

Ivanna Eudora Kean

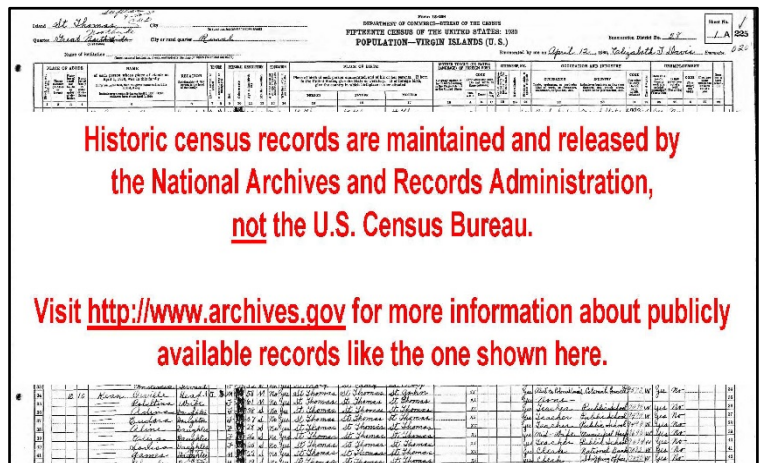
Census Taker and Lifelong Educator



Enid M. Baa Library and Archives, Virgin Islands
Department of Libraries, University of the Virgin Islands.
Accessed through Digital Library of the Caribbean
(April 1, 2019).

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. For this reason, the Census Bureau has always embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce representative of the local communities. From the beginning of our country's history to the middle of the 20th century, the United States has expanded not only westward, but also outward, including into the nearby Caribbean. Some acquisitions, like those of Cuba and Puerto Rico, resulted from military action, while we acquired others, like the U.S. Virgin Islands, through purchases. While conducting censuses in these new territories, census officials generally relied on local supervisors and census takers, who had the trust, knowledge, and experience needed to work with their communities.

Ivanna Eudora Kean, known as Eudora, was born on December 28, 1892, on the island of St. Thomas, in what was then the Danish West Indies. Eudora's father, Orville, worked as a banker and local politician, while her mother, Robertina, raised Eudora and her 11 siblings. Both Orville and Robertina promoted the education of all of their children. In addition to learning at home, Eudora also attended several private schools on the island. In 1911, Eudora entered the Hospitalgade School at St. Thomas to both study Danish and teach, thus beginning a career that would last 52 years.



Eudora and her family's 1930 Census.

ISLAND OF ST. THOMAS.		
Special agents.		
Charlotte Amalie:		
General.....	Niels C. A. Kjeldsen.	
Wages and hours of labor.....	Victor C. Peterson.	
Manufactures.....	Anthony L. Audain.	
Messenger.....	Joseph Morrill.	
ENUMERATION DISTRICTS.		Enumerators.
No.	Designation.	
Charlotte Amalie Town.		
1	King's Quarter.....	Elma U. Smith.
2	King's Quarter.....	Irina N. Meyers.
3	King's Quarter.....	Anna M. Vessump.
4	Queen's Quarter.....	Amadeo I. Francis.
5	Queen's Quarter.....	Ivanna E. Kean.
6	Queen's Quarter.....	Cleoda H. Bonelli.
7	Crown Prince's Quarter.....	Emmy A. Williams.
8	Crown Prince's Quarter.....	Eulalie M. Stevens.
9	Crown Prince's Quarter.....	Adina M. Petrus.
10	Crown Prince's Quarter.....	Estella A. Martine.

Eudora listed as an enumerator for the 1917 Census.

In 1917, after overtures dating back to 1867, the United States purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark. This helped the United States establish a forward naval base during World War I, while the Danish no longer had to worry about a territory with a fickle economy. To better understand the new territory, one of the first tasks undertaken by the United States was a census. Based on past experiences, the Census Bureau knew that the quickest way to get competent, trustworthy, and knowledgeable workers was to hire local teachers. The census was delayed from November to December in 1917, in part due to transportation problems. As a result, the teachers, including Eudora, started the enumeration of St. Thomas on December 24, 1917, during the holiday break.

6-8493 DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS Enumeration District No. _____
CENSUS OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF UNITED STATES: 1917
POPULATION Schedule No. _____

City or rural district _____
Street or road, and House No. _____ Dwelling No. _____ Family No. _____

Name of person enumerated _____
Relationship to head of family _____
Enumerated by me on the _____ day of November, 1917.

Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done _____
Industry, business, or establishment in which at work _____
Employer, employer, or working on own account _____

Special Agent.

SEX	AGE	EDUCATION	INDUSTRY	LANGUAGE	RELIGION	PROPERTY	RENT	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	OTHER
Male	20	High School	Teacher	English	Methodist	Own	Yes	Married	U.S. Citizen	
Female	18	High School	Teacher	English	Methodist	Own	Yes	Married	U.S. Citizen	

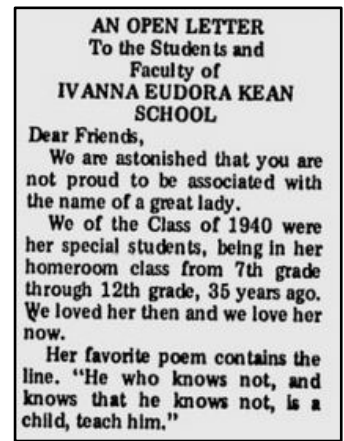
NOT TO BE USED BY ENUMERATORS

The experimental 1917 field punch card.

In addition to being the first U.S. census of the Virgin Islands, the 1917 Census of the Virgin Islands also tested new technology and census-taking methods. Ever since Herman Hollerith, one of the founding fathers of International Business Machines (IBM), developed punch card technology for the 1890 Census, the Census Bureau had been refining the technology, and would do so until computers replaced punch card tabulation in the 1950s. As part of the punch card process, an army of census clerks would take handwritten census schedules and use a pantograph—basically a large

hole punch machine—to transfer the information from the schedules to machine readable punch cards. In an attempt to remove this time consuming step from the tabulation process, the Census Bureau decided to test whether enumerators could simply punch the cards in the field, and then have machines assemble the data back at headquarters. As part of the pre-testing for the 1920 Census, the Census Bureau chose two locations to test this new technology during special censuses—Okmulgee County, Oklahoma, and the urban districts of Charlotte Amalie, on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

With her conductor’s punch (a handheld, single-hole punch device much easier to use in the field than a large pantograph) and census cards, Eudora and her fellow teachers conducted the census of Charlotte Amalie, with work ending after 3 weeks on January 12, 1918. Eudora and the nine other enumerators working in Charlotte Amalie counted 7,747 people in the city. However, the experimental method of hole punching census cards in the field proved too cumbersome and inefficient. In fact, the Census Bureau would not test another hand-held census-taking device for field workers until almost a century after Eudora’s efforts.



A letter from Eudora’s former students to the students of the newly minted Ivanna Eudora Kean High School. *The Virgin Island Daily News* (Charlotte Amalie, USVI) March 19, 1975

Following her census work in 1917, Eudora continued educating both her students and herself. She completed correspondence courses with the International Correspondence School—specializing in math while taking correspondence courses with Columbia University and the University of Wisconsin. Eudora also completed courses at Virginia’s Hampton Institute, today Hampton University, a historically black university with a well-respected teacher’s college. Not only did several Virgin Island teachers travel to the United States to receive their education at Hampton University, but in 1953, the school opened an extension office in the Virgin Islands. Eudora also traveled extensively to Puerto Rico and New York City throughout her life, visiting relatives and expanding her horizons.

After moving around and working at several schools early in her career, including a stint as a principal in 1915, Eudora settled at Charlotte Amalie High School in 1922, where she was employed until her retirement in 1963. Eudora greatly influenced the lives of her students and earned the Teacher of the Year Award in 1959, the Charlotte Amalie High School Student Council Distinguished Service Award in 1963, and had a new school named in her honor in 1975. Eudora remained unmarried her whole life, and passed away on February 27, 1979, on St. Thomas. The Census Bureau is grateful for Eudora’s lifelong dedication to public service, our country, and our agency.



Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in 2016
IEKHS Breast Cancer PSA, Theater Tech I Class, IEKHS (St. Thomas, USVI), 2016. Accessed through YouTube (April 1, 2019).