

Demographic Trends in the 20th Century

In 2002, the U.S. Census Bureau celebrated its hundredth year as an agency of the federal government of the United States. The Bureau marked the event with the release of a Census 2000 Special Report -- *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*. Ever since its inception in 1902, the U.S. Census Bureau has collected, tabulated, and published information on the population of the United States, for various levels of geography. This special report consolidates information from each census, 1900 to 2000, and documents the remarkable changes in the nation's population and housing trends through the course of the last century. Analyses have been provided for the nation, regions, states, as well as metropolitan areas. Trends in fertility, mortality, and internal as well as international migration have been highlighted by analyzing changes in the size of the population, its geographic distribution, age and sex composition, and racial and ethnic composition. The report also documents the changes in housing and household composition trends. Analysis has been based on 100% data obtained for each of the censuses, 1900 through 2000. Key excerpts from the report follow.

National Trends

The U.S. population more than tripled from 76 million in 1900 to 281 million in 2000. Population density tripled between 1900 and 2000, but remained relatively low when compared to most countries. The 1990s experienced the largest numerical population increase of any decade in the history of the United States.

With 4.5% of the total world population, the U.S. ranks as the fourth most populous country in the world from the turn of the century to until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, and as the world's third most populous country since then, following China and India. Although U.S. population growth was remarkable compared with other industrialized countries, the U.S. share of the world's population declined as less developed countries grew more rapidly. In fact, from 1950 to 2000, the U.S. and the rest of the developed world comprise a declining share of the world's population.

The U.S. population grew increasingly metropolitan, from 28% in 1910 to 80% in 2000. The suburban population accounts for most of the metropolitan growth rather than the central cities. By 2000, half of the U.S. population lived in suburban areas. By the

close of the century, nearly one-third of Americans lived in a metropolitan area with 5 million or more residents.

Age and Sex. In 1900, the U.S. age and sex composition was similar to many of today's developing countries, which are characterized by its young population. Over the course of the century, the nation witnessed the following trends: relatively high fertility at the start of the century, lower fertility in the late 1920s and during the 1930s, higher fertility during the baby-boom

period, followed by lower fertility during the baby-bust period. The effect of the baby-boom on the age and sex structure of the U.S. will extend several decades into the 21st century as the baby-boomers age through the life cycle.

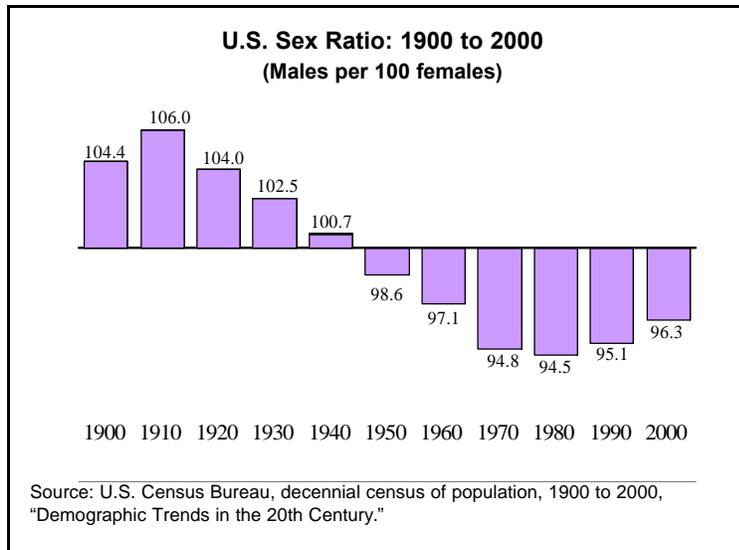
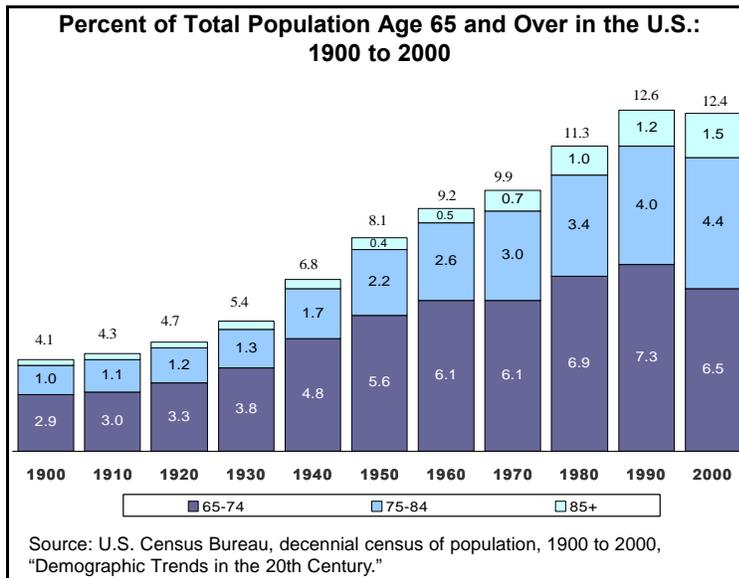
Since 1900, the age distribution of the U.S. population changed from relatively young to relatively old. The U.S. median age rose significantly over the century from 22.9 to 35.3 years. By 2000, the largest 5-year age groups were 35-39 and 40-44.

The elderly population increased ten-fold during the century from 3.1 million in 1900 to 35.0 million in 2000. The proportion of the elderly population (as a percent of the total) declined for the first time in the 1990s, partly due to the relatively low number of births in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The male/female ratio of the total population has reversed. Prior to 1950, males outnumbered females in the total population. From 1950 to 2000, the female population outnumbered the male population. Larger gains for women than men in life expectancy and attrition of the large number of immigrants in decades prior to WWI (who were predominantly men) accounted for this shift.

Central cities had lower sex ratios (males per 100 females) than the suburbs or non-metropolitan areas. Throughout the century, women constituted most of the population age 85 and over, and their predominance in this age group greatly increased between 1990 and 2000.

Race and Ethnicity. Since 1970, the population of races other than White or Black has grown significantly, however Whites remained the largest race group. In 1900, one out of every eight Americans was of a race other than White. By 2000, about one out of every four Americans was of a race other than White. The Black population increased steadily throughout the century, from 8.8 million in 1900, to about four times larger in 2000 (34.7



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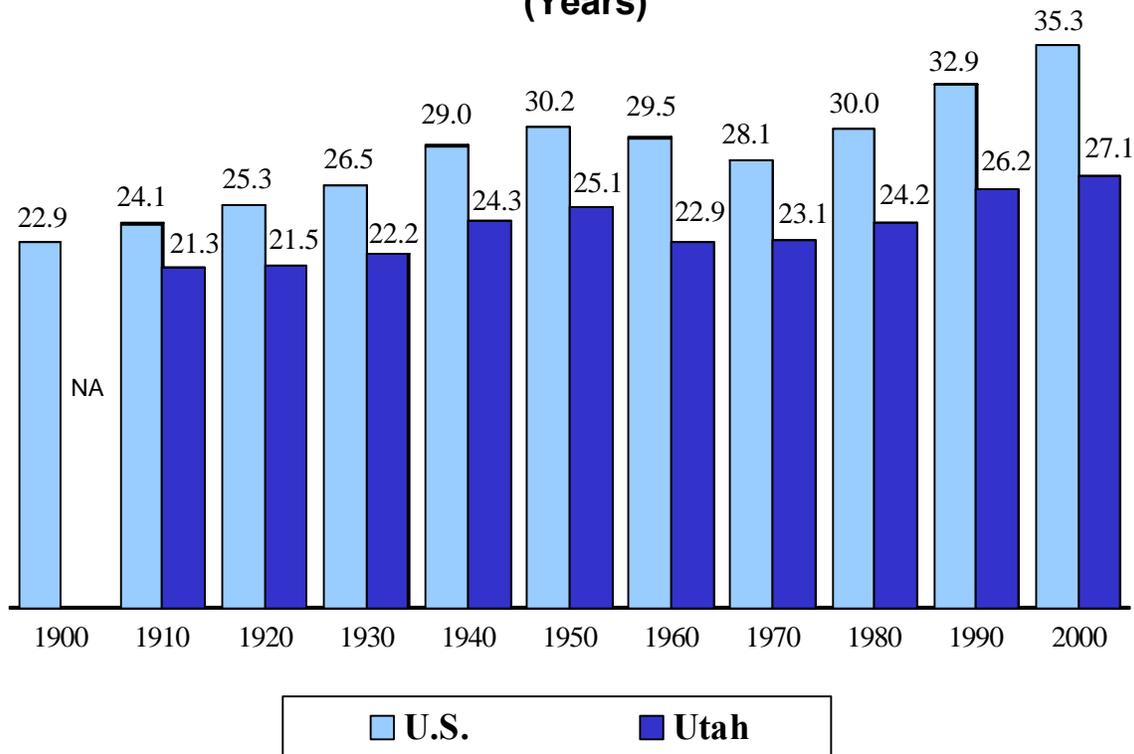
million reported Black alone, and 36.4 million reported Black in combination with another race). The Asian and Pacific Islander and Some Other Race particularly increased during the period 1970-2000. International migration and subsequent births to the immigrant population contributed to this rapid increase. The largest group since the 1980 census, other than White or Black, is the Some Other Race group. The size of this group is greatly influenced by the overwhelming number of Hispanics reporting this group as their race category. The Hispanic population more than doubled in size between 1980 to 2000. In 1980 and 2000, Hispanics were much younger than non-Hispanics. Black females outnumbered Black males in every decade of the century. The White population grew more slowly than every other race group in the second half of the 20th century and for the century as a whole. Whites had a higher average annual growth rate during the first half of the century (1.4%) than during the second half (0.9%).

Between 1980 and 2000, the minority population grew 11 times as rapidly as the White non-Hispanic population. Immigration and subsequent births to the new arrivals during the last few decades of the century played a major role in changing the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population. These influences are indicated by the very high percentage increases in the Asian and Pacific Islander (204%) and the Hispanic (142%) populations from 1980 to 2000. Asians and Pacific Islanders grew faster than any other group in both halves of the 100-year period. American Indians and Alaskans increased at the slowest pace in the first half of the century, but grew rapidly during the latter period.

Housing. From 1940 to 2000, the number of housing units in the U.S. more than tripled. The number of vacant housing units increased in every decade from 1940 to 2000, except for the 1960s when they declined by 73,000. Prior to 1950, over half of the housing units were rented. By 1950, homeownership became more prevalent than renting. Homeownership rates continued to increase until 1980, decreased slightly in the 1980s, and then increased in the 1990s, reaching the highest level of the century (66.0%) in Census 2000.

Households. In 1900, the most common household contained seven or more people. From 1940 to 2000, households with two people represented the most common household size. The average household size declined from 4.60 in 1900 to 2.59 in 2000, or by 44%. Between 1950-2000, married couple households declined from more than three-fourths of all households (78%) to just over half (52%) of all households. The proportional share of one-person households increased more than any other size. In 1950, one-person households represented one out of every ten (9.5%) households. By 2000, they composed one out of every four households (26%). In every census from 1970 to 2000, approximately three-fourths of all female householders age 65 and over lived alone. In 1970, women represented one out of every five householders (21%). By 2000, the proportion had grown to more than one of every three (36%). For total, married-couple, and other family households, the proportion of female householders among Black householders exceeded the proportion of female householders

Median Age of the U.S. and Utah: 1900 to 2000 (Years)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census of population, 1900 to 2000, "Demographic Trends in the 20th Century."

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among householders of any other race or Hispanics. In 1960, three of every five (59%) married couple households included at least one of their own children. By 1990, (and in 2000), less than half (46%) of married-couple households had an "own child" under the age of 18.¹ In 1950, only one of every five (19%) male family households with no wife present had an "own child" under age 18. By 2000, half (50%) of all male family households with no wife present had at least one child of their own under age 18.

Regional Trends

The Western United States population grew faster than the population of each of the other three regions of the country in every decade of the 20th century. Regionally, the distribution of the U.S. population experienced a shift toward the South and the West. In 1900, a majority of the U.S. population (62%) lived in either the Northeast or the Midwest. However, by the end of the century, a majority of the population (58%) lived in either the South or the West. The South and West accounted for nearly two-thirds of the U.S. population increase from 1900-2000. Gains in total population of the South and West occurred at the expense of corresponding losses in population share of the Northeast and the Midwest.

Age and Sex. Regionally, the title of the "youngest" region shifted from the South to the West during the century, while that of the "oldest" shifted from the Midwest to the Northeast. The South was the youngest region from 1900-1960, with the highest proportion of 15 and under population, and the lowest proportion of 65 and older population. The West shows the youngest population later in the century. The West had the lowest proportion of age 65 and over population between 1970-2000, and also had the highest proportion of 15 and under population in 1990 and 2000.

Race and Ethnicity. The minority population increased rapidly in every region since 1980, especially in the West. The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. has essentially been a post-1970 phenomenon, with regional patterns generally reflecting the trend of the U.S. as a whole. From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of minorities markedly increased in every region, and each region's percentage-point increase was larger in the 1990s than in the 1980s. From 1900 to 2000, the number of non-Southern states with race populations of at least 10% other than White increased from 2 to 26. Blacks, along with Asians and Pacific Islanders, have been the most regionally concentrated races. More than half the Blacks still live in the South and, until 2000, more than half of the Asians and Pacific Islanders lived in the West. While the Hispanic population was concentrated in the West, the percentage of Hispanics increased in every region from 1980 to 2000. The West had a higher proportion of Hispanics than any other region. More than 40% of the Hispanic population lived in the West from 1980-2000. This reflects the fact that all of the states along the U.S.-Mexico border are western states and most of the Hispanics are Mexican in origin. The Northeast was the only region where there was a steady decline in the

proportion of the population that was Hispanic, dropping from 18% in 1980 to 15% in 2000. The proportion of Hispanics in the South's population nearly doubled from 5.9% in 1980 to 11.6% in 2000.

Housing. Every region experienced an increase in vacancy rates in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and a decrease in vacancy rates during the 1960s and the 1990s. From 1940 to 1960, the West had the highest vacancy rate, then from 1970 to 2000, the South had the highest vacancy rate. Each region's highest homeownership rate was recorded in 2000. The Midwest had the highest homeownership rate for every decade except in 1910, when the West ranked first.

Households. By 2000, one-person households represented about one fourth of all households in each region. The West had the highest proportion of one-person households for each census from 1940 to 1970. The Northeast had the highest regional proportion from 1980 to 2000.

State Trends

In 1900, nearly half of the states had fewer than 1 million people. By 2000, only seven states (and DC) had a population under 1 million. California accounted for one-sixth of the total population growth during the 100-year period. Just eight states -- California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and New Jersey -- were responsible for more than half of the total population gain from 1900 to 2000. Nine western states and Florida accounted for the ten fastest-growing states from 1900 to 1950, and eight western states plus Florida and Texas were the fastest growing from 1950 to 2000. The highest population density states, all in the Northeast, were New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Age and Sex. Only Mississippi and Utah rank among the ten states with the highest percentage of population under age 15 in each and every decade of the century. In 2000, only seven western states -- Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming -- had a larger male population than female population. The number of states with a larger female than male population quadrupled from 11 in 1900 to 44 in 2000.

Race and Ethnicity. Among the 50 states, Hawaii, New Mexico, Mississippi, Texas, and California had the five highest percentage of minority populations from 1980 to 2000.

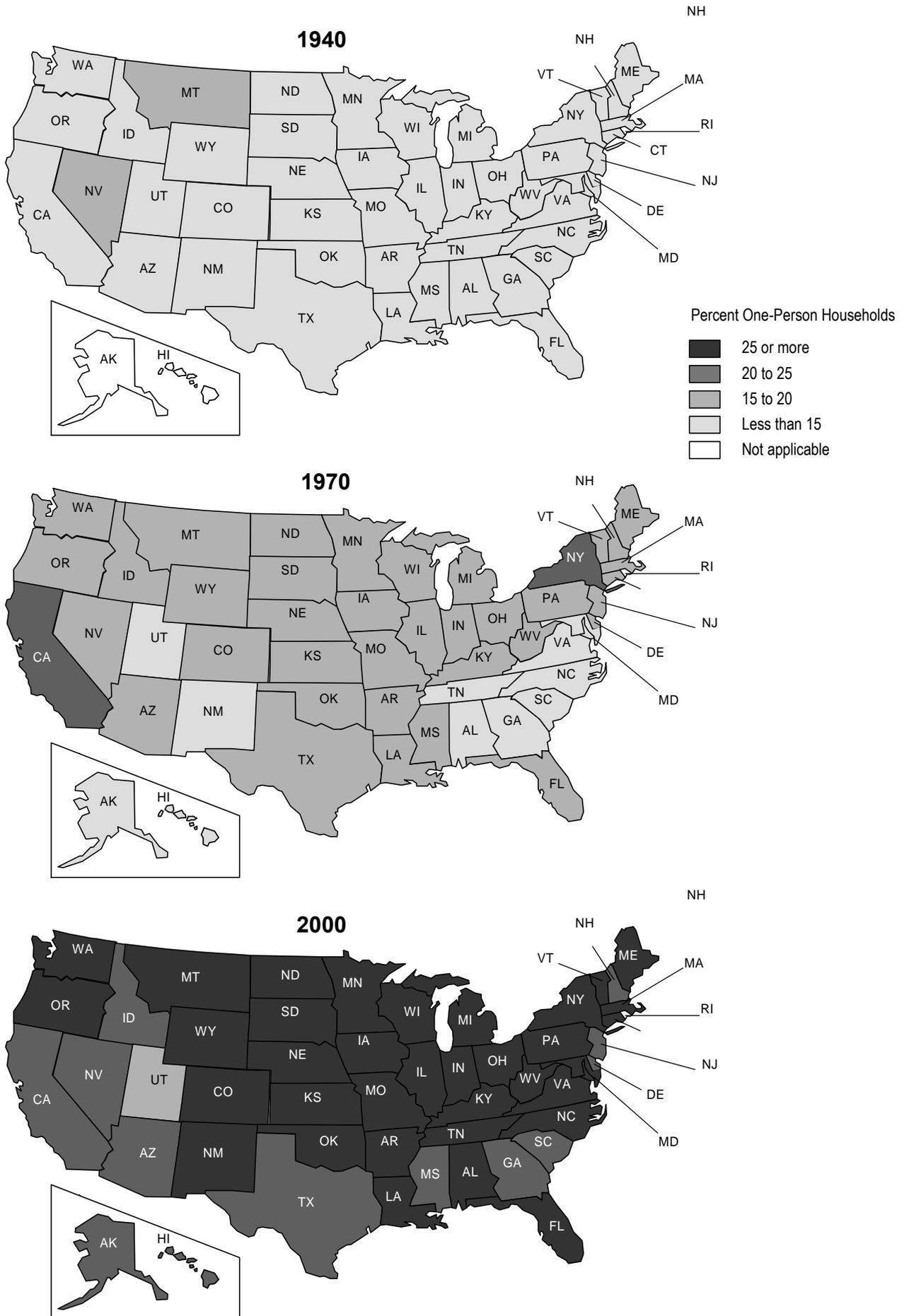
Households. In 1940, fewer than 20% of the households in every state were one-person households. (In 1970, only California, the District of Columbia, and New York had at least 20% one-person households.) By 2000, at least 20% of the households in every state, except Utah (18%), were one-person households. Nevada, California, Arizona and Idaho ranked among the 10 states with the highest percentage of one-person households in 1900 and 1940, but ranked among the 12 states with the lowest percentage of one-person households in 2000.

Additional Information

For more information on this report, visit the Census Bureau's website at www.census.gov, or contact the State Data Center at (801) 538-1036.

¹ As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, *Children* include sons and daughters by birth, step-children, and adopted children of the householder regardless of the child's age or marital status. *Own children* differ from children in that they are never married and under age 18.

Percent One-Person Households by State: 1940, 1970, and 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census of housing, 1940, 1970, and 2000, "Demographic Trends in the 20th Century."