

How Census Bureau Will Keep Your Secrets

by DENNIS L. PAJOT

If you're among the five in 100 the computer selects for a nationwide sampling during this year's decennial census, the head of your household will be asked:

...been married more than once?

It's mandatory that the question be answered.

Elaborate precautions have been taken by the U.S. Census Bureau to prevent anyone telling how it's answered, however.

If the present spouse doesn't know, and you don't want it known, you'd best leave the question blank until everything else is filled out and you have some privacy.

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS this week obtained a copy of the long-form questionnaire that will be mailed to 5% of households selected at random by computers. Included also were the fewer questions of a 15% sampling.

Four out of five households will be asked only a minimum of questions, requiring about 15 minutes to fill out. The 5% sample gave an account of the short form in its Dec. 7, 1969 issue.

About 45 minutes will be required by those on the 5% sampling list. Maybe 30 minutes will be required for the 15% sampling form.

John Siviter, task force director for the "Livonia Census district," which includes all of Observeland, supplied the long form information last week shortly after moving into district offices at 12500 Inkster Road.

A SKELETON CREW of administrative assistants is already at work, testing and interviewing persons who have applied for the 450 jobs that will be available between now and completion of the census taking work sometime in late May or June. About 250 applications have been received. More are invited, said Siviter. A phone call to the office, 255-5940, will bring an application form in the mail.

Siviter or a member of his staff, fresh from crash instruction courses themselves, will guide you through the very specific training needed. Previous experience is not required.

ON HIS STAFF now are his office supervisor, Carol Phillips of Redford Township; three permanent clerks, Pat Violante, Norma Sawyer and Lois Downs; and a permanent supply clerk, Dale Ball. Others will be added for various durations at the necessary time in the processing.

About 350 of those hired will be census neighborhood enumerators. But these won't necessarily come into living



ROWS OF FILES are made of cardboard, and afterwards the census workers will use them in mailing cartons. Mrs. Lois Downs sits at a collapsible cardboard desk. (Observer photo)

rooms to ask questions. Most of their work will be scanning forms submitted by the householders and compiling statistics from them.

All except special locations, such as hospitals, hotels, motels and "flophouses" will be reached first and—hopefully—solely by mail, said Siviter. Only if the forms are returned incomplete or unacceptably filled out will a personal call be made to households by an enumerator.

Mailings from the central U.S. Census Bureau are expected to reach households about March 27. Householdholders are expected to fill out the forms on April 1 and include only information valid as of that date, and then to return them by mail to the indicated address immediately.

RETURNS NOT received by April 7 will be subject to checkoff in Siviter's office and enumerators will attempt to prompt householders with a phone call. If this fails, they will visit the address.

Through April and the first week of May there will be an auditing in Siviter's office of returns and sufficiencies.

The last two weeks in May are scheduled for actual computations. "This is when the material becomes classified and I'm the only one who can work on it," said Siviter. "By the last of May or the first of June, I should be ready to announce some preliminary figures."

HE QUICKLY NOTED that although not technically classified, original information persons shown living in the census is considered private, and even enumerators cannot divulge it to their spouses.

"We can and will prosecute any violators," he said.

The law also requires each respondent to answer truthfully each question asked in his questionnaire—whether or not he likes the question.

What incentive is there, otherwise, for people to fill them out and return them?

"That's good incentive, I feel," said Siviter. "In the first place, the results will determine representations in Congress, and the State Legislature. An undercount could deprive people of sufficient representation."

He noted that in the 1960 census failure of 5.8 million persons to be counted resulted in forfeited congressional seats. For instance, among the 5.8 million were 2.8 million blacks believed distrustful of government. Those 2.8 million blacks lost five congressmen that could have been working for them this past 10 years.

Secondly, according to Siviter, "There are a tremendous number of federal and state program funds allocated on the basis of census figures. An undercount could again deprive people of their just due."

WHAT ABOUT the invasion of privacy complaint often heard from the middle-class white population which his district contains?

"There's only a minute portion of the information not a matter of public record already, in county files or city files, state files or federal files," he said.

Siviter noted that the census is called for in the U.S. Constitution and that the first census asked 300 questions. "Some of them very personal. The questions have since been refined, and so have the census-taking techniques, the use of mailed self-completion forms being the most noticeable."

Siviter's office testifies to extensive "thought" that has been put into the process, producing step by step instruction manuals and kits for every job in the temporary task right down to advance delivery of rolls of string to the census offices.

"OUR INITIAL SHIPMENT was 7½ tons of paper," said Siviter. With the exception of his executive desk, every other of about 30 desks and several typing tables are supplied as collapsed cartons. These are unfolded, bent into shape, interlocked, used for the four-month period and then are disposable.

Row upon row of files are actually stacked and taped cardboard boxes that become mailing cartons when the local processing is completed.

A whole section of office supplies is presently neatly stacked in cardboard bins. Parked between various work areas are of prepared folded cardboard.

Normal booklet telephone and steel folding chairs look eerie amidst the cardboard jungle.

The cardboard is stout. Siviter stood on a typing table for several long minutes posing as if instructing his staff. It's easily moved, too. The photographer tossed two "fists" out of the way with flicks of his wrists.

SENIOR CITIZENS wanting short-term employment are encouraged by the U.S. Census Bureau to apply for jobs as census takers. They should apply to Siviter's office, telephone 255-5940. Persons of all ages are also invited to work.

No previous experience is required. The bureau provides paid training for all employees. The general pay rate is \$2 per hour. Applicants must be able to work from six to eight hours daily, five days per week when their portion of the task is scheduled. They should also be willing to work evenings and Saturdays.

President Richard Nixon has called the decennial census "a photograph of our country" or a self-analysis upon which intelligent social decisions can be based.

He notes that in the matter of head count, along the first census in 1790 showed a population of 3,929,214 persons. By 1960 there were 179,323,175 persons shown living in the United States.

THE CENSUS SEEKS to learn much more than simple

numbers of people. The questions that will be asked of all households seek to place the relationships of members of the household, ages, sex, ethnic group, and marital status.

About 15 questions are asked of all households seeking to determine basic creature comfort facilities in those households, such as whether there is a telephone, outside door, complete kitchen, number of rooms, hot and cold water, flush toilet, bathtub or shower, basement, ownership or rental, size of lot, sale value or monthly rent paid.

The only thing the respondent has to write is names. The remainder of the questions are multiple choice and are to be answered by filling in appropriate circles in heavy black pencil—for computer reading.

Siviter said the processing involves microfilming of each completed form by a process which eliminates all but the bold black dots, then running of the microfilm through a computer pickup for analytic compilation.

QUESTIONS BEING asked 15 and 5% of the householders seek to determine more complete data about living conditions, migration patterns, literacy, mortality, service in the armed forces, education, health, work record, type of occupation and earnings.

The 15% will be asked, "Is this building connected to a public sewer?" and "What country was (the head of household's) mother and father born in?" and "What language other than English was spoken in (the household's) childhood home?" and "Where did he work last week?"

The 5% only will be asked, "Which feet is used most for cooking?" and "Do you have a battery operated radio?" and "Is this person naturalized?" and "Has this person ever supported a vocational training program?" and "In April 1965 what state did this person live in?" and "What kind of work was he doing?"

INCOME QUESTIONS are directed to both the 15 and the 5%. Here will be an exception to the "no writing" responses. Exact figures are called for.

The questions are: "How much did this person earn in 1969 in wages, salaries, commissions, bonuses, or tips from all jobs?"

"How much did he earn in 1969 from his own non-farm business, professional practice or partnership?"

"How much did he earn in 1969 from his own farm?"

"How much did this person receive in 1969 from Social Security or Railroad Retirement?"

"How much did he receive in 1969 from public assistance or welfare payments?"

"How much did he receive in 1969 from all other sources?"

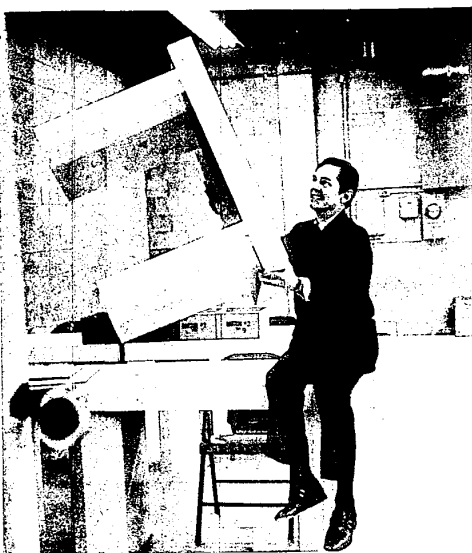
THOSE SOUND very probing, but supposedly the same information was entered on his federal income tax returns.

[A question asked in 1890 no longer appears: "Is there any one living here who is insane or idiotic?"

Neither does the additional question of 1890 appear: "Is this person restrained by a strap...kept under lock and key...size of his head?"

A comparison would seem to indicate that we've progressed from a nation concerned with personal infirmities to one concerned with living conditions, cultural advantages and the labor force.

Regional Affairs



DESKS ARE CARDBOARD but they're sturdy in the U.S. Census Bureau's new office on Inkster Road. Director John Siviter shows they're also light. (Observer photo by Vince Witke)

Why They Use Cardboard Desks

Mention of cardboard furniture probably arouses memories of paper dolls and doll houses in the minds of most people, but to the U.S. Bureau of the Census it's strictly business and highly economical.

The task of finding temporary furnishings for census district offices has been a growing problem since the earliest days of the Republic when U.S. marshals conducted the head count.

TRADITIONALLY, the acquisition of office equipment was accomplished by a great deal of renting from local firms and by considerable borrowing from other government agencies. Even with the borrowing, however, the cost of moving and storing rose steadily until currently it is estimated that the average price tag for furnishing one working

space amounts to approximately \$20.

For the 1970 census of population and housing, the Bureau will need to equip about 20,000 spaces in 353 district offices throughout the nation.

Two census officials tackled the problem on a limited scale in 1965 when a special census was conducted for Cleveland, Ohio.

Making use of their home workshop experience in making play furniture for their children, they designed tables of plywood and detachable legs. These units could be combined to create almost any size of needed table space and they could be dismantled and shipped easily.

TWO YEARS LATER, however, when special censuses were being conducted in New Haven, Connecticut, and

North Philadelphia, the plywood idea was replaced by cardboard. Cardboard is lighter, less expensive and easier to assemble.

In addition to tables, it was made into sorting and file bins. It was light and almost unbelievably sturdy—a 58-pound man could sit on a table without collapsing it. It could be treated with fire-resisting chemicals. It could be folded for shipment and it could be stored in small spaces.

The furniture is so light that a woman working alone can set up an office or rearrange office layout in order to alter office operations without any great effort.

Cost of new cardboard furniture is about \$8 per working space, \$22 less than the cost of the combination of renting and borrowing. That saving will add up nationwide to more than \$400,000.

Pair Trained By Mobil Oil

Eugene L. Prossie of 530 East and William C. Longenecker of 7017 Bonnie Drive East, Westland, successfully completed a month's training recently at Mobil Oil Corporation's retail development center in Morton Grove, Ill.

The graduates of the extensive four-week course operate Prossie's Mobil Service at 123 South Meridian in Westland.

Mobil dealer Prossie and his

Bill To Aid Divorced Moms, Kids

Immediate temporary financial support would be available to divorced mothers and their children under a bill introduced today in the Michigan Senate by State Sen. William Faust (D-Westland).

The measure would raise marriage license fees from the present \$5 to \$15, with the additional money to establish a "fund for emergency support."

Upon the filing of a petition for divorce, the judge could order the Friend of the Court to administer the fund, to provide temporary support payments.

"Currently, a mother who is divorced and who needs child support funds must apply for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) payments to tide her over until she is able to prevail upon the father for support."

"Under this bill, she can, at the judge's discretion, receive immediate support up to the amount which ADC payments would normally provide."



SLEEPING BEAUTY—The Livonia Redford Theatre Guild's annual children's production opens Feb. 28 in Redford Union High School. Appearing in the fairy tale set to music are, from left: D. James Monroe; Russ Vogel; Sandy Michael and Lyn Tozmiak. Performances are scheduled at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. The production moves to Bentley High School on March 7; Thurston High, March 14; and Franklin High, March 21.

Appointment Official

Congressman Jack McDonald (R-15th District) has formally announced the appointment of John M. Siviter to the position of director of the Livonia District Census Office.

He resides at 2571 Greenland Court, Livonia, with his wife Lynn and three children. Congressman McDonald was director of the census for Western Wayne County in 1960.

Siviter has held management positions for the past 10 years and is currently serving as general manager of Said Electric Co., electrical contractors located in Livonia.

THE HARRIS BROADCASTER

RELIGIOUS VAUDEVILLE

"Fresh Cookies"

Saturday, March 7 - 8 p.m.

All Saints Lutheran Church

8850 Newburgh Road (At Joy)

Donation: \$2.50

ROCK CONCERT

By Symphonic Metamorphosis

Friday, February 27 - 8:30 p.m.

Louis E. Schmidt Auditorium

20155 Middlebelt

Tickets: Mrs. Wood at 474-1708

Donation: Advance Sale \$1.50

At Door - \$2.00

EASTERN STAR CARD PARTY

Thursday, March 5 - 8 p.m.

Garden City Masonic Temple

1740 Middlebelt Road

Ticket Information:

Mrs. Phyllis Nelson 427-3305

"EDUCAID" DEMONSTRATION

Friday, February 27 - 8 p.m.

Whittier Jr. High School

28550 Ann Arbor Trail

Donation: Free

To publish the notice of your organization activity, contact, in person, Thomas F. Rost, Mgr., Garden City Chapel, or David R. Whitney, Mgr., Livonia Chapel.

R.G.&G.R. SINCE 1910

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REDFORD OBSERVER	20,700	19,896
WESTLAND OBSERVER	18,000	17,876
SOUTHFIELD OBSERVER	17,000	(16,000)
FARMINGTON ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER	16,400	14,501
GARDEN CITY OBSERVER	11,400	10,843
PLYMOUTH MAIL & OBSERVER	9,700	9,800
WEEKLY EDITION, WEDNESDAY EVENING EDITION, February 1970 Will be included in March 1970 CAC Ad Rate:		
Total Weeklies	122,500	116,972
Weeklies	90,500	86,272

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