



County Population Change Since 1860

After the Gold Rush, four out of every five Californians lived between San Francisco and the Sierra Nevada **foothills**.

By 1900, the **population** began to shift from the foothills into the farming areas of the Central Valley and Southern California. By 1920, a thriving logging industry also attracted people to Humboldt County in the northcoast, while new farms spread into the San Joaquin Valley.

The next big population changes occurred during and after World War II. Throughout the 1950s, military workers returning from the war joined the shipbuilders and factory workers who had moved west to support the war

effort. They combined with a restless American society moving into Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area. The post-war baby boom, when American birth rates increased dramatically, also increased the numbers. California emerged from the 1960s as the most populated state in the nation.

Since 1990, the number of people moving out of California to other states has been larger than the number moving into California from the other 49 states. They leave California in search of better job opportunities and cheaper housing. However, the total population continues to grow with the arrival of new immigrants from other countries, combined with domestic births. As the population density of coastal cities increases, new jobs and cheaper housing attract people to the Central Valley and Mojave Desert.

1900-2000 Population Density
People per square mile

