POPULATION NOTES

January, 1992
OSD-92-65

Minnesota Becoming More Middle-aged

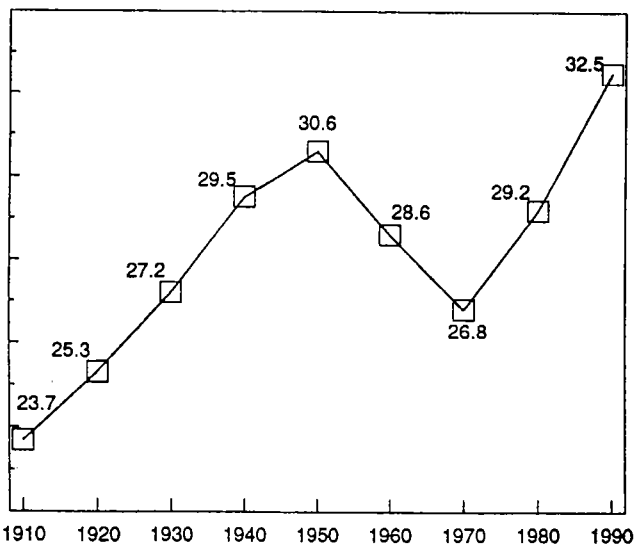
Martha McMurry

The baby boom generation has begun to move into its 30s and 40s, producing a definite "middle-aging" of Minnesota's population. Census data indicate that the state's median age increased to a record 32.5 years in 1990, up from 29.2 in 1980 (Figure 1). Half the population was older than 32.5 in 1990. Minnesota's median age was slightly younger than the national average of 32.9 years. The aging of the baby boom and the relatively small size of subsequent generations have created a definite middle-aged spread in Minnesota's population profile (Figure 2).

Minnesotans are now older on average than they have ever been before. Nineteen ninety was not the first time the median age topped 30, however. In 1950 the median age was 30.6 years. After 1950 the arrival of the baby boom children increased the population at younger ages and lowered the median age to 28.6 in 1960 and 26.8 in 1970. As the baby boom grew up and grew older, the state median age increased. It will continue to increase in coming decades.

Figure 1.

MINNESOTA MEDIAN AGE 1910-1990



Middle-aging at a Glance...

- The median age of Minnesotans rose from 29.2 in 1980 to 32.5 in 1990, a record high.
- The 35- to 44 year-old age groups grew the fastest.
- The young adult population ages 15 to 24 declined sharply.
- The number of elderly people went up, with the greatest increase among the 85 and older population.
- Non-metropolitan areas generally have older populations.
- The white population is older than the minority population.
- Women continue to outnumber men, but the ratio of men to women appears to have stabilized.

Population Ages 35-44 Has Large Increase

The 40-44 and 35-39 year-old age groups posted the largest increases of any age groups between 1980 and 1990 (Figure 3). People who were 40-44 in 1990 represent the first wave of the post-World War II baby boom.

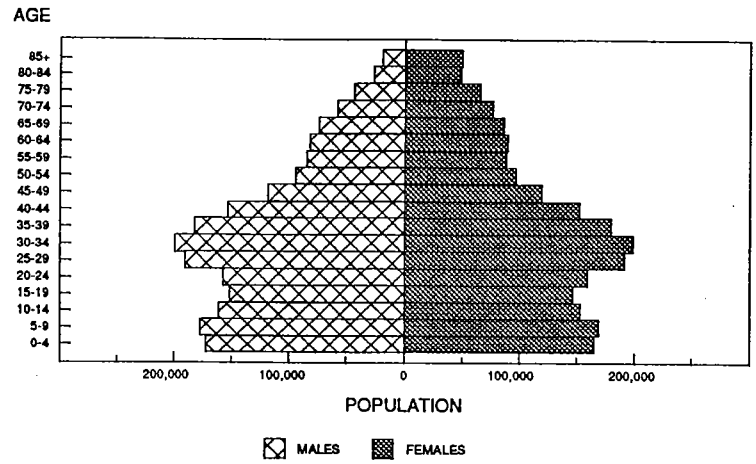
The baby boom generation, roughly those aged 25-44 in 1990, have an affinity for metropolitan areas. The 25-44 year-old population grew fastest in the Twin Cities and St. Cloud regions and in Olmsted County (Rochester) (Figure 4). Extreme north central Minnesota also had a big increase in the baby boom age groups, the only non-metropolitan area to show such high growth. This area experienced considerable employment and population growth in the 1980s.

At the other extreme, many parts of the state had declines or very small gains in the number of 25-44 year-olds. Much of western and northeastern Minnesota fell into this category. Many of these

MN PLANNING

Figure 2.

MINNESOTA POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX, 1990



areas have a long history of out-migration of young adults, leaving a relatively small pool of people to age into their 30s and 40s. And although 25-44 year-olds are not quite as mobile as younger adults, many may also have been leaving non-metropolitan Minnesota to look for jobs.

The geographic growth pattern for the 25-44 year-old age group was typical. The regions of the state with the highest rates of increase (or the lowest rates of decline) for each individual age group were generally those with the strongest overall population growth: the metropolitan areas of Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Rochester, and a few counties in extreme north central Minnesota. (See *Population Notes*, April, 1991.)

The Twin Cities and Olmsted County have the greatest proportions of the population in the 25-44 year-old age groups. In Dakota County 38.5 percent of the residents were between 25 and 44, the highest proportion in the state. Hennepin County was second with 37.5 percent. The counties with the lowest percentages of people in these ages are in the western half of the state and in north central Minnesota. Only 22.5 percent of Lincoln County residents and 22.8 percent of those in Traverse County were between 25 and 44.

Young Adult Population Declines Dramatically

The 1980s witnessed a sharp drop in the number of persons aged 15-24, the baby bust generation. The decline reflects the small number of births during the late 1960s and the 1970s. The number of 15-19 year-olds went down 26 percent from 1980 to 1990. The young adult population declined throughout the state, especially in southwestern Minnesota, where the combination of the baby bust and high rates of out-migration produced huge losses (Figure 5). Three counties (Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, and Lake) had declines of over 50 percent. Only two counties, Dakota and Sherburne, had more 15-24 year-olds in 1990 and than in 1980. In these two counties rapid

Figure 3.

35-44 YEAR-OLD POPULATION GROWS FASTEST

Young Adult Population Declines

% Change in Population, Minnesota, 1980-1990

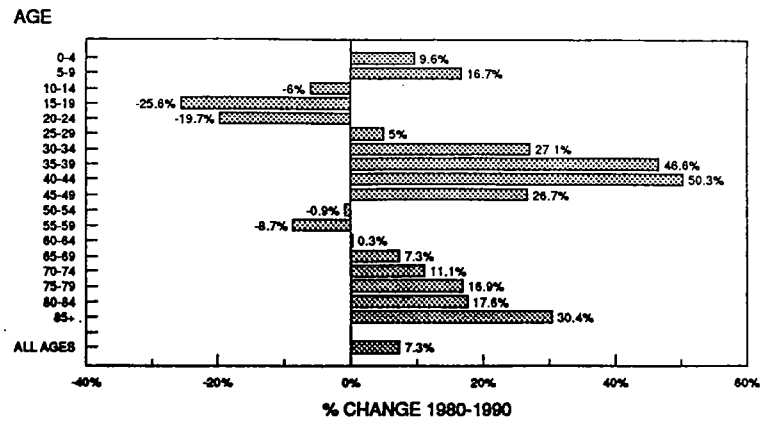
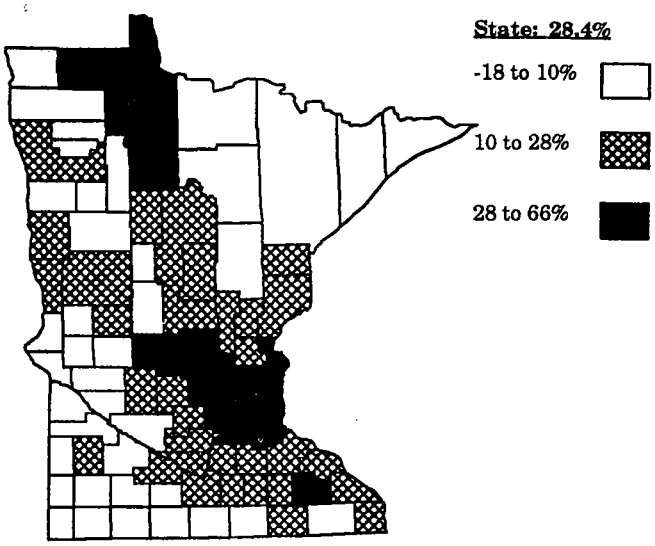


Figure 4. Percent Change in 25-44 Year-Old Population 1980-1990



overall population growth managed to offset the effects of the baby bust.

The young adult population is distributed unevenly across the state. The largest concentrations are found in counties with college or university campuses. Rice, Winona, Stearns, Clay, Stevens, Nicollet, and Beltrami are among the counties with the highest percentages of 15-24 year-olds. All have large residential campuses. While there are also large campuses in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties (Minneapolis and St. Paul), these counties also have very large total populations and the college effect is not as noticeable.

Elderly Population Grows

Minnesota's elderly population continued to grow in the 1980s, with the growth rates highest at the most advanced ages. The most dramatic growth occurred among the 85 and older population, which went up 30 percent since 1980. The 85+ population had the third highest growth rate among age groups, trailing only the 40-44 and 35-39 year-olds. Increasing life expectancy has been an important factor in the growth of the oldest age groups, but the birth and migration patterns of the late 19th and early 20th century also have been significant.

The fastest growth of the very old population occurred in rapidly growing suburban areas and in the far north central part of the state (Figure 6). Both of these regions are most likely seeing the aging of people who migrated there in the past. Some of the people who moved to the suburbs in the first waves of suburban growth are now reaching an advanced age. In north central Minnesota, part of the reason for the rapid increase may be the aging of elderly people who moved to these regions to retire.

Although the biggest increases in the 80 and over population occurred in suburban and north central Minnesota, the greatest concentrations of population 80 and older are found in rural areas in the western half of the state (Figure 7). The proportion is as high as 7.7 percent in Big Stone, Lincoln, and Traverse Counties, compared to a state average of 3.3 percent. The high proportion of older people in western Minnesota reflects the out-migration of younger people and children. Older people, who are less

Figure 5. Percent Change in 15-24 Year-Old Population 1980-1990

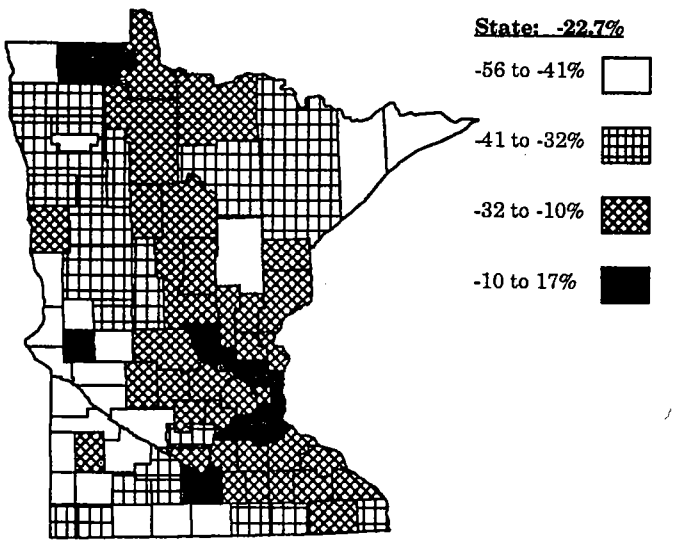
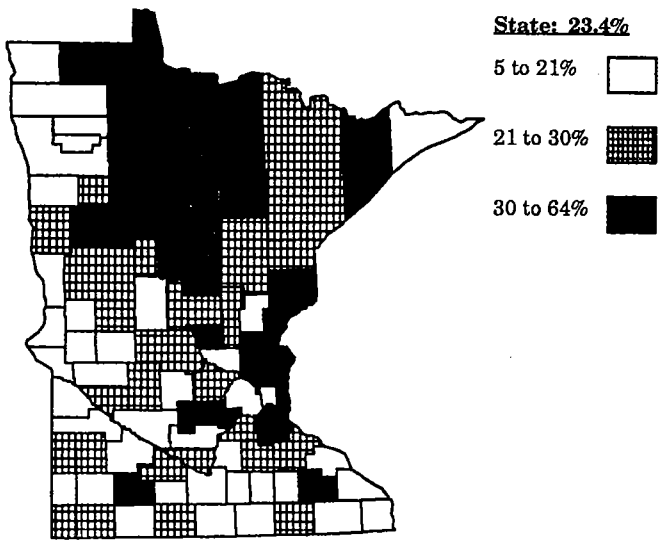


Figure 6. Percent Change in 80+ Year-Old Population 1980-1990



mobile, make up a relatively large proportion of the remaining population.

Population of Children Shows Modest Increase

Overall the population of children in Minnesota increased modestly, with increases occurring in the 0-9 year-olds and a decrease among the 10-14 year-olds. The slight growth in the number of children reflects the "echo baby boom" or "baby boomlet", the result of the baby boomers moving through their prime childbearing years.

The growth and distribution patterns of the 0-14 year-old population closely follows the example of the 25-44 year-old age group, which of course includes many of their parents. The biggest increases in the number of children occurred in the Twin Cities and Rochester areas and in extreme north central Minnesota. These areas also have the greatest concentration of children. Many areas had substantial declines in the number of children, however, including most of northeastern, western, and southwestern Minnesota. Many young adults and young families have left these areas, leaving behind a relatively small number of people in their childbearing years.

Population in 50s and 60s Shows Little Change

There was little change in the number of Minnesotans in their 50s and 60s. The number of people in their 50s declined slightly and the number in their 60s increased slightly. This generation was born in the 1920s and 1930s, an era of relatively low fertility.

Figure 7. Percent of Population Aged 80+, 1990

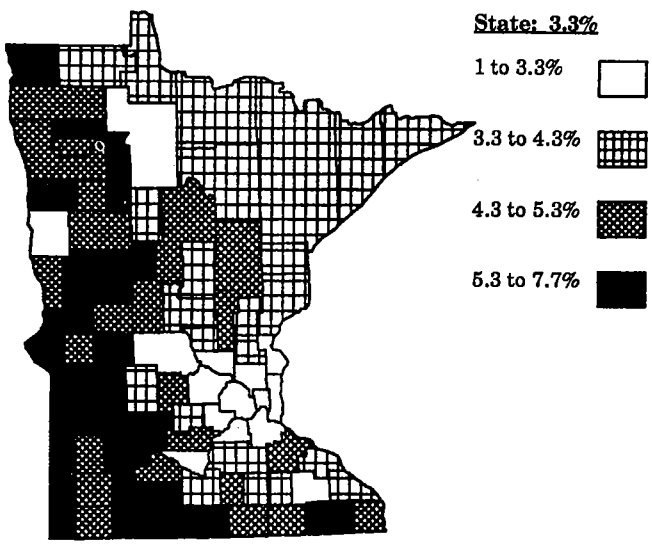
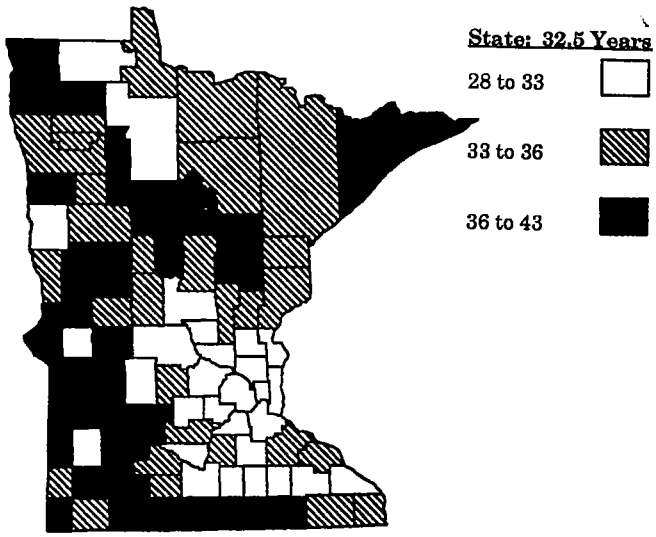


Figure 8. Median Age, 1990



Median Age Lowest in Metropolitan Areas; Highest in Western Minnesota

The median age of the population is highest in western and north central Minnesota and lowest in the metropolitan areas around Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Rochester (Figure 8). Five counties (Aitkin, Lincoln, Traverse, Grant, and Big Stone) have a median age over 40. Aitkin County has the highest median age, 42.8 years. Suburban counties and counties with college or university campuses generally have the youngest populations. Blue Earth County, home of Mankato State University, was the youngest, with a median age of 27.6. Six other counties (Stearns, Sherburne, Clay, Beltrami, Benton, and Anoka) had a median age below 30.

Diversity in age is even more apparent below the county level. Median age ranges from a high of 70 years in tiny Tenney in Wilkin County to a low of 16.8 years in Ogema Township in Pine County, site of a youth camp (Table 2). Some of the places with high median ages have nursing homes, while some of the ones with low median ages have college campuses. Stearns County and neighboring Morrison County have 5 of the 10 cities and townships with the youngest populations. Of the cities and townships with the oldest populations, all except Lilydale are outside the Twin Cities area.

Minority Populations Are Younger Than White Population

Minority populations are noticeably younger than the white population. In 1990 the median age for the white population was 33.1, while figures for minority groups ranged from 20.4 for the Asian or Pacific Islander population to 23.9 for the African-American

Table 1. COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE 1990

	Total	Under 5	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65-84	85+
Minnesota	**4,375,099**	**336,800**	**829,983**	**442,809**	**1,445,827**	**772,746**	**478,099**	**68,835**
Aitkin	12,425	670	2,289	597	2,989	2,952	2,628	300
Anoka	243,641	21,416	52,953	23,933	89,923	41,850	12,494	1,072
Becker	27,881	2,063	6,045	1,964	7,803	5,420	3,991	595
Beltrami	34,384	2,872	7,356	4,885	9,849	5,426	3,535	461
Benton	30,185	2,641	6,403	3,538	9,712	4,377	2,904	610
Big Stone	6,285	441	1,200	316	1,513	1,327	1,238	250
Blue Earth	54,044	3,425	8,966	12,451	14,707	7,909	5,667	919
Brown	26,984	1,973	5,424	2,289	7,571	4,974	4,118	635
Carlton	29,259	2,050	6,161	2,143	8,644	5,756	4,033	472
Carver	47,915	4,561	9,946	4,180	17,460	7,755	3,479	534
Cass	21,791	1,534	4,395	1,250	5,582	4,847	3,774	409
Chippewa	13,228	886	2,695	808	3,539	2,538	2,336	426
Chisago	30,521	2,484	6,920	2,345	9,708	5,360	3,238	466
Clay	50,422	3,541	9,084	9,973	13,704	8,138	5,171	811
Clearwater	8,309	585	1,834	539	2,111	1,627	1,357	256
Cook	3,868	2,61	675	201	1,239	854	581	57
Cottonwood	12,694	813	2,492	759	3,197	2,587	2,401	445
Crow Wing	44,249	3,171	8,757	3,477	12,327	8,874	6,785	858
Dakota	275,227	25,535	56,611	25,290	106,090	44,226	15,799	1,676
Dodge	15,731	1,339	3,610	1,245	4,824	2,631	1,782	300
Douglas	28,674	2,020	5,760	2,422	7,893	5,379	4,465	735
Faribault	16,937	1,057	3,437	978	4,274	3,522	3,158	511
Fillmore	20,777	1,493	4,288	1,440	5,411	3,944	3,521	680
Freeborn	33,060	2,256	6,274	2,378	9,161	6,845	5,406	740
Goodhue	40,690	3,003	8,447	3,017	12,344	7,415	5,428	1,036
Grant	6,246	400	1,217	288	1,536	1,309	1,280	21
Hennepin	1,032,431	77,210	161,599	109,025	387,341	180,299	101,984	14,973
Houston	18,497	1,467	3,845	1,318	5,576	3,360	2,505	426
Hubbard	14,939	1,027	3,062	863	4,023	3,300	2,384	280
Isanti	25,921	2,047	6,065	1,977	8,327	4,627	2,474	404
Itasca	40,863	2,703	8,855	2,852	11,703	8,260	5,921	569
Jackson	11,677	798	2,338	788	3,138	2,287	1,974	354
Kanabec	12,802	979	2,906	894	3,694	2,455	1,681	193
Kandiyohi	38,761	2,973	8,064	3,670	11,419	6,824	5,035	776
Kittson	5,767	409	1,097	310	1,545	1,155	1,066	185
Koochiching	16,299	1,032	3,117	1,367	4,930	3,416	2,202	235
Lac Qui Parle	8,924	605	1,754	406	2,263	1,838	1,746	312
Lake	10,415	625	1,910	583	2,888	2,589	1,653	167
Lake of the Woods	4,076	337	791	261	1,184	,810	622	71
Le Sueur	23,239	1,788	5,077	1,786	6,764	4,327	3,039	458
Lincoln	6,890	364	1,437	343	1,548	1,461	1,472	265
Lyon	24,789	1,746	4,993	3,298	6,832	4,066	3,318	536
McLeod	32,030	2,598	6,684	2,683	9,690	5,633	4,113	629

Table 1. COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE 1990 (continued)

	Total	Under 5	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65-84	85+
Mahnomen	5,044	345	1,229	312	1,226	1,011	827	94
Marshall	10,993	695	2,474	665	2,894	2,251	1,763	251
Martin	22,914	1,589	4,554	1,357	6,446	4,422	3,927	619
Meeker	20,846	1,587	4,540	1,422	5,759	3,955	3,136	447
Mille Lac	18,670	1,425	4,012	1,359	5,124	3,554	2,789	407
Morrison	29,604	2,338	6,920	2,251	8,196	5,281	4,061	557
Mower	37,385	2,441	7,114	2,770	9,948	7,585	6,626	901
Murray	9,660	641	1,979	593	2,433	2,023	1,759	232
Nicollet	28,076	2,026	5,321	4,510	8,574	4,546	2,698	401
Nobles	20,098	1,353	3,978	1,631	5,432	3,985	3,198	521
Norman	7,975	483	1,670	403	2,006	1,632	1,503	278
Olmsted	106,470	9,160	20,368	9,796	37,793	18,749	9,110	1,494
Otter Tail	50,714	3,457	9,986	3,432	13,557	10,437	8,486	1,359
Pennington	13,306	900	2,662	1,376	3,706	2,413	1,895	354
Pine	21,264	1,450	4,593	1,491	6,132	4,251	2,956	391
Pipestone	10,491	795	2,154	741	2,684	1,924	1,871	322
Polk	32,498	2,353	6,790	2,739	8,856	5,975	4,967	818
Pope	10,745	743	2,217	571	2,714	2,115	2,072	313
Ramsey	485,765	38,783	81,321	56,161	167,992	82,120	51,707	7,681
Red Lake	4,525	324	1,030	261	1,210	862	736	102
Redwood	17,254	1,279	3,567	1,066	4,492	3,293	3,027	530
Renville	17,673	1,284	3,638	1,065	4,647	3,449	3,087	503
Rice	49,183	3,401	9,507	8,124	14,168	8,185	4,921	877
Rock	9,806	673	2,113	609	2,575	1,889	1,677	270
Roseau	15,026	1,443	3,240	1,285	4,590	2,438	1,796	234
St. Louis	198,213	12,185	36,136	20,176	58,481	37,768	29,956	3,511
Scott	57,846	5,478	12,523	5,006	21,396	9,202	3,699	542
Sherburne	41,945	3,648	9,670	4,928	14,409	6,312	2,595	383
Sibley	14,366	1,067	3,015	967	3,892	2,888	2,198	339
Stearns	118,791	8,983	24,026	20,665	34,600	18,041	11,097	1,379
Steele	30,729	2,408	6,384	2,712	9,455	5,476	3,744	550
Stevens	10,634	618	1,882	2,240	2,442	1,751	1,452	249
Swift	10,724	676	2,206	605	2,767	2,093	2,078	299
Todd	23,363	1,636	5,495	1,627	6,126	4,502	3,494	483
Traverse	4,463	306	865	209	1,019	975	934	155
Wabasha	19,744	1,541	4,171	1,456	5,760	3,674	2,742	400
Wadena	13,154	959	2,753	948	3,350	2,617	2,172	355
Waseca	18,079	1,350	3,834	1,653	5,364	3,047	2,458	373
Washington	145,896	12,138	32,177	11,771	53,662	26,655	8,467	1,026
Watonwan	11,682	875	2,406	794	3,115	2,359	1,834	299
Wilkin	7,516	585	1,541	558	2,109	1,432	1,114	177
Winona	47,828	3,191	8,539	8,676	13,207	7,654	5,666	895
Wright	68,710	6,209	16,176	5,961	22,609	11,042	5,934	779
Yellow Medicine	11,684	781	2,374	737	2,934	2,364	2,112	382

Table 2. Minnesota Cities and Townships With the Highest and Lowest Median Age in 1990

Highest			Lowest		
City/Township Name	County Name	Age	City/Township Name	County Name	Age
Tenney	Wilkin County	70.0	Ogema Township	Pine County	16.8
Hendricks	Lincoln County	64.7	St. Joseph	Stearns County	21.4
Forest Township	Becker County	64.4	Northfield	Rice County	22.2
Franklin Township	St. Louis County	61.0	Hillman Township	Morrison County	22.2
Woodrow Township	Cass County	60.9	Spring Hill Township	Stearns County	23.1
Crooked Lake Township	Cass County	60.1	St. Martin Township	Stearns County	23.6
Minnie Township	Beltrami County	59.2	Morris	Stevens County	23.6
Wolf Lake	Becker County	59.2	Granite Township	Morrison County	23.9
Lilydale	Dakota County	58.9	Twin Lakes Township	Mahnomen County	24.0
Barrett	Grant County	58.8	Pine Point Township	Becker County	24.1

population. The median age of Hispanics was 22.2, and of American Indians, 23.0.

The lower average age among minority groups is attributable both to higher fertility and to higher rates of in-migration to Minnesota. Young single people and young families are more likely to move, so high rates of in-migration are associated with a lower median age. In addition, minority families tend to have more children, another factor related to a lower average age.

Women Outnumber Men

Women outnumber men in Minnesota, as they do in the U.S. as a whole. In 1990 there were 96.2 males for every 100 females. The number of men per 100 women (the "sex ratio") has stabilized since 1970 after declining through most of the century.

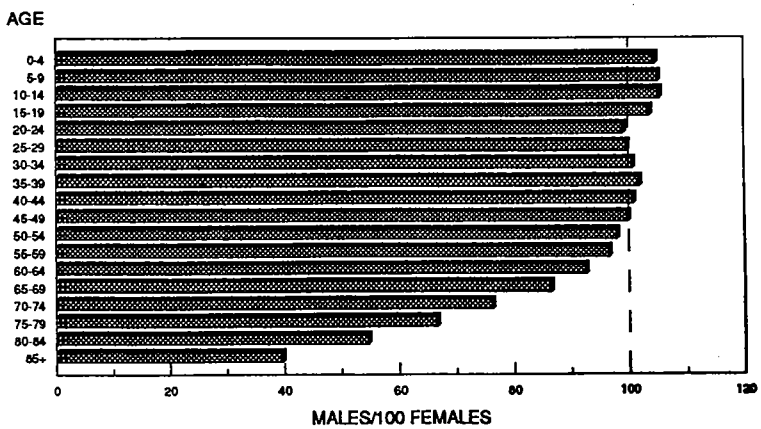
The sex ratio reflects both differences in survival rates and differences in migration rates. The ratio of men to women is generally higher in frontier areas and in areas where agriculture, logging, and mining are major employers. In the early 1900s farming was still the major employer in Minnesota and the majority of people lived in rural areas. Men outnumbered women by a considerable margin. As the state became more urbanized, the sex ratio dropped. Another reason for the decline in the sex ratio is that women's longevity has increased more than men's.

At birth there are more boy babies than girl babies. In Minnesota the number of males is close to or greater than the number of females until the mid 40s (Figure 9). After that the sex ratio declines dramatically, reflecting higher mortality rates for men. Over age 85 there are only 39 men for every 100 women. There are only 16 counties in the state where men outnumber women (Figure 10). Five of these counties contain correctional facilities for men. Suburban counties around the Twin Cities also have more men than women, as do a few counties in northern Minnesota. One reason there are more

Figure 9.

MALE POPULATION DROPS OFF SHARPLY WITH AGE

Minnesota Males per 100 Females, 1990

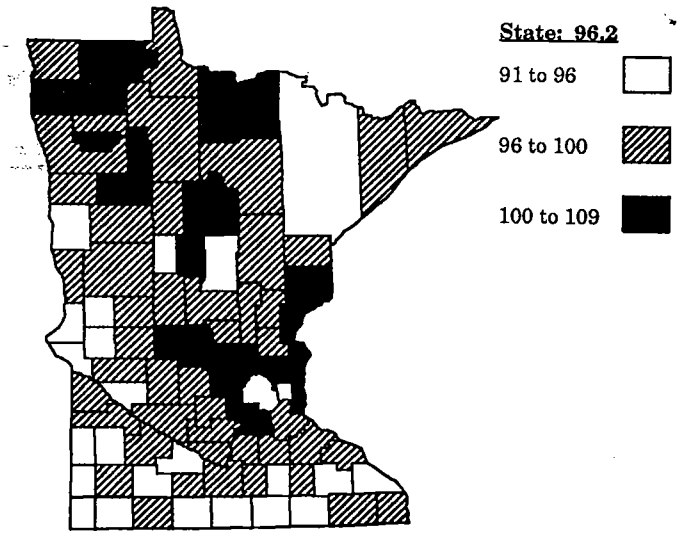


males in suburban areas is the younger age structure. Suburbs have fewer residents in the older ages where women greatly outnumber men. Suburban areas tend to attract married couples more than they attract single women, another reason for the relatively high ratio of men to women.

The higher male/female ratios in parts of northern Minnesota have a variety of causes. In Koochiching and Roseau Counties, the expansion of lumber processing and window manufacturing industries has probably attracted more male than female migrants. In some of the other northern Minnesota counties, sex ratios are higher than the state average in almost all age groups, suggesting a long history of higher out-migration by women.

The lowest ratios of men to women are found in the three counties containing large central cities (Ramsey, Hennepin, and St. Louis) and in many rural areas. Central cities have historically attracted women because there are more job opportunities. The low sex ratios in rural areas have different causes. Rural areas traditionally had higher sex ratios, but the ratios in many parts of rural Minnesota are now quite low. The main reason is that these rural counties have come to contain large proportions of elderly people and, as noted above, women substantially outnumber men at more advanced ages.

Figure 10. Males Per 100 Females, 1990



Population Notes **is published periodically by Demography, Minnesota Planning (Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning), 300 Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155.**

For more information or copies:
Census Help Line (612) 296-2557

Recycled • Recyclable • Soy Ink

MN PLANNING
658 CEDAR STREET
ST. PAUL, MN 55155

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 171
St. Paul, MN

POPULATION NOTES