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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

J. C. CAPT, Director (Appointed May 22, 1941)

WILLIAM LANE AUSTIN, Director (Retired January 31, 1941)

PHILIP M. HAUSER, Assistant Director



SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES : 1940

POPULATION

NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE OF THE  
WHITE POPULATION

Mother Tongue

By Nativity, Parentage, Country of Origin,  
and Age, for States and Large Cities

Prepared under the supervision of  
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## SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1940

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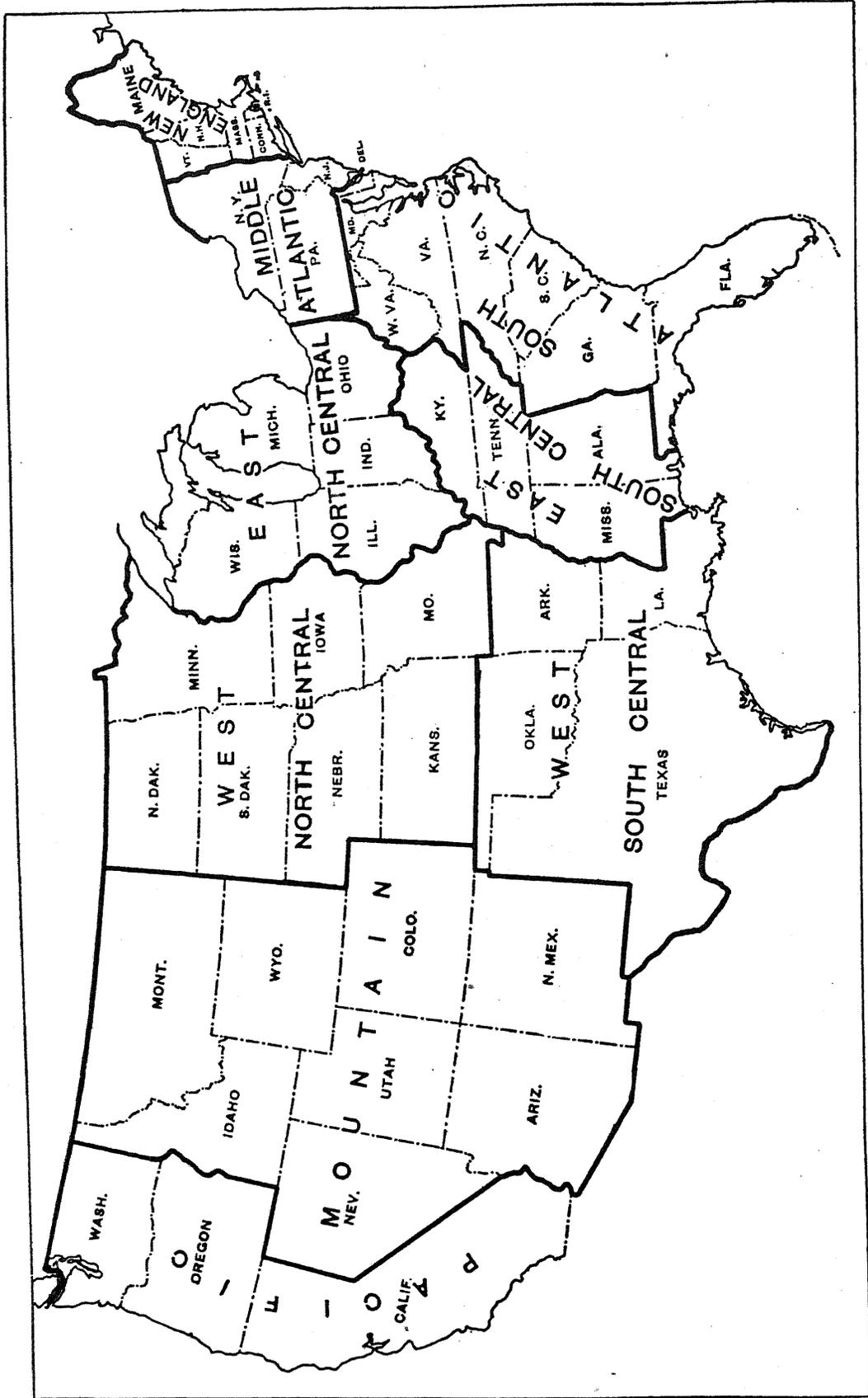
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## FOREWORD

Sampling techniques were utilized in the Sixteenth Decennial Census for the first time in the history of the Population Census. The use of sampling methods permitted the collection of statistics on a larger number of inquiries than has heretofore been possible, the release of preliminary population statistics at an early date, and the tabulation of a great many social and economic characteristics of the population at a relatively low cost.

This report is based upon the tabulations of a 5-percent sample of the population returns and presents statistics on the mother tongue of the white population at the time of the 1940 Census. These statistics are designed primarily to amplify and refine data on country of origin. Coordinated with such data, they serve to differentiate those national minority groups obscured in statistics based on country of origin alone. The tabulations were included in the program of the Population Division in the belief that information as to the number and location in this country of such minority groups would be useful to various agencies in evoking a maximum war effort from the nation. This report was prepared under the supervision of Dr. Leon E. Truesdell, Chief Statistician for Population, and Dr. A. Ross Eckler, Assistant Chief Statistician, by Dr. Henry S. Shryock, Jr., Chief of General Population Statistics, Dr. Henry D. Sheldon, and Dr. Paul C. Glick. The sampling procedures were under the direction of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, Mathematical Adviser.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES SHOWING GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS



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# MOTHER TONGUE

## INTRODUCTION

### GENERAL

This report presents statistics on the mother tongue of the white population of the United States cross-classified by a number of characteristics. Mother tongue is the principal language spoken in the home in earliest childhood. The subjects by which mother tongue is cross-classified are age, sex, nativity, parentage, and country of origin. These statistics are based on a five-percent sample of the population enumerated in the Sixteenth Decennial Census of Population, taken as of April 1, 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Statistics on the mother tongue of the foreign white stock are significant primarily in amplifying data on country of origin. Coordinated with data on country of origin, the returns for mother tongue may, with certain exceptions, be taken as indicative of ethnic stock, and also serve to differentiate those national minorities which are obscured in the country-of-origin statistics.

Data on the mother tongue of the native white of native parentage were collected for the first time in 1940. These statistics, within limits, indicate the degree to which foreign languages, and hence foreign cultures, persist among the descendants of immigrants, and also indicate the location within the United States of relatively permanent foreign language groups such as the Spanish-Americans of the Southwest and the French of Louisiana.

Information on mother tongue was obtained on a sample basis for the entire population in 1940, but it was tabulated only for white persons, since most persons of the other races speak one characteristic language--English for the Negroes, Chinese for the Chinese, Japanese for the Japanese, etc.

Related reports.-- This report is one of three reports on the characteristics of the white population by nativity and parentage. One of the other reports in this series, entitled "General Characteristics," presents data on the white population by age, marital status, and years of school completed. The remaining report, entitled "Country of Origin of the Foreign Stock," presents statistics on the age, tenure and value or rent of home, for the foreign white stock, by country of origin and nativity, with citizenship for the foreign-born white by country of origin. Data on the country of birth of the foreign-born white also appear in Volume II of the 1940 Population reports, entitled "General Characteristics."

Arrangement of tables.-- In the present report, the tables are grouped according to subject. The mother tongue of the white population is shown in tables 1 to 4 by nativity and parentage, and in tables 5 to 7 by age. In table 8, data on the mother tongue of the foreign white stock by nativity are presented for 1940, 1920, and 1910, with data on only the foreign-born white for 1930. Tables 9 to 12 deal with mother tongue cross-classified by country of origin. In tables 1 to 4, data are shown for the United States, regions, divisions, States, and their urban-rural parts, and for cities of 500,000 or more inhabitants. Data on age in tables 5 to 7 are presented for the United States, urban and rural, and for regions. In the remaining tables, data are presented only for the United States.

Availability of unpublished data.-- Twenty-eight mother tongues were tabulated for the white population, by sex, age, nativity, and parentage, for the United States, regions, divisions, States and their urban and rural parts, and for cities of

500,000 or more inhabitants. All of the data tabulated are presented for the United States, but because of space limitations, they are not presented for the smaller areas in full detail. Data for an abridged list of twenty mother tongues were tabulated for the foreign white stock by sex, nativity, and country of birth of parents for the United States, regions, seven selected cities (Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia), and the States in which these cities are located. Again, because of space limitations, these data are presented only for the United States.

These unpublished statistics, however, can be made available upon request, for the cost of transcribing or reproducing them. Requests for such statistics, addressed to the Director of the Census, Washington, D. C., will receive a prompt reply which will include an estimate of the cost of preparing the data.

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND EXPLANATIONS

**Mother tongue.**-- Mother tongue is defined as the principal language spoken in the home of the person in his earliest childhood. English was reported as the mother tongue only if no foreign language was spoken. It should not be assumed, however, that the figures shown for the various languages other than English represent persons who, on the census date, were able to speak solely these languages, since the vast majority of these persons have learned to speak English; and many of them have even so far forgotten the mother tongue which they learned in childhood as to be unable to use it with facility now. The 1930 statistics on inability to speak English indicate that, of the foreign-born white 10 years old and over, less than 10 percent were unable to speak English. Likewise, it is well known that, in general, native persons of foreign parentage are likely to be able to speak English more readily than the foreign language of their parents. The figures on mother tongue, therefore, are not indicative of the number of persons who habitually speak a language other than English.

**Classifications of mother tongue.**-- The mother tongues shown in this report are arranged in a geographic order which, in general, parallels that of the usual classification by country of origin. It is recognized that the mother tongue of a person is not necessarily the language most commonly used in the country of his birth and that languages grouped on a geographic basis are frequently of diverse linguistic stocks. However, there is, in general, a close correspondence between mother tongue and country of origin.

The classification of mother tongues used in tables 1 to 8 of this report is as follows:

Northwestern Europe:	Central Europe:
English <sup>2</sup>	German
Norwegian	Polish
Swedish	Czech
Danish	Slovak
Dutch	Magyar (Hungarian)
Flemish	Serbian
French	Croatian
	Slovenian

<sup>2</sup> The category "English" in the tables includes some persons who reported Irish, Scotch, or Welsh as their mother tongue. It is believed, however, that many of these persons actually spoke a dialect of English rather than such Celtic languages as Gaelic or Welsh; and in any case the whole number of such returns is very small. It may be assumed, therefore, that the "English" group was practically all of English mother tongue.

<sup>1</sup> The 1940 Population Census schedule is reproduced in Part 1 of Volume IV of the Sixteenth Census Reports on Population, with a note indicating the method of selecting the 5-percent sample of the population, upon which the statistics presented in this report are based. The instructions to enumerators are also reproduced in this volume.

## INTRODUCTION

Eastern Europe:	Southern Europe:
Russian	Greek
Ukrainian	Italian
Armenian	Spanish
Lithuanian	Portuguese
Finnish	All other:
Rumanian	Arabic
Yiddish	All other

This classification does not, of course, include separate designations for all languages. Numerically unimportant languages are included either with one of the specific mother tongues listed or with "All other."

There are several important differences between the 1940 classification of mother tongue and those of preceding censuses. As indicated above, mother tongues are arranged in geographic order in 1940; in 1930, 1920, and 1910, however, they were grouped in terms of linguistic affinity. Again, in 1940 statistics on mother tongue are presented for the entire white population, whereas in 1930 they were presented only for the foreign-born white, and in 1920 and 1910 only for the foreign white stock. There were also differences in the procedure of classification with respect to the native white of foreign or mixed parentage,<sup>3</sup> and with respect to the classification of persons not reporting mother tongue.<sup>4</sup> Fewer mother tongues are shown separately in 1940 than in 1930; Icelandic, Ruthenian, Bulgarian, Lettish, Wendish, Estonian, Turkish, and Albanian, all shown separately in 1930, were classified as "All other" in 1940, since none of them was returned by an appreciable number of persons.

The 1930 figures for the foreign-born white of Spanish mother tongue in this report have been adjusted to include Mexicans, classified as white in 1940, but with "other races" in the 1930 reports. There were in 1930, 126,288 persons classified as foreign-born white of Spanish mother tongue and 616,998 persons classified as foreign-born Mexicans, practi-

<sup>3</sup> In 1940 the native population of foreign parentage was classified by the principal language spoken in their homes in earliest childhood. In 1920 and 1910, however, this group was classified by the mother tongue of their parents, and persons with parents of different mother tongues were classified separately as of "mixed mother tongue." In 1910 persons of "mixed mother tongue" were classified further by mother tongue of father, but in 1920 they were not so classified. Thus, in table 8, 1910 figures for the native white of foreign or mixed parentage, include persons of "mixed mother tongue" for the total and for each specific mother tongue, and are roughly comparable with those for 1940. The 1920 total for native white of foreign or mixed parentage also includes the 791,058 persons of "mixed mother tongue," but, since persons of "mixed mother tongue" were not tabulated by mother tongue of father in 1920, they do not appear in any of the figures for specific mother tongues, which are therefore not strictly comparable with the 1910 and 1940 figures. Consequently, the 1920 figures understate the totals for specific mother tongues.

<sup>4</sup> In 1940, no attempt was made to allocate persons not reporting their mother tongue. In preceding censuses, persons not reporting mother tongue were allocated to a specific mother tongue if the person not reporting originated in a country which was the origin of persons who reported in the main a single mother tongue. (Country of origin is defined as country of birth of foreign-born white and country of birth of parents of native white of foreign or mixed parentage.)

cally all of whom may safely be assumed to have been of Spanish mother tongue. This makes a total of 743,286 persons of Spanish mother tongue who would have been classified as foreign-born white under the 1940 procedure. This adjustment has been made for all the tables in this report in which 1930 figures are presented.

Returns on mother tongue may be inaccurate in some cases because of a tendency to return nationality rather than the proper name of the language. For example, in every census there are entries such as "Austrian," "Swiss," or "Belgian," which are not names of languages. In most cases, the first two examples were classified as German, and the third as Flemish. Another source of error is the informant's or the enumerator's ignorance of the English names of foreign languages. For instance, some persons of Slavic origin returned "Slavish" as their mother tongue. In most cases this appears to mean Slovak, but it may also designate Slovenian. In some earlier censuses, such entries were classified as "Slavic, not specified." Some of the persons returned as of "Dutch" mother tongue were "Pennsylvania Dutch" whose mother tongue was actually a dialect of German.

**Nativity, parentage, and foreign white stock.**—The white population is classified by nativity into two groups: native white and foreign-born white. A person born in the United States or in any of its outlying territories or possessions is counted as native. Likewise included as native are the small group of persons, who, although born in a foreign country, or at sea, were American citizens by birth, because their parents were American citizens. All other persons are counted as foreign born.

The native white population is classified by parentage into three groups, as follows: (1) native parentage (both parents born in the United States or in the outlying possessions); (2) foreign parentage (both parents foreign born); (3) mixed parentage (one parent native and the other foreign born). In the tables in this report those persons of foreign and of mixed parentage are combined into a single group designated "foreign or mixed parentage."

The term "foreign white stock" is used to indicate the combined total of two classes, namely, the foreign-born white and the native white of foreign or mixed parentage. The figures on "foreign white stock," therefore, comprise only those persons who were born abroad or who had at least one parent foreign born, that is, those persons of the first and second generations, but not subsequent, generations. The native white of native parentage comprise those persons of the third and subsequent generations in the United States.

Table I shows the principal mother tongues (i. e., those returned by 500,000 or more persons) of the white population by nativity and parentage, for the United States in 1940.

There were 21,996,240 white persons in the United States in 1940 with a mother tongue other than English. Each of the following mother tongues was reported by more than 1,000,000 persons: German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Yiddish, and French. All white persons reporting foreign mother tongues constituted 18.6 percent of the entire white population.

The proportion of persons with English mother tongue was lowest for the generation of most recent residence in the United States. Between one-fourth and one-fifth of the first generation of whites were of English mother tongue whereas about one-half of the second generation, and about nine-tenths of the third and subsequent generations, reported English mother tongue.

Table I. MOTHER TONGUE OF THE WHITE POPULATION, BY NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940

[Principal mother tongues only; figures based on table 1; percent not shown where less than 0.]

MOTHER TONGUE	NUMBER				PERCENT BY MOTHER TONGUE				PERCENT BY NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE			
	Total	Foreign born	Native of foreign or mixed parentage	Native of native parentage	Total	Foreign born	Native of foreign or mixed parentage	Native of native parentage	Total	Foreign born	Native of foreign or mixed parentage	Native of native parentage
Total.....	118,392,040	11,109,620	23,157,580	84,124,840	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	9.4	19.6	71.1
English.....	93,089,640	2,506,420	12,121,040	78,352,180	78.6	22.6	52.6	93.1	100.0	2.7	13.1	84.2
Foreign.....	21,996,240	8,354,700	10,712,480	2,929,060	18.6	75.2	46.3	3.5	100.0	38.0	48.7	13.3
German.....	4,949,780	1,589,040	2,435,700	925,040	4.2	14.3	10.5	1.1	100.0	32.1	49.2	18.7
Italian.....	3,766,820	1,561,100	2,080,680	125,040	3.2	14.1	9.0	0.1	100.0	41.4	55.2	3.3
Spanish.....	2,416,320	801,680	1,428,820	185,820	2.0	7.2	6.2	0.2	100.0	33.2	59.1	7.7
Yiddish.....	1,861,400	428,360	714,060	718,980	1.6	3.9	3.1	0.9	100.0	23.0	38.4	38.6
French.....	1,751,100	924,440	778,680	52,980	1.5	8.3	3.3	0.1	100.0	52.8	44.2	3.0
Swedish.....	1,412,050	359,530	533,760	518,760	1.2	3.2	2.3	0.6	100.0	25.5	37.8	36.7
Norwegian.....	880,900	423,200	374,040	38,660	0.7	3.8	1.6	-	100.0	50.9	45.0	4.1
Russian.....	658,220	232,820	344,240	81,160	0.6	2.1	1.5	0.1	100.0	35.4	52.3	12.3
Czech.....	585,080	356,940	214,160	13,980	0.5	3.2	0.9	-	100.0	61.0	36.6	2.4
All other.....	520,440	159,640	279,040	81,760	0.4	1.4	1.2	0.1	100.0	30.7	53.6	15.7
Not reported.....	3,244,120	1,517,960	1,534,300	191,860	2.7	13.7	6.6	0.2	100.0	46.8	47.3	5.9
	3,856,160	248,500	264,060	2,843,600	2.8	2.2	1.1	3.4	100.0	7.4	7.9	84.7

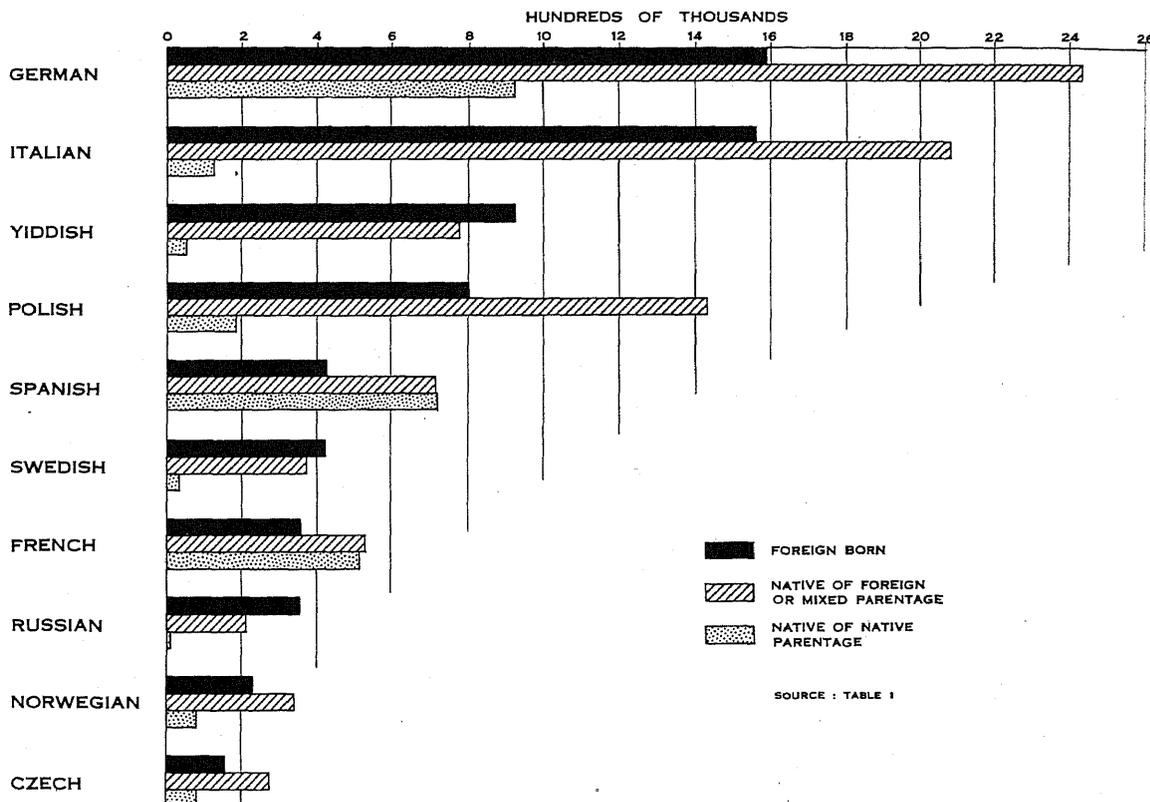
Among the foreign-born white, more than a quarter were of German or Italian mother tongue, and nearly another quarter were of Polish, Spanish, Yiddish, or French mother tongue. The figures for second generation whites show that persons of German and Italian mother tongue each represented about one-tenth of the total, and persons of Polish mother tongue, more than one-twentieth. Among the third and subsequent generations no foreign mother tongue was reported by as much as two percent of the total.

The native white of native parentage constituted 13.3 percent of all persons reporting a foreign mother tongue. This percentage was exceeded in each of the groups reporting the following mother tongues: Spanish (38.6), French (36.7), Dutch (22.9), German (18.7), and Czech (15.7). The figures for these mother tongues in certain States indicate the existence of relatively permanent foreign-language groups. Thus, 97.1 percent

of the white persons reporting French in Louisiana were native white of native parentage, and 87.0 percent of those reporting Spanish in New Mexico were of the third or subsequent generations. In Texas this percentage was 44.7 for persons of German mother tongue, and 42.1 for persons of Czech mother tongue. Similar high proportions of the native white of native parentage among persons of German and Dutch mother tongues in Pennsylvania reflect the persistence of foreign mother tongue among the "Pennsylvania Dutch."

These persistent foreign language groups represent in the main the descendants of the original settlers of certain parts of the States under consideration; thus, the original settlers of New Mexico were Spanish, and those of Louisiana were French. Germans constituted the majority of the early settlers of south central Pennsylvania. At a somewhat later period, Czechs and Germans founded important agricultural settlements in Texas.

PRINCIPAL FOREIGN MOTHER TONGUES OF THE WHITE POPULATION, BY NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940



**Historical trends.**—The comparison of the 1940 statistics on mother tongue with those from previous censuses is complicated by a change in the definition of mother tongue. Prior to 1940, mother tongue of the foreign-born white was defined as the language of customary speech in the homes of the immigrants prior to immigration and the native white of foreign or mixed parentage were classified as of the language of customary speech in the homes of their immigrant parents prior to immigration. In 1940, however, mother tongue was formally defined as the principal language spoken in the home of the person in his earliest childhood; and this definition was obviously interpreted by many of the enumerators as referring to the language spoken by the person himself.

For the foreign-born white it is probable that this shift in definition had no appreciable effect and that the figures for 1940 are fairly comparable with those for the earlier censuses.

For the native white of foreign or mixed parentage, however, the 1940 data are not comparable to those of 1920 and 1910, since the 1940 classification is partly based on the language spoken by the second-generation persons themselves, in their American homes (where English was often the principal language spoken), rather than on the language spoken by their parents before coming to the United States.

Between 1920 and 1940 the marked increase in second-generation persons reporting English mother tongue is in large part traceable to this shift in definition. Likewise, the sharp decline in this period in the foreign mother tongues characteristic of the older immigrant stocks results from the fact that it was possible in 1940 for the second generation of these stocks to be returned as of English mother tongue.

**Geographic differences.**—Among the regions, the percentage of the white population reporting a foreign mother tongue was 6.3 percent in the South, 18.3 percent in the West, and 23.9 percent in the North. Among the divisions, this percentage varied from 1.0 percent in the East South Central Division to 28.8 percent in the Middle Atlantic Division. Among the States, it varied from less than 1.0 percent in each of 5 States, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, to 47.3 percent in New Mexico.

Among white persons of a foreign mother tongue, the percentage who were residents of the North (79.7) was considerably greater than that among persons of English mother tongue (57.7). Persons of Spanish mother tongue were the most notable exception; only 12.3 percent of them were found in the North, the remainder being about equally divided between the South and the West. Among the divisions, the pattern was not so consistent. Thus, a majority of each of the groups reporting Yiddish, Italian, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Russian as their mother tongue,

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was found in the Middle Atlantic Division. A majority of white persons of Flemish and Norwegian mother tongue was found in the East and West North Central Divisions, respectively; and, of Portuguese mother tongue in the New England Division. Persons of other foreign mother tongues showed somewhat less concentration in any single division. Among the States, in turn, there was even less concentration than among the divisions. With the exception of persons of Yiddish mother tongue, a majority of whom were residents of New York State, there was no foreign language group with a majority of its members in a single State.

Although, in the United States as a whole, German was the mother tongue of more white persons than was any other foreign mother tongue, in certain sections of the country some other foreign mother tongue was reported by more persons. For example, French was the most frequently reported foreign mother tongue in the New England Division, Italian in the Middle Atlantic Division, and Spanish in the West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific Divisions.

**Urban-rural differences.**—Urban population, as defined by the Bureau of the Census, is in general that residing in cities and other incorporated places having 2,500 inhabitants or more. In addition, certain densely populated townships and other minor civil divisions, not incorporated as municipalities have been classified as urban under special rules. The remainder of the population is classified as rural, and is subdivided into the rural-farm population, which comprises all rural residents living on farms, and the rural-nonfarm population which comprises the remaining rural population. (For further details for each State, see Volume I of the Population reports.)

The principal mother tongues of the white population are shown for the United States and its urban and rural parts in table II.

Table II. MOTHER TONGUE OF THE WHITE POPULATION FOR THE UNITED STATES, URBAN AND RURAL: 1940

[Principal mother tongues only; figures based on table 1]

MOTHER TONGUE	NUMBER				PERCENT OF TOTAL		
	United States	Urban	Rural-nonfarm	Rural-farm	Urban	Rural-nonfarm	Rural-farm
Total.....	118,392,040	68,043,620	24,924,600	25,423,820	57.5	21.1	21.5
English.....	93,039,640	50,496,220	21,028,240	21,515,180	54.3	22.6	23.1
Foreign.....	21,396,240	15,700,800	3,095,920	3,199,520	71.4	14.1	14.5
German.....	4,949,780	2,842,220	836,640	1,270,860	57.4	16.9	25.7
Italian.....	3,766,820	3,306,120	354,040	106,660	87.8	9.4	2.8
Polish.....	2,415,820	1,378,320	251,000	192,020	81.7	10.4	7.9
Spanish.....	1,861,400	1,049,560	436,160	375,680	56.4	23.4	20.2
Yiddish.....	1,751,100	1,716,500	25,880	5,620	98.1	1.5	0.3
French.....	1,412,060	890,040	285,280	236,740	63.0	20.2	16.8
Swedish.....	830,900	523,340	135,840	165,720	63.0	16.3	19.9
Norwegian.....	658,220	277,800	123,720	250,700	42.2	19.7	36.1
Russian.....	585,080	434,340	57,560	33,180	64.5	9.8	5.7
Czech.....	520,440	288,280	79,160	158,900	55.4	14.1	30.5
All other.....	3,244,120	2,331,040	509,640	403,440	71.9	15.7	12.4
Not reported.....	3,356,160	1,846,600	800,440	709,120	55.0	23.6	21.1

For all persons of foreign mother tongue the proportion living in urban areas was greater than that for the total white population, but this proportion varied considerably among the various mother tongue groups. In general, those foreign-language stocks represented in the earlier immigration to this country showed a comparatively high proportion of persons in rural areas, and those represented in more recent immigration showed a comparatively high proportion in urban areas. Within this general pattern, however, there were still differences among persons of various foreign mother tongues. For example, although persons of Russian mother tongue are somewhat more recent immigrants than persons of Yiddish mother tongue, 5.7 percent of the former, but less than 1.0 percent of the latter, were found in rural-farm areas. Likewise, although the period of heaviest immigration from Norway coincided with that from Sweden, the proportion of persons of Norwegian mother tongue in rural-farm areas was almost twice that of persons of Swedish mother tongue.

The proportion native white of native parentage in each of the principal mother tongue groups is shown for urban and rural areas in table III.

For each of the principal foreign mother tongues, the proportion of persons who were native of native parentage was higher in rural-farm than in urban areas. This difference stems partly from the earlier settlement of foreign-language groups in farm areas and partly from a greater persistence of these languages in isolated rural communities.

Table III. PERCENT NATIVE OF NATIVE PARENTAGE IN THE WHITE POPULATION, BY MOTHER TONGUE, FOR THE UNITED STATES, URBAN AND RURAL: 1940

[Principal mother tongues only; percentages based on table 1]

MOTHER TONGUE	United States	Urban	Rural-nonfarm	Rural-farm
Total.....	71.1	61.7	61.3	86.0
English.....	84.2	77.7	89.9	93.9
Foreign.....	13.3	8.0	21.5	31.3
German.....	18.7	9.9	24.4	34.6
Italian.....	3.3	3.1	4.3	5.5
Polish.....	7.7	6.5	8.3	19.4
Spanish.....	38.6	31.6	45.3	50.4
Yiddish.....	3.0	3.0	5.5	5.7
French.....	36.7	22.8	51.0	72.1
Swedish.....	4.1	3.2	5.0	6.0
Norwegian.....	12.3	6.1	12.8	19.0
Russian.....	2.4	2.2	3.4	4.0
Czech.....	15.7	6.3	16.3	32.6
All other.....	5.9	4.4	8.3	11.9
Not reported.....	84.7	79.9	88.5	93.0

**Sex and age.**—Data on mother tongue are presented separately for males and females in several tables in this report (tables 1, 5, 11, 12).

The age classification is based on the age of the person at his last birthday before the date of the census, that is, the age of the person in completed years. In the 1940 census tabulations, when the age of a person was not reported, it was estimated on the basis of other information on the census schedule, such as marital status, school attendance, employment status, age of other members of the family, etc.

Since few of the foreign-born white—the major group of persons with a foreign mother tongue—are less than 25 years old, the age statistics in this bulletin are shown for the age group "under 25 years" and then by 10-year intervals to 65 years and over. The percent under 35 years old in the white population classified by nativity and parentage, for the principal mother tongues, is shown in table IV.

Table IV. PERCENT UNDER 35 YEARS OLD IN THE WHITE POPULATION, BY MOTHER TONGUE, BY NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940

[Principal mother tongues only; percentages based on table 5]

MOTHER TONGUE	All classes	Foreign born	Native of foreign or mixed parentage	Native of native parentage
Total.....	58.7	14.0	60.0	64.3
English.....	62.0	18.0	55.9	64.4
Foreign.....	45.0	12.8	64.4	66.3
German.....	27.4	12.9	27.9	50.8
Italian.....	56.2	13.8	66.5	61.2
Polish.....	56.9	7.7	80.6	85.7
Spanish.....	71.5	35.0	87.8	79.0
Yiddish.....	43.8	14.3	76.3	67.5
French.....	48.2	17.4	51.9	65.8
Swedish.....	20.4	6.2	34.0	48.2
Norwegian.....	27.2	7.6	31.9	63.9
Russian.....	37.2	9.8	61.2	63.4
Czech.....	41.7	7.9	50.6	76.9
All other.....	46.4	10.8	79.3	64.4
Not reported.....	58.1	13.3	74.9	60.4

The recency of immigration of a particular foreign language group accounts in large part for its age distribution. Thus, since the peak of immigration from Sweden, Norway, and Germany occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, persons of Swedish, Norwegian, and German mother tongue were older than persons of any other principal mother tongue. Among persons of Swedish mother tongue, only 20.4 percent were under 35 years old, and among persons of German and Norwegian mother tongue only 27.4 and 27.2 percent, respectively. In contrast, persons of Spanish mother tongue, with 71.5 percent under 35 years old, were the youngest of our foreign-language groups. The bulk of these persons are of Mexican stock. Not only has immigration from Mexico continued in large volume until recently, but also this stock, as shown elsewhere, has preserved Spanish as its language down through the generations. Poles and Italians were among our most recent European immigrants, and a majority of persons of Polish and of Italian mother tongue were found to be less than 36 years old.

The age composition of a foreign-language group is affected, not only by the recency of its immigration, but also by its nativity and parentage composition. Since the foreign-born white are, on the average, older than either of the parentage

MOTHER TONGUE

classes in the native population, those language groups with high proportions of foreign born tend to be older than those with low proportions. Although the nativity and parentage composition of a foreign-language group is normally a function of recency of immigration, the proportions of native white or foreign or mixed parentage and of native parentage are affected by the degree to which the foreign language persisted among the original foreign born and their descendants.

There were relatively few native white of foreign or mixed parentage of Russian mother tongue, apparently because Russian immigrants acquired English rapidly as their habitual language. This fact explains the paradox that although the peak of Russian immigration occurred relatively late, there is nonetheless only a small proportion of persons of Russian mother tongue under 35 years old.

The extreme youth of persons of Spanish mother tongue resulted partly from recency of immigration and partly from the persistence of Spanish among the descendants of Mexican immigrants. Persons of French mother tongue were similar to those of Spanish mother tongue in several respects. More than one-third of the persons reporting French mother tongue were native white of native parentage, and a majority of the foreign white stock of French mother tongue originated in a neighboring country (Canada). Since, however, first generation French-Canadians have been residents of the United States for a much longer period than first generation Mexicans, the foreign white stock of French mother tongue was considerably older than that of Spanish mother tongue. In addition, the proportion of persons under 35 years of age among the native white of native parent-

age who reported French as their mother tongue was less than that for the corresponding group who reported Spanish mother tongue.

Country of origin.—In the 1940 census the question on country of birth of the individual and the supplementary question on country of birth of his parents referred to the political boundaries as they were on January 1, 1937, and therefore such countries as Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were included. The classification of the 1930 population is based on the political boundaries of 1930, which were in most respects identical with those of January 1, 1937, so that figures for these two censuses are reasonably comparable.

In those tables which show country of origin (tables 9 to 12), the 1940 data for the foreign-born white and the native white of foreign or mixed parentage are classified by country of birth of parents. Persons with both parents foreign or with father foreign and mother native are classified by country of birth of father, and persons with mother foreign and father native, by country of birth of mother.

The classification of the foreign-born white thus differs from some of the distributions published elsewhere in the 1940 reports where the classification is by own country of birth. This difference in classification results from the fact that it was not feasible to include, in the tabulation on which the present data are based, the country of birth of the person himself. The comparability of these two types of classification is shown in table V in which the foreign-born white are classified by own country of birth and by country of birth of parents.

Table V. FOREIGN-BORN WHITE POPULATION, BY OWN COUNTRY OF BIRTH AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF PARENTS, BY SEX, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940

COUNTRY OF BIRTH	OWN COUNTRY OF BIRTH (Based on complete count)			COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF PARENTS (Based on 5-percent sample)			EXCESS*					
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Amount			Percent of own country of birth		
							Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All countries.....	11,419,198	6,011,015	5,408,123	11,109,620	5,856,580	5,253,040	-309,518	-154,435	-155,083	-2.7	-2.6	-2.9
Northwestern Europe.....	2,825,691	1,430,969	1,394,702	2,788,900	1,411,720	1,377,180	-36,771	-19,249	-17,522	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3
England and Wales.....	657,335	328,991	328,344	637,840	320,980	316,860	-19,495	-8,011	-11,484	-3.0	-2.4	-3.5
Scotland.....	279,321	139,019	140,302	285,140	142,200	142,940	5,219	3,181	2,638	2.1	2.3	1.9
Northern Ireland.....	106,416	47,827	58,589	108,520	48,840	59,680	2,104	1,013	1,091	2.0	2.1	1.9
Irish Free State (Eire).....	572,031	244,092	327,939	605,220	260,840	344,380	33,189	16,748	16,441	5.8	6.9	5.0
Norway.....	262,088	145,621	116,467	245,560	136,400	109,160	-16,522	-9,221	-7,307	-6.3	-6.3	-5.3
Sweden.....	445,070	245,469	199,601	430,900	238,780	192,120	-14,170	-6,689	-7,481	-3.2	-2.7	-3.7
Denmark.....	138,175	83,825	54,350	132,460	79,060	53,400	-5,715	-4,765	-950	-4.1	-5.7	-1.7
Netherlands.....	111,064	64,777	46,287	108,640	64,020	44,620	-2,424	-757	-1,667	-2.2	-1.2	-3.5
Switzerland.....	88,293	49,612	38,681	77,880	43,740	34,140	-10,413	-5,872	-4,541	-11.8	-11.8	-11.7
France.....	102,930	47,387	55,543	96,180	44,520	51,660	-6,750	-2,867	-3,883	-6.6	-6.1	-7.0
Other Northwestern Europe.....	62,948	34,349	28,599	60,560	32,340	28,220	-2,388	-2,009	-379	-3.8	-5.8	-1.3
Central Europe.....	3,482,449	1,813,842	1,668,607	3,372,360	1,756,680	1,615,680	-110,089	-57,162	-52,927	-3.2	-3.2	-3.2
Germany.....	1,237,772	638,022	599,750	1,202,080	621,180	580,900	-35,692	-16,842	-18,850	-2.9	-2.6	-3.1
Poland.....	993,479	523,543	469,936	969,360	513,560	455,800	-24,119	-9,363	-14,136	-2.4	-1.9	-3.0
Czechoslovakia.....	319,971	161,838	158,133	304,200	152,340	151,860	-15,771	-9,498	-6,273	-4.9	-5.9	-4.0
Austria.....	479,906	248,304	231,602	461,380	236,160	225,220	-18,525	-12,144	-5,382	-3.9	-4.9	-2.8
Hungary.....	290,228	144,354	145,874	285,180	141,920	143,260	-5,048	-2,434	-2,614	-1.7	-1.7	-1.8
Yugoslavia.....	161,093	97,781	63,312	150,160	91,520	58,640	-10,933	-6,261	-4,672	-6.8	-6.4	-7.4
Eastern Europe.....	1,475,919	784,351	691,568	1,451,160	762,700	682,460	-24,759	-15,651	-9,108	-1.7	-2.0	-1.3
Russia (U. S. S. R.).....	1,040,884	548,216	492,668	1,047,540	550,160	497,380	6,656	1,944	4,712	0.6	0.4	1.0
Lithuania.....	165,771	91,601	74,170	155,080	85,960	69,120	-10,621	-5,641	-5,050	-6.4	-6.2	-6.8
Finland.....	117,210	60,770	56,440	112,020	57,020	55,000	-5,190	-3,750	-1,440	-4.4	-6.2	-2.6
Rumania.....	115,940	61,596	54,344	104,460	56,700	47,760	-11,480	-4,895	-6,584	-9.9	-7.9	-12.1
Other Eastern Europe.....	36,114	22,168	13,946	32,060	18,860	13,200	-4,054	-3,308	-746	-11.2	-14.9	-5.3
Southern Europe.....	1,896,886	1,121,376	1,775,510	1,859,740	1,102,500	1,757,240	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Greece.....	163,252	117,324	45,928	155,120	110,660	44,460	-8,132	-6,664	-1,468	-5.0	-5.7	-3.2
Italy.....	1,623,580	935,139	688,441	1,580,920	916,060	664,880	-42,660	-19,079	-23,581	-2.6	-2.0	-3.4
Other Southern Europe.....	110,054	68,913	41,141	123,700	75,780	57,920	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Other Europe.....	219,819	129,910	89,909	18,500	15,200	13,300	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Asia.....	149,909	87,310	62,599	143,540	86,120	57,420	-6,369	-1,190	-5,179	-4.2	-1.4	-8.3
America.....	1,509,865	729,057	780,798	1,151,160	555,460	595,700	-358,695	-173,597	-185,098	-23.8	-23.8	-23.7
Canada-French.....	273,366	133,576	139,790	251,560	121,420	130,140	-21,806	-12,156	-9,650	-8.0	-9.1	-6.9
Canada-Other.....	770,753	351,730	419,023	479,100	226,180	270,920	-273,653	-125,550	-148,103	-35.5	-35.7	-35.3
Mexico.....	377,433	197,965	179,468	343,560	178,740	164,820	-33,873	-19,225	-14,648	-9.0	-9.7	-8.2
Other America.....	88,303	45,786	42,517	58,940	29,120	29,820	-29,363	-15,666	-12,697	-33.3	-36.4	-29.9
All other and not reported.....	58,630	31,200	27,430	334,260	170,200	164,060	275,680	139,000	136,630	470.1	445.5	496.1

\* "Excess" represents the excess of figures for country of birth of parents over those for own country of birth.

1 Excludes Albania.

2 Includes Albania.

3 Difference not shown because of lack of comparability.

With a few exceptions, the differences between the two bases of classification are small. The chief exceptions are groups of countries from which immigrants have been comparatively few, countries with recent boundary changes, and countries in the Western hemisphere, notably Canada, which have substantial num-

bers of foreign born, many of whose children migrate to the United States. It is probable then, that for Canada a large part of the difference between the figures for own country of birth and country of birth of parents is accounted for by persons born in Canada of parents who were born in Europe.

## INTRODUCTION

Since figures on own country of birth are from the complete count and figures on country of birth of parents are based on the sample tabulations, the differences under consideration are also slightly affected by sampling variation.

**Country of origin and mother tongue.**— Statistics on mother tongue are of greatest usefulness in relation to persons of Austrian, Belgian, Canadian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Swiss, and Yugoslavian parentage. Immigrants from each of these countries include persons of different ethnic or national groups, which may be distinguished to some extent by their mother tongue. Likewise, statistics on mother tongue serve in part to differentiate persons, such as those of Jewish extraction, who constitute a distinct ethnic or national group, but who are completely obscured in the statistics on country of origin.

The degree to which a foreign white stock of a foreign mother tongue replaces that mother tongue with English may be taken as one index of assimilation. Since mother tongue is defined as the principal language spoken in the home in earliest childhood, the mother tongue of a person, so far as exactly returned, is fixed at birth. Consequently, statistics on mother tongue for a given generation indicate little as to the extent to which English replaces a foreign mother tongue within that generation among populations originating in non-English-speaking countries. The statistics on mother tongue of the second generation from such countries, however, do indicate something concerning the extent to which their parents (i. e., the first generation in America) have replaced their mother tongue with English. Table VI presents statistics on the number of native white of foreign or mixed parentage returned as of English mother tongue, by selected countries of origin, for the United States in 1940. The selected countries of origin are those non-English-speaking countries with 200,000 or more foreign white stock.

Table VI. PERSONS OF ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE IN THE NATIVE WHITE POPULATION OF FOREIGN OR MIXED PARENTAGE, FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1940

[Figures based on table 12]

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Total	ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE	
		Number	Percent of total
Denmark.....	305,640	201,940	66.1
France.....	246,120	153,720	62.5
Switzerland.....	205,680	124,580	60.6
Netherlands.....	261,320	155,180	59.4
Sweden.....	856,320	481,220	56.2
Germany.....	3,996,840	1,985,860	49.7
Rumania.....	181,760	63,900	48.5
Norway.....	662,600	316,060	47.7
Russia.....	1,569,360	667,000	42.5
Austria.....	781,340	326,240	41.8
Greece.....	163,420	65,660	40.2
Hungary.....	371,640	140,440	37.8
Italy.....	2,371,200	887,700	29.2
Yugoslavia.....	222,800	64,320	28.9
Lithuania.....	229,040	64,980	28.4
Czechoslovakia.....	664,620	174,020	26.2
Finland.....	167,080	40,860	24.5
Poland.....	1,912,380	434,680	22.7
Mexico.....	699,220	49,160	7.0

The countries of origin presented in table VI are ranked according to the proportion of second-generation persons reporting English as their mother tongue. In general, those foreign white stocks represented in the earlier immigration to the United States had a higher proportion of persons with English mother tongue in the second generation than did the stocks of more recent origin. Within this general pattern, however, there were marked differences among the various nationality groups. Thus, the proportion of persons of English mother tongue among second generation Danes, French, Swiss, Dutch, and Swedes exceeded that for second generation Germans, although German foreign stock is one of the oldest in the country. Likewise, this proportion for second generation Rumanians, whose parents were among the most recent immigrants

to this country, was almost as large as it was for second generation Germans. Again, although Greeks and Italians immigrated to this country in approximately the same period, about 40.2 percent of the second generation Greeks, but only 29.2 percent of the second generation Italians, reported English mother tongue. The low percentage for second generation Mexicans is accounted for in part by the recency of immigration but to a much greater extent by the fact that large numbers of Mexican immigrants have settled in predominantly Spanish-speaking communities.

## COMPARISON BETWEEN RESULTS OF SAMPLE TABULATIONS AND COMPLETE COUNT

The statistics based on the sample tabulations are expected to differ somewhat from those which would have been obtained from a complete count of the population. An analysis of the statistics based on the tabulations of the 5-percent sample of the population for items that were obtained also for the total population indicates that in 95 percent of the cases the sample statistics differ from the complete census statistics by less than 5 percent for all numbers of 10,000 or more, by less than 10 percent for numbers between 5,000 and 10,000, and by less than 20 percent for numbers between 2,000 and 5,000. Somewhat larger variation may be expected in numbers below 2,000. Even for these small numbers, however, the majority of the differences between the sample and the complete census statistics are less than 10 percent, although much larger differences occasionally occur.

Table VII presents a comparison of figures from the sample tabulations and those from the complete count for the white population by nativity and sex.

Table VII. COMPARISON BETWEEN RESULTS OF THE SAMPLE TABULATIONS AND COMPLETE COUNT FOR THE WHITE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, BY NATIVITY AND SEX: 1940

NATIVITY AND SEX	Based on complete count	Based on 5-percent sample	EXCESS OF SAMPLE OVER COMPLETE COUNT	
			Amount	Percent of complete count
Total.....	118,214,870	118,392,040	177,170	0.1
Native.....	106,795,732	107,282,420	486,688	0.5
Foreign born.....	11,419,138	11,109,620	-309,518	-2.7
Male.....	59,448,548	59,541,380	92,832	0.2
Native.....	53,437,533	53,684,800	247,267	0.5
Foreign born.....	6,011,015	5,856,580	-154,435	-2.6
Female.....	58,766,322	58,850,660	84,338	0.1
Native.....	53,358,199	53,597,620	239,421	0.4
Foreign born.....	5,408,123	5,253,040	-155,083	-2.9

The differences between figures based on the sample tabulations and those from the complete count for the total population and for each sex were relatively small. The figure from the sample tabulations for the foreign-born white was, however, 2.7 percent below that from the complete count, a deviation appreciably larger than would have been expected to arise from sampling variation alone. This difference resulted from a tendency in the sample coding to classify persons as native white of native parentage at the expense of other categories. Thus, it is quite possible that the native white of foreign or mixed parentage were underrepresented in the sample tabulations in about the same proportion as the foreign-born white. (Since the questions on parentage and mother tongue were asked only of persons in the 5-percent sample, no comparison between the figures from the sample tabulations and those from the complete count for these items was possible.) The deviations mentioned would not, however, affect most of the conclusions that might be drawn from the statistics presented in this report.

In a forthcoming technical bulletin there will be a detailed exposition of the sampling method, descriptions of the various samples that were taken, and comparisons between the samples and complete count. The purpose of the bulletin will be to assist in evaluating the data that are published on the basis of the samples.