Center for Urban Studies–February 2002
Working Paper Series, No. 8

# African Americans in the United States, Michigan and Metropolitan Detroit

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF URBAN, LABOR AND METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

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# African Americans in the United States, Michigan and Metropolitan Detroit

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## Introduction

Data on race has been collected since the first U.S. decennial census in 1790 (see Table 1). Blacks have been enumerated in every census. According to the Census, the term "Black or African American" refers to people having origins in any of the black race groups of Africa. It includes people who reported "Black, African Am., or Negro" or wrote in entries such as African American, Afro American, Nigerian, or Haitian.[1]

Table 1
Categories for Collecting Data on Blacks in the Census: 1860-2000

| Census Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1860 | Black | Mulatto | | |
| 1870 [1] | Black | Mulatto | | |
| 1880 | Black | Mulatto | | |
| 1890 | Black | Mulatto | Quadroon | Octoroon |
| 1900 | Black (of Negro decent) | | | |
| 1910 | Black | Mulatto | | |
| 1920 | Black | Mulatto | | |
| 1930 | Black | | | |
| 1940 | Black | | | |
| 1950 | Negro | | | |
| 1960 | Negro | | | |
| 1970 | Negro or Black | | | |
| 1980 | Black or Negro | | | |
| 1990 | Black or Negro | | | |
| 2000 | Black, African American, or Negro | | | |

[1] In 1890, mulatto was defined as a person who was three-eighths to five-eighths black. A quadroon was one-quarter black and an octoroon one-eighth black.

Source: 200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population And Housing Questions 1790-1990. U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Bureau of the Census.

## National Perspective

Let us first look at how blacks identified themselves with regard to the single and multiple race options. In the total population, 34.7 million people, or 12.3 percent, reported only black. An additional 1.8 million people reported black and at least one other race. Within this group, the most common combinations were "Black and White" (45 percent), "Black and Some other race" (24 percent), "Black and American Indian and Alaska Native" (10 percent), and "Black and White and American Indian and Alaska Native" (6 percent). Thus, 36.4 million, or 12.9 percent of the total population, reported black alone or in combination with one or more other races. [Unless specifically noted, the 2000 counts of blacks used in the remainder of this paper will be that of blacks alone. This is generally regarded to be more comparable for comparison purposes with previous censuses.]

Blacks increased in number from 29,980,996 in 1990 to 34,658,190 in 2000. This represented a gain of 15.6 percent, slightly above the 13.2 percent growth that the nation experienced in total population. "Blacks ended the 20th century by returning to the region that they spent most of the century leaving. Their return reinforces the South's distinct racial profile as a mostly white-black region."[2] Census 2000 numbers show that the non-Hispanic black population of the South surged in the 1990s by 3,575,211 people—more than in the other three regions of the United States combined. As shown in Table 2, the South, while containing just fewer than 36 percent of the nation's population, accounted for almost 55 percent of the country's blacks, and 58 percent of the total increase in the country's black population. The South's gain during the 1990s was roughly double the number of blacks that the South gained in the

1980s (1.7 million) and well above the gain for the 1970s (1.9 million), when blacks began returning to the South.

Table 2
2000 Black Population by Region and Division

| | Total Population | Black or African American | Percent of U.S. Total | Percent of Black Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| UNITED STATES | 281,421,906 | 34,658,190 | | |
| Northeast | 53,594,378 | 6,099,881 | *19.0%* | *17.6%* |
| New England | 13,922,517 | 719,063 | *4.9%* | *2.1%* |
| Middle Atlantic | 39,671,861 | 5,380,818 | *14.1%* | *15.5%* |
| Midwest | 64,392,776 | 6,499,733 | *22.9%* | *18.8%* |
| East North Central | 45,155,037 | 5,405,418 | *16.0%* | *15.6%* |
| West North Central | 19,237,739 | 1,094,315 | *6.8%* | *3.2%* |
| South | 100,236,820 | 18,981,692 | *35.6%* | *54.8%* |
| South Atlantic | 51,769,160 | 11,026,722 | *18.4%* | *31.8%* |
| East South Central | 17,022,810 | 3,418,542 | *6.0%* | *9.9%* |
| West South Central | 31,444,850 | 4,536,428 | *11.2%* | *13.1%* |
| West | 63,197,932 | 3,076,884 | *22.5%* | *8.9%* |
| Mountain | 18,172,295 | 523,283 | *6.5%* | *1.5%* |
| Pacific | 45,025,637 | 2,553,601 | *16.0%* | *7.4%* |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171) Summary File for states and Census 2000 Redistricting Summary File for Puerto Rico, Tables PL1 and PL2.

The strength of the South is clearly evident when one looks at the state level. Table 3 provides a listing of the top 15 states for blacks, with their associated ranking on total population. It is apparent that the rankings of southern states are very different for blacks than for totals. Georgia, which ranks 10th overall, has the third largest count of black residents. The largest differences show for Louisiana (22nd and 9th), South Carolina (26th and 14th) and Alabama (23rd and 15th).

Table 3
Top 15 States Ranked by Black Population in 2000

| | Total Population | | Black Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Rank | Number | Rank |
| New York | 18,976,457 | 3 | 3,014,385 | 1 |
| Texas | 20,851,820 | 2 | 2,404,566 | 2 |
| Georgia | 8,186,453 | 10 | 2,349,542 | 3 |
| Florida | 15,982,378 | 4 | 2,335,505 | 4 |
| California | 33,871,648 | 1 | 2,263,882 | 5 |
| Illinois | 12,419,293 | 5 | 1,876,875 | 6 |
| North Carolina | 8,049,313 | 11 | 1,737,545 | 7 |
| Maryland | 5,296,486 | 19 | 1,477,411 | 8 |
| Louisiana | 4,468,976 | 22 | 1,451,944 | 9 |
| Michigan | 9,938,444 | 8 | 1,412,742 | 10 |
| Virginia | 7,078,515 | 12 | 1,390,293 | 11 |
| Ohio | 11,353,140 | 7 | 1,301,307 | 12 |
| Pennsylvania | 12,281,054 | 6 | 1,224,612 | 13 |
| South Carolina | 4,012,012 | 26 | 1,185,216 | 14 |
| Alabama | 4,447,100 | 23 | 1,155,930 | 15 |

While the largest counties in the United States tend to be the leaders in terms of numbers of black residents, with only Prince George's County, Maryland, having a total population of less than one million, it is small southern counties that are the leaders when it comes to the black share of total

population (see Table 4). Alabama and Mississippi account for eight of the top 10—each having two counties with shares over 80 percent.

| Rank | County | State | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RANKING BY NUMBER OF BLACKS** | | | | | |
| 1 | Cook County | IL | 5,376,741 | 1,405,361 | *26.1%* |
| 2 | Los Angeles County | CA | 9,519,338 | 930,957 | *9.8%* |
| 3 | Kings County | NY | 2,465,326 | 898,350 | *36.4%* |
| 4 | Wayne County | MI | 2,061,162 | 868,992 | *42.2%* |
| 5 | Philadelphia County | PA | 1,517,550 | 655,824 | *43.2%* |
| 6 | Harris County | TX | 3,400,578 | 628,619 | *18.5%* |
| 7 | Prince George's County | MD | 801,515 | 502,550 | *62.7%* |
| 8 | Bronx County | NY | 1,332,650 | 475,007 | *35.6%* |
| 9 | Miami-Dade County | FL | 2,253,362 | 457,214 | *20.3%* |
| 10 | Dallas County | TX | 2,218,899 | 450,557 | *20.3%* |
| **RANKING BY PERCENT OF BLACKS** | | | | | |
| 1 | Jefferson County | MS | 9,740 | 8,424 | *86.5%* |
| 2 | Macon County | AL | 24,105 | 20,403 | *84.6%* |
| 3 | Claiborne County | MS | 11,831 | 9,951 | *84.1%* |
| 4 | Greene County | AL | 9,974 | 8,013 | *80.3%* |
| 5 | Petersburg city | VA | 33,740 | 26,643 | *79.0%* |
| 6 | Holmes County | MS | 21,609 | 16,997 | *78.7%* |
| 7 | Hancock County | GA | 10,076 | 7,835 | *77.8%* |
| 8 | Lowndes County | AL | 13,473 | 9,885 | *73.4%* |
| 9 | Sumter County | AL | 14,798 | 10,827 | *73.2%* |
| 10 | Bullock County | AL | 11,714 | 8,564 | *73.1%* |

Table 4
Top 10 Counties Ranked By Number and Percent of Blacks, 2000

As with counties, the largest cities tend to lead in black population as well. New York comes in first on both measures, while Los Angeles, ranked 2nd overall, falls to number 7 for blacks, due to its large Hispanic and Asian populations. Chicago ranks second in number of blacks, while Detroit, ranked 10th overall, moves up to number 3 in number of blacks, due to its high concentration. In fact, Detroit ranks second in its share of black residents (81.6 percent for black alone) among all cities in the United States with populations of 100,000 or greater. Only Gary, Indiana, has a higher share (84.0 percent).

## Michigan, Its Metropolitan Areas and Counties

The 2000 Census found Michigan to have a black population of 1,402,742, which constitutes 14.1 percent of the state's total population (see Table 5). During the 1990s Michigan gained 119,303 blacks. This represented a greater gain than that of the 1980s, when Michigan's population increased by less than 0.5 percent overall, but much less than previous decades (see Table 6). Metropolitan areas house 82 percent of the state's total population, but 98 percent of the state's black population (see Table 7). The Detroit Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA)[3] accounts for 72 percent of the state's metropolitan black population, and, within the Detroit PMSA, Wayne County holds 85 percent of the PMSA total, with a black population of 864,627, representing 42 percent of its total population. Oakland County runs a distant second to Wayne County with 119,708 blacks, followed by Genesee County. No other county in the state has more than 50,000 blacks (see Table 8).

| Census Year | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1900 | 2,420,982 | 15,816 | *0.7%* |
| 1910 | 2,810,173 | 17,115 | *0.6%* |
| 1920 | 3,668,412 | 60,082 | *1.6%* |
| 1930 | 4,842,325 | 169,453 | *3.5%* |
| 1940 | 5,256,106 | 208,345 | *4.0%* |
| 1950 | 6,371,766 | 442,296 | *6.9%* |
| 1960 | 7,823,194 | 717,581 | *9.2%* |
| 1970 | 8,875,083 | 991,066 | *11.2%* |
| 1980 | 9,262,044 | 1,190,682 | *12.9%* |
| 1990 | 9,295,287 | 1,282,744 | *13.8%* |
| 2000 | 9,938,444 | 1,402,047 | *14.1%* |

Table 5
Michigan Black Population, 1900-2000

| Decade | Total Change | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|
| 1900 - 1910 | 1,299 | *8.2%* |
| 1910 - 1920 | 42,967 | *251.0%* |
| 1920 - 1930 | 109,371 | *182.0%* |
| 1930 - 1940 | 38,892 | *23.0%* |
| 1940 - 1950 | 233,951 | *112.3%* |
| 1950 - 1960 | 275,285 | *62.2%* |
| 1960 - 1970 | 273,485 | *38.1%* |
| 1970 - 1980 | 199,616 | *20.1%* |
| 1980 - 1990 | 92,062 | *7.7%* |
| 1990 - 2000 | 119,303 | *9.3%* |

Table 6
Michigan Black Population Change, 1900-2000

| Area | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ann Arbor PMSA | 578,736 | 42,075 | *7.3%* |
| Lenawee County | 98,890 | 2,033 | *2.1%* |
| Livingston County | 156,951 | 716 | *0.5%* |
| Washtenaw County | 322,895 | 39,326 | *12.2%* |
| Benton Harbor MSA | 162,453 | 25,729 | *15.8%* |
| Berrien County | 162,453 | 25,729 | *15.8%* |
| Detroit PMSA | 4,441,551 | 1,012,262 | *22.8%* |
| Lapeer County | 87,904 | 709 | *0.8%* |
| Macomb County | 788,149 | 21,151 | *2.7%* |
| Monroe County | 145,945 | 2,686 | *1.8%* |
| Oakland County | 1,194,156 | 119,708 | *10.0%* |
| St. Clair County | 164,235 | 3,381 | *2.1%* |
| Wayne County | 2,061,162 | 864,627 | *41.9%* |
| Flint PMSA | 436,141 | 88,356 | *20.3%* |
| Genesee County | 436,141 | 88,356 | *20.3%* |
| Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland MSA | 1,088,514 | 77,660 | *7.1%* |
| Allegan County | 105,665 | 1,315 | *1.2%* |
| Kent County | 574,335 | 49,994 | *8.7%* |
| Muskegon County | 170,200 | 23,971 | *14.1%* |
| Ottawa County | 238,314 | 2,380 | *1.0%* |
| Jackson MSA | 158,422 | 12,396 | *7.8%* |
| Jackson County | 158,422 | 12,396 | *7.8%* |
| Kalamazoo-Battle Creek MSA | 452,851 | 41,819 | *9.2%* |
| Calhoun County | 137,985 | 14,912 | *10.8%* |
| Kalamazoo County | 238,603 | 22,968 | *9.6%* |
| Van Buren County | 76,263 | 3,939 | *5.2%* |
| Lansing-East Lansing MSA | 447,728 | 35,510 | *7.9%* |
| Clinton County | 64,753 | 401 | *0.6%* |
| Eaton County | 103,655 | 5,397 | *5.2%* |
| Ingham County | 279,320 | 29,712 | *10.6%* |
| Saginaw-Bay City-Midland MSA | 403,070 | 40,875 | *10.1%* |
| Bay County | 110,157 | 1,343 | *1.2%* |
| Midland County | 82,874 | 857 | *1.0%* |
| Saginaw County | 210,039 | 38,675 | *18.4%* |

Table 7
Michigan Metropolitan Area Black Population, 2000

Table 8
Ranking of Michigan Counties by
Total Black Population, 2000

| County | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|
| MICHIGAN | 9,938,444 | 1,402,047 | *14.1%* |
| Wayne County | 2,061,162 | 864,627 | *41.9%* |
| Oakland County | 1,194,156 | 119,708 | *10.0%* |
| Genesee County | 436,141 | 88,356 | *20.3%* |
| Kent County | 574,335 | 49,994 | *8.7%* |
| Washtenaw County | 322,895 | 39,326 | *12.2%* |
| Saginaw County | 210,039 | 38,675 | *18.4%* |
| Ingham County | 279,320 | 29,712 | *10.6%* |
| Berrien County | 162,453 | 25,729 | *15.8%* |
| Muskegon County | 170,200 | 23,971 | *14.1%* |
| Kalamazoo County | 238,603 | 22,968 | *9.6%* |
| Macomb County | 788,149 | 21,151 | *2.7%* |
| Calhoun County | 137,985 | 14,912 | *10.8%* |
| Jackson County | 158,422 | 12,396 | *7.8%* |
| Eaton County | 103,655 | 5,397 | *5.2%* |
| Van Buren County | 76,263 | 3,939 | *5.2%* |
| St. Clair County | 164,235 | 3,381 | *2.1%* |
| Cass County | 51,104 | 3,107 | *6.1%* |
| Ionia County | 61,518 | 2,759 | *4.5%* |
| Monroe County | 145,945 | 2,686 | *1.8%* |
| Ottawa County | 238,314 | 2,380 | *1.0%* |
| Chippewa County | 38,543 | 2,088 | *5.4%* |
| Lenawee County | 98,890 | 2,033 | *2.1%* |
| St. Joseph County | 62,422 | 1,561 | *2.5%* |
| Gratiot County | 42,285 | 1,554 | *3.7%* |
| Mecosta County | 40,553 | 1,450 | *3.6%* |
| Bay County | 110,157 | 1,343 | *1.2%* |
| Allegan County | 105,665 | 1,315 | *1.2%* |
| Montcalm County | 61,266 | 1,308 | *2.1%* |
| Lake County | 11,333 | 1,252 | *11.0%* |
| Isabella County | 63,351 | 1,211 | *1.9%* |
| Branch County | 45,787 | 1,187 | *2.6%* |
| Midland County | 82,874 | 857 | *1.0%* |
| Marquette County | 64,634 | 846 | *1.3%* |
| Livingston County | 156,951 | 716 | *0.5%* |
| Lapeer County | 87,904 | 709 | *0.8%* |
| Tuscola County | 58,266 | 613 | *1.1%* |
| Alger County | 9,862 | 595 | *6.0%* |
| Newaygo County | 47,874 | 519 | *1.1%* |
| Luce County | 7,024 | 505 | *7.2%* |
| Baraga County | 8,746 | 432 | *4.9%* |
| Clinton County | 64,753 | 401 | *0.6%* |
| Manistee County | 24,527 | 388 | *1.6%* |
| Houghton County | 36,016 | 334 | *0.9%* |
| Arenac County | 17,269 | 309 | *1.8%* |
| Gogebic County | 17,370 | 299 | *1.7%* |
| Grand Traverse County | 77,654 | 295 | *0.4%* |
| Crawford County | 14,273 | 213 | *1.5%* |
| Mason County | 28,274 | 200 | *0.7%* |
| Hillsdale County | 46,527 | 197 | *0.4%* |
| Iron County | 13,138 | 144 | *1.1%* |
| Emmet County | 31,437 | 142 | *0.5%* |
| Schoolcraft County | 8,903 | 140 | *1.6%* |
| Barry County | 56,755 | 137 | *0.2%* |
| Shiawassee County | 71,687 | 135 | *0.2%* |
| Sanilac County | 44,547 | 120 | *0.3%* |
| Iosco County | 27,339 | 106 | *0.4%* |
| Clare County | 31,252 | 100 | *0.3%* |
| Roscommon County | 25,469 | 81 | *0.3%* |
| Keweenaw County | 2,301 | 79 | *3.4%* |
| Osceola County | 23,197 | 79 | *0.3%* |
| Oceana County | 26,873 | 77 | *0.3%* |
| Alpena County | 31,314 | 73 | *0.2%* |
| Huron County | 36,079 | 69 | *0.2%* |
| Cheboygan County | 26,448 | 62 | *0.2%* |
| Wexford County | 30,484 | 54 | *0.2%* |
| Leelanau County | 21,119 | 49 | *0.2%* |
| Benzie County | 15,998 | 43 | *0.3%* |
| Antrim County | 23,110 | 42 | *0.2%* |
| Otsego County | 23,301 | 42 | *0.2%* |
| Charlevoix County | 26,090 | 42 | *0.2%* |
| Presque Isle County | 14,411 | 37 | *0.3%* |
| Delta County | 38,520 | 35 | *0.1%* |
| Kalkaska County | 16,571 | 34 | *0.2%* |
| Gladwin County | 26,023 | 32 | *0.1%* |
| Dickinson County | 27,472 | 32 | *0.1%* |
| Ogemaw County | 21,645 | 28 | *0.1%* |
| Missaukee County | 14,478 | 27 | *0.2%* |
| Montmorency County | 10,315 | 25 | *0.2%* |
| Menominee County | 25,326 | 25 | *0.1%* |
| Mackinac County | 11,943 | 23 | *0.2%* |
| Alcona County | 11,719 | 19 | *0.2%* |
| Oscoda County | 9,418 | 8 | *0.1%* |
| Ontonagon County | 7,818 | 2 | *0.0%* |

While Detroit leads the second largest city in the state (Grand Rapids) by an almost 5 to 1 ratio in total population, its lead over second place Flint in black population is almost 12 to 1. In third place is Southfield, which experienced an increase of more than 20,000 blacks during the decade, followed by Grand Rapids and Pontiac (see Table 9). When the city ranking is based on black share of the total population, as seen in Table 10, Highland Park (93 percent) and Benton Harbor (92 percent) move ahead of Detroit.

Table 9
Ranking of Michigan Cities by Total Black Population, 2000

| Rank | Area | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Detroit city | 951,270 | 771,966 | *81.2%* |
| 2 | Flint city | 124,943 | 66,231 | *53.0%* |
| 3 | Southfield city | 78,296 | 42,259 | *54.0%* |
| 4 | Grand Rapids city | 197,800 | 39,401 | *19.9%* |
| 5 | Pontiac city | 66,337 | 31,416 | *47.4%* |
| 6 | Saginaw city | 61,799 | 26,440 | *42.8%* |
| 7 | Lansing city | 119,128 | 25,498 | *21.4%* |
| 8 | Inkster city | 30,115 | 20,267 | *67.3%* |
| 9 | Kalamazoo city | 77,145 | 15,757 | *20.4%* |
| 10 | Highland Park city | 16,746 | 15,598 | *93.1%* |
| 11 | Oak Park city | 29,793 | 13,622 | *45.7%* |
| 12 | Muskegon city | 40,105 | 12,582 | *31.4%* |
| 13 | Benton Harbor city | 11,182 | 10,303 | *92.1%* |
| 14 | Ann Arbor city | 114,024 | 9,906 | *8.7%* |
| 15 | Battle Creek city | 53,364 | 9,440 | *17.7%* |

Table 10
Ranking of Michigan Cities by Percentage of Black Population, 2000

| Rank | Area | Total Population | Black Population | Percent Black |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Highland Park city | 16,746 | 15,598 | *93.1%* |
| 2 | Benton Harbor city | 11,182 | 10,303 | *92.1%* |
| 3 | Detroit city | 951,270 | 771,966 | *81.2%* |
| 4 | Muskegon Heights | 12,049 | 9,315 | *77.3%* |
| 5 | Buena Vista | 7,845 | 5,384 | *68.6%* |
| 6 | Inkster city | 30,115 | 20,267 | *67.3%* |
| 7 | Beecher | 12,793 | 8,394 | *65.6%* |
| 8 | Benton Heights | 5,458 | 3,569 | *65.4%* |
| 9 | Southfield city | 78,296 | 42,259 | *54.0%* |
| 10 | Flint city | 124,943 | 66,231 | *53.0%* |
| 11 | Lathrup Village city | 4,236 | 2,106 | *49.7%* |
| 12 | Vandalia village | 429 | 204 | *47.6%* |
| 13 | Pontiac city | 66,337 | 31,416 | *47.4%* |
| 14 | Fair Plain | 7,828 | 3,705 | *47.3%* |
| 15 | Oak Park city | 29,793 | 13,622 | *45.7%* |

## Tri-County Area

Black population growth in the tri-county area can be divided into several time periods. The first stage of growth occurred between 1910 and 1930 and was followed by a brief period of stagnation during the Depression years. The 1940s signified the growth of Detroit into the "Arsenal of Democracy" and a subsequent population boom. Following the war, the mass suburbanization of the Detroit metropolitan area began and Detroit's black population grew. Finally, the period from 1970 through 2000 represents the suburbanization of blacks in the tri-county area.

## The First Great Migration, 1910 to 1930

Prior to World War I, Detroit was the 13th largest city in the United States and had a small black population of roughly 4,000 people, constituting only 1 percent of its total population (see Table 11). The economy of Detroit was similar to that of many other Midwest industrial cities in that it was mostly

manufacturing. However, according to Detroit Divided (2000), it was the technological advances and venture capital of rich Detroit families that set Detroit apart from many other cities and eventually made Detroit the "Motor City." World War I had a drastic and unimagined impact on Detroit. The war effort required large amount of chemicals, steel, motor vehicles and industrial products which Detroit had been producing for years (Farley et al.). The demand for manufacturing products created an even larger demand for workers. However, the war had halted European immigration, thus requiring that jobs be filled from within the United States. Detroit became a mecca for those looking to prosper in the war economy. Between 1910 and 1930, Detroit's population grew by 236 percent, making it the nation's fourth largest city. Detroit's black population went from under 6,000 people to more than 120,000 in the same time period, as the first black migration from the South began. In 1920, 87 percent of black residents were born outside of Michigan, mostly in the South (Farley et al.). This wave of black migrants from the southern United States constituted Detroit's Great Migration.

Table 11
Detroit Population Change, 1820-2000

| Census Year | Total Population | Black Population | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1820 | 1,422 | 67 | *4.7%* |
| 1830 | 2,222 | 126 | *5.7%* |
| 1840 | 9,102 | 193 | *2.1%* |
| 1850 | 21,019 | 587 | *2.8%* |
| 1860 | 45,619 | 1,402 | *3.1%* |
| 1870 | 79,577 | 2,235 | *2.8%* |
| 1880 | 116,340 | 2,821 | *2.4%* |
| 1890 | 205,876 | 3,431 | *1.7%* |
| 1900 | 285,704 | 4,111 | *1.4%* |
| 1910 | 465,766 | 5,741 | *1.2%* |
| 1920 | 993,678 | 40,838 | *4.1%* |
| 1930 | 1,568,662 | 120,066 | *7.7%* |
| 1940 | 1,623,452 | 149,119 | *9.2%* |
| 1950 | 1,849,568 | 300,506 | *16.2%* |
| 1960 | 1,670,144 | 482,223 | *28.9%* |
| 1970 | 1,511,482 | 660,428 | *43.7%* |
| 1980* | 1,203,339 | 754,274 | *62.7%* |
| 1990* | 1,027,974 | 774,529 | *75.3%* |
| 2000** | 951,270 | 771,966 | *81.2%* |

* Non-Hispanic Black
** Non-Hispanic Single Race Black

## The Great Depression, 1930 to 1940

With the crash of the stock market in 1929, America's economy came to a halt and Detroit's growth slowed. Detroit's total population grew by a mere 54,000 people, much less than the half million gained in the previous decade (see Table 12). The suburbs also suffered, as their growth was but half that of the previous decade. As for the black population, the tri-county experienced its smallest growth since 1910. In conjunction with the slowing of population growth in the city and suburbs, there was a significant population shift occurring. For the first time, Detroit's suburbs experienced greater population growth than the city of Detroit, signaling the beginnings of the suburbanization of Detroit. However, bleak times for Detroit and its suburbs would not last long as World War II thrust Detroit's manufacturing and automobile industries once again into high gear and created the "Arsenal of Democracy."

| Decade | Total Population | | Black Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Change | Percent Change | Total Change | Percent Change |
| 1900 - 1910 | 180,062 | *63.0%* | 1,630 | *39.6%* |
| 1910 - 1920 | 527,312 | *113.2%* | 35,097 | *611.3%* |
| 1920 - 1930 | 575,584 | *58.0%* | 79,228 | *194.0%* |
| 1930 - 1940 | 54,790 | *3.5%* | 29,053 | *24.2%* |
| 1940 - 1950 | 226,116 | *13.9%* | 151,387 | *101.5%* |
| 1950 - 1960 | -179,424 | *-9.7%* | 181,717 | *60.5%* |
| 1960 - 1970 | -158,662 | *-9.5%* | 178,205 | *37.0%* |
| 1970 - 1980 | -308,143 | *-20.4%* | 93,846 | *14.2%* |
| 1980 - 1990 | -175,365 | *-14.6%* | 20,255 | *2.7%* |
| 1990 - 2000 | -76,704 | *-7.5%* | -2,563 | *-0.3%* |

Table 12
Detroit Population Change, 1900-2000

## The Second Great Migration, 1940 to 1950

The tri-county grew by more than 600,000 people between 1940 and 1950, and blacks accounted for nearly one-third of that growth. As was the case with the population growth brought about by World War I, over two-thirds of the blacks living in Detroit in 1940 and 1950 were born in the southern United States (Farley et al.). However, much of the population growth occurring during this period was in the suburbs, almost twice that of the city of Detroit. This represented a continuation of the trend that began in the 1930s, but at an accelerated pace. This period signaled the second great migration and mass suburbanization of Detroit.

## White Suburbanization, 1950 to 1970

A number of large population shifts occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. First, Detroit began its population decline by losing more than 300,000 residents. Second, suburban Detroit experienced its largest total growth (in any 20-year period) by gaining more than 1,500,000 residents. This was more than its total growth over the previous 50 years (see Table 13). Third, Detroit experienced its largest growth in black population, picking up 360,000. Fourth, the suburbs surpassed Detroit in share of the total tri-county population. Finally, the black share of suburban growth fell. Averaging over 5 percent of the total during the previous three decades, black population growth accounted for only 2.7 percent during this period. As a result of these factors, this period truly marks the segregation of metropolitan Detroit, with the growth of the primarily white suburbs and the decline of an increasingly black city of Detroit.

| Decade | Total Population | | Black Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Change | Percent Change | Total Change | Percent Change |
| 1900 - 1910 | 6,882 | *4.9%* | -63 | *-8.3%* |
| 1910 - 1920 | 164,713 | *111.3%* | 3,573 | *512.6%* |
| 1920 - 1930 | 295,961 | *94.6%* | 13,184 | *308.8%* |
| 1930 - 1940 | 145,196 | *23.9%* | 4,193 | *24.0%* |
| 1940 - 1950 | 412,752 | *54.8%* | 35,647 | *164.7%* |
| 1950 - 1960 | 925,587 | *79.3%* | 19,353 | *33.8%* |
| 1960 - 1970 | 600,745 | *28.7%* | 20,008 | *26.1%* |
| 1970 - 1980 | 147,936 | *5.5%* | 30,653 | *31.7%* |
| 1980 - 1990 | 43,808 | *1.5%* | 30,601 | *24.0%* |
| 1990 - 2000 | 207,492 | *7.2%* | 75,611 | *47.9%* |

Table 13
Suburban Detroit Population Change, 1900-2000

## Black Suburbanization, 1970 to 2000

The 1970s brought a decrease in the overall tri-county population, primarily due to the heavy population loss in Detroit. The 1.5 million-person gain of the previous two decades was reduced to a meager gain of 399,000 between 1970 and 2000. However, increases in the black suburban population constituted 34 percent of total suburban growth. While the black numerical gain (75,611) was greatest during the 1990s, its share of total growth was greatest during the 1980s when it reached 70 percent. The decade of the 1970s ushered in the beginning of black suburbanization in the tri-county area. While the suburbs of Detroit grew by 14.8 percent between 1970 and 2000, the black population in the suburbs grew by 142 percent.

In 1970, the tri-county black population made up 18 percent of the total population and only six communities, besides Detroit, had shares greater than the area average percentages (see Table 14). These communities (Ecorse, Highland Park, Inkster, Pontiac, River Rouge and Royal Oak Township) housed 78.5 percent of the suburban black population. By 2000, this share had fallen to 34 percent, as other suburbs experienced significant gains in their black population.

Table 14
Suburban Detroit Population Change, 1970-2000

**Table 14. Suburban Detroit Population Change, 1970-2000**

| | 1970 | | | 1980 | | | 1990 | | | 2000 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Population | Black | Percentage | Total Population | Black | Percentage | Total Population | Black | Percentage | Total Population | Black | Percentage |
| Clinton Township | 48,865 | 1,296 | *2.7%* | 72,400 | 2,489 | *3.4%* | 85,866 | 2,578 | *3.0%* | 95,648 | 4,424 | *4.6%* |
| Dearborn | 104,199 | 13 | *0.0%* | 90,660 | 83 | *0.1%* | 89,286 | 490 | *0.5%* | 97,775 | 1,225 | *1.3%* |
| Dearborn Heights | 80,069 | 12 | *0.0%* | 67,706 | 63 | *0.1%* | 60,838 | 274 | *0.5%* | 58,264 | 1,224 | *2.1%* |
| Detroit | 1,511,482 | 660,428 | *43.7%* | 1,203,339 | 758,939 | *63.1%* | 1,027,974 | 774,529 | *75.3%* | 951,270 | 771,966 | *81.2%* |
| East Detroit | 45,920 | 13 | *0.0%* | 38,280 | 26 | *0.1%* | 35,283 | 87 | *0.2%* | 34,077 | 1,594 | *4.7%* |
| Ecorse | 17,515 | 6,716 | *38.3%* | 14,447 | 5,676 | *39.3%* | 12,180 | 4,760 | *39.1%* | 11,229 | 4,533 | *40.4%* |
| Farmington Hills | 48,933 | 83 | *0.2%* | 58,056 | 310 | *0.5%* | 74,652 | 1,421 | *1.9%* | 82,111 | 5,681 | *6.9%* |
| Ferndale | 30,850 | 89 | *0.3%* | 26,227 | 117 | *0.4%* | 25,084 | 340 | *1.4%* | 22,105 | 754 | *3.4%* |
| Garden City | 41,864 | 10 | *0.0%* | 35,640 | 24 | *0.1%* | 31,846 | 74 | *0.2%* | 30,047 | 330 | *1.1%* |
| Hamtramck | 27,245 | 3,270 | *12.0%* | 21,300 | 2,751 | *12.9%* | 18,372 | 2,573 | *14.0%* | 22,976 | 3,430 | *14.9%* |
| Harper Woods | 20,186 | 2 | *0.0%* | 16,361 | 11 | *0.1%* | 14,903 | 132 | *0.9%* | 14,254 | 1,449 | *10.2%* |
| Highland Park | 35,444 | 19,889 | *56.1%* | 27,909 | 23,443 | *84.0%* | 20,121 | 18,594 | *92.4%* | 16,746 | 15,598 | *93.1%* |
| Inkster | 38,595 | 17,189 | *44.5%* | 35,190 | 19,994 | *56.8%* | 30,772 | 19,144 | *62.2%* | 30,115 | 20,267 | *67.3%* |
| Lincoln Park | 52,984 | 5 | *0.0%* | 45,105 | 226 | *0.5%* | 41,832 | 381 | *0.9%* | 40,008 | 810 | *2.0%* |
| Livonia | 110,199 | 41 | *0.0%* | 104,814 | 108 | *0.1%* | 100,850 | 263 | *0.3%* | 100,545 | 945 | *0.9%* |
| Madison Heights | 38,599 | 15 | *0.0%* | 35,375 | 240 | *0.7%* | 32,196 | 291 | *0.9%* | 31,101 | 559 | *1.8%* |
| Oak Park | 36,762 | 72 | *0.2%* | 31,537 | 3,814 | *12.1%* | 30,462 | 10,385 | *34.1%* | 29,793 | 13,622 | *45.7%* |
| Pontiac | 85,279 | 22,760 | *26.7%* | 76,715 | 28,532 | *37.2%* | 71,166 | 29,712 | *41.8%* | 66,337 | 31,416 | *47.4%* |
| Redford Township | 71,901 | 17 | *0.0%* | 58,441 | 87 | *0.1%* | 54,387 | 362 | *0.7%* | 51,622 | 4,383 | *8.5%* |
| River Rouge | 15,974 | 5,094 | *31.9%* | 12,912 | 4,218 | *32.7%* | 11,314 | 3,957 | *35.0%* | 9,917 | 4,144 | *41.8%* |
| Roseville | 60,529 | 606 | *1.0%* | 54,311 | 569 | *1.0%* | 51,412 | 511 | *1.0%* | 48,129 | 1,247 | *2.6%* |
| Royal Oak Twp. | 6,326 | 4,237 | *67.0%* | 5,784 | 3,358 | *58.1%* | 5,011 | 3,267 | *65.2%* | 5,446 | 3,870 | *71.1%* |
| Royal Oak | 85,499 | 26 | *0.0%* | 70,893 | 116 | *0.2%* | 65,410 | 330 | *0.5%* | 60,062 | 910 | *1.5%* |
| Southfield | 69,285 | 102 | *0.1%* | 75,568 | 6,976 | *9.2%* | 75,728 | 21,871 | *28.9%* | 78,296 | 42,259 | *54.0%* |
| St. Clair Shores | 88,093 | 167 | *0.2%* | 76,210 | 181 | *0.2%* | 68,107 | 139 | *0.2%* | 63,096 | 434 | *0.7%* |
| Sterling Heights | 61,385 | 38 | *0.1%* | 108,999 | 204 | *0.2%* | 117,810 | 466 | *0.4%* | 124,471 | 1,602 | *1.3%* |
| Taylor | 70,020 | 20 | *0.0%* | 77,568 | 1,266 | *1.6%* | 70,811 | 2,956 | *4.2%* | 65,868 | 5,721 | *8.7%* |
| The Pointes* | 58,708 | 96 | *0.2%* | 52,099 | 89 | *0.2%* | 49,300 | 181 | *0.4%* | 47,780 | 588 | *1.2%* |
| Troy | 39,419 | 1 | *0.0%* | 67,102 | 642 | *1.0%* | 72,884 | 974 | *1.3%* | 80,959 | 1,678 | *2.1%* |
| Warren | 179,260 | 132 | *0.1%* | 161,134 | 297 | *0.2%* | 144,864 | 1,033 | *0.7%* | 138,247 | 3,676 | *2.7%* |
| Westland | 86,749 | 2,234 | *2.6%* | 84,603 | 2,200 | *2.6%* | 84,724 | 2,802 | *3.3%* | 86,602 | 5,823 | *6.7%* |

* Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods and Grosse Pointe

## Detroit

According to Sugrue (1996), residential racial division occurred during the first great migration. Prior to this time, blacks frequently lived among other races in Detroit's small but growing population. It was after World War I and the influx of blacks from the South that black "ghettos" formed. These residents, along with new arrivals, were confined to the most run-down, over-crowded areas of the city, predominantly the lower east side, commonly referred to as the "Black-bottom." As time passed and Detroit's black population grew, their geographic distribution within the city grew as well (see Appendix 1). Unfortunately, blacks were still confined to the most dense and dilapidated areas of the city through a variety of discriminatory maneuvers (Farley et al., Sugrue). Many of the most dilapidated areas were slated for demolition during the "Urban Renewal" programs of the 1950s and 1960s, further exacerbating the housing dilemma of blacks. It was not until after the 1970s that blacks were able to gain greater access to suburban neighborhoods.

## Conclusion

The decade of the 1990s has brought a number of interesting changes to the distribution of blacks at both the national and local level. Nationally, while the black rate of growth was slightly higher than total population growth, the significant change occurred as blacks ended the 20th Century by returning to the region that they spent most of the century leaving. In the 1990s, the black population of the South increased by more than in the other three regions of the United States combined. Locally, while the metropolitan Detroit area continues to account for the vast majority of Michigan's black population (72 percent), the distribution of blacks in the area is changing. While blacks increased their share of the city of Detroit's population from 76 to 82 percent, the actual number of blacks in the city fell for the first time in modern history (our measure goes back to 1820). The suburbs of Detroit (within the three counties of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne), however, experienced the largest numerical growth in blacks of any decade in the 20th Century. In fact, black growth accounted for almost half the total suburban growth.

Access to residential opportunities throughout metropolitan Detroit is now open to blacks. While there continue to be communities that function more as "magnets," the 1990s brought blacks to communities throughout the region. As we move into the 21st Century, the issue will move to one of economic equity. The incomes of blacks have been rising faster than that of whites nationally, and the middle and upper middle class ranks are growing. As opportunities increase, we anticipate a continuing movement of blacks throughout metropolitan Detroit.

## References and Notes

Farley, R., S. Danziger, & H.J. Holzer (2000). Detroit Divided. Russell Sage Foundation. New York, NY.

Sugrue, T. J. (1996). The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ.

[1]For Census 2000, the question on race was asked of every individual living in the United States and responses reflect self-identification. Respondents were asked to report the race or races they considered themselves and other members of their households to be. The question on race for Census 2000 was different from that of previous censuses in several ways. Most significantly, respondents were given the option of selecting one or more race categories to indicate their racial identities. As a result, the Census 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 census or earlier censuses. Unless otherwise stated, the data contained in this paper will utilize the 2000 category of "Black alone," or single race - Black, as the method for reporting 2000 totals.

[2] Frey, William H. (2001) Census 2000 Shows Large Black Return to the South, Reinforcing the Region's "White-Black" Demographic Profile. Population Studies Center, University of Michigan.

[3] The Detroit PMSA consists of Lapeer, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair and Wayne counties.

## Appendix I

1950 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

1960 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

1970 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

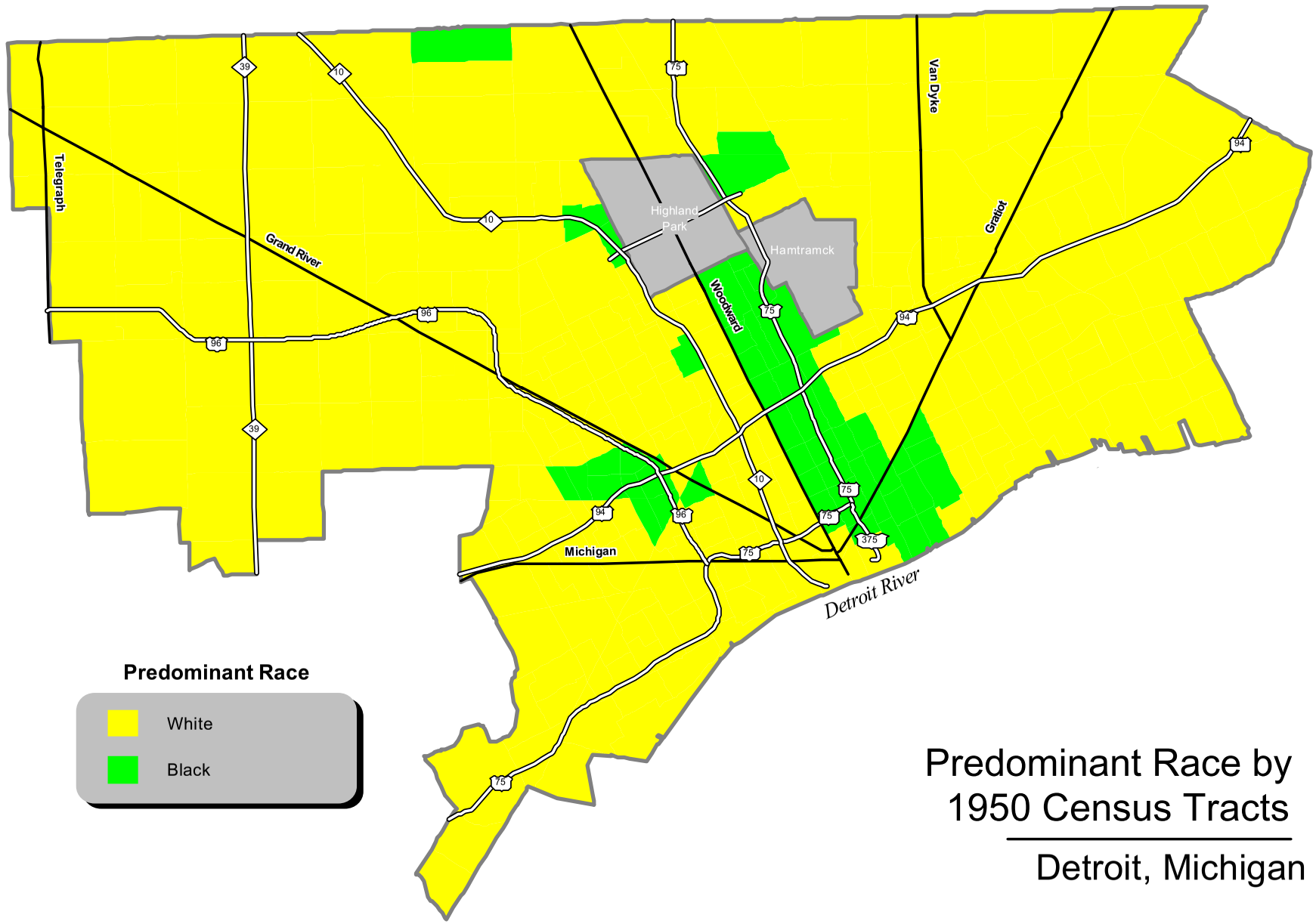
1980 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

1990 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

2000 Predominant Race by Census Tracts, Detroit, MI

2000 Census Black Population by MCD, Tri-County

2000 Census Black Population by County, Michigan




# Predominant Race by 1950 Census Tracts

## Detroit, Michigan

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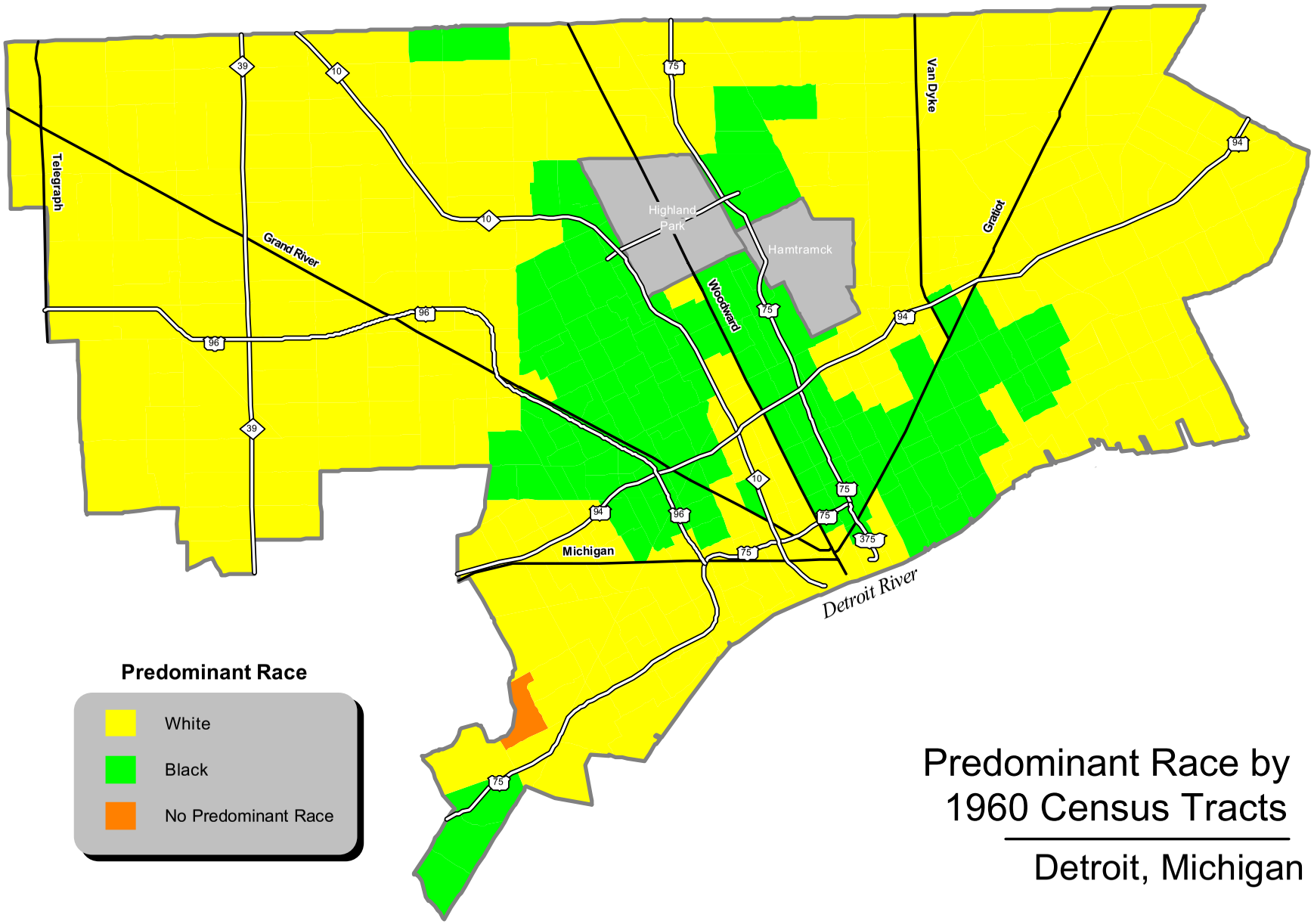


# Predominant Race by 1960 Census Tracts

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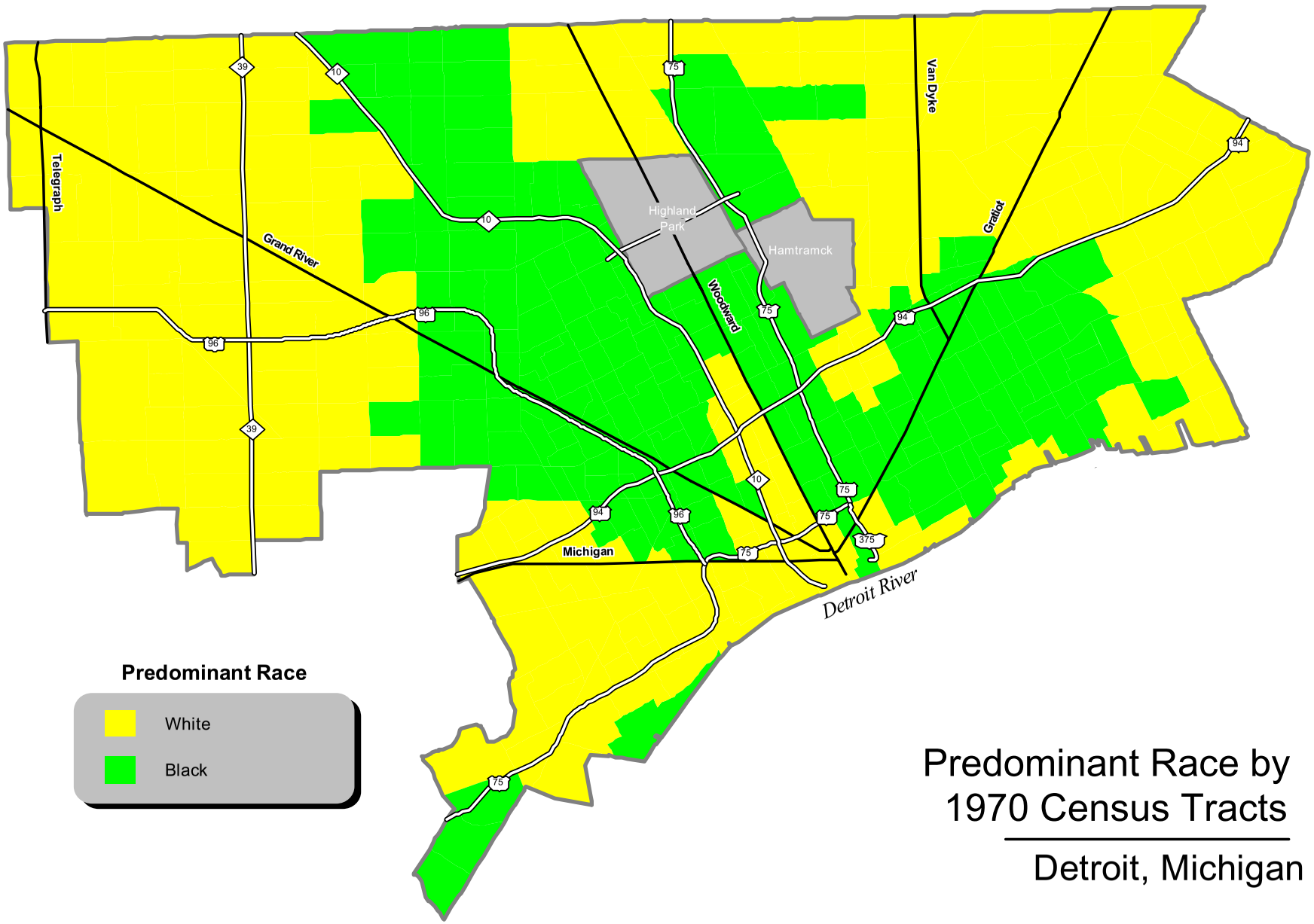


# Predominant Race by 1970 Census Tracts

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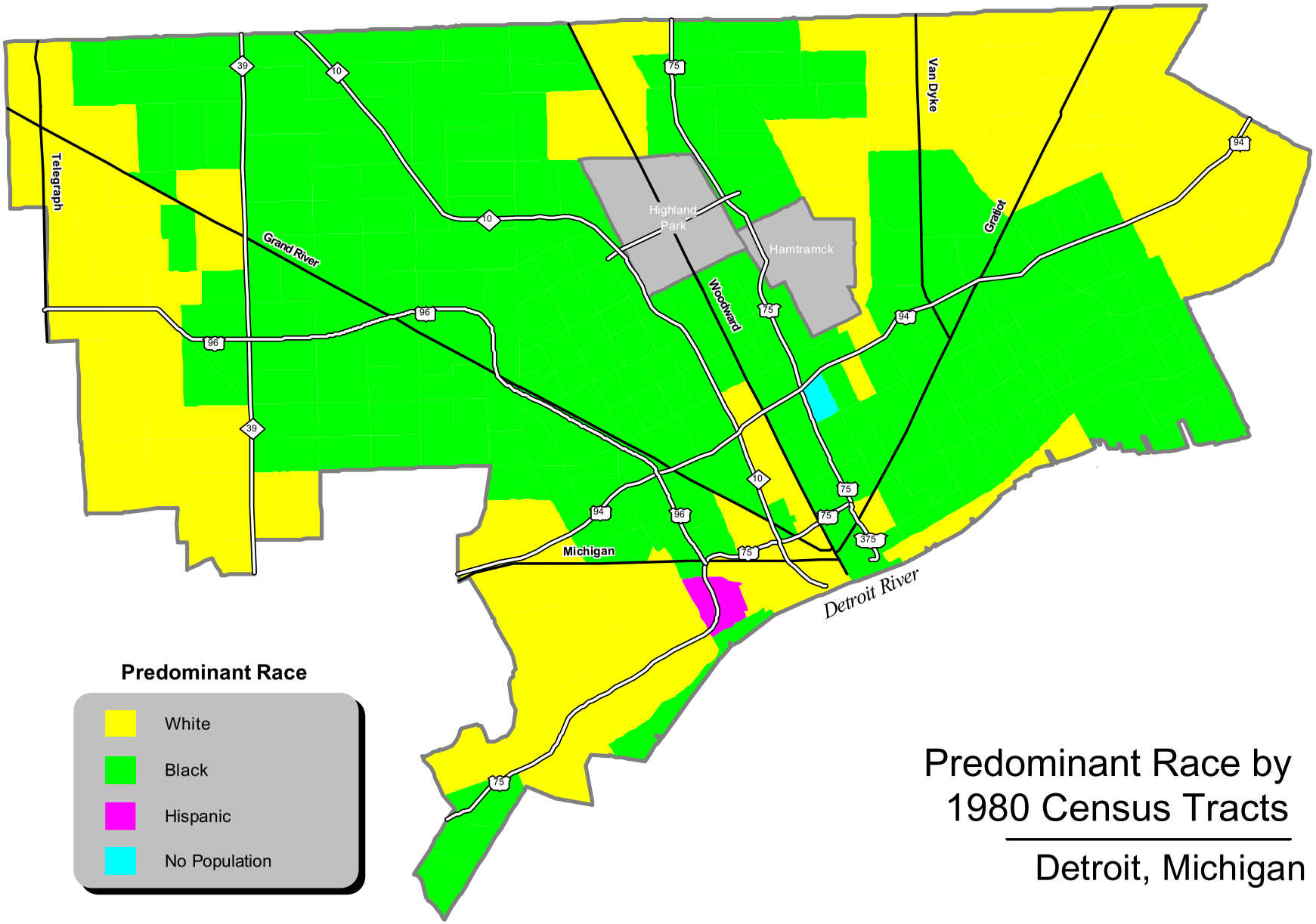


# Predominant Race by 1980 Census Tracts

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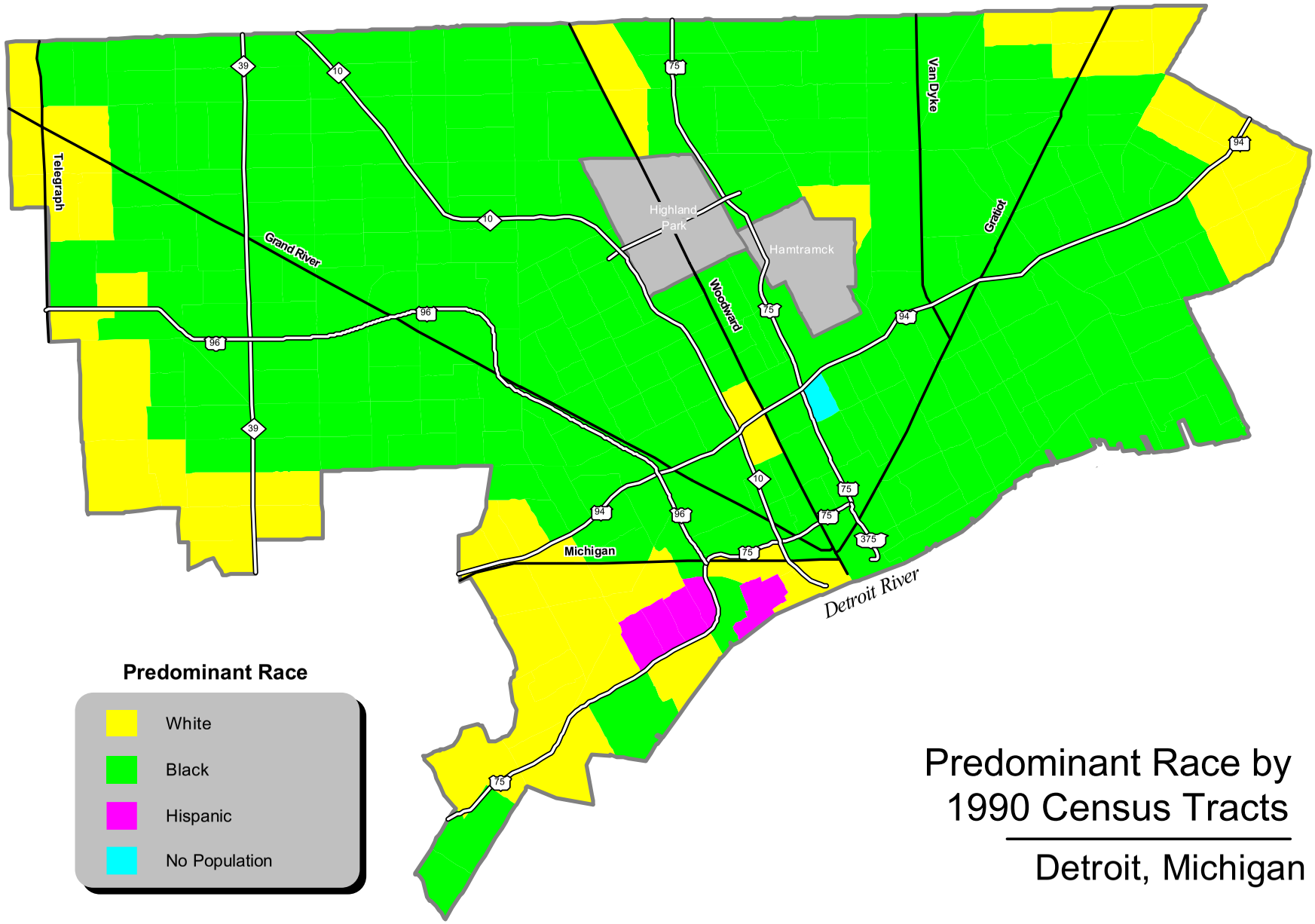


# Predominant Race by 1990 Census Tracts

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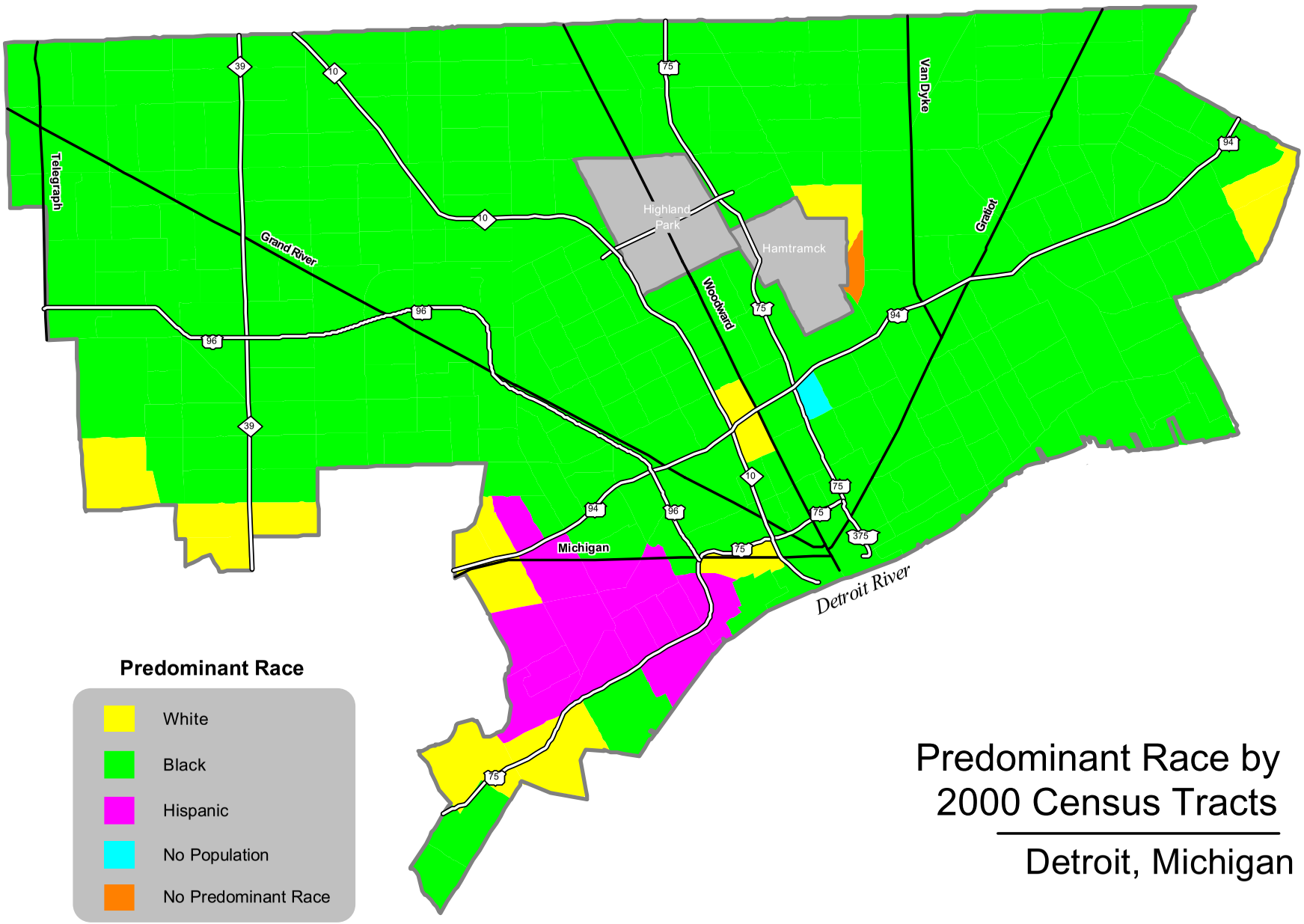


# Predominant Race by 2000 Census Tracts

## Detroit, Michigan

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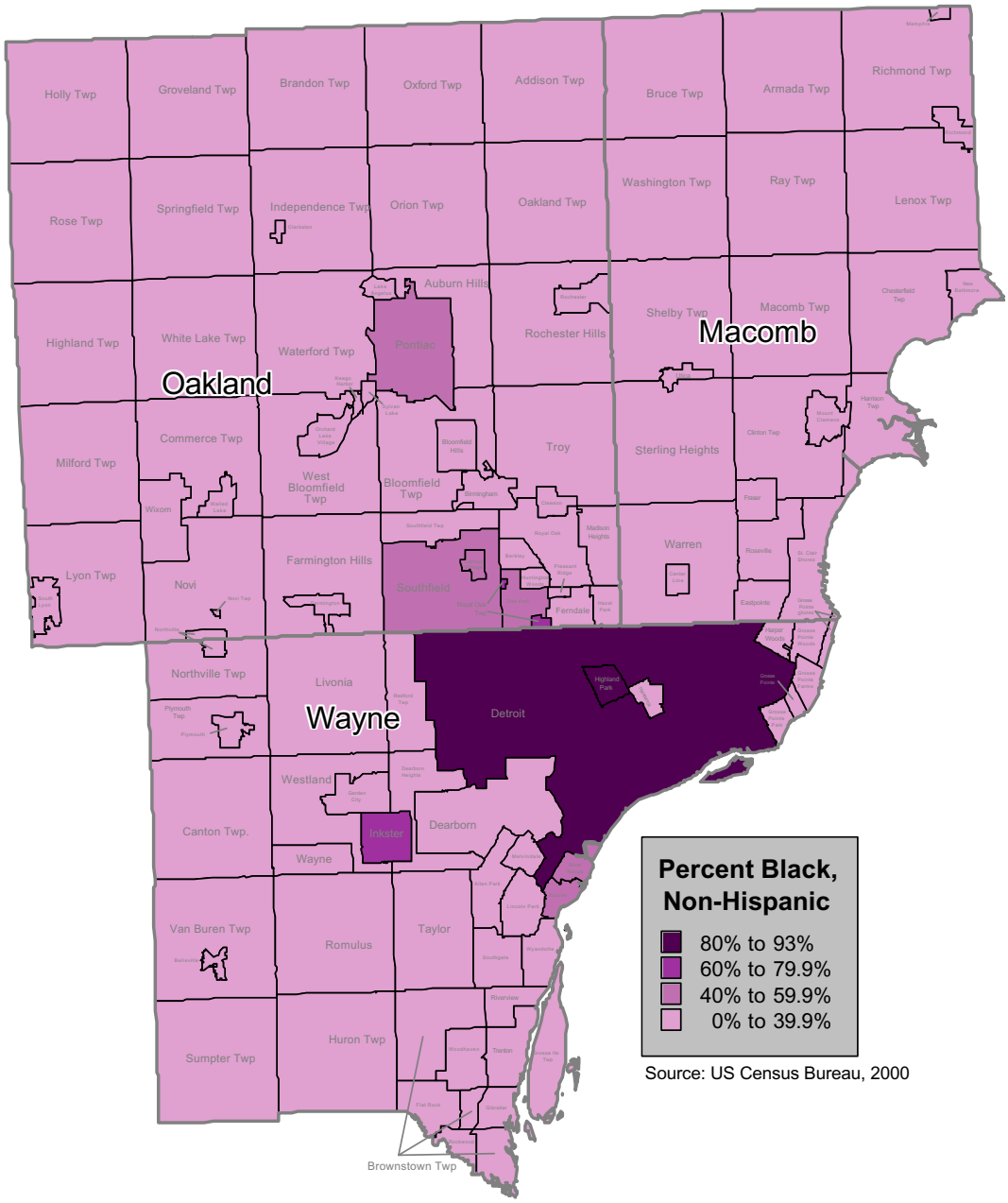
# 2000 Census Black Population by MCD
## Tri-County Area

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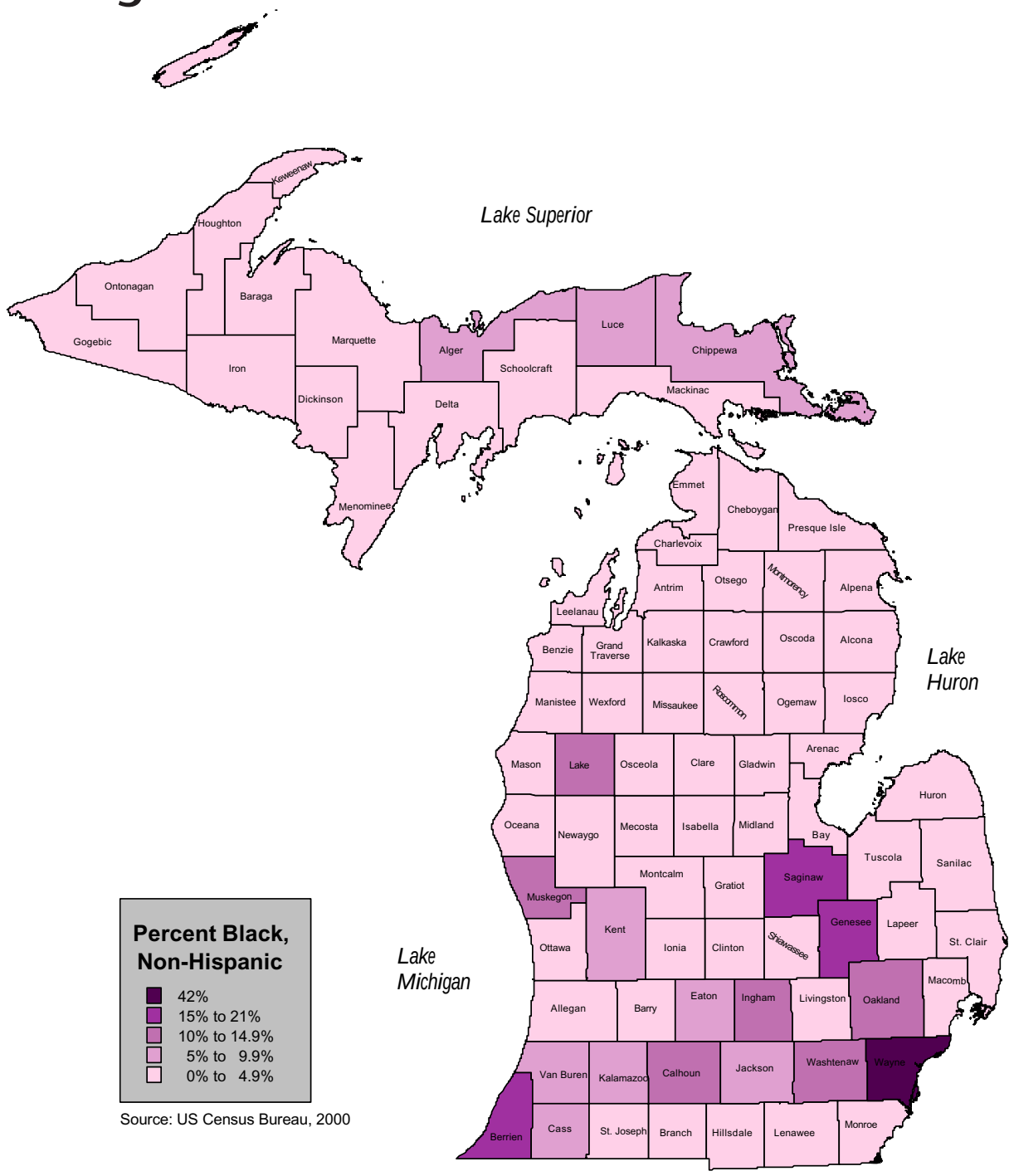
# 2000 Census Black Population by County
## Michigan




Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

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