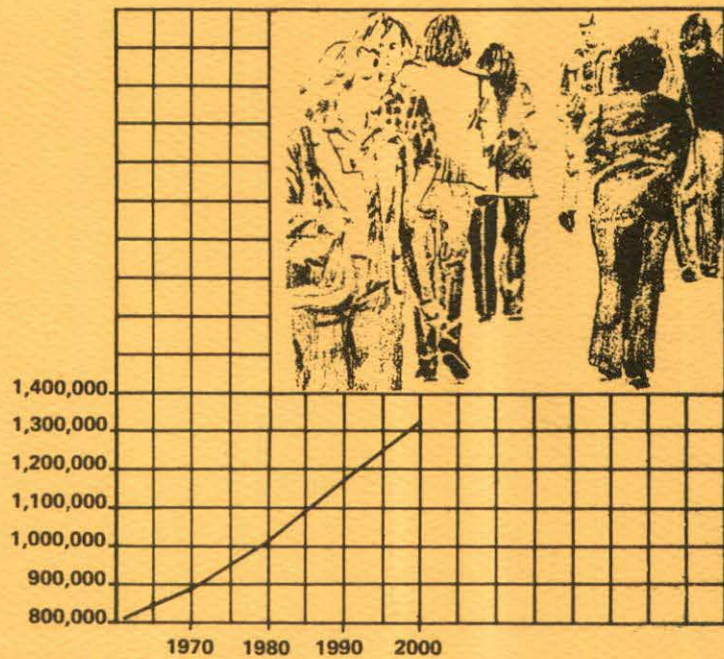


# An Analysis of Population Changes in Eastern Kentucky 1970-2000

by Gary C. Cox

Department of Geography



No.1 June 1979

Appalachian Development Center Monograph Series

Morehead State University

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The series provides a forum for creative and scholarly works concerned with the cultural, environmental, and economic problems of the Appalachian Region. A great variety of manuscripts including bibliographies, position papers, research studies, and analyses of regional conditions will be considered for publication. All contributions which address these concerns and which are regional in scope will be considered by the Editorial Review Board and are encouraged.

Contributions to the series and all correspondence relating to the series should be addressed to the Editor, Appalachian Development Center Monograph Series.

Cover design by Kath Wagar

**AN ANALYSIS OF POPULATION CHANGES  
IN EASTERN KENTUCKY  
1970-2000**

**Gary C. Cox  
Department of Geography**

**Appalachian Development Center Monograph Series No. 1**

**Morehead State University  
Morehead, Kentucky , 40351**

**June, 1979**

## FOREWORD

This is to introduce the first in what we expect to be a long series of informative monographs on the Appalachian Region of Kentucky. This series is published by the Appalachian Development Center at Morehead State University and is our way of informing the people of the region and addressing the cultural, economic, and environmental concerns of the region.

With financial assistance from Governor Julian M. Carroll, the Appalachian Development Center was created in 1978 at Morehead State University as an outgrowth of the need to serve the people in Eastern Kentucky. This need was expressed at the Appalachian Development Conference called by Governor Julian Carroll in May of 1978. Many of the participants in the Conference recognized that programs must be developed in the Appalachian Region to diversify the economic base and to generally upgrade the quality of life. Morehead State University has always accepted the challenge to serve the region and the programs of the Appalachian Development Center are the latest in that effort.

We invite anyone who has prepared manuscripts or other information which would be of regional interest to submit it to the Appalachian Development Center for consideration as a publication. The series is intended to be a forum for exchange of ideas and information on the region. All contributions will be considered.

Morris L. Norfleet, President  
Morehead State University

June, 1979

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## INTRODUCTION

Accurate population projections are essential for anyone engaged in long-range planning. Predicting future population trends any considerable distance into the future, however, is a notoriously risky undertaking. So many human variables are involved that all too frequently such projections make a mockery of the demographer's best efforts. Regardless of how sophisticated are the statistical models used, long-range population forecasting is statistical guessing with a fairly wide margin of error.

Eastern Kentucky and Central Appalachia, in general, present an especially formidable challenge. Since the beginning of the 20th Century the economy of the region has been tied to one product, coal, which has led the region through a series of spectacular "booms" and heartbreaking "busts." While the present global energy situation appears to have contributed a measure of stability to the coal industry and indirectly to the region, coal remains a highly volatile factor in the future of Eastern Kentucky.

This volatility is the result of factors primarily external to the region. Changes in Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) prices or policies, strict enforcement of the new Federal surface-mining laws, the construction of a slurry line for western coal, a technological break-through (now anticipated) for recovering gas from the geo-pressurized belt in the Gulf States, a new oil discovery in the Western Hemisphere, or any one of several other variables could alter the demand for Eastern Kentucky coal and would be reflected quickly in population statistics in Eastern Kentucky. These factors should be kept in mind when using population estimates for this region.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A brief look at the history of population change in Central Appalachia should help to put the present demographic situation into proper perspective. Beginning around 1900 (the exact dates vary somewhat between areas), a spectacular coal boom spread across the dissected and rugged plateau lands of Central Appalachia. An almost insatiable demand for railroad workers, prop cutters, and coal miners concentrated hundreds of thousands of people in teeming ribbons of settlement along the creeks and hollows of the coal rich areas. This boom continued almost without interruption for three decades of unprecedented growth.

The Great Depression abruptly terminated the boom in 1929. Population remained high, however, because any loss through out-migration was off-set by tens of thousands of former highlanders returning from the depressed cities of the North and Midwest. There was simply no place for Appalachia's poor to flee. Also, the economic situation in the hills was no more desperate than elsewhere in the country.

The beginning of the 1940's heralded the start of a second great boom in Appalachian coal production, but no substantial additional growth in population, because there was an ample supply of workers left over from the previous boom. A second factor also became significant during this period—a growing stream of Appalachian migrants heading for Dayton, Detroit, Middletown, and a dozen other northern and midwestern cities. During the 1940's they were hardly missed since the relatively high birth rate in the region continuously renewed the population. However, they were setting the stage and establishing the migration routes for the "great exodus" which was to follow shortly.

Between 1948 and 1950 four events occurred almost simultaneously which were to set in motion one of the two great interregional migrations in modern United States history. The automation of mining, the loss of much of the coal market to cheap residual oil and natural gas, the introduction of the light-weight chain saw in logging, and the precipitous decline of Appalachian agriculture due to midwestern competition made much of the labor force of Central Appalachia redundant.

The loss of population was almost instantaneous as a flood of displaced highlanders poured out of Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and the southwestern counties of Virginia. Within a single decade some counties lost from 15 to 30 percent of their total population. For almost two decades the depressed conditions prevailed without interruption, although the major part of the massive readjustment of population was over by the mid-1960's.

After 1965, economic conditions stabilized somewhat and by the end of the decade more Appalachians were returning to the region than were leaving. A minor boom in coal production was already underway before the Arabian oil embargo of 1973. Coal was slowly recapturing some of its former markets from oil and gas.



The oil embargo and the ensuing "energy crisis" sent the region spinning into another boom that has since ebbed slightly. However, this one appears to be soundly based and should continue through the remainder of this century or until alternatives to fossil fuels become viable. With a full understanding of the possible roadblocks to unbroken prosperity for the region, the following projections of population trends have been made based upon statistics which reflect changes in the region's economy and population since 1965.

The statistical data used in this analysis were derived from estimates of future population made by the U.S. Census Bureau in its population forecasts and from the Population Research Unit of the University of Louisville's Urban Study Center.

### **POPULATION TRENDS IN EASTERN KENTUCKY, 1970-2000**

During the two decades from 1950 to 1970, the forty-nine counties of Eastern Kentucky lost 196,249 people or about 17.8 percent of the total population of the region. By 1970, an unexpected reversal in this rather dismal trend had occurred, resulting from the increasing demand for coal. In the first six years of the decade, Eastern Kentucky's population, according to U.S. Census estimates, grew by 104,027 or 11.8 percent (Table I). This was well above the state average of 6.4 percent and more than double the national growth rate of only slightly more than 5 percent.

The reversal, no doubt, reflects the changing economic climate of Central Appalachia in general and Eastern Kentucky in particular. Barring unforeseen circumstances, this upward trend in population is expected to continue through the remainder of this century and well beyond. The population of the region (Eastern Kentucky) is expected to grow from 893,774 in 1970 to 1,030,630 in 1980; 1,177,534 in 1990; and 1,326,164 in 2000 (Table II). While some slowing from the explosive growth rate of the first six years of the decade of the 1970's is almost inevitable, the pace of growth in population should remain well above state and national rates. The overall anticipated growth rates are expected to drop only slightly from 15.75 percent per decade in the 1970's to 14.15 percent in the 1980's and to 12.75 percent in the 1990's (Table II).

In actual numbers this translates into an expected population increase in Eastern Kentucky of 136,856 (15.75 percent) in the decade of the 1970's; 145,904 (14.15 percent) in the 1980's and 150,118 (12.75 percent) in the 1990's or a whopping 296,012 (28.7 percent) in the last two decades of this century. This is not a bad trend for a region which most experts had written off as hopeless only a few short years ago. A revitalized coal industry combined with the cumulative effects of extensive efforts by the Appalachian Regional Commission and numerous other government agencies is beginning to provide the stimulus that was missing from the region between 1948 and 1965.

TABLE I  
POPULATION CHANGE IN EASTERN KENTUCKY, 1970-1976

County	1970	1976	Change in Population	
	No.	No.	No.	%
Adair	13,037	14,400	1,363	10.4
Bath	9,235	9,100	-135	-1.4
Bell	31,121	33,700	2,579	8.3
Boyd	52,376	52,400	24	2.0
Breathitt	14,221	16,400	2,179	15.1
Carter	19,850	23,000	3,150	15.7
Casey	12,930	14,000	1,070	8.5
Clark	24,090	26,200	2,110	8.7
Clay	18,481	21,200	2,719	14.7
Clinton	8,174	8,700	526	7.0
Cumberland	6,850	6,900	50	0.3
Elliott	5,933	6,000	67	0.5
Estill	12,752	13,500	748	5.7
Fleming	11,366	12,000	634	5.2
Floyd	35,889	42,600	6,711	18.7
Garrard	9,457	9,500	43	0.5
Green	10,350	10,600	250	2.4
Greenup	33,192	35,000	1,808	5.5
Harlan	37,370	41,100	3,730	9.9
Johnson	17,539	21,600	4,061	23.0
Jackson	10,005	10,500	445	4.4
Knott	14,698	17,800	3,102	21.0
Knox	23,689	27,400	3,711	15.5
Laurel	27,386	33,000	5,614	20.6
Lawrence	10,726	12,500	1,774	16.8
Lee	6,587	7,200	613	9.0
Leslie	11,623	13,200	1,577	13.7
Letcher	23,165	27,800	4,635	19.8
Lewis	12,355	12,900	545	4.1
Lincoln	16,663	18,100	1,437	8.7
McCreary	12,548	14,700	2,132	17.3
Madison	42,730	47,300	4,570	10.7
Magoffin	10,443	11,900	1,455	14.3
Martin	9,377	11,300	1,923	20.5
Menifee	4,050	4,300	250	6.0
Monroe	11,642	11,900	258	2.5
Montgomery	15,364	17,700	2,336	15.0
Morgan	10,019	11,100	1,081	10.9
Owsley	5,023	5,300	277	6.4
Perry	26,259	29,300	3,041	11.5
Pike	61,059	71,900	10,841	17.7
Powell	7,704	8,600	896	12.1
Pulaski	35,234	42,900	7,666	21.8
Rockcastle	12,305	12,900	595	4.5
Rowan	17,010	17,200	190	1.2
Russell	10,542	11,900	1,358	13.1
Wayne	14,268	15,600	1,332	9.3
Whitley	24,145	30,000	5,855	24.1
Wolfe	5,669	6,500	831	14.6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>876,501</b>	<b>980,600</b>	<b>104,027</b>	<b>11.8</b>

SOURCE: Based on data from Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series p. 26, No. 76-17, "Population Estimates", U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, July 1977.

**TABLE II**  
**Population Estimate for Eastern Kentucky Counties, 1980-2000**

County	1970	1980	Change		1990	Change		2000	Change		Change	
	No.	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Adair	13,037	15,471	2,434	18.70	17,832	2,361	15	20,070	2,238	13	4,599	30
Bath	9,235	9,185	-50	-0.54	9,365	80	-02	9,597	232	-02	412	04
Bell	31,121	33,978	2,857	9.18	37,716	3,738	11	41,475	3,759	10	7,497	22
Boyd	52,376	51,579	-797	-1.52	51,302	-267	-01	50,060	-1,242	-02	-1,509	-03
Breathitt	14,221	16,944	2,723	19.15	20,260	3,316	20	23,389	3,129	15	6,445	38
Carter	19,850	23,680	3,830	19.29	28,543	4,863	21	33,578	5,035	18	9,898	42
Casey	12,930	14,899	1,969	15.23	17,071	2,172	15	19,130	2,059	12	4,221	28
Clark	24,090	27,829	3,739	15.52	31,407	3,578	13	34,953	3,546	11	7,124	26
Clay	18,481	22,568	4,087	22.11	27,108	4,540	20	31,557	4,449	16	8,989	40
Clinton	8,174	8,837	663	8.11	9,611	774	09	10,441	830	09	1,604	18
Cumberland	6,850	6,699	-151	-2.20	6,793	92	01	6,816	23	00	115	02
Elliott	5,933	5,522	-411	-6.93	5,422	-100	-02	5,295	-127	-02	-227	-04
Estill	12,752	13,428	676	5.30	14,374	946	07	15,464	1,089	08	2,035	15
Fleming	11,366	12,146	780	6.86	12,965	819	07	13,835	870	07	1,689	14
Floyd	35,889	43,781	7,892	14.29	52,841	8,060	18	61,634	8,793	17	16,853	38
Garrard	9,457	10,214	757	8.00	10,962	748	07	11,556	594	05	1,342	13
Green	10,350	10,903	547	5.34	11,398	495	05	11,861	463	04	958	09
Greenup	33,192	34,281	1,089	3.28	36,559	2,278	07	38,400	1,841	05	4,119	12
Harlan	37,370	41,868	4,498	12.04	47,410	5,542	13	52,877	5,467	12	11,009	26
Johnson	17,539	23,078	5,539	31.58	29,181	6,103	26	35,301	6,120	21	12,223	53
Jackson	10,005	10,474	469	4.69	10,954	480	05	11,464	510	05	990	09
Knott	14,698	18,591	3,893	26.50	23,034	4,453	24	29,357	6,323	27	10,776	58
Knox	23,689	28,370	4,681	19.76	33,104	4,734	17	38,029	4,925	15	9,659	34
Laurel	27,386	34,028	6,642	24.25	41,141	7,113	21	48,570	7,429	18	14,542	43
Lawrence	10,726	13,112	2,386	22.25	15,804	2,692	21	18,637	2,833	18	5,525	42
Lee	6,587	7,196	609	9.25	8,050	854	12	8,855	805	10	1,659	23
Leslie	11,623	13,021	1,398	12.03	14,732	1,711	13	16,233	1,501	10	3,212	25
Letcher	23,165	29,386	6,221	26.86	36,270	6,884	23	43,134	6,864	19	13,748	47
Lewis	12,355	12,899	544	4.40	13,927	1,026	08	14,904	977	07	2,003	16
Lincoln	16,663	18,128	1,465	8.79	19,704	1,576	09	21,234	1,530	08	3,106	17
McCreary	12,548	15,749	3,201	25.51	19,309	3,560	23	22,823	3,514	18	7,074	45
Madison	42,730	52,080	9,350	21.88	57,497	5,417	10	64,705	7,208	13	12,625	24
Magoffin	10,443	11,853	1,410	13.50	13,531	1,678	14	15,371	1,840	14	3,518	30
Martin	9,377	12,050	2,673	28.51	15,248	3,198	27	18,438	3,180	21	6,378	53
Mason	17,273	16,147	-1,126	-7.00	15,285	-856	-05	14,215	-1,090	-12	-1,946	-12
Menifee	4,050	4,627	577	14.25	5,289	662	14	5,978	689	12	1,351	29
Monroe	11,642	12,276	634	5.45	12,977	701	-06	13,609	632	05	1,333	11
Montgomery	15,364	18,550	3,186	20.74	21,869	3,319	18	25,196	3,327	15	6,646	36
Morgan	10,019	10,729	710	7.09	11,805	1,076	10	12,869	1,064	09	2,140	20
Owsley	5,023	5,158	135	2.69	5,410	252	05	5,726	316	06	568	11
Perry	26,259	28,820	2,561	9.75	31,817	2,997	10	35,234	3,417	11	6,414	22
Pike	61,059	76,799	15,740	25.78	93,846	17,047	22	110,226	16,380	17	33,427	44
Powell	7,704	9,060	1,356	17.60	10,366	1,306	14	11,771	1,405	14	2,711	30
Pulaski	35,234	44,914	9,780	27.47	55,491	10,577	24	65,936	10,445	19	21,022	47
Rockcastle	12,305	13,177	872	7.09	14,521	1,344	10	15,915	1,394	10	2,738	21
Rowan	17,010	17,856	846	4.97	16,874	-982	-05	16,964	90	01	-892	-05
Russell	10,542	12,204	1,662	15.77	14,022	1,818	15	15,814	1,792	13	3,610	30
Wayne	14,268	16,601	2,333	16.35	19,226	2,625	16	21,719	2,493	13	5,118	31
Whitley	24,145	31,952	7,807	32.33	39,379	7,427	23	47,630	8,251	21	15,678	49
Wolfe	5,669	6,436	766	13.53	7,413	977	15	8,319	906	12	1,883	29
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>893,774</b>	<b>1,030,630</b>	<b>136,856</b>	<b>15.75</b>	<b>1,177,534</b>	<b>145,904</b>	<b>14.15</b>	<b>1,326,164</b>	<b>150,118</b>	<b>12.75</b>	<b>296,012</b>	<b>28.7</b>

SOURCE: Based on data from Brockway, James M. and Michael A. Span, *How Many Kentuckians: Population Forecasts, 1970-2020*. (Louisville: University of Louisville Urban Studies Center Population Research Unit, Nov., 1977)

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE GENERAL TRENDS

Not all of the counties in the region are projected to grow in population, however, and these are noteworthy in why they will not. The counties of Boyd, Elliott, Mason, and Rowan are projected to decline in population from 1980 to 2000 (Table III). These projections are based upon the "component method" of forecasting and they do not take into account all factors, a weakness of the general methodology.

Boyd County continues to lose population due to a heavy migration of residents to neighboring Greenup and Carter County, although most of these will continue to work in the industrialized Ashland-Huntington Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. This trend is expected to continue at an accelerating rate (Table III). On a much smaller scale Mason County is losing residents to neighboring Lewis and Fleming counties, although this does not account for the entire loss or the anticipated loss for the remainder of this century. In the case of both Boyd and Mason counties, environmental pollution and declining quality of life appear to be the major elements in the present and predicted future losses of population. This, however, does not constitute a regional loss since Carter, Fleming, and Lewis are becoming "bedroom communities" for their more industrialized neighbors.

The trend in Elliott County is easier to explain. A continuation of the last 30 years of "demographic hemorrhaging" is expected to continue into the future as far as anyone dares to predict. Lacking significant mineral, timber, or agricultural resources, poorly located in terms of transportation facilities and population centers, and possessing woefully inadequate service facilities, there is little to attract or hold industry, business, or people.

The Rowan County trend presents an enigma because the county shows every indication of explosive growth during the 1970's. Almost five hundred housing units have been constructed in an eight year period, a new industry has moved into the county, the hospital has expanded, a major shopping center has been constructed, and considerable growth has occurred in conjunction with water oriented recreation. In spite of this apparent growth both the Bureau of the Census and the Urban Studies Center at the University of Louisville project essentially no growth during the 1970's; and the University of Louisville projection indicates a five percent loss of population for the county by 1990 (Table III). One is tempted to reject this projection out-of-hand, although, careful analysis of the model used yields no such conclusion.

The component method of population projection uses migration data as one of the components in the estimating equation and herein may lie the explanation for what is obviously not a true picture of Rowan County or similar counties in the region. Migration data are derived in part by tracing the movement of social security numbers and the filing of income tax returns. Many university students get their social security number after they arrive at the university or file their first income return while attending school. A few years later they become a statistic somewhere else and are counted as an out-migrant, but they were never counted as an in-migrant in the county in which they attended school. The component method is supposed to take into consideration certain "special populations", but it apparently does not fully compensate for the movement of students to and from a college town.

TABLE III

## Population Estimates for Selected Counties, 1970-2000

County	1970		Change 1970 - 1980		1980		Change 1980 - 1990		1990		Change 1990 - 2000		Cumulative Change 1980 - 2000	
	No.	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bath	9,235	9,185	-50	-0.54	9,365	180	02	9,597	232	02	412	04		
Boyd	52,376	51,579	-797	-1.52	51,302	-267	-01	50,060	-1,242	-02	-1,509	-03		
Breathitt	14,221	16,944	2,723	19	20,260	3,316	20	23,389	3,129	15	6,445	38		
Carter	19,850	23,680	3,830	19	28,543	4,863	21	33,578	5,035	18	9,898	42		
Elliott	5,933	5,522	-411	-07	5,422	-100	-02	5,295	-127	-02	-227	-04		
Fleming	11,366	12,146	780	07	12,965	819	07	13,835	870	07	1,689	14		
Floyd	35,889	43,781	7,892	14	52,841	8,060	18	61,634	8,793	17	16,853	38		
Greenup	33,192	34,281	1,089	03	36,559	2,278	07	38,400	1,841	05	4,119	12		
Johnson	17,539	23,078	5,539	32	29,181	6,103	26	35,301	6,120	21	12,223	53		
Knott	14,698	18,591	3,893	27	23,034	4,453	24	29,357	6,323	27	10,776	58		
Lawrence	10,726	13,112	2,386	22	15,804	2,692	21	18,637	2,833	18	5,525	42		
Letcher	23,165	29,386	6,221	27	36,270	6,884	23	43,134	6,864	19	13,748	47		
Lewis	12,355	12,899	544	04	13,927	1,026	08	14,904	977	07	2,003	16		
Magoffin	10,443	11,853	1,410	14	13,531	1,678	14	15,371	1,840	14	3,518	30		
Martin	9,377	12,050	2,673	29	15,248	3,198	27	18,438	3,180	21	6,378	53		
Mason	17,273	16,147	-1,126	-07	15,285	-856	-05	14,215	-1,090	-12	-1,946	-12		
Menifee	4,050	4,627	577	14	5,289	662	14	5,978	689	12	1,351	29		
Montgomery	15,364	18,550	3,186	21	21,869	3,319	18	25,196	3,327	15	6,646	36		
Morgan	10,019	10,729	710	08	11,805	1,076	10	12,869	1,064	09	2,140	20		
Pike	61,059	76,799	15,740	26	93,846	17,047	22	110,226	16,380	17	33,427	44		
Rowan	17,010	17,856	846	05	16,874	-982	-05	16,964	90	01	-892	-05		
Wolfe	5,669	6,436	766	14	7,413	977	15	8,319	906	12	1,883	29		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>410,819</b>	<b>469,150</b>	<b>58,331</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>536,633</b>	<b>66,426</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>604,697</b>	<b>68,334</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>134,460</b>	<b>29</b>		

SOURCE: Based on estimate of future population from Brockway, James M. and Michael A. Span, *How Many Kentuckians: Population Forecasts, 1970-2020*. (Louisville: University of Louisville Urban Studies Center Population Research Unit, Nov., 1977)

Based on new residential construction and the arrival of new business establishments, the 1980 census should indicate a population in Rowan County greater than 18,300. Furthermore, the county has or is developing most of the ingredients necessary for an economic "take-off." The county is well-located in terms of transportation facilities, has easy access to much of the nation's market, is close to the growing Appalachian coal fields, will soon have excellent sewage and water works, has excellent health facilities, has enough suitable land for industrial, business, and residential development, has the attraction of a major university, has unexcelled recreation facilities, and will, hopefully, soon have a more satisfactory school system. In short, the county has most of the attractions to make it a good place to live and work. Considering all these advantages it is difficult to see how Rowan County could be one of the eastern Kentucky's counties with declining population. The only missing ingredient at this time is the lack of a major basic employer.

Therefore, the projections used for this analysis have limitations as the above example suggests. The projections should be viewed as best estimates based upon available data. Conditions are always subject to change.

### CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

How will the trends outlined above affect institutions of higher education in Kentucky? This is not an easy question to answer since several economic and social variables must be considered. This analysis considered possible outcomes based strictly on demographic variables. In planning for future development, the anticipated age structure of the population is just as important as total population. Fortunately, it is easier to project age structures several years in advance than it is total numbers.

A careful analysis of the anticipated population pyramids for the selected counties between 1970 and 2000 leads to some interesting, although somewhat surprising conclusions (Figure I). Most college and university students will, of course, be drawn from two five-year groups in the population, 15-19 and 20-24 year olds. As a percentage of total population these groups reached a peak in the late 1970's and are expected to decline sharply after 1980. This decline should continue until 1991 when a very slow recovery is expected. The total decline as a percentage of population probably will be greater than 20 percent during the decade of the 1980's. This trend can be explained quite simply. While the population of Eastern Kentucky is growing rapidly, it is also rapidly growing older.

As gloomy as this may at first appear, an analysis of total population figures instead of percentages is much more reassuring. In total numbers of young people of prime college age, Eastern Kentucky as a whole has experienced a sharp increase since 1970, although this has not been reflected in actual college and university enrollments. The number of college aged people should peak in 1980 (The number of 18 year olds actually peaked in 1978). The anticipated increase from 1970 to 1980 is expected to be a surprising 33.4 percent.

The number of potential students (18-22 year olds) will begin to decline significantly after 1980 with a particularly sharp decline between 1982 and 1985. The

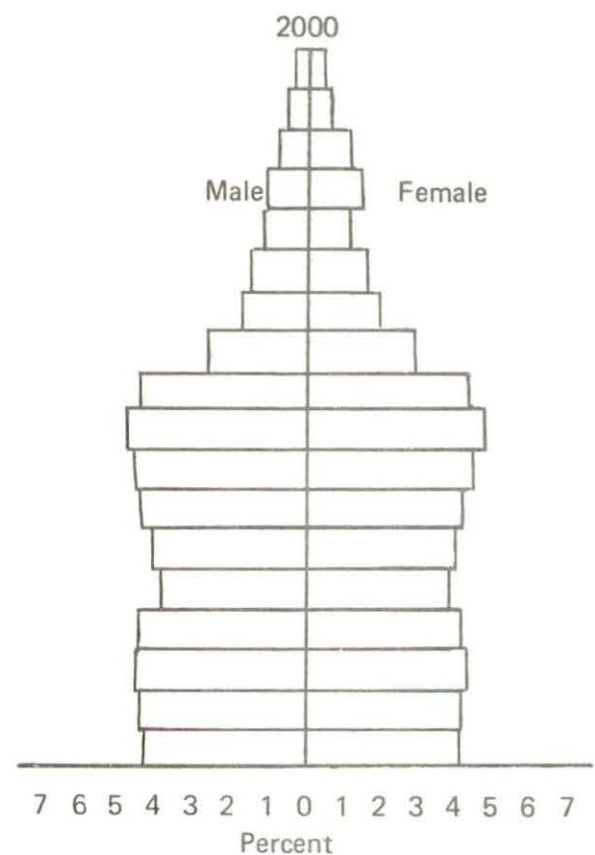
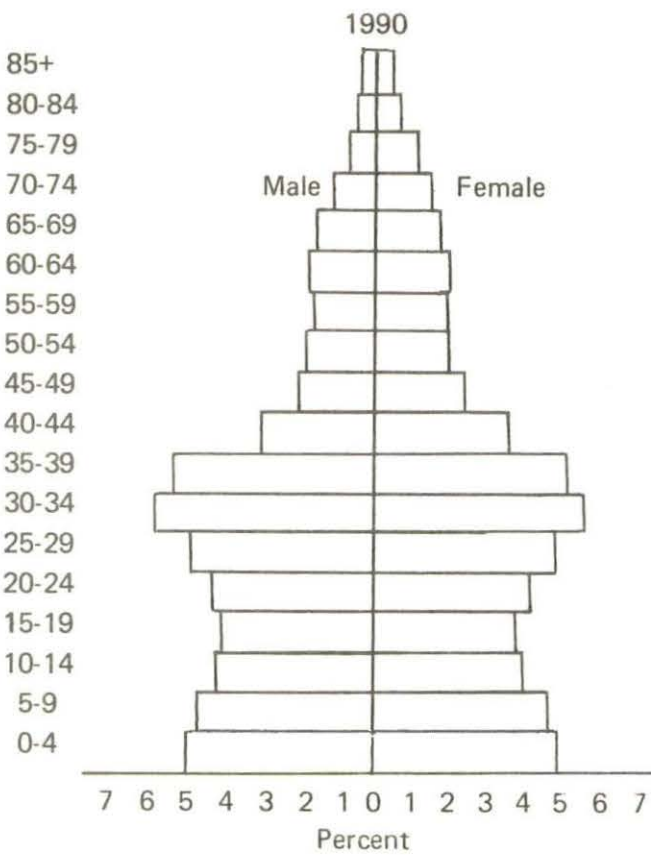
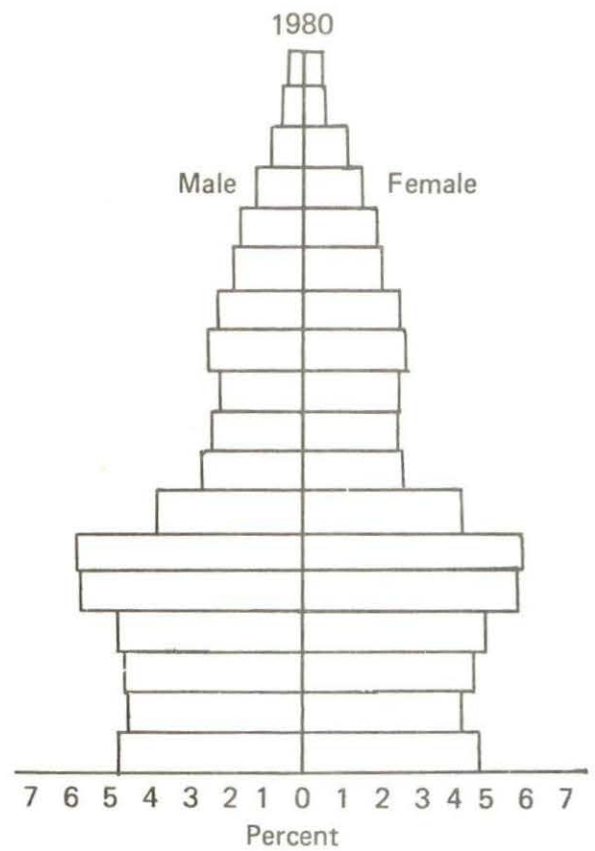
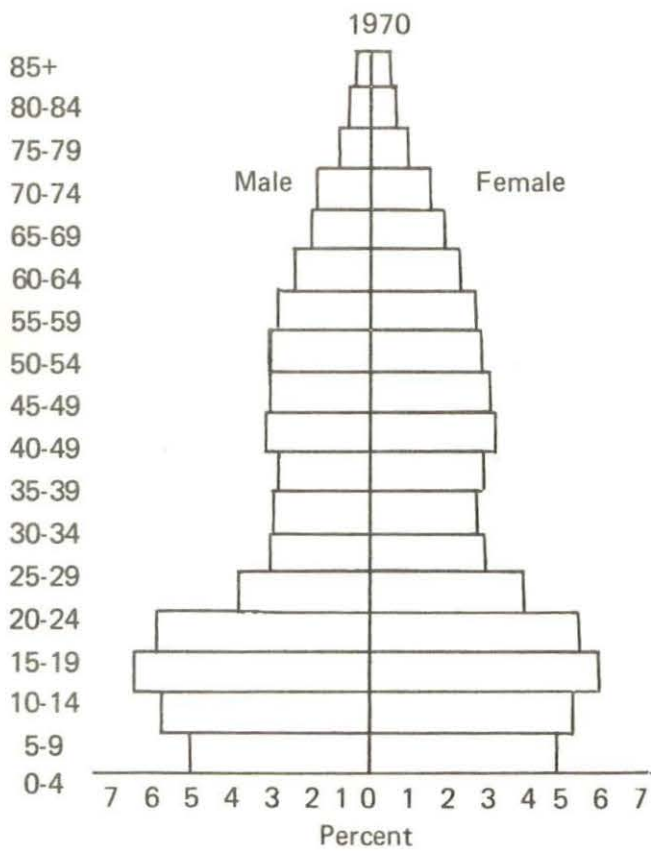


Figure 1. Predicted age-sex structure of population in selected Kentucky counties, 1970-2000.

SOURCE: Data for the 1970 pyramid are from the U.S. Bureau of Census, *U.S. Census of Population, 1970*. Data for the 1980, 1990, and 2000 pyramids, are from Brockway, James M. Michael A. Span, *How Many Kentuckians: A Population Forecast 1970-2020*. (Louisville: University of Louisville, Urban Studies Center Population Research Unit, Nov., 1977)

actual drop in total numbers between 1980 and 1990 is expected to be approximately 11 percent, far below the national decline of about 25 percent during the same period. After 1990 the number of potential students will begin to rise slowly. Again this increase is expected to be more rapid than national averages.

Given the fact that eastern Kentucky colleges and universities are currently enrolling a much lower percentage of the college age population than reasonably could be expected, it may be possible to go through the 1980's without a major drop in enrollment, provided that a higher percentage of students can be convinced college education is desirable and beneficial. The improved economic climate in the region should also help to make a college education affordable for many who would not otherwise go. At any rate, the outlook for eastern Kentucky is much brighter than for most other regions in the United States.



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