

# Emily I. Farnum

*Progressive Woman in the Federal City*

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## Farnum Family 1880 Census

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.

The first female chief of division was Emily Ida Farnum. She was born in December 1875, to Laura and Walter Hamilton Farnum in Castile, New York. Raised in her grandfather's hotel until his death in 1882, Emily had access to the first library in Castile. After her grandfather's death, the family, which by now included two sisters, Jessica and Agnes, and a brother, Hamilton, sold their New York property and moved to Washington, DC.

Although the Farnum's exact arrival date in Washington, DC. is unknown, Emily's mother bought property in the city as early as 1895. Around 1900 Emily began her career with the Census Bureau as a clerk, while also studying literature at George

Washington University and sending stories to the Washington Post on the side. By 1908, she received a promotion to stenographer. She worked mainly in the Appointments Division, and during the intercensal period, handled most of the work by herself. After 20 years and two censuses, Census Bureau leadership recognized Emily's skills and promoted her as the first expert chief of a division in July 1919. As chief of the Appointments Division, she was responsible for the hiring, correspondence, and working life of 1,000 local employees and over 70,000 field workers of the 1920 Census (what would now be the Personnel Office).



*Press and Sun Bulletin*  
(Binghamton, NY); 2 Aug 1919



*The Green Book Magazine; December 1919*



**AFTER PASSING** several preliminary hurdles, Mrs. Fenlon was sent to talk with Miss Emily Farnum, who is chief of the appointment division of the Census Bureau, and who seems to have been impressed favorably by Mrs. Fenlon's record.

*The Washington Post (Washington, DC.); 12 May 1940*

Emily was not only a tireless Census Bureau employee, but she was also a passionate suffragist. As early as 1914, she wrote letters to the *Washington Times* as a proponent of a woman's right to vote and participated in marches. In 1916, the Stanton Suffragette Club, an auxiliary of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, elected Emily as an executive member. She was also an active member of the American Statistical Association.

Emily continued to work at the Census Bureau as the Chief of the Appointments Division through the 1940 Census. Her example, hard work, and earnest advice through five censuses has not just benefited the women of the Census Bureau, but has influenced the U.S. Commerce Department as a whole. She died on June 13, 1942, at the age of 66 in her adopted hometown of Washington, DC.



*Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

**Jessica Farnum with Library of Congress Staff, 1914**



*The Washington Post (Washington, DC.); 8 Jul 1906.*

The same influence that attracted Emily to federal service had also affected her sister, Jessica. Jessica worked for the Library of Congress from 1902–1937, rising to the position of secretary in 1909. For many years, she was the only woman on the staff.

Emily and Jessica Farnum were not the only members of the Farnum family who lived progressive lives. Brother Hamilton worked briefly as a Congressional page before joining the Gray Line Tour Company and rising to manager. In 1921, he became the president of the Sightseeing Bus Lecturers and Standsmen Union and led pickets and strikes for unionization. Of the third sister, Agnes, less is known,

however she did push the bounds of what was socially acceptable for women by working as an actress in the first decade of the century. None of the siblings ever married and they lived together for their entire lives. Emily and Jessica's contributions both in their federal jobs and in their personal lives have enriched and affected those who followed.

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**Farnum Family 1930 Census**

# Julie R. Jenney

Lawyer, Leader, Census Supervisor



The Woman Citizen (New York, NY)  
15 Nov 1919

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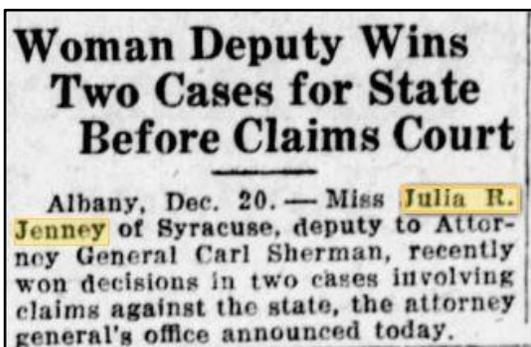
Born on April 11, 1866, Julie Regula Jenney was the oldest child of Colonel Edwin S. Jenney and Marie S. Jenney. Edwin served courageously in the Civil War and worked as a lawyer in Syracuse, NY. Marie was a society matron and, at the age of 69, marched in the first suffrage parade in New York City. Julie decided to study law. After a rejection from Cornell Law School, she became the first woman to graduate from Michigan Law School in 1892. Julie worked as a clerk for a few years in her father's office and took over after his passing in 1900. In 1920, she started her own law office and provided legal aid for many of Syracuse's less affluent citizens. Julie became the first female Deputy Attorney General of New York in 1923. During that same year, she won two cases that saved the state over \$55,000.

In August 1919, Julie R. Jenney received an appointment as one of the first five female enumerator supervisors for 5<sup>th</sup> District, Syracuse, NY. She began testing 500 prospective enumerators in early November, from which she selected 150. Following enumerator selection, Julie trained them all the way through the end of December, while also conducting meetings at various

localities to ensure proper coverage of her district. As the census got under way on January 1, 1920, the winter weather in Syracuse immediately took its toll. Despite initial optimism based on her early success, Julie still had to request an extension of a few days after a large blizzard disrupted the last week of counting the 11,932 residents.

## Jenney Family 1880 Census

Age	Sex	Color	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Never	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Never	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Never
14	F	W		X													



The Ithaca Journal (Ithaca, NY); 20 Dec 1923

In addition to being a successful lawyer and census supervisor, Julie was also a suffragist and social leader. In 1893, Julie was involved in the Political Equality Club. By 1895, she had joined the New York State Suffrage Association (NYSSA). Through the NYSSA, an offshoot of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Julie became very influential in the national scene. As early as 1896, she shared the stage and voted alongside Susan B. Anthony, and she continued to be active in the NYSSA well into the 20th century. Julie also was involved with the Syracuse Legal Relief Society, the Syracuse Council of Women's Clubs, the Syracuse War Monument Association, and the Professional Women's League of Syracuse. She acted as mentor to some of New York's notable women such as Bessie Seeley, the first woman to graduate from Syracuse Law School in 1903, and Bernice Nash, the first woman nominated for a county position in the state of New York.



Miss Julie R. Jenney, of Syracuse, N.Y., the first woman census supervisor in the United States, appointed August 13, 1919.

Photo courtesy of Census Bureau Archives

In September 1945, the Onondaga Bar Association celebrated lawyers who had served for over 50 years, among whom Julie was the only woman. Two years later on December 21, 1947, Julie passed away at the age of 81 in her hometown of Syracuse, NY. Although Julie did not have any children during her amazing life, she left a legacy through her groundbreaking actions. Throughout her accomplishments as first female law graduate, first female deputy attorney general, and first female census supervisor, Julie continuously gave back to her community and set an example for women in the state of New York and beyond.

Jenney Family 1940 Census

Julie was not the only notable woman in her family. Marie, her sister, became even better known in her day. She graduated from the Unitarian Theological Seminary in Meadville, PA in 1897. After her 1904 marriage to Frederic Howe, she used the name Dr. Marie Jenney Howe. Marie was active in the suffragist movement like her mother and sister. She wrote several books and articles, became heavily involved in the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and founded the salon-like Heterodoxy Group that attracted the leading suffragists of the day. Marie passed away in 1934. Census records highlight Marie's transformation. On the first census after her marriage in 1910, Marie listed "None" as her occupation despite the fact that she was a writer and ordained theologian. However, by Marie's last census in 1930, she listed two occupations: writer and Unitarian minister.



The Atchison Daily (Atchison, KS); 4 Mar 1914

# Minnie P. Lindsay

## A Federal Woman in the Lone Star State

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Photo courtesy of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Alumni Book

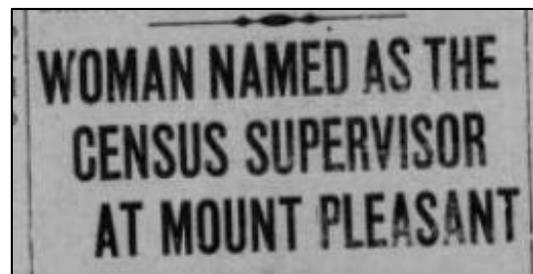
Pounders Family 1880 Census

One of the first female supervisors of enumerators in 1920 was Minnie P. Lindsay, of the first Texas district. Born April 26, 1873, in Titus County, TX, to Samuel P. Pounders and Claudia Fairer, Minnie was the oldest of their five surviving daughters. Samuel Pounders had started out as a farmer in Alabama, but by the time of Minnie's birth, he was a successful lawyer. He and his wife ensured that all of their daughters received higher education and work experience. Around 1904, Minnie married Robert Francis Lindsay, a Mount Pleasant banker. They had no children and remained married until his death in 1956.

In 1920, Minnie became one of the first five women appointed as the census supervisor over a team of enumerators. The positions usually went to people with strong local ties, both personally and politically.

Like the other four women,

Minnie had prior work and management experience—she had been a teacher, an insurance salesperson, and a soliciting agent for the railroad. Furthermore, her family was politically connected in Titus County, TX. Her husband, Robert, was a banker and her father was a lawyer and bank director, as was her brother-in-law, Milton Burford. Perhaps most importantly, another one of her brothers-in-law, C. L. Duncan, served two terms as Mayor of Mount Pleasant. Add this to her knowledge of the area and Minnie perfectly fit the mold of a 1920 Census supervisor.



The Eagle (Bryan, TX); 10 Dec 1919



# Olive M. Riddleberger

*An Expert Statistician*

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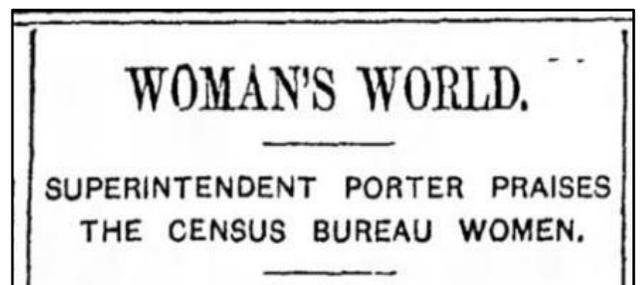


Washington Evening Star (Washington, D.C.); 2 Jan 1916

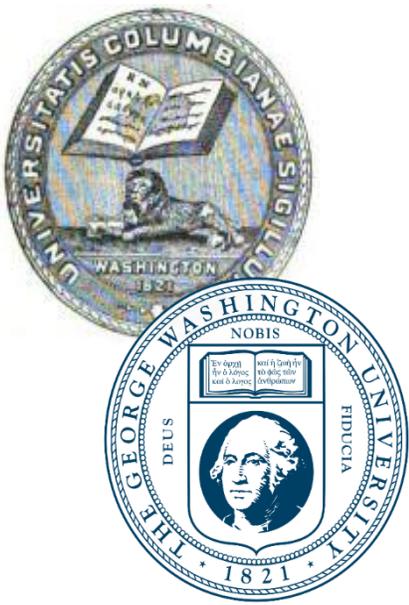
Riddleberger Family 1880 Census

Olive Mizpah Riddleberger was born on January 21, 1870, in Woodstock, VA, the second of seven children in a notable political family. Her father, Harrison Holt Riddleberger, was a former Confederate officer, lawyer, and well-known Virginia politician. He was elected as a third party candidate for the Readjusters (a coalition of Republicans, conservative Democrats, and African-Americans). Harrison was in state politics from 1871 to 1882, and served as a U.S Senator from 1883 to 1889. Harrison had a particularly fiery temper—he once fought two duels in one day, and had multiple detentions or arrests, the most memorable of which occurred on his last day in the Senate. Olive attended the Shenandoah Female Institute for most of the 1880s and after graduation she gained employment with the Census Office in 1889 as a stenographer.

Olive's employment began a career that spanned almost 50 years. In 1892, Olive advanced to the position of computer. She helped handle the calculations and computations facilitated by the groundbreaking Hollerith counting machine, which the Census Office employed for the first time during the 1890 census. Starting in 1897, Olive pursued higher education in her free time and studied mathematics and statistics at Columbian University (later George Washington University) for two years. Although she did not get a degree, the advantages of her extra education changed the direction her career.



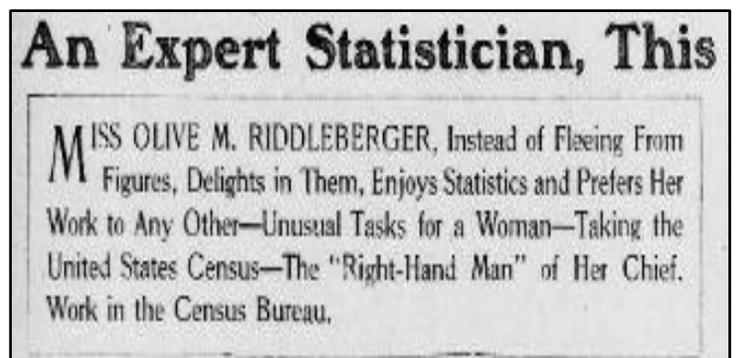
The Sandusky Register (Sandusky, OH); 19 Dec 1890



**Columbian University, where Olive attended classes for two years, became George Washington University in 1904.**

With over two decades of experience in the Census Bureau, Olive encompassed all of the attributes an expert chief of division would need. In 1920, Olive received the appointment as expert Chief of the Geography Division, and oversaw the complete and accurate mapping and assignment of census districts. After this success, Olive did not slow down. In 1930 she became the assistant chief statistician for the Population Division. In this role, Olive oversaw the collection of data from the final returns, along with her assistant, Alice V. Hagan. She, along with Chief Statistician Dr. Leon E. Truesdell, supervised the statistical calculations and final reports for the Fifteenth Census of the United States. Olive also prepared other statistical reports such as the *Topical Index of Population Census Reports, 1900-1930*. She was an active member of the American Economic Association and the American Statistical Association.

In 1901, Olive advanced to the position of clerk and, in 1902, was one of the original members of the Census Bureau when it became a permanent agency under the Department of Commerce and Labor. As Olive's career with the Census Bureau flourished, she expanded her work duties. In 1908, she worked as a clerk on the Cuba Census and in 1909, she received a promotion to clerk in the populations division. By 1916 Olive was an expert statistician at the Census Bureau and the protégé of chief statistician William C. Hunt. In this role, Olive used her extensive knowledge of the counting machines and assisted in the preparatory planning of the 1920 Census, including the handling of the returns and their statistics.



*Washington Evening Star (Washington, D.C.); 2 Jan 1916*

The image shows two pages of a 1940 census record. The top page is a summary sheet with various columns for household information, including names, ages, and marital status. The bottom page is a detailed individual record for the Riddleberger family, with columns for name, sex, race, age, marital status, occupation, and education. A red box highlights the Riddleberger family's information on both pages. At the bottom of the second page, there is a small red text box with the following text: '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.'

**Riddleberger Family 1940 Census**

In 1936, after five decennial censuses and 46 years with the Census Bureau, Olive retired from public service. Having lived a life devoted to her work, Olive never married or had children. Instead, she found happiness in her later years living with her brother Frank, her nephew, and grandnieces and nephews. Olive spent her remaining days in her hometown of Woodstock, Virginia, and passed away on 8 January 1958, just a few weeks short of her 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. Olive's groundbreaking path through the Census Bureau relied on education and hard work, an example many have since been able to follow.

# Gertrude E. Rush

*Census Enumerator and Legal Pioneer*

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*The Des Moines Register (Des Moines, IA); 29 Nov 1999*

Gertrude Elzora Durden was born on August 5, 1880, in Navasota, Texas. Gertrude's father, Frank, was a Baptist minister, who moved his family north to find better and safer opportunities. The family settled in Kansas. They moved frequently as Frank worked at various jobs— including as a coal miner, carpenter, and farmer— while Sarah, his wife, kept house and worked as a dishwasher. After completing her high school education, Gertrude taught primary school and wrote hymns as well as plays such as “Sermon on the Mount” and “Black Girl’s Burden.” In 1907, she married Howard University-educated lawyer James Buchanan Rush and began studying law while working at his law office.

## Rush Family 1910 Census



**Gertrude enumerated her own household first and listed her occupation as “playwright.”**

cents per name), at a time when average weekly pay was \$6. In Iowa, the biggest problems with the decennial tabulation took place in Des Moines, and centered around a small handful of people who were reticent to answer any census questions, regardless of who posed them. In reaction to the appointment of “colored” census takers, the Des Moines *Bystander* congratulated the enumerators and hailed them as respected citizens.

In early 1910, Gertrude passed the enumerator examination and became one of the 1,605 African-American enumerators working nationwide. For two weeks, starting on Census Day, April 15, Gertrude conducted door-to-door visits to 1,531 families—most of whom were white. For this, she earned approximately \$42 (2.5

**Mr. H. W. Hughes and Mrs. Gertrude Rush are the only colored census enumerators that passed the examination and are appointed by the district enumerator Mr. Culbertson of Knoxville. We congratulate those parties, they are both highly respected citizens. Mrs. Rush is Atty. J. B. Rush's wife.**

*The Bystander (Des Moines, IA); 8 Apr 1910*



Photo from *Notable Black American Women, Book 2* (by Jessie C. Smith)

Gertrude earned her B.A. from Des Moines College in 1914 and then completed her third year of school through a correspondence program at La Salle Extension University in Chicago. In 1918, she became the first black woman to pass the Iowa state bar. She would remain the only African-American woman to do so until 1950. Unfortunately, her husband died shortly before she achieved this honor, but she took over his practice. Over time, she focused her work on women’s legal rights in estate cases.

Gertrude was also active in many community groups. Gertrude was president of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs

from 1911–1915, and a lifelong member afterwards. She joined the Des Moines Charity League in 1912 and the Public Welfare Bureau in 1919. During this time, she championed representation in public office for black Americans, the appointment of black probation officers, and the creation of the Protection Home for Negro Girls. Gertrude also actively participated in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as the Young Women’s Christian Association. She also participated in various suffragist groups, such as the Colored Women’s Suffrage Club, various art and political clubs, and a wide variety of Christian organizations, including the Women’s Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention.

**Rush/Durden Family 1930 Census**



**By 1930, Frank and Sarah Durden were once again living with their daughter.**

Perhaps the most important of Gertrude’s accomplishments is her success in the field of law. In 1921, she became the first woman to lead a coed state bar association when she became president of the Iowa Colored Bar Association. In 1925, after being denied admission to the American Bar Association, she and four male lawyers founded the Negro Bar Association (now called the National Bar Association). It presently boasts more than 65,000 members, primarily African-American.



*The Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh, PA); 27 Sep 1952  
Gertrude with the WANBC, 1952

In 1985, the National Bar Association established the Gertrude E. Rush Award, which honors lawyers and judges “based on their leadership in the community and [who] have demonstrated a concern for human and civil rights, and are models for excellence in legal education, along with perseverance in the law, public policy, and social activism.” In 2010, the National Bar Association was one of the groups that worked with the Census Bureau to help ensure accurate counts of historically underrepresented groups. Gertrude passed away in Des Moines on September 5, 1962, but her groundbreaking path starting with the Census Bureau

relied on courage, education and hard work, and left an example many have since been able to follow.

# Marian “Minnie” Burck Smith

## *A Political Matriarch*

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*(Photo courtesy of the Smith family)*

A scan of a 1880 U.S. Census record for the Burck family. The document is a grid with columns for names, ages, and other details. A red box highlights the family's entry. Below the grid, there is a red box with text: "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."

**Burck Family 1880 Census**

Marian (sometimes Marion) Burck, called Minnie by her family, was born March 9, 1871 in Milam County, Texas, to Alfred and his wife, Frances. Over the next few years, a town sprang up in the area. It incorporated as Rockdale in 1874 and Alfred became its first mayor. In the mid-1880s, Alfred left the family and never returned. As the oldest child, the teenaged Minnie became a schoolteacher in order to support the family. In 1894, she married Roy Edgerton Smith, the son of a prominent politician. Together the couple had seven children. By 1920, Roy had also deserted his family, leaving Minnie with four children under the age of 17. Despite his abandonment, they never divorced and Minnie went by Mrs. Roy E. Smith for the rest of her life. She and her older children worked many different jobs to get by, including a stint for Minnie selling encyclopedias.

In 1919, Minnie joined the Census Bureau as the supervisor for the 6<sup>th</sup> District of Texas, and would continue to work with the Bureau for the next 15 years. With schoolteacher efficiency, Minnie methodically prepared for the 1920 census. On October 1, 1919, she advertised for enumerators with the goal of raising around 200, and planned training for October 27. In early November, she again advertised for the 45 enumerators still needed. In late November and early December, Minnie traveled her territory and met with local politicians to finalize plans for the count, which commenced on January 1. Despite her best efforts, Minnie did not get the needed enumerators and had to ask for an extension in order to get a complete count.



*(Photo courtesy of the Smith family)*

**Marian Burck Smith and Children**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: POPULATION  
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Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here.

### Smith Family 1920 Census

Despite being a single mother, Minnie sent every one of her seven children to college. Her daughter, Flo, was a journalist and public relations specialist for an aviation school before moving to Hudson, WI, with her husband. Another daughter, Polly, worked as a statistician for the highway department in 1930 and attended photography school in New York. In 1935, the Centennial Exposition hired Polly to celebrate the centennial of Texas through pictures. A third daughter, Mildred, was famous in 1930s and 40s Texas as radio persona Gail Northe before she moved to California and started a ranch with her husband. Minnie's oldest daughter, Dorothy, was a successful dress and costume designer who worked as for her

mother as assistant supervisor during the 1920 Census.



Photo from *San Antonio Light Collection*, University of Texas at San Antonio's *Institute of Texas Culture*  
**Polly Smith c. 1936**



*Longview News-Journal (Longview, TX); 11 Oct 1938*

### Mildred (Gail Northe)

Her sons found equal measures of success. Her youngest son, Burck, moved to California and became West Coast Manager for American Airlines. Bill, her middle son, became an artist who eventually moved to New York and worked in advertising. Cyrus Rowlett, known as C.R., climbed to the highest halls of power in Washington, DC. Working his way up from a cattle baron's office boy at age 9, to a bookkeeper at 12, and a tax accountant at 20, C.R. powered his way through the University of Texas despite having dropped out of high school. His meteoric rise continued through accounting firms and power companies until he ended up as the co-founder and president of American Airlines. His career had a temporary pause while he served as a major general (Deputy Commander of Air Transport Command) during World War II. C.R. was also actively involved in politics and, in 1938, he was able to introduce his mother to the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1968, the Smith family fortunes came full circle when President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce—the agency that oversees the Census Bureau.

Unfortunately, Minnie never got to see this final chapter. She passed away at the age of 77 in January 1950 at the home of her daughter Mildred (Gail) in Auburn, CA. She is remembered as an amazing mother and a tireless public servant, who not only gave everything to her own children, but was also generous to the community at-large. In her honor, her son C.R. endowed the *Marion Burck Junior Fellowship Fund* and donated 575 volumes of Western Americana, the *Marion Burck Smith Collection*, to the University of Texas. Beyond her family, Minnie's work benefitted the Census Bureau, the United States, and the men and women she inspired.

Department of Commerce—the agency that oversees the Census Bureau.



*Chicago Tribune (Chicago, IL); 17 Feb 1968*