

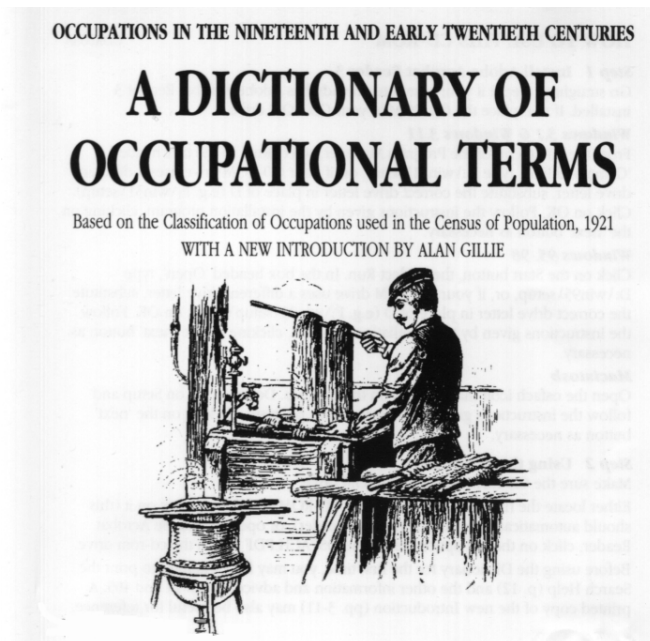
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A Dictionary of Occupational Terms

Based on the Classification of Occupations used by the Census of Population, 1921

Published by the Open University on CD-ROM, price £12.95 (inc. p&p)
available from Faculty Office (CDR0088), Faculty of Social Sciences (G. 2),
The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA
Further info and order form: <http://socsci.open.ac.uk/SocSci/da301/agp1.pdf>

Reviewed by Peter Christian



The Dictionary of Occupational Terms has its origins in an attempt to analyse the occupations given by respondents in the 19th Century censuses. Derived from the glossaries created for the use of those analysing these censuses, the material on this CD-ROM was first published in 1927 by the Ministry of Labour, but has not been widely available. The original is almost 600 pages long and is therefore an unlikely candidate for a modern reprint

on paper, but the Open Studies in Family and Community History Research Group at the Open University have made it available on CD-ROM in Adobe Acrobat format with images of the pages in the original edition, and an introduction which provide the background to the *Dictionary*.

The CD is readable on both Windows and Macintosh platforms. If you already have the Adobe Acrobat readers installed, you can simply click on the file containing the *Dictionary*, otherwise you will need to install the appropriate version of the reader from the CD.

In fact the term “dictionary” is something of a misnomer, as the main part of the book is actually a thesaurus, with occupations listed by classification not by alphabetical order. There are 238 occupational codes organized under 31 main headings - the start of the classification is shown in Fig. 1.

Code no.	Order & suborder	Occupational group
000-	I	Fishermen
010-	II	Agricultural occupations
040-	III	Mining and quarrying occupations
	1	In coal and shale mines
	2	In metalliferous mines and workings
	3	In other mines and quarries
	4	At oil wells and brine wells
080-	IV	Workers in the treatment of non-metalliferous mine and quarry products (including workers in gas works)
	1	Makers of coke and by-products (excluding tar distilling)
	2	Makers of other products
100-	V	Makers of bricks, pottery and glass
	1	Makers of bricks, pottery and earthenware
	2	Makers of glass and glass ware
140-	VI	Workers in chemical processes; makers of paints, oils, etc.
	1	Workers in chemical processes
	2	Makers of paints, oils (not mineral), etc.
160-	VII	Metal workers (not electro plate or precious metals)
	1	Employers, managers, foremen
	2	Furnacemen (not foundry) and puddlers
	3	Rollers
	4	Foundry workers
	5	Smiths and skilled forge workers
	6	Machine tool workers
	7	Fitters and millwrights
	8	Other workers

Figure 1

To find the entry for a particular occupation, you first need to find it in the alphabetical listing, and there is a index to this in the left-hand frame, which makes it possible to get to the right place fairly quickly (see Fig. 2).

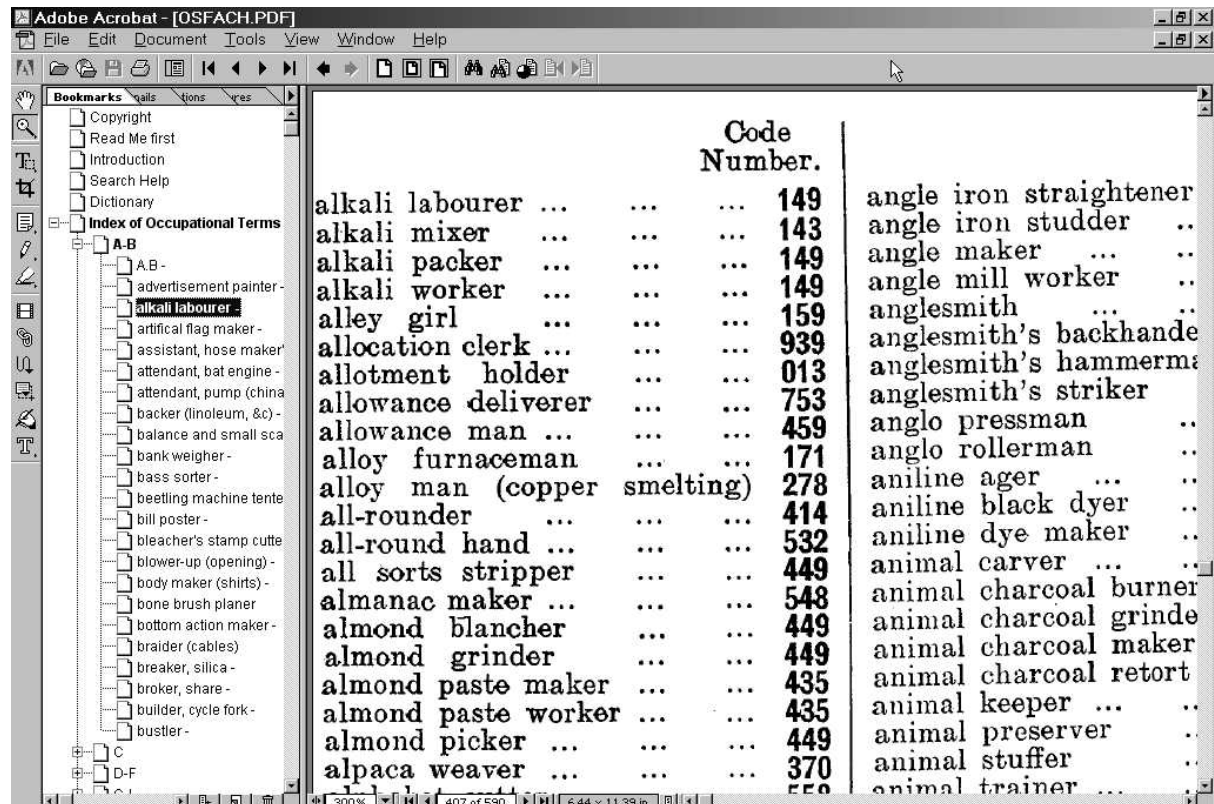


Figure 2

Unfortunately, you can't simply click on the chosen entry to go to the correct section of the book. You have to note the code number to the right of the occupation, and then locate that number in the index frame to the left and click on it to bring up the relevant page. In Figure 3, you can see that an "alley girl" does not do what you thought.

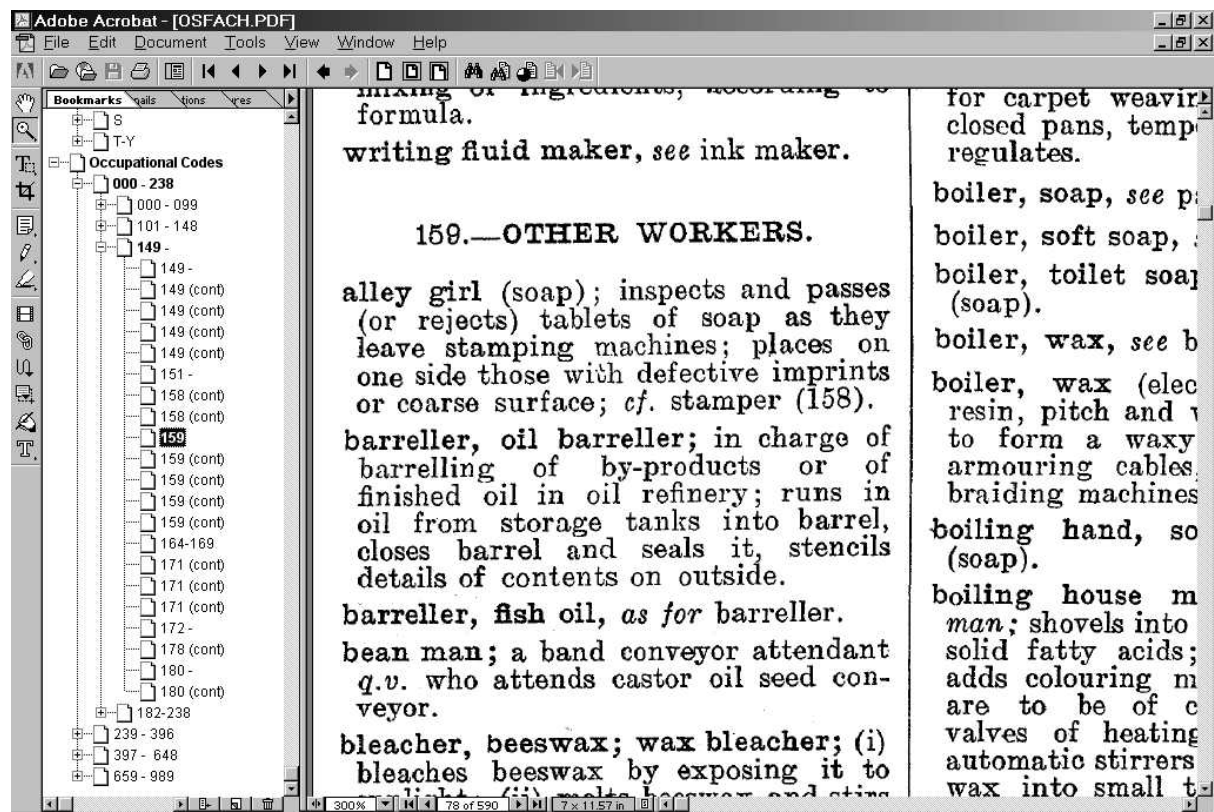


Figure 3

Unfortunately, what you can't immediately see here is the kind of trade under which "alley girl" is classified - you have to scroll back to the previous major heading, or look at the overall index to see that an alley girl is classified under "Workers in chemical processes: makers of paint, oils, etc."

One could wish for a more sophisticated conversion, with text rather than images and proper hyperlinks within the book rather than simply from an index frame, but I think it's easy to understand why this hasn't been done. The difficulty of running the original through an optical character recognition process would be considerable, and there would have been an immense labour in proof-reading, and setting up the thousands of hypertext links.

It's important to note one limitation in the original work: it excludes "the professional occupations and occupations connected with public administration and defence". Also, of course, it is more limited than the books on old occupations, which naturally cover a longer time-scale. But the

huge advantage of this work is its comprehensiveness - with almost 30,000 terms defined, it is well ahead of any other publication, in spite of its historical limitations. The fact that *every* job title is described is what makes it particularly valuable

You might think that major dictionaries like this are something that not many individual genealogists will need to buy, and undoubtedly it should be an essential purchase for any library with holdings in genealogy or social history. However, at only £12.95 it should it might well be worthwhile purchase for anyone with 19th century ancestors in trade or industry, just for the descriptions of what was involved in each occupation and to see what other occupations were associated with it. And anyone involved in census transcription would find it a very useful tool for checking difficult to read occupations. The OU must be thanked for making this material readily available at such a reasonable price.