

## **Ethical issues related to collection of the dataset**

The dataset that Ben Dreier and I used for our final project, "MembershipRolls.csv," raises a lot of interesting ethical issues. The dataset contains information from over 3,000 members of The People's Independent Church of Christ in Los Angeles who were part of the church in the 1940s. The dataset lists each member's address, former church, and hometown. This dataset was originally obtained from the archives of the People's Independent Church of Christ by my proctor, who gave us this dataset because she wanted us to help her analyze the church's roster for her book on African-American churches in California.

The first major ethical issue that this dataset raises is that many of the descendants of the church's members are certainly alive and many still live in Los Angeles. Many of the descendants of the church's members probably did not consent to having the information of their ancestors used for an academic purpose. Many of the descendants may not be aware, even though the point of this study is to better understand the demographics of the church's members. Only the consent of the People's Independent Church of Christ was obtained, raising the question of whether that is enough consent for an ethical academic study.

Another major ethical issue this dataset raises is the fact that it was obtained privately from the church's archives and is not public. This data is not in any university archives, library, or other location. The fact that very few people have this information about the church right now means that this is a private use of data that ideally should be publicly available, or at least accessible to other researchers who could find other interesting insights from this data.