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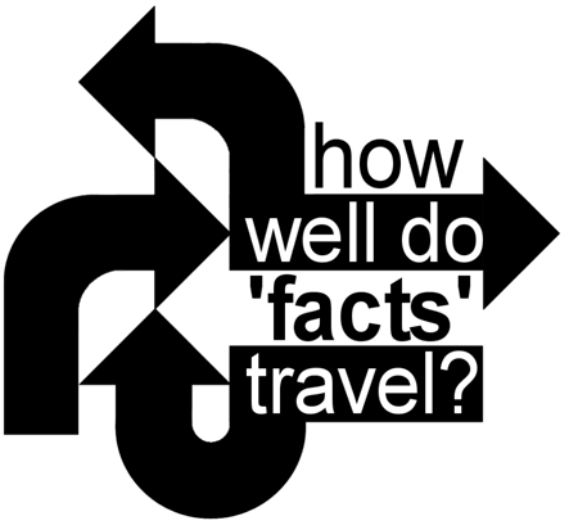

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Mapping Poverty in Agar Town: Economic Conditions Prior to the Development of St. Pancras Station in 1866

Steven P. Swensen

Abstract

In 1866, the Midland Railway Company demolished Agar Town, an area Victorian writers called the foulest slum in London, to make way for the development of St Pancras railway station. Most Londoners lauded the action. But what kind of tenants actually inhabited the area before it was destroyed, and were they really as foul a populace as recorded? While it is impossible to recreate the exact conditions under which the people of Agar Town lived, it can be shown that the households were more complex than earlier accounts suggest. This paper employs census data and contemporary interviews to reconstruct the earnings and overall income available to households within the displaced area. This information is used to produce a visual representation of economic conditions within the lost streets of Agar Town, based upon Charles Booth's 1889 *Descriptive Map of London Poverty*.

Introduction

Where the impressive Gothic-style St. Pancras station now sits, there once was a vibrant neighbourhood teeming with life and activity. Agar Town was located north of central London on land owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in the parish of St. Pancras. Agar Town developed in the early 1840s on a wedge of land sandwiched between the railway lines leading to King's Cross Station and Euston Station. It stood on land that would ultimately be taken over to build the St. Pancras Railway station in 1866. Bordered on the east by King's Cross railway station, Agar Town was bordered on the south and west by Somers Town, built on the land of Lord Somers. The population of Somers Town was described as "low," "working-class" and in danger of "contaminat[ing]"

nearby, more respectable populations.[1] But the people of Somers Town could take heart in knowing that they were still better off than their neighbours in Agar Town. “Ague Town,” as it was labelled, was what early Victorians saw as the foulest north London development of all.[2]

Agar Town’s location ensured that it would never be suitable for middle-class development. William Agar purchased the lease to 70 acres of land from the St. Pancras estate in 1810.[3] The Regent’s Canal, which opened in 1820, cut across the land and drew trade and industries to the area that wanted to take advantage of the canal for transportation. By 1822, William Agar had sold his interest in the southern portion of his estate to the Imperial Gas, Light & Coke Company, which also used the canal to transport coal for their operations. The proximity to transport and this new industrial development drew people to the St. Pancras, transforming the area into an industrial suburb. As a result of the canal, Agar Town developed rapidly and grew haphazardly, from sparsely inhabited countryside to a population of 104,000 in the decade after 1821. After William Agar died, his widow began leasing out the land in 1841. However, the Agar family leased the land in very small plots with the term being a relatively short length of just 21-years, inhibiting any high-quality development.[4] Thus, “Agar Town—the lowest effort of building skill and arrangement in or near London—arose upon Church property.”[5]

References to the budding Agar Town call it a “shanty town” with “houses that were little more than huts made from bricks and rubbish” and “slums from the day they were first occupied.”[6] Mr. King, a local resident, was clearly bitter in the late 1840s:

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[1] Olsen, *Town Planning in London*, p. 63-65.
[2] Porter, *London: A Social History*, p. 217.
[3] Camden, *Streets of St. Pancras,* p. 92.
[4] Denford, *Agar Town: The Life and Death of a Victorian “Slum”* p. 14.
[5] Hollingshead, *Ragged London,* p. 131.
[6] Denford, p. 10.

> The leases terminate at the end of 21 years, which have brought together such a variety of Poor to the area…as to make it a second Saint Giles, it being very hazardous for any respectable person to pass or repass without insult, or annoyance, as that locality received most of the refuse which the forming of New Oxford Street swept away to improve that previous impure district.[7]

Another author reminisced in 1854 about Agar Town's bucolic beginnings and subsequent decline:

> This large tract of land was granted on lease to a gentleman connected with the law, Mr. Agar, after whom the district was named. Mr. Agar died, leaving his property to [his] very young children. At that time [his] large residence near Pratt-Street was in the fields, and no houses had been built on the estate. Indeed, so retired was this place that within the last fifteen or sixteen years nightingales have been heard near a clump of trees at short distance from Mr. Agar's house. The land was, however, soon let out into small strips…. No systematic plan of drainage was laid out: in fact, the houses were planted down very much in the same manner as the wooden huts and tents at the gold diggings: each man suited his means or fancy in the erection of an edifice on the land which for a few years was, on certain conditions, his own.[8]

As a result of this haphazard development, a Board of Health report said in 1851 that Agar Town was "one of the most neglected in the metropolis"[9] and a London journalist reported finding it "nestling, as snugly as ever, by the side of the Great Northern Railway [King's Cross]…built on a swamp, and running down to the canal in every stage of dirt and decay."[10] *The Builder* newspaper wrote in 1853, "No words would be too strong to describe the miserable conditions of this

[7] From The Kentish Town Roll (Survey of London, XIX:61), quoted in Denford, p.11.
[8] Godwin, *London Shadows,* p. 7.
[9] Parliamentary Papers, 1851, XXIII:33, *Report lately made to the Board of Health in reference to the sanitary condition of Agar Town by R.D. Granger,* quoted in Denford, p. 11.
[10] Hollingshead, p. 9, 130.

disgraceful location. The houses have been planted here without any thought of drainage, or of any other arrangement necessary for health."[11]

In addition to its apparent poor location, the buildings developed within Agar Town were also substandard. "Many were mere hovels erected by journeymen bricklayers and carpenters on Sundays and in other spare time, and were inhabited before the ground flooring was laid."[12] The Vicar of St. Pancras said that the houses were "more fitted for the occupation of wild beasts than for human beings" and the area "is one of extreme and almost unmitigated poverty."[13] John Hollingshead, a London journalist, wrote extensively about the housing in Agar Town after his visit in 1861. He wrote that the huts were filthy, often having no doors, windows, or privies, "a collection of the very lowest of labourers' cottages."[14] He described the huts as three or four-room dwellings, built of old rubbish, and let to two or three families each. "Some of the builders still live in them, happy and contented, but dreading the time - about 1866 - when their term will expire. They are always ready to rally round the place, and to call it a 'pretty little town'."[15] While most writers or journalists only touched briefly on the conditions in Agar Town, one influential article deserves mention as it described in vivid, albeit fictional, detail the awfulness of Agar Town.

In 1851, Charles Dickens published a story in *Household Words,* his weekly journal where he could communicate his ideas on social reform. The short story by W.M. Thomas tells the imaginary story of a Manchester man who seeks to establish his family in the suburbs of London. He has "a favourable impression of the northern side of London, from the pretty villas and cottages which [he] had remarked on each side

[11] *The Builder,* October 8, 1853, p. 1.
[12] Miller, *St. Pancras Past and Present,* p. 54.
[13] Denford, p. 11.
[14] Hollingshead, p. 132.
[15] Hollingshead, p. 136.

of the [rail] line."[16] He buys a map, measures off a semi-circle the desired distance from his office between Battle Bridge (near King's Cross Station) and Euston Square, and looks for "all the Victoria Crescents and Albert Terraces thereabouts."[17] A district called Agar Town seems to fit the bill, and the man is especially attracted by the street names: Salisbury Crescent, Oxford Crescent, Cambridge Crescent and the like. He is even concerned that "the houses in that neighbourhood might be of too expensive a class for a man of moderate means."[18]

Upon arriving in Agar Town, the first thing he sees is the St. Pancras workhouse. Outside it, a woman and "a number of ragged children" appear to be on the move from there to a residence in this "desirable district."[19] However, the roads in Agar Town are "a complete bog of mud and filth, with deep cart-ruts."[20] The promisingly named Salisbury Crescent turns out to be "several wretched hovels, ranged in a slight curve, that formed some excuse for the name. The doors were blocked up with mud, heaps of ashes, oyster-shells, and decayed vegetables."[21] In addition, Agar Town is host to houses with water "a flowin' in at the back doors," cinder-heaps, dung-heaps, and piles of whelk and periwinkle shells from costermongers. He asks a dustman he meets if there are sewers in the district, to which he receives this reply:

> Sooers? Why, the stench of a rainy morning is enough fur to knock down a bullock. It's all very well for them as is lucky enough to have a ditch afore their doors; but, in gen'ral, everybody chucks everythink [sic] out in front and there it stays. There used to be inspector of noosances, when the choleray was

[16] "A Suburban Connemara," *Household Words,* 8 March 1851, p. 562.
[17] *Household,* p. 562.
[18] *Household,* p. 563.
[19] *Household,* p. 563.
[20] *Household,* p. 563.
[21] *Household,* p. 563.

> about; but as soon as the choleray went away, people said they didn't want no more of that…[22]

Some areas of Agar Town are even worse than Salisbury Crescent, and the dustman acquaintance informs the man that,

> As to the roads, they ain't never been done…. When people began to build [here], they run up a couple o' rows o' houses oppersite [sic] one another and then the road was left fur to make itself. Then the rain come down, and people chucked their rubbidge out; and the ground bein' nat'rally soft, the carts from the brick-fields worked it all up into paste.[23]

The man, upon realising that his favourable but false picture of Agar Town makes it far from an ideal place to live says, "the place, in its present state, is a disgrace to the metropolis," and he uses the example of Agar Town to call for improved dwellings for the respectable poor.[24] He contends "no spot could be better adapted for the erection of small tenements for labouring men and mechanics" since "no respectable tenant could be induced to take the land for so short a term upon a building lease."[25] In the ensuing years, "Agar" became a by-word representing bad landlords, whether that reputation was deserved or not. A modern author wrote, "Only when the full horror of conditions in areas like Agar Town or St. Giles is grasped can one appreciate the enthusiasm with which their destruction was greeted."[26] With the perception these articles must have given the public, it is no wonder the demolition of Agar Town in 1866 was not lamented.

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[22] *Household,* p. 563.
[23] *Household,* p. 563. In addition to the lack of paved roads, Agar Town was also not lit until 1860, in spite of its close proximity to the Imperial Gas Works. See Denford, p. 19.
[24] *Household,* p. 565.
[25] *Household,* p. 565.
[26] Wohl, *The Eternal Slum,* p. 39.

Unfortunately, how the thousands of actual residents felt about losing their homes, neighbourhood, sociality, and possibly even livelihood may never be fully known. There are only sparse glimpses into the human cost the loss of Agar Town caused. One such account is a recollection of an old inhabitant of Agar Town, born in 1851 and living on Cambridge Street until 1863, as recorded by Rev. Morrell in 1935:

> He stated that there were sports in Agar Fields, with its meadow and mulberry ground. Many people had their own houses with a little garden in front and one at the back. Street sellers would come round with hot mutton pies, penny pies and baked potatoes. The chief milkman, Mr. Harvey, was ruined when Agar Town was destroyed.[27]

Although neighbouring Somers Town was not quite the slum that was Agar Town, John Hollingshead said it was still a "worthy neighbour of Agar Town."[28] It was full of dark courts and alleys, gin palaces, cheap shops, patched windows, and passages teeming with children. It had a generally worn-out appearance. But Somers Town, with over 30,000 inhabitants, boasted much more industry than Agar Town, and on Sunday mornings its business centre, Chapel Street, could be found crowded with the residents of Agar Town.[29] To visit Agar Town and Somers Town with Hollingshead in 1861, it would have been virtually impossible to imagine that within a few short years, 4,000 homes would be destroyed and thousands displaced by the Midland Railway Company.[30]

[27] Morrell, *The Story of Agar Town,* cited in Denford, p. 20-21.
[28] Hollingshead, p. 140.
[29] Hollingshead, 140.
[30] Porter, *London, A Social History*, p. 231.

Railway Mania

Even though the railway eventually destroyed their homes, and possibly many lives, it was likely due to the previous railway developments at Euston station (completed in 1837) and King's Cross station (completed in 1852) that Agar Town and Somers Town had grown to such proportion in the first place. When the first railway line in England (and in the world) was opened in 1825, and when London's first railway began operating in 1836, they linked existing cities together. [31] However, railroads eventually stimulated the creation of cities themselves. Moreover, the point at which two railway lines crossed constituted a favourable site for urban development, and many neighbourhoods owed their foundation and their rapid growth to this factor. That the densely populated Agar Town and Somers Town were located between Euston Station and Kings Cross Station was likely no accident. However, if the railway brought benefits, these were purchased at a high cost. *The Builder,* a weekly Victorian magazine that championed the smaller office, workshop, and cottage, summed up their view on the railways in this terse judgement, "No rural district we know of has suffered so much disfiguration from the structures connected with them as we have to complain of in London itself."[32]

When Lord Somers originally accepted the London and Birmingham Railway Company's proposal in 1834 to build their Euston railway terminus within Somers Town, which was already a "thriving working-class community,"[33] it must have seemed like a good idea. The real truth, however, was that "the coming of the railway was ultimately to cause great damage to the Duke [of Bedford's] property in London, but in

[31] Bairoch, *Cities and Economic Development*, 281.
[32] *The Builder,* Vol. 34 (1876), p. 847.
[33] Olsen, *Town Planning in London,* p. 63

1834 it seemed merely to require a change in the street plan."[34] Ultimately, the disruption and destruction caused by the building of these new railway lines was only to benefit the middle and upper classes, who were the main railway clientele at the time. This was because in the mid-nineteenth century, one ride cost the equivalent of an hour's pay for an urban labourer.[35] In essence, "for the unskilled workers of London in the 1860s, all that lay beyond a tiny circle of personal acquaintances or walking distances was darkness."[36] But at the time, government and railway officials largely brushed aside any negative costs or realities about the new "Railway Mania." Because the several railway companies were in competition, railway intersections and the companies' usurping of land to build termini was often highly inefficient. Such was the case when three different companies ultimately built their termini within a mile of each other on the edge of the Bedford Estate—Euston, Kings Cross, and St. Pancras stations. In 1842, the satirical periodical *Punch* facetiously proposed a "grand railway from England to China, with its terminus on the site of a demolished St. Paul's."[37] Such was the careless frenzy of the railway fever. By the 1880's, the Duke of Bedford had given up his half-century fight to shield his tenants from the railways.[38]

In the midst of this railway mania, and as soon as it was announced that a second International Exhibition was to be held in London, the Midland Railway Company decided they needed their own station to

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[34] Olsen, p. 65. The Bedford estate stretched from present day Covent Garden up to Camden Town and the Duke of Bedford was planning to create Bedford New Town of respectable second and third-rate houses for the middle class, but the establishment of Euston Station, and later King's Cross and St. Pancras bordering the Bedford estate significantly depreciated its real estate value. See Olsen, p. 150-151.
[35] Bairoch, p. 281. By the late 1800s, the cost of a ride had fallen to the equivalent wages of twenty minute's work, greatly increasing the accessibility of railways to the poorer classes, largely as a result of the 1883 Cheap Trains Act that reduced fares specifically for workers.
[36] Bairoch, p. 283.
[37] "Grand Railway from England to China," *Punch* vol. 3, p. 205, 1842.
[38] Olsen, p. 151.

prepare for the rush of excursion passengers, rather than continuing to share King's Cross station with the Great Northern Railway Company. In 1859, the Midland Rail Company purchased 27 acres from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and purchased the rest of Agar Town in 1860.[39] After unsuccessful petitions against the company's plans by the St. Pancras Vestry, The Regent's Canal, and the Imperial Gas Light & Coke Company, the Midland Railway (St. Pancras Branch) Bill was passed by Parliamentary powers and became law in 1866. It gave the company complete power to purchase necessary lands and houses "by compulsion or agreement."[40] While the company had to compensate those who had taken out 99-year leases with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, weekly tenants could be evicted without compensation. Some of them fought strenuously to obtain remuneration for being displaced, but were unsuccessful.[41] The official number of displaced "labouring classes" by the Midland Railway Company put the number at a mere 1,180 persons.[42] However, more realistic estimates indicate that the extension of the Midland Rail line into its own station at St. Pancras demolished 4,000 houses in Somers, Camden, and Agar Towns, displacing perhaps as many as 32,000 people.[43]

Railway companies often argued that demolition of slum property was a social improvement and popular attitudes at the time seem to agree, as evidenced by this editorial statement in *The Times:*

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[39] Denford, p. 23.
[40] Denford, p. 23.
[41] Dyos, "Railways and Housing in Victorian London," p. 95. The landlords who were selling their property for £19,500 offered to 'clear the people out' for a further £200. The Company's solicitor accepted this proposal, saying that if it had not been made he would 'have given the tenants small sums by way of gratuity' anyway. The tenants tried desperately to make some claims on these funds, but the landlords contented 'that the tenants had no right or title to any part of the money.' The court upheld that contention, and although their hardship was sympathetically recognised, declared 'weekly tenants had no claim to compensation if they were evicted.'
[42] Cited in Dyos, "Social Costs of Railway Building," p. 26.
[43] *Working Man,* II (8 Sept. 1866), p. 110-11 quoted in Dyos, "Railways and Housing in Victorian London" *Journal of Transport History,* Vol. 2, No. 1 (May 1955), p. 12.

> We accept railways with their consequences, and we don't think the worse of them for ventilating the City of London…You can never make these wretched alleys really habitable, do what you will; but bring a railway to them, and the whole problem is solved.[44]

There was no mention of the razing of Agar Town in the local paper, *The Camden and Kentish Town Gazette*, only praise from other contemporary writers: "Our thanks…for having cleared away the whole, or nearly the whole of the above mentioned district of mud and hovels."[45] Similar to that remorseless eulogy, Frederick Williams in *The History of the Midland Railway* in 1875 wrote,

> Agar Town was a very "abomination of desolation'… a dreary unsavoury locality, abandoned to mountains of refuse…. At the broken windows and doors of mutilated houses canaries still sang and dogs lay sleeping in the sun to remind one of the vast colonies of bird and dog fanciers who formerly made their abode here; and from these dwellings wretched creatures came, in rags and dirt, and searched amid the far extending refuse for the filthy treasure by the aid of which they eked out a miserable livelihood; while over the neighbourhood the gas works poured their mephitic vapours and the canal gave forth its rheumatic dampness, extracting in return some of the more poisonous ingredients from the atmosphere and spreading them upon the surface of the water in a thick scum of various and ominous hues. Such was Agar Town before Midland came.[46]

The pervasive image of Agar Town as a notorious by-word for a foul and squalid slum apparently made it easy for the Midland Railway Company to sweep away the settlement in just two months in 1866 without any public outcry.[47]

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[44] "Unfortunate Londoners," *The Times*, 12 March 1861, pg. 9 column B.
[45] Walford, *Old and New London*, Vol. 5, p. 370
[46] Frederick Williams, *The History of the Midland Railway: Its Rise and Progress: A Narrative of Modern Enterprise,* quoted in Coppock, *Greater London,* p. 127.
[47] Denford, p. 5.

Demography

But who were the thousands of inhabitants displaced without remuneration, left to find accommodation wherever they could? What follows is an examination of the kind of tenants that actually inhabited Agar Town. Were they indeed as foul a populace as the writers of the time indicated? While it is impossible to re-create the exact conditions under which the people of Agar Town lived, it is possible to show that the households were much more complex than earlier accounts that have largely dismissed Agar Town as just another disposable shanty-town slum. Through examination of the census records of 1861, taken just five years before the destruction of the area by the railroad, a picture of the type of people living there and their occupations emerges. This information can then be used for more detailed analysis of poverty levels within the Agar Town neighbourhood. Using interviews conducted by Henry Mayhew, one of the social journalists of the time who recorded rich accounts of street life in Victorian London, a reasonably accurate depiction of the earnings and subsequent comfort levels of various occupations can be estimated. By cross-referencing the occupations of those living in the slums of Agar Town with the detailed descriptions of wages associated with those types of jobs presented by Henry Mayhew, the economic condition of individual streets in Agar Town can be assessed. The ultimate goal of this analysis is a visual representation of the poverty levels within the lost streets of Agar Town, similar to Charles Booth's remarkable 1889 *Descriptive Map of London Poverty*. A poverty map offers a visual representation of the complex levels of economic life in Agar Town that has not been previously accessible nor fully explored in the existing literature.

The first step in learning more about the residents of Agar Town is to learn more about the town itself. While much of the region's early history is outside the scope of this paper, Agar Town itself had a very

short existence, surviving only about 25 years from its development on Lord Agar's manor in the 1840s. Given its short life, very few histories or descriptions of Agar Town exist. Apparently, until a brief 1995 Occasional Paper of the Camden History Society was written, only one short book, written in 1935 with an eye toward the area's ecclesiastical history, even existed.[48] Indeed, finding remnants of Agar Town today is not easy since almost nothing has survived since Parliamentary powers quickly approved its demolition in 1866. Simply determining the streets that made up the original area of Agar Town becomes the initial step required for this project, accomplished by looking at period maps.

Two detailed maps exist of the entire area prior to the incursion of the Midland Rail line: Cassell's map of 1862 and Stanford's Library map of 1863. Of the two, Stanford's map is much more detailed since it was originally intended to be hung on the walls of libraries. It was published using the latest cartographic advancements of the time and considered to be the most detailed map of London in its day. In addition, it has been digitised and is available online, which makes zooming-in to examine street names extremely helpful.[49] After examining the areas displaced by the rail works, including tracks, coal drops and depots, a goods depot, and the Midland Rail terminus at St. Pancras station, 50 separate identifiable streets can be found.[50] The railway tracks laid for the approach to St. Pancras station, coal yard and the northern goods depot are the main features of the Midland Rail developments that replaced Agar Town. Much of the area displaced by the St. Pancras railway station, the former Midland Grand Hotel attached to it, and the southern

[48] Denford, *Agar Town: The Life and Death of a Victorian "Slum"* p. 5.
[49] See Hhttp://www.motco.com/Map/81006/H
[50] The list of these streets is included as Table 1 in the appendix. In *Streets of St. Pancras* published by the Camden History Society, they list 62 vanished streets that were lost to the railways, but since these 12 extra streets beyond what I could identify are not sourced or entirely identifiable on either map, they are not included in this analysis.

goods depot and potato market (where the British Library is now) is actually within Somers Town. However the two towns were so integrally linked that the border between the two is somewhat problematic and cannot be unequivocally identified. In addition, the contemporary account from John Hollingshead emphasise the intertwined character of the two neighbourhoods:

> The whole of Somers Town—the adjacent district at the back of the New Road [north of Euston Road], near King's Cross—is a worthy neighbour of Agar Town….Chapel Street is the chief centre of business, and Sunday morning it is its most busy period….The stall-keepers who crowd in the gutters with fish-stalls, vegetable-stalls, and hardware-stalls, are mostly residents of Agar Town; and when they have done their business for the day they go home to their huts like merchants to their villas.[51]

It is clear, then, that one cannot study Agar Town and the displacement of its residents without also considering Somers Town. Hence, this study includes streets that are technically within Somers Town in the total number of 50 streets lost to the railway developments at St. Pancras. This inclusion is necessary without regard to exact town divisions in order to present the broadest analysis of disruption caused by the railway's incursion into the area.

Having identified the streets lost to Midland rail lines and supporting structures, these streets and their inhabitants can then be examined using original images from the 1861 census taken on the night of 7 April 1861.[52] Each census page includes the following information:

- Name of road, street, etc.
- House number or name

[51] Hollingshead, p. 140, 142.
[52] See Figure 1 in the appendix for a sample sheet from the 1861 census. These images are available on microfilm at the National Archives in Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU.

- Whether or not the house was inhabited
- Name of each person that had spent the night in that household
- Relationship of person enumerated to the head of the family
- Person's marital status
- Age at last birthday (sex is indicated by which column the age is recorded in)
- Person's occupation
- Person's place of birth
- Whether blind, deaf, or idiot.

For the present purposes, the person's occupation is the most relevant detail. In addition to the obvious need for occupational information, the analysis also records ages, relationship to head of household, and size of household supported by the listed occupation. This allows for more detailed analysis of each household and their true level of economic status based on how many people were dependent on the income of those who were working. Assessing the overall income-per-person in each household is important since a labourer supporting three other persons is clearly better off than a labourer supporting a household of seven, for example. Otherwise, this analysis would not be a real-life approach to the burden faced by those working family-men and women who have more dependent on them for support than their young, newly married or even single neighbours did.

The first challenge that arises in gathering occupational data for each person is the overwhelming number of displaced persons. To look up and record every person living within the boundaries of the 50 streets, estimated to be as high as 32,000 people, is prohibitive. Therefore, a sampling technique of recording at least 30 distinct households on each street within the affected area was employed. On some streets, this represents the total number of people living on that street, where other

streets appear to have 200 households or more. To obtain 30 distinct households per street, over 170 separate census sheets have been transcribed, each containing 25 individual entries, resulting in over 4,250 persons evaluated.[53] Of this number, almost 1,700 individuals had an occupation recorded that could be used toward the overall economic analysis of Agar Town. The reason many of the individuals did not have occupations listed was because they were either young children, scholars (students), or unemployed wives in more comfortable households. Very rarely was any head of household listed without an occupation, and of those, many were older and apparently supported by adult children with whom they lived. Thus, the idea that Agar Town was an area crowded with indolent or idle poor, thereby making it a slum, is certainly not borne out by this sampling. Further, the "official" estimate of 1,180 displaced persons put forth by the Midland Railway Company is clearly a gross underestimate of the actual number affected by the new railway construction.

Overall, looking at the individuals on the 1861 census sheets for Agar Town as a whole, the occupations appear to be typical of a neighbourhood in close proximity to industry and trade. It is striking how apparently "normal" the occupations look. Among this sample population, a number of the more respectable trades are present, notably an accountant, a druggist, some clerks, and even a jeweller. Skilled artisans are also prevalent with trades such as cabinetmakers, fine wood turners and pianoforte makers represented. Among the nearly 1,700 residents with occupations, there are 477 unique occupations listed.[54] However, these 477 can be effectively reduced to 233 occupations as a result of terminological differences used by various census enumerators for the

[53] The transcription of the census page (shown in Figure 1) in the appendix is included in Table 2. Its location on Stanford's 1863 map is shown on the map in Figure 2.
[54] The full list of all 477 different occupations is included as Table 3 in the appendix.

same job, or for different skill levels within the same occupation. For example: a bricklayer, a bricklayer journeyman, and a bricklayer's labourer are all essentially the same occupation, even if they have different pay levels associated with their specific job. It should be noted that while many individual occupations have been aggregated together here for ease of classification and research, the different pay and skill levels within occupations were not disregarded in the final analysis. Within these 233 different occupations, laundry work and general labourers were by far the most common occupations, each having more than double the next most common occupation.[55] Launderers and labourers account for more than 17% of the total employed persons in this sample, a fairly substantial portion of the total considering that the next five largest occupations (servants, boot and shoe makers, rail workers, costermongers, and bricklayers) taken together do not eclipse that percentage. Adding in the next nine largest occupations (artificial flower makers, carpenters, butchers, dress makers, errand boys and messengers, charwomen, wood choppers, carmen, and coal workers) results in 50% of the total sample population being represented. This demonstrates that the majority of jobs are concentrated among just 16 different occupations. In fact, removing the sparsely represented occupations, those with just one or two persons from within the sample engaged in that job, results in 135 occupations being eliminated but only removes 10% of the total jobs reported. Put another way, 90% of the total jobs reported among the near 1,700 person sample are represented within the remaining top 98 occupations.

Having identified the most common occupations, determining the pay rates for each job is the next task. Charles Dickens was only one of many writers who found Victorian social issues of absorbing interest.

[55] See Table 4 in the appendix for the list of 233 occupations and their respective number of persons engaged in each job.

Fortunately, some of these other social explorers recorded extensive detail about what many of their contemporaries may have thought were mundane aspects of everyday life. But to the economic historian, these details bring otherwise flat facts into full-bodied vividness.

London's Social Explorers

In the mid-nineteenth century, many "social explorers" ventured into the world of the poor, which was entirely unknown to the middle and upper classes, to record the details of a seemingly foreign land that existed within their same city. As income disparities widened between the classes, London had become an island of villages as whole districts lost contact with their neighbours.[56] One journalist and social explorer, John Hollingshead, wrote a series of ten letters titled "London Horrors" for the *Morning Post* in 1861. These essays were then serialised, like so many other journalists" work at the time, and compiled into a book following their newspaper printings. In the introduction to his book, *Ragged London*, he wrote of the poor, "How many they really number, what they really profess to be, and in what proportion they may be found in different parts of the metropolis, are secrets that no census has ever fully exposed."[57] Victorian London's social explorers came in many different forms. They included journalists, writers of fiction, the casually curious, quasi-social-scientists, and even politicians. Journalists probably composed the largest group of social explorers. Many of them were commissioned by newspapers to "explore" particular areas or segments of society and write their findings for the papers' faithful readers. One of these social explorers, Charles Dickens, is much better known for his novels and short stories. But as a working journalist all his life, Dickens

[56] Dyos, *The Victorian City,* p. 360.
[57] Hollingshead, *Ragged London*, p. 6-7.

conducted social investigations to illuminate the dark corners of Victorian life. These investigations were a primary influence for his fictional descriptions of London life in the 18th century, and Dickens set many of his stories in neighbourhoods he explored and was familiar with. For example, in 1843 Charles Dickens wrote,

> They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were fowl and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.[58]

Dickens himself grew up in the North-London suburb of Camden Town, set on the north border of Agar Town, which he used as the model for the locations in *A Christmas Carol*.[59] He later described his boyhood community as "shabby, dingy, damp, and mean a neighbourhood as one would desire not to see."[60] While neither of the above descriptions refers directly to Agar Town, the image of Agar Town as a notoriously foul and squalid slum put it in the same mysterious category as the other festering islands of poverty in Victorian London the public wanted to read about.

A lesser known, but just as important, journalistic social explorer was Henry Mayhew. In 1849, *The Morning Chronicle* employed him as the London correspondent in their survey of conditions of the working classes. For a little more than a year, at first twice weekly and then once a week, Mayhew's lengthy articles descended and mingled with the poverty-stricken masses. "He conveyed like no one before him, save

[58] Dickens, *A Christmas Carol,* p.
[59] Dickens, *A December Vision*, p. 14.
[60] Ackroyd, *Dickens,* p. 60.

Dickens, the flavour, smells and very expressions of teeming London."[61] In all, his 83 articles gave the curious middle and upper classes nearly a million words to digest in his effort to illuminate the world of the new industrial poor. In 1850, he left *The Morning Chronicle* and set up his own periodical entitled *London Labour and the London Poor,* a publication he continued for two years. In 1851, Henry Mayhew wrote, "The poor inhabit a separate 'country' which remains to be discovered by the wealthy, and the way of life in that country is so strange that a leap of imagination is required to believe that it even exists."[62] His serialised pieces at his new publication documented a very broad survey of Victorian life and were later compiled into four volumes published in 1861. This massive four-volume compilation, also entitled *London Labour and the London Poor*, is a comprehensive look at the details of daily life contained within approximately 400 verbatim interviews, complete with meticulously compiled statistical tables. His books are a profusion of facts, figures, tables, charts, and statistics.

Although there are certainly a great many similarities in Mayhew's work when compared with Dickens, Hollingshead, and others, what is notable about Mayhew's methods is that wherever possible, he allows the poor to speak for themselves. Where Dickens and others provide imaginative insights and interpretation, Mayhew's work is filled with more facts and less of his own personal reactions. His profiles of people are told strictly in their own words, with little of his own commentary on their circumstances. Mayhew's accounts are quite striking in the austere, unadorned descriptions of the stark reality of life in the streets and poverty in the midst of plenty. It is this factual presentation coupled with Mayhew's attention to detail that makes his works so valuable. Not only did he record the vivid, unsentimental, and impassionate conditions of the

[61] Porter, p. 283.
[62] Keating, *Into Unknown England,* p. 14.

poor, he also detailed the financial want and actual wage levels that led to the poverty, deprivation, and squalor in which the people he interviewed survived. As a complete “anatomist” of the poor, he presented uniquely detailed analyses of their diet, purchasing habits, and paltry capitalism under which they struggled to survive. These financial details are of invaluable importance to this project and the analysis of Agar Town wage levels for specific occupations.

In spite of the incomparable nature of Henry Mayhew’s work among the social explorers of his day, his efforts and detail seem to have been all but forgotten as no subsequent works on poverty make any mention of Henry Mayhew or his work.[63] Mayhew died in July 1887, forgotten and unknown. It was not until the 1950s that Mayhew’s stark descriptions of great poverty in the midst of London’s wealth and plenty were rediscovered. In 1971, Eileen Yeo and E. P. Thompson published *The Unknown Mayhew,* followed soon thereafter by Anne Humphrey’s *Voices of the Poor* putting selections from Mayhew’s original interviews back into print. What has really allowed for unparalleled access to Mayhew’s work was the publication of the original serialised *Morning Chronicle* surveys in 1980. This six-volume set contains the original articles in their entirety and chronological order, rather than the edited versions that contained only about a third of the original content in the four volume *London Labour and the London Poor* published a decade later in 1861. The six volume *Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts* is the backbone to this project and has been the primary source for the wage data used in this analysis. Without Henry Mayhew’s meticulous effort to record every detail obtainable about the poor, their occupations, industries, living conditions, and especially their actual wages, this analysis would not be possible.

[63] Taithe, *The Essential Mayhew*, p. 9.

Procedure

After thoroughly reviewing the hundreds of interviews conducted by Henry Mayhew, earnings can be determined for a good proportion of the people involved in the different occupations present within the Agar Town sample population. In all, reliable wage levels are available for 34 industry groups. While this may not seem like a sufficient volume of data to evaluate the level of poverty within the displaced streets, recall that the occupations are quite concentrated among the population. Thus, of the nearly 1,700 persons with occupations listed, wage data could be determined for more than 1,000 people, or 63% of the total population.[64] With this information, gross income for each working person can be reasonably approximated. Certainly, there would have been some variability among the working wages, and where variations have been identified, those wages have been adjusted according to skill levels or other factors identified as causing the variations.

It should be noted that only gross income is being calculated for this analysis, meaning, the total income earned by a working person before paying for their rent, food, and other expenses. As a result of the high level of unpredictability in these expenses, there is no reliable way to standardise these unavoidable discretionary expenditures. Considering just the variability in rents for example, there existed a wide range depending on house size, location, or condition. In reviewing Henry Mayhew's extensive interviews, the range starts at a low of about one shilling per week and rising to almost 10 shillings for a larger house for a big family on the edge of a nicer neighbourhood. However, for the most part, the poor people he interviewed who gave details about their rent expense reported paying one and a half shillings (1s.6d) to three shillings (3s.). Within the general area of Agar Town, the lowest rents documented were paid by the Irish in Holborn where 1s. to 1s.6d. bought one room,

[64] For the list of occupations, totals and wage data, see Table 5 in the Appendix.

probably without a sink; 2s.6d. to 4s.6d. bought one or two rooms with access to a shared water tap and privy, while 5s. could buy two rooms in a more upscale dwelling.[65] However, a rent of approximately 4s. was about the maximum the working class could afford, which would include most of the people sampled in Agar Town. Certainly there were areas within Agar Town where reported rents indicate the tenants must have been better off than the lower rent areas of the labouring classes. In 1860, the weekly rents reported by tenants living at 10 and 11 Canterbury Place (located at the southern end of Agar Town near the Gas Works) were paying between 4s.6d. and 6s. Therefore, unless extensive research was conducted using whatever available records may be deposited at the Greater London Records Office to determine the house sizes on streets within Agar Town, only very inaccurate ranges could be assumed. Not until 1884 were any broad surveys conducted in greater London to discover the rents paid in various neighbourhoods.[66] Thus, considering gross income in this analysis ensures that each household will be compared equally.

Having gathered the wage data, the next step in the analysis of poverty levels within Agar Town is to calculate the earnings per household. This is done by calculating the total number of persons living within a household that are dependent upon the wage-earner's income. In many households, there are multiple persons working and contributing to the total income earned. Where there is more than one person with an occupation in a household, wage data needs to be available for each worker in order to be considered in this analysis. For example, looking at the census record transcription shown in Table 2 of the Appendix, a shoemaker named James Silverside lived at 19 Brewer Street. From data collected by Henry Mayhew, we know that Mr. Silverside earned

[65] Denford, p. 9.
[66] Gillie, "Origin of the Poverty Line," p. 722.

approximately 6 shillings per week as a regularly employed shoemaker. Of course, stating that he had regular work is another assumption about which we have no information, but to keep every person with an occupation on equal ground, all are assumed to have had a full 6-day work week. Mr. Silverside's mother was a wardrobe shopkeeper and Mary Ann Silverside, who is either James Silverside's wife or sister (the record does not specify), is also employed as a machinist. Unfortunately, there is no specific mention of wardrobe shopkeepers or machinists within Mayhew's interviews. Without knowing how much additional weekly income these two individuals contributed to the total household income, we cannot include the Silverside household in the analysis of poverty within Agar Town.

It seems likely, of course, that there are other contemporary sources that may have provided information about these two occupations as well as any others that are not included in Mayhew's work. However, for the purposes of this analysis and to keep a consistent source, only wage data contained within Henry Mayhew's interviews has been considered. Recognizing the limitations of considering only one source, there are also certain benefits as well. In addition to the simple benefit of having one consistent source, Mayhew completed all *Morning Chronicle Survey* interviews within a two-year time frame, ensuring a high level of uniformity between various data points across interviews.

Looking once again at Table 2 in the Appendix, James Gore, who lived next door to the Silversides at 18 Brewer Street, was also a shoemaker. His wife, Eliza, was an upholsterer for whom we do have wage information from Mayhew's interviews. Therefore, since we have wage data for both persons in this household who are actively employed, they can be included in the analysis to determine the overall economic level of Brewer Street.

After eliminating any household that does not have wage data for each working individual, there are a total of 466 households spread among the 50 displaced streets that can be used to evaluate the overall economic well-being of Agar Town. This results in an average of almost 10 households per street that are being evaluated toward determining that street's economic level. Hence, the importance of originally sampling over 4,250 persons and at least 30 households per street can be seen since more than two-thirds of that original sample has been eliminated because of a lack of wage data for the entire household. Finally, within these 466 households are represented 1,800 persons, both working and non-working, with an average household size of 3.9 persons per household.

Creating the Map

Having compiled the wage data through census records and interviews, the final step is to represent the data visually. To do this, we turn to Charles Booth, another social explorer working a generation apart from Henry Mayhew, but who also endeavoured to document the true economic condition of London's poor. Using an imperialistic analogy similar to Mayhew, Charles Booth asked, "As there is a darkest Africa, is there not also a darkest England?"[67] But unlike Mayhew, who studied the individual poor, Booth set out to study poverty en masse, ascending as if in a balloon to see the complete city simultaneously. Indeed, where Mayhew's value stood in his ability to capture personal stories verbatim of the individual faces of poverty, Booth's value was in counting the individual as a piece of the larger picture. Perhaps Charles Booth's most celebrated accomplishment was the *Descriptive Map of London Poverty* that accompanied and recorded the results of his analysis, coloured

[67] Booth, *In Darkest England*, *intro*.

according to a seven-point scale representing the condition of life on any given street.[68] Creating a map like Booth's for an earlier time in Agar Town requires a thorough understanding of Charles Booth's map, it's accompanying data, his methods for gathering it, and how he measured the poverty he studied.

Beginning in the 1880s, Charles Booth decided to look more closely at the nature of the social problems facing British society because he refused to believe that a million Londoners lived in "great poverty," as radical politicians claimed.[69] Booth began his investigation in 1886 into the conditions and occupations of people living in the East End on a house-to-house basis.[70] In 1889, his investigation expanded to include the rest of the metropolitan area on a street-by-street basis. This is one feature his critics point to as a flaw in his work, that only a small portion of the city was looked at with any level of household detail, while most of London was only surveyed by street. Notwithstanding, the poverty survey was only the first instalment in a monumental three-part investigation, which progressed to study industry, and then eventually religion in the late 1890s. In 1891, Booth published the results of his street-by-street survey of poverty in London as the initial two-volume study called *Labour and Life of the People.* Work on the monumental project lasted until 1903 and resulted in the 17-volume series entitled *Life and Labour of the People of London.*[71]

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[68] The original records from Booth's survey into life and labour in London, dating from 1886-1903 are housed in the archives of the British Library of Political and Economic Science at LSE, including the 450 original survey notebooks, questionnaires, interview notes, police notebooks, and accompanying maps. Much of this information has been digitized and is searchable online at Hhttp://booth.lse.ac.uk/H

[69] Whitehead, *Growth of Camden Town,* p. 70.

[70] See Booth, *Condition and Occupations of the people of the Tower Hamlets 1886-87*

[71] As the study progressed, three different editions of the study were produced: *Labour and Life of the People,* 2 volumes & Appendix (London: 1889-1891), *Life and Labour of the People in London,* 9 volumes & Maps (London: 1892-1897), and *Life and Labour of the People in London,* 17 volumes (London: Macmillan,1902-1903).

Booth's initial house-by-house survey methodology was complex and was likely influenced by his work assisting in the allocation of the Lord Mayor of London's Relief Fund, where he analysed the 1881 census returns to determine how to allocate funds most efficiently. In that capacity, Booth may have also helped design the questionnaires sent to various agencies within the City of London.[72] However, Charles Booth did not have such "hard data" as individually completed surveys when he expanded his poverty inquiry to include all of metropolitan London. Instead, he and his team relied on what they were told by London School Board visitors (the attendance officers) about the occupations of a street, the habits of the people, and the appearance of the houses and occupants. While there is no direct evidence, Booth may have modelled his system of poverty classification on the information received from the School Board.[73]

What made Charles Booth's inquiry revolutionary was his efforts to define and quantify poverty—to create a "poverty line."[74] In one biography about Charles Booth, his biographers went so far as to say, "Booth invented the concept of the poverty line, perhaps his most striking single contribution to the social sciences."[75] While the validity of this statement will not be considered here, what is widely accepted is that Charles Booth never explicitly described why he adopted the particular line of poverty used to divide those "in poverty" and those "in comfort." One author suggests that the notion of a poverty line was not actually invented by Booth, but rather was created by the London School Board as part of its programme for School Board visitors to determine parents' ability to pay for school fees.[76] Regardless, Booth defined the poverty line as the "very

[72] O'Day and Englander, p. 29.
[73] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People,* vol. 1, p. 5.
[74] Fried and Elman, *Charles Booth's London,* p. x.
[75] Simey, *Charles Booth,* p. 88.
[76] See Gillie, "The Origin of the Poverty Line," p. 718.

poor who had an income of 18s. to 21s. a week."[77] His "poverty line" was actually a range, the lower bound of 18 shillings, which separated the "poor" from the "very poor," and an upper bound above which the people struggled but had the reassurance of regular employment. Similarly, the London School Board developed its own poverty lines such that if a family was at a certain income threshold, any school fees over 1d. (pence) per child would be eliminated, and if a family's income was below that income threshold, all fees would be waived altogether, essentially creating two lines with which to evaluate a family's ability to pay. Accepting the hypothesis that Booth took his poverty line from the School Board helps explain why his poverty line was structured with an upper and lower bound.

Critics of Charles Booth have said, "Booth's poverty line…was drawn arbitrarily in relation to ill defined and uncertain income groups and applied inconsistently."[78] However, Edward Buxton, the London School Board's former chairman appropriately argues in relation to their poverty assessment programme, "No machinery that you could possibly invent would enable you to say what each parent is able to pay; and even if you could do so, the circumstances of the parents vary from week to week."[79] Certainly, Booth's failure to specify the exact income level at which a family would pass from one class to another helped keep both his precise methodology concealed but also allowed for some flexibility in evaluation since there could be so numerous variables affecting the level of poverty in a given household. Perhaps the true importance of Booth's work was that it destroyed long-standing myths in unexplored parts of the city and gave solid statistical support to earlier studies of the poverty of London.[80]

In the first volume of the poverty series in *Life and Labour of the*

[77] Booth, *Conditions and Occupations,* p. 394.
[78] Englander, *Retrieved Riches,* p. 124.
[79] Gillie, p. 718.
[80] Dyos, *The Victorian City,* p. 596.

People in London, Charles Booth explains his system of poverty classification. In it, he outlines the categories that form the basis for the eight-tier system of poverty classification he uses.[81] Within these *eight* classifications, differentiated by letters A through H, Booth describes the range of conditions under which the different types of people lived. From the lowest class of street sellers and loafers, which he describes as living a life of extreme hardship, to the upper middle class who would have had servants, the full range of the people of London is represented. From these eight different classifications, Booth derived his *Map Descriptive of London Poverty.*

Without a doubt, one of the most remarkable products of the inquiry were the maps of London showing the level of poverty or wealth according to a seven-point colour code. The first of these maps was produced in 1889, but as the survey progressed, Booth thought the maps should be revisited and a second series was produced in 1898. This second set were based on the observations made by Booth's team of investigators and assistants who accompanied policemen on their beats around London. Acknowledging the quality of Edward Stanford's Library Map series first produced in the 1860s, an updated version of Stanford's map was used by Charles Booth as the base-map for his poverty maps.[82] The colours Booth used ranged symbolically from yellow and red, the colours of wealth and warmth, to blue and black, the colours of cold and darkness. Even though his poverty scale was based on eight different classifications, the poverty maps used just seven colours. The exact correlation between the colours and his established poverty levels is summarised in Table 8.

[81] The descriptions and specific differences between the eight poverty classes are detailed in Table 3 in the Appendix.
[82] Hyde, *Edward Stanford and his Library Map*, p. iii.

In order to create a map to visually represent the poverty within the displaced streets of Agar Town that is comparable to Booth's map, a more accurate estimate of income earned needs to be established for each different colour.[83] To do this, we must dig deeper within Charles Booth's writings to determine exactly what he meant by his "poverty line" definition of 18s. to 21s. In one place, Booth states that he "suggested 18s. to 21s. for a moderate-sized family."[84] However, this still does not fully answer the need for an exact number as we now need a definition for a moderate-sized family. Booth does include his ideas for family size nearby in a footnote saying, "a 'small family' is considered to consist of about four members."[85] But here again we are left to interpret how similar a moderate-sized family is with a small family. To find the exact answer, we must go back to Booth's earliest published work on the East End where he first defined his "line of poverty" for a "moderate" family, the size of which can be found in the reported discussion of his 1887 paper noting, "that the very poor…had an income of 18s. to 20s. a week…with four or five persons in a family."[86] Finally, with that information, we can deduce the income per person for Booth's "poverty line" range, or category C within his poverty classification system (see Table 3). Figuring an income per person per week of approximately 4s. at the poverty line, we can infer the amounts for the other classification levels and then begin to extrapolate that same scale back to the data gathered for the streets of Agar Town.

With this final detail, a coloured map using the same general colours as Charles Booth's map is possible. One change that I have made is to add a light purple colour so that each poverty level has its own

[83] Figure 3 in the Appendix is a detailed image from Booth's *Descriptive Map,* showing the St. Pancras area. A present-day map of the same detailed area is shown in Figure 4.
[84] Booth, *Life,* vol. 9, p. 5.
[85] Booth, *Life,* vol 9, p. 14, footnotes
[86] Quoted in Booth, "Condition," p. 394.

unique colour, instead of combining levels D and E as Charles Booth did (see Table 4 in the Appendix). The completed maps of Agar Town poverty can be seen in the Appendix.

Conclusion

Looking at the completed Agar Town map, it is clear that Agar Town was not the unequivocal shantytown housing nothing but tenants of extreme poverty that was the common perception by Victorian writers. That false idea continues to be perpetuated by unquestioning writers. For example, from a recent history of Camden Town under an alleged pencil sketch of Agar Town, we read,

> Property of this type would have been marked in dark blue and black on Booth's map. However, Agar Town was demolished in the 1860s to create railway yards and gasholder sites, so it would not have been shown on the Booth map in 1889.[87]

As the map created here clearly shows, there is much more variety and complexity to the lost streets of Agar Town than this writer assumes. While it may have been a morass of mud, and fetid with disease in some places at certain times, painting the whole area of Agar Town with such a broad brush does a great injustice to the many hard-working people living there, especially those of a higher, skilled class that also made Agar Town home.

Notably, pianoforte makers figure quite prominently among the sampled residents for this study. The manufacturing in this highly skilled trade was centred in Camden Town to the north of Agar Town.[88] Regent's Canal could be used to haul bulk timber to the piano factories and then

[87] Whitehead, *Growth of Camden Town,* p. 75.
[88] Whitehead, p. 55.

the cumbersome finished pianos could be shipped back down the canal and either loaded onto one of the nearby rail heads at Euston or King's Cross, or taken to the docks to be shipped anywhere in the world. Among the sampled workers in Agar Town, 21 are pianoforte makers, with an additional nine persons who were French polishers, which was a component of the piano making industry. In addition, there were many other skilled tradesmen including carpenters, cabinetmakers, fine wood turners, even a family of math instrument makers on Perry Street. There was a portrait painter, pyrotechnic artist, and even a British Museum attendant all living in Agar Town. While these may not have been as skilled or highly paid positions as some of the other trades, this variety clearly points to a much more dynamic neighbourhood than has been assumed.

Amid all the negative aspects pointed out by the Victorian social explorers, Agar Town did have its benefits. Hollingshead noted that the air was surprisingly pure, and that the neighbourhood was so poor that even thieves and prostitutes didn't bother to operate there. Its problems were simply dirt, overcrowding, and intemperance.[89] It is worth noting that the overcrowding at the root of Agar Town's problems was the fault of the poor town planning of its upper class landlords. Hollingshead also described the upper portion of Agar Town as composed chiefly of "hard-working mechanics and railway men—the houses were not hovels, but like those in railway towns."[90] Indeed, looking at the map, this appears to be true with some of the streets represented by higher classes of workers and with more income per person.

Whether Agar Town was a slum is not really the most important point to prove. Rather, it seems quite clear that it was *not as bad* a slum as the literature would lead the modern reader to believe. The existence

[89] Hollingshead, p. 137.
[90] Hollingshead, p. 133.

of slums was a result of many different factors, but chief among them was overcrowding as a result of urbanization. The opportunities of the city, and the chance for new-found wealth attained either legitimately by labour or illegitimately by crime, attracted to cities not only the population of the rural districts, but also the inhabitants of less-favoured towns and even foreign countries. With the lack of affordable housing for many of these new entrants into London, they were forced to crowd into already overpopulated areas. Given this overcrowding, slums became sources of infectious diseases like cholera, and as sources of criminality. Slums thus threatened the non-slum population of surrounding areas.

Clearing out the slums was a typical political plan of action in Victorian London. One of the problems inherent in the policies of slum clearance was that the very identity of a slum was imposed on its inhabitants by outsiders. In his foreword to Booth's works, Raymond Williams noted:

> The idea of poverty is itself a social construction. To say that a man is poor is to make a comparison, and therefore to indicate, for acceptance or rejection, a relationship between him and others, or between him and ourselves… . Poverty is a comparative estimate, in the light of the experience of others, or of ourselves.[91]

The social consequences of slum clearance and housing demolitions are not hard to imagine. It is important to note that clearance often made the situation worse by reducing the amount of cheap, slum housing, thereby forcing up rents for the slums that remained, or displacing the slum dwellers into neighbouring areas that would then become slums themselves. For almost all those displaced, these evictions meant a change for the worse—higher rents and less room.[92]

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[91] Fried and Elman ed., *Charles Booth's London*, p. ix-x.
[92] Dyos, "Railways," p. 15

In 1866, the year Agar Town disappeared, Charles Dickens' weekly magazine, *All the Year Round,* highlighted some of the effects of these demolitions:

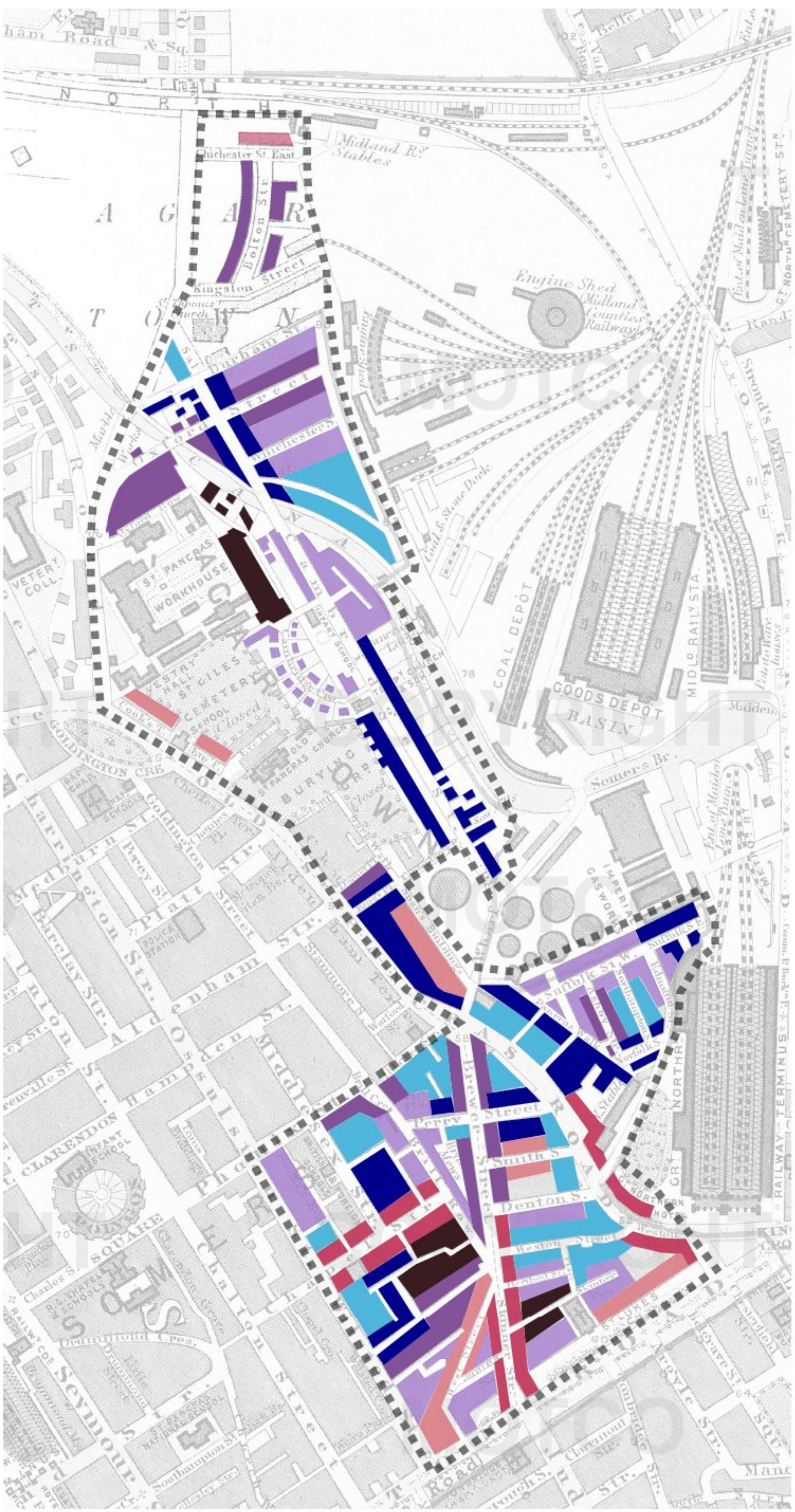
> Pigsties, dung-heaps, dogs, children, and costermongers' refuse, jammed together into a heterogeneous and inextricably confused mass….[But] standing with your back to the entrance of any of these courts, you look far away across the line of railway over a vast and desolate waste.[93]

Perhaps, as Dickens suggests, Agar Town was merely a product of its environment, hopelessly trapped between Euston Station and King's Cross, with Regent's Canal and the Gas Works, adding further insult to its handicapped position within the city of London. Unfortunately, Victorian writing on the poor could be very impersonal. Many reported merely facts rather than conveying the emotional experiences of the people they were reporting on. There were many pamphlets filled with statistical tables, but very rarely (if ever) does the reader find the human details that no doubt existed. In Agar Town as much as anywhere, there were families, friendships, and feelings of home amid the challenges of living within overcrowded, substandard housing, trying daily to avoid the extreme hardships that could be just around the next corner. The worst hardship eventually came for all of Agar Town in 1866.

[93] *All the Year Round,* XV (1866), p. 466.

Key to map:

- black (poorest)
- dark blue
- light blue
- lavender
- purple
- pink
- red (most affluent)
- boundary of St Pancras site



A Map of Agar Town, shaded according to Booth's *Descriptive Map of London Poverty* (1863 Stanford map copyright Motco.com). Reconstructed detail highlighted.

Key to map:

black (poorest)

dark blue

light blue

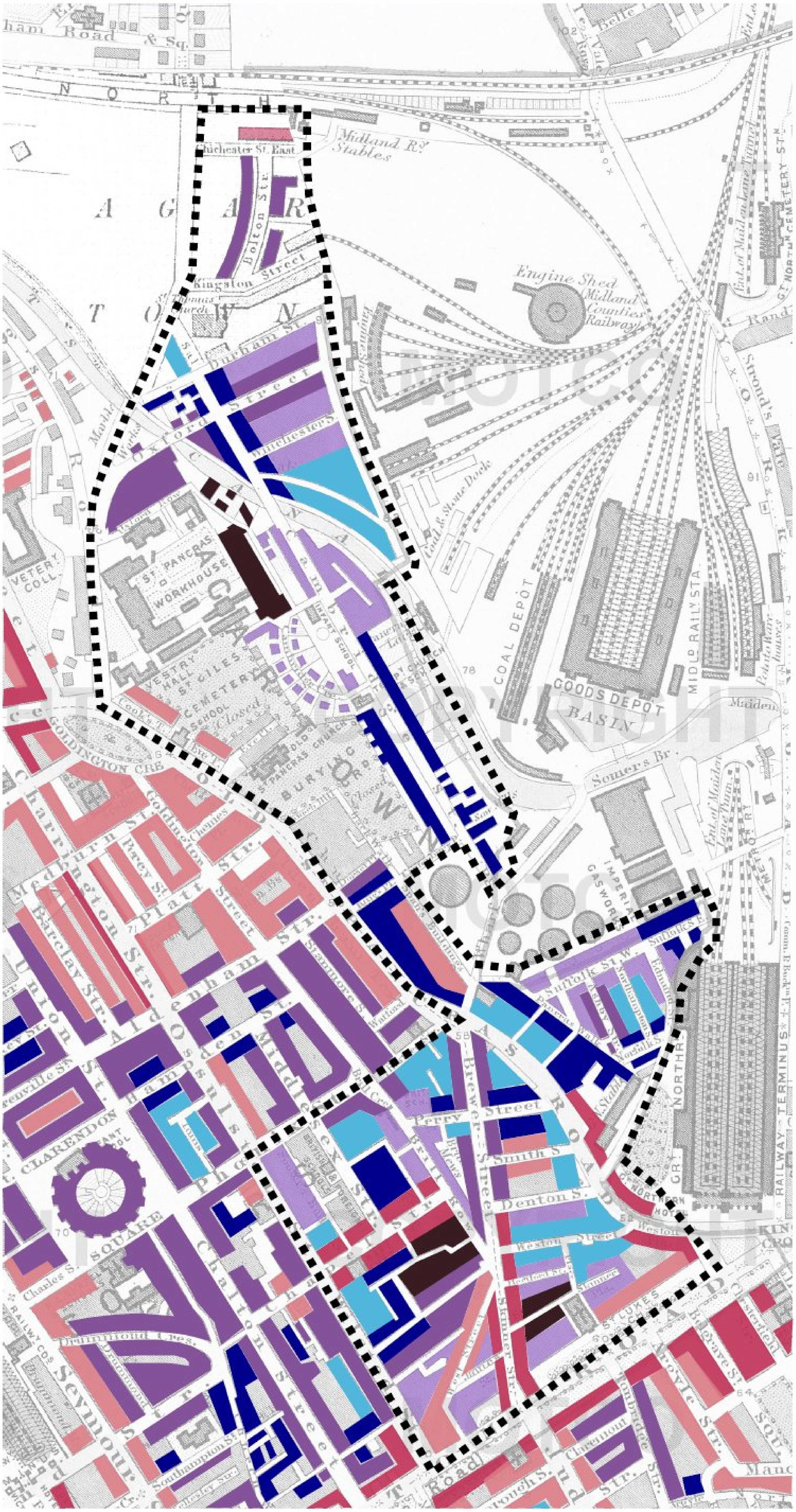
lavender

purple

pink

red (most affluent)

boundary of St Pancras site



A Map of Agar Town, shaded according to Booth's *Descriptive Map of London Poverty* (1863 Stanford map copyright Motco.com)

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Appendix

Table 1

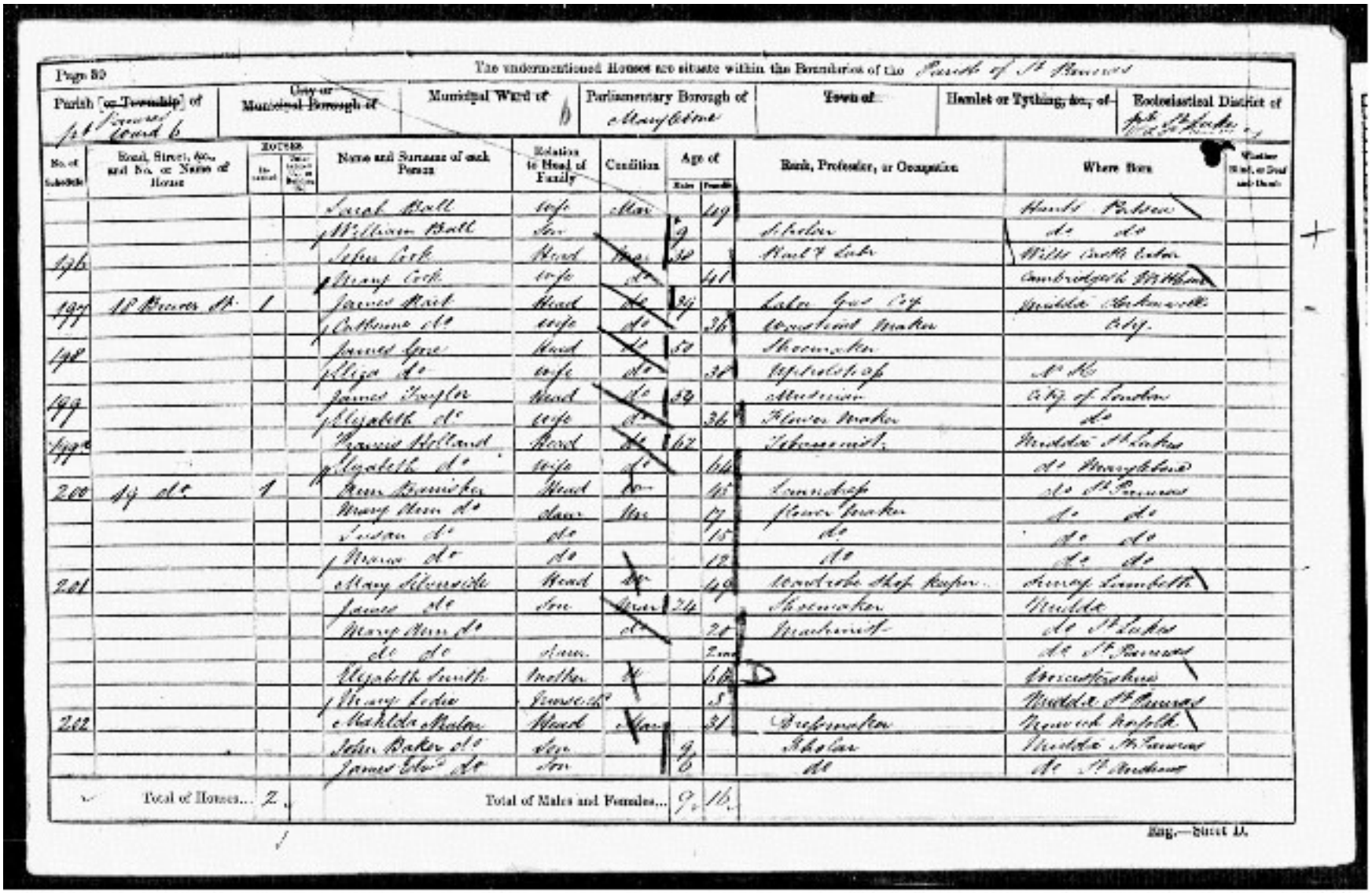
These 50 streets that have since vanished as a result of the Midland Railway developments in Agar Town and Somers Town can be identified on either Cassell's map of 1862 or Stanford's Library map of 1863. There are in fact at least 4 additional streets that can be identified on the maps, however, they cannot be identified within the 1861 census records so they are not included in this economic analysis of overall poverty.

Ashby	Norfolk
Bolton	Northampton
Brewer	Northams Buildings
Brill Crescent	Oxford
Brill Place	Pancras Walk
Brill Row	Perry Street
Cambridge Crescent	Perry Terrace
Cambridge Row	Phillips Buildings
Cambridge	Platt Terrace
Canterbury Place	Salisbury
Chapel Street	Salisbury Crescent
Chichester St. East	Skinner
Church Hill	Skinner Place
Denton	Smith
Denton Buildings	Smith Place
Dorset Place	Spanns Buildings
Durham	Spans Place
Edmund	Suffolk Street East
Elstree Street	Suffolk Street West
Hertford	Upper Cambridge
Hertford Place	West Street
Isaacs Place	Weston/Western
James Street	Weston/Western Place
Kings Place	Wharf
Kingston	Winchester

Figure 1

The microfilmed image on the following page is a sample sheet from the 1861 census, showing residents of 17-19 Brewer Street, in the parish of St. Pancras. Enumeration forms were distributed to all households a couple of days before census night and the complete forms were collected the next day. All responses were to reflect the individual's status as of 7 April 1861 for all individuals who had spent the night in the house. People who were travelling or living abroad were enumerated at the location where they spent the night on census night, usually listed as ‘visitor.’ All of the details from the individual forms were later sorted and copied into enumerators' books, which are the records we can view images of today.

The clerks who compiled and reviewed the census data made a variety of marks on the returns. Unfortunately, many of these tally marks were written over personal information and some fields, such as ages, can be difficult to read as a result. More useful marks include a single slash between households within a building and a double slash separating households in separate buildings.



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The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the Parish of St Pancras

Parish [or Township] of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecclesiastical District of
St Pancras Ward 6		b	Marylebone			St Pancras

No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House	Houses: Uninhabited	Houses: Building	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of: Males	Age of: Females	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb
				Sarah Ball	Wife	Mar		49		Hants Portsea	
				William Ball	Son		9		Scholar	do do	
196				John Cook	Head	Mar	32		Rail Way Labr	Wilts Castle Eaton	
				Mary Cook	Wife	Mar		41		Cambridgesh Whittlesea	
197	12 Brewer St	1		James Rait	Head	Mar	39		Labr Gas Co	Middlesex Hammersmith	
				Catherine do	Wife	Mar		36	Worsted Maker	City	
198				James Gore	Head	Mar	52		Shoemaker		
				Eliza do	Wife	Mar		38	Upholstress	St Pancras	
199				James Taylor	Head	Mar	39		Musician	City of London	
				Elizabeth do	Wife	Mar		36	Flower Maker	do	
199a				Francis Holland	Head	Mar	62		Tobacconist	Middlesex Islington	
				Elizabeth do	Wife	Mar		66		do Hampstead	
200	49 do	1		Wm Bennister	Head	Mar		46	Lamplighter	do St Pancras	
				Mary Ann do	Daur	Mar		17	Flower Maker	do do	
				Susan do	do			15	do	do do	
				Maria do	do			12	do	do do	
201				Mary Ellenside	Head	Wid		49	Wardrobe Shop Keeper	Surrey Lambeth	
				James do	Son	Unm	24		Shoemaker	Middlx	
				Mary Ann do		Mar		20	Dressmaker	do Islington	
				do do	Daur			2mo		do St Pancras	
				Elizabeth Smith	Mother	Wid		66	D	Worcestershire	
				Mary Leslie	Servant			51		Middlx St Pancras	
202				Mathilda Mahon	Head	Mar		31	Professor	Norwich Norfolk	
				John Baker do	Son		9		Scholar	Middlx St Pancras	
				James Edwd do	Son		6		do	do St Marylebone	
	Total of Houses... 2			Total of Males and Females...			9	16			

Eng.—Sheet D.

Table 2

Author's transcription of 1861 census record sheet from 17-19 Brewer Street as shown in Figure 1. The column House Size has been added to calculate and track how many individuals were living within a given household and will be used later to determine income per person. Note: not all information from the original census records was deemed necessary for this analysis so some columns, including marital status and place of birth, were not recorded.

Street No.	Street Name	Name (approx)	Relation	Age M	Age F	Occupation	House Size
17	Brewer Street	Sarah Ball	Wife		49	n/a	
17	Brewer Street	William Ball	Son	9		Scholar	
17	Brewer Street	John Cook	Head	38		Railyard Labourer	2
17	Brewer Street	Mary Cook	Wife		41	n/a	
18	Brewer Street	James Rait	Head	39		Labourer Gas Co	2
18	Brewer Street	Catherine Rait	Wife		36	Waistcoat Maker	
18	Brewer Street	James Gore	Head	50		Shoemaker	2
18	Brewer Street	Eliza Gore	Wife		38	Upholsterer	
18	Brewer Street	James Faylor	Head	54		Musician	2
18	Brewer Street	Elizabeth Faylor	Wife		36	Flower maker	
18	Brewer Street	Francis Holland	Head	62		Tobacconist	2
18	Brewer Street	Elizabeth Holland	Wife		64	n/a	
19	Brewer Street	Ann Banister	Head		45	Laundress	4
19	Brewer Street	Mary Ann Banisker	Daughter		17	Flower maker	
19	Brewer Street	Susan Banisker	Daughter		15	Flower maker	
19	Brewer Street	Maria Banisker	Daughter		12	Flower maker	
19	Brewer Street	Mary Silverside	Head		49	Wardrobe Shopkeeper	6
19	Brewer Street	James Silverside	Son	24		Shoemaker	
19	Brewer Street	Mary Ann Silverside	n/a		20	Machinist	
19	Brewer Street	Mary Ann Siverside	Daughter		2	n/a	
19	Brewer Street	Elizabeth Smith	Mother		66	n/a	
19	Brewer Street	Mary Lodie	Nurse Child		3	n/a	
19	Brewer Street	Matilda Nealon	Head		31	Dress Maker	4
19	Brewer Street	John Baker Nealon	Son	9		Scholar	
19	Brewer Street	James Edward Nealon	Son	6		Scholar	

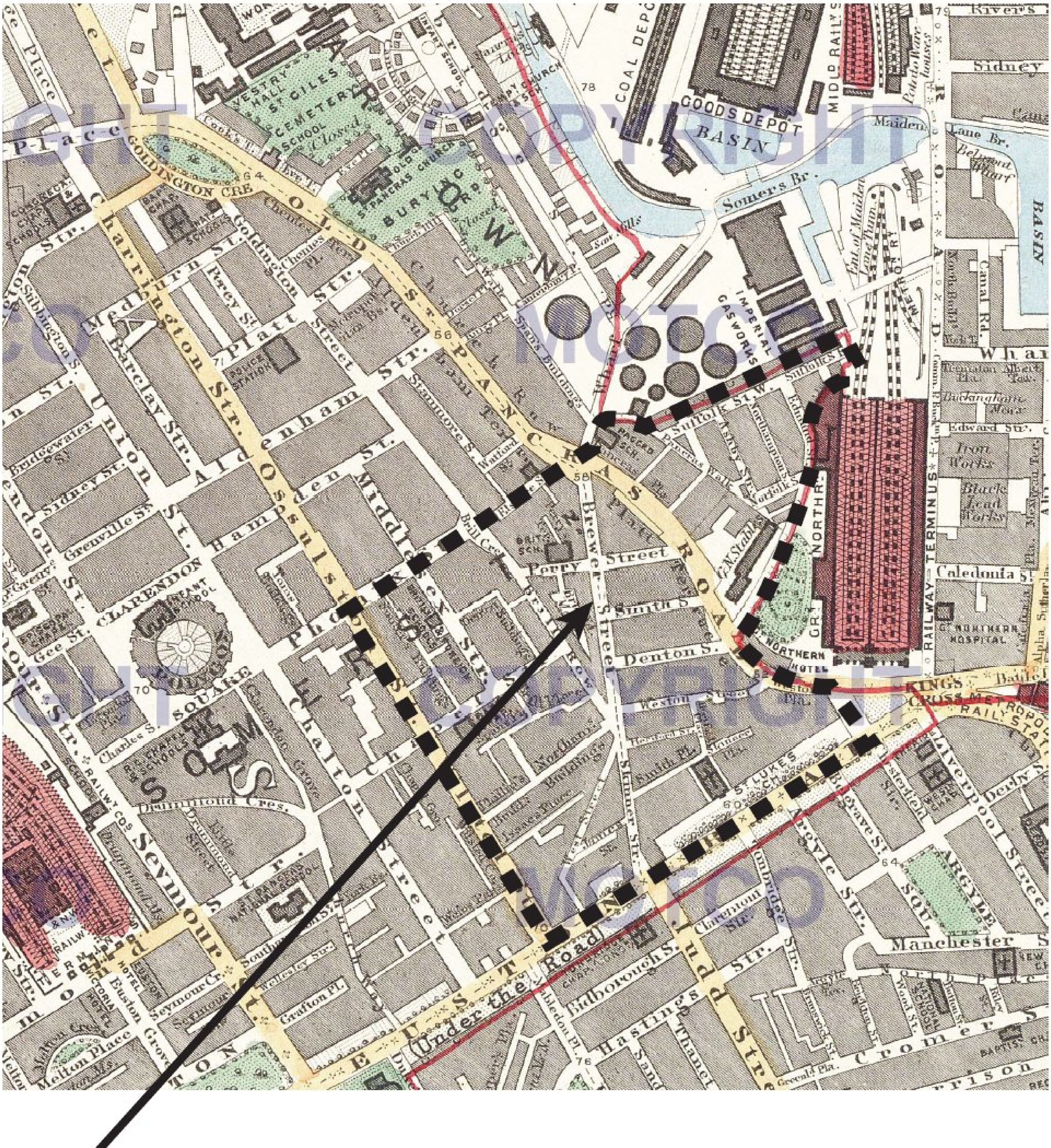


Figure 2: Detail of Stanford's 1863 Library Map of London. Boxed area shows approximate area displaced by future St. Pancras Railway Station. Arrow indicates Brewer Street, the street featured in the census records referenced in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Table 3

These 477 occupations represent the total unique jobs contained among the 1,667 persons listed in the sample with a stated occupation.

Accountant	Annuitant	Apprentice to __Maker	Artificial flowermaker
Assistant	Assistant to father	B. Lead Boy	Baker
Baker Journeyman	Baker's Shopwoman	Barmaid	Barman
Barman Widow	Battle Dealer	Bedstead, and Cabinet Maker	Beer Maker (Ginger)
Beer Retailer	Bell Hanger	Bible Mission	Bill Hanger&GasFilter
Bird Catcher	Bird Dealer	Blacksmith	Blacksmith Journeyman
Bleach Mill	Blindmaker	Boilermaker	Book Binder
Book Closer	Book Folder	Book Sewer	Book&Shoemaker
Bookseller	Bookseller's Assistant	Boot & Shoemaker (Master)	Boot and Shoemaker
Boot Binder	Boot Closer	Boot Maker	Braider
Brass Finisher	Brass Turner	Brewer	Brewer's Servant
Bricklayer	Bricklayer Journeyman	Bricklayers Labourer	Brickmaker
British Museum Atten	Brush Drawer	Brushmaker	Brushmaker (Master)
Bugle Worker	Builder	Builder employs 3	Builder's Journeymn
Builder's Labourer	Butcher	Butcher - Pork	Butcher Shopman
Butcher's Apprentice	Butcher's Journeyman	Butcher's labourer	Button Maker
Cab Driver	Cab Proprietor	Cabinet Maker	Cabman
Canister Maker	Capt. 1st Life Guards	Carman	Carman Journeyman
Carpenter	Carpenter & Joiner	Carpenter and Engine Driver	Carpenter Journeyman
Carter	Carter Guard	Cartridge Maker	Carver
Carver & Gilder	Chair Caner	Chair, Sofa and Cabinet Maker	Chairmaker
Chandler's Shop	Charwoman	Cheesemonger	Cheesemonger Journeymn
Cheesemonger's App	Chef's Keeper	Chelsea Pensioner	Chelsea Pensioner (Lab)
Chemist	Chemist Apothecary	Chimney Sweep	Cigar Maker
Cigar Maker Journeyman	Clay Modeller	clerk	Clerk Office
Clog Maker	Clog&WoodenShoemak	Clothier Master	Coach Joiner Journeyman
Coachmaker	Coachmaker Journeyman	Coachman	Coachsmith
Coal Agent	Coal Dealer	Coal Heaver	Coal Laborer
Coal Porter	Coalyard Labourer	Coffee Roaster	Coffeehouse Assistant
Coffeehouse Keeper	Coke Dealer	Colour and Varnish Maker	Commercial Traveller
Commission Agent	Compositor	Compositor Apprent.	Confection Journeyman
Confectioner	Constable	Cook	Cook (Formerly)
Cooper	Cord Wainer	Cork Cutter	Costermonger
Courier	Cow Keeper	Dairy	Dairyman
Dealer	Diary woman	Distiller's Servant3	Domestic
Domestic Servant	Draper	Draper Assistant	Draper Shopowner
Draper, Employs 1	Draper's apprentice	Draper's Shopman	Dress Maker
Druggist's Assist	Dust Sifter	Dyer	Dyer Master
Dyer-Bonnet	Embroiderer	Engine Cleaner	Engine Driver
Engine Driver Gas co	Engine Driver-Leadwks	Engine Fitter	Engine Smith
Engineer	Engineer's Labourer	Envelope Black Borderer	Envelope Folder
Errand Boy	Excavator	Excavator Labourer	Factory Labourer
Factorygirl Labourer	Farm Labourer's Widow	Farmer's Daughter	Farmer's labourer
Farmer's Wife	Farrier	Farrier Journeyman	File Cutter
Fine Wood Cutter	Fish Monger	Fish Worker	Fishmonger Assist.
Fitter	Florist	Framer	French Polisher
French Polisher Journeyman	Fund Holder	Gardener	Gardener (Market)
Gas Filter	Gas Fitter	Gas Lighter Gas Co	General Assistant
General Dealer	General Dealer (Marine	General	General

	Store)	Dealer(MarineStore)	Dealer(PotatoShop)
Gentleman	Gentlewoman	Gilder	Glass Cutter
Glass Engraver	Glass Grinder	Goldsmith	Goldsmith Smelter
Governess	Governess Assistant	Grease Melter	Greengrocer
Greengrocer & Porter	Grocer	Grocer Assistant	Grocer's Apprentice
Groom	Ground Digger	Ground Labourer	Hackney Driver
Hair Frigette Weaver	Hair Worker (Fancy)	Hairdresser	Hairdresser Apprent.
Hatmaker	Hawker	Hawker (Street)	Horse Keeper
Horse Slaughter	Horse Slaughterer	Horsehair Drainer/Drawer	Hosier
Hosier's Assistant	Hotel Waiter	House Decorator	House Holder
House Joiner	House Proprietor	Housekeeper	Imitator of Words
Invalid	Iron Founder	Iron Foundry Master	Iron Trade Labourer
Ironer	Ironmonger	Ironplate Maker	Jeweller
Jobber	Journeyman to father	Labourer	Labourer (general)
Labourer Gas Co	Labourer Lead wks	Labourer-Dust	Labourer-Ferrier's
Labourer-Ground	Labourer's wife	Labourer-Smith's	Ladies Shoe Maker
Landed Proprietor	lath render	Laundress	Laundress Assistant
Laundress Mangler	Laundress/Mangler	Laundreyman	Laundry Foreman
Laundry Forewoman	Laundry Master	Leaseholder	Letter Carrier
Light Porter	Line worker	Lithographer	Locksmith
Machine Worker at Saw Mills	Machinist	Map Warehouseman	Mason's Labourer
Match Maker	Math. Instrument Mkr	Messenger	Miliner
Milk Dealer	Milkman	Milkwoman	Milliner
Milliner & Dress Maker	Miner	Modeler Fancy	music manufactory
Musician	Musician's Wife	Muslin Stamper	n/a (wife)
Needlewoman	Needleworker	Nurse	Nurse (Monthly)
nursemaid	Office Keeper	Oil & Color Man	Oilman
Omnibus Driver	Organ Builder	Ostler	Packer
Painter	Painter & Gen'l Dealer	Painter (House)	Painter (Master)
Painter and Glazier	Painter Journeyman	Paper Colourer	Paper Folder&Cutter
Paper Hanger	Paperbag Maker	Parior	Pawnbroker
Pencil Maker	Pensioner	Pensioner (Goldsmith)	Perfumer
Pewterer	Piano Forte Finisher	Piano Forte Maker	Piano Fortemaker Journeyman
Picture Frame Maker	Pipe Maker	Plasterer	Plasterer Journeyman
Plate Engraver	Plumber	Pocket Book Maker	Poleman
Police Constable	Pork Butcher	Pork Butcher assist.	Pork Cutler
Porter	Porter (Jobbing)	Porter for Laundress	Portman Maker
Portrait Painter	Post Lettercarrier	Potatoe Salesman	Printer
Printer & Compositor	printer journeyman	Printer Overseer	Printer's Boy
Printer's Compositor	Printer's labourer	Printer's Pressman	Printer's Warehousmn
Publican	Purveyor of Calfs Meat	Pyrotechnic Artist	Rail Signal Fitter
Railway Clerk	Railway Engineer	Railway Foreman	Railway Guard
Railway Labourer	Railway Lamplighter	Railway Lampmaker	Railway Miner
Railway Officeman	Railway Police Constable	Railway Policeman	Railway Porter
Railyard Labourer	Ropemaker	Sailor Merchant Services	Salesman (brush)
Saw Maker	Sawyer	Scholar	School Mistress
School Mistress (Math)	School Teacher of Classics	Scripture Reader	Seamen Royal Navy
Seamstress	Seemstress	Servant	Servant Butler
Servant Domestic	Servant Maid	Servant to Parents	Sheet Hawker
Ship Carpenter	Shirt Maker	Shoe binder	Shoe Closer
Shoeblack	Shoemaker	Shoemaker Apprentice	Shoemaker Journeyman
Shop Boy	ShopKeeper	Shopman	Shopman Smelter
Shopwoman	Shrimps Salesman	Sign Writer	Signalman
Silk Hat Finisher	Silver Chaser	Silver Plater	Silversmith
Silversmith's Appr.	Smelter	Smith	Smith & Bell Hanger
Smith & Ferrier	Smith and Gas Filter	Soldier's Wife	Stableman
Stableman Labourer	Stationer	Stationer (Fancy)	Stationer's Assistant
Stationer's Porter	Stationer's Warehousemn	Steward	Stone Sawyer
Stonemason	Stonemason Apprentice	Stonemason Journeyman	Storekeeper

SugarBoiler Journeyman	Surveyor	Sweep	Tailor
Tailor Journeyman	Tailor Slop Cutter	Tailoress	Tailor's Widow
Theatrical Carpenter	Timber Bender	Timber Merchant	Tin Plate Worker
Tinman	Tobacco Paper Maker	Tobacconist	Tripe Dresser
Trunk & Packing Case Maker	Turner	Type Torinder	Upholsterer
Valet	Van Guard	Vegetable Blockmstr	Victualler
Victualler (Licensed)	Victualler's Assist.	Waistcoat Maker	Waiter
Ward Clerk	Wardrobe Dealer	Wardrobe Seller	Wardrobe Shopkeeper
Warehouseman	Watchcase Maker	Watchcase Maker (Gold)	Watchmaker
Wax Modler	Well Sinker	Wheelwright	Wheelwright&Smith
Whitesmith	Wine Cooper	Wire __ Maker	Wire Drawer
Wire Worker	Wood Bundler	Wood Carver	Wood Chopper
Wood Cutter	Wood Sawyer	Wood Turner	

Table 4

From the original list of 477 occupations in Table 3, this list of 233 is summarised by industry, grouping similar jobs together to more accurately assess the total number of persons involved in a given occupation. Total persons from the sampled 1,667 persons with occupations in the displaced area that are engaged in each occupation or industry are also shown.

Summarised and Sorted	Total	Summarised and Sorted	Total	Summarised and Sorted	Total
Laundry workers	148	Governess	4	Coke Dealer	1
Labourers	139	Grooms	4	Color and Varnish Maker	1
Servants	69	Hatmakers	4	Commission Agent	1
Boot & Shoe makers	66	Plumbers	4	Courier	1
Rail Workers	49	Silver workers	4	Dealer	1
Costermongers	45	Tobacco workers	4	File Cutter	1
Bricklayers	43	Victuallers	4	Fine Wood Cutter	1
Artificial flower makers	38	Bird industry	3	Fitter	1
Carpenters	36	Blindmakers	3	Florist	1
Butchers	33	Cabmen	3	Gas Fitter	1
Dress Makers	33	Commercial Travellers	3	Gas Lighter Gas Co	1
Errands & Messengers	31	Confectioners	3	Gentleman	1
Charwoman	28	Match Makers	3	Gentlewoman	1
Wood workers	28	Math. Instrument Makers	3	Grease Melter	1
Carman	27	Pariors	3	Ground Digger	1
Coal workers	25	Pawnbrokers	3	Ground Labourer	1
Brush workers	24	Tin workers	3	House Decorator	1
Painters	24	Van Guard workers	3	House Holder	1
Porters	23	Waistcoat Makers	3	House Joiner	1
Piano manufactory	22	Watch industry	3	Imitator of Words	1
Needlewomen	22	Assistants to father	2	Invalid	1
General Dealers	21	B. Lead Boys	2	Jeweller	1
Grocers	19	Cartridge Makers	2	Journeyman to father	1
Tailors	18	Carvers	2	Landed Proprietor	1
Milliners	17	Chemists	2	lath render	1
Coach workers	15	Chimney Sweeps	2	Leaseholder	1
Bakers	14	Clerks	2	Letter Carrier	1
Engine workers	14	Compositors	2	Light Porter	1
Book industry	13	Constables	2	Line worker	1
Plasterers	13	Coopers	2	Lithographer	1
Printers	13	Cork Cutters	2	Machine Worker - Saw Mills	1
Bar and Beer workers	12	Druggist's Assistants	2	Map Warehouseman	1
Cabinet Makers	12	Embroiderers	2	Modeler Fancy	1
Hotel Waiters	12	Envelope workers	2	Musician's Wife	1
Stone workers	12	Factory workers	2	Muslin Stamper	1
Dairy workers	11	Framers	2	Office Keeper	1
Seamstresses	11	Fund Holders	2	Oil & Color Man	1
Hair workers	10	Gas Filters	2	Oilman	1
Nurses	10	Gilders	2	Perfumer	1
Cabs/Bus workers	9	Hosiers	2	Pewterer	1
Excavators	9	House Proprietors	2	Picture Frame Maker	1
Ironers	9	Jobbers	2	Plate Engraver	1
Drapers	8	Locksmiths	2	Pocket Book Maker	1
French Polishers	8	Machinists	2	Poleman	1
Horse workers	8	Mason's Labourers	2	Portman Maker	1
Upholsterers	8	Miners	2	Portrait Painter	1
Gardeners	7	Musicians	2	Potatoe Salesman	1
Shop Keepers	7	Pencil Makers	2	Pyrotechnic Artist	1

Smiths	7	Pipe Makers	2	Ropemaker	1
Stationers	7	Police Constables	2	Sailor Merchant Services	1
Blacksmiths	6	Post Letter carriers	2	Saw Maker	1
Engineers	6	Publicans	2	Sawyer	1
Goldsmiths	6	Purveyors of Calves Meat	2	Scripture Reader	1
Iron workers	6	Trunk & Packing Case Makers	2	Seamen Royal Navy	1
Paper workers	6	Wheelwrights	2	Ship Carpenter	1
School workers	6	? Clicker	1	Shrimps Salesman	1
Whitesmiths	6	Accountant	1	Sign Writer	1
Wire workers	6	Annuitant	1	Signalman	1
Brass workers	5	Apprentice to __Maker	1	Silk Hat Finisher	1
Chelsea Pensioners	5	Assistant	1	Smelter	1
Cigar industry	5	Battle Dealer	1	Soldier's Wife	1
Cooks	5	Bedstead, and Cabinet Maker	1	Steward	1
Cord Wainers	5	Bell Hanger	1	SugarBoiler Journeyman	1
Dyers	5	Bible Mission	1	Surveyor	1
Farriers	5	Bill Hanger&GasFilter	1	Theatrical Carpenter	1
Housekeepers	5	Bleach Mill	1	Timber Bender	1
Shirt Makers	5	Boilermaker	1	Timber Merchant	1
Stablemen	5	Braider	1	Tripe Dresser	1
Wardrobe industry	5	Brickmaker	1	Turner	1
Builders	4	British Museum Atten	1	Type Torinder	1
Carters	4	Bugle Worker	1	Valet	1
Chair industry	4	Button Maker	1	Vegetable Blockmstr	1
Cheesemongers	4	Canister Maker	1	Ward Clerk	1
Coffee workers	4	Capt. 1st Life Guards	1	Warehouseman	1
Dust Sifters	4	Chandler's Shop	1	Wax Modler	1
Farm workers	4	Chef's Keeper	1	Well Sinker	1
Fish industry	4	Clay Modeller	1	Wine Cooper	1
Glass workers	4	Clothier Master	1		

Table 5

Among the 1,667 persons from the sample population with a stated occupation, a total of 1,043 are working within these 34 occupations. Wage data from Henry Mayhew's *Morning Chronicle Survey* interviews is also listed. Ranges in the wage data refer to either different job titles or skill levels within each summarized occupation.

Occupations (Summarized)	**Total**	**Wage Data**
Laundry workers	148	7.5
Labourers	139	8
Servants	69	3
Boot & Shoe makers	66	3 to 17
Rail workers	49	11
Costermongers	45	13
Bricklayers	43	13
Artificial flower makers	38	5
Carpenters	36	12 to 30
Butchers	33	36
Dress Makers	33	8
Errands & Messengers	31	5
Charwomen	28	2
Wood workers	28	8 to 23
Carmen	27	12
Coal workers	25	21
Painters	24	18
Porters	23	9
Needlewomen	22	4
General Dealers	21	24
Grocers	19	12
Tailors	18	14 to 24
Milliners	17	7
Coach workers	15	16
Cabinet Makers	12	30
Gardeners	7	11
Stablemen	5	15
Chair industry	4	30
Coffee workers	4	20
Fish industry	4	15
Bird industry	3	8
Waistcoat Makers	3	12
Clerks	2	25
Musicians	2	6
Total	**1043**	

Sources: Henry Mayhew. *The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts.* In 6 volumes. Edited by Peter Razzell. Horsham, Sussex, 1982.

Table 6

From these five districts (chosen to illustrate the different street colours eventually assigned by Booth), it can be seen what type of information Booth and his researchers received from the School Board visitors. The 'type of housing' and 'people' were recorded by the different School Board officials based on their familiarity with a given street or district. The 'classification of children' was used by the School Board to represent how many children lived in a given district in various levels of poverty, as denoted by the letter next to the number of children. It is likely that Booth used this methodology to formulate his 'poverty line' assessment for each street he studied. He would then assign a given street colour to that street according to the observation and description received from the School Board.

District	***Street Colour***	***Type of Housing***	***People***	***Classification (of children)***
Chelsea	Blue to Black	10 rooms, unsanitary, damp	Crowded, poverty stricken, lurchers, never pay rent	40A 150B 80C 29D
Westminster	Dark Blue	4 room cottages, dirty, bad lot	Casual Poor	20B 9C
Marylebone	Light Blue	4 to 6 rooms	Labouring class, poorer	9C 27D
Finsbury	Purple	2 to 8 rooms, let in tenements	Struggling poor, mostly casual, a few in regular work	100B 35C 25D 40E 31F
East Lambeth	Pink	2 Families in each	Tolerably good class, clerks, mechanics	12E 36F
Greenwich	Red	Detached and semi-detached	Caretakers, police sergeant, inspector	2D 4F

Source: Charles Booth, *Map Descriptive of London Poverty, 1889,* Introductory Notes, London: London Topographical Society, 1984.

Table 7

In the first volume of the poverty series in *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Charles Booth expounds on the system of poverty classification. These eight categories form the basis for the seven colours used on the *Map Descriptive of London Poverty* (the exact correlation is detailed in Table 8). The eight-tier system of poverty classification is summarised in the table below:

Booth Classification	***Description of class***
A	The lowest class, which consists of some occasional labourers, street sellers, loafers, criminals and semi-criminals. Their life is the life of savages, with vicissitudes of extreme hardship and their only luxury is drink
B	Casual earnings, very poor. The labourers do not get as much as three days work a week, but it is doubtful if many could or would work full time for long together if they had the opportunity. Class B is not one in which men are born and live and die so much as a deposit of those who from mental, moral and physical reasons are incapable of better work
C	Intermittent earning. 18s. to 21s. per week for a moderate family. The victims of competition and on them falls with particular severity the weight of recurrent depressions of trade. Labourers, poorer artisans and street sellers. This irregularity of employment may show itself in the week or in the year: stevedores and waterside porters may secure only one of two days' work in a week, whereas labourers in the building trades may get only eight or nine months in a year.
D	Small regular earnings. Poor, regular earnings. Factory, dock, and warehouse labourers, carmen, messengers and porters. Of the whole section none can be said to rise above poverty, nor are many to be classed as very poor. As a general rule they have a hard struggle to make ends meet, but they are, as a body, decent steady men, paying their way and bringing up their children respectably.
E	Regular standard earnings, 22s. to 30s. per week for regular work, fairly comfortable. As a rule the wives do not work, but the children do: the boys commonly following the father, the girls taking local trades or going out to service.
F	Higher-class labour and the best paid of the artisans. Earnings exceed 30s. per week. Foremen are included, city warehousemen of the better class and first hand lightermen; they are usually paid

	for responsibility and are men of good character and much intelligence.
G	Lower middle class. Shopkeepers and small employers, clerks and subordinate professional men. A hardworking sober, energetic class.
H	Upper middle class, servant keeping class.

(See Charles Booth. *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Volume 1 pp.33-62).

Table 8

The correspondence between the eight classes as defined in the published volumes and the seven colour codes on the *Maps Descriptive of London Poverty* and is not direct. Rosemary O'Day and David Englander helped clarify it in their book in the following table. Note that the far right column refers to my own system for colouring the map I will create of Agar Town. A lighter purple colour, lavender, has been added to help differentiate between the eight different poverty classifications as defined by Charles Booth.

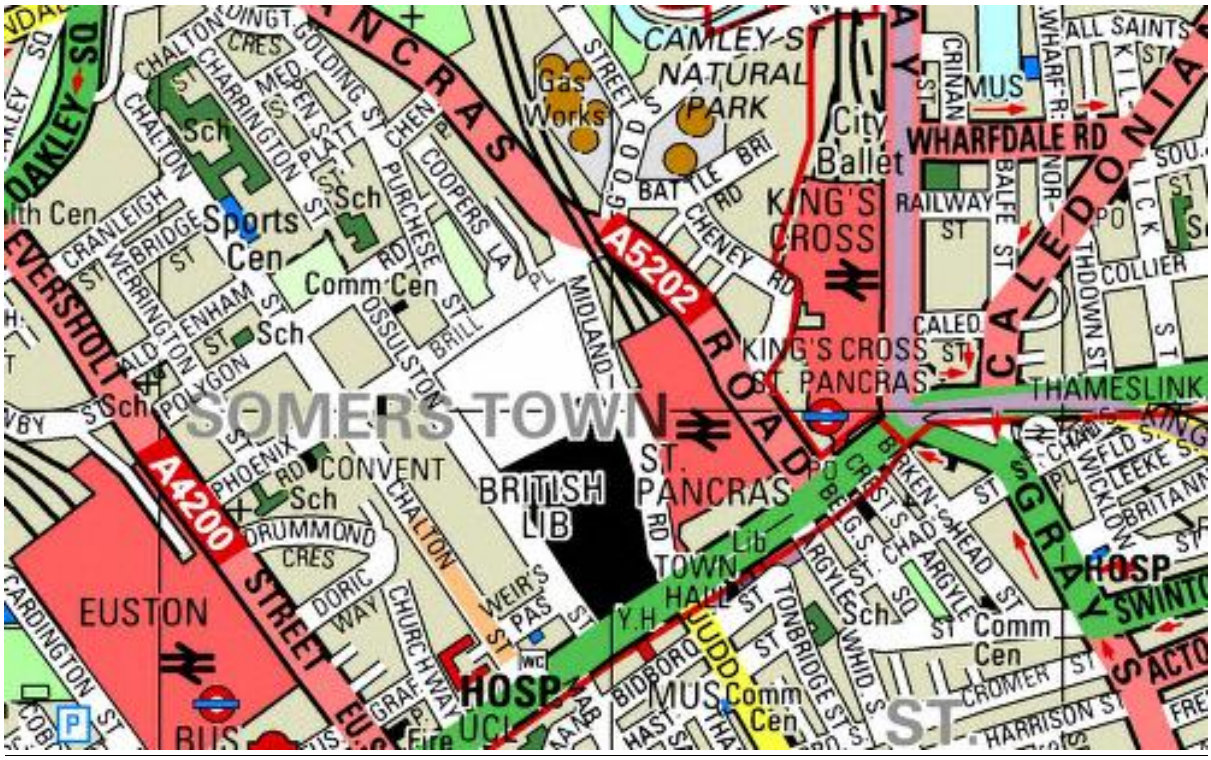
<table>
<tr><th>Class</th><th colspan="2">Description</th><th colspan="2">Booth's Map colour of streets</th><th>My Agar Town Map Colours</th></tr>
<tr><td>A</td><td colspan="2">The lowest class of occasional labourers, loafers and semi-criminals</td><td>Black</td><td rowspan="3"></td><td>Black</td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td><td colspan="2">Casual earnings: "very poor" (below 18s. per week for a moderate family)</td><td>Dark Blue</td><td>Dark Blue</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td><td>Intermittent earnings</td><td rowspan="2">Together, these constitute "the poor" between 18s. and 21s. per week for a moderate family</td><td rowspan="2">Light Blue</td><td>Light Blue</td></tr>
<tr><td>D</td><td>Small regular earnings</td><td rowspan="2">Purple

mixed between D & E</td><td>Lavender</td></tr>
<tr><td>E</td><td colspan="2">Regular standard earnings - Above the line of poverty</td><td></td><td>Purple</td></tr>
<tr><td>F</td><td colspan="2">Higher class labour - Fairly comfortable good ordinary earnings</td><td>Pink</td><td rowspan="3"></td><td>Pink</td></tr>
<tr><td>G</td><td colspan="2">Lower middle class - Well-to-do middle class</td><td>Red</td><td>Red</td></tr>
<tr><td>H</td><td colspan="2">Upper middle class - Wealthy</td><td>Yellow</td><td>None</td></tr>
</table>

(See Rosemary O'Day and David Englander. *Mr Charles Booth's Inquiry: Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered* p.47)

Figure 3
Detail of Charles Booth's 1898 Descriptive Map of London Poverty, showing St. Pancras Railway Station as indicated by boxed area.

Figure 4
Detail of present-day London map of the same area as shown in Figure 3. Note British Library has replaced Midland Rail Goods Depot and Potato Market.



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