



Population Resource Center

Providing the Demographic
Dimension of Public Policy

Independence Day 2006

"When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

-Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

"It is impossible we should think of Submission to a Government, that has with the most wanton Barbarity and Cruelty, burnt our defenseless Towns in the midst of winter, excited the Savages to massacre our Farmers, and our Slaves to murder their Masters, and is even now bringing foreign Mercenaries to deluge our Settlements with Blood. These atrocious injuries have extinguished every remaining Spark of Affection for that Parent Country we once held so dear."

- Benjamin Franklin (Letter to Lord Richard Howe, July 20, 1776)

"It is certainly needless to multiply Arguments in such a Situation. All that is valuable to us as Men and Freemen is at Stake. It does not admit of a Question, what would be the Effect of our finally failing. Even the boasted Commissioners for giving Peace to America have not offered, and do not now offer any Terms but Pardon on absolute Submission. And though (blessed by God) even the Loss of *Philadelphia* would not be the Loss of the Cause--Yet while it can be saved, let us not, in the Close of the Campaign, afford then, such Ground of Triumph; but give a Check to their Progress, and convince our Friends, in the distant Parts, that **ONE SPIRIT ANIMATES THE WHOLE.**"

- John Hancock, Gettysburg Address, November 18, 1863

History

- At the time of the Declaration of Independence, there were thirteen colonies: Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Virginia.
- The total population of the thirteen colonies in 1776 was approximately 2.5 million.
- In May of 1773 the British Parliament concocted a clever plan. They gave the struggling East India Company a monopoly on the importation of tea to America. Additionally, Parliament reduced the duty the colonies would have to pay for the imported tea. The Americans would now get their tea at a cheaper price than ever before. However, if the colonies paid the duty tax on the imported tea they would be acknowledging Parliament's right to tax them.
- Twelve of the thirteen colonies sent a total of fifty-six delegates to the **First Continental Congress**. Only Georgia was not represented. One accomplishment of the Congress was the Association of 1774, which urged all colonists to avoid using British goods, and to form committees to enforce this ban. **The Second Continental Congress** convened in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775 and John Hancock was elected president of Congress.
- On June 10, John Adams proposed that Congress consider the forces in Boston a Continental army. He recommended George Washington for the position of general. Congress began to raise men from other

colonies to join the army in New England, and named a committee to draft military rules. To pay for the army, Congress issued bills of credit, and the twelve colonies represented in the Congress promised to share in repaying the bills. Acting as an independent government, Congress appointed commissioners to create peace treaties with the Indians.

- When a congressional committee began to investigate the possibility of foreign aid in the war against Great Britain, France expressed interest.
- When North Carolina and Virginia empowered their delegates to vote for American independence, Virginian Richard Henry Lee offered a resolution stating that the colonies "are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." A committee was appointed to draft a declaration of independence, and Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write it. On July 2, Congress voted in favor of independence, and on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was approved. Copies were sent throughout the colonies to be read publicly.
- Congress declared July 4th a legal federal holiday in 1941.

U.S. Census History

- At the time of the Declaration of Independence, there was no official measure of the inhabitants in the 13 colonies. The population of the United States is estimated to have been 2.5 million in 1775.
- The first official count of the U.S. population was conducted in 1790 by federal marshals on horseback. It took 18 months to question and record the answers of the 3.9 million U.S. inhabitants in notebooks or bits of paper.
- To avoid states augmenting their population, the founding fathers designated that the first census be used to allocate the cost of the Revolutionary War, with more populous states paying more. State population counts are now used for distribution of approximately \$185 billion in federal funds for programs including schools, highways, hospitals and elderly assistance.
- The layout and process of the census has changed dramatically over the past two centuries. In 1790 six questions were asked, while in 1840 there were over seventy questions. The census of 1890 was the first to be tabulated by machine. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the census department began measuring unemployment and income. The first non-defense computer was developed to tabulate the 1950 census. Mail-in forms took precedence over door-to-door enumerators in 1970.
- The first census of 1790 included free white males 16 and over; free white males under 16; free white females; all other free persons by sex and color; and slaves.

The 2000 Census

- The 2000 Census used 860,000 temporary workers and \$6 billion to conduct its effort, which consisted of questionnaires by mail and select follow-up visits. It found the U.S. population to be 281,421,906, as of April 1, 2000.
- As a way to get more responses, the 2000 Census was shortened to seven questions, making it the briefest survey in 180 years. These included basic questions of age, sex, ethnicity, and number of occupants. One in six households, however, received the 52-question long form.
- A major change for the 2000 Census was in the category of race. In past surveys a person had to choose one race. However, a person could mark more than one race in the 2000 survey.
- The census now counts all U.S. residents, providing forms in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog to strengthen its effort.

Demographic Trends

- In July of 1776 there were about 2.5 million people living in the colonies with 4.5 persons per square mile. While in October 2006 there will be a projected 300 million people with a population density of 79.6 persons per square mile.
- The U.S. population has grown greatly in diversity. In 1790, 2.5 million Americans were white and 757,000 were black. According to new estimates released by the Census Bureau, as of July 2005, about 198.4 million Americans were non-Hispanic white; 42.7 million were Hispanic; 39.7 million were black; 14.4 million were Asian, 4.5 million were American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 990,000 were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders.
- In 2005, there were about 35 million foreign-born residents in the United States, accounting for 12 percent of the nation's total population. There also were about 30 million "second-generation" Americans, about 10 percent of the total population, meaning that at least one of their parents was born abroad.
- The foreign born were first included as a category in 1850. From 1850 to 1930, the foreign-born population of the United States increased from 2.2 million to 14.2 million, reflecting large-scale immigration from Europe during most of this period. The highest percentages foreign born were 14.4 percent in 1870. Today there are 33.5 million foreign born in the U.S. the majority (53%) from Latin America and Asia (25%) representing 11.7 percent of the total U.S. population.
- About 1.1 million immigrants were granted legal permanent residence in 2005. Of these, one-in-four settled in California, and one-in-10 in the New York metro area. That same year, about 463,000 people became naturalized citizens. Mexico contributed the highest number of naturalized citizens in 2003 (56,100), followed by India (29,800), the Philippines (29,100), Vietnam (26,000) and China (24,000).
- The population has expanded as the country's land mass grew from the thirteen original colonies. In 1790, when the first census was taken, the mean center of population was in Kent, Maryland. Following the population move out west, the mean center went from Upshur, West Virginia in 1840 to Decatur, Indiana in 1890 to Clinton, Illinois in 1960. The mean center is currently near Phelps, Missouri.

This Fact sheet was prepared in June of 2006 by Angelique Olmo. It is based on information from a number of sources including the United States Census Bureau, Library of Congress, Eyewitness to History.com. For more information contact the Population resource Center at 202-467-5030, 1725 K Street, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20006

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