

FIGURE 5-8. Population change, 1830-1970.

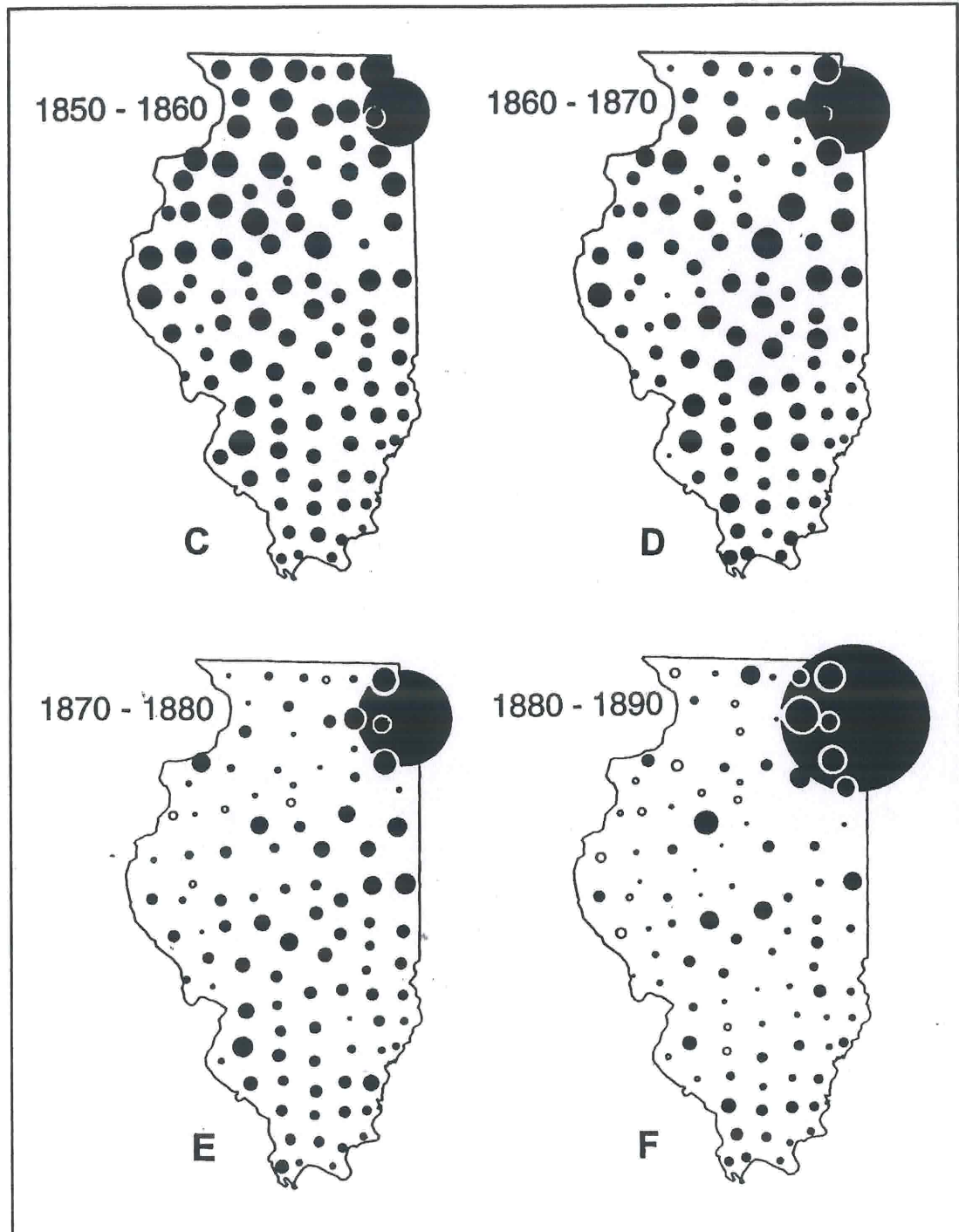


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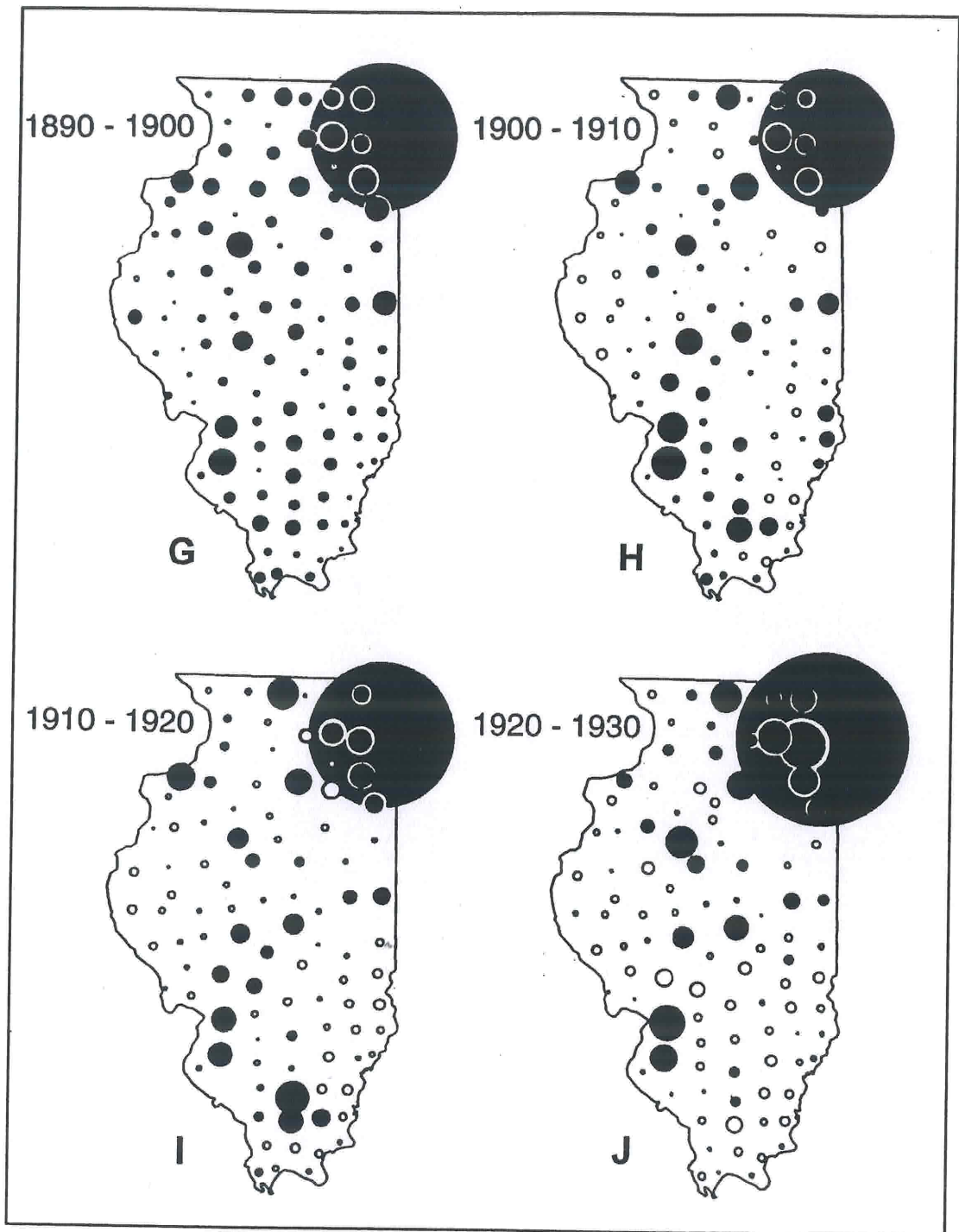


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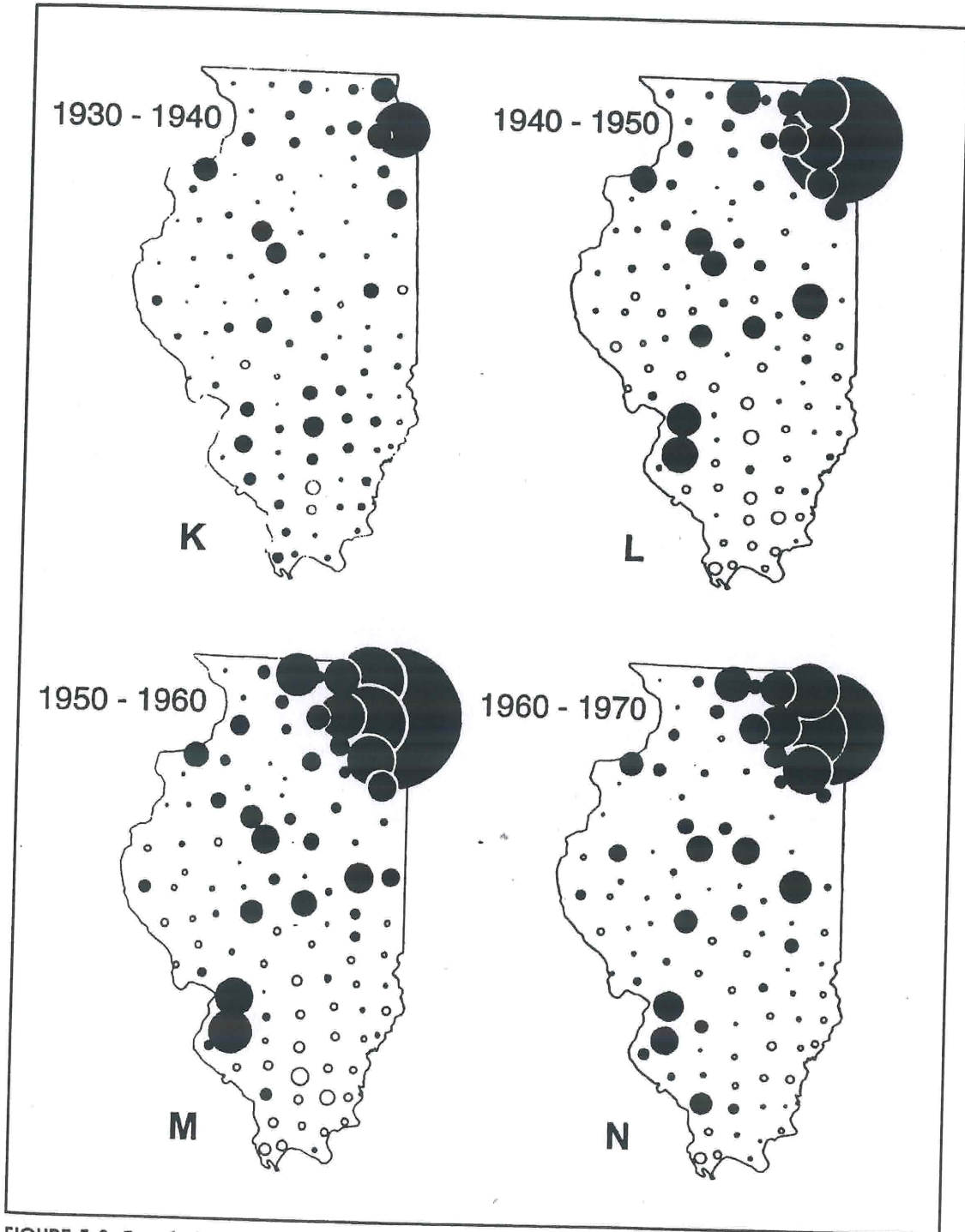


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began as stations on rail lines, and those that prospered grew at the expense of those not so located. The railroads also put long-distance drovers out of business, but concurrently made Chicago the nation's leading livestock market. Chicago bankers who supported the market development also assisted in financing the development of new farm implements as well as new farms. In addition, Chicago established the Board of Trade, which standardized the grain market and constituted the country's leading lumber market. All of this activity provided many jobs in Chicago, which led to large population growth especially in the 1850s. In addition, many small-town production plants moved to Chicago, contributing to its concentrations of trade and industry.

The somewhat uniform growth of Illinois counties in the 1850s and 1860s changed with the beginning of the 1870s (Figure 5-8E). While the growth of rural counties declined from the previous decade, Cook County more than doubled in population, and by 1880 Chicago was the nation's fourth largest city. Following the Civil War, a rural depression led to migration both to newer lands in the West and, even more, to Chicago.

The period beginning in 1880 was characterized by heavy immigration to Chicago, the state's primary industrial center. Increasingly, the new arrivals came from northern, then eastern and southern Europe. Chicago's industrial power grew with production of Minnesota's iron ore (accessible by lake transportation) and nearby supplies of coal. The rail net brought agricultural produce for processing by the city's growing labor supply drawn from its farming hinterland as well as from Europe. Mechanization on the state's farms released population from the land, often in the richest agricultural counties. Thus, while most of Illinois' downstate counties grew, 31 lost population in the 1880s. The state's population changed from 69.4 percent rural in 1880 to 55.1 percent rural in 1890

(Figure 5-8F). In addition to Chicago, some downstate cities also grew in commercial and industrial importance; several of these were mining centers.

General prosperity returned to the nation beginning about 1900, but even the previous decade was one of economic gain for Chicago and the state. Whereas other more totally agrarian states suffered depressed times, the economic diversity in Illinois coupled with its fortuitous location allowed for economic advancement. By 1900 Illinois' rural population had dropped to 45.7 percent. In the face of the depressed conditions of the early 1890s, Chicago held the Columbian Exposition which, among other things, publicized the city's technological and cultural achievements. But the general prosperity and urban growth of the first decade of the twentieth century were accompanied by population loss in 56 of the 102 Illinois counties. Again, technological improvements in agriculture released farm labor. At the same time, downstate urban and coal mining centers experienced population growth, though considerably more modest than that of Chicago.

Heavy immigrant flow from eastern and southern Europe continued for the first 30 years of the twentieth century. Beginning about 1915, migrants from the American South added to the Illinois population mixture. Labor shortages during World War I led to the northward movement of southerners, many of them African-Americans. This movement steadily increased as economic opportunities in Illinois constituted a strong pull. A compilation in 1914 showed important industry in 35 cities of downstate Illinois, while the African-American population of Chicago more than doubled between 1910 and 1920 (Figure 5-8I). To meet the war effort, very high agricultural and industrial production was needed. This production was realized even though many rural counties continued to lose population. These losses, plus Chicago's

continued large gains, led to the sectionalism that had been building before 1910 and is still in evidence today. Downstate feelings, manifesting themselves in Illinois' politics, grew out of a distrust of Chicago and a fear that the city would dominate the rest of the state.

Overseas immigration was virtually stopped after the war, but the northward movement of African-Americans from the South continued to increase. With continued industrial growth, especially in Chicago, jobs were available in the North. Chicago's African-American population rose to 4.1 percent in 1920 and 6.9 percent in 1930. They were squeezed into a definite zone on the south side of the city, one of the factors keeping racial tensions alive.

The decline and demise of small towns in Illinois continued as the means of transport were improved. With the arrival of the auto and better roads, a new dimension was added, but results were much the same. The auto enabled farmers and villagers to travel to larger places where a more extensive array of goods and services was available. The continuing loss of business in small towns hastened their decline. In large urban centers, especially Chicago, the inner city became blighted. Auto transport, just as the streetcar before it, enabled the working population to commute from suburban residential locations. The sizable suburban growth is suggested in Figure 5-8I. At the same time, 63 rural counties lost population in the 1920s.

As a consequence of the Great Depression, the northeastward migration of Illinois' center of population reversed itself for the only time between 1930 and 1940. Likewise, Figure 5-8K reflects a reversal of earlier trends. The vast urban growth of the previous decade virtually ceased. In addition, many downstate counties that had suffered a population loss in the 1920s now were the recipients of modest gains, the result of a general "back-to-the-farm" movement characteristic

of the Depression. In contrast to the previous decade, only 26 counties experienced population losses, and these were generally very small. Illinois' population growth, which had been 17.7 percent in the previous decade, was only 3.5 percent in the period 1930-1940. Rural growth actually outpaced urban, 4.6 percent to 3.1 percent. Unemployment reached approximately 1.5 million during the Depression, and 277,000 families received relief. Immigration was restricted and Chicago lost some of its economic attractiveness. For some people who lost their city jobs, a return to relatives or friends in rural locations meant at least subsistence and avoiding the degrading aspects of the dole.

Although better times began to emerge in the late 1930s, prosperity returned to Illinois when World War II stimulated the economy (Figure 5-8L). Domestic war effort requirements found many willing workers. While one million of the state's citizens took an active part in the war, federal spending provided local employment for many of those who remained on the home front. In some cases labor shortages resulted and the number of African-Americans migrating northward once again helped fill the need. An estimated 100,000 Black Americans moved during World War II to Chicago, where their employment increased from 4.9 percent to 11.7 percent in five years. A similar increase was also experienced in the Metro East urban agglomeration in southwest Illinois tributary to St. Louis. Though the number of farms decreased, improved techniques helped develop better farms. Levee construction and farm drainage districts helped bring 88.3 percent of Illinois under cultivation, the largest proportion of tilled land for any state. Illinois farms produced record crops. In 1945, 13 counties in north-central Illinois were listed among the leading 100 American counties in value of farm products. That this great production was accompanied by increased mechanization is

evident in Figure 5-8L. Many counties, especially in west-central and southeast Illinois, lost population in the 1940-1950 decade. These same regions continue to be the most rural parts of the state today.

The return of peace after 1945 found Illinois more firmly established than before as a manufacturing state, reversing the back-to-the-farm movement. While certain Chicago industries lost importance, others readily absorbed the skilled and unskilled workers who remained. By 1950, Illinois was fourth in the nation in population, but a strong third in manufacturing. The massive growth of Chicago and its suburbs, and to a lesser extent the growth in downstate manufacturing centers, is readily apparent in Figure 5-8M. Jobs in the Chicago area continued to exercise a powerful attraction. The new immigrants were from the American South, Europe, and Latin America. As Chicago's suburbs became the recipients of those who were seeking the good life away from the more crowded and pluralistic city, the new arrivals took up the inner city housing of former residents. In the 1950s, Cook County had more people than the other 101 counties combined. The City of Chicago actually has been losing population since the 1950s, but the city's suburbs have gained greatly in the same period (a gain of 77 percent in the decade of the 1950s). Elsewhere, growth continued in counties that contained medium to large urban populations and where industrial activity shared in the prosperous American economy.

Those counties that did not share in the urban-oriented job market lost further numbers as the trend toward greater agricultural mechanization continued. Once again, the counties experiencing greatest loss were in the southeast and west-central parts of the state. Beginning in the late 1880s a county growth pattern emerged that still holds. Three major zones of growth are:

1. The northeast, expanding outward from Chicago
2. A northwest-southeast axis in central Illinois
3. The Metro East area in southwestern Illinois

Areas of population loss have been in the aforementioned west-central and southeastern parts of the state. Separating the northeast and central sections of continued growth is an area of population stability. An examination of Figures 5-8I through 5-8N shows that only a few notable exceptions altered the dominant pattern.

By 1970, Illinois ranked fifth in population, having been leapfrogged by California and Texas. The state's population increased 10.2 percent in the 1960s, becoming 82.9 percent urban and 13.6 percent non-White in 1970. The rush to suburban fringes in the urban northeast has continued since the 1960s, and by 1990 Chicago had more than 200 suburban municipalities. The inner city's inhabitants continue to be African-Americans and other recent arrivals, especially from Latin America and Asia. Chicago's African-American population rose from 10 percent in 1950 and 14 percent in 1960 to 32.7 percent in 1970. Spanish-speaking newcomers constituted 10 to 15 percent of the city's people. Appalachian Whites and Native Americans were among other minorities in the nation's (then) second largest city. Meanwhile, 40 percent of the population of the nation's second largest county lived outside the city of Chicago. The growth went beyond the county, and for the first time since 1920, a majority of Illinoisans in 1970 no longer lived in Cook County. However, those counties showing the greatest increases outside Cook were also in the northeast. Of the state's 19 municipalities over 50,000, seven were in suburban Cook County and four others were in adjacent counties. Downstate, the largest growth in the 1960s was again in these counties with sizable

cities. Almost one-half of the state's counties (49) again lost population, mostly in areas that had been losing for some time. Changes in the 1960s also were associated with the new superhighway system. Whole new suburbs and housing subdivisions were created along the transport arteries, enabling workers to commute greater distances to their jobs. Downstate villages declined, hotels were replaced by motels, and city centers decayed as outlying shopping centers flourished. Nevertheless, in 1970 Illinois' advantageous location along with its strong balance of agriculture and industry seemingly assured the state's future economic viability.

CONTEMPORARY PATTERNS

Urban Versus Rural Population

The population of Illinois in the 1990s can be apportioned among five areas:

1. Metropolitan Chicago
2. Other metropolitan
3. All other urban
4. Rural non-farm
5. Farm.

Metropolitan Chicago accounts for approximately two-thirds of the state's population (7 of 11 million) and encompasses six counties, soon to expand to seven by the addition of Kendall County. The Chicago-area dominates most population statistics and therefore the following data are commonly reported in relative terms, percentages and medians. There are nine other metropolitan areas with central cities of at least 50,000 residents. Together these ten metropolitan areas (including Metropolitan Chicago) account for 23 of Illinois' 102 counties and 82.7 percent of the state's population (Figure 5-1). There are another 220,000 people who live in urban areas outside the metropolitan counties. These include communities of at least 2,500 residents

but less than 50,000 (larger urban areas would be designated metropolitan). Many of these places can be described as small and medium-sized cities that are scattered throughout the state. The final two categories, both rural, are designated as rural non-farm and farm. Many in the former category live in small communities with populations under 2,500, thereby not qualifying as urban. There also are large numbers of non-farmers who reside outside community boundaries. The last category, the farm population, has been declining in numbers for several decades but continues to be very important in Illinois' economy.

Population growth was experienced throughout most of the state in the decade of the 1970s. Only 15 of the state's 102 counties did not increase. However, that trend reversed in the 1980s, when only 20 counties had a population increase. A variety of factors led to an apparent urban-to-rural movement in the 1970s. This so-called "population turnaround" was short lived, however, as rural areas suffered serious population decreases during the 1980s. By 1990 the farm population in the United States had sunk to less than three percent of the total. Illinois followed the national trend of declining rural population while remaining one of the country's leading farm states.

Largely economic circumstances have led to fewer (although larger) farms, fewer farmers and, consequently, fewer small towns and small town populations. Although desire for a rural-like lifestyle has led some urban dwellers to non-urban areas, they have not become directly engaged in agriculture. These rural non-farm persons have been attracted to the real or perceived amenities of living "closer to nature." But part of this circumstance is one of census definition. The United States census defines anyone living in a place of less than 2,500 as rural. Many Illinoisans living in places of less than 2,500 are not farmers; in fact, they are living in ways that differ little

from urban lifestyles. The old dichotomy of city slicker and country hick is largely inappropriate today. But it must be borne in mind as one passes the beautifully planted and cultivated fields of rural Illinois that relatively few farmers are responsible for those fields, and fewer still are successful in the traditional sense of wealth accumulation. The areas of Illinois where the rural population is most dominant continues to be the west-central and southeast (Figure 5-10). These two regions have few cities and, as such, have suffered the most from an economy that no longer favors farming and small service center activities.

Economic and Education Patterns

Economically, Illinois is an enigma. It has for decades ranked in the top dozen states in per capita income, yet recently the state's

financial status has been weak. The wealth of the state can be seen in its high per capita income, highest among neighboring states and ranking seventh in the country. College graduation rates also are high, suggesting that Illinois' per capita income will continue to rank among the leading states.

Within the state the distribution of the population with a college degree is rather predictable. The highest concentrations are in urban and in university counties (Figure 5-11). DuPage County ranks highest with 36 percent of its population over 25 years of age having graduated from college. Champaign County is second with 34 percent and Jackson County is third with 29.5 percent. Most of the counties with the lowest percentages are predominantly rural and in the southern one-third of the state.



FIGURE 5-9. The small village of Adair is among hundreds of communities in Illinois that do not meet the census definition for urban status. (Illinois Geographical Society)

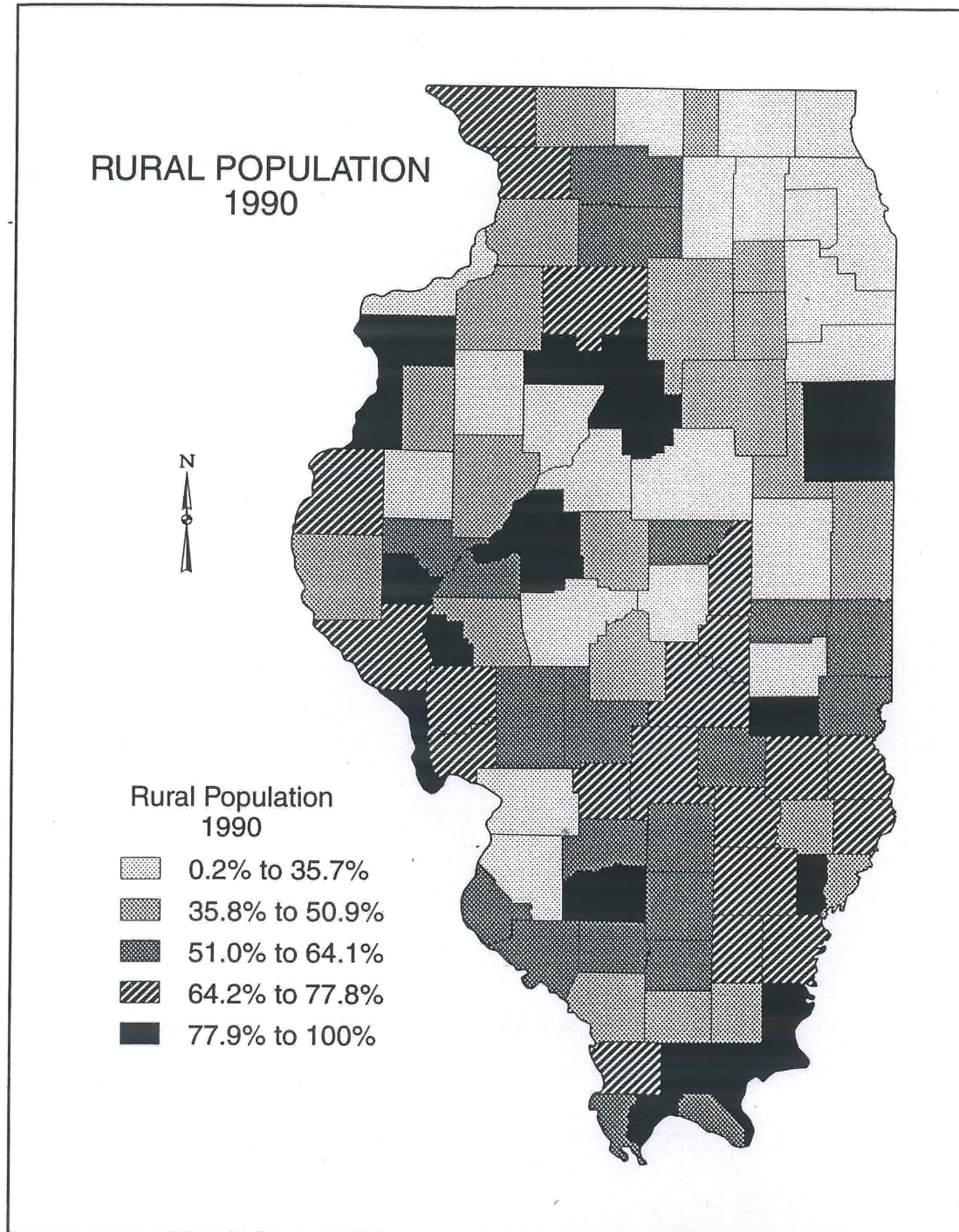


FIGURE 5-10. Rural population, 1990.