

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

FOR RELEASE

December 1, 1953

Washington 25, D. C.

Series P-20, No. 49

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

MOBILITY OF THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES APRIL 1952 TO APRIL 1953

Of the persons 1 year old and over in continental United States in April 1953, 122 million, or 79 percent, lived in the same house as a year earlier; 31 million, or 20 percent, lived in a different house in the United States; and 740,000, or 1 percent, had moved into the United States from abroad, according to the results of a sample survey announced today by Robert W. Burgess, Director, Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. Of the 31 million mobile persons, that is, persons who had changed their residence within the United States, 21 million, or 2 out of 3, were living in the same county as a year ago and 10 million were migrants, that is, they were living in a different county. The proportion of migrants in the population was relatively low for the year 1949-1950 (a period of slight economic recession), rose again in 1950-1951 (when the Korean conflict began), and has since leveled off. The proportion of short distance (intracounty) movers, however, has remained fairly constant at about 13 percent during the postwar period.

In general, the results of the 1953 survey were consistent with those of earlier years. As in the 1952 survey, the smallest proportion of mobile persons was found among persons living on farms and in large cities and their environs and the highest proportion in the smaller cities and in towns and villages (table 2). Young adults are the most mobile element in the population; in 1953, about 31.6 percent of the persons 18 to 34 years of age were movers as against 21.7 for those under 18 and 12.7 percent for those 35 years of age and over (table 3). Persons in the

labor force tend to be more mobile than adults not in the labor force, and the unemployed are more mobile than the employed (table 4).

In recent years there has been some indication that nonwhites are slightly more mobile than whites. The present survey seems to indicate that for the period 1952 to 1953 they were appreciably more mobile. However, a part of the difference results from the inclusion in the 1953 survey of a sample segment in a recently opened housing project for Negroes; and although the difference in question is significant, inferences based on the size of the observed difference should be made with some caution. As in previous years, the data from the 1953 survey indicate that whites tend to move longer distances than nonwhites.

A comparison of movement to and from farms indicates that there was some net movement away from farms between April 1952 and April 1953 (table 5). The excess of persons moving from farms held true for both males and females and for all age groups. Nearly three-fourths of the net loss in the farm population through migration was in the age groups under 35.

About 7 out of 10 of those who move from one farm to another or from one nonfarm residence to another stay within the same county, whereas for those changing their type of residence the proportion is only about half. Furthermore, only about 7 percent of movers between different farms also move to a different State. About one-quarter of those moving from a nonfarm

residence to a farm are interstate migrants, and the proportion of such long-distance migrants is intermediate for the other two kinds of moves.

The farm population was less mobile than the nonfarm population. Of those who lived on farms in 1952, 15 percent moved in the following year. These movers were divided about equally between those who moved to other farms and those who moved to nonfarm residences. Of those who were not living on farms in 1952, 21 percent moved and only about 1 percent moved to farms. Even moving from one farm to another usually involves more trouble than moving from one nonfarm home to another.

Data on the mobility status and type of mobility of the ever married and married appear in table 6. As might be expected, the proportion of mobile persons declines steadily as the length of marriage increases. Of those married in 1952 or 1953, 72 percent had moved, 29 percent were migrants, and 19 percent were interstate migrants. The mobility question covered only the period from April 1952 to April 1953, and obviously additional newlyweds had moved in the first quarter of 1952.

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Population coverage.--The data for 1953 (covering the mobility period April 1952 to April 1953) shown in this report relate primarily to the civilian population of the United States 1 year old and over. Approximately 982,000 members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post were also included, but all other members of the Armed Forces were excluded. For simplicity, the group covered is called the "population" or the "civilian population" in this report. The coverage of the population for the earlier survey years was essentially the same.

Urban and rural residence.--The definition of urban and rural areas used in the April 1953 survey was the same as that used in the April 1952 survey and the 1950 Census. This definition differs slightly from that used in the April 1951 and March 1950 Current Population Surveys, but it is markedly different from that used in earlier surveys and censuses.

Size of place.--The urban population is classified as living in urbanized areas or in urban places outside urbanized areas. According to the definition used in the 1950 Census and in the April 1953 Current Population Survey, the

population in urbanized areas comprises all persons living in (a) cities of 50,000 inhabitants or more in 1940 or according to a special census taken between 1940 and 1950; and (b) the densely settled urban fringe, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, surrounding these cities. Residents of urbanized areas were classified according to the size of the entire area rather than by the size of the place in which they lived. The remaining urban population is classified as living in the smaller urban places not in the urbanized areas.

Farm and nonfarm residence.--The rural population is subdivided into the rural-farm population, which comprises all rural residents living on farms, and the rural-nonfarm population, which comprises the remaining rural population. The method of determining farm and nonfarm residence in the April 1953 survey is the same as that used in the 1950 Census and in the April 1952, April 1951, and March 1950 Current Population Surveys but differs from that used in earlier surveys and censuses. Persons on "farms" who were paying cash rent for their house and yard only were classified as nonfarm; furthermore, persons in institutions, summer camps, "motels," and tourist camps were classified as nonfarm.

Mobility status.--The civilian population of the United States has been classified according to mobility status on the date of the survey on the basis of a comparison between the place of residence of each individual at the survey date and the place of residence one year earlier. This comparison restricts the classification in terms of mobility status to the population born before the beginning of the mobility period; hence, children under 1 year old are omitted from this report.

The information on mobility status was obtained from the response to the following series of inquiries. The first of these was: "Was ... living in this house April 1 a year ago?" If the answer was "No," the enumerator asked, "Was ... living in this same county on April 1 a year ago?" If the response was "No" again, the enumerator asked, "What State (or foreign country) was ... living in on April 1 a year ago?"

In the classification three main categories are distinguished:

1. Mobile persons or movers.--This group consists of all persons who were living in a different house in the United States at the end

of the period than at the beginning of the period.

2. Nonmobile persons or nonmovers.--This group consists of persons who were living in the same house at the end of the period as at the beginning of the period.

3. Persons abroad.--This group consists of persons, either citizens or aliens, whose place of residence was outside continental United States at the beginning of the period, that is, in a Territory or possession of the United States or in a foreign country. These persons are distinguished from movers, who are persons who moved from one place to another within continental United States.

Mobile persons are subdivided in terms of type of mobility into the following two groups:

1. Same-county movers.--These are persons living in a different house but in the same county at the beginning and end of the specified period.

2. Migrants, or different-county movers.--This group consists of persons living in a different county in the United States at the beginning and end of the period. Migrants are further classified by type of migration on the basis of a comparison of the State of residence at the end of the period with the State of residence at the beginning of the period.

- a. Migrants within a State.
- b. Migrants between States.

Age.--The age classification is based on the age of the person at his last birthday.

Color.--The term "color" refers to the division of population into two groups, white and nonwhite. The group designated as "nonwhite" consists of Negroes, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, and other nonwhite races.

Marital status.--Persons 14 years of age and over are grouped into four major categories with respect to marital status: single (never married); married, spouse present (husband and wife living in same household or quasi household); married, spouse absent; and widowed and divorced.

For the purposes of this report, the categories "Married, spouse present" and "Married, spouse absent" have been consolidated into "married." The "married" and "widowed and divorced," in turn, constitute "ever married."

Year of marriage.--Persons who had ever been married were asked to answer the question, "What year did [you] get married?" Thus, married (including separated) persons were to report the calendar year in which their current marriage had taken place; widowed and divorced persons were to report the calendar year in which their last marriage had taken place.

Employment status

Employed persons.--This category comprises those persons who, during the survey week, were either (a) "at work"--those who did any work for pay or profit, or worked without pay for 15 hours or more on a family farm or business; or (b) "with a job but not at work"--those who did not work and were not looking for work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of vacation, illness, industrial dispute, bad weather, or layoff with definite instructions to return to work within 30 days of layoff. Also included are persons who had new jobs to which they were scheduled to report within 30 days.

Unemployed persons.--This category includes those persons who did not work at all during the survey week, and who were looking for work. Also included as unemployed are persons who would have been looking for work except that (a) they were temporarily ill, (b) they expected to return to a job from which they had been laid off for an indefinite period, or (c) they believed no work was available in their line of work or in the community.

Labor force.--This category comprises (a) the total of all civilians classified as employed or unemployed in accordance with the criteria described above, and (b) persons serving in the Armed Forces who, at the time of the survey, were living off post or with their families on post. Members of the Armed Forces living on post, apart from their families, are not included.

Not in the labor force.--This category includes those persons 14 years old and over not classified as employed, unemployed, or in the Armed Forces. Persons who were engaged in "own home" housework, in school, inmates of institutions, retired, permanently unable or too old to work, seasonal workers for whom the survey fell in an "off" season, and the voluntarily idle are considered as "not in the labor force." Persons doing only incidental unpaid work (less than 15 hours) are also classified as not being in the labor force.

SOURCE AND RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

The estimates presented in this report are based on data obtained in connection with the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey. The sample consists of about 25,000 households located in 68 areas in 42 States and the District of Columbia. The estimates shown in table 1 for periods prior to April 1952 to April 1953 are based on data obtained in connection with the Current Population Surveys for the respective periods.

The estimating procedure used in this survey involved, as a final step, the inflation of weighted sample results to independent estimates of the civilian population of the United States classified by age, sex, and veteran status. These independent estimates were based on statistics from the 1950 Census of Population, statistics of births, deaths, immigration, and emigration, and statistics on the strength of the Armed Forces and separations.

Since the estimates, except the independent estimates mentioned above, are based on sample data, they are subject to sampling variability. Table A presents the approximate standard errors of sample estimates of selected size. The standard error is a measure of sampling variability. Sample estimates may differ, due to sampling variability, from the counts which would be obtained by a complete enumeration. The chances are about 2 out of 3 that this difference is less than the standard error. The amount by which the standard error must be multiplied to obtain other odds deemed more

appropriate can be found in most statistical textbooks. For example, the chances are about 19 out of 20 that the difference is less than twice the standard error and 99 out of 100 that it is less than 2 1/2 times the standard error.

Table A.--STANDARD ERROR OF ESTIMATED NUMBER
(Range of 2 chances out of 3)

Estimated number	Standard error	Estimated number	Standard error
50,000.....	30,000	3,000,000.....	230,000
100,000.....	40,000	5,000,000.....	295,000
300,000.....	75,000	10,000,000.....	410,000
500,000.....	95,000	20,000,000.....	560,000
1,000,000.....	135,000	40,000,000.....	725,000

Estimates of characteristics classified by urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm residence are subject to somewhat greater sampling variability, and estimates of characteristics classified by age and sex are subject to slightly less sampling variability than that shown above. Estimates for nonwhites presented in table 1 are subject to about 25 percent more than the usual sampling variability of estimates for nonwhites.

The reliability of an estimated percentage depends upon both the size of the percentage and the total on which it is based. Table B shows the approximate standard errors of percentages computed by using sample data for both numerator and denominator.

Table B.--STANDARD ERROR OF ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE
(Range of 2 chances out of 3)

Estimated percentage	Base of percentage							
	500,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	10,000,000	20,000,000	50,000,000
2 or 98.....	2.6	1.9	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3
5 or 95.....	4.1	2.9	2.1	1.7	1.3	0.9	0.7	0.4
10 or 90.....	5.7	4.0	2.8	2.3	1.8	1.3	0.9	0.6
25 or 75.....	8.2	6.7	4.1	3.3	2.6	1.8	1.3	0.8
50.....	9.5	9.5	4.7	3.8	3.0	2.1	1.5	0.9

The estimates of sampling variability shown in these tables are not directly applicable to differences obtained by subtracting one figure from another. The sampling variability in an observed difference between two estimates depends on the sampling variability of each of the estimates and the correlation between them.

In addition to sampling variation, the estimates are subject to biases due to errors of response and to nonreporting, but the possible effect of such biases is not included in the measures of reliability shown.

LIST OF DETAILED TABLES

Table	Page
1.--Mobility status and type of mobility of the civilian population 1 year old and over, by color and sex, for the United States: April 1948 to April 1953.....	6
2.--Place of residence and sex of the civilian population 1 year old and over, by mobility status and type of mobility, for the United States: April 1953.....	7
3.--Age and sex of the civilian population 1 year old and over, by mobility status and type of mobility, for the United States: April 1953.....	8
4.--Employment status and sex of the civilian population 14 years old and over, by mobility status and type of mobility, for the United States: April 1953.....	9
5.--Farm residence in 1953 by farm residence in 1952 of the civilian population 1 year old and over, by mobility status, type of mobility, age, and sex, for the United States: April 1953.....	9
6.--Marital status, sex, and year of marriage of ever-married persons 14 years of age and over, by mobility status and type of mobility, for the United States: April 1953.....	11