

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

S. N. D. NORTH, DIRECTOR

SPECIAL REPORTS

SUPPLEMENTARY ANALYSIS AND
DERIVATIVE TABLES

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1900

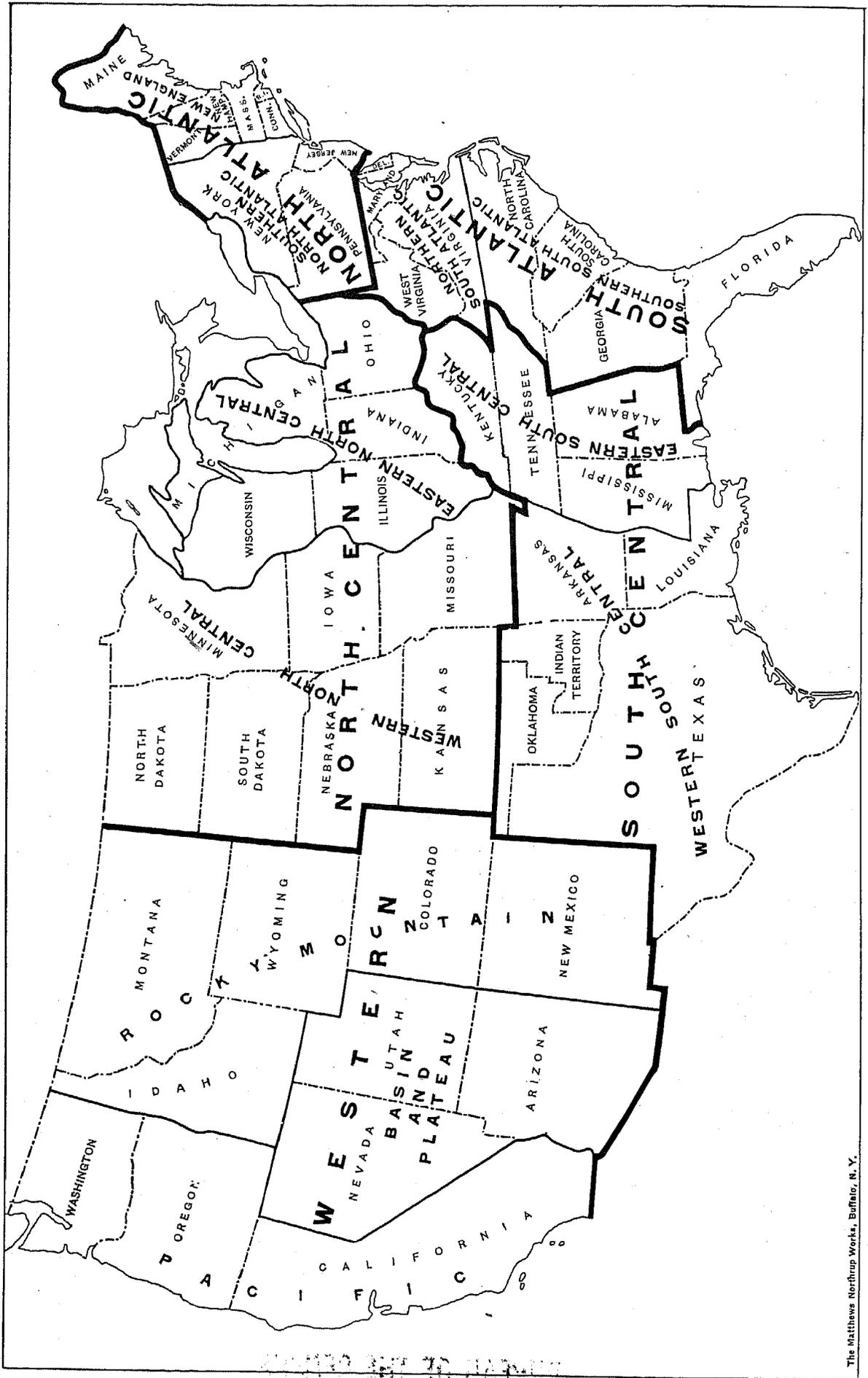


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MAP 1.—MAIN AND MINOR GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR,
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS,
Washington, D. C., March 1, 1906.

SIR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a special supplementary report on the Twelfth Census, prepared under the supervision of Prof. Walter F. Willcox, of Cornell University, acting as a special agent of this Bureau, formerly chief statistician for methods and results at the Twelfth Census.

This report, portions of which have already been published as monographs in bulletin form, is in the nature of an analysis and interpretation of statistics contained in the main reports of the Twelfth Census—particularly of the statistics of population. Its preparation was authorized by my predecessor in office, Hon. William R. Merriam, in order to bring out the more significant features of figures presented in the extended tables of the reports of the Twelfth Census.

Portions of this report, the discussion of vital statistics, by Dr. J. S. Billings, the chapter on the negro farmer by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, and that on age statistics by Dr. A. A. Young, have been contributed by persons who are not in the Government service, but are specially qualified to deal with the topics assigned them. Other chapters, as those on illiteracy, interstate migration, and occupations, have been prepared mainly or entirely in the Census Bureau, by persons of special training recommended by one or another of the leading universities. Practically all the text, not otherwise credited, was written by Professor Willcox.

It is his request that special credit should be given to Dr. J. A. Hill, Mr. W. S. Rossiter, and Mr. G. D. Leslie for the loyal and efficient assistance they have rendered at various stages in the preparation of this volume.

Very respectfully,


S. D. North
Director.

Hon. VICTOR H. METCALF,
Secretary of Commerce and Labor.

PREFACE.

The present volume is a report from the division of methods and results, later merged in the division of revision and results, of the Census Office.

The law of March 3, 1899, under which the Twelfth Census was taken, provided for four inquiries "relating to the population, to mortality, to the products of agriculture and of manufacturing and mechanical establishments." It also provided for "five chief statisticians who shall be persons of known and tried experience in statistical work." Congress seems to have intended that one of the five statisticians should be assigned to each of the four inquiries, but nothing showed its intention regarding the fifth position. The Director of the Census tendered this position to the writer; it was accepted and a special division of the Census Office, the division of methods and results, was established and placed under his charge. The first plan was for this division merely to advise and cooperate with the other four in their work, but later the Director gave it a more independent field. The requirement of the law that the results of the four inquiries should "be published not later than the first day of July, 1902," made it certain that in the divisions of population and vital statistics there would be no time to make radical changes in the tabulations and lines of interpretation which had been employed in the previous census. The division of methods and results, therefore, was authorized to prepare a volume of derivative tables and critical interpretations of the Twelfth Census as a supplement to the reports originating in the other divisions, and of that authorization the present volume is the outcome.

It is sometimes alleged that a Government statistical office should stop short with the collection, tabulation, and publication of statistical material in tabular form, leaving the task of its interpretation to private individuals. The present volume has been prepared in the belief that it is part of the Government's duty to show what its figures mean. To be sure no interpretation can exhaust the meaning of the figures, and it then becomes a question what are the proper limits of an official commentary. The answer which thought and experience have slowly developed, and which this volume exemplifies, is that it is admissible to draw from the figures and to publish in a Government document inferences which would be accepted as almost certain by anyone competent to weigh the evidence, and which seem to be of general rather than of merely local interest or importance. It is believed that the interpretative work herein keeps within these limits.

The topics to be included were decided mainly by the results of preliminary studies, only such as proved of exceptional importance having been pushed to completion. Looking over the results, the writer suggests that in them a certain tendency and even unity may be discerned. Modern census work, based upon the individual return and tabulated by cards or slips, one for each person, has emphasized the individual as the main component or unit of society. For its purpose these units have formed larger units, such as states, cities, or counties, mainly as a result of local proximity. The picture of society which results is artificially simplified. It is true, but not the whole truth. Indeed, it is far from all the truth which census methods are adapted to reveal. The present report tends to supplement such a census picture by the study of social groups in which the bond of union is not exclusively or even mainly local proximity. The most important of these groups is the family, and the sections on the size of families, the marital condition of the population, and the proportion of children seek to throw some light upon this basis of our social life as a people. Groups of other sorts recognized in the report are persons bound together by community of race or community of occupation. Such work must be tentative, it must omit entirely many groups which might be studied with profit, and in any group selected the discussion must fall short of bringing to the surface all that the census figures mean. But possibly it may lead others to further and more adequate efforts in the same direction, and thus soon be superseded. Such an outcome would give no one more pleasure than the writer.

The derivative tables in the latter half of the volume include many which are not discussed in the text. It is believed that they carry their meaning on their face. Many of them indicate statistical differences between city and country—a basis of classification which, for many purposes, is more significant than the usual one between states or counties. In all these tables city totals for the United States and its divisions are given, and over against them are set country totals found by subtracting the city totals from those for the whole division, city and country included. A large number of ratio tables have also been introduced.

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