

Edward Jackson Davis

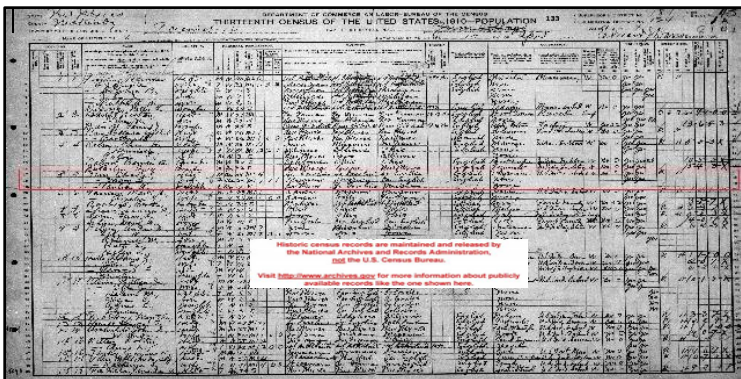
Physician for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Census Bureau Enumerator

The U.S. Census Bureau is proud of its history of continually evolving to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. To accomplish this, the Census Bureau has long embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce representative of local communities and the people who were a part of the neighborhoods that they counted. For this reason, census work was often one of the few government jobs open to minorities. Beginning with the 1870 Census (the first after the abolition of slavery), the Census Bureau began hiring African Americans as enumerators and data processors. With the creation of a permanent Census Bureau in 1902, African American workers and statisticians found an environment with an inclusiveness far greater than many contemporary institutions.



DR. E. J. DAVIS

*Dr. Edward Jackson Davis,
St. Louis Argus (St. Louis, Missouri),
January 22, 1943.*



This 1910 Census record lists Edward as the Census Bureau enumerator for the Zuni Agency and it shows he was living with his wife and 4-year-old daughter, Pauline.

Harvard Medical school, eventually graduating in 1900. Edward then moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and began working as a resident physician and superintendent of the newly established Provident Hospital (later People's Hospital), the only privatized institution in St. Louis that treated African American patients.

Edward worked at People's Hospital until 1903, when he accepted a federal appointment as the first American physician and health officer of the Zuni Agency in New Mexico, beginning in 1903. In this role, Edward worked with the Zuni people to improve their physical, mental, and social health by treating the sick patients and encouraging the adoption of modern sanitation practices such as increasing the space between residents' homes among many other actions. Edward updated the Superintendent of Zuni Agency and the officials at the Bureau of Indian Affairs about his own actions for each year and about the overall health of the Zuni people living at the Zuni Agency in Zuni, New Mexico.



This photograph from the 1890 Census shows a dwelling in Zuni. The 1890 Census contained several anthropological and scientific reports on many Indian groups, including the Zuni.

On June 1, 1905, Edward married Mary Louise Moseley, a member of a prominent St. Louis family. They had a daughter, Pauline Alexandria, in 1906, who would eventually graduate from Cornell University and dedicate her life to teaching in the St. Louis Public Schools.

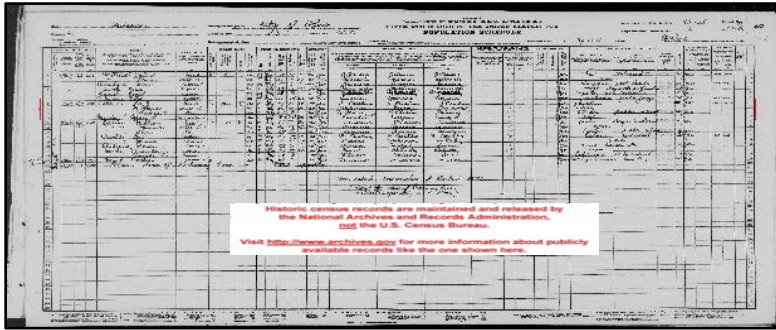
In addition to serving the Zuni people and providing annual reports to the officials at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, DC, Edward served as a BIA census enumerator from 1904 to 1906. Following the instructions of Douglas D. Graham, the U.S. agent at Zuni, New Mexico, from 1870–1906, Edward and Jolie A. Palin, the Zuni Agency’s field matron, enumerated the number of males above 18 years, the number of females above 14 years, the number of school children between 6 and 16 years, the number of school houses at the agency, the number of schools in operation and the attendance at each, and the names of the teachers employed and their salaries.

DR. DAVIS RETURNS TO ST. LOUIS
Dr. Edward J. Davis, formerly resident physician of Provident Hospital, of this city, after fifteen years of service for the U. S. Government among the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, has returned to the city where he will begin anew the practice of his profession.

Dr. Edward Davis served his country as a civil servant in the U.S. Government for 15 years.

St. Louis Argus (St. Louis, Missouri), December 13, 1918.

Given his experience serving the Zuni and his experience as an enumerator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs annual censuses of American Indian agencies, Edward received an appointment as an enumerator for the nation’s 1910 Census. As a Census Bureau enumerator, Edward counted a total of 1,775 people living in Zuni, New Mexico, a majority of whom lived on the Zuni Reservation. Furthermore, Census Bureau officials used Edward’s and results from other New Mexican enumerators to determine the territory had the third largest population of American Indians in the country with a total of 20,573 people.



Above: This 1930 Census record shows Edward, his wife, his daughter, and his 93-year-old mother-in-law were living together in St. Louis.

Having completed the enumeration of Zuni, New Mexico, Edward returned to his traditional responsibilities as the Zuni Agency’s physician and continued to serve the Zuni and the Bureau of Indian Affairs employees living on or near the agency for another 8 years.

In late 1918, Edward, Mary, and Pauline returned to St. Louis. According to local newspaper articles and census records, Edward continued his work as a physician

in St. Louis and served as the treasurer of Peoples’ Hospital in St. Louis and as the city’s inspector of hygiene of public schools. In addition to running a private practice and working for the city of St. Louis, Edward also served his local community as a member of the Sigma Psi Phi, Eta Boule Chapter of which he was secretary for life, a member of the Anniversary Club, and treasurer of the Mound City Medical Forum and the Pine Street YMCA.

Dr. Edward J. Davis passed away on January 20, 1943, at Peoples’ Hospital, after suffering from a paralytic stroke a few weeks earlier. At the time of his death, his wife, daughter, and cousin, Mrs. P.J. Williams survived him. We are grateful for Edward’s service to the U.S. Census Bureau, his community, and our nation.



Initially founded in 1894 as Provident Hospital, the Peoples Hospital (pictured above) moved locations within the St. Louis region and changed its name in 1903. During the early and mid-20th century, the Peoples Hospital served as the only private medical facility where African American physicians and surgeons could practice and treat members of their community during the era of segregation.

Image courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.