

PART II

STEVENS COUNTY POPULATION

Geographically, the population of Stevens County is unequal in distribution and is sparse in density. Settlement has taken place primarily in the county's major river valleys and along the tributaries. The principal area of settlement is the Colville River Valley which runs diagonally across the middle of the county from Springdale to Marcus in a southeast-northwest direction. Other centers of human occupancy are along Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake and in the Kettle River Valley, both located on the western edge of the county. A thin population band extends up the Columbia River bottomlands and in tributary areas in northern Stevens County. In the south, settlement has taken place in the Spokane River lowlands and along primary and county roads. Remaining areas of the county are too mountainous and permanent habitations are very rare.

Population Growth

The growth of Stevens County was slow before the middle of the nineteenth century. Lack of roads and distance from eastern markets kept immigration to a minimum. Early settlers were discouraged by the rugged terrain, dense forests, harsh climate and Indian hostility. Stevens County population was only 734 in 1870 according to the Census.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1900. Mining and various land acts brought many immigrants from eastern states and Europe. The construction of railroads into the area in the late 1880's gave further impetus to the settlement and expansion of Stevens County. By the turn of the century, the county population was 10,543.

The period 1900 to 1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the county gained 14,754 people, increasing more than two-fold to 25,297. New Markets for lumber, mining and agricultural products were opened by the railroads and miners, livestockmen, lumbermen and tradesmen increased in number.

With the detachment of Pend Oreille County in 1911, Stevens County's population figure was reduced accordingly. Since then, the number of people has ranged between 21,605 in 1920 to 17,884 in 1960. The American Smelting and Refining Company at Northport, Goldfield Consolidated Mines at Colville and the Northwest Magnesite Company at Chewelah provided a source of seasonal employment for farmers and enlarged local markets for provisions, hay and feed. Logging operations in the Colville Valley for the Spokane market also provided employment. From 1930 to 1940 the construction of Grand Coulee Dam brought employment for Stevens County residents. On the other hand, the filling of Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake behind the giant dam inundated several thousand acres of farmland on the Marcus Flats, the older towns of Marcus and Kettle Falls and benchlands along the Columbia River, causing some loss of farm population between 1940 and 1950. Slight declines in mining employment and a city-ward migration of rural youth since 1940 have caused a general loss of population. Stevens County's population decreased from 19,275 in 1940 to 17,884 in 1960 or 7.2 percent in the two decades.

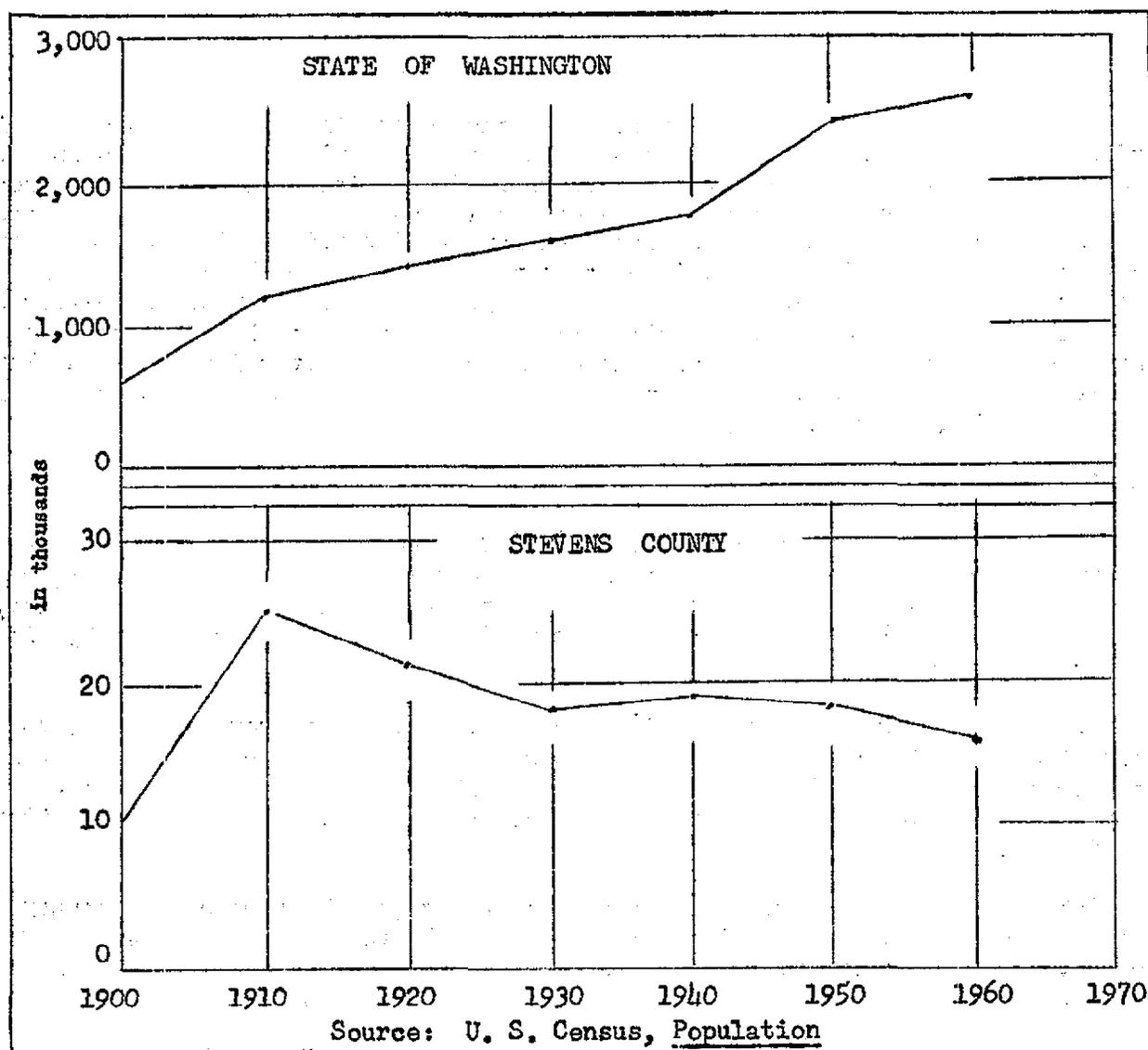


Figure 1. Population Trends: 1900-1960

Table 1. Population of Stevens County, 1900-1960

Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1900	10,543	100	0
1910 ^{1/}	25,297	100	0
1920	21,605	100	0
1930	18,550	100	0
1940	19,275	100	0
1950	18,580	83.8	16.2
1960	17,884	78.7	21.3

^{1/} Population figure included area which is now Pend Oreille County prior to 1911.

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Urban and Rural Population

Stevens was entirely rural until 1950 with all persons living in cities or villages under 2,500 or on farms and in the countryside. In 1950, Colville, the county seat, reached 3,033 persons, becoming the only city in the county classified as urban by the Census. Of Stevens' population in 1950, 83.8 percent was rural and only 16.2 percent was urban. By 1960, Colville had increased to include 21.3 percent of the county's population. The remaining 78.7 percent was rural, living either in the country or in one of the five other incorporated places of Stevens County. With farming, forest industries and mining being the principal occupational outlets, the population has remained predominantly rural.

The rural population was largely rural-nonfarm in 1960, consisting of 8,444 persons living in the country but not on farms. Rural-farm population decreased in the twenty years between 1940 and 1960. Persons living on farms numbered 10,581 in 1930, 10,704 in 1940, then dropped to 8,896 in 1950 and to 5,634 in 1960. In 1960, Stevens County ranked eleventh among the counties of Washington in farm population. Since 1940, the trend in farm population has been clearly downward. The Census in 1960 counted 3,262 fewer people on farms than in 1950, a decline of 36.7 percent. Both farms and people living on farms are becoming fewer, whereas the production of farm products continues to increase. Stevens County finds itself in a new period where technology fashions vast economic and social changes.

The six incorporated cities and villages have varied in growth since 1910. Colville, surrounded by a farm, forestry, commercial and mining economy, has grown steadily. Chewelah and Northport, more specialized mining villages, grew rapidly in a mining boom period between 1910 and 1920.

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

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Chewelah	823	1,288	1,315	1,565	1,683	1,525
Colville	1,533	1,718	1,803	2,418	3,033	3,806
Kettle Falls	377	276	414	560	714	905
Marcus	—	551	583	393	149	126
Northport	476	906	391	427	487	482
Springdale	251	184	215	227	268	254

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Chewelah has gradually grown in population reaching a peak in 1950 with 1,683 persons but since then dropped to 1,525 in 1960. Northport, on the other hand, hit its peak back in 1920 with 906 and since then has remained under 500 persons. The decline at Marcus since 1930 has resulted from its removal from the original site. The original site of Marcus is now covered by the Grand Coulee Reservoir (Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake). Many people who lived in Marcus moved to Kettle Falls after selling their property to make room for the reservoir. Springdale, a farming center, has maintained a population around 250 since 1940. More people were living in Stevens County cities and villages in 1960 than in any previous year. With the exception of Colville and Kettle Falls, each town has decreased in population. In 1960, the six incorporated places had a combined population of 7,098.

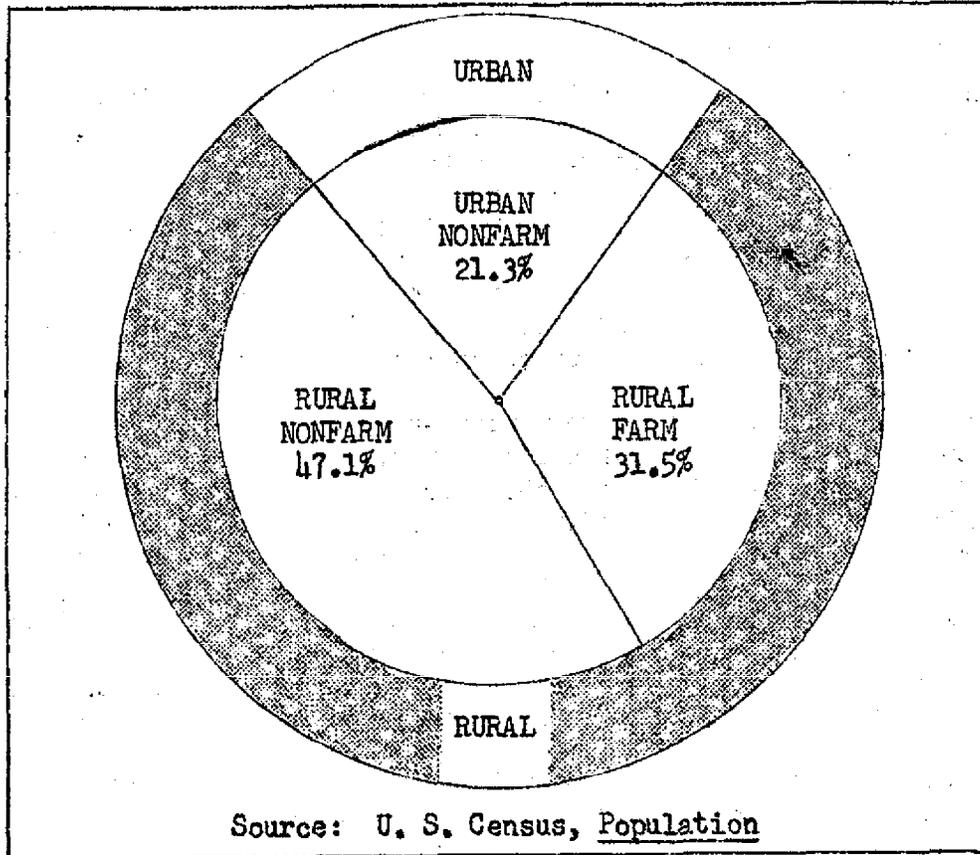


Figure 2. Urban and Rural Population, Stevens County, 1960.

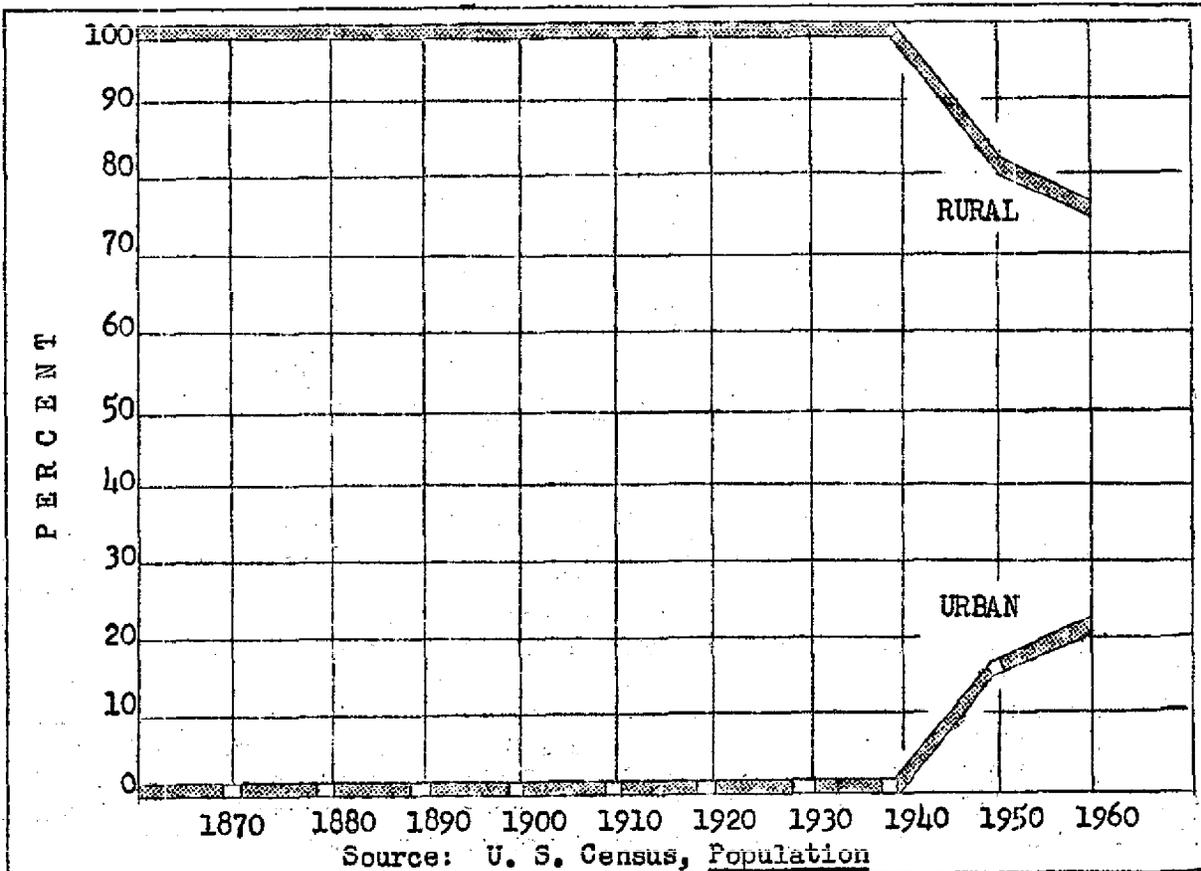


Figure 3. Rural and Urban Population Trends, Stevens County, 1870-1960

Population Characteristics

Agricultural and trade opportunities in Stevens County have attracted settlers of varied origins and backgrounds. In 1890, over one-fifth of the population was foreign-born. Canada, Germany, Sweden, England and Ireland led all other nations as origins of immigrants in 1890. Immigration was largest in the period between 1900 and 1920. Many central and southern European nationalities such as Polish, Yugoslavs, Austrians and Italians came to work in the mines. Scandinavians, Germans, Swiss and Danes tended to settle on farms. Agriculture in the county profited much from the industry of European immigrants, many of whom were prominent farm pioneers. The percentage of foreign-born has decreased since 1920 because of lowered immigration quotas and by 1960 only 3.2 percent of the county's population was of foreign birth.

Typical of many counties in the western United States, Stevens County has been a melting pot of many nationalities who have migrated from Europe to seek new opportunities. Canada and Germany lead as countries of origin of the foreign stock (i.e., all first- and second-generations). In 1960, about 17 persons out of each 100 were of foreign stock. The major immigrant groups ranked in numerical order were as follows: Canadians, Germans, Englishmen, Swedes and Norwegians.

The nonwhite population of Stevens County was 838, according to the Census of 1960. The races included 793 Indians, 14 Negroes, 7 Filipinos and 4 Japanese, residing mainly in rural places. The Indians live mostly on the Spokane Reservation.

Table 3. Employment of the Population
Stevens County, 1960

Types of Employment	Total Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	5,890
Agriculture	1,593
Forestry and Fisheries . . .	48
Mining	112
Construction	317
Manufacturing	1,193
Transportation, Communications and other Public Utilities .	267
Retail and Wholesale Trade .	887
Miscellaneous Services . . .	1,064
Public Administration (govern- ment employment)	270
Other employment	139

Source: U. S. Census of Population

In 1960, a total of 5,890 persons were employed in the county. Agriculture is the most important type of employment in Stevens County. According to the Census figures, 1,593 or about 27 percent of all self-employed and employed persons were in agriculture. Manufacturing of lumber and mineral products was second in employment. Work in wholesale and retail stores in the various towns was third as

a source of wages. The next largest field of work was in the miscellaneous services covering many trades. Mining work, formerly second in importance, was one of the minor occupations in 1960.

According to the 1930 Census, there were 126 males per 100 females in Stevens County. In 1960, Stevens' population consisted of 9,217 males and 8,667 females, which was a ratio of 106 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. In 1960, rural men numbered 7,732 and rural women 6,706--a ratio of 115 males per 100 females.

Stevens County's population is aging. The percentage of older people has been increasing steadily since 1870. The 1930 Census showed only 7.7 percent of the people in the county were 65 and over, whereas in 1960, they accounted for 11.5 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 young people 5 to 9 years of age. Children to 4 years of age formed the second largest group, while those between 10 and 14 years were third. Children under 15 years of age accounted for over 31 percent of the county's population.

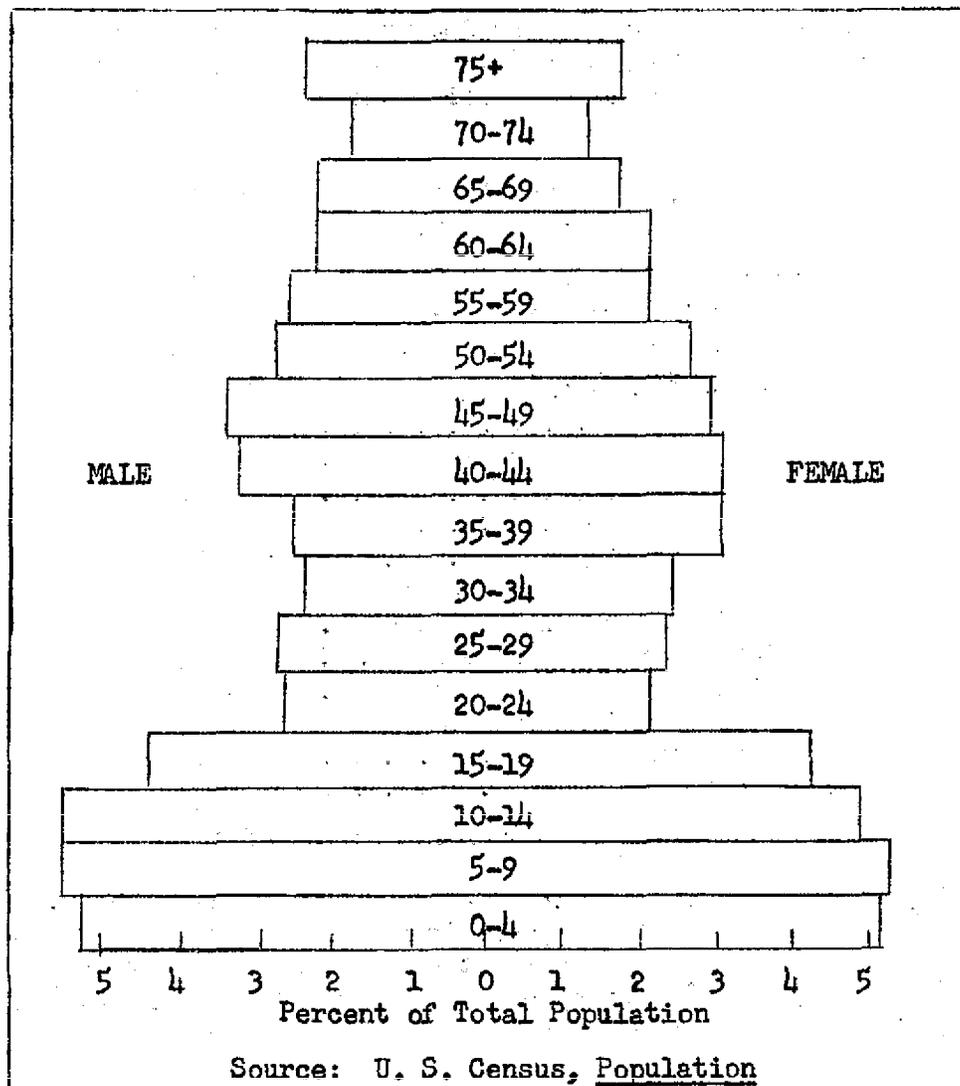


Figure 4. Age Distribution of Population, Stevens County, 1960