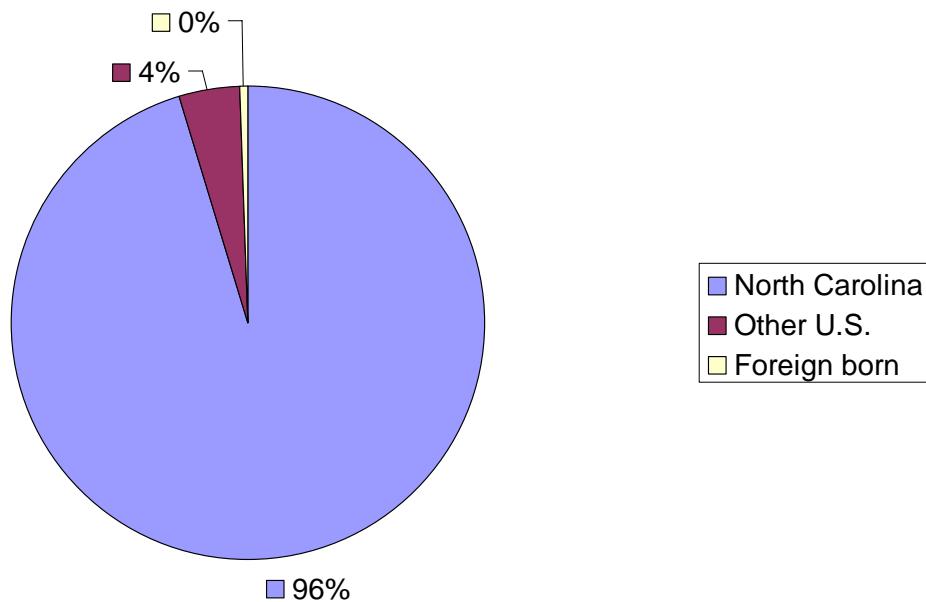
NATIVITY AND LANGUAGE: Seven percent of the people living in North Carolina in 2006 were foreign born. Ninety-three percent was native, including 60 percent who were born in North Carolina.

Among people at least five years old living in North Carolina in 2006, 10 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Of those speaking a language other than English at home, 68 percent spoke Spanish and 32 percent spoke some other language; 50 percent reported that they did not speak English "very well."

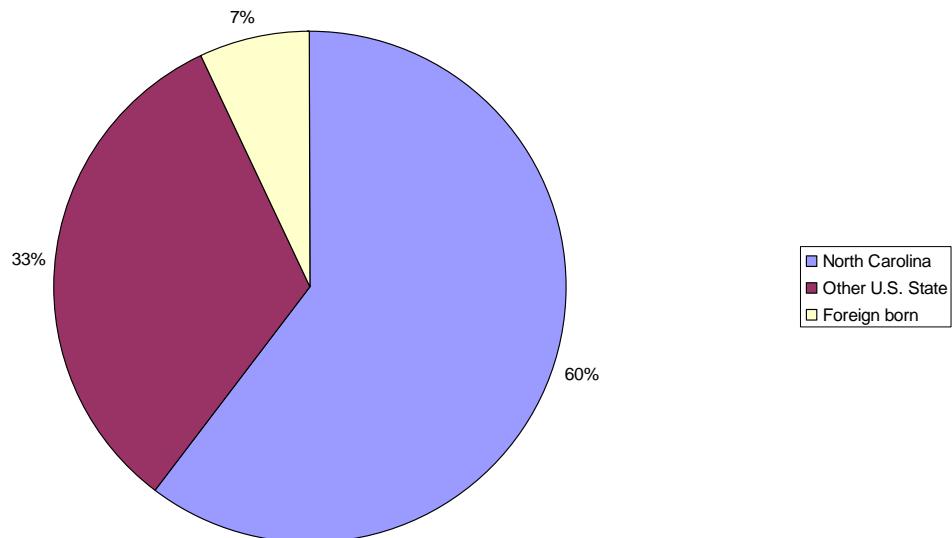
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

As students build circle graphs of the nativity of Durham residents in 1880 and the nativity of NC residents today, they should see that there was very little immigration to Durham in 1880 and that these immigrants came exclusively from Europe and Canada. Government data today shows that immigrants to N.C. come from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania as well as from Canada and Europe.

Place of Birth of Durham Residents, 1880



Place of Birth of North Carolina Residents, 2006



American Fact Finder (Excerpts)
Social Characteristics for the State of North Carolina

Data Set: **2006 American Community Survey**

Survey: **2006 American Community Survey**

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US37&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_DP2&-ds_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE			
Total households	3,454,068	+/-13,312	
Family households (families)	2,310,456	+/-17,812	
With own children under 18 years	1,051,848	+/-13,827	
Married-couple families	1,706,840	+/-18,258	
With own children under 18 years	702,992	+/-13,158	
Male householder, no wife present	148,807	+/-7,144	
With own children under 18 years	73,963	+/-5,620	
Female householder, no husband present	454,809	+/-10,167	
With own children under 18 years	274,893	+/-7,857	
Nonfamily households	1,143,612	+/-15,215	
Householder living alone	959,166	+/-14,745	
65 years and over	301,931	+/-5,929	
Households with one or more people under 18 years	1,170,646	+/-13,989	
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	755,875	+/-5,159	
Average household size	2.49	+/-0.01	
Average family size	3.04	+/-0.02	

PLACE OF BIRTH			
Total population	8,856,505	*****	
Native	8,242,307	+/-13,538	
Born in United States	8,166,894	+/-14,571	
State of residence	5,286,411	+/-29,739	
Different state	2,880,483	+/-28,110	
Born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Island areas, or born abroad to American parent(s)	75,413	+/-5,043	
Foreign born	614,198	+/-13,538	

WORLD REGION OF BIRTH OF FOREIGN BORN			
Foreign-born population, excluding population born at sea	614,198	+/-13,538	
Europe	70,752	+/-5,131	
Asia	126,018	+/-4,875	
Africa	31,097	+/-5,073	
Oceania	2,430	+/-781	
Latin America	367,082	+/-9,111	
Northern America	16,819	+/-2,761	