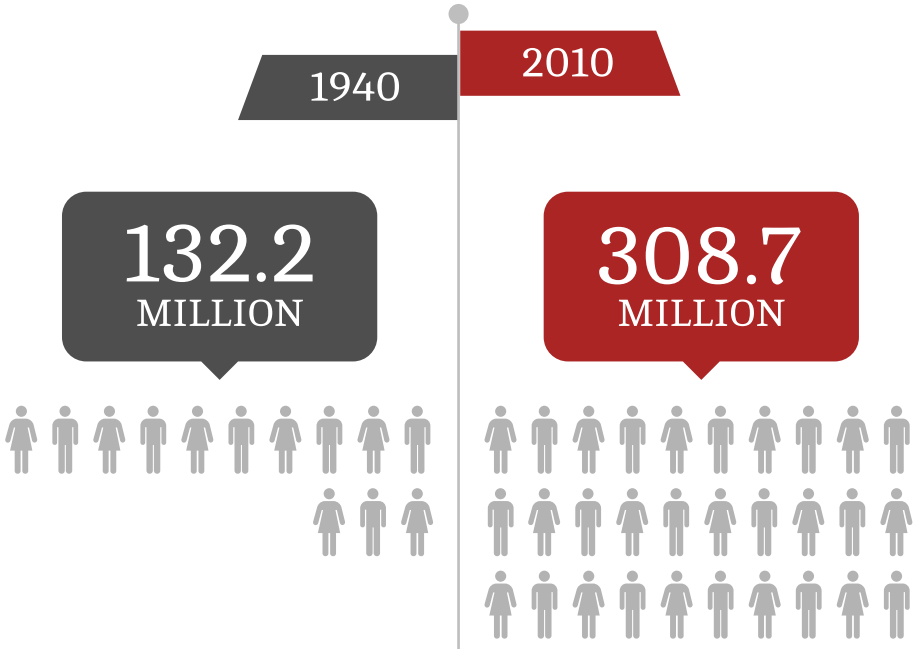
United States Census Bureau

1940-2010:
HOW HAS AMERICA CHANGED?

Then & Now

The 1940 Census came at a momentous time in our nation's history — as we recovered from the Great Depression and not long before our entry into World War II. It was also the first Census that looked deeper into the details of much of American life. Now, 72 years later, upon release of the 1940 Census forms by the National Archives, we look back and see just how much America has changed.

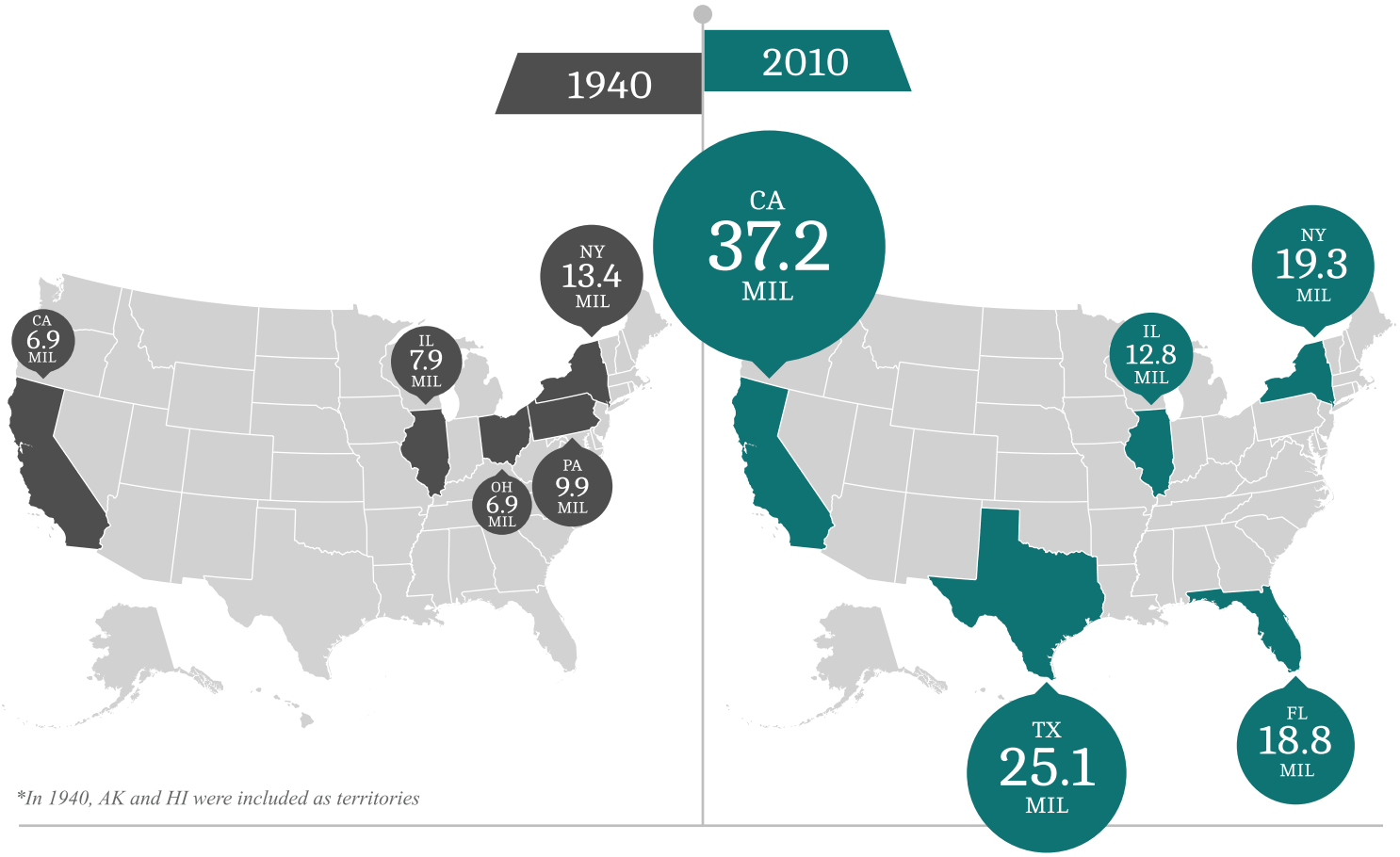


Nearly 1 in 6 of the people counted in the 1940 Census were also counted in the 2010 Census.

Sources: 2010 American Community Survey, 2010 Census, 1940 Census

5 MOST POPULATED STATES

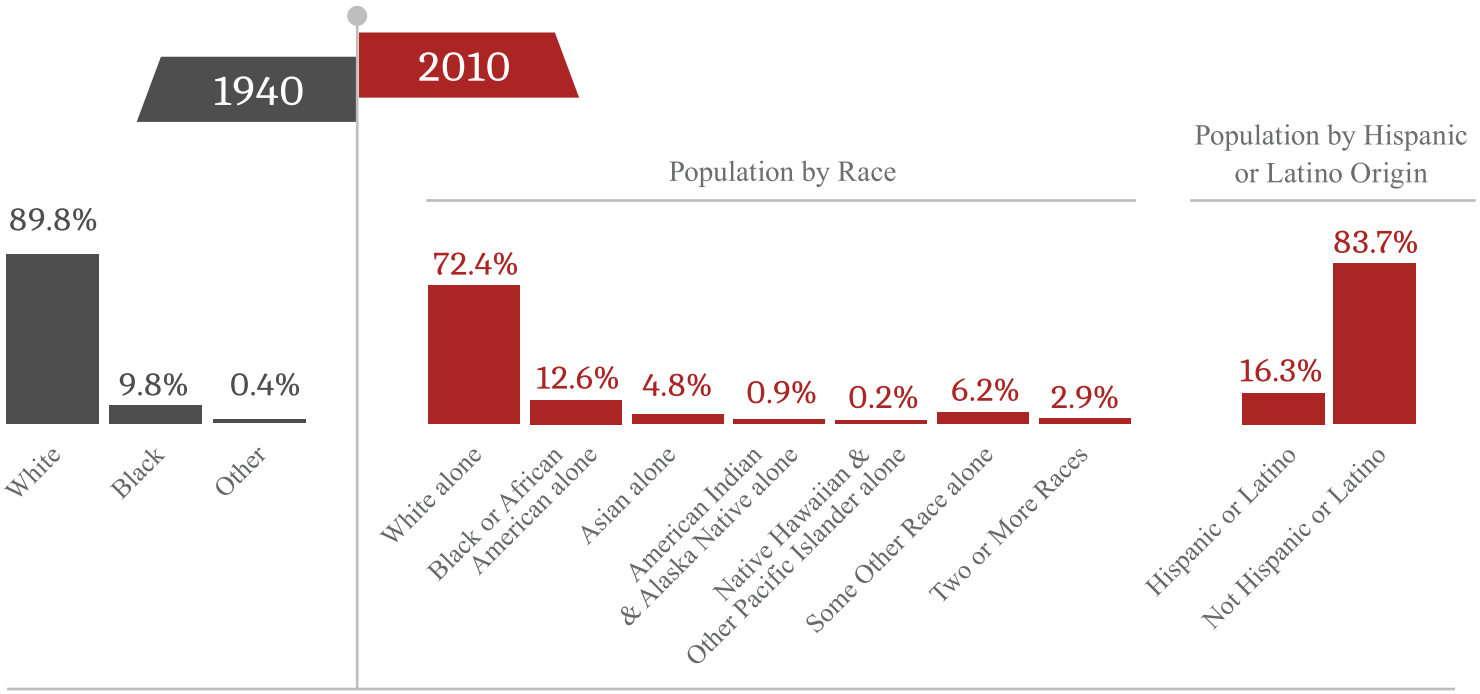
The overall U.S. population growth has shifted south and west, with Texas and Florida now among the most populous states.



*In 1940, AK and HI were included as territories

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

As we've grown, we've also become more diverse.



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Sources: 2010 American Community Survey, 2010 Census, 1940 Census

EDUCATION

Improved access to education means far more people today are college graduates.

	1940	2010
% of Pop. with Bachelor's Degree	5%	28%
% of Males 25+ who are college grads	5.5%	28.5%
% of Females 25+ who are college grads	3.8%	27.9%

EARNINGS

Women still make less money in the workplace than men...but the wage gap is shrinking.

	1940	2010
Median Income for Men	$956	$33,276
Median Income for Women	$592	$24,157

Women earned 62¢ for each dollar a man earned

Women earned 74¢ for each dollar a man earned

TOP INDUSTRIES

Our workforce and industries have changed dramatically over time.

1940 — 45,166,083 Employees

- 23.4% Manufacturing
- 18.5% Agriculture
- 14.0% Retail trade
- 8.9% Personal services
- 7.4% Professional & related services

2010 — 139,033,928 Employees

- 23.2% Educational services, health care & social assistance
- 11.7% Retail trade
- 10.6% Professional, scientific, management & administrative services, waste management services
- 10.4% Manufacturing
- 6.2% Construction

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Sources: 2010 American Community Survey, 2010 Census, 1940 Census

HOUSING

The average American home in 1940 was much different than its modern counterpart.

1940

$30.83
Avg. monthly rent, urban

$18.35
Avg. monthly rent, rural, non-farm

78.9%
had an outside toilet, rural-farm

17.7%
had running water, rural-farm

31.3%
had electric light, rural-farm

2010

$855
Median monthly rent and utilities

$1,496
Median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners

99.4%
had complete plumbing

97.5%
had telephone sevice

57.1%
had two or more vehicles

MARITAL STATUS

Even the terms we use to determine who's single and who's married have changed over time.

1940

Never Married		Age	Married	
98.3%	88.1%	15-19	1.7%	11.6%
43.9%	28.9%	20-34	54.8%	68.0%

2010

Never Married		Age	Married	
99.2%	98.3%	15-19	0.8%	1.6%
65.6%	55.6%	20-34	30.8%	39.2%

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Sources: 2010 American Community Survey, 2010 Census, 1940 Census