

1960 Census of Population

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960

(The tables presented here are preprints of tables 173, 277, and 288 (or portions thereof) from Final Report PC(1)-1D, which is scheduled to be published in several months and which will contain additional summary information on the detailed characteristics of the population)

The educational level of the population of the United States continued its steady increase during the decade of the fifties. In 1960, the median number of years of formal schooling by adults (25 years old and over) was 10.6 years, as compared with 9.3 years for the adult population in 1950. The percentage of adults who had completed high school (including those who went on to college) rose from 34 to 41 percent over the decade, and the percentage who had completed four or more years of college went from 6 to 8 percent during the same period of time.

Improvement in the educational status of the population over time can be viewed more clearly through an analysis of educational differences by age in 1960. Only 18 percent of the population 75 years old and over (who had attended school several generations ago) finished high school. Corresponding figures were 25 percent for persons 60 to 64 years old (who were educated about two generations ago), 48 percent for those 40 to 44 years old (whose schooling was completed roughly one generation ago), and 64 percent for those 20 years old (most of whom have just passed through the educational systems).

In general, women tended to have slightly higher educational attainments than men at each age, but men and women had certain characteristic differences in their educational distributions. Among all age groups, smaller percentages of females than males failed to finish the 8th grade and larger percentages of females than males were high school graduates. At most age groups, particularly at the younger adult ages, larger percentages of men than women started and finished college.

The educational attainment of nonwhites was markedly lower than that of whites for all age groups. The data do show, however, a narrowing of the differentials in the median school years completed for whites and nonwhites. For example, among males, the medians were 8.1 years for whites and 3.9 years for nonwhites at ages 75 and over, 10.7 years for whites and 7.4 years for nonwhites at ages 45 to 49, and 12.4 years for whites and 10.5 years for nonwhites at ages 25 to 29.

Among the major regions, the median number of years of school completed in 1960 was highest in the West and lowest in the South at all age groups. Among the geographic divi-



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sions, it was highest for the Pacific Division and lowest in the East South Central Division. Variations in the median educational level by age for standard metropolitan statistical areas tended to conform to variations for broader areas of the country, namely, that they were generally highest for metropolitan areas in the West and lowest for those in the South.

The number in each category of highest grade of school completed for 1950 and 1960 represents the combination of (a) persons who reported that they had attended the indicated grade and finished it, and (b) those who had attended the next higher grade but had not finished it.

All of the statistics for 1960 in this report were obtained from a 25-percent sample, consisting of one household out of every four

(and of one person out of every four persons not in households). There may be differences between comparable distributions in this report and in other reports of the 1960 Census of Population because of sampling variability or errors in processing. Definitions of the terms used in this report, explanations of collection and processing procedures, and a statement on sampling variability may be found in the introduction to any of the reports in the PC(1)-D series.

Statistics on educational attainment for 1950 were obtained from a 20-percent sample of the population.

An outline of the publication program for the 1960 Census of Population may be obtained free of charge from the Bureau of the Census, Washington 25, D.C., or from any U.S. Department of Commerce Field Office.