

# A Population Map for Indiana for 1940

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## The Distribution of Indiana's Population

The number of people in Indiana and their distribution, according to the 1940 Census, are graphically represented in Figure 1.<sup>1</sup> This representation is accomplished by the use of a series of comparative circles for inhabitants of incorporated towns and dots for the rural population.<sup>2</sup> The areas of the circles are proportional to the size of the towns represented. For cities having a population over 10,000, the actual political boundaries are shown. The dots, each representing one hundred rural inhabitants, are localized by townships.

The use of dots and comparative circles for the representation of distributional phenomena is a method widely used by geographers in population studies.<sup>3, 4</sup>

The outstanding feature of Indiana's urban population distribution is the dominant position held by Indianapolis. This city, about three times as large as the second ranking city, lies at the geographic center of the state. It also dominates the most highly urbanized area, a triangular region bounded by lines drawn northeastward from Terre Haute to Fort Wayne and from Terre Haute eastward to Richmond. In or near this region are found twenty of Indiana's thirty-five cities with populations in excess of 10,000.

A second highly urbanized belt extends from Goshen, in the north-central part of the state, westward to include Indiana's lake cities. Here are ten of the state's cities with populations of 10,000 or more. The remaining five cities in this class are in southern Indiana with the Ohio Valley centers of Evansville and New Albany-Jeffersonville the largest.

The dispersal of rural population is, with few exceptions, rather uniform. The most notable exception is found near the large cities. Other exceptions are the relatively less densely peopled Kankakee Basin, portions of the Norman Upland in Brown and Jackson counties and the Crawford Upland in Martin County. A large part of Brown County is included in state and national forests and in a state park. Martin County is the site of a large state forest. There is a perceptible thinning

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<sup>1</sup>This map is based on data from the Bureau of the Census, Population, First Series, Number of Inhabitants, Indiana, 16th Census of the United States, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>The term rural refers to all persons living outside the limits of incorporated towns. Urban is used with reference to the inhabitants of incorporated towns. These terms as used here should not be confused with the Census Bureau definition of "rural" and "urban."

<sup>3</sup>See Smith, Guy-Harold, 1928. The population of Wisconsin, *Geographical Review*, 28:420, for examples of this type of map.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, Guy-Harold, 1928. A population map for Ohio for 1920, *Geographical Review*, 28:426.

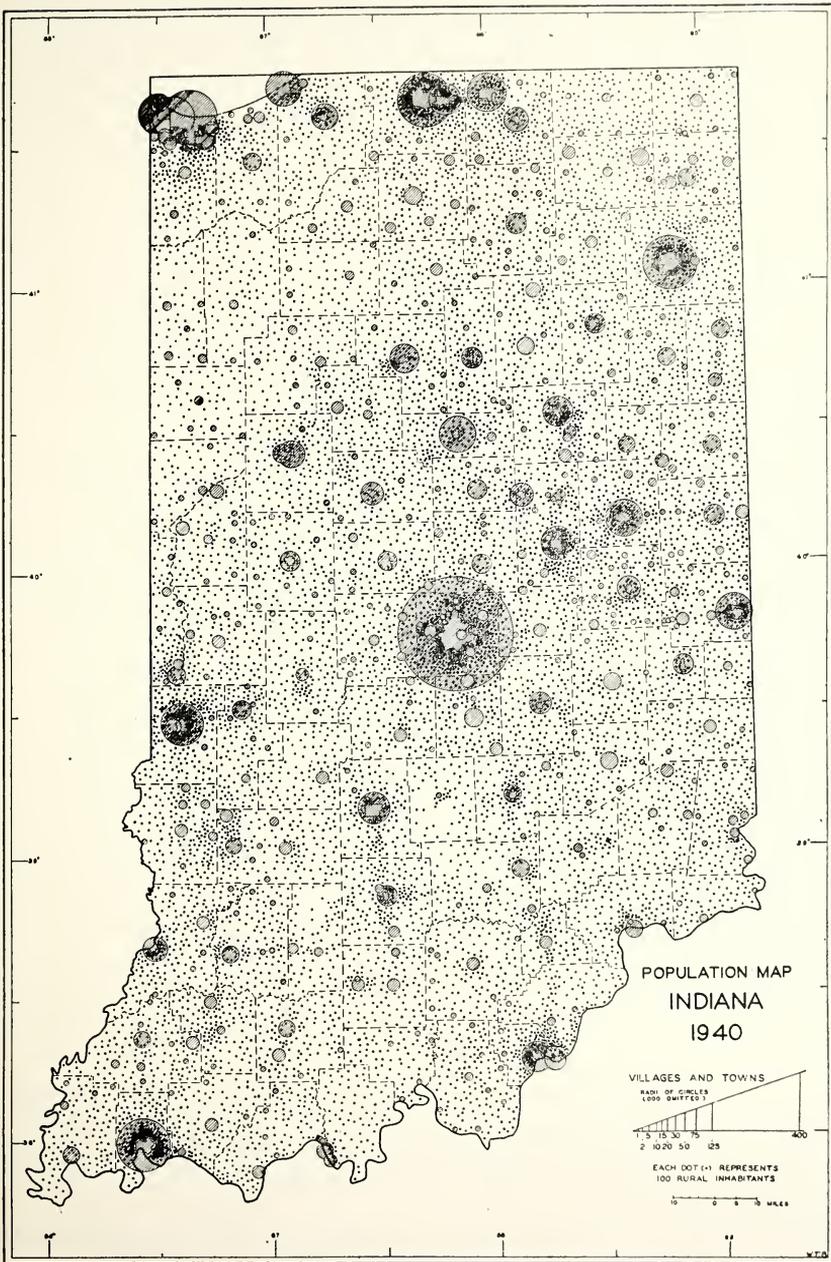


Fig. 1

of the rural population in the counties bordering the Ohio River although the differences between population densities here and in the better agricultural lands of the northern part of the state are not as great as might be expected.

The principal concentrations of rural population are found in the townships which are adjacent to the larger cities. This suburban grouping is particularly noticeable in the peripheral area of the lake cities, South Bend-Mishawaka, Fort Wayne, Anderson, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, New Albany and Evansville. The growth of suburban populations has been a characteristic feature in the increasing urbanization of the nation's population during the past thirty years. Such densely populated rural areas have resulted primarily from attempts on the part of city dwellers to escape air pollution, high taxes, traffic hazards for children and the failure of zoning ordinances to protect residential property from incursion by business and industrial developments.<sup>5</sup> They have been made possible by improved methods of transportation, particularly the automobile.

**Changes in the Distribution of Indiana's Population.** The population of Indiana, numbering 3,427,796 in 1940, increased 189,293 or five and eight-tenths per cent in the last decade. This is the smallest increase in the history of the state in terms of per cent, and, with the exception of the decade ending in 1910, the smallest numerical gain since 1820. The percentage of gain for Indiana is well below that for the nation but, compared with adjoining states, it exceeds that for Illinois and Ohio and is less than that of Kentucky and Michigan.

In states where the changes in number and localization of the inhabitants have been large these changes may be made apparent by a comparison of a series of distributional maps of the type of Figure 1.<sup>6</sup> For Indiana the changes in population were so small in the last decade that a direct comparison of the 1930 and 1940 maps of population distribution does not show adequately the shifts in the number and localization of Indiana's inhabitants. These aspects of population change are better shown for Indiana by separate maps. Figure 2 represents areas in which the population has increased. Figure 3 shows the areas of population decrease. The method of depiction is similar to that of Figure 1. Proportionate circles are used to show changes for incorporated towns. Villages for which the gain or loss in population was less than twenty are not shown on the maps. Dots, each representing ten inhabitants and localized by townships, show changes in rural population.

The decade between 1930 and 1940 was a period during which a variety of forces affecting population numbers and distribution were active in Indiana. The maps are based on inventories of population taken at the beginning and end of this period. The census of 1930

<sup>5</sup>The prime factors as listed by Mr. Earl B. Teckemeyer, President of the Indianapolis Real Estate Board, reported in the Indianapolis Star for November 2, 1941.

<sup>6</sup>For such a series of maps see Petty, Julian J., 1938. Progress Report on State Planning in South Carolina, p. 14.

marked the close of a period of great prosperity during which the trend of population movement was definitely cityward. All but five of Indiana's cities in the 10,000 or over class gained in population in the 1920-1930 decade. Eleven enjoyed increases of more than fifty per cent. For the state as a whole the urban increase amounted to twenty-one per cent and the rural<sup>7</sup> population declined three-tenths of one per cent. Between 1930 and 1940, the increase in rural population, both in per cent and in actual number, exceeded the urban increase for the first time since 1890.

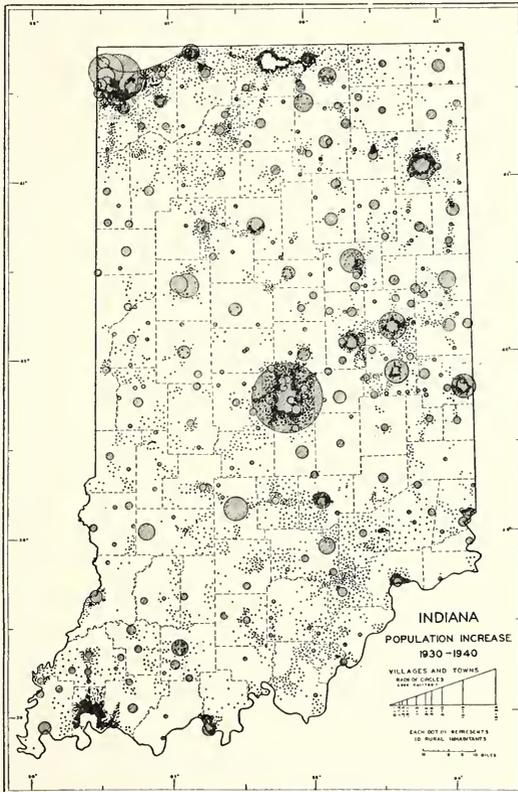


Fig. 2

The economic and social forces operating to cause distributional changes in Indiana's population in the past ten years are not capable of exact evaluation.<sup>8</sup> They include the nationwide depression which

<sup>7</sup> Urban and rural used here in accordance with the Bureau of Census definition.

<sup>8</sup> See Nat. Res. Com. Report of the committee on population problems, 1938. Problems of a changing population, pp. 83-116, for a discussion of these forces.

was felt in all walks of life in Indiana but probably most seriously in the manufacturing, mining and quarrying centers. The most disastrous flood in the history of the Ohio Valley occurred in 1937. The various forms of State and Federal relief were introduced. The state's long dormant petroleum industry was revived in 1937 with the principal effect being felt in southwestern Indiana. These forces, and others, were so varied in nature, duration and locale that many details of their effects are lost in the interval between 1930 and 1940. The result of these

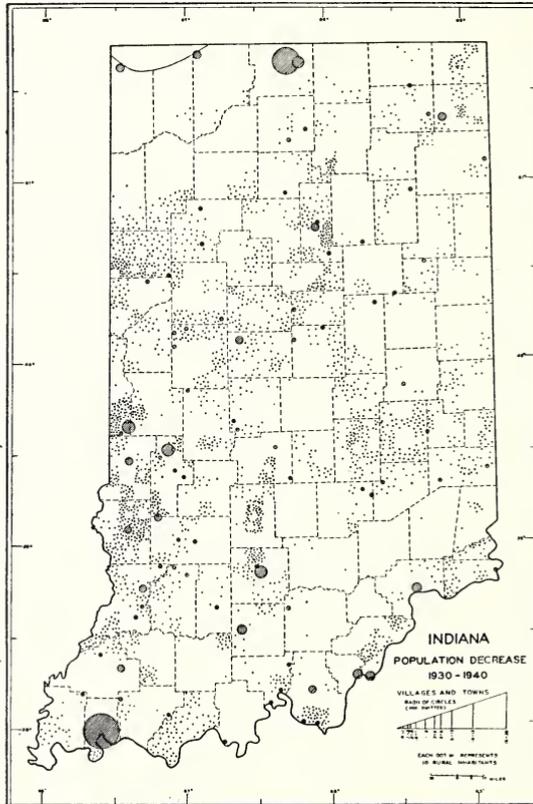


Fig. 3

forces, as they affect population number and location, may be seen in Figures 2 and 3.

**Areas of Population Increase.** The principal trend in the size of Indiana's incorporated towns in the past decade has been upward but at a slower rate than that of the 1920-1930 census period. Of the 494 towns included in Figure 1, seventy-four per cent increased in size, the increases ranging from 100 or less to more than 10,000 for Indianapolis and Gary. (Table I.) Twenty-six per cent of the towns lost

TABLE I.—Percentage of change for 494 incorporated towns.

Increase		Decrease		
Number of Towns	Per cent of Total	Number of Persons	Number of Towns	Per cent of Total
209	42.3	1-100	108	21.7
118	23.8	101-500	13	2.6
22	4.4	501-1000	3	.6
18	3.6	1000-over	3	.6

population, the majority of the losses being less than 100 and the maximum loss exceeding 5,000.<sup>9</sup>

The largest percentage increases achieved without enlargement of political limits are found in Frankfort and Gary where gains of twelve per cent and eleven per cent, respectively, occurred. Other towns, for which gains of over ten per cent occurred, are Lafayette, Bloomington, New Castle and Columbus. Each of these cities incorporated suburban areas between 1930 and 1940.

There are two large population agglomerations in Indiana, each consisting of a dominant city and its satellites. Indianapolis, with eighteen towns in its peripheral area, and Gary, with thirteen, are the largest of these groupings. Of greater significance than the actual population of the incorporated towns in these areas is the population of the metropolitan area, a figure which includes the rural non-farm population but excludes the rural farm population. The estimate for the Indianapolis area is 450,000, with an increase of about six per cent over 1930, and 280,000 for Gary, a gain of about nine per cent.

The most notable increases in rural populations are those found in townships adjacent to the larger cities. This suburban growth is evident, in Figure 2, for most of the cities. The exceptions, for the most part, are those which extended their political limits to include their suburbs in the last decade. Because of this type of expansion, Bloomington and Lafayette show practically no increase in their suburban areas.

Other areas of rural population increase are found in the northwestern counties and a rather indefinite belt extending southward from Brown and Bartholomew counties to Jackson and Floyd counties on the Ohio River. Physiographically, the northwestern area lies in the Kankakee Lacustrine Section of the Northern Lake and Moraine Region and the belt in the south lies largely in the Norman Upland.<sup>10</sup> These physiographic regions are relatively poor agricultural areas and are among the less densely settled lands of the state. It is possible that a part of the displaced urban population, seeking cheap land, found homes in these less desirable agricultural regions.

<sup>9</sup> Evansville is reported as having lost 5,187. The 1930 census for Evansville included population of parts of five townships outside the city limits. These suburban areas were excluded in the 1940 census.

<sup>10</sup> Malott, Clyde A., 1922. Physiography of Indiana, Handbook of Indiana Geology, part 2, p. 66.

**Areas of Population Decreases.** Most of the urban centers which lost population in the last decade can be quite definitely localized. They are found in the coal mining districts, the quarrying district and along the Ohio River. The chief exception is found in South Bend and Mishawaka. Here, since there were no changes in the cities' areas, the loss seems to be genuine. Evansville, which in Figure 3 shows the state's greatest loss, actually gained, in its metropolitan area, approximately 18,000 inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

The loss in rural population, although occurring in townships in nearly every county in the state, tends to be concentrated in certain areas. Eleven of the thirteen counties touching the Ohio River include townships in which the rural population decreased. The quarrying and coal mining districts in southern and western Indiana lost rural population in the last decade, a period of severe economic depression for these industries. The greatest loss in rural populations seems to have occurred in the counties that lie near a line drawn from Benton County in northwestern Indiana southeastward to Dearborn County on the Ohio River. Most of these counties lie in the Tipton Till Plain, Indiana's richest farming region. This belt of rural population loss tends to coincide with the counties in which the number of farms declined between 1930 and 1940. This fact suggests that the consolidation of farms and the mechanization of agriculture in the better farming regions has tended to reduce the size of the rural farm population. Despite this loss in central Indiana and in other areas the gains in the rural townships in the extreme northwest and in many of those in the southern counties gave Indiana a net increase in rural population in the last decade.

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote Number 9.