

GEOGRAPHY SPOTLIGHT

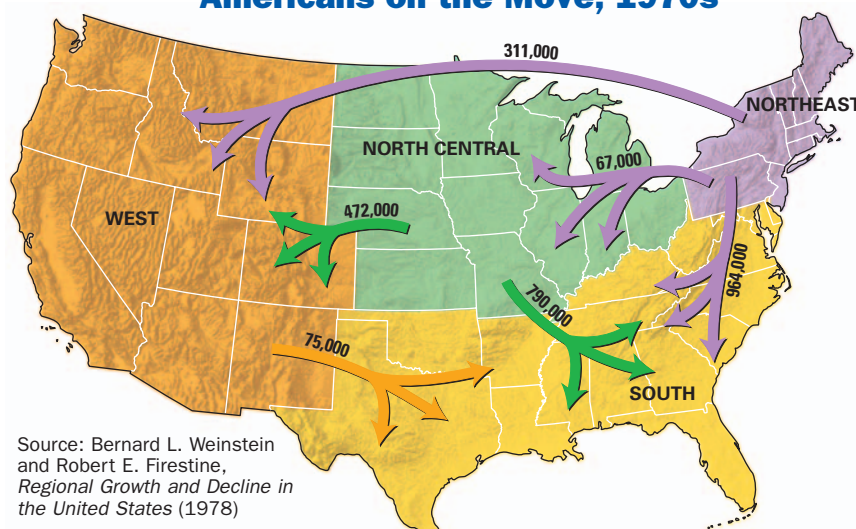
Sunbelt, Rustbelt, Ecotopia

In the 1970s, people on the move created new names for areas to which they moved. The West was sometimes called **Ecotopia** because of its varied scenery and ecological attractions. The South and Southwest were called the **Sunbelt** because of their warm climate. The North Central and Northeast regions were called the **Rustbelt** because many of their aging factories had been closed.

As a geographical term, *region* is used to designate an area with common features or characteristics that set it apart from its surroundings. For example, the Mississippi Valley is a large physical region; Warren Woods is a small physical region. The term is often used for groups of states that share an area and certain characteristics.

As people move from state to state, and from region to region, they gradually transform the balance of political and economic power in the nation. Each census in recent times has recorded how certain states have gained population and others have lost population. If the gains or losses are large enough, a state's representation in the U.S. House of Representatives will increase or decrease commensurately.

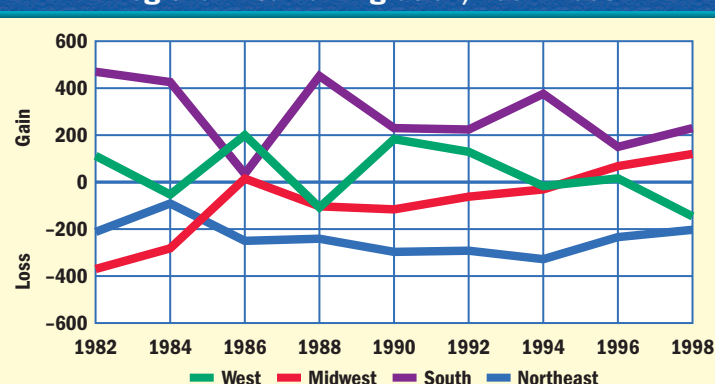
Americans on the Move, 1970s



REGIONAL EXCHANGES

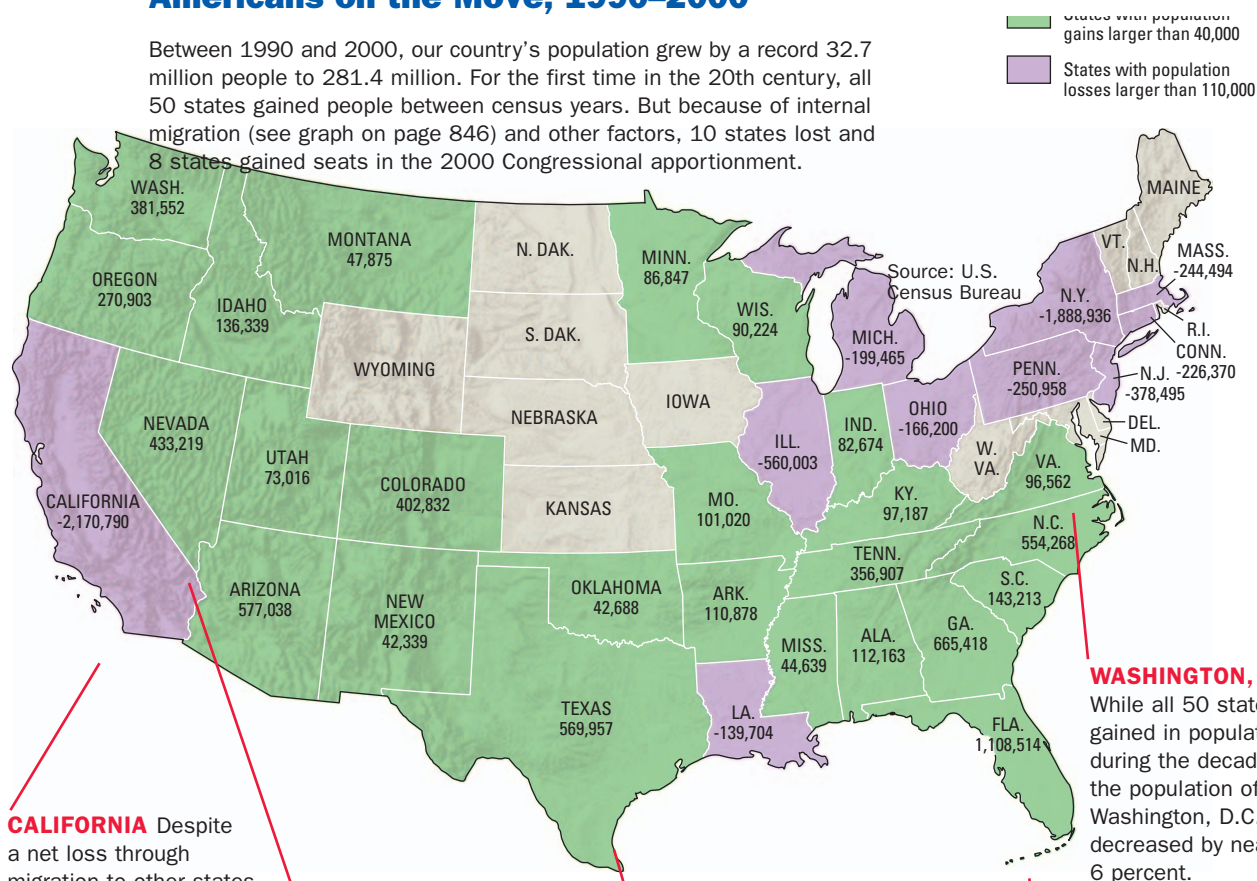
Between 1970 and 1975, the population center of the United States, which had generally moved westward for 17 decades, suddenly moved southward as well. The arrows show the net number of Americans who migrated and their patterns of migration in the early 1970s. The West gained 311,000 from the Northeast plus 472,000 from the North Central region, for a total of 783,000 people. However, it also lost 75,000 people to the South. During the 1980s and 1990s the southward and westward shift continued.

Regional Internal Migration, 1982–1998



Americans on the Move, 1990–2000

Between 1990 and 2000, our country's population grew by a record 32.7 million people to 281.4 million. For the first time in the 20th century, all 50 states gained people between census years. But because of internal migration (see graph on page 846) and other factors, 10 states lost and 8 states gained seats in the 2000 Congressional apportionment.



CALIFORNIA Despite a net loss through migration to other states of 2 million people in the 1990s, international immigrants and in-state births gave California the greatest net increase in population among the 50 states.

NEVADA There has been such a large influx of people since 1945 that building houses for newcomers has become a major industry in Nevada.

TEXAS During the 1990s, Texas eclipsed New York to become the nation's second-most populous state behind California. Sixty percent of the Texas increase has been driven by Hispanic growth.

WASHINGTON, D.C. While all 50 states gained in population during the decade, the population of Washington, D.C., decreased by nearly 6 percent.

FLORIDA During the 1990s, Florida's population increased 23.5 percent, making it the nation's fourth-largest. With so many new residents, Florida gained two additional House seats, bringing its congressional delegation to 25.

(below) Housing development near Danville, California, 1990



THINKING CRITICALLY

- Analyzing Distributions** Which states lost the most people between 1990 and 2000? Which states gained the most people?
- Creating a Graph** Choose one of the most populous states and then pose a historical question about population in that state. Create a graph or graphs that show various aspects of population for the state you have chosen. Be sure that the graph(s) help to answer the question you posed. Then display the graph(s) and the question in the classroom.



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