Tracking CRC Schools in North America

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Since the late nineteenth century, there have been records of the CRC schools in the United States, and other places around the world. These records include directories regarding the opening and closing of schools, as well as other information and statistics regarding the school. All of this data exists, but to this day it has yet to be used to map out the growth of the CRC schools in America. My summer research project was to create series of maps and graphs that projected the numbers of CRC schools in a variety of different ways. These maps will be used for future research projects, presentations, and maybe one day be published.

My work started off by tracking preparing datasets regarding the placement of the different schools in America. This consisted of creating a database for every 5 years from present day until the late nineteenth century. Back in the earlier days, there were only a few schools in the west Michigan area, today there are hundreds of schools spread across the nation. Using a database that contained every CRC school in the United States, I was able to map out geographical locations of where these schools resided, as well as tracking the growth and decline in the different areas by each decade. While there was much spread through the United States, a majority of the schools settled in the Midwest in the earlier centuries, then moved to the West and Southern regions, but still settling in Michigan and Iowa mostly.

My second task was to work with school openings and closings throughout our studies time period. For this project I used dataset mentioned earlier, manually dividing up the different changes that occurred every five years by comparing one year's data set to the next. From this I was able to determined what schools had opened and closed during those five year gaps. I mapped the continent from an international scale to a city scale, showing the growth and decline of schools in different parts of the United States and Canada.

The final project I worked on was mapping the different demographics of the schools. Using the data that was provided from the school directories I have made series of maps, on a variety of scales showing different information about the schools during those 5-year time periods. This information includes enrollment numbers, grade ranges, percentage of the school age population and student teacher ratios.

From this summer's research I have learned a lot about my field of study. I have become much more experienced in mapping data on the computer, using programs such as ArcGIS. Also, I have learned a lot more about data management, and working with databases of varying sizes on Excel. This includes working with massive, premade databases and creating data tables of my own from extracted data. The experience that I have gotten from this summer's research will be very beneficial to me for any future employment in this field.