

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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★ Special Edition ★

100th Anniversary: San Francisco Earthquake — April 18

Almost a century before Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans, one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history devastated San Francisco. On April 18, 1906, at 5:12 in the morning, "The Great San Francisco Earthquake" struck, followed by a series of catastrophic fires that burned for three days and destroyed more than 500 blocks in the heart of the city. The earthquake is estimated at 8.25 on the Richter scale and lasted about one minute. Conservative estimates have put the quake's death toll at more than 3,000 — with some estimates as high as 6,000 — mostly in the city of San Francisco. Between 225,000 and 300,000 people were left homeless with property damage estimated then at \$400 million (about \$8.2 billion in today's dollars). In commemoration of this disastrous event, the Census Bureau spotlights how the city has changed.

1.5 million

The population of California at the time of the 1900 census. At that time, California was the nation's 21st most populous state. <<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cph2/cph-2-1-1.pdf>>

36.1 million

Estimated population of California on July 1, 2005, making it our most populous state. <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/006142.html>>

342,782

The population of San Francisco at the time of the 1900 Census, making the city the most populous in California and ninth most populous city nationwide. <<http://www.census.gov/population/documentation/twps0027/tab13.txt>>

744,230

As of July 1, 2004, the estimated San Francisco population. At that time, San Francisco was only the fourth most populous city in the state and the 14th most populous city nationwide. <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005268.html>>

53,323

In 1900, the number of dwellings in San Francisco. (Source: 1900 Census)

353,930

In 2004, the number of housing units in San Francisco. (Source: American FactFinder)

95%

In 1900, the percentage of San Francisco's white residents. At that time, about 5 percent were Asian or Pacific islander, and less than 1 percent were black.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076.html>>

58%

On July 1, 2004, the percentage of San Francisco's white population. Thirty-four percent were Asian, 14 percent Hispanic (of any race) and 8 percent black.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005514.html>>

34%

In 1900, the percentage of San Francisco's foreign-born population. This population totaled 116,885, of whom about 35,000 were from Germany. (Source: 1900 Census)

37%

In 2004, the percentage of San Francisco's foreign-born population (excludes those in group quarters). This population totaled 270,165, of whom about 92,000 were from China. (Source: American FactFinder)

304

In 1900, the number of farms in San Francisco. These farms were spread across 8,219 acres. (Source: 1900 Census)

8

In 2002, the number of farms in San Francisco. Farm acreage was not published, thus avoiding disclosure of data pertaining to individual farms.

(Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service at <<http://www.usda.gov/nass/>>)

4,002

In 1900, the number of manufacturing establishments in San Francisco. (Source: 1900 census)

883

In 2003, the number of manufacturing establishments in San Francisco.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/03cbp/cbp03-6.pdf>>

“Special Editions” of the U.S. Census Bureau’s *Facts for Features* are issued to provide background information for less known observances, anniversaries of historic events and other timely topics in the news.

Sources for introductory paragraph: National Park Service, the Library of Congress and Wikipedia.

Editor’s note: Some of the preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau’s Public Information Office at (301) 763-3030; fax (301) 457-3670; or e-mail <pio@census.gov>.