

FACTS & FEATURES



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* Special Edition *



Anniversary of Washington, D.C., as Nation's Capital

In July 1790, the U.S. Congress authorized the selection of a site “not exceeding 10 miles square” somewhere in the Potomac River region to serve as the permanent seat of the United States government. In the interim, Philadelphia would serve for a decade as the nation’s capital. On Dec. 12, 1800, Washington, D.C., officially became the nation’s capital. In commemoration of this event, the Census Bureau offers the following:



D.C. . . . Then and Now

14,093

The population of the District of Columbia (D.C.) at the time of the 1800 census. This included the population of three places within the district: Washington (3,210), Georgetown (2,993) and Alexandria (4,971). At the time, the district included territory taken from Virginia in 1791 but later retroceded to Virginia in 1846. A total of 8,144 people lived within the District of Columbia’s current boundaries.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cph2/cph-2-1-1.pdf>

570,898

Estimated D.C. population as of July 1, 2002.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/000456.html>

802,178

Population of the district, according to the 1950 census. This was its peak population.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen1990/cph2/cph-2-1-1.pdf>

157

Number of D.C. residents per square mile in 1800. At the time, the District contained 90 square miles of land. (Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.*)

9,317

Number of D.C. residents per square mile in 2000. The city reached its highest density in 1950, with 13,151 residents per square mile. Since 1940, the District has consisted of 61 square miles of land. <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en> (Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.*)

About 1-in-5

Ratio of district residents who lived in a rural area in 1800. The district continued to have a rural population as late as 1880, when 18,000, or 1-in-10, of its residents lived in rural areas. (Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.*)

72

Percentage of D.C.'s population who were minorities as of July 1, 2002. The 1960 census was the first to show that D.C. had become a majority-minority place.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/001342.html>>

(Also *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.*)



Down on the Farm ... in D.C.

1,000

The number of D.C. residents who lived on farms in 1910, the most recent census to show a farm population in the district. As late as 1950, 1,000 acres of D.C. land consisted of farmland. (Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.*)

From time to time, special editions of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* are issued to commemorate anniversaries or observances or to provide background information for topics in the news. Below is a listing of previous editions:

U.S. Armed Forces and Veterans (April 10, 2003)

Tax Time (April 11, 2003)

Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial (May 12, 2003)

Dialing for Dollars (Sept. 24, 2003)

Editor's note: Some of the preceding data were collected in surveys and, therefore, are subject to sampling error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: (301) 763-3030; fax: (301) 457-3670; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.

