

Census trends BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

NEXT YEAR'S US Census promises more drama than usual, thanks to some recent demographic twists resulting from the economic crash of 2008. For example, the latest estimates have the state of Florida, long dependent on the real estate and construction industries, losing population for the first time since World War II. The trend toward bigger and bigger houses also seems to have hit a wall (see top of next page).

In Massachusetts, a decades-long exodus of residents to other states has slowed down considerably (see State of the States, *CW*, Spring '09), and our homeownership has continued to rise even as it's fallen from its peak in the rest of the US (see bottom of next page).

BIGGEST POPULATION GAINS IN MASSACHUSETTS

1980s	1990s	2000-08	2007-08
BOSTON: 11,289	BOSTON: 14,858	BOSTON: 19,636	N. READING: 3,364
LOWELL: 11,021	LYNN: 7,805	REVERE: 12,580	REVERE: 2,219
BARNSTABLE: 10,051	HAVERHILL: 7,551	CHELSEA: 6,282	CAMBRIDGE: 1,570
PLYMOUTH: 9,695	SHREWSBURY: 7,494	QUINCY: 4,114	CHELSEA: 1,483
WORCESTER: 7,960	FRANKLIN: 7,465	CAMBRIDGE: 3,953	BRAINTREE: 986

BIGGEST POPULATION LOSSES IN MASSACHUSETTS

1980s	1990s	2000-08	2007-08
ARLINGTON: -3,589	HARVARD: -6,348	PITTSFIELD: -3,044	BARNSTABLE: -332
PITTSFIELD: -3,352	NEW BEDFORD: -6,154	NEW BEDFORD: -2,495	SPRINGFIELD: -287
BRAINTREE: -2,501	SPRINGFIELD: -4,901	LYNN: -2,227	PITTSFIELD: -258
BROCKTON: -2,384	HOLYOKE: -3,866	BROOKLINE: -2,219	YARMOUTH: -180
MELROSE: -1,905	PITTSFIELD: -2,829	LAWRENCE: -2,112	NEW BEDFORD: -177

Source: US Census Bureau.

Note: Harvard's sharp drop in population during the 1990s was due to the closing of Fort Devens by the US Army. North Reading's sharp rise in 2007-08 is an estimate based on a large number of new housing permits in that town.

INTERNAL SHIFTS

Massachusetts has been characterized by slow population growth over the past few decades; in fact, it lost population for a few years before the economic crash seemed to freeze people in place. The table at left shows the biggest gainers and losers within the state.

During the 1980s, population shifted to both older cities and newer towns in the eastern part of the state outside Route 128. (Though Boston's 2 percent increase translated into the biggest raw change, towns such as Carver, Mashpee, and Sandwich had jumps of more than 50 percent.) This phenomenon continued into the 1990s, but the biggest population losers were no longer older Boston suburbs but instead Gateway Cities too far away to take advantage of the Hub's economy.

So far in the current decade, however, the biggest population gains have been in Boston itself and in close-by cities such as Cambridge, Chelsea, and Revere. Out-of-orbit industrial cities have continued to slump, but in the most current year available, the formerly robust Cape Cod region has started to shed people, with Barnstable, Bourne, Dennis, Sandwich, and Yarmouth all in the loss column.

What does this mean when the state, as seems inevitable, is forced to eliminate a congressional district in 2012? Based on population shifts (and grotesque lines), Barney Frank's congressional district is a logical target for extinction; it has three of the 10 biggest losers in the state (New Bedford, Brookline, and Newton). But given his seniority in the US House, it seems more likely that mapmakers will go after John Olver (whose western district includes Pittsfield) or relieve Ed Markey of the barely growing MetroWest suburbs and put him in the same district as North Shore Rep. John Tierney.

PERCENTAGE OF NEW ONE-FAMILY HOMES SOLD IN US WITH MORE THAN 2,400 SQUARE FEET

2000: 35%
 2005: 43%
 2008: 42%

Source: US Census Bureau.

CITY	% BORN IN MASS.	% BORN ELSEWHERE AS AMERICAN CITIZENS	% FOREIGN-BORN
BOSTON	46	25	29
BROCKTON	64	13	23
CAMBRIDGE	33	39	28
FALL RIVER	66	13	21
FRAMINGHAM	51	25	23
LAWRENCE	39	20	40
LOWELL	58	16	25
LYNN	57	11	32
NEW BEDFORD	66	14	21
NEWTON	50	32	18
QUINCY	59	15	26
SOMERVILLE	43	29	27
SPRINGFIELD	55	35	10
WORCESTER	61	21	18
STATE TOTAL	64	22	15
US TOTAL	59*	29	13

Source: 2007 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Notes: Bolded numbers are higher than the statewide average in the same categories. "Born elsewhere as American citizens" includes natives of Puerto Rico and US territories, as well as those born abroad to American parents.

*Represents the percentage of residents living in the same state in which they were born.

MAGNET CITIES

Even though we've been losing people to other parts of the country for generations, thanks to high housing costs and low temperatures, the Bay State's need for a highly educated workforce has always attracted people from elsewhere. But as the table at left shows, some communities have more pull than others.

The Census Bureau provides annual data on cities of more than 60,000 people, and in that group Cambridge has the smallest share of lifelong Bay Staters (33 percent of the total), with other US natives at 39 percent and immigrants at 28 percent. The first number is similar to that of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, another high-tech college city, where only 36 percent of residents were born in-state. But Chapel Hill, like much of the urban South, has a very high percentage of people from other parts of the country (48 percent) and a much lower share of the foreign-born (15 percent).

The older industrial communities known as Gateway Cities have generally been less successful at attracting people from outside Massachusetts. Springfield is a bit of an aberration in that more than one-third of its residents come from elsewhere in the US, but almost 95 percent of the residents in that category were born in Puerto Rico. At the same time, its immigrant population (10 percent) is far lower than any other city of significant size. The result is a poorer and less diverse population than in, say, Lowell or Lynn.

The South Coast cities of Fall River and New Bedford stand out for their high percentages of Bay State natives. Still, many Gateway City equivalents elsewhere in America are even more parochial. For example, in Flint, Michigan, 76 percent of residents were born in-state, and a mere 1.3 percent were born outside the US.

HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES

1990: US 63.9%, MASS. 58.6%
 2007: US 68.1%, MASS. 64.3%
 2008: US 67.8%, MASS. 65.7%

Source: US Census Bureau.

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