

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 settlement 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 capitol 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 capitol 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 1889, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Gray's Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at that time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 621,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,111,990. 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 (142,000), 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.

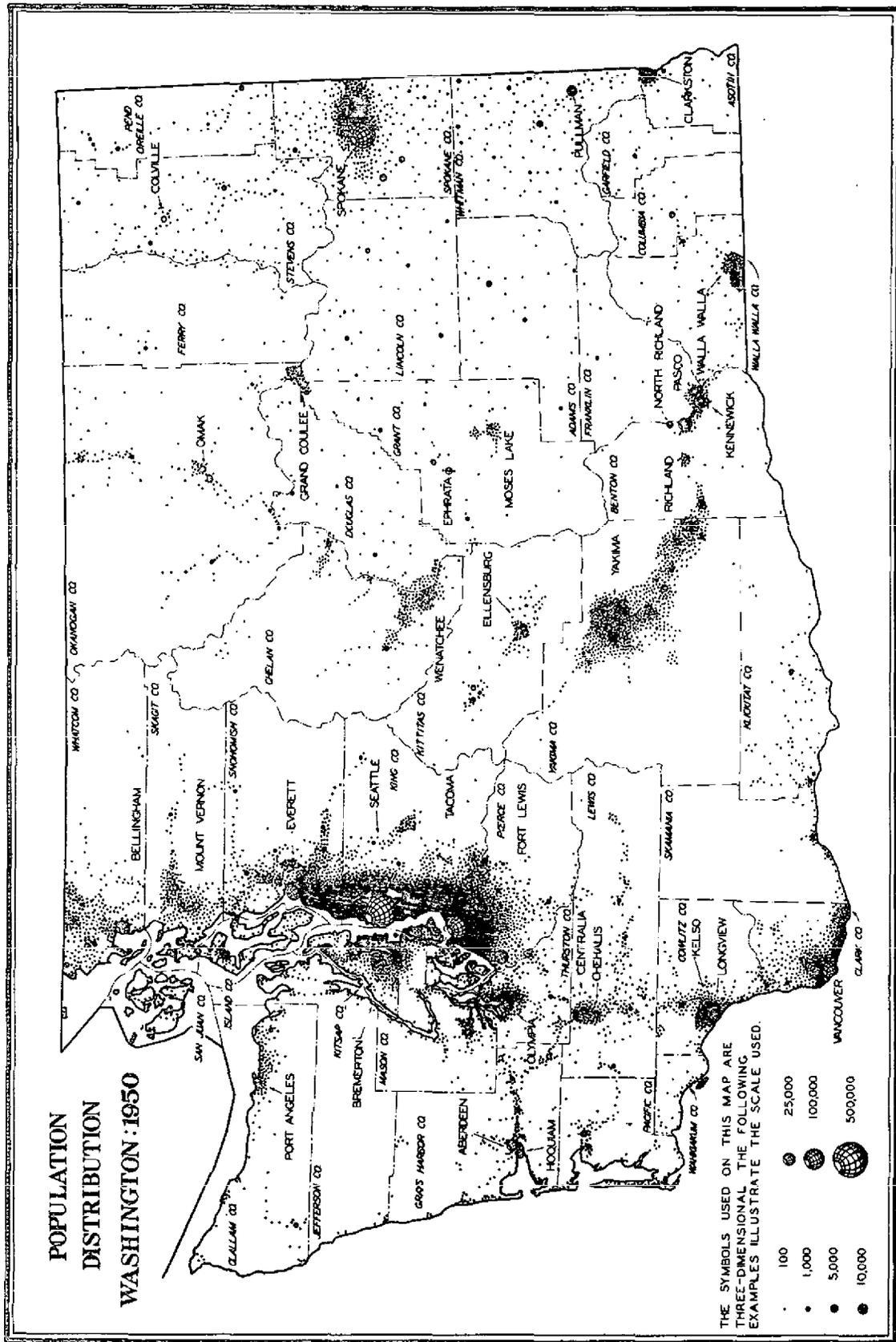
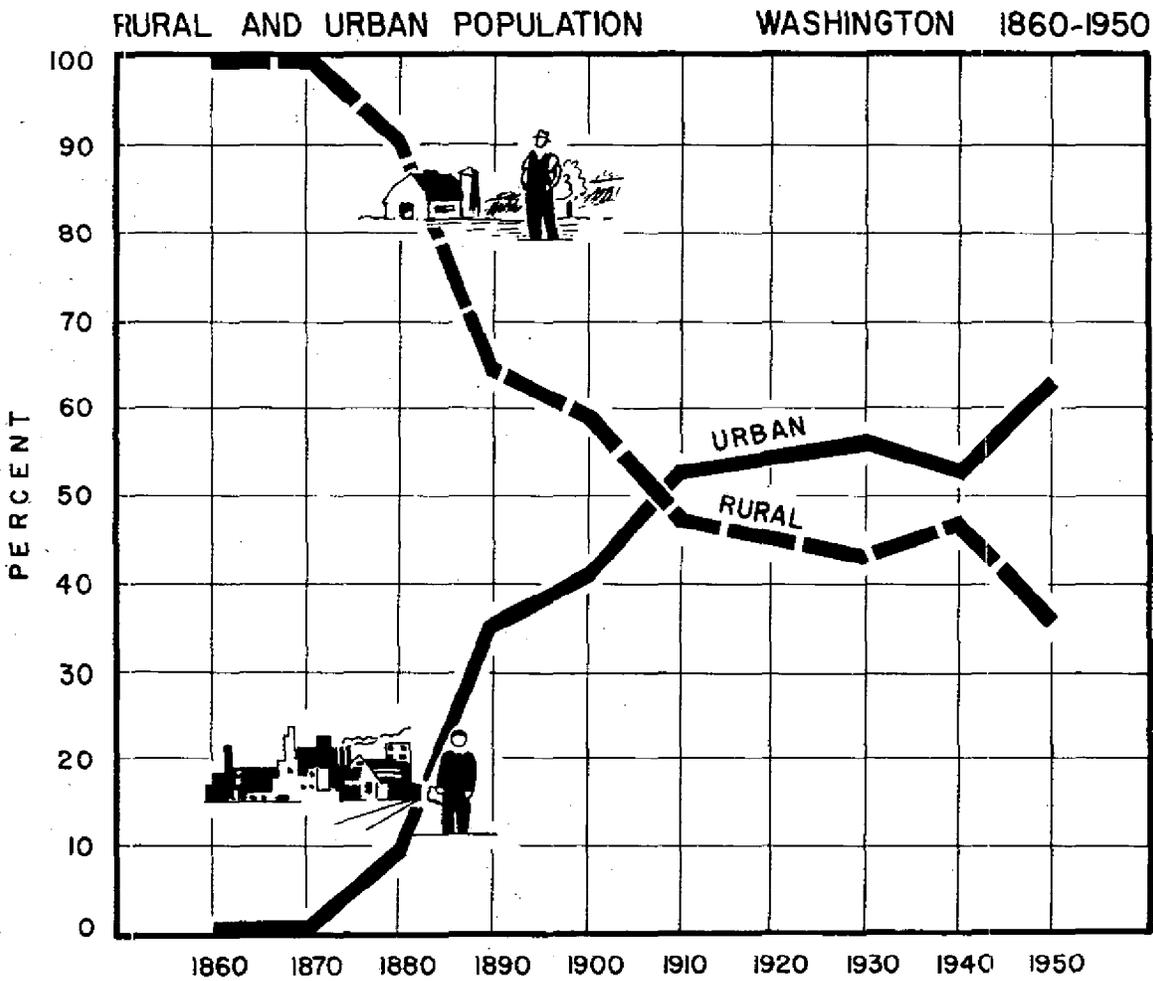
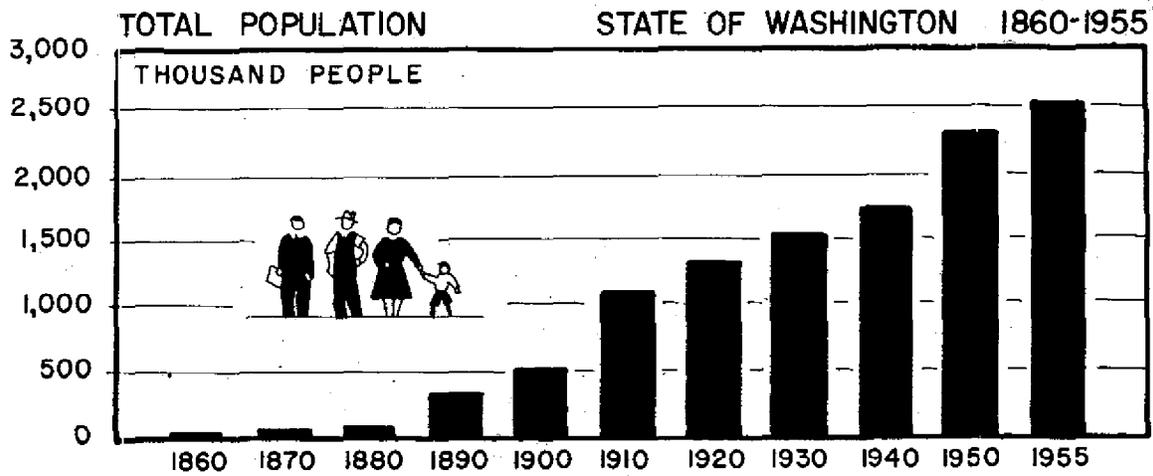


Figure 6.- DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WASHINGTON, 1950 (Map by courtesy of Population Research Office, Washington State Census Board).



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 Douglas County

Douglas County ranked thirty-first among Washington counties with a population of 12,600 in 1955. With the exception of the 1930 and 1940 Censuses, population has gained nearly three-fold since 1900.

Population trends are closely related to agriculture and to recent construction work on Columbia River projects. From 1900 to 1940, dry land grain farming and livestock raising supported only a sparse population. Drought and low wheat prices accompanied by numerous failures in farming operations in the

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),

period 1920-40 resulted in a considerable loss of people, particularly the farm youth. From the lows of 7,561 in 1930 and 8,651 in 1940, the county population started to increase again. Major growth factors were the Federal work on Grand Coulee Dam, the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, Chief Joseph Dam and Rock Island Dam. Construction payrolls and the steady employment of engineering and maintenance personnel brought many new families to the villages of Douglas County. The new growth was primarily within cities and villages and not in more people on farms.

Table 2.- Population of Douglas County
1890-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1890	3,161	100	0
1900	4,926	100	0
1910	9,227	100	0
1920	9,392	100	0
1930	7,561	100	0
1940	8,651	100	0
1950	10,817	100	0
1955	12,600	100	0

Source: U.S. Census, Population

According to Census classifications, Douglas County population is entirely rural. There are no cities or villages with over 2,500 inhabitants. The Census classifies an urban place as any city or town which has 2,500 residents or more.

The population, however, is predominantly nonfarm with residential and occupational characteristics. Nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants live in villages or cities or in country residences and are supported by nonfarm occupations. In 1950 the Census reported rural nonfarm population at 6,789 and rural farm population at 4,028. Percentage-wise, Douglas County is 63 percent rural nonfarm and 37 percent rural farm. In farm population, Douglas County ranks twenty-third in the state.

Growth trends of incorporated places are related primarily to changes in agricultural and nonagricultural employment. Older agricultural trade centers--Waterville and Mansfield--have declined in population slightly as the result of recent changes in agriculture. Larger and more mechanized farms with fewer people employed in operating or working brings fewer people to town. Fewer farm families need fewer people to provide the needed services. Mansfield and Waterville in 1958 had fewer residents than in 1920. The lowest figure was reached in 1930 following the poor wheat marketing years of the last 1920's.

On the other hand, Bridgeport and Rock Island grew rapidly after 1940 when construction projects on the Columbia River were in full progress. Being near the Chief Joseph Dam Project, Bridgeport had a rapid growth in the 1950's. Construction on Rock Island Dam caused expansion and town growth at Rock Island, the townsite near the project. East Wenatchee, a short distance from Wenatchee across the Columbia River, has grown steadily since 1940. Its growth has been

based on a general expansion of fruit growing, commercial and professional trades and residential housing development in the Wenatchee district.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
Douglas County, 1919-1958

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1958 ^{1/}
Bridgeport	431	337	305	320	802	1,005
East Wenatchee	---	---	^{2/}	268	389	430
Mansfield	---	478	230	349	414	376
Rock Island	---	---	^{3/}	130	152	254
Waterville	950	1,198	856	939	1,013	982

^{1/} Populations for 1958 are estimates of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1958.

^{2/} East Wenatchee was not incorporated prior to 1935.

^{3/} Rock Island was not incorporated prior to 1930.

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

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

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	67	69	35
Scotland.....	28	18	9
Northern Ireland.....	---	---	---
Ireland (Eire).....	33	19	6
Norway.....	19	36	14
Sweden.....	26	55	20
Denmark.....	24	115	37
Netherlands.....	---	2	6
Switzerland.....	2	17	---
France.....	3	8	3
Germany.....	132	202	70
Poland.....	---	1	3
Czechoslovakia.....	---	---	---
Austria.....	2	7	11
Yugoslavia.....	---	5	---
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	2	93	25
Finland.....	---	1	1
Italy.....	9	11	4
Canada-French.....	---	1	9
Canada-Other.....	87	139	99
All other countries...	19	59	31
Totals	451	858	383
Percent foreign-born	14.3	9.1	3.5

Source: U.S. Census, Population

Typical of many counties in the western United States, Douglas County farmlands and towns were settled by a mixture of immigrants from many other states and foreign lands. In 1920, about one-tenth of the farm and town settlers were Germans and Scandinavians who came in migrations between 1880 and 1920. Main immigrant groups in 1920 were Germans (202), Canadians (140) and Danish (115). Following 1924, fewer foreign immigrants came to take up homes in Douglas County. By 1950, foreign-born families made up only 3.5 percent of the population. Many of the cash-grain wheat farms in Douglas County were pioneered by European immigrants who sought free homesteads or low-priced farming land after arriving earlier in eastern and midwestern United States.

Agriculture is by far the leading field of employment in Douglas County. About 40 percent of all wage earners and self-employed persons worked in agriculture in 1950. The second major type of employment was in construction, followed by work in retail and wholesale stores. Minor occupations were manufacturing, transportation, government and mining. Much of the agricultural employment is seasonal. Large numbers of migratory laborers come to the fruit growing districts in late summer and fall to harvest apples and soft fruit.

Table 5. Employment of the Population
Douglas County, 1950

DOUGLAS

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	3,336	600	3,936	100.0
Agriculture.....	1,474	60	1,534	40.0
Forestry and fisheries.....	—	—	—	—
Mining.....	7	—	7	.2
Construction.....	589	6	595	15.0
Manufacturing.....	139	15	154	4.0
Transportation.....	156	17	173	4.4
Retail and wholesale stores.....	362	181	543	13.6
Miscellaneous services.....	283	221	504	12.8
Public administration (government employment).....	79	42	121	3.0
Other employment.....	247	58	305	7.0

Source: U.S. Census, Population