

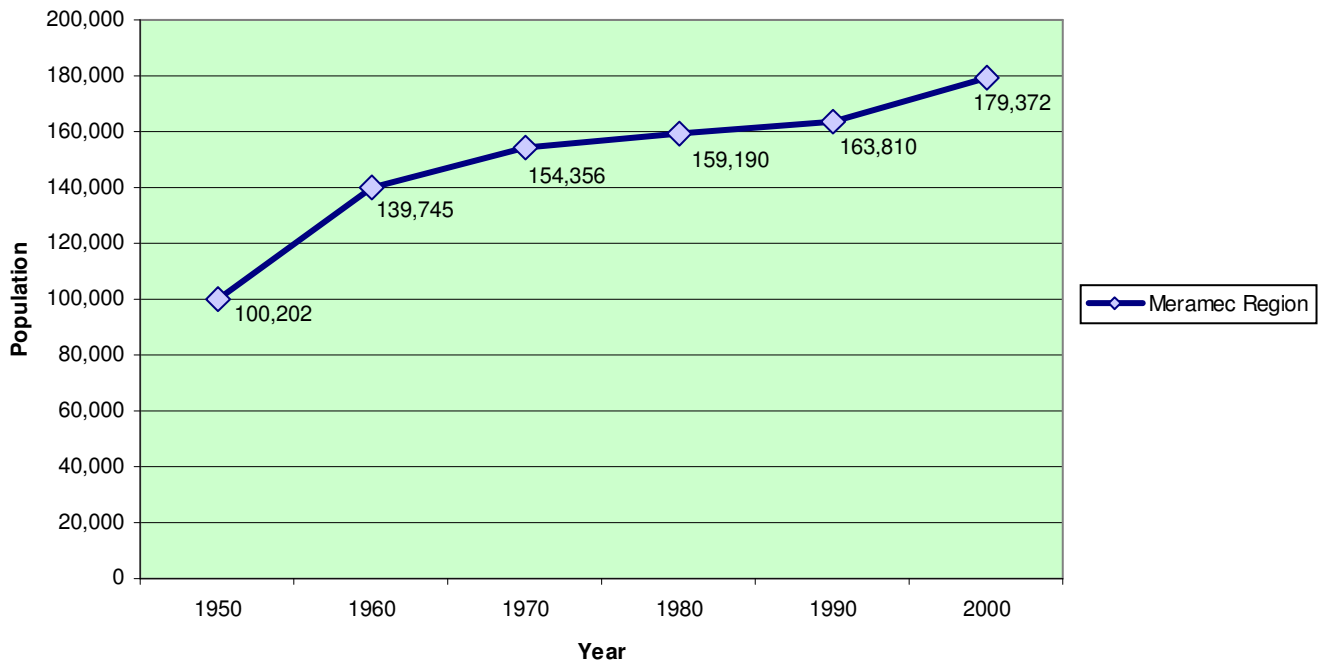
# SECTION 2 - CHAPTER 1: THE MERAMEC REGION DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC DATA

## POPULATION

### POPULATION TRENDS

The Meramec Region is currently home to some 179,372 people. Since 1950, the population of the region has grown by almost 79 percent, from 100,202 people in 1950 to 179,372 people in 2000. Chart 1-1 below shows the population growth for the region from 1950 to 2000. The region as a whole showed marked growth between 1950 and 1960—39.5 percent. The region's combined population increased at over twice the rate, of the nation's population and four times the rate of the state during that timeframe. Growth slowed considerably in the region, however, from 1970 to 1990, picking up again from 1990-2000 with about a 10 percent increase. Table 1-1, located at the end of this chapter, indicates the general population statistics for the United States, the state of Missouri, the Meramec Region and the eight counties within the region.

**Chart 1-1: Meramec Region Population 1950-2000**



Source: U.S. Census of Population 1940-2000, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce

Regional growth from 1990 to 2000—9.5 percent—was also at a higher pace than that of the state—8.6 percent. However, the rate was lower than the national level of 13.1 percent. In the Meramec Region, from 1990-2000, seven of the eight counties had increases in population. According to Census 2000 data, Pulaski County had a decrease of .3 percent. By 2000, 15 Meramec cities had declined in population and 18 communities had increased. One community—Meta—remained the same. Ten communities had growth rates of over 10 percent: St. Robert showed the largest increase—59.5 percent. The largest population decrease occurred in Morrison, with a decrease of 23.1 percent of its population.

The greatest county growth in population occurred in Crawford County (18.9 percent), followed by Washington County (14.5 percent). The most significant growth in population for the Meramec Region occurred along Interstate 44: Cuba (27.3 percent), Rolla (16.2 percent), St. James (13.8 percent), Bourbon (13.5 percent), Sullivan (12.2 percent) and St. Robert (59.5 percent). Other communities, with a population greater than 1,000 that showed a significant increase were Belle (10.3 percent) and Linn (17.9 percent). Of the communities with a population less than 1,000, the most significant growth occurred in Leasburg (11.8 percent), Westphalia (11.5 percent) and Caledonia (11.3 percent). The communities with the greatest decline in population were, Morrison (-23.1 percent), Newburg (-17.8 percent), Bland (-13.2 percent) and Edgar Springs (-11.6 percent).

## **PROJECTIONS**

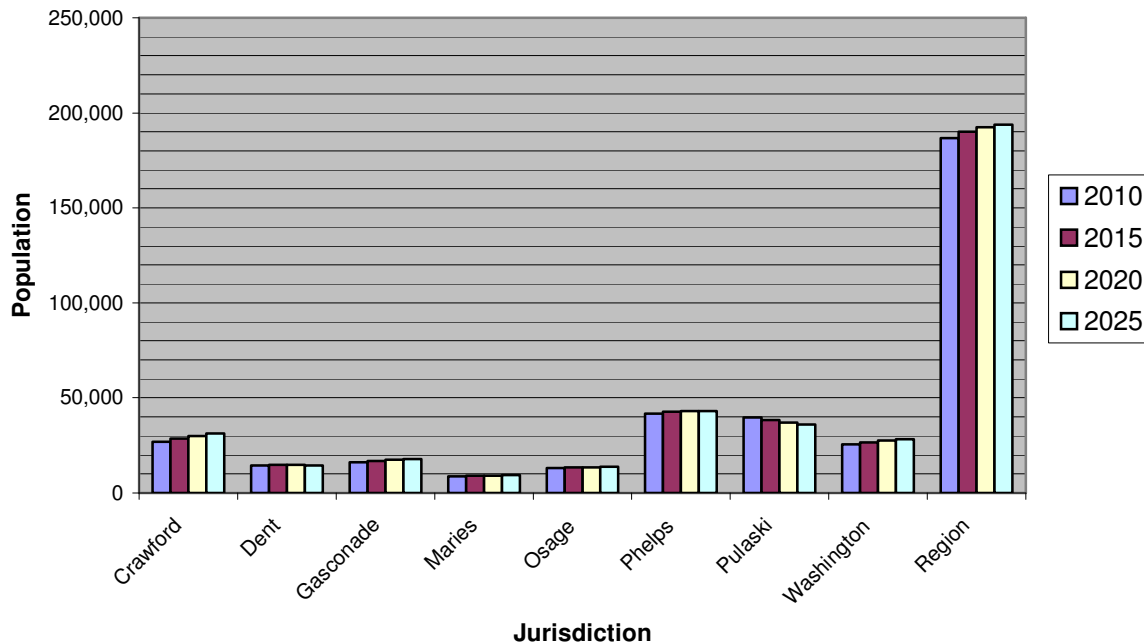
According to population projections by the Missouri State Division of Budget and Planning (Table 1-2), the Meramec Region can expect continued growth for the next 20 years. The region's growth will only be a little over 6 percent over the next two decades while Missouri is projected to grow by 9.2 percent and the nation by 17.2 percent. The population increase projection for 1990 to 2005 is 2.6 percent for the Meramec Region. It is projected that the population for the Meramec Region will increase at a slightly greater rate than Missouri and at a slower rate than for the United States.

Notably, in the population projections, Pulaski County is projected to decrease in population. However, actual population in the area has increased significantly due to an

increase in military and civilian personnel resulting from the Base Realignment Committee decisions in 1995 and 2005. The 1995 BRAC brought some 2,000 military and civilian personnel to the installation. The full impact of the 2005 BRAC is not yet known. All population projections are based upon Census 2000 data, although, locally, it is known that these numbers do not account for these realignments.

Chart 1-2 below graphs the population projections for the eight Meramec counties in the region from 2010 to 2025.

**Chart 1-2: Populations Projections by County**



Source: Mo. State Government, Division of Budget & Planning web site  
<http://www.oa.state.mo.us/bp/projections/scenario.htm>

**MIGRATION**

The two major components of population change are natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) and migration (the difference between population moving into an area and the population leaving that area). Tables 1-3 through 1-12 indicate migration patterns for the eight counties in the Meramec Region from 1930 to 2000.

From 1930 to 2000, the Meramec Region gained a total of 65,350 persons through natural change, and gained 18,246 through net migration. Some 14,000 citizens migrated out of the Meramec Region from 1940 to 1950, followed by considerable in-migration of 26,534 from 1950 to 1960, largely in Pulaski County. The only county to gain through migration during the decade from 1940-1950 was Phelps County. Phelps County shows no negative net migration in any given 10-year period. Washington County lost about 27 percent of its population from 1940 to 1950, finally gaining them back from 1970 to 1980 due to natural change.

Pulaski County's population has been the most erratic during the past 70 years. The county gained over 36,000 in population from 1950 to 1960 and over 7,000 from 1960 to 1970. However, the county lost almost 12,000 people from 1970 to 1980.

While Missouri's overall population increased by some 1.9 million people from 1930 to 2000, the migration for the time period was a negative 301,172.

## **AGE-SEX CHARACTERISTICS**

The population of the Meramec Region is aging. From 1970-2000, all age categories over 25 gained in population, while those 25 and less lost population. According to the 2000 Census, the total number of persons under age 25 decreased by about 20 percent from 1970 to 2000. Tables 1-13 through 1-30 display the age-sex characteristics of the population of the Meramec Region and its eight counties from 1970 - 2000.

The greatest decline between 1970 and 2000 occurred in the age group 20-24—some 43.8 percent, followed by the group 15-19—27.3 percent. Although the 15-19 years old group declined by 27.3 percent from 1970 to 2000, they are still the largest segment of the population for the region.

The greatest increase between 1970 and 2000 occurred in the age group 40-44, an increase of 101.8 percent. Significantly, the second largest increase was in the 75+ age group—an 82.7 percent increase. Persons over 50 increased by about 49.3 percent from 1970-2000, the largest increase from 1970-1980—19.5 percent. Again, in 1990-2000, the over-50 population increased by 17.3 percent. Almost 58 percent of the population change from 1990-2000 was net migration, indicating that many of those migrating into the region during that time were retirees.

Other age-sex statistics to note are:

- In Dent County, the age group 40-44 grew by 30 percent between 1990 and 2000.
- In Gasconade County, the age group 40-44 grew by 43 percent between 1990 and 2000.
- In Maries County, 35-39 years old segment grew 44 percent between 1990 and 2000.
- The largest age group in Phelps County was 20-24 (3,775) in 1990 and also 20-24 (4,023) in 2000. This age group grew by 7 percent between 1990 and 2000. This may partially be attributed to the number of people who attend the University of Missouri-Rolla. UMR enrollment increased by about 700 students from 2001 to 2005.

In 2000, ages 65 and older accounted for about 22 percent of the region's population (Table 1-13). The median age of the region (Table 1-31) in 1970 was 30.4 years. The median age had increased to 36.6 years by 2000. Phelps County shows an increase of over 10 years in the median age from 1970 to 2000. Gasconade County's median age increased by only 0.9 years since 1970, but they hold the oldest population with 41.3 years median age. The region has consistently shown a population that is older than that of both the state and the nation, although running relatively close to the state median. Factors influencing these figures are the increasing age of the population, a large number of senior citizens retiring to the rural areas, improved health care and the birthrate decline of the 1960s.

## **RURAL-URBAN RESIDENCY**

Urban residents are those who reside in any incorporated location with a population of at least 2,500. Tables 1-32 and 1-33 leave little doubt that the Meramec Region is a rural area, although this trend seems to be leveling. Some 84.9 percent of the population of the region was classified as rural in 1960; by 2000, 67.5 percent was considered rural.

Pulaski County has shown the largest population shift from rural since 1960. As the table indicates, some 50.9 percent of the population shifted from rural to urban. This large increase is due in part to the fact that in 1960, none of the incorporated areas exceeded the 2,500 population minimum to be classified as "urban." This did not happen until 1970, when Waynesville's population reached 3,375. Also, from 1960 to 2000, 15.2 percent of Crawford County's population shifted from rural to urban. Maries and Osage counties remained steady with 100 percent of their populations rural. Washington and Dent counties were the only Meramec counties to experience a shift from urban to rural

from 1960 to 2000, at 8.2 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively. The Meramec Region rural/urban population has consistently been the reverse of both the state and the U.S.

## **RACIAL GROUPS**

According to the 2000 Census, the Meramec Region deviates from the national and state trends of population regarding racial groups (Table 1-34). Only 7.9 percent of the region's population—about 14,000 people—is considered non-white, while the same group represents 24.86 percent of the United States' population and 15.14 percent of Missouri's population. Prior to the addition of Pulaski County to the Meramec Region, the non-white population was only 3.75 percent. According to 1970 Census data, the region's non-white population was 3.72 percent, rose to 6.4 percent in 1990 and is 7.9 percent currently. (See Tables 1-34 through 1-37).

Other than white, the largest racial group in the region is “Black/African American Alone” (6,269) followed by “Two or More Races” (3,156). With the exception of Pulaski County, the “non-white” population seems to be spread proportionately throughout the region with slightly greater numbers in Phelps, Dent and Washington counties, which have non-white populations of 6.76 percent, 4.67 percent and 4.53 percent respectively. The Phelps County “non-white” population may be largely attributed to the student population at the University of Missouri - Rolla.

## **INCOME**

### **FAMILY INCOME**

Family incomes in the Meramec Region generally increased from 1990-2000. However, the family income for the region and the eight counties individually falls below the state and national averages (Tables 1-38 through 1-40). Although the largest single-family income category for the region is \$35,000 and over, the percentage of population that falls into this category is 9 percent less than that of the state and 13.5 percent less than that of the nation. In 1990, the largest single-family income category for the region was \$10,000-\$24,999 at 36.7 percent. Chart 1-3 on the following page depicts the family income figures for the Meramec Region in 1989 and 1999. Of significance is the dramatic increase of persons in the \$35,000 and over segment from 1989 to 1999.

**Chart 1-3: Meramec Region Family Income, 1989 and 1999**



**Source: 1980, 1990 Census of Population, U.S. Census Bureau**

Citizens of the Meramec Region continue to bring home fewer income dollars than the nation as a whole. Between 1979 and 1989, the gap between the region’s and the nation’s median family income averages widened (See Table 1-41). In 1979, the region’s families were making 73.3 percent of the national median, but in 1989, that percentage had dropped to 69.1 percent. By 1999, however, the regional family median had gained considerably—76.2 percent of the national median. Osage County was the only Meramec county showing a gain on the national median from 1979-1989. From 1989 to 1999, however, every county gained on the national median. Osage County continues to carry the highest family incomes—with 92.9 percent of the national median. Washington County has the lowest, with 63.2 percent of the national median.

**POVERTY**

According to 2000 Census data, about 14 percent of the Meramec Region families are living in poverty. This figure is down from the 1989 percentage of 17.4 percent. Washington and Dent counties have historically led the region in percent of population meeting poverty guidelines for the past 20 years (Table 1-41). In 1979, over 20 percent met the guidelines in these counties. These percentages increased considerably in 1989, with Washington County showing 27.2 percent and Dent 25.2 percent persons in poverty.

Gasconade and Osage counties continue to have the lowest number of persons in poverty, with less than 10 percent for 1999.

## **EDUCATION**

The educational level of the residents of the Meramec Region has increased significantly during the past 30 years. Table 1-42 shows that most Meramec counties had a significant increase in the percentage of adults 25 and older with at least a high school diploma during that time frame. Regionally, that percentage grew by about 42 percent from 1970 to 2000. Pulaski County, in 2000, shows the highest percentage of high school graduation, with 85.1 percent of its over-25 population holding at least a high school diploma. Washington County has the lowest percentage, with 62.5 percent, in 2000.

Table 1-43 and 1-44 provide information on the percentage of the population that had continued their education beyond a high school diploma or equivalency. In 2000, about 19.1 percent of Meramec citizens 25 years and older have obtained some type of college degree, slightly down from 1990, when almost 19.8 percent had obtained degrees. The percentage of persons 25 years and older obtaining degrees in the region is still lower than the national average of 30.7 percent and the state average of 26.7 percent. Both Phelps and Pulaski counties have over 25 percent of their 25-plus citizens with at least an associate degree. This is to be expected because the University of Missouri-Rolla and the Rolla Technical Institute are located in Phelps County as well as several federal and state agencies that employ individuals with advanced degrees. Additionally, Fort Leonard Wood military personnel and their educated spouses increase the educational attainment percentages for the region.