

EVALUATING THE CROSSTABULATIONS

(Jonathan Foster, Doctoral Candidate, UNLV)

The following cross-tabulations are drawn from the Western History Association's 2005 Membership Survey. The cross-tabs are categorized into nine general sections and enable cross-referencing between topics of interest. General topics include gender, geographic area of interest, educational level, location, occupation, years of membership, topical interest, race/ethnicity, and year of birth. Within each topic specific document, the reader will find tables with percentages and numbers relating how that topic compared with the wide variety of questions and variables presented in the survey.

While crosstabs on every possible variable are not provided within each individual document, cross referencing to another topical document will provide the desired data. Cross referencing guides have been provided in the table of contents appearing at the beginning of each document. This was done merely to reduce the crosstabulation documents' already imposing size. The .pdf documents are also searchable using your computer's ctrl + f functions.

Many interesting results can be obtained from the crosstabulation tables; a few examples follow.

Gender: Females account for 71.4 percent of respondents employed in University Administrative positions. Males account for 88.2 percent of respondents employed in the field of Business/Industry. 30.5 percent of female respondents identified themselves as faculty members at a four year college or university compared to 35.5 percent of males.

Geographic Area of Interest: Among respondents listing the American West as their top geographic area of interest, the category of Nineteenth to Twentieth Century proved to be the most popular chronological period of interest. 43.8 percent chose this period.

Educational Level: Among holders of the Ph.D. 1.7 percent of respondents listed immigration as their primary topical area of interest. 4.7 percent of doctoral candidates listed immigration as their primary topic of interest. Likewise, 2.8 percent of Ph.D. holders considered cultural/intellectual history as their main interest, compared to 4.7 percent for doctoral candidates.

Location: Of the five respondents who listed the US South/Southeast as their principal geographic area of interest and supplied a place of residence, 4 resided in southeastern states. Of the 59 respondents who listed the American Southwest as their primary area of interest, 36 or 61 percent resided in the southwestern states of Arizona (14), California (6), Colorado (1), New Mexico (12), Nevada (1), and Utah (2).

Occupation: Of WHA survey respondents employed in the museum/sites occupations, 20 percent feel that the state of western history is healthy as reflected in the job market. 37.2 percent of those employed as faculty members at four-year colleges or universities viewed the field as healthy in this regard, compared to 25 percent of those employed as faculty members at 2 year institutions. Among responding doctoral students, 34.1 percent perceived the field as healthy.

Years of Membership: Among new members of the WHA (One year or less), Native American history stands out as the most popular topical area of interest (10.9 percent chose this area). Environmental history proved to be the second most popular topical area among new members, with 9.4 percent choosing it as their primary field of interest.

Topical Interest: Only 2 percent of respondents who chose the American West as their principal geographic area of interest chose cultural/intellectual history as their primary topical area of interest. This compares with 5.7 percent of those who listed the United States as their principal geographic area of interest and cultural/intellectual history as their primary topical area of interest.

Race/Ethnicity: Forty percent of respondents who self-identified as African American categorized the reputation of the WHA as an open, professional organization as “most important” in their decision to join and retain membership. 12.9 percent of those listing themselves as “white” listed this factor as “most important,” while 18.9 percent of “Caucasians,” 25 percent of “Anglos with ethnic description” and 22.6 percent of “Anglos” responded in the same manner.

Year of Birth: Of respondents listing their professional self identity as “primarily a western historian,” 45.5 percent was born between 1930 and 1949. 34.7 percent was born between 1950 and 1969.