College Graduates

In 1870 a little more than 9,000 Americans graduated from college. The number of graduates remained under 100,000 each year until the late 1920s, and under a million until 1990. As of 1990, about 22 percent of whites, 12 percent of blacks, and 10 percent of Hispanics were college graduates. As recently as 1950 male graduates outnumbered female graduates three to one; but the proportion of females increased, and by 1982, women outnumbered men on college campuses. Since then the proportion of women has increased. College graduates tend to concentrate in areas with better-paying jobs, such as the West and Northeast coasts. Areas with the highest concentration of college graduates are Los Alamos County, New Mexico, home of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (53 percent of those 25 and over), and the suburban Washington, D.C., counties of Arlington, Virginia (52 percent) and Montgomery, Maryland (50 percent).

Percent of People 25 and Over With Bachelor Degrees by County, 1990

Fig. 1-14