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To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Daniel Brooks

Comment:

I was entrusted with an old city telephone directory from the 1930's found in my deceased grandfather's belongings. After extracting info of personal interest, I realized other genealogists might also benefit from data found therein. I realized of course that to share the data necessitated copying it in one way or another and publishing it electronically. So I decided to seek permission for the copyright holder.

The copyright listed in the directory was that of a now-defunct telephone company. After hours of finding few leads on the status of the company's copyrights, I decided to get outside help. I contacted a state agency to help track the info down. They checked their records and reported that over the course of many decades the company that had published the directory had eventually become the property of Verizon.

So, I began trying to contact Verizon to seek their permission, but of course no one there really had any idea what I was talking about.

Eventually, I was able to speak to someone in middle management who told me the company was not concerned about it and gave me verbal permission to re-publish the information.

I documented that approval, but still feel uneasy about moving ahead given the lack of written permission. But I also see no hope of getting such written permission since Verizon's legal group has no interest in taking such a trivial request from an individual.

As such, that directory is still sitting on my desk with no immediate plans to share it's contents with other researchers.