

## **4. Potential issues and biases**

### **4.1. Caused by use of external sources**

The use of external sources to link and match Aboriginal people in the census was a bit of a double edged sword. On the one hand it allowed us to gather far more data than we could have otherwise, but on the other, it presented a number of potential biases.

4.1.1. Some people living near Rooster Town in the census were not recorded as Aboriginal in the manuscript census, but shared Aboriginal traits. In cases such as this I would use external sources to confirm or deny that the individual was Aboriginal. This was only done in the area surrounding Rooster Town, meaning people were more likely to be found in this area.

4.1.2. The use of external data caused some bias in who was and who wasn't linked as well as the strength of links because people who were researched externally were easier to link. This causes bias in the data because the people who had external research done on them were generally associated with Rooster Town.

### **4.2. Biases caused by linking**

4.2.1. Some people were much easier to link than others, causing bias. These included:

- People who didn't change their address
- People who had the same family members in multiple censuses
- People who had the same age in multiple censuses
- People with moderately unique names (For example the St Arnauds were easier to link than the Smiths)
- People's whose names didn't change (especially relevant in Winnipeg where names tended to become Anglicised)

Less consistent groups were more difficult to link. Some of the most underrepresented types of people include:

- Women who marry/remarry or move away from home
- People without their own home: Lodgers, elderly family members, adopted children, servants and people in institutions
- People and families who don't have a stable home and move around a lot
- People with very common names and people who change their names

4.2.2. Different sources were used for linking different censuses. For 1901, 1906, and 1911 Automated genealogy was primarily used and Ancestry was somewhat used. For the other censuses Ancestry was the only site used to look for links. This is significant because for each site the search function worked in different ways and often an individual would be easy to link using one site and very difficult using another.

### **4.3 General biases**

4.3.1. When scrolling through the census pages it was easier to identify large groups of Aboriginal people than small groups or individuals, like domestics.

4.3.2. Data collected in different censuses meant that it was easier to identify Aboriginal people in some census years than others. For example 1901 had a colour category which really helped. On the other hand in 1906 there was no Tribal Origin, Colour or Language question, which made it virtually impossible to find people using some of the methods discussed previously.

4.3.3. The rules enumerators followed were different in various censuses. For example in some years origins were traced through mothers and in some years through fathers. After 1901, Metis were no longer identified as “Halfbreed” and their origins were traced through their European ancestors.

4.3.4. Some censuses were easier to read than others. Most notably 1911 was very difficult to read.

4.3.5. It is likely there were a number of mistakes made in the process of recording the data, both by the original census enumerator and by myself. Notably, uncommon answers were much more likely to be recorded incorrectly. For example, the data is biased towards people whose occupation was “Labourer” because I had to transcribe that answer hundreds of times. On the other hand, it was more difficult to transcribe “Juggling Clown” because that occupation came up much more rarely.