

Arkansas In Abstract

In the following pages we organize, present and interpret information germane to the strands of history and Arkansas studies curricula prescribed for the secondary schools of this state. This information provides a selective “snapshot” of Arkansas as revealed in the decennial Census and other statistical overviews. Except where noted, information in these compilations derives from the *Arkansas Statistical Abstract 2002* (published by UALR), which is in turn based on Census Bureau publications. Figures given are, except for historical statistics supplied for context, the most recent available.

1. Demographics

Arkansas Population Figures: a slow climb

From the earliest period of European colonization and development, the population of Arkansas has stubbornly resisted living up to promoters' predictions. In 1810 the human population of today's Arkansas was estimated to be 1062, not counting native populations. By 1850, the figure had grown to 209,867 including African-Americans both free and enslaved. During the twentieth century, the state's population grew from 1,311,564 in 1900 to 1,909,511 in 1950 and ultimately 2,673,400 in 2000; the impressive overall growth masks Arkansas' decline in population during the late 1940s and 1950s, the product of wartime and post-war outmigration in search of work.

Where are we?

During the twentieth century, Arkansas' population, like that of the rest of the nation, became increasingly urban. This reflected both the "push" of rural poverty and frustrations with shifting agricultural markets as well as the "pull" of manufacturing, commercial and service jobs in the cities and large towns. Arkansas' shift from rural to urban majority did not occur until after 1970, some five decades after the nation's population had turned this corner. At the beginning of the twentieth century, only 8.5 percent of Arkansans (as opposed to over 39 percent of all Americans) lived in urban or semi-urban areas. By 1950, when 64 percent of Americans lived in "town," urban Arkansans made up just 32.3 percent of the population. In 2000, 79 percent of Americans (but only 53.5 percent of Arkansans) live in urban zones.

Who we are: Population by Gender , Ethnicity and marital status

In 2000, Arkansas' population reached 2,673,400. Of these, 1,304,693 were male and 1,368,707 were female, reflecting a national trend of a growing distaff majority. Slightly less than half of the population was under the age of 35.

Arkansas' ethnic profile in the 2000 Census reflects a heavy European majority existing alongside significant minority populations. Also significant is the disparity in median age between "European" and other ethnic groups.

Ethnic group	Population		Median Age		% of pop.
White ("European")	2,138,598		38		80
Black	418,950	28		<16	
Native American	17,808	31		<1	
Asian	20,220	30		<1	
Hawai'ian	1,668		23		<1
Latino/a (any race)	86,866	24		>3	
"Some other"	40,412	23		1.5	
Two or more	35,744	25		1.3	

County with largest reported population of

African-Americans	Pulaski	115,197
Latino/as	Benton	13,469
Asians	Pulaski	4,510
Native Americans	Benton	2,531

Marital choices: changes with time

Arkansans have, in common with the rest of the nation, exhibited significant shifts in marital preferences during the last half of the 20th century. Particularly interesting is the change in ratio of married to divorced Arkansans reflecting both shifting social mores and liberalization of divorce laws. The following figures categorize Arkansans of marriage age, over 14 to 1970, 15 or older beginning in 1980.

year	single	married	widowed	divorced	total
1950	270,185	919,580	112,745	25,470	1,327,930
1990*	379,361	1,129,995	164,342	161,212	1,834,910

* Latest year available

How We Believe: Religions in Arkansas

The extent of religious practice in Arkansas has traditionally been assumed to be high and predominantly Christian in its orientation, yet surveying its true extent is made difficult by several factors. Chief among these is the discontinuation in 1936 of the U.S. Government's Census of Religious Bodies. Various scholarly surveys and compilations of denomination-supplied statistics make possible, however, an approximation of Arkansans' religious habits. These include: Glenmary Research Center. *Churches & Church Membership in U.S.*,(1990), and Kosmin, B. & S. Lachman. *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society*; Harmony Books: New York (1993).

In the Glenmary 1990 survey, 89.8 percent of surveyed Arkansans identified themselves as "Christian," members of 21 denominational groups. Another study from the same year revealed that 1,423,000 people or 60.5% of the population were "adherents" or members of Christian church congregations, including Roman Catholic, Latter-Day Saint and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Of the Christian denominations, the largest membership is in the various Baptist churches: 1990 figures indicated almost 849,000 Baptists, including Free-Will, Missionary and Primitive congregations. Other faiths with large memberships include Methodism (202,808, including A.M.E. and other Methodist branches, 1990), Church of Christ (86,502 in 1990), Roman Catholic (85, 992 in 1996) Assemblies of God (55,438 in 1990), Presbyterian (28,947 in 1990) and Episcopal (13,845 in 1990).

Since 1990, Arkansas has seen the growth of so-called "megachurches," often non-denominational but based in evangelical or Pentecostal traditions, as well as the steady growth of Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, or Mormon, congregations: in 1990, LDS membership was estimated at 10,446 but in 1997, the church claimed 19,000 adherents. Another Christian confession with a growing Arkansas presence is the Eastern Orthodox Church which in 1990 had only one unit established here but which has since expanded. Despite the absence of reservations or organized tribal governments, the Native American Church was estimated to have almost 13,000 Arkansas members in 1990.

Significant numbers of non-Christians make Arkansas their home. Several Islamic centers are scattered throughout the state, serving members of the Nation of Islam ("Black Muslims") as well as orthodox Muslims. In 1990 the Jewish population of Arkansas was reckoned at 2,389, while Arkansas' "neo-pagans" numbered 400. Other non-Christian faiths found in Arkansas include Hinduism, Baha'i and Buddhism. Perhaps significantly, in 1990 only 0.20% of Arkansans described themselves as agnostic, and 5.8% as non-religious.

The Health of the State: living and dying in Arkansas

Birth rates in Arkansas have, like those across the rest of the United States, generally declined since the mid-20th century, reflecting a trend toward smaller families, begun later in the parents' life.

Year	# of births	# per 1,000 population
1950	45,699	23.4
1970	35,457	18.4
1990	36,440	15.5
1999	36,670	14.4

County with most births, 1999: Pulaski (5,513; rate per 1,000: 15.25)

County with fewest births, 1999: Calhoun (54; rate per 1,000: 9.4)

Births to Mothers less than 20 years old, 1980-1999

Year	# of births	% of total births in state
1980	8036	21.5
1990	7174	19.68
1999	6526	17.06

Mortality

year	# of deaths	rate (# per 100,000 pop.)	rate, non-whites
1950	15,301	881.3	1,006.1
1970	20,668	1,074.6	1,211.6
1990	24,588	1,046	1,035.4
1999	27,934	1,094.9	937.8

The Arkansas Way(s) of Death

Heart attacks, cancers and strokes lead the pack of Arkansans’ mortal enemies. A relatively high rating for accidents and adverse effects may reflect Arkansan enjoyment of high-risk behaviors; anecdotal evidence points to lax workplace and recreational safety as contributing factors to the high “accidents” toll. On the other hand, Arkansans commit suicide at a markedly lower rate than does the nation at large.

Leading Causes of Death in Arkansas, 1998, ranked, with national rankings for comparison.

Cause of Death	AR total	rank	rank, national
Heart disease	8,431	1	1
Malignancies (cancers)	5,950	2	2
Cerebrovascular (stroke)	2,344	3	3
Accidents/adverse effects	1,296	4	6
Chronic Pulmonary	1,236	5	4
Pneumonia/Influenza	1,096	6	5
Diabetes mellitus	644	7	7
Kidney diseases	393	8	9
Septicæmia	358	9	11
Suicide	344	10	8
Homicide/”Legal” Interv	232	11	13
Alzheimer’s Disease	231	12	12
Liver disease/cirrhosis	203	13	10
Atherosclerosis	150	14	14
Perinatal conditions	127	15	– (not in top 15)
Hypertension	125	– (not top 15)	15
All other causes	4,292		

Arkansans in Uniform

Arkansans have seen honorable service in all of the wars of the United States to occur since the organization of the state in 1836. Figures for Arkansans in service are disputable, but mortality figures are considered fairly reliable:

War	Arkansas mortality
American Civil War	3782 (Confederate) <2000 (Union)
Spanish-American War	50 (approx.; deaths occurred during training)
World War I	292 (combat); 472 (other causes)
World War II	4611

Korean Conflict	461
Vietnam Conflict	588

Veterans in Arkansas Today

The Department of Veterans' Affairs's Arkansas constituency exceeds 283,000 veterans. In 2001, 74,224 people received health care in the state's VA facilities. 46,286 Arkansas veterans and survivors collected disability compensation or pension payments. Over 4,000 veterans or their families went to school thanks to provisions of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. Over 36,000 live in houses bought with loans guaranteed by the same act. 904 were interred in Arkansas' three national cemeteries.

The DVA operates major medical centers in Little Rock and Fayetteville. In 2001, these provided 13,387 inpatient stays and almost 650,210 outpatient visits. The DVA's Little Rock Regional Office serves veterans and their survivors in the state who seek VA financial benefits. In fiscal year 2001, the Little Rock office processed 5,485 disability compensation claims. During fiscal year 2001, the Little Rock facility acted on 4,472 cases where veterans reopened claims.

Arkansas national cemeteries in Fort Smith, Fayetteville and Little Rock. In 2001, these saw 904 burials. A state veterans cemetery constructed in North Little Rock in 2001 with a VA grant conducted 71 interments. In addition, the VA has provided 4,497 headstones and markers for the graves of veterans in Arkansas and 2,532 Presidential Memorial Certificates to survivors of Arkansas veterans.

2. Economy

Arkansas' economy during the 19th century was based on agriculture, extraction and severance. During the early decades of the 20th century, progressive governors, legislators and businessmen worked to diversify the Arkansas economy, making it less vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations and crop failures. Today's economic profile reflects progress toward that goal.

What we do: occupations, by sectors

	1990	2000
Total civilian labor force (thousands)	1,126.1	1,238.1
total employed	1,047.8	1,183.2
unemployment rate	7%	4.4%
Non-farm payroll jobs, total (thousands)	923.5	1,161.6
Mining	4.3	3.4
construction	37.6	53.5
Manufacturing	232.8	251.4
Transportation & Utilities	56.0	70.3
Trade	205.6	267.0
Finance and Insurance	38.3	46.2
Service sector	189.6	278.6
Government	159.3	191.3

1999 figures reveal average annual employment in the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector of 16,163.

Selected 1999 average weekly wages, with national figures provided for comparison purposes:

Industry	Average week's wage, Arkansas, dollars	National
all	488	641
all private	482	639
agriculture	396	373

mining	671	1,051
construction	508	669
manufactures	544	806
trade, retail	327	338
finance	624	978
services	448	606
federal gov	772	851
state gov	560	667

Manufacturing

Number of Establishments	3294 (1999)
Five largest categories by numbers of establishments (1999):	
Fabricated metal products	497
Wood Products	404
Food Manufacturing	295
Printing and related	269
Machinery manufacturing	255
Number of workers	229, 628 (1999)

Five largest categories by numbers employed (1999):

Food manufacturing	51,136
Fabricated metal products	22,732
Machinery manufacturing	17,579
Wood products	15,779
Elect. equip, appliances	15,614
Total value, shipments	\$45,185,963 (1997)

Agriculture

Number of Farms	145,076 (1954)
Number of farms	45,142 (1997)
Individual/family	39,009 (1997)
Corporation	5,916 “
other	217 “
Acreage in cultivation, field crops	8,331,000 (1999)
Leading field crops by acres harvested, 1999	
Soybeans	3,350,000
Rice	1,625,000
hay	1,240,000
cotton	960,000
wheat	920,000
Average value/farm (1997)	\$360,114
Market value of products sold (1997)	\$5.479 billions
crops	\$2.188 billions
Livestock, poultry	\$3.291 billions
per farm	\$ 121,388
Farm net income per farm, all sources	\$37,621

Mining and Extraction, including Oil and Gas (1997)

Total establishments	307
Oil and gas extraction	121
Other Mining	76
“Stone Mining” (quarrying)	27
Sand, gravel & clay	43
Mining support activities	110
Total number of employees	3,250
Value of shipments	\$793,742,000

Commercial /industrial (includes manufacturing and mining, excludes agriculture)

Number of establishments (1999)	62,737
Number of employees (1999)	954,948
Annual payroll (1999)	\$23,170,883
Businesses owned by minorities (1997)	13,023
Employees, minority-owned businesses (1997)	12,566
Payroll, minority-owned businesses (1997)	\$210,939

Five largest categories of commerce , by # of establishments (1999)

Retail trade	12,236
retail employees	131,257
Services (non-food and public admin.):	6,718

employees	39,922
Health Care & Social Assistance	5,884
employees	129,260
Construction	5,687
employees	45,538
Professional, Scientific and Technical Servs.:	4,700
employees	29,663

Transportation

Number of Motor Vehicle Registrations (1999)	
Private/commercial automobiles	895,327
Private/commercial trucks	469,537
Private/commercial buses	1,096
private/commercial motorcycles (1997)	15,953
Publicly owned vehicles	17,781
Number of Driver's Licenses (2001)	1,959,725
Total annual travel on Arkansas streets, roads, highways, estimated by DMV	
1920	169 million miles
1960	7.387 billion miles
1980	16.28 billion miles
1997	26.883 billion miles

Total gasoline usage in Arkansas, 1999: 1,462,091,000 gallons

Disbursements for highways (and highway patrol & safety) in Arkansas, all levels of government, 1997: \$1,003,129,000 (57,066,000 or 5.6% of total expenditures for safety measures and Highway patrol)

Arkansas motor vehicle traffic fatalities:

1985	452
1990	521
1995	631
1999	604

Energy: What we burn, make, pump and dig

Energy by source and measure, 1999:

Coal, short tons, thousands	15,293
Natural Gas, billion cu. ft.	261
total petroleum, barrels, thousands	72,190
electricity, nuclear, kwh, billions	12,920
power, hydroelectric, kwh, billions	2,694

Energy expenditures, by year, in millions of dollars

1985	1990	1995	1997
4,234.6	4,703	5,223.4	5,812.3

Average residential gas bills, per customer, in dollars

1985	1990	1995	1997
379	389	432	523

Arkansas Energy Production, 1999

source	quantity (measure)
gas, natural	177,160 million cubic feet
oil, crude	7,154 thousands of barrels
gasoline	767 thousands of barrels
distillate fuel oil	596 thousands of barrels
coal	22,000 short tons

Electric Power

total number of generating plants:	100
coal-fired	5

Petroleum-fired	23
Gas-fired	24
water-powered	46
Nuclear	2
Capability, megawatts	9,428 (winter); 9,278 (summer)

Average household monthly consumption of electricity, 1997, in kilowatt-hours

Arkansas	966
US	574

Communications: Reaching Arkansans

Arkansas is extensively covered by broadcast and print media. In 2000, 87 AM and 171 FM radio stations served Arkansans, plus some 53 television stations delivered via broadcast and cable servers. In that same year, Arkansas supported 30 daily papers (16 with Sunday editions), approximately 100 weekly papers and 47 magazines and other periodical publications.

Telephone access lines in Arkansas, 1999

Business	398,197
Residential	1,017,145

Financial Sector: Money Managers and More

Number of banks in Arkansas, 1999

State	149
National	50

Amount of Deposits in All Arkansas commercial banks

1990	\$17,636,702
2000	\$32,744,451

New, merged and failed Banks, U.S. and Arkansas, 2000

	US	Arkansas
New	223	3
Merged	527	14
Failed	7	0

Life Insurance In force, 1998: \$101,270,000,000

Running the Table: Governance

The state government features seven constitutional officers: Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Attorney-General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Commissioner of State Lands. The Lieutenant-Governor serves as President of the State Senate. Amendment 63 Of the State Constitution sets a term length of four years for constitutional officers. Amendment 73 stipulates that they may serve no more than two terms in a particular office but does not disqualify term-limited constitutional officers from seeking other constitutional offices following their tenure.

The state's bicameral General Assembly or Legislature is made up of one hundred Representatives and thirty-five Senators. The legislature meets in sessions lasting at least sixty days every odd-numbered year. The Governor is empowered to convene Extraordinary, or "special" sessions when circumstances require attention. Each senator is assumed to represent approximately 76,000 constituents; each representative stands for about 27,000. Representatives are elected for two-year terms and are limited to three terms. Senators may serve two four-year terms.

The governments of Arkansas' seventy-five counties are each presided over by nine elected officials: County Judge, Circuit Clerk, County Clerk, Sheriff, Collector, Treasurer, Assessor, Surveyor and Coroner. In many Arkansas counties, the Sheriff also serves as collector.

Law and Justice:

Cases filed per judge for all courts, FY 1999

Number of circuit judges:	110
Criminal cases	62,810
Civil cases	21,576
Chancery cases	55,626
Probate cases	14,728
Juvenile cases	25,268
Total cases	179,378
Per judge	1,631

Direct spending in Arkansas for state and local justice systems (1996)

Total justice system	\$551,333,000
Police/protection	\$253,869,000
Judicial/Legal	\$95,378,000
Corrections	\$202,086,000
Per capita, Arkansas	\$80.51
Per capita, U.S.	\$141.44

Employment, Local and State Justice systems in Arkansas, 1995

Arkansas Total	12,964
State	4,641
Counties	3,852
Municipalities	4,471

Prisoners in State and Federal facilities in Arkansas

1985	4,611
1990	6,649
1995	9,411
1999	10,926

Average Annual cost per prisoner, Arkansas, FY 1999-2000: \$14,377

Average annual cost per prisoner, U.S., FY 1999-2000: \$15,964

Prisoner Profiles, averaged:

	Age when imprisoned	Sentence (yrs)	Actual served?	%male	
Arkansas	32	8		2	93.4
U.S.	30.7	6.3		2.9	93.2

Violent and Property Offenses known to police, 1999

Total	103,062
Theft	63,496
Burglary	21,710
Assault	7,870
Vehicle Theft	6,623
Robbery	2,014
Rape	708
Arson	498
Murder	143

The Natural State: Tourism, Parks

The scenic beauty of Arkansas prompted Governor Bill Clinton to proclaim Arkansas “The Natural State” in 1988; the 77th General Assembly adopted this cognomen as the official state nickname in 1989. Three national forests, seven National Park Service sites, forty-five state parks, thirteen major lakes, the Ozark and Ouachita Mountain ranges, over 9,700 miles of streams and rivers, plus abundant wildlife, museums, historical sites and other attractions make Arkansas a top destination for both in-state and visiting tourists.

In the year 2000 travel and tourism accounted for 49,381 jobs in the Natural State and expenditures of over 3.8 billion dollars. In that same year Arkansas saw 20,336,000 “person-trips,” reflecting both instate and out-of-state travelers making a trip of 100 miles or more, with an average expenditure per each of \$188.98. Arkansas’s travel-generated payroll in 2000 was \$661,026,000.

Geography

Arkansas, with a surface area of approximately 53,182 square miles, ranks 29th among the states of the Union in size. Within or along its borders are found 9,740 miles of streams and 453,868 acres of lakes, with a total surface area exceeding 1,100 square miles.

Arkansas is roughly evenly divided between lowlands and highlands, with elevations ranging between approximately 50 feet above sea level in the southeast to Mount Magazine's height of 2,823 feet. The state is located between 33° and 36° 30' North latitude, and 89° 41' and 94° 42' West longitude. Average annual temperatures for Little Rock, the state capital, measured over 1961-1990, reveal maximum temperatures as high as 112° in July and -5° in February, with an annual average precipitation of 50.86 inches. Growing seasons range from 180 days in the high northwestern Ozark plateau to as long as 240 days in the eastern Delta country.

Institutions: Education, Health Care

Public Education:

Number of school districts, 1997	311
Public school enrollments, k-12, 1998-9	421,933
Number of public school teachers, k-12, 1998-9	30,745
expenditures per public school pupil, 1998-9	\$4,679
expenditures per public school pupil, 1980-81	\$1,701
Public school graduates, 1998-99	26,866

Health Care

Number of Hospitals, 1999	83
Number of admissions	375,297
Average length of stay in hospital	5.9 days
Personnel, Full-time equivalents (includes doctors, dentists, nurses and other salaried personnel) in Arkansas hospitals	43,979
Number of nursing homes, 1997	238
Number of physicians' clinics, 1997	1,650
Number of physicians, 1998	5,306
county with most physicians, 1998	Pulaski (2,204)
county with least physicians, 1998	Calhoun and Cleveland (1 each)
Percent of pop. without health coverage, 1999	14.7

3. Native peoples of Arkansas and the origin of the state's name.

Like many place names in the state, the word "Arkansas" has its roots in a Native American term, transliterated into French, then transformed again by English-speaking settlers and developers of the 19th century.

When French explorers first visited this region in the late 17th century, they encountered a native nation living in the Mississippi delta country whose members called themselves "Ugakhpa," meaning "the downstream people." The French variously rendered this name as "Kappa," "Cappa" or "Quapaw," this last becoming today's accepted transliteration of the original Dhegilan Siouan name.

Another term applied to the Quapaw came from Algonkian-speaking natives who accompanied early French expeditions into the Mississippi country. These guides called the Quapaw "Akansa," or "people of the wind." French, then Spanish and finally English-speaking travelers and settlers rendered this name as "Acansae," "Arcansa," and otherwise. An 18th-century French map first styles the Arkansas River as such; the same map refers to the Quapaw as "les Akansas."

After the province of Louisiana was bought by the United States in 1803, the name and, apparently, its pronunciation remained fluid for some decades. In 1811, American soldier and explorer Zebulon Pike dubbed the area and river “Arkansaw,” likely reflecting common pronunciation. Others, after Pike, insisted on pronouncing the name stressing the middle syllable and the final consonant, as “Ar-KANSAS.” In 1881, over four decades after statehood, the General Assembly ultimately resolved that the state’s name should be spelled “Arkansas” but pronounced as “Arkansaw.”

4. Selective bibliography: A dozen widely available books that speak volumes about the state:

- a. American Guide (WPA guide) Series: *Arkansas*
- b. Whyne, DeBlack and others: *Arkansas: A Narrative History*
- c. Fletcher: *Arkansas*
- d. Foti and Hanson: *Arkansas and the Land*
- e. Sabo: *Paths of our Children*
- f. Dougan: *Arkansas Odyssey*
- g. Donovan, Gatewood and Whyne (eds.): *The Governors of Arkansas*
- h. Roy: *How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City*
- i. Harington: *The Architecture of the Arkansas Ozarks*
- j. McNeil: *Arkansas Folklore Sourcebook*
- k. Christ: *The Civil War in Arkansas*
- l. Goss: *The Arkansas State Constitution, A reference guide*

5. For still more information: A handful of useful web sites.

Arkansas Secretary of State: www.sosweb.state.ar.us
AccessArkansas: www.accessarkansas.org
Arkansas. Roadside Traveler: www.aristotle.net/~russjohn
Ark. History Commission: www.ark-ives.com
Ark. Archeological Survey: <http://www.uark.edu/campus-resources/archinfo/>

