city (1990 pop. 7,322,564), land area 304.8 sq mi (789.4 sq km), SE N.Y., largest city in the United States and one of the largest in the world, on New York Bay at the mouth of the Hudson River. It comprises five boroughs, each coextensive with a county: Manhattan (New York co.), the heart of the city, an island; the Bronx (Bronx co.), on the mainland, NE of Manhattan and separated from it by the Harlem River; Queens (Queens co.), on Long Island, E of Manhattan across the East River; Brooklyn (Kings co.), also on Long Island, on the East River adjoining Queens and on New York Bay; and Staten Island (Richmond co.), on Staten Island, SW of Manhattan and separated from it by the Upper Bay. The metropolitan area (1990 est. pop. 18,087,000) encompasses parts of SE New York state, NE New Jersey, and SW Connecticut. The port of New York (which is now centered on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River) remains one of the world's leading ports, with significant container, cruise, and other terminals.

Economy

New York is a vibrant center for commerce and business and one of the three “world cities” (along with London and Tokyo) that control world finance. Manufacturing—primarily of small but highly diverse types—accounts for a large but declining amount of employment. Clothing and other apparel, such as furs; chemicals; metal products; and processed foods are some of the principal manufactures. The city is also a major center of television broadcasting, book publishing, advertising, and other facets of mass communication. It became a major movie-making site in the 1990s, and it is a preeminent art center, with artists revitalizing many of its neighborhoods. The most celebrated newspapers are the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. New York attracts many conventions—including the national Democratic (1868, 1924, 1976, 1980, 1992) and Republican (2004) party conventions—and was the site of two World's Fairs (1939–40; 1964–65). It is served by three major airports: John F. Kennedy International Airport and LaGuardia Airport, both in Queens, and Newark International Airport, in New Jersey. Railroads converge upon New York from all points.

With its vast cultural and educational resources, famous shops and restaurants, places of entertainment (including the theater district and many off-Broadway theaters), striking and diversified architecture (including the Woolworth Building, Chrysler Building, Empire State Building, Seagram Building, 8 Spruce St., and One World Trade Center), and parks and botanical gardens, New York draws millions of tourists every year. Some of its streets and neighborhoods have become symbols throughout the nation. Wall Street means finance; Broadway, the theater; Fifth Avenue, fine shopping; Madison Avenue, advertising; and SoHo, art.

Ethnic Diversity

New York City is also famous for its ethnic diversity, manifesting itself in scores of communities representing virtually every nation on earth, each preserving its identity. Little Italy and Chinatown date back to the mid-19th cent. African Americans from the South began to migrate to Harlem after 1910, and in the 1940s large numbers of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic-Americans began to settle in what
is now known as Spanish Harlem. Since the 1980s New York City has undergone substantial population growth, primarily due to new immigration from Latin America (especially the Dominican Republic), Asia, Jamaica, Haiti, the Soviet Union and Russia, and Africa.

Points of Interest and Educational and Cultural Facilities

The city's many bridges include the George Washington Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, Henry Hudson Bridge, Robert F. Kennedy (formerly Triborough) Bridge, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, the Throgs Neck Bridge, and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. The Holland Tunnel (the first vehicular tunnel under the Hudson) and the Lincoln Tunnel link Manhattan with New Jersey. The Queens-Midtown Tunnel and the Hugh L. Carey (formerly Brooklyn-Battery) Tunnel, both under the East River, connect Manhattan with W Long Island. Islands in the East River include Roosevelt Island (site of Cornell Tech and apartments), Rikers Island (site of a city penitentiary), and Randalls Island (with Downing Stadium). In New York Bay are Liberty Island (with the Statue of Liberty); Governors Island; and Ellis Island. New York City is the seat of the United Nations. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is a complex of buildings housing the Metropolitan Opera Company, the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet, and the Juilliard School. Other performances venues include Carnegie Hall and New York City Center.

Among the best known of the city’s many museums and scientific collections are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (designed by Frank Lloyd Wright), the Frick Collection (housed in the Frick mansion), the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Neue Galerie, the Museum of the City of New York, the Museum of Jewish Heritage—a Living Memorial to the Holocaust, the American Museum of Natural History (with the Hayden Planetarium), the museum and library of the New-York Historical Society, the Brooklyn Museum (see Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences), and the Paley Center for Media. The New York Public Library is the largest in the United States. Major educational institutions include the City Univ. of New York (see New York, City Univ. of), Columbia Univ., Cooper Union, Fordham Univ., General Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary, New School Univ., New York Univ., and Union Theological Seminary. A center for medical treatment and research, New York has more than 130 hospitals and several medical schools. Noted hospitals include Bellevue Hospital, Mt. Sinai Hospital (part of Mt. Sinai NYU Health), and New York-Presbyterian Hospital (encompassing Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center and New York Weil Cornell Medical Center). Among New York’s noted houses of worship are Trinity Church, St. Paul’s Chapel (dedicated 1776), Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (see Saint John the Divine, Cathedral of), Riverside Church, and Temple Emanu-El.

New York’s parks and recreation centers include parts of Gateway National Recreation Area (see National Parks and Monuments, table); Central Park, the Battery, Washington Square Park, Hudson River Park, Riverside Park, and Fort Tryon Park (with the Cloisters) in Manhattan; the New York Zoological Park (Bronx Zoo) and the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx; Coney Island (with a boardwalk, beaches, and an aquarium) and Prospect Park in Brooklyn; and Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (the site of two World’s Fairs, two museums, a botanic garden, and a zoo) in Queens. Sports events are held at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan, home to the Knickerbockers (basketball) and Rangers (hockey); at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, home to the Yankees (baseball); at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, home to the Nets (basketball); and at Citi Field, home to the Mets (baseball), and the United States Tennis Association Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, home to the U.S. Open (tennis), in Queens. In the suburbs are the homes of the Islanders (hockey; in Uniondale, Long Island) and the Giants and the Jets (football; at the Meadowlands, in East Rutherford, N.J.).

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Other places of interest are Rockefeller Center; Battery Park City; Greenwich Village, with its cafés and restaurants; and Times Square, with its lights and theaters. Of historic interest are Fraunces Tavern (built 1719), where Washington said farewell to his officers after the American Revolution; Gracie Mansion (built late 18th cent.), now the official mayoral residence; the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage; and Grant’s Tomb.

History

The Colonial Period

Although Giovanni da Verrazzano was probably the first European to explore the region and Henry Hudson certainly visited the area, it was with Dutch settlements on Manhattan and Long Island that the city truly began to emerge. In 1624 the colony of New Netherland was established, initially on Governors Island, but the town of New Amsterdam on the lower tip of Manhattan was soon its capital. Peter Minuit of the Dutch West India Company supposedly bought the island from its Native inhabitants for 60 Dutch guilders worth of merchandise (the sale was completed in 1626). Under the Dutch, schools were opened and the Dutch Reformed Church was established. The indigenous population was forced out the area of European settlement in a series of bloody battles.

In 1664 the English, at war with the Netherlands (see Dutch Wars), seized the colony for the duke of York, for whom it was renamed. Peter Stuyvesant was replaced by Richard Nicolls as governor, and New York City became the capital of the new British province of New York. The Dutch returned to power briefly (1673–74) before the reestablishment of English rule. A liberal charter, which established the Common Council as the main governing body of the city, was granted under Thomas Dongan in 1686 and remained in effect for many years. English rule was not, however, without dissension, and the autocratic rule of British governors was one of the causes of an insurrection that broke out in 1689 under the leadership of Jacob Leisler. The insurrection ended in the execution of Leisler by his enemies in 1691. In 1741 there was further violence when an alleged plot by African-American slaves to burn New York was ruthlessly suppressed.

Throughout the 18th cent. New York was an expanding commercial and cultural center. The city's first newspaper, the New York Gazette, appeared in 1725. The trial in 1735 of John Peter Zenger, editor of a rival paper, was an important precedent for the principle of a free press. The city's first institution of higher learning, Kings College (now Columbia Univ.), was founded in 1754.

The Revolution through the Nineteenth Century

New York was active in the colonial opposition to British measures after trouble in 1765 over the Stamp Act. As revolutionary sentiments increased, the New York Sons of Liberty forced (1775) Gov. William Tryon and the British colonial government from the city. Although many New Yorkers were Loyalists, Continental forces commanded by George Washington tried to defend the city. After the patriot defeat in the battle of Long Island (see Long Island, battle of) and the succeeding actions at Harlem Heights and White Plains, Washington gave up New York, and the British occupied the city until the end of the war for independence. Under the British occupation two mysterious fires (1776 and 1778) destroyed a large part of the city. After the Revolution New York was briefly (1785–90) the first capital of the United States and was the state capital until 1797. President Washington was inaugurated (Apr. 30, 1789) at Federal Hall.

New development was marked by such events as the founding (1784) of the Bank of New York under
Alexander Hamilton and the beginning of the stock exchange around 1790. By 1790 New York was the largest city in the United States, with over 33,000 inhabitants; by 1800 the number had risen to 60,515. In 1811 plans were adopted for the laying out of most of Manhattan on a grid pattern. The opening of the Erie Canal (1825), ardently supported by former Mayor De Witt Clinton, made New York City the seaboard gateway for the Great Lakes region, ushering in another era of commercial expansion. The New York and Harlem RR was built in 1832. In 1834 the mayor of New York became an elective office. In the next year a massive fire destroyed much of Lower Manhattan, but it brought about new building laws and the construction of the Croton water system.

By 1840 New York had become the leading port of the nation. A substantial Irish and German immigration after 1840 dramatically changed the character of urban life and politics in the city. The coming of the Civil War found New Yorkers unusually divided; many shared Mayor Fernando Wood’s Southern sympathies, but under the leadership of Gov. Horatio Seymour most supported the Union. However, in 1863 the draft riots broke out in protest against the federal Conscription Act. The rioters—many of whom were Irish and other recent immigrants—directed most of their anger against African Americans. Extensive immigration had begun before the Civil War, and after 1865, with the acceleration of industrial development, another wave of immigration began and reached its height in the late 19th and early 20th cent. As a result of this immigration, which was predominantly from E and S Europe, the city’s population reached 3,437,000 by 1900 and 7 million by 1930. New York’s many distinct neighborhoods, divided along ethnic and class lines, included such notorious slums as Five Points, Hell’s Kitchen, and the Lower East Side. They were often side by side with such exclusive neighborhoods as Gramercy Park or Brooklyn Heights.

Municipal politics were dominated by the Democratic party, which was dominated by Tammany Hall (see Tammany) and the Tweed Ring, led by William M. Tweed. The first of many scandalous disclosures about the city’s political life came in 1871, leading to Tweed’s downfall. Although not always victorious, Tammany was the center of New York City politics until 1945.

Until 1874, when portions of Westchester were annexed, the city’s boundaries were those of present-day Manhattan. With the adoption of a new charter in 1898, New York became a city of five boroughs—New York City was split into the present Manhattan and Bronx boroughs, and the independent city of Brooklyn was annexed, as were the western portions of Queens co. and Staten Island. The opening of the first subway line (1903) and other means of mass transportation spurred the growth of the outer boroughs, and this trend has continued into the 1990s. The Flatiron Building (1902) foreshadowed the skyscrapers that today give Manhattan its famed skyline.

Later History

In the 20th cent., New York City was served by such mayors as Seth Low, William J. Gaynor, James J. Walker (whose resignation was brought about by the Seabury investigation), Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Robert F. Wagner, Jr. (see under Robert Ferdinand Wagner), Abraham Beame, John V. Lindsay, Edward I. Koch, David Dinkins (New York City’s first African-American mayor), and Rudolph Giuliani. The need for regional planning resulted in the nation’s first zoning legislation (1916) and the formation of such bodies as the Port of New York Authority (1921; now the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey), the Regional Plan Association (1929), the Municipal Housing Authority (1934), and the City Planning Commission (1938).

After World War II, New York began to experience the problems that became common to most large
U.S. cities, including increased crime, racial and ethnic tensions, homelessness, a movement of residents and companies to the suburbs and the resulting diminished tax base, and a deteriorating infrastructure that hurt city services. These problems were highlighted in the city's near-bankruptcy in 1975. A brief but spectacular boom in the stock and real estate markets in the 1980s brought considerable wealth to some sectors. By the early 1990s, however, corporate downsizing, the outward movement of corporate and back office centers, a still shrinking industrial sector, and the transition to a service-oriented economy meant the city was hard hit by the national recession.

In the late 1990s the city capitalized on its strengths to face a changing economic environment. While the manufacturing base continued to dwindle, the survivors were flexible and, increasingly, specialized companies that custom-tailored products or focused on local customers. Foreign markets were targeted by the city's financial, legal, communications, and other service industries. The city also saw the birth of a strong high-technology sector. Budget cuts in the mid-1990s reduced basic services, but a strong national economy and, especially, a rising stock market had restored vigor and prosperity by the end of the 20th cent.

The destruction of the World Trade Center, formerly the city's tallest building, as a result of a terrorist attack (Sept., 2001) was the worst disaster in the city's history, killing more than 2,700 people. In addition to the wrenching horror of the attack and the blow to the city's pride, New York lost some 10% of its commercial office space and faced months of cleanup and years of reconstruction. The crisis brought national prominence and international renown to Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who provided the city with a forceful and calming focus in the weeks after the attack. Michael R. Bloomberg, a moderate Republican, succeeded Giuliani as mayor in 2002. In 2012 low-lying areas of the city's boroughs suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy's storm surge. In 2014, Bill de Blasio, a populist and liberal Democrat, became mayor.

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