

# Iwao Milton Moriyama

*Improving Life with the U.S. Census*



*The Honolulu Advertiser* (Honolulu, HI)  
3 October 1952.

The U.S. Census Bureau has always highlighted American diversity through its decennial snapshots of the population. As the United States grew and the population became more diverse, the Census Bureau's workforce adapted to represent the country's people and needs. As immigration from non-European countries increased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Census Bureau tried to hire enumerators that lived in the neighborhoods and spoke the language. Others became a part of the operations in Washington, DC. From the first surges of Chinese immigration into California in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, immigrants of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage have long contributed to the Census Bureau's mission, both at headquarters and in the field.

Iwao Milton Moriyama was born on January 26, 1909, in San Francisco, CA, to Saburo and Reki Moriyama. His father, Saburo, had originally come to America to study photography and later established his own studio in the 1910s. Iwao graduated from San Francisco's

Polytechnic High School in 1926 and went on to attend the University of California at Berkeley. After receiving his bachelor of science degree in 1931, Iwao traveled to the east coast to attend Yale, where he earned his master's degree in 1934 and a doctorate in 1937, both in public health. Following his graduation, Iwao worked for the American Public Health Association as a technical secretary.

**Moriyama Family, 1920 Census**



*The Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL)  
28 December 1950.

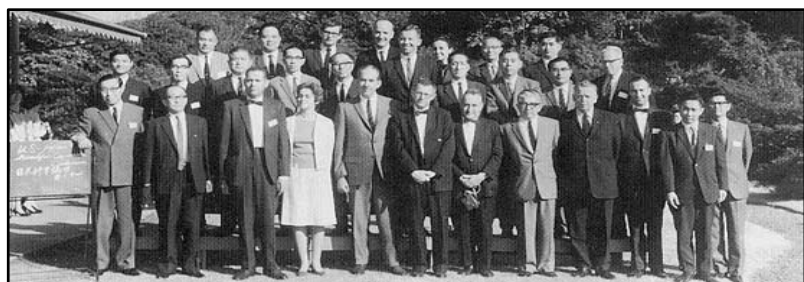
In 1940, Iwao moved to Washington, DC, to help improve the lives of people across the world by working in the federal government. As a public servant, he began an impressive career that would last over 30 years. Iwao, first, worked as a biometrician in the Vital Statistics Division at the Census Bureau. Since the 1850 Census, the Census Bureau had collected vital statistics on marriages, births, and deaths and had helped standardize the collection of these statistics across the entire country. With the creation of a permanent census office in 1902, rising urbanization and its associated diseases, and the outbreak of World War I, the collection of vital statistics became one of the Census Bureau's most important surveys beyond the decennial mandate.

In 1935, the Census Bureau began ramping up its Division of Vital Statistics, not just to run registration campaigns at the state level, but to focus on new and important research in the area of vital statistics. Iwao's arrival at the Census Bureau in 1940 also coincided with the outbreak of World War II in Europe, which the United States would soon enter. In order to support this preparation, the Division of Vital Statistics focused on providing age and manpower information, not just to the government, but to individuals trying to gain employment under new wartime measures. As vital statisticians estimated that 55 million Americans had no birth certificate on file in 1940, a person's entry in the census was often the only way to approximate their age.\*

**Moriyama's 1940 Census, working in Washington, DC.**

Historic census records are maintained and released by the National Archives and Records Administration, not the U.S. Census Bureau. Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here.

Iwao adapted to his new job with enthusiasm and did his part to ensure proper statistics regarding available draftees and potential workforce. He would later say, "The most essential commodity for the prosecution of the war was people—people to fight the war, people to produce war material, and the people to whom critical material had to be diverted for the production of essential civilian goods. Thus, it was important to have current knowledge, and in many cases a future picture, of the population, its composition and distribution, as well as the forces affecting it."



**Moriyanama and scientists connected with the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Tokyo, 1965.**

*From the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (and the University of Texas).*

Within five years, Iwao received a promotion from biometrician, to senior statistician, and finally to the chief of the Planning and Analysis Section of the Vital Statistics Division. However, in 1943, the Budget Bureau recommended to separate the Division of Vital Statistics from the Census Bureau. In 1946, the new National Office of Vital Statistics (NOVS) formed

within the United States Public Health Service. In his role as a vital statistician, Iwao followed the office out of the Census Bureau and became chief of the Mortality Analysis Office at NOVS. He continued working for the Public Health Service until 1975, serving in roles such as director of the Office of Health Statistical Analysis and associate director of International Statistics.

In 1961, Iwao became a fellow of the American Statistical Society. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he also worked with the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, where he served as chief of the Epidemiology and Statistics. After retiring in 1975, Iwao continued to be active with national and international vital statistics organizations and Japanese nuclear-bomb survivors. He was also a member of the Cosmos Club, the Delta Omega public health honor society, and the Sigma Xi science honor society. His professional associations included the Population Association of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Statistical Association, and the American Public Health Association.



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Iwao passed away in Mitchellville, MD, on June 10, 2006, at the age of 97. His wife of 60 years, Toshiko, and one of their two sons survived him. Iwao Moriyanama's dedication to vital statistics helped to ensure the health of not just the United States, but all of the countries and people he worked with throughout his career.

\*For more information, see "Mary C. Ourlser" at <https://go.usa.gov/xXCsb>.