



South Dakota State University

United States™
Census
Bureau



Data In Indian Country

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Objectives

Immediate challenges in gathering data

names and the use of enumerators

Indian Census Rolls (BIA)

Legal background

How people were listed

Who was counted

US Census and American Community Survey

Exclusion

From enumerators to self-reporting

Data collection issues even in the beginning

- In May 6th, 1877 Charles A. Johnson and Charles P. Jordan collect the names of those who surrendered with Crazy Horse
- Approx. 1,500 names gathered
- About 70 of the names are...questionable.

By any other name...

- Most of the questionable names appear with the Lakota bands
 - 2 with the Cheyennes
- The names listed on the ledger either:
 - Given by a Winkte
 - Joke
 - Passive form of resistance

✓ 1 } Well up
1 } Gross Trick
1 } Iron 'White Man

1 } Crazy Horse
1 } Tall Bull

1 } Thick Face
1 } Little Boy

✓ 1 } Little Hawk,
1 } Patch Stealer

✓ 115 Brought forward
1 The Above
1 Pulls Out

1 Muttler

{ Bloody Knife
The Shield

✓ 1 Dried Pick -

1 Blind Woman no 2 (M)

✓ 1 Nose in Sight

{ Ass Hole
American Horse

Legal Background for Indian Census

- "That hereafter each Indian agent be required, in his annual report, to submit a census of the Indians at his agency or upon the reservation under his charge."
 - The Act of July 4, 1884, (23 Stat. 76, 98)

The Distribution of the Indian Census

- In 1885 and later censuses, the agent used and complied forms from the Census Bureau.
- Only one Census per Reservation (except when the reservation existed in more than one state)
- The original copy of the enumeration was sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Multiple Copies were not made
- The earliest censuses were written in by hand with little instruction on how to fill out the forms

The Distribution of the Indian Census (cont.)

- At first, a new census was taken each year and the entire roll redone.
- In 1921 agents were instructed to list all people under their charge, and if a name was listed for the first time, or was not listed from the last year, an explanation was required.
- Persons also could be designated by a number peculiar to that reservation, if it was explained somewhere, or they could be listed as "N.E.", or "Not Enrolled."

The Distribution of the Indian Census (cont.)

- By the 1930s, in some cases, only supplementary rolls showing changes from the previous year were submitted.
- By 1940 the Indian censuses were discontinued
- However in 1950, an Indian Census was taken by the Census Bureau but it will not be available for public use until 2022

How people were listed

- Initially, getting the forms completed on time was the main priority for the commissioner
- Eventually instructions included listing family groups with all the people living in each household.
- The agent was instructed to list the Indian and English names of the head of the household and the names, ages, and relationship of the other family members.
- In 1902 agents received directives which contained suggestions to translate Indian names to English
- After 1904 the column for Indian Name was discontinued

The issue of names crops up again

- For issues of land ownership or property, family members were listed with father or husband surnames.
- Agents were instructed not to substitute English for the native language.
- If the name was easy to pronounce and remember, it was suggested that the names should be kept.
- "Foolish, cumbersome or uncouth translations which would handicap a self-respecting person should not be tolerated." were to be dropped.

Who was Included

- In 1909, The agent was responsible for showing how many people resided on the reservation and how many allotted Indians were living on their allotments.
- By 1913, "In enumerating Indians who are not attached to your jurisdiction, they should be classified by tribal affiliations, in which case they should be designated by approximate blood relationship."

After the Indian Census was discontinued

- The Indian Census lasted from 1884-1940
- Individual tribes maintain enrollment figures
- Reliance of data on Native American turns to the Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)

United States Census

- Originally no mention of American Indians.
 - Not included possible due to non-taxable status
- Enumerators later mark either “I”, “Indian” or “In.”
- By 1930, A person of mixed Black and American Indian lineage was also to be recorded as Black.

Census: From appearance to self selection

- A person with both White and American Indian lineage was to be recorded as an Indian.
- In 1970, the Census switches method from enumerators to mail-in-surveys.
 - Change caused 110% increase in the Native American population.

Switching to the American Community Survey (ACS)

- In 2010, replaced Census to provide continuous data.
- The sampling error is generally higher with the ACS than with the decennial census long form.
- The sampling rate is declining slightly over time.

Issues with the American Community Survey

- Data for smaller geographic areas (especially those under 20,000 as well as for all ZIP codes, even those with populations over 20,000), are only released as 5-year “period estimates”.
- Margins of error not necessarily a big issue in urban areas but become a significant issue in rural areas.

Still seeing the same problems

- The Census methodology has changed continuously from enumerators who identified American Indians through appearance then to self reporting.
- American Community Survey distributes same number of survey even as household population grows so the margin of error is high.

Thank You!