

curiously narrow. As a result, a useful short-run analysis of the relation between population and economic progress was elevated into a law of doubtful validity.” (page ix)

The two books on population should be of value not only to students of population but also those interested in the demographic aspects of modernization of underdeveloped areas.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH IN RHODE ISLAND¹

IN this booklet, Kurt B. Mayer “attempts to trace in brief outline the growth of Rhode Island’s population from its inception and to relate it to the processes of economic development characteristic of this area.”

Primarily an agricultural community when first colonized in 1636, Rhode Island subsequently became a maritime and commercial community and finally an industrial state.

Settled by those persecuted in the Massachusetts colonies, most colonists were dependent upon subsistence farming. However, early could be seen not only division of labor—the blacksmith, the shoemaker, etc.—but also the beginnings of foreign commerce and shipbuilding, which formed the basis of the colony’s wealth during the eighteenth century. Newport became the leader in New England commerce as well as the center of the American slave trade. Subsidiary to maritime commerce, but developing as a result of it, were distillers to convert imported molasses to rum, manufacturing concerns to produce sail cloth and cordage, and iron works. Livestock farming on large plantations was initiated.

The population of Rhode Island increased rapidly during the colonial period. It increased from the 7,181 persons in 1708 to 59,678 in 1774. Diverse social strata could be observed on the eve of the Revolution: the wealthy commercial and mercantile class and the landed aristocracy, the poor self-sufficient farmers, the colored slaves, and indentured servants. Popula-

¹Mayer, Kurt B.: *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH IN RHODE ISLAND*. Providence, Brown University, 1953, 70 pp., \$2.25.

tion growth declined after the Revolutionary War with the decline of Newport and the State as a whole. With peace, prosperity was restored and population growth resumed. Providence experienced a shipbuilding boom, but the declining commercial enterprises were unable to absorb the surplus agricultural population and out-migration began from the rural areas of Rhode Island, as from other New England States.

With the rise of manufacturing in the nineteenth century—particularly the cotton and woolen industries—population growth resumed and urbanization began. Readily available labor and capital and cheap water power fostered the textile industry which, in turn, gave stimulus to the iron works that had started earlier. The jewelry industry, today one of the State's major concerns, began early in the nineteenth century.

From about 1820 until 1910 the history of Rhode Island's prosperity can be seen in the expansion, consolidation, and technological advance of existing industries—particularly in the cotton and woolen industries, the jewelry and silverware industry, the metal and machinery trades, and in the beginnings of other related industries—the manufacture of rubber goods, chemical plants, the dyeing and finishing of textiles, hosiery and knit goods concerns, and in the manufacture of silk. Although primarily an agricultural State—subsistence farming had been replaced by crop specialization as a result of increased Western competition and the rural exodus—urbanization increased as did industrialization. Population increases—from 83,059 in 1820 to 542,610 in 1910—were the result of natural increase, in-migration from other states and, since about 1850, immigration from abroad also. The rate of increase for each ten-year period from 1820 to 1910 varied from 8.0 per cent to 35.6 per cent. As Kurt B. Mayer says, "The year 1910 marks a turning point in the demographic history of Rhode Island, bringing to a close what might be called its Golden Age." (p. 53.)

During the next thirty years, the over-all industrial and demographic picture of Rhode Island changed. The cotton industry, due to Southern competition, had gradually declined although there were a few years of prosperity attributable to the war booms; other branches of the textile industry were not

as adversely affected. The jewelry industry remained constant; the metal and machinery trades declined. Labor turned to the tertiary industries, to the trades, and to the services for employment. The rate of population growth reached a low of only 3.8 per cent for the 1930–1940 decade as a result of immigration restrictions, and a falling birth rate. However, during 1940–1950 the birth rate rose, as it did in the country as a whole, and Rhode Island's population increased 11.0 per cent.

In his general summary, Mayer states, "Employment opportunities have not expanded at the same rate as has population growth. . . . This lag between the rate of employment expansion and the rate of population growth spells potential trouble; it is the crux of the State's present problems. (p. 69.) . . . However, . . . what is needed now is not further industrialization but a diversion of resources into different types of industries and an adaptation of existing manufacturing industries to new products and new technologies." (p. 70.)

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