

# New Jersey Population: 1790 to 2010

by Sen-Yuan Wu, Division of Labor Market & Demographic Research

The nation's first Census — conducted in 1790 — counted 184,139 residents in New Jersey. According to the most recent (the 2010) Census, New Jersey's current population — 8,791,894 — was more than 47 times of the population we had some 220 years ago. Nationally, total population increased by 7,757 percent between 1790 and 2010.

Table 1

| Census Population Trend: United States and New Jersey, 1790-2010 |                          |                       |      |                            |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Year   | United States Population | New Jersey Population |      | NJ's Seats in the Congress |
|  |                          | Number                | Rank |                            |
| Constitution   |                          |                       |      | 4*                         |
| 1790   | 3,929,214                | 184,139               | 9    | 5                          |
| 1800   | 5,308,483                | 211,149               | 10   | 6                          |
| 1810   | 7,239,881                | 245,562               | 12   | 6                          |
| 1820   | 9,638,453                | 277,575               | 13   | 6                          |
| 1830   | 12,866,020               | 320,823               | 14   | 6                          |
| 1840   | 17,069,453               | 373,306               | 18   | 5                          |
| 1850   | 23,191,876               | 489,555               | 19   | 5                          |
| 1860   | 31,443,321               | 672,035               | 21   | 5                          |
| 1870   | 38,558,371               | 906,096               | 17   | 7                          |
| 1880   | 50,189,209               | 1,131,116             | 19   | 7                          |
| 1890   | 62,979,766               | 1,444,933             | 18   | 8                          |
| 1900   | 76,212,168               | 1,883,669             | 16   | 10                         |
| 1910   | 92,228,496               | 2,537,167             | 11   | 12                         |
| 1920   | 106,021,537              | 3,155,900             | 10   | 12**                       |
| 1930   | 123,202,624              | 4,041,334             | 9    | 14                         |
| 1940   | 132,164,569              | 4,160,165             | 9    | 14                         |
| 1950   | 151,325,798              | 4,835,329             | 8    | 14                         |
| 1960   | 179,323,175              | 6,066,782             | 8    | 15                         |
| 1970   | 203,302,031              | 7,171,112             | 8    | 15                         |
| 1980   | 226,545,805              | 7,365,011             | 9    | 14                         |
| 1990   | 248,709,873              | 7,730,188             | 9    | 13                         |
| 2000   | 281,421,906              | 8,414,350             | 9    | 13                         |
| 2010   | 308,745,538              | 8,791,894             | 11   | 12                         |

\*The first apportionment was established by the Constitution based on population estimates made by the Philadelphia Convention, and was not based on any census or enumeration.

\*\*Congress failed to pass any reapportionment act during the 1920s. Consequently, distribution of seats from 1910 Census remained in effect, despite population shifts.

Source: US Bureau of the Census

---

The numeric increase in the population since the 2000 Census (population count: 8,414,350) was 377,544 in New Jersey, the 22nd largest in the nation. The state's 4.5 percent growth rate between 2000 and 2010 was faster than 13 other states. Nevada led the nation's population growth with a 35.1 percent gain during the first decade of the 21st century, followed by Arizona (+24.6%), Utah (+23.8%), Idaho (+21.1%), and Texas (+20.6%). Michigan was the only state to experience population decline in this decade. Michigan (-0.6%), Rhode Island (+0.4%), Louisiana (+1.4%), Ohio (+1.6%) and New York (+2.1%) rounded out the five slowest growth states for the decade. Nationally, the 9.7 percent increase from 2000 to 2010 was the slowest since the Great Depression. The nation's population growth rate was 13.2 percent between 1990 and 2000.

Population growth was relatively slow in New Jersey during the first half of the 19th century when the nation was expanding rapidly from 18 states in 1790 to 38 states by 1850. Since the 1860s, population growth in New Jersey had outpaced the nation as a whole until 1970, with exceptions in the 1870s and 1930s. Similar to other "Rust Belt" states, New Jersey's population growth has lagged behind the nation since the rise of the "Sun Belt" states in the 1970s. The rate of population growth in New Jersey was 2.7 percent between 1970 and 1980, 5.0 percent between 1980 and 1990, 8.9 percent between 1990 and 2000, and 4.5 percent from 2000 to 2010.

New Jersey's population ranked ninth among the nation's 18 states, according to the 1790 Census. The state's population ranking dropped gradually to the 21st (out of 43 states) in 1860, but rose sharply from the 16th (among 50 states) in 1900 to the 11th in 1910 owing to a large influx of foreign (mostly European) immigrants. New Jersey became the nation's 8th largest state in 1950, and maintained that rank for three decades until it dropped to the 9th in 1980. New Jersey continued to be the 9th largest state in 1990 and 2000, but became the 11th in accordance with the 2010 Census.

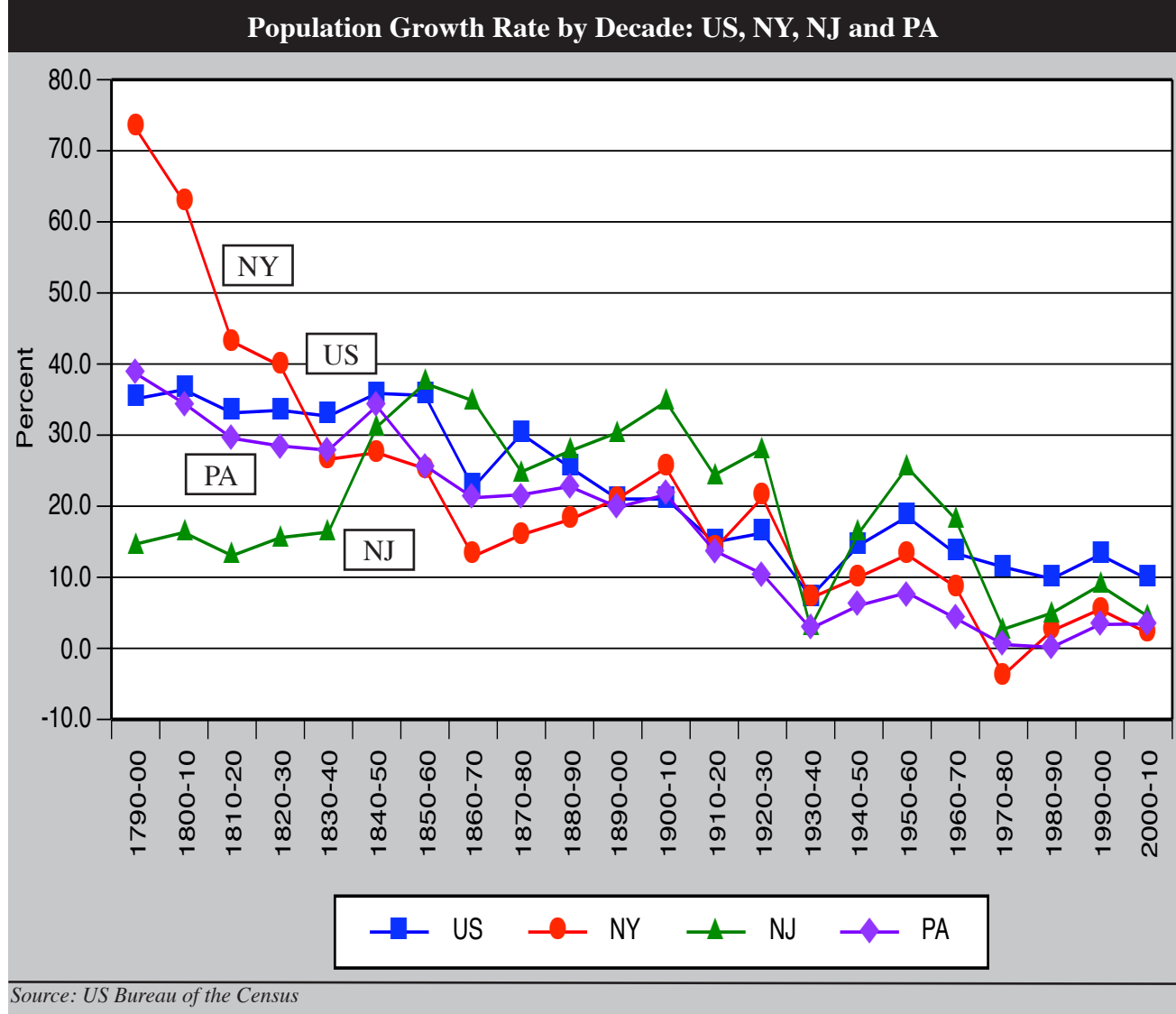
With 1,195 persons per square mile, New Jersey's distinctive status as the nation's most densely populated state remains unchallenged for more than 40 years. Rhode Island (population density: 1,018) was the only other state with more than 1,000 persons per square mile, as of 2010. Alaska's 1.2 persons per square mile was the lowest density in the nation. The current population density was 87.4 persons per square mile in the nation as a whole.

A fundamental reason for conducting the decennial census of the United States is to apportion the members of the House of Representatives among the 50 states to ensure equal representation for all. The Constitution set the number of representatives at 65 in 1787 when four seats were assigned to New Jersey. After the first Census of 1790, the number increased to 105 while New Jersey was assigned five seats. The total seats in the House of Representatives were fixed at 435 after the 1910 Census. New Jersey's congressional seats peaked at 15 in 1960 and 1970. The state lost a congressional seat after the 1980 Census and, again, after the 1990 Census. New Jersey is estimated to lose one of its current 13 seats in the reapportioned 113th Congress (convenes in January 2013). Nine other states will also lose congressional seats based on the 2010 Census counts: Ohio (-2), New York (-2), Pennsylvania (-1), Missouri (-1), Michigan (-1), Massachusetts (-1), Louisiana (-1), Iowa (-1) and Illinois (-1). In contrast, eight states are expected to gain one or more seats after the 2010 Census: Texas (+4), Florida (+2), and one each for Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Utah and Washington.

Before 1850, population in New Jersey's mid-Atlantic neighbors – New York and Pennsylvania – grew faster than New Jersey. However, the state's population growth has outpaced New York and Pennsylvania since 1850 (except in the 1930s when New York had a

higher population growth rate than New Jersey). New York ranked 46th with its 2.1 percent growth between 2000 and 2010 while Pennsylvania's 3.4 percent growth ranked 41st among the 50 states. In comparison, New Jersey's 4.5 percent growth rate ranked 37th in the nation. Its 377,544 net gain of population was the 22nd largest numeric growth among 50 states.

Chart 1



### Data Availability

The 2010 Census population counts and New Jersey population data from previous censuses are available on this Department's Labor Planning and Analysis web site: [http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/dmograph/Demographics\\_Index.html](http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/dmograph/Demographics_Index.html). For information regarding New Jersey population, contact New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research. Tel. 609-292-0076, email: [sywu@dol.state.nj.us](mailto:sywu@dol.state.nj.us).