

A Demographic Profile of Collin County, Texas

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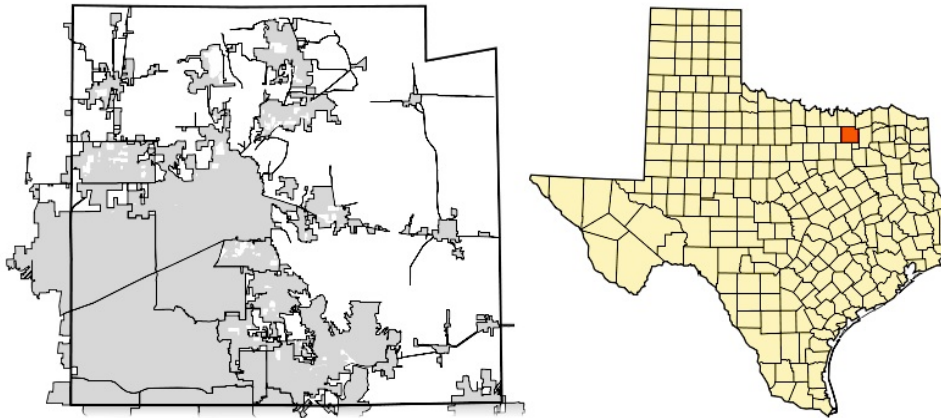
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Overview

Collin County is primarily a suburban area located north of Dallas, and at the far northeastern corner of the Dallas-Fort Worth urban area. The non-rural areas of the county are split between several small cities, some of which spill over into adjacent counties. Exhibit 1 shows the location of Collin County.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this county from a demographic perspective is its rapid rate of growth: As displayed graphically in Exhibit 2, the 1960 total population was 41,247 and by 2000 the population had risen to 491,675¹.

Exhibit 1. At left: A detail of Collin County with grey areas showing incorporated cities. At right: The state of Texas with Collin County shaded.

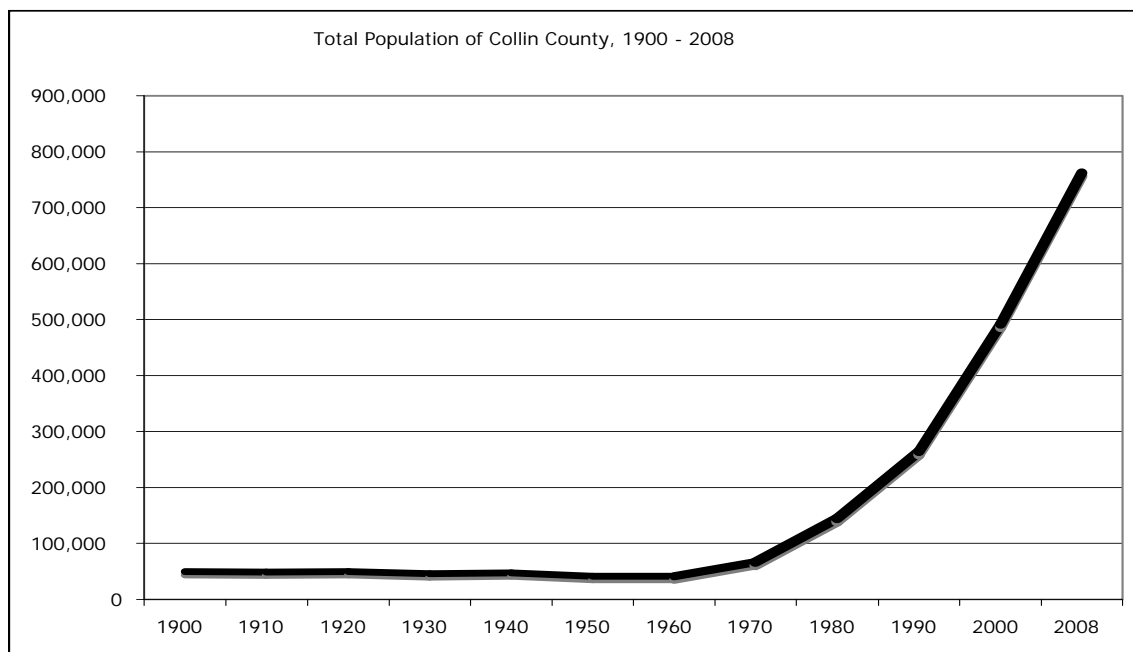


It is, however, the period from 1990 to 2000 that will be the major focus of this report and several interesting dynamics are apparent. First, the age structure in both 1990 and 2000 shows the pattern typical of many bedroom suburbs, with high numbers of children and adults of childrearing age but relatively few young adults and older individuals (Exhibits 3a and 3b). Second, the county's ethnic and racial make up is predominately non-Hispanic whites. This group was 89% of the

¹ See the data methods section for more detail, but unless otherwise noted all data used here was taken from the US Census Bureau.

total population in 1990 and 81% in 2000. Third, the county has a very high median household income at \$70,835 in 2000. Before examining these issues the data and methods used to generate this report will be explained, with special reference to the life table from which many of the more important calculations presented here were made. This table can be found in Appendix A, and the related survivorship table in Appendix B.

Exhibit 2. Growth in Collin County, 1900 to 2008.



The Life table: Data and Methods

To create a life table for Collin County in 1990 population estimates for males and females in each age group shown were downloaded for the US Census Bureau's website and the mortality data for the same year was taken from the Center for Disease Control's website. However there were some

discrepancies in the age groups as the CDC lumped most of the middle years of life into ten-year groups and the number of deaths thus had to be split up to match the predominantly five-year divisions used by the Census Bureau using the Karup-King method (Siegel & Swanson 2004: 726). The table was constructed using the considerations outlined in *The Methods and Materials of Demography* (in particular pages 307-317), although the Fergany method was employed to find the total person years lived by each age group (as outlined by UNC Population Center). The table is presented in Appendix A. The life table shows a low level of mortality and relatively long life expectancy.

Making ten-year projections of this population from the 1990 life table allows us to estimate the level of migration. This projection can be found on page six, and a few notes on its construction are in order. First, the estimates for age groups 10-15 to 70-75 (in 2000) were produced by multiplying the number in the age group that would have been ten years younger in 1990 by the relevant survivorship ratio for the intervening years. Second, estimates for 0-4 in 2000 were found by taking the ratio of children 0-4 years-old to women of childbearing age (that is ages 15-34) in 1990 and then using that ratio to determine the number of expected children in 2000 based on the number of women of childbearing age expected for that year. This estimate was then multiplied by the survivorship ratio for that group to estimate the number of 5-9 year olds for 2000. Finally, the 85 and over group in 2000 was projected by combining all those 75 and over in 1990 and multiplying by the survivor ratio for relevant age groups.

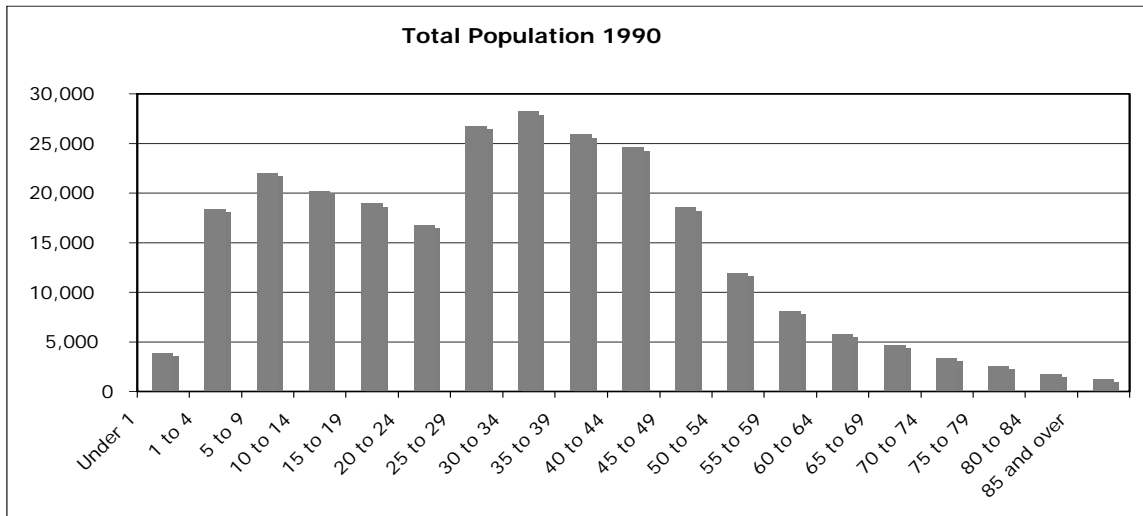
Having calculated the survivorship of those in the county from 1990 to 2000 allows us to see the large number in-migrants received by Collin County: 203,191, or almost the size of the population in 1990. These calculations are shown in the table in Appendix B. The distribution of in-migrants by age, is telling of both who moved to Collin County and why, as will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Age and Sex Structure

The large increases in population from 1990 to 2000 indicate that the process of suburbanization is very much underway, and an analysis of the age structures of the migrants gives us very good clues as to who is moving in (See Exhibit 4). The large number of migrants in the 25-39 and under-nine age groups indicate that families with children are moving in or having children once they have “settled down”. While the 25-39 age bracket may seem a little old to start a family, we do know that the average age at first marriage has moved much closer to thirty in recent decades. We also know that this trend is more pronounced among whites and the wealthy. Somewhat more speculatively, it is likely that these couples are waiting to attain some measure of financial security and then buying a house in the largely suburban county. The fact that there is a relative deficit of young adults indicates that those individuals tend to move away, and it is quite likely that they are going off to college given the county's high median household income. At the other end of the age range, the fact that the drop off in

numbers of older adults is less pronounced in 2000 than 1990 suggests that many of those that moved to Collin County in the 1970s have remained. It seems likely that have bought homes, given both the high level of income and relatively low cost of living and housing in the area. Although in fairly low numbers, there are also some older adults moving into the county, and the low cost of living maybe a strong incentive to seniors on relatively fixed incomes. One suspects that this age group also contains the remnants of a relatively small group of individuals who has always lived in the county and are now watching the farms and ranches they knew as children turn into sub-divisions as waves of people poured in². The sex ratio of the Collin County is unremarkable and stands at 99.8 in both 1990 and 2000, indicating a very slight excess of females.

Exhibit 3a. The Age Structure of Collin County in 1990.



² While we have no direct data on the process of suburbanization we can note that the number of households classed as rural by the Census Bureau declined more than 5% from 1990 to 2000.

Exhibit 3b. The Age Structure of Collin County in 2000.

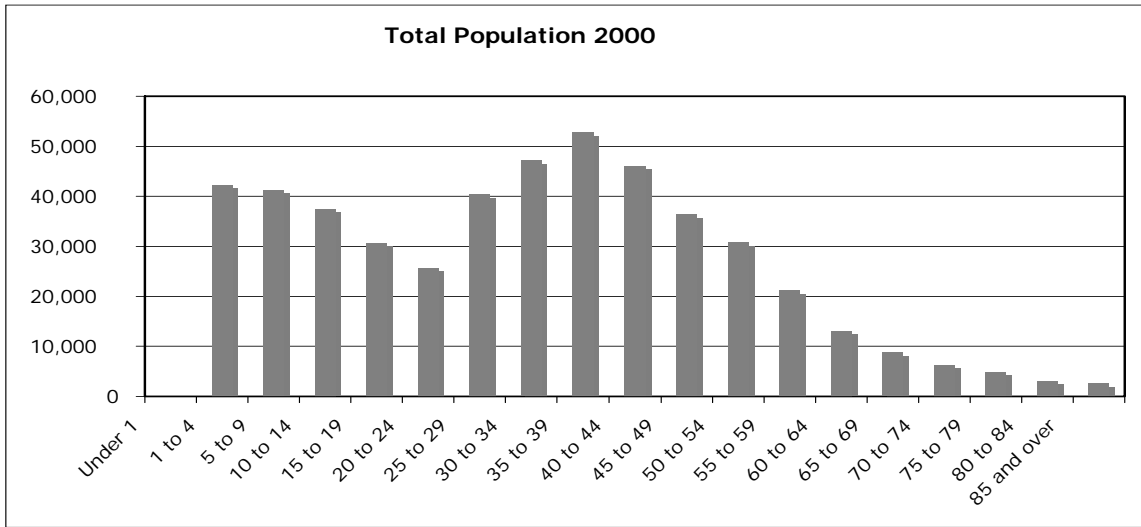
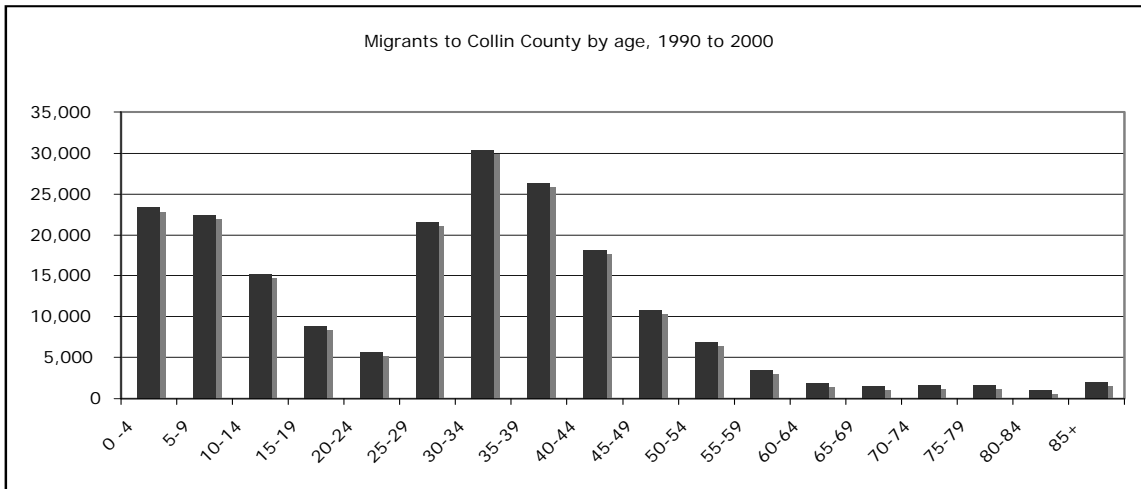


Exhibit 4. The Net Number of Migrants by Age, Collin County, 1990 -2000.



Race and Ethnicity

In both 1990 and 2000, Collin County is predominately white. Although the percentage of whites did decline somewhat from 89% in 1990 to 81% in 2000, the large growth in population means that the intervening decade nevertheless

saw very large numbers of whites move into Collin County. It would seem this county has been on of the major targets of “white flight” from the urban core of Dallas where the percentage of the population claiming to be “white” there has declined about ten percent from 1990 to 2000³. At the same time, we can be sure that migrants from other parts of the country no doubt make up part of this growth. Data on previous place of residence is unavailable, thus disentangling the exact causes and origins of this migration is impossible.

Among the non-white population, blacks represented the largest racial group in 1990 at 4.64% of the population. In the intervening decade the number of Asian Pacific Islanders doubled- moving from 2.83% to 6.92%- and they represented the largest non-white group in 2000. In both years the number of Hispanic/Latino was small relative to the total population, but this groups also showed a nominal increase from 6.88% to 10.27%.

Income

Collin County has a very high median household income, standing at \$70,835 in 2000. This is 68% above the US median household income is \$41,994 in 2000⁴. As mentioned above with reference to “white-flight”, disentangling where Collin County’s recent in-migrants moved from is not possible. However, we can be certain that changing residences requires

³ Changes in racial categories mean that this figure is comparing the “white” category in 1990 to “white alone” in 2000. This is not an ideal procedure but the overall picture is still clear.

⁴ Several decidedly non-academic sources- Wikipedia, Forbes.com, YahooNews.com- claim Collin County to be the 23rd wealthiest county in America. While the author was unable to locate any peer-reviewed source that could confirm this it would seem Collin County in the top percentile of America’s 3,141 counties or county equivalents.

resources, and the residents of Collin County certainly have them in abundance. The relatively low cost of living- in particular newly constructed suburban housing units- in the area is likely attracting migrants from further field than more urban and still relatively cheap Dallas. No doubt this high concentration of resources leads to better funded and higher quality schools, which would in-turn attract the types of nuclear families with young children discussed above.

Conclusion

These admittedly simple demographic tools have still told us a great deal about Collin County. First, we know large numbers of people are moving in. Second, we know that they are primarily white and affluent. We can be almost certain that they are nuclear families, and we can also see from the age structure of all residents that it is unlikely these migrants are returning to where the parents raised them to raise their own families.

Although more detailed data would be needed to know why these individuals moved, we do know enough about them to venture a reasonable guess as to why they moved: they are young couple who waited to gain some measure of financial stability before having children and are now looking to buy homes in good school districts.

This admittedly simple hypotheses- and what it implies about the underlying social structure- suggest pieces of information that would be of great use to policy makers. One of the more obvious implications for Collin County is that these families are likely to stay after the children finish school because of the

homes they have bought. Thus, the county will need to plan for an eventual shift from services targeted at the young to those that serve the old. While the relative affluences of the area will ease some the demand on public services, they will still be important because there is good reason to suspect that these seniors may have little family in the area. The fact that their children have very likely also moved away will be also significant as it will weaken both the individuals' support networks and the county's tax base.

References

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University of North Carolina Population Center:
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