



# POST-CIVIL WAR: REGIONAL SHIFTS IN U.S. POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

## Activity Item

This activity uses the following online tool:

- Charts Showing the Distribution by Age and Sex of the Population of the United States: 1850-1870  
[www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/workspace/handleMediaPlayer?qvq=&trs=&mi=&lunaMediaId=RUMSEY~8~1~29196~1130256](http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/workspace/handleMediaPlayer?qvq=&trs=&mi=&lunaMediaId=RUMSEY~8~1~29196~1130256)

## Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to compare and analyze population pyramids of 1850-1870 census data for different races/ethnicities and for U.S. states and territories.
- I will be able to use data from population pyramids to draw connections between the Civil War and western migration.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1 - Learn About the 1870 Census

### Authorizing Legislation

The 1870 Census was conducted under the authority of the Census Act of 1850. A new law, approved on May 6, 1870, called for two procedural changes: The marshals were to submit the returns from the population questionnaire to the U.S. Census Bureau by Sept. 10, 1870; all other questionnaires were due by Oct. 1, 1870. Additionally, penalties for refusing to reply to enumerator inquiries were expanded to cover all questions asked on all questionnaires.

### Enumeration

After the Civil War, the decennial census questionnaires were reordered and redesigned to account for the discontinuation of the “slave questionnaire.” The schedules for the 1870 Census were “general population,” “mortality,” “agriculture,” “products of industry,” and “social statistics.”

The secretary of Interior selected Gen. Francis A. Walker as superintendent of the ninth census on Feb. 7, 1870. At the time of his appointment, Walker was chief of the Bureau of Statistics — an agency within the U.S. Treasury Department — and was one of several experts who had participated in the U.S. House of Representatives’ committee deliberations about the 1870 Census. A capable administrator, Walker introduced examinations to test the qualifications of those applying for positions with the Census Bureau. Walker remained as superintendent until November 1871, when Congress’ failure to appropriate funds for his salary caused him to resign. Nevertheless, he continued overseeing census work as commissioner of Indian affairs. Later, he resumed his duties as superintendent of the census, working without compensation.

The 1870 enumeration was completed by Aug. 23, 1871.

### Technological Advancement

By 1870, the job of tallying and tabulating questionnaire responses was becoming overly burdensome for the Census Bureau. This problem was partially alleviated by the use of a rudimentary tallying machine.

## Part 2 - Discuss and Analyze Census Data

1. What major domestic events happened in the 20 to 30 years before the 1870 Census? How might these historical events have affected the distribution of the U.S. population in 1870?
2. Now navigate to the online tool using the URL at the top of this activity, and follow along as your teacher briefly reviews how to interact with the document on the screen. What data do these population pyramids show? What information appears on the left and right sides of the pyramids? What do the horizontal lines in each pyramid represent?
3. Look at the three aggregate population pyramids for 1850, 1860, and 1870 in the top section of the document. Do the data align with your expectations? Why or why not? Explain what historical events may have contributed to any patterns you see in the population distributions.
4. Which 1870 population pyramids in the top section surprise you? Why do you think some pyramids show such stark differences in their data?



