

Project E-233-028

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ECONOMY  
OF THE  
CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA

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## INTRODUCTION

The seven-county Chattahoochee-Flint Area is becoming strongly industrialized, with over 40% of its workers in manufacturing. Although textiles and apparel dominate in the area, the trend is toward higher-paying industries, such as metalworking and machinery.

A number of problems and opportunities are pinpointed in this brief analysis of the counties currently represented in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission. These counties include Carroll, Coweta, Harris, Heard, Meriwether, Talbot, and Troup.

This study analyzes the present employment structure and trends in the area and reviews other highlights of the region's economy. Its main purpose is to provide perspective for more detailed studies and for the establishment of active development goals and efforts.

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA

Map 1 (on the facing page) shows the population in each of the seven Georgia counties forming the Chattahoochee-Flint Area and also the number of residents who were employed at the time of the 1960 Census. Density of population varied considerably throughout the area, from approximately 18 persons per square mile in Heard and Talbot counties to over 105 persons per square mile in Troup County.

The number of workers living in each county ranged from 1,839 in Heard County to 18,438 in Troup County. The total in the seven-county area was 56,326.

Population and employment trends in the individual counties have varied in the past 20 years, and the figures for the area as a whole show a fluctuating pattern.

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Employment</u> <u>(by place of residence)</u>
1940	155,241	54,789
1950	158,721	60,603
1960	155,916	56,326

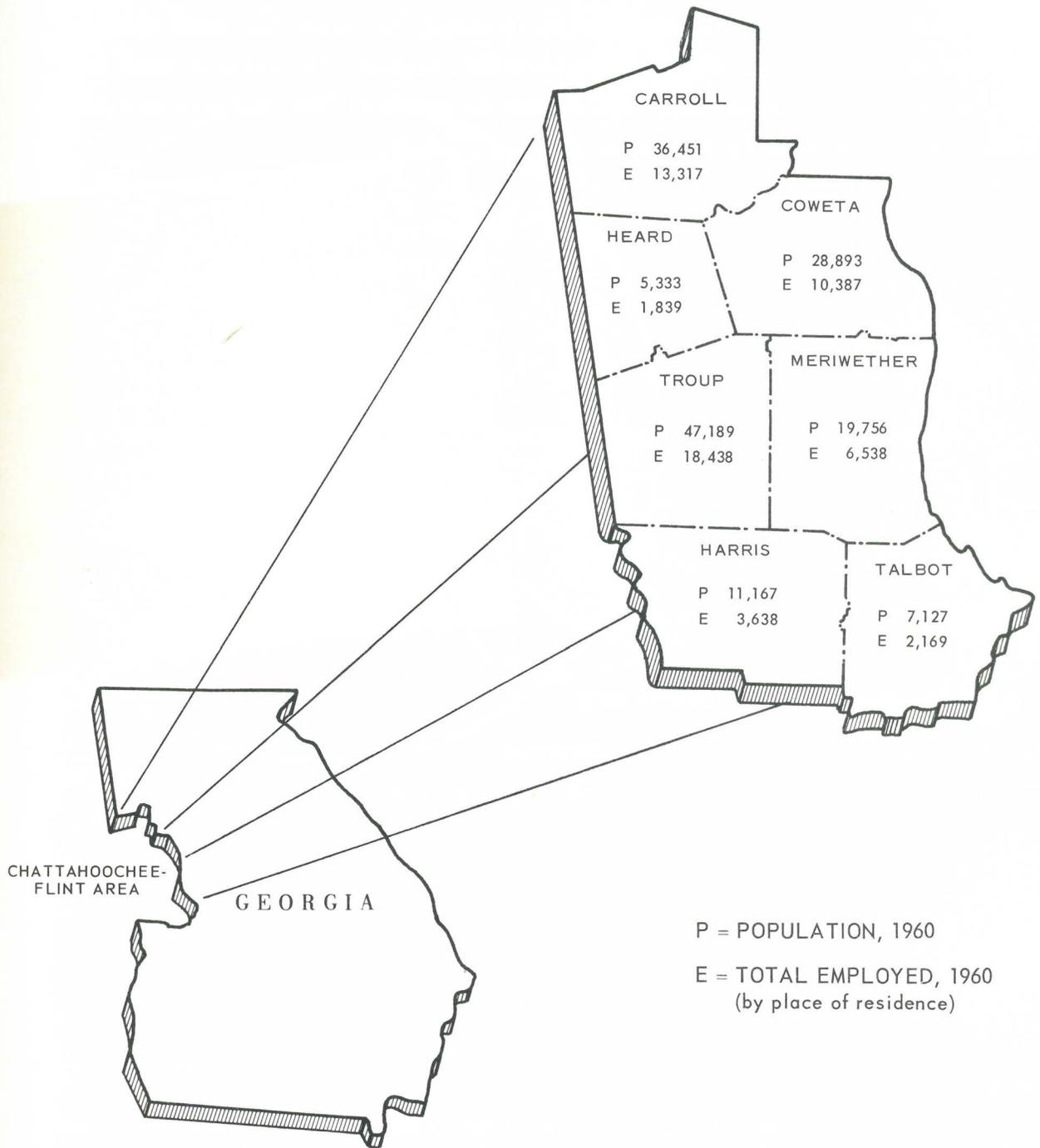
Only Carroll and Coweta counties showed a net gain in population between 1950 and 1960, but when the natural increase (total births less total deaths) is taken into consideration these two counties also prove to have had a population loss. Out-migration from the seven-county area between 1950 and 1960 totaled nearly 30,000 persons.

CHATTAHO  
FLINT A

SOURCE:

MAP 1

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE  
CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA, 1960

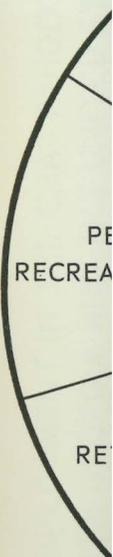


SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population

## DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA

Chart 1 shows the percentage distribution by industry of the workers living in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area. In 1960 manufacturing was the main source of employment, not only for the area as a whole, but also for each individual county. Out of a total employment of 56,326, some 22,960 workers were in manufacturing -- over three times the number in personal and recreational services,<sup>1/</sup> the next ranking category.

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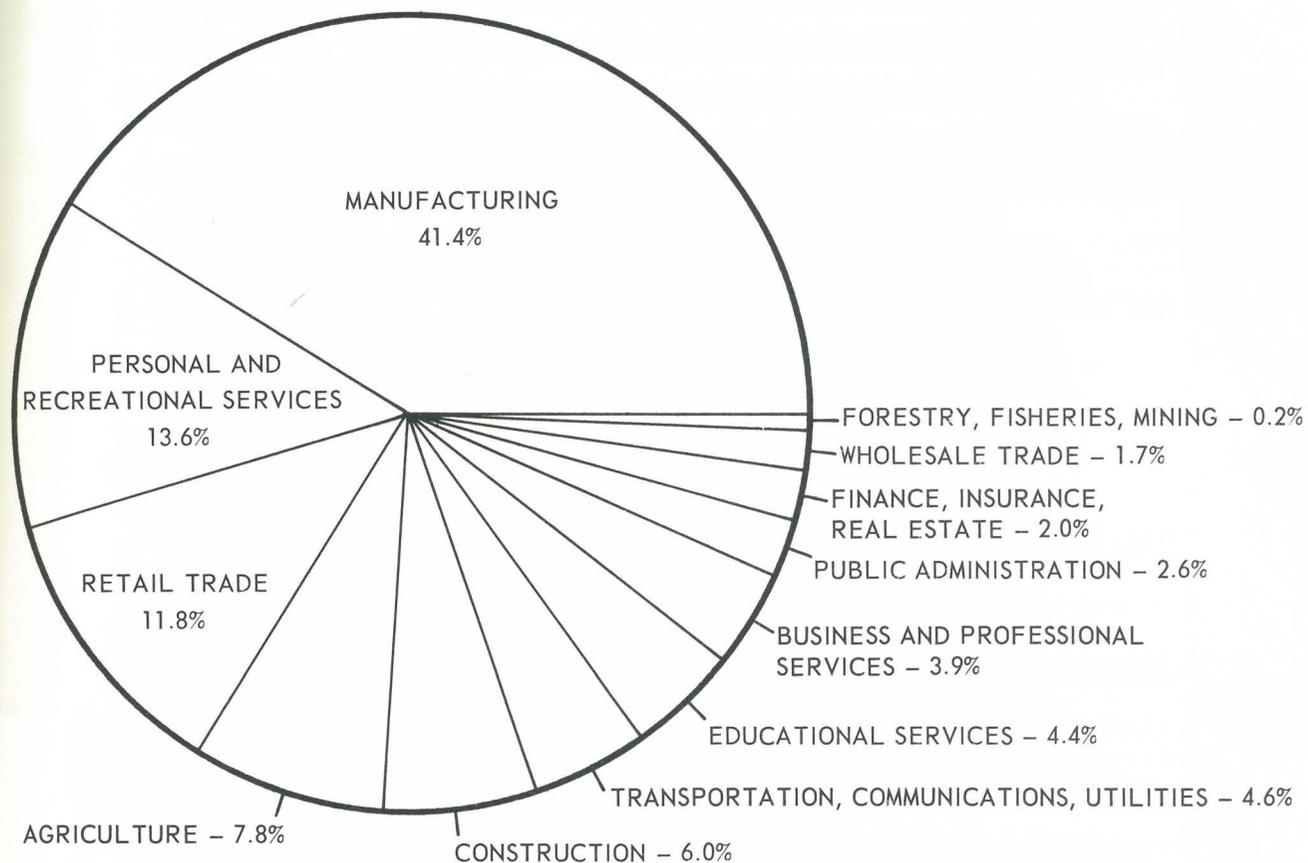
SOURCE:

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<sup>1/</sup> "Personal and recreational services" comprise repair services; services in private households, hotels, and motels; laundry and dry cleaning services; and entertainment and recreation services. "Business and professional services" include advertising, accounting, auditing, and bookkeeping services; welfare, religious, and nonprofit membership organizations; hospitals; and other professional and related services (except educational).

CHART 1

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA, 1960  
(by place of residence)



SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population

COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT  
IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA, GEORGIA, AND THE UNITED STATES

Chart 2 compares the employment mix in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area with that in Georgia and the United States as a whole (in descending order of employment magnitude in the seven-county area).

The emphasis on manufacturing in the study area is clearly marked. Only one other category -- personal and recreational services -- tops both Georgia and the U. S. in percentage of workers.

CHART 2

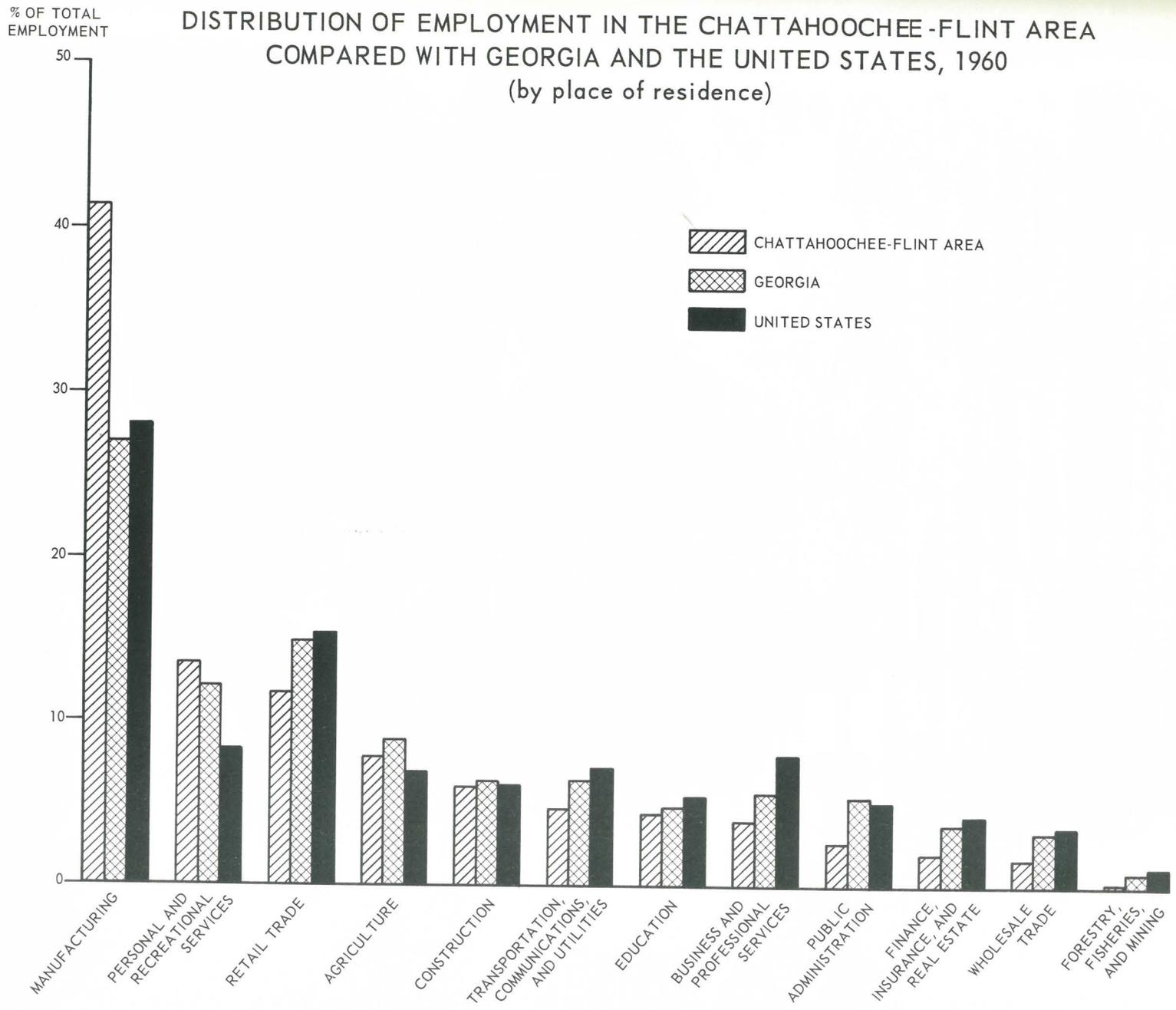
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA  
COMPARED WITH GEORGIA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960

% OF TOTAL  
EMPLOYMENT

50

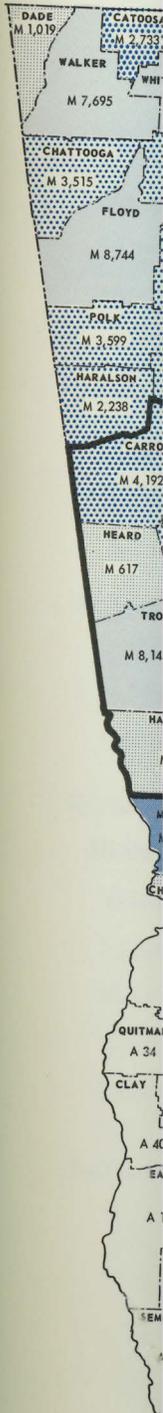
CHART 2

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA  
COMPARED WITH GEORGIA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960  
(by place of residence)



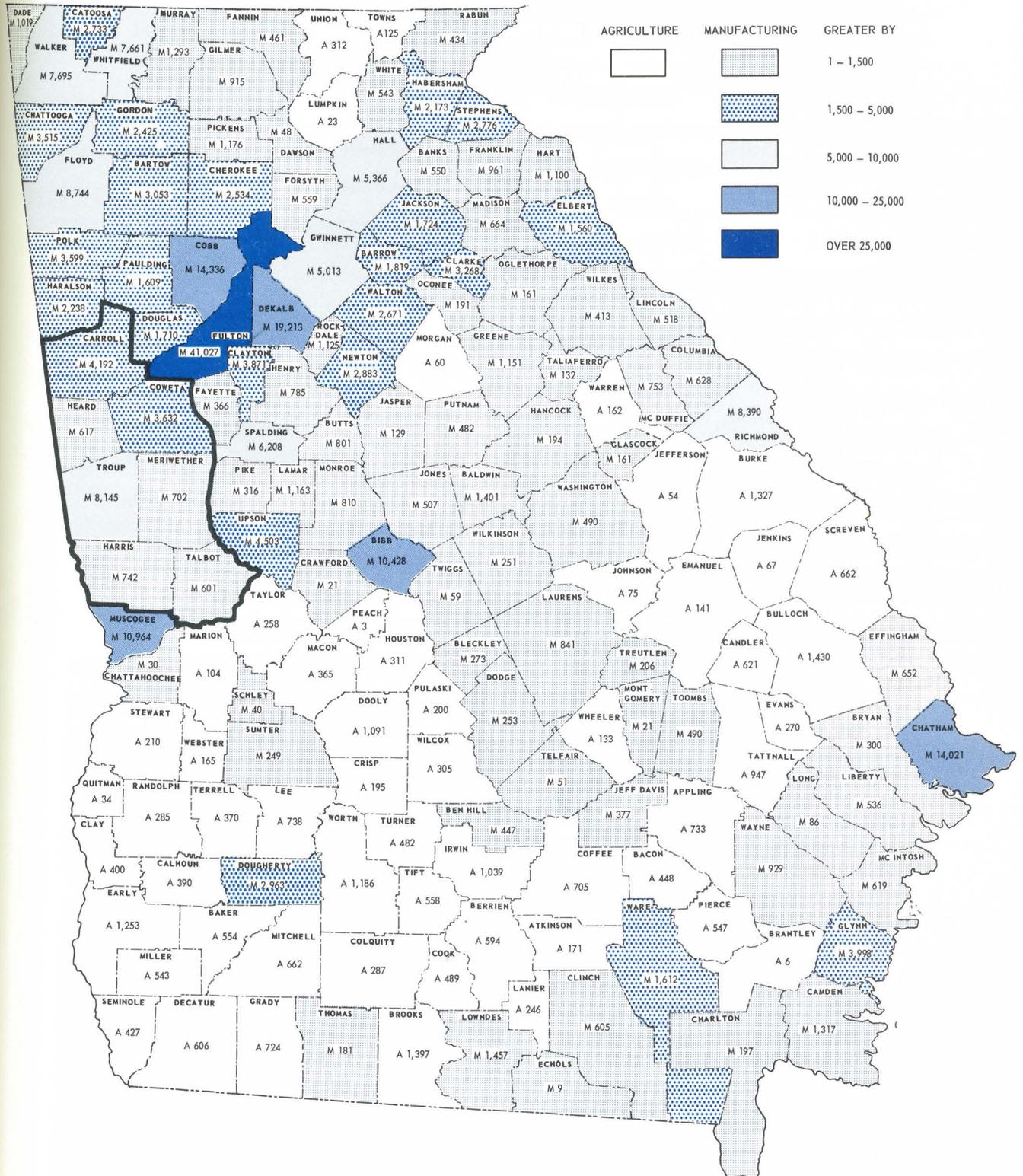
AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT  
IN GEORGIA AND THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA

Map 2 compares agricultural and manufacturing employment by county in Georgia, by place of residence. Manufacturing leads agriculture in 104 of the state's 159 counties. In all the counties in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area, manufacturing employment is greater than that of agriculture. The margin of difference varies considerably, however, from a low of 601 in Talbot to a high of 8,145 in Troup County.



# MAP 2

## PREDOMINANCE OF MANUFACTURING OR AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES, 1960 (by place of residence)



DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Table 1 breaks down the manufacturing employment of the area into industrial categories and compares the distribution with that of Georgia and the U. S.

Over 53% of manufacturing workers living in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area are employed in textiles -- more than twice the proportion of state employees in this industry and nearly 10 times the U. S. percentage. Apparel manufacturing is the only other category where the area's percentage of workers tops those of both the state and the nation.

Major plants in Troup County provide jobs for many of the area's textile employees and also pull in workers from Alabama. Sizable textile and apparel factories also are located in Carroll, Coweta, and Meriwether counties. Some of the mills have been established for well over half a century -- the Dixie Mill division of West Point Manufacturing Company<sup>1/</sup> has been in LaGrange since 1897, Callaway Mills and the Dunson Division of Pepperell Manufacturing Company<sup>1/</sup> were established there in 1900 and 1912, respectively, and Callaway's plant in Meriwether County dates from 1910.

In more recent years greater diversification has been achieved with the location of Southwire Company (wire and cable products) in Carrollton in 1950 and William L. Bonnell Company, Inc. (aluminum extruded shapes) in Newnan in 1955, each employing several hundred workers in the manufacture of primary metal products.

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Prim  
Chem  
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Source

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<sup>1/</sup> Merger of these two companies was approved by the stockholders in March 1965.

Table 1  
 DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY  
 IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA, GEORGIA, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960  
 (by place of residence)

<u>Manufacturing Category</u>	Chattahoochee- Flint Area		State of Georgia	United States
	<u>No.</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Total Manufacturing	22,960	100.0	100.0	100.0
Durable goods:	5,637	24.6	33.6	56.1
Furniture, lumber, and wood products	2,624	11.4	12.5	6.1
Primary metals	1,369	6.0	1.5	7.0
Fabricated metals	555	2.4	2.6	7.4
Machinery, except electrical	249	1.1	2.8	8.9
Electrical machinery, equipment, and supplies	61	.3	2.0	8.5
Motor vehicles and equipment	209	.9	3.2	4.8
Transportation equipment, except motor vehicles	203	.9	4.3	5.6
Other durable goods	367	1.6	4.7	7.8
Nondurable goods:	17,323	75.4	66.4	43.9
Food and kindred products	1,216	5.3	12.2	10.4
Textiles	12,209	53.2	26.0	5.5
Apparel	3,048	13.3	12.9	6.6
Printing and publishing	197	.9	3.9	6.5
Chemical and allied products	93	.4	3.8	4.9
Other nondurable goods	560	2.4	7.6	10.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Chart 3 shows employment by industry in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area for 1950 and 1960 (in descending order of employment magnitude in 1960).

The most striking change was the drop in agricultural employment. The loss of nearly 8,000 jobs in this industry between 1950 and 1960 more than offset the gains in every other category, causing an overall reduction of 4,277 in the total number of workers.

Details of the 1950-1960 change by industrial category are as follows:

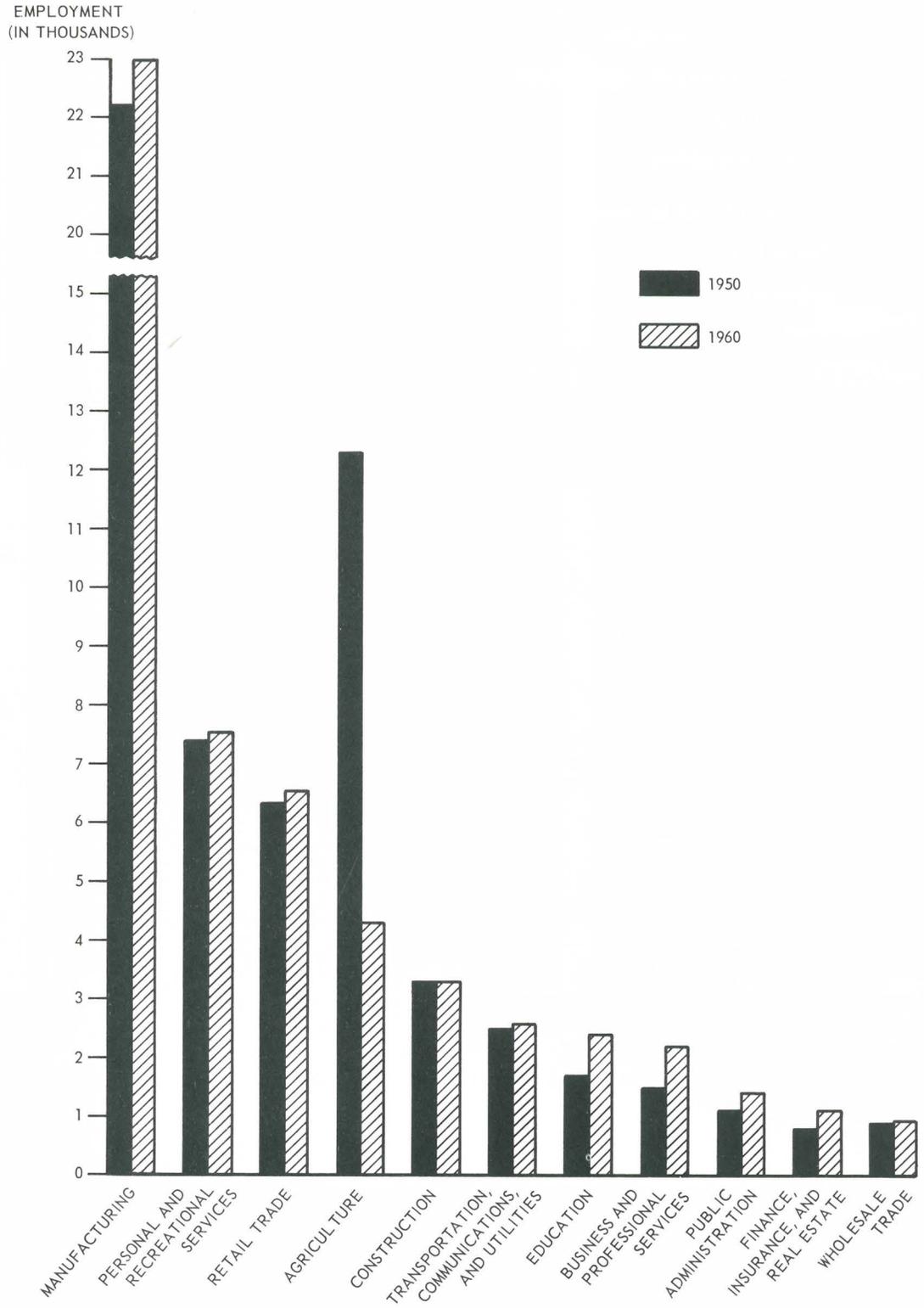
<u>Total net change (loss)</u>	<u>-4,277</u>
Manufacturing	752
Education	722
Business and professional services	675
Finance, insurance, and real estate	344
Public administration	325
Retail trade	202
Personal and recreational services	142
Wholesale trade	71
Transportation, communications, utilities	52
Forestry, fisheries, mining	48
Construction	17
Agriculture	-7,940

The overall loss would have been even greater but for the increase in commuting. Nearly 15% of the workers living in the seven-county area cross county lines to their places of employment. Roughly one third of these commuters travel to another county within the area, but about 5,700 work in the surrounding counties. Atlanta is an important source of employment for many of these workers.

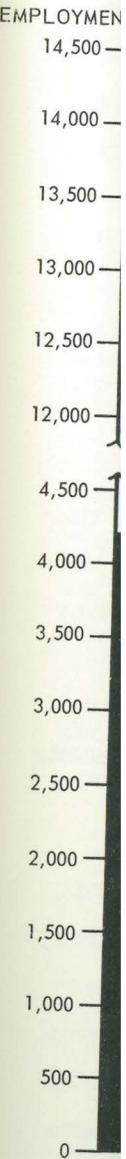
Commuting into the area from outside also takes place, but the number of workers involved is much more limited.

The increase of 752 employees in manufacturing is made up of gains and losses of varied dimensions in the different categories. Chart 4 shows the major decreases in textiles and furniture, lumber, and wood products. Except for a comparatively slight loss in chemicals, all the other classes of manufacturing increased their employment, with apparel and primary metals showing the greatest advances.

CHART 3  
 EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA  
 1950-1960

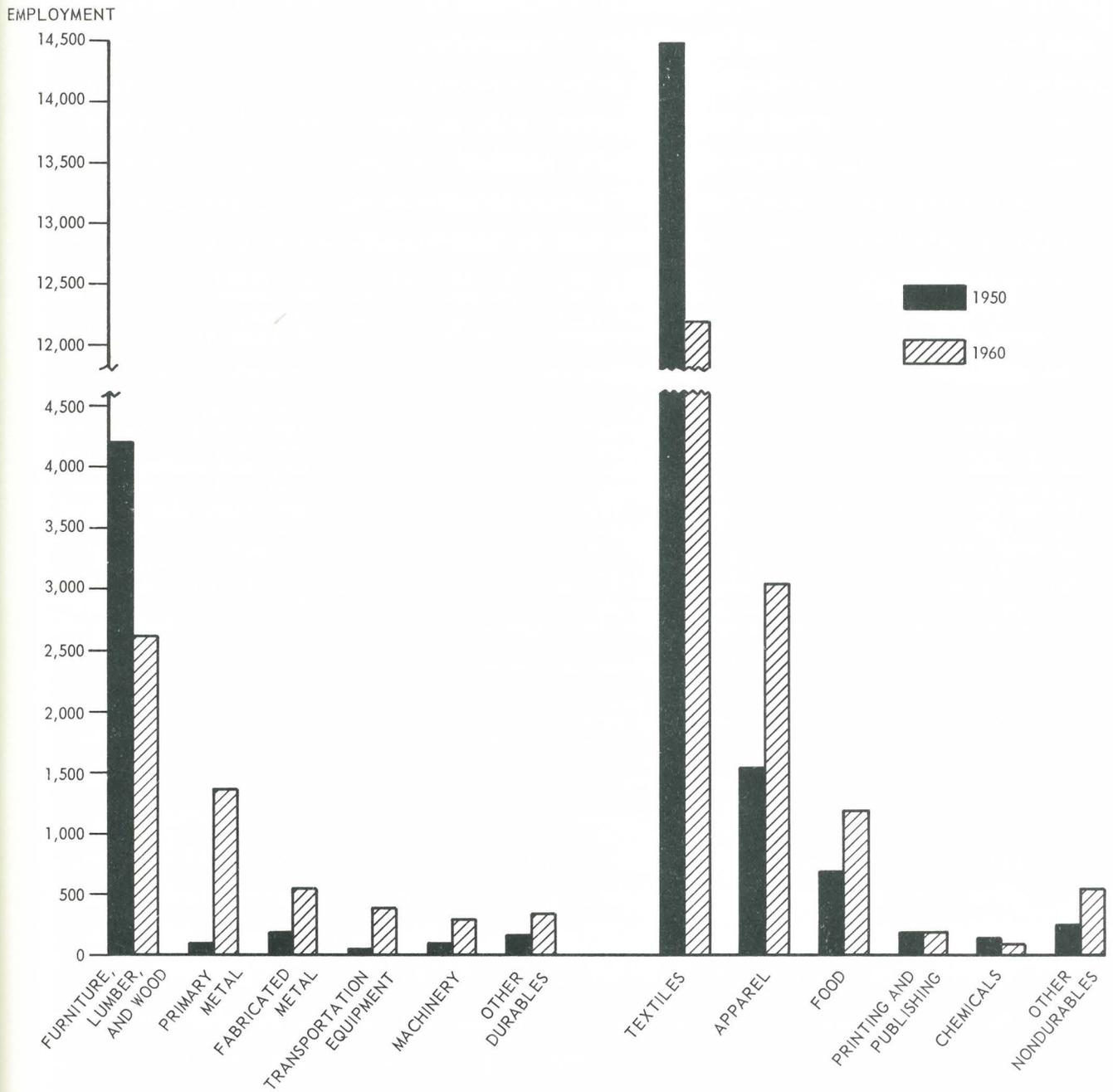


<u>Total manufacturing change, 1950-1960</u>	<u>752</u>
Total durable goods	831
Furniture, lumber, and wood	-1,561
Primary metals	1,281
Fabricated metals	347
Transportation equipment	374
Machinery	201
Other durables	189
Total nondurable goods	-79
Textiles	-2,312
Apparel	1,495
Food	497
Printing and publishing	1
Chemicals	-60
Other nondurables	300



FURNITURE,  
LUMBER,  
AND

CHART 4  
 MANUFACTURING TRENDS IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA  
 1950-1960



A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PROBLEMS  
AND OPPORTUNITIES CONFRONTING THE CHATTAHOOCHEE-FLINT AREA

Problems

In 1940 over 37% of the workers in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area were employed in agriculture, but mechanization soon brought drastic changes. Small farms became uneconomical and were either abandoned or combined to form larger units. These larger units were operated to an increasing extent by machines, and the need for farm labor was rapidly reduced. In addition to the farm workers being turned away, children leaving school who had expected to join their parents on the land found they had to look elsewhere for jobs.

Between 1940 and 1960 the number of farm workers in the seven-county area dropped from 20,596 to 4,329, a decrease of 16,267. By 1960 less than 8% of the employed labor force was in agriculture.

Many of the displaced farm workers looked for jobs in the cities, but the main industry of the area -- textiles -- had its own troubles, and workers were being turned away from the mills. (See Chart 4.) At the same time the number of employees was also being reduced in the lumber and wood industries -- another category where the unskilled or semiskilled farm hand could have hoped for a job. As a result many people left the area. During the 1950-1960 decade nearly 30,000 persons moved away from the seven counties. (See page 2.)

Analysis of the net change in population by age groups emphasizes the loss of workers:

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Change 1950-1960</u>
Under 18 years	61,197	61,317	120
18-64 years	85,989	80,549	-5,440
65 and over	11,535	14,050	2,515

The loss of population might have been even more severe but for the fact that Columbus and Atlanta are within commuting distance of most of the counties in the area. In 1960, some 8,250 residents of the seven-county area were commuting across county lines for employment.

Agricultural employment has continued to decline since 1960, and although some textile factories have made modest gains, the general trend in textiles

has been downward. The number of apparel workers has increased, but of more significance is the growth of employment in the metal and machinery industries and in the manufacture of plastics products.

These new industries are important from more than one point of view. They reduce the heavy dependence on the textile mills, which in the past has caused the economic well-being of the area to fluctuate directly with the rise and fall of this one industry. They also raise the income level of the workers. Wages in textiles, apparel, and furniture, lumber, and wood are among the lowest of those paid in manufacturing. In 1950 over 90% of all manufacturing workers living in the area worked in this low-wage group of industries. By 1960 this figure had dropped to 78% (see Table 1), and current indications are that this percentage has now been further reduced.

The dominance of the low-wage industries is reflected in the average income of population in the Chattahoochee-Flint Area. In 1960 per capita income was only 82% of that of Georgia. Individual county figures showed considerable variation, but none of them reached the Georgia average: Highest was Coweta, with a per capita income 90% of that of Georgia, followed by Troup (88%), Carroll (86%), Harris (76%), Meriwether (69%), Heard (62%), and Talbot (50%). The location and further expansion of high-wage industries are, therefore, of vital importance.

Inter-area competition for business and industry can be expected to continue and intensify in the years ahead. Technical skills and basic aptitudes for training are becoming more and more important in plant location discussions. The new area vocational-technical school at LaGrange will prove to be an important asset in this respect. Comparisons based on the educational status of residents 25 years old and over show that all seven counties fall below the state's average in median number of school years completed. There is a need for the continuous upgrading of all educational facilities.

#### Opportunities

Development of "Strength" Industries. Industries which have potentials based on existing agricultural and forest resources in the area should be investigated for further development. Such industry potentials include food processing, meat packing, and timber utilization. When investigation and

research have revealed the feasibility of specific industries, these opportunities should be brought to the attention of interested area people and to prospective concerns outside the area. A continuous effort is needed to identify and manufacture new products which can be made from existing area raw materials. There is also a need to develop such service industries as machine shops, foundries, plating, anodizing, and metal-treating plants.

Development of Tourist and Recreational Potentials. The dollar income which can be produced by tourism is appreciable. The area has lagged in the development of this industry because of its geographical location and the relative lack of scenic attractions.

While tourism may never become a major industry throughout the area, much can be achieved through a planned program of development. A promotional campaign of some magnitude, together with economic development of scenic and historical attractions, tourist facilities, and good restaurants, will be needed.

The widespread promotion of existing tourist attractions, such as Callaway Gardens, the Little White House, Roosevelt State Park, to name a few, is a possible starting place.

The tourist potential of the West Point Dam on the Chattahoochee River should not be overlooked -- even during the construction period. However, the quality of the water is a subject to which the Commission should give immediate attention, if the full potential is to be realized.

Development of Retail and Wholesale Trade Potentials. Retail and wholesale trade activity is largely dependent upon the overall economy of the area. A strong economy generates much trade activity; a weak one manifests itself by declining or static trade activity. As the Chattahoochee-Flint Area becomes stronger, growth will occur in retail and wholesale trade.

However, positive steps can be taken to improve the situation by campaigns to upgrade the present activity levels of area merchants through education in modern selling techniques, training of employees, and promotional campaigns.

River and Stream Development. The report of the United States Study Commission for the Southeast River Basins highlights a number of proposed river and stream projects in the Commission area besides the West Point Project. Among these is an early-action plan for the development of the Flint River. This is a power, flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife project.

Other longer-term proposals include the Franklin and the Cedar Creek projects on the Chattahoochee River. They will provide benefits for flood control, recreation, fish and wildlife, water supply, and possibly navigation.

These projects need further study and analysis to prove their feasibility (particularly for navigation). Action at the local level by the Chattahoochee-Flint Commission can materially accelerate the development of these and other river and stream projects.

Transportation. Interstate Highway 20 will pass through Carroll County, and Interstate 85 will pass through Coweta and Troup, also cutting across a corner of both Meriwether and Harris counties. When these two highways are completed, the improvement in transportation should stimulate the industrial development of the whole area, for industry, which moves its finished goods and receives raw materials by motor freight, is looking for locations close to such interstate highways.

Serious consideration should be given to the manufacturing opportunities that will be opened up by these major access routes to Atlanta. Good possibilities are likely to arise for the development of satellite industries to supply the needs of the diversified industrial complex in the metropolitan area.

In addition, the tourist makes stops at restaurants and motels which locate at community interchanges of these highways. The new employment opportunities consequently created at service stations and motels are also of importance to the growth of the area.