

Uncle Sam Prepares to Count His Children—and How His Family Has Grown Since First Census in 1790!

By **ELMO SCOTT WATSON**
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THE coming of a new year means a big job for Uncle Sam. For 1940 is "census year" and it means that once more he is faced with the task of counting all his children.

And how his family has grown since he took the first census of its members 150 years ago! Then there were only 3,929,214 of them. This year it is estimated that there will be more than 132,000,000.

The first census, taken in 1790, covered only population. The count was made within a year from the date of the inauguration of President Washington, and the assembling of the first congress of the United States. The enumerators took the name of the head of each family, together with the total number of persons in the family, classified as free or slave. The count began on the first Monday in August, 1790, and the law gave nine months for the completion of the work.

Double this time elapsed, however, before all the returns were in. Communication then was slow and uncertain. The Americans of that day, particularly in the rural districts, regarded the census enumerators with some suspicion, and there were those who thought these agents of the federal government really aimed at getting information on which to base an increase of taxes.

The report of the first census is contained in an octavo volume of 56 pages. Discolored and crumbling with age, this little book is very rare. The census bureau has two of the few copies in existence, and the Library of Congress one.

Adams' Prophecy.

Four years before the first census was taken, John Adams, destined to become the second President of the United States, had a vision of the potentialities of America which led him to predict that the population of the United States would some time exceed 20,000,000. At that time such a prophecy seemed little more than a wild flight of the imagination and was branded as utterly ridiculous.

Writing from London, where he was minister to the Court of St. James, he said, "It has ever been my hobby horse to see rising in America an empire of liberty, and a prospect of 200,000,000 or 300,000,000 of freemen without one noble or king among them."

It was John Tyler, tenth President of the United States, blessed with a similar vision, who made a similar prophecy, though not so extravagant as Adams' but at the same time doubtful of fulfillment, and missed his guess by only a few years and a relatively small number of millions of population. In a letter addressed to Col. Samuel Gardiner of Shelter Island, whose son married Tyler's daughter, and dated from the ex-President's country seat, Sherwood Forest, Va., November 26, 1850, Tyler said, "In a little more than half a century, a people who were regarded as little better than a host of murderers or sojourners among savage tribes have attained position among the first civilized powers.

"With a spirit of adventure heretofore unequalled by anything which has occurred on the map of the world, there is united a deep plodding sagacity which crowns the most daring enterprises with success. Such a people, even had they attained that which is denominated a stationary condition in regard to population, would not fail to attract great and absorbing attention. But, when the reverse is the fact, when our population is known to double in every period of twenty-five years, when having now a population of 25,000,000 that number, before the child now in the nurse's arms attains maturity, is destined to reach nearly 50,000,000, and before that same child shall have passed the boundaries of middle age, to 100,000,000."

How Right Were They?

Now that Uncle Sam is preparing again to count his children, it is interesting to check up on the predictions of these two Presidents and see just how nearly right they were. Although Tyler's prophecy was a bit too optimistic, he was not far wrong. At the time his letter was written the population of the country was 23,260,638. He predicted that it would double in the next 25 years and although there are no figures available for 1875, by 1880 it had reached 50,262,382.

It had not reached the 100,000,000 mark by 1900, as his predic-



tion suggested, for Uncle Sam's children then numbered 76,129,408, and it was not until 20 years later that it reached the mark of 105,710,620. Even though the "doubling" process which he prophesied did not continue consistently, there did take place the amazing growth in the nation of 50,000,000 people in half a century, or an increase in population of 200 per cent.

So Tyler's prophecy was not so extravagant as it must have seemed at the time. And when there is taken into consideration the steady increase during the 153 years since John Adams made



Miss Mildred Keaton has one of the toughest assignments in taking the census. She "covers" the Arctic coast from Point Barrow east to the Alaskan-Canadian line, the route over which she "mushes" to treat ailing natives as a field nurse for the Office of Indian Affairs.

known his vision, even his estimate does not now seem so fantastic.

The 1930 census gave a total of 122,775,046 people under the Stars and Stripes. On June 27, 1936, the population was estimated at 128,403,000, an increase of 5,627,954 in six years or nearly 938,000 a year. The census bureau's last preliminary estimate of the nation's population, as of July 1, 1938, was 130,215,000, an increase of 1,812,000 in the two years since the estimate of 1936. That meant approximately 906,000 each year.

200,000,000 in 2000 A. D.?

Even though the increase seems to be growing smaller, there is still a large enough gain each year to justify the prediction that John Adams' estimate of 200,000,000 may eventually be reached. On the basis of the increase since 1930, it will take nearly 70 years and we will probably reach the year 2000 A. D. before we reach a population of 200,000,000 in the U. S. A.!

Officials of the census bureau regard the 1940 census as probably the most important and far-reaching since that first one 150 years ago. For this one will be much more than a mere counting

of noses. As in past years, the census will cover population, occupations, irrigation, drainage, manufactures, business, mines and quarries, vital statistics, cotton production and consumption, and financial statistics of states and cities. In addition, the census takers will also assemble data never sought before and these data will bear upon the new social and economic situations which have arisen in the last few years, bringing with them problems that are yet unsolved.

For this census will also be concerned with such questions as unemployment, migrations from one state to another and additional vital statistics bearing on public health and facilities for treatment of disease. Much of the health data may prove to have a decided bearing upon the vital problem of national defense. For instance, the census authorities hope to learn how many men would be incapacitated for military service by disease.

Problem of Migration.

The problem of migration is one to which President Roosevelt submitted a report to congress, setting forth that population shifts from state to state were not of concern only to the one state into which the great influx had taken place (California) but that they affected the whole nation. Migration from state to state is a new social movement in the United States directly traceable to unemployment.

In addition to asking his children the usual questions about age, sex, color, marital status, homes and education, Uncle Sam will also want to know about their present economic condition, their profession or occupation and whether they are employed or unemployed. Each person will also be asked where he lived 10 years ago so that some measure of migration may be obtained.

The most significant data, however, in the opinion of the census authorities, will be the figures indicating the trend of population growth, which has been steadily declining, and the distribution, according to age groups. A continuing decline in population will have a decided bearing on the future economic and social life of the nation.

A smaller population foreshadows a reduction in future markets at home and abroad. Fewer pupils in the public schools will indicate a lesser need for schoolhouses and other plant equipment and a greater surplus of teachers. An increase in the higher age groups will have important economic effects, in the form of a more persistent demand by the higher age groups for a redistribution of the profits of industry, such as the various old age pension schemes that have caused so much disturbance in the last few years. That, combined with a decrease in the lower age groups will mean lower incomes for the younger Americans.

The job of securing all this information will require the services of approximately 150,000 persons, of whom 8,000 will be employed in Washington compiling the data gathered by the 142,000 enumerators in the field. The cost of this task is estimated at \$20,000,000.

History tells us that the first census ever made was taken by Moses.

"Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names every male by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel."

Thus spoke the Lord to Moses, and Moses, with Aaron's assistance, collected the figures for the first census report, which may be found in practically every home and hotel room. It is appropriately entitled "Numbers," the fourth book of the Bible.

By its breadth of scope the census William of Normandy ordered for his new kingdom of England, resembles modern surveys. He commanded his people in 1085 A. D. to record every lord and peasant, every acre, every ox, every mill, every manor, every weir and every plow the value thereof and—this is forward looking—the natural resources, woods, fields and streams capable of development and revenue. The report to William the Conqueror became the Domesday Book, unreadable today except by scholars, yet protected in the public record office at London as one of the most precious possessions of England.

Uncle Sam was one of the pioneers in this business of counting his children scientifically. Sweden took the lead before our first census in 1790, but England, France, and Prussia did not see the necessity of regular counting of noses until 10 or 20 years later. Russia took no census until 1897.

The first American census, taken in 1790, was very limited in scope and was directed by the United States marshals. They were allowed 13 months for the job, and when the totals were added up our population was less than 4,000,000.

That census related solely to population. The name of the head of the family was taken, together with the number of persons in each family, classified as free or slave. The whites, who were free, were classified as "free whites," as male or female, and the free whites males as over or under 16 years of age. That was about all there was to it. The marshals who supervised the 1790 count numbered only 17 and the enumerators 650. The cost was \$44,000.

The deeply religious settlers of America nearly upset our first census when they harked back to another less fortunate Bible cen-



Taking information from a census schedule by means of a card puncher. Facts are translated into figures on this machine.

sus. "Satan stood up against Israel," they pointed out to the marshals, "and provoked David to number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan." What happened? "God was displeased; therefore he smote Israel. The Lord sent pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel 70,000 men."

Fears that our first census would bring similar destruction upon the nation did not materialize, so the marshals delivered their reports to President Washington within nine months for all the original states, except Vermont, Rhode Island and South Carolina. Vermont and Rhode Island entered the Union later. The marshal of South Carolina found workers scarce at \$1 per 150 heads counted.

With the exception of a comparatively few, when the vast total is considered, the original records of every family enumerated in the 1790 and subsequent census are on file in the census bureau. The missing records have been lost or destroyed by accident. However, the file on John Hancock has been preserved and his family was reported as being made up of "two white males over sixteen years of age, three white females and seven other free persons, not white."

In the taking of the 1860 census, each person was for the first time asked to give the value of his or her real and personal property. The records for Illinois show that Abraham Lincoln's family comprised Mr. Lincoln, his wife, his three sons and a boy, fourteen years old, named Philip Dinkell. Mr. Lincoln said he was worth \$17,000 of which \$5,000 was the value of his real estate, the remainder being personal property. In the same census James Buchanan listed his household as consisting of himself, his niece, Miss Harriet Lane, and 11 employees and servants, all of the latter being of foreign birth.

The system of individual enumeration was adopted at the census of 1850, and at the same time a number of new classifications were added—illiteracy, school attendance, occupation, place of birth, age, etc.

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Strange Facts

! "Black-Out" Lights Street Car Drivers Immortal Trees !

For "black-outs" during air raids, England has perfected highway and traffic lights, headlights and police uniforms that can be seen only by those on the ground.

Geneva, Switzerland, has streetcars whose entire space is given over to restaurants in which the passengers eat and drink as they travel through the city.

Many navies now use a torpedo that appears to be aimed at a point far ahead or far behind its target but, after going some distance, suddenly makes a right or left swing and strikes before its objective can turn away.

A study of marital tendencies reveals that a much larger number of widowed and divorced men marry spinsters than widowed and divorced women marry bachelors.

The giant redwood trees in California and Oregon have never been known to die a natural death.—Collier's.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Fat Side Up.—Put the roast in the pan with the fat side up so it will baste itself.

For Dried Fruits.—Try soaking and cooking a thin slice or two of lemon with your dried apricots, peaches or prunes.

Chocolate and orange flavors blend well. Add orange extract to chocolate frosting or candy. Try covering a chocolate cake with orange frosting.

Stored Potatoes.—Potatoes stored in too cold a place change some of their starch to sugar, and when a potato has accumulated considerable sugar it won't fry well.

Cane-bottomed chairs that have sagged can be tightened by being well scrubbed with a soapy mixture containing a handful of salt. Allow to dry, then paint with a strong solution of salt and water and dry again, if possible out of doors.

Washing Shirts.—To loosen the dirt on cuff and collar bands of men's and boys' shirts, scrub them with a soft brush frequently dipped in warm soapy water before putting them in the laundry tub.

Pop Corn Fudge

2 cupsful popcorn
2 cupsful brown sugar
1 cupful thin cream or whole milk
1 tablespoonful butter
1 teaspoonful vanilla

Combine the sugar and cream and stir over a low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Continue cooking to 238 degrees F. or until it forms a soft ball when tried in cold water. Remove from the heat and let stand in cold water until the mixture is cool. Then add the butter, popped corn and vanilla. Beat until creamy. Shape on a buttered plate and cut into squares. Peanuts may be added to mixture, also.

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