



RENEWING ILLINOIS

ONE ILLINOIS: NOBLE ASPIRATION OR IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?



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POSHARD ENDOWMENT FOR RENEWING ILLINOIS SUMMIT



Glenn Poshard, left, and Jo Poshard, right, appear with Institute Director John Shaw during a news conference announcing the formation of the Poshard Endowment for Renewing Illinois Summit

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute extends sincere gratitude to Glenn and Jo Poshard for their generous donation in establishing the Poshard Endowment for Renewing Illinois Summit.

The Poshard Endowment for Renewing Illinois Summit was established in 2019 and helps sustain a long-term future for the program. The Poshard's investment in the Institute's Renewing Illinois Summit continues Paul Simon's legacy of fostering opportunities for the next generation of leaders to take part in public service.

You can support the Renewing Illinois Summit online at www.paulsimoninstitute.org/support



John T. Shaw
Institute Director

Dear Participants,

The theme of our 2022 Renewing Illinois Summit is *One Illinois: Noble Aspiration or Impossible Dream?*

Illinois, as we all know, is a large, dynamic, and diverse state with a rich and complicated history. Regional tensions and fissures have been a common theme during our two centuries of statehood.

Some experts have identified six distinct regions in Illinois—Chicago, suburban Cook County, the collar counties, Northern Illinois, Central Illinois, and Southern Illinois—while others have depicted three—Chicago, the collar counties, and the rest of the state. Other analysts see the division in Illinois as a simple and stark split between urban and rural.

Our hope is that this summit helps us forge a creative and positive agenda for One Illinois. As we attempt to do so, we should consider fundamental issues and hard questions:

- What specifically can be done to forge a common identity and a sense of shared destiny in Illinois?
- Is it necessary or misguided to think of One Illinois?
- Are the different regions in Illinois treated fairly in the allocation of financial resources and political power?
- Can the urban-rural division be bridged?
- Do the people of the various regions of Illinois inevitably view such issues as guns, education, economic development, criminal justice reform, and transportation differently?
- Are Illinois' regional tensions related to, or distinct from, the challenges facing other large states such as New York, Florida, Ohio, or Minnesota?

It is our hope that this book provides you with a solid foundation to consider these and other questions. Rob Paral, a leading demographer, examines the 2020 census and helps us think about the “changing faces of Illinois.” Roger Biles, one of Illinois' leading historians, provides crucial historical context to understand the regional tensions in Illinois. David Joens, director of the Illinois State Archives, vividly describes regional secession movements in Illinois, showing that these have been persistent in our state's history.

We hope this reading is enjoyable and instructive and contributes to a successful summit in which we all find tangible ways to Renew Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Shaw". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John T. Shaw



Where Is Illinois Now and Where Is It Going?

Rob Paral. principal of Rob Paral & Associates

Granted statehood in 1818, Illinois is slightly over two centuries old. During that time, in approximately fifty-year segments, our state has embodied trends that defined our nation. The early 1880s brought westward expansion by European migrants and the taking of natives' land. The second half of that century saw population explosion and rapid urbanization. In the first part of the twentieth century Illinois industrialization was essential to our nation helping to win two world wars and establishing the United States as the pre-eminent world power.

Most recently, a new half-century period can be identified. One of profound social and economic change for the state. No longer was Illinois on an endless growth trajectory. Residents shifted their preference to live in one part of the state or another, leaving rural areas for urban and suburban places, including those not in Illinois. The typical Illinoisan looks different: new communities of African Americans, Asians and Latinos have appeared. Politically, there is a growing divide among the state's internal regions.

These are all profound shifts, and each deserves exploration to understand where our state is going. In this essay, I try to sketch out some of the broad transformations that we are experiencing in our state. On the one hand, I provide a snapshot of where we are today and how we compare to some of our neighbors, but I spend more time on how we have become a different state over the last half century, and how much of our evolution may not be positive for the state as a whole.

Illinois Today

To begin, how do we look? What are the big-picture demographic, social and economic metrics that define us?

Illinois as of the 2020 census is home to 12.8 million residents. We are a big state, the sixth largest in the U.S., home to both some of the most urbanized and dense neighborhoods in North America but also to rural Pope county that has about 12 persons per square mile.

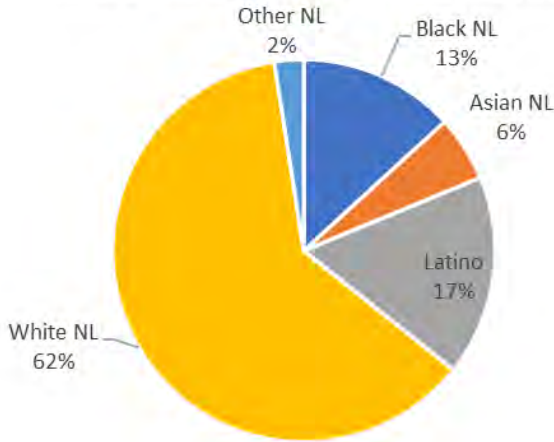
In the northeast lies metropolitan Chicago, the demographic behemoth, the third largest metro area in the United States with 9.5 million persons spread across nine Illinois counties and parts of two other states. The region includes extremes of density (more than one Chicago community area has nearly 100,000 people while Alden Township in McHenry County is home to 1,300) and prosperity (just miles apart, Lake Forest city has median household income of \$189,000 and North Chicago city is at \$47,000.)

Illinois is also home to many smaller and important metropolitan areas like metro Peoria (403,000 persons), metro Rockford (337,000), and the Illinois portion of metro St. Louis (683,000), to name a few. These metro areas are often defined by particular industrial histories: machine tooling in Rockford, agricultural products in Decatur, government in Springfield, financially related services in Bloomington.

Chicago, the storied city, has 2.7 million residents and is the third largest city in the U.S. Its neighborhoods span extremes of economic wealth and poverty and racial segregation and integration.

Illinois is home to great racial and ethnic diversity. A majority of Illinoisans, 62 percent, identify themselves as White, non-Latino.¹ Latinos at 17 percent are the second largest major group, followed by African Americans or Blacks at 13 percent and Asians at six percent.²

Illinoisians by Race/Ethnicity: 2020



Behind the broad racial/ethnic categories lie even more diversity. The Illinois Asian population is about 29 percent Indian, 20 percent Filipino, 17 percent Chinese, and 13 percent Korean. Most Latinos are of Mexican origin, about 78 percent, but 9 percent are Puerto Rican and 4 percent are Central American.

Illinois is among a handful of “gateway states” that receive a disproportionate share of new immigrants to the United States. As of the 2016-2020 period there were 1.8 million immigrants living here. The foreign-born population is extremely diverse, with the three largest groups – Mexico, India and Poland – representing three different continents. The top ten countries represent about two-thirds of all immigrants, with the remaining third including persons from throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

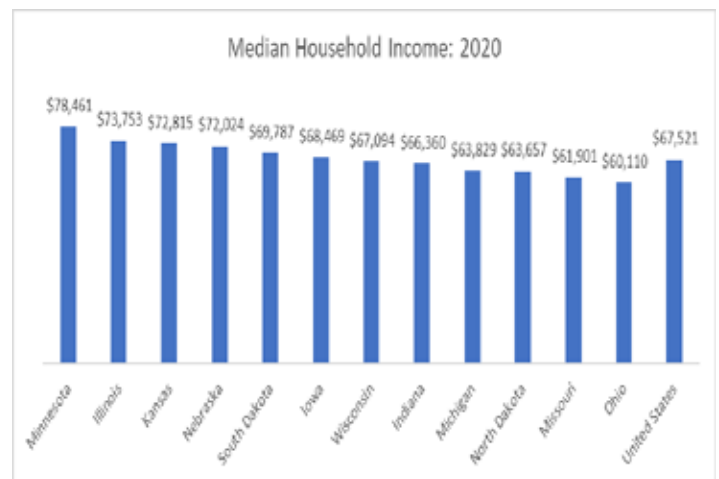
Immigrants in Illinois: 2016-2020

Total	1,779,063
Mexico	628,401
India	158,225
Poland	127,303
Philippines	89,324
China	75,286
Korea	38,739
Pakistan	30,785
Ukraine	25,432
Vietnam	24,253
Guatemala	23,216
Other	558,099

Source: American Community Survey

Many Illinois residents are fourth, fifth or older generation in the United States, yet continue to specify their ancestry when asked. Some 1.5 million Illinoisans report German ancestry, 844,000 Irish, 610,000 Polish, 520,000 Italian, and 141,000 Swedish.

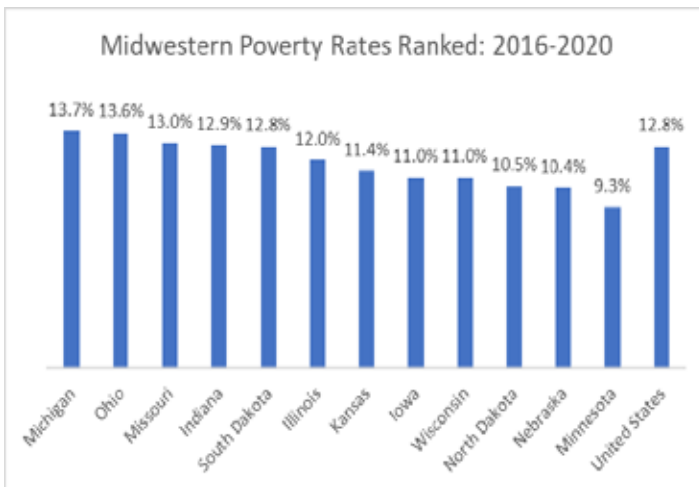
We are among the wealthier states. Our median household income was almost \$77,000 in 2020, placing us 17th among the 51 states and the District of Columbia and well ahead of the national median. Only Minnesota has higher income than Illinois among our Midwestern neighbors.



Illinois ranks in the middle of the midwestern states in terms of poverty rate, at 12.0 percent, and is below the national rate of 12.8 percent. (In 2022, a family of four was below the poverty level if it had income of less than \$27,750.)

1 Latinos may be of any race, thus I use “non-Latino” to describe persons who are not Latino but are White, Black or Asian.

2 Following conventions of the federal government, I use “Black” and “African American” interchangeably.



From these high-level indicators one can say that Illinois continues its historical tendency to represent something like the middle of the pack in many of its demographics. Our racial breakdown roughly mirrors that of the nation, and we resemble the county as a whole with our many rural counties mixed with numerically dominant metro areas. The state's poverty rate is neither low enough to brag about nor nearly high enough to rank high compared to our neighbors. The relatively high household income marks us as a home to prosperity, at least for a large segment of the population.

From the current snapshot one might say "What's to worry about?" Well, the problem is that we are becoming a more unequal state, where resources are becoming concentrated geographically, where many residents don't share in the wealth creation, and where prosperity is increasingly linked to a piece of paper (or a digital record) of a bachelor's degree. We are also a state where, by at least some measures, political polarization is on a steady march.

A Changing Illinois

A Slow-Growth State with Internal Rebalancing

Where are we going as a state? What are the trends set in motion over the past half century?

It would be hard to discuss change taking place in Illinois without addressing, first and foremost, the overall population numbers. Certainly for the news media but also for many public-policy enthusiasts the latest versions of Census Bureau numbers on Illinois population are tracked almost like the midwestern weather: obsessively, with a touch

of defensiveness. "Are we up or down?" "Whose leaving and who's coming?" "Well, it's not so bad." It almost gets to the point of "Are we still loved?"

The truth of the story is that we have had a slow-growth state for the past decade. Over the last decade we were up some years and down in others like, yes, a barometer. Our growth patterns, though, are not unique and they reflect those of other Midwestern (and, by the way Northeastern) states, which have been losing residents to the south and west for decades.

But our slow growth does hurt. Over the last ten years Illinois lost its proud position as the fifth largest state to Pennsylvania (of all places). The 2020 census reported that Illinois fell by about 18,000 persons since the previous census and the repercussions included the loss of a congressional seat. Assuming that the state's congressional delegation pulls together on at least some issues that benefit Illinois, probably few political developments cause as much damage as losing a congressional district.

(It hardly soothes our wound to know that the Census Bureau has admitted that it probably missed almost two percent of Illinois in the 2020 census. The revised estimates suggest that the state grew and surpassed 13 million persons by 2020. Unfortunately, the official census results remain, and the damage has been done.)



If it makes us feel any better, low-growth is endemic to our region. Iowa, Michigan and North Dakota have declined in one recent decade or the other, and virtually all the midwestern states lag the national average in growth.

Decade-to-Decade Growth Rates in the Midwest

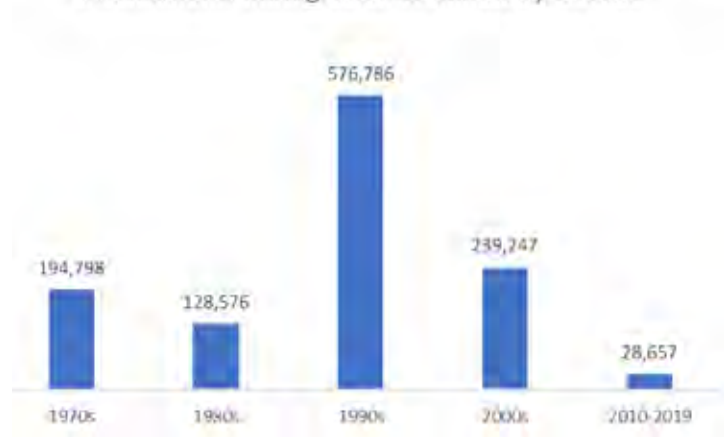
	1970 -1980	1980 -1990	1990 -2000	2000 -2010	2010 -2020
Illinois	3%	0%	9%	3%	0%
Indiana	6%	1%	10%	7%	5%
Iowa	3%	-5%	5%	4%	5%
Kansas	5%	5%	9%	6%	3%
Michigan	4%	0%	7%	-1%	2%
Minnesota	7%	7%	12%	8%	8%
Missouri	5%	4%	9%	7%	3%
Nebraska	6%	1%	8%	7%	7%
N. Dakota	6%	-2%	1%	5%	16%
Ohio	1%	0%	5%	2%	2%
S. Dakota	4%	1%	8%	8%	9%
Wisconsin	7%	4%	10%	6%	4%
Midwest	4%	1%	8%	4%	3%
U.S.	11%	10%	13%	10%	7%

The problem for Illinois population is not the so-called natural increase, which refers to the numbers of births over deaths in a given year. There are many more births than deaths in the state. On top of that, tens of thousands of immigrants from abroad move to Illinois each year.

No, the problem for Illinois is that too many residents born here decide to leave. Who does not have a friend that graduated from a school in Illinois and moved to a sunbelt state? Who does not know a farmer, factory work, policeman or office worker who after a lifetime in Illinois retired to Florida? On average about 96,000 more Illinois residents leave the state each year than are offset by people moving to the state from another part of the U.S. It is this imbalance of out-migration/in-migration that suppresses Illinois population.

Declining immigration numbers exacerbate our population problem. Illinois, more than sunbelt states like Florida, Texas or California has disproportionately relied on international immigration to buoy its population. It is no coincidence that the jump in Illinois population in the 1990s (by almost a million persons) occurred during one of the highest immigration decades in U.S. history, when immigration to Illinois exceeded half a million persons. But immigration is on the decline. In 2011, for example, about 31,000 immigrants came to Illinois, but in 2020 the number was down to about 11,000.

International Immigration to Illinois by Decade



Statewide population counts in Illinois are one story. Still another is the relocation of Illinois residents within the state. If the state-level picture is that of a flat, sometimes up, sometimes down trend, things are more complicated when we zoom into the county and regional levels.

Counties that have grown since 1970 are found across Illinois, as may be seen in the accompanying map. They range from Winnebago on the Wisconsin border to Massac across the river from Kentucky, and from Kankakee on the east to Madison and Monroe on the west. The trouble is that the growth counties are outnumbered by declining counties. In particular, almost every county near the state's eastern and western borders has lost population.

The important thing to understand about the Illinois counties with population decline, however, is not whether they are east or west, or north or south. It is that they are not metropolitan counties. Only seven Illinois counties that lost population since 1970 are in metropolitan areas.

Population loss is largely rural loss and population gain is largely metropolitan gain, in metro areas around Bloomington, Danville, Moline-Rock Island, Decatur, Cape Girardeau, Carbondale-Marion, Champaign-Urbana, Chicago, Kankakee, Peoria, Rockford, St. Louis, and Springfield.

Such is the magnetic power of metropolitan areas in Illinois that these regions have grown in population by **1.8 million** or 19 percent since 1970. Population outside those metro areas is down by 111,000 or negative seven percent.

Metro Population Change in Illinois

	1970	2020	# Change	% Change
In metro area	9,580,591	11,390,788	1,810,197	19%
Not in metro area	1,533,385	1,421,720	-111,665	-7%
Statewide	11,113,976	12,812,508	1,698,532	15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

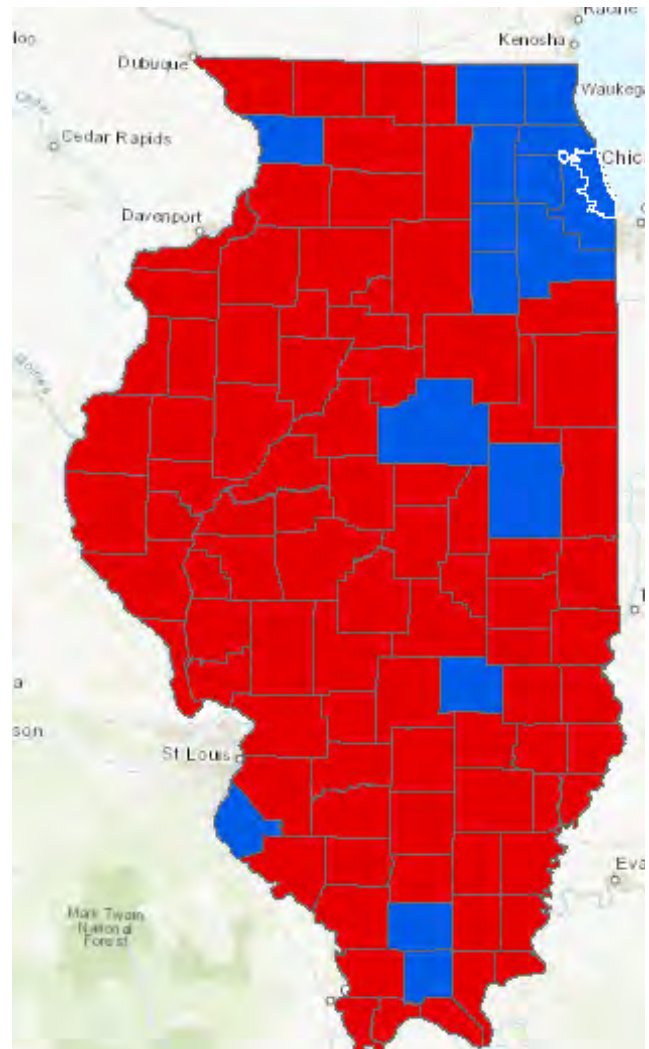
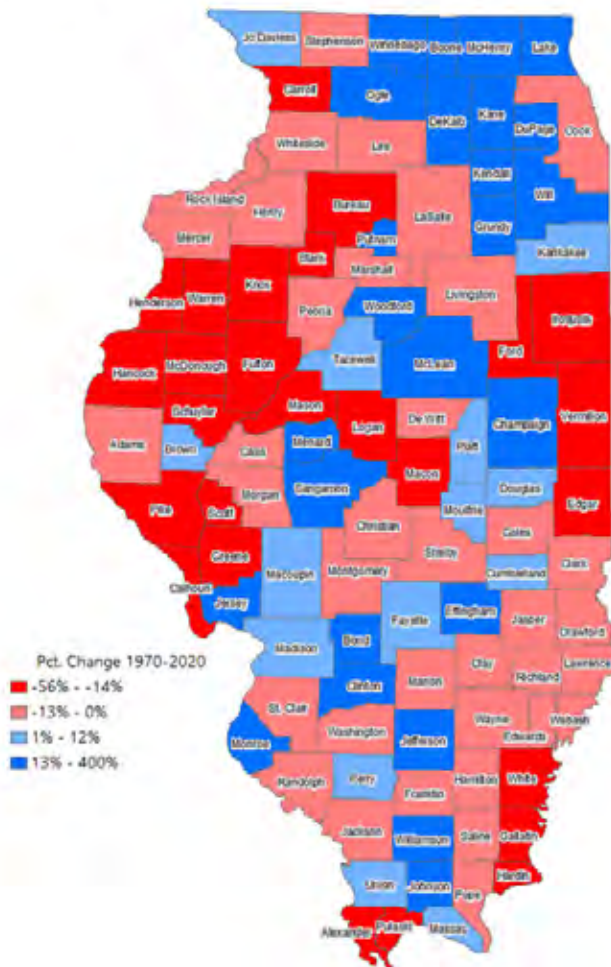
The intricacies of population change that is taking place in metropolitan Chicago could warrant its own report. The region has large swaths of urban, suburban and even semi-rural areas that are marbled through with rich veins of social class, race, privilege and poverty. Suffice it to say that each county of metro Chicago except for DeKalb grew in number over the last decade, while only seven counties downstate had growth. The metro Chicago area is like that corner of the game board where the marbles keep rolling to.

It is accurate to say, in fact, that metro Chicago has been the key to maintaining a somewhat

stable population in Illinois. And perhaps surprisingly, for those who may see exaggerated images of a chaotic Chicago in the popular media, people seem to be voting with their feet by moving to that city, so much so that the city is key to maintaining the Chicago metro area's growth. Chicago rose by about two percent during the 2010s as the state overall fell slightly. So Illinois: whether you want to or not, you should thank Chicago for keeping our population up.

(The second map below shows counties of growth, blue, and counties of decline, red, between 2010 and 2020.)

Population Change: 1970-2020



A Much More Diverse State Emerges

The total population numbers mask another reality about change in Illinois. In racial terms, the state in the last half century has intensely diversified. Non-White persons have grown in number by nearly three million in the last half century. The state has added hundreds of thousands of Black non-Latinos and Asian non-Latinos and 1.8 million Latinos.

With all the increase in Asian, Blacks and Latinos, one group's story explains the slow statewide growth: White, non-Latinos in Illinois have plummeted in number by 1.8 million persons since 1970.

White, non-Latinos, with their population loss, have fallen from 85 to 62 percent of the population since 1970. Latinos have risen during that period from two percent to 17 percent of Illinoisans. Black non-Latinos have seen their share change but little, remaining at 13 percent. Asians, meanwhile, who are still the smallest of the major racial groups at 632,000, have soared from less than one percent to almost six percent of the state.

Race/Ethnicity in Illinois

	1970	2020	# Change	% Change
Black NL	1,403,700	1,621,569	217,869	16%
Asian NL	50,300	682,399	632,099	1,257%
Latino	243,500	2,083,005	1,839,505	755%
White NL	9,371,400	7,594,355	(1,777,045)	-19%
Other NL	18,000	303,936	285,936	1,589%
Total	11,086,900	12,285,264	1,198,364	11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Race/Ethnic Distribution in Illinois

	1970	2020	Point Change
Black NL	12.7%	13.2%	0.5
Asian NL	0.5%	5.6%	5.1
Latino	2.2%	17.0%	14.8
White NL	84.5%	61.8%	(22.7)
Other NL	0.2%	2.5%	2.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

We may associate Chicago and its metro area with diversity, however, non-white communities have grown across the state. Persons who don't identify as White are a quarter or more of the population in half a dozen metro areas in Illinois.

Non-metro counties are changing as well. Cass County, located northwest of Sangamon County (home to Springfield), saw its nonwhite population rise from one percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 2020. (Much of the Cass growth involved Latinos drawn to jobs in the meatpacking industry.)

Non-White Share of Selected Metro Populations in Illinois

	1980	2015	Point Change
Bloomington-Normal, IL	6%	20%	+15
Champaign-Urbana-Rantoul, IL	13%	33%	+20
Chicago, IL	31%	48%	+18
Decatur, IL	11%	24%	+13
Kankakee, IL	16%	28%	+12
Rockford, IL	12%	30%	+19
St. Louis, MO/IL	19%	23%	+4
Springfield, IL	8%	20%	+12

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Economic Rewards Are Concentrating

As the state's population has re-organized itself to the benefit of metro areas, some of those metro areas have performed better than others. Households in metro Chicago have higher median incomes, \$74,600, than Illinois overall, at \$68,400, and Chicago-area income is higher than many other metro areas such as Decatur (\$53,700), Rockford (\$56,900) or Rock Island (\$59,900).

But over time Bloomington-Normal is the star performer. While Bloomington's incomes are slightly down in the last decade, they are up 20 percent since 1970. (All discussion in this essay of income uses inflation-adjusted data.) It is worth noting that Bloomington is home to disproportionately high numbers of jobs in white collar, finance/insurance/real estate sector. About 26 percent of Bloomington area workers are in that sector compared to nine percent of all Illinois workers.

In the last decade at least, the Chicago area median income has grown faster than other areas, at four percent growth in the last decade compared to negative four percent in metro Peoria or negative three percent in metro Rockford. Another sign of the relative wealth of metro Chicago is that, of 18 Illinois zip codes with median household incomes above \$150,000 income, 14 are in the Chicago area.

Amid this wealth growth in northeast Illinois, the city of Chicago has had an especially high

income run-up, with its household median income jumping 11 percent in the last decade and 18 percent since 1970. The jump in Chicago, as in any area, can reflect lower-income persons leaving the area, but it likely also reflects households with higher earning power moving to the city.

Household Income Change in Illinois by Metropolitan Area

	Median HH Income	% Growth 2010-2020	% Growth 1970-2020
Bloomington-Normal, IL	\$68,037	-1%	20%
Champaign-Urbana-Rantoul, IL	\$54,897	0%	-2%
Chicago metro area	\$74,621	4%	10%
Chicago city	\$62,097	11%	18%
Davenport, IA - Rock Island-Moline, IL	\$59,876	4%	0%
Decatur, IL	\$53,725	2%	-7%
Kankakee, IL	\$59,370	-1%	n/a
Peoria, IL	\$60,094	-4%	-2%
Rockford, IL	\$56,899	-3%	-12%
St. Louis, MO/IL	\$65,725	4%	11%
Springfield, IL	\$62,590	0%	11%
Illinois	\$68,428	3%	n/a
U.S.	\$64,994	5%	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Household incomes in rural areas also appear to be declining compared to other parts of the state. Incomes of households not in a metro area were about 82 percent of the incomes of persons in metro Chicago in 1980. By 2010 the households outside the Chicago area had incomes that were down to 77 percent of Chicago regional incomes. The rural income decline is not just versus metro Chicago. A similar pattern is true when comparing rural incomes to those of metro Bloomington.

It is not only geography that is linked to increased income disparities. We are seeing some of our largest communities slip behind others, as the fruits of economic growth are not enjoyed equally. On the one hand, Asian and Latino households have seen their incomes rise almost as fast (Latinos) or faster (Asians) than non-Latino Whites in Illinois since 1980. Black median household incomes, however, have grown much more slowly, at six percent compared to 16 percent for Whites.

As of 2020, the relative economic position of African Americans in Illinois has slipped against that of Whites, with Blacks households earning 63 percent of White households in 1970 but only 57 percent of White households fifty years later. The position of Latinos vis-a-vis Whites has remained largely unchanged.

Median Household Income

	1980	2020	Change 1980-2020
Black NL	\$50,896	\$53,933	6%
Asian NL	\$90,121	\$110,057	22%
Latino	\$61,121	\$69,904	14%
White NL	\$81,074	\$93,844	16%
Other NL	\$63,130	\$85,000	35%
Total	\$76,377	\$84,000	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Ratio of Household Income to White Household Income

	1980	2020
Black NL	63%	57%
Asian NL	111%	117%
Latino	75%	74%
White NL	100%	100%
Other NL	78%	91%
Total	94%	90%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another economic sign of a state separating economically shows up when we look at the value of a college education, for those fortunate enough to be able to acquire one. Over the decades the fortunes of the highly educated have grown compared to persons without a B.A.

In 1980 the households of persons with a bachelor's degree had incomes that were 42 percent higher than the incomes of persons without a B.A. By 2020 households of persons with B.A.'s had incomes that were 83 percent higher than households of persons of lower education.

Ratio of HH Income of Persons with B.A. Degree to Persons Without B.A. in Illinois

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	1.42	1.63	1.65	1.79	1.83

Source: author's calculations from Census Bureau data

Disproportionate economic returns to having a college degree are furthermore seen in terms

of what workers are paid for the job they do. In the last decade, workers in “white collar” occupations related to management, business, science and the arts had the highest income growth, with their household incomes rising five percent in the 2010s, compared to, for example, growth of two percent among “blue collar” workers with jobs in production, transportation and material moving.

Change in Median Household Income by Occupation: Illinois 2010-2020

Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	5%
Service Occupations	3%
Sales and Office Occupations	4%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	4%
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	2%

Source: American Community Survey

Given the importance of higher education, it’s worthy to note who does and does not have a college degree. Some 67 percent of Asian non-Latinos, for example have at least a B.A. degree as do 40 percent of White non-Latinos. Only 23 percent of Black non-Latinos and 16 percent of Latinos have a four-year college degree. At least 40 percent of Illinois residents in the metro Chicago area have a B.A. compared to 25 of persons outside of metro Chicago. Again, the picture that emerges is of income rising, or falling behind, based on the group you were born into or the area where you live.

Pct. of Persons with a B.A. Degree in Illinois: 2015-2019

By Race/Ethnicity	
Black NL	23%
Asian NL	67%
Latino	16%
White NL	40%
Other NL	40%
Total	36%
By Region	
Downstate	25%
Suburban Chicago Metro Except Cook County	42%
Suburban Cook	40%
Chicago	42%

Source: American Community Survey

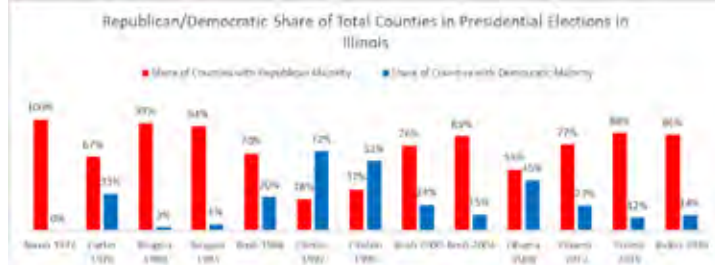
The Illinois Electorate: a Tally of Two States

Voter preferences for Democratic or Republican presidential candidates tell us a lot about attitudes toward the issues featured in national campaigns: taxes, crime, immigration and civil rights. Every four years we have a presidential contest that gives us a glimpse of how similar or dissimilar our Illinois neighbors are to one another and, for better or worse, the election results reveal a growing divide between upstate and downstate, metro and non-metro, and blue and red.

Vote totals determine elections, and if a low-population county chooses one candidate or another it probably has little effect on a statewide race. But a purely geographic analysis of where the red and blue majorities illustrate one facet of a growing divide.

Most Illinois counties have voted for Republican candidates going back to 1972 when Richard Nixon carried each county in the state including Cook. The exception were the Bill Clinton candidacies of 1992 and 1996, when Clinton carried most counties and racked up even more counties than Illinois resident Barack Obama in his own elections of 2008 and 2012.

After the Clinton victories of the 1990s Illinois returned to its pattern of most counties voting red. Obama carried only 48 of the 102 Illinois counties in 2008 and only 23 counties in 2012. Donald Trump in 2016 carried 90 of the 102 counties for the highest county total since Ronald Reagan in 1984. Trump again won 88 counties in 2020. The last two elections featuring candidate Donald Trump saw Illinois counties vote red at levels not seen since the 1980s.

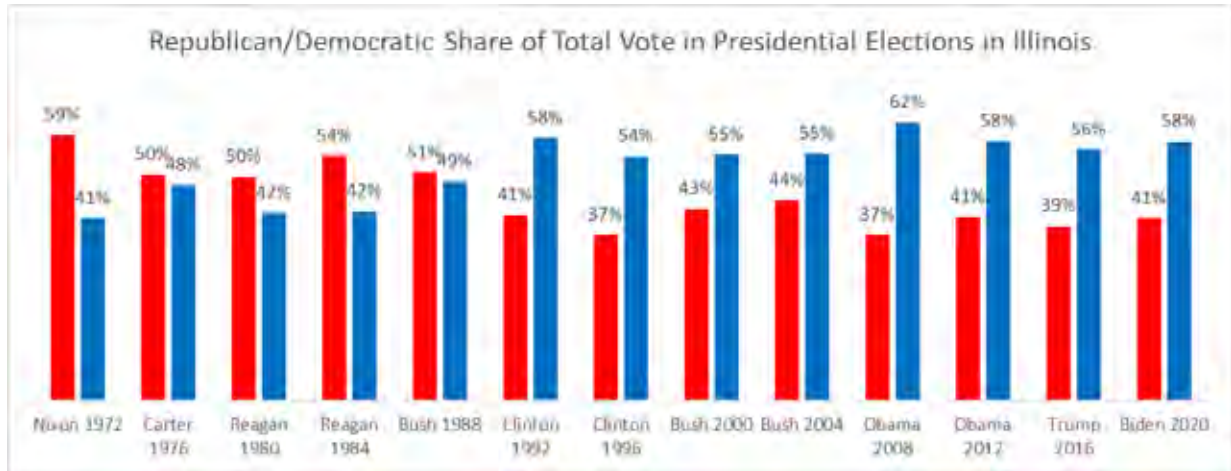


A completely different story involves the actual numbers of votes that win elections, and in this regard, Illinois has been a solidly blue state since 1992. The lower-population, generally more rural counties of Illinois may support Republican presidential candidates, but the highly populated coun-

ties have clearly preferred Democratic candidates for the last thirty years.

Republican presidential candidates carried Illinois in the 1970s and 1980s, but with the exception of the Nixon election the Republicans won with relatively small margins in several elections. But when Illinois turned Blue in 1992,

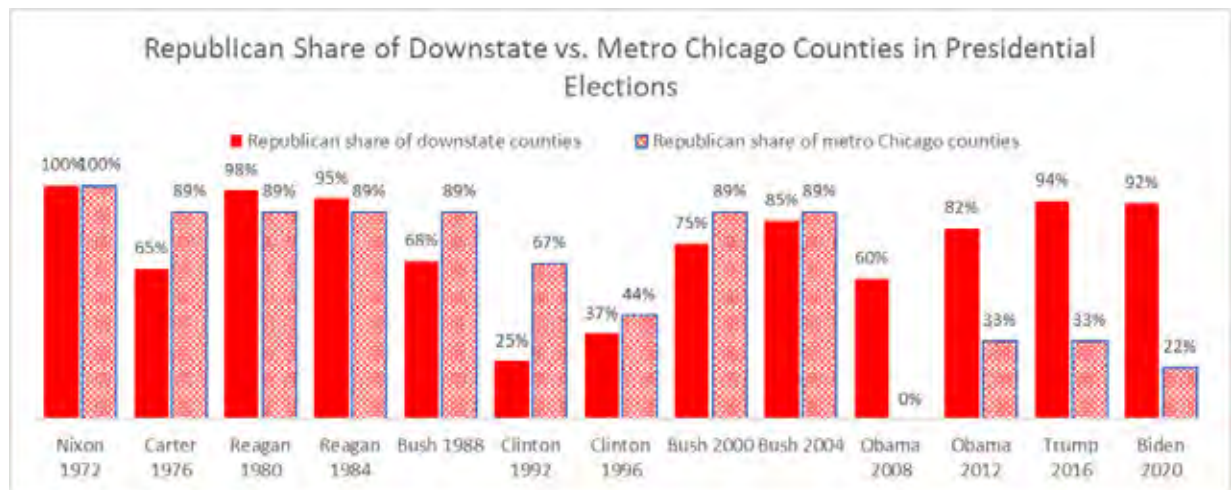
it did so in a big way. The Democratic candidates often won by margins that rivaled or exceeded Nixon's. Especially in the last four elections the Democratic candidates didn't just win but, as they say, they crushed it, with margins of victory of at least 16 points.



The blue-ing of Illinois has a lot to do with, and is one more example of, how metro Chicago is moving in a different direction than the rest of the state. It is in the metro Chicago counties that Republicans are performing worse than at any time in the last fifty years. None of the nine Chicago-area counties voted Republican in 2008, and after that never more than a third of them did. In the Biden-Trump contest of 2020 only Grundy and McHenry counties, which are the most geographically pe-

ripheral to metro Chicago, went for Trump.

The preferences of metro Chicago matter to the partisan separation going on in Illinois because more and more voters live in that area and more and more of them vote for Democrats, at least in presidential elections. Between 1972 and 2020 the metro Chicago share of votes went from 63 to 67 percent. And metro Chicago is very blue. Although it has 67 percent of voters it gave Joe Biden 77 percent of his Illinois votes in 2020.



Metro Chicago Share of Total Votes Cast

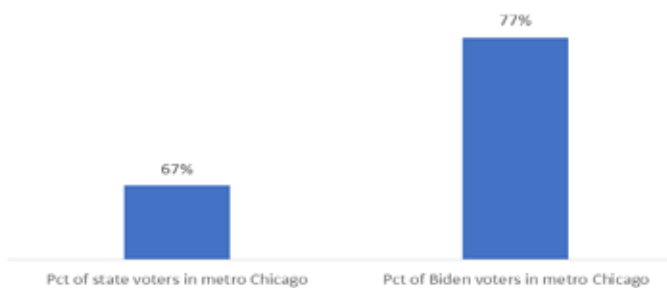
1972	2020
63%	67%

Based on current 9-County Region

Democratic/Republican Winner of Metro Chicago Counties in Presidential Elections

COUNTY	Nixon 1972	Carter 1976	Reagan 1980	Reagan 1984	Bush 1988	Clinton 1992	Clinton 1996	Bush 2000	Bush 2004	Obama 2008	Obama 2012	Trump 2016	Biden 2020
Cook	R	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
DeKalb	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	R	R	D	D	D	D
Will	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	R	R	D	D	D	D
Lake	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	R	R	D	D	D	D
Kane	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	D	D
DuPage	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	D	D	D
Kendall	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	R	R	D
Grundy	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	R	R	D	R	R	R
McHenry	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D	R	R	R

Metro Chicago Influence on 2020 Presidential Election in Illinois



If part of the story of solid and growing partisanship in Illinois is the story of blue metro Chicago, another part is the story of reliably red downstate counties. Eighteen Illinois counties have never voted for a Democratic presidential candidate in the last fifty years and most them have declined to change their tendencies. Half of them actually increased their votes for Republicans.

The three counties that became less red between 1972 and 2020 may come as no surprise given the trends discussed in this essay: Lee and Ogle counties, both of which had more than a ten-point decline in Republican votes, border metro Chicago. Woodford county lies in metro Peoria and borders metro Bloomington-Normal.

Republican Share of Vote in Nixon and Biden Elections

County	Nixon 1972	Biden 2020	Point Change
Adams	70%	72%	2
De Witt	65%	70%	4
Edwards	74%	84%	10
Effingham	66%	78%	12
Ford	75%	72%	-2
Iroquois	76%	77%	1
Lee	69%	58%	-11
Livingston	72%	70%	-2
Logan	70%	68%	-2
Menard	70%	68%	-2
Morgan	66%	64%	-2
Ogle	74%	61%	-13
Scott	66%	77%	11
Stark	72%	69%	-3
Wabash	68%	75%	7
Washington	69%	77%	8
Wayne	70%	84%	14
Woodford	73%	68%	-5

Conclusion: Be Careful with Your Crystal Ball

At the tail end of a fifty-year period of change in Illinois, it is hard to expect that the beginning of the next half decade will be much different. Nothing suggests that in the near future Illinois is going to reverse the flow of residents leaving the state nor the internal movement into metro areas. Meanwhile, the federal government has failed for 40 years to enact an immigration policy that's in tune with local needs for workers, consumers and taxpayers, and which could again re-populate our state.

We can expect the racial diversity of recent decades to continue apace. Asians and Latinos are younger and are having more children than Whites or Blacks. We are coming off of a period of high immigration which usually consists of young adults. We can look for growth and family-building to mark those communities and the state for years to come.

Our economic polarization consisting of higher-paid jobs being created in metro areas and higher returns being paid to college education reflects national trends reaching back to the end of the second world war. Unionization is at an all-time low, despite some recent worker-organizing victories at companies like Amazon and Starbucks. Government redistribution policies have arguably gone in the wrong direction in terms of tax cuts that benefit the wealthy. Illinois' wrong-headed dependence on property taxes to fund education will continue to mean that richer communities have more money for schools, and the resulting disparate outcomes for children's educations will continue to divide the state.

Having said all that, few people in mid-century Illinois foresaw the state's coming industrial explosion and the related, massive immigration of the late 1880s. No one in the early 1900s predicted that Americans would soon fight in two horrific world conflicts. In the 1950s, the coming civil rights victories were not remotely guaranteed, the Vietnam War was off the radar screen, and no one but no one expected computer technology to turn our world upside down.

So none of us today should be too sure of where Illinois will go. Climate change is degrading our life and life chances on this planet, and cooler, water-rich states like Illinois may look increasingly attractive compared to, say, Dallas where there were 40 days of 100-degree weather as of August 4 this year. Businesses may be unsustainable in the 1000-year drought of the southwest where the Colorado River is drying up and the nation's largest water reservoir (Lake Mead) is 65-percent empty.

The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with technologies of remote work will only be revealed over time. Will the office towers of Chicago empty, or will thousands of young workers continue to pour into the city to work hybrid schedules? Will the increase in vegetarianism, veganism and the development of meatless alternatives change the face of agriculture in Illinois?

So much we don't know. But we have a great state that has helped set the pace for centuries. Let's see what Illinois can do.

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GREETINGS FROM ILLINOIS



One Illinois

Noble Aspiration or Impossible Dream?

Roger Biles

Professor Emeritus of History at Illinois State University

“Why are we connected with these yahoos, anyway?” asked *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Mike Royko in 1981. “Chicagoans have little in common with the small town bumpkins and simple-minded rustics who make up most of the rest of Illinois.”

Royko’s mean-spirited depiction of Illinoisans who lived outside of the Windy City created a furor throughout the state. Editorial writers of newspapers from Galena to Cairo lashed back at the provincial views expressed by the *Sun-Times* writer, and angry lawmakers defended their aggrieved constituents in fiery speeches on the floor of the General Assembly.

The controversy, which soon subsided, reflected a long-standing history of regional antagonism in the state present since territorial days and persisting into the twenty-first century.



A large state settled by disparate groups with contrasting cultures, values, and norms, Illinois has long been a battleground for ideas contested by a heterogeneous people.

An early north-south division developed into an uneasy urban-rural split based upon Chicago’s phenomenal growth in the nineteenth century; rampant suburbanization created a sprawling metropolitan region in Cook County and the surrounding area that dwarfed lesser urban places in the rest of the state. The remarkable population

increase in Chicago and surrounding suburbs, coupled with modest increases or even losses elsewhere in the state, altered the political balance of power in Springfield.



Illinois state border sign.

Residents of Rockford, Peoria, East St. Louis, and other stagnant communities grumbled about the decline of representation they suffered in the state legislature. As well, Chicago’s economic successes often contrasted with the halting progress in less prosperous parts of Illinois. Issues have changed over the decades, but the regional tensions traceable back to the original era of European settlement have stubbornly remained as serious barriers to state unity. A full understanding of the regional fissures begins with historical context.

One year after Illinois became a state in 1818, most of its people resided south of the new capital city of Vandalia. The vast majority of newcomers had arrived from the Upland South (Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia). Few settlers ventured into northern Illinois, the last area of the state in which significant numbers of Indians roamed and still constituted a threat to the advancing white population.

Illinois in 1819

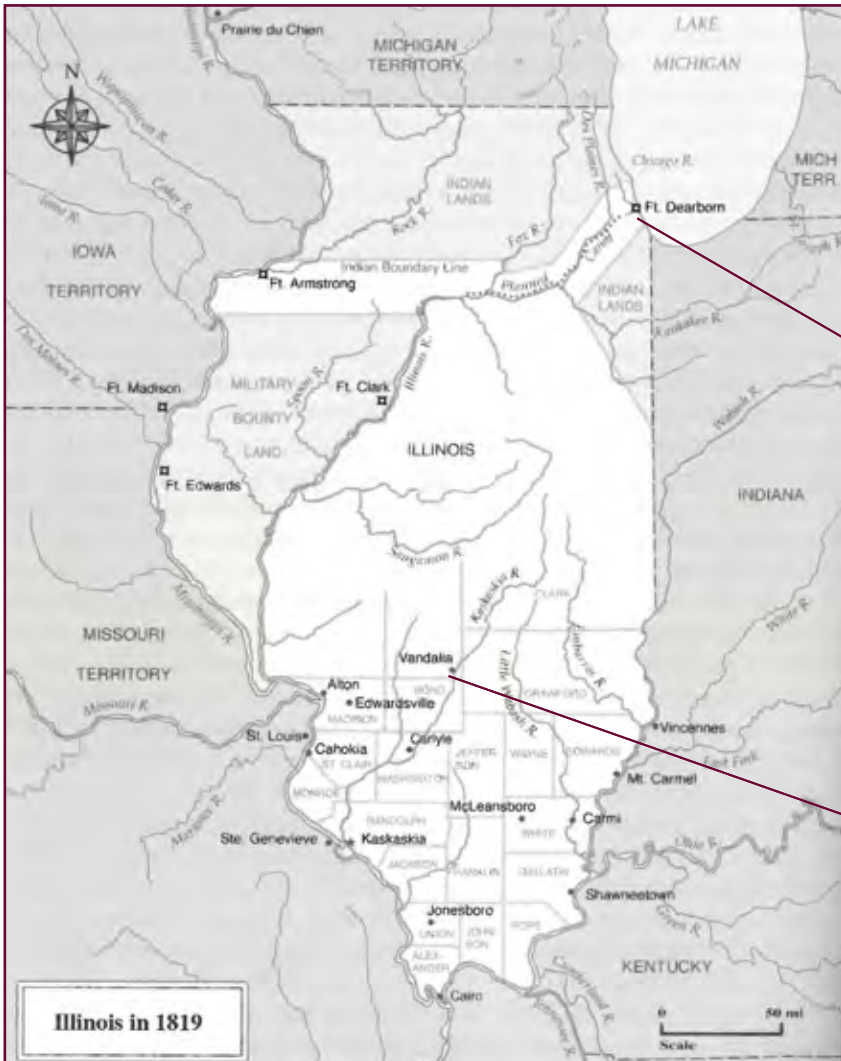
Illinois became the 21st state on December 3, 1818. This 1819 Illinois map shows the division of settlements in the state, with most settlers living in Southern Illinois, near river trade routes and away from Native American lands.



Fort Dearborn, 1831, Chicago area.



Illinois State Capitol, 1839, Vandalia.



The nascent settlement that became Chicago amounted to nothing more at that time than a jumble of cabins, trading posts, and stables. With the forcible removal of the last Indian tribes and improved transportation came a dramatic increase in the numbers of immigrants in the 1830s. Regional differences in settlement patterns endured. Southerners journeyed to Illinois along the Ohio River and the National Road, a wide thoroughfare suitable for wagon traffic that originated in Cumberland, Maryland and ended in Vandalia.

After the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, immigrants followed the Great Lakes to Illinois from New York, Pennsylvania, and the New England states. The Erie Canal also linked the Atlantic seaboard to Chicago, which became the distribution center for manufactured goods to a vastly expanding midwestern frontier. Before the Civil War, the pattern of a commercial Chicago and an agricultural downstate was crystalizing.

Population growth in the state's northern section exploded in the 1830s and 1840s, triggering a series of cultural conflicts. People in the southern reaches of Illinois warily eyed the new arrivals, who boasted of their enviable affluence and superior education. The Yankees believed in hard work, thrift, order, and progress; they took pride in being aggressive businessmen. Sober and industrious, they labored long hours and advocated higher taxes to improve the commonwealth. They viewed the denizens of southern Illinois as lazy and decadent, attributing the primitive frontier conditions throughout much of the state to the indolence of the inhabitants. "One thing is certain," wrote a northern settler in 1850, "where New England emigrants do not venture, improvements, social, agricultural, mechanical or scientific, rarely flourish."

Imbued with a sense of altruism and eager to perfect themselves and others, many of these northerners embraced a variety of reform causes ranging from abolitionism to temperance.



Illinois farm, 1881, Madison County.



Dearborn Street, 1909, Chicago.

Accustomed to living at a slower pace, seemingly less determined to succeed financially, and indifferent—if not openly hostile—to formal education, most southerners possessed values typical of their Scotch-Irish or Anglo-Celtic roots. They viewed Yankees as greedy, grasping peddlers who could not be trusted. Being “Yankeed,” southerners said, meant to be swindled by a fast-talking salesman from the big city.

Often distrustful of institutions, southerners felt overwhelmed by the number and influence of schools, government agencies, and voluntary associations established in Illinois by transplanted northerners. Perhaps worst of all, the moralistic Yankees perpetrated a kind of cultural imperialism whereby they sought to remake other people in their own image—an image that southerners suspected to be more illusory than real. High-minded Yankee rhetoric masked base motives, sons of the South believed, as moral crusades often conveniently allowed reformers to advance their own economic interests.

Along with the influx of Yankees came waves of migrants from foreign countries. In the early years of immigration, many foreigners congregated in the settled tracts of southern Illinois such as in St. Clair, Madison, and Edwards Counties across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, but increasingly they established residences in the northern part of the state—especially in the Chicago region where unprecedented industrial growth created jobs and economic opportunity. As multitudes of Poles, Slavs, Scandinavians, Italians, Greeks, and Jews arrived in the great ethnic cauldron on

Lake Michigan, many downstaters recoiled at the heterogeneity they encountered during their infrequent trips to the Windy City. Bombarded by a variety of languages, sights, and smells in the city’s polyglot neighborhoods, visitors from elsewhere in Illinois saw Chicago as not only alien but threatening. The cultural divide widened throughout the nineteenth century as increasing numbers of the foreign-born were drawn to the metropolitan magnet at the southern tip of Lake Michigan.



Hull House, 1889, Chicago.

Most settlement houses, like Chicago’s Hull House, were large buildings in crowded immigrant neighborhoods of growing industrial cities, where settlement workers provided services for immigrants and sought to remedy poverty.

The combustible issue of race added to the tension. History, geography, and demography combined to create an ambiguous legacy for slavery

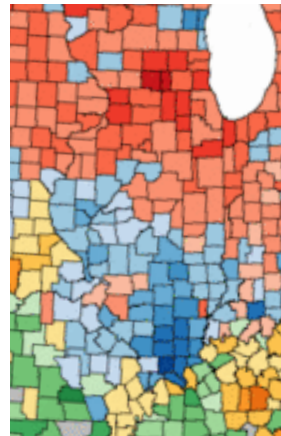
in Illinois. The 1818 constitution forbade human bondage but stopped short of emancipation where the practice already existed. State law prohibited whites from bringing slaves into Illinois for the purpose of manumission. The early settlement of the state by so many southerners reinforced support for slavery, a condition altered somewhat but not eradicated by the increasing Yankee immigration. In the years before the Civil War, a robust abolition movement developed in Illinois, the Underground Railroad thrived, and the fledgling anti-slavery Republican party grew rapidly.

At the same time, however, pockets of pro-slavery sentiment remained throughout the state and especially in the southernmost area. In the 1860 presidential election, Abraham Lincoln won just 50.7 percent of the popular vote statewide (approximately 70 percent of ballots in the northern counties and only 20 percent in southern counties). Lincoln's narrow electoral margin attested to the deep divisions among the state's residents on the slavery question.

During the Civil War, the Confederate cause attracted many followers in Southern Illinois. In the first months of the conflict, concerns about the loyalty of Illinoisans sympathetic to slavery and secession abounded in Springfield. Pro-slavery forces in Williamson County met in Marion and discussed the formation of a new state that would secede from the United States and ally with the Confederacy. The threat never materialized, but Union loyalists and Confederate partisans clashed repeatedly during the war. Union leagues proliferated throughout northern counties to support Republican candidates and shore up morale through the dissemination of propaganda.

In the central and southern parts of the state, Copperhead organizations operated secretly to obstruct the draft, engage in sabotage, and otherwise instigate dissent. The most violent confrontation occurred in Charleston, a noted center of Confederate support, when furloughed members of a U.S. infantry brigade exchanged gunfire with local Copperheads. When the violence subsided, the list of casualties included nine dead and twelve wounded. (The so-called Charleston Riot appeared to be the most lethal Civil War home front disturbance except for the New York City Draft Riot of 1863.) The lingering divisiveness in Illinois showed in the narrowness

of Lincoln's 1864 reelection victory, in which he prevailed by only 30,736 votes out of a total of 348,236 cast.



1860 Presidential Election Results by County in Illinois

In 1860 Illinois was divided over who should be elected the next President of the United States. The northern red counties (plus a few from the south) were won by Abraham Lincoln. The southern blue counties were won by Stephen Douglas.



Illinois Union soldiers from the 71st regiment.



The Charleston Riot occurred around this courthouse in 1864.



Growth of Chicago

This map shows the urbanization of the Chicago area between 1900 to 2000. With the invention of commuter rail, it became attractive to work in the city and live in the suburbs. Chicago's steady population increase led to growing suburban development.



Bascule Railroad Bridge, 1900, Chicago.



Elevated Loop Construction, 1895, Chicago.

The rapid growth of Chicago in the post-Civil War decades amplified the fear and mistrust between the metropolis' residents and the inhabitants of the rest of the state. The Windy City's growing reputation as a wicked, worldly refuge for vice, criminality, irreligiosity, and political extremism further alienated downstate defenders of pietism and tradition. Industrialization brought spectacular economic growth and development to the state, but it came unevenly as agriculture increasing lost sway to manufacturing. The chasm widened further as many offspring of rural and small-town Illinois repudiated their humdrum lives on the prairie and left for the bright lights and economic allure of the big city. Disgruntled farmers and village merchants, increasingly isolated as their numbers dwindled, became keenly aware of their declining status in modernizing America. The growth in Illinois of such groups as the Granges,

Farmers' Alliances, and Populist Party, all of which also served an important function as social outlets, underscored the perceived need among farmers for enhanced political representation to protect their endangered financial interests.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, as the population disparities between urban and rural areas continued to widen, the pull of tradition remained strong in central and southern Illinois. The Ku Klux Klan enjoyed a hardy revival in rural areas, no more so than in "Bloody Williamson" County where Governor Len Small dispatched the National Guard to reclaim control of local government from the Invisible Empire; twenty men died in full-pitched battles by the time that National Guardsmen withdrew. Offsetting the Chicago electorate's opposition to prohibition, voters outside of Cook County provided sufficient majorities to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment.

Downstaters scored a notable victory in 1920 by voting overwhelmingly to defeat a revised state constitution that would have redistricted malapportioned legislative districts and granted Chicago several home rule provisions. The rejection of the new constitution safeguarded, at least temporarily, the political power of downstate counties by preserving their disproportionate majorities in the General Assembly.

World War II accelerated many of the trends ongoing in the state for generations. Owing to the effect of the draft and the movement of many men and women away from rural Illinois to work in urban factories, the farm population fell from 978,907 to 759,429 from 1940 to 1945. Fewer farmers faced the need to increase yields to feed Americans and their wartime allies. Workers engaged in agricultural pursuits saw their income triple during the war, but they balked at inflation, the scarcity of consumer goods, rationing, and the shortage of labor that forced them to work much longer hours to maintain production levels.

Meanwhile, many farmers resented the benefits won by industrial workers. Thanks to the insatiable demand for war material, men and women readily found manufacturing jobs with generous wages routinely augmented by overtime pay. Factory workers received higher wages, it seemed to rural folk, because labor unions took advantage of wartime exigencies on behalf of the rank and file. Despite a no-strike pledge taken by major labor leaders in 1941, work stoppages became commonplace in Illinois. Between 1942 and 1945, union locals conducted more than fifteen hundred strikes in the state. In all, farmers prospered during the war but fumed while city workers flaunted the law to gain even more economic ground.



The decades after the Second World War ushered in spectacular economic growth and an age of mass consumerism, especially in the Chicago metropolitan region.



Illinois wind farm, Sangamon County, 2009.

The conversion of the economy from military hardware to consumer goods went smoothly as industrial output in Illinois ballooned after the war. Approximately three-fourths of the gains in the state's manufacturing occurred in metropolitan Chicago. At the same time, the postwar advent of the automobile triggered massive suburban growth and transformed the Illinois landscape. Throughout the "collar counties" encircling Chicago—DuPage, Lake, McHenry, Kane, Will, and the unincorporated sections of Cook—bulldozers carved out living spaces for hordes of suburbanites in the postwar decades. As the Chicago metropolitan area metastasized across northeastern Illinois, industry deserted the inner city for greener pastures in adjoining municipalities, other states, and overseas.

Chicago's share of manufacturing employment in the region fell from 71 percent in 1947 to 54 percent in 1961; less than half of the industrial jobs remained in Chicago in 1965. Soon most commuters were working outside of the city and, according to studies by civil engineers and urban geographers, Chicagoans were driving daily to nearby communities for employment as well. The appearance of massive shopping malls with acres of free parking in outlying areas allowed suburbanites to make their purchases close to home and avoid fatiguing traffic and expensive parking garages in the Loop.

As in previous decades, population grew unevenly in Illinois after World War II. Chicago lost residents, its suburbs recorded huge increases, and the remaining areas of the state experienced moderate growth. The state's population generally shifted northward from 1950 to 1980, with the

TABLE 1 – Population Growth in Collar Counties, 1980-2010

County	1980	1990	2000	2010
Cook	5,253,655	5,105,067	5,376,741	5,194,675
DuPage	658,835	781,666	904,161	916,924
Lake	440,372	516,418	644,356	703,462
Will	324,460	357,313	502,266	677,560
Kane	278,405	317,471	404,119	515,269
McHenry	147,897	183,241	260,077	308,760
TOTAL	7,103,624	7,261,176	8,091,720	8,316,650
Illinois	11,426,518	11,430,602	12,419,293	12,830,632

Source: All population data are taken from U.S. census reports.



Park Forest suburb, 1961.



Chicago skyline, 1953.

metropolitan region around Chicago adding the most people. The populace also became more diverse. The number of whites in Illinois decreased by an estimated 700,000 to 900,000 during the 1970s, while the number of African Americans and Latinos increased by approximately 400,000.

As before, Chicago remained the primary destination in the state for nonwhite immigrants. During the 1960s, the city's African American population increased by 300,000, and more blacks lived in Cook County than in any other county in the nation. The Mexican presence in Chicago, stimulated by the bracero program in World War II that recruited several thousand temporary workers, increased steadily and remained the largest group of Spanish-speaking immigrants, followed by Puerto Ricans and other groups from Central America and the Caribbean. By the end of the twentieth century, people of color in Chicago were joining the suburban exodus; for the most part, blacks moved into southern suburbs such as Dolton, Robbins, and Harvey, while Latinos moved westward into

such places as Cicero, Aurora, and Elgin. Long the most heterogeneous portion of Illinois, the Chicago metropolitan region was becoming even more so in contrast to downstate counties.

As Illinois approached the millennium, two key demographic developments altered the character of the state. First, beginning in the years immediately following the Second World War and hastening in the last decades of the century, the vast suburban region encompassing Chicago surged in population, wealth, and political influence. The percentage of the state's people residing in the collar counties rose steadily from 1980 to 2010. (See Table 1). No longer merely an important but secondary force existing in the shadow of the metropolis, the conglomeration of suburbs surrounding Chicago became instead the dominant geopolitical region in the state. Second, the emigration of whites and the simultaneous influx of people from other nations changed the racial mix of the state. Between 1970 and 2000, more than a million whites left Illinois

while hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Latin America and Asia replaced them. During the 1990s, for example, the Latino population of the state grew from 904,446 to 1,530,262 (a 69 percent increase), and the Asian population grew from 282,569 to 423,603 (a 50 percent increase).



By the twenty-first century, onlookers hailed Chicago as a global city, and the adjacent suburbs continued to grow at a stunning pace. Simultaneously, people in the rest of the state lagged well behind in numbers and quality of life.

Suburban sprawl, never a phenomenon caused solely by white flight, affected downstate communities as well as Chicago. According to the Illinois House of Representatives' Smart Growth Task Force, the pace of metropolitan growth in some central and southern Illinois cities nearly equaled the more heralded rates in the northeastern region of the state. Cookie-cutter residential developments, strip malls, office buildings, parking lots, and chain stores became commonplace in the outlying areas of Springfield, Peoria, Bloomington-Normal, and Champaign-Urbana, and along the Route 13 corridor stretching from Carbondale to Marion. New suburban developments—with curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and homes with attached multi-car garages—replaced corn and soybean fields as they crept outward from existing municipalities. Local businessmen and enthusiastic boosters endorsed growth as a sign of progress and touted their hometowns' enhanced cosmopolitanism.

The notorious conditions of the inner-city poor in Chicago notwithstanding, Southern Illinois communities contained the highest percentages of indigents. In 1990 Alexander County reported that 263 of every 1,000 residents received public aid, while Pulaski County counted 225 residents per 1,000 on welfare; Cook County listed 212. Desperate to attract revenue-producing businesses, downstate communities vied for industries that they would have shunned decades earlier. Small towns competed to attract prisons, for example, more of which were built during the 1990s than at any time in history. Towns even



Population Movement

This map shows the geographical movement of Illinois's center of population between 1830-2000. Within the span of 170 years, Illinois's population density grew incrementally to being centered around the city of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.

battled to have landfills and garbage incinerators located in their backyards.

Economic uncertainty beset Illinois agriculture too. The disappearance of farmland, ongoing in modest fashion for generations, accelerated in the last three decades of the twentieth century because of paving, flooding, strip mining, and other forms of development. Between 1981 and 1996, the state lost nearly 600,000 arable acres—about 4.4 acres every hour for fifteen years.



Rural-urban discord, layered on top of geographical schisms, continues to divide Illinois. Concerns about economic stagnation and widening income inequality have intensified in the twenty-first century, conditions exacerbated by the political bifurcation between the collar counties and downstate.

Political inequality has become glaring. Chicago Democrats controlled about 50 percent of the Illinois electorate in mid-twentieth century, with suburban and downstate voters commanding the other half. By 2010, voters in the six collar counties outnumbered their counterparts in the remaining ninety-six counties by a two-to-one margin. Downstaters have long rued their powerlessness in the state capital, lamenting the damage to democratic decision-making when majority interests drowned out the voices of an embattled minority.

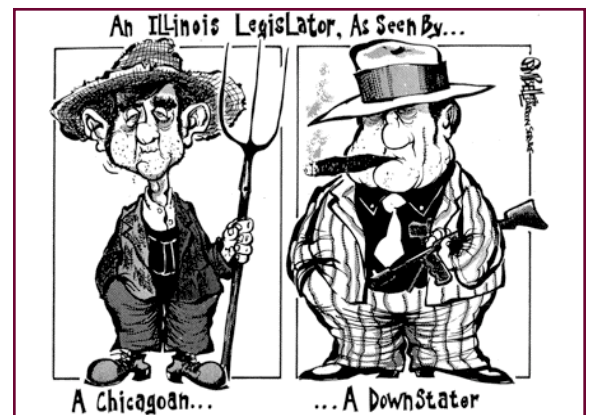
The entrenched divisions between a flourishing north and a less affluent south and between urban and rural environments, worrisome in their potential implications for the future, can best be understood as the natural outcome of abiding historical forces in Illinois. Yet even with a solid grasp of the past's determinative impact on the present, the search remains for effective policies to address the formidable barriers to achieving One Illinois ■



Downtown Springfield, 2012.



Illinois farm, Fayette County, 2008.



Illinois legislator political cartoon, 2003.

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BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO: Regional Efforts to Secede from Illinois

David Joens, director of the Illinois State Archives

**Fair representation
Show me the money
They are different than us**

On December 3, 1818, President James Monroe signed legislation making Illinois the 21st state of the union. Just over 200 years later, on February 7, 2019, State Representative Brad Halbrook (R-Shelbyville) introduced House Resolution 101, calling for breaking up of the Prairie State by separating Chicago from the rest of Illinois. Fresh off the heels of the state's 2018 bicentennial celebration, to some it looked like Halbrook was thumbing his nose at the proud 200-year history of Illinois. In actuality, however, Halbrook's resolution became just one of a number of efforts through the years to break the bonds of Illinois' mystic chords of memory. Indeed, the idea of breaking up Illinois goes back to, well, almost the beginning.

HURON: THE FEVER RIVER TERRITORY

In 1787 Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance. The ordinance laid down the future for the Northwest Territory, which was the land west of Pennsylvania stretching to the Mississippi River and north of the Ohio River to the Canadian border. The ordinance called for dividing the land into between three and five states and even laid out the boundaries of those states.



For the states that became Indiana and Illinois, the northern border under the ordinance was placed at the southern tip of Lake Michigan, while Ohio's border included just the southern shore of Lake Erie. However, when Ohio became a state in 1803, it successfully advocated Congress to extend its border up the western side of

Lake Erie to add the present-day port city of Toledo. When Indiana became a state in 1816, it convinced Congress to give it a northern border that extended ten miles up the Lake Michigan shore and then east to the Ohio border, giving the state Great Lakes access.

Illinois followed Indiana's example two years later in 1818 but instead of just asking that its border be pushed up north by 10 miles, it asked for, and received, a border 61 miles north of what the ordinance called for. This area contained approximately 8,400 square miles of prime farmland stretching from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. It also included the valuable lead mines of Galena. In one fell swoop Congress gave Illinois all or parts of what are now its northernmost 14 counties, including present-day Cook, Lake, DuPage, Winnebago, Rock Island and Jo Daviess. Congress took this action without consulting the settlers of what was then a very sparsely populated area and certainly without consulting any of the residents of what eventually became the state of Wisconsin.

In 1828, just 10 years after statehood, lead miners from Galena sent a petition to Congress requesting that a new territory be created, consisting of mining areas around Galena and across the border in what is now southwest Wisconsin. This area was known as the Fever River Lead Mines District (the Fever River is now known as the Galena River). The petitioners noted that splitting the district between two states didn't make sense. They also complained that the Galena part of the territory had been added to Illinois without the residents' consent. The petition drew the qualified support of the *Galena Miners Journal*, which wrote "We do not fully agree with the memorialists in petitioning Congress to dispose of that tract of country which has once been granted Illinois, but we think that it would be for the best interest of the miners to be erected together with the adjoining county above into a separate territory." The paper also criticized Congress for violating the Northwest Ordinance when laying out the northern border of Illinois. Although the petition and the newspaper's views were ignored by Congress, historian William Radebaugh, who called the territory Huron, noted the issue of the northern border would come back ten years later, when Wisconsin sought to become a state.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

When Illinois became a state in 1818, it became the third and final state in the southern tier of the Northwest Territory, joining Ohio and Indiana. The northern tier of the Territory (today's Michigan, Wisconsin and the part of Minnesota east of the Mississippi River) was then combined to form the Michigan Territory (1818-1837). When Michigan became a state in 1837, Wisconsin became its own territory. That territory's politicians immediately began thinking about statehood. And, some of those thoughts included retaking the northern part of Illinois.

In late 1838 the Wisconsin territorial legislature and Governor Henry Dodge sent a memorial to Congress, stating "that all that district of country lying between the northern boundary line of the state of Illinois, and a line drawn west from the southern extreme of Lake Michigan to the Mississippi rightfully belongs to the Territory of Wisconsin." Wisconsin argued that the Northwest Ordinance had been clear on the issue of where the state line should be drawn. Wisconsin wanted the land but it also needed the residents of that area so it could meet the minimum 60,000 population needed to become a state. However, Congress chose to ignore the petition. A year later, the territorial legislature asked the voters of Wisconsin to approve a request for statehood. That request included placing the southern border of the state at the old Northwest Territory border. Unfortunately for Wisconsin politicians, however, voters in the territory rejected the idea of statehood, with or without the lower border.

In the disputed territory, however, voters were beginning to think being a part of Wisconsin might not be such a bad idea. Illinois had been settled from the south to the north and, although Chicago had incorporated as a city in 1837, in 1840 the population center of the state was still down south. Most settlers in southern and central Illinois were southerners with southern attitudes. In northern Illinois, especially after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, a majority of the settlers were Yankees from New England and New York, or immigrants from western Europe. Although the Illinois state capitol had moved to Springfield in 1839, which was closer to the center of Illinois, Illinois politics was still controlled by central and southern Illinois politicians. And, these politicians

in 1837 had racked up a tremendous state debt through an ill-advised plan to have the state fund the building of railroads, canals and bridges, most of which were to benefit their regions of the state. Facing limited influence in Illinois and a large debt they felt they didn't create, some northern Illinois residents began to seriously consider joining Wisconsin.

In early 1840 meetings were held in nine counties to elect delegates to a July 6 meeting in Rockford to discuss leaving Illinois. On July 6, 120 delegates from Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Boone, Carroll, Ogle, Whiteside, Winnebago, Rock Island and McHenry counties attended the Rockford convention. Cook County, which was greatly benefiting from Illinois' constructing the I & M Canal connecting Lake Michigan to the Illinois River, did not have representatives at the meeting. Delegates declared that by the Northwest Ordinance their counties belonged in Wisconsin and if that territory chose to have a constitutional convention for statehood, they wanted to elect delegates and be a part of the convention.

The rationale for secession could be found in an 1840 letter to the *Chicago American* from a resident from Pecatonica, in Winnebago County. The author wrote, "Three fourths of the inhabitants of Illinois proper are a totally different sort of people. They have numerical superiority. The most unreasonable and ill-grounded prejudices against us exist among them. We are powerless and our voice is if not unheard certainly unheeded in the legislative councils of the State. Whether designedly or not almost every legislative enactment is directly averse to our interests, our views and our feelings." Those words, written by a northern Illinoisan about southern Illinois, would echo throughout most of the secession movements in Illinois, with only the location of the authors and the region being criticized changing.

In early 1842 meetings were again held in Illinois counties but this time, along with passing resolutions and sending petitions to Congress, delegates at these meetings called for the voters to decide if they wished to be a part of Wisconsin. Where election returns are available, it appears as if voters overwhelmingly favored leaving Illinois and joining the Wisconsin Territory. In Stephenson County, the vote was 570 to 1. In Boone, it was 495 to 11. In Winnebago it was 971 to 6. But,

while the residents of the disputed Illinois territory apparently seemed to favor joining Wisconsin, in Wisconsin voters were still not eager to become a state. In 1843 they again voted down applying for statehood in a vote that did not include the residents of the disputed territory. Additionally, a report in the territorial legislature expressed concern that Wisconsin should only annex the area if it was assured northern Illinois didn't bring with it its share of the large debt Illinois had amassed. The report also expressed concern that this tract of land's population would overwhelm the rest of Wisconsin and shouldn't be allowed to join the state until the rest of Wisconsin was equal in population.

With Wisconsin not even sure it wanted to become a state, sentiment for separation died down in Illinois. In addition, in 1842 the state elected Judge Thomas Ford of Ogle County in northern Illinois as governor. Ford strongly opposed separation on legal grounds. And, although he hadn't lived in Ogle County long, his election made it difficult for dissolution supporters to make the case that as a region it had no strength in Illinois politics. As one person noted during Ford's election campaign, "If we must have a man who is opposed to the union of this section to Wisconsin we must not choose Judge Ford, for the simple reason that he being a citizen of the district itself will have a powerful influence in defeating the exertions of our people in accomplishing that object." Finally, Congress also did not want to become involved, having already set precedent for changing borders in the Northwest Territory with Ohio and Indiana. When Wisconsin finally sought statehood in 1847-1848, it recognized the northern Illinois border and Congress admitted Wisconsin to the union with the border firmly in place.

EGYPT, CSA

Frontier Illinois was settled from the south to the north, as emigrants came down the Ohio River and then made their way up the Wabash and Mississippi rivers. Most of the settlers before statehood and in the years immediately following statehood came from southern states. Some of these southerners owned slaves in Illinois or many others were at least sympathetic to the idea of slavery. When Illinois became a state in 1818, not one of the state's 15 counties had a county seat

north of Edwardsville. Chicago was still 15 years away from incorporating as a tiny village. Indeed, the state capital of Kaskaskia was considered the center of the new state and yet was located just 80 miles north of the Ohio River.

By 1860, things had changed. Improvements in transportation ranging from the opening of the Erie Canal in New York state in 1825 to the creation of roads, bridges, steamships and even railroads made northern Illinois more accessible. The once vacant lands in northern Illinois were now filled up with Yankees from America's northeast and immigrants from western Europe. Southern Illinois now lagged far behind both central and northern Illinois in population and in wealth. The boomtown of Chicago was on its way to becoming the second largest city in the country and a major manufacturing and transportation hub. The invention of the steel plow in 1837 led to the discovery that the prairies of northern and central Illinois contained some of the richest farmland in the world. Southern Illinois found it had more in common with New Orleans than it did with Chicago. New Orleans was closer, too.

Democrat John A. Logan was the political leader of southern Illinois. While serving in the state legislature, Logan in 1853 had authored legislation known as the Black Laws, which severely discriminated against African Americans living in Illinois. If the upcoming Civil War was to be about either abolishing slavery or even preventing its expansion, the loyalty of Logan and of southern Illinois to the union might be suspect.

As the southern states began seceding after Lincoln's November 1860 election, Logan in Congress sought compromise between the two regions of the country. His region of Illinois, however, was split.

The *Salem Advocate* newspaper, in Marion County, openly advocated for southern Illinois to join the confederacy. In Pope County, a large public meeting held in April endorsed secession. On April 15, three days after Fort Sumter, a meeting in Marion protested Lincoln's call for troops and passed pro-secession resolutions. One resolution, blaming Lincoln and his election as the cause of troubles with the south, stated "the interest of the citizens of southern Illinois imperatively demands a division of the State. We heartily pledge ourselves to use all means of our power to effect the same and attach ourselves to the southern Confederacy."

Logan's father-in-law, John Cunningham, attended the meeting and helped draft the resolution.

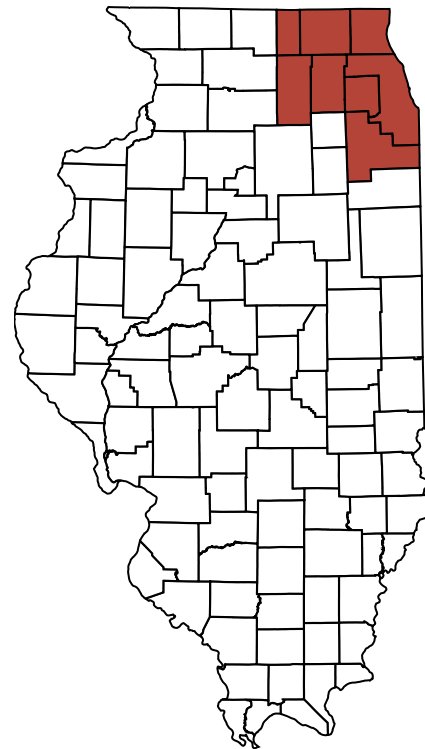
Throughout early 1861, southern Illinois wrestled with which side to support. Reviewing letters sent to Illinois Governor Yates, some said the region was a hot bed of secession, while others said the region was mostly loyal to the union. The night following the Marion meeting, citizens gathered in Carbondale to condemn the resolution and call for its repeal. In late April, union general Benjamin Prentiss stationed a company of soldiers and two cannons by a bridge near Carbondale over the Big Muddy River. Pro-secession residents threatened to attack the company but Logan and other southern Illinois leaders persuaded the mob not to. In May an attempt was made to organize a company of soldiers from southern Illinois to fight for the Confederacy. Thirty-five men, including Logan's brother-in-law, volunteered for the unit, which marched south and fought as part of the 15th Tennessee. Another of Logan's brothers-in-law was arrested by General Prentiss for taking part in rebel activities. Logan's own brother tried to form a company of soldiers to fight for the Confederacy.

Due to its location, southern Illinois was pivotal to the north's success. Cairo, in particular, located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, was vital to the union's war effort if it was to move down the Mississippi River and split the Confederacy in two. By May, the first Union troops began arriving in Cairo, both to secure it from the Confederacy and to prepare for an invasion of the south. With the arrival of northern troops, blatant secession support began to wane.

The death blow for southern Illinois secession came on June 18, when Logan spoke before Union troops commanded by Ulysses Grant, where he called for full support of the union. Although still a congressman, Logan enlisted in the Union army as a colonel and raised a regiment of troops from southern Illinois. He eventually became a Major General and the north's greatest volunteer (non-West Point) general. After the war, he switched allegiance to the Republican Party, was again elected to serve in Congress and also elected as a U.S. Senator from Illinois. He was the Republican Party's vice presidential candidate in 1884 and only his untimely death in 1886 prevented him from becoming the party's nominee for president in 1888.

CHICAGO

In the immediate years after the Civil War, there was no serious talk about dividing the state, in spite of differences between regions and changing demographics. In 1870 the state passed a new constitution (its third), which better reflected the realities of 1870s Illinois, especially with regards to transportation and the growing size of Chicago. In 1871 Chicago, now by far the largest city in the state, made an attempt to take the capital from Springfield. However, the Great Chicago Fire in October of that year stopped Chicago's efforts. Had Chicago, located 450 miles north of Illinois' southern border, become the capital, the Chicago-downstate split would have been worse through the years. Instead, legislators in Springfield from all over the state generously voted to appropriate funds for the rebuilding of the great city. In 1877 the new state capitol building opened in Springfield, which pretty much secured that central Illinois city as the state's capital. Things began to fray shortly after the turn of the century.



Through the years Chicago and downstate grew in their differences. Immigration to Chicago began to include socialists and radicals from western Europe who wished to unionize; Irish Catholics; eastern Europeans who spoke different languages; and eventually, African Americans from the south. Downstate saw similar demographic changes,

especially with Italian coal miners and pro-union immigration, but on a smaller scale and spread out in a larger geographic area. In addition, downstate farmers began to resent the big city. Any big city. In Chicago, the rich governed the newly created board of trade, which determined how much, or really how little, farmers should be paid for their produce. Railroad owners determined, with no government regulation, how much to charge in shipping and those costs often seemed, and, in fact, were, arbitrary. Storage and warehouse facilities, the largest of which were located in transportation hubs like Chicago, charged farmers' prices for storage and the amount they charged too, was unregulated and seen by many farmers as capricious. The grange movement, a national pro-farmer, mostly rural movement of the 1870s and 1880s, saw its greatest strength in Illinois and affected some changes, as did the later progressive movement of the 1890s. But the biggest sin of Chicago in the eyes of downstate, was that it just kept growing.

Chicago's population in 1860 was 112,000. By 1900 it was 1.7 million and by 1950 it peaked at 3.6 million. The rest of Illinois couldn't keep it. Illinois' population in 1860 was 1.7 million, meaning Chicago wasn't even 10% of the state's population. By 1900, the state's population was 4.8 million, meaning Chicago was at 35% of the state's population. Cook County at one point held more than 50% of the state's population.

Under the 1870 Constitution, every 10 years the General Assembly was supposed to redraw the lines of its legislative and Congressional districts, to reflect population changes shown by the decennial census. Legislative districts generally did not cross county lines or, in the case of Chicago, city lines. It was not until the 1960s that the federal courts made almost iron clad the requirement that legislative districts be of equal population. Before then, "close enough" was the mantra. While extremely small counties were lumped together into legislative districts, for the most part small and medium-sized counties would have their own legislative districts. Following the 1870 Constitution, each district had one Senator and three representatives. Larger counties, such as Peoria and Sangamon, would have more than one district. As Chicago and Cook County grew, their number of legislative districts also grew.

In the 1872 election, Cook County had seven legislative districts, five of which were wholly within Chicago. After the 1891 reapportionment, Cook County jumped to 15 districts, with the rest of the state having 36. Chicago grew by 60% in the next 10 years and the city filled with immigrants and residents with no connection to agriculture. For downstate legislators, this was too much. Republican Senator John McKenzie of Jo Daviess County introduced a resolution during the reapportionment process to limit the size of the Cook County delegation to the same 15 districts it had following the 1890 census. In the era before the court rulings on *one man, one vote*, McKenzie is quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* as saying that Cook was only one county out of 102 and 15 districts was all it deserved. For the first time since the Civil War, secession was mentioned in Illinois and it was mentioned by Chicagoans. However, cooler heads prevailed and Cook County ended up with 19 districts, with the rest of the state having 32.

However, Chicago continued to grow and rather than give Chicago and Cook County its fair share of representative in Congress and the General Assembly, downstate legislators, Republican and Democrat, simply refused to act. In 1911 and again in 1921, the legislature refused to reapportion the senatorial and Congressional districts. In 1921, a frustrated Senator John Denvir of Chicago's west side introduced a joint resolution in the Senate to create the State of Northern Illinois, which would consist of Cook, Will, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, DeKalb and Boone counties, and a State of Southern Illinois, which would consist of the remaining 94 Illinois counties. The resolution did not advance. The *Chicago Tribune* editorialized at the time that: "There are differences between Chicago and downstate, but none of which are injurious except in the manner in which politicians use them. The real differences are beneficial." The downstate *Cairo Evening Citizen* agreed, writing that "the great city and the great state should be able to go along in the most harmonious relations." That said, the Cairo paper also urged Chicago to accept limitations on its representation in the legislature.

The issue would not go away, however. In 1923, Chicago activist John Fergus reignited the issue and framed it as a "taxation without representation" issue. Encouraged by that argument, in 1925 Cook County threatened not to pay any of its state



taxes until the state redistricted. In June of 1925 the Chicago City Council passed a resolution on secession. It had been a quarter of a century since the last reapportionment and their motto became "reapportionment or secession." A committee of 150 was formed to look into secession but a compromise was reached when the legislature voted to grant Chicago more home rule powers, in effect giving it more authority over itself and less interference from the state. Still, in 1929 former state representative James Kirby of Petersburg felt compelled to organize a Downstate League of Defense, whose purpose was to prevent the City of Chicago from seceding from the state. In 1931 as the legislature again failed to reapportion, Representative John Garriott of Chicago presented a petition to the House again calling for a new state to consist of Cook County. Again, nothing happened. The issue would reappear every so often, including a

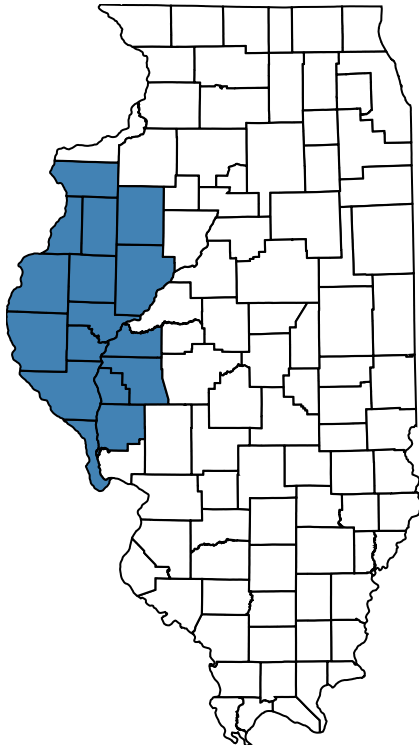
petition drive during the failed 1951 reapportionment attempt, but nothing came of it.

The redistricting stalemate continued until 1954, when voters approved an amendment to the State constitution which the state reapportioned for the first time since 1901. After further issues of *one man, one vote* and redistricting were dealt with by the legislature and, especially, by the courts, the reapportionment issue died down. It went so well that in 1967 the *Rockford Register Star* wrote an editorial complimenting Chicago for not threatening to secede but merely threatening to steal the state capital from Springfield. That détente didn't last long and two years later, in 1969, Chicago Alderman Vito Marzullo proposed to the Chicago City Council that Cook County secede. Still, by 1971, with the Chicago-Downstate split resolved, at least temporarily, all would seem peaceful in Illinois. It was not. In 1973, a

new secession movement arose. This time, it was western Illinois that threatened to leave the state.

FORGOTTONIA

In the 1970s, times were tough in western Illinois. The major road building projects of the 1950s and 1960s that had seen interstate highways like I-55 and I-57 built seemed to skip western Illinois. Businesses and people were leaving the region. Politically in the state, power seemed to rest everywhere but in western Illinois. It seemed as if the region had been, well, forgotten.



In response, a group of businessmen from western Illinois came together and decided to vent their region's frustration by creating a separate country, based on the idea that it would fight a war, lose and receive reparations (the Mouse that Roared). Later it was decided to just create a separate state, called Forgottonia. The state was to consist of 16 counties in western Illinois, west of the Illinois River. The business leaders hired a theater major named Neal Gamm from Western Illinois University to serve as governor of the new state of Forgottonia. They couldn't have made a better choice.

As governor, Gamm held press conferences, lobbied politicians, visited local newspapers and television stations, walked in parades and attended civic functions. To improve his visibility, he wore a Lincoln-esque costume and traveled in a customized car. Billboards stating "Welcome to Forgottonia"



Forgottonia Governor and then-Western Illinois University student Neal Gamm is pictured in front of the Forgottonia Capitol building in 1973. Photo courtesy of the Western Illinois University Archies and Special Collections.

were erected and t-shirts were made on behalf of the "movement." Fandon, in McDonough County, was chosen as the state capitol and the white flag of surrender chosen as the state flag.

The movement took off and even the national media covered the story. Within a week of announcing the creation of Forgottonia, the Mercer County Board voted to leave Illinois. McDonough County followed suit. Congressman Paul Findley of Jacksonville voiced his support for the movement and Congressman Tom Railsback attended a meeting. In November 1973, Gamm attended a session of the Illinois Senate, where State Senator Clifford Latherow of Carthage introduced him from the floor as the governor of Forgottonia.

Eventually, the movement faded. Gamm became tired of playing the role of governor and the novelty of the secession movement wore off. Western Illinois also began sharing in more state funding, with the extension of Route 67 and I-72, and the expansion of Western Illinois University serving as three examples. However, even 45 years later Forgottonia has not been forgotten, at least not as an entity. In 2018 a folk musical entitled Forgottonia premiered at East Central College in Missouri. Photographer Bruce Morton has released a series of three photography books on Forgottonia. There is a Forgottonia web page. And, recently a microbrewery has opened in Macomb named Forgottonia. Thanks to that microbrewery,

long after the other Illinois secession movements are actually forgotten, we'll all be drinking to Neal Gamm and Forgottonia.

COOK COUNTY

As we put western Illinois behind us (can we say as we forget about Forgottonia), Chicago and Cook County began another secession movement. Actually, it would be fairer to say that a newspaper columnist started a secessionist movement.

In 1981, the Regional Transportation Authority, which provides public transportation for Chicago and the suburbs, was broke and came to Springfield looking for funding. The legislature balked and as the issue festered it became a crisis. In Chicago, *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Mike Royko knew who to blame. "(The) problem is that the rural yokels and the smug suburbanites of this state dislike Chicago and do everything they can to destroy this city," he wrote. So, using his column as a platform, he wrote several pieces calling for Chicago to secede from Illinois.

Newspapers had a lot of influence at the time and Royko was a Pulitzer Prize winning writer. However, it was the language and the tone he used that made the issue what it was. An eloquent Thomas Paine he was not. Some quotes:

"Chicagoans have little in common with the small town bumpkins and simple-minded rustics who make up most of the rest of Illinois."

"They talk funny, they eat greasy food and most of them are nothing more than hillbillies."

"Who uses highways anyway? Most of the Downstate highways are for the benefit of farmers, small town louts, hillbillies and village idiots."

"We are fed up with downstate hayseeds and polyester leisure suit suburbanites trying to wreck our city."

Newspaper editorialists and columnists from all over Illinois quickly responded and then suburban and downstate legislators chimed in. According to Royko, some downstate legislators began circulating "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters with his picture on it and they named a restroom in the capitol building after him. Republican Senator Pate Phillip from DuPage County called Chicago a rathole.

The funding issue over the RTA continued and on June 10, 1981, the Senate Executive Committee approved a joint resolution sponsored by Senator Howard Carroll calling for Chicago and Cook County to become the 51st state. While done in a humorous vein, the resolution made it to the Senate floor, where on the last day of session it passed by a voice vote. Although the sponsor was a Chicago Democrat, Republican Senator Roger Sommer from Morton spoke in favor of the resolution, stating "this is something my constituents have been asking for for years. They've sent me down here to do it." Although the resolution passed the Senate, the House never voted on it.

Over the next 30 years the idea of secession was raised but not in an official manner. In 1996, when Governor Jim Edgar and Mayor Richard Daley were feuding over a third airport for Chicago, *Chicago Tribune* columnist Thomas Hardy proposed that Chicago secede from Illinois and become the 51st state. He even named it Daleyland. However, Hardy didn't have the audience that Royko did, and the idea didn't go anywhere.

In 2018 Democratic gubernatorial candidate Robert Marshall proposed dividing Illinois into three or four states. If it was to be three states it would have been Chicago, the suburbs and downstate. Four states would have been Chicago, the suburbs west to I-355, the rest of northern Illinois north of I-80, and the rest of Illinois south of I-80. Marshall did not become governor of Illinois or of any of his proposed states, so the idea went nowhere.

NEW ILLINOIS

In the 2010s a new secession movement began and it continues to this day. Although the reasons behind this secession movement are familiar, there was, and is, a difference between this movement and the ones in the past. In the past, secession movements were "we want to leave." This secession movement is "we are kicking you out." Led by downstate members of the Illinois House, this movement seeks to kick Chicago and Cook County out of Illinois.

In several recent sessions of the General Assembly, resolutions have been introduced in the Illinois House by downstate legislators to have Chicago and Cook County become the 51st state. For the 101st General Assembly (2019), there were

eight representatives sponsoring this legislation. In addition, there is a group known as “Illinois Separation,” which reportedly has 24,000 followers on its Facebook page and is working on a county-by-county petition drive to get an advisory referendum on the ballot to separate Chicago and Cook County from Illinois. In 2020 an advisory referendum for a new state appeared on the ballots in 22 counties and won overwhelmingly in each county. There is another group called “New Illinois,” which has a website, a logo, a flag and the same goals as Illinois Separation. Already the Effingham County Board has voted to place the advisory referendum on its 2020 ballot.

Although kicking a region out of the state rather than a region leaving the state is a new twist, the reasons behind the separation are the same. House Resolution 101 from 2019 talks about fair representation, stating that in 2010 Democrat Pat Quinn won enough votes for governor in Cook County alone and didn’t need the rest of the state, where he lost in 98 of the remaining 101 counties. The resolution discussed the money issue, claiming that the city is often financially bailed out by the rest of the state. Finally, addressing regional differences, the resolution argues that “the majority of residents in downstate Illinois disagree with City of Chicago residents on key issues such as gun ownership, abortion, immigration, and other policy issues.”

The bottom line is this: the idea of breaking up Illinois is nothing new. From railroads and canals to mass transit and airports. From slavery to immigration. From paying for failed internal improvements projects to paying for troubled pension

systems, only the issues have changed. And, in a larger sense these haven’t changed either, as they revolve around issues such as fair representation; taxes and spending; and different beliefs.



Will Illinois ever break up? Well, you know what they say. Breaking up is hard to do.

David Joens is the director of the Illinois State Archives, the state agency that is responsible for the preservation of historic Illinois state and local government records. A fifth-generation resident of Illinois, Joens received his bachelor’s degree from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, two master’s degrees from the University of Illinois at Springfield, and a doctorate in Illinois history from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He is the author of three books on Illinois history and government, including *From Slave to State Legislator: John W. E. Thomas, Illinois’ First African American Lawmaker*, published by SIU Press.

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