

VITAL STATISTICS

The Big 1960 Man Hunt

Census time has come again and a record number of Americans will be hunted down and asked a selection of personal questions. Here is what to expect about April 1.

By ALLEN LONG

THE BIGGEST man hunt of the century will get under way about April 1.

Approximately 160,000 census takers will start tracking down 180,000,000 Americans in their homes, apartments and rooming houses.

This is the year for the decennial census. Many questions have been prepared, but—good news—not as many as in some previous censuses. However, more people will be answering the detailed questions than in previous censuses.

The law requires you to answer all questions truthfully. Your answers cannot be used for purposes of taxation, investigation or regulation.

Your answers will be stamped "confidential." The census taker is sworn to secrecy under severe penalties. Information obtained in the census can be published only as figures in which no person can be identified.

Toward the end of March, the Bureau of the Census will mail out to every household a form that must be filled in before the census taker arrives. This is being done so that you can consult other members of your family for facts you may not know yourself.

Questions for Americans

One question will ask you to name any visitors who stay overnight in your house on March 31 of this year. Another question will ask you to list all persons living in your house, giving their relationship to you, their sex, race (white, Negro, Hawaiian, part Hawaiian, Aleut, Eskimo, etc.), birth date and marital status. Another question will ask whether more than one family lives in the house and whether they eat with you.

Other questions touch upon your house—its cooking equipment, number of rooms, hot and cold water, toilets, bathtubs, ownership and value.

The census taker will call a few days later. He or she will show credentials. The census taker will transfer this prepared information to her forms.

Every fourth household will get a thorough interview. Many more questions will be asked, and a blue questionnaire will be left for the householder to fill out and mail back in a postage-paid envelope.

This will give the Bureau of the Census accurate, detailed information on 25% of the population. It will enable statisticians to draw a more accurate picture for all Americans.

Some of the detailed questions in the

1960 census that were not in the 1950 census include items on: Language spoken before coming to the U. S. (for foreign born U. S. residents), year moved into this house, attending public or private school, year when last worked, name of employer (not for publication), county and city where you work and means of transportation to work.

This is the first year that the question has been asked on how you get to work. Answers are expected to benefit the public by enabling transit companies to plan future service, and highway officials to analyze traffic patterns and evaluate new highway proposals. The figures also will help industries decide where to put new industrial parks.

Dropped from the 1950 census are questions attempting to identify persons of mixed Indian, Negro and white races; the 1950 attempt was unsuccessful, said Paul C. Glick of the Bureau of the Census. Citizenship will not be included either because there was little use made of this information from 1950 census data. A question on length of unemployment also

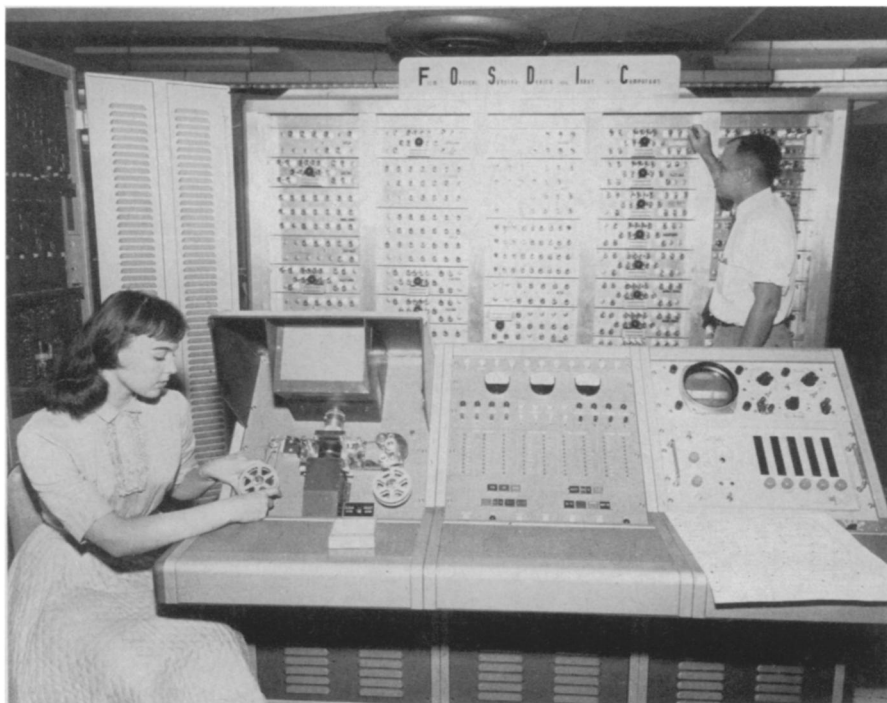
was dropped, but because 1950 results were unsatisfactory.

Of the scores of questions proposed by groups having a vital interest in the nature of the American people, several notable questions were considered and dropped. One such question was, "What is your religion?" Inclusion of this question was urged to fill a gap resulting from absence of a Census of Religious Bodies since the last one in 1936. But the proposal drew fire from individuals, newspapers and certain religious groups. It was decided that there could be so much resistance to this question that it could damage the rest of the census, so the proposal was rejected.

Pre-testing Reveals Faults

Also rejected was a question on adult education. In pre-testing this question on a sample population, it was discovered that some forms of adult education are ill-defined. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to get reliable results without exploring the subject with a long string of questions.

For similar reasons, a decision also was made to exclude questions relating to how many jobs are held by each person. Some observers feel this will be one of the most significant omissions in the 1960 census.



FOSDIC—Five FOSDICs, or Film Optical Sensing Devices for Input to Computers, will do the work of 2,000 clerical workers in the 1960 census. The Bureau of the Census made the four copies of FOSDIC, originally developed by the National Bureau of Standards. Census documents are photographed on 16 mm microfilm since FOSDIC can read the film faster than it can the paper sheets themselves.

Reliable data in this area might confirm suspicions that a shocking number of Americans have to hold two or more jobs because of inflation.

In counting the 1960 population, census workers will use and amass more than 50,000,000 separate sheets of paper. These will be processed through 400 Census District Offices scattered throughout the country. Mechanical processing of the billions of facts reported will begin late in April at the Bureau's Census Operations Office at Jeffersonville, Ind.

Books turned in by census takers will be microfilmed so that each 14-by-16-inch worksheet will occupy a frame of microfilm about a square inch in area. It is expected that, at times, processing will run 24 hours a day and that all told about 50,000 rolls of microfilm—holding 950 miles of information—will be used.

The developed microfilm then will be shipped to the Bureau's main offices at Suitland, Md., to be run through FOSDIC, a Film Optical Sensing Device for Input to Computers. Five FOSDICs will handle the job, doing the work that otherwise would require 2,000 clerks.

As its name suggests, FOSDIC will "read" information on the microfilm and transfer it to magnetic tape. Meanwhile, computer experts will be working out programs for electronic machines. These machines will extract the various kinds of information wanted from the taped census data.

They may, for instance, be instructed to tabulate the number and racial characteristics of all the men in a given district.

The machine will produce its own magnetic tape containing this wanted information. This tape will then be run through a high speed printer than can turn out statistical tables at the rate of 600 lines a minute.

Final state population totals will be given to President Eisenhower late in November. He in turn will give them to Congress with a table for apportioning seats among the states in the House of Representatives, as required by the Constitution.

Out of the 1960 population census will come five series of publications:

1. Series P-A: State reports on number of inhabitants for various types of geographical areas.
2. Series P-B: State reports showing general demographic characteristics (data by sex and color, on age, household relationship and marital status).
3. Series P-C: State reports on general social and economic characteristics.
4. Series P-D: State reports on detailed population characteristics.
5. Series P-E: Special population reports showing characteristics for the U. S. and regions.

The first reports will be published in November of 1960. Most, however, will be published in 1961, and the last reports—those of Series P-E—will be published in 1962. The reports on housing will be published during this period also, but slightly behind the population reports.

Why take a census, especially when it will cost taxpayers an estimated \$120,000,-

(Continued on p. 78)

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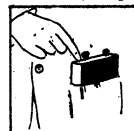
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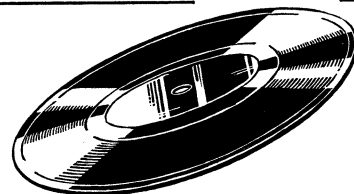
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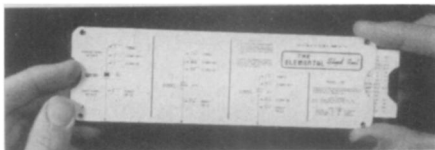
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On Heart Sunday
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Do You Know

Between 1950 and 1958, the percentage of *working wives* rose faster among U. S. farm families than among city families or rural non-farm families.

Average U. S. consumption levels per person for the different *meats* in 1960 are expected to be as follows: beef, 83 pounds; pork, about 67 pounds; veal, seven pounds, and lamb, 4½ pounds.

The largest scientific *payloads* the U. S. has placed in orbit are the 90-pound Explorer VII and the 142-pound Explorer VI.

More than 95% of the world's *olive oil* is produced in the Mediterranean Basin.

Domestic use for *synthetic lubricants* made from fats is expected to increase to about 26,000,000 pounds in 1961.

Three new *national forests* have been established by Presidential proclamation: the Oconee in Georgia, the Tombigbee in Mississippi, and the Tuskegee in Alabama.

Ferrokinesics, the study of the dynamic metabolism of iron following intravenous injections of tracer doses, has been very useful in the study of many pathological states.

1960 Man Hunt

(Continued from p. 75)

000? The answer is easy. The law requires it so that proper state representation can be had in Congress. But aside from that basic reason, there are many uses of census figures that directly and indirectly benefit the public.

The Government is a heavy user of census figures. Congress uses census data to help determine what kinds of laws should be passed. Federal funds often are distributed to the states on a population basis—for instance, funds for the school-lunch program are apportioned partly on the basis of how many school children are in the state.

Businesses also use census figures heavily in planning for the future. Perhaps a factory, warehouse or new store, offering additional employment, will be put up in your community because a study of census figures indicates that your community is a good place for it.

Careful study of census figures is vastly revealing to businesses. By understanding and using census information, companies have been able to cut costs and improve efficiency. The end result is a product that you buy at a lower price than otherwise might have been possible if there had been no census.

Science News Letter, January 30, 1960

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