

PART II Population

Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains, and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlements occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan, and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present state of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capital in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capital at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

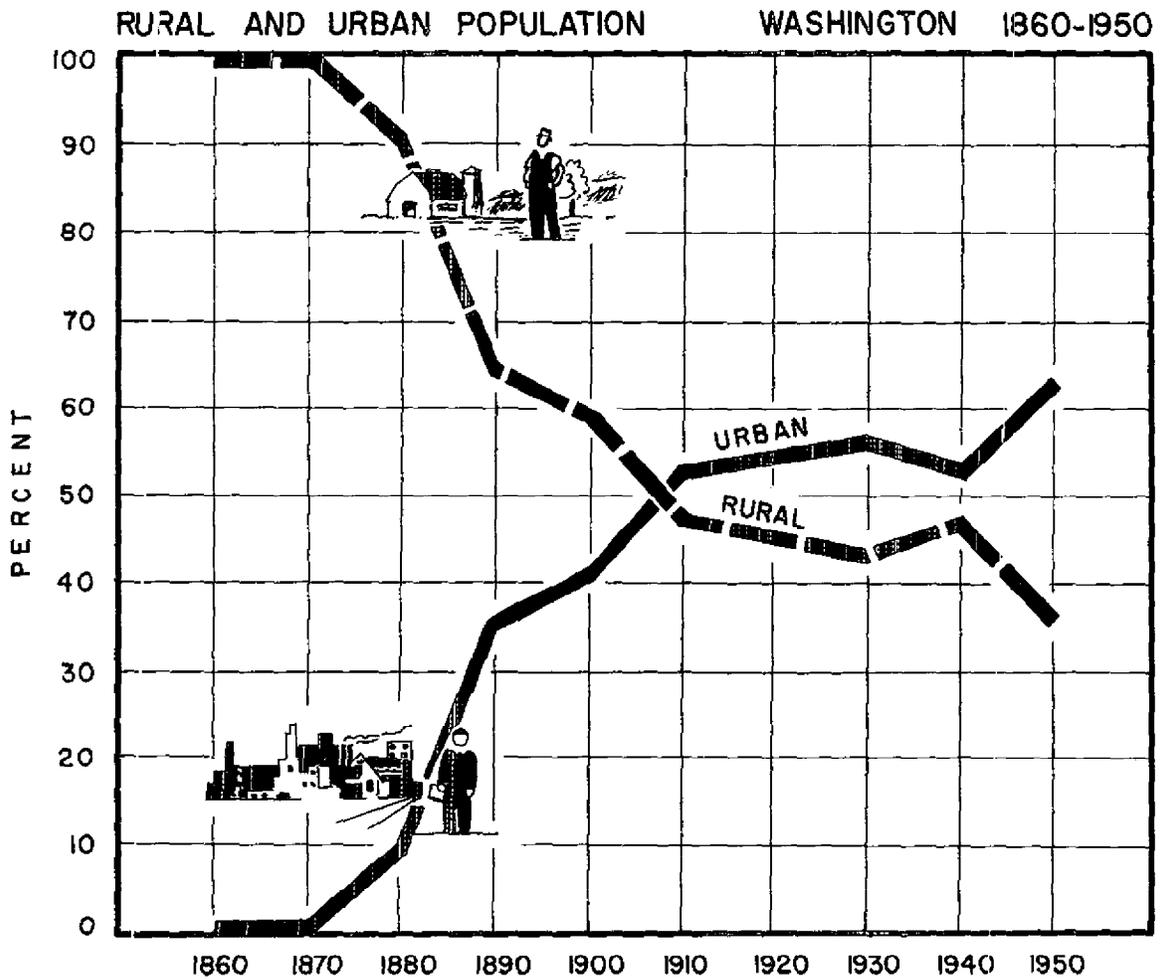
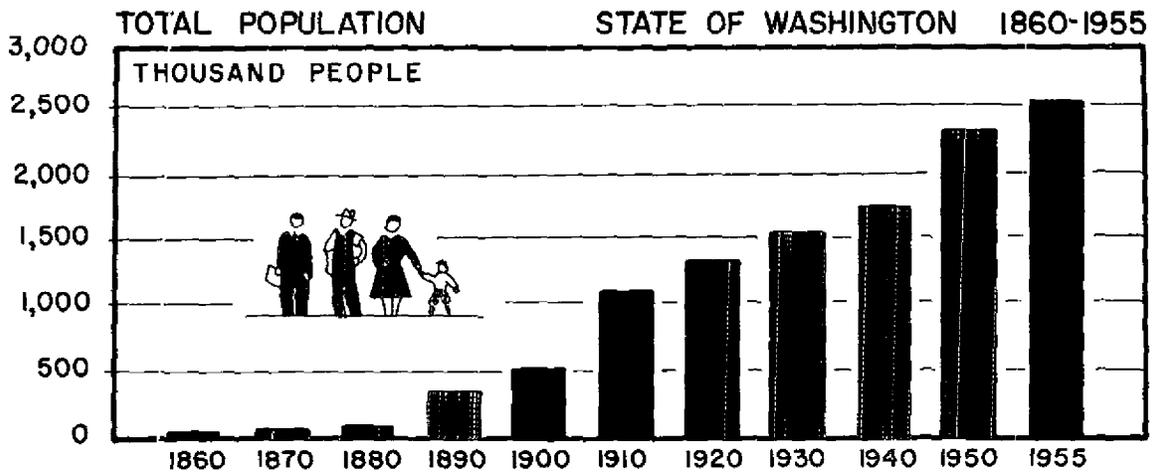
Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at this time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe who took up lumbering, fishing, mining and agriculture. Ranked numerically according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.



SOURCES OF DATA: U.S. Census 1860-1950; Washington State Census Board, Estimate - 1955.

The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lived in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.- Population of Washington
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,141,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population; Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1955 Estimate.

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

Population of Cowlitz County

Cowlitz County has grown steadily in population since the first Census in 1860. From 1860 to the 1920's the population was entirely rural. With the rapid industrial growth of Longview and Kelso after 1920, population became over half urban by 1930. Total county population has nearly doubled since 1930, reaching 58,600 by 1955 compared with 31,906 in the 1930 Census.

Farm people today are in the minority. Over two-thirds of Cowlitz residents either live in cities of over 2,500 population or live in smaller towns, villages and rural non-farm residences. 1950 Census tables show the following

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

divisions as to residence: urban 51.9 percent, rural non-farm 37.9 percent and rural farm 10.2 percent. Rural farm inhabitants in 1950 numbered only 5,435 with only about one person in ten residing on a farm. Cowlitz farm population ranks seventeenth among Washington counties.

Table 2.- Population of Cowlitz County
1860-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1860	406	100	0
1870	730	100	0
1880	2,062	100	0
1890	5,917	100	0
1900	7,877	100	0
1910	12,561	100	0
1920	11,791	100	0
1930	31,906	47.0	53.0
1940	40,155	52.4	47.6
1950	53,369	48.1	51.9
1955 1/	58,600	44.4	55.6

1/ 1955 figures are estimates of
Washington State Census Board

Source: U.S. Census, Population

Under the influence of industrialization all incorporated cities and towns have grown since 1930. Longview, the largest city, mushroomed rapidly as a completely new city. From an area of open fields and woodlands it became a city of 12,652 between 1921 and 1930. Its growth continued and doubled by 1956, reaching 23,002 and a ranking of tenth among Washington cities. Kelso, the county seat, located across the Cowlitz River from Longview, has shared also in rapid industrial growth at the mouth of the Cowlitz. Kelso grew from 6,000 to 9,000 residents between 1930 and 1956. Castle Rock, Kalama and Woodland have

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
Cowlitz County, 1910-1956

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1956 1/
Castle Rock	998	829	1,239	1,182	1,255	1,355
Kalama	816	1,228	940	1,028	1,121	1,160
Kelso	2,039	2,228	6,260	6,749	7,345	9,000
Longview	—	—	10,652	12,385	20,339	23,002
Woodland	384	521	1,094	980	1,222	1,141

1/ Populations for 1956 are estimates of the Washington State
Census Board, April 1, 1956.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population
Washington State Census Board.

made gains as the result of increased logging, lumbering and farming in their trade areas. Both industrial employment and general farming have contributed to growth of these towns.

Cowlitz County's industrial and agricultural development has resulted from the investments and labor of immigrants and settlers from many foreign lands and the eastern United States. In 1890 about 14 percent of the inhabitants were from European countries. Because of more recent restrictive quotas on immigration by the United States, this percentage has gone down to about 5 percent. Canadians, Scandinavians and Finns were the largest immigrant groups. Settlers from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany have been prominent as dairy-men, poultrymen and part-time general farmers. In addition to the nationalities in Table 4, the 1950 Census tabulated 150 Negroes, 45 American Indians and 12 American Japanese.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Cowlitz County
1890, 1920 and 1950

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	63	82	195
Scotland.....	16	14	54
Northern Ireland.....	--	--	3
Ireland (Eire).....	44	37	36
Norway.....	44	117	212
Sweden.....	142	197	279
Denmark.....	60	49	58
Netherlands.....	10	41	37
Switzerland.....	19	42	--
France.....	7	14	26
Germany.....	188	188	166
Poland.....	1	22	21
Czechoslovakia.....	2	--	23
Austria.....	8	32	44
Yugoslavia.....	--	9	24
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	21	49	78
Finland.....	--	462	350
Italy.....	23	66	29
Canada-French.....	--	15	59
Canada-Other.....	172	168	816
All other countries...	20	64	268
Totals	843	1,668	2,778
Percent foreign-born	14.3	14.1	5.2

Source: U.S. Census, Population

Enumerations in the 1950 Census found that over 19,000 persons were employed. Nearly half were in wood products manufacturing, in lumber and paper plants. Agriculture was a minor field of wage earning and self-employment with only 4 percent of workers thus engaged. Service trades, including work in retail stores, banks, schools and other services, were of second importance.

Table 5.- Employment of the Population
Cowlitz County, 1950

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
Total employed workers	15,218	4,134	19,352	100.0
Agriculture.....	676	105	781	4.0
Forestry and fisheries.....	108	9	117	.6
Mining.....	19	1	20	.2
Construction.....	1,190	23	1,213	6.3
Manufacturing.....	8,285	620	8,905	46.0
Transportation.....	756	39	795	4.1
Retail and wholesale stores.....	1,908	1,205	3,113	16.1
Miscellaneous services.....	1,384	1,695	3,079	15.9
Public administration (government employment).....	366	123	489	2.5
Other employment.....	526	314	840	4.3

Source: U.S. Census, Population

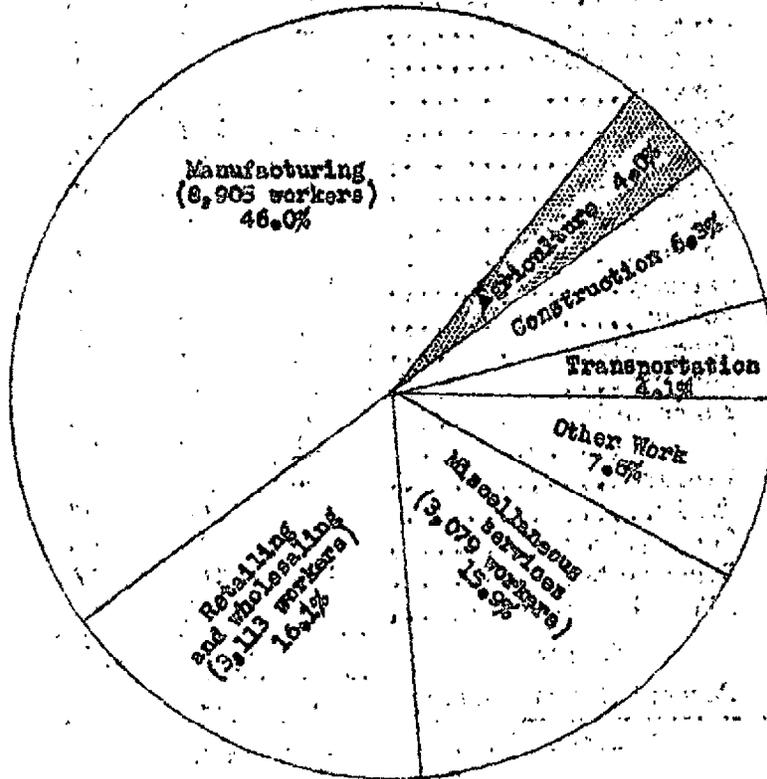


Figure 3.- Agricultural Employment Compared With Other Employment in Cowlitz County, 1950