At home you will need the Gale database username and password from the library’s Gold Sheet.
Type a single keyword/phrase for a Basic Search
Or select Advanced Search
Change limiters to Keyword
Enter Keywords and/or Key Phrases
Click Search
Articles are sorted by Content
You may click on a specific content category, or use the menu to the right.
You may further limit your search by Subject or Document Type.
Notice the color coding for reading /content level

- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Basic
Click on the title to access the article
Notice search terms are in red
Read through the article to find a connection to your research before printing!
Student Resources in Context
Printing Tutorial
Poverty

Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History. 2nd ed. 2015.

Poverty can be defined either in terms of a definite income level or as a relative condition that changes as society redefines it. Most economists agree that a safe definition of poverty is the inability, through lack of income or wealth, to provide decent housing, clothing, health care, nutrition, or education for oneself and one’s family. The government defined the “poverty line”—the arbitrary dividing line between the poor and the nonpoor—has been $16,700 for a family of four in the contiguous United States. In 2013, the number of U.S. citizens living below the poverty line was 43.6 million, including 14 million children. Sixty-five percent of the poor were nonwhite and 41.6% were women (including unwed mothers), and in 1990 one quarter of all adults aged 25 or older had not graduated from high school.

According to economic historians, the populations of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were poor in the years before the American Revolution (1775–83). Between 1790 and 1860 the percentage of U.S. citizens living in poverty probably remained about the same; by 1860 there were approximately 2.7 million poor males in the United States. Since 1870 the percentage of U.S. citizens living in poverty has been cut in half, primarily because of the rapid economic growth between 1880 and 1910 and in the years following World War II (1939–45). The first efforts by the federal government to cope with poverty began in the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933–45) established the Social Security...
Poverty

Poverty can be defined either in terms of a definite income level or as a relative condition that changes as society defines it. Most economists agree that a safe definition of poverty is the inability, through lack of income or wealth, to provide decent housing, clothing, health care, nutrition, or education for oneself or one's family. In 1990 the federal government defined the "poverty line"—the arbitrary dividing line between the poor and the non-poor—as $15,500 for a family of four in the contiguous United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of U.S. citizens living below the poverty line in 1992 was about 38 million, including 14 million children. Sixty-five percent of this number were women (many unmarried mothers), and in 1990 one quarter of all adult African American males lived below the poverty line.

By economic historians, roughly seven to ten percent of the populations of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other economic centers were below the poverty line during the American Revolution (1775-83). Between 1790 and 1860, the national poverty rate remained approximately the same. By 1860, however, poverty probably remained about the same, although the number of poor persons in the United States. Since 1870 the percentage of the population living below the poverty line has steadily declined, primarily because of the rapid economic growth during the period between World War II (1938-45). The first efforts by the federal government to combat poverty began in the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-45) established the Social Security Administration in 1935 to provide minimum retirement benefits to U.S. citizens, and the government began to make federal funds available to the states for programs such as Aid to Dependent Children. By 1960 the U.S. government estimated that 40 million U.S. citizens lived below the poverty line. In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson (in office 1963-65) declared an "unconditional war" on poverty that led to the creation of programs such as Head Start and the Neighborhood Youth Corps. Because of these efforts and the billions of dollars donated by private citizens and foundations, by 1973 the percentage of the population living in poverty reached its lowest level in U.S. history—11.1 percent, or 20 million U.S. citizens. The Census Bureau estimated that in 1987 about 13.3 percent of the total U.S. population still lived in poverty.

See also: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Great Society; Income; Social Security Act (1935); Welfare Policy

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2015 Gale, Cengage Learning
Student Resources in Context
Saving to Google Drive Tutorial

Google Drive
Enter your @pvbears.org email address
Enter your PV Network Password
The article has now been saved to your drive. Click **Ok**. Then open your **Google Drive** to access the saved PDF.