

Authority for the 1950 Census

The Population Commission of the United Nations recommended that member nations undertake population censuses during the calendar year 1950. Legal authority for the taking of a population census of the Ryukyu Islands on 1, 2, and 3 December 1950 was established in Military Government Ordinance No.25, dated 18 October 1950. Recommendations of the Commission were used as a guide in developing the census schedule and in establishing the procedures employed. Procedures and methods used in the conduct of the 1950 census in Japan were followed wherever feasible because of the similarity of the areas and people. The Programs and Statistics Section of Military Government Headquarters planned and directed the operation of the census, which was conducted by the four Gunto Governments under the surveillance of the Military Government Teams.

Methods and Procedures of the 1950 Census.

The census of the Ryukyu Islands was a do facto count ; i.e., individuals enumerated in the areas where they were physically present on the date of the census regardless of their usual residence, as distinguished from a de jure count, in which individuals are enumerated according to the areas of their usual residence.

All persons present as of 0001 hours 1 December 1950 were enumerated except members of the Allied Forces, employees of the United States Government, diplomatic representatives of foreign governments, and dependents of any of these categories. All other persons were counted regardless of thier legal residence. Persons temporarily absent from the Ryukyu Islands on the date of the census were not counted.

The Japanese and Ryukyuan census schedules adopted were almost identical-the Japanese contained 33 questions and the Ryukyuan 32. The standard "line" type of schedule was adopted, which permitted entry of responses to all 32 questions on a single line across the page.

A publicity campaign was launched several months prior to the census taking in order to acquaint the populace with the date of the census and to inform them of its meaning and importance. Posters, radio broadcasts, and press accounts were employed.

The key personnel (Ryukyuan) responsible for the administration of the census visited Japan for consultation with Japanese experts and for observation of the census operation in Japan. This group was responsible for the training of 197 supervisors, who in turn instructed the 3,685 enumerators who collected the data. In establishing the enumeration districts, an effort was made to assign no more than 50 households for one enumerator.

In January 1951 census technicians from each Gunto went to Japan for training in coding and tabulating the census data. The entire tabulation process was performed by hand, since machine tabulating equipment was not available. A staff of approximately 100 Ryukyuan was organized and trained for the tabulation work.