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TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

Migration is one of the great forces of history. When people move in large numbers, they sometimes rearrange not only their own lives but also the places they leave and the places they settle. Migration can rebalance economies, reorganize politics, transform cultures. Migrations across oceans and borders have continually reshaped the United States. Internal migrations have been at times nearly as significant.

Mobility and Migration. Measuring mobility and identifying historically significant migration patterns is far from simple, especially before the 1940s. Since 1948 the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) has provided a yearly estimate of how many Americans change residences and some indications of the dimensions of the move. From 1948 to 1971 the annual relocation rate held steady at 19 to 20 percent, meaning that one-fifth of the population changed residence every year. Other than World War II and probably World War I, this was the high-water

era of geographic mobility in the twentieth century. Relocations were less frequent in the early decades of the century and also slowed measurably since the 1970s. From 2006 to 2010, 12 to 13 percent of Americans have moved each year.

Most moves cover short distances and have modest implications. The term "migration" is usually reserved for moves that cross county or state lines. In CPS data, on average 6.5 percent of Americans migrated from one jurisdiction to another each year from 1948 to the 1970s, 3.3 percent of them to a different state. Since 1975 an average of 2.6 percent of Americans has crossed state lines each year.

Although annual mobility rates from earlier periods are not known, birthplace information from the U.S. Census can be used to compare migration across state lines for each decade since 1850. Demographers describe a U-shaped pattern. Migration rates across state lines were very high in the mid-nineteenth century as farmers and slave drivers moved west into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Rates declined after the 1870s, then began climbing with the new century, reaching a peak around the 1970s. In 1860, 41 percent of all U.S.-born adults lived outside their state of birth, and in 1900, 32 percent did. That percentage held steady until 1950, then rose to 39 percent by 1980, then retreated slightly to 38 percent by 2007.

Consequential Migrations. All moves are consequential for the individuals involved, but some migration patterns have broader implications. The twentieth century witnessed a number of consequential migrations that helped reshape culture, politics, or economic structures.

No pattern was more important than the move from farm to city. A nation of farmers became a nation of urbanized workers in the twentieth century, although the trend began much earlier. By 1920 a majority of Americans had moved to areas designated "urban." By 1970 the rural population had shrunk to 27 percent, and only 4 percent still lived on farms. This rural-to-urban migration was more than spatial. It meant a dramatic change in occupation and way of life, a change that has been the focus of generations of social research and social policy. It also meant huge changes in political economy. Farm-belt power drained into the cities along with farm people. The decades of rapid urbanization from the 1920s through the 1960s were also the decades when big cities dominated national political agendas.

Migration to suburbs became consequential in the second half of the twentieth century, with some of the same political-economic dimensions as the urbanization flow. Suburbs were not new, but in the decades after World War II they attracted millions who valued an automobile-centered, nonurban way of life. In 1940, roughly 22 million Americans lived in the suburban areas surrounding major cities. By 1970 the number of suburbanites had tripled and now exceeded the number of major-city residents by 12 million. Race played a role in the postwar rush to suburbs. As black families moved into the major cities, white families moved out. Suburbs also pulled much of the industry and some of the political influence away from big cities. But the millions who made the move from city to suburb experienced some of the transitional challenges that came with migration to cities. In both settings, newcomers negotiated with unfamiliar institutions, people, and patterns of life. The negotiations in turn made both cities and suburbs productive centers of historical change.

Regional Migrations. Migration also decisively rearranged regions. At the start of the

twentieth century, virtually all of the nation's industry and most of the population was concentrated in a bank of northeastern and north-central states stretching no farther west than Illinois and no farther south than Pennsylvania. The redistribution of industry and people has unfolded in several stages.

From 1900 to 1930 the principal industrial states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois continued to attract more migrants than they lost, drawing farm folk from southern states and the Great Plains region into the factory towns and big cities. A second stream moved west, mostly to California, which attracted more than 3 million migrants in those decades. Florida, too, became a magnet, especially for sun-seeking New Yorkers with money to invest.

Migration slowed dramatically in the 1930s, as it generally does in times of economic stress. The Dust Bowl migration was the much-publicized exception. The three hundred thousand Oklahomans, Texans, and Arkansans who headed to California attracted attention from journalists and policy makers who for a time worried that migration was a public problem rather than a public good.

World War II set off the greatest sequence of human relocation in American history. At least 57 percent of the population changed residence during the war years, 21 percent of them migrating across county or state lines. The military itself is at all times an important source of mobility. Between 1940 and 1945, 16 million Americans were called to service and sent to bases across the country, with family members sometimes trailing behind. Tens of millions more left farms and small towns to take jobs in the defense industries. This often involved long-distance moves and regional redistributions. The older industrial centers were key to the defense buildup, but the federal government also located shipyards and aircraft plants on the Pacific and Gulf coasts. California, Oregon, and Washington gained more than 3 million newcomers during the 1940s. The West was starting to industrialize and populate.

The postwar decades accelerated the population shift to California and the West and continued to drain the South. Between 1940 and 1970 the South lost close to 12 million of its daughters and sons, mostly to the upper Midwest industrial states and the far West. The rate of out-migration was heavier for black southerners than for whites, but whites made up about two-thirds of those leaving. By 1970, 34 percent of southern-born black adults and 19 percent of southern-born whites were living in other regions. Still, some parts of the South were starting to attract migrants. Florida continued to be a magnet, while the coast cities from Virginia to Texas added to the trend that had begun during the war, mostly attracting people from the interior South but also northern businesses and personnel.

The Sunbelt reversal caught demographers by surprise in the 1970s, but in retrospect it is apparent that the urban South had steadily been developing the infrastructure that would bring industries, jobs, and people. The deindustrialization decisions that turned north-central states into the Rust Belt in the 1980s sent millions looking for opportunities elsewhere. The South now became the nation's principal population-importing region, pulling that title away from the West for the first time in American history. The West continued to grow through internal migration, but mostly outside California. After 1988, for the first time since statehood, California began exporting more internal migrants than it took in, sending them mostly to other western states.

These regional shifts were significant on many levels: they had the effect of redistributing political power through congressional

redistricting and industrial strength, redistributing racial and ethnic minorities in ways that tended to make regions more alike than ever before, and redistributing religions and other cultural institutions. In the long scheme it is fair to say that migration had a homogenizing effect among the country's various regions: by the end of twentieth century the differences among regions were less pronounced than they had been at the start.

Diversity Redistributed. These broad strokes hide many significant migration experiences, especially those of population groups for whom social interaction and identity development are important. African Americans' Great Migration out of the South was hugely consequential for the big cities in which they settled, for the politics of race and civil rights, and for twentieth-century American cultural development. The history of American music and American religion would not be the same without that internal-migration story.

Latinos are often pictured as an immigrant population even though many have an American pedigree stretching back generations. Latino internal migration has been an important force for the spread of multiracial diversity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Texas plays an important role in this. The center of Mexican American population in the early twentieth century, Texas began losing its Tejano population to California and perhaps more significantly to north-central and northwestern states in the 1920s. The diaspora has continued from that and other southwestern states ever since. As late as 1980, two-thirds of Mexican Americans living in the upper Midwest were U.S.-born migrants or children of migrants not from Mexico but from the American Southwest. Puerto Ricans are also internal migrants. Since World War II, Puerto Ricans have moved readily back and forth between the island commonwealth and New York and other Atlantic states. By 1960, more than a million Puerto Ricans made their homes in the continental United States, by 2000 more than 3 million did, and by 2010 about 4.4 million did.

Migration brought highly significant changes to Indian country. Before World War II, Native Americans lived on or near reservations. The Census does a poor job of tracking Native Americans, but the available statistics suggest that no more than 10 percent of Indians lived in cities in 1940. During the war many left reservations to serve in the military or work in defense plants, and in the decade following, Congress embarked on an explicit program to terminate reservations and relocate native peoples. Even after those policies were overturned in the 1960s, the migration from reservations to cities continued. The 2000 Census found nearly half of self-identified Indians living in metropolitan areas. Migration for native peoples has had many consequences, including the reorganization of Indian identities and politics. In cities like Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Chicago, Houston, Anchorage, Alaska, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, members of dozens of tribes have come together to shape pan-Indian communities and new forms of political activism. Urban-based organizations like the American Indian Movement and United Indians of All Tribes led the Red Power movement that changed the tone of Indian country in the 1970s.

Other migration sequences likewise yielded new concentrations and communities. Gays and lesbians have long used migration to come together in cities that offer some measure of tolerance or safety. For much of the twentieth century, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco were principal targets of gay migration. Mixed-race couples migrated

for similar reasons. Most states banned interracial marriage until the civil rights era, and social intolerance lasted much longer. Lacking such laws, Washington State and a few others became home to disproportionate numbers of mixed-race couples.

Retirees also took advantage of the increased mobility and increased social benefits of the late twentieth century to move in force to particular locations, especially Florida, Arizona, and southern California. By late in the century these areas were also talking about seasonal "snowbird" migrations by elderly northerners wealthy enough to winter in the South.

New Reasons for Moving. As these examples indicate, the twentieth century introduced new patterns of migration: not just new destinations, but also new reasons for moving and some changes in who is likely to move. Young adults have always been the largest cohort of movers and became more so as the twentieth century made college educations and military service more and more common. In earlier centuries, men were more mobile than women, but changes in the job market, new transportation technologies, and cultural shifts helped women become almost as mobile in the second half of the twentieth century. The automobile and the interstate highway system made long-distance migration easier for everyone, but they also reduced one of the key reasons for short-distance moves. With a car it became easier to commute to work, making it less likely that a new job necessitated a new home.

Demographers have wondered whether the century also saw changes in some of the basic motivations for migration. Did noneconomic "lifestyle" considerations become more important reasons for relocating as more Americans became wealthier and as consumerism increased? The Sunbelt surge since the 1970s encouraged that interpretation, but a set of surveys conducted in the early 1980s left the issue unresolved. Job issues were by far the most common reasons cited for long-distance moves; "amenity" issues like climate were rarely the principal reason for moving, but they did appear more frequently as a secondary factor.

Slowing Down. Since the 1980s, the restless nation has become less so. The rate of moving, both short distances and long, has dropped steadily, and in early twenty-first-century international comparisons, the United States no longer stands alone as the most highly mobile nation. Denmark and Finland have comparable rates, and Canada, Australia, and Great Britain are not far behind. The reasons for the American slowdown are not entirely clear. Is it because of the aging population? Is it because of the housing market, whose ups and downs can make it hard for people to move? Is it because of changes in job markets—that there are fewer fast-growing manufacturing industries, more telecommuting, more dual-job households that keep one partner anchored?

One argument is that migration has become less necessary precisely because of the great migrations of the twentieth century. Regions are more alike now in social, cultural, and also economic dimensions. Metropolitan areas often have reasonably similar economies and occupational distributions, so that opportunities that once required a long-distance move can now be found within commuting distance of home.

What this slowdown means for the nation is even less clear. It certainly has cultural implications. The nation has celebrated geographic mobility since the 1800s, associating migration through space with a variety of signifiers that have helped Americans feel proud and powerful. A nation of pioneers,

adventurers, innovators, strivers, and risk takers, a nation in which the freedom to move is thought to be associated with social and economic opportunity—these myths and stories keyed American identity for many generations. And curiously, as migration rates have dipped, so has the volume of discourse about America's being a restless nation. Journalists, politicians, and educators are less likely to celebrate mobility, or even to discuss it. Immigration from other lands attracts attention. Internal migration, so central to American life and identity for the nation's first two centuries, for the moment has become less significant. But perhaps only for the moment.

[*See also* **Automobiles; California; Cities and Suburbs; Demography; Dust Bowl; Migrant Camps, Depression Era; Native American History and Culture,** ***subentry on*** **Since 1950; Southwest, The; Sunbelt; West, The;** ***and*** **World War II, Home Front.**]

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James N. Gregory

AFRICAN AMERICANS

In many ways, African Americans have always been a people on the move. Migration—whether forced or voluntary—has been central