

OPENING STATEMENT
OF
CALVERT L. DEDRICK

To the

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians

November 2, 1981

When I arrived at my office in the Bureau of the Census on February 26, 1942, Director J. C. Capt had already called me to report immediately to his office. He told me that the War Department needed the immediate services of a statistician to register enemy aliens. Also, that they wished me to report in San Francisco the next day, and would deliver a priority airline ticket to me at noon for departure from Washing at 6 p.m. that day. It was obvious that the Director wanted the Bureau of the Census to do all it could to help in this phase of the war effort. (J. C. Capt had been a Captain in World War I.)

I was met at the San Francisco airport at noon the next day and taken immediately to General DeWitt's headquarters. Fifty-three weeks later, following my service as Chief Statistician of the Wartime Civil Control Administration, The War Department returned me to Washington and assigned me to the Office of the Provost Marshal General, where I served as a statistician and economist on Prisoner of War labor until June 1945.

It is logical to ask why the Director of the Census should have chosen Dedrick for the War Department assignment. Perhaps it was because I had recently returned from a six-month assignment to Panama and had not yet assumed all the duties of my Census position as Chief Statistician and Chief of the Statistical Research Division, or perhaps he considered my prior experience with national registrations.

When I joined the Census Bureau staff in 1935 with a shiny new Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin but no previous Federal government experience, Director William L. Austin gave me a number of outside assignments. Some of these were quite short term duties on inter-Departmental technical committees, or temporary staff assistance to a new agency of activity while they were recruiting regular staff. Among my details and assignments between 1935 and 1941 should be noted the following which are related to national registrations:

1. Interdepartmental technical committee to set up the Social Security System and conduct the initial national registration for the assignment of identity numbers to persons and employers. (1935)
2. Census of Partial Employment, Unemployment and Occupations: 1937. This was actually a voluntary, post office, registration of persons who considered themselves unemployed and wished to register this fact.. A valuable national sample census of unemployment was conducted as a check on the completeness and accuracy of the voluntary registration. The Census Bureau loaned me and others to the independent staff of this activity. (1937)
3. Selective Service Registration of 1938. Several agencies, including the Census Bureau, loaned staff to help Major Hershey set up and conduct the registration for the 1938 Draft. I helped to draft the registration forms and procedures. (1938)
4. Alien Registration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice. Solicitor General

Francis Biddle requested that the Census Bureau assist the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which had just been transferred from the Department of Labor to the Justice Department, in planning and conducting a Registration of Aliens in compliance with an Act of Congress. I was detailed, with one assistant, to the Department of Justice from June to October for that purpose. (1940)

My original assignment at the War Department in February 1942 was to be for "two weeks to two months" on a reimbursable basis. In June the War Department requested my transfer from the Census Bureau on a War Service appointment. This was done on June 8, 1942. Following my work with W.C.C.A. in March 1943, I was transferred to the Office of the Provost Marshal General in Washington (but on the payroll of Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy) to serve as Chief Economist and Statistician for the Prisoner of War program of that Office; also as Consultant on matters relating to the Civilian Evacuation Program. This war service extended from March 1943 through June 1945.

At the Wartime Civil Control Administration my position as Chief of the Statistical Section required that I organize and administer that important unit which was required for the planning and operation of the alien evacuation program. I was responsible for designing registration and administrative procedures, the preparation of maps and logistical plans for the evacuation of areas selected by higher command, and the family and individual intelligence reporting system. I also wrote parts of the Final Report, and assisted staff members of the War Relocation Authority with some statistical aspects of their work.

The preparation of evacuation plans for specific areas was based in part on counts of the Japanese population for small areas (1940 Census enumeration areas for rural zones and blocks for some cities.) These data we

were not accurate because of the two-year lag after the census and some increased movement of the Japanese population as evacuation approached. At no time were the names and addresses of individuals or families received or requested from the Bureau of the Census. The punched cards from which detailed tabulations were made did not (and in 1940 could not) contain the names of individuals. To the best of my knowledge the War Powers Act, passed in the spring of 1942, was never used by the Bureau of the Census in connection with confidential population information.

How, then, could the W. C. C. A. publish such detailed statistics of the 1940 U. S. Census of Population? In early December 1941, the normal tabulation procedures required that all the cards be sorted by race as well as by sex and age. So as not to delay the normal compilation of the census, a duplicate set of cards were made for the Japanese in all the U. S. Shortly after joining W.C.C.A. I recommended that the War Department request (and pay for, if necessary) a complete set of tables for our areas giving full census tabulations for even the smallest areas for which data had been identified. Thus we had details for enumeration areas which would otherwise be available only for the State as a whole. Incidentally such tabulations are frequently purchased for program purposes.

I am quite willing to answer any questions the Commission and its staff may have concerning the statistical aspects of the evacuation operation. I may be biased, but I believe that the statistics and planned logistics of this operation were efficient and effective, given the military requirements and constraints.