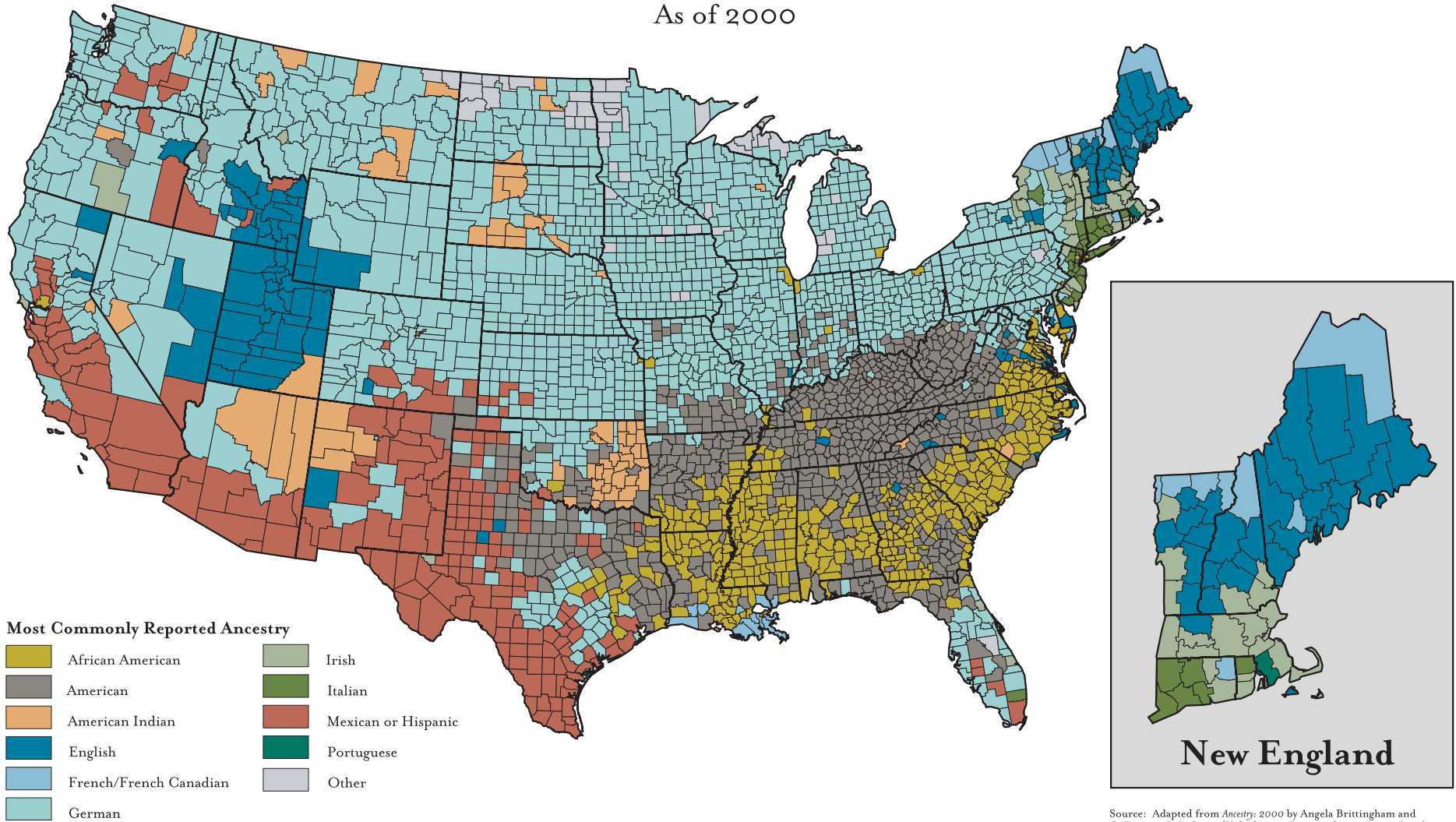


Largest Ancestry Group for Residents of Each County

As of 2000



Source: Adapted from *Ancestry: 2000* by Angela Brittingham and G. Patricia de la Cruz. (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Brief No. 35, June 2004.)

Note: Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf

Largest Ancestry Group for Residents of Each County

Midwest/North

German is the most commonly reported ancestry in the United States. About 15% of Americans consider themselves to be of German descent, and it is the largest ancestry group in nearly half of United States counties. German immigrants who streamed to America in the 19th century settled largely in the Midwest and northern sections of the West. Counties in these areas still reflect that past immigration flow.

West/Southwest

Mexican and Hispanic ancestries lead in most counties of the Southwest. Mexico has been a source of immigrants throughout the 20th century, and is the sixth most common country of origin, accounting for 7% of the population. In 1920 (the first census after Arizona and New Mexico were granted statehood), Mexican immigrants accounted for 18% of Arizona's population, 6% of New Mexico's, 5% of Texas', and 3% of California's. Just as Europeans have tended to stay where they immigrated, so too have Mexicans and Hispanics. Of all the various ancestry groups, Mexicans and Hispanics are the only one that continues to have an active, substantial immigration stream today.

South

In over half of the counties of the South, the most common response to the U.S. Census question on ancestry or ethnic origin is simply "American" or "United States." African American is the most common ancestry in most other southern counties. The region had very low levels of immigration for nearly 200 years. The forced migration of Africans to America, mainly to southern states, had almost ended by 1810. Historic white immigration also ended quite early. According to the 1870 census, less than 2% of the southern population was foreign-born; in contrast, immigrants constituted 20% of the population of the other 23 states. Currently, the South still has a lower-than-average concentration of immigrants, despite having within its borders Florida and Texas, two of the four leading destination states for the foreign-born.

New England

New England is the only other area of the United States (besides the Midwest) where European ancestries lead in all counties – but none of these top ancestries is German. Instead, New England counties' largest ancestries are English, Irish, French / French Canadian, Portuguese, and Italian. New England and parts of the Mid-Atlantic have the only counties led by these ancestries. These geographic ancestry patterns began taking shape over 100 years ago. By 1870, New England was home to 11% of English immigrants to the United States, 20% of Irish, 33% of Canadian, and nearly all Portuguese immigrants – but less than 2% of German immigrants lived in New England.

Most Commonly Reported Ancestries

African American

9% of U.S. Population

Most common ancestry in the South; also leads in many large northern cities.

American

7% of U.S. Population

No strong tie to foreign heritage; the dramatic growth of this ancestry often referred to as “The Unhyphenating of America.”

American Indian

3% of U.S. Population

Large share of population living in Mountain states and the Dakotas.

English

9% of U.S. Population

Spread evenly throughout the country; highest concentrations in Northeast and Utah.

French

3% of U.S. Population

Largely French-Canadians and Acadians.

German

15% of U.S. Population

Largest ancestry in the nation, leading in nearly half of U.S. counties.

Irish

11% of U.S. Population

Second largest ancestry, but leads in only a few counties, mostly in the Northeast.

Italian

6% of U.S. Population

Highly concentrated in states along northeast corridor.

Mexican

7% of U.S. Population

The only major ancestry with a currently active immigration stream.

Portuguese

<1% of U.S. Population

Almost wholly concentrated in southern New England.

Other Ancestry

15% of U.S. Population

In total, 83 other ancestries were reported by more than 100,000 people.

No Answer

20% of U.S. Population

The most common response to the Census ancestry question was to leave it blank. This share doubled between 1990 and 2000.