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Pennsylvania's Population: 1790-1990

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November 2000

PUBLISHED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE DATA CENTER (PaSDC),
A UNIT OF THE INSTITUTE OF STATE AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AT PENN STATE HARRISBURG

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ISBN 1-58036-143-9

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was researched and written by Victoria Marquez, an intern from York College, and Amy Jonas, former Senior Research Coordinator of the Pennsylvania State Data Center (PaSDC), under the direction of Diane Shoop, PaSDC Director. Format contributions were made by Mark Gehret, Senior Research Technologist, and Research Assistants, Pat Kelly and Amy Binder.

DATA SOURCES AND BACKGROUND

Information provided in this report was compiled primarily from selected United States Censuses beginning with the first in 1790 and continuing with 1850, 1900, 1950 and 1990, the most recent for which data are available. The first census was limited in information, providing the number of males older and younger than the age of 16 and the number of females and slaves. It also provided a breakdown of data by county.

Subsequent censuses provided more detailed population information. The 1850 Census provided information on territory, population, moral and social condition, industry, property, revenue and taxation, as well as the statistical details of cities, towns and counties. There were also comparisons between states along racial lines. Census questions included the number of births, marriages, deaths, types of occupations, nativity, and types of industry and commerce.

The 1900 Census added the distinction between urban and rural population, as well as median age, state or territory of birth, foreign parentage, citizenship and years in the United States.

In 1950, the census included questions regarding marital status, household and family characteristics, residence in 1949, school enrollment, employment status, income, hours worked per week, and industry and class of workers.

The 1990 Census expanded the population information to include poverty, causes of death, fertility, language spoken in home, housing quality, and commuter patterns. Some questions asked in earlier censuses were no longer asked including taxation. These are now covered in separate surveys carried out by the Census Bureau.

In addition to the five decennial censuses mentioned, the following resources were used:

Almanac of the 50 States. 1999 Edition. Vermont: Information Publications, 1985.

Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1996. VA: CQ Staff Directory, Inc. 1997

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website. National Center of Health Statistics. www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/marriage.htm

Grove, Robert D., Vital Statistics Rate 1940-1960. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

Kurian, George Thomas. Datapedia of United States 1790-2000: American year by year. Maryland: Bernan Press 1994.

Pennsylvania Vital Statistics Annual Report 1980. Department of Health, 1982.⁽¹⁾

Pennsylvania Vital Statistics Annual Report 1990. Department of Health, 1992.⁽¹⁾

United States Census Bureau. Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1970. Bicentennial edition. Part 1 and 2, Washington, D.C., 1975.

United States Census Bureau. Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1999 (119th edition) Washington, D.C., 1999.

United States National Office of Vital Statistics. Vital Statistics Rate 1900-1940. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

United States National Office of Vital Statistics. Vital Statistics Rate 1940-1960. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

United States Bureau of the Census. Century of Population Growth 1790-1900. Baltimore: Genealogical Publication Company 1969.

⁽¹⁾ Pennsylvania State Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analysis, interpretations or conclusions.

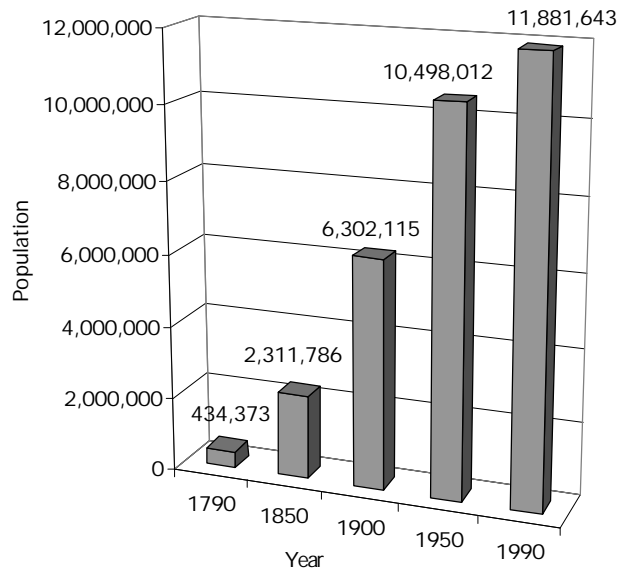
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- From 1790 to 1990, Pennsylvania's population increased steadily. Over the course of those 200 years, the population grew by 2,635 percent.
- Over 200 years, Pennsylvania's population became much more urbanized jumping from 10.2 percent urban in 1790 to nearly 70 percent in 1990.
- The percent of males to females has been decreasing since 1790. The male to female ratio in 1790 was 51.3 to 48.7 percent. In 1990, females outnumbered males 52.1 to 47.9 percent.
- Racial diversity has grown significantly in the most recent years examined. While whites made up approximately 97.5 percent of the population in 1790, 1850, and 1900, they fell to 93.9 percent in 1950 and to 88.5 in 1990.
- Heart disease was the number one cause of death in 1950 and 1990, accounting for nearly 40 percent of all deaths. It replaced infectious diseases which caused the most deaths in previous years.
- Immigration from other countries was a consistent source of population growth in Pennsylvania. In 1900, almost 15 percent of the state's total population were foreign born. The majority of these were born in Ireland, Germany, and England. By 1990, only 3.1 percent of the state's population makeup was foreign born, the majority having come from Italy.
- The number one industrial category in 1850 in terms of number of employees was the commerce/ trade/ manufacturing/ mechanical arts/ and mining category. Two hundred years later, the industry with the largest percentage of employees was the service industry.
- The percentage of individuals graduating from high school increased dramatically from 20.9 percent in 1950 to 74.7 percent in 1990. Those going on to earn a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 12.5 percent in the same 40-year time span.

POPULATION

In 1790, Pennsylvania's population was one of the largest in the country with a total population of 434,373. The greatest jump in population occurred between 1790 and 1850 when the population increased by 432 percent to 2,311,786. In 1900, Pennsylvania's population exceeded 6.3 million, and by 1950, that number had grown by another 4.2 million. Pennsylvania's population increased to 11,881,643 by 1990. This figure represents a 2,635 percent increase from 1790.

Total Population: Pennsylvania, 1790-1990

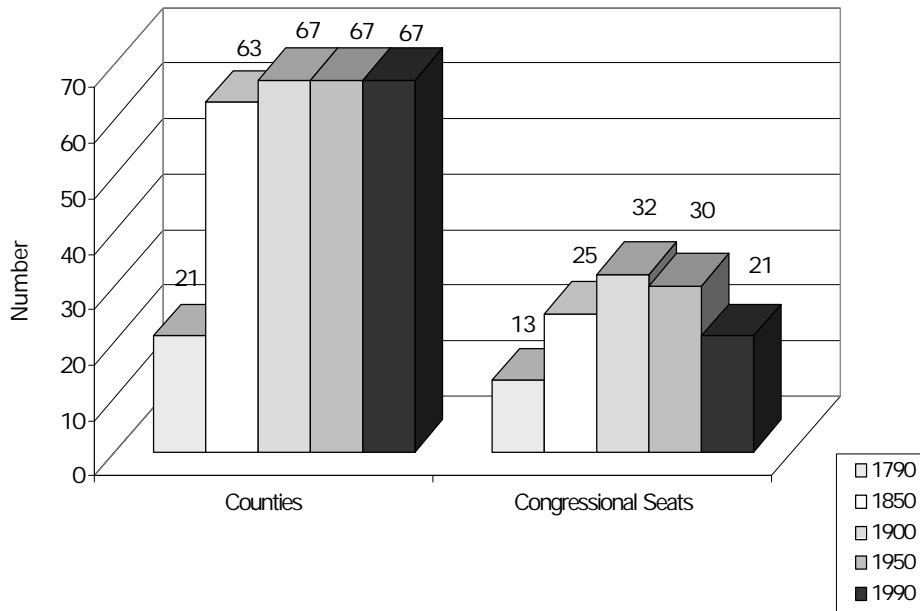


NUMBER OF COUNTIES AND CONGRESSIONAL SEATS

In 1790, Pennsylvania consisted of 21 counties. In 1850, the number of counties had tripled to 63. By 1900, four more counties had been added for a total of 67.

After the first census in 1790, Pennsylvania was represented by 13 of 106 seats in the United States House of Representatives. This is equal to 12 percent of the total number of seats for the nation. In 1850, the state's number of House seats increased to 25 of 237 but the percentage fell to 10.5. Then in 1900, the number increased again to 32 of 391, 8 percent of the total. In 1950, the Commonwealth's number of seats in the House decreased to 30 of 437, and by 1990, Pennsylvania was represented by 21 of the 435 seats. These numbers correspond to 7 and 5 percent of total seats in their respective years.

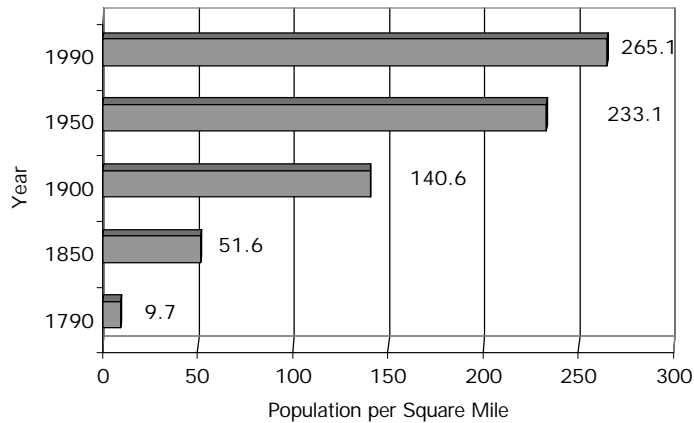
Counties and Congressional Seats 1790-1990



LAND AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY

In 1790, Pennsylvania's land area equaled 44,832 square miles and the population density was 9.7 people per square mile. In 1850, the land area remained unchanged, the population density increased to 51.6 people per square mile. By 1900, the population density almost tripled to 140.6 people per square mile. By 1950, the population density increased to 233.1 people per square mile. In 1990, the total area of Pennsylvania was 46,058 square miles and the land area was 44,819 for a population density of 265.1 people per square mile.

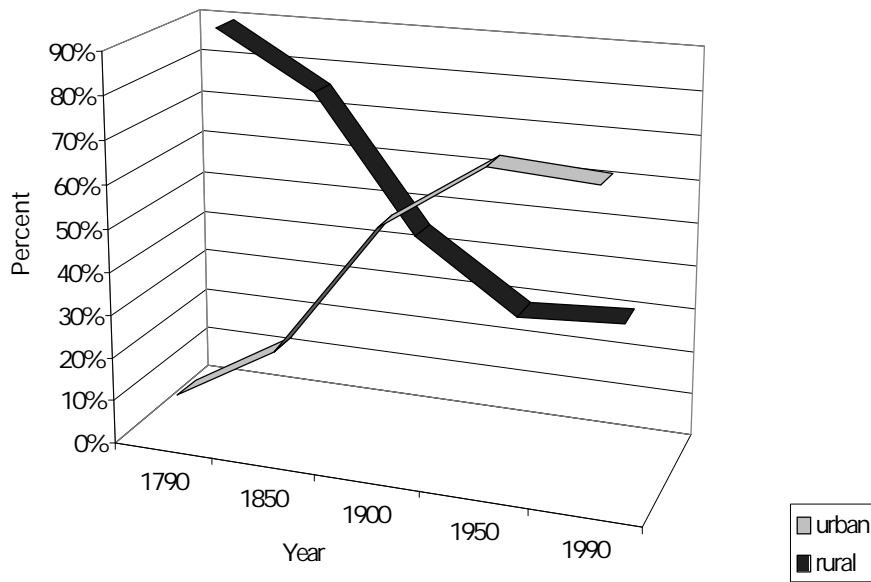
Population Density of Pennsylvania 1790-1990



URBAN VERSUS RURAL

In 1790, one hundred years prior to the industrial revolution, most Pennsylvanians lived in the rural landscape of the state. Only 10.2 percent lived in an urban dwelling. By 1900, the percentage of those living in urban areas increased to 54.7 percent. The population shift from rural areas to urban continued in 1950 climbing to 66.5 percent urban. By 1990, 68.9 percent of the population lived in an urban area.

Percent of Population Living in Urban and Rural Areas: Pennsylvania, 1790-1990



Source: United States Census 1790, 1850, 1900, 1950, 1990

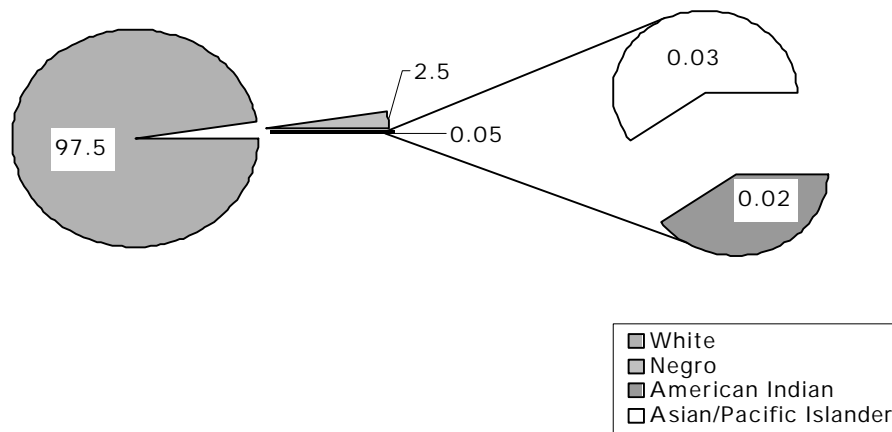
RACE

The first census, in 1790, provided only the most basic information about the racial makeup of Pennsylvania. Individuals were defined as either “whites, slaves, or free coloreds.” Whites composed 97.6 percent of the population with slaves and free coloreds composed the balance. There were 1,300 American Indians located on a branch of the Susquehanna River, but they accounted for less than one half of one percent of Pennsylvania’s population and were not a designated census category.

In 1850, the racial breakdown was nearly the same with whites making up 97.7 percent and the remaining 2.3 percent being free coloreds.

Whites comprised 97.5 percent of the population in 1900. The 1900 census also included the racial categories of Indian (today’s American Indian/Alaskan Native) numbering 1,639 and Mongolian (today’s Asian/Pacific Islanders) at 1,967. Together, these two groups composed less than 0.1 percent of the population. In 1900 and in 1950, today’s black or African-American population are referred to as negro.

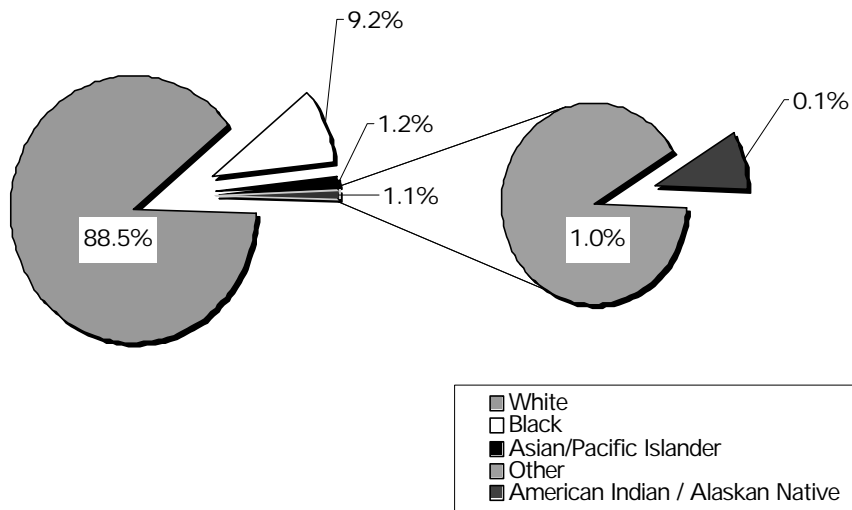
Population by Race: Pennsylvania, 1900



In 1950, the white population dropped to 93.9 percent while the negro population rose to 6.1 percent. The number of American Indians decreased to 1,141, while Asian/Pacific Islanders increased to 3,287. There were 1,251 people who defined themselves as “Other.” Together these three groups did not equal 1 percent of the total population.

Forty years later, in 1990, the population of Pennsylvania continued to diversify. Whites made up 88.5 percent of the population while African Americans increased to 9.2 percent. American Indians also increased in population to 14,733, accounting for 0.1 percent of the total. A substantial increase occurred within the Asian/Pacific Islander race which rose to 127,438, or 1.2 percent of the population.

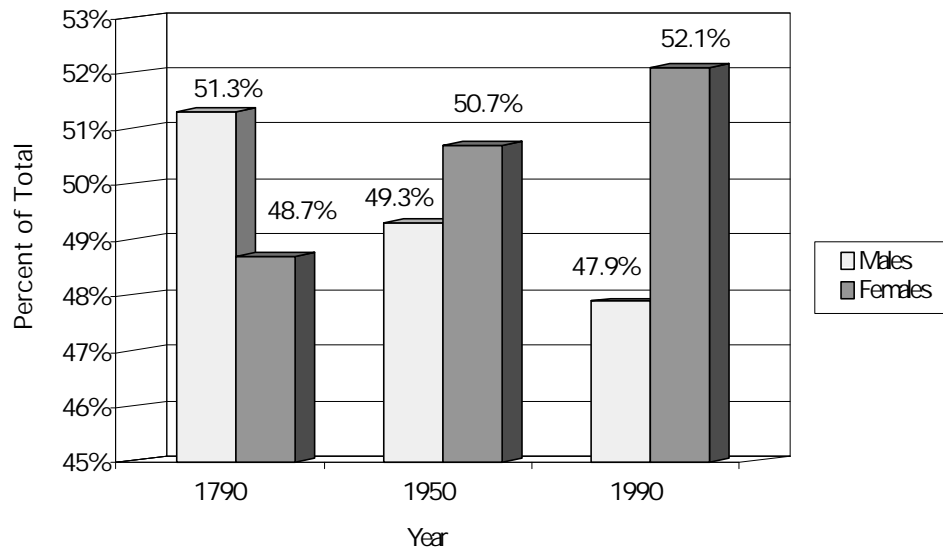
Population by Race: Pennsylvania, 1990



GENDER

From the time the first census was taken in 1790, male population held a slight majority. However, this situation reversed by 1950. In 1790, there were 217,736 males (51.3 percent) and 206,363 females. This relationship remained fairly constant until 1950, when males fell to 49.3 percent (5,170,411 males to 5,327,601 females). In 1990, the male to female rate dropped again to 47.9 percent, with almost 500,000 more females than males.

Percent of Population by Gender: Pennsylvania 1790, 1950, 1990

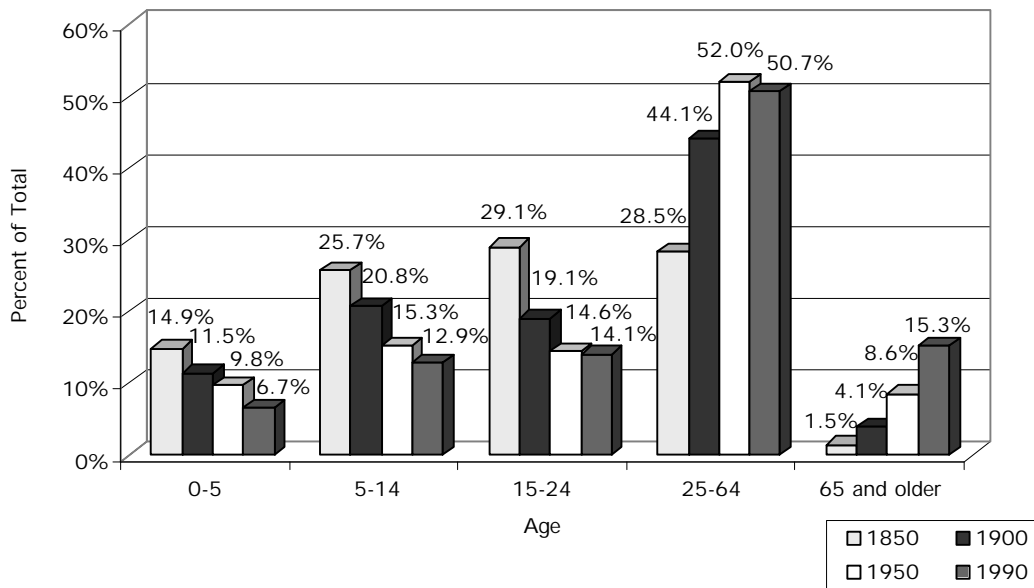


AGE

In the 1790 census, the only age differentiation was for males under 16 and age 16 and older. Nearly half of the male population was below age 16 (49.1 percent). Since 1850, the age categories have included most five-year age cohorts and 51.4 percent of the population was under age 20. Only 30 percent were age 30 and older. Fifty years later, the majority of people were between the ages of 25 and 64 years. The median age in 1900 was 24.2 years old. The median age prior to 1900 is not available.

The population of Pennsylvania by age in 1950 and 1990 followed the same pattern as 1900, with the majority of the population between the ages of 25 and 64. Two categories continued to change. Those under the age of five continued to decline. Those age 65 and older continued to increase. In fact, the size of the age 65 and older category almost doubled during the forty-year time span. The median age increased 7.1 years from 1900 to reach 31.3 in 1950. In 1990, the median age increased to 35.1 years.

Population by Age: Pennsylvania. 1850 to 1990

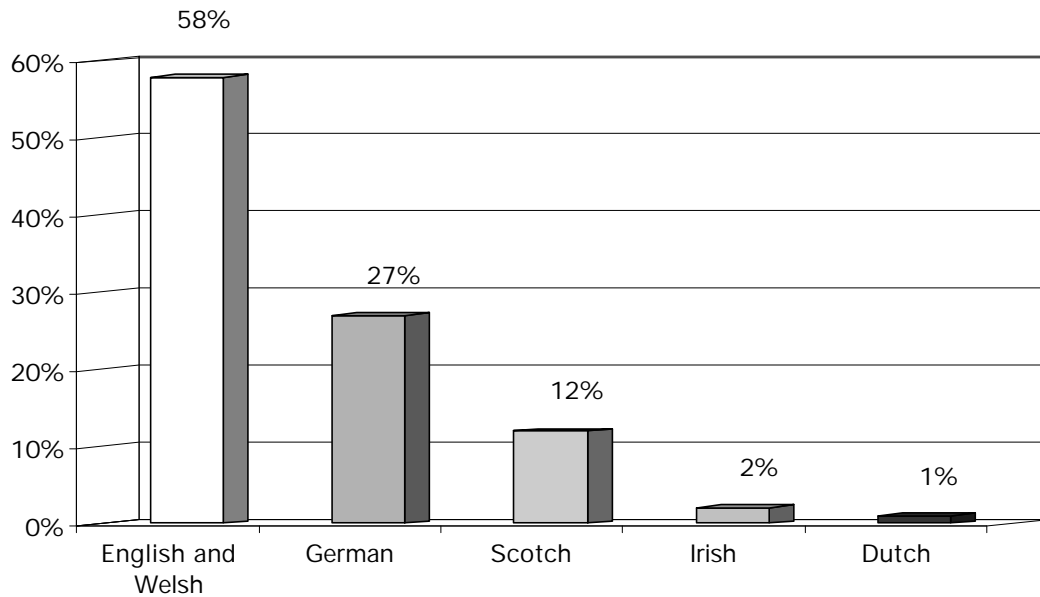


FOREIGN BORN POPULATION

Pennsylvania became home to many individuals as they immigrated to the United States. In fact, in 1850, 13.1 percent of the state’s population was foreign born. However, by 1990, this number decreased significantly to 3.1 percent.

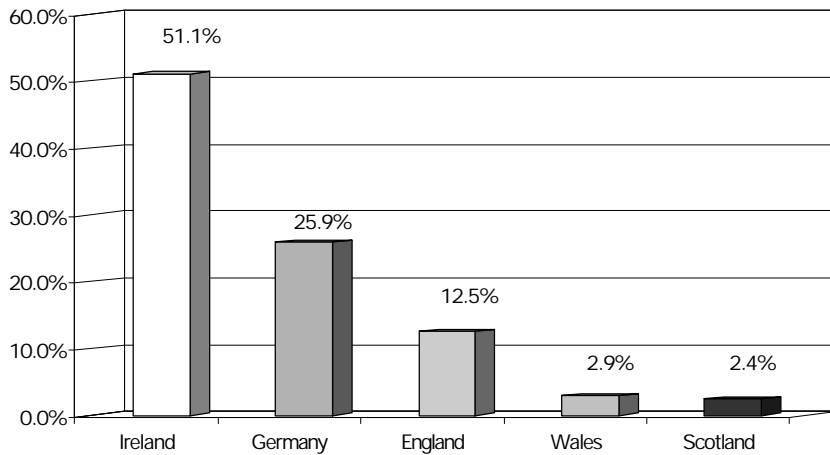
The dominant countries of origin of Pennsylvania’s 1790 population were England and Wales (43,026 people), Germany (19,307), Scotland (9,552), Ireland (1,555) and Holland (465). The chart below displays the percentages of each of these five nationalities of the immigrant population of Pennsylvania in 1790.

Leading Nationalities of Origin of the Foreign Born Population: Pennsylvania, 1790



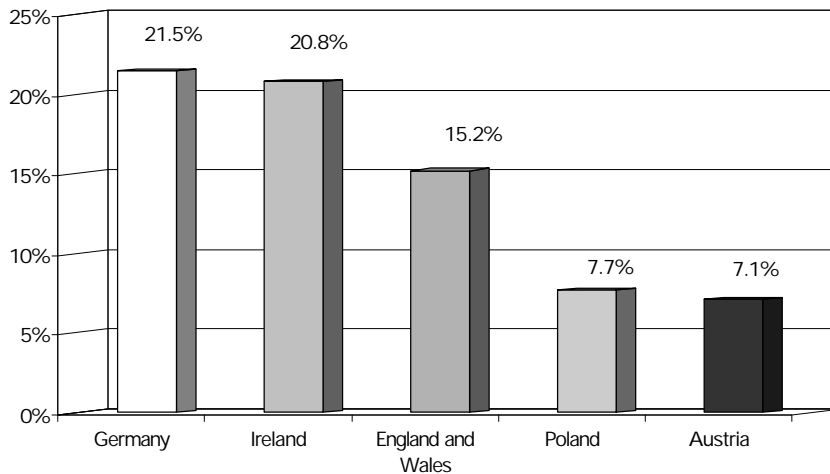
In 1850, Ireland was the leading source of more than half (51.1 percent) of the Commonwealth’s foreign born population. Germany, England, Wales and Scotland rounded out the top five countries.

Leading Countries of Origin of the Foreign Born Population: Pennsylvania, 1850



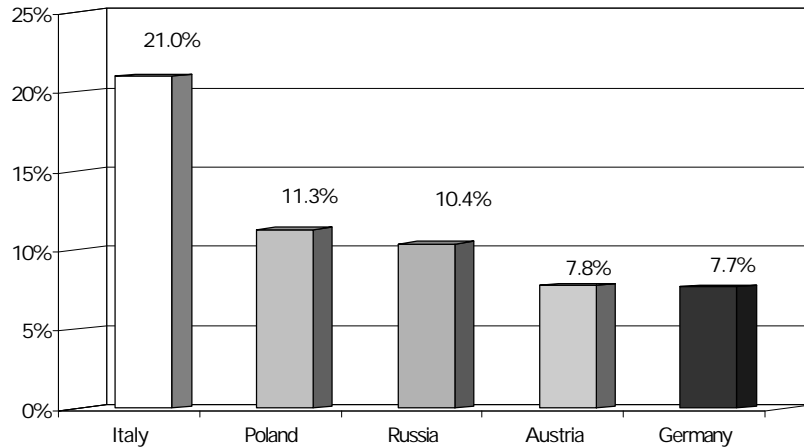
In 1900, Germany took the lead from Ireland as the top country of origin of Pennsylvania’s foreign born. Germany, Ireland, and England and Wales continued to dominate; however, Poland and Austria replaced Scotland in the top five.

Leading Countries of Origin of the Foreign Born Population: Pennsylvania, 1900



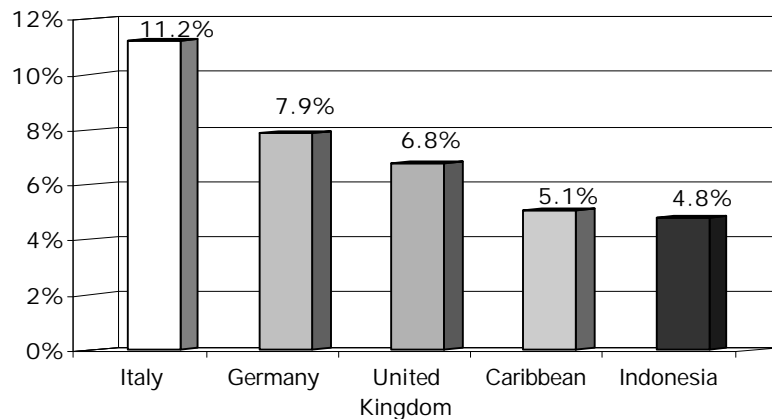
In 1950, Ireland, England, and Wales fell out of the top five countries of origin for immigrants. Italy became the leading country of immigration, followed by Poland, Russia, Austria, and Germany. Great Britain had been replaced by mainland Europe as the primary source of immigrants.

Leading Countries of Origin of the Foreign Born Population: Pennsylvania, 1950



In 1990, in addition to the familiar countries of Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom, the Caribbean and Indonesia became significant countries of origin for Pennsylvania immigrants. While those five countries led as sources of people to Pennsylvania, they represented a small percent of the total foreign born in the state. In prior years, the census provided data only on the most basic places from which people immigrated while the 1990 census provided the most detailed listing of the foreign makeup of Pennsylvania.

Leading Countries of Origin of the Foreign Born Population: Pennsylvania, 1990



VITAL STATISTICS

Data on births, deaths, and marriages were not available in 1790. In 1850, there were 64,331 births in Pennsylvania for a rate of 27.8 per 1,000 in population. There were 28,551 deaths, a rate of 12.3 per 1,000 population.

The number one cause of death in 1850 was Zymotic diseases (40.7 percent), which included such illnesses as cholera, small pox, measles, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and the flu. The next highest causes were diseases of the respiratory organs (17.7 percent), diseases of the brain and nervous system (9.8 percent), diseases of uncertain or variable seats (6.7 percent, including abscess, gout, cancer, rickets, scurvy, tumor, etc.), and diseases of the digestive organs (3.3 percent, including worms, dyspepsia, gastritis, jaundice, etc).

In 1900, birth and death rates were no longer in the census, but deaths were first reported through other sources in 1906 and births in 1915. The 1915 birth rate was 26.5 per thousand with 217,979 births. In 1906, there were 90,199 deaths in Pennsylvania, and the rate was 15.0 per 1,000.

The number one cause of death in 1900 was general disease (18.1 percent), which encompassed roughly the same diseases as the Zymotic diseases of 1850, and included measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, venereal disease, influenza, typhoid fever and cholera. As in 1850, diseases of the respiratory system were the second leading cause of death in 1900 at 15.6 percent while diseases of the brain and nervous system were third at 13.7 percent. Diseases of the circulatory system (8.0 percent) and accidents (6.3 percent) were the fourth and fifth leading causes in 1900.

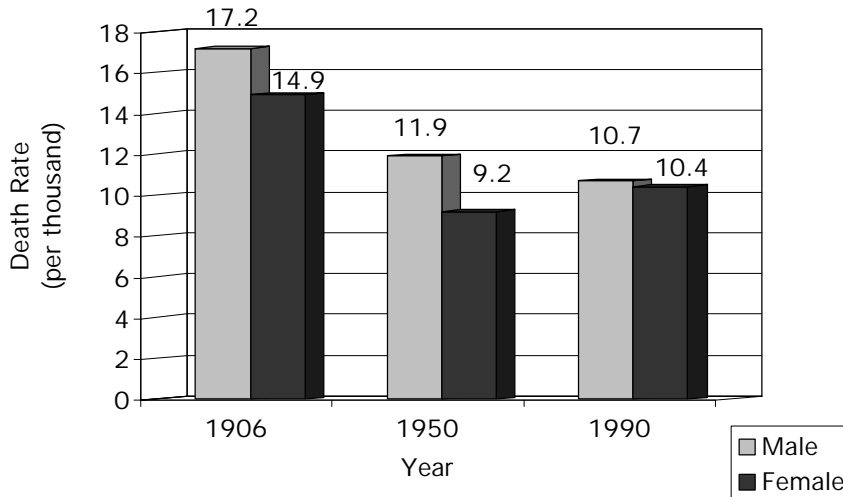
In 1950, there were 221,635 births, which calculated to a birth rate of 21.1 per thousand. The overall death rate dropped to 10.5 deaths per thousand. Heart disease rose to become the number one cause accounting for 39.7 percent of all deaths. Cancer (14.8 percent) and strokes (10.0 percent) were the next deadliest maladies, followed by accidents (5.1 percent), and perinatal conditions (3.4 percent).

In 1990, the number of births decreased to 171,053, for a birth rate of 14.4 per thousand. The death rate dropped to 10.2 deaths per thousand. The three leading causes of death remained heart disease (35.7 percent), cancer and stroke while the others were chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (including bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and allied conditions) and unintentional injuries or accidents. These top five conditions composed 66.5 percent of all deaths that year.

The disparity in death rates by gender and race have decreased since the first data in 1906. Males at that time had a death rate of 17.2 per thousand compared to 14.9 for females, representing a difference of 2.9. This gap decreased to 11.9 for males and 9.2 for females in 1950 (a difference of 2.7). In 1990 the difference was only 0.3 (10.7 for males and 10.4 for females).

Whites in 1906 had a significantly lower death rate, 15.8 per thousand, compared to other races whose combined rate was 28.3. By 1950, whites had a death rate of 10.4, while the rate for blacks was 11.9. Non-white male and female death rates were 13.2 and 10.2 per thousand respectively. Finally, in 1990 whites had a death rate of 10.4 per thousand and for blacks it was 10.5. Non-white male and female death rates were 12.0 and 9.2 per thousand respectively.

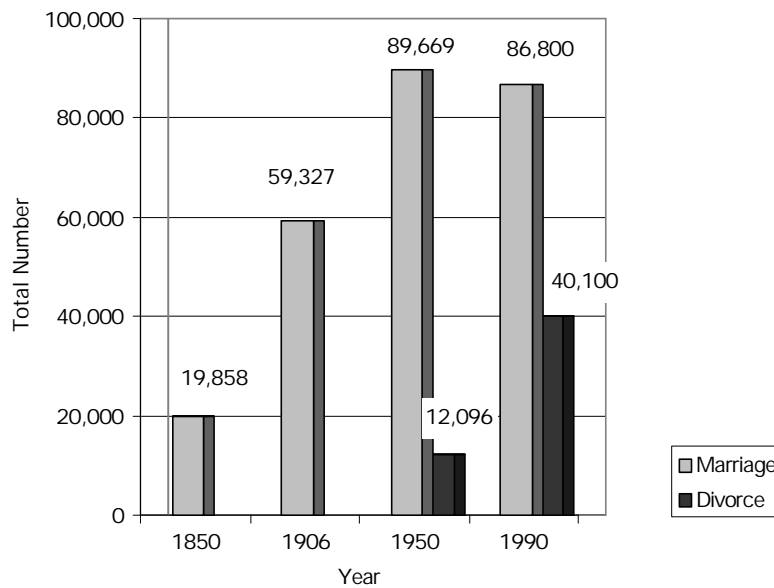
Death Rate By Gender: Pennsylvania 1906-1990



MARRIAGE

The 1850 census reported 19,858 marriages that year at a rate of 8.6 per 1,000. Marriage rates were first provided by other sources in 1906, and reported 59,327 marriages, with a marriage rate of 8.3 per thousand. In 1950, the marriage rate increased to 8.5 per thousand, and by 1990, had decreased to 7.1 per thousand. Divorce rates were not available until the 1950 census. In 1950, the divorce rate was 1.2 per thousand, and in 1990, it increased to 3.4 per thousand.

Marriage and Divorce in Pennsylvania, 1850 to 1990



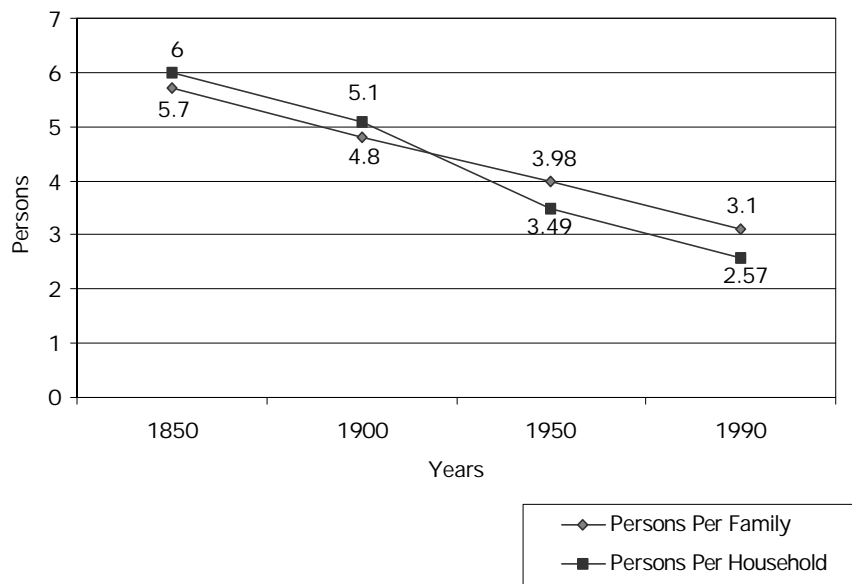
The majority of individuals getting married in 1900 were between the ages of 25 and 29. According to the 1950 census, the majority were married between age 20 and 24 years. In 1990, more males were getting married between the ages of 25 and 29, while more females were married between the ages of 20 and 24 than any other age group. The median age for first marriage was 25.9 years for males and 24 years for females in 1990.

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

There were 386,216 “dwellings” in 1850. Assuming all were occupied, this shows an average of 6.0 persons per household. In 1900, there were 1,236,238 dwellings, an increase of 220 percent. There were an average of 5.1 persons per dwelling. By 1950, the term household (occupied housing unit) was used and the number had grown to 2,918,632, a 136 percent rise from 50 years prior. Finally, in 1990, the number had reached 4,495,966 representing an increase of 54 percent. Persons per household steadily decreased to 3.5 in 1950 and 2.6 in 1990.

There were 408,497 families in 1850 which equates to an average family size of 5.7 persons. In 1900, the number of families had increased 223 percent to 1,320,025 for an average family of 4.8 persons. Families continued to increase, doubling to 2,639,925 by 1950. The average family size was 3.98 persons in 1950 and decreased to 3.1 in 1990. By that year, the number of families had reached 3,155,989, a 20 percent increase from 1950.

Persons Per Household and Family: Pennsylvania, 1850-1990



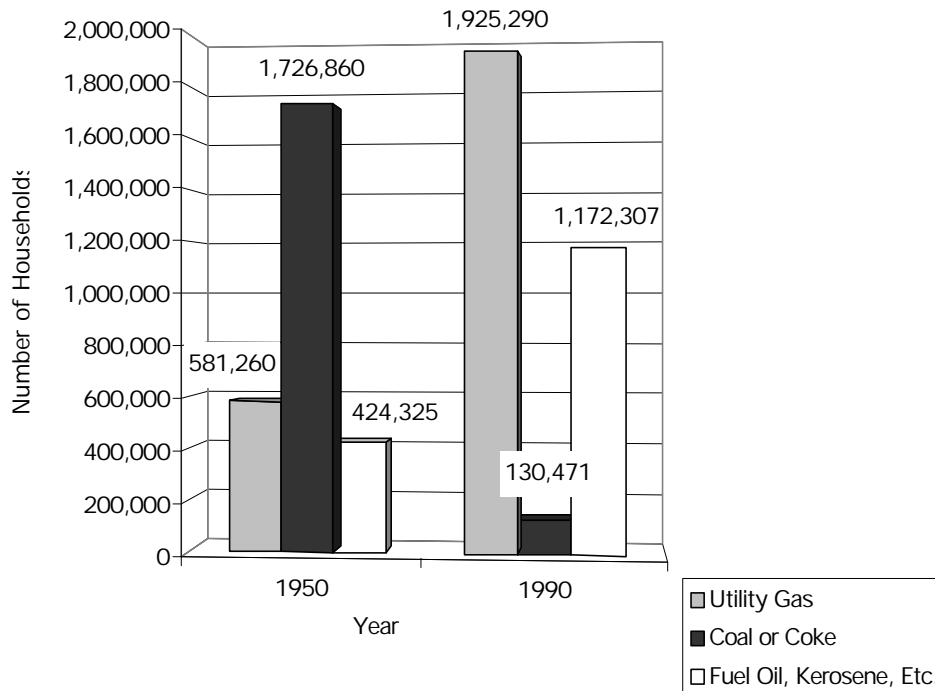
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing quality and characteristics were not reported in censuses until the twentieth century. In the 1950 census, housing questions were asked, but when compared to the 1990 census, the questions were very different in how they were asked and what they defined.

Of the housing units in 1950, 28.4 percent lacked proper plumbing facilities and 7.6 percent lacked kitchen facilities. By 1990, these numbers had dropped to 1 percent lacking plumbing facilities and 0.9 percent lacking kitchen facilities.

The dominant heating fuels used in 1950 changed a great deal by 1990. The chart below shows the top three combined heating fuels used in 1950 and in 1990. Types of fuels not shown are bottled, tank or lp gas, electricity, wood, solar energy, and other.

Leading Heating Fuels Used in Pennsylvania, 1950 and 1990



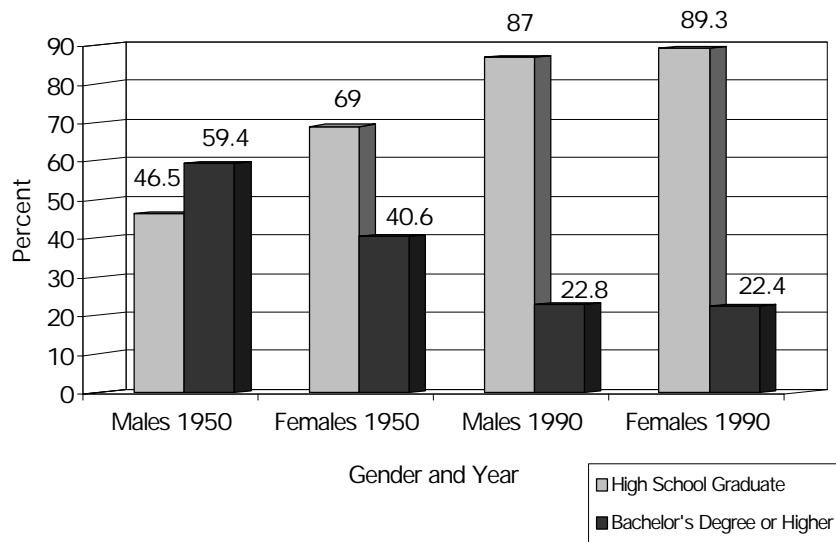
EDUCATION

In 1850, the earliest census with school attendance statistics showed that 22 percent of Pennsylvania’s population had attended school within the previous year. Males made up 52.2 percent of attendance compared to 50.5 percent of the population. Whites comprised 98.7 percent of those who attended school and 97.7 of the total population while native born persons accounted for 96.9 percent of those who attended school and 86.9 percent of the total population. In other words, females, non-whites, and the foreign born were less likely to attend school.

In 1990, 23.8 percent of the total state population was enrolled in school. Whites accounted for 85.8 percent of enrollments but 88.5 percent of the population.

The number of people achieving a higher education in Pennsylvania increased significantly between 1950 and 1990. In 1950, only 20.9 percent of Pennsylvanians had graduated from high school whereas in 1990, 74.7 percent were high school graduates. Those who earned a bachelor’s degree or higher increased from 5.4 percent in 1950, to 17.9 percent in 1990.

Educational Attainment of the Population Age 25 and Older: Pennsylvania, 1950 and 1990

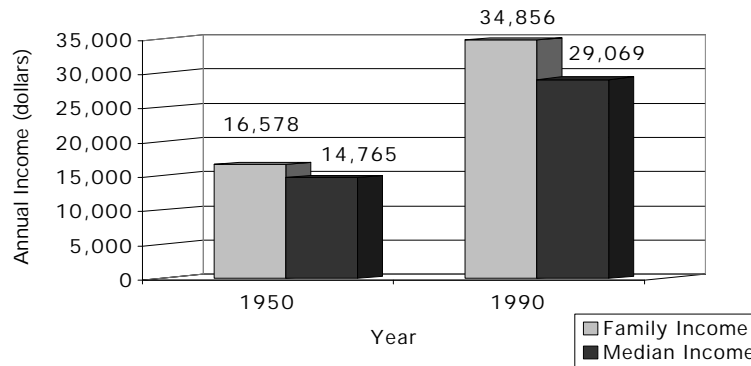


In 1950, there was a substantial difference between men and women in educational attainment. Twenty two and a half percent more females than males graduated from high school, but 18.8 percent more males than females obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. By 1990, males and females were virtually equal in percent of high school graduation and attainment of a bachelor’s degree or higher. Surprisingly, the percentage of both males and females obtaining a college degree decreased from 1950 to 1990.

INCOME AND POVERTY

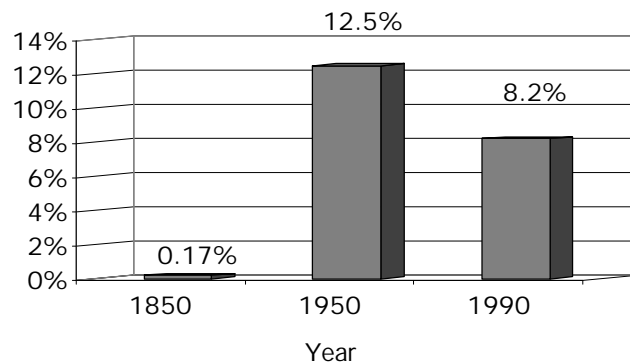
The first census to examine income figures was in 1950. The median family income that year was \$3,182 or \$16,578 in 1989 dollars (comparable to the 1990 census). In the 1990 census, the median family income was more than double the 1950 figure at \$34,856. The 1950 income was also measured for families and unrelated individuals (roughly equivalent to the 1990 household income definition). In 1950, the median income for this group was \$2,834 or \$14,765 adjusted for inflation. The 1990 median household income was \$29,069, not quite double.

1950 and 1990 Median and Family Income (Adjusted to 1989 dollars)



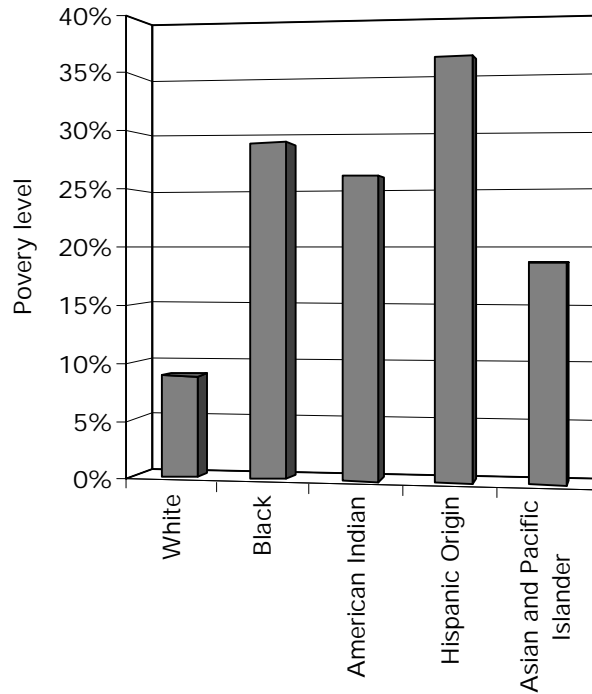
Poverty data were not collected in all censuses. The 1850 census identified 3,811 “paupers,” 0.17 percent of the population. In 1950, 12.5 percent income of “families and unrelated individuals” were less than \$500 or \$2,605 adjusted for inflation. The 1990 threshold for poverty was \$6,652 for one person. In 1990, 11.1 percent of the state’s population lived in poverty.

Percentage of Population in Poverty 1850, 1950 and 1990



In examining the poverty levels within each race and ethnic group, there were significant differences between races. In 1990 whites had the lowest poverty level at 8.8 percent, while those classified as Asian/Pacific Islander had a poverty level of 18.7 percent. American Indians had a poverty level of 26.1 percent. The poverty level of blacks was 29 percent and the highest poverty level of a specific race or origin was of those of Hispanic Origin with a poverty level of 26.2 percent.

Poverty Level by Race/Origin, Pennsylvania: 1990

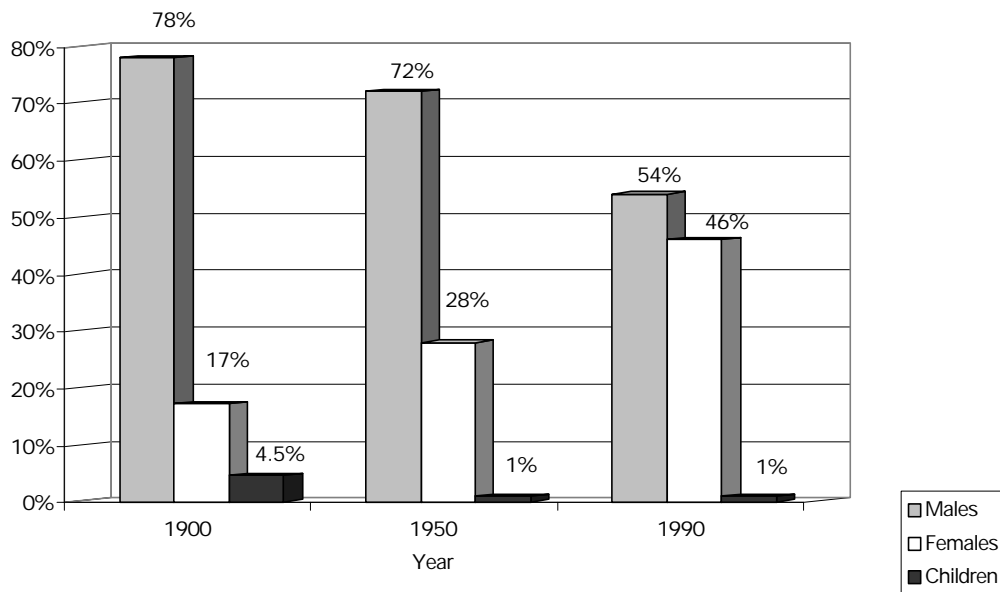


LABOR AND INDUSTRY

The industry leaders in number of Pennsylvania employees changed a great deal between 1850 and 1990. In 1850, the commerce/trade/manufacturing/mechanical arts/mining industry accounted for 39 percent of all employment with 266,927 employees. Agriculture followed with 31 percent, and labor was third with 24 percent. In 1900, the textile industry led with 147,000 employees. Fifty years later, the leader in number of employees was manufacturing, with 1,396,320 workers. In 1990, more Pennsylvania employees worked in the services industry than any other (1,773,211).

The labor force in 1900 was divided into men age 16 and older, women age 16 and older, and children under age 16. Of the 733,834 total workers, 78 percent were men, 17.2 percent were women, and the remaining 4.5 percent were children. Fifty years later, the workforce totaled 3,930,655. Again, the vast majority (72 percent) were men age 16 and older. Fewer than 1 percent were age 14 and 15. Nearly, 28 percent were women. By 1990, the picture had changed. There were 6,255,284 workers age 16 and older- 46 percent of whom were women.

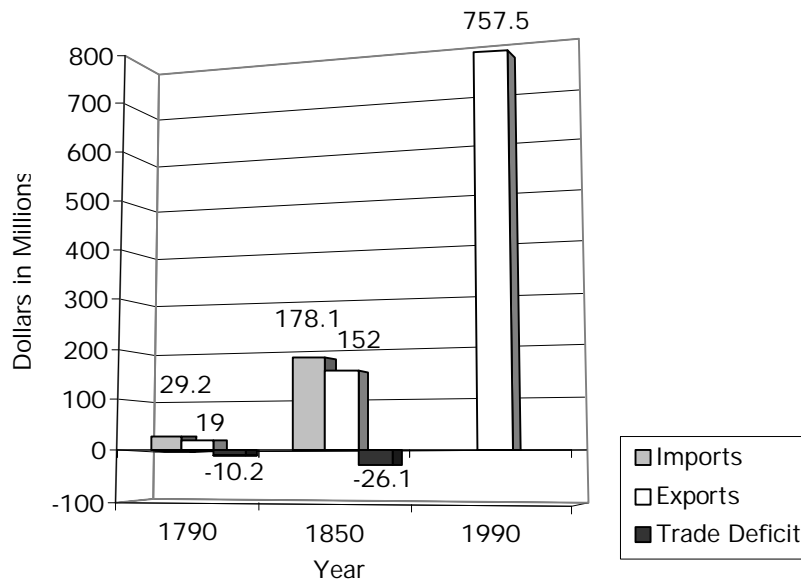
Percent of Labor Force by Gender: Pennsylvania, 1900-1990



IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

In 1790, Pennsylvania imported \$29.2 million in goods and exported \$19.0 million for a trade deficit of \$10.2 million; the trade deficit amount being greater than half of the income obtained from exports. By 1850, the numbers had greatly multiplied to \$178.1 million in imports and \$152.0 million in exports. This trade deficit was \$26.1 million but was equal to only 17 percent of total exports. In 1990, the Commonwealth exported \$757.5 million worth of goods. This figure represents an increase of nearly 4,000 percent from 200 years prior and nearly 400 percent from 1850. Import data, and thus, trade deficit data, for 1990 are not available.

Imports and Exports



SDCIP 4-00
November 2000

ISBN 1-58036-143-9
Free