

1983

Dynamics of population growth in rural counties: A study of Mathews County, Virginia

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<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-9ajt-zd22>

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DYNAMICS OF POPULATION GROWTH IN
RURAL COUNTIES: A STUDY OF MATHEWS
COUNTY, VIRGINIA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Government
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Michael Hunley DeWitt

1983

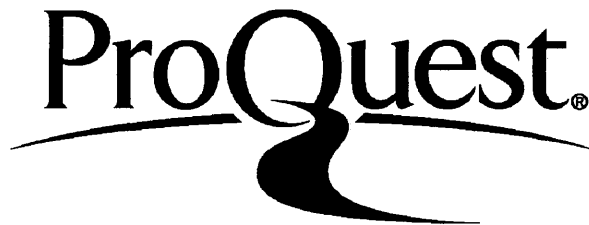
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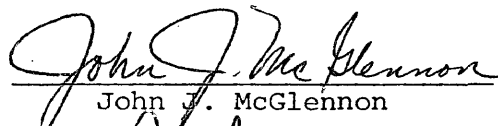
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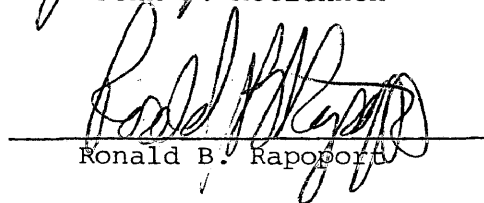
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Professor John J. McGlennon, under whose guidance this investigation was conducted, for his patient guidance and criticism. The author is also indebted to his family and friends in Mathews County, Virginia for their encouragement, patience and support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree of involvement and participation in governmental decision-making by groups in rural communities experiencing in-migrating population growth. This study will illustrate that new migrants to a rural community will communicate demands to the local government which in turn will cause the long-time native residents to do the same. The long-time native residents will become more active in local government affairs and will compete with the newcomers in determining government policies.

This study will incorporate data found on population changes from census materials, budget information from county budget documents and the results of a county-wide survey of citizens and governing officials in a rural Virginia county.

DYNAMICS OF POPULATION GROWTH IN
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CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING RURAL COMMUNITY

We are now in the midst of a renewed interest in the fortunes of small communities because of what startled demographers in the past few years have been calling the "reverse" migration..... nonmetropolitan areas of the country are increasing in population more rapidly than metropolitan areas..... In the 1970's the concern turns to the difficulties small communities with limited resources have in coping with growth and sudden change. What then can we say about the ability of small community governments to deal with these new demands?¹

In "Small Towns and the Meaning of Informal Government" Alvin D. Sokolow discusses the quality of political representation and describes the administrative and policy styles of small governments located in nonmetropolitan areas. Based on Sokolow's work one may speculate about the consequences of small government characteristics in coping with growth and change.

Migration trends in the United States have resulted in a variety of changes in the communities to which migrants have moved as well as the areas from which they came. American society has never been a static system in a fixed equilibrium with its environment: expansion and movement have been central themes of its history.² Between the end of World War II and the early 1970's most Americans were preoccupied with conditions in the large metropolitan areas of the nation, and only marginal national attention was given to what might be termed "the outlands",³ the small cities, towns, villages and rural communities on the fringes of metropolises and beyond.

Nonmetropolitan America was identified in the urban mind with farming, an occupation millions of Americans were abandoning for the delights of the city or suburb. But the reality of what nonmetropolitan areas were and what they were becoming was not recognized. The 1970's have seen the emergence of new settlement patterns and new ways of living and working that are partly rural and partly urban.⁴

At the time of the first United States census in 1790 most of the nation's 4 million citizens lived in a narrow band along the Atlantic coastline. Ninety-five percent of the population lived in rural areas, and the vast majority of this rural population was agricultural. Only 5 percent of the population lived in 24 urban places. The country remained predominantly rural until the mid-19th century. Only then did the shift from rural to urban dominance gain momentum. By 1920 the United States had become predominantly urban, and virtually all gain in the national population since that time has been absorbed by the urban sector.⁵

In the early 1970's population growth began to change. The growth which had been relatively uniform throughout the nation slowed. As the protective mantle of natural increase was withdrawn, the differences in regional growth caused by migration became more evident. For example, in the South the population increased by 5.1 million people between 1970 and 1975, a sharp departure from previous five year periods. The state of Florida, alone, added 27 percent to its population between 1970 and 1978. Prior to 1970, the large number of migrants to Florida offset what was in fact a migratory loss for the rest of the South. But since 1970, the rest of the region has had migration gains as well.

The Northeast has entered an era of virtual stability. The region

lost 700,000 people to other regions between 1970-75, and now registers no population growth at all, since out-migration offsets natural increase. In the North Central states the population increases have slowed considerably, also.

In the West, California no longer dominates migration growth as it did prior to 1965. Between 1970 and 1975, the other 12 western states gained one million people through net in-migration (more than twice California's share) compared with only 0.2 million (less than one-seventh of California's share) between 1960 and 1965.⁶ These recent migration trends have led researchers to study new and different characteristics within the regions and local communities of the United States.

Research in the field of small rural government has basically been a description of three major characteristics of rural areas. These characteristics are: 1) the informality of rural government; 2) the political conflicts, especially when population growth is occurring; and 3) the charm of the rural setting.

John C. Bollens in *American County Government* argued that research on county government customarily employed a structural, legalistic and descriptive approach and did not attempt to undertake systematic analysis within a theoretical framework. He stated that:

American county government is a significant but little understood and often maligned unit. The conflicting appellations applied to counties, such as the dark continent, the dead Indian, the headless wonder, a government of rising importance, and the local government of the future, stand as strong evidence of the lack of sufficient information and analysis about them.....Overall, county governments are a mixed bag.⁷

An effort to bring some semblance of order to studies that have been done on rural government begins by discussing work which best illustrates the notion of informality in the rural government setting.

Informality is promoted in rural government by the simple and small organizational characteristics of these governments and the expectations of the citizens. According to Alvin D. Sokolow it is understood that the local rural government is obligated to perform its duties in a friendly and personal manner. In "Small Towns and The Meaning of Informal Government" he discusses several reasons for this. First is the idea that there is informality among professional executives due to the multiple responsibilities they have. Therefore, as a jack-of-all-trades the administration has little time or energy to engage in long-range planning and research.

Second, public officials are guided in their decisions by friends and neighbors, and particularistic rather than universalistic values. As a result, they rely on past decisions and their "feel" for the situation, and are inconsistent in applying the laws and regulations to their friends and neighbors.

Third, there is a public-private mixture in the administration of the local government as well as a great deal of volunteerism. In the end, public goods and services may be provided by the local government, individuals, friends, and/or private contractors. Volunteerism helps to produce citizen familiarity and support for local government, and generally strong and spirited community identification.⁸

Warren E. Mills, Jr. and Harry R. Davis explained the public-private mixture in their book, Small City Government. Their illustrations showed that under certain circumstances much of the policy-making took place outside the formal machinery of government. Final public policy was, in many cases, the result of a whole series of interlocking decisions taken by various groups and persons with various motives and acting in private as well as public capacities.⁹

Many have argued that the informality of local rural government results in poor policy development. However, William A. Giles and Dale A. Krane state that policy development is best understood as a function of the county's socio-economic level rather than as a by-product of modern administrative practices. Their study of Mississippi counties resulted in findings that contradicted those arguments which suggested that socio-economic advances generated increased administrative professionalism, and, in turn, that administrative professionalism resulted in more effective policy delivery. Giles and Krane suggest that it is unlikely that drastic changes in the subjective realm of county officials or in the administrative organization of the county governments will take place until the economic resources of counties are substantially elevated.¹⁰

Revenue sharing has been used in the past as a method for boosting the economic resources of local governments, and as a vehicle for bringing local governments more fully into a system of inter-governmental administration. Federal policy-makers and officials have encouraged through positive incentives and guidelines the evolution of more capable local governments.¹¹ The role of local governments in our federal system is considered to be vitally important. As James L. Sundquist said in Making Federalism Work:

As the federal government continues to establish national objectives that can be executed only through state and local initiative and participation, the stake of the country in the upgrading of state and local government.....becomes ever greater.¹²

One may conclude that the informal nature of the local rural government is a significant characteristic for researchers to investigate. Certainly, others have found it to be an interesting curiosity.

Political conflicts are an inevitable characteristic of any governmental unit. At the local level and in rural areas, however, there is a great deal of evidence which indicates that differences result from personality conflicts rather than policy or issue-oriented conflicts. Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman point out in Small Town in Mass Society that:

The pervasiveness of political discussion is of special significance when one notes that it is focused on personalities rather than issues, and that it continues in the presence or absence of issues. Issues, then, are not an essential ingredient of local politics.¹³

This characteristic raises some concern about the quality of political representation.

The performance of elected and appointed officials greatly affects the balance between policy competence and intimate representation.¹⁴ Officials must determine where the responsibility for public decisions will lie¹⁵ in order to have some measure of accountability and quality in their work. These political problems must be resolved along with at least two further limiting factors: the citizens' ability and willingness to pay for the decisions and programs proposed.¹⁶ If the quality of political representation at the local level is going to be enhanced through a balance between policy competence and intimate representation, then more attention will have to turn to issues and away from personalities.¹⁷

The conflict over the separation of politics and administration in government is one which has been argued for years.

.....the line between politics and administration, at least as it appears to those actually involved in governing, is wavering and often blurred - so blurred, indeed, as to constitute a broad zone of ambiguity. This kind of situation is obviously full of hazards for politician and administrator alike.¹⁸

The ambiguities between politics and administration create problems in the governmental decision-making arena as well as in the implementation stages of policy decisions. One often has difficulty distinguishing the two and the officials involved in each. Therefore problems arise in the areas of responsibility and accountability which may result in a frustrated citizenry.

Political conflicts become even more complex and difficult to handle when rural areas are experiencing population growth. As Alvin D. Sokolow states in "Small Towns and the Meaning of Informal Government":

In addition to the obvious demands on the quality and quantity of public services and the pressures of development on land use patterns, small communities experiencing new growth are faced with the political conflicts between newcomers and oldtimers, and between proponents of change and defenders of the status quo.¹⁹

The performance of elected and appointed officials in the midst of such situations becomes a crucial concern for both the newcomers and the oldtimers. Officials must attempt to balance many more variables when reaching decisions.

Edgar L. Sherbenon addresses the concern over the conflicts between groups in his essay, "Class, Participation, and the Council-Manager Plan". Based on the notion that newcomers in a community are somewhat disadvantaged, he writes:

Effective political participation by large groups depends upon the development of program politics and majority coalitions of interest groups.....professional management is more likely than competitive forms to carry out such programs as are developed and selected by the community. Rationally speaking, we can say that lower status groups have much to gain from the greater confidence in public instruments engendered by the elimination of personal favoritism, and by the systematic rationalization of administrative organization.²⁰

Sherbenon believes that a local government based on rational, professional administration will be far more beneficial to newcomers than one operated on informal personal favors. This organization of professional administration may be virtually non-existent at the rural level, however. As previously discussed, informality and close, personal relationships are very strong characteristics of local government in rural areas.

In addition to the political conflicts already presented here, there is one other problem to be described as discussed by Warren E. Mills, Jr. and Harry R. Davis in Small City Government. Mills and Davis state:

.....the interests involved at the municipal level are by no means always, or even usually, organized group interests..... a feature of local policy making is the high degree of interest conflict in which the interests are not organized groups but general points of view held by different people.²¹

This characteristic can obviously cause even more headaches for decision-makers. It can, however, allow officials enough discretion to carry out policies which they personally endorse, without the consensus of broad support from any particular constituency.

The final characteristic of the rural area to be discussed may seem even less important for researchers, but should not be overlooked. The charm of rural areas is best described by Peter A. Morrison in the essay, "Rural Renaissance in America? The Revival of Population Growth in Remote Areas". In this essay Morrison reports on the characteristics of migrants, and the differences between today's urban-to-rural migrants and the 1950's-1960's rural-to-urban migrants.

The most interesting aspect of Morrison's essay is one of the most central concerns of everyone - oldtimers, newcomers, governing officials -

in the rural setting:

Urbanites that, for all their reported nostalgia for the simple life, are accustomed to the style and conveniences of cities..... their impact on a rural area is much different from the impact of the rural native on the city.....country migrants who moved to the city for the opportunities inherent in bigness were further enhancing that bigness, but city migrants who move to the country for the charm of smallness are obviously not enhancing that smallness. If they demand urban amenities, even more of the rural character they prized is lost.²²

In recent years rural communities and small towns have had to adjust to the sometimes rapid changes resulting from new migrants. As Glenn V. Fuguitt and Calvin L. Beale point out in "Population Change in Nonmetropolitan Cities and Towns", even areas that appeared to be declining were actually growing, also. The reasons for this they explained:

To some extent the widespread reputation of small towns as dying may represent an impression from their business trends..... from 1950 to 1970 nonmetro towns of fewer than 2,500 people had an average decline of nearly a third in the number of consumer business establishments. Such losses have a visible impact on the physical fabric of towns. Yet, the same places increased in population by an average of one-ninth. Thus residential functions of smaller nonmetro towns are seen to have taken a contrary overall course from their business functions. Business decline does not preclude population growth in an era when there are more retired people and a greater propensity to live in one place and work in another.²³

Thus, one can conclude that the reasons for rural migration are varied. The growth that is occurring in rural communities is stimulating activity in areas of local government that were not of great concern a few years ago. Political participation on the part of residents is changing, the roles of local government officials are evolving to meet new circumstances, and the entire rural environment may possibly take on a completely new look in the years ahead. However, as Granville Hicks reminds us in Small Town there are values and beliefs that are an essential part of not only rural America, but all America that cannot be overlooked.

He wrote:

Personally, I have some sympathy with those who wish they could preserve the values of the self-sufficient small town, but it is not sympathy that matters as much as understanding. What I have to remember is that in asking people to take something I am also asking them to give something up, and what they are asked to abandon seems just as important to them as what I am asking them to take seems to me.²⁴

In more recent years studies have been conducted of growth and change in rural America that have resulted in findings that are particularly important for nonmetropolitan areas. Glenn V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss were able to determine a number of distinctive features among rural residents based on interviews conducted in the Upper Great Lakes Region. Their interviewing was carried out only in nonmetropolitan counties and focused on those nonmetropolitan counties experiencing rates of net in-migration exceeding 10 percent between 1970 and 1975.

In "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends" Fuguitt and Voss explained that the most recent move for the people of the Upper Great Lake Region did not involve the crossing of a state boundary. Of those residents who had moved from metropolitan areas, 69 percent moved within the state. Among the residents who came from nonmetropolitan origins, 82 percent had moved from within state.

Their study also showed that metro-origin migrants, on the average, tended to settle farthest away from urban centers. Nonmetro-origin migrants settled nearest to such centers and long-term residents fell somewhere in between.²⁵

Despite the recent notion of nonmetropolitan growth and metropolitan decline, Richard A. Engels and Mary Kay Healy have argued that much of the gain in nonmetropolitan areas took place only in two years, 1970 and 1971. Their work in "Rural Renaissance Reconsidered" indicates that

since 1971 the rural increases have been relatively constant and lower than in 1970 and 1971. Metropolitan areas saw a dramatic drop to half of the previous year's population increase in 1971 and 1972, but since then, their annual growth also has been constant.²⁶ One may conclude that the last few years have been a period of relative inactivity.

Engels and Healy conclude that "the main sign that rural areas are enjoying a renaissance in population growth came not from people moving out of cities, but from the rural areas retaining population".²⁷ This finding seems to suggest stagnation rather than resurgence. However, to be more specific, they found that only the largest metropolitan areas - those over three million people - were losing population. Those between two and three million were growing, but more slowly than nonmetropolitan counties. The majority of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, which each have less than two million population, grew roughly the same as nonmetropolitan counties.²⁸ Therefore, this may lead to the conclusion that there is a tendency toward a new stability in the balance between urban and rural areas.

Regardless of the degree of migration activity, evidence does indicate that there are new interests in rural America. And there are a number of reasons for the migration trends witnessed in the 1970's. Job related reasons²⁹ are usually strongest among people migrating to either metropolitan or nonmetropolitan areas. Young adults in the process of leaving home, pursuing educations, entering or leaving the military, launching careers, marrying, purchasing homes - migrate frequently. The largest concentration of migration appears in younger ages and declines steadily with age until roughly the period of retirement. Older adults are restrained to lower rates of migration by

their places of work and residence. Migrants are typically better educated than non-migrants - those with higher educational attainments are often tied into recruiting structures or professional organizations which inform them of different opportunities in other locations.³⁰ Inexpensive land and low wage rates in nonmetropolitan areas have decentralized manufacturing.³¹ When manufacturers move, they bring with them, to some degree, a number of opportunity-seeking migrants.

Recent migration trends have been aided by somewhat reduced transportation costs (before 1973) and new or expanded transportation routes.³² This may not hold true for long, however, due to the petroleum and gasoline supply variations, these could be particularly severe for nonmetropolitan areas since they are almost totally dependent on the passenger auto and commercial truck.³³

Important social or economic links, such as family ties, are reasons for recent movements back to rural areas as well.³⁴ Fuguitt and Voss found that this was the reason that many people had migrated. These people had a positive view toward country living and wanted their families to be united in the rural environment.

The trend toward a new way of life for many Americans explains some migration movements. Earlier retirement and the availability of new sources of income, such as pensions and other payments, have added to retirees' mobility.³⁵ Retirees have also expressed a general dissatisfaction with city living. They seem to have a strong desire to move away from urban problems and have a general desire to improve their environmental quality of life.³⁶ These migrants tend to create markets wherever they go, especially in service-oriented areas.

Initial employment opportunities retain existing residents and attract opportunity-seeking migrants. The resulting population, larger and more affluent, enlarges local demand for goods and services, and creates new jobs that attract still more migrants.³⁷

Speculation about the implications of these recent migration trends has been varied. Neal R. Peirce concludes in a Washington Post article entitled, "The Countrified City", that "most rural communities are ill-equipped to deal with sudden population growth, and many are repeating the wasteful, sprawling patterns of metropolitan suburbs."³⁸

J. C. Doherty originally labeled the small communities experiencing in-migrating population growth as countrified cities due to the extension of city conditions, institutions, and activities on a county or multi-county scale.³⁹ The problems that newly experienced growth from arriving migrants cause include congestion, sprawl and increased support costs, and result in a zero sum game: one region gains at the expense of another.⁴⁰

Formulas for distributing federal funds that are based on the number of area inhabitants will cause the distribution among localities to change. Also, "net migration may alter a region's labor pool, adding to or subtracting from its stock of human capital."⁴¹ These are serious implications for American communities. As a result, the victims of the rural return could be rural America itself. Rural areas must adjust to new in-migrants living in split-level homes and bungalows on a few acres, in tiny subdivisions or in mobile homes. Also, the new residents have a desire to work in offices, factories or service jobs, send their children to suburban-like consolidated schools, and shop mainly in suburban-type shopping centers.⁴²

What are small communities experiencing in-migration population

growth to do? Planning and zoning, that dreaded combination that prompts the countryman to reach for his rifle, may be needed if the nonmetro environment is to be protected. Also, a strong national policy protecting prime agricultural land could constrain nonmetro growth by simply not allowing available land to be converted to urban uses. A strong environmental movement could also curtail growth in nonmetro areas. If the environmentalists can turn their considerations into effective national policy, they may be able to slow, if not stop, much of the decentralization of people and industry to the countryside.⁴³

One may speculate about the roles and actions of citizens, new and old, in the rural areas and small town communities of America where these population changes have been occurring. Alan J. Hahn has theorized in "Planning in Rural Areas" that rural decisionmakers like most decisionmakers, will not respond to problems until they reach crisis proportions. As a result, the impact of urbanization may be quite far along and quite obvious before decisionmakers voluntarily look for planning assistance.⁴⁴ Therefore, one may feel that local decisionmaking in nonmetropolitan areas is extremely low-key and committed to the notion of limited government.

Hahn indicates a chain of events that may occur in rural areas as they grow. He states:

As a rural jurisdiction urbanizes: 1) people and land uses are more densely distributed and, hence, more likely to conflict; 2) change is more rapid and obvious; 3) newcomers, who do not conform in values and needs with original residents, grow more numerous; 4) increasing change and complexity is responded to through new public services and administrative devices, increased expenditures, and more formalized procedures; 5) land use controls may be adopted for the first time, but they are still unlikely to be formally enforced; and 6) urban-oriented newcomers will disagree more and more with the original residents who are still dominant in local decisionmaking, they will send organized groups to local board meetings, and they will organize politically to challenge incumbent officeholders.⁴⁵

Based on the findings of others, and the assumptions they have made, a test can be conducted which would further illustrate the implications of in-migrating population growth in small rural communities. Many of the same conclusions reached by others can be more thoroughly examined by subjecting them to further testing in other areas of the United States. Also, new and more accurate conclusions may be discovered.

The purpose of the following pages will be to expand the present body of knowledge concerning the more demanding and growing role of local governments in the United States. I have presented some of the characteristics of new in-migrants and problems that are faced by growing rural areas. Unanticipated consequences of this growth were touched upon as well.

The hypothesis to be tested in this thesis encompasses the relationship that new migrants to rural communities and the long-time native residents have with their local government and each other. Essentially, I shall attempt to determine if governmental response to in-migrating citizen needs leads to increased political demands from the long-time native population. My purpose in conducting this type of study is twofold: first, to investigate how new migrants in a rural community communicate demands to the local government for services which they desire; and second, to determine if the long-time native residents become more active in local government affairs as a result of their desire to compete with new migrants in determining government policies.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

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³J. C. Doherty, "Public and Private Issues in Nonmetropolitan Government", in Growth and Change in Rural America, (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Land Institute, 1979), p. 53.

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⁵Glenn V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss, "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends", in Growth and Change in Rural America, (Washington, D. C.: The Urban Land Institute, 1979), p. 1.

⁶Peter A. Morrison, "The Shifting Regional Balance", American Demographics, May 1979, pp. 9-10.

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⁸Alvin D. Sokolow, "Small Towns and the Meaning of Informal Government", pp. 3-9.

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²⁰Edgar L. Sherbenon, "Class, Participation, and the Council-Manager Plan", Public Administration Review, 21 (1961), p. 135.

²¹Warner E. Mills, Jr. and Harry R. Davis, Small City Government, p. 95.

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²³Glenn V. Fuguitt and Calvin L. Beale, "Population Change in Nonmetropolitan Cities and Towns", Economic Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Economic Report Number 323, August 1975, p. 1.

²⁴Granville Hicks, Small Town (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 272.

²⁵Glenn V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss, "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends", in Growth and Change in Rural America (Washington, D. C.: The Urban Land Institute, 1979), pp. 30-32.

²⁶Richard A. Engels and Mary Kay Healy, "Rural Renaissance Reconsidered", American Demographics, May 1979, p. 16.

²⁷Ibid. p. 19.

²⁸Ibid. p. 17.

²⁹Glen V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss, "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends", p. 33.

³⁰Ibid. pp. 26-29.

³¹Peter A. Morrison, "The Shifting Regional Balance", p. 11.

- ³²Ibid. p. 12.
- ³³J. C. Doherty, "Public and Private Issues in Nonmetropolitan Government", p. 91.
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- ³⁵Peter A. Morrison, "The Shifting Regional Balance", p. 11.
- ³⁶Glenn V. Fuguitt and Paul R. Voss, "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends", p. 33.
- ³⁷Peter A. Morrison, "The Shifting Regional Balance", p. 12.
- ³⁸Neal R. Peirce, "The Countrified City", The Washington Post, 6 October 1979, p. E16, col. 3.
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- ⁴⁰Peter A. Morrison, "The Shifting Regional Balance", p. 15.
- ⁴¹Ibid. p. 14.
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- ⁴⁵Ibid. p. 46

CHAPTER II

MATHEWS COUNTY, VIRGINIA

The choice of setting for this study is based on criteria similar to that of Fuguitt and Voss in their publication, "Recent Nonmetropolitan Population Trends" in Growth and Change in Rural America. The requirements which they established for their study of the Upper Great Lakes Region are appropriate for this research as well.

The thesis will examine a county in the rural Southeast that is considered nonmetropolitan and is not included in any Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. The research of Fuguitt and Voss indicated that the rural Southeast was one of the regions of the United States experiencing population growth due to in-migration and that the remote, nonadjacent, nonmetropolitan counties in some parts of the United States were growing even faster than the fringe areas of large cities.

The county studied does not contain any incorporated place. This condition illustrates the remoteness of the county and its small population.

Another criterion involves the previous population trends for the county. The study will require a county that lost population during the decade of 1950 to 1960. This will indicate that the county was declining, and predictions probably would have suggested a continuation of those downward trends. The decade of the 1960's should show very little change in the county's population from the 1950's.

Finally, I shall investigate a county that has experienced a rate

of net in-migration exceeding 10 percent between 1970 and 1980, thus indicating a drastic change from the 1950's and 1960's. Also, this will maximize the potential for locating recent migrants. This, too, is a similar criterion to ones used in the study by Fuguitt and Voss.

I have selected Mathews County, Virginia as the setting for my research. Located in the eastern portion of Virginia, Mathews County is bounded by the counties of Middlesex on the north and Gloucester on the west. The county is bounded by the North River on the west, the Mobjack Bay on the south, the Chesapeake Bay on the east, and the Piankatank River on the north. Mathews serves as the county seat and is 70 miles east of Richmond, 56 miles northwest of Norfolk and the ports of Hampton Roads, and 154 miles south of Washington, D. C..⁴⁶

During the decade of 1950-60 Mathews County experienced a -0.4 percent population decline. The population fell from 7,148 residents to 7,121. The natural growth in population due to births in the decade increased by 2.4 percent, however net migration during the same time was -2.8 percent.⁴⁷

Between 1960 and 1970 the county experienced very little change. The total population increased from 7,121 to 7,168, or 0.7 percent. The in-migration gain during the decade was 4.1 percent, the first gain in almost 30 years.

In the 1970's Mathews County began to witness great changes. Population growth for 1970 through 1980 resulted in an increase from 7,168 to 7,995, an 11.5 percent increase of 827 people for the ten-year period.⁴⁸ During the same period the natural population from births decreased by 471 persons, or -6.6 percent. Thus, the in-migration for the period totaled 1,298 for an 18.1 percent increase.⁴⁹ The 18.1

percent increase for 1970 through 1980 clearly indicates that the county has seen substantial in-migration growth throughout the ten-year period.

Among the characteristics of growing rural counties that one may anticipate finding is the chain of events described by Alan J. Hahn in "Planning in Rural Areas" in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners. As Mathews County has grown its people and land uses have probably become more densely distributed and, hence, more likely to conflict. Also, change is more rapid and obvious as newcomers, who do not conform in values and needs with original residents, grow more numerous. Local government responds to increasing change and complexity through new public services and administrative devices, increased expenditures, and more formalized procedures. Land controls may be adopted for the first time, and urban-oriented newcomers may begin to disagree more and more with the original residents. Finally, this would result in newcomers organizing for the purpose of challenging local decisions and incumbent officeholders. If these events have occurred, they should be confirmed in responses given by county administrative officials and officeholders when questioned about the changes in Mathews County.

Hahn theorized that growing rural counties would begin to provide new services for their changing population as well as upgrade their administrative devices and governmental procedures. The budget documents of Mathews County should reflect changes in governmental services and advances in administrative professionalization. Also, one can learn the overall organizational characteristics of county government from budget documents. As stated by Alvin D. Sokolow in "Small Towns and the Meaning

of Informal Government", an administrator or county official who has multiple responsibilities will be considered a jack-of-all-trades. Thus, the budget should reflect multiple areas of government programs with limited personnel to oversee these programs.

A final budgetary concern would involve the use of revenue sharing funds. David O. Porters' "Federalism, Revenue Sharing, and Local Government" in Public Policy Making in a Federal System points out the significance of these funds in helping to promote inter-governmental administration and the evolution of more capable local governments. Whether or not these funds have been used to upgrade local governmental administration in Mathews County should indicate the direction of the local decisionmakers toward greater professionalization.

Interviews conducted by Fuguitt and Voss in the Upper Great Lakes Region provide a basis for a county-wide survey which could indicate a number of features about the residents of Mathews County. First, one can determine where new residents moved from and why they moved to Mathews County. Differences concerning the number of years that people have lived in the county and their levels of education can be found as well. More importantly, however, will be the differing opinions held by new and old residents concerning the county's sudden growth, the county government's ability to deal with growth and the future needs of the citizens, and the conflicts that result in county decisionmaking processes.

Neal R. Peirce questioned whether or not county governments were equipped to deal with sudden growth in "The Countrified City". Peirce was concerned about the preservation of the living environment, jobs, education, and services as well as other issues during times of growth and change. Alan J. Hahn in "Planning in Rural Areas" established

several theoretical criteria which he believed would help determine a local government's problem-solving ability. The residents of Mathews County can indicate in a survey their opinions about the level of professionalism among the county officials, the role that county government plays in local affairs, and the attitude that county officials project toward their work and the public. Also, Alvin D. Sokolow hypothesized, due to the informality of local government and the multiple responsibilities of officials, there may be problems at the local level when sudden population changes are occurring. Thus, a county-wide survey can allow one to test Sokolow's hypothesis as well as the questions raised by Peirce and Hahn.

J. C. Doherty's "Public and Private Issues in Nonmetropolitan Government" in Growth and Change in Rural America explains the conflicts that evolve during periods of population growth in rural counties. These conflicts are explained further by Edgar L. Sherbenon's "Class, Participation, and the Council-Manager Plan" in Public Administration Review and Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman in Small Town in Mass Society. Both individual and group conflicts can be an outgrowth of population changes as well as problems arising from personality conflicts and issue differences. Planning, zoning, and environmental quality are potential issues of conflict at any time, but more so during periods of growth and change. Citizen reaction to these conflicts and their efforts to resolve them can be determined from their responses to survey questions.

A final topic that can be included as a part of a survey is the notion of volunteerism. As Alvin D. Sokolow explained, volunteerism helps to produce citizen familiarity and support for local government, and generally strong and spirited community identification. Levels of

volunteerism among Mathews County residents could indicate similarities or differences that would be of particular interest to researchers who are trying to determine levels of participation among the residents in local affairs.

Another method of obtaining information about the county's growth would be to interview certain county administrative officials and elected officeholders. Their opinions about the county's sudden growth, the local governments' ability to deal with growth and the future needs of the citizens, and the conflicts that result in county decisionmaking processes are essential to understanding the overall changes within Mathews County. Warren E. Milles, Jr. and Harry R. Davis discuss in Small City Government the responsibility for public decisions that lies with these individuals. Therefore, their opinions are crucial ones since they are in the positions of ultimately determining and implementing policy decisions.

Peter A. Morrison's "Rural Renaissance in America? The Revival of Population Growth in Remote Areas" in Population Bulletin discussed the dangers that were threatening the charm of the rural setting. Clearly, this is an issue that must concern many individuals who are now living in Mathews County. Morrison explained the characteristics of migrants, and the differences between today's urban-to-rural migrants and the 1950's - 1960's rural-to-urban migrants. He stated the different kind of impact that urban-to-rural migrants had on the country than rural-to-urban migrants had on cities. Evidence of Morrison's conclusions should be supported by findings obtained in Mathews County.

These previous studies will be the basis for my research in Mathews County, Virginia. As indicated earlier Mathews County

experienced substantial in-migration growth during the 1970's. The population trends of Mathews County will be compared with those of surrounding and similar counties in the eastern Virginia area. This will present a clearer picture of the overall population trends for the region.

Secondly, I analyzed selected Mathews County budget documents for 1960 through 1979 (published and available for public inspection). The budgets for 1960-61, 1965-66, 1970-71, 1975-76 and 1978-79 were studied in order to determine changes in county expenditures, revenue sources and overall governmental programs. Since the budget must reflect all programs of the county government, it served as an excellent indicator of governmental priorities, trends and organizational and administrative changes.

Thirdly, a county-wide survey of 200 citizens was conducted to determine their views on population growth, local government administration and responsiveness, volunteerism, community services, and political activity as well as basic demographics.

Finally, ten public officials in Mathews County were personally interviewed to obtain their views on the changes that have taken place. The three current members of the county board of supervisors, the school board chairperson, the planning commission chairperson, the parks and recreation commission chairperson, three former members of the board of supervisors, and the county administrator were interviewed. The results of this study will be helpful in more fully understanding the impact of in-migrating population growth on rural areas in the United States.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

⁴⁶Virginia Electric and Power Company, Mathews County, Virginia: An Economic Study (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Electric and Power Company, 1974), p. 1.

⁴⁷U. S. Bureau of Census, County and City Data Book, 1967 (A Statistical Abstract Supplement). U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1967, pp. 392-401.

⁴⁸1980 Census of Population, Number of Inhabitants in Virginia Part 48, 1982 (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census). U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1982, p. 8.

⁴⁹Julian H. Martin and Michael A. Spar, Growth in Virginia 1970-1980: 1980 Census Analysis Series, Volume I (Charlottesville, Virginia: Tayloe Murphy Institute, 1981), pp. 4-5

CHAPTER III
POPULATION CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT

Counties similar to Mathews and within the same geographic region of Virginia have experienced some of the same population changes as well as governmental changes. Appendix A, page 47 provides a clearer picture of these similarities and indicates population changes for the counties of Lancaster, King and Queen, King William, Middlesex and Mathews.⁵⁰

The chart shows that all the counties, except Lancaster, experienced population decline in the 1950's. All had negative in-migration growth, therefore Lancaster must have had a rather large natural birth rate.

In the 1960's all the counties had a decline in their overall population as well as their in-migration with the exception of Mathews. The +4.1 percent in-migration population rate appears small, but when one considers that there was a -3.4 percent decline in the natural population the figure becomes more significant.

There are greater changes in the 1970 to 1980 time period. All of the counties witnessed quite substantial in-migration increases. Middlesex County experienced the greatest in-migration growth, a 26.4 percent increase, while King and Queen County had the smallest, a 4.9 percent increase. Mathews County fell in the middle of the five counties with an 18.1 percent increase in its in-migrating population.

During this same period the expenditures and responsibilities of the Mathews County local government expanded. The operating budget for

the county in 1960-61 totaled \$268,246.03.⁵¹ By 1965-66 the budget had grown by 43.38 percent from 1960-61 to \$384,594.91.⁵² The 1970-71 budget expanded to a whopping \$2,496,083.00⁵³ over the 1965-66 budget, or a 549.02 percent increase. There is an explanation for such a large increase, however. In 1970 the county board of supervisors approved a \$1,127,500.00 capital outlay request for an addition to Mathews High School.⁵⁴ This expenditure, along with other educational support expenditures for the new addition, caused the dramatic budget increase. Well over half of the county's educational budget went toward this capital outlay request. Without the capital outlay request the budget would still have increased by 281.0 percent to \$1,368,583.00 from 1965-66.

In 1975-76 the budget was \$2,126,574.32,⁵⁵ a 14.80 percent decrease from 1970-71. However, if one excludes the capital outlay expenditure of 1970-71, the budget increase from 1970 to 1975 is \$752,991.32 more, or a jump of 55.0 percent. What happened between 1970 and 1975 to cause such a large increase?

Before studying the governmental changes between 1970 and 1975, I wish to include the county expenditures for 1978-79. During that year the budget grew to \$2,525,505.00,⁵⁶ or an 18.76 percent increase from 1975-76. A more modest increase than 55.0 percent, but still substantially large for the three-year period.

As stated, the Mathews County operating budget increased by 43.38 percent from 1960-61 to 1965-66. Most of this increase resulted from increasing expenditures in the area of Social Services and Public Health. During this five-year period the Social Services and Public Health portion of the county budget increased by 62.09 percent; from \$18,379.73⁵⁷ to \$29,792.74.⁵⁸ Additionally, from 1965-66 to 1970-71 this budget went from a \$29,792.74⁵⁹ expenditure to \$224,269.86⁶⁰, or a 652.77 percent

increase. Funding for these increases came from the federal government and the public welfare fund - revenues received from the Lyndon B. Johnson "Great Society" Administration that had little, if any, impact on the taxpayers of Mathews County in terms of local taxes.

In addition to increases in Social Services and Public Health between 1960-61 and 1965-66, there was a 49.81 percent increase in expenditures for Educational Purposes. This, too, was primarily funded through the federal government which allocated funds for the School Food Program, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the National Defense Education Fund and Head Start.⁶¹

Between 1965-66 and 1970-71 additional expenditures went into areas that the county had not witnessed before this time. With the creation of regional and county planning commissions and a local rescue squad and expanding fire prevention department, the county found itself making contributions to these agencies for land, vehicle purchases, and construction.⁶² Along with these new areas were the traditional expenditures that the county had to maintain. Thus, increases in the county operating budget were inevitable.

The most dramatic change in terms of greater professionalization occurred in the county between 1970-71 and 1975-76. During this five-year period the board of supervisors hired the first county administrator, building inspector and sanitary district supervisor. The County Administration portion of the budget increased by 264.71 percent. In addition to this the county began appropriating more funds for Crime Prevention and Detection. Additional deputies were hired to assist the sheriff as well as a dispatcher and a secretary for the department (before 1970 the sheriff had one deputy).⁶³

Finally, the 1978-79 budget shows the overall advances of the county since the 1960's; even the three short years between 1975-76 to 1978-79 have seen more and more change. Besides the departments, programs and activities already added throughout the 1960's and early 1970's; in the 1978-79 budget one finds that the county has added a director of parks and recreation to its administrative arm of the county government.⁶⁴

These changes are only a few of the advances made by Mathews County between 1960 and 1978, and reflect a portion of the more demanding and responsible role of local government. Naturally, the increasing expenditures from year to year have come not only from increasing services and duties of the county government, but also result from inflation. Nevertheless, "change" has come to the county - to some it has appeared gradual - others may view it as too fast, unnecessary, unwanted. The next chapter will examine how the citizens feel about their county - where it has been and where it is going.

Before studying the citizens reaction to change in Mathews County, it is useful to add that the tax rates have changed very little since the 1960's. The 1960-61 budget indicated a tax rate of \$2.30 per \$100 of the assessed value (50%) on real estate and \$2.30 per \$100 of the real value of personal property.⁶⁵ This continued until the 1970-71 budget saw both taxes increase to \$2.50.⁶⁶ Later, in the 1975-76 budget the real estate tax was changed to \$1.60 per \$100 of the real value of real estate.⁶⁷ Thus, what may have appeared as a tax cut, was actually an increase.

With an expanding tax base, due to more building and construction and new residents, the county has been able to increase its revenues each year as needed. By increasing the tax rate while experiencing a growing

tax base the county had greater revenues to meet the expenditures of the local government.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

⁵⁰Julian H. Martin and Michael A. Spar, Growth in Virginia 1970-1980: 1980 Census Analysis Series, Volume I (Charlottesville, Virginia: Tayloe Murphy Institute, 1981), pp. 4-5.

⁵¹Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 4 (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddy Company, 1960), p. 437.

⁵²Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 5 (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Company, 1965), p. 308.

⁵³Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 6 (Lynchburg, Virginia: G. W. Warthen Company, 1970), p. 97.

⁵⁴Ibid. p. 97.

⁵⁵Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 7 (Columbus, Ohio: Cott Index Company, 1975), p. 54.

⁵⁶Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 8 (Lynchburg, Virginia: C. W. Warthen Company, 1978), p. 287.

⁵⁷Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 4 (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Company, 1960), p. 436.

⁵⁸Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 5 (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Company, 1965), p. 307.

⁵⁹Ibid. p. 307.

⁶⁰Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 6 (Lynchburg, Virginia: C. W. Warthen Company, 1970), p. 96.

⁶¹Ibid. p. 99.

⁶²Ibid. p. 95.

⁶³Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 7 (Columbus, Ohio: Cott Index Company, 1975), p. 54.

⁶⁴Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 8 (Lynchburg, Virginia: C. W. Warthen Company, 1978), p. 287.

⁶⁵Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 4 (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Company, 1960), p. 441.

⁶⁶Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 6 (Lynchburg, Virginia: C. W. Warthen Company, 1970), p. 99.

⁶⁷Mathews County, Supervisors Minute Book Number 7 (Columbus, Ohio: Cott Index Company, 1975), p. 57.

CHAPTER IV
CITIZEN REACTION TO POPULATION CHANGE

The informality of rural government, the public-private mixture in the administration of local government, the potential political conflicts at the local level, and the charm of the rural setting have been studied and discussed by other researchers. The researchers have indicated that these are among the major characteristics of rural areas, and there is evidence that more research is needed to fully understand potential concerns of rural local governments in the future.

American county government has been described as a significant but little understood unit of society. Sufficient information is being sought on local governments, and analysis about them is proving to be informative. Local government politics, administration, and programs are significant for researchers to investigate because they reflect a mixture of so many features of American life. Mathews County, Virginia can possibly tell us more about rural counties experiencing in-migrating population growth and governmental change, and help decisionmakers as well as citizens better understand local government problems.

In order to examine attitudes toward population change, I conducted a county-wide survey of residents in Mathews from July 5 through 14, 1982. The questionnaire is outlined in Appendix B, pages 48, 49, 50, 51.

During the nights of the survey 202 residents were questioned by telephone. In Mathews County there is one telephone exchange, 725, and

the following phone series: 2000, 3000, 4-4100, 5000 and 7000.

Telephone numbers were randomly selected and I had approximately 500 available telephone numbers to call.

On the survey, the introductory questions are basic screening questions. Question one determines the length of time residents have actually lived in the county. Questions 1A, 1B and 1C are asked if the respondents have lived in the county ten years or less. The remaining questions are used to study the differences and similarities among new migrants and long-time residents in terms of their attitudes toward each other and local government, their desired role of local government, their contact with local government and basic demographics. The survey results are outlined in Appendix C, pages

Overwhelmingly, the survey shows that most residents feel that the population of Mathews County has grown at about the right pace. Over half of the respondents in each category agree that the population growth has been about right for the county. As one might expect there are a sizeable percentage of new residents who are not sure about their attitude toward the population growth as well as a high percentage among those in the 10 to 20 years category. Surprising, however, are the number of "not sure" responses from the residents who have lived in Mathews County all their lives. This group's uncertainty about the population changes indicates a lack of interest or a lack of awareness about the county's population growth. Of course these high percentages of "not sure" answers may indicate an overall unawareness of population change throughout the county - many may feel that the population just hasn't changed very much. Even among those who moved to Mathews seeking a rural lifestyle and those who moved to Mathews for retirement there

is a basic satisfaction with the county's population growth. Rural lifestyle and retirement movers seem content with the population situation as it is.

The introduction to this thesis quoted Alvin D. Sokolow from "Small Towns and the Meaning of Informal Government". Sokolow questioned the ability of small governments to deal with new demands resulting from population growth. The survey and county budget documents illustrate some characteristics of Mathews that would help the county in dealing with population growth problems. First, Mathews County citizens view their governing officials as being responsive. As the county has experienced population growth the citizens have, at least, felt that they could express their opinions and views to governing officials, and the officials would, at least, listen. Thus, the county government has had an "open door" during the years of growth.

The county has managed to maintain a public-private mixture in many of its programs and services, and has encouraged volunteerism among residents. Participation has been emphasized in many activities and the county has managed to avoid some costly programs by encouraging volunteer community support for them (i.e. fire departments, rescue squad, animal care, recreation, etc.).

Finally, Mathews County has been helped by professional administration and management. As in-migration grew greater the county hired its first administrator, followed later by a building inspector, a sanitary district supervisor, and a director of parks and recreation as well as other support personnel. These changes, brought on by increasing population and citizen needs, helped Mathews to deal with the problems of the 1970's.

In terms of people's values, and their opinions and feelings about being a part of the Mathews community, the survey shows some definite distinctions between new and long-time residents. The opinions expressed by most respondents indicate that value differences do exist.....between 57 and 75 percent of the respondents in each category of residency agree that new residents in Mathews County have different values than the long-time residents.

Edgar L. Sherbenon stated in his essay, "Class, Participation, and the Council-Manager Plan," that newcomers in a community are somewhat disadvantaged due to their inability to organize into program or issue-oriented groups. Thus, new residents with different values and opinions than the more long-time residents should have more difficulty in pursuing their goals. However, the survey and county budget documents show that despite value differences and, more importantly, the lack of organized group activity, there has been considerable success for the newcomers in attaining some of their demands. This success can be attributed to two things. First, professional management in the county government has overlooked personal favoritism and individual interests in favor of systematic, rational programs that address the needs of a growing community and changing times.

Second, the interests of the more long-time residents in the county have not been protected by organized group activity (see Appendix C, question 15). Long-time residents have relied on limited individual contact rather than majority coalitions or special activist groups to protect their interests (see Appendix C, questions 14 and 14A). Therefore, newer residents have gained from administrative organization and growing professionalism within the county government.

The professional "atmosphere" of the county government was addressed in the survey as well. Most residents agree that the county government is run in a professional manner. However, among the life-long residents there is considerable disagreement and uncertainty (see Appendix C, question 7). Based on these results, I must conclude that the newer residents have viewed the professional nature of the county government as positive, and they have benefitted from this. Life-long residents on the other hand have seen changes in the county government that are unlike the more favorable and personable "days of old" and somewhat resent the newer methods of county administration. Thus, they are more alienated and less active in county government affairs.

Warner E. Mills, Jr. and Harry R. Davis discussed in Small City Government that the interests involved at the municipal level are not organized, but general points of view held by different people. This is evident in Mathews County and, as a result, has allowed the county administration to overlook individual special interests and instead pursue the more demanding needs of a growing rural county.

Despite their differences in terms of values, almost all residents feel that they are a part of the Mathews County community and believe Mathews to be a friendly and pleasant area. Even among the new residents there is a feeling that they have become an important part of the county and that most people are receptive and cordial to them (see Appendix C, question 6). Some residents, even among those who have lived in Mathews over 20 years, feel the stigma of being "come heres" (as they are called), but this does not result in divisiveness or resentment among the residents. Length of residency is considered important when someone is seeking an appointed or elected public office,

and most agree that at least ten years of residency is necessary. This is true for all groups except, of course, the newer residents.

Through interviews with the Mathews County governing officials I obtained some general information about the changes in the county government. Their responses provide a general background for my conclusions about the survey of county residents. The outline of the questions asked of the county officials is in Appendix D, pages

Most of the officials agree that the population growth in Mathews County has been steady, manageable growth. Most migrants were thought to be retirees, as the survey confirmed, and the officials believe the growth to be healthy and good for the county.

The officials see no serious conflicts between new migrants and more long-time natives, but believe there are differences of opinion among residents. These differences are viewed as positive since they allow county officials to hear a variety of sides to any issue before reaching a decision. Most officials stated that new migrants generally participate more in county affairs than life-long residents and this is reflected in the make-up of county boards and commissions. Most applicants for appointed positions are newcomers according to the officials, and new migrants generally seem to be more involved. There is a cross-section of all residents taking part in county affairs, but most officials state that newcomers seem to play a more active role.

Officials would not state a specific number of years for someone to live in Mathews before seeking elected or appointed public office. Most agree that an individual should know the county and its needs, and have an understanding of its history and people.

Professionalism has improved greatly and is continuing to improve in the overall opinion of the governing officials. People in county government are better educated, new migrants bring new and different ideas, and the county is more aware of procedures and decision-making processes that add efficiency to the county government. Naturally, there are differences of opinions about areas of government that can stand improvement, but most officials agree that the local government is handled effectively.

In terms of the future needs of the county, most officials believe that maintaining present services will be difficult to accomplish. There are building programs and maintenance problems that seem to dominate the minds of most officials, but no new or innovative projects are in the planning stages. Some officials hope to use revenue-sharing funds for building programs in the future. These funds have helped the county's school transportation system in recent years as well as in the area of police protection (purchase of police equipment, jail construction, etc.). Most recently, however, the funds have been used simply to balance the budget.

Among the immediate changes for Mathews County are a 5-member board of supervisors and a 5-member school board (both increased from 3-member boards). These changes are results of the growing population and increasing demands of the citizenry on the county governing officials. The 5-member school board began in July of 1982 and the 5-member board of supervisors will begin with elections in November of 1983. Otherwise, officials see very little change from what has already happened - slow, gradual growth with Mathews remaining primarily a residential community.

All of the officials expressed a desire for some type of small, clean industry in the county, but none were specific on this topic. "Caution" seems to be the key word when "industry" is mentioned in Mathews County. All of the officials want Mathews County to maintain its rural character and continue to keep its balance of agriculture, fishing, recreation and family homes.

The results found in this research show that new residents have had a significant impact on the county. The governing officials agree that new residents are active in local affairs and want certain services and programs in the county. This study shows that most new residents express their views to governing officials at county meetings and therefore give the impression that they are concerned, involved, and willing to attend these meetings. Also, one must keep in mind that the views expressed at public meetings are the ones that are read in the newspapers - the opinions of individuals who state their views to governing officials personally are often not heard in the news media.

The question that must be answered now is: does governmental response to in-migrating citizen needs lead to increased political demands from the long-time natives of the county? This study shows that the answer to this question must be no. First, new residents in the county have expressed their wishes to governing officials primarily at local meetings, but they have relied on some personal contact and phone calls as well. However, there is very little organized or group activity among new residents - opinions are generally expressed from individual points of view and not from a well-organized group.

My studies of Mathews County have led me to believe that the citizens of Mathews should be extremely grateful to the men who have

served on the board of supervisors over the past twelve years. The board has managed to maintain a "middle of the road" philosophy during recent years amidst increasing pressures from individuals promoting greater change and individuals desiring the status quo or a return to previous decision-making philosophies. Much credit must go to the county administrator as well for his managerial and professional skills.

Any group that could have organized itself well enough to influence large numbers of voters might have been able to significantly influence the decision-makers of the county. However, due to the lack of well-organized citizen groups the county governing officials were able to move the county through gradual change at a manageable pace. Whether or not this will continue to be the case, of course, remains to be seen.

Due to the small numbers of citizens who are active in groups that attempt to influence the decisions of the county governing officials, the present decision-making process will probably continue. Mathews County has no strong political party activity or large issue-oriented action groups, and most clubs and local societies are too small to significantly influence decision-makers. This may change in the years ahead - people may begin to see advantages to organized political activity, if they are able to get results from their efforts. For now, however, this does not seem likely.

The long-time natives of Mathews County seem to have no organized plan of action to protect their interests either. As several local governing officials said, "natives seem content to just grumble and complain down at the general store, but don't take any action to change things."

Why does this lack of organized activity exist? Among newcomers the excuse may be that they just haven't had enough time to organize.

Or, they may not be fully aware of the potential political clout they have. Newcomers have seen some success due to the work of the county administrator and his foresight in guiding the county in a progressive direction. As newcomers become more settled and established they may begin to see advantages in organized activity to achieve more goals.

More long-time natives have been fortunate that change in the county hasn't been more drastic. However, to continue the process of gradual, manageable growth, long-time natives must come to realize that planning and regulation will be necessary in the future. Several governing officials stated that the county cannot go much longer without a comprehensive land-use plan. Zoning and land-use regulation will be viewed as safeguards to the county's rural character and not as another meddling governmental burden. Perculation problems, poor soil for sewage drainage, will limit to some degree the amount of new homes and businesses in the county as well.

In terms of the results found by other researchers studying rural governments across the United States there are some similarities as well as differences found in this study of Mathews County. Certainly there is great informality found in the local government of Mathews as was the case for Alvin D. Sokolow in "Small Towns and the Meaning of Informal Government." This informality is illustrated in the personality conflicts rather than policy or issue-oriented conflicts. The one-on-one contact of county residents and decision-makers emphasizes the same notion that Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman discussed in Small Town in Mass Society. That is, personalities, rather than issues, dominate political discussions, and issues are not an essential ingredient of local politics.

In Mathews the local government is organized in a small and simple fashion and the county executive, the administrator, has multiple responsibilities. The county has added some professional personnel in recent years, but much of the work-load and responsibility falls on the county administrator. The county governing officials rely on friends and neighbors for assistance and counsel, and there is a mixture of public-private programs that require some local government involvement or volunteer participation from the citizenry.

Due to the county's informal nature there is potential for conflict. The informality can help to promote greater divisions among county residents when personalities clash or when new residents differ with more long-time residents.

Peter A. Morrison in "Rural Renaissance in America? The Revival of Population Growth in Remote Areas" found that there was a certain charm in the rural setting. This survey shows that there is a strong feeling among most Mathews County residents that "smallness" is better. Whether or not this smallness, and its characteristics, can be maintained is the source of much debate. People seeking the simple life in the country may discover that their impact on a rural area is detrimental. As Morrison said, migrants who moved to the cities in the 1960's for the opportunities inherent in bigness were further enhancing that bigness. However, urban migrants who move to the country for its smallness are certainly not helping to maintain that smallness.

Finally, budget documents in Mathews County clearly show the many changes since the early 1960's that have occurred and present a clear picture of what has happened over the last twenty years. County

administration has been upgraded. Local services and programs have expanded along with some new personnel to oversee them.

So, what more is there to say about Mathews County, Virginia? "The land of happy homes and fertile farms on smiling waters" is in the midst of change. Some may say that there is a limit to the amount of change that can take place - that, eventually, the population, the size of the local government, and the number of county services will stabilize. This can only happen if the citizens want it to happen. Citizens must realize that whatever happens can be and should be resulting from their desires and decisions. The status quo will not remain all by itself - change will occur. Will it be desired change or something else? As Granville Hicks emphasized in Small Town, preserving the values of the self-sufficient small town is not easy.

APPENDIX A

	<u>1950-60</u> Population Change	<u>1950-60</u> In-Migration	<u>1960-70</u> Population Change	<u>1960-70</u> In-Migration	<u>1970-80</u> Population Change	<u>1970-80</u> In-Migration
Lancaster	+6.2%	-6.0	-0.5	-5.6	+11.0	+12.7
King and Queen	-6.5%	-17.8	-6.8	-12.4	+8.7	+4.9
King William	-0.3%	-11.9	-0.9	-8.5	+24.5	+20.2
Middlesex	-5.9%	-13.3	-0.4	-1.7	+22.6	+26.4
Mathews	-0.4%	-2.8	+0.7	+4.1	+11.5	+18.1

APPENDIX B

SURVEY: MATHEWS COUNTY CITIZENS

Hello, my name is Mike DeWitt and I'm calling from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. I am conducting a survey under the direction of the Department of Government at William and Mary, and your phone number was chosen at random from residents in Mathews County. I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself and the county. First,

Are you 18 years of age or older?

Are you a resident of Mathews County and a U. S. citizen?

-
- ___ 1. How long have you lived in Mathews County - less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 10 to 20 years, over 20 years, or all of your life?
 1. 0-5 years 2. 5-10 years 3. 10-20 years 4. over 20 years
 5. all of your life
- ___ A. Why did you move to Mathews County - because of job reasons, marriage reasons, retirement, family ties, the rural lifestyle, or some other reason?
 1. job 2. marriage 3. retirement 4. family
 5. rural lifestyle 6. other
- ___ B. Where did you live before moving to Mathews County - in another rural county, a small town, an average-size city or suburb, or a large metropolitan area?
 1. rural county 2. small town 3. average-size city or suburb 4. large metropolitan area
- ___ C. In what state did you live - Virginia or out of state?
 1. Virginia 2. out of state
- ___ 2. In terms of population growth in Mathews County, do you think the population has grown - too fast, about right, too slow, or are you not sure?
 1. too fast 2. about right 3. too slow 4. not sure

Now, I'd like to make several statements. You tell me if your overall opinion is to agree with a statement or disagree with it.

- ___ 3. New residents in Mathews County have different values than those of the long-time residents of the county - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 4. New residents in Mathews County want different things from the local government than do the long-time residents of the county - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 5. Generally, county governing officials and appointed board and commission members should have lived in the county at least 10 years before serving in a public office - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 6. Generally, I feel like I am a part of the Mathews County community - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 7. The local government of Mathews County is run in a professional manner - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 8. County government expenditures are appropriated wisely and efficiently - do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure
- ___ 9. Mathews County is meeting the people's needs and providing necessary government services - do you agree, disagree or are you not sure?
1. agree 2. disagree 3. not sure

Now, I'd like to ask you a question about the local taxes in Mathews County.

- ___ 10. Do you think Mathews County, in terms of taxes, is raising taxes - too fast, not raising taxes fast enough to meet the county's needs, is about right, is in need of a tax reduction, or are you not sure?
1. too fast 2. not fast enough 3. about right 4. tax reduction 5. not sure

Now, I'd like to ask three questions about the local government of Mathews County.

- ___ 11. How responsive do you think the governing officials in Mathews County are toward the public - are they very responsive, somewhat responsive, not very responsive, not responsive at all, or are you not sure?
1. very responsive 2. somewhat responsive 3. not very responsive 4. not responsive at all 5. not sure
- ___ 12. Do you feel that if you contacted someone in the county government about how things are run, you could influence them - on most problems, on some problems, not on any problems, or are you not sure?

1. most problems 2. some problems 3. not on any problems
4. not sure

- ___ 13. Do you think the county government should encourage more volunteer work from citizens and local organizations - yes, they should encourage more, no, the work in the county should be done by professionals, things should stay about the way they are, or are you not sure?
1. yes 2. no 3. same as they are 4. not sure

Now, I'd like to ask several questions about yourself.

- ___ 14. Have you ever felt it necessary to express your opinion to the Mathews County local governing officials?
1. yes 2. no 3. not sure
- ___ A. How have you expressed your opinion to the Mathews County local governing officials - by writing letters, phone calls, attending board meetings, by some other means, or are you not sure?
1. letters 2. phone 3. attending meetings
4. other 5. not sure
- ___ B. Attending board meetings - how often do you attend?

- ___ 15. Are you a member of any group that takes part in trying to influence the decisions of the county governing officials?
1. yes 2. no 3. not sure
_____ Yes - what is the name of your group?
- ___ 16. Have you ever sought an elected or appointed public office in Mathews County?
1. yes 2. no 3. not sure
- ___ 17. Are you a member of any volunteer organization or community service group in Mathews County?
1. yes 2. no 3. not sure
- ___ 18. How often, would you say, do you volunteer to do community-related work - 1 to 5 hours per week, 6 to 10 hours per week, 11 to 20 hours per week, over 20 hours per week, none, or are you not sure?
1. 1-5 hours 2. 6-10 hours 3. 11-20 hours 4. over 20 hours 5. none 6. not sure
- ___ 19. What is your approximate age - 18 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years, 51 to 65 years, or over 65 years?
1. 18-30 years 2. 31 to 40 years 3. 41 to 50 years
4. 51-65 years 5. over 65 years
- ___ 20. What was the last year of school that you completed - some high school, graduated from high school, some college, graduated from college, or some post-college education?
1. none - some high school 2. graduated from high school
3. some college 4. graduated from college 5. post-college

- ___ 21. What do you expect your family's combined income before taxes will be this year - under \$10,000, between 10 and \$20,000, between 20 and \$30,000, between 30 and \$40,000, over \$40,000, or are you not sure?
1. under \$10,000 2. 10-\$20,000 3. 20-\$30,000
4. 30-\$40,000 5. over \$40,000 6. not sure
- ___ 22. What is your race - white, black, American Indian, Asian-American, or something else?
1. white 2. black 3. American Indian 4. Asian-American
5. other
- ___ 23. Respondent's sex (DO NOT ASK)
1. male 2. female

Thank you for your time and cooperation with this survey

Telephone number _____

Name of interviewer _____

APPENDIX C.

RESULTS - SURVEY: MATHEWS COUNTY CITIZENS

1. How long have you lived in Mathews County?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0-5 years	34	16.8
5-10 years	43	21.3
10-20 years	18	8.9
over 20 years	26	12.9
all life	81	40.1
TOTAL	<u>202</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Among those who have moved into Mathews County within the last ten years the following results have been obtained:

A. Why did you move to Mathews County?

job	7
marriage	6
retirement	25
family	12
rural lifestyle	21
other	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	77

B. Where did you live before moving to Mathews County?

rural	11
town	4
average city	39
metro area	23

C. In what state did you live?

Virginia	57
Out of state	20

	<u>Years of Residency</u>				
	<u>0-5</u>	<u>5-10</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>over 20</u>	<u>all life</u>
2. <u>Population growth</u>					
too fast	3	5	2	2	10
about right	18	26	10	17	41
too slow	3	2	2	3	4
not sure	10	10	4	4	26
3. <u>Different values</u>					
agree	20	32	13	15	59
disagree	4	5	2	4	3
not sure	10	6	3	7	19
4. <u>New resident wants</u>					
agree	14	22	9	20	47
disagree	9	8	2	3	7
not sure	11	13	7	3	27
5. <u>10-year residency</u>					
agree	14	15	10	16	52
disagree	18	21	6	6	15
not sure	2	7	2	4	14
6. <u>Part of community</u>					
agree	27	35	14	20	74
disagree	4	3	1	2	0
not sure	3	5	3	4	7
7. <u>Professionalism</u>					
agree	18	18	4	11	30
disagree	5	12	4	3	16
not sure	11	13	10	12	35
8. <u>Expenditures</u>					
agree	8	14	4	8	14
disagree	11	17	7	4	29
not sure	15	12	7	14	38
9. <u>Meeting needs</u>					
agree	18	23	8	14	40
disagree	7	10	4	4	13
not sure	9	10	6	8	28

	<u>Years of Residency</u>				
	<u>0-5</u>	<u>5-10</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>over 20</u>	<u>all life</u>
10. <u>Taxes</u>					
too fast	6	7	3	5	32
not fast enough	2	7	1	2	2
about right	13	20	9	11	26
reduction	2	5	1	4	13
not sure	11	4	4	4	8
11. <u>Responsiveness</u>					
very responsive	4	7	1	4	7
somewhat	16	22	13	11	41
not very	5	6	1	3	12
not at all	0	1	1	1	2
not sure	9	7	2	7	19
12. <u>Contact/Influence</u>					
most problems	3	2	2	0	2
some	18	27	11	17	38
not any	8	11	3	6	17
not sure	5	3	2	3	24
13. <u>Volunteerism</u>					
encourage more	17	19	8	14	47
no, less	3	4	2	0	3
same	6	13	2	7	15
not sure	8	7	6	5	16
14. <u>Express opinion</u>					
yes	16	26	8	13	41
no	18	17	10	13	39
not sure	0	0	0	0	1
A. <u>Method</u>					
letters	1	0	1	1	3
phone	1	5	3	2	4
meetings	10	11	4	6	11
not sure	0	1	0	1	1
other	4	9	0	3	22
B. <u>Meetings</u>					
1/year	2	4	0	4	4
2/year	3	2	1	0	3
3/year	1	3	3	2	1
over 3/year	4	2	0	0	3

	Years of Residency				
	<u>0-5</u>	<u>5-10</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>over 20</u>	<u>all life</u>
15. <u>Group member</u>					
yes	9	7	1	5	6
no	25	36	17	21	75
16. <u>Sought office</u>					
yes	2	0	1	2	3
no	32	43	17	24	78
17. <u>Volunteer member</u>					
yes	5	10	3	2	13
no	29	33	15	24	68
18. <u>Volunteer hours</u>					
1-5 hours	9	7	3	1	14
6-10 hours	1	2	1	1	1
11-20 hours	0	2	1	0	0
over 20 hours	1	0	0	0	0
none	22	30	13	22	62
not sure	1	2	0	2	4
19. <u>Age</u>					
18-30 years	7	5	6	1	7
31-40 years	13	10	5	0	6
41-50 years	4	4	1	2	8
51-65 years	6	12	2	14	25
over 65 years	4	12	4	9	35
20. <u>Education</u>					
none-high school	6	5	2	6	32
graduated - HS	9	11	9	6	29
some college	8	12	5	7	16
graduated college	10	9	1	6	2
post-college	1	6	1	1	2
21. <u>Income</u>					
under \$10,000	5	8	1	6	28
10-\$20,000	11	12	4	6	15
20-\$30,000	8	7	5	4	11
30-\$40,000	2	4	1	3	3
over \$40,000	2	3	1	0	1
not sure	6	9	6	7	23
22. <u>Race</u>					
white	32	42	16	25	65
black	2	1	2	1	16
other	0	0	0	0	0

23. <u>Sex</u>	<u>Years of Residency</u>				
	<u>0-5</u>	<u>5-10</u>	<u>10-20</u>	<u>over 20</u>	<u>all life</u>
male	12	20	5	6	28
female	22	23	13	20	53

Among some of the other results that the survey illustrated include the following:

*How do retirement movers and rural lifestyle movers view the population growth in Mathews County?

<u>Reason for moving</u>	<u>Population Growth</u>			
	<u>too fast</u>	<u>about right</u>	<u>too slow</u>	<u>not sure</u>
retirement	0	18	1	6
rural lifestyle	4	9	2	6

*How do large metropolitan area migrants and average-size or suburban area migrants view the degree of professionalism in Mathews County government?

<u>Previous residence</u>	<u>Professionally administered government</u>		
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
large metro area	12	6	5
average city/suburb	17	8	14

*How do large metropolitan area migrants, average-size city or suburban area migrants, and life-long residents view the services provided by the local government?

<u>Residence</u>	<u>Meeting needs with necessary services</u>		
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
large metro area	18	3	2
average city/suburb	16	10	13
all life in Mathews	40	13	28

*How do life-long residents and retirement movers view local taxes?

<u>Type of resident</u>	<u>Level of tax increases</u>				
	<u>too fast</u>	<u>not enough</u>	<u>about right</u>	<u>reduce tax</u>	<u>not sure</u>
retirement mover	6	1	12	1	5
all life in Mathews	32	2	26	13	8

*How much volunteer activity is donated by the different age groups in Mathews County?

<u>Age</u>	<u>Hours</u>					
	<u>1-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>11-20</u>	<u>over 20</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>not sure</u>
18-30 years	4	2	0	0	19	1
31-40 years	8	1	0	1	22	2
41-50 years	2	0	0	0	15	2
51-65 years	7	0	2	0	48	2
over 65 years	13	3	1	0	45	2

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE: MATHEWS COUNTY GOVERNING OFFICIALS

Hello, I am Mike DeWitt and I am a graduate student at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. I am working for my master's degree in government and wish to ask for your assistance in my studies. I have conducted a survey of Mathews County residents under the direction of the Department of Government at the College of William and Mary, and would like to ask you several questions about yourself and the county. Due to your experiences in local government I am hopeful that your answers will be helpful in my study. First,

1. How long have you lived in Mathews County?
2. Do you have any compliments or criticisms concerning the general population growth that Mathews County has experienced in the past ten years (since 1970 census to 1980 census)?
3. Do you have any compliments or criticisms concerning the new residents that have moved into Mathews County in the past ten years (since 1970 census to 1980 census)?
4. How long, would you say, should someone live in Mathews County before they seek an elected or appointed public office? Why?
5. Do you have any compliments or criticisms concerning the degree of professionalism within the local government of Mathews County?
6. Do you feel that there are any areas of local government where expenditures are not being appropriated as wisely and efficiently as you would like? Why?
7. Do you foresee any new areas of local government where Mathews County may begin to provide another public service, or services, to the citizens of the county in the future?
8. How have revenue-sharing funds been used in the past by Mathews County?
9. Do you foresee any changes, or trends, occurring in Mathews County that you think will have a significant impact on the way the county government will operate in the future?

10. What kind of community would you like for Mathews County to be ten or fifteen years from now?
11. What is your race?
 1. White
 2. Black
 3. Other
12. What is your sex?
 1. Male
 2. Female
13. What is your approximate age?
 1. 18-30 years
 2. 31-40 years
 3. 41-50 years
 4. 51-65 years
 5. over 65 years
14. What was the last year of school that you completed?
 1. none-some high school
 2. graduated from high school
 3. some college
 4. graduated from college
 5. post-college education

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VITA

Michael Hunley DeWitt

Born in Williamsburg, Virginia, December 8, 1955. Graduated from Mathews High School in Mathews County, Virginia on June 7, 1974, and received a Bachelor of Science degree from James Madison University on May 5, 1978 with a major in General Social Science/Secondary Education and Business Administration. Master of Arts candidate, the College of William and Mary in Virginia, with a concentration in American Politics and Public Policy/Administration. The course requirements for this degree have been completed, but not the thesis: Dynamics of Population Growth in Rural Counties.

In September of 1978 the author entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant in the Department of Government. Graduate coursework was completed in December, 1979. The author has been a social studies teacher at Gloucester High School, Gloucester County, Virginia since August, 1980 to the present.