

participation, income and poverty measures, veteran status, commuting to work, housing characteristics, and a host of additional items – each required by federal statute for program administration and funding.

The 2000 Census reveals that, standing on the threshold of the 21st century, Wisconsin is a state growing at annual rates not far above or below the national average. The distribution of the state's population between urban and rural areas also is similar to the U.S. average. While our population is becoming increasingly more diverse in terms of its racial and ethnic mix, Wisconsin is still overwhelmingly a White, non-Hispanic population.

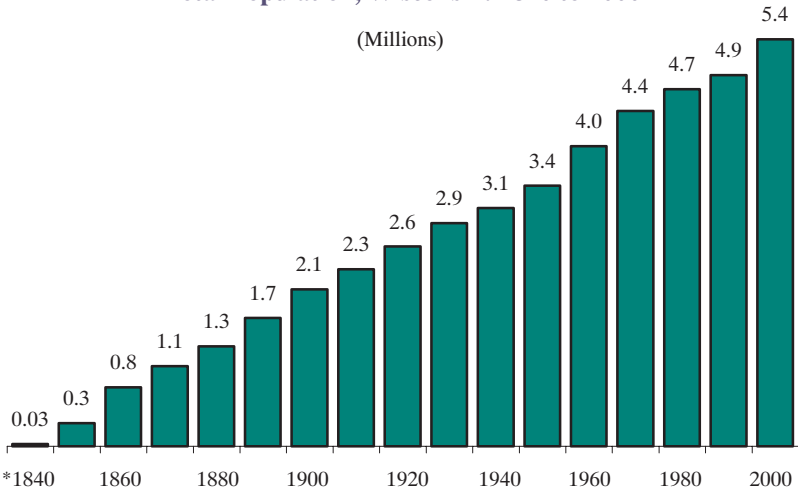
In this article, we examine what the 2000 Census reveals about the people, the families, and the communities of Wisconsin. In the next two sections we discuss overall population growth in the state and the sources of that growth. We then discuss one of the implications of population growth: an increasing density of population settlement across the landscape. In the context of the geographic distribution of Wisconsin's population, and the geographic distribution of population change, we introduce the concepts "urban" and "rural" and discuss how the state's population has become increasingly urbanized during the past century. We also introduce the somewhat related concepts of "metropolitan" and "non-metropolitan" distribution. In each of these topic areas, we also draw some brief comparisons with the pace of population change in Wisconsin relative to its neighbors in the Midwest. Following this, we present data for several of the most basic demographic approaches to "segmenting" the population. We discuss at some length both the age and sex composition of the population as well as the state's racial and ethnic diversity. Major trends are identified that have an inherent demographic momentum likely to influence the demographic future of the state. Having discussed race and ethnicity, we shift attention to the somewhat related concept of ancestry as measured in the decennial census. This leads us next to a brief section on the foreign-born population in Wisconsin. This is followed by sections that deal with household and family composition in the state, the nature of work in Wisconsin, income and poverty measures, educational attainment, and a brief section on what the census can tell us about persons with disabilities. A final section takes a look at housing data from the 2000 Census. We conclude with a brief commentary on what this demographic portrait of Wisconsin's people says about us, and how this portrait may change in coming years.

Population Growth and Sources of Growth

Wisconsin's population stood at 5,363,675 on April 1, 2000 (Fig. 1). This number represents an addition of approximately 472,000 persons since the 1990 Census, the second highest numerical increase between two censuses since statehood in the middle of the 19th century (Fig. 2). Only in the 1950s, when Wisconsin added 518,000 residents, was the numerical growth higher – although the sources of growth in the 1950s differed significantly from those of the 1990s. Coming at the height of the post-World War II baby boom, growth during the 1950s was due entirely to the large difference between births and deaths (roughly 567,000). During the 1950 to 1960 period, the state actually lost residents through the migration

process because the number of residents leaving the state exceeded the number arriving by 49,000. By contrast, in the 1990s, the demographic exchanges were balanced very differently. Between 1990 and 2000 growth from net in-migration to the state accounted for almost half of total growth.

Figure 1
Total Population, Wisconsin: 1840 to 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 1840 to 2000

* 1840 population count is reported for the Wisconsin Territory.

Numerical growth in the 1990s was surprisingly robust, exceeding the growth anticipated by demographic projections made in the early 1990s. Wisconsin's overall *rate* of growth, however, was a somewhat modest 10% for the decade (Fig. 3). This contrasts with a rate of growth of more than 13% for the U.S. as a whole. Thus, Wisconsin's share of the national population continued a decline begun approximately a century ago (Fig. 4). As a consequence, Wisconsin joined nine other states, primarily in the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country, in losing a seat in the Congress in the reapportionment of the House of Representatives based on the final census counts. These seats went to eight states in the faster growing South and West regions (Fig. 5). The 2000 Census reapportionment took effect when the 108th Congress was elected in November 2002. Because each state is allotted votes in the Electoral College based on the sum of their U.S. senators and representatives, the new census numbers also mean that Wisconsin will have one less electoral vote in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections than it did in 2000.

Components of Population Growth

Net change in Wisconsin's population results from the addition of births and in-migrants and the subtraction of deaths and out-migrants. For most of the decades during the 20th century, the principal contribution to growth came from what demographers call natural increase (difference between births and deaths) (Fig. 6).