

# History and Forecast of Population of the State of Illinois\*

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**T**HOROUGH UNDERSTANDING of population composition, movement, and characteristics is necessary before any sound program to improve the economic status or the social and physical welfare of that population can be applied. As will be developed later, the Illinois population is made up of about 63 per cent of persons who were born here, about 20 per cent who were born in other states of the Union, and 17 per cent foreign-born population.

The general population drift in the United States has been westward since the formation of the thirteen states (Fig. 1). This westward movement, and the increasingly rapid urbanization of population, are outstanding characteristics of the whole country. To understand this westward migration one has only to trace population growths of each state from its first available census to 1930. Such studies show that the oldest states, with the exception of Maine, Vermont, and Pennsylvania, early lost their high proportionate positions with respect to U. S. population, as territory farther west and south became colonized. New York and the southern and middle-western states reached their peak positions between 1830 and 1870. Then they, in turn, lost ground with further westward migration, but stabilized their trends around 1870. The far western and southwestern states have had steady increases in per cent of total population beginning with their colonization. Numerically, no state has had a decrease in population, but those with large urban centers have had, by and large, the greatest increases.

In 1810, when its first census count was made, Illinois had a population of only 12,282 persons. These were concentrated mostly along the Mississippi bottom lands between Kaskaskia and Cahokia. Kaskaskia, the first capital and commercial center, was founded about 1700. When Illinois was admitted to statehood in 1818 its population had increased to about 40,000, confined almost entirely to strips along the Ohio, Wabash and Mississippi rivers in the southern end of the state.

Although the population of Illinois had reached 851,470 by 1850, the greatest increase came during the era of railroad construction.

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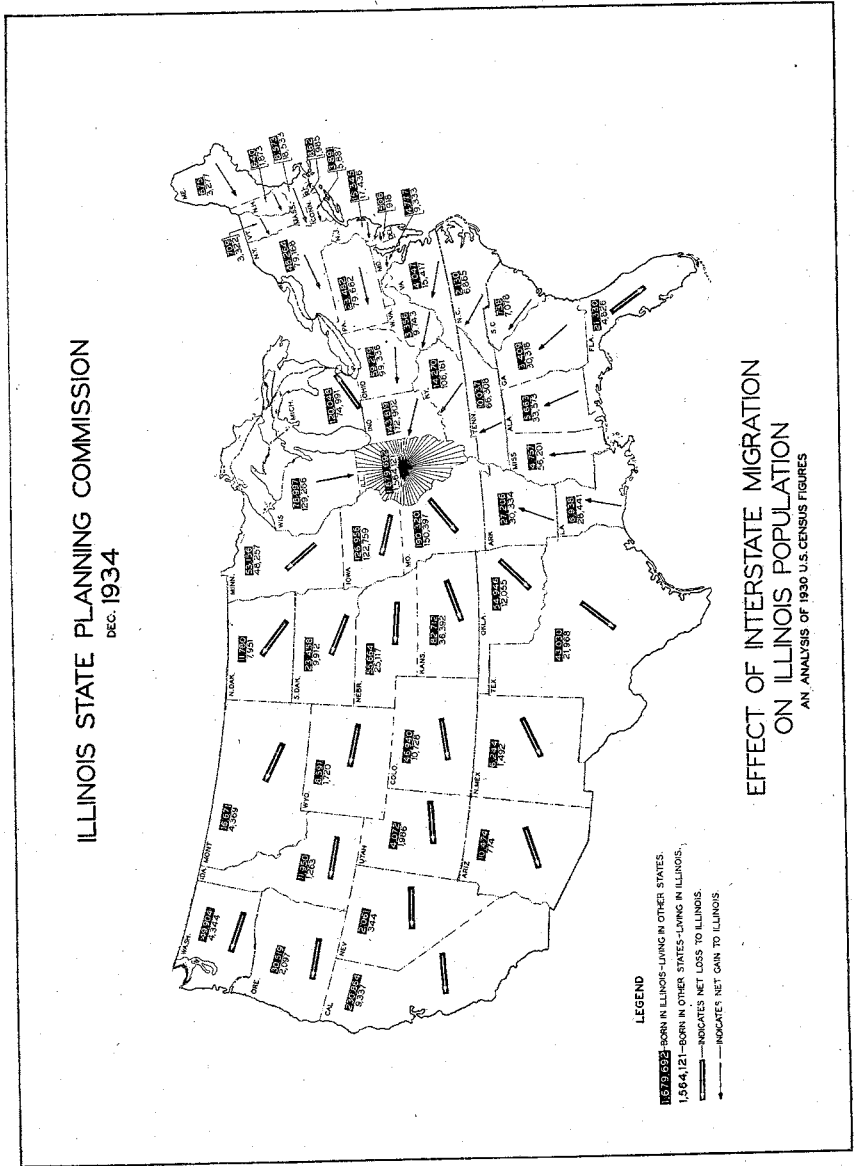


Fig. 1

From 1850 to 1860 the population more than doubled, and by the end of the century the state's population was 4,821,550. In 1930 the census count showed 7,630,654, a gain, for the 30 years, of 58 per cent.

One of the outstanding characteristics of population movement in Illinois has been the great increase in urban population (Fig. 2). Almost three-fourths of the people live in towns and cities larger than 2,500. Increases in urban population are particularly noticeable in the larger cities (Fig. 3).

In only 13 of the 102 counties in the state did the proportion of the state's population living in the county increase between 1890 and 1930. Five of these counties are in the Chicago region, two in the East St. Louis region, four have been pulled up by major industrial cities and two are coal-producing counties (Fig. 4).

**Population migration.**—Migration of population is another important population characteristic. Analysis of census figures shows that in 1930 there were 1,679,692 persons born in Illinois who were living in other states. On the other hand there were 1,564,121 persons living in Illinois who were born in other states. Thus, the state's population has lost 115,571 persons in interstate migration (Fig. 5). Seventy-five per cent of the increase in Illinois population is due to the natural increase, that is, the births minus deaths, and the net foreign immigration gain is around 25 per cent of the total.

If we further analyze the figures on interstate migration we find that the general flow of population is westward. Only two states east of the Mississippi took more of our native population than they gave Illinois of their native populations. West of the Mississippi the situation is reversed. California takes most of the errant native Illinois people. More than 230,000 native Illinoisans were counted in California's 1930 population (Fig. 1).

Of the native Illinoisans living here, 67 per cent are found to be urban and 33 per cent rural. Oddly enough 67 per cent of those who were born in Illinois but have moved elsewhere are also urban. Of the 1,564,121 persons moving into Illinois from other states 81 per cent are urban and 19 per cent are rural (Fig. 5). Thus we have an infiltration of population which is 27 per cent more urban than the native Illinois population is. This characteristic influences the make-up of our whole population, and were it to continue indefinitely, would make the entire state even more predominantly urban. In fact, studies of the urban and rural population development indicate that the whole state will have become 80 per cent urban by 1960 (Fig. 2). It is estimated that by 1960, 84 per cent of the entire state population will be concentrated in 28 counties that have shown steadily increasing tendencies.

**Changes in age groups.**—A most important change in the composition of our population is the decrease in the proportion in the younger age groups. In only 9 counties in the state—five of which

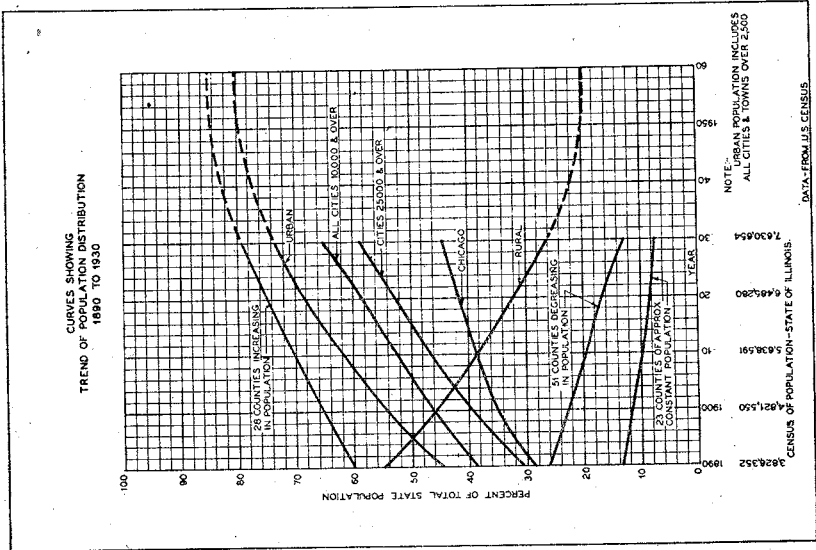
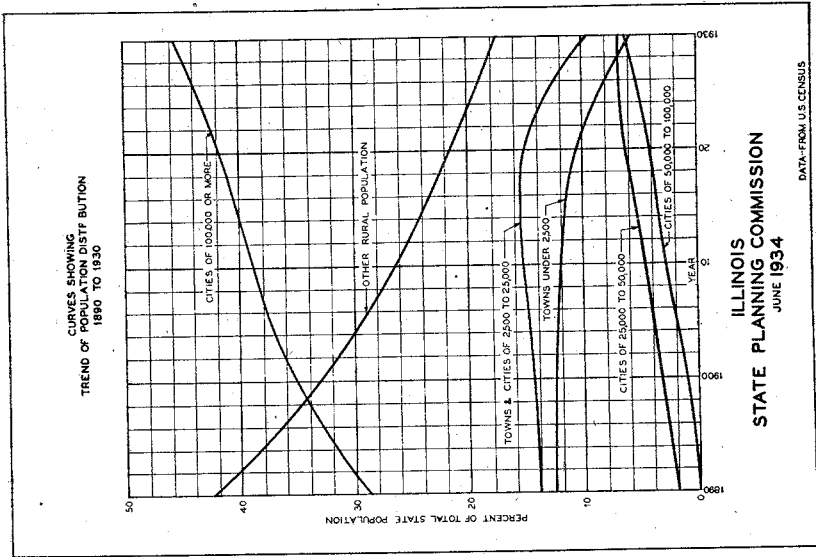


Fig. 2

are urban—was the birth-rate higher for the 1928-1932 five-year average than for the 1923-1927 average (Fig. 6). In 1930, 62.5 per cent of all families in the state had no children under 10 years of age and only 2.5 per cent had four or more children under 10. Even among the farm population 56.5 per cent of the families had no children under 10 and only 4.8 per cent had four or more children, with wide variations being noted as between counties. Contrary to what might be expected Cook County did not have an exceptionally low proportion of small children, but about the average for the state.

For the 16 years between 1916 and 1931 the natural population increase in Illinois averaged 49,000 annually. This is the births minus the deaths. The highest variation above the average was attained in 1921, when the natural increase amounted to 72,685. The lowest net gain was made in 1918, when the natural increase amounted to only 19,996. However, the deaths in 1918 were unusually high, so that year, a war year, cannot be considered as typical. The births recorded in 1931 were the lowest in number for the 16 years.

Improvement in public health facilities and health research have extended the life span to the point where there is an increasingly large number of persons in the old-age brackets. In 1900 there were 3.95 per cent of the whole population of Illinois over 64 years of age. By 1930 this figure had been increased to 5.52 per cent of the population. The state population increased (1900 to 1930) only 58 per cent, whereas persons over 64 years increased in numbers 121 per cent. In other words, the older persons increased in numbers at a rate more than double that of the whole population. The birth rate, on the other hand, has declined. A four-year average of recorded births (1919-1922) reveals a birth-rate per 1,000 population of 21, whereas a four-year average a decade later (1928-1931) was only 17, or a decrease of 19 per cent. Because of the war, these figures may not be entirely comparable, nevertheless they reveal a decrease trend in the birth-rate. The death rate for the two decades are 11.85 and 11.39, respectively.

The decline in the birth-rate is noticeable in the decreasing proportion of the number of persons in the lower age groups. The per cent changes from decade to decade in the various age groups is shown below.

PER CENT OF POPULATION IN VARIOUS AGE GROUPS

Census year	0-9 Years	10-19 Years	20-29 Years	30-39 Years	40-49 Years	50-64 Years	65 and over
1900. ....	22.7	19.8	18.5	15.5	10.4	9.1	4.0
1910. ....	20.3	18.9	19.7	15.3	11.6	9.9	4.3
1920. ....	20.1	17.5	18.0	16.4	12.0	11.3	4.7
1930. ....	17.0	17.9	17.4	16.5	13.5	12.2	5.5

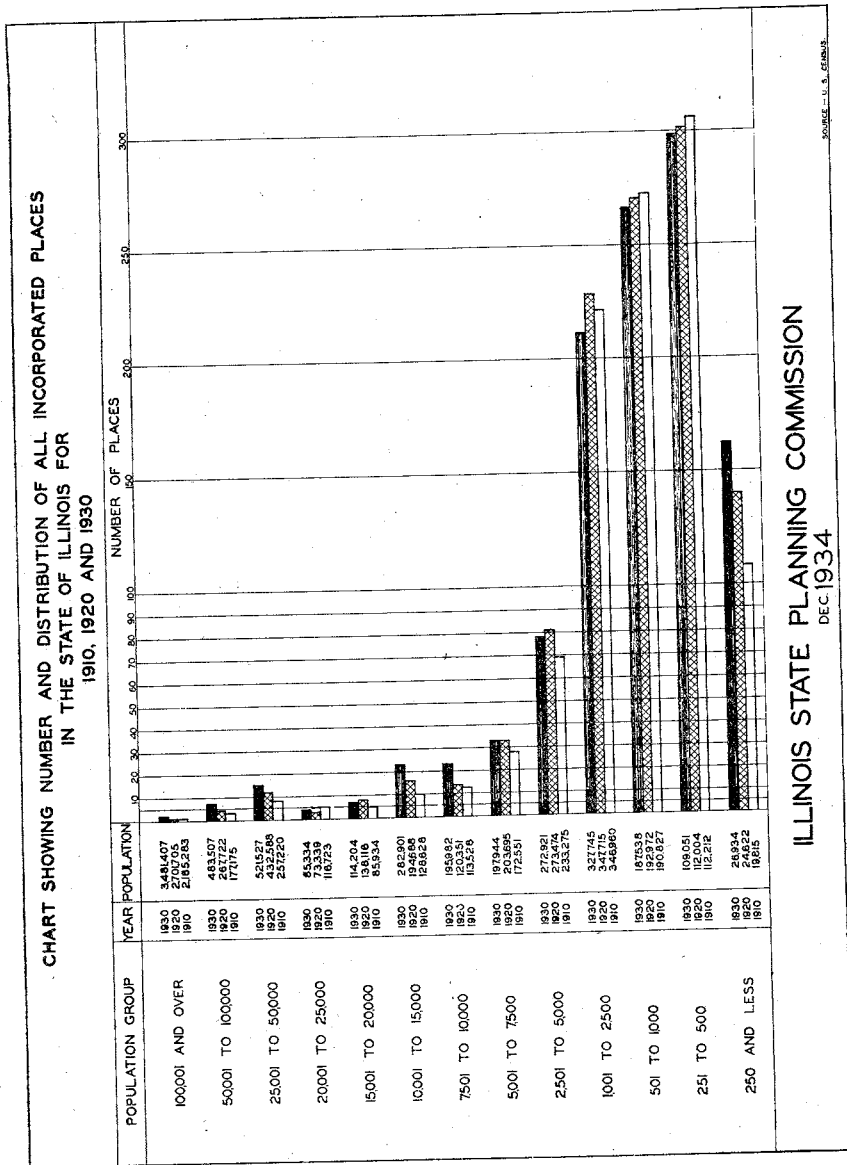


Fig. 3

This 30-year picture of population sheds much light on what the future composition of the state's population will be from the standpoint of age groups. All these considerations, coupled with economic, industrial and agricultural changes lead to a forecast for the state of a popu-

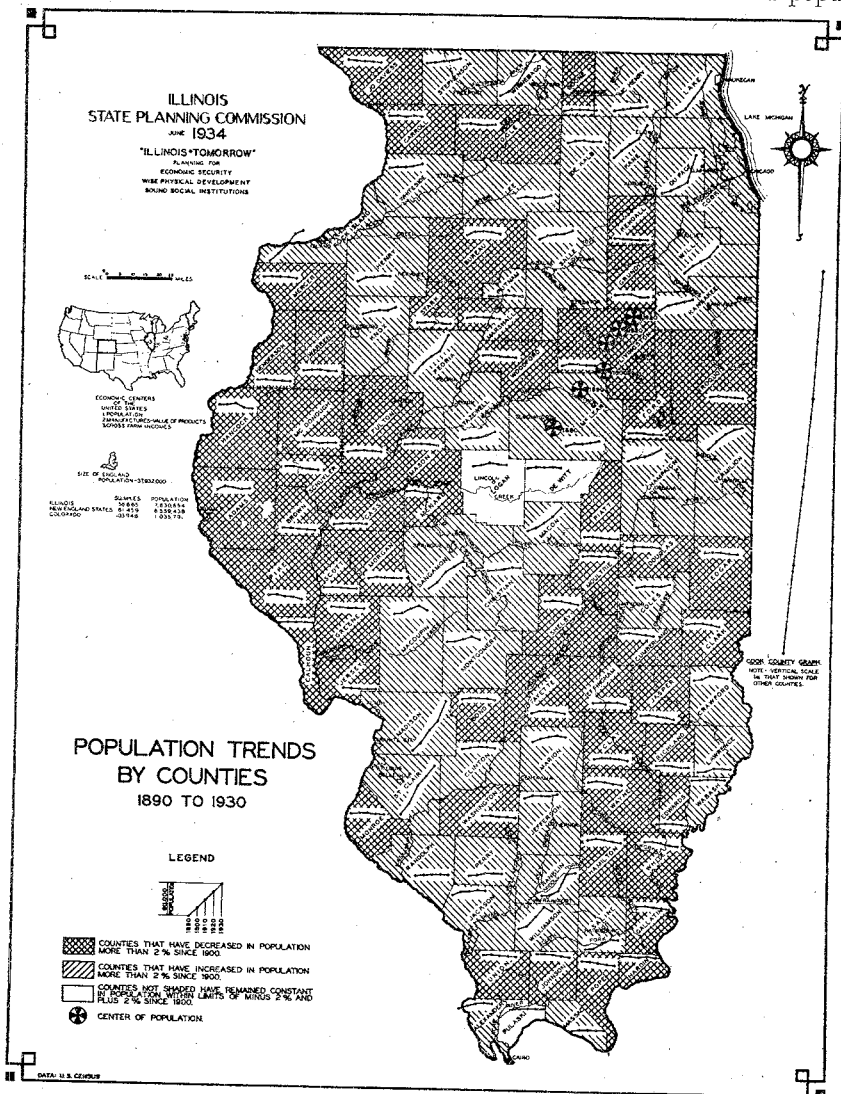


Fig. 4

lation of 9,000,000 by 1960. Of this amount it is believed that at least 7,808,150 will be urban (including all incorporated municipalities). This estimate further cites that the 201 cities and towns expected to be in the group with populations of over 2,500 inhabitants, will contain

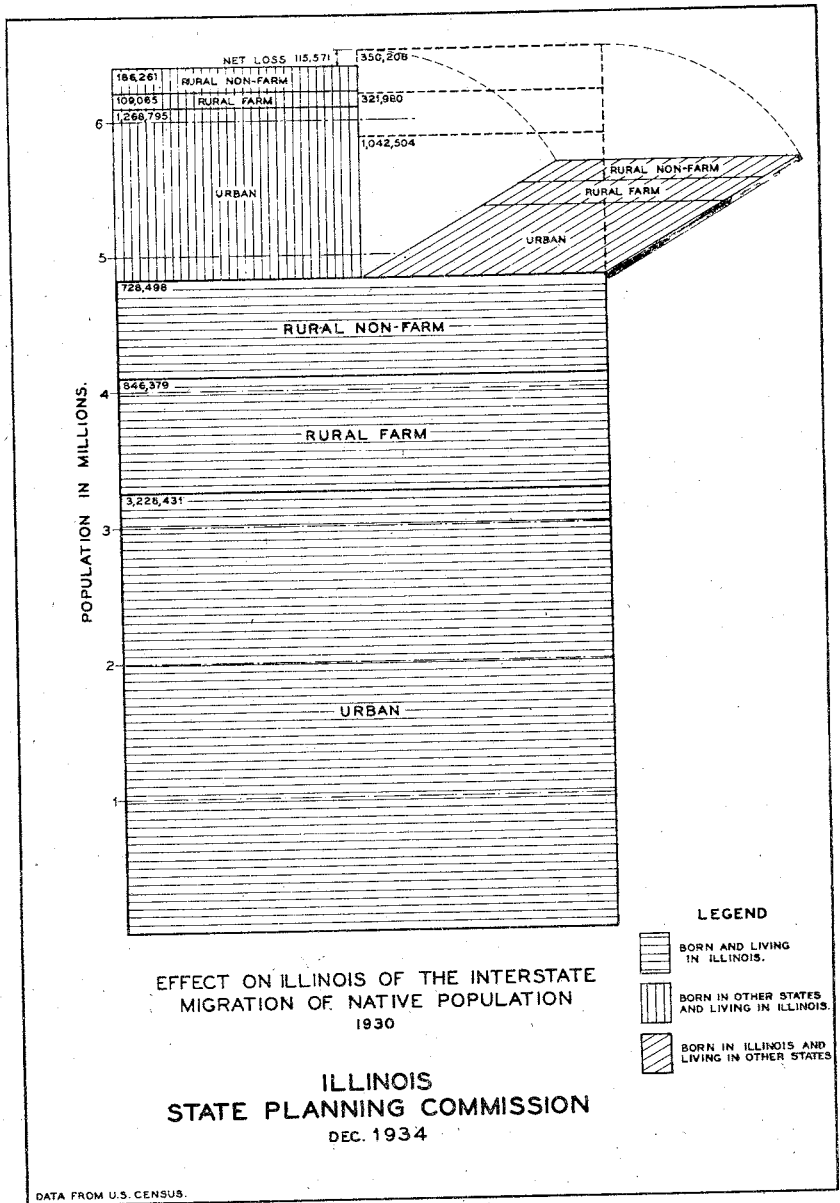


Fig. 5

7,213,400 population and the strictly farm population will be but slightly over 900,000. This forecast includes 1,960 estimates of every incorporated place in the state.

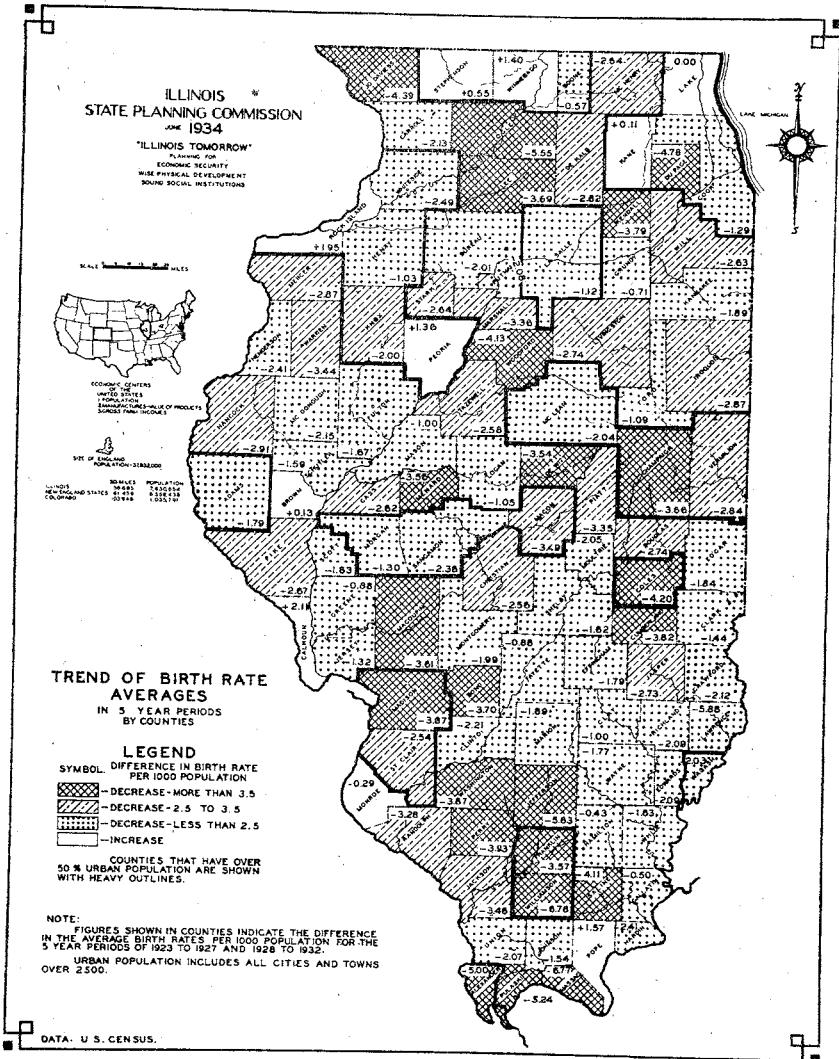
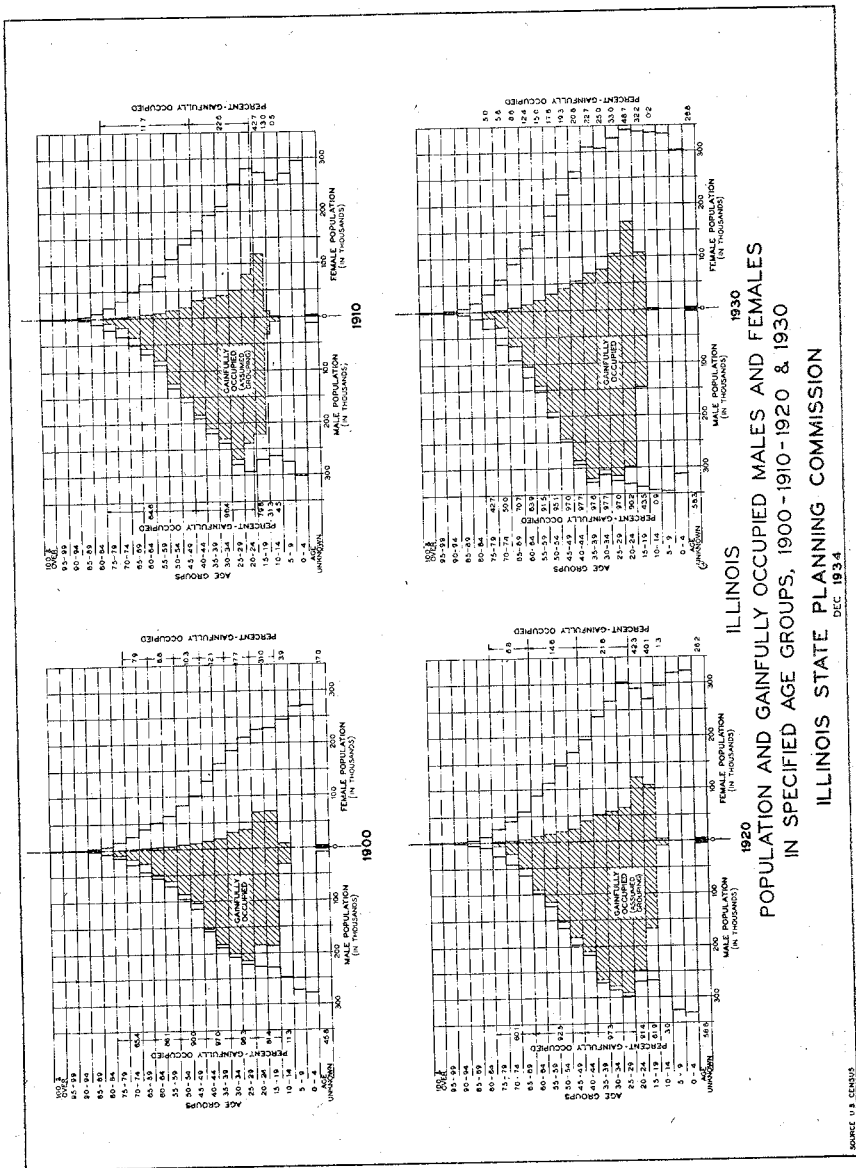


Fig. 6

**Racial characteristics.**—Having determined what the general character and amount of population is to be in the next three decades, let us examine the figures with respect to racial groups. We have seen that our population is becoming more urban all the time and that we are actually losing more native population to other states than we are gaining back. Analyses of these figures on interstate migration



ILLINOIS  
POPULATION AND GAINFULLY OCCUPIED MALES AND FEMALES  
IN SPECIFIED AGE GROUPS, 1900-1910-1920 & 1930  
ILLINOIS STATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
DEC. 1934

Fig. 7

SOURCE: U. S. CENSUS

show that, as of 1910, Illinois had lost 368,881 more native white persons than it gained; the 1920 census count showed cumulative net loss of 475,807 native whites; and in 1930 the cumulative net loss was 341,961. On the other hand, in 1910, 57,577 more negroes had come into the state than had left it; the number increased to a net gain of 116,476 in 1920; and in 1930 the cumulative net gain was found to be 223,592. Thus the net loss of all native population, due to interstate migration, had decreased from 310,896 as of the 1910 census to 115,571 as of 1930, the influx of negroes being responsible for 76 per cent of that decrease.

When this migration of negro population in and out of Illinois is compared to the United States quite another picture appears. For the whole country only 25 per cent of the negro population lives in states other than where born. On the other hand only 23 per cent of the negroes living in Illinois were born here. The U. S. censuses, for the years indicated, show a 26 per cent increase in total Illinois population from 1890 to 1900, and a 31 per cent increase for the negro population. Between 1900 and 1910 the increases were, for the state, 16.9 per cent, and for the negro, 28.1 per cent. Between 1910 and 1920 the increases were 15 and 67 per cent, respectively, while between 1920 and 1930, these relative increases continued with 17.8 per cent for the state, and 80.5 per cent for the negro.

The percentage changes in the negro population in cities over 25,000 population are even more astonishing. Although Chicago's total population increased 98 per cent between 1900 and 1930, the negro population increased from 30,150 to 233,903, or almost 800 per cent. Peoria increased its population (1900 to 1930) 87 per cent, and its negro population was augmented 117 per cent. East St. Louis gained in total population 151 per cent and in negro population 540 per cent. Evanston, with a population of 19,259 in 1900, had 737 negroes; with a 1930 population of 63,338, it had 4,938 negroes. These percentage gains are 228 and 570 per cent, respectively. However, the demand for unskilled labor, which caused the great influx of negroes between 1910 and 1930, has fallen off since the last general census, so that temporarily this movement has been checked.

Data on foreign population is not so easy to analyze. However, all foreign groups compose about 17 per cent of the total Illinois population. The highest recent net gain in population due to foreign immigration was in 1913 when Illinois' share of immigrants minus emigrants was 82,882. The next largest gain was in 1924, the year the immigration laws based on ethnic groups became effective. That year Illinois gained 42,277 foreigners. In 1930 the number of aliens who came to Illinois to live outnumbered those leaving by only 2,916, and in each of 1932 and 1933 about 2,500 more aliens returned to their native countries than came to Illinois to live.

**Conclusion.**—It appears obvious that the future growth of population of Illinois will depend on the birthrate and the further influx of negroes. Assuming as a continuing annual increment to the present population the average net of births minus deaths for the 1916-1931 period, and allowing for a continued loss, though slight, of population through interstate migration of native whites, the estimate for 1960 still can be placed at around 9,000,000 people.