Historical Inquiry with

The *Statistical Atlas of the United States* (1870) Church Accommodation Chart

About the Historical Document

The *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870* was published in 1874 and compiled under the authority of Congress by Francis A. Walker, M.A., the superintendent of the ninth Census and a professor of political economy and history at the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale College (now Yale University). As stated on its title page, the document includes "contributions from many eminent men of science and several departments of the government."

Walker supervised the Census using scientific methods and sought to make the Census information gathered more accessible to the general public by producing the *Statistical Atlas*, which provides explanations and charts and maps of the data collected. He expanded the amount of information collected in the Census and applied statistical techniques to more accurately reflect the development of the United States after the Civil War.

The page of the *Statistical Atlas* used in this activity charts church affiliation for the United States, the 37 states at the time of the 1870 Census, the District of Columbia, and the North West and South West Territories. The full chart title is "Chart Showing the Ratio of Church Accommodation to the Total Population Over 10 Years of Age with the Proportion of Such Church Accommodation Furnished by Each of the Largest Four Denominations Within Each State and By Each of the Largest Eight Denominations Within the United States." In this case, the term "accommodation" means "affiliation." The chart depicts the states (areas) as equal-sized squares, with the individual categories representing a proportion of the total state (or area) population over 10 years of age. The categories include eleven denominations plus one for all other denominations.

Uses for This Activity

This activity reveals a snapshot of declared church affiliation in 1870. It provides historical inquiry questions for students to evaluate the chart. The questions are divided into the following topics: observe, reflect, question, and analyze. This activity may be used to introduce and engage students in the process of historical inquiry and/or to process and reflect about the influence of church affiliation in the United States.

Standards and Benchmarks (see page 9)

Grade Level

8-12

Materials

- Internet access and a whiteboard to display PDF 1 (page Pl.XXXI "Chart Showing the Ratio of Church Accommodation to the Total Population Over 10 Years of Age with the Proportion of Such Church Accommodation Furnished by Each of the Largest Four Denominations Within Each State and By Each of the Largest Eight Denominations Within the United States" in the *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870*): https://www.stlouisfed.org/~/media/Education/Lessons/pdf/maps/PDF1_SA1870 Church-Accommodation.pdf. A copy of PDF 1 is provided at the end of this activity for the teacher's reference.

  NOTE: The PDF version is provided because it has better resolution than the *Statistical Atlas* online version. The full *Statistical Atlas* is available at https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/?id=64#scribd-open. The chart in PDF 1 is on page 81.

- Handout 1, one copy for each student

- Handout 1—Answer Key for the teacher

Procedure

1. Display *PDF 1: SA1870 Church Accommodation* (as noted in the Materials section). Explain to the students that this is a primary source document. It is a population chart from a document called the *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870*. In this activity, they will practice historical inquiry by examining the chart and answering questions about it. Explain the following:

   - The *Statistical Atlas* was published in 1874 and is considered a watershed moment for statistics in the United States, bringing us on a par with our European counterparts.

   - In this case, the term "accommodation" means "affiliation."

   - The charts show the declared church affiliation of the population of the United States and each of the 37 states, the District of Columbia, and the North West and South West Territories at the time of the 1870 Census.

   - The first square on the chart is for the nation. The states follow in alphabetical order, with the District of Columbia and the two territories at the end.

   - The square size is the same for each state, but the size of each category is proportional to the total number of people in the state over 10 years of age.

econlowdown®
click. teach. engage.

- • The different-colored sections refer to the church denomination categories counted by the Census.

- • There is an explanatory note at the top center of the page and a legend at the top right.

2. Discuss with the students how religious freedom was one of the reasons some early settlers came to the United States. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…" Churches provide the structural framework and physical buildings for many people who choose to gather to practice religion, hence the connection with religious freedom.

3. Continue to display PDF 1. Distribute a copy of *Handout 1: Historical Inquiry* to each student. Have the students work in pairs and instruct them to look at the chart (PDF 1) together to find the answers to the questions on Handout 1. After students complete the activity, discuss their findings, referring to *Handout 1—Answer Key* as needed.

Assessment

4. Instruct the students to write an essay that (i) summarizes their findings and (ii) provides evidence gathered from this inquiry and classroom learning that supports their findings.

econlowdown®
click. teach. engage.

Handout 1: Historical Inquiry

Historical Inquiry with the *Statistical Atlas of the United States* (1870): Interpreting the Church Accommodation Chart

Observe

1.   What information does the title provide about this chart?

2.   What is the source of the information for this chart?

3.   What does the legend indicate about this chart?

4.   Which current states were not yet states and therefore not on this chart?

5.   What does the note (under the title) indicate about the size of the gray borders on some of the squares?

6.   What do you first notice about the square depicting the entire United States?

Reflect

7.   Who was counted on this chart?

8.   Why do you think this chart is important?

9.   How might this chart be biased?

10.   What can be learned from examining this chart?

11.   Is there anything significant missing from this chart?

Question

12.   What differences does this chart show across states and between the states and territories?

13.   What does this chart indicate about the United States and the world at this time?

14.   Where could I find additional information related to this topic?

Analyze

15.   How has the United States changed since this chart was made?

16.   How does the information on this chart foreshadow the future?

17.   What features of this chart might still be the same today?

econlowdown®
click. teach. engage.

Handout 1: Historical Inquiry—Answer Key

Historical Inquiry with the *Statistical Atlas of the United States* (1870): Interpreting the Church Accommodation Chart

Observe

1. What information does the title provide about this chart? (*The title indicates that the chart*

    •   *provides information for the United States and each state,*

    •   *includes the total population over 10 years of age, and*

    •   *reports as ratios the number of people in the four largest denominations in each state and the eight largest denominations in the United States relative to the total population in each state.*)

2. What is the source of the information for this chart? (*Social Statistics of the Ninth Census 1870 by Francis A. Walker*)

3. What does the legend indicate about this chart? (*The legend indicates the following denomination categories included on the chart and the color code for each: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, Christian, Dutch Reformed, Universalist, Mormon, and All other Denominations.*)

4. Which current states were not yet states and therefore not on this chart? (*Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming*)

5. What does the note (under the title) indicate about the size of the gray borders on some of the squares? (*The border of each square—the gray shaded area—"represents the population for which no church accommodation is provided." When there is no border, "the aggregate church accommodation equals or exceeds the population over 10 years of age"; in other words, there is no part of the population not accounted for by the denominations.*)

6. What do you first notice about the square depicting the entire United States? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: The largest denominations in order of size are Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic. The next four denominations seem to be nearly equal in size: Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Christian. The Dutch Reformed, Universalist, and Mormon denominations were not large enough to be included for the nation as a whole.*)

Reflect

7. Who was counted on this chart? (*All persons over the age of 10 residing in the United States, the District of Columbia, and the North West and South West Territories*)

8. Why do you think this chart is important? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: The chart gives a visual depiction of the church affiliation breakdown in each state that allows for quick and easy comparison. It shows how church affiliation varied across the country.*)

9. How might this chart be biased? (*Answers will vary. Bias is not readily discernible on this chart.*)

10. What can be learned from examining this chart? (*Answers will vary but may include that it shows how church affiliation differed across the United States, the District of Columbia, and the territories.*)

11. Is there anything significant missing from this chart? (*Answers will vary.*)

Question

12. What differences does this chart show across states and between the states and territories? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: Twenty-two states were predominantly Methodist, but the territories were not predominantly Methodist. The North West and South West Territories were predominantly Roman Catholic, as were California, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, and Wisconsin. The North West Territories had a large number of people with no church accommodation, but the South West Territories had maximum affiliation.*)

13. What does this chart indicate about the United States and the world at this time? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: The United States had a mixture of denominations in every state and territory. Although the chart does not speak to denominations worldwide, it could be used to compare the United States with other countries.*)

14. Where could I find additional information related to this topic? (*Answers will vary. You could refer students to the Pew Research Center article, "A Brief History of Religion and the U.S. Census" at http://www.pewforum.org/2010/01/26/a-brief-history-of-religion-and-the-u-s-census/, which explains more about the collection of information about denominational affiliation and why it is no longer collected.*)

econlowdown®
click. teach. engage.

Analyze

15. How has the United States changed since this chart was made? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: The North West and South West Territories are now states. The relative sizes of the denominations for the nation and individual states have likely changed.*)

    TEACHER NOTE: First Amendment concerns about the separation of church and state seem to be the main reason for later exclusion of church affiliation from the Census.

16. How does the information on this chart foreshadow the future? (*Answers will vary but may include that church affiliation was prevalent in the early years of our nation's history and church teachings shaped the culture and moral standards of the country.*)

17. What features of this chart might still be the same today? (*Answers will vary but may include that churches of various denomination are still prevalent across the United States.*)

7

Copy of PDF 1

Standards and Benchmarks

College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

Dimension 2, Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts

- **Historical Sources and Evidence: By the End of Grade 8**

  D2.His.11.6-8. Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.

  D2.His.12.6-8. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.

  D2.His.13.6-8. Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

- **Causation and Argumentation: By the End of Grade 8**

  D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

  D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

  D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

- **Historical Sources and Evidence: By the End of Grade 12**

  D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

  D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

- **Causation and Argumentation: By the End of Grade 12**

  D2.His.14.9-12: Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

  D2.His.15.9-12: Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.

  D2.His.16.9-12: Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

econlowdown
click. teach. engage.