

PART II

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY POPULATION

Geographically, the population of Grays Harbor County is very unequally distributed. The majority of the people live in the southern half of the county concentrated largely in the cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam situated on Grays Harbor and in Montesano located a few miles inland. In the southern part of the county, the rural population is largely confined to the Chehalis River lowlands and tributary valleys. A loose population belt extends along the Pacific coastline from Grayland located in the extreme southwest corner of the county to Taholah at the mouth of the Quinault River. Scattered settlements are also found in the area north of Grays Harbor. The northern half of the county, covered largely by the foothills of the Olympic Mountains, is nearly void of inhabitants except along the coast and in the area surrounding Lake Quinault.

Population Growth

The growth of Grays Harbor County was slow before 1870. Lack of roads and distance from the East kept immigration to a minimum. Early settlers were discouraged by the dense forest growth, hostile Indians, damp climatic conditions and remoteness from markets. The Grays Harbor County population was only 285 in 1860 according to the Census. Population grew rapidly from 1860 to 1900. New transcontinental railroads brought waves of immigrants from eastern states and European countries. The extension of the Northern Pacific Railroad through the Chehalis River Valley brought new settlers and encouraged rapid expansion. Increased coastwise shipping also brought new trade opportunities to the area. By 1900, the county population was 15,124.

The period 1900 to 1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the county gained 20,466 people, increasing more than twofold to 35,590. Large numbers of settlers arrived to work in the mills and logging camps. Many became interested in part-time farming on logged-over lands. Between 1910 and 1930, the population continued to grow at a steady rate, reaching 59,982 at the end of the period. There was a decline in population during the 1930-1940 decade followed by an increase beginning in the late 1940's. Forest products industry in the county began to level off or decline in some localities after 1930 while more recently the tourist trade and agriculture have continued to grow. Since 1940, most of the new growth in population has occurred in the small towns and in the rural areas. The county's two largest cities had fewer people in 1960 than in 1940. By 1960, the total population of Grays Harbor County was 54,465.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1890, the entire population of Grays Harbor County was in rural areas either in villages or on farms. By 1900, however, Grays Harbor's population was divided 58 percent rural and 42 percent urban. The percentage of urban population (i.e., persons living in incorporated places of 2,500 or more) increased during the decade between 1900 and 1910. In 1910, over 61 percent of the population was urban. Since then, the percentage figure of Grays Harbor County's urban population has fluctuated between 57.5 in 1930 and 54.2 in 1960. According to the 1960 Census, 29,503 persons were living in urban places while 24,962 individuals resided in small towns, on farms or in country homes. With manufacturing, commerce and services being the principal occupational outlets, the population has remained more urban than rural.

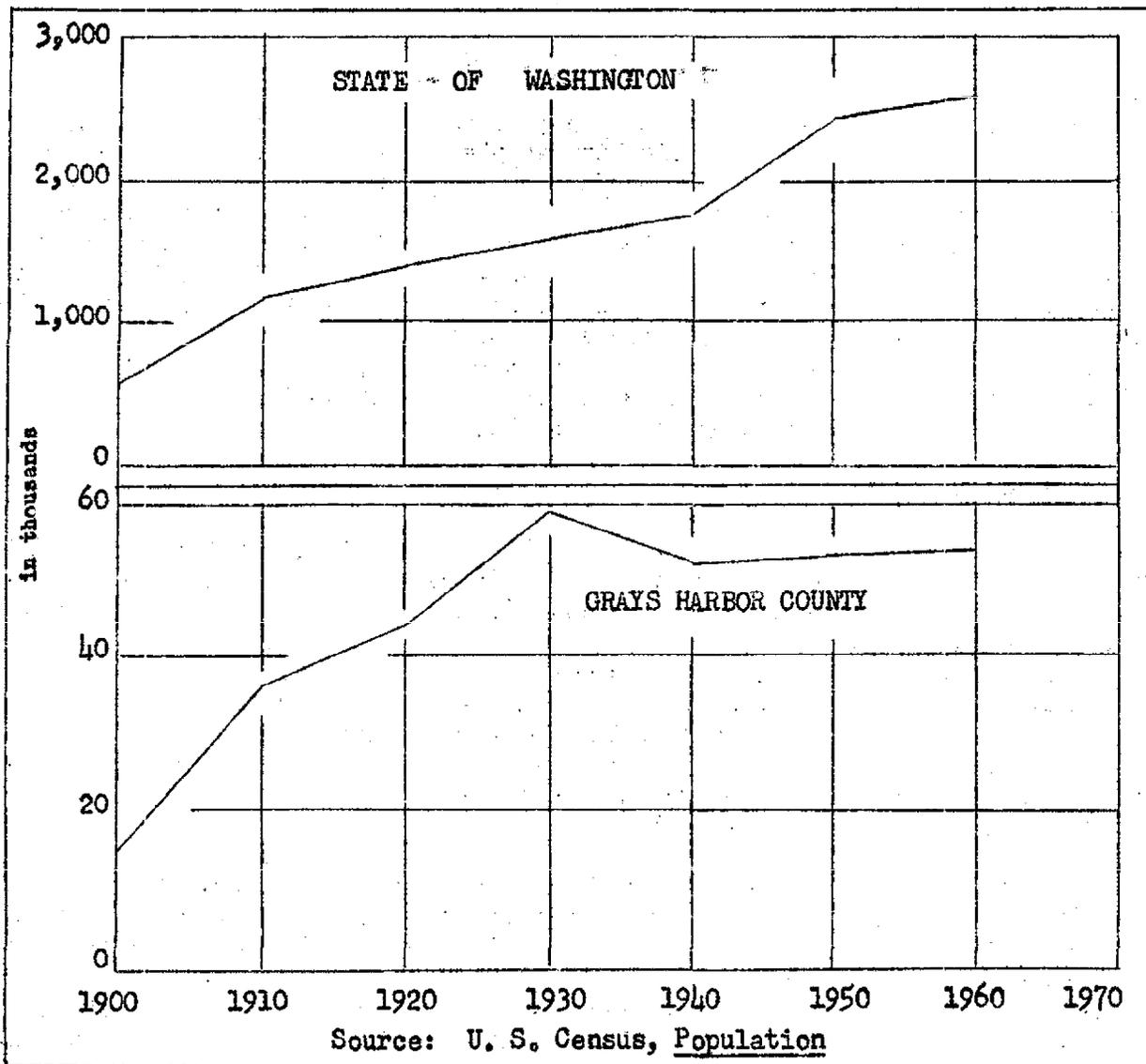


Figure 1. Population Trends: 1900-1960

Table 1. Population of Grays Harbor County, 1860-1960

Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1860	285	100	0
1870	401	100	0
1880	921	100	0
1890	9,249	100	0
1900	15,124	58.0	42.0
1910	35,590	38.7	61.3
1920	44,745	43.3	56.7
1930	59,982	42.5	57.5
1940	53,166	44.2	55.8
1950	53,644	42.6	57.4
1960	54,465	45.8	54.2

Source: U. S. Census, Population

In 1960, the rural population was predominantly rural-nonfarm, consisting of 22,306 persons who lived in the country but did not operate farms. Rural-farm population has decreased in the last two decades. Persons living on farms numbered 7,722 in 1940, 4,899 in 1950 and 2,656 in 1960. In 1960, Grays Harbor ranked twenty-third among the 39 counties of Washington in farm population. Both farms and people living on farms are becoming fewer, whereas the production of farm products continues to increase. Modern technology, sound farming practices and efficient marketing facilities have greatly increased the productivity of the individual farmer.

Table 2. Population of Incorporated Places
Grays Harbor County, 1910-1960

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Aberdeen	13,660	15,337	21,723	18,846	19,653	18,741
Cosmopolis	1,132	1,512	1,493	1,207	1,164	1,312
Elma	1,532	1,253	1,545	1,370	1,543	1,811
Hoquiam	8,171	10,058	12,766	10,835	11,123	10,762
McCleary	--	--	--	--	1,175	1,115
Montesano	2,488	2,158	2,460	2,242	2,328	2,486
Oakville	465	396	469	418	372	377
Westport	--	114	272	443	731	976

Source: U. S. Census, Population

There are eight incorporated places in Grays Harbor County. Each incorporated town has had a varied rate of growth related to changing conditions in forest industries, tourist trade and commercial activities. Montesano, the county seat, had a population of 2,488 in 1910, but economic conditions caused it to decline and fluctuate since then. In recent years, however, it has again grown to include 2,486 residents in 1960. Populations of interior county towns have been mainly affected by the forest products industry but resort, sports fishing and other tourist oriented employment opportunities have been the main reason for the growth of Westport and other settlements on the coast.

Aberdeen and Hoquiam, the county's primary industrial and commercial centers, grew rapidly from 1910 to 1930 as a result of a prosperous lumber industry. Depressed conditions in lumber marketing in the late 1930's caused a decline but by 1950 Aberdeen and Hoquiam were regaining population. Since 1950, however, both cities have again decreased in numbers of people. Aberdeen is the largest city in the county with 18,741 persons in 1960. Hoquiam, adjoining Aberdeen to the west, is second with a 1960 population of 10,762.

In 1910, there were six incorporated places in Grays Harbor, comprising a total population of 27,448. By 1960, there were eight incorporated places with a combined population of 37,580. Only Aberdeen and Hoquiam had populations exceeding 2,500 in 1960 and, therefore, were the only two incorporated places considered by the Census to be urban population. Aberdeen and Hoquiam form the largest urban settlement on Washington's Pacific Coast.

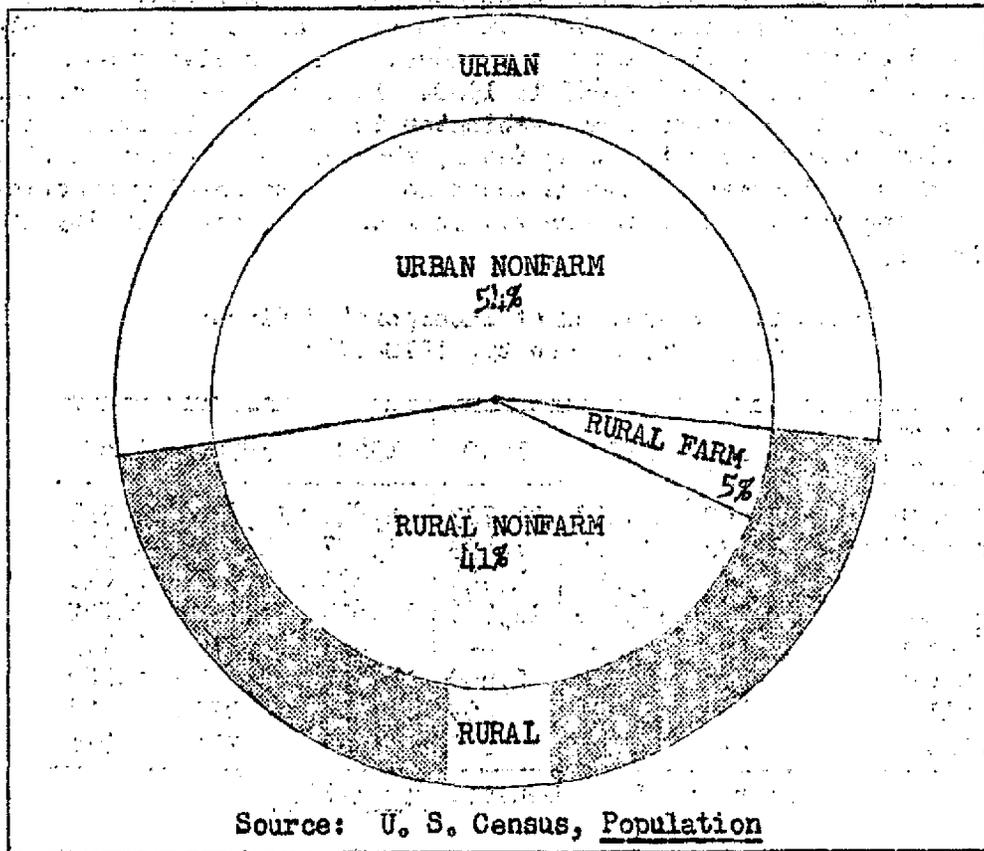


Figure 2. Urban and Rural Population, Grays Harbor County, 1960

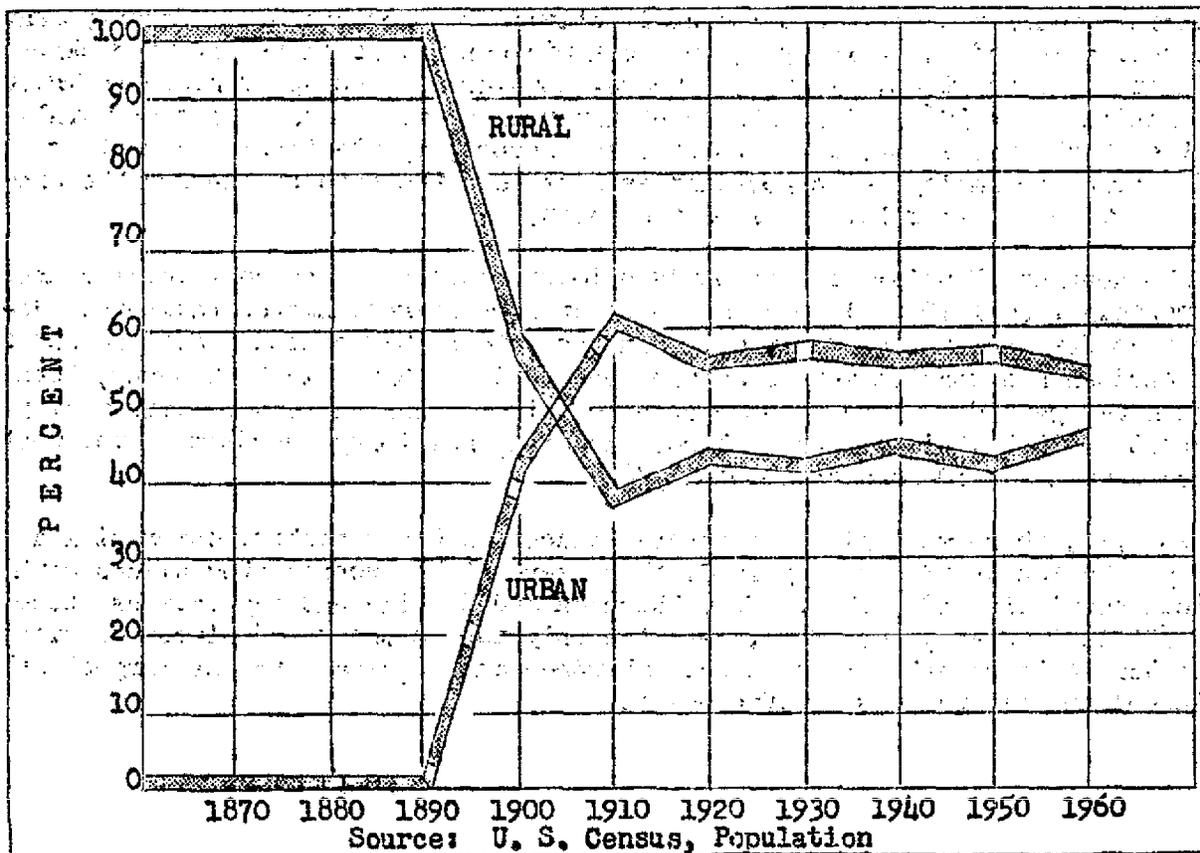


Figure 3. Rural and Urban Population Trends, Grays Harbor County, 1870-1960.

Population Characteristics

Grays Harbor County has been a melting pot of a variety of foreign immigrants as well as a large number of settlers from other parts of the United States. The lumber and fishing industries and opportunities in homesteading land attracted over 10,650 immigrants from Europe, Canada and Asia by 1920. At the peak of immigration in 1920, nearly 24 percent of all county inhabitants were of foreign birth. By 1950, foreign-born population was decreasing as a result of United States quota limits on immigration. In 1960, there were 4,090 foreign born, amounting to 7.5 percent of the county's total population. The five largest immigrant groups were Finnish, English, Swedish, Norwegian and German. In 1960, about 24 persons out of each 100 were of foreign stock (all first and second generations) in Grays Harbor County. There were 13,313 persons of foreign stock in the county in 1960.

The nonwhite population of Grays Harbor County was 1,094 according to the Census of 1960. The races included 848 Indians, 104 Filipinos, 55 Chinese, 39 Negroes and 24 Japanese. Most of the Indians reside on the Quinault and Chehalis Indian Reservations which are located partly within Grays Harbor County.

In 1960, a total of 18,848 persons were employed in the county. According to Census figures, 7,902, or nearly 42 percent, of all self-employed and employed persons were in manufacturing involving mainly forestry and food products. The next largest field was in miscellaneous services covering many trades, followed by retail and wholesale trade. Fourth in employment rank was transportation, communications and other public utilities after which came construction. Agriculture ranked sixth, employing 696 people or 3.7 percent of all employed persons.

Table 3. Employment of the Population
Grays Harbor County, 1960

Types of Employment	Total Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	18,848
Agriculture	696
Forestry and Fisheries	245
Mining	13
Construction	854
Manufacturing	7,902
Transportation, Communications and other Public Utilities	1,060
Retail and Wholesale Trade	3,265
Miscellaneous Services	3,752
Public Administration (govern- ment employment)	634
Other employment	427

Source: U. S. Census, Population

According to the 1930 Census, there were 127 males per 100 females in Grays Harbor County. In 1960, Grays Harbor's population consisted of 27,736 males and 26,729 females, which was a ratio of 104 males per 100 females. The number of women relative to men tends to increase as the county becomes older and more settled. Other factors such as war and industrialization also tend to increase

the proportion of women. Of the county's rural population in 1930, 14,863 were males and 10,630 were females, a ratio of 140 men per 100 women. In 1960, rural men numbered 12,898 and rural women 12,064—a ratio of 107 males per 100 females.

Grays Harbor County's population is aging. The 1930 Census showed that only 4.3 percent of the people in the county were 65 and over, whereas in 1960, people of this age accounted for 11.9 percent of the total. Improved health practices and greater medical knowledge have played an important part in lengthening the life span. In 1960, the largest single age group was that of children 5 to 9 years of age. Children under 5 years formed the second largest group, while those from 10 to 14 years of age were third. Children under 15 years of age accounted for over 30 percent of the county's population.

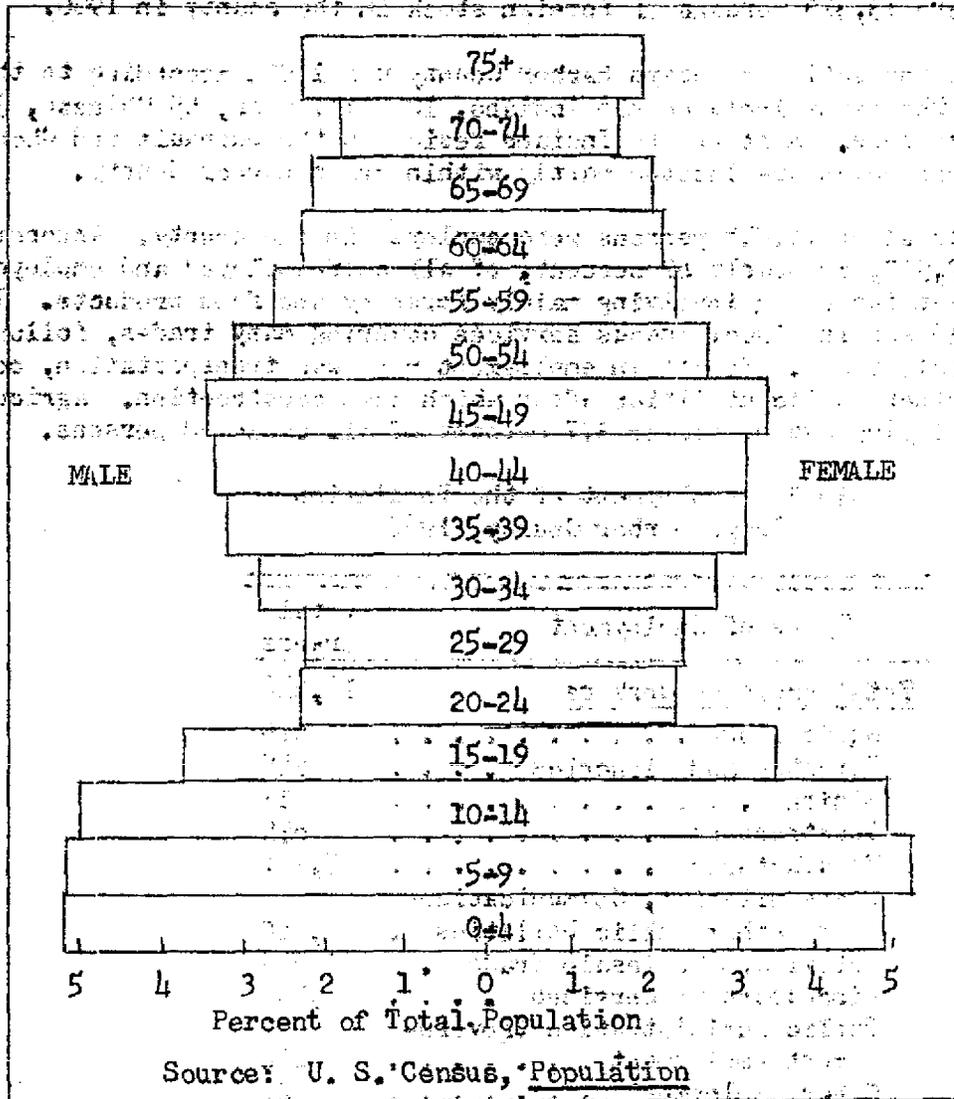


Figure 4. Age Distribution of Population, Grays Harbor County, 1960