

Population Change and Trends: The Backdrop

- ***Population Estimates***
- ***Madera County Profile***
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PART I.

PART I. Population Change and Trends: The Backdrop

The record of the past has been one of tremendous progress in areas such as education, health and longevity, and economic growth, but deterioration in other areas, such as the likelihood that a child is born into poverty or into a marginally poor family or into a family without health insurance.

Madera County faces challenges, many of which are deeply rooted in conditions of poverty. Social, material, and health disparities between groups have persisted and, in some cases, widened. What is more, the challenges are greatly intensified by the reality of a State budget lacking the resources to fully fund human service agencies to serve local needs. In an environment of massive budget shortfalls yet to be overcome, the retrenchment of support to health and human services, to public education and higher education, appear insuperable. This is the backdrop Madera County finds itself in.

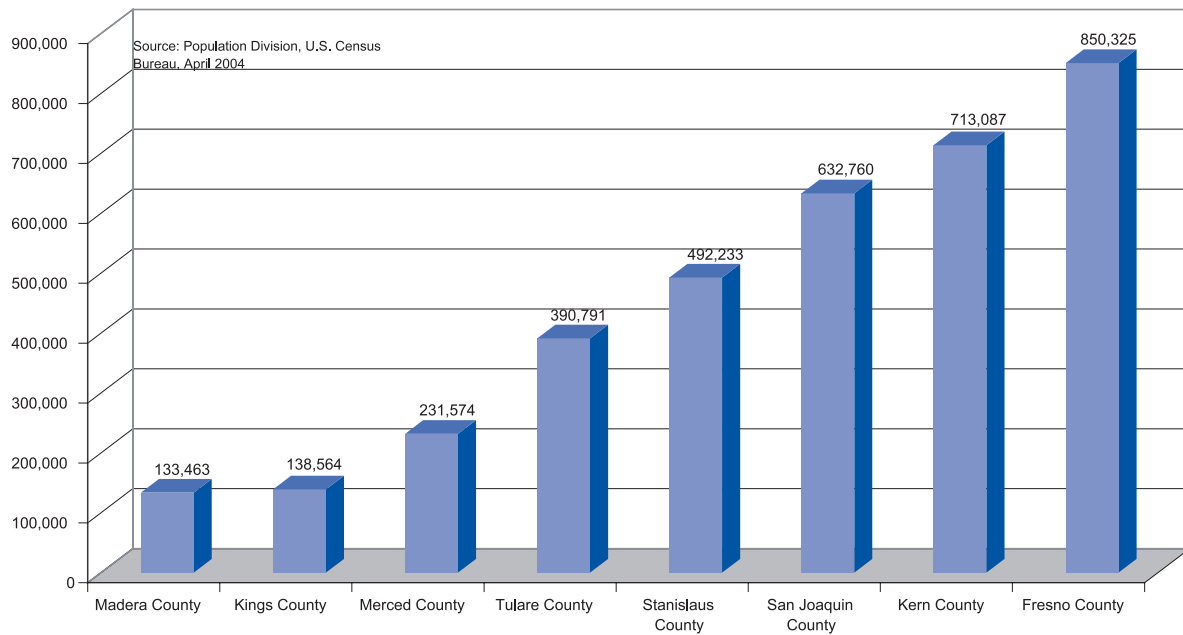
Madera County, however, is but one of a number of counties, particularly in the Central Valley that are similarly affected. In the Central Valley, counties are rural with a deep agricultural economic base and are constrained financially to provide sufficiently for all human needs. These counties, particularly the smaller counties of Madera, Kings, and Merced, have a relatively small tax base (land rich, but tax poor), high seasonal unemployment and under-employment, with a rapidly growing population base of children and families.

About The Challenge

“What is necessary is for the Report Card to serve as the basis for dialogue and discussion—at a public policy-leadership level that brings to focus common issues and the laying out of strategies to meet head-on the growing challenges. We must work together in establishing the local agenda and then in taking much more control of the local scene, both short and long term, to improve our quality of life.”

*— Hubert (Hub) Walsh, Director,
Madera County Department of Social Services*

Figure 1. Population Estimates, Central Valley Counties, July 1, 2003



Population Estimates (Figure 1)

The 2000 U.S. Census reported a Madera County population of 123,109 residents. The latest estimates reveal a steady climb to 133,463 residents as of July 2003 (the California Department of Finance estimates 135,262 as of January 2004). Similar to the experience of other counties in the Central Valley, the Madera County population reveals higher growth rates than for California as a whole due to increasing numbers of births and immigration.

The growth is steady even though the region is mostly rural with fewer employment opportunities. Agriculture is attracting a sustained flow of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, as well as a small, yet steady flow of Asian and Eastern Asian groups to the area. In addition, the high cost of housing in large population centers of California (Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay area) is driving people to seek more affordable housing in the Central Valley.

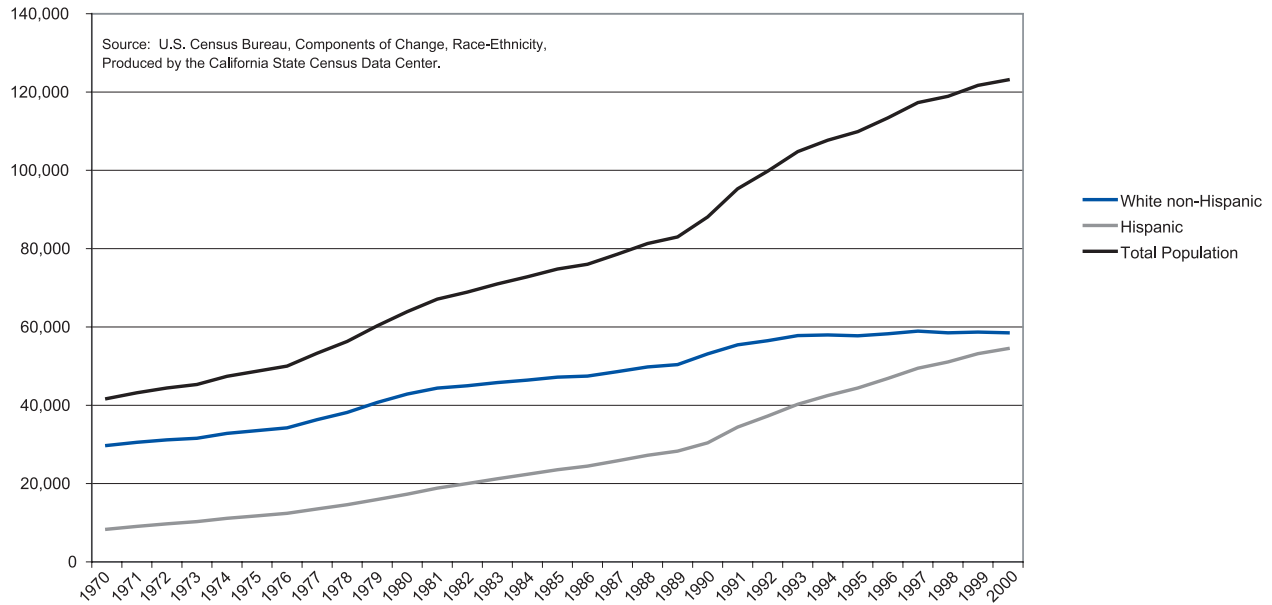
Madera County Profile (Figure 2, 3)

The population of the county is becoming increasingly diverse.¹ In recent years, Hispanics and minority racial groups—African Americans, Asians, and American Indians—have each grown faster than the population as a whole. In 1990 these groups together represented 40 percent of the population.

¹ The concepts of race and ethnicity lack precise and universally accepted definitions. Whenever possible, however, data for the following five categories are presented:

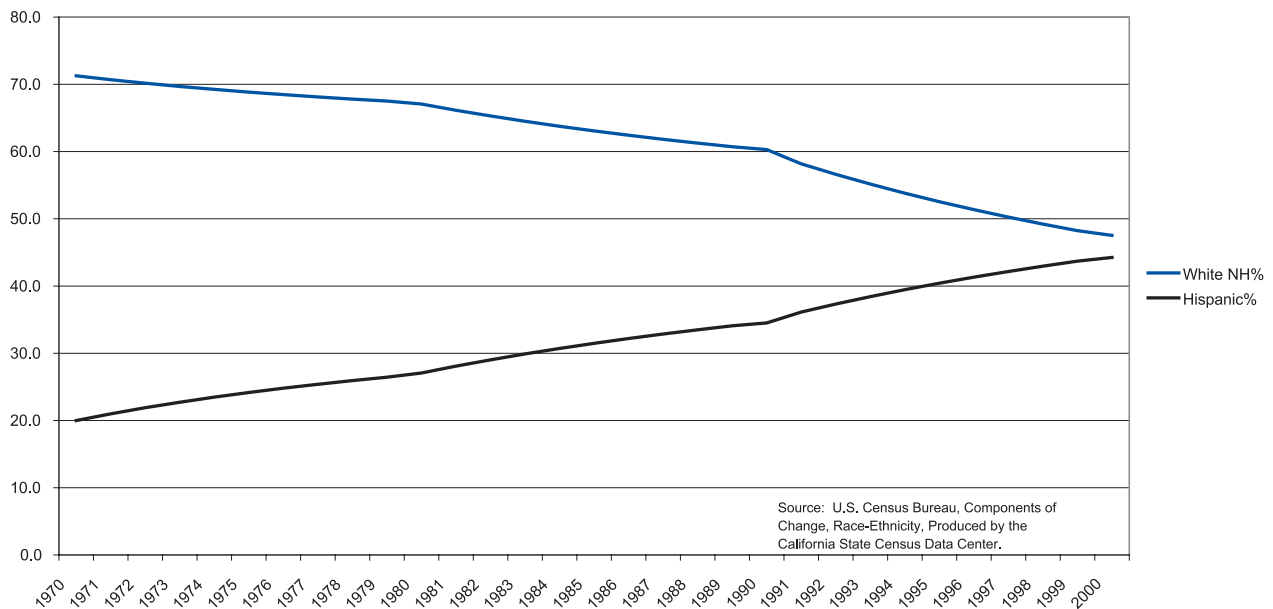
- Hispanic/Latino, may be of any race,
- White, not of Hispanic origin,
- African American or black, not of Hispanic origin,
- Asian, including Pacific Islander,
- American Indian or Native American, including Alaska Native (Alaskan Eskimo and Aleut).

Figure 2. Growth Trends: Total Population, White non-Hispanic and Hispanic/Latino Persons in Madera County, July 1970 to 2000 Census



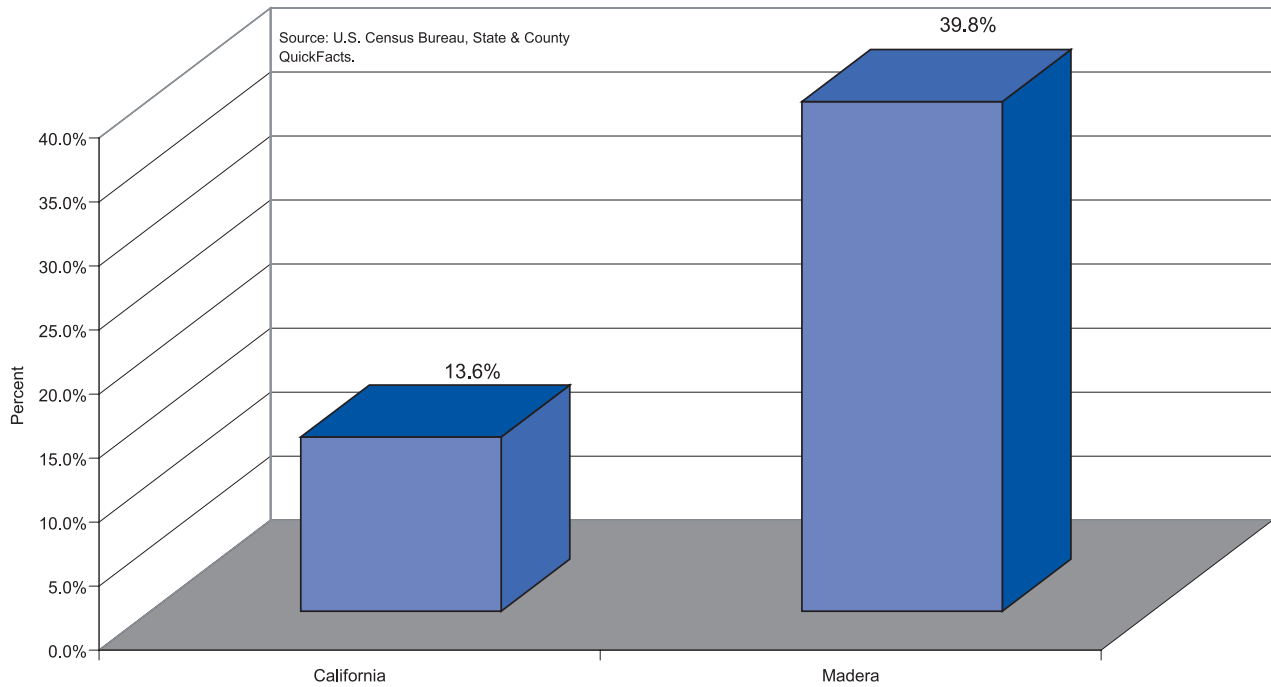
By 2000, minority groups as a share of the population had increased to 53.4 percent and thereby becoming more than half of the population. Moreover, projections indicate the racial and ethnic population will continue to grow substantially.

Figure 3. White non-Hispanic and Hispanic Growth Trends as Percent of Total Population, Madera County, 1970-2000



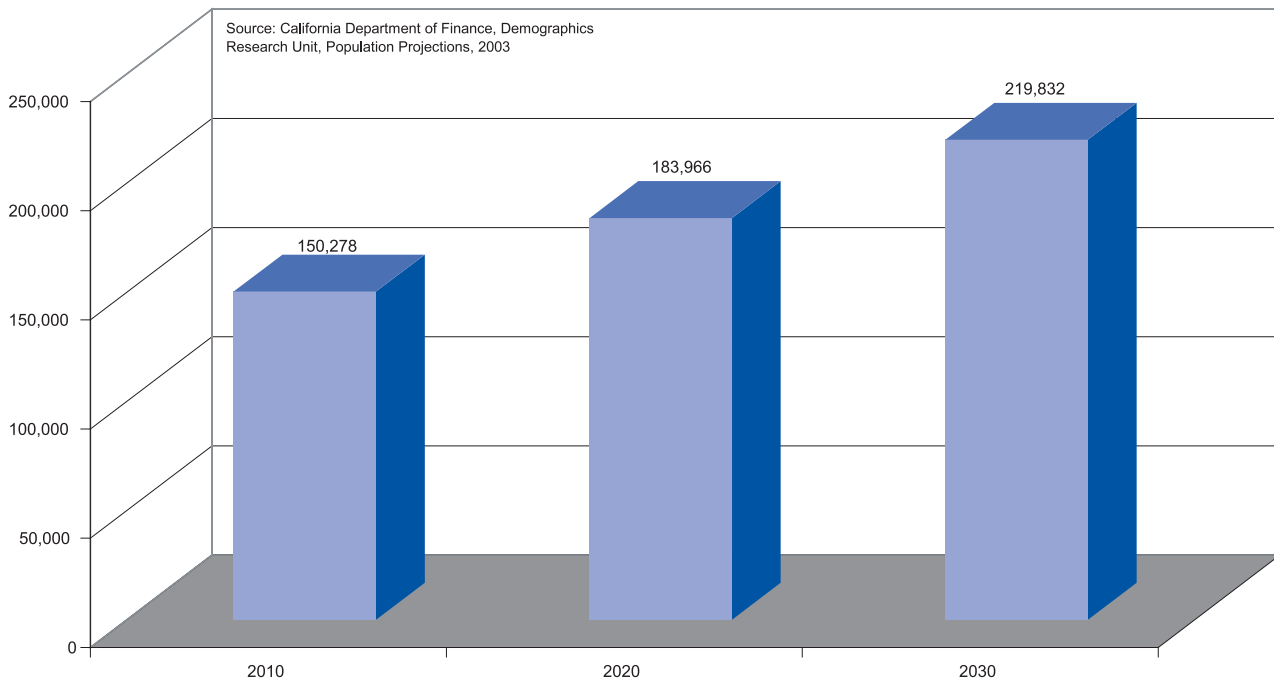
Population growth has slowed dramatically for White non-Hispanic groups, largely due to declining fertility rates among them. As a result, the White non-Hispanic share of the population has fallen steadily since 1970, while the Hispanic/Latino share of the population has increased significantly.

Figure 4. Population Percent Change, California and Madera County, 1990-2000



Comparing the change in population from the 1990 to the 2000 Census, Madera County grew by 39.8 percent (Figure 4). By comparison the population change statewide was 13.6 percent. Madera’s transformation was thus dramatic during that period, and will continue to be so in the coming years.

Figure 5. Population Projections, Madera County, 2010 to 2030



Population Projections (Figure 5)

Madera County appears to be keeping pace with population projections that indicate a county of 150,278 persons by the year 2010. The county is projected to reach 183,966 by 2020, and 219,832 persons by 2030 (CA, DOF Pop. Projections).

In the short-run, the county will add 27,160 more persons to the population base by the year 2010, which is like adding two cities the size of Chowchilla to the county in ten years' time. In the longer run, the county will see an additional growth of 33,688 people between 2010 and 2020. These increases will be attributable primarily to increases in the Hispanic/Latino populations.

Between 2010 and 2020, Hispanic/Latinos will outpace the growth of White non-Hispanics by a margin of 6.7 to 1. In fact, more than 74 percent (74.4%) of the population growth will be Hispanic/Latino during that period. This is not new or startling information. It is simply a socio-demographic fact reflecting the broader natural population increases in California, including immigration. Madera County only mirrors the statewide trend. During this same period, the California population will reach 43,851,741, by 2020. Hispanic/Latinos will comprise 43 percent of the total State population, compared to 33.7 percent for White non-Hispanics by 2020.