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Census Enumerators In 1940 To Ask Many New Questions

Using three questionnaires—about people, homes and farms—the United States census bureau will conduct the greatest fact-finding drive in the nation's history next April. Ammon McClellan, of Charlotte, area manager for the bureau of the census, has given out the following information in regard to this great undertaking which makes interesting reading:

The lists of questions involving about 132 million persons, 33 million dwelling units and seven million farms will be filled out during the month of April by 120,000 census-takers, who will pay a personal call on every family.

First phases of the vast array of basic information assembled by this canvass, which will be computed in a new six-story building in Washington by more than 7,000 clerks and a huge battery of mechanical tabulators, will be made public next autumn, but further analyses and breakdowns will continue for about two years.

New Questions
"This year's census," Mr. McClellan said, "falls on the 150th anniversary of census-taking in America. It is of unusual significance to the country because it will measure the social and economic effects of the broad developments of the last decade."

"In addition to the usual questions about age, sex, size of family, nativity and citizenship of the foreign-born, vital new statistical knowledge will be developed by questions on education, mass migration, employment, unemployment, occupation and distribution of wages and salaries."

"Whereas previous censuses merely have separated the literate from the illiterate, this year's question on education—'highest grade of school completed'—will give a complete pattern of the degree of education possessed by the American people."

"Similarly, experience since 1929 has led to a new approach to employment and earnings which will give up-to-the-minute basic facts on the nation's most important problems. Persons privately employed or in permanent public jobs will be separated from those on public emergency work, and from the unemployed. Hours of work and constancy of work will be learned, and these will be related to occupation, industry and annual wage. Of the jobless, the duration of unemployment will be asked."

"An important addition to the data on occupation is a separate category entitled 'new worker' to obtain a picture of the number of young people who have finished their schooling in recent years but have been unable to obtain work and thus acquire an occupation."

Census of Housing
"On separate questionnaires, the same census-takers who ask the population questions, will compile the nation's first comprehensive picture of the sort of homes in which our people live. This will cover the number of people in relation to the number of rooms, the age and type of structure, whether owned or rented and the value or amount of rental, what sort of heating, cooking, lighting and sanitary facilities, and whether there is a mortgage."

"This census of housing should provide the facts from which to judge immediate needs for dwelling construction, repair or modernization, and is of vital importance in discussing the future of our economy."

"In addition to the questions on population and housing, farmers

will answer separate agriculture questionnaires concerning crops, their value and acreage, livestock, values and debts, labor and machinery."

Confidential By Laws
Mr. McClellan pointed out that when April's population, housing and farm censuses are combined with the censuses of business and manufacturers which began last week, a rounded, current picture of American life will be available.

This information will be available not only on a national basis, but will be broken down by states, counties and towns for purposes of local analysis and comparison. For example, farm conditions thus can be analyzed by states or counties, housing or income distribution by cities.

Similarly, whole series of facts may be correlated, such as the relation of these factors to persons of varying age or sex.

Mr. McClellan emphasized that the law decrees that all information obtained by the census-taker be kept confidential, and cannot be used in any way to detriment of any individual. Census officials, who are the only persons to see the returns, are sworn to secrecy, and can be fined heavily and imprisoned for violating this oath. Census records are not open to other federal agencies for any purpose.

Crops Are Regionalized
The farm census schedule contains 232 questions, designed to cover all significant agricultural activities throughout America. Not all of the questions will be asked of every farmer, since the list includes, of necessity, many types of farm operation and a wide variety of crops unlikely to appear on any single farm.

The farm questionnaire, or schedule, has been "streamlined" this year by being published in nine "editions" for use on a regional basis. Thus inquiries about various crops will include only those actually raised in the territory. This plan permits inquiry in greater detail into the crops actually grown in a given region. In California for example, elimination of queries concerning sugar cane and other crops not frequently grown there permit information in greater detail concerning citrus and other fruits.

Questions on the three schedules evolved from long series of conferences with persons most familiar with the subjects, both in and out of the government.

For example, more than 6,000 questions were submitted to the census bureau by interested organizations and individuals for inclusion in the farm census alone. To sift out the least significant and most impractical queries series of meetings were held with farm leaders, commercial interests dealing with farmers, market analysts and statisticians. About four per cent of the original proposals survived.

Questions on population and housing were subjected to the same "shakedown" process, with interested business, industrial and social groups participating in the discussion as to which questions should be placed finally on the schedule.

To test further the workability of its plans, the census bureau took test-censuses of agriculture in 1938, and of population in two Indiana counties last summer.

J. C. Little of Clifton, Ashe county, has reported unusually successful results in the use of sericea lespedeza to build up badly eroded places in his pasture.

Do Not Overplant Around Your House

Visualize the foundation planting of shrubs and flowers around your house five or 10 years from now and you will use fewer plants, and set them further from the house, says John H. Harris, landscape specialist of the State college extension service. Most people overplant around the foundation of their homes. Leave open spaces between groups so that the foundation will show; if the foundation is undesirable to be seen, use vines to correct this situation, he advised.

Harris recommends that plants be placed on either side of the entrance, at corners of the house, between windows, and grouped to break a long straight line or relieve the bleakness of an uninteresting wall. "Low flowers and vines can often be used to an advantage among the foundation plantings. Such plants as periwinkle, low phlox, verbena, ivy, and low-growing shrubs add color and interest to the planting," the specialist stated.

"Avoid the monotonous planting of shrubs all of the same height and size. Use some tall-growing, some low-growing, some upright, and some prostrate plants to have a pleasing effect," he continued.

Some of the more important reasons for beautifying the home grounds with shrubs and flowers are listed by Harris as follows: To create a picture by uniting the separate elements, such as walks, drives, house, and lawn into a pleasing and harmonious whole; to give infinement, shade and background for the buildings; to decorate, soften, and add charm to the house, but not to hide it; to screen off undesirable views; to separate or enclose certain areas; and to give justification and make more natural the curves in the walks and drives.

WAGES

Wage rates paid to hired farm workers dropped sharply during the last quarter of 1939, and on January 1 averaged only 119 per cent of their 1910-14 level.

The war has not yet appreciably stimulated United States export trade, and as a result, export figures for last year show a decrease, while imports increased.

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