

Chapter 68a -- We The People: Overall Population



Dates:
1820

Sections:

- The Total Population Continues Its Rapid Growth
- Growth In The Deep South Lags Behind
- The West Begins To Roar

Time: 1820

The Total Population Continues Its Rapid Growth



In the thirty years between 1790 and 1820, America's population has grown explosively, from 3.9 million to 9.6 million, an increase of over 10% per year, tracing to birth rates, not immigration.

Total U.S. Population (000)

1790	1800	1810	1820
3,929	5,237	7,240	9,638
	+38%	+33%	+34%

Compared to the three global powers of Europe, the U.S. is already closing in on both Spain and its former parent, England.

European Population (MM) In 1820

Year	France	England	Spain
1820	30.3	11.9*	11.0

* Excludes Scotland and Ireland

Three Additions to America's Growing Population

All three "segments" of the U.S. population have expanded over the decades – whites, free blacks and the African slaves.

U.S. Population Growth By Segment

	1790	1800	1810	1820	1820/1790
Total	3929	3308	7240	9638	+145%
Whites	3172	4306	5863	7867	+148
Free Blacks	59	108	186	233	+295
Slaves	698	894	1191	1538	+120

Time: 1820

Growth In The Deep South Lags Behind

A dramatic shift, however, has occurred in how Americans are distributed across the geographical landscape – and the effect is not what Southern delegates to the 1787 Convention expected.

Population Growth By Region

	1790	1820	Growth
Northeast	1,968	4,360	122%
Northwest	---	793	++
Border	488	1,467	301
Old South	1,473	2,558	74
Southwest	---	460	++
Total	3929	9,638	245

At that time, Southerners were convinced that their region’s more favorable year-round climate for farming would cause Northerners to migrate their way – thus expanding their “share” of the total U.S. population and, in turn, their share of votes in the House of Representatives.

But this migration fails to materialize – and instead the South’s population share actually drops.

The old South – Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia – declines from 38% of the total population in 1790 to only 24% by 1820. The Border South – Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky – is off slightly from 12% to 11%.

Meanwhile the eight Northeastern states – NH, Vt, Mass, Conn, RI, NY, NJ, Pa -- remain essentially stable, at a dominant 48% share. This seems to be explained by the growing appeal of Northern cities, with more and more people being drawn to their diverse and vibrant economic opportunities, easy access to goods and services, and the allure of contemporary culture and society.

The big gains in the population shift, however, occur in the “new West” – the four new Northwest Territory states – Ohio, Indiana and Illinois – and the four Southwest states – Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Distribution Of US Population

	1790	1820	Change
Northeast	50%	45%	(5)
Northwest	--	8	8
Border	12	15	3
Old South	38	27	(11)
Southwest	--	5	5
Total	100%	100%	

Time: 1820

The West Begins To Roar



A Typical Log Cabin Residence In The Early 1800's

A remarkable migration west has already taken place between 1790 and 1820. It begins in Kentucky and then filters in all directions -- expanding the total number of people living across the Appalachians from 386,000 to over 1.6 million, fully one sixth of the total population.

One by one pioneers have driven through mountain gaps, along primitive trails, into possible danger from native tribes, facing the uncertainties of building new log cabins, planting crops, founding towns, and starting their lives over from scratch on the frontier.

Their motivation is as old as the republic itself -- the chance to realize the American Dream, to advance one's wealth and station in life by as much as individual daring and initiative permit.

This constant drive for upward mobility is one reward of freedom, and an intrinsic part of the American character.

For those moving west, the dream comes in the form of new farmland, more of it, and better, than what one had "back East."

The land sought extends from the Appalachians, across the Mississippi River and into "Louisiana."

It has been “extracted,” first from Britain by warfare, then France by treaty, and finally from the Indian tribes, largely through force and deception.

By 1820 much of the land is “in the public domain,” owned by the Federal Government, and divided into “Territories,” with boundaries mostly defined by the meanderings of major rivers, and negotiations with the original thirteen states to settle disputed claims.

Terms for its sale of vary over the years -- the latest established by The Land Act of 1820.

- The minimum size of a tract sold will be 80 acres (reduced from 320 in 1800);
- The price is set at \$1.25 per acre (down from \$1.65, before the Panic of 1819); and
- A minimum down payment of \$100 is required of all buyers.

The rest is simple. Frontiersmen are told to go find the site that strikes their fancy; have a surveyor define its span; make payment to the government; write and record the deed; and the land is yours.

As always, speculators flock to acquire the new acreage, then parcel it out into smaller lots for resale and quick profits. Despite these maneuvers, data from North Carolina sales indicate that the average settler probably starts his new life with roughly the 80 acres originally intended.

Size Of Farms In North Carolina (1860)

Acre Size	3-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-499	500-999	1000+
% Total	3%	7%	31%	28%	29%	2%	0.5%

Along with the new land comes the opportunity to form new states and be admitted to the Union.

The path to statehood requires that a given Territory achieve a threshold population level of at least 60,000 residents, establish a local legislative body in some city or town, then write, vote on, and pass a state constitution, and apply to the federal government for admission.

Between 1790 and 1820, an additional eight “western” states have already joined the union – with a ninth, Missouri, eager to follow suit.

Western States Admission To The Union

#	Year	State	Slavery
15	1792	Kentucky	Yes
16	1796	Tennessee	Yes
17	1803	Ohio	No
18	1812	Louisiana	Yes
19	1816	Indiana	No
20	1817	Mississippi	Yes
21	1818	Illinois	No
22	1819	Alabama	Yes