

Population Growth in Miami and Dade County, Florida

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In several respects the growth of the population of Dade County is an interesting, if not unique, phenomenon. In an age when national trends disclose a definite movement away from the cities, Miami continues to expand with rapid vigor. In a nation, which, according to some (pessimistic) observers, is approaching economic maturity, Dade County exhibits potentialities which are proving an irresistible lure to men whose pioneering instincts lie close to the surface. In such a community, the reasons for population growth lie in the strength of inducements to immigration—the study of birth and mortality rates is unimportant.

The spectacular growth of Dade County's population began in the years immediately following World War I (Table 1). In each five-year period since 1920, Dade's population has increased by 56,247 persons on an average. Assuming this rate to continue—and there is every reason to suppose that it will—Dade County should have a population of nearly 500,000 in 1960.

The tourist traffic has been the most important single cause of this growth. The influx of tourists has been stimulated through promotion, improved means of transportation, and the increasing importance of leisure in the average American's scale of values. It has resulted in the creation of many jobs, especially in retail and wholesale trade, and in services in general. Job opportunities are the most important factor in the growth of population through migration.

There is a definite correlation between business activity, especially in trade and construction, and the rate of population growth in Dade County. The period of prosperity in the 1920's witnessed an increase in total population of approximately 100,000. The collapse in the construction industry towards the end of that decade preceded the general industrial depression by several years, and its effects upon Miami's population growth were evident at once. Between 1930 and 1935, Dade's population increase was 37,000—admittedly great, but only 65% of the average increase for the five-year periods since 1920. Between 1935 and 1940, returning pros-

perity increased job opportunities, and the population gain was roughly 87,000.

During the war years, the population growth was retarded to some extent. The 1940-1945 increment was approximately 47,000, some 9,000 below average. War industry and military installations largely, but not wholly, compensated for the loss in the tourist traffic in this period.

The war gave Dade County an opportunity to begin a program of economic diversification through encouragement to industry. Dade County has established a Coordinating and Planning Committee to prepare for the undoubted growth which the county will experience in the future. Intelligent planning promises to lend considerable impetus to industrial growth, and the prospects for increased population based upon the job opportunities thus created are good. Economic diversification will expand as a result of the technological developments in aircraft transportation coupled with Miami's strategic location.

The study of the distribution of Dade County's population shows that it is over-whelmingly urban (Table 2). Until 1930, the city of Miami grew more rapidly than the county as a whole. At that time, 77.4% of the county's population lived in Miami. Since then, the ratio has steadily declined until today it is 62.8%. Between 1930 and 1945, many large cities in this country have experienced a decline in total population, and although Miami has continued to gain, its rate of growth reflects the national trend. Between 1940 and 1945, the most rapidly growing communities were those north and west of Miami. Three factors are basically responsible for this movement. Industrial development is appearing north and west of Miami; the location of military installations is in the same area; and the tourist traffic, virtually excluded from Miami Beach during the war, moved into communities directly north of Miami.

Between 1935 and 1940, the tourist traffic, in an era of prosperity, was the decisive factor in the distribution of Dade County's population. The mortgage insurance policy of the Federal Housing Agency played a major role in the growth of Miami Shores, Miami Beach, and Miami Springs as well as other rapidly developing communities. There is an interesting contrast in the types of cities which grew more rapidly between 1935 and 1940 on the one hand, and between 1930 and 1935 on the other. In the former period, the communities experiencing the most rapid growth were those catering to the tourist traffic. In the latter period, such cities as Homestead and Florida City, which service agricultural pursuits, took their place among the more rapidly growing communities. This is a natural concomitant of industrial depression.

With the ending of the war, several factors promise to influence population distribution during the next few years. Among these the most im-

portant are: reopening of Miami Beach to tourists; the retention or abandonment of military installations; industrial growth; the development of airports, roads, and so on; the promotion of real estate developments; and the overflow of population from the center of density into adjacent areas on the north and west.

The colored population of Dade County is increasing at the rate of 8,649 every five years (Table 3), but this is proportionately less than the rate of total population growth. In 1920, nearly 30% of the total population was colored, compared with 17.7% in 1945.

There is a slight tendency for colored people to seek outlying communities (Table 4). The proportion of colored in Homestead and South Miami is gradually increasing, while it is declining in Miami and Hialeah. The great decline in colored population in Miami Beach and Coral Gables between 1940 and 1945 (Table 4) reflects the transfer from domestic employment to war activities, and may be expected to reverse itself in the near future.

In comparing the 1930 census data with the 1940 (Table 5), it is evident that throughout the United States as a whole, children under 15 are becoming a smaller percentage of the total population, while the percentage of persons aged 15 through 19 remains fairly constant. In other words, the average age of the nation's population is increasing. In Dade County each age group under 20 is becoming a smaller percentage of the total population, and, in addition, Dade County shows a smaller percentage of its population in each of these age groups than the country as a whole.

In the 20 through 24 age group, Dade and the Country as a whole have the same proportion, approximately; and this proportion did not materially change between 1930 and 1940.

In comparison with the country as a whole, Dade County has an appreciably higher proportion of its population in all age brackets from 25 through 44. This was also true in 1930. Dade's population in the age groups from 45 through 64 is somewhat greater than the country's as a whole, although the discrepancy is small. On the other hand, the proportion of the country's population over 64 is larger than Dade's.

A community which shows a smaller than average percentage of its population in the young and in the old age groups, and which at the same time shows a decidedly greater proportion of individuals in the age groups from 20 to 64, is not a community to which the aged come to retire. Rather, it is a pioneering community—one to which people come with the evident expectation of creating a home and gaining a livelihood.

In what economic activities do these people gain their livelihood? The United States Census reveals that in 1940 there were approximately

111,000 persons gainfully employed in Dade County (Table 6). Of these, 28,500 were employed in trade and another 25,000 in personal services. Thus nearly 50% of the workers were dependent in great measure on the tourist traffic. The construction industry was third on the list, but it employed only 10,500 persons, and was consequently far less important than the other two. Small numbers of people found employment in utilities, manufacturing, and professional services.

This situation is obviously unhealthy. An appreciable measure of economic diversification is urgently needed. Miami is not suitable, because of its location, for heavy industry, but it is hoped that the development of light and medium industry will be forthcoming in the years ahead. The removal of Miami's dependence upon the tourist traffic as virtually a sole means of economic growth should go far to stimulate the increase in Dade County's population. Care must be taken to avoid interference with the tourist traffic, however, for this will remain the major factor in the economic background of Dade County. Development in other economic activities must supplement and not supplant the basis on which Miami and Dade County have grown in the past. The prospects for continued expansion are excellent.

TABLE 1

POPULATION, DADE COUNTY

A. ORIGINAL DATA		B. TREND ORDINATE (Five-year increment, 56,247)
1920	42,753	42,753
1925	111,332	99,000
1930	142,955	155,247
1935	180,998	211,494
1940	267,739	267,741
1945	315,060	323,998
1950		380,235
1955		436,482
1960		492,729

Source: United States and State Censuses

TABLE 3

COLORED POPULATION OF DADE COUNTY

	ORIGINAL DATA	TREND (INC.: 8,649)	% OF TOTAL
1920	12,680	12,680	29.7%
1925	28,869	21,329	25.9%
1930	29,894	29,978	20.9%
1935	35,924	38,627	19.9%
1940	49,518	47,276	18.5%
1945	55,877	55,925	17.7%
1950		64,574	17.0%
1955		73,223	16.8%
1960		81,872	16.6%

Source: United States and State Censuses

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN INCORPORATED PLACES

	1925		1930		1935		1940		1945	
	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %
Dade County	42,753	111,332	142,955	100	180,998	100	267,739	100	315,060	100
Miami	29,571	84,258	110,637	77.4	127,600	70.6	172,172	64.5	197,326	62.8
Miami Beach	644	2,342	6,494	4.5	13,330	7.3	28,012	10.6	32,327	10.3
Coral Gables		901	5,697	3.9	6,747	3.7	8,294	3.1	9,332	3.0
Hialeah		1,494	2,600	1.8	3,168	1.75	3,958	1.5	4,904	1.6
South Miami			1,160	0.8	1,690	0.9	2,408	0.9	2,761	0.88
Miami Shores			612	0.43	693	0.39	1,956	0.73	2,918	0.93
Miami Springs			402	0.3	443	0.2	898	0.3	1,860	0.6
North Miami Beach			520	0.4	1,457	0.8	871	0.3	1,965	0.6
Opalocka			339	0.2	522	0.3	497	0.2	1,835	0.6
Golden Beach			36				83		243	
Biscayne Park					450	0.25	500	0.2	1,204	0.4
El Portal							365	0.14	487	0.15
Surfside							295	0.1	1,001	0.3
North Miami					1,354	0.75	1,973	0.74	1,759	0.56
Homestead	1,307	2,114	2,319	1.6	3,034	1.7	3,154	1.2	3,072	1.0
Florida City	355	540	452	0.3	633	0.35	752	0.28	979	0.3

Source: United States and State Censuses

TABLE 4

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COLORED POPULATION: INCORPORATED AREAS OF 1000 AND OVER

	1920		1925		1930		1935		1940		1945	
	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %	TOTAL %
Dade	12,680	100	28,869	100	29,894	100	35,924	100	49,518	100	55,877	100
Miami	INA*		24,549	85	25,116	84	27,632	77.0	36,857	74.0	40,986	72.0
Homestead	INA*		487	1.7	517	1.7	935	2.6	1,139	2.3	3,072	5.5
South Miami					388	1.3	822	2.3	1,166	2.4	1,447	2.6
Florida City					223	0.7	221	0.6	233	0.5	432	0.8
Hialeah											294	0.5
Opalocka											279	0.5
North Miami Beach							212	0.6			65	0.1
Coral Gables			46	0.2	449	1.5	523	1.5	839	1.7	58	0.1
Miami Springs											32	0.1
Miami Beach							324	0.9	736	1.5		
Miami Shores			56	0.2	230	0.8					57	0.1
North Miami							37	0.1	7			
Elsewhere	INA*	INA*	3,731	12.9	2,971	10.0	5,218	14.4	8,484	17.5	10,091	17.8

*Information not available Source: United States and State Censuses

TABLE 5
AGE COMPOSITION: POPULATION DADE COUNTY
FEDERAL CENSUS: 1930-1940
A-1940 B-1930

AGE	A-1940			B-1930		
	TOTAL	DADE COUNTY %	U. S. %	TOTAL	DADE COUNTY %	U. S. %
under 5	16,764	6.2	8.0	12,058	8.4	9.3
5-9	16,507	6.2	8.1	12,709	8.9	10.3
10-14	18,945	7.1	8.9	11,255	7.9	9.8
15-19	19,219	7.2	9.4	10,675	7.5	9.4
20-24	23,605	8.8	8.8	12,656	8.8	8.9
25-29	26,572	9.9	8.4	14,537	10.2	8.0
30-34	25,774	9.6	7.8	13,529	9.5	7.4
35-39	25,031	9.3	7.2	(23,261	16.3)	7.5
				()	
40-44	21,706	8.1	6.7			6.5
45-49	18,219	6.8	6.3			5.7
				15,955	11.2	
50-54	15,854	5.9	5.5			4.9
55-59	12,130	4.5	4.4			3.8
				9,659	6.7	
60-64	10,102	3.8	3.6			3.1
over 64	17,239	6.5	6.9	6,531	4.6	5.3

TABLE 6
INDUSTRY GROUPS OF EMPLOYED WORKERS:
14 YEARS OLD AND OVER, 1940

INDUSTRY GROUP	NO. EMPLOYED WORKERS			% OF COUNTY TOTAL		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Persons employed	111,002	75,822	35,180	100.00	100.00	100.00
Agriculture	5,158	4,548	610	4.65	6.00	1.73
Forestry and Fishing	180	175	5	.16	.23	.01
Construction	10,518	10,325	193	9.48	13.62	.55
Manufacturing	7,879	6,990	889	7.10	9.22	2.53
Transportation and other Utilities	8,195	7,358	837	7.38	9.70	2.38
Wholesale and Retail Trade	28,562	20,189	8,373	25.73	26.63	23.80
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6,032	4,015	2,017	5.43	5.30	5.73
Business and Repair Service	2,871	2,603	268	2.59	3.43	.76
Personal Service	24,988	8,831	16,157	22.51	11.65	45.93
Amusement, Recreation, Etc.	3,270	2,850	420	2.95	3.76	1.19
Professional Service	7,643	3,471	4,172	6.88	4.58	11.86
Government	3,591	3,075	516	3.24	4.05	1.47
Mining	148	146	2	.13	.19	.01
Ind. not specified	1,967	1,246	721	1.77	1.64	2.05

Source: United States Federal Census