



Data Visualization:

A New Way to See Historical Records in the AFL-CIO Archive

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Libraries Research and Innovative Practice Forum



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Advancing Workers Rights in the American South: Digitizing the records of the AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department

- 3 Year Grant: May 2021 - May 2024
- Partner grant:
 - University of Maryland
 - Georgia State University
- Goal: Digitize and provide access to AFL-CIO Civil Rights Southeast Division and national-level records from the AFL, CIO, and AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department, 1943-1999
- 119 linear feet total from both partners



AWR Social Media & Outreach

- 3rd year of grant = getting materials online, conducting outreach work
- Intensive PII screening resulted in high level of familiarity with collection metadata
- Desire to create social media posts focused on work of Access team
 - In search of compelling ways to illustrate “back-end” work





Civil Rights Dept. - Data Sets

Data Set 1

- **25% selected and digitized at UMD**
- 45 linear feet (or 36 boxes)
- 1,417 folders

Data Set 2

- **3 collections for AFL-CIO Civil Rights Dept**
- **174.75 linear feet total**
- **6,362 folders**





First Data Set

Digitized Materials from the AFL-CIO
Civil Rights Department

A Brief Note about Data Visualization

- Use of visual/graphical elements to represent information and data
- Many possible forms:
 - Charts
 - Graphs
 - Maps
 - And more!
- Goals for this project:
 - Show the big picture of the collection rather than the content of the materials
 - Illustrate patterns, trends, or themes
 - Develop methodology that could be applied to other collections by using existing metadata



Tools Used

Voyant Tools

- “Web-based text reading and analysis environment”
- Intended for digital humanities scholarship
- Able to produce a variety of text-based visualizations
- Open-source project

voyant-tools.org

Datawrapper

- Full-service online data visualization toolkit
- Options for maps as well as more traditional charts and tables
- “Freemium” model

datawrapper.de

Excel

- Does more than you think it can!
- PivotTables & PivotCharts
- Easy to use when your data is already in spreadsheet form





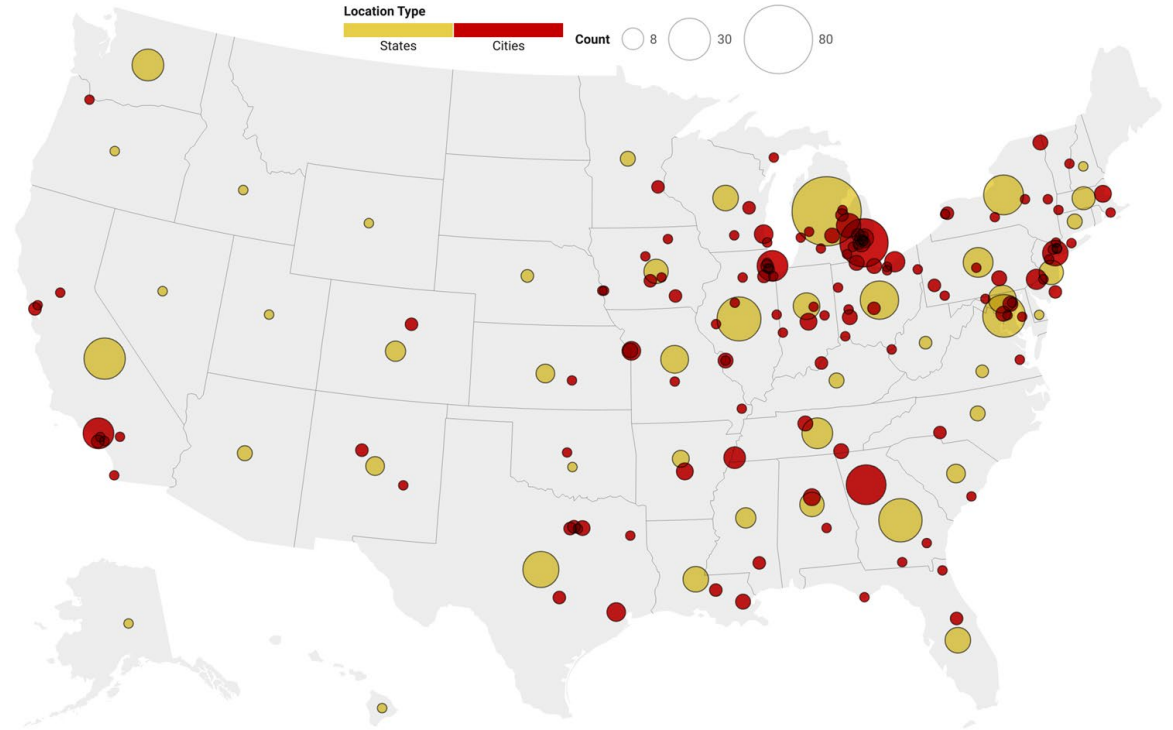
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- Made w/ Cirrus in Voyant Tools
- The larger the word, the more frequently it appears in the corpus
- Options to select number of words, font, and other visual aspects
- Used a plain text file containing all folder titles
- Drawback: only registers single words (can't use phrases like "Equal Employment Opportunity Commission")

Centers of Civil Rights Activity in Newly Digitized UMD Records

Map

- Many folder titles also included state or city names
- Obtained coordinates using Geoapify (online geocoding tool)
- Use of color to distinguish between different counts: red for mentions of a city and yellow for mentions of a state



Map: Rosemarie Fettig, Special Collections and University Archives • Created with Datawrapper



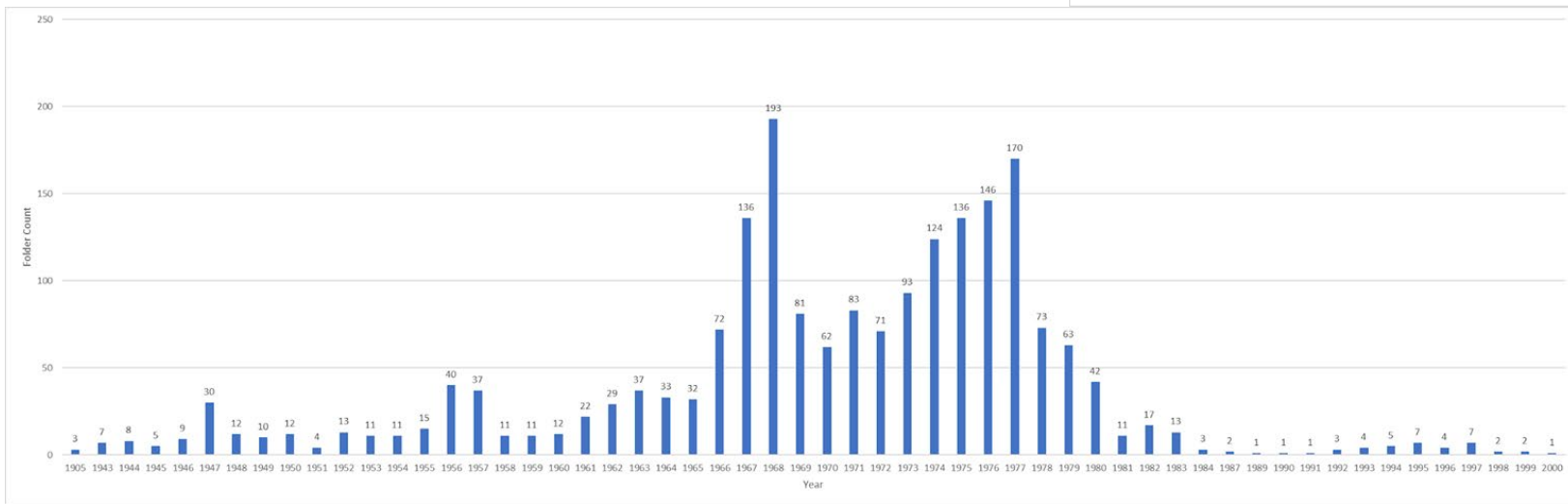
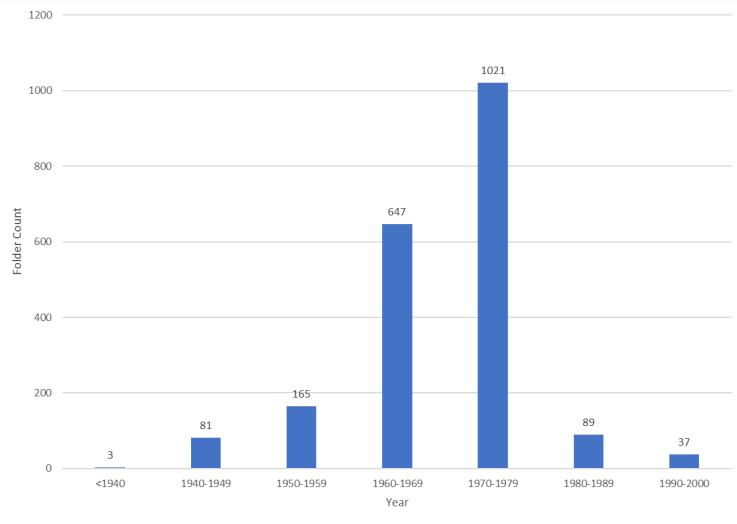
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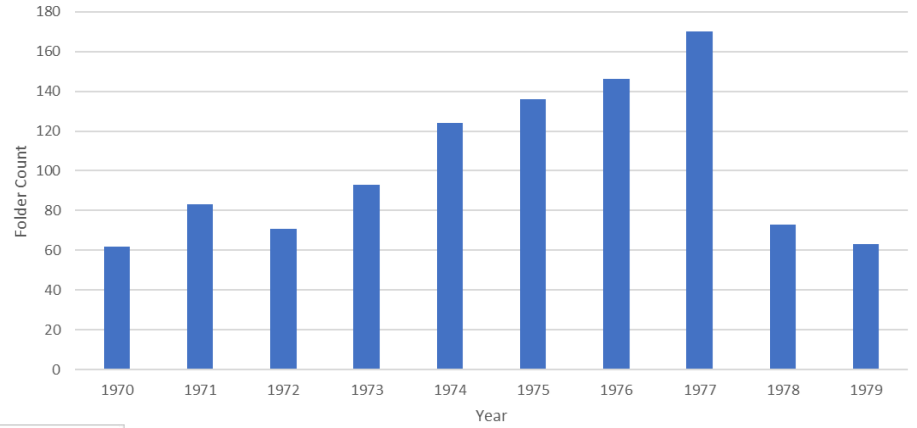
Timelines

- Date information existed for nearly every folder
- Used Pivot Tables to obtain counts of folders with a certain date
- Multiple graphs for multiple perspectives
- Created for a blog post - not limited to a single square image

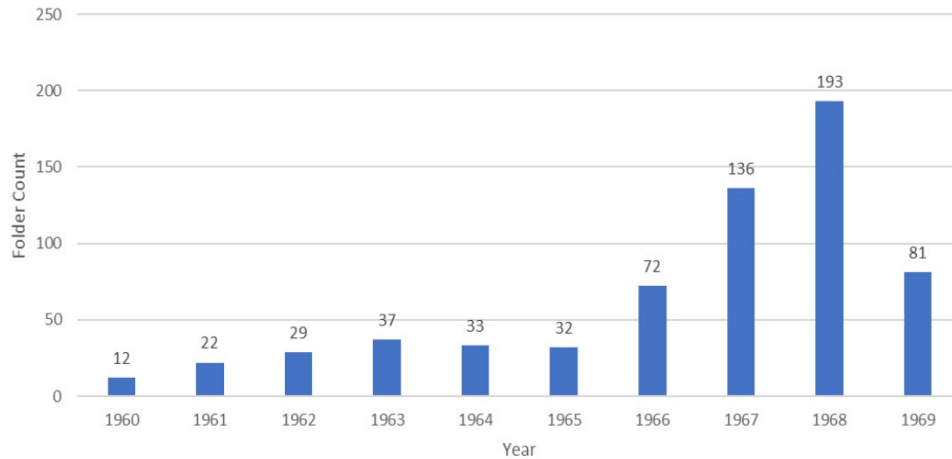
<https://hornbakelibrary.wordpress.com/2024/01/31/data-visualization-a-new-way-to-use-historical-records-in-the-afl-cio-archive/>

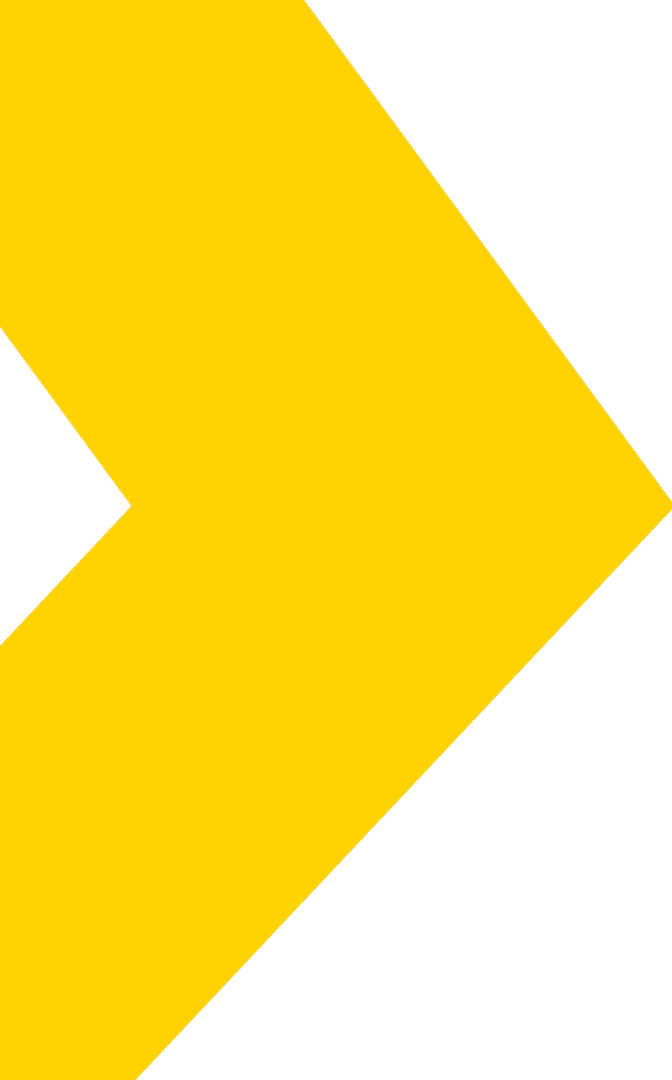


Folders by Year: 1970s



Folders by Year: 1960s





Second Data Set

ALL Materials from the
AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department



350 terms

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Word Cloud

- 150 terms
- Easier to see subject strengths in folder titles



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Data Set 2





Centers of Civil Rights Activity in AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department Records collections

Location Type

States

Cities

Count

30

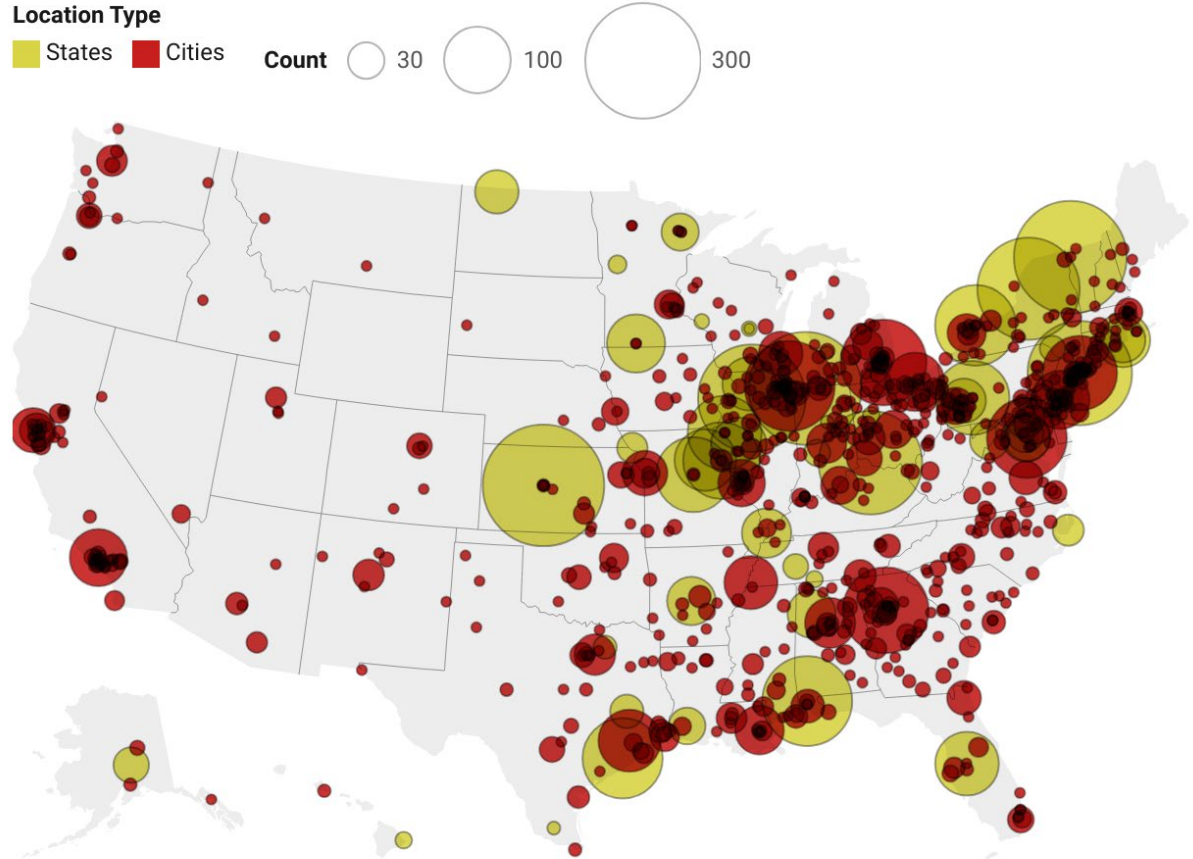
100

300

Map

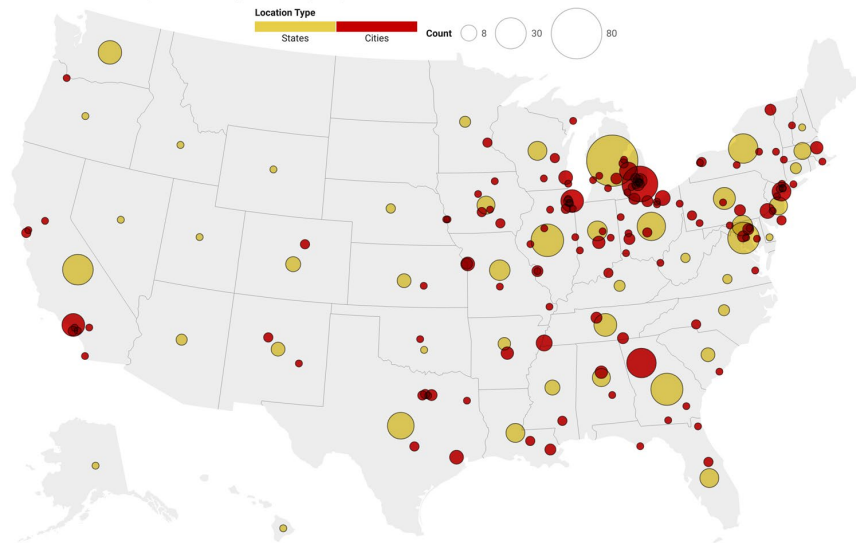
Civil rights movement focus

- Cities, metropolitan areas
- Eastern half of US
- Strength in Northeast region



Data Set 1

Centers of Civil Rights Activity in Newly Digitized UMD Records



Map: Rosemarie Fettig, Special Collections and University Archives • Created with Datawrapper

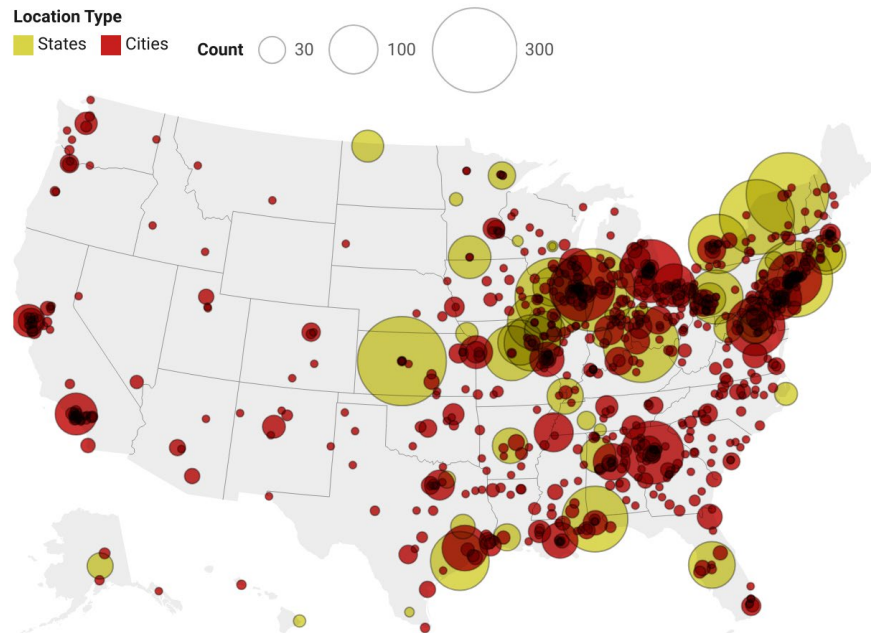


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Data Set 2

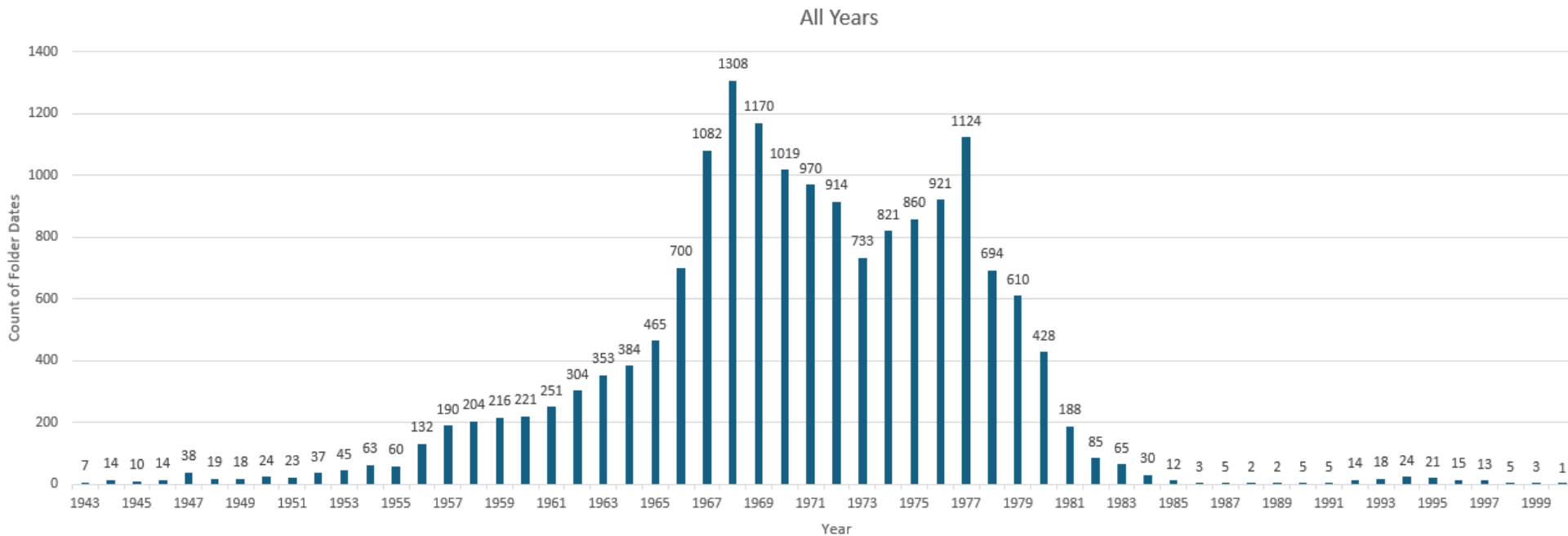
Centers of Civil Rights Activity in AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department Records collections



Map: Jen Gathings Eidson, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Maryland • Created with Datawrapper

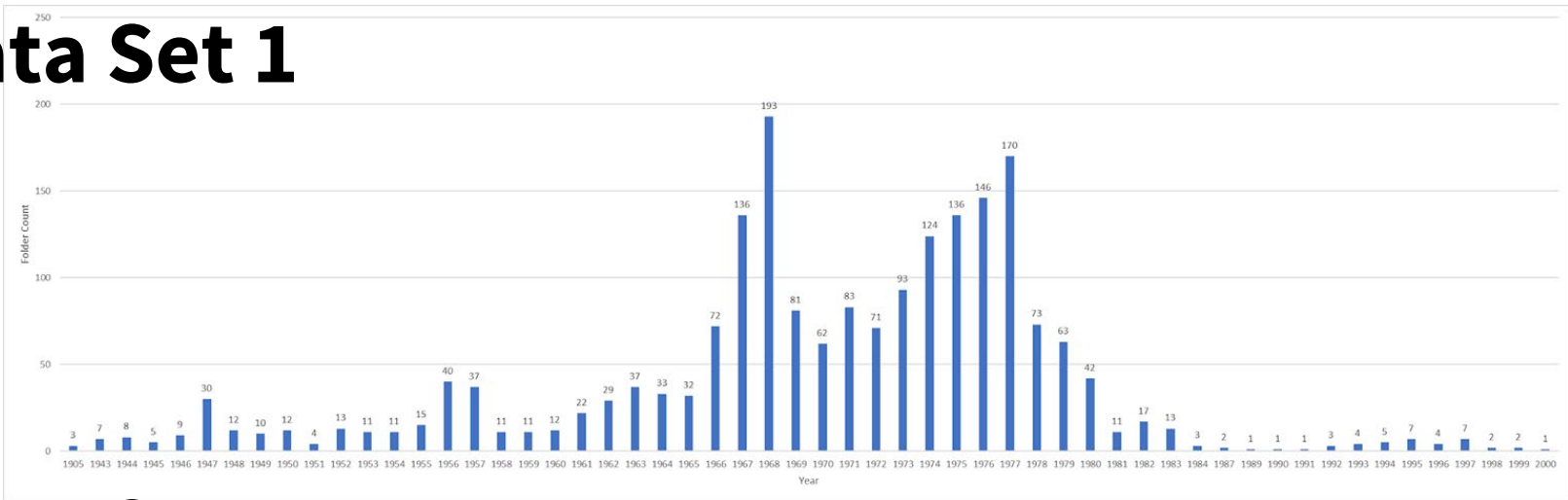


Timeline of All Years All Content

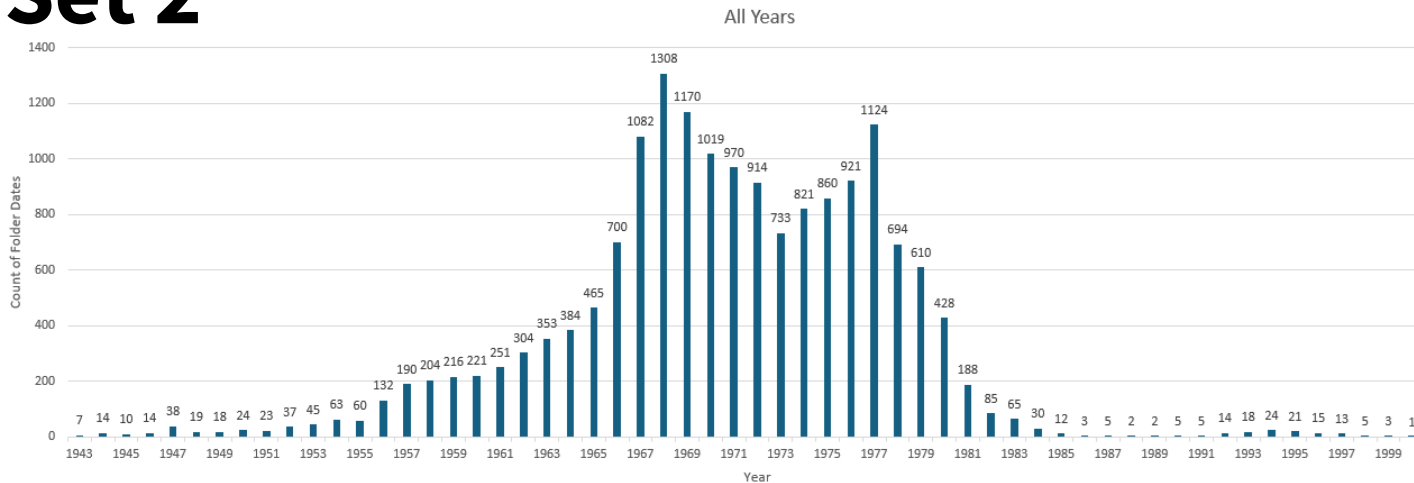




Data Set 1

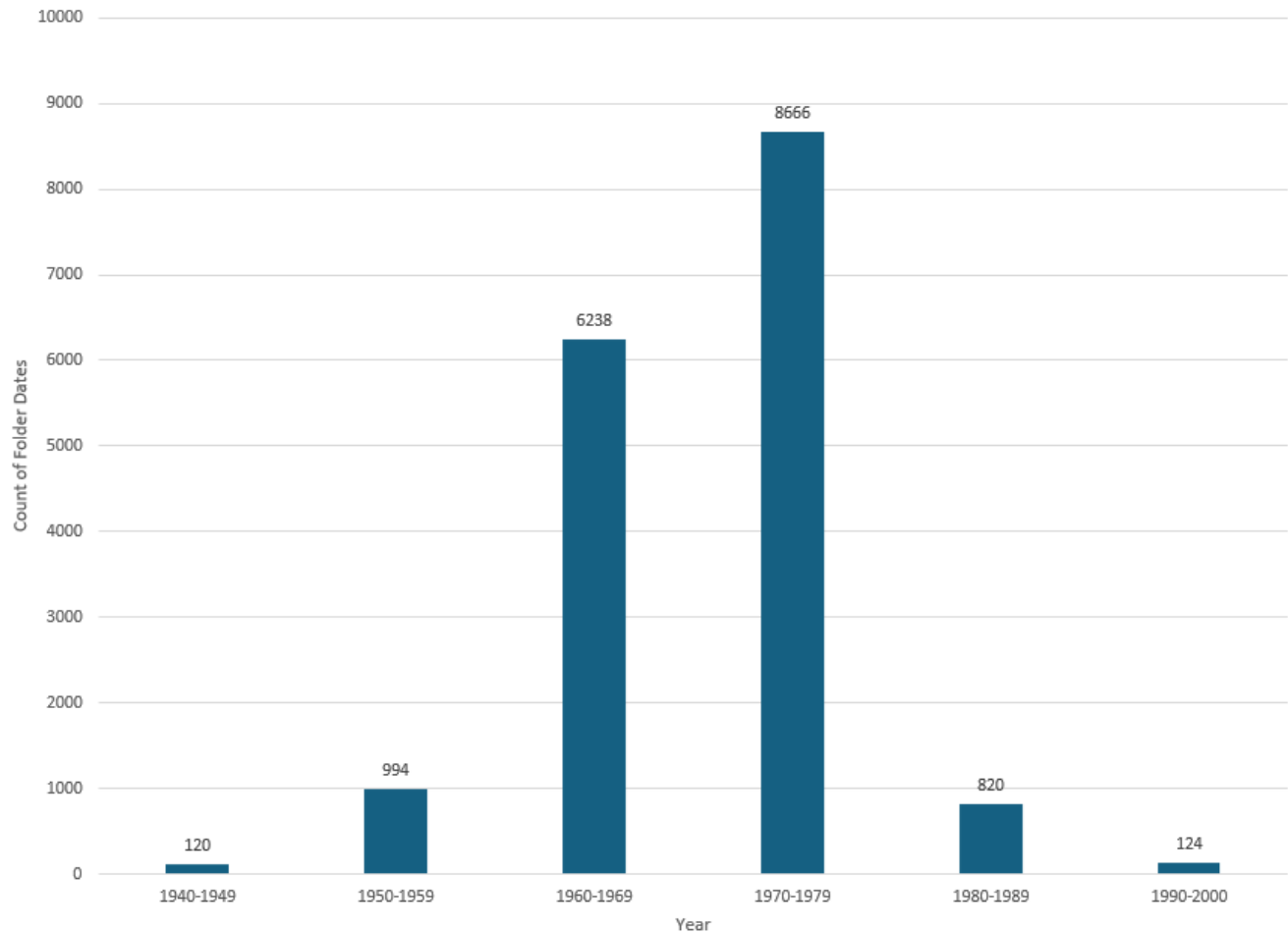


Data Set 2



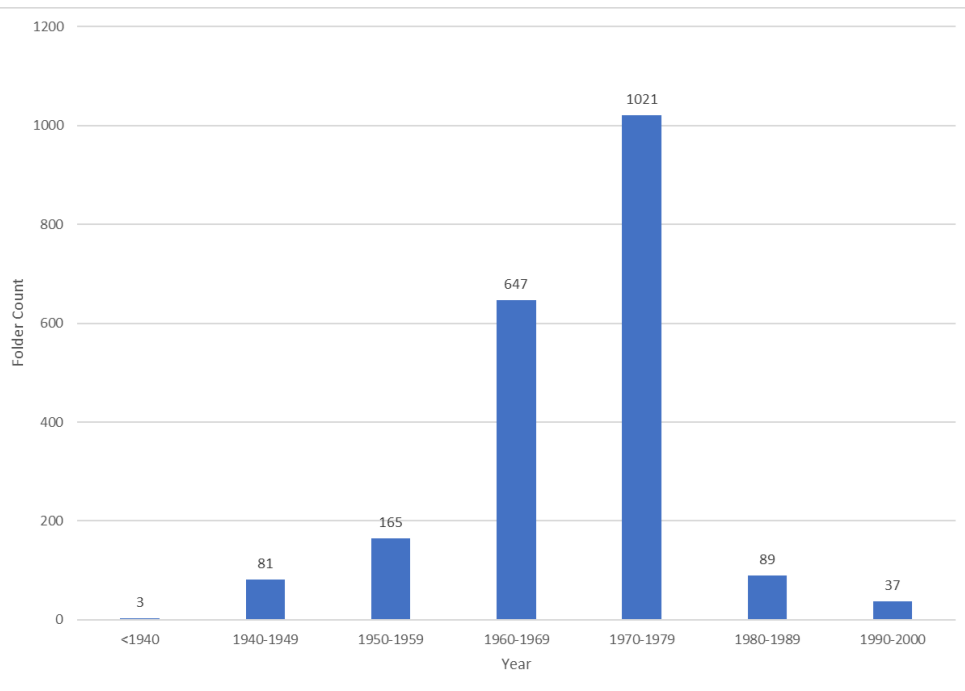


Timeline by Decade

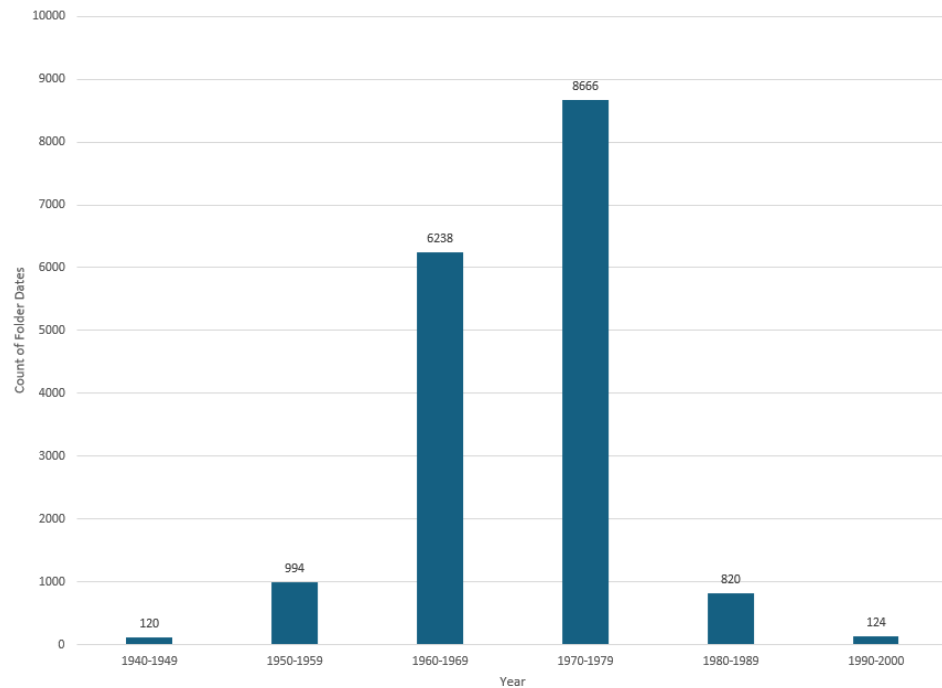




Data Set 1

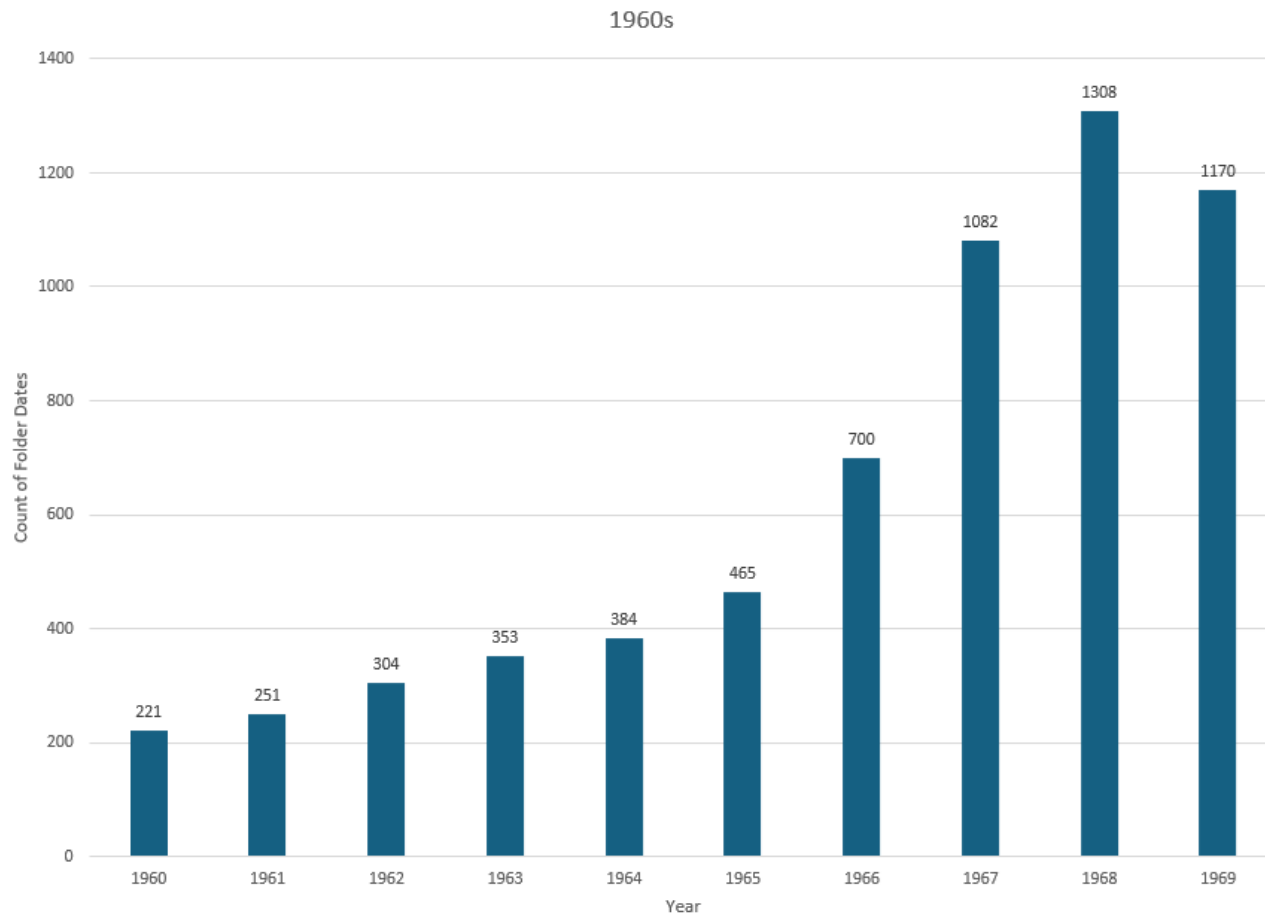


Data Set 2



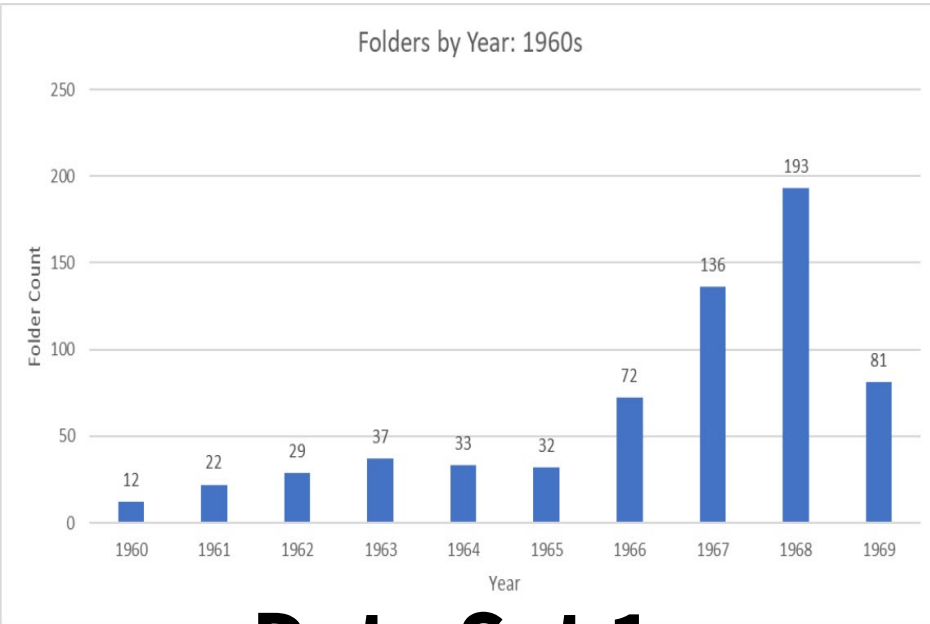


Timeline of the 1960s

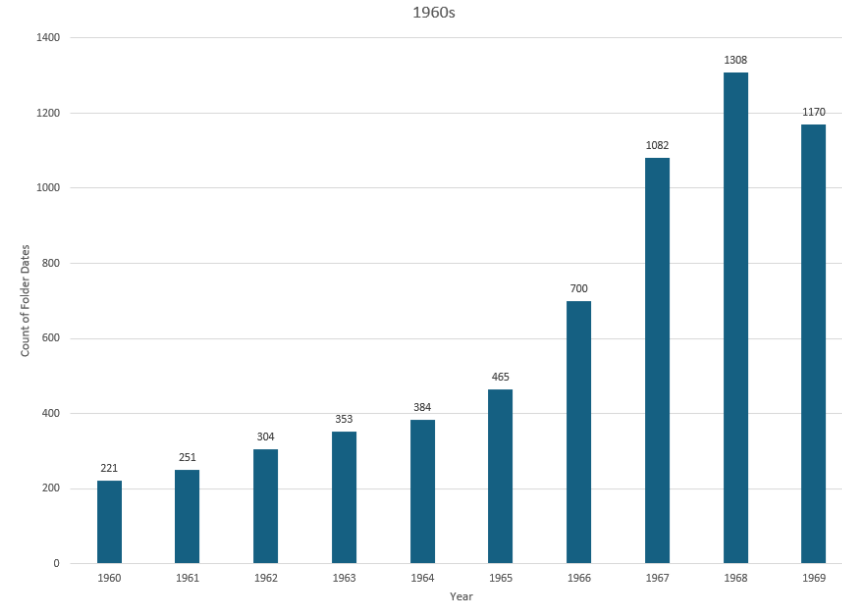




Timeline of the 1960s



Data Set 1

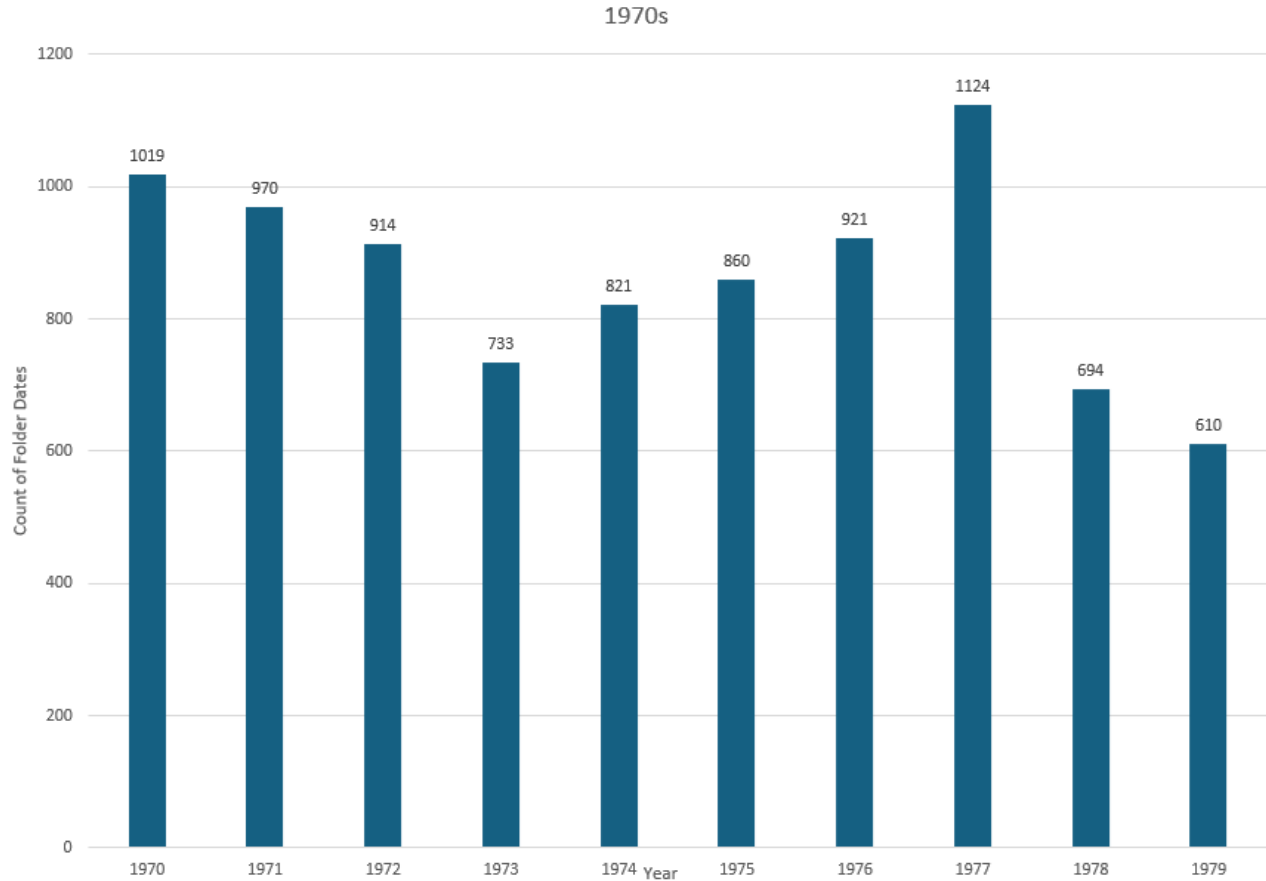


Data Set 2



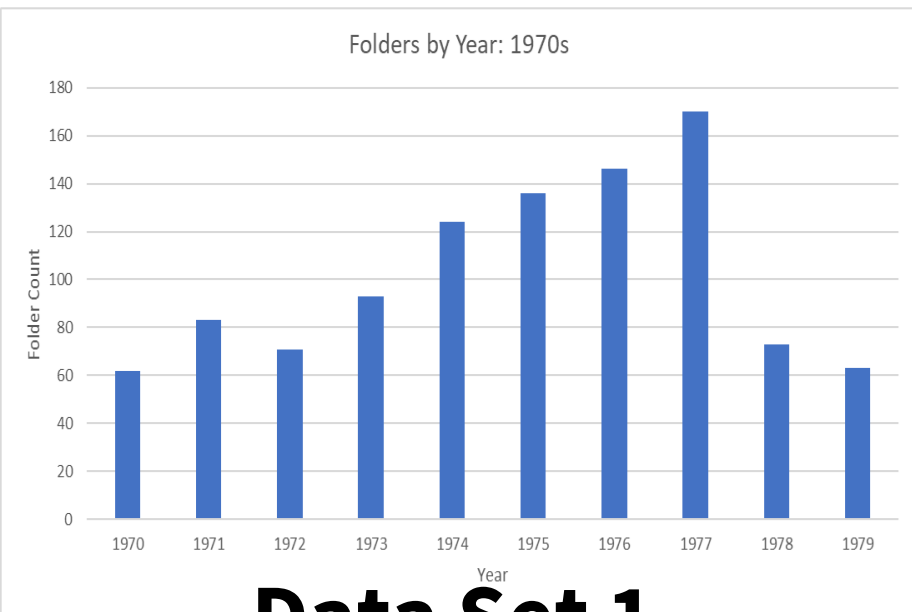


Timeline of the 1970s

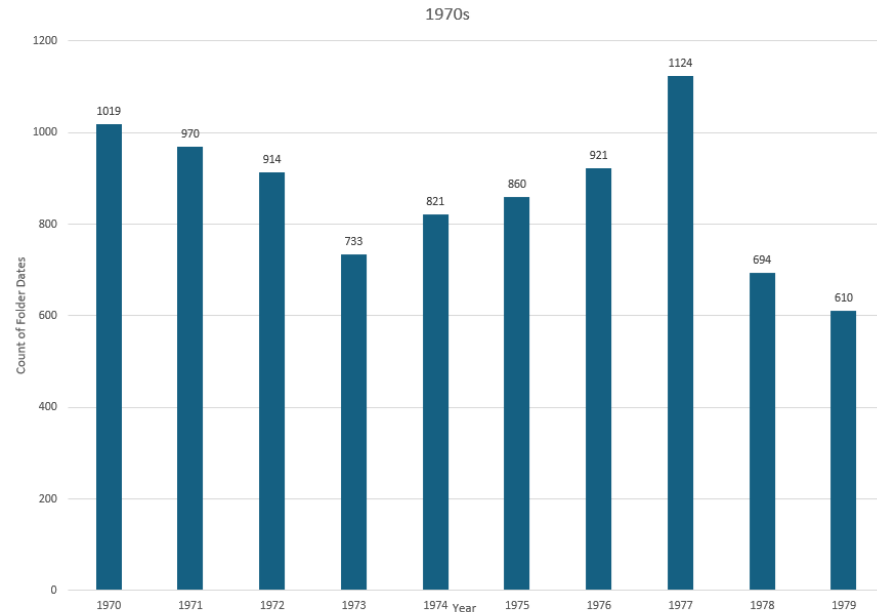




Timeline of the 1970s

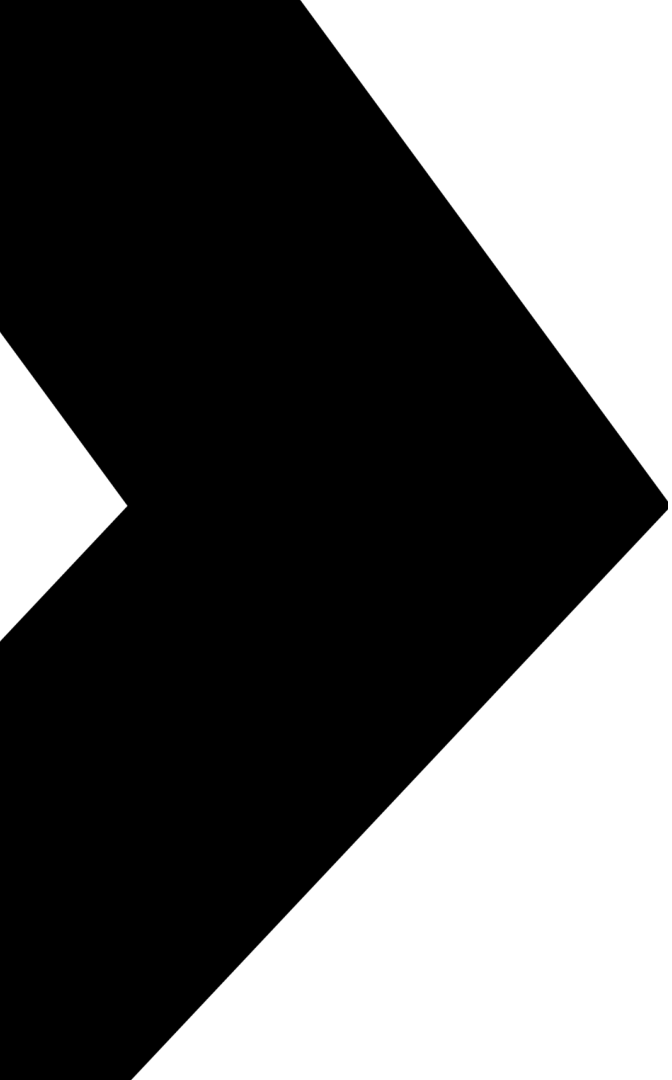


Data Set 1



Data Set 2





Conclusion



Value of visualizing data

High-level viewpoint can reveal potential for future research and point to specific folders and documents in the collections.

- Why are there more records from the 1960s than the 1940s or the 1990s?
- Why is there no representation from the 1930s?
- What is the reason for the high percentage of documents in 1968 and 1978?
- What was going on, or not going on, at these times?



User friendly method to share archives with the general public in an easy to understand visual format.

- Identify trends
- Identify strengths in the collections
- Identify gaps in the historical record

And now we know the sample set of reduced data indicated most trends found with full data set.





Leaving you with... Collections

SCUA Blog post

Data Visualization: A New Way to See
Historical Records in the AFL-CIO
Archive (Jan. 31, 2024)

Tools

voyant-tools.org

datawrapperr.de

<https://www.geoapify.com/>

AFL, CIO, and AFL-CIO Civil Rights
Department records, 0044-LBR-RG9-001.
Special Collections and University Archives.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/42524>

AFL, CIO, and AFL-CIO Civil Rights
Department, Discrimination Case Files, 0054-
LBR-RG9-002. Special Collections and
University Archives

<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/42541>

AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department records,
0068-LBR-RG9-003. Special Collections and
University Archives

<http://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/42551>



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Digital Repositories

University of Maryland Digital Collections

Search: Labor

Georgia State University Digital Collections

Search: AFL-CIO

Civil Rights Digital Library

Contributing Institution: Georgia State University. Special Collections

Contributing Institution: University of Maryland, College Park. Libraries.

Digital Public Library of America

Collection: Advancing Workers' Rights in the American South

Collection: AFL-CIO Southeast Division Civil Rights Department Records

Umbra Search Engine for African American History

Contributing Institution: Georgia State University. Special Collections

Contributing Institution: University of Maryland, College Park. Libraries.



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Thank You!

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