



FIGURE Pa-A Rate of net population change: 1790–1999

Source

Series Aa10 as a percentage of series Aa9.

components of the natural increase of a population, and Chapter Ad, on international migration, presents data on immigration and emigration, the other two sources of national population change. Chapter Ac, on internal migration, presents information on movements of the population within the United States, which can be a significant element in the population growth (or decline) of a state or region of the country.

Completing Part A are three chapters that examine the characteristics of the population from different perspectives. Chapter Ae examines marriage, family composition, and living arrangements. Chapter Af presents data for population cohorts organized by year of birth. Finally, Chapter Ag presents the available data on American Indians, a unique segment of the American population.

Characteristics of the Population

The Millennial Edition of *Historical Statistics* is organized around functional categories rather than by the characteristics of the population. That fact, however, should not distract the user from the importance of the changing composition of the population. Although some would consider the population counts presented here rather dry information of interest only to demographers, in reality these counts are the starting place for examining almost any subject from an historical perspective. Particularly notable in this regard are the social and economic issues that revolve around race, ethnicity, and gender. Because of the importance of these issues, many of the tables in *Historical Statistics* report figures separately for men and women and for separate races, variously defined. We have no separate chapters on gender or race.¹ Nonetheless, these distinctions are so important that they require some discussion at the outset.

Table Pa-B provides a chronology of important events relating to race, ethnicity, and gender. The second essay in this introduction to Part A charts changes over time in the definition of race and ethnicity from the first federal census of 1790 to the present. The third essay describes the evolution of race and ethnic distinctions in American life as influenced by the institution of slavery, the

changing magnitude and character of immigration from abroad, internal migration, economic development, and other factors.

Gender is the other preeminent social category in American life. Because sex – the biological correlate of gender – is a key component of personal identification, gender identification is requested in almost all official records, including census counts, birth and death registers, school enrollment, and more. Many governmental agencies publish the data they collect in a format that is disaggregated by sex. The rich availability of these sex distinctions in the quantitative historical record makes it possible to illuminate the many differences in the experience of men and women both today and in times past. These gender differences are pronounced, and they cut across most aspects of life. Gender distinctions appear in virtually every chapter of *Historical Statistics*. The changing salience of gender in America is also the subject of a large scholarly literature. Important works of synthesis include Smuts (1959); Baxandall, Gordon, and Reverby (1976); Brownlee and Brownlee (1976); Cott (1977, 1987); Degler (1980); Kessler-Harris (1982); Woloch (1984); Jones (1985); Bergman (1986); Goldin (1990); Sklar and Dublin (1991); and Folbre (1994).

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RACE AND ETHNICITY: DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

Charles Hirschman with Richard Alba and Reynolds Farley

For 200 years, race has been a standard item in the decennial censuses of the United States. These official statistics on the population by race are displayed in Table Aa145–184. For much of this period, there was no popular debate and apparently no major problem in the

¹ Chapter Aa on population characteristics has a separate section on the Hispanic population and Chapter Ag is on American Indians. Hispanic origin or identification is not considered to be a race.

TABLE Pa-B Important events in the history of race, ethnicity, and gender: 1619–2003

1619	The first slaves are imported into Jamestown, Virginia. They were treated as indentured servants and freed after a fixed period of service.
1637	Anne Hutchinson is expelled by Massachusetts Bay Colony for preaching to men.
1692	Witchcraft trials take place in Salem, Massachusetts.
1705	Virginia law defines slaves as real estate and allows slave owners to kill fugitive slaves.
1790	An act of Congress limits naturalization of immigrants to free whites.
1793	The Fugitive Slave Act is passed, making it illegal to give aid or comfort to runaway slaves.
1808	England and the United States prohibit engagement in the international slave trade.
1814	The first textile mill opens in Waltham, Massachusetts, and offers employment to young women.
1822	Denmark Vesey organizes a slave revolt in Charleston, South Carolina. The slaves are betrayed by an informer. Thirty-seven, including Vesey, are executed.
1830	Robert Dale Owen's <i>Moral Physiology</i> is the first tract on birth control to be published in America.
1831	Nat Turner leads a slave revolt that kills fifty-seven whites before the slaves are cut down by an overwhelming force.
1833	Oberlin College becomes the first college to open its doors to both blacks and whites, women as well as men.
1837	Mount Holyoke College is established as the first college for women.
1839	Mississippi becomes the first state to grant limited property rights to married women (largely involving control over slaves), but only with their husbands' permission.
1843	The nativistic Know-Nothing political movement founds the American Republican Party to combat foreign influences and to uphold American values. The party is disbanded after the presidential election of 1856.
1845	Massachusetts becomes the first state to recognize the right of married women to manage and otherwise control their own estates without their husbands' permission.
1845	The Great Irish Potato Famine (1845–1849) stimulates the immigration of large numbers of Irish to the United States.
1848	The first Women's Rights Convention takes place at Seneca Falls, New York.
1852	Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , providing momentum to abolitionism.
1857	The U.S. Supreme Court rules in the <i>Dred Scott</i> decision that a black person is not entitled to citizenship rights.
1859	John Brown raids Harper's Ferry, Virginia, to obtain arms for slaves to help them fight for their freedom. He is hanged for treason.
1865	President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation, which frees slaves in territory under Confederate control as of January 1.
1865	Slavery is abolished in the United States by the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution after the end of the Civil War.
1866	The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (ratified in 1868) confers citizenship on emancipated slaves. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 grants citizenship to all native-born persons except Indians.
1868	Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony found the feminist newspaper <i>The Revolution</i> .
1870	The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution grants blacks the right to vote.
1870	The Naturalization Act of July 14, 1870, is enacted. It extends the naturalization laws to aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent and overturns the 1790 restriction on the naturalization of nonwhites.
1873	The Comstock Law forbids sending birth control information and devices through the U.S. mail.
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Act of May 6, 1882, is enacted. It outlaws the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States for a period of ten years, bars Chinese from naturalization, provides for the deportation of Chinese living illegally in the United States, and permits the entry of Chinese students, teachers, merchants, and tourists. The provisions of the Act are continued in a series of laws. The Act is repealed in 1943.
1889	Wyoming becomes the first state to give women the vote in state and municipal elections.
1890	The Second Morrill Land Grant Act becomes law. Congress institutes regular appropriations for the land-grant colleges; the "historically black" institutions were set up in response to the demands of this Act that nonwhite students be provided facilities.
1896	In <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , the Supreme Court validates the separation of black and white pupils and establishes the "separate but equal" doctrine.
1906	The Naturalization Act of June 29, 1906, is enacted. It makes knowledge of the English language a requirement for naturalization.
1907	The United States and Japan sign the "Gentlemen's Agreement," according to which Japan agrees to halt the emigration of Japanese laborers to the United States and the United States agrees to end discrimination against Japanese nationals living in the United States. Later, the Quota Act of 1924 excludes immigration from Japan.
1908	In <i>Muller v. Oregon</i> , the Supreme Court upholds an Oregon law limiting women's workday to ten hours.
1909	W. E. B. DuBois founds the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to fight for civil rights for blacks through legal action.
1909	Women shirtwaist dressmakers in New York stage a general strike, the "Uprising of the Twenty Thousand."
1911	Illinois passes the first "mothers' pension" law.
1915	Margaret Sanger coins the term "birth control."
1915	The "Great Migration" begins. Between 1900 and 1960, more than 4.8 million African Americans flee the South's oppressive conditions. The vast majority of these migrants settle in Northern cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and New York. Both world wars create greater economic opportunities for blacks in Northern-based industries as military demands for manufactured items coincide with wartime labor shortages.

(continued)

TABLE Pa-B Important events in the history of race, ethnicity, and gender: 1619–2003 *Continued*

1920	Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrant anarchists, are arrested for murder in a bungled robbery. After a long trial, they are executed in 1927. The case stirs xenophobic feeling among Americans.
1920	The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote, is ratified.
1924	The Indian Citizenship Act gives Indians the right to vote.
1924	The Immigration Act of May 26, 1924, becomes law. It establishes the National Origins Quota System. In conjunction with the Immigration Act of 1917, it governs American immigration policy until 1952. This important law radically reduces the level of immigration to the United States and sets restrictive quotas on immigration by country of origin of the immigrants.
1930	State and municipal governments begin pressuring married women to leave civil service in order to provide more jobs for men at the onset of the Great Depression.
1930s	Mexican and Philippine repatriations. A large number of Mexican and Philippine agricultural laborers who migrated to the western United States to work in seasonal agriculture during the 1920s are unable to find work after the onset of the Great Depression. Strong anti-Mexican and anti-Filipino demonstrations by native-born whites prompt the federal government to pay the transportation costs to return these workers to their home countries.
1935	The Social Security Act, which provides the basis for public assistance to mothers with dependent children, is passed by Congress.
1942	Japanese internment begins. Approximately 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans, most of them U.S. citizens, are interned in relocation centers during World War II. Most remain in internment through December 1944.
1943	The Act of December 17, 1943, which in effect repeals the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, becomes law. China is an ally of the United States against Japan in World War II.
1943	A Fair Employment Practices Committee is established by the government to eliminate discrimination in war industries based on race, creed, or national origins. Women enter war industries in large numbers, and symbols such as “Rosie the Riveter” assert, “We can do it!” – women can do the jobs of men in the world of work.
1945	The Equal Pay Act is first introduced in Congress.
1948	President Harry S Truman ends segregation in the U.S. military.
1954	In <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , the Supreme Court holds unconstitutional the deliberate segregation of schools by law on account of race.
1955	The Montgomery bus boycott begins after Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to comply with racial segregation laws. The boycott is led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and continues for almost a year. It ends when the Supreme Court declares racial segregation on public transportation unconstitutional.
1957	U.S. Army troops are sent to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce the desegregation of public schools.
1959	During the Cuban revolution, thousands of Cubans fleeing the government of Fidel Castro are granted nonimmigrant visas and enter the United States. Many are later granted permanent resident status with the passage of the Act of November 2, 1966.
1960	The federal Food and Drug Administration approves the use of norethynodrel (Enovid) as an oral contraceptive.
1963	The Equal Pay Act, requiring equal pay for persons performing the same work, is passed by Congress.
1963	The University of Alabama is desegregated. After a long period of litigation, a major battle of the campaign to end racial segregation in American higher education takes place on the campus of the University of Alabama. In June 1963, the stalemate between the state and federal governments over the admission of two black students to the university ends when President Kennedy federalizes part of the Alabama National Guard and orders it to safeguard the students’ entry into the university, by force if necessary.
1964	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws discrimination in employment or public accommodations on the basis of race or sex.
1965	The Voting Rights Act of 1965 nullifies state and local laws and practices, such as literacy tests, that prevent blacks and other minorities from voting. The Act authorizes federal examiners to register qualified voters.
1965	The Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of October 3, 1965, abolish the National Origins Quota System of 1924, eliminating national origin, race, or ancestry as a basis for immigration to the United States, and establish the Preference System.
1965	A Connecticut law prohibiting married couples from using contraception is ruled unconstitutional.
1966	Farm workers led by Cesar Chavez join the AFL-CIO and march 300 miles from Delano to Sacramento to dramatize their grievances. The United Farm Workers–led boycott of grapes picked by nonunion workers involves more Americans than any previous consumer boycott.
1966	The National Organization of Women is founded.
1968	Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated while in Memphis to support a sanitation workers’ strike. A wave of civil unrest follows in many urban areas.
1969	The Stonewall Riots inaugurate the Gay and Lesbian Liberation movement.
1970	California passes the nation’s first “no-fault” divorce law.
1970s	The formerly all-male Ivy League colleges and universities become coeducational.
1972	The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is approved by Congress. The amendment is not ratified.
1972	Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 mandates equal resources for women and men in educational institutions receiving federal support.
1973	In <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , the Supreme Court loosens restrictions on abortion.
1975	The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of May 23, 1975, establishes a program of domestic resettlement assistance for refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam. Laotians are made eligible the following year.

TABLE Pa-B Important events in the history of race, ethnicity, and gender: 1619–2003 *Continued*

1978	The United States agrees to admit 47,000 “Boat People” fleeing Vietnam and Cambodia.
1978	In <i>University of California Regents v. Bakke</i> , the Supreme Court rules that the University of California, Davis, medical school discriminated against Allan Bakke, a white applicant, by maintaining a quota for minority admissions. The court holds, however, that race can be one of the factors considered in university admissions decisions.
1980	The United States agrees to admit approximately 125,000 Cubans fleeing Castro’s Cuba in the Mariel Boat Lift.
1982	The ERA fails to achieve ratification by the states within the prescribed time period.
1986	The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) becomes law. This comprehensive immigration legislation authorizes legalization for certain aliens who had resided in the United States in an unlawful status and increases employer sanctions and border enforcement.
1996	Changes in welfare rules impose strict time limits and work requirements.
1997	The Office of Management and Budget revises standard categories into five major racial groups (American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; black or African American; native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and white) and two ethnic categories (Hispanic or Latino; and non-Hispanic, non-Latino).
2000	Individuals are allowed to self-identify with more than one race in the U.S. census.
2003	The Supreme Court upholds <i>Roe v. Wade</i> .
2003	In a case involving the University of Michigan Law School (<i>Grutter v. Bollinger</i>), the Supreme Court upholds the principle that race may be a factor in admissions decisions, under the rationale that there is a compelling state interest in racial diversity. However, in a separate case (<i>Gratz v. Bollinger</i>), the court rules against the University of Michigan’s undergraduate admissions policy, particularly its use of a mechanical point system that failed to meet the requirement for individualized consideration of applicants, as laid out in the court’s 1978 <i>Bakke</i> decision.

measurement of race – either for those in charge of collecting government statistics or for those who responded to census inquiries. It is likely that at least some problems arose in assigning persons to specific racial categories. Some individuals probably felt that the race classification did not acknowledge their true identities, especially if they were of mixed ancestry or if their appearance did not meet stereotypical expectations (Forbes 1990). Indeed, some persons “passed” from one racial identity to another as a means of individual social mobility (Myrdal 1944, pp. 129–30, 683–8). Nonetheless, the system worked in the sense that the categories used in the race question agreed with popular perceptions. As a consequence, the measurement of race in the census met with only minor challenges over this long period.

In spite of this seeming stability, the conceptual content and the meaning of race have undergone a sea change over time, and a new concept – that of ethnicity – has arisen (Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Anderson and Fienberg 1999). A hundred years ago, most people, including a significant share of intellectuals, thought of racial classifications as biological groups akin to species (Gould 1996; Lott 1998). Over the course of the twentieth century, however, both the scientific and the popular understandings of race shifted gradually. Today, races are generally defined as social categories (Omi and Winant 1994; Hollinger 1995).

Although the standard sociological approach was to apply the term “race” to distinctions based on people’s appearance and the term “ethnicity” to distinctions based on culture or language (van den Berghe 1967), “ethnicity” came to be used increasingly as an inclusive term for all groups believed to share common descent. In a 1987 decision giving an Iraqi the right to sue under provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Supreme Court ruled that ethnic groups could be considered races because of the historical meaning of these terms (*St. Francis College v. Al-Khazraji* 1987). Conventional and scientific usage of terms such as “race” and “ethnicity” will undoubtedly be subject to further change, as they have in the past, but “race” remains the term officially used in population censuses as well as in popular discourse.

The social science conception of race and ethnicity underlying contemporary census measurements has moved far from the popular beliefs that motivated the original inclusion of race (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). In 1790, at the time of the first census of the United States, race or color was assumed to be part of the natural order, with differential entitlements for citizenship and legal standing. The first naturalization law, passed in 1790, stipulated that only those who were “free and white” could become citizens (Heer 1996). The Constitution required that each enslaved individual be counted as 60 percent of a person to determine population and electoral apportionment. Indians who did not pay taxes were excluded altogether.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the development of pseudoscientific social Darwinism, “race” became a defining category in Western thought (Harris 1968). At that time, race was equated with biologically based divisions among humans; these divisions, according to a view shared by many social scientists of the period, determined fundamental capacities, such as intelligence, of the members of different races. This view led to attempts, in the late nineteenth century, to gather more detailed racial data. Color had been added as a census classification in 1850, with the categories of white, black, and mulatto; in 1870, Chinese and (American) Indian were added. By 1890, the search for racial (that is, biological) precision led to census categories based on degrees of African ancestry (mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon). In 1900, categories included the proportion of “white blood” (none, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8) for each enumerated Indian.¹

In the 1930 Census, Mexicans were included as a category in the race classification. The stigmatizing effect of being listed as a nonwhite group in the census was understood clearly (the other groups were Negro, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, and

¹ The full text of census questionnaires is reproduced in U.S. Bureau of the Census (1973); for a review of the evolution of American censuses, see Anderson (1990).

Korean). Therefore, after protests by the Mexican-American community and the Mexican government, the Census Bureau agreed to discontinue the practice (Cortes 1980, p. 697).

Over the second half of the twentieth century, race came to be viewed widely as a social construction lacking a universal, inherent meaning (Nagel 1994; Omi and Winant 1994). The recognition that race is not a “natural” category whose meaning can be taken for granted has raised the issue of how best to measure race so as to capture its contemporary social significance. This issue also has become salient because of the growth in interracial marriage, especially after the Supreme Court invalidated the last state laws against miscegenation in 1967 (Sandefur 1986; Kalmijn 1993; Shinagawa and Pang 1996; Qian 1997). The increase in the number of mixed-race Americans has blurred what formerly were viewed as clear-cut boundaries separating major racial groups (Root 1992, 1996).

Questions about the measurement of race and ethnicity also have arisen because of the increasing politicization of racial and ethnic census data. Census data are widely used to measure social and economic problems; these are generally presented in terms of the numbers of persons affected, especially by racial and ethnic divisions. Moreover, census numbers show the potential size of a political constituency: in interethnic politics, increases in population numbers can be used to make a case for increased governmental attention, changes in electoral districts, and the allocation of resources.

In 1960, the census shifted to a self-enumeration format, in which respondents could specify their own race as they wished (Taeuber and Hansen 1966). Prior to this time, enumerators assigned individuals to racial categories. In most cases, these enumerators probably did not even ask respondents about their race because the racial characteristics were thought to be readily observable. With the new method of data collection, respondents could say how they wished to be identified. It is something of a surprise that the practical consequences of this fundamental change in measurement methods were minor. There was an increase in persons who reported themselves as American Indians (Eschbach 1993, 1995), and more persons checked the “other race” category because they thought their identity was not included in the list of races on the census questionnaire (Harrison and Bennett 1995). The overall patterns of racial composition, however, suggest that in 1960 most Americans identified themselves by race largely as census enumerators had classified them in earlier censuses.

Ethnic political mobilization was directly responsible for the addition of a separate census question on Hispanic identity, beginning in the 1970 Census, and for the separate listing of numerous Asian nationality groups under the race question (see Table Aa2189–2215) (Choldin 1986; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990; Espiritu 1992, Chapter 5; Lott 1998). Hispanic origin has been conceptualized as an ethnic category independent of a person’s racial classification. Administrative actions and popular understanding, however, have created a social position for Hispanics almost equivalent to that of one of the major racial categories. The result is a five-category racial and ethnic scheme that has been used widely to describe American society (non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, non-Hispanic Asians, non-Hispanic Indians, and Hispanics), and is characterized by the historian David Hollinger (1995) as the ethnoracial “pentagon.” This five-category classification was formally created in 1977 in Statistical Directive 15 from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (Office of Management and Budget 1997a, Appendix 1). Although Hispanic origin and race

officially are independent classifications, the popular assumption is that virtually everyone can be fit into one, and only one, of these five OMB categories.

In the 1980 Census, a new question on ancestry (or ethnic origins) was added to supplement the data on race and Hispanic identity and to replace the question on parents’ place of birth that had been asked since 1870 (for statistics on the native-born population of foreign parentage, by parents’ country of origin, see Table Ad319–353). The richness of new data on race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry might have led to a greater understanding of the racial and ethnic roots of the American population; instead it created a crisis. Problems in measuring and interpreting information on race and ethnicity that had been obscured with limited data were now painfully evident (Levin and Farley 1982; Lieber-son and Waters 1988; Alba 1990). Investigations found ambiguity and inconsistency across the various measures of race and ethnic classifications (Lieberson and Santi 1985; Farley 1991); studies of reliability were not encouraging (Johnson 1974).

The increase in marriages across racial and ethnic boundaries has contributed greatly to doubts about the use of race as an ascriptive category, that is, as a characteristic that is assigned to an individual in some official tabulation. The offspring of these unions do not fit neatly into the standard census categories (Xie and Goyette 1997). Examination of census data along the three dimensions of race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry shows a significant number of persons who are black and Hispanic, persons who are white (by race) and American Indian (by ancestry), and persons with other blended and mixed ethnic origins. Although the numbers are not so large as to change the findings based on the conventional ethnic comparisons, and although ad hoc rules can be devised to handle inconsistent cases (del Pinal 1992), a major flaw is evident in the conceptual framework of mutually exclusive and exhaustive racial and ethnic categories.

The underlying problems are evident in the contentious task of revising Statistical Directive 15, the set of OMB rules that defines racial and ethnic categories for government agencies’ collection and presentation of data (Edmonston, Goldstein, and Lott 1996; Office of Management and Budget 1997a; Lott 1998). Members of some groups (for example, religious groups) do not find the primary source of their group identity in any of the census questions. A growing number of persons either do not answer the questions or write in that they are “American” (Lieberson and Waters 1993). Because classifications reflect a variety of criteria (physical appearance, language, treaty status, national or regional ancestry) that are determined solely by individual, subjective choice, it is not surprising that many persons find the census questions difficult to answer and that government agencies find the logic behind them difficult to explain (Perlmann 1997). The arrival of immigrants with mixed backgrounds, such as Afro-Dominicans, Spanish-speaking Filipinos, Chinese from Thailand, and Indians from Guatemala, further challenges the traditional classification system.

After deliberate study and efforts to bring stakeholders into the process, the OMB revised Statistical Directive 15 (Office of Management and Budget 1997b). There are now five major racial categories (American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; black or African American; native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander – Filipinos and Samoans dominate this “other” group; and white) and two ethnic categories (Hispanic or Latino, and not Hispanic or Latino).

The greatest change in the government's classification of individuals by race took place in the 2000 Census, when persons were allowed for the first time to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. This change in the measurement of race has occurred in a social and political climate very different from that of the past. Indeed, it is a direct response to the challenge from individuals and groups who wish the census to reflect more accurately the growing multiracial portion of the population (Statistics Canada and U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993; Wright 1994; Edmonston, Goldstein, and Lott 1996).

This change has created concern about the effects of the new inquiry on the country's racial composition. Some minority-group leaders believe that the new methods may reduce the number of persons identifying themselves as members of their respective groups. Statisticians and public officials fear that continuity in one of the most important series of census data will be disrupted and that data mandated for important public purposes, such as electoral redistricting, will shift in unexpected ways.

The preliminary results from the 2000 Census that are available to us as this edition of *Historical Statistics of the United States* is going to press suggest that none of these potentially important problems have materialized. Only 2.4 percent of the population claimed two or more races. Individuals who did so were highly concentrated geographically and racially.

Hawai'i led the nation, with 21.4 percent of the population claiming their origins from two or more races. Alaska and California were the distant second- and third-ranked states, with 5.4 and 4.7 percent of their populations, respectively. The sparsely populated fourth- and fifth-ranked states, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington (two tied for fifth place), had only 3.8 and 3.6 percent of their populations claiming two or more races.

Multiple racial identities were highly concentrated among native peoples and Hispanics. 54.4 percent of native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders and 39.9 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives reported two or more races. Hispanics accounted for 6.3 percent of the total population nationwide, yet their share of the population reporting two or more races was 32.6 percent.

An interesting statistic that portends change in the very near future in the United States has to do with reports of racial identity by age group. While only 1.9 percent of the population 18 years of age and older claimed two or more racial identities, more than double that percentage (4.0 percent) of those younger than 18 years of age did so. The proximate cause of this substantial change is the growing share of Hispanics in the population, for whom multiple racial identities are closer to the norm.

In conclusion, for the most part, the racial categorization of Americans that was established in 1790 remains a reasonably reliable guide to racial distinctions to the 2000 Census. In the near future, however, we can expect substantial changes in racial self-identification as marriage partnerships increasingly cross traditionally defined racial boundaries.

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RACE AND ETHNICITY: POPULATION, VITAL PROCESSES, AND EDUCATION

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At the beginning of the Republic, about four fifths of the population was white and one fifth black.¹ Most of the blacks at that time were slaves in the South. Importantly, people of no other race were enslaved in the United States at this time. For this reason, the presumptive status of blacks was enslaved. In 1820, the first census that distinguished slaves from free blacks, the free black population was 13 percent of the total black population. By 1860, this proportion had fallen to about 11 percent. The decline was largely due to the higher fertility of slaves relative to free blacks, but it also reflected the very low rate of manumissions.

The massive influx of European immigrants beginning in the 1840s caused the nonwhite share of the population to decline from about 20 percent in 1800 to just over 10 percent by 1930. Immigration from Asia began in the 1850s, but later was strictly limited, first by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and then by a series

of additional laws that expanded the geographic areas in Asia to which exclusion applied. These exclusionary laws culminated in 1924 with the passage of the Quotas Act, which imposed strict numerical limitations on immigration and plugged the last loopholes on all immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere (see the essay in Chapter Ad). Following the adoption of this Quota System, the white share of the population remained stable at about 89 percent until the mid-1960s.

The ethnicity of the white population changed considerably during the period of mass immigration from the 1880s through the adoption of the Quota System in 1924. The geographic source of immigration shifted away from Northern and Western Europe toward Southern and Eastern Europe (Table Ad90–97). This produced a large shift in the country of origin of the foreign-born population. Thus in 1850, 59.7 percent of the foreign-born originated in the British Isles and only 0.4 percent from Southern and Eastern Europe. By 1920, the percentages were 15.6 and 40.7, respectively (Table Ad354–443).

In 1965, the Congress replaced the Quota System with a new set of immigration laws called the Preference System. The Preference System raised the limit on the number of immigrants and shifted the criterion of admission from country of origin to family reunification. The number of immigrants increased and, unexpectedly, the country of origin of immigrants shifted away from Europe toward Asia and Latin America (see the essay in Chapter Ad). These legal changes in immigration law were reflected in an increase in the Asian and Pacific Islander share of the population from less than 1 percent in 1960 to almost 3 percent by 1990 (Table Aa145–184).

American Indians are another nonwhite group that displayed unusually rapid growth during the last years of the twentieth century. The growth in their numbers is due almost exclusively to ethnic reidentification (see Chapter Ag).

The Hispanic population comprises various races and is considered an ethnic, not a racial, category. This population has grown at rates of from 4 to 6 percent per year in the decades since 1940. A great deal of that growth more recently has been from persons of Mexican origin, who now comprise 58 percent of the Hispanic-origin population. The other important components are those of Puerto Rican and Cuban origin (9.6 and 3.5 percent of the Hispanic population, respectively) and, recently, a rapidly growing representation from Central and South America, including individuals from non-Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

The growth of the Mexican American population was stimulated by a migrant agricultural labor program, which was developed during World War II and continued into the 1950s and 1960s. Data on those engaged in this work during the World War II years are not available, but the number participating in the 1950s and through 1964 is included in series Ad1022 and constitutes most of the nonimmigrants reported in that series. During the peak years of this Braceros Program in the late 1950s, almost a half million people entered the country annually under its auspices – more than the number who entered as immigrants from all countries during these years. At the conclusion of the Braceros Program in 1964, the annual flow of migrant agricultural labor became undocumented. By the mid-1980s, the undocumented population was so large as to prompt legislation that legalized the status of this group while at the same time implementing controls to slow the future stream of such workers (see the essay in Chapter Ad).

The growth of the Cuban American population can be traced to the passage of the Cuban Refugees Act of 1966. Fidel Castro's 1959

¹ The racial and ethnic characteristics of the population and the impact of these characteristics on the growth and development of the American economy are subjects of a large scholarly literature. Key works of synthesis include Thompson and Welpton (1933); Taeuber and Taeuber (1958); Bean and Frisbee (1978); and Haines and Steckel (2000). Useful statistical compendia include Cummings (1918) and Smith and Horton (1995).