

Population Growth of Indiana Cities, 1940-1950

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is threefold, namely, (1) to present a brief statistical description of Indiana city growth during the past decade; (2) to give some tentative interpretations for the tempo of increase or decrease; and (3) to suggest a growth terminology with definite statistical meanings.

Statistics used in this study were secured from Preliminary Count: PC—2 and 3.

Exceptional Growth (Over 100 per cent increase)

Six cities in Indiana which more than doubled their population during the decade 1940-1950 are Charlestown, Clarksville, Griffith, Highland, Munster and Speedway. Charlestown's growth amounted to more than 400 per cent as it jumped from a population of 939 to 4,760. Munster shows a growth of over 170 per cent, an increase from 1,751 to 4,750. Of these six only Highland with a population of 2,723 was classified as a city in the 1940 census. During the past decade, Indiana passed a law qualifying a political unit with a population of 2,000 as a city.

In addition to their exceptional growth within this decade, these settlements have another characteristic in common, namely, they occupy rim locations to much larger cities. They all serve as residential settlements for persons commuting 15 miles or less to adjacent metropolitan areas. Should one draw circles with 15 mile radii around Gary and/or Hammond, Louisville, and Indianapolis, he will find that the circles enclose all six of these small cities. Only political boundaries separate Munster, Highland and Griffith from each other. And in turn, only a political boundary to the north along the Calumet River separates them from Hammond. They are only a few miles southwest of Gary.

Clarksville, sandwiched between the political boundaries of Jeffersonville on the east, and New Albany on the west, is just across the river from Louisville and forms a part of that city's metropolitan district. Charlestown is 15 miles northeast of Jeffersonville.

Only a political boundary separates Speedway from the western portion of Indianapolis.

In the 1950 census three cities are listed for which no population statistics were given ten years ago. They are Cedar Lake, Home Corner, and South LaPorte. Each has a population of over 2,500. The largest is Cedar Lake, with 3,945. It is less than 20 miles from the heart of either Gary or Hammond. South LaPorte is about equidistant from South Bend and Gary—a distance of less than 30 miles. Home

Corner is not shown on the most recent official state map of Indiana but is in Marion County adjacent to Indianapolis.

Excellent Growth (50-100 per cent growth)

Six of our cities show an excellent growth with increases from 50 to 100 per cent, namely, Angola, Columbus, East Gary, Lakeland, Walkerton and West Lafayette. Three of these are adjacent to or buttress larger cities. East Gary adjoins Gary. Walkerton is approximately 20 miles southwest of South Bend. Lakeland, adjoining Michigan City on the east, is about equidistant between Gary and South Bend.

The residential function also plays a part in interpreting the growth of West Lafayette since a new ruling was made for the 1950 census whereby part of the college students qualify as residents.

Columbus' growth is partially explained by the annexation of East Columbus, an unincorporated area with a population of about 3,500.

Angola in northeastern Indiana, 53 miles east of Elkhart, and approximately the same distance north of Fort Wayne, seems to be the only city in this group whose growth is not partially interpreted by employment opportunities in adjacent large cities, change in definition as to the counting of college students, or the annexation of adjacent residential areas.

Very Good Growth (25-49.99 per cent increase)

Seventeen Indiana cities show a very good growth during the past decade with increases between 25 and 49.99 per cent. The distribution of these cities again suggests the strong influence of relative locations adjacent to large city areas with work, shopping and service opportunities. Automobile transportation and hard-surfaced roads makes commuting twenty to thirty miles feasible.

Ten of these 17 cities are within a 25 mile radius of Indianapolis, Gary, Louisville and Cincinnati.

Four of them cluster around Indianapolis. Greenfield is 21 miles to the east, Danville is 20 miles to the west, Plainfield lies 8 miles to the southwest, and Beech Grove is only about a mile southeast of the Indianapolis boundary.

Four other cities from this group, Hobart, Chesterton, Crown Point and Valparaiso, are near Gary. The Hobart political boundary touches Gary on the west. Crown Point, to the south, Valparaiso to the southeast and Chesterton to the east are all less than 20 miles from Gary.

The last two cities of the ten, Jeffersonville and Greendale, owe their growth in part because they serve as residential areas for workers commuting to and from Louisville and Cincinnati.

Of the seven remaining cities in this group of 17, the growth of three, and perhaps four, is partially or primarily explained by their residential function. Bloomington, as a university city, owes most of its increase to the ruling qualifying some college students as residents. Greencastle has and North Manchester may have benefitted by the same method.

Just east of Camp Atterbury, Edinburg partially owes its development to the influx of people during two wars.

Knox, Rensselaer, and Scottsburg, though not located near large cities or influenced by college student populations, show an increase of 25-49.99 per cent increase.

Steady Growth (10-24.99 per cent increase)

Forty-eight of the 138 cities in Indiana maintained a steady growth during the 1940's with increases of 10 to 24.99 per cent. (The reader should keep in mind constantly that settlements with 2,000 individuals qualify as cities according to state law.) These cities are well scattered over the state from New Albany in the southeast to Hammond in the northwest, from Evansville in the southwest to Fort Wayne and Kendallville in the northeast.

It is interesting to note that 14 of the state's 19 largest cities are in this group. Bloomington is the only one of Indiana's 19 largest cities which shows an increase of over 25 per cent.

Minor Growth (5 to 9.99 per cent increase)

Twenty-seven or approximately one-fifth of the cities reveal a minor growth from 5 to 9.99 per cent. Eleven of these are south of Indianapolis and 16 north. Indianapolis, our largest city, is in the list and so is Elkhart, the thirteenth largest city.

Practically No Growth (0-4.99 per cent increase)

Seventeen or over one-tenth of the cities showed practically no growth, and the group might be characterized as stagnant. They were simply able to hold their 1940 number and add a few families. Nine of these 17 are south of Indianapolis. Terre Haute, the seventh largest city in Indiana, had a growth of 2.2 per cent.

Minor Decline (0-4.99 per cent decrease)

Six cities, Aurora, East Chicago, Garrett, Mitchell, Petersburg and Princeton had fewer people in 1950 than ten years earlier. Garrett had only two people less and Mitchell had only a 3.5 per cent decline, but these cities failed "to hold" or retain their 1940 population figure. East Chicago is north of Indianapolis and the other five are to the south. The largest of these cities, East Chicago, is completely surrounded by other political units or Lake Michigan and cannot expand its territory materially. Consequently, as residential land gives way to other urban uses, East Chicago will probably continue to decline.

Serious Decline (Decrease of 5 per cent or more)

Eight cities showing a decline of 5 per cent or over are Bicknell, Bloomfield, Cannelton, Clinton, Jasonville, Linton, West Terre Haute and Whiting. Whiting, like East Chicago, cannot expand its political

boundaries and will probably continue to decline. However, the other seven cities in this group have ample space for expansion. It is important to note that four of these cities, Bicknell, Clinton, Jasonville, and Linton, are located in the coal fields of western Indiana, in areas where extensive strip mines have been or are in operation. Bloomfield is on the edge of the Crawford Upland, the most rugged and least desirable physiographic region in southern Indiana from the standpoint of cultivated agriculture.

Urban Growth Terminology

Would it not be wise for us to adopt a descriptive word terminology so some definite statistical limits are borne in mind when we say a minor growth, or steady growth or excellent growth?

In preparing this study, the following table of descriptive terms and their statistical values seemed appropriate:

<i>Descriptive Term</i>	<i>Statistical Value</i>	<i>No. of Cities in Indiana, 1940-1950</i>
Exceptional Growth	100 per cent and over	9
Excellent Growth	50-100 per cent	6
Very Good Growth	25-49.99 per cent	17
Steady Growth	10-24.99 per cent	48
Minor Growth	5-9.99 per cent	27
Practically No Growth	0-4.99 per cent	17
Minor Decline	4.99-0 per cent	6
Serious Decline	5 per cent or more	8
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Total		138

The third column indicates the number of cities to which the term is applied.

Summary

Indiana's 19 largest cities in 1950 failed to grow rapidly during the past decade. Only Bloomington had an increase of over 25 per cent.

Forty-eight cities or approximately one-third maintained a steady growth.

Thirty-two or about one-sixth show a very good to exceptional growth. Nine of these more than doubled their population. Twenty-four of the 32 have benefitted substantially by a favorable relative location, namely, a short commuting distance to the largest Indiana cities or to the metropolitan districts of Louisville and Cincinnati. The growth of four additional cities is partially interpreted by qualifying college students as residents.

It becomes obvious that the residential function has played an important role in providing a stimulus for development in these rapidly

growing cities during the past decade. It may be that the feasibility of commuting has decentralized factory workers during the past ten years more rapidly than companies have decentralized their factories.

As we look to the future more of these small cities with their important residential function may become a part of expanding urban area or metropolitan districts.

Cities with the greatest decline are concentrated in southwestern Indiana especially in the coal fields.