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**THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS OF RAPID POPULATION GROWTH ON A
NONMETROPOLITAN MICHIGAN COUNTY**

Michigan State University

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THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS OF RAPID POPULATION
GROWTH ON A NONMETROPOLITAN MICHIGAN COUNTY

By

Richard Wayne Rathge

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS OF RAPID POPULATION GROWTH ON A NONMETROPOLITAN MICHIGAN COUNTY

By

Richard Wayne Rathge

This dissertation investigates the institutional impacts associated with rapid population growth in a nonmetropolitan county in Michigan's northern lower peninsula. The county, Osceola, experienced a population increase at a rate of 27.6% over the past decade amounting to a net gain of 3,049 migrants after four previous decades of outmigration, indicative of the general "turnaround" migration phenomenon occurring throughout much of the United States and other industrialized countries.

The emergent effects of in-migration on five social institutions, education, government, economy, religion, and health and social services, and their ability to cope with the shifting demands of an enlarged population, are addressed. Concurrently, this volume explores various problematic features of the current urban-to-rural migration trend and their possible ramifications for host communities.

The data consist of several major types: 1) personal

interviews, 2) printed materials including records, minutes, centennial publications, 3) census, 4) government documents, 5) newspapers, and 6) personal observations. Analysis of these data is mainly descriptive.

Findings from the study indicate that the anticipated conflict between oldtimers and newcomers has not surfaced to any appreciable level. However, distinct institutional impacts are apparent. Among the more notable are curtailed programming in Osceola's schools, increased discipline problems, a significant shift in sentiment against millage and bond issue requests, strained infra-structures (e.g., roads, waste disposal), increased crime, excessive property assessments, inflated dependency ratios, and changing land use. Interestingly, county functionaries have taken a "wait and see" stance toward growth. Among the five institutions, religion has exhibited the least amount of change.

In time, it would seem likely that special interests of newcomers and oldtimers will become more differentiated and organized, and perhaps be the catalyst for conflict. Thus further investigations into the impacts of rural revival on county institutions and systems are recommended.

To my wife, Polly, whose patience during this research was unwavering. Together we share the achievement represented by this manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thoughtful people have contributed their time and effort to my graduate training and to this research. I would be a bit naive to suggest that adequate recognition could be given to them in this limited space. Nonetheless, I wish to express my appreciation to those whose guidance and concern directed my course and made possible that which I have accomplished.

A special word of thanks is given to Dr. J. Allan Beegle, Chairperson of my Dissertation and Guidance Committee. I have acquired much scholastically and personally from his encouragement and support. He has graciously allowed me to participate in many of his professional and research activities which have strengthened my academic awareness. His patience and untiring interest in others is a trait I shall always strive to achieve.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to professors Harry Schwarzweller, James Zuiches, and Craig Harris for their unwavering interest, timely insights, and patient support. Their critical examination of my research, their fruitful comments, and their cordial guidance and encouragement are genuine expressions of the meaning of academia.

Gratitude is also extended to Calvin L. Beale, Director,

Population Studies Program, Economics and Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Farmers Home Administration, and Michigan AES Project 1062 for the funding of the larger project on Community Impacts of Nonmetropolitan Growth of which this study is a part. I wish to further acknowledge Dr. Thomas Koebernick, Department of Sociology, Wright State University, and Fredrick Frankena, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University, for their assistance in the data collection.

A special note of thanks is also extended to the residents of Osceola County. Their friendliness and generous assistance made this research an enjoyable experience.

Ironically, the person I owe the most thanks to I have chosen to acknowledge last -- in the modest and humble way she would have insisted on. She has served as editor, advisor, and counselor, the person behind the scene who receives most of the frustration and grief and rarely ever the glory or recognition. To my wife, Polly, may we never take for granted the meaning of giving.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the decade of the 1970's, the established trend of migration from rural areas to metropolitan centers actually waned and began to reverse itself in the U.S. (Beale, 1975). This phenomenon, however, was not restricted to the U.S., but appeared in other industrialized nations (Vining and Kontuly, 1978). The rural renaissance occurred rapidly within the U.S., beginning in the North and quickly spreading to other parts of the nation. Baffled as to the characteristics of the population "turnaround" and concerned by its intensity and breadth, scholars concluded that a new, or at least more complicated pattern of settlement, was emerging which necessitated scientific inquiry (McCarthy and Morrison, 1978).

Investigations into the characteristics of migrants opting to relocate in rural areas reveal that they are, on the whole, younger, more educated, and of a higher socioeconomic status than other members of previous nonmetropolitan in-migrant streams or of native rural populations. Their numbers include well educated professionals, elderly retirees, and those in early career stages (Ploch, 1978; DeJong and Humphrey, 1976).

Further studies of urban to rural migrants' selection of nonmetropolitan environs suggest that their motivations are less economic than most previous migrants in that "quality of life" considerations are now stressed (U.S. Census, 1979; Williams and Sofranko, 1979; Voss and Fuguitt, 1979). This is convincingly corroborated by the fact that numerous bucolic counties, with few plausible economic catalysts for growth, are posting marked population increases (Zelinsky, 1977; Bowles and Beale, 1980). Similarly, counties experiencing the most pronounced changes are exhibiting the lowest rate of commuting (Morrison and Wheeler, 1976) which tends to eliminate "bedroom" communities as a dominant explanation of growth.

Accenting this marked departure from previous decades, evidence shows that rural migrants do not seem to require close proximity to urban centers, are opting to sever urban ties (Voss, 1979), and are often moving into areas at considerable distance from metropolitan centers (Beale and Fuguitt, 1978). Destinations are frequently retirement or recreational environments (McCarthy and Morrison, 1978; Beale, 1976; Campbell, 1975). Such analyses raise an intriguing query: Why has this trend surfaced?

Several explanations for the emerging rural influx have been proposed. Recently, Beale (1976) synthesized migrants' motivations into several major push-pull categories, which include the desire to escape the cities' unfavorable images, the near elimination of the urban-rural gap in material

conveniences, and the growth of post high school educational facilities in rural areas. Morrison and Wheeler (1976) assert that affluence as well as various structural and lifestyle changes¹ in the U.S. have given rise to a "floating population" which, seemingly unrestricted by economic circumstances, acts upon an expressed preference for rural residential locations. As they view it, liberal policies regarding government transfer payments (i.e. social security, welfare, etc.) are an example of one stimulus in a complex web of catalysts.

Although little doubt remains as to the authenticity of the rural renaissance, debate rages over its longevity. Some scholars suggest that the trend toward rural living will be truncated by the current economic situation (Rainely, 1976; U.S. Congress, 1974), while others propose that the rising cost of energy may promote less traditional lifestyles thus enhancing rural growth (Frankena, 1978; Miernyk, et al., 1977). Regardless of one's leanings, we can only predict the turnaround's longevity and strive to more fully understand its consequences.

Since previous explanations of suburbanization, employment decentralization², and urban sprawl³ no longer entirely explain rural development (McCarthy and Morrison, 1978), there is a void of information needed by planners and policymakers in order to anticipate the effects of changing demographic circumstances of their communities. Furthermore, the apparent shift in migrants' motivations has dramatically

altered rural settlement patterns, which may have serious consequences for land use, environmental quality, and the overall organizational and institutional structure of rural governmental systems. Additional questions remain concerning the effects of rapid growth on traditional⁴ rural cultures and life styles.

The lack of scientific scrutiny into these areas diminishes the amount and diversity of information available to policy makers and potentially retards the timely development of growth strategies that may curb an array of long range negative consequences for rural America. In response to this concern, the following chapters attempt to document the effects of rapid growth on the institutional structure of a nonmetropolitan Michigan county. It is postulated that the type and intensity of impact experienced by a nonmetropolitan turnaround county system as a result of rapid, predominately urban origin immigration, is a consequence of the immigrants' pattern of settlement and composition of the migrant stream. Attention is directed at determining where migrants are settling within the nonmetropolitan county, the characteristics of the migrant stream, and the impact these two factors have on the institutional structures of the county.

A fundamental objective of this study is to assess the impacts of rapid population growth in a nonmetropolitan county. One may speculate that growth in isolated pockets may suppress county governmental officials' awareness of

growth while concurrently localizing environmental impacts. In the following chapters, this conjecture will be investigated. Augmenting the inquiry is a descriptive analysis of the institutional disruptions which the county has incurred. The analysis will focus on a nonmetropolitan Michigan county during the decade from 1970 to 1980.

The approach of this study is descriptive in nature. Utilizing an array of field method techniques, the bulk of the data consists of: 1) personal interviews; 2) printed materials, including records, minutes, centennial publications; 3) census; 4) other government documents (eg. Economic Development Plans, Financial Reports, etc.); 5) newspapers; and 6) personal observations. To facilitate the reader's insight, a detailed description of these data are given as they are encountered in the study.

The county selected for observation is Osceola, located in northwest Michigan about seventy five miles directly north of Grand Rapids and adjacent to the Manistee National Forest (see Figure 1). Three major highways pass through the heavily forested county; numerous lakes are nestled in the rolling hills and woods. The Muskegon River bisects the county's southeastern edge, while four other smaller rivers (Hersey, Chippewa, Pine and Middle Branch) cut across the county's four corners. A state forest tends to make the center of the county sparsely populated (see Figure 2).

Osceola County contains six towns and villages. The largest town is Reed City, the county seat, whose population

Figure 1. Michigan Counties

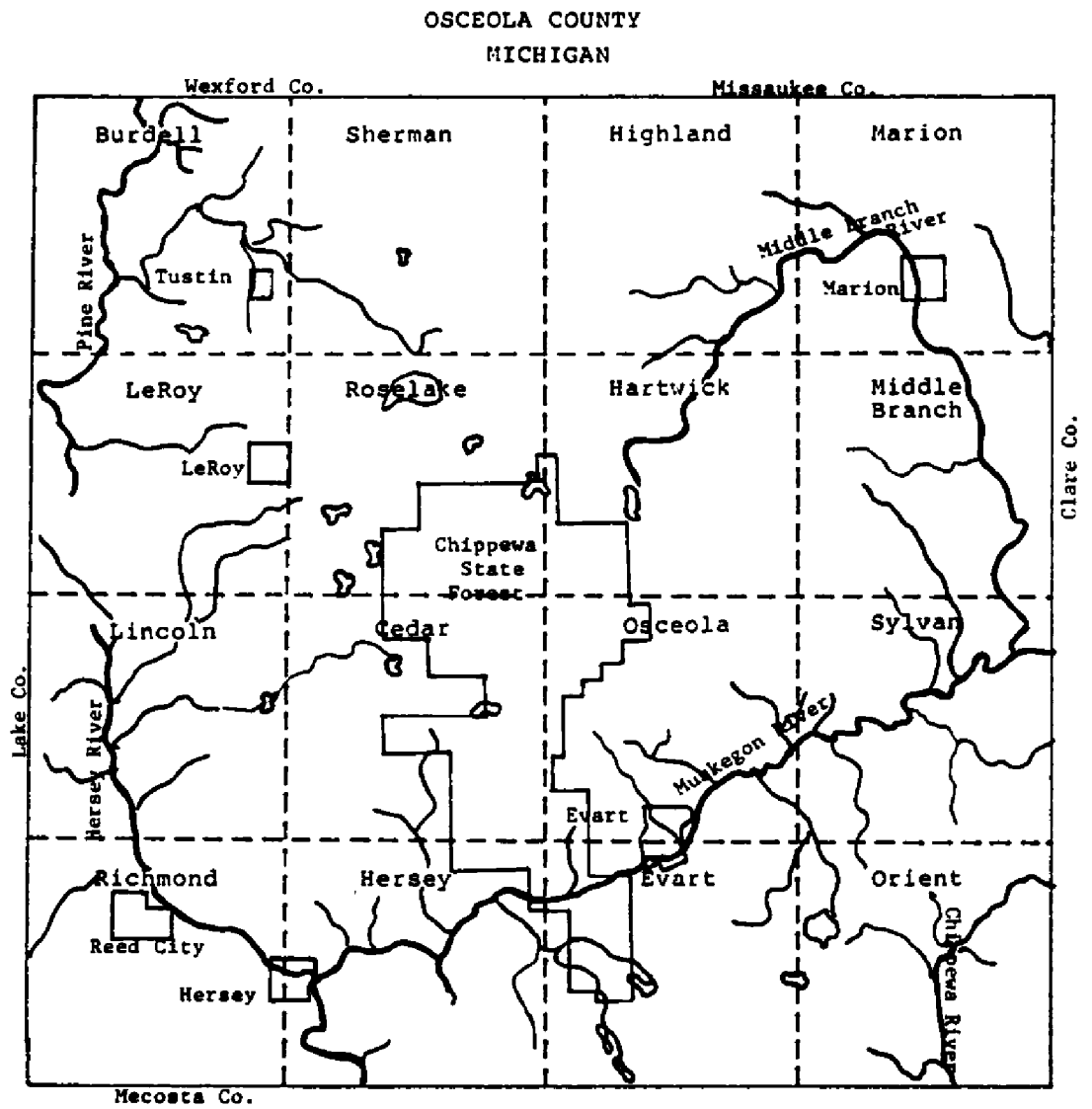


Figure 2. Study Site: Osceola County, Michigan

(2,286 in 1970) decreased slightly during the decade. Evart, the second largest town, grew modestly, with a 13% gain by April, 1980. The other smaller villages, Tustin, Hersey, LeRoy, and Marion gained at different rates, however, all remained at less than 900 people by 1980. Overall, the county's population increased at a rate of 27.2% from 1970 to 1980 (partly from a net gain of 3,000 migrants), after four previous decades of net outmigration. Since the towns and villages accounted for only 6% of the county's growth, the major change occurred in the open country.

Osceola was selected for study because its growth is attributed to retirement, recreation, and small-scale manufacturing, factors viewed by Beale (1976) as key elements related to the turnaround. The county is readily accessible due to its three major interstate highways. Moreover, Osceola's population is relatively small, thus it is a more manageable study site.

Entree into the county was established in late spring of 1979 via an initial visit with Agricultural Extension personnel. Actual fieldwork began in the summer of 1979, after a preparatory period including the collection of census data and a content analysis of the county's weekly newspaper, the Osceola County Herald, from 1970-1979.

To establish a proper perspective for understanding the county, its people, and the setting in which the turnaround occurred, the beginning chapters are devoted to a brief historical glance of the county. Information from centennial

publications, newspaper articles, and various archival sources are drawn upon. Subsequent chapters focus on the population influx which occurred during the 1970's and the resultant environmental and institutional impacts. A concluding section discusses the ramifications of these events and possible policy strategies which may assist planners in formulating long range schemes to eliminate or moderate deleterious growth impacts.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A COUNTY

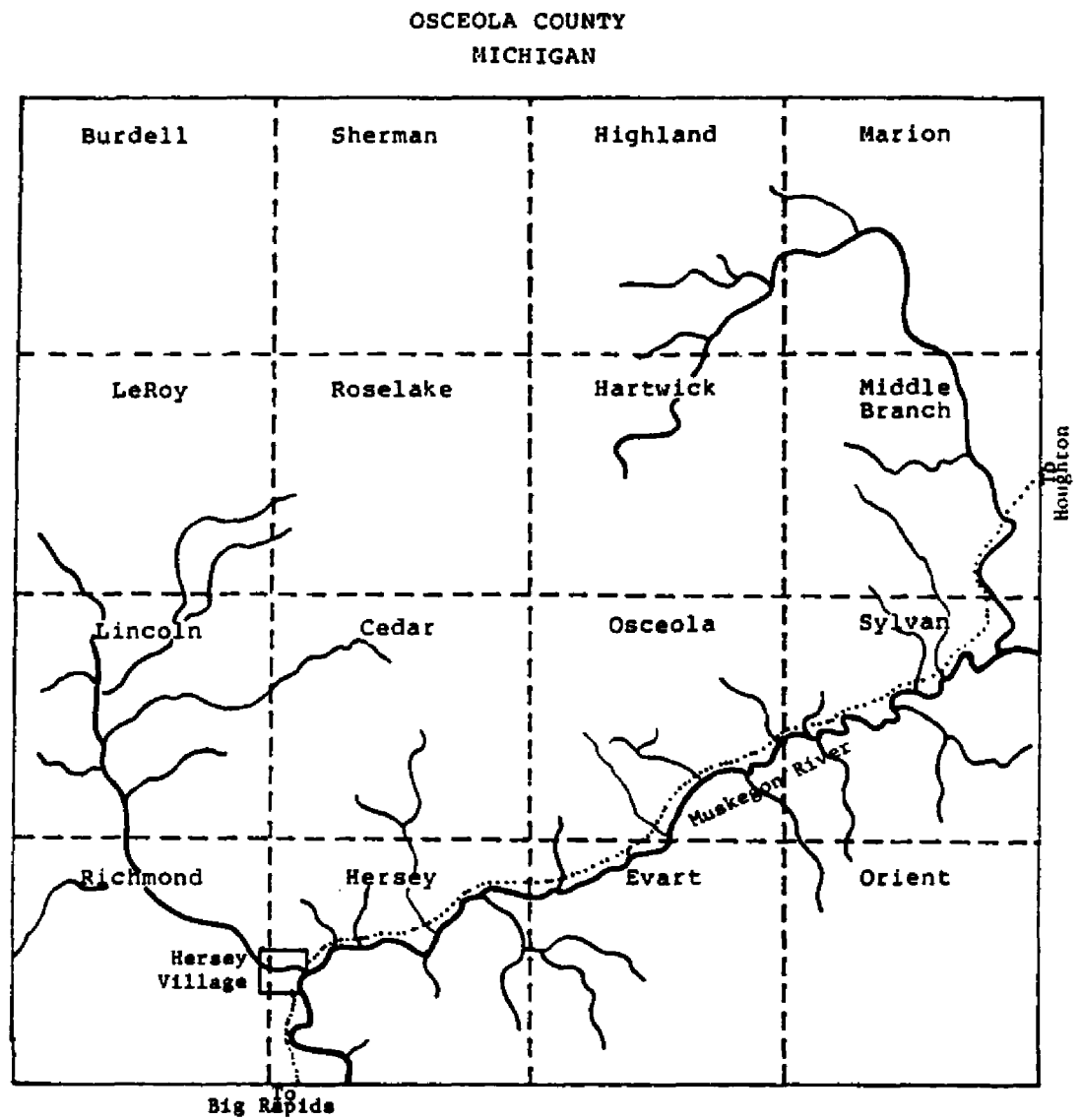
The beginning stages of Osceola County's settlement are, unfortunately, largely unpreserved in written documents. However, via stories, biographies and other details verbally passed down through generations, one can assemble an overview of the early residents of the county. Prior to the early surveyors who sectioned off the territory during the mid part of the last century, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi Indians roamed the land. The hardwood forests of the territory provided excellent winter hunting grounds for these early residents who, after maple sugaring in early spring, returned to the coast line region of Lake Michigan to cultivate corn and other crops (Osceola County Herald, 1974e). It is uncertain how many Indian villages were in the area, or the number of persons who occupied the land. However, the largest Indian activity in Michigan is believed to have been centered in the Muskegon Valley, including Lake, Osceola, and Newaygo counties.

Pioneers were first known to have ventured into the territory during the late 1830's, mainly for trapping and fur trading. Similar to their predecessors, little information has been recorded concerning their adventures; several towns and rivers still bear their names (eg., Hersey).

In 1838, the land encompassing Osceola County was surveyed in accordance with an act of the Michigan State Legislature. Two years later on April 1, 1840, the survey was approved and the land was given the name Un-wa-tin in honor of an Ottawa Indian chief named in Washington's 1836 treaty. At this juncture the territory was still politically a part of Ottawa County. Surprisingly, three years later the Legislature renamed the county Osceola, to honor a Florida Seminole chief.

According to several reports, no one permanently settled the land until 1851 when a logger named Delos (Doc) Blodgett took up residency in what is now section 19 of Hersey Township (see Figure 3). Within a short span of time, a lumbering camp was constructed under the supervision of "Doc" and his partner T. Stinson. Utilizing oxen and the Muskegon River to transport logs, their operation grew in a span of a few years to gross 30 million feet of logs annually.

A road accommodating wagons was blazed in 1855 paralleling the Muskegon River from Big Rapids to Houghton Lake (see Figure 3). This corridor greatly facilitated the growth of the county. In 1860, a census of the area recorded 27 settlers in the territory. However, by the advent of the area's first railroad (Flint and Pere Marquette) in 1870, nearly 2,100 people had moved into its scenic wilderness. During those fifteen years Osceola had shifted from being politically a part of Ottawa County (until 1857), Newago County (until 1859), and Mecosta County until 1869 when it



..... Assumed Route

Figure 3. Location of First Village and Road in Osceola County.

was organized as an independent political unit. A description of the people who settled this land, their economic and social activity, and the county's early political development follows.

EARLY SETTLERS

Historically, migrants who settled the U. S., at least in its early stages, followed a general pattern of movement from east to west along well defined lines. The progressive waves of settlers, uniquely preserved in Census documents via records of family members' birth places, are striking. A U.S. Census Bureau statute allows one access to original census records if 80 years has elapsed from the date it was taken. Enumerations in Osceola County prior to 1890, therefore, are available to the public. Utilizing this fortunate opportunity, I coded Osceola's entire 1870 Census counts for computer analysis. The 1870 Census, or Osceola's second official enumeration, was analyzed due to the small county population in the previous census (N=27). Included in the enumeration is the age, occupation, birth place, and parental birth place of each family member (N=2,093).

As shown in Table 1, more than one out of three (35.6%) residents of Osceola County 18 years of age or older, presumably the first settlers, originated from foreign countries. Considerably fewer children, those less than 18, were foreign born (24.0%) with slightly more than 44 percent of youngsters being native Michigianians.

Table 1. Birth Place of Residents by Age Grouping, Osceola County, 1870.

BIRTH PLACE	AGE GROUPING					
	0-17		18 & over		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
New England	11	1.1	41	3.9	52	2.5
Maine	2	.2	10	.9	12	.6
Vermont	7	.7	14	1.3	21	1.0
New Hampshire	-	-	3	.3	3	.1
Massachusetts	-	-	6	.6	6	.3
Connecticut	2	.2	6	.6	8	.4
Rhode Island	-	-	2	.2	2	.1
Middle Atlantic	122	12.2	326	31.1	448	21.9
New York	87	8.7	259	24.7	346	16.9
Pennsylvania	35	3.5	64	6.1	99	4.9
New Jersey	-	-	3	.3	3	.1
East North Central	603	60.3	291	27.7	894	43.6
Michigan	443	44.2	104	9.9	547	26.7
Ohio	78	7.8	155	14.7	233	11.4
Indiana	67	6.7	26	2.5	93	4.4
Illinois	7	.7	3	.3	10	.5
Wisconsin	8	.8	3	.3	11	.6
West North Central	21	2.1	7	.7	28	1.3
Minnesota	1	.1	-	-	1	*
Iowa	17	1.7	1	.1	18	.9
Missouri	1	.1	-	-	1	*
Nebraska	-	-	1	.1	1	*
Kansas	2	.2	5	.5	7	.4
South Atlantic	4	.4	10	1.0	14	.7
Virginia	-	-	3	.3	3	.1
South Carolina	4	.4	7	.7	11	.6
Foreign	240	24.0	374	35.6	614	30.0
TOTAL	1001	100.0%	1049	100.0%	2050	100.0%

*Less than .1%

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1870.

The gradual westward movement of earlier generations of foreign immigrants is apparent in the fact that 46% of the residents 18 years of age or older, were born in the contiguous states of New York (24.7%), Pennsylvania (6.1%) and Ohio (14.7%). The migration pattern of these early pioneers, would be succinctly described by tracing the movement of the family as a unit, via the birth place of each member in the family. However, such a diagram is too cumbersome to demonstrate effectively the migration pattern of the 440 resident families of Osceola County in 1870. Rather, the following example may suffice in illustrating the lateral movement of settlers during the era.

According to Census enumerators⁵, Oswald Esner, one of many German farmers born around 1831, migrated to the U.S. sometime thereafter. Around 1844, Electra Esner, presumably his wife⁶ was born in New York. Within the next 10 years, the Esner family traveled to Ohio where Hannah was born around 1855. Two years later Martha Esner was born, also somewhere in Ohio. Once again the Esner family pushed westward traveling to Michigan where Lewis was born around 1864. Two years later Albert Esner was born, presumably in Lincoln Township where the Esner family resided during the 1870 Census.

Slightly more than 53% of foreigners in Osceola during this time were born in Canada, primarily Ontario (see Table 2). It appears that Osceola County may have been a temporary stopping point for some Canadians, a speculation implicit in the high ratio of young to old (see Table 2). Germans, Irish, and English accounted for an additional 43.8% of the foreign immigrants. Several factors contributed to the movement of different ethnic groups to Osceola, including the railroad and lumber industry.

Table 2. Birth Place of Foreign Born Residents by Age Grouping, Osceola County, 1870.

BIRTH PLACE	AGE GROUPING					
	0-17		18 & over		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
England	3	1.2	28	7.5	31	5.0
Canada	208	86.6	121	32.4	329	53.6
Germany *	29	12.2	175	46.8	204	33.3
Scotland	-	-	5	1.3	5	.8
Switzerland	-	-	3	.8	3	.5
Norway	-	-	3	.8	3	.5
Ireland	-	-	34	9.1	34	5.5
Wales	-	-	1	.3	1	.2
France #	-	-	2	.5	2	.3
Nassau	-	-	2	.5	2	.3
TOTAL	240	100.0%	374	100.0%	614	100.0%

* Germany includes Bavaria, Prussia, Saxony, and Seleckia (spelling appears as written in Census Records).

France includes Elsess Alcare (spelling appears as written in Census Records).

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1870.

The Irish, for example, played an important part in the construction of the railroad during the mid 1800's. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, later known as the Pennsylvania Central, expanded northward from Big Rapids. A second major carrier traversing the territory was the Flint and Pere Marquette (now the Chesapeake and Ohio) which pushed westward through Evart and eventually intersected the GR & I at Todd's Slashing (see Figure 4). At this junction, many of the Irish opted to settle, congregating on the east side of the newly developing village which later became Reed City. As a result, the east side of Reed City still bears the name "Irish Town", named after the area's large settlement of Irish during the 1870's (White, 1975:12).

Early Swedish immigrants, similar to the Irish, were also attracted to the territory by the railroads. However, unlike the Irish, the Swedes were actually recruited to the County. Rev. Isaac Tustin traveled to Sweden to hire laborers for the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad (Holmes, 1971). It is reported that he offered free transportation and inexpensive land in return for employment on the railroad. His successful recruitment campaign combined with 40 acres of land donated by the railroad (under the conditions that a church, school and cemetery would be constructed), provided the ingredients for the founding of Tustin village. The original colony was settled by 80 families or approximately 300 people (Smith, 1884). Nearly a century later, on October 7, 1979, a plaque located at the

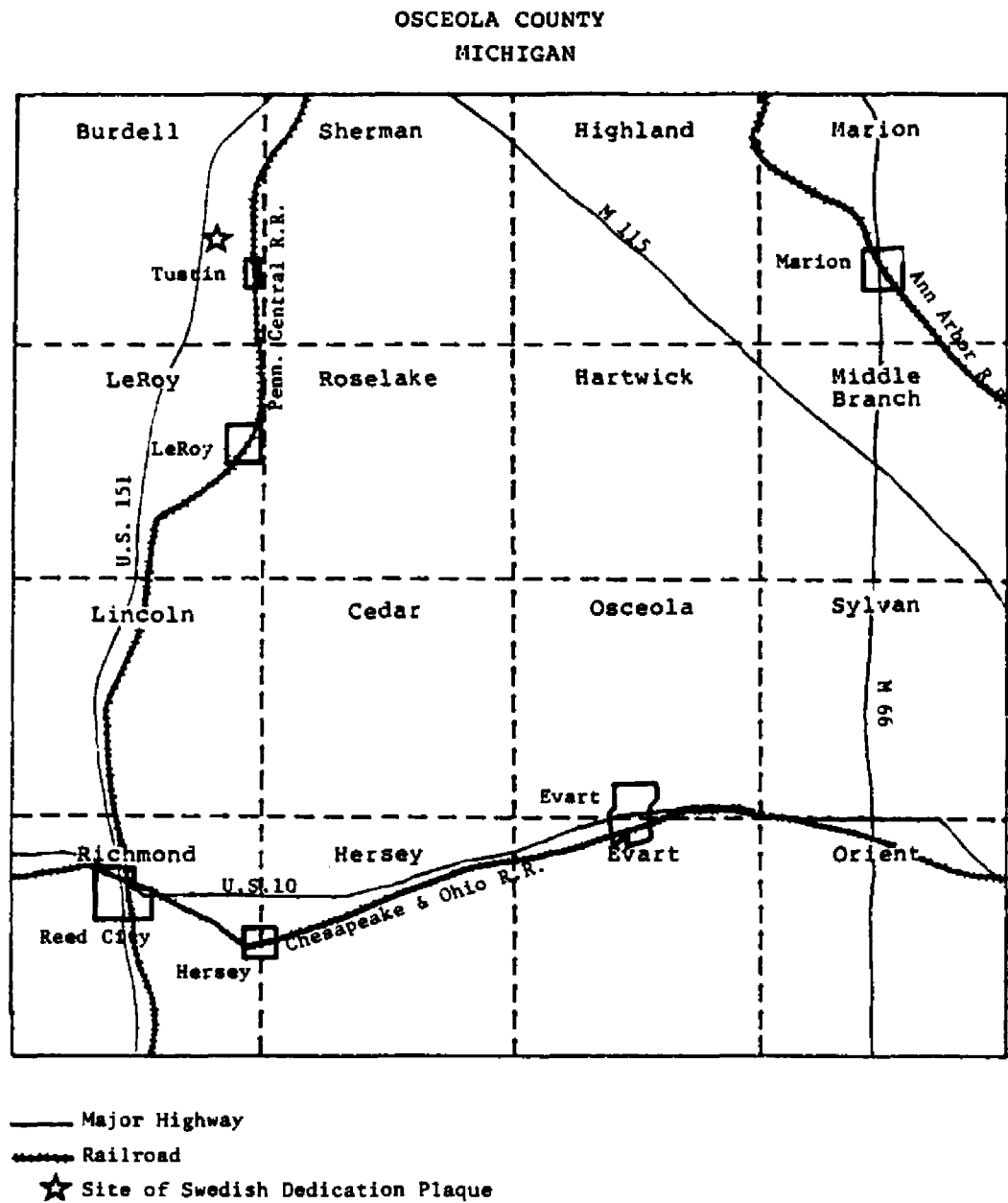


Figure 4. Location of Major Highways and Railroad Lines,
Osceola County.

scenic turnout on U. S. 131, just north of the Marion exit (see Figure 4), was dedicated to the descendents of Swedish pioneers who settled the territory (Osceola County Herald, 1979d).

Highland Township was the destination of many of the migrants from Holland. By 1880, nearly 200 people lived in the township. Interestingly, during this period, Highland was known for its production of "gentian", a herb used as a stomach tonic. Hundreds of pounds of the herb were marketed annually by the people of Highland Township (Smith, 1884).

German immigrants were the second largest ethnic population in the county. During the 1870's, approximately one of every five settlers in the county was of German descent, that is, approximately 400 of the county's 2,093 residents. Richmond Township became the home of 350 of these German descendants, accounting for more than half the township's population (Holmes, 1971).

Canadians, also numerous in Osceola in 1870, tended to settle in Richmond and Lincoln townships. According to the 1870 Census, 62% of the native Canadians in Osceola resided in Richmond township. Neighboring Lincoln township attracted the second highest proportion of Canadian migrants.

Few native Americans (Indians) lived in the county during the last half of the 1800's. According to the 1870 Census, less than a dozen Indians resided in wigwams. However, those that did usually camped north of Reed City. White reports, the Indians made baskets, fascinated the local

people by their handiwork, and exchanged their wares for food (White, 1975:11). Apparently, hostility to the Indians was commonplace during this period, but, little evidence exists as to the issues involved (Rose, 1972:4). Nevertheless, it is quite apparent that the Native American population in the territory, rapidly vanished.

A similar social commentary is found with respect to Osceola's black population. In the late 1800's, blacks were rare to the county. Obviously, one reason was their lack of geographic mobility. Although freed from slavery in 1865, blacks often had a difficult time raising sufficient funds to migrate. Compounding this situation were the negative attitudes toward blacks. A tragic instance, was that of Daniel White, the first known black in Osceola County. Homesteading land in section 30 of Highland township, he became the county's first documented murder victim (White, 1975:19). The only other known black family during that time was the Smiths, freed slaves from Kentucky, who purchased 20 acres of land in Lincoln Township in 1873. According to the book by Harry Smith, "Fifty Years of Slavery in the U. S.⁷", the Smiths were also subjected to harsh treatment. Ironically, they built a dance hall on their property which was a major entertainment attraction during that period (White, 1975:19). It appears that Harry Smith was quite adept at dancing and story telling, and added much to the entertainment. Presently, in 1980, only 17 blacks reside in the county (U.S. Census, 1981).

OSCEOLA'S POST 1870 POPULATION BOOM

Osceola's population rapidly expanded after 1870. Easy access to the county was made possible by one of four railroads completed after 1870, along with numerous stagecoaches which traveled through the territory. Extensive publicity about the "land of green gold" (lumber) inundated Osceola with migrants, especially from the east coast, eager to establish their fortunes. In 1871, it was not uncommon for 100 people to arrive in one day via rail or stagecoach (Rose, 1972:15). The tremendous population influx rivals that of modern boomtowns as 400 lots were sold and 67 new buildings were constructed in Evart, during the first six months of 1872 (Rose, 1972:17). Even though 70 full time carpenters were employed in Evart during that year, the waiting list for construction was quite extensive (Osceola County Herald, 1978b). This period of prosperity was also one of exploitation; two Evart merchants alone grossed nearly \$80,000 in goods sold during the first six months of 1872 (Rose, 1972:15).

Population expansion was not only confined to the villages, but rapidly spread to the surrounding land. An additional impetus was homestead land. Northern Michigan was designated by the governor as homestead territory, under the Homestead Act of 1862 (Rose, 1972:3). According to this legislation, a person could acquire 80 acres of land if he or she successfully cleared two acres each year for four years,

while improving, fencing, and building a house on the property where residency was established. Moreover, Civil War veterans could homestead twice the amount of land, or 160 acres.

By 1880, immigrant families passing through the villages of Osceola enroute to the outlying territory were commonplace. According to the Census Bureau, the major villages at that time were Reed City (1,091), Evart (1,302) and Hersey (472). However, numerous other smaller villages dotted the county (see Figure 5).

Osceola's population continued to expand rapidly until 1910, when lumber and related industries declined due to depleted forests (Table 3). During the 20 years that followed, the county lost 5,083 residents. It was not until after 1970 that Osceola's population reached the zenith it established during the lumbering boom days.

With the rapid development of Osceola County before the turn of the century, and the subsequent rapid population decline that followed, the composition of its population changed significantly. The early pioneers of the county were, according to the 1870 Census, predominately young or middle aged men and women and their families. In 1870, 38.5% of Osceola's population were between the ages of 19 and 45, as seen in Figure 6 and Table 4. Since relatively large families were common during this period a significant portion (42.7%) of the residents of Osceola were children less than 15, as depicted in the large base of the population pyramid

OSCEOLA COUNTY
MICHIGAN

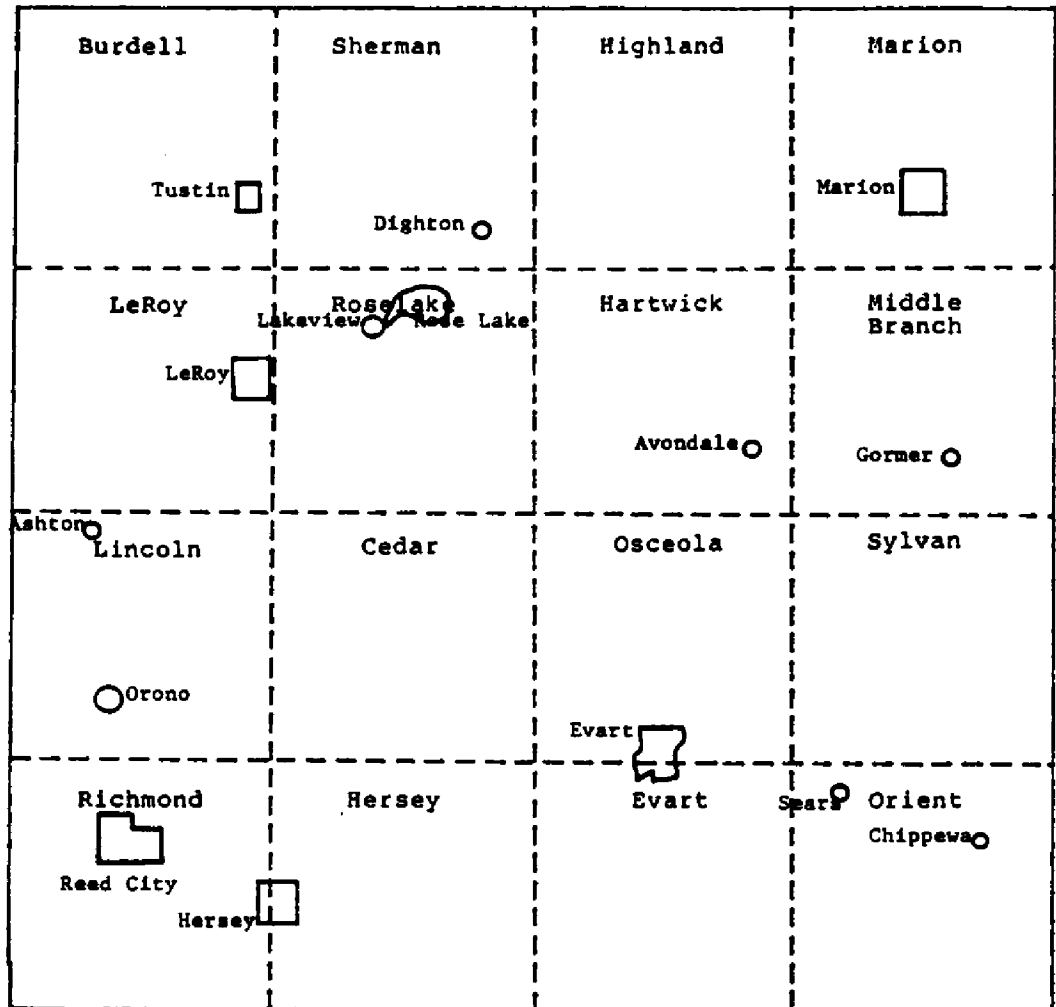


Figure 5. Known Population Centers in Osceola County, Michigan.

Table 3. Population of Townships and Places in Osceola County, 1870-1980.

TOWNSHIP/PLACE	1870 ¹	1880 ²	1890 ³	1900 ³	1910 ³	1920 ³	1930	1940	1950 ⁴	1960	1970	1980
Osceola County	2,093	10,717	14,630	17,859	17,889	15,221	12,806	13,309	13,797	13,595	14,838	18,879
Burdell Township	-	547	734	1,359	1,183	906	762	747	698	685	737	1,084
Tustin Village	-	-	-	303	371	281	253	232	229	248	230	264
Cedar Township	-	374	336	314	249	228	179	203	158	102	103	238
Evart City	-	(1,302)	1,269	1,360	1,386	1,326	1,301	1,335	1,578	1,775	1,707	1,931
Evart Township	168	1,077	1,215	1,194	1,077	1,019	875	503	544	526	582	1,025
Hartwick Township	47	239	417	540	652	519	442	481	374	368	406	423
Hersey Township	286	778	908	1,157	1,064	926	701	615	521	645	815	1,229
Hersey Village	-	(472)	328	327	310	284	279	202	239	246	276	364
Highland Township	58	198	326	792	1,417	1,132	841	937	810	659	712	1,059
LeRoy Township	148	819	1,087	1,312	1,033	799	739	708	634	617	644	858
LeRoy Village	-	-	452	375	331	642	270	274	243	267	248	295
Lincoln Township	334	902	1,084	1,250	1,020	842	701	658	860	889	910	1,168
Marion Township	-	92	1,042	1,253	1,562	1,428	1,092	1,334	1,417	1,417	1,427	1,487
Marion Village	-	-	-	741	767	708	607	710	879	898	891	819
Middle Branch Twp	49	169	219	518	520	425	389	430	472	403	541	640
Orient Township	54	508	707	758	763	654	488	513	426	382	552	637
Osceola Township	137	1,318	1,550	1,697	1,705	1,476	1,433	591	509	519	623	927
Reed City City	-	(1,091)	1,776	2,051	1,690	1,803	1,792	1,845	2,241	2,184	2,286	2,214
Richmond Township	653	2,352	3,064	3,401	2,855	2,748	2,677	865	1,197	1,135	1,318	1,630
Rose Lake Township	-	470	627	659	704	469	357	362	323	292	380	834
Sherman Township	116	568	810	1,002	1,451	1,091	734	690	574	544	608	839
Sylvan Township	43	366	504	653	724	559	396	492	461	453	487	656

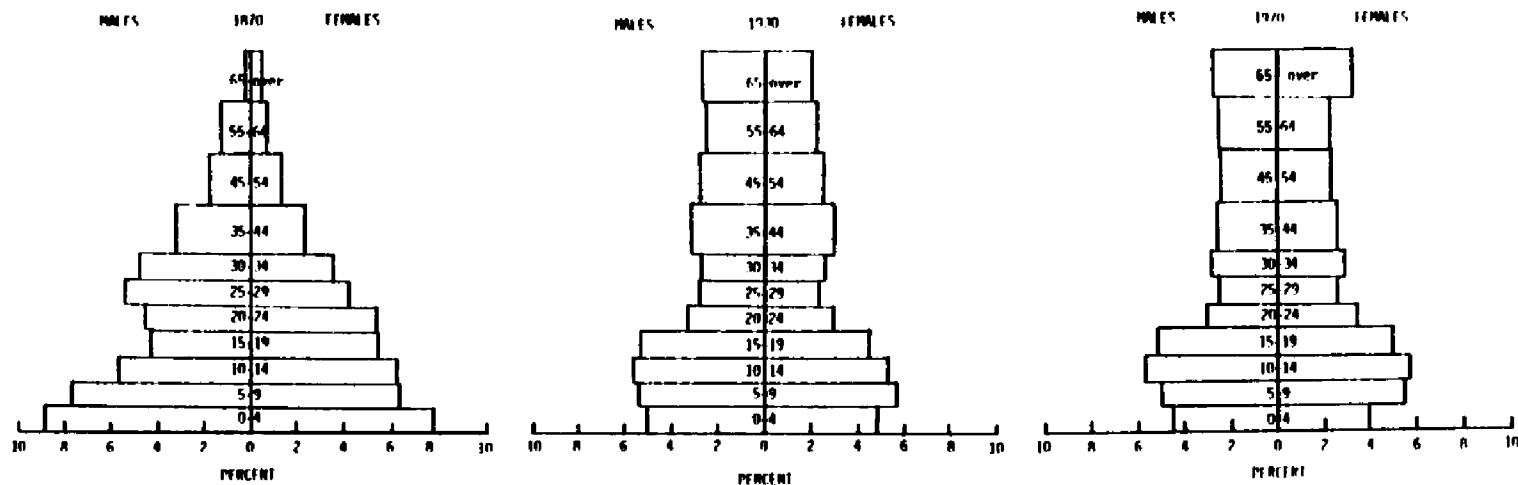
¹ In 1870, Burdell was part of LeRoy Township, Cedar was part of Lincoln Township, Marion was part of Middle Branch Township and Rose Lake was part of Lincoln Township.

² Evart City is included in Evart and Osceola Townships, Reed City City is included in Richmond Township and Hersey Village is included in Hersey and Richmond Townships.

³ Evart City is included in Evart and Osceola Townships and Reed City is included in Richmond Township.

⁴ Hersey Village is included in Hersey and Richmond Townships.

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses of Population.



Source: See Table 4

Figure 6. Age Distribution by Sex for Osceola County, 1870, 1930, and 1970.

Table 4. Age Distribution by Sex of Osceola County Residents, 1870, 1930 and 1970.

	1870						1930						1970					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-4	189	9.0	167	8.0	356	17.0	636	5.0	628	4.9	1264	9.9	644	4.4	595	4.0	1,239	8.4
5-9	158	7.6	133	6.3	291	13.9	670	5.2	725	5.7	1395	10.9	738	5.0	803	5.4	1,541	10.4
10-14	119	5.7	129	6.1	248	11.8	719	5.6	658	5.2	1377	10.8	854	5.8	864	5.8	1,718	11.6
15-19	86	4.1	80	3.8	166	7.9	665	5.2	562	4.4	1227	9.6	750	5.1	729	4.9	1,479	10.0
20-24	93	4.4	109	5.3	202	9.7	416	3.2	372	2.9	788	6.2	463	3.0	497	3.4	960	6.4
25-29	117	5.6	85	4.1	202	9.7	359	2.8	307	2.4	666	5.2	370	2.5	406	2.7	776	5.2
30-34	102	4.9	73	3.5	175	8.4	351	2.7	344	2.7	695	5.4	400	2.7	420	2.8	820	5.5
35-44	134	6.4	89	4.3	223	10.7	788	6.2	748	5.8	1536	12.0	759	5.1	792	5.4	1,551	10.5
45-54	78	3.7	47	2.3	125	6.0	733	5.7	669	5.2	1402	10.9	721	4.9	798	5.3	1,519	10.2
55-64	52	2.5	21	1.0	73	3.5	659	5.2	557	4.3	1216	9.5	705	4.8	731	4.9	1,436	9.7
65 +	14	.7	13	.6	27	1.3	709	5.5	523	4.1	1232	9.6	848	5.7	951	6.4	1,799	12.1
Unknown				.1	5	.1	8	.1			8	.1					-	
Total	1,147	54.6%	946	45.4%	2,093	100.0%	6,713	52.4%	6,093	47.6%	12,806	100.0%	7,252	49.0%	7,586	51.0%	14,838	100.0%
Median Age	20.5		17.3		19.1		28.0		26.1		27.1		27.4		28.8		28.1	

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1870;
U.S. Census of Population, 1930 vol. 3(1):Table 11;
U.S. Census of Population, 1970 PC(1)-B24:Table 35.

in Figure 6.

After the turn of the century, several significant events shifted the composition of Osceola's population. Depressed by the exhausted lumber industry, the County's economy fostered the out-migration of its young adults, who according to population trends, most often relocated in the urban areas of the state or nation (Price and Sikes, 1975). As a result of this exodus, the pool of young men and women workers in Osceola rapidly diminished. Simultaneously, the cohort of children dwindled, reflecting the outmigration of those in the early childbearing years. Furthermore, the resident population of the county gradually aged, inflating its elderly population. As a result of this trend, the proportion of children in the county (less than 15 years old) dropped from 42.7% in 1870 to 31.6% in 1930 . The pool of young workers (20-34) declined from 27.8% to 16.8%, while the elderly (65 and over) increased from 1.3% of the county's population in 1870 to 9.6% in 1930. During this sixty year period, the median age of the county's population rose 8 years; women's median age rose 8.8 years (see Table 4).

The trend of outmigration, particularly for those in early career stages, continued as evident by the relatively small proportion of persons (20-34 years of age) residing in the county in 1970 (see Figure 6 and Table 4). An increased movement of retirees into the nonmetropolitan counties of Northern Michigan also began after World War II (Koebernick and Beegle, 1978). This added dimension to Osceola's

population redistribution caused the number of senior citizens (65 and over) to swell to 12.1% of the county's population by 1970. The average life expectancy of women continually rose over this time span to exceed men's by 7.7 years in 1970 (Verway, 1979). Given the large contingent of elderly, the median age of women in the county surpassed that of men in 1970, 28.8 to 27.4, respectively.

THE ECONOMY

Agriculture accounted for 77.9% of those gainfully employed in Osceola in 1870 (Table 5). Interestingly, the Census Bureau reports that 72.6% of these workers were farmers. However, dual occupations were common, (farming in the summer months and lumbering in the winter) which may account for the low proportion of reported lumber workers. This discrepancy is apparent since lumber, or "green gold" as it was referred to, is viewed as the initial economic catalyst which attracted people to the county (Rose, 1972). In 1873, eleven lumber mills were operating in the county, seven of which were near Evart. The magnitude of the lumbering industry, rapidly depleted the supply of timber. By 1882, one half of the virgin pine forests, estimated at 100,000 acres, were cut or destroyed by fires which frequently ravaged the land (Rose, 1972).

Agricultural crop production rapidly grew in its contribution to the county's economy. In 1882, the farmers of Osceola were producing three times the food needs of its

Table 5. Persons Engaged in Gainful Occupations by Industry for Osceola County, 1870, 1930 and 1970.

INDUSTRY GROUP	YEAR					
	1870		1930		1970	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Employed, 16 Years Old and Over						
All Industries	599	100.0%	4,463	100.0%	5,044	100.0%
Agriculture	466	77.9	2,569	57.6	471	9.3
Farming/Farm Managers	434	72.6	1,772	39.7	293	5.8
Farm Laborers	26	4.3	731	16.4	86	1.7
Forestry/Fishing	6	1.0	18	.4	34	.7
Extraction of Minerals	-	-	48	1.1	58	1.1
Manufacturing/Mechanical	61	10.2	533	11.9	2,188	43.4
Saw Mills, Furniture and other Woodworking	33	5.6	139	3.1	67	1.3
Building/Construction	20	3.3	139	3.1	231	4.6
Metal	3	.5	61	1.4	323	6.4
Other	5	.8	194	4.3	1,567	31.1
Transportation/Communications	8	1.3	316	7.1	199	3.9
Railroad	6	1.0	71	1.6	18	.3
Other	2	.3	245	5.5	181	3.6
Trade	5	.8	419	9.4	1,014	20.2
Wholesale/Retail	5	.8	300	6.7	433	8.6
Other	-	-	119	2.7	581	11.6
Public Service (not elsewhere classified)	2	.3	37	.8	191	3.8
Professional Service	19	3.2	259	5.8	798	15.8
Teachers	7	1.2	*	*	172	3.4
Physicians	2	.3	*	*	41	.8
Legal, Engineering, Others	10	1.7	*	*	585	11.6
Domestic and Personal Service	32	5.3	203	4.5	183	3.6
Hotel	5	.8	60	1.3	*	*
Domestic	17	2.8	139	3.1	74	1.5
Other	10	1.7	4	.1	*	*
Other Industry not Specified	6	1.0	127	2.9	-	-

*not available

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1870;
 U.S. Census of Population, 1930 vol. 3(1):Table 20;
 U.S. Census of Population, 1970 PC(1)-C24:Table 123.

people, and began exporting crops (Osceola County Herald, 1978c). The number of farms rapidly increased to over 2,200 by the turn of the century, with an average size of 82.1 acres (Table 6). At this time slightly more than one half of Osceola's land was utilized in farming operations; potatoes, hay, wheat and corn were the major crops. Dairy farming also was a major agricultural industry, and still remains quite viable. Orchards were numerous during this period with approximately 95,000 trees in the area, 73% of which were apple (U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1902:Table VII-2). However, today relatively few orchards remain.

Potatoes, the first crop introduced into the county in 1851, thrived especially in the eastern part of the county. By the turn of the century, Tustin was the largest potato shipping center in Michigan. However, increased statewide competition during the next forty years lowered the price of potatoes, eventually shifting Osceola farmers away from potatoes toward grain crops, especially wheat. Today, the large potato warehouses of Tustin remain standing; however, they are empty and deteriorating remnants of a changing era.

Although farms encompassed 71.6% of Osceola's land area in the 1930's⁸, agriculture began waning as a major sector of employment. The total proportion of men employed in agriculture declined from 80.4% in 1870 to 63.3% in 1930 (see Table 7). Interestingly, women's participation in the agricultural sector of the economy increased slightly during that same period, 9.5% to 11.7%, respectively. However, the

Table 6. Number and Size of Farms and Major Crops Grown,
Osceola County, 1900, 1935 and 1974.

FARM CHARACTERISTIC	1900	1935	1974
Number			
Total All Farms	2,287	2,061	554
Size			
Total Acres of Farmland	187,664	264,444	117,288
Percent of All Land	50.5	71.6	31.5
Average Farm Size (Acres)	82.1	128.3	212.0
Harvested Cropland	*	79,477	45,140
Major Crops Grown (Total in Acres)			
Corn	10,699	15,768	11,099
Wheat	11,447	1,510	2,186
Hay	14,533	39,495	28,837
Irish Potatoes	9,014	7,585	209

*Data not available (first data on Harvested Cropland available is 1925 which was 79,400)

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1900 vol. 6(1): Tables 10, 22, 55;

U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1935 vol. 1(1): Tables 1, 3;

U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1974 vol. 1(22): Tables II-1, II-18, II-21, II-23, II-27.

Table 7. Percent of Persons Employed by Industrial Grouping by Sex for Osceola County, 1870, 1930, and 1970.

INDUSTRY GROUP	YEAR								
	1870			1930			1970		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total Employed, 16 Years Old and Over									
All Industries (Total Number)	100.0% 578	100.0% 21	100.0% 599	100.0% 3,967	100.0% 496	100.0% 4,463	100.0% 3,164	100.0% 1,880	100.0% 5,044
Agriculture	80.4	9.5	77.9	63.3	11.7	57.6	14.9	-	9.3
Manufacturing/Mechanical	10.4	4.8	10.2	12.8	5.2	11.9	45.8	39.4	43.4
Transportation/Communications	1.4	-	1.3	7.4	4.8	7.1	5.2	1.8	3.9
Trade	.5	4.5	.8	8.8	13.9	9.4	19.9	20.4	20.2
Public Service (not elsewhere classified)	.3	-	.3	.8	.8	.8	4.6	2.4	3.8
Professional Service	2.9	9.5	3.2	2.9	29.2	5.8	8.6	28.0	15.8
Domestic and Personal Service	3.1	66.7	5.3	1.1	32.3	4.5	1.0	8.0	3.6
Other	1.0	-	1.0	2.9	2.1	2.9	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1870;
U.S. Census of Population, 1930 vol. 3(1):Table 20;
U.S. Census of Population, 1970 PC(1)-C24:Table 123.

overall decline represents increased competition and downward spiralling farm prices which Osceola's farmers could not withstand, especially due to the county's soil quality, irregular weather conditions, and short growing season (Osceola County Herald, 1974e). As a result, by 1930 the county's economy had gradually shifted toward manufacturing, trade, and transportation industries (see Table 7). This trend rapidly accelerated after 1940, as numerous small manufacturing companies were attracted to the county. By 1970, 43.4% of the workforce was employed in manufacturing or mechanical industries: the largest employment sector for both men and women (see Table 7). Agriculture's contribution diminished to less than 10% of the workforce. The number of farms dwindled 73% during the forty years while the average size of farms increased 65% to 212 acres. At this juncture, farmland accounted for only 31.5% of Osceola's total territory (see Table 6).

OSCEOLA'S ECONOMIC SHIFT

Manufacturing, trade, and service sectors of the economy initially only complemented the lumbering industry. For example, numerous saw, grist, and planing mills dotted the territory before the turn of the century. Coupled with these businesses, Osceola County also boasted companies manufacturing wooden chairs, furniture, wooden bowls and charcoal. However, hardwood forests quickly disappeared in the late 1800's, taking with them the economic base which

supported many of the towns and residents of Osceola. As a result, such flourishing villages as Brazel, Dewings, McDonald's Switch, Mt. Vernon, Chippewa, Gormer and others vanished with little trace today (Nurnberger, 1971a).

Lakeview for example, was once a thriving village of over 100 people, located on the shores of Rose Lake, the largest lake in Osceola County (see Figure 5). The village boasted of the largest saw mill in the county, which produced over 50,000 board feet of lumber a day. Considering its shingle mill, general store and dozens of houses, a local paper reported prior to 1900, that the "village will continue to grow and in a short time assume a position among the many other growing villages in the county" (Nurnberger, 1971d). Unfortunately, the demise of the lumber industry quickly snuffed the development of Lakeview, and few traces of its existence remain.

Orono, is another reminder of the boom and bust period of Osceola's history. Located three miles north of Reed City (see Figure 5), Orono was named after a distinguished Penobscot Indian chief known for his advocacy of peace during the French and Indian War (Nurnberger, 1971a). It was also one of the terminal stations of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad. Twice a day the locomotives would enter Orono, turn around via wooden turntables, attach additional passenger or box cars and begin the return journey to Luther, Michigan (about 15 miles to the northeast). The village, much larger than Lakeview, was a bustling center including four hotels,

two restaurants, several sawmills, a wooden bowl factory, a charcoal mill, several general stores, a post office, and numerous potato warehouses (Nurnberger, 1971b, 1971c). More than twice the size of Lakeview, Orono remained viable until the beginning of World War II. Today, there are few remnants of the once flourishing town.

More economically diversified towns and villages managed to survive the post 1900 decline of the lumber industry. Evert and Reed City for example, housed many of those employed in the service sector of the economy, including physicians, attorneys, small business proprietors, restaurant and hotel owners, and numerous others. Also, many small manufacturing firms sprang up in these locations before 1900. Residents of Reed City operated flour mills, woolen and textile mills, utility companies (water and electricity) among others (White, 1975). Similarly, Evert had several large manufacturing firms prior to 1900 including M. Belanger and Sons Blacksmith Shop which later became American Logging Tool Corporation, still one of the town's leading employers (Rose, 1972:95).

MANUFACTURING GROWTH

After the turn of the century, manufacturing firms slowly increased their contribution to Osceola's economic base. By 1930, nearly 12% of those gainfully employed in the county worked in manufacturing (see Table 5). Within the next forty years, this proportion more than tripled (43.4%)

while those employed in the service industries, especially professional services, more than doubled (15.8%) outpacing those employed in agriculture (9.3%).

Several large manufacturing firms which entered the county after 1940 accelerated Osceola's economic shift. Miller Industries for example, began manufacturing aluminum doors in Reed City around 1945. By 1961, the company was using more than 6 million pounds of aluminum annually. Shortly thereafter, Miller Industries was taken over by Consolidated Aluminum Company, presently the second largest employer in Osceola (White, 1975:122). Michigan Cottage Cheese Company also began operating in the county in the early 1940's, producing powdered and condensed milk along with cottage cheese. This company now produces Yoplait yogurt. In 1974, Reed City was designated as the Cottage Cheese capital of Michigan in recognition of the output of this company (White, 1975:121). Several other large manufacturing firms entered the county in the 1950's including Gardner-Denver (tools), Ewart Products (plastics), Liberty Dairy and Wolverine Manufacturing (gloves and other leather goods). Rancour (machine products) and Natron (wire harnesses for auto industry) arose after 1960.

OTHER ECONOMIC SECTOR GAINS

Moderate gains in trade and professional sectors of the economy are recorded, in part due to increasing participation by women (see Table 7). In 1930, 29.2% of the women recorded

by the census as being employed, worked in professional fields, especially teaching. A slightly higher proportion (32.3%) were employed in domestic or personal service fields. It is important to note, however, that trade and service industries did not parallel the pace of growth that occurred in manufacturing after 1940. Perhaps one explanation is the influence of large service centers (Big Rapids and Cadillac) in neighboring counties, which may have stifled the development of these sectors in Osceola. As a result, by 1970, manufacturing firms employed the largest proportion (39.4%) of men (45.8%) and women (39.4%) of all industrial classifications.

The discovery of oil around Reed city also contributed to the economic shift which took place in Osceola County during the 1940's. The "Reed City Zone" as it is still known, became one of the top five oil producing fields in Michigan (White, 1975:69). As a result, housing once again became scarce around Reed City as those associated with oil and natural gas production flocked to the area. The rapid influx of people reversed Osceola's outmigration trend which plagued the county after 1910 (see Table 3). However, only modest growth was evident in the county's population until after 1960.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Politically, Osceola County was juggled between several surrounding counties prior to its early development into an

independent entity. In 1861, while still part of Mecosta County, the township of Richmond was organized, encompassing Osceola's entire land area. Sixteen votes were cast in the organizational election with D.A. Blodgett becoming the first township supervisor (Smith, 1884). Six years later the townships of Lincoln and Middle Branch were organized. Within the next three years, an additional twelve townships were laid out. Marion, which lacked the hardwood forests that initially attracted migrants to the county, was not organized until 1871 -- the last of the sixteen townships (see Figure 7).

The County as a whole gained administrative powers in 1861 with its first election held in D.A. Blodgett's house (Atlas of Osceola County, 1878). Blodgett, along with B.R. Gooch and A. McFarlane were elected county inspectors. Eight years later in 1869 the first general election was held, with six townships participating and eight county officials elected. At this time the county seat was located in Hersey, the county's largest village. However, Hersey's development did not parallel county growth as did Reed City or Evart, which sprang up several years later. As a result, the 16 member board of supervisors (the precursor of the existing county commission) voted in 1926 to relocate the county seat in Reed City. They failed in two attempts that year. However, the following year, 1927, a proposition voted on by the people successfully moved the seat of government to Reed City. Animosity developed over this political maneuvering,

OSCEOLA COUNTY
MICHIGAN

Burdell	Sherman	Highland	Marion
1871	1868	1870	1877
LeRoy	Roselake	Hartwick	Middle Branch
1870	1871	1870	1867
Lincoln	Cedar	Osceola	Sylvan
1867	1871	1869	1870
Richmond	Hersey	Evart	Orient
1861	1868	1870	1870

Figure 7. Dates at which Townships Organized, Osceola County, Michigan.

although some of it has faded with time (White, 1975:62).

Interestingly, history repeated itself three times since the turn of the century with respect to the placement of the county's seat of government. The last effort began in January of 1978, when a member of the County Commission introduced a bill to move the county seat to Evart. The impetus for this move was the desire for a new courthouse. Animosity once again flared between supporters of the move, mostly residents of Evart, and those seeking to keep the county seat in Reed City. The major issues pro and con, centered around the cost of new construction, anywhere from \$6.5 million to \$11 million, and the need for the county seat to be centrally located (Osceola County Herald, 1979a). The controversy became intense and ultimately the residents of the county were left to resolve the issue in a special election. During the months before the election, in April of 1979, both sides poured thousands of dollars into promotional and advertising campaigns in an effort to sway public opinion. However, by a nearly 3-to-1 margin, the voters of the County decided to keep the County Seat in Reed City. Ironically, during that same special election, the residents of the County turned down a bill to borrow \$3 million for construction of a new courthouse by a 7-to-2 vote. Thus, even if the County Seat had been moved, no money would have been available for courthouse construction (Swem, 1979).

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The settlement patterns of Osceola's early migrants suggest that the social organizational structure of the county was quite fragmented. Numerous homogeneous and independent groups dotted the territory, often comprised of people with similar ethnic backgrounds as noted earlier in the chapter. Residents of the county were, however, initially linked together in mutual bonds of support, enabling them to survive in a wilderness environment. From this mutual dependency, group cohesion was based primarily on proximity. Settlers in nearby areas would often assist newcomers in clearing their land and constructing dwellings (Rose, 1972:9). In fact, "barn raisings" were special events during those days. Logs were cut and transported to the construction site, while those at the site were hewed. The sides of the building were pieced together, and when completed, a day was set aside for assembling them. Residents from miles around were called for assistance. Utilizing poles, the sides were lifted into place and secured. Afterwards, a meal and celebration followed providing a social climate for exchanging news and information (Rose, 1972:9).

Churches also were pivotal in the early development of the County. The first church (Lutheran) constructed in Osceola was built in 1865 in Hersey to serve the large contingent of Germans in and around that area. Today, the

building still stands. Within the next decade, numerous other denominations established churches in the county including Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists.

Church attendance, similar to "barn raisings" provided an opportunity for social interaction among members of the community. Numerous church social events, furnished much of the entertainment during the mid 1800's. Furthermore, church socials often were fund raisers for new construction. The "Popcorn Social", the "Calico Hop" and numerous suppers, for example, were held by residents of Evart to construct the M.E. Church in the mid 1870's (Rose, 1972:49).

As the population of Osceola County increased and diversified, various societies, associations, and fraternal organizations were formed. Since agriculture dominated the economy until after the turn of the century, many of the social organizations reflected farming interests. For example, the Osceola County Agricultural Society was first established in 1875, holding its formal meetings in Hersey. The following year chapters of the Patrons of Husbandry (known popularly as the Grange) were organized in Richmond, Lincoln, Sherman, and Orient Township, the latter in 1877. The formation of these groups reflect the concern that farmers shared in seeking solutions to common problems in agriculture as well as attempting to gain more control in the market place (Carlson, et al, 1980). By shifting from autonomous local community groups to state, regional and

national organizations such as the Grange, farmers attempted to facilitate their visibility and actual input in policy making.

Fraternal organizations also formed in the county during the last half of the 1800's. The influence of religion was often an integral part of some. For example, the Masons built lodges in Hersey (1871), Evart (1873, 1875) and Reed City (1882). However, others were more service oriented, like the Odd Fellows, with chapters in Evart (1874), LeRoy (1877) and Reed City (1878).

Formal womens' organizations surfaced in the county around the turn of the century. The Order of the Eastern Star was granted dispensation in Reed City in 1899, with 56 charter members. Shortly after the turn of the century, women in Evart organized the Evart Women's Club (1905). Similar to the Eastern Star, the Women's Club was established for educational and cultural advancement of its members. Moreover, this group functioned as a service organization, credited, for example, with the creation of Evart's library.

Military service organizations surfaced after the first World War with Osceola's founding chapter of the American Legion being established in Reed City in 1919. Evart's chapter was organized the following year, while the accompanying auxiliaries began in 1921. Osceola's chapter of the VFW and its auxiliary began in 1936.

Numerous other social and service organizations sprang up in the county during the mid 1900's including the Lions,

JayCees, Osceola Women's Club and the Rotary Club.

Organizations for youth were also established early in the decade including Boy and Girl Scout troupes and 4-H clubs (White, 1975; Rose, 1972).

EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES

The preceding glance at Osceola County's economic and social development provides useful insights into changes which occurred in reaction to its recent population upsurge. The first and perhaps most useful observation concerns the county's persistently narrowing economic base. Initially monopolized by a prosperous yet fleeting lumber industry, Osceola's economy revolved largely around timber during the late 1800's and early 1900's. With the demise of that industry, farming became the county's leading economic activity. However, marginal soils, sporadic unfavorable weather conditions, and short growing seasons were not conducive to sustaining Osceola's economy in the midst of increased competition, lower farm prices, and rising labor costs. Thus during and shortly after World War II, manufacturing replaced agriculture as the county's economic mainstay. Ironically, Osceola's manufacturing sector became largely dependent upon the auto industry. In fact, by the mid 1970's, almost half of those employed in manufacturing worked in one of two firms (Evert Products and Nartron) directly linked to the auto industry (Osceola County, 1976). The recent instability of the auto industry has once again

threatened Osceola's economic vitality as witnessed in the closing of Riverside Manufacturing in Marion, involving 100 auto related workers.

Osceola's historically vacillating economic situation is reflected in the county's sporadic population growth. Its narrow economic base has seemingly retarded the county's ability to retain its youth and those in early career stages, while possibly promoting an attitude among its residents of an inability to attract large numbers of new migrants. Tourism and recreation were viewed as limited contributors to the county's economy. As officials suggested, "the county lacks those special elements that make an area stand out from others" (Osceola County, 1976:22). Viewing tourism and recreation as having minimal potential for growth may have also contributed to residents's lacking an anticipation of and sensitivity to the 1970's population influx. These speculations will be addressed more fully in Chapter 4.

A second noteworthy insight deals with Osceola's social organizational development. Although transportation, communication, and other forms of technology have expanded the potential range of informal networks among county residents (Anderson, 1961), rivalries still exist among certain geographic areas of the county. Evidence of such antagonism surfaced in the recent dispute over relocation of the county seat (see Osceola County Herald, 1979a). The county's apparent lack of harmony may stem from economic quibbling or possibly from early settlement patterns. As

noted previously, the county was dotted with numerous ethnic enclaves which may still maintain certain normative characteristics. Perhaps more important are the possible political power blocs which may exist as a result of differences among geographic areas in the county. Such conjectures will be addressed in later chapters. Let us begin with an analysis of the population influx, including origin and destination patterns, motivations for migration, and the characteristics of the migrants.

CHAPTER III

THE POPULATION RENAISSANCE: 1960-1980

Osceola County experienced a population resurgence during the 1960's after three previous decades of population decline. One intriguing aspect of this population influx is that the growing areas differed markedly from the past. As noted in Table 8, prior to 1960 Osceola's municipalities often experienced population expansion while most of the county's townships lost residents. However, during the decade of the 1960's the trend unexpectedly reversed. Population gains were recorded in all sixteen townships but only in two of the county's six municipalities (Hersey Village and Reed City). This trend intensified during the 1970's when twelve townships grew by more than 25% (see Table 8).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Osceola's rural renaissance is indicative of a general trend sweeping many parts of the U.S. Residential preference research reveals a significant appeal to rural living; however, most migrants also desire close proximity to urban centers (Fuguitt and Zuiches, 1975). Interestingly, many of the nonmetropolitan counties that experienced rapid population growth in the 1970's, including Osceola, are located at some distance from metropolitan centers. The following sections probe the turnaround migrant

Table 8. Population Trends for Osceola County's Townships and Municipalities, 1950 to 1980.

TOWNSHIPS/ MUNICIPALITIES	POPULATION		PERCENT CHANGE 1950-60	POPULATION 1970	PERCENT CHANGE 1960-70	POPULATION 1980	PERCENT CHANGE 1970-80
	1950	1960					
Townships							
Burdell	469	437	- 6.8	507	16.0	1,067	44.8
Cedar	158	102	-35.4	103	1.0	235	128.2
Evart	544	526	- 3.3	582	10.6	1,029	76.8
Hartwick	374	368	- 1.6	406	10.3	420	3.4
Hersey	282	399	41.5	539	35.1	1,229	50.8
Highland	810	659	-18.6	712	8.0	1,063	49.3
LeRoy	391	350	-10.5	396	13.1	858	33.2
Lincoln	860	889	3.4	910	2.4	1,173	28.9
Marion	538	519	- 3.5	536	3.3	1,491	4.5
Middle Branch	472	403	-14.6	541	34.2	642	18.7
Orient	426	382	-10.3	552	44.5	635	15.0
Osceola	509	519	2.0	623	20.0	920	47.7
Richmond	1,197	1,135	- 5.2	1,318	16.1	1,649	25.1
Rose Lake	323	292	- 9.6	380	30.1	847	122.9
Sherman	574	544	- 5.2	608	11.8	847	39.3
Sylvan	461	453	- 1.7	487	7.5	657	34.9
Municipalities							
Evart City	1,578	1,775	12.5	1,707	- 3.8	1,945	13.9
Hersey Village	239	246	2.9	276	12.2	364	31.9
LeRoy Village	243	267	9.9	248	- 7.1	293	18.1
Marion	879	898	2.2	891	- 0.8	816	- 8.4
Reed City City	2,241	2,184	- 2.5	2,286	4.7	2,221	- 2.8
Tustin Village	229	248	8.3	230	- 7.3	264	14.8
TOTAL	13,797	13,595	- 1.5	14,838	9.1	18,928	27.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980.

stream to gain insight into the characteristics and motivations of these movers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TURNAROUND MIGRANTS

Current literature suggests that a diverse population has participated in the rural migration trend of the past decade. Although no unique label appropriately describes the migrant stream, such as an "upper middle class escapism" popularized by the media (Sofranko and Williams, 1980:19), studies indicate a significant proportion of the movers include the young, the well educated professionals, and the elderly retirees (Ploch, 1978; Mitchell, 1975; DeJong and Humphrey, 1976). Voss and Fuguitt (1979), and Sofranko and Williams (1980) have broadened our understanding of the turnaround migrant stream through their research of rapid growth counties in nonmetropolitan areas of North Central states⁹.

Based on research by Voss and Fuguitt (1979) and Sofranko and Williams (1980),¹⁰ one may speculate that migrants to Osceola County, most likely, significantly over-represent various socio-demographic strata, especially retirees, and upper white collar occupations (professionals, technical and kindred, and managers and administrators, except farm). Disparities between characteristics of migrants and the resident population they join, may pose serious implications. For example, large influxes of elderly migrants into rural environments have been found to affect significantly

community social structures by producing increased demands on existing public services (Koebernick and Beegle, 1978).

Moreover, expanding numbers of young, educated, cosmopolitan movers, in some instances, effectively alter voting patterns, shift political bases, and disrupt social norms in the rural communities they join (see Graber, 1974; Hennigh, 1978; Colfer and Colfer, 1978). A detailed discussion of the impacts incoming migrants have had on Osceola's social systems is offered in Chapter 4.

TRACING MIGRANTS

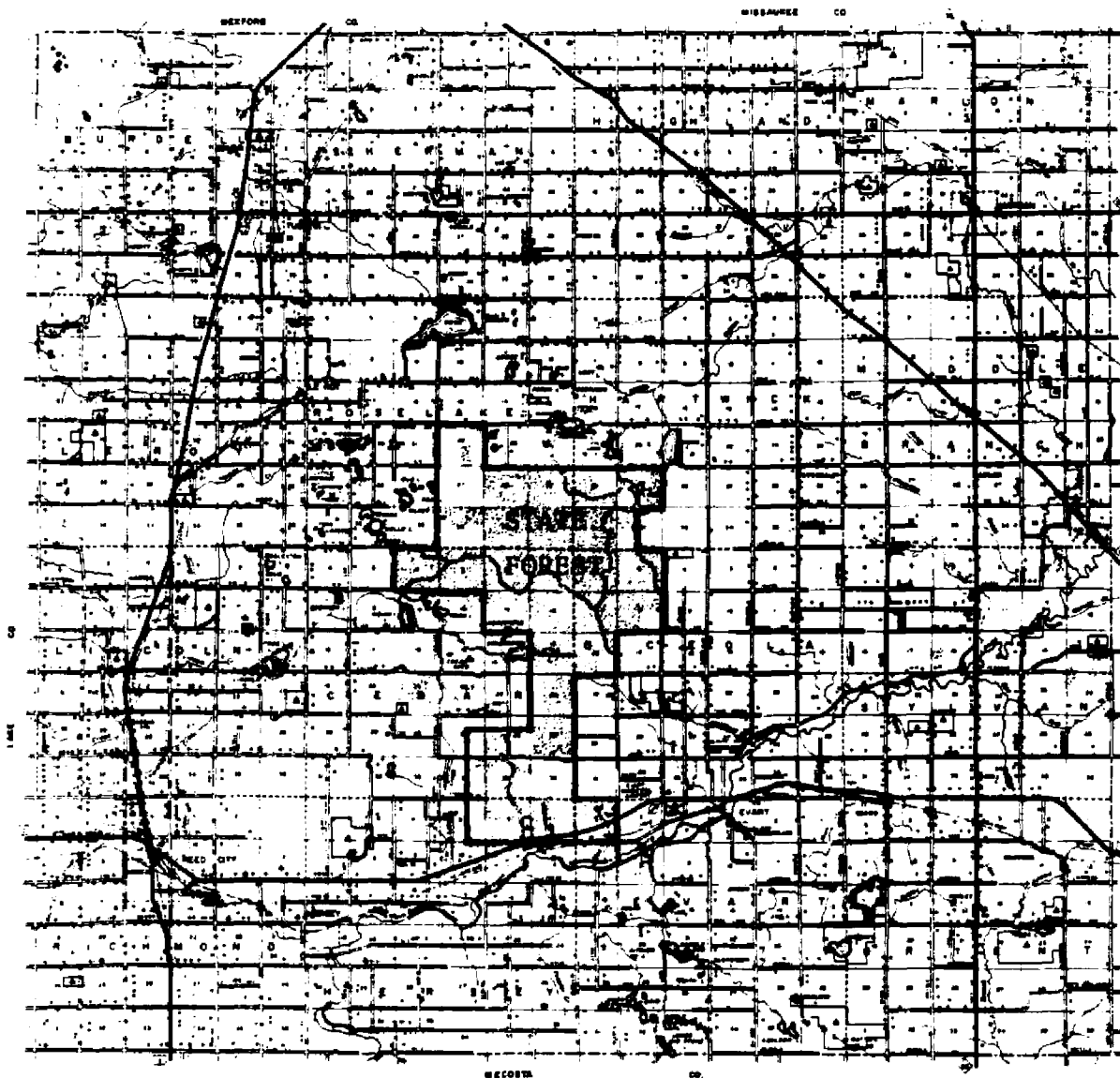
The geographical origins of recent migrants to nonmetropolitan counties in the North Central states have been the center of much speculation. The media, popularizing a "back to the land" movement (Press, 1979; Werner, 1981), reinforced the hypothesis that many of the movers were from central cities of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA'S)¹¹. The surveys of Voss and Fuguitt (1979) and Sofranko and Williams (1980) substantially confirmed this conjecture.

Voss and Fuguitt (1979), centering upon Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, indicate that 40% of the migrants surveyed originated from one of four SMSA'S (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, Chicago, or Detroit). Moreover, approximately seven out of ten listed their former residence within a metropolitan county. If one assumes their weighted sample is representative of Michigan, then approximately 70%

of all recent migrants to any of its fast-growing nonmetropolitan counties are believed to have had recent residence in a metropolitan county. This analysis¹² of Osceola County's recent migrants, in part, substantiates their findings.

As noted earlier, the bulk (94%) of Osceola's growth during the 1970's occurred in the county's sixteen townships (see Table 8). Recognizing the fact that these townships were for most cases, sparsely populated (see Figure 8), limited housing was available to accommodate the influx. According to housing census data, in 1970 only 1,006 vacant units existed in the county along with 1,158 seasonal dwellings (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1972: Table 60). As a result of the influx, 3,161 new units were constructed in Osceola over the decade (see Table 9). This represents an expansion nearly three times greater than the previous ten years. Eighty-nine percent of the new construction occurred outside existing population centers. Moreover, only 283 of these units (9%) were built in areas where sewer lines were accessible, specifically in or around Reed City, Evart, and Marion. As a result, the vast majority of new housing units required septic tanks¹³.

A Michigan health ordinance requires that all persons obtain septic tank approval from the County Health Department prior to construction or modification of existing structures in rural areas. The permit contains the applicant's present address, the exact location of the land holding, and the type



OSCEOLA COUNTY

- Residential
- ▲ Commercial/Industrial
- ⊞ Subdivision

Source: Osceola County Planning Commission

Figure 8. Building Site Locations, and Existing Land Use, Osceola County, 1970.

Table 9. Housing Unit Counts and Septic Tank Applications by Township and Municipality, Osceola County 1970-1980.

TOWNSHIP/ MUNICIPALITY	HOUSING UNITS				SEPTIC TANK APPLICATIONS ¹		
	1970	1980	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE 1970-80	TOTAL	INTER COUNTY PERMITS	% OF NEW HOUSING UNITS
Township							
Burdell	350	606	256	73.1	137	58	54
Cedar	82	136	54	65.9	117	47	*
Evart	418	692	274	65.6	236	103	86
Hartwick	275	336	61	22.2	119	58	*
Hersey	466	678	212	45.5	264	134	*
Highland	298	429	131	44.0	103	43	79
LeRoy	281	386	105	37.4	111	36	*
Lincoln	414	606	192	46.4	162	37	84
Marion	533	608	75	14.1	64	10	85
Middle Branch	265	404	139	52.5	102	32	73
Orient	345	491	146	42.3	135	62	92
Osceola	249	411	162	65.1	179	44	*
Richmond	390	604	214	54.9	213	35	99
Rose Lake	377	873	496	131.6	337	202	68
Sherman	230	354	124	53.9	102	38	82
Sylvan	333	580	247	74.2	170	75	69
Municipalities							
Evart City	643	803	160	24.9	-	-	-
Hersey Village ³	122	149	27	22.1	-	-	-
LeRoy Village ⁴	96	114	18	18.8	-	-	-
Marion City ⁵	324	334	10	3.1	-	-	-
Reed City City ²	817	930	113	13.8	-	-	-
Tustin Village ²	89	97	8	9.0	-	-	-
TOTAL	6,766	9,927	3,161	46.7	2,551	1,014	—

*Over 100% due to the inclusion of modifications to existing dwellings, which are not counted as new housing units.

¹ The septic tank applications are for the period January 1, 1970 to June 30, 1979.

² Housing unit counts include those in Tustin Village.

³ Housing unit counts include those in Hersey Village.

⁴ Housing unit counts include those in LeRoy Village.

⁵ Housing unit counts include those in Marion City.

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Housing, PHC80-V-24:Table 1.

of dwelling. The County Health Department considered the permits to be public records and permitted us¹⁴ to code the data for analysis.

All applications for septic tanks in Osceola County between January 1, 1970 and June 30, 1979 were collected and coded. The total for this period amounted to 2,551 permits, the majority of which were in-county residents (see Table 10). It is believed that the majority of in-county applications reflects modifications to existing dwellings or second homes and cottages. Since our present concern focusses upon intercounty movers, the analysis will be largely restricted to the 1,014 permit applications from outside the county.

Table 9 indicates that the number of septic tank applications in each township closely approximates the number of new housing units constructed over the decade. In five townships, more applications for approval were submitted to the County Health Department than there were new housing units constructed. Most likely, this discrepancy is a result of permits requested for modifications to existing dwellings, which therefore are not counted as new housing by the Census Bureau. Additionally, the larger number of permits may represent construction planned but not yet acted upon. Nonetheless, data from the septic tank applications encompass a significant portion of the county's growth.

Several limitations are inherent in the data set just described. First, only applications for new or modified

Table 10. Number and Percent of Applicants for Septic Tank
Approval by Type of Current Residence.

AREA OF ORIGIN	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Within County	1,325	51.9
Outside the County but within the State	978	38.4
Other State	36	1.4
Unknown*	212	8.3
TOTAL	2,551	100.0%

*Due to lack of information on septic tank applications

dwelling sites can be monitored. Hence, those migrants moving into existing dwellings do not appear in this data set. Also excluded are those migrants whose dwellings could tap the sewer systems of Reed City, Marion, or Evart. Second, the permits represent intended or prospective dwelling requests. An extensive survey to establish the actual existence of dwellings subsequent to application was not feasible for reasons of time and travel costs. Spot checks of selected areas in the county led us to conclude that in most cases permit approvals were accompanied by actual dwelling construction or the placement of a mobile home. Finally, the permits only imply that one or more migrants will be associated with the dwelling space for which septic tank approval was granted. Thus the number of persons occupying the dwelling cannot be assessed via these data. Moreover, one can not know whether or not the inhabitants are seasonal residents by this data source. Acknowledging these limitations, the following analysis utilizes the septic tank applications to assess the origins and destinations of "prospective migrants."

PROSPECTIVE MIGRANTS' ORIGINS

The original distribution of prospective intercounty migrants to Osceola County closely parallels the findings of Voss and Fuguitt (1979). Approximately three out of four out-of-county applicants came from urban settings (see Table 11). Moreover, the majority of the urbanites came from

Table 11. Number and Percent of Intercounty Applicants
by Type of Current Residence.

AREA OF ORIGIN*	INTERCOUNTY APPLICANTS		
	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT OF IN STATE TOTAL
Metropolitan	761	75.0	77.8
Core ¹	512	50.5	52.4
Suburban ²	249	24.5	25.4
Nonmetropolitan	217	21.4	22.2
Southern Lower ³	94	9.3	9.6
Adjacent to Osceola	(48)	(4.7)	(4.9)
Northern Lower ⁴	121	11.9	12.4
Adjacent to Osceola	(69)	(6.8)	(7.1)
Upper Peninsula	2	.2	.2
Other State	36	3.6	—
TOTAL	1,014	100.0%	100.0%

*1970 SMSA delineations.

¹ Core counties are those containing a central city or cities of an SMSA

² Suburban counties are within an SMSA but do not contain a central city of an SMSA.

³ Southern lower counties are in the lower peninsula south of a line running from Oceana County to Bay County.

⁴ Northern lower counties are in the lower peninsula north of the Oceana-Bay City line.

central cities of SMSA'S (see Figure 9). For example, the Detroit SMSA is the origin of one half of the prospective intercounty migrants, with 98 coming from the city of Detroit. Similarly, more than 25 prospective migrants come from the cities of Warren, Dearborn, and Livonia, which when combined with Detroit account for nearly 40% of all cases from this SMSA. Other SMSA central cities with significant proportions of prospective migrants to Osceola are Flint with 49, Lansing with 35, Grand Rapids with 26, and Kalamazoo with 20.

The prospective stream originating in nonmetropolitan areas is significantly smaller and consists mainly of those residing in counties adjacent to Osceola, with half originating in the two neighboring cities of Cadillac (N=38) and Big Rapids (N=19). An additional 3.6% of the prospective intercounty movers are from other states. This group also is dominated by persons having an urban origin, the bulk of which are from the neighboring states of Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio.

Overall, more than 80% of the prospective migrants to Osceola are from metropolitan or city backgrounds. Thus, one may infer that disparities may exist between the newcomers and natives, especially in lifestyle values and ideologies. The consequences which developed as a result of these variations are detailed in Chapter 4.

Figure 9. Michigan's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) and Major Urban Centers, 1970.

MOTIVATIONS FOR MOVING

A peculiar aspect of Osceola's renaissance is that motivations prompting immigration appear to differ significantly from those affecting past decades of migration. As noted earlier, prior to 1960 the fluctuations in Osceola's population were attributed mainly to economic forces. In general, residents left the area in times of underemployment or low wage rates, while migrants entered the county during times of prosperity. This trend, in theory, reflects a reallocation of resources, a basic component in economic models of migration (see Bowles, 1970; Greenwood, 1975). The popularity of such explanations of migration may have arisen from the common tendency of researchers to infer migration motivations from structural characteristics. Availability of economic and employment data facilitated interpretation of people as economic maximizers, thus suggesting that economic elements are major causal factors in the migration process (Shaw, 1975:57). Certainly, evidence substantiates the proposition that many people do cite employment as a catalyst for migration (Lansing and Mueller, 1967; Masnick, 1968; U.S. Bureau of Census, 1979). However, a major flaw in economic models is their inability to account for those not in the labor market (eg. retirees), as well as noneconomic considerations (eg. climate, social ties, health). Subsequent studies have incorporated noneconomic motivations into migrations models (see Wolpert, 1965; Speare, 1974).

However, until recently, employment remained the single best descriptor of the motivation for long distance moves (Sofranko and Williams, 1980:46).

Convincing evidence suggests that many migrants of the 1970's have distinctly noneconomic rationales for moving (Voss and Fuguitt, 1979; Sofranko and Williams, 1980). Interviews with newcomers to Osceola keenly illustrate this claim.

OSCEOLA MOVERS AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS

Data¹⁵ was gathered on the motivations of recent migrants (people who moved after 1970) to Osceola. Movers were contacted in the summer of 1979 via recommendations from key informants¹⁶. In order to guarantee reasonably complete coverage of the diverse population, between five and ten interviews were conducted with individuals in each of five distinct categories of movers: a) voluntary simplicity persons¹⁷, b) professionals, c) skilled and unskilled workers and laborers, d) welfare clients, and e) elderly (both seasonal and year round). No formal survey instrument was used; an outline consisting of areas of inquiry guided all interviews.

In general, a combination of, 1) precipitating events, 2) factors "pushing" migrants away from their area of origin, and 3) elements enticing movers to Osceola could be identified in all interviews. Several examples are illustrative of this observation.

(1) Why Migrants Left When They Did

Life cycle transitions often parallel shifts in residency. Retirees, for example, are a major component in the turnaround migration stream. Elderly are "uprooting" urban homesteads and returning to rural environments upon retirement, attempting to rekindle former lifestyles (see Voss and Fuguitt, 1979: 114). In Osceola County, sentiments corroborating this finding were frequently given by elderly informants. As one retired security worker from Royal Oak explained, "its a slower pace here ... more relaxed than life in the cities. You get a sense of freedom here which brings back fond memories of boyhood."

Employment factors were also verbalized as catalysts for rural migration. Industrial and manufacturing firms seeking to capitalize upon potential economic benefits in rural areas (eg. low cost land and labor), have often expanded satellite operations into rural counties. Concurrently, job transfers and promotions of staff members to key positions in these environs increase, evident in numerous cases in Osceola.

Additionally, employment opportunities communicated to unemployed or underemployed workers in other environments, often prompt migration. Workers in urban areas affected by economic recessions may find it easier to locate employment through friends or kin in rural areas, than through metropolitan employment centers. This supposition is

reinforced by several informants who noted that relatives helped them secure work in Osceola after they lost former jobs due to the decline in the auto industry. This may, in part, account for the curiously high proportion of people in Voss and Fuguitt's (1979) study who cite employment as their major reason for moving to rural areas. Also it may explain the inverse relationship between population size of metropolitan origin and migration due to employment factors found in the Sofranko and William (1980) study. In Michigan, the larger urban centers are mainly dominated by the auto industry, thus loss of employment in these areas may have been greater during the 1970's than in less populated places.

(2) Factors Motivating Departure

Anti-urban sentiments (eg. crime, overcrowding, racial and ethnic clashes) tend to be the most powerful incentive for migration of urbanites (Voss and Fuguitt, 1978). A principal of one of Osceola's High Schools illustrates this finding by noting, "the biggest impact of in-migration occurred just after the riots in Detroit and the subsequent controversy over busing."

A diminished attractiveness of urban centers is evident in most interviews with Osceola's newcomers. For example, a plant superintendent verbalized his chief reason for leaving Toledo as, "a fear for his children to go out at night." Similarly, a former university professor, who became

disenchanted with his work, left Detroit and opened a gift shop in Osceola. He commented, "there is no noise pollution here" and "I have a lot more control of my life." Perhaps a registered nurse from Lansing best summarized these anti-urban sentiments in her comment, "I wanted to get out of that rat race" and gain some "peace of mind."

(3) Factors Motivating Selection of Destination

Attractive features of rural amenities (e. g. recreation opportunities, friendly atmosphere, good place to raise a family) are often cited in the same breath with anti-urban factors. One notable exception, the voluntary simplicity mover, are those migrants who expressed a concern for a simpler lifestyle. "Back to nature" generally best describes the feelings prompting these newcomers to leave their prior residence. One former Lansing school teacher, although satisfied with his former teaching position, explained that his move to Osceola County represented a life cycle transition in which he and his family were living out certain values that had gradually coalesced. Ecological aspirations to reduce consumption and a desire to revamp their entire life routine prompted them to leave Lansing and relocate in a rural environment where raising chickens and other food staples was possible. A similar experience was related by a family from Grand Rapids, who sought to escape the city in search of a more ecological, and self-sufficient way of life. Organic farming, wood heating, utilization of a food co-op,

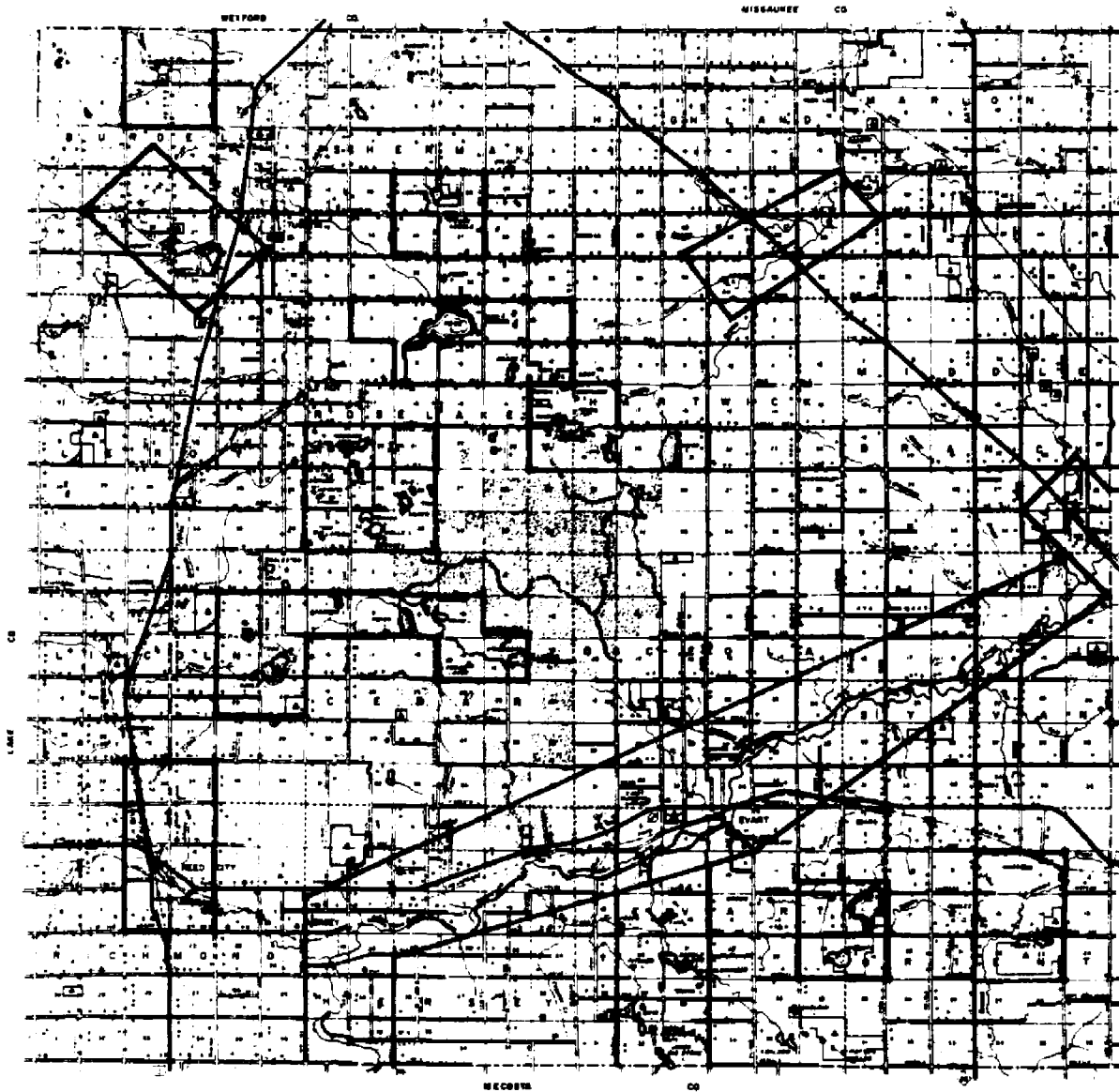
and other forms of a less capital-intensive lifestyle appear to be a prime motivating force.

Destination Selectivity in Osceola County

Movers to Osceola were quite selective in their choice of residential location sites. In mapping out the areas¹⁸ cited on the Health Department applications, we found that approximately 70% of the new dwelling sites were located in sections containing either the Muskegon River, a lake of at least twenty acres, or one of four smaller rivers (i.e., Chippewa, Middle Branch, Hersey, Pine) (see Figure 10).

Lakes tended to be the most attractive natural amenity, accounting for nearly 40% of the total intercounty permits. Lake sites averaged nearly seven times as many new dwellings as those sites lacking lakes or rivers (see Table 12). The number of new residences in sections surrounding lakes, however, varies significantly, as suggested by the relatively large standard deviation for these areas, shown in Table 12.

Rose Lake, for example, stretches across 370 acres and three separate sections; the Rose Lake subdivision encompasses part of a fourth section. Over the nine and one half years covered by the data, 113 permits were requested for this area alone. In contrast, Big Lake, the second largest lake in the county totaling 204 acres, attracted only twenty dwelling sites over the decade. This suggests that realtors and land developers may be significant forces in promoting natural amenity areas. Interviews with residents



OSCEOLA COUNTY

Figure 10. Development Areas with High Concentration of Applications for Septic Tank Permits, Osceola County, 1970-1980.

Table 12. Number of Intercounty Applicants for Septic Tank Approval and Section Location, by Type of Amenity in Sections.

TYPE OF AMENITY IN SECTION	REQUESTED PERMITS IN SECTION			
	NUMBER		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	PERMITS	SECTIONS		
Lake ¹	402	81	4.96	9.30
River ²	195	27	7.22	5.60
Stream ³	90	70	1.29	1.67
Other	294	398	.72	1.05
Unknown ⁴	33	-	-	-
TOTAL	1,014	576	-	-

¹ A section contained a lake if it included all or a portion of a lake amounting to at least 20 acres. One exception to this rule is section 5 in Rose Lake Township. This section was included in the lake category since it contained the extension of a subdivision surrounding Rose Lake.

² A section contained a river if the section included a portion of the Muskegon River.

³ A section contained a stream if the section included a portion of either the Chippewa, Hersey, Pine or Middle Branch Rivers.

⁴ Unknowns are applications which lacked information on section locations.

in the Rose Lake area, in part, confirm this hypothesis. According to these newcomers, information and promotion of the Rose Lake subdivision was disseminated through a travel trailer club whose members were mainly retirees.

The Muskegon River accounts for an additional 19% of the new dwelling sites occurring in the county during the last decade. In Hersey Township, 102 of 134 prospective residences were in sections along the Muskegon River. Once again the density of dwellings in the sections along the Muskegon River varies significantly, mainly due to the development of subdivisions. The lack of appreciable growth along the three major interstate highways indicates that commuting (or easy access to major throughfares) is a less important consideration to migrants than is appealing natural amenity locations, especially in combination with water resources and development activity.

The applicants selectivity of destination sites suggest linkages between migrants and residents in the area of destination may be important elements in the migration process (see also Voss and Fuguitt, 1979: 106; Sofranko and Williams, 1980: 63). Two separate forces, often indistinguishable, seem to account for this selectivity namely, interpersonal and informational networks.

INTERPERSONAL NETWORK TIES

The interpersonal network between kin, friends and migrants has been shown to be an important factor in

facilitating the migration process. During the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the 19th century, Le Play (1872) observed that the parental household served as the foundation from which members ventured to take advantage of opportunities and to retreat to its safe haven in times of duress. He referred to this type of family structure as *famille-souche*, or stem family.

Brown, Schwarzweller, and Mangalam (1963) applied Le Play's notion to the contemporary migration of people to-and-from Beech Creek in Eastern Kentucky. Their longitudinal study corroborated the existence of an interpersonal kinship network, particularly in connection with extended families. Beech Creek families facilitated the migration process through encouragement, by providing family migrants "havens of safety" in times of crisis, while in turn "branch-families" established socio-psychological "cushions" in the areas of destination for family members who also became migrants (Brown et al., 1963).

Evidence from Osceola County indicates interpersonal network ties are contributing factors to the destination choice of some turnaround migrants. For example, several informants cited crisis situations (eg. unemployment, divorce) which prompted them to leave their prior residence and move closer to their family. An unemployed road construction worker from Detroit explained, "I couldn't find a job anywhere, so my father let me use his cottage." Similarly, a recently divorced woman from Kalamazoo

commented, "I moved up here because my mother has property here, so I put my trailer next to hers."

INFORMATIONAL NETWORKS

In addition to interpersonal networks, where migrants seek destinations which maintain proximate ties to significant others, informational networks are active contributors to destination selection. Informational networks are social links that function primarily as channels of communication. For example, friends or relatives in a nonmetropolitan area may relay knowledge of employment opportunities, attractive sites for recreation, and available lots for retirement homes in their area, to a network of urban friends. This information link may implant possible destination sites into the minds of friends, relatives and associates. Similarly, urbanites may vacation with friends in nonmetropolitan areas, creating an awareness of the natural amenities existing in the area. More importantly, each contact may be circulated through a variety of friendship webs, disseminating information about a specific nonmetropolitan area to many others which could result in giving greater visibility to an area as a desirable destination.

Evidence of widespread utilization of informational networks was found by Voss and Fuguitt (1979: 106). More than half of the 992 migrants interviewed gained information about their nonmetropolitan residence through visits with

friends and relatives, while slightly less than one in three reported that they had vacationed in the area.

Interestingly, less than 35% arrived at their information independently, that is, through realtors, newspapers, or brochures.

Support for the apparent vitality of informational networks in Osceola County is found by utilizing the septic tank applications. An informational network is said to exist when applicants from the same community of origin seek septic tank approval for the same one-mile square section in the county. It is necessary to emphasize that data verifying any form of communication between applicants in the assumed networks was not obtained. Of the 1,014 intercounty applicants analyzed, nearly one in four applied for the same square mile section of Osceola county as did at least one other person from the given home community - a total of 91 networks (see Table 13 and Figure 11).

There appears to be a pattern between applicant's place of origin and the particular section of Osceola chosen for residence. Interestingly, the incidence of applicants selecting similar places for intended destination increased as the distance from the community of origin increased (see Table 14 and Figure 12). Of the 48 networks with applicants originating more than 120 miles from Osceola county, nearly 60% chose destination sites that were also selected by more than 15 intercounty applicants. This is in marked contrast to the members of the 16 networks with origins less than 60

Table 13. Origin and Networks of Intercounty Applicants for Septic Tank Approval in Osecola County by Zip Code Region.*

ZIP CODE REGION	APPLICANTS		DIFFERENT CITIES OF ORIGIN OF APPLICANTS IN REGION		CITIES WITH SOLE APPLICANTS IN REGION		NETWORKS	
	No.	Percent of Total	No.	Percent of Total	No.	Percent of Total cities in Region	No.	Percent of Total
Royal Oak	206	20.3	39	15.2	8	20.5	10	11.0
Detroit	299	29.5	40	15.6	10	25.0	31	34.1
Flint	90	8.9	20	7.8	8	40.0	10	11.0
Saginaw	49	4.8	25	9.7	15	60.0	4	4.4
Lansing	96	9.5	31	12.1	17	54.8	7	7.7
Kalamazoo	59	5.8	22	8.6	13	59.1	4	4.4
Jackson	19	1.9	9	3.5	6	66.7	3	3.3
Grand Rapids	102	10.1	28	10.9	14	50.0	13	14.3
Traverse City	55	5.4	11	4.3	6	54.5	9	9.8
Upper Peninsula and Gaylord	3	.3	3	1.1	3	100.0	-	-
Other	36	3.6	29	11.2	25	86.2	-	-
TOTAL	1,014	100.0%	257	100.0%	125	48.5%	91	100.0%

*See Figure 11 for graphic depiction of zip code regions in Michigan.



Source: Rand McNally Zip Code Atlas

Figure 11. Zip Code Regions in Michigan.

Table 14. Destination Sites of Networks by Area of Origin Delineation and Number of Intercounty Applicants in Destination Section (in Percent).

TOTAL INTERCOUNTY APPLICANTS WITHIN DESTINATION SECTION	SECTOR LOCATION *			COMMUNITY SIZE			COUNTY DESIGNATION #		
	A	B	C	SMALL CITY	MEDIUM CITY	LARGE CITY	CORE	SUBURBAN	NONMETRO
	0 - 60 mi.	61 - 120 mi.	over 120 mi.	0 - 19,999	20,000 - 99,999	100,000+			
2 - 5	68.8	33.3	25.1	57.7	22.7	28.0	28.3	18.2	70.0
6 - 15	18.7	33.3	16.7	15.4	18.2	27.9	25.0	9.1	15.0
16 & over	12.5	33.3	58.2	26.9	59.1	44.1	41.7	72.7	15.0
TOTAL	100.0% N=16	99.9% N=27	100.0% N=48	100.0% N=26	100.0% N=22	100.0% N=43	100.0% N=60	100.0% N=11	100.0% N=20

* Each county was divided into one of three sectors according to which sector the majority of it's land mass was located. The sectors represent three concentric zones with radii of 60 miles, 120 miles, and 120 + miles from the center of Osceola County. See Figure 12 for a complete breakdown of Michigan into sector categories.

See Figure 9 for a breakdown of Michigan into metropolitan categories.

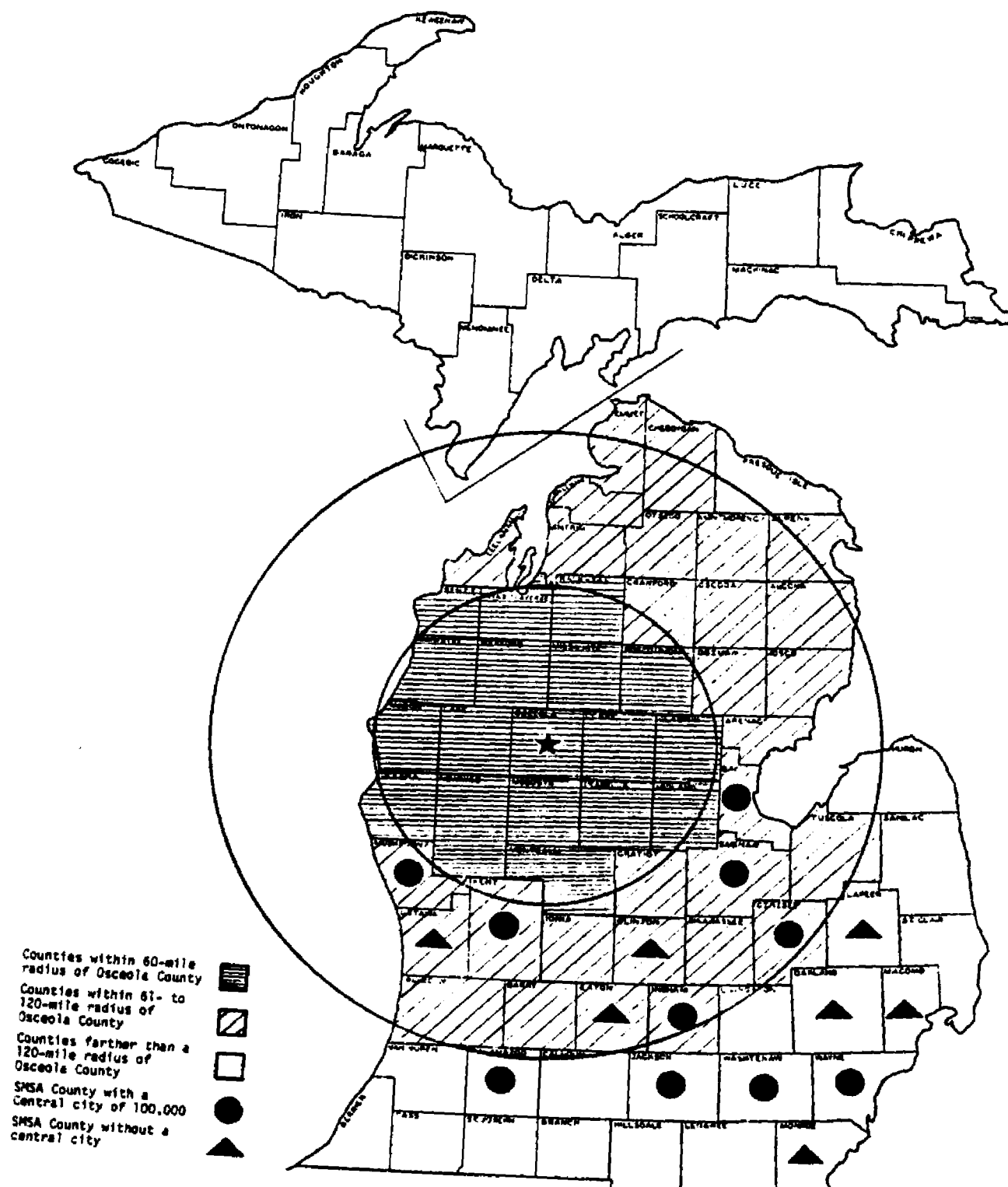


Figure 12. SMSA Counties in Michigan and Distance from Osceola County, 1970.

miles from Osceola in which only 12% choose destinations with more than 15 intercounty applicants. Instead, the vast majority of network applicants who originated in areas close to Osceola county applied for sections which, by July 1979, included at most three additional intercounty applicants.

Based on initial impressions, one may suggest the reported pattern is due in part to the operation of informational networks. Since distance is a major obstacle in acquiring full knowledge of available sites for migration, one must often rely on information gained through visits and conversations with friends, relatives and associates. Moreover, with increased distance one may become more reliant on secondary information, which may moderate awareness of alternative sites and make selected areas more appealing. As a result, people from more distant places may become selectively attuned to specific locales for possible migration via an informational network.

Several key examples provide support for this notion. Kalamazoo, a city of approximately 80,000 persons which is more than 120 miles from Osceola county, is the origin of 20 prospective migrants to dwelling sites in the county. Eight applicants selected the same one mile section in Rose Lake township, while an additional five applied for an identical section in Burdell township. Thus 65% of the prospective migrants from Kalamazoo are accounted for in two networks as previously defined. Similarly, of the 98 applicants from the city of Detroit, also located more than 120 miles away from

Osceola, 53% are accounted for by 17 networks ranging in size from ten to two. The neighboring suburb of Dearborn had 27 prospective migrants, nine of whom sought the same section. Likewise, the cities of Warren and Livonia have five networks ranging in size from two to eight, which account for roughly 35% of more than 30 prospective migrants from each of these cities. Overall, 23% of the 632 applications from communities more than 120 miles from Osceola county are accounted for by 48 networks, which range in size from two to ten households.

Distance, however, may be a confounding element since the southern half of the lower peninsula of Michigan contains the majority of all major population centers in the state. Thus, a significant portion of urban places are distant from Osceola county. To control for this intervening factor, the effects of size and distance are studied separately (see Table 15). Although small cell sizes make interpretation difficult distance seems to exert an independent effect. The incidence of migrants from the same small community (less than 20,000 inhabitants) choosing destinations in identical square mile sections of Osceola which contain at least 15 other prospective intercounty migrants, dramatically rises as distance from Osceola county increases; the reverse holds true for larger cities of origin. This finding, in theory, adds support to the conjecture that the role of informational networks increases with distance.

Table 15. Destination Sites of Networks by Total Intercounty Applicants Within Destination Section by Origin Community Size and Sector Location (in Percent).

TOTAL INTERCOUNTY APPLICANTS WITHIN DESTINATION SECTION	SECTOR LOCATION*			
	0-60 mile radius		61-120 mile radius	
	SMALL CITY	LARGE CITY	SMALL CITY	LARGE CITY
	0 - 19,999	100,000 +	0 - 19,999	100,000 +
2 - 5	68.8	—	29.6	27.7
16 & over	31.2	—	70.4	72.3
TOTAL	100.0% N=16	N=0	100.0% N=27	100.0% N=47

*See Figure 12 for a breakdown of Michigan into sector categories.

SUMMARY

Osceola County has, during the past decade, experienced a significant influx in its population. Studies suggest much of the growth is due to the migration of elderly, professionals, and those in early career stages, many of whom seem disenchanted with urban environments (see Voss and Fuguitt, 1979; Sofranko and Williams, 1980). Through informational and interpersonal networks, these metropolitan and nonmetropolitan migrants are selectively settling into the county's scenic and recreationally attractive river and lake front areas.

An influx of migrants, younger, more educated, and more likely to be professionally employed than the resident population they join, the speculated case in Osceola, is potentially disruptive to political and normative structures within rural community systems (Graber, 1974; Hennigh, 1978; Sokolow, 1977). Moreover, lifestyles may clash when predominately urban movers relocate into rural environments (Colfer and Colfer, 1978; Freudenburg, 1978). The selective settlement patterns of migrants to natural amenity regions may pose numerous environmental and aesthetic consequences (Beale, 1974; Stabler and Patton, 1977), while possibly concealing the magnitude of growth from policy makers. The following chapter, focussing upon the institutional impacts of rapid growth in Osceola County, addresses these issues.

CHAPTER IV

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS OF RAPID GROWTH

Limited attention has been directed toward assessing the impact of turnaround migration upon social institutions. Changing demographic conditions may influence individual and community stability as well as the adequacy of county institutions to cope with the shifting demands and characteristics of its resident population. The following description of the impacts of rapid population growth on Osceola county may offer insight into the effects of population change on rural social institutions.

Five social institutions are focussed upon in the following analysis: education, government, economy, religion, and health and social services. Information and data on the consequences of growth are derived from various sources. Interviews with over 100 local residents and key informants in the five institutional sectors were conducted in the summer of 1979 and 1981 to gain insight into effects, perceptions, and reactions to population expansion. Abstracted material from relevant documents provides supportive evidence. These sources are further detailed in the following sections.

Prior to the field work, a content analysis of the main weekly newspaper in Osceola County, the Osceola County Herald

was carried out to learn something about how population growth impinged upon different community sectors. Items related to growth were classified as to subject-matter from 1970 through 1980. A total of 710 "stories" were coded; results are summarized in Table 16.

The growth-related articles in the Osceola County Herald are classified into ten subject-matter types. They are, in order of greatest frequency: (1) transportation; (2) education/schools; (3) government, all levels; (4) business/local economy; and (5) health and medical care. In general, commentaries involving transportation problems, school issues, and government disputes were frequent each year throughout the 70's. Others, such as religious life and crime and deviancy, were mentioned infrequently in Herald stories.

Transportation issues mainly revolved around the construction of a major interstate (U.S. 131) which traverses the western edge of the county (see Figure 4). Disputes over the most appropriate site for the interchange and "off ramps" raged throughout the decade. Debate centered on economic advantages versus land use alterations (i.e., the usurping of prime agricultural land). Other subject matters classified in the analysis are discussed in the following pages.

Table 16. Growth-Related Articles Published in the Osceola County Herald by Subject Matter and Year, 1970 through 1980.

SUBJECT MATTER	YEAR											
	TOTAL	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Transportation												
Number	127	13	16	8	6	14	21	16	14	6	7	6
Percent	18.0	16.9	24.6	14.8	6.1	15.8	23.6	36.4	26.9	10.9	15.2	14.6
Education/ Schools												
Number	115	15	5	10	17	26	17	6	1	6	4	8
Percent	16.2	19.5	7.7	18.5	17.3	29.3	19.1	13.6	1.9	10.9	8.7	19.5
Government/All												
Number	112	7	6	10	18	6	9	6	17	15	13	5
Percent	15.8	9.1	9.2	18.5	18.4	6.7	10.1	13.6	32.7	27.3	28.3	12.2
Business/Local Economy												
Number	96	12	3	6	15	16	5	8	7	9	7	8
Percent	13.5	15.6	4.6	11.1	15.4	18.0	5.6	18.2	13.5	16.4	15.2	19.5
Health/Medical Care												
Number	67	4	11	4	2	10	24	5	1	3	-	3
Percent	9.4	5.2	16.9	7.4	2.0	11.2	27.0	11.4	1.9	5.5	-	7.3
Overall Quality of Life												
Number	68	18	14	6	7	2	2	1	3	8	3	4
Percent	9.6	23.3	21.5	11.1	7.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	5.8	14.5	6.5	9.8
Land Use												
Number	57	-	2	-	22	5	8	2	4	8	4	2
Percent	8.0	-	3.1	-	22.4	5.6	9.0	4.5	7.7	14.5	8.7	4.9
Recreation/ Leisure												
Number	49	8	4	7	8	7	3	-	5	-	4	3
Percent	6.9	10.4	6.2	13.0	8.2	7.9	3.4	-	9.6	-	8.7	7.3
Religious Life												
Number	11	-	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Percent	1.5	-	6.2	5.6	-	1.1	-	-	-	-	2.2	4.9
Crime/Deviancy												
Number	8	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	3	-
Percent	1.1	-	-	-	3.1	2.2	-	-	-	-	6.5	-
TOTAL												
Number	710	77	65	54	98	89	89	44	52	55	46	41
Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Compiled from issues of the Osceola County Herald from January 1, 1970 through December 31, 1980, Osceola County Michigan.

EDUCATION

The post 1970 urban-to-rural migration trend has a number of potential impacts for rural school systems. Alterations in school age populations may directly affect educational revenues, demand on facilities and personnel, maintenance, and future planned development. Moreover, significant shifts in other segments of the population may also have potential ramifications for school systems. For example, elderly are frequently viewed as opposing school bond and millage requests and thus, a dramatic influx of retirees into a school district may adversely affect school revenues. Furthermore, large numbers of newcomers with values at variance with local norms may induce institutional alterations, as witnessed in an Oregon tax revolt which closed four school districts (see Hennigh, 1978).

The following narrative describes the consequences of the rapid growth of the 1970's on Osceola County's four school districts. Interviews with the seven school principals and Osceola's four school district superintendents intermingled with those of several teachers, provide insights into their perspective on Osceola's growth. Articles from the county's major newspaper (Osceola County Herald), and various educational statistics from Michigan's Department of Education are also utilized. Policy recommendations are offered as well.

OSCEOLA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Osceola County contains portions of four public school domains (see Figure 13), Evert, Marion, Pine River, and Reed City, which subdivide the county into quadrants. Reed City's district, encompassing the county's more populated territory, contains about twice as many students as does the Marion school district (see Table 17). Evert and Pine River's student bodies are about equal in size, but are slightly smaller as compared with Reed City.

Each of the school systems is administered by an elected board. A superintendent oversees the operation of all schools within each district. School districts within Osceola contain at least one high school (grades 10-12), middle school (grades 7-9), and elementary school (grades 1-6), and kindergarten facilities. Principals, the key administrators of each school, are directly below district superintendents in the educational hierarchy.

Augmenting public education in Osceola are several parochial schools that conduct classes within the county. Dwarfed by the larger public schools, these private facilities are all located in Reed City. An alternative to public education is available to residents in the county at all grade levels (K-12), including numerous non-public facilities in neighboring counties. Administrators in Osceola's private schools, also contacted, facilitated an awareness of consequences which occurred in the non-public

OSCEOLA COUNTY
MICHIGAN

Burdell	Sherman	Highland	Marion
PINE RIVER		MARION	
LeRoy	Roselake	Hartwick	Middle Branch
Lincoln	Cedar	Osceola	Sylvan
REED CITY		EVART	
Richmond	Hersey	Evart	Orient

Figure 13. Location of School Districts in Osceola County, Michigan.

Table 17. Percent Change in Public School Enrollment, K Through 12, 1971-72 Through 1978-79, Districts Comprising Osceola County, Michigan.

YEAR	K		1-6		7-9		10-12		TOTAL	
	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE	NO.	PERCENT CHANGE
REED CITY										
1971-1972	144		922		525		403		1,994	
1972-1973	118	-18.1	952	3.3	514	- 2.1	448	11.2	2,032	1.9
1973-1974	136	15.3	918	- 3.6	520	1.2	497	10.9	2,071	1.9
1974-1975	142	4.4	924	.6	654	8.5	503	1.2	2,133	3.0
1975-1976	149	4.9	905	- 2.1	563	- .2	521	1.8	2,129	- .2
1976-1977	137	- 8.1	903	- .2	521	- 7.5	512	0	2,073	- 2.6
1977-1978	153	11.7	856	- 5.2	515	- 1.2	540	5.5	2,064	- .4
1978-1979	118	-22.9	838	- 2.1	471	- 8.5	518	- 4.1	1,945	- 5.8
EVART										
1971-1972	80		538		320		292		1,230	
1972-1973	73	- 8.7	548	1.9	322	.6	279	- 4.4	1,222	- .6
1973-1974	87	19.2	522	- 4.7	325	.9	294	5.4	1,228	.5
1974-1975	87	0	509	- 2.5	316	- 2.8	348	18.4	1,260	2.6
1975-1976	92	5.7	522	2.5	321	1.6	361	3.7	1,296	2.8
1976-1977	76	-17.4	551	5.6	318	- .9	306	-15.2	1,251	- 3.5
1977-1978	94	23.7	529	- 4.0	297	- 6.6	309	1.0	1,229	- 1.8
1978-1979	84	-10.6	527	- .4	307	3.4	300	- 2.9	1,218	- .9
PINE RIVER										
1971-1972	72		506		306		231		1,169	
1972-1973	82	13.9	599	- .2	332	8.5	246	6.5	1,219	4.3
1973-1974	94	14.6	576	3.0	345	3.9	268	8.9	1,283	5.2
1974-1975	90	- 4.3	556	- 3.5	320	- 7.2	309	15.3	1,275	- .6
1975-1976	84	- 6.7	598	7.5	306	- 4.4	340	10.0	1,328	4.1
1976-1977	90	7.1	591	- 1.2	342	11.7	333	- 2.1	1,356	2.1
1977-1978	117	30.0	565	- 4.4	344	.6	313	- 6.0	1,339	- 1.2
1978-1979	105	-10.2	579	2.5	335	- 2.6	305	- 2.6	1,324	- 1.1
MARION										
1971-1972	60		448		233		179		920	
1972-1973	56	- 6.7	419	- 6.5	242	3.8	173	- 3.3	890	- 3.3
1973-1974	69	23.2	416	- .7	249	2.9	201	16.2	935	5.1
1974-1975	77	11.6	420	1.0	255	2.4	196	- 2.5	948	1.4
1975-1976	71	- 7.8	408	- 2.9	235	- 7.8	204	4.1	918	- 3.2
1976-1977	74	4.2	419	2.7	250	6.4	200	- 2.0	943	2.7
1977-1978	59	-20.3	437	4.3	218	-12.8	206	3.0	920	- 2.4
1978-1979	66	11.9	419	- 4.1	224	2.7	203	- 1.5	912	- .9

Source: Calculated from Michigan Department of Education Data. See also Stansly E. Hecker and Frederick R. Ignatovich, "Michigan Total, Public, and Nonpublic Membership Based on 1971-72 through 1978-79 Membership Data," Michigan State University, College of Education, 1979.

sector of the county's educational institution.

ENROLLMENT

The trailing edge of the "baby boom" cohort¹⁹ initiated a period of expected enrollment decline in Osceola's schools starting in 1970. Osceola's shrinking student populations became manifest in the closing of St. Philips school (K-12) in mid 1970. However, a concurrent rapid influx of young urbanite families halted the county's declining student enrollment and ushered in a new wave of growth. Consequently, Osceola's schools encountered a brief span of accelerated growth while Michigan's student population, in general, plunged (see Figure 14).

Closer inspection of enrollment data reveals that Osceola's four school districts did not grow at similar rates (see Figure 14). Rather, those districts encompassing Osceola's prime natural amenity locations (see Figures 10 and 13) recorded the largest advances. For example, Pine River's student body expanded until mid-1977 (except for slight dip in 1974). In contrast, Marion's enrollment vacillated greatly throughout the decade.

Student populations began receding in all four districts, however, near the end of the 1970's (see Figure 14). The Reed City Schools which were particularly affected by shrinking numbers lost nearly 6% (19 pupils) in one year. Disruptions resulting from these enrollment fluctuations are now discussed.

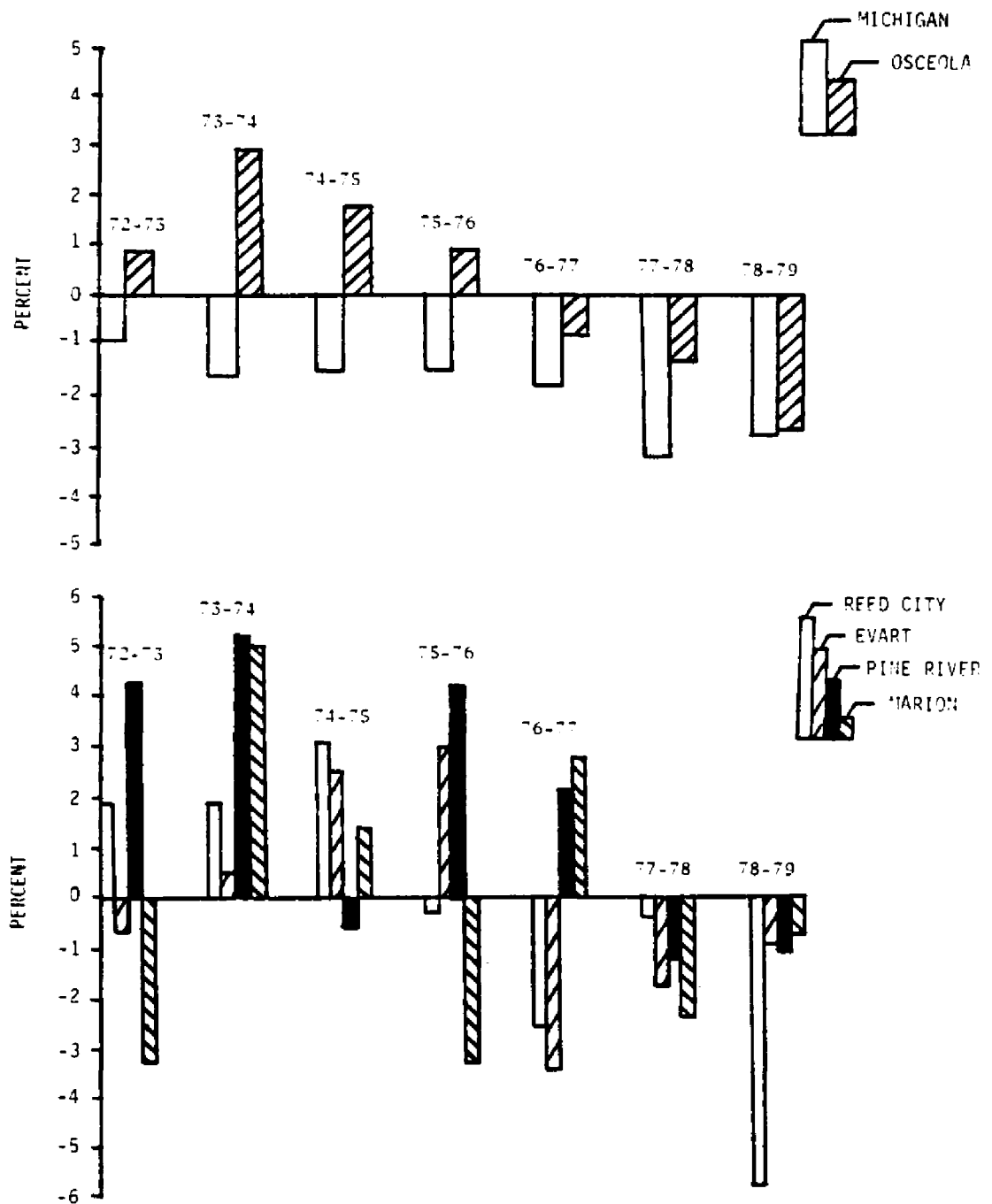


Figure 14. Percent Change in School Enrollments; 1972-73 through 1978-79, Michigan, Osceola County and its School Districts.

IMPACTS OF POPULATION GROWTH ON OSCEOLA'S SCHOOLS

The educational system in Osceola County has been affected in major ways by population growth. Impacts include pressure on educational facilities and programs, shifting attitudes toward school bond and millage requests, increased heterogeneity of students, and an array of discipline problems. The effects of growth, however, have varied greatly among the public and private school systems in the county. Generally, actors in the school system, whether superintendents, principals, teachers or members of the board of directors, have chosen to cope with problems as they arise. Aggressive planning to contend with enrollment changes or to create school-based programs that address the needs of the migrant population are conspicuously absent, to any significant degree, in the Osceola school system. The following sections describe in more detail several of the major concerns which surfaced during the 1970 decade.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

An obvious impact of population growth on the schools in Osceola, is the strain placed upon classroom space and other educational facilities. Chronic overcrowding surfaced as enrollments exceeded building capacities. According to the superintendent of the Reed City Schools, in the period 1970 to 1976, enrollments increased 48% with 20.7% accounted for

by "the influx of people from the cities" (McNally, 1976). Six portable classrooms were used to alleviate overcrowded conditions, and the situation grew extremely acute in the middle schools in 1973, a result of several defeated millage requests for expanded facilities.

A serious lack of communications between educational personnel and the county's populace is, in part, responsible for the situation which plagued Reed City's school district. A review of the Osceola County Herald, from 1970 to 1980, failed to detect any sign of a vigorous campaign aimed at informing the county residents as to the schools particular predicament. Frustrated by the preceived ignorance, apathy, or indignation of district voters, Reed City's superintendent was quoted as saying, "We'll wake up one day and parents will wonder why their children are on split shifts...If we don't start now it'll be that much more critical" (Osceola County Herald, 1973a).

Schools in the Pine River district were similarly inundated by students. Enrollment increases that averaged 50 students per school year cramped newly constructed classrooms. LeRoy's bus garage was renovated to provide elementary schoolrooms. In Tustin, additional classroom space was provided for elementary students by subdividing existing rooms. At the High School, teachers conducted courses in lounges, hallways, cafeterias, and band rooms (Osceola County Herald, 1974b).

The situation at Evart and Marion schools, somewhat less

severe (see Table 17), was also alleviated in part by portable classrooms. Elementary pupils in particular, overcrowded their facilities in the early 1970's.

Ironically, declining enrollments after 1977 became the major issue for Osceola's schools (see Table 17). Fewer students translated into diminished revenues. Moreover, cuts in state funds, higher fuel costs, and a severely depressed economy produced additional financial problems for education. Faculty and staff layoffs became necessary. Alterations in educational programs developed, several of which are commented upon.

PROGRAMS

Deleterious consequences on instructional programs are latent impacts of population growth. Overcrowded school conditions in Osceola during the early part of the 70's undercut several educational appendages. The county's headstart program, for example, was evicted from its location in Reed City to provide more classroom space for other students (Osceola County Herald, 1974f).

A chronic shortage of teachers in the Reed City area generated disturbing effects. Pupil/teacher ratios catapulted to 28, significantly above other school districts (see Table 18). An insufficient number of teachers and facilities severely curtailed special classes such as art, music, shop, and gym. Furthermore, inadequate course offerings in career and special education threatened Reed

Table 18. Selected Characteristics of Osceola's School Districts, 1970 to 1979.

YEAR	SCHOOL DISTRICT	MILLAGE RATE			TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSE		PUPIL/TEACHER RATIO		DROP-OUT RATE	
		ALLOC.	VOTED	TOTAL	PER PUPIL	RANKING	OSCEOLA	STATE [#]	OSCEOLA	STATE
1970-1971	EVART	8.2	12.0	20.2	744.92	372	23		4.99	
	MARION	8.2	10.0	18.2	748.55	314	23		5.51	
	PINE RIVER	8.2	15.8	24.0	791.71	217	24	(25)	5.51	(3.91)
	REED CITY	8.2	8.8	17.0	667.97	491	28		6.02	
1972-1973	EVART	8.0	13.0	21.0	885.95	313	23		8.05	(5.04)
	MARION	8.0	10.0	18.0	908.21	261	22		2.69	(4.17)
	PINE RIVER	8.0	14.0	22.0	916.51	240	22	(24)	5.93	(5.04)
	REED CITY	8.0	9.0	17.0	764.08	514	27		5.19	(5.03)
1974-1975	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1101.27	349	22		7.83	(4.03)
	MARION	8.0	12.0	20.0	1052.14	424	22		2.07	(3.97)
	PINE RIVER	8.0	14.0	22.0	1110.56	338	23	(24)	2.93	(4.03)
	REED CITY	8.0	12.0	20.0	935.47	520	26		5.92	(4.61)
1976-1977	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1151.58	438	22			
	MARION	8.0	14.8	22.8	1121.09	476	24			
	PINE RIVER	8.0	16.0	24.0	1215.24	357	22	(23)		
	REED CITY	8.0	15.0	23.0	1070.06	506	25			
1978-1979	EVART	8.0	15.0	23.0	1445.35	448	25			
	MARION	8.0	14.0	22.0	1423.64	468	21			
	PINE RIVER	8.0	16.0	24.0	1518.42	363	23	(22)		
	REED CITY	8.0	15.0	23.0	1360.36	505	24			

* Ranking based upon 529 total school districts in Michigan.

[#] State comparisons made by size of school district: Evart & Pine River 1,000-1,499; Reed City 1,500-1,999; Marion 500-999. Data for 1970-71 drop-out levels were not available by size of school district, thus the comparison is made with all counties north of and including Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, Gladwin, Ogemaw, and Iosco.

Sources: Michigan Department of Public Education, Summary of Expenditure Data for Michigan Public Schools, Bulletin No. 1013, 1971-72 through 1978-79.
Michigan Department of Public Education, Ranking of Michigan Public High School Districts by Selected Financial Data, Bulletin No. 1012, 1971-72 through 1978-79.
Michigan Department of Education, Public High School Drop-outs in Michigan: 1969-70 through 1974-75.
Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Educational Statistics 1970-1971 through 1979-1980.

City's accreditation (Osceola County Herald, 1984h). An additional factor creating this situation is that funds per pupil in Reed City schools are among the lowest in the state (see Table 18).

The influx of many disadvantaged youth diverted funds to expand activities and benefits for needy individuals in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Remedial reading classes were initiated along with various special education opportunities. Title I funds were tapped to aid school lunch programs, student employment, and other compensatory efforts.

Community education activities in the county also significantly increased during the decade. Although few educators associate expanded programming with migration, the parallel between a reported influx of elderly by informants and an increase in events catering to senior citizens is striking. Free enrichment classes, lectures, demonstrations, and workshops offered during government sponsored hot lunches, recreational trips (eg.. Lowell Showboat, Tulip Festival), and various other activities are a few examples of the programs directed specifically at the county's elderly population. An informant noted, however, that 40% to 50% of the elderly involved in community education, estimated by monthly newsletter circulations at around 400, are seasonal participants -- migrating to the south or preferring to stay at home during winter months.

Various summer recreational activities for youth

increased near the end of the 1970's. Parks, tennis courts, softball diamonds, and numerous other facilities were renovated, in part, due to an outcry by residents against slack local governments (an issue addressed more fully in a section on government). Appropriations for county parks rose from \$6,000 in 1970 to \$32,750 in 1980; an increase of 446 percent.

BOND ISSUES AND MILLAGE REQUESTS

A significant shift in sentiment toward bond issues and millage requests paralleled Osceola's population growth. Until March 1972, voters in the Reed City School District had not rejected a school bond issue for at least a quarter of a century. However, in a ten day span, voters successfully defeated three school bond proposals by large margins (see Osceola County Herald, 1972a; Osceola County Herald, 1972b). A second attempt one year later, seeking to fund a new middle school, also met with strong opposition (Osceola County Herald, 1973e). Similar situations occurring in rapid growth areas of rural Oregon are reported by Hennigh (1978).

Pine River voters also joined the sweeping school tax rebellion. During the mid 1970's, in the height of elevated school enrollments, voters in the district twice rejected bond issues designed to alleviate the chronic overcrowding (Osceola County Herald, 1973g; Osceola County Herald, 1974b).

Mixed opinions are offered by school informants as to the cause of the unfavorable voting trend. Nearly all

suggest that no single label accurately categorizes those responsible for school bond defeats. Rather, "every group seems to be against higher taxes" as one official commented. However, several administrators who analyzed the county's election returns offered these generalizations: 1) voters with low income tend not to register, regardless of the vigor of millage or school bond campaigns; 2) senior citizens and those on fixed incomes are prone to oppose tax increases; and 3) households without school aged children are apt to vote against school issues.

Additional factors which cross socio-demographic lines also affect voting behavior. A mistrust of school officials, for example, may have contributed to millage defeats in the Pine River School District. Residents of the district were informed that successful passage of a bond issue to construct Pine River High School (which occurred in 1969) would be their last building request. However, within only a short span of time, a new school bond issue was placed on the ballot.

Disagreements with planners also spurred residents to oppose school requests. Elderly in the Reed City School district are a key case in point. A bond issue to support the construction of a middle school in Reed City has been consistently turned down by voters who fear becoming overburdened with taxes. A spokesperson for one senior citizen group stated, "we are not against the new school, but we are definitely against the size and the kind that is

proposed (Osceola County Herald, 1972g). High construction costs and interest rates threaten to plunge the district into debt if the school building request is granted, according to the elderly. Senior citizens in the area view their present taxes, and those of people on fixed incomes as prohibitive, thus an additional tax hike would be overburdening.

Other impacts of population growth affect students more directly. Several detrimental impacts are commented upon.

DROP-OUTS

Elevated high school drop-out rates in Osceola parallel the population influx, and suggest possible student adaptation problems. Michigan's Department of Education reports Osceola's drop-out level for the 1970-71 school year was the twelfth highest in the state (Michigan Department of Education, 1971). Moreover, a comparison of Osceola's school districts with those of similar size in Michigan, reveal relatively high county drop out rates (see Table 18). The only exception is Marion schools which sustained only modest growth. Unfortunately, published statistics on Michigan's student drop-outs ceased after 1975 making interpretation of Osceola's situation hazardous. However, available data indicate that Marion High School, the least affected by population growth and also the smallest of the county's four high schools, curbed its drop-out problem most effectively (see Table 18). Interestingly, Pine River also had remarkable success in reducing their drop-out level in 1974-

75. In contrast, students in Ewart and Reed City high schools quit at alarmingly high rates. Administrators point to transient newcomers as a major factor exacerbating this problem.

TRANSIENTS

Several school administrators referred to Osceola's high pupil "turn-over" rate as a major problem due to rapid population growth. A substantial contingent of highly mobile newcomers to Osceola created a very fluid student body particularly at the high school level. One high school principal commented, "there is a hell of a turnover...about 30% are mobile, very mobile."

The consequences of transitory households, most often associated with families headed by welfare recipients or road construction workers, on educational institutions are difficult to assess. Studies indicate transient students decrease the continuity of classrooms (Mountain West Research, 1975; Trigg, 1976:5), increase the incidence of drop-outs (Gilmore, 1976; Mountain West Research, 1975), and detract considerably from the learning process (Cortese, 1979). School informants from Osceola substantially corroborate these findings, citing significant disruptions created by the constant infusion of students who were socialized in a different environment, notably in large cities.

In the perception of local officials parents from mobile

households, especially those in lower economic strata, also disrupt educational processes by their lack of participation in millage or school bond campaigns. Frequently they fail to register to vote in such issues thus in most instances, contribute to their defeat.

This situation, in part, suggest the migration process itself disrupts educational institutions. School informants from Osceola, point out that migrating youth often are plagued by adjustment problems. Moreover, local youngsters occasionally clash with newcomers intensifying the situation and increasing delinquency.

DELINQUENCY

Discipline problems in Osceola's schools increased markedly during the 1970's. According to informants, increased staff time was spent on counseling, probate court, and mental health referrals. One superintendent noted that elementary schools are especially problematic since teachers and personnel at this level often search for causes and cures of troubled children, an exercise infrequently seen at the secondary level.

Unfortunately no data were available to determine the extent to which migrants or the rapid influx of newcomers, in general, directly contribute to delinquency. However, symptoms occurring in Osceola County similar to those reported by Freudenburg, (1978), Cortese (1979), and Cortese and Jones (1979), in their studies of rapid population growth in rural

areas, persuasively indicate rapid population growth may induce deleterious impacts on students.

Overt disfunctions among students within the county appeared in several forms. Student shoplifting during lunch hours became particularly acute in Reed City, forcing several businesses to bar students from their stores during those hours (Swem, 1977). Vandalism and malicious destruction of property threatened the closing of numerous recreational facilities during summer months. According to Reed City's manager, "hardly a night goes by that someone doesn't break or steal something. Light bulbs have been broken and stolen, toilets have been broken and stuffed with paper, towel racks have been ripped off the walls, doors have been kicked in, things have been yanked off the ceilings in restrooms, picnic tables have been stolen...its unbelievable" (Osceola County Herald, 1979c). Overall, juvenile arrests in Osceola for all crimes other than curfew, loitering, and run-away rose from 60 in 1970 to 102 in 1976, an increase of 70% (see Department of State Police, 1971; 1977). The comparable rates for rural Michigan (areas with populations less than 2,500 people) and Michigan in general, are much lower for that same period, 25% and 19%, respectively.

Although young newcomers may disrupt traditional social control mechanisms (Freudenburg, 1978), increase dissention among school student bodies (Johnson, 1975), and subject classmates to different values, migrants are not necessarily the "troublemakers" within the community. Interviews with

numerous residents in the county reinforce this supposition. As a student from Pine River High School aptly explained, "Pine River has been swept by a wave of 'city kids.' This has led to some dissention among the student body, yet a vast majority causing the problems (vandalism) are not 'city kids' but those who were born and raised in the area" (Johnson, 1975).

Drug abuse among Osceola's students also accelerated during the 1970's. Much of the blame is placed upon the heavy influx of youngsters from Detroit. Since drug trafficking increased significantly in most areas of Michigan during the 1970's (Osceola County Herald, 1970a), it is difficult to determine the validity of such a contention. In 1973, local governments in Osceola viewed the abuse of controlled substances sufficiently high enough to state that a drug prevention program was "urgently needed in this area" (Osceola County Herald, 1973c). Funds for the program were provided by the county shortly thereafter, and its success necessitated the hiring of additional personnel (Osceola County Herald, 1973f).

SUMMARY

Rapid change in population presents significant consequences for educational institutions. Impacts in Osceola County included severe overcrowding of school facilities, curtailed educational programming, growing opposition to millage and school bond requests, elevated high

school drop-out levels, increased heterogeneity of students, and an array of delinquency. Dissatisfaction with public education, due to many of these factors, is causing numerous households to seek private education. In Osceola County, Trinity Lutheran School nearly doubled its enrollment during the last five years of 1970 (N=102). Moreover, the number of non-Lutherans attending the school increased by a factor of 7 over the same period. Since enrollment in Michigan's nonpublic schools declined by 3.5% (see Verway, 1980) during that same time period, this may indicate, in part, Osceola residents' dissatisfaction with the county's public educational system.

Ironically, much of the disruption is due to poor planning and a lack of open communications between school personnel and area residents. An aggressive campaign by school administrators to inform residents of changing student enrollments, intertwined with community input in planned development may increase the successful passage of millage and bond requests. Moreover, policies by school personnel aimed at integrating new students and parents into their new environment, may effectively reduce the severity of growth impacts.

GOVERNMENT

Governmental institutions and politics in rural America are commonly viewed as highly personal, informal, and uncomplicated (see Nelson, 1960; Sanders, 1966; Gallaher, 1961; Bernard, 1973; Vidich and Bensman, 1959). Elected officials, in most cases, vacillate indistinguishably between public and private roles, a demeanor often prescribed by local mores. These individuals typically make judgments on issues based upon subjective community norms. Policies, therefore, adjust to the unique conditions of the territory or actors (Wood, 1958:278). In general, an informal support mechanism is the skeletal structure of rural governmental institutions.

Fragile rural polities may be threatened by rapid population growth. Newcomers socialized in more cosmopolitan environments may enter rural political mainstreams, disrupting former informal standards (Sokolow, 1981). Their arrival in large numbers, moreover, may effectively overburden existing infra-structures and delivery systems creating severe strains on often frail institutions. Additionally, rural political officeholders inundated with growth may be required to perform tasks for which they are unfamiliar or ill-trained including zoning, intergovernmental relations, grant writing, and tax scheme development.

Insight into these issues is offered through an analysis of political systems within Osceola County and population

growth related problems which confronted these polities during the 1970's. Interviews with government officials at the county (N=13)²⁰ , township (N=14)²¹ , and municipality levels (N=16)²² detail various disparities among different strata of government, including recognition of growth and its impacts.

Minutes of the meetings of Osceola's County Commission from 1970 to 1980 document policies adapted by county functionaries for coping with growth issues. A review of the Osceola County Herald during that same time period, offers further evidence of the events which occurred during the decade. It is difficult, however, to determine the amount or direction of bias among reporters for the paper, thus caution is assumed in the analysis and where possible interviews or documented data are used to corroborate articles. A description of these situations follows a brief overview of Osceola's political system.

OSCEOLA COUNTY'S GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

Osceola County operates with a 15 member commission. Since the representation on this commission is based on population, the two largest towns in the county -- Reed City and Evart -- hold a commanding voice in the affairs of the county via one-third of the commission votes (see Figure 15). However, this dominance is to some extent muted by a lingering rivalry between the two cities that started from a

OSCEOLA COUNTY
MICHIGAN

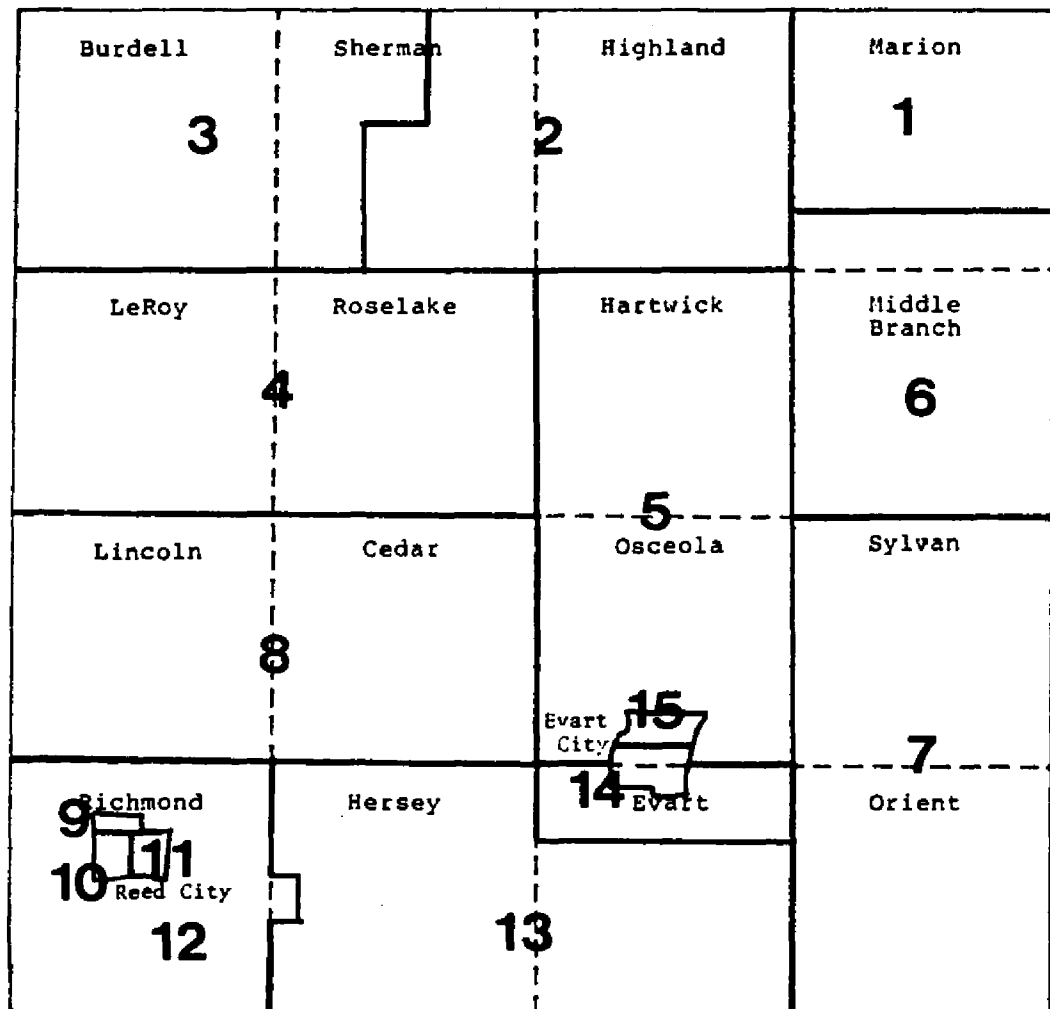


Figure 15. Osceola County Commission Districts, 1979.

dispute over the location of the county seat at the turn of the century.

The rural character of the county still fashions political life. More than half (17) of the thirty-three different commissioners serving the county during the 1970's are or have been farmers. The remaining members, and former members are store owners, business personnel employed by various manufacturing firms in the county, insurance representatives, medical professionals, and homemakers. Only two women have served in this capacity, the first elected in 1972.

Long time residency appears to be a prerequisite for county office, for 26 of the 33 commissioners during the 70's are natives of the area; only one has lived fewer than ten years in the county. This norm is apparent even at the level of local government. All but three key officials (mayors or presidents, clerks, treasurers, and city managers) from the six municipalities in the county have lived in the area longer than 15 years. Although Ploch (1978) indicates newcomers have been successful in obtaining public offices in rural polities, migrants to Osceola have not been as fortunate. A lack of vigor or desire among newcomers in seeking political positions in several of Osceola's smaller villages is cited by some area officials as one explanation. One village administrator explained, "they are just not interested, however, some help out with our voluntay fire department."

Nonetheless, Osceola's newcomers are not bashful about voicing growth related concerns; a trait observed in other rural areas (see Cockerham and Blevine, 1977; Hennigh, 1978; Graber, 1974). Complaints about road maintenance, crime, and taxes were frequently heard from migrants, a topic discussed later in this section.

The governing structure of the towns and villages in the county runs the gamut of complexity from the bureaucratic system of Reed City (population 2,221) to the old fashioned town meeting of LeRoy (population 293). Only Reed City and Evart employ professionally trained city managers, while the remaining four rely upon their town council to perform planning and administrative functions.

An intermediate strata of government is the township. Comprised of a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and various subcommittees (eg. road commission), a township board is primarily responsible for the infra-structural affairs of a six square mile domain. Although substantially reliant upon county support, both legislatively and monetarily, township officials retain zoning privileges, a limited ability to levy taxes, and property assessment responsibilities.

Not surprisingly, the diversity of governmental units and nature of jurisdictions have resulted in an equally diverse impact of population growth on government. Since lakes, woods, forests and streams -- the natural amenities that seem to attract in-migrants -- are not evenly dispersed throughout the county, the consequences of growth are not

equally felt in all areas of the county. Moreover, recognition of population expansion varies distinctly among different sectors of government.

GROWTH AWARENESS

County government seems nonchalant about population growth occurring in Osceola, an attitude implicit in interviews with county commissioners. Impressions of population influx were frequently viewed by them as "not significant." For example, one commissioner commented, "not a great deal of growth is occurring in the county ... the population is around 18,000." Even though his estimate is in error by nearly 1,000 persons (18,928), the decennial gain which he suggested is still two and a half times greater than any previous decennial growth period in Osceola's history since the turn of the century.

Selectively confined population growth may be, in part, responsible for this somewhat distorted perspective. Much of Osceola's population expansion, as noted in Chapter 3, is found in wooded areas, alongside lakes and the Muskegon River, in general hidden from the casual onlooker. Commissioners for the most part are aware of these common growth areas, however, most note that they infrequently visit them, as illustrated in the response: "Rose Lake is getting quite a few newcomers and their share of problems, however, I've never been there so I don't know."

In marked contrast, township supervisors are in a

favorable position to witness population growth. Responsible for a six-mile square piece of geography, they are keenly aware of changes occurring in their territory, as evidenced in interviews. Population growth varied widely among townships in Osceola, hence, an array of responses were given ranging from, "growth has been pretty substantial" to "our township has only gradually increased due to a lack of lakes."

Differential population growth in Osceola's municipalities similarly prompted divergent responses from local public servants. Key government officials (village president, clerk, treasurer, councilmember) in Tustin, LeRoy, and Hersey uniformly described their village's influx as gradual, and pointed to peripheral territory as areas of gain. Informants from the larger towns of Reed City, Ewart, and Marion assessed their area's growth situation as limited, commenting that surrounding lakes and streams are forces attracting migrants.

Varied preceptions of population growth among county, township, and municipal governments are found to be disruptive. In Osceola County, incongruity between legislative bodies fostered an array of clashes among public servants. Their disjointed views of growth attenuated successful planning, financing, and cooperation as noted in the following sections.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REACTION TO GROWTH

Osceola's county government appears somewhat disassociated from the growth problems in its townships and small towns, a condition implicit in the county commission minutes. A review of these minutes for the period from January 1970 to June 1979 revealed that an overwhelming portion of time and energy was devoted to budgetary concerns, sundry individual recognitions, and maintenance of county grounds, buildings, material and personnel.

Conversations with county officials suggest that the impact of population growth is viewed as a local concern for areas around lakes and rivers where expansion is occurring. Township leaders, disgruntled over the lack of assistance given them by the county, have taken semi-isolationist attitudes. As one township supervisor noted, "the county doesn't seem to be doing much about growth ... (thus) the county is not really needed in this particular township, it (township) is doing well enough on its own."

Financial assistance, waste disposal sites, and improved services (i.e., emergency health care, elderly transportation) were frequently mentioned needs by township informants. As one municipal official said, "they have the money but they won't spend it." A review of county appropriations over the decade reveals a contingency fund which commissioners state they are hesitant to tap. Ironically, this "nest egg" has not dropped below \$60,000

since 1975 (see Table 19).

Discontent between township and county government, however, is not new in Osceola. In 1969 supervisors were banned from the county commission in an apparent power play. Prior to that time, townships had representation in county decision making via one vote. A subsequent attempt at unifying the two political bodies several years later met with a similar fate. In this instance, a township association was formed to facilitate information flows between supervisors and commissioners. However, as one supervisor explained, "many supervisors quit attending after a couple of meetings ... commissioners would not attend either."

Local public servants also expressed dissatisfaction with county government. Infra-structural problems (i.e., roads, landfills) were most often cited as major concerns. Satirically, one informant commented, "the county hasn't helped us much, they think we are in the next county up."

GROWTH ISSUES CONFRONTING OSCEOLA'S GOVERNMENTS

The consequences of growth are viewed by most government officials in Osceola as a "mixed bag" -- better in some respects, worse in others. County and local administrators are the most positive, citing few negative impacts and emphasizing that population expansion has bolstered area business climates. However, township supervisors frequently responded that the conditions in their localities had

Table 19. Osceola County Budget Appropriations, 1970-1980.

APPROPRIATIONS	YEAR						PERCENT CHANGE 1970-1980
	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	
Health Care ¹	44,850	53,600	49,891	66,133	142,666	181,721	305
Institutions	12,000	28,000	10,000	15,000	30,000	50,000	25
Parks	6,000	13,000	25,000	31,246	30,000	32,750	446
Retirement/Relief Funds ²	25,500	35,500	57,860	133,860	139,800	215,000	743
Social Welfare Service	35,000	70,000	68,429	73,795	83,687	87,366	150
County Fairs	15,000	15,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	67
Ambulance Service	32,000	39,140	51,051	72,000	98,465	137,091	328
Other Services ³	10,000	9,800	12,300	6,300	6,300	4,400	- 56
Planning Commission	-	32,586	6,100	6,195	6,000	6,000	NA
Miscellaneous ⁴	700	280	2,000	4,300	2,100	13,646	NA
General Fund/ Capital Outlay	262,222	276,976	335,414	479,388	667,843	927,686	NA
Contingency Fund	-	32,587	27,145	69,879	67,139	60,000	NA
TOTAL	443,272	608,989	730,190	983,096	1,299,000	1,470,660	293

¹ Health Care includes appropriations for Child Care, Health Unit, Public Health, Child Guidance Clinic

² Retirement/Relief Funds includes appropriations for Soldier/Sailer Relief, Social Security, Retirement Fund, Hospital Life Insurance, Unemployment Compensation.

³ Other Services includes appropriations for Extension Agent, Library, Water Patrol, Civil Defense, Riot Control, Youth Camp.

⁴ Miscellaneous includes appropriations for Osceola Historical Society, Western Michigan Tourist Association, Soil Conservation, Monument Markers, Six Cap, Probation Agent, Department of Public Works, Western Michigan Health Plan, Beacon House, Law Office Training School, Snow Mobile Patrol.

Source: Osceola County Commission Minutes, 1970 through 1980, Osceola County Michigan.

worssened as a result of in-migrants. Negative consequences of recent growth highlighted by interviews with public servants are: 1) road maintenance, 2) waste disposal, 3) crime, and 4) taxes.

1) Road Maintenance

Several factors have increased the clamor over road quality in Osceola County namely, increased traffic, diminished highway finances, and vociferous newcomers. Heavy use of Osceola's throughfares, especially by weekend vacationers, has accelerated their deterioration. "Township populations more than double on (summer/fall) weekends" noted one supervisor.

Limited budgets were mentioned as intensifying the situation²³. Townships were requested to sustain heavier road maintenance cost near the end of the 70's due to diminished revenues funneled through the county from the state (Osceola County Herald, 1978d). A review of the county road commission's budget reveals deficit spending during the early years of the 70's. However, near the later part of the decade revenues exceeded expenditures (see Table 20). Most likely these figures are an indication of the extent of support townships provided. Between 1970 and 1978, funds spent on snow removal and road maintenance -- services complained about most by newcomers -- more than doubled. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this gain reflects a response to a heightened demand from metropolitan

Table 20. Osceola Road Commission Budgets, 1970 to 1978.

ITEM	YEAR					PERCENT CHANGE 1970-1978
	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	
Revenues	635,616	791,321	1,362,915	1,497,185	1,656,225	160
Expenditures	729,075	834,268	962,422	1,273,215	1,356,158	86
Construction	258,375	222,036	198,490	233,161	147,030	- 43
Maintenance	404,977	534,653	580,954	683,739	862,023	113
Equipment	21,825	35,852	12,415	84,415	17,842	-
Administration	43,898	41,727	64,855	80,565	101,966	132
Snow Removal	-	-	105,708	191,335	227,297	115*

*Percent change was calculated from 1974 to 1978.

Source: Osceola County Commission Minutes, 1970-1979.

newcomers for better roads and road maintenance.

Nonetheless, informants uniformly stated that urban migrants frequently complain of poor up-keep and tardy snow removal; sentiments seldom voiced by local residents.

2) Waste Disposal

Osceola's rapid population growth and increased manufacturing activity during the 1970's placed a severe strain on the county's waste disposal facilities. Interestingly, funds were secured by the county for a comprehensive area-wide study of Osceola's water and sewer systems in 1970 (Osceola County Herald, 1970f); a final report appeared in 1971 (see Osceola Planning Commission, 1971). Although the study predicted development areas with precision and alluded to growth, county officials avoided waste disposal planning and rejected an Osceola Planning Board's recommendation for a county landfill, suggesting the need did not exist and the cost was too high (Osceola County Herald, 1973h). Rather, the commissioners opted to remain reliant upon facilities in neighboring counties and interim licenses granted to Reed City, Evart, and Marion. However, in 1978 the Department of Natural Resources, which regulates disposal sites, closed the local sites in Osceola, thus elevating the county's solid waste disposal problems to a crisis level (Osceola County Herald, 1978e).

One explanation for the commissions' attitude is their possible distrust of expertise. Solokow (1978) noted that

rural governments often view professional assistance as representing foreign values, potential disruptors of informal institutions. This also may explain why commissioners did not seek technical assistance in producing a county building code (see Osceola County Herald, 1974j).

Ironically, informants state that inadequate control and restriction on land development has intensified waste disposal problems in the county. Numerous illustrations revolving around septic tank systems were offered. In general, respondents reported that portions of Osceola's scenic countryside are not suitable for septic tank systems; a frequent discovery made by newcomers after they purchased land. In the case of Lake Miramici, a large scale lake development scheme, many of the 1,121 lots are situated in a clay basin for which county health officials will not approve for septic tank installation. Since the area was platted before the state's Subdivision Control Act in 1968, which forced tracted land to be approved before development, the county's lack of restrictions left newcomers with few safeguards. Additionally, informants stressed that lenient guidelines have allowed excessive development along lakeshores which threatened ground water quality.

3) Crime

Some supervisors felt that crime had increased, particularly crimes of property such as vandalism, trespass and theft. Evidence substantiates this claim. In 1977 the

incidence of burglary was in Osceola was 60% higher than that reported in 1971, a difference much greater than that recorded for Michigan's rural areas (places with less than 2,500 population) (18%) or Michigan in general (-.7%) (see Michigan Department of State Police, 1971; 1977). Moreover, the number of total offenses for all crimes reported in Osceola was 86% higher in 1977 than in 1971. This represents an increase larger than that for Michigan's rural areas (27%) or the state as a whole (11%) (see Michigan Department of State Police, 1971; 1977).

According to one law enforcement officer at the Osceola County Sheriff's Department, "breaking and entering and larceny have the largest increase (along) with civil disputes, especially over land, the most predominate crime." Seasonal dwellers are viewed as one catalyst producing the rising crime rate; unemployment is an additional factor. As noted by the informant, "vacant cottages and summer homes are favorite targets."

Contrary to the impressions of many local residents, most of the offenses committed in Osceola are not attributed to newcomers. Rather, native youngsters and residents from neighboring counties are considered to be mainly at fault. As one commissioner explained, "Crime is up, but much of that is our local kids. Some thought it was due to 'rif-rafi,' but the sheriff will tell you that's not the case."

In an attempt to curb the county's crime rate, several townships implemented a "neighborhood watch" program, an

illustration of rural areas' informal social control mechanisms (Osceola County Herald, 1975b). This self help scheme utilizes local residents as overseers of residential areas.

4) Taxes

Government officials, especially township supervisors stressed the "flack" they must take over repeated assessment increases. In about three of four townships, property valuations more than quadrupled over the 1970 decade (see Table 21), rates much higher than the state's increase (135%) (see Lukomski 1970; Verway, 1980). The total assessed valuation of townships on the average increased from one and a half million in 1970 to over seven million in 1980. Property near lakes elevated to ten times the value of agricultural land; timberland areas rose five times that of agricultural property. The comparatively smaller assessed property valuations in Evert and Reed City only doubled during that time span, which suggests rapid population growth may have contributed significantly to assessment rate increases (see Table 21).

Residents enraged over skyrocketing property taxes, organized meetings with county and township officials to air their views (see Osceola County Herald, 1972c). Claims of unjust assessments were directed occasionally at township supervisors. For example one resident reported, "one township supervisor owns 3,000 acres including lakefront

Table 21. Equalized Property and Total Valuations for Cities and Townships in Osceola County, 1970-1980.

PLACE	1970		1975		1980		PERCENT CHANGE	
	PROPERTY	TOTAL	PROPERTY	TOTAL	PROPERTY	TOTAL	PROP.	TOTAL
TOWNSHIPS								
Burdell	1,721,640	1,877,307	2,973,643	3,209,032	8,634,250	8,858,952	402%	372%
Cedar	608,400	747,600	1,925,800	2,687,400	5,565,900	6,521,170	815	772
Evart	3,095,350	3,365,600	4,540,150	4,984,550	11,066,300	11,595,500	258	245
Hartwick	1,480,500	1,575,400	2,567,700	2,729,376	7,395,898	7,583,567	401	381
Hersey	2,441,500	2,859,300	5,038,200	6,122,200	12,064,400	13,266,700	394	364
Highland	1,411,300	1,639,700	2,579,000	3,136,350	8,541,375	9,065,715	505	453
LeRoy	1,180,700	1,352,800	2,072,000	2,309,600	6,807,100	7,039,900	477	420
Lincoln	2,068,353	13,879,853	3,960,300	20,183,700	9,615,900	25,561,300	365	84
Marion	2,853,700	4,514,820	4,401,200	6,372,800	10,652,559	12,271,784	273	172
Middle Branch	1,274,100	1,402,000	2,402,600	2,578,200	7,210,493	7,473,193	466	433
Orient	1,328,700	2,648,795	2,517,600	5,117,565	7,347,900	10,812,304	453	308
Osceola	1,368,900	1,467,050	2,642,400	2,794,200	7,775,468	7,992,661	468	445
Richmond	3,116,600	7,963,600	4,775,700	10,655,700	14,509,914	18,046,714	366	127
Rose Lake	1,736,300	1,882,200	3,356,000	4,180,900	11,793,510	12,655,775	579	572
Sherman	1,315,685	1,714,578	2,447,830	3,266,749	7,107,750	8,037,286	440	369
Sylvan	1,545,340	1,729,060	3,221,850	3,477,851	8,718,050	8,950,248	464	418
CITIES								
Evart	3,479,779	6,528,604	5,057,300	11,761,500	9,137,623	14,112,323	163	116
Reed City	4,691,600	6,668,900	6,032,800	9,663,700	10,939,500	13,848,117	133	108
TOTAL	63,718,447	63,817,107	62,457,573	105,231,373	164,883,890	203,693,214	159	219

Source: Osceola County Commission Minutes, 1970-1980.

property which was not assessed as high as other parcels in the township." The County Equalization Director commented that such matters are "local concerns" (Osceola County Herald, 1972c).

Intensifying local residents' hostility toward taxation were the factor increases the state tacked onto Osceola's assessments. For three consecutive years starting in 1976, the State Equalization Board increased the county's valuation above what the county assessed. Osceola was only one of five Michigan counties (Mecosta, Muskegon, Oceana, Clinton) in which factor increases occurred (Osceola County Herald, 1979b). Complaints by county officials concerning unfair practices by a state tax commission representative resulted in the transfer of Osceola to the jurisdiction of another representative (Osceola County Herald, 1980b).

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

As noted previously, county government seemed to be somewhat disassociated from growth problems. The key population impact issues dealt with by the commission were highway construction, health care, and recreation. Several more specific actions related to growth included the creation and implementation of a junk ordinance, county building code, and a centralized ambulance network.

Collectively, commissioners have taken a "wait and see" stance toward growth. Few preventive measures aimed at curbing growth related impacts have been set in motion by the

commission. County zoning, for example, has met with limited support from commissioners.

Plans for county zoning were first discussed in 1970 (see Osceola County Herald, 1970g). Residents' fervor for protecting Osceola's scenic areas prompted the passage of a "Green Belt Zoning Ordinance" in 1971 which restricted building construction within 50 feet of a watershed, except to stabilize terrain. That same year the Osceola Planning Commission expressed an "urgent need to control residential development" in the county. Negative consequences of growth in neighboring counties were utilized as an illustration of the effect of planning negligence. Nevertheless, action toward county zoning in Osceola was delayed until a land use study was suggested in 1975 (Ide, 1975). Ironically, during that time span, land developers were selling lots in Osceola without proper authorization (Detroit Free Press, 1971), utilizing and selling county property (Osceola County Herald, 1972f), and over-developing river front areas (Osceola County Herald, 1971b).

Township officials were keenly aware of the situation, and began proposing regulations. Hersey Township in late 1970 restricted the number of mobile homes allowed into the area, especially in Hersey Village (Osceola County Herald, 1970h). Middle Branch Township, inundated with development, requested a moratorium on new plats along the Middle Branch River. As one spokesperson said, "we'll soon become a drainage ditch if development continues" (Osceola County

Herald, 1971). Additionally, Rose Lake, Sherman, Sylvan, and Richmond Townships implemented zoning ordinances while Highland, Osceola, and Cedar Townships were in the process of instituting land use codes.

The issue of zoning once again surfaced at the county level in 1977. County planners urged commissioners to formulate a plan to protect unrestricted areas of the county. However, in general commissioners remained opposed to such county statutes. As one commented, "people think its a communist plot ... it takes away their freedom." Threats from vociferous zoning opponents perhaps contributed to commissioners negative attitude. A real estate broker at one land use meeting met with applause when he said, "I will actively campaign against every commissioner who votes for this ordinance and I urge everyone here to do the same." A notable comment by one commissioner during the same meeting sums up the commissioners' apparent insensitivity to development impacts, "If ever there was a place that God meant for houses, it was here" (Osceola County Herald, 1977b). Not surprisingly, the commission voted down county zoning 11 to 4 late in 1979.

SUMMARY

Evidence from Osceola County suggests that population growth confined to selected localized areas may significantly distort policy makers' awareness of population expansion and its ramifications. Other factors including economic prorit

motives, pressure from constituents, and lack of vigor or interest may also account for public servants' misconceptions of growth or their unwillingness to promote planned development. Regardless of causation, varied perceptions in different strata of government minimizes effective coordination among polities. In Osceola, disjointed views attenuated successful planning, financing, and cooperation between political sectors.

Obvious impacts of population growth were manifest in strains on various infra-structural components. Road maintenance costs increased dramatically due to heavy use, especially by weekend vacationers. Solid waste disposal facilities became severely taxed. Over-development and improper soil quality fostered disputes over septic tank utilization.

Additionally, public servants were subjected to grumbling migrants. Officials stressed the "flack" they must take from vociferous newcomers over tardy snow removal, inadequate road maintenance, increased crime, and excessive property assessments. Moreover, some governmental functionaries reported conflicts of interest between newcomers and oldtimers due to lifestyle clashes.

Aggressive growth management, to a large extent, was absent in Osceola, particularly at the county level. Distorted views of the magnitude of population expansion and a reluctance to seek technical assistance in planning may have been contributing factors. Improved communications

between governmental strata may have effectively minimized growth impacts and facilitated strategies for future change.

ECONOMY

Until the 1950's, the economy of Osceola County was based almost exclusively upon its indigenous resources -- forests and agricultural land. Notwithstanding its distance from major markets, small scale manufacturing firms began entering the county in the 1950's in part a reflection of a much larger trend sweeping the U.S. (see Clemente, 1975). Recreational amenities of Osceola, initially considered less desirable than those at other locations in Michigan, were extensively developed during the 1970's, paralleling the county's rapid population expansion. Hence, small scale manufacturing and recreation constitute major additions to the traditional economy based on forestry and agriculture.

Shifts in Osceola's economic activity and subsequent institutional impacts are scrutinized by utilizing an array of census, social security, and Michigan Employment Security Commission data. Interviews with key informants (managers, plant supervisors, and personnel officers) in Osceola's ten largest industries and various bankers, realtors, and small business owners provide additional insight.

EXPANSION IN MANUFACTURING

Since 1950, Osceola has become relatively dependent upon manufacturing employment. In 1970 slightly more than 43% of Osceola's gainfully employed population worked in manufacturing (see Table 7). This proportion is

significantly higher than the state in general and accounts for nearly 42% of Osceola's total labor and proprietors' earnings in 1971. This figure ranks sixteenth highest among all counties in the state (see Table 22).

Manufacturing's contribution to Osceola's economy expanded during the 1970's. Social security data reported in County Business Patterns indicate that throughout the decade more than 60% of nonfarm employment held by nongovernment employees of Osceola was in manufacturing (see Table 23). These figures are only estimates, however, since they are not based on total annual employment. Rather, the data are the number of employees for the week including March 12, for the indicated year. Interviews with leading employers in the county reveal slightly higher manufacturing employment figures.

Based upon respondents' estimates, the ten major manufacturers in the county employed 1,458 persons in 1970 and 2,016 in 1979, an increase of about 38%. Only one firm, CONALCO, had fewer employees in 1979 than in 1970. However, personnel officers note that a number of workers in these plants reside outside the county, particularly in neighboring towns less than 40 miles away. Nonetheless, by 1978 Osceola ranked fourteenth highest in the state in the proportion of labor and proprietor's earning from manufacturing (see Table 22).

Most of the manufacturing firms in Osceola are directly or indirectly dependent upon national markets rather than

Table 22. Labor and Proprietors' Earnings in Selected Economic Sectors in Osceola County and Ranking among Michigan Counties, 1971 and 1978.

LABOR AND PROPRIETORS' EARNINGS IN SELECTED INDUSTRY						
INDUSTRY	1971			1978		
	AS A % PERCENT OF TOTAL EARNINGS	TOTAL (\$000)	RANK IN STATE	AS A % PERCENT OF TOTAL EARNINGS	TOTAL (\$000)	RANK IN STATE
Agricultural	6.44	2,310	17	7.01	21	4,212
Government	1.73	496	34	1.85	41	1,115
Manufacturing	41.88	13,004	16	45.97	14	27,642
Wholesale Trade	3.39	1,025	49	3.24	33	1,951
Retail Trade	10.43	3,345	52	8.48	34	66,840
Services	7.38	2,122	68	7.07	68	4,252

SOURCES: Michigan Income Monograph:1971-1976. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.
Michigan Statistical Abstract:1980. Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Michigan State University.

Table 23. Employment by Industry, Osceola County 1970 to 1978.

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES FOR WEEK INCLUDING MARCH 12*									
	1970				1975				1978	
	OSCEOLA NO.	%	MICHIGAN NO.	%	OSCEOLA NO.	%	MICHIGAN NO.	%	OSCEOLA NO.	%
Construction	160	5.2	107,504	4.3	114	3.4	94,184	3.8	142	4.4
Manufacturing	1,942	63.5	1,103,816	44.2	2,126	62.8	951,213	38.5	1,938	60.3
Transportation	82	2.7	128,470	5.1	33	1.0	126,185	5.1	30	.9
Wholesale Trade	107	3.5	149,939	6.0	131	3.9	146,219	5.9	117	3.6
Retail Trade	462	15.1	462,305	18.5	517	15.3	482,465	19.5	567	17.6
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	48	1.6	119,198	4.8	62	1.8	161,524	6.5	91	2.8
Services	235	7.7	393,866	15.8	324	9.6	473,362	19.2	264	8.2
Other	24	.7	31,505	1.3	80	2.2	33,203	1.5	67	2.2
TOTAL	3,060	100.0%	2,496,603	100.0%	3,387	100.0%	2,468,355	100.0%	3,216	100.0%

*All wage and salary employment of private nonfarm employees and of nonprofit membership organizations under compulsory coverage (Social Security).

Source: County Business Patterns. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, CBP-78-24.

local ones. This diminishes the county's economic benefits from local sales of its products (see Summers, 1976).

However, two companies directly linked to the auto industry employ nearly half of all manufacturing workers in the county (see Osceola County, 1976). This dependence has proven to be a serious limitation to the county's economic stability. For example, the slow-down of the auto industry in the early 70's forced the closing of two Osceola firms and displaced 160 workers. Moreover, disputes in contract negotiations with the United Auto Workers Union in 1974 caused 750 employees to be laid off (Osceola County Herald, 1974i).

Other processed and manufactured products from Osceola plants include electronic parts, logging tools, leather goods (including shoes and gloves), and dairy products. A notable development in the dairy business is the recent conversion of cottage cheese production to Yoplait yogurt.

The dominance of manufacturing may have detracted from the county's ability or desire to economically diversify. In 1971, retail and service sectors of Osceola's economy accounted for less than 18% of total labor and proprietors earnings, substantially lower than most counties in the state (see Table 22). In 1978, the proportion dropped nearly two percentage points. However, significant retail losses in other counties also occurred (see Verway, 1980). Many respondents note that numerous trade and service functions for Osceola residents are provided in neighboring cities

(Big Rapids and Cadillac) perhaps exacerbating the situation (see also Osceola County, 1976).

DECLINING FARMS AND FARM LAND

Agriculture in Osceola has remained an important economic contributor to the county's economy (see Table 22). However, various aspects are changing. Osceola's farms are generally becoming less numerous but are growing in average size. From 1969 to 1978 the number of farms in the county diminished 10.0% -- 663 to 597, respectively (using the 1969 census definition of farms²⁴) -- a loss only slightly greater than that of the state (9.5%) (see U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1980). Osceola's total farm acreage declined from 135,652 acres to 127,995 acres, a 5.6% drop compared to the state's .8% gain. Concurrently, the average size of an Osceola farm rose 11.7% to 229 acres, an increase slightly higher than that of Michigan (10.5%). On the average, a farm in Osceola is 60 acres larger than the average Michigan farm.

Dairy, livestock, and related products have gained in economic importance in Osceola during the '70s. The value of products sold in this sector increased five times that of cash crops from 1974 to 1978, and accounted for 86% of Osceola's total agricultural sales in 1978 (see U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1980). The dominance of dairy farming in the county has helped support, in part, two large manufacturers in the county, namely, Liberty Dairy with 81 employees in 1979 and Yoplait with 90 employees in 1979.

SHIFTS IN RETAIL TRADE

Conversations with postmasters and business owners in Osceola suggest that a substantial number of retail and service operations have begun in the county since 1970. Informants suggest at least 20% of the businesses listed in the 1979 telephone directories for Osceola County, were established after 1970. Perhaps a more notable observation is the shifts in types of businesses appearing in Osceola. In 1979, a cross-country ski shop and the county's only shoe outlet, for example, opened in LeRoy -- a village of 295 persons with fewer than 25 businesses. Similarly in Tustin (pop. 264) a crafts shop began operation in 1976.

Although the viability of these stores is questionable, they suggest that newcomers are adding diversity to Osceola's economy. One respondent who recently opened a gift shop in the county stated, "I didn't do a need analysis before setting up business." Rather, he explained a "slower pace and more relaxed atmosphere" than that of an urban environment prompted the decision.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF POPULATION GROWTH

The growth in population between 1970 and 1979, had several major economic effects on Osceola. The influx of retirees and welfare clients has increased the county's ratio of dependent persons to workers, while concurrently

heightening demand for various services. Migrants' movement into selected natural amenity locations have shifted land use patterns and in some instances created environmental problems. Property asessments have skyrocketed. The promotion of tourism and recreation has resulted in an increased strain on the county infra-structure, prompting negative reactions from residents. In general, an array of economic impacts have surfaced as a consequence of growth, several of which are discussed.

Inflated Dependency Ratios

Osceola's post 1970 population influx enlarged the ratio of dependent persons to workers. Gains in elderly retirees, youth, and welfare recipients are most notable. Estimates indicate that in 1976, 11.9% of the county's population was 65 years old or over -- a proportion more than 2% above state average (National Clearing House on Aging, 1978). Youth in Osceola have also expanded, presumably from the in-movement of numerous young families. Public and private school enrollment, an estimate of the number of children, has increased in proportion to Osceola's total population. In 1970, children enrolled in school (K-12) accounted for 28.0% of the county's total population while they were 31.3% in 1979 -- a proportion second highest in the state (Verway, 1972; 1980). A relatively large number of welfare recipients also have relocated in the county. Michigan's Department of Social Services estimate 6.8% of Osceola's total population

received public assistance in 1978, placing it among the 20 highest counties in the state (Verway, 1978).

The fact that transfer payment recipients had increased was often reported by local residents and officials. These suppositions are confirmed by data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Their figures reveals that in 1978 earnings from transfer payments in Osceola equaled 23.2% that of personal income, more than twice the state average (11.6%) (Verway, 1980). Benefits from social security (old age, survivors, and disability insurance) account for nearly half of that amount (11.6%). Various other public assistance programs (welfare) contributed considerably less to the county's total transfer payments than that of social security, yet their proportion to total personal income for 1978 still ranked thirteenth highest in the state (Verway, 1980). A sign of growth in welfare services is a new building located in Reed City to house the Department of Social Services which previously was located in the old county office building.

Income from transfer payments may be economically beneficial to the recipient area (Clawson, 1976). For example, those receiving public assistance may buy local goods and services which in turn supports local business and provides employment for community residents. However, informants note that many of Osceola's elderly are seasonal. As a result much of the income received from transfer payments is spent outside the county. This leakage effect

pertains not only to elderly but also to many transient welfare recipients.

Additionally, demands for selected services (i.e. health care, retirement facilities, social services) increase as dependent populations expand. Osceola's budget appropriations from 1970 to 1980 reveals funds for health care rose 305% over the decade (see Table 19), as compared to a 195% increase for the state (see Verway, 1972; 1980). The county's contribution to social welfare services increased 150% during the same time span (see Table 19). Other increased expenses included ambulance service and transportation for elderly. More discussion of these impacts is given in a section on Health Care and Social Services.

Changing Land Use Patterns

A major effect of population growth in Osceola is seen in its changing patterns of land use. As noted earlier, 7,657 acres of farm land in Osceola were converted to other uses between 1969 and 1978. An analysis of plat changes²⁵ during that time span reveals much of the land conversion was to small tracts and subdivisions. A comparison of Osceola Plat Books for 1970, 1972, 1975, and 1978 show 566 new parcels (22,578 acres sectioned off from previously larger land holdings) of land were platted between 1970 and 1978 (see Table 24). Slightly more than 16% (3,697 acres) of this acreage is designated small tracts or subdivisions. A review of Table 24 indicates consistently large parcels of land, on

Table 24. Land Use of Parcels Sectioned Off in Osceola County, 1970-1978.

LAND USE	NO. OF PLATS	ACRES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
1970 to 1972				
Small Tracts/Subdivisions	19	1,195	62.9	60.0
Business	2	20	10.0	0
Private	122	6,392	31.2	27.8
Other	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	143	7,607		
1973 to 1975				
Small Tracts/Subdivisions	23	1,284	55.8	64.7
Business	1	77	-	-
Private	122	4,565	22.3	35.3
Other	4	360	90.0	100.0
TOTAL	150	6,286		
1975 to 1978				
Small Tracts/Subdivisions	22	1,218	55.4	55.1
Business	2	200	100.0	84.8
Private	244	7,037	21.4	37.2
Other	5	230	46.0	32.4
TOTAL	273	8,685		
1970 to 1978				
LAND USE	NO. OF PLATS	%	ACRES	%
Small Tracts/Subdivision	64	7.8	3,697	16.4
Business	5	.6	297	1.3
Private	488	90.5	17,994	79.7
Other	9	1.1	590	2.6
TOTAL	566	100.0%	22,578	100.0%

Source: Compiled from Osceola County Plat Maps for the years 1970, 1972, 1975 and 1978 (see endnote No. 25).

the average, were tracted or converted into subdivisions throughout the decade. River front property was particularly favored for subdivisions and small tracts, however, their availability diminished rapidly as indicated by the small number of lots tracted or subdivided along rivers after 1975 (see Table 25). Interestingly, subdivisions and small tracts increased in number along interstates after 1975. In general, slightly more than 20% of the parcels sectioned off by Osceola land holders between 1970 and 1978 were in natural amenity locations -- along rivers and lakes (see Table 26). Open country and agricultural land, however, still accounts for the majority of plats parceled (see Table 26).

Several ramifications stem from the proliferation of subdivisions and resort development. One is the necessity of land use planning, viewed as a negative consequence by county officials (see also Garkovich, 1979). Zoning in Osceola was rejected by county commissioners and left to individual townships to implement. As they explained, residents view it as an infringement upon their rights. Much of the controversy centers on the "minimum acreage" required for dwelling in open space zones (see Osceola County Herald, 1977b). Although the proposed minimum access lot size in Osceola's open space districts was cut from 40 acres to 20 acres, residents still vehemently opposed zoning at the county level (see Swem, 1978a). As a result, the county has limited control over land development abuse.

Table 25. Location of Parcels of Land Sectioned Off Between 1970 and 1978 in Osceola County and Designated as Small Tracts/Subdivisions.

LOCATION	SMALL TRACTS/SUBDIVISIONS					
	1970 - 1972		1973 - 1975		1976 - 1978	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Along an Interstate ¹	3	15.9	1	4.3	6	27.3
Adjacent to a River ²	6	31.6	5	21.7	3	13.6
Adjacent to a Lake ³	2	10.5	-	-	1	4.5
Adjacent to a Town	1	5.3	2	8.7	2	9.1
Adjacent to a State Forest	1	5.3	-	-	2	9.1
Other	6	31.4	15	65.3	8	36.4
TOTAL	19	100.0	23	100.0	22	100.0

¹ Interstates include U.S. 131, U.S. 10, M 115, M 66, M 61.

² Rivers include the Muskegon, Chippewa, Middle Branch, Hersey, and Pine.

³ Lakes include all those at least 20 acres in size.

Source: Compiled from Osceola County Plat Maps for the years 1970, 1972, 1975, and 1978 (see endnote No. 25).

Table 26. Location of Parcels of Land Sectioned off Between
1970 and 1978 in Osceola County.

LOCATION	PARCELS SECTIONED OFF							
	1970 - 1972		1973 - 1975		1976 - 1978		1970 - 1978	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Along an Interstate ¹	5	3.0	2	1.3	10	4.2	17	3.0
Adjacent to a River ²	25	15.0	30	19.0	36	15.0	91	16.1
Adjacent to a Lake ³	9	5.4	6	3.8	10	4.2	25	4.4
Adjacent to a Town	3	1.8	6	3.8	7	2.9	16	2.8
Adjacent to a State Forest	3	1.8	1	.6	8	3.3	12	2.1
Other	122	73.0	113	71.5	169	70.4	405	71.6
TOTAL	167	100.0%	158	100.0%	240	100.0%	566	100.0%

¹Interstates include U.S. 131, U.S. 10, M 115, M 66, M 61.

²Rivers include the Muskegon, Chippewa, Middle Branch, Hersey, and Pine.

³Lakes include all those at least 20 acres in size.

SOURCE: COMPILED FROM OSCEOLA PLAT MAPS FOR THE YEARS 1970, 1972, 1975
AND 1978 (SEE ENDNOTE NO. 25).

"Strip development," a situation guarded against by Osceola policy makers for sometime, is another consequence of growth. Until 1978, Reed City had a long standing policy of not extending services (i.e., water, sewer) outside city limits. However, in August of that year the policy was rescinded allowing "strip businesses" to be established along throughfares leading into the city. Supporting the move, Reed City's planner said, "competition from strip business is healthy." Recent studies and the popular media, however, question that claim (see Press, 1979; Stabler and Patton, 1977).

Population growth near Reed City but outside its political boundaries created an additional land use impact. Larger subdivisions near Reed City receive many benefits from the town including police and fire protection. However, residents in these areas do not contribute to city taxes. In 1977 Reed City began proceedings to annex nine and a half square miles of neighboring territory, much of which is prime agricultural land, to be rezoned for residential and commercial use (see Osceola County Herald, 1977a). The volatile controversy resulting from this issue, still unresolved, has created bitter animosity between residents of the two areas and has prompted the resignation of several leading public servants.

Various environmental consequences also arise from changing land use. The rapid expansion of development areas has strained solid waste facilities, threatened underground

water supplies, and detracted from the county's scenic landscape. Moreover, residential development and enlarged infra-structural development (i.e., roads) pose additional potential impacts including increased soil erosion, intensified noise, air, and water pollution, and an encroachment on wildlife. One oldtimer summed up environmental consequences quite succinctly saying, "If you go down some of these back roads, you'll see alot of trailers where there was countryside not too long ago. Its getting where there is no room left, you can't go mushroom hunting anywhere."

Inflated Property Assessment

The explosion of resort and retirement homes also poses major economic consequences. The price of land has risen rapidly as a result of subdividing. From 1970 to 1980, for example, the state equalized real property value for the county rose 219% (see Table 21), much higher than the state in general (135%) (see Verway, 1980). More dramatically, eleven of the sixteen townships had decennial increases greater than 400%; Cedar township in particular had property values in 1980 eight times that equalized in 1970.

For those wishing to sell land, this inflation may be enthusiastically welcomed, but for those who want to remain in farming or to otherwise hold on to their land, it has meant an exorbitant propety tax burden. Many informants reported instances in which farmers were forced to sell off

parcels of their land in order to pay their enlarged tax bill.

Recreation and Tourism

Increased utilization of Osceola's natural amenity locations produced an array of negative impacts. As might be expected, subdivisions and small land tracts have increased dramatically. By 1979 there was one licensed real estate broker, salesperson, or office for every 130 persons in Osceola County (Verway, 1980). Many of the most desirable locations on lakes and river banks have become dotted with mobile home parks, cottages, and retirement homes.

Overcrowded parks and recreational areas are common complaints by residents. Promotion of tourism has intensified the situation. Ironically, county planners view recreation and tourism as having a limited economic impact (see Osceola County, 1976). However, vociferous localites view conditions differently. One spokesperson, speaking out against tourism stated, "speaking of trash, how many dollars does this county spend on picking up litter each year -- kind of cuts down on the profits doesn't it?" (Osceola County Herald, 1970).

Excessive abuse of local terrain by recreational vehicles (eg., snowmobiles) has also paralleled population growth. The onslaught of snowmobilers brought "booming business" to the county and prompted planners to investigate a county recreational plan (Osceola County Herald, 1970).

Ironically, one year later snowmobile ordinances were implemented to designate use areas, since congestion, hazzards in towns, and abuse of terrain were commonplace.

Ill designed land development schemes in recreation areas also produced detrimental effects. New regulations concerning Osceola's parks and recreational areas had to be adapted and enforced to curb health hazzards. Problems with improper kitchen sewage disposal and septic tank seepage into ground waters were cited (see Osceola County Herald, 1970).

SUMMARY

The economy of Osceola County has substantial dependency on manufacturing employment, especially that linked directly or indirectly to national markets. Population growth during the 1970's expanded the range of retailers in the county, but, diversification of Osceola's economy has been limited. As a result, the county is extremely vulnerable to fluxuations in external markets and accompanying detrimental consequences, as seen in the displacement of 160 workers due to the closing of two Osceola firms during the slow-down of the auto industry.

The influx of population since 1970 has had several major effects on Osceola's economic institutions. Expenditures for health and social services have increased due to expanding numbers of elderly and migrants on public assistance. An explosion of resort and retirement homes have

intensified environmental problems, altered county land use patterns, and inflated property values. Abuse of local terrain has resulted from excessive recreational use.

Ironically, land use planning and policies aimed at restricting development are unfavorably viewed by county officials, although some ordinances have been implemented by local and township governments. A general laissez-faire approach to economic growth issues has been taken by county administrators. Accumulating negative impacts, however, may demand more aggressive planning in the near future.

RELIGION

The religious institutions in Osceola County represent an extremely diverse array. In total, 30 churches ranging in size from only eight to over 700 members hold services in the county. While three churches -- a Roman Catholic, a Methodist, and a Lutheran -- have more than 300 parishioners each, membership in most churches is well below 100. The largest denominations in the county are Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, and numerous Pentecostal groups.

All but a few of the clergy in the county were interviewed or responded to a mailed check-list of questions (N=21, some ministers have multiple parishes). Virtually all of the ministers reported "newcomers" (those arriving after 1970) among their membership. On the average, migrants account for 17% of Osceola's church bodies, but, the range in individual church memberships is rather large. In one instance nearly half of the congregation is new (post 1970) to the community. Two clergy mentioned no "newcomer" members.

Elderly residents represent a large contingent of church members or attenders (more than one in three). In four parishes, more than half of the congregation is 65 years of age or over. Furthermore, clergy reported that 34% of the newcomers who attend religious services in Osceola are elderly. This is somewhat less than what we would expect based on our estimate of elderly in the turnaround migrant

stream.

Several ministers alluded to a stagnation of ideas and activity occurring in their churches; a situation which they felt newcomers may help to remedy, at least in part. Optimism by clergy is reflected in responses to a query on change agents within their congregations. In comparing "old-timers" (residents prior to 1970) with "newcomers," 43.7% of the clergy agreed that long tenured residents initiated less innovations than migrants (see Table 27). One minister explained, "Those recently moved bring a variety of backgrounds and ideas which are helpful in the church and community. Most 'old-timers' are very narrow in outlook and experience." Other clergy, in reporting similar sentiments, stated that population growth has brought "positive changes" to the church. However, most prefaced their comments with the observation that, in some cases, 'city people' carry with them an array of problems; welfare burdens were cited as an example.

Tenure appears to be an important prerequisite for office in many of the churches in Osceola. Nearly 44% of the clergy reported that "old-timers" hold more church offices than residents entering the community after 1970 (see Table 27). As one minister explained, "These people (newcomers) are not office holders because they are outside the power structure." Nonetheless, a few pastors alluded to migrants' success in "breaking up old power groups."

An additional observation is that many clergy perceive

Table 27. A Comparison of Clergy RESPONSES* about Church Related Activity Among "Old-Timers" and Newcomers in Osceola County.

ACTIVITY	<u>OLD-TIMERS MORE</u>		<u>ABOUT THE SAME</u>		<u>OLD-TIMERS LESS</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Office Holding	7	43.8	9	56.2	0	0	16	100.0%
Initiation of Changes	1	6.3	8	50.0	7	43.7	16	100.0%
Service/Helping Activity	6	37.5	9	56.2	1	6.3	16	100.0%
Monetary Giving	7	43.8	9	56.2	0	0	16	100.0%

*The responses are to the question, "How would you compare "old-timers" (residents before 1970) with "newcomers" (moved in after 1970) as to the following church-related activities:"

newcomers as less supportive of the church in service activities and monetarily as compared to pre-1970 residents (see Table 27). The seasonal nature of many elderly newcomers was cited as one explanation. Others suggest a desire to retain ties with former churches influence participation and monetary giving.

In general clergy had mixed feelings about population expansion, although most welcomed it. They saw growth as enhancing the economic well being of their area; however, no aggressive schemes to recruit migrants were encountered. One minister in the Marion vicinity who reported no membership or attendance gains, stated, "growth..we would love it." On the other hand, a pastor in a high growth area of Osceola expressed fear that the population influx may destroy the "quaintness" of its communities.

While a marked impact of population growth on religious institutions has not yet occurred, the potential consequences could be significant. An infiltration of active newcomers into religious power bases, for example, may result in more energetic programming tailored to the interests and needs of Osceola's changing population. Alternatively, the influx of recent movers to the county may produce conflict inhibiting the vitality of the institution.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

An outgrowth in health care services occurred in Osceola County simultaneously with the post 1970 population influx. It is difficult to determine what part of this augmentation is a direct consequence of in-migration. Some of the expansion of health services represents agency growth which were bound to have taken place. New federal programs designed to ameliorate rural health care problems²⁶ may have further enhanced Osceola's medical facilities and enlarged their staff regardless of internal population fluxuation. Health administrators in the county, however, believe many of the alterations which have occurred in Osceola's health and social services are directly linked to increased demand due to population growth and to a community effort to expand the number of medical personnel.

Various data sources including health statistics and hospital records confirm the magnitude and variety of changes which have taken place in the county's health care systems during the 1970's. Interviews with key health and social service professionals (N=9)²⁷ supplement this documentation and provide insight into the ramifications of growth. Additionally, a review of the Osceola County Herald from 1970 to 1980 places events and circumstances into proper perspective.

GAINS IN MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

Growth in the number of doctors and dentists is easily established. In 1970 there were three physicians, all in Reed City, and three dentists, two in Reed City and one in Evart. By 1980 their numbers rose impressively; eight physicians, one optometrist, three chiropractors, and five dentists (see Michigan Health Council, 1970; 1980). All other medical personnel²⁸ (exclusive of doctors and dentists) numbered 215 in 1980, as compared to 110 ten years ago.

Although the medical staff in the county nearly doubled during the 1970's, a shortage of health professionals still exists. Ironically, the county does not have an active recruitment program, staffing is reliant upon administrators' efforts. In 1974 a severe shortage of nurses in Reed City was eased by hiring Phillipine graduates (Osceola County Herald, 1980a).

A lack of anonymity and privacy are cited as contributing factors to Osceola's staffing problems (Osceola County Herald, 1971a). Moreover, the county's small population base restricts the amount and variety of facilities and equipment available to medical personnel, attractive features found in more urban environments. An additional shortcoming is the scarcity of certain social and recreational activities in Osceola which are found in more cosmopolitan settings. As one nurse from Lansing stated, "I don't like this area, there is nothing to do...no cultural

activity."

Nonetheless, the hospital in Reed City has undergone several expansions since it was refurbished in 1970. The last renovation, beginning in 1978, served to upgrade their various units including emergency, out-patient, surgical, pharmacy, and respiratory therapy services. The Extended Care Facility, located in a wing of the Reed City Hospital, is filled to capacity and has a long waiting list. It could easily double in size if space were available, according to one hospital spokesperson. Surprisingly few patients, however, are newcomers. Almost all are elderly long-time residents of local communities. This may reflect the seasonal character of elderly migrants who have recently moved to Osceola.

EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

A survey conducted by Osceola county commissioners in 1970 of educators, professionals, and community agencies found an increased need for mental health services. Their findings reported that 18% of Osceola's school population were in need of special assistance, a situation viewed by the commission as "of marked and grave concern" (Osceola County Herald, 1970i). The national average for that period was only 10%. Within several months of the survey, a mental health clinic opened in Osceola. Prior to that time the county was serviced by an out-county regional office. Presently the staff consists of a director, five clinical workers,

a part-time psychiatrist and two secretaries. The director felt that there is a huge backlog of needed services, and that the growth of the clinic is not necessarily related to the recent population influx. However, Freudenburg (1978) who found a marked increase in mental health problems and controlled substance abuse in several Colorado boomtowns, suggests rapid population growth may be a prime catalyst.

According to Osceola's Mental Health Clinic records, 48 cases were treated in 1970 as compared with 180 in 1978. Informants at the clinic felt that Osceola's case load might be inflated from "transients"--families usually headed by an unemployed member, moving into the county to occupy low rent housing. Economic strains (e.g., farmers "at the end of their ropes") were also mentioned as a major causative factor increasing the incidence of mental health problems.

County assistance and funding for mental health is generally supported by county officials despite a broad lack of understanding by Osceola residents. According to a staff member at the clinic, community placement after mental hospitalization is nearly impossible in Osceola since stigmas tend to persist. Moreover, client anonymity is difficult to maintain even at the referral level, intensifying the situation, especially since nearly 40% of the mental health referrals in the county between 1970 and 1978 were children less than 18 years of age.

SHIFTS IN HEALTH DELIVERY

Until 1975, only private firms provided emergency health delivery care for residents of Osceola. Rapidly increased demand and growing disappointment with services prompted county commissioners to subsidize a county ambulance system (see Osceola County Herald, 1975a). Bitter controversy erupted with the decision to publicly support emergency care. Costs for the system skyrocketed (see Table 18). The installation of new technologies (e.g., advanced life support systems) were questioned with regards to cost effectiveness. Township officials complained about inadequate service. As one supervisor stated, "we have been paying out quite a bit of money over the last few years for an ambulance service, but we're not really getting our fair share in return" (Osceola County Herald, 1978f). The debate over ambulance service still rages on in the county. Presently, three emergency vehicles based in Reed City, Evart, and Marion are responsible for the entire county.

INCREASED SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS

Osceola's increased elderly, youth, and welfare populations have presented several problems for county administrators due to increased demands for various services. In general county and local officials have been receptive to heightened requests for additional assistance, however, varied preceptions as to the needs of residents surfaced in

interviews with health professionals, policy makers, and recipients.

Elderly

Nearly 12% of Osceola's population is over 65 years of age, 2% above state average. Housing and extended care facilities for the county's elderly have exceeded their maximum capacity and long waiting lists have existed throughout the 1970's (Osceola County Herald, 1976a). During the decade three subsidized housing complexes for Osceola's retirees were opened. A requirement of two years residence in the county is one stipulation for occupancy, however, coordinators of the projects note that most senior citizens living in the units moved to the county prior to 1970. The large number of mobile homes used by migrants to Osceola may offer one explanation for the disparity. Alternatively, elderly newcomers may be more financially secure than the resident senior citizen population.

Nonetheless, health officials stressed the need for additional care facilities for "single" elderly. Moreover transportation for seniors is a substantial problem in Osceola. In 1975 the county investigated a ride program designed specifically for its retirees. One year later a four county transit project was dedicated (see Osceola County Herald, 1976b). The success of the system, however, was short lived and within ten months after it was initiated, the county commission withdrew funds for the program (see

Willard, 1977). Ironically, lack of use and rising fuel costs were cited as reasons for its termination.

It is difficult to determine what part population growth played in causing or facilitating the initiation or expansion of programs for the elderly. An increased awareness of the needs of senior citizens, implicit in expanded services, surfaced in many parts of Michigan. Nonetheless, activities and programs catering specifically to elderly increased substantially in Osceola during the 1970's. A volunteer program designed to offer senior citizens more participation in community affairs began in 1974 (see Osceola County Herald, 1974g). A coordinator for the program commented, "many don't really need the meal, rather, it allows them to see friends." Interestingly, this perspective is often overlooked by businesspersons and county officials. Denouncing the program as unwanted by elderly, one banker noted, "they (retirees) do not wish to be entertained by the county. They don't want someone to cook their meals, that's why they came here -- to get away from bureaucracy." "Hot meals," the federally sponsored nutrition program alluded to by informants was initiated in 1976 (Cornelisse, 1976). Estimates from an official at the Service for the Aging indicated nearly 1,000 Osceola elderly participate in the program. Other programs oriented toward assisting Osceola's older residents include an outreach program, cancer screening, home care service, and a homemakers group. The commission on Aging furthermore, instituted a project for

indigent/debilitated elderly which services 1,500 clients. Bands and choral groups from local high schools increased the number of recitals given at senior citizen facilities. "Golden Years Honorary Passes" allowing seniors free admission to high school athletic and cultural events were also initiated.

Youth

Activity for youth also expanded in Osceola during the 1970's. In 1974 the county rejuvenated its Teen Club through efforts of parents and teenagers (see Osceola County Herald, 1974d). Unfortunately solicited support for financial aid and leadership were not well received. CETA funds have allowed the club to remain in operation but recent cutbacks by the Reagan administration threaten its viability. Youth membership has increased in the county's 4-H program also (see Osceola County Herald, 1975).

The county's parks and outdoor recreational facilities have been substantially remodeled during the 1970's. Osceola's appropriations for parks increased 446% during the decade, much more than other funded areas (see Table 18). New ball diamonds, tennis courts, and park equipment were provided in the renovation process. In 1979, an estimated 1,000 youth participated in Osceola's softball summer leagues (Osceola County Herald, 1979).

WELFARE

During the 1970's, a relatively large number of persons receiving public assistance relocated in the county. In 1972 monthly welfare benefits were distributed to 869 residents of Osceola (Osceola County Herald, 1972e). By 1980 that number had increased 155% to 2,216 (Michigan Department of Social Services, 1980). Estimates by Michigan's Department of Social Services place Osceola's 1978 recipient level to total population among the 20 highest in the state; 6.8% of the county's total population were on welfare (Verway, 1978).

Several impacts of expanded demand for social services are notable. For example, a new building to house the county's social services, formerly located in the old county office building in Reed City, was constructed in 1973 (see Osceola County Herald, 1973b). Additionally, a new branch office of the Michigan Security Exchange Commission was constructed in Reed City in 1978. The director explained unemployment claims precipitated the relocation, even though the county's jobless rate infrequently exceeded state average.

Alterations in existing social service programs and the initiation of new benefits are viewed by county officials as consequences of population growth. For example, prior to 1973, Osceola provided surplus food commodities to needy families. Pressure from social service agencies shifted the program to the more well known "food stamps" plan since it

allowed individuals to purchase staples for a balanced diet, an aspect absent in the food commodities scheme (see Osceola County Herald, 1974c). Moreover, an emergency health fund was begun in 1972 to further reach the county's low income families and to establish a day care center (Osceola County Herald, 1972d). Unfortunately, lack of community support forced the closing of the day care center within a year after it had opened (see Osceola County Herald, 1974). Additionally, the schools implemented a meal price program to accommodate children from low income families.

Limited acceptance of welfare clients by county residents was frequently mentioned in interviews. An informant from Osceola's Department of Social Services stated, "we must convince the locals that we are not just bleeding hearts when it comes to welfare." Animosity between residents and those associated with welfare was alluded to in a later comment, "we probably couldn't run for public office because we are the people who give money to the unworthy."

The stigma of public assistance was expressed in several interviews with welfare clients. One recipient from Kalamazoo explained, "the county stinks, people are unfriendly even the welfare people discriminate against us. I would have been better off staying where I was." On the other hand, some publicly subsidized residents stated the county draws welfare clients into the area because it is an "easy mark." According to one recipient from Detroit, "its easy to get on (the welfare rolls) and no one checks."

Most county and local officeholders did not perceive welfare as a major problem in the county. Interestingly, several mentioned that pride frequently overshadows the desire of many low income residents to seek public assistance. This perception may have even filtered into policy decisions. One county commissioner who placed a low priority on subsidized housing in Osceola stating, "they may be poor but they are proud... I don't think we have to subsidize a housing program" (Swem, 1978b).

SUMMARY

Expanding numbers of elderly, youth, and welfare clients have placed strains on Osceola's medical and social services. Medical personnel have increased in number during the 1970's, however, a shortage of trained staff still exists. Patient anonymity and successful community placement after mental hospitalization are viewed by medical staff as significant problems in Osceola. Health care administrators see inflated health delivery costs as negative consequences of population growth. Osceola's expenditure for public health, for example, rose 305% from 1970 to 1980 (see Table 18) as compared to a 246% increase for the state (State of Michigan, 1970; 1980). The expense for the county's subsidized ambulance service, consisting of three vehicles, rose 328% in ten years. Demand for housing for the elderly, recreational facilities for youth, and public assistance for the county's needy have taxed Osceola's budget.

In general, officeholders in the county have been receptive to the growing demands for increased medical and social services. Welfare programs, however, are still viewed with suspicion. Individuals supported by public assistance are occasionally ill received, although few county officials perceive the situation as problematic.

A notable observation is that some policy makers may have been biased by the supposition that the county's poverty-stricken are often too proud to seek assistance. An attitude of, "poor but proud" may disguise the growing need for medical and social services in the county and desensitize public servants' awareness of the impacts changing demographic circumstances may have on the county's health and social service institutions.

Summary

Despite the often low level of recognition of population growth in Osceola, all sectors in the county have felt the impact. School populations increased during the first part of the decade creating severely overcrowded conditions. Children socialized in urban environments were said by school administrators to have intensified a gamut of problems including elevated drop-out levels and delinquency. Millage and school bond requests became difficult to pass. An explosion of resort and retirement homes exacerbated environmental problems, altered county land use patterns, and inflated property values.

The influx has further diversified the county's population. In some instances cosmopolitan migrants have helped revitalize religious institutions. Concurrently vociferous newcomers have overburdened county infrastructures by demanding new or improved services. Elderly, both returnees and those new to the area have served to increase the already large proportion of senior citizens in the population. Extended health care facilities subsequently have exceeded their maximum capacity creating shortages in suitable retirement housing. Inflated welfare rolls have strained county budgets and stirred up bitter feelings and animosity among county residents.

Interestingly, the level of conflict between oldtimers and newcomers has not surfaced to any appreciable level.

Although distinct institutional impacts are apparent, hostility has not been directed at any specific group. In time, it would seem likely that special interests of newcomers and oldtimers will become more clearly differentiated, organized, and perhaps catalysts for conflict.

An additional notable observation is that population growth confined to selected localized areas may significantly distort policy makers' awareness of population expansion and its ramifications. Varied perceptions of growth from county, township, and local public servants hampered cooperation between political sectors elevating growth consequences.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This research sought to expand our knowledge of the institutional alterations in rural areas induced by rapid population growth. At one level the analysis addresses the emergent effects of demographic change on social institutions and their ability to cope with the shifting demands of an enlarged population. Are fragile rural polities disrupted by growth? What consequences do inflated school enrollments present for rural educational systems? How do rural health care systems adjust to increased demands? Does growth enhance a rural areas's economic viability? Are religious institutions altered by an expanding population? Answers to these types of issues are difficult to assess at an aggregate level; hence the detailed study of the rural county of Osceola.

Concurrently, this study explores various problematic features of the current urban-to-rural migration trend and their possible ramifications for host communities. Settlement patterns of migrants to Osceola, for example, are scrutinized to gain insight into ecological and sociological consequences. An analysis of their origins offers insight into possible social mechanisms utilized in the migration decision process. Furthermore, the consequences of the

infusion into a rural county of those socialized in a more cosmopolitan environment is addressed.

Additionally, this research seeks to stimulate queries into the implications of the turnaround migration phenomenon. Is there a need, for example, for a more rigorous agricultural land protection policy? How can our knowledge of the impacts of population growth assist fragile rural social institutions in coping with change? Perhaps more importantly, should growth policies be implemented to preserve these institutions. Obviously these questions necessitate a fuller understanding of the rural revival, and our delay in seeking answers to these concerns may prove to be detrimental.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Osceola County, selected for observation because of its relatively small and manageable population, is located in scenic northern Michigan. The county has numerous natural amenity locations including the Manistee National Forest, the Muskegon and four smaller rivers, and various lakes. Recreation, retirement, and small scale manufacturing are among the major precipitating factors in the county's recent population upsurge.

Historically, Osceola has had few periods of population gain. Pioneers first settled the territory in the mid 1800's. However, it was not until 1870 that the county's population swelled to an appreciable size (i.e., 2,093).

From 1870 to the turn of the century Osceola experienced a population boom period. Lumber or "green gold" as it was referred to, caused the county to be inundated with migrants. Pockets of various ethnic groups dotted the territory and produced rivalries which still surface today.

Depressed by an exhausted lumber industry, the county's economy fostered the rapid out-migration of its younger adults around 1910. This exodus depleted the pool of young men and women workers in Osceola. Simultaneously, the cohort of children dwindled, inflating the county's elderly population. The economic base that supported many of the towns shifted during this period and as a result numerous flourishing villages vanished with little trace today.

Manufacturing firms slowly increased their contribution to Osceola's economic base. By 1970, 43.4% of Osceola's workforce were employed in manufacturing. Trade and service industries also rapidly outpaced agriculture in their number of workers. Gains in retail trade and professional services gradually expanded Osceola's population, but not to the zenith established in the lumber boom days.

POPULATION RENAISSANCE

Osceola County experienced a population resurgence beginning in the late 1960's. The rural renaissance, indicative of a general trend sweeping many parts of the U.S., increased Osceola's population 27.6% during the 1970's. Interestingly, migrants to the county relocated outside

existing population centers, a reversal of prior trends. All of Osceola's sixteen townships grew in 1970, 12 by more than 25%, while only two of the county's six municipalities expanded in size.

Septic tank permits containing the applicant's present address, the exact location of the land holding, and the type of dwelling were utilized to assess migrants' origin and proposed destination. Since 89% of the new construction in the county and 94% of Osceola's growth occurred outside existing population centers (and locations where sewer lines are available) these data encompass a vast majority of the newcomers. Several limitations, however, are inherent in the data as detailed in Chapter 3.

An analysis of the septic tank permits reveals more than 80% of the applicants are from metropolitan or city backgrounds. Moreover, the majority of the urbanities are from central cities. These data conform to that found by Voss and Fuguitt (1979) and Sofranko and Williams (1980).

A peculiar aspect of Osceola's renaissance is that motivations prompting in-migration appear to differ significantly from those affecting past decades of migration. Data gathered from interviews with a variety of newcomers during the summer of 1979, suggest a combination of factors are drawing movers to Osceola: 1) precipitating events (e.g., retirement, loss of employment), 2) factors "pushing" migrants away from their area of origin (e.g., crime, pollution), and 3) elements enticing movers to Osceola

(e.g., slower pace of life, simpler lifestyle). Evidence from surveys of migrants to nonmetropolitan counties in the North Central Region are similar to these findings (see Voss and Fuguitt, 1979; Sofranko and Williams, 1980).

Movers to Osceola were quite selective in their choice of residential location sites. More than 70% of the new dwelling sites cited on the septic tank permits were located in sections containing either the Muskegon River, a lake of at least twenty acres, or one of four smaller rivers. Rapidly diminishing natural amenity locations may curtail future growth in Osceola; however, data supporting this supposition have not yet surfaced.

Evidence from Osceola County indicates interpersonal and informational network ties may be contributing factors to the destination choice of some turnaround migrants. In addition to migrants seeking proximate ties to significant others (especially in times of crisis), social linkages which function as channels of communication are strongly suggested by the data. In Osceola County there was a large incidence of applicants from the same place of origin who sought residence in the same one square mile section of Osceola. Moreover, the incidence tended to increase with distance from place of origin, suggesting, in theory, that the role of informational networks increases with distance.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS

Five social institutions are focussed upon in this research: education, government, economy, religion, and health and social services. Information and data on the consequences of growth are derived from over 100 interviews with local residents and key informants in the five institutional sectors. Abstracted material from relevant documents provide supportive evidence. Prior to the field work, a content analysis of the main weekly newspaper in Osceola was carried out for growth related articles from 1970 through 1980. A total of 710 "stories" were reviewed.

Problems related to the construction of U.S. 131, an interstate highway traversing the county's western edge, were most widely covered during the decade. Debate centered on economic advantages versus land use alterations. Institutional impacts were also mentioned frequently in commentaries.

Education

Each of Osceola's four public school districts felt the impact of rapid growth, however, Marion was least effected. Expanding numbers of children placed strains upon classroom space and other educational facilities during the first half of the 70's. A serious lack of communications between educational personnel and the county's populace was in part responsible for chronic overcrowding. Ironically, declining

enrollments after 1977 became a major issue.

Deleterious consequences of growth included program cut-backs, a chronic shortage of teachers, and curtailed course offerings. A significant shift in sentiment toward bond issues and millage requests paralleled Osceola's population growth. Voters consistently turned down requests until mid decade. Available data reveal rates of drop-outs elevated during the first half of the 70's. Unfortunately, published statistics of Michigan's student drop-outs ceased after 1975. Highly mobile newcomers to the schools were viewed by administrators as catalysts for disruption. Discipline problems increased markedly. In general, a rapid change in population resulted in significant consequences for Osceola's educational institutions.

Government

Osceola's rural polity exhibited few changes as a result of the post 1970 population influx. Its 15 member commission, dominated by representatives from Reed City and Evart, is still fashioned by the county's rural flavor. Throughout the decade, the majority of persons serving as commissioners were farmers. Moreover, long time residency appears to be a prerequisite for county office, for 26 of the 33 commissioners during the 70's were natives of the county. This norm is apparent even at the township and local level. A lack of vigor or desire among newcomers to seek political office in several of Osceola's smaller villages is cited by

some officials as one explanation.

The diversity of governmental units and nature of jurisdictions in Osceola have resulted in an equally diverse impact of population growth that public servants must contend with. County government seems nonchalant about growth while township supervisors and municipal leaders, closer to the "action," view the influx as of key concern. The varied perceptions of population growth among the different strata of government has attenuated successful planning, financing, and cooperation among political leaders in the county.

Growth issues confronted by Osceola's governments mainly revolved around strained infra-structures. Officials stressed the "flack" they must take from vociferous newcomers over tardy snow removal, inadequate road maintenance, increased crime, and excessive property assessments. Moreover, some governmental functionaries report conflict of interest between newcomers and oldtimers due to lifestyle clashes.

Collectively, county officials have taken a "wait and see" stance toward growth. County zoning, for example, has met with limited support from commissioners. As a result, nearly half of the township supervisors have implemented township zoning policies to curb excessive growth.

Economy

The economy of Osceola County has substantial dependency on manufacturing employment, especially that linked directly

or indirectly to national markets. Population growth has had limited impact in diversifying the county's economy. The potential consequences of this situation are etched in Osceola's history. Ironically, few aggressive efforts have been taken to shifts its course.

Concurrent with the post 1970 population influx are various alterations in Osceola's economic institutions. Agriculture, for example, still an important economic contributor to the county's economy, has changed. Osceola farms are generally becoming less numerous but are growing in average size. Also dairy, livestock, and related products have gained in economic importance. A variety of new retail businesses have also appeared in the county.

Population growth has presented major economic problems. An influx of elderly, welfare, and youth have inflated the county's dependency ratio and strained social services. The explosion of resort and retirement homes have shifted county land use patterns. Moreover, the proliferation of subdivisions and resort developments have inflated property taxes and exacerbated environmental problems. One resident summed up the situation quite succinctly when he said, "If you go down some of these back roads, you'll see a lot of trailers where there was countryside not too long ago. Its getting where there is no room left, you can't go mushroom hunting anywhere."

Religion

A marked impact of population growth on religious institutions has not yet occurred, however, the potential consequences could be significant. Several ministers optimistically viewed growth as a mechanism by which old power blocs in congregations may be dissolved. Newcomers bring a variety of backgrounds and ideas which are helpful in the church and community. Nonetheless, clergy report they also carry with them an array of problems, welfare being the example most often cited.

Health and Social Services

Strains on health and social services in Osceola have resulted from expanded numbers of elderly and welfare clients. Although the number of medical personnel in the county has substantially increased, a shortage of health professionals still exists. Notable consequences of growth include increased mental health care needs, greater demand for expanded health delivery systems, heightened requests for additional extended care facilities, and inflated welfare rolls.

In general, county officials have been receptive to the growing demands for increased medical and social services. Although welfare systems are viewed with suspicion, few public servants perceive this situation as problematic.

Overall, the anticipated conflict between oldtimers and newcomers has not surfaced to any appreciable level. Although distinct institutional impacts are apparent, hostility has not been directed at any specific group. In time, it would seem likely that special interests of newcomers and oldtimers will become more clearly differentiated, organized, and perhaps catalysts for conflict. Thus a return to the county at some future date should provide invaluable insight into the long-term impacts of population growth.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The existence of a new and more complicated pattern of population redistribution in the U.S. presents a host of concerns. Although the population turnaround has gained prominence among researchers, implicit in the expanding efforts to monitor this trend, issues involving the potential longevity of the phenomenon and its long term consequences need to be more fully addressed. Several of these topics are discussed.

Future of Natural Amenity Locations

Evidence in this volume and in numerous other studies document migrants' selective choice of destination sites. Natural amenity locations -- areas around lakes and rivers -- are favorite spots in the North Central Region of the U.S., and their demand has reached substantial proportions. An

immediate consequence is inflated land values and heightened property taxes. Given the finite nature of prime scenic acreage, what happens after these sites have been fully saturated with subdivisions? Will the tide of turnaround migration recede?

In Osceola, subdivisions around larger lakes extended into adjacent sections, which suggests that expansion may continue regardless of waterfront availability. Alternatively, destination sites near major throughfares gained prominence in Osceola toward the end of the decade, presumably after most of the waterfront lots were taken, suggesting migrants may turn to secondary preferences (e.g., easy travel access). A fuller understanding of the current migration trend and its future direction may assist policy makers in developing appropriate growth strategies.

A second major issue concerns the effects of inflated property taxes due to increased development in natural amenity locations. In Osceola, cases were reported in which residents had to sell off parcels of their land to pay increased property taxes. This implies the turnaround may disproportionately affect those on fixed incomes or the more disadvantaged in rural areas. Moreover, rising land costs may deter future investments in agriculture. Income from agricultural production can not keep pace with prices offered by land developers. Furthermore, various policies such as the 1967 Plat Act encourage splitting land into small parcels. A potential snowballing effect may drastically

diminish prime agricultural land. The long term economic ramifications therefore are of key concern.

Retirement and Rural America

Elderly are found to represent a major component of the turnaround stream. In many parts of rural America an influx of retirees is exacerbating an already difficult situation. The number of senior citizens in Osceola, for example, is more than 2% higher than state average. The eroding economic conditions in Michigan and the tighter constraints on social services recommended by the Reagan administration may present significant problems for rural areas such as Osceola. Many urban retirees who migrate to rural areas may have amassed sufficiently large pensions to weather inflated costs of living. However, what of the resident elderly population? Farmers and low wage earners in certain rural growth areas, who retire after spending a substantial portion of time in rural America, may find public assistance insufficient to meet the rising cost induced by the turnaround. This may force "oldtime" elderly to seek a different environment, perhaps the urban centers -- a counterstream to elderly urban migrants. Obviously evidence is needed to more fully understand these possibilities and their ramifications.

There is also a need to investigate the effects of an expanding elderly population on rural communities. The reduction in a rural area's workforce, for example, may hamper its ability to attract new businesses. Participation

by residents in various social institutions and voluntary organizations may decline and lead to stagnation of these services. These issues are addressed to some extent by Wang (1977).

Furthermore, the economic impacts of seasonal retirees are uncertain. Much of the income rural areas could receive from transfer payments may be spent outside the county. This may compound the financial difficulties many rapid growth communities face.

Rural Transportation Systems

Mobility in rural America is becoming an increasingly alarming situation. Over 57% of the rural poor and 45% of the elderly in rural America have no private means of transportation (see Governor Milliken, 1981) hampering their employment opportunities and contact with vital social services. The prohibitive costs of public transit systems exacerbate these conditions. In Osceola, attempts by county administrators to operate a tri-county public transit system met with failure due in part to exorbitant costs. Increasing numbers of elderly entering rural areas magnify this critical situation. The need for investigations into strategies which may alleviate rural transportation problems is apparent.

Effects on Informal Rural Institutions

Informal rural institutions and volunteer organizations are vital components of rural America. However, an influx of

people socialized in more cosmopolitan environments may disrupt rural lifestyles. Freudenburg (1978), for example, found that rapid growth eroded many of the informal rural institutions formerly prevalent in several Colorado boomtowns. Deviance, once informally controlled by community residents through discipline and peer pressure, became a bureaucratic responsibility as the community's population skyrocketed. Similarly, the "people caring" mechanisms common in rural communities, lost vitality and soon transferred to the auspices of government agencies. Thus the former civic duties of caring for the aged, tending the ill, and contributing to the needy lost their informal flavor and were replaced by formal institutional guidelines. The demise of such informal institutions translates into increased costs for rural areas. Moreover, the social consequences are equally detrimental. Research, therefore, into the ramifications of growth on informal institutions is also needed.

Numerous other concerns require investigation including: the effect of urbanization on rural communities, the consequences of changing land use, and the impacts of the turnaround on places of origin. In order to avoid a plethora of detrimental consequences, these matters need to be promptly addressed.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

It is important to acknowledge that the methodological and conceptual approach utilized in this study is just one of many possibilities. Much of the value of this ethnographic endeavor is found, ironically, in the flaws and limitations encountered in the research design. A brief discussion of these weaknesses is offered in an attempt to facilitate future inquiries into the effects of rapid population growth on rural areas.

First, a county is perhaps not the most appropriate unit of analysis for investigating the institutional consequences of rapid population growth. Communities and social institutions are often amorphous in nature and overlap political boundaries. A more ecological approach to isolating a target area is recommended. However, since much of turnaround migration is occurring in hinterland areas, this task is not easily accomplished. The "service center" concept may offer one possible solution. Surveys of where rural residents work, recreate, and gain needed services should provide social interactional boundaries which may be used as the unit of analysis. One obvious drawback to this approach is its cost. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to gather published data which align with such boundaries.

A second major weakness in the present study is its inability to tap informal institutional consequences. A more focussed observation of one institution (eg., education,

government, economy, religion, health and social services) may provide these insights. Alternatively, one may opt to utilize a "community" based approach, concentrating on one homogenous unit (eg., a service center). At this level of analysis, shifts in social interaction, norms, and customs are more readily observed.

An additional limitation of this study was the lack of information on recent migrants to the county. A survey of newcomers may have provided more insight into attitudinal disparities among recent movers and Osceola's residents. It may be found that Osceola's rural migrants are less cosmopolitan in ideology than expected (which might account for the lack of "oldtimer-newcomer" conflict in Osceola apparent in most turnaround studies). Furthermore, little is known of those who left Osceola during the 1970's. Outmigration is itself a major impact.

These are only some of the weaknesses and limitations of the research design utilized in this study. It is hoped that these deficiencies can be overcome in future research.

END NOTES

END NOTES

1). In their research, Mc Carthy and Morrison (1978) suggest several American lifestyle changes that have promoted rural growth, namely, early retirement and an increased orientation towards leisure and natural amenity-rich environments. Furthermore, numerous state and federal administrative actions have eliminated barriers that often impeded the migration process of the elderly and unemployed. For example, restrictions on transfer payments have been lifted allowing recipients to collect their benefits in different locations. Moreover, policy incentives have been initiated in rural areas that facilitate growth. For example, the Rural Health Clinic Services Act decreased the federal guidelines for Medicare/Medicade reimbursements while availability of trained medical personnel and facilities in rural areas increased.

Furthermore, HUD, HEW, and FHA have expanded their grants, loans, and overall housing and development assistance and incentives for rural areas. A detailed outline of the recent policies affecting rural America is given in the Carter Administration's, "Small Community and Rural Development Policy," effective December 20, 1979.

2). Several comprehensive bibliographies are available on rural industrialization. See Council of Planning

Librarians Exchange Bibliographies No. 940, No. 1148, and No. 1365.

3). An excellent literature review of urban sprawl is available from authors Paul Tribble and James Bohland, Council of Planning Librarians Exchange Bibliography No. 368.

4). Although debate still rages over lifestyle differentials among urban and rural sectors (Lowe and Peek, 1974; Fischer, 1972), certain characteristics are more common in rural environments, including conservative attitudes and a more Gemeinschaft orientation (Fischer, 1978; Glenn and Hill, 1977). However, studies indicate the normative mechanisms which formerly separated rural-urban cultures are rapidly disappearing (Photiadis and Bell, 1976).

5). Enumerators often misspelled the names of countries and places since both they and the residents being questioned often had very little education, forcing many enumerators to spell phonetically. Interestingly, an error in the spelling of Everett, one of the first families in the territory, caused the city and township of Evart to be spelled as it is today. Other errors may be detected in the names of countries listed in Table 1; note especially Seleckia which the author thinks was intended to be Silesia.

6). Since the relationship among family members was not recorded in the 1870 Census, one can only speculate as to the relationship among family members by using the age of those having identical last names. We must assume age data recorded in the census during this period is reasonably

correct. Since mortality was relatively high during this period (especially of deaths during childbearing), it is often difficult to determine husband-wife relationships. For example, if Electra was Oswald's first wife then she bore Hannah, presumably the Esner's first child, at age 11. However, if Electra was Oswald's first child, then she was conceived when Oswald was only 13, a less likely situation. Thus it appears reasonable to assume that Electra may be Oswald's second wife, or perhaps his sister.

7). It appears that Harry Smith could not read or write. Thus he utilized a ghost writer to draft his work. The book first appeared in 1891 and sold for 15 cents for paperback copies and 50 cents for the hardback version (White, 1975:19).

8). The year 1930 was chosen for a comparison because it is the first year detailed population characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau were available for counties (eg. occupational and industrial breakdowns). Since I independently coded the 1870 census, various data manipulations were possible to obtain corresponding detailed characteristics. A third point in time, 1970, is also used in the discussion in Chapter II, for a comparison at the point just prior to the rapid influx which occurred during the decade of the 1970's.

9). The states in the North Central Region include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and

Wisconsin.

10). Both studies were systematic random samples of telephone exchanges drawn from North Central nonmetropolitan counties experiencing rapid growth. The Voss and Fuguitt (1979) study encompassed Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Households sampled were those whose telephone exchange in 1977 differed from that in 1970 (N=992). The 37 counties selected by Voss and Fuguitt for observation exhibited net migration rates which had increased by above 20% from 1970 to 1975.

Sofranko and Williams' (1980) study included all states in the North Central Region, and targeting those nonmetropolitan counties having at least a 10% net migration increase between 1970 and 1975 (N=75). Their sampling was similar to that of Voss and Fuguitt (1979), however, their preliminary screening checked names, addresses, and phone numbers for any change from 1970 to 1977. Their study consisted of 709 migrants and 425 nonmigrant residents.

11). An SMSA is a term used to describe an area containing at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more, or a city with at least 25,000 inhabitants, which, together with those contiguous places having population densities of at least 1,000 residents per square mile total 50,000 or more and are economically and socially integrated. The boundaries of the SMSA conform to county lines and are extended to include adjacent counties with certain metropolitan characteristics and work commuting patterns.

12). The survey technique utilized by Voss and Fuguitt (1979) is fairly expensive and outside the resources of this present study. Thus an alternative approach was selected.

13). The 1970 Census of Housing indicates only 12% (N=480) of the alternative systems were not septic tanks (see Verway, 1979:Table II-4).

14). A research team under the direction of Dr. J. Allan Beegle, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University assisted in collecting much of the data utilized in this dissertation. Members of the team included Dr. Thomas Koebernick, Department of Sociology, Wright State University, and Fred Frankena and Richard Rathge, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University. Since much of the data gathering was a team effort, it is referred to as such in the text to give credit to the invaluable effort of my colleagues.

15). Since the focus of the dissertation is institutional impacts, no attempt has been made to gain a representative sample of newcomer interviews. Rather, interviews are utilized to provide insight into an array of problems and conflicts that arise as a result of migration, from the migrants' viewpoints. An attempt to obtain a random sample of newcomer interviews would have been costly, time consuming, and outside the scope of this study.

16). Key informants were office holders, workers, or representatives in five institutional sectors of the county (Government, Education, Economy, Religion, and Health

Services). A more detailed description is given in Chapter 4.

17). This group consists of those who, in varying degrees, opt for a simple lifestyle. In general, adherence to some combination of conservation, maintenance of the natural environment, and organic production of food, characterizes this group.

18). Osceola County is organized by a grid system, common among counties in the North Central Region. Geographically, the county is divided into sixteen townships. Each township is further divided into 36 different square mile sections (640 acres). Information on the septic tank applications corresponds to section locations, thus prospective destinations can be traced to a one square mile area of land.

19). The baby boom cohort refers to those people born between the mid-1940s and late 1950's. Birth rates in the United States increased dramatically during this post-World War II period. Total fertility rates went from 2.19 in 1940 to 3.58 in 1957; a downward trend in fertility rates beginning in 1958 carried into the late 1970's.

20). County officials interviewed include 10 of 15 county commissioners, Osceola's county agent, the chair of Osceola's planning commission, Osceola's 4H program director, and an officer in the county sheriff's department.

21). Key township official interviewed were 14 of 16 township supervisors.

22). Three leading public servants (mayors, village/city presidents - vice presidents - clerks - treasurers, councilmembers, and city managers) from each of Osceola's six municipalities (Reed City, Evart, Marion, Tustin, LeRoy, and Hersey) were interviewed.

23). Michigan's formula for highway tax distribution is based on auto registration, thus a funding disparity exists between actual county population size and volume of road use.

24). A joint agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Bureau of the Census, changed the definition of farms for statistical purposes to any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. The previous definition (used from 1959 through preliminary 1974 reports) counted as a farm any place with less than 10 acres from which \$250 or more agricultural products were sold or any place of 10 acres or more from which \$50 or more agricultural products were sold or normally would have been sold during a census year.

25). Osceola Plat Books for the years 1970, 1972, 1975, and 1978 were compared to assess changes in the size of land holdings in Osceola County during the 1970's. Each one square mile section in Osceola (N=576) was scrutinized and plats within these sections which either grew in size or were subdivided were coded. The data includes the location of changing plats with respect to natural amenity sites (i.e., rivers, lakes), designated land use, and the number of plots

and acreage which was altered. Comparisons were made between a) 1970 and 1972; b) 1972 and 1975; and c) 1975 and 1978.

26). The federal government has recognized the rural health situation as unique and designed numerous special programs to aid rural areas including: a) Community Health Centers, 2) National Health Service Corps; 3) Health Underserved Rural Areas; d) Rural Health Initiative; e) Rural Health Clinic Services Act; f) Loan Repayment Plan; and f) Community Facilities Loan Program (see Ahearn, 1979).

27). Key health and social service personnel interviewed include Osceola's director of mental health, Reed City's hospital director, Osceola's director of social services, the regional director of services for the aging, Osceola's director for the commission on aging, the head nurse in the Reed City Hospital Extended Care Unit, the administrator of Meadowview -- a retirement facility, the coordinator of Osceola's hot meals program, and a public health nurse in charge of Osceola's family planning center.

28). Other medical personnel includes 25 RNs, 20 LPNs, 6 Medical Technicians, 4 X-ray Technicians, 3 Respiratory Therapists, 1 Physical Therapists, 1 Physical Therapist Assistant, 3 Pharmacists, 1 Dietician, 2 Consultants (social worker and speech therapist). Source: Hospital Director, Reed City Hospital, Reed City, Michigan.

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