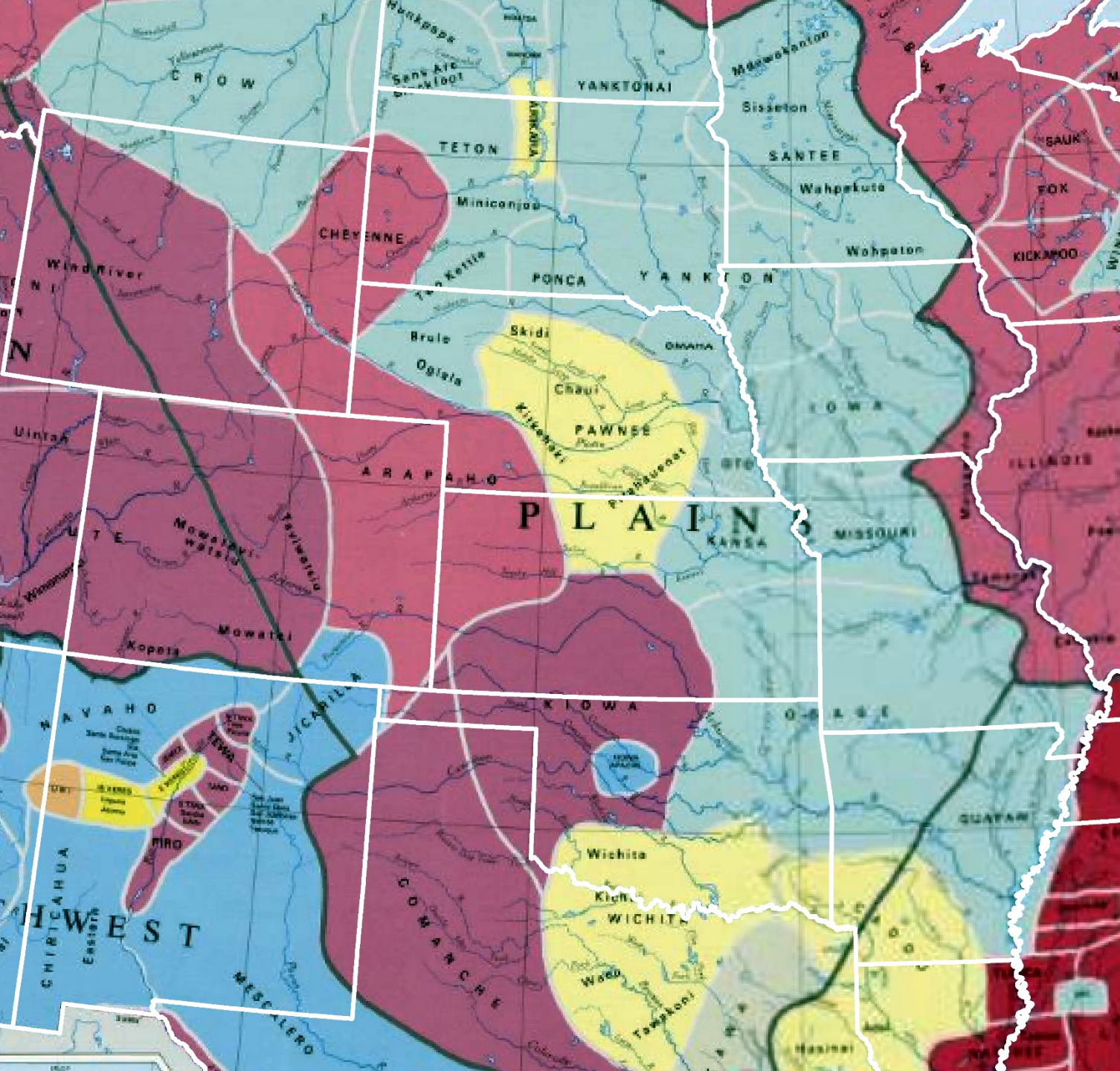


A landscape photograph showing a dirt path leading through a green field towards a golden wheat field. In the background, there is a row of green corn plants under a dark, cloudy sky with a hint of sunset or sunrise. The image is split vertically into two halves, with the right half being a darker, semi-transparent overlay for text.

# Kansas Then & Now 1890-2015

2016 Kansas State of the State  
Kansas Economic Policy Conference  
**Reimagining Kansas: Policy  
Implications Now and in the Future**



# Original Inhabitants

While this presentation focuses on demographic changes in Kansas after 1890, the area we now know as Kansas was originally inhabited by a number of indigenous people. The name "Kansas" was taken from the Kansa people, who lived in the eastern part of our state.

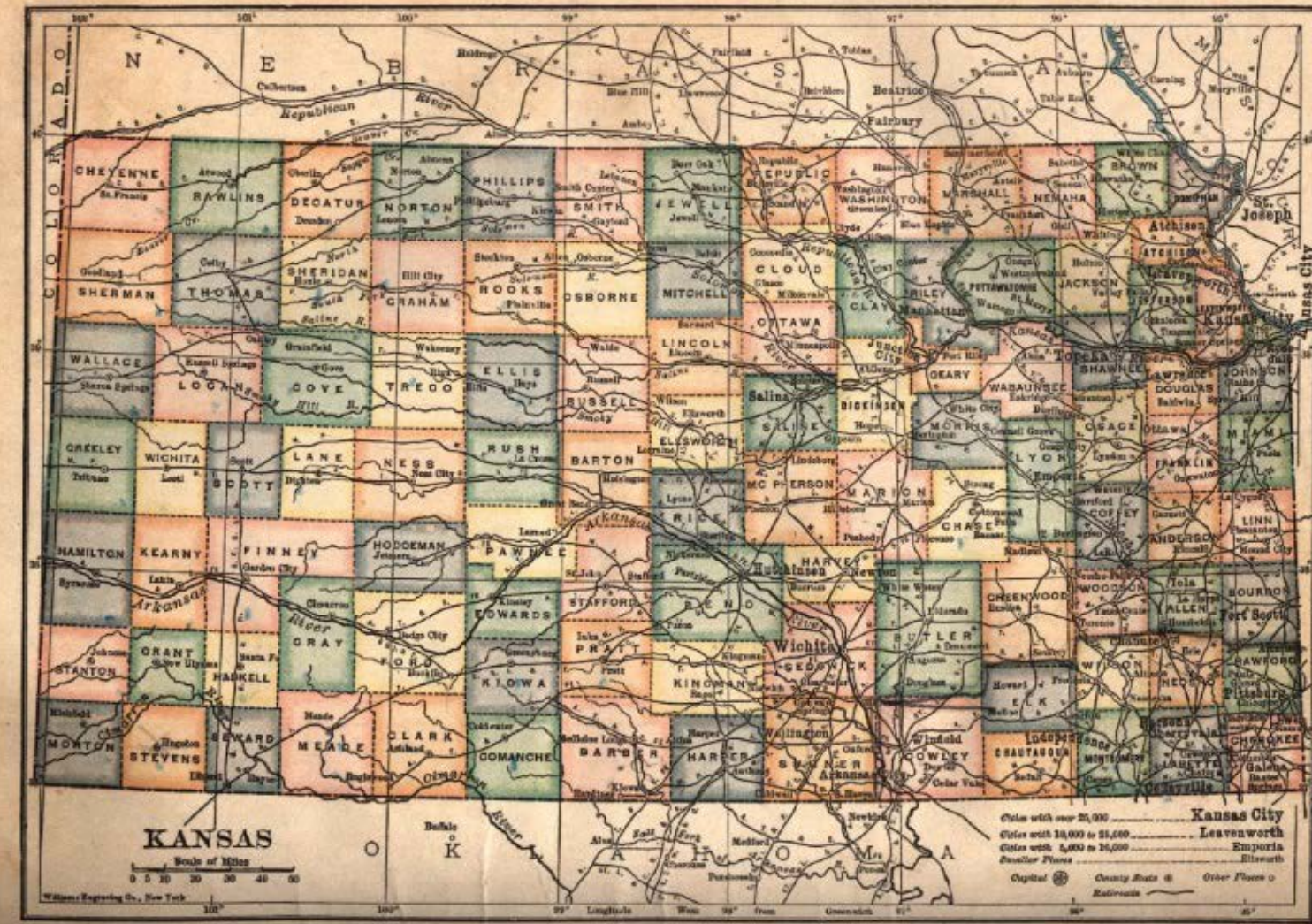
Map Credit: Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701e.ct003648r/>

# Kansas 1890

"Besides being indicative of economic trends, population data provide an excellent indicator of the relative strength of these economic factors which tend to expand or to contract the community's economy."

"Actually, Kansas achieved its maximum percentage of the population of the United States in the 1890 census, when roughly 2.25% per cent of the United States population lived within the State."

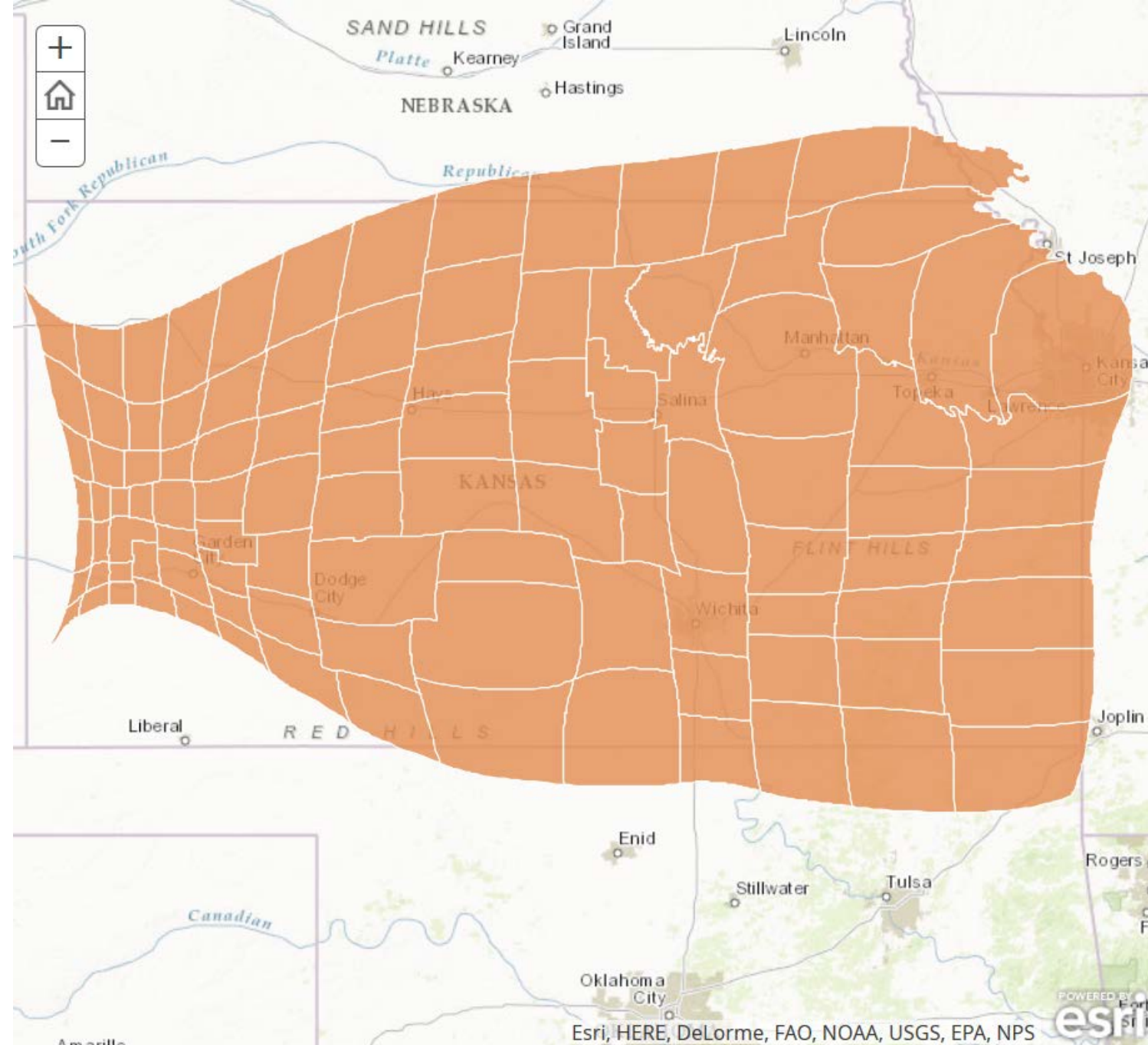
excerpt from "Some Controlling Forces in Kansas Population Movements", J.D. Morgan, Bureau of Business Research, School of Business, University of Kansas (1953).





## Kansas Cow Towns

In the late 1800's Kansas, especially the western part of the state, was known for the cattle drives bringing livestock up from Texas to "cow towns" with railheads.



# Kansas 1890

Even in the prosperous westward movement years, the population in Northeast Kansas far exceeded the population in the western half of the state.

Viewed here as a cartogram, where county boundaries are stretched to represent the population in 1890, Wyandotte County is the most populous in the state with 54,407 inhabitants.

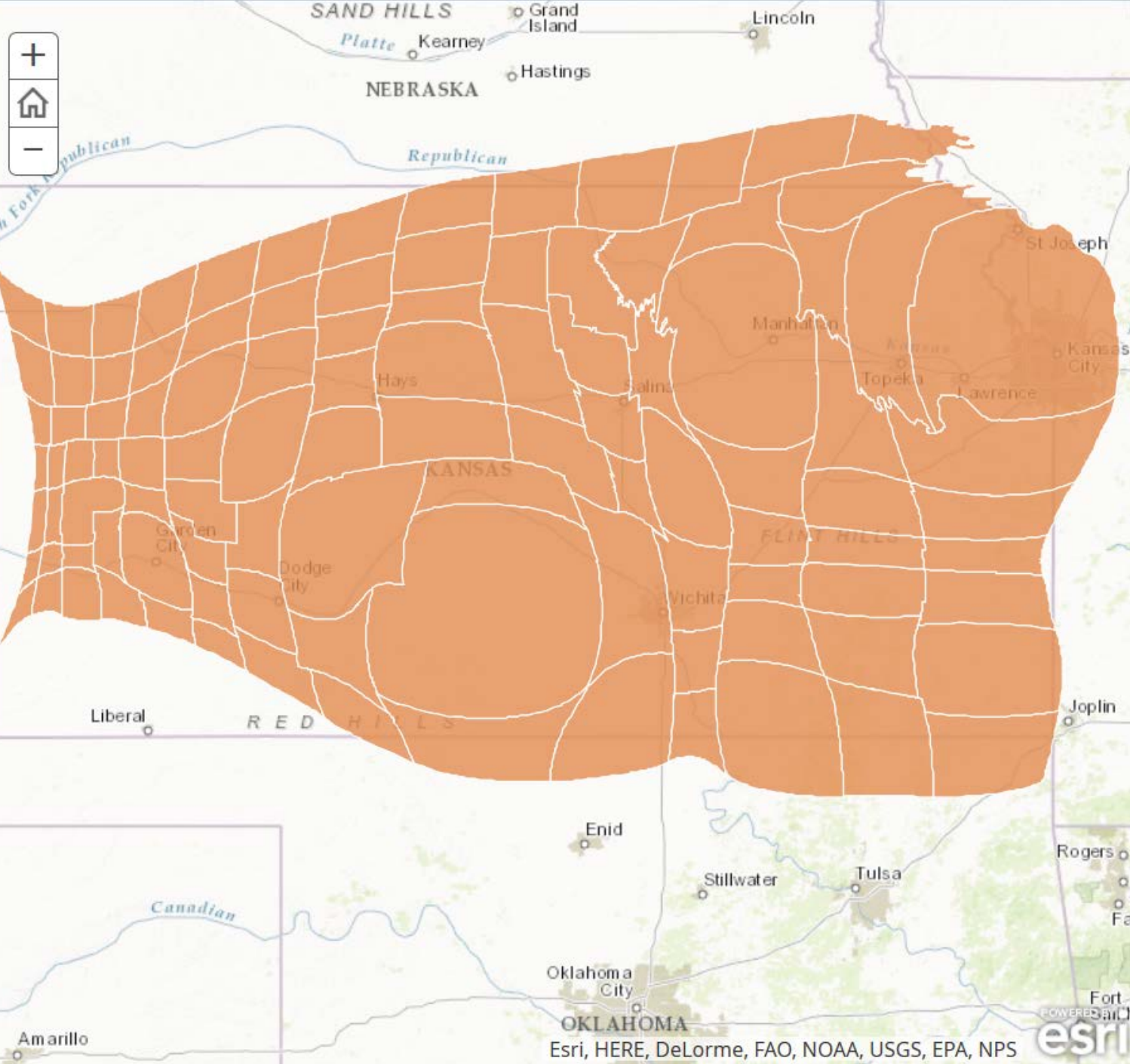


## The Dust Bowl

The 1930's brought clouds of dust and devastated the Kansas farm economy. Sixty-eight of Kansas's 105 counties peaked in population BEFORE the dust bowl.

Sunday April 14, 1935  
Dust Clouds Rolling Over  
Stovall Studio, Dodge City,

Photo Credit: "Dust clouds rolling over the prairies, Hugoton, Kansas" by Stovall Studio, April 14, 1935 used by permission from kansasmemory.org, Kansas State Historical Society.



# Kansas 1940

The dust bowl resulted in many people leaving the state or moving to larger cities for employment. The two largest counties are Wyandotte with 145,071 and Sedgwick with 143,311 people.

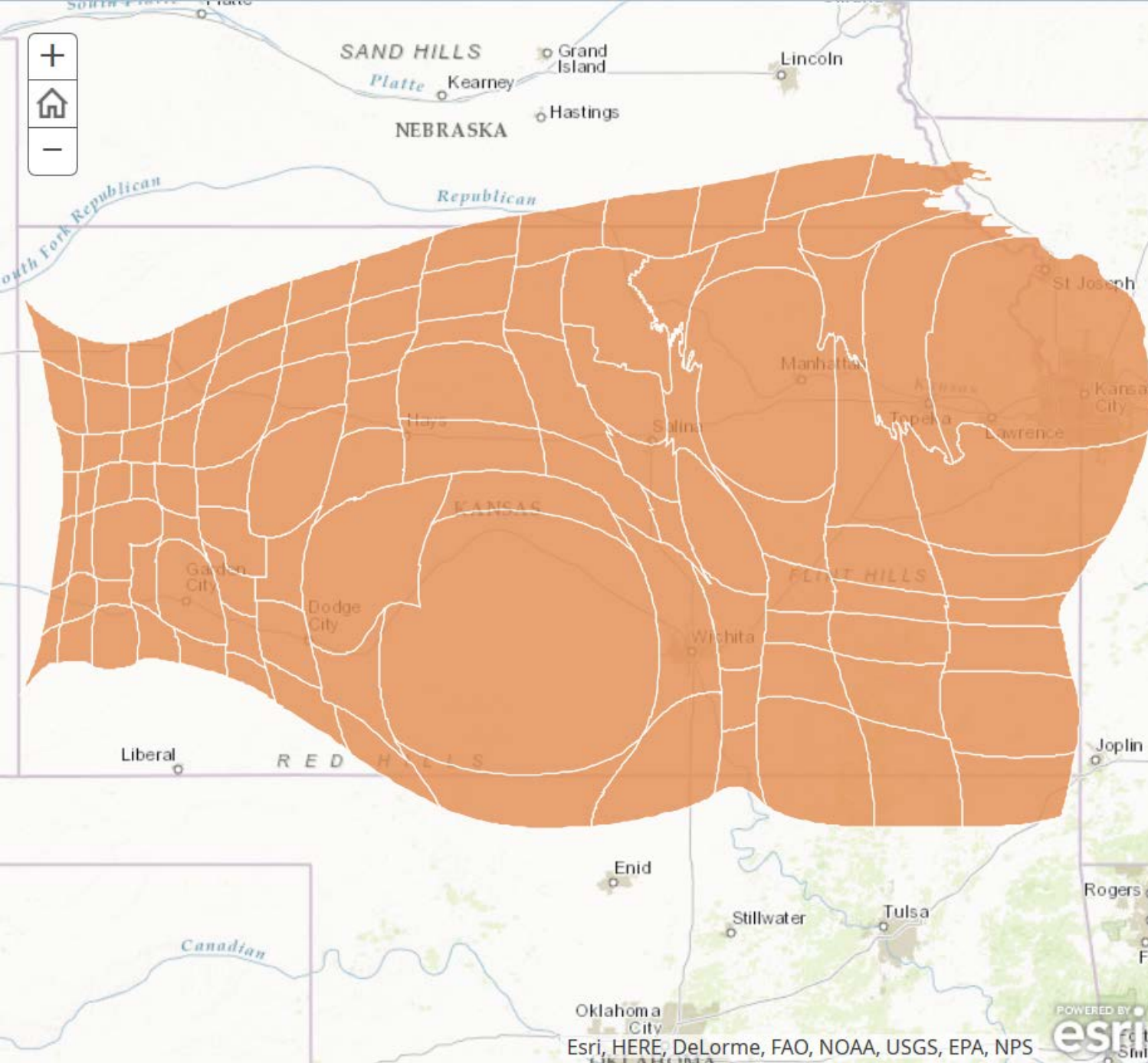


## War Boom

World War II brings a boom to the aviation industry. Firms such as Boeing, Beech, and Cessna employed more than 25,000 aircraft workers in Kansas plants, most of them in Wichita.

Photo Credit: Boeing B-29 assembly line in Wichita, Kansas (1944) by United States Army Air Forces - United States Air Force Historical Research Agency.





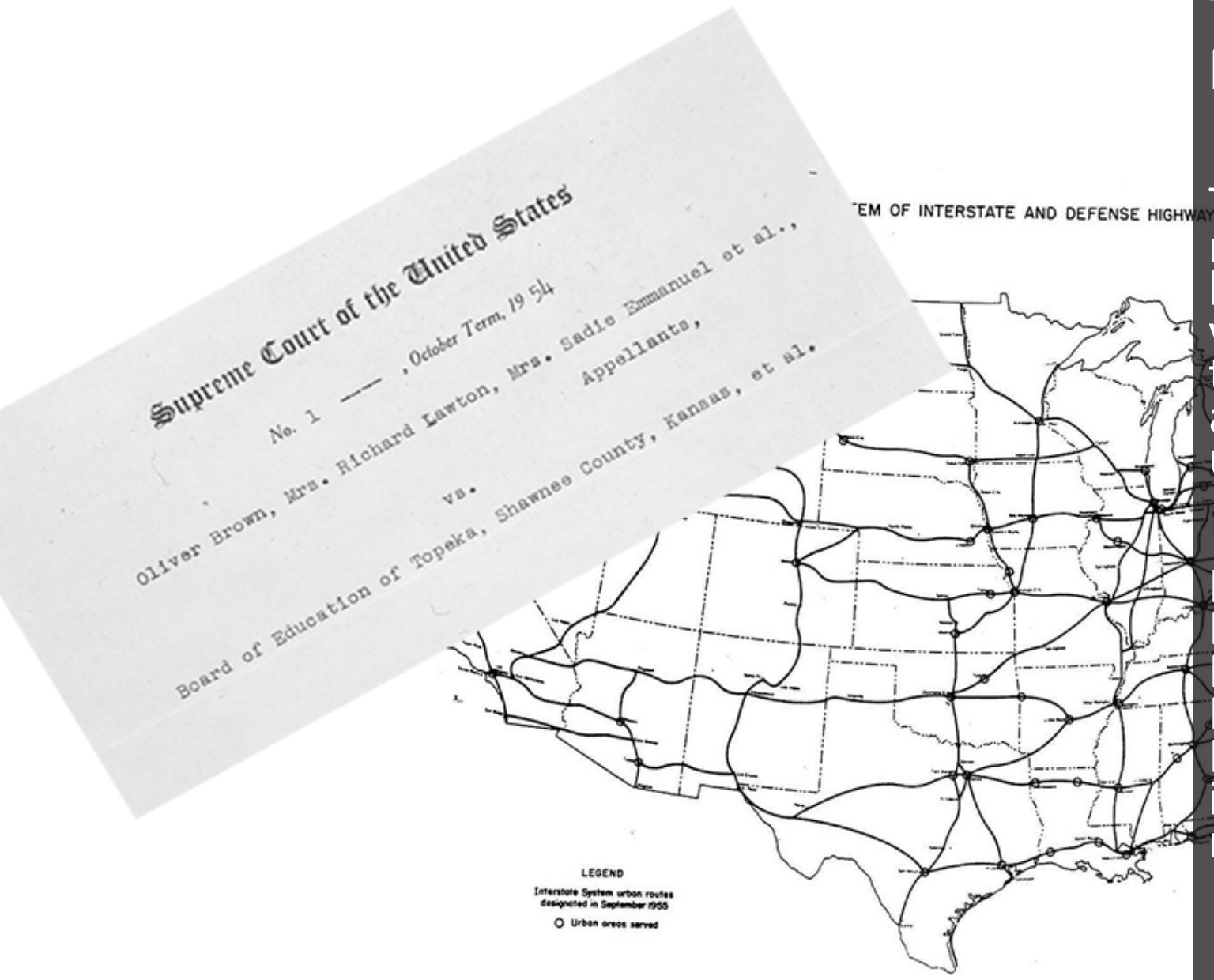
# Kansas 1950

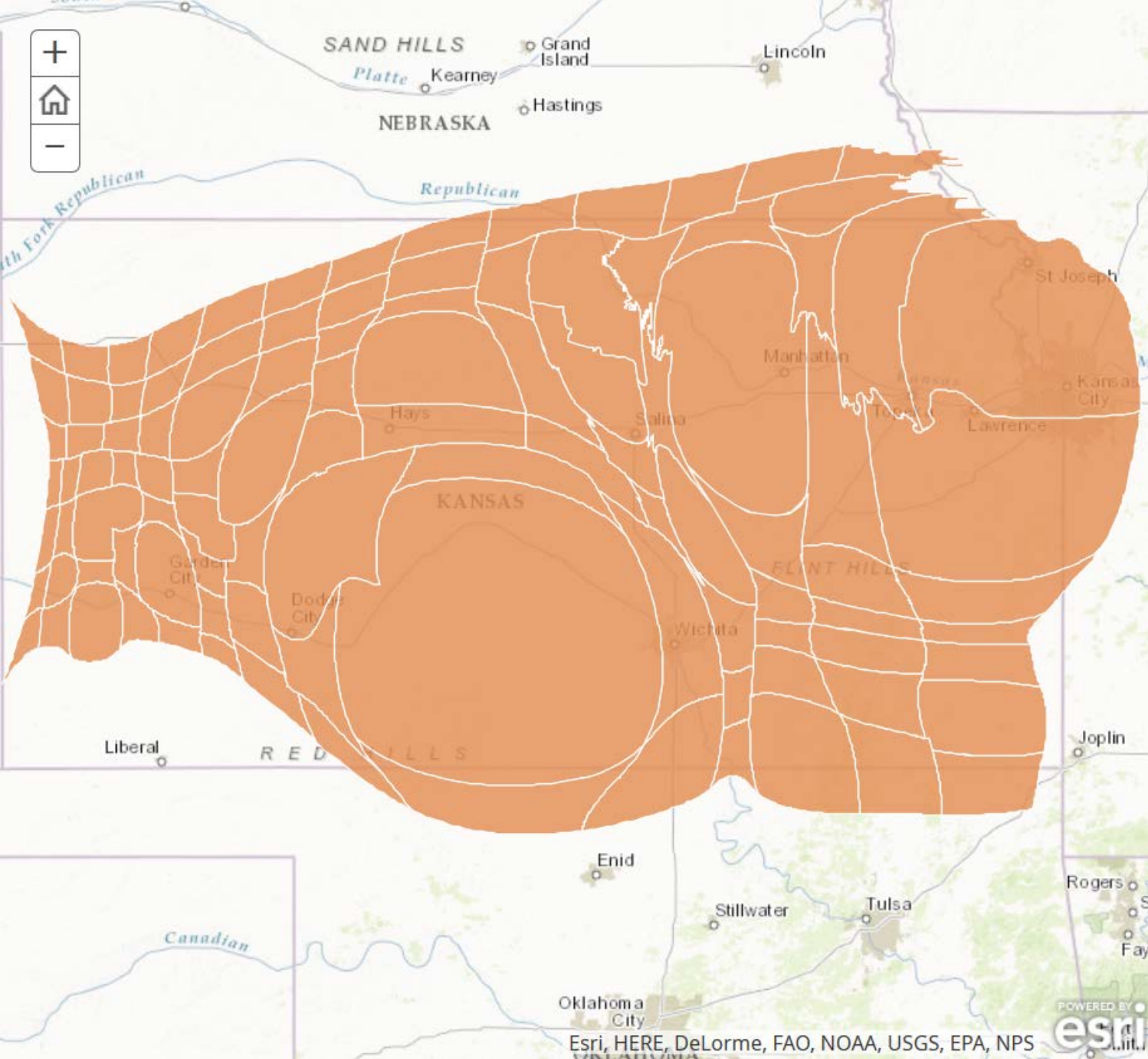
Sedgwick County sees a 55% increase in population from 1940-1950. Fostered by the booming aviation industry, it surpasses Wyandotte and becomes the largest county in the state with 222,290 people.

# The 1950s Suburban Migration

Two crucial events lead to significant migration in the 1950s. In 1954, the landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruled that separate public schools for white and black students was unconstitutional.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Better known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, it enabled the construction of 41,000 miles of highway.





## Kansas 1960

Fueled by fears of racial integration and the ease of commuting provided by the Interstate Highway System, the 1950s saw significant numbers of people moving to the suburbs.

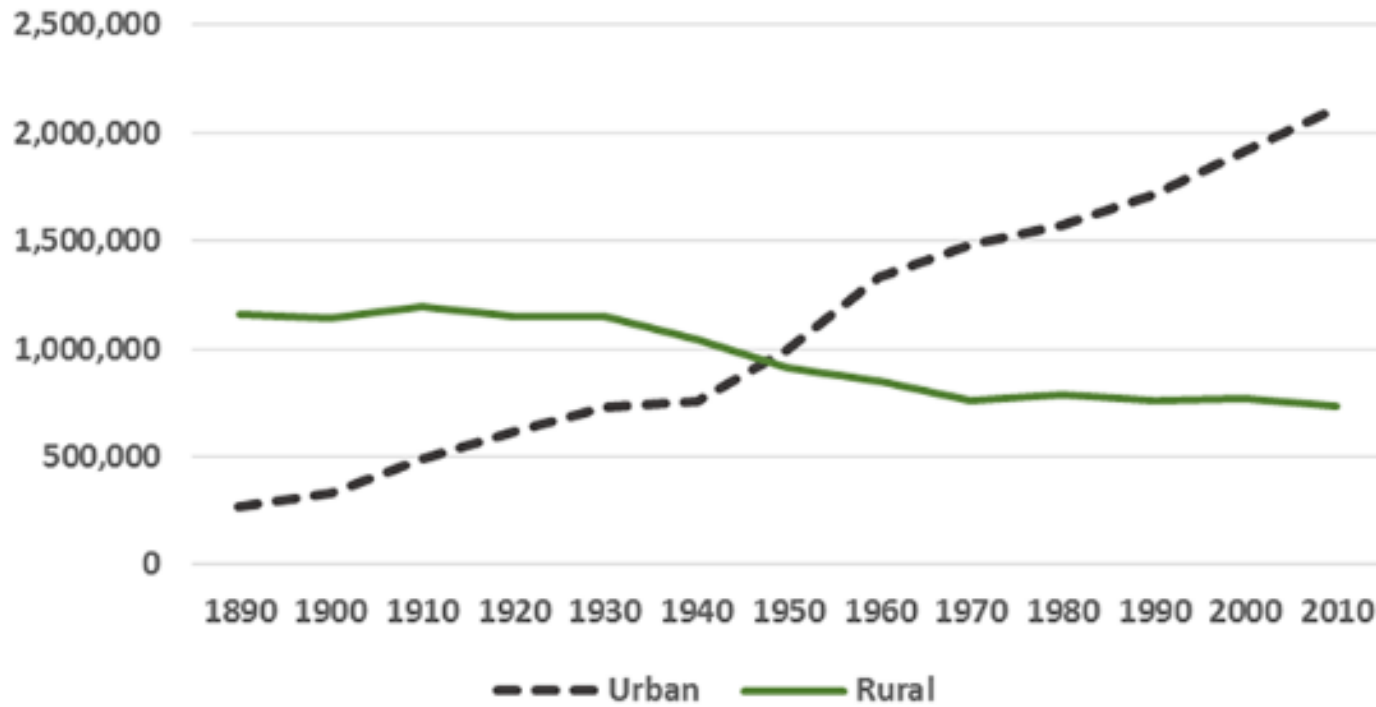
From 1950-1960, Johnson County, Kansas more than doubles in population from 62,783 to 143,792. At the same time, Sedgwick County sees an increase of more than 120,000 people where the once thriving Wyandotte County has a modest gain of 20,000 people.

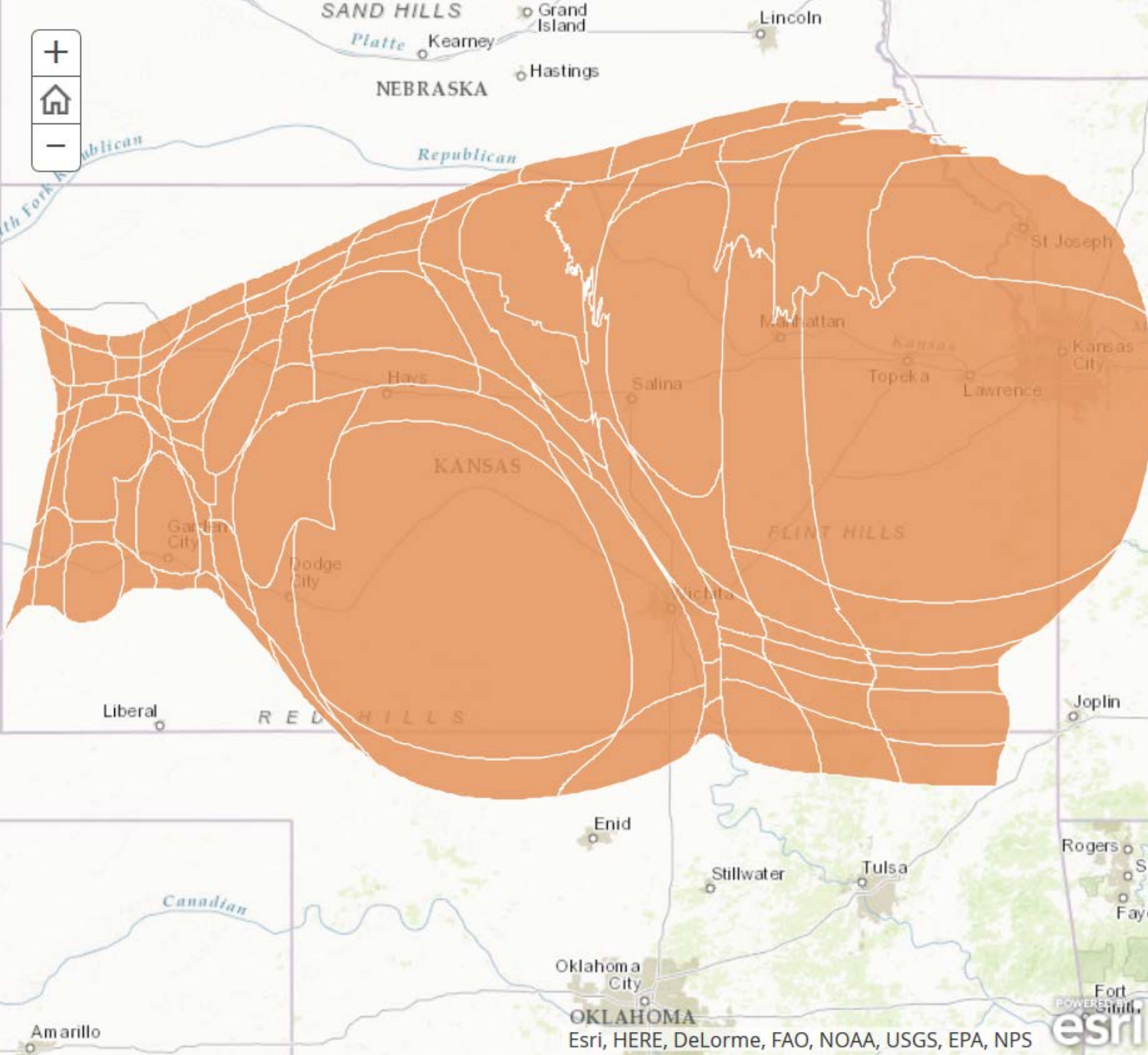
72 Kansas counties peak in population BEFORE 1960.

# Urban Migration Continues

The Kansas population grows at an average of 5% per decade from 1970-2010. The shift from rural to urban continues with rural populations declining.

Urban and Rural Population in Kansas, 1890-2010





# Kansas 2010

By 2010, 52% of the state's 2.8 million people live in five counties:

- Johnson 544,179
- Sedgwick 498,365
- Shawnee 177,934
- Wyandotte 157,505
- Douglas 110,826

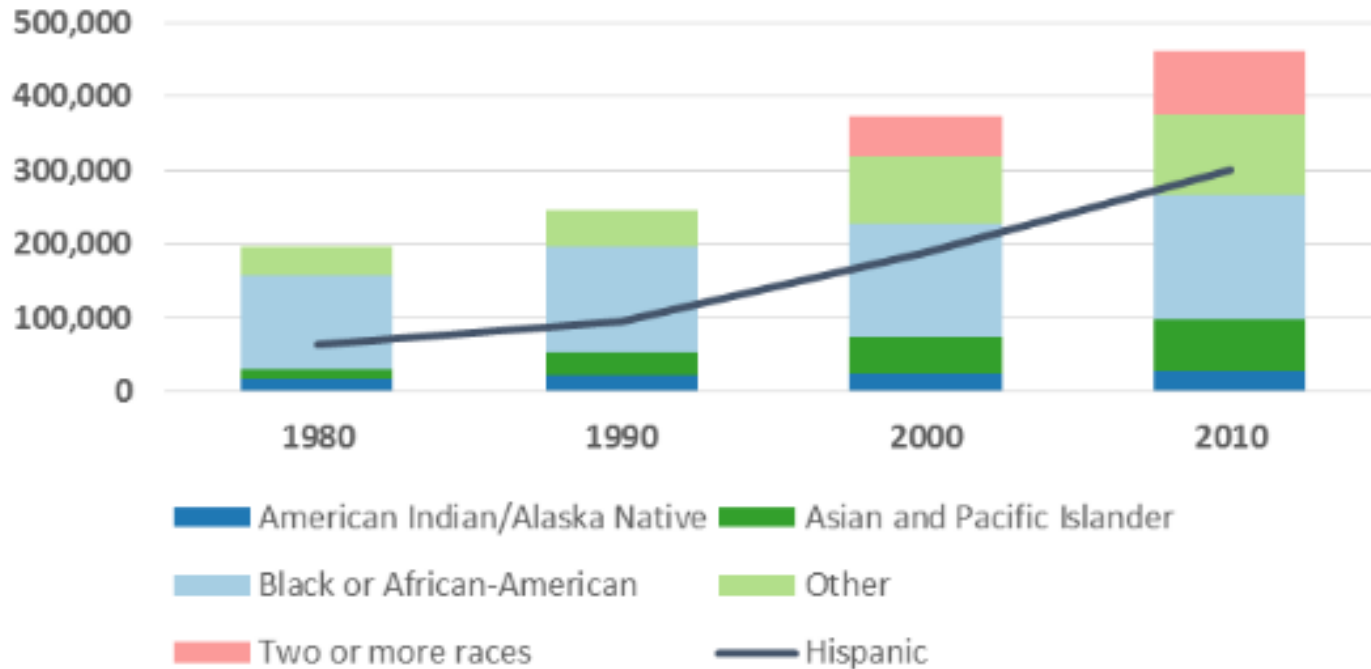
# Changing Demographics

While the State has a modest overall population growth of 20% over the 30 years from 1980-2010, the minority population in the state grows at a considerably faster rate. All minority groups grow faster than the overall population.

## Increases from 1980-2010:

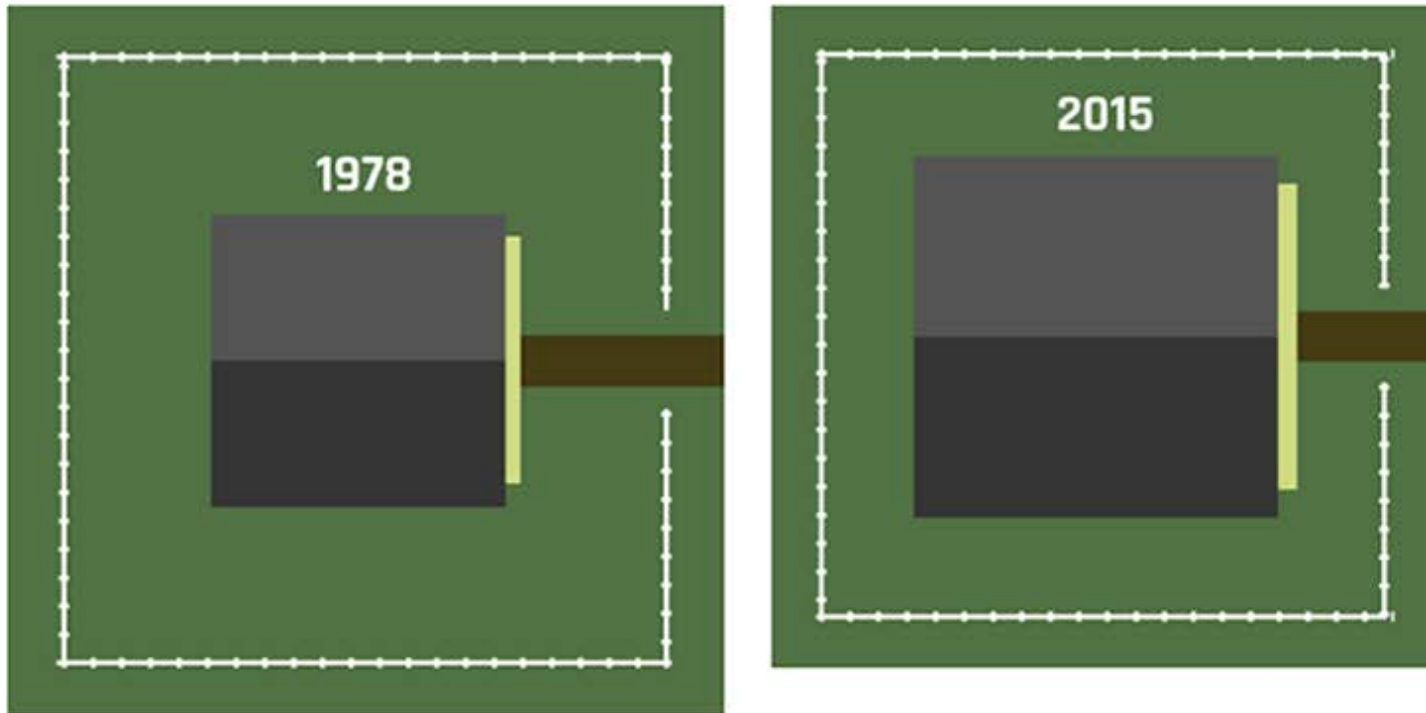
- Hispanic 374%
- Asian and Pacific Islander 364%
- "Other" Race 183%
- American Indian or Alaska Native 83%
- Black or African-American 33%
- White 10%

Population by Race & Ethnicity in Kansas, 1980-2010  
(excluding White alone)



# Changing Housing Patterns

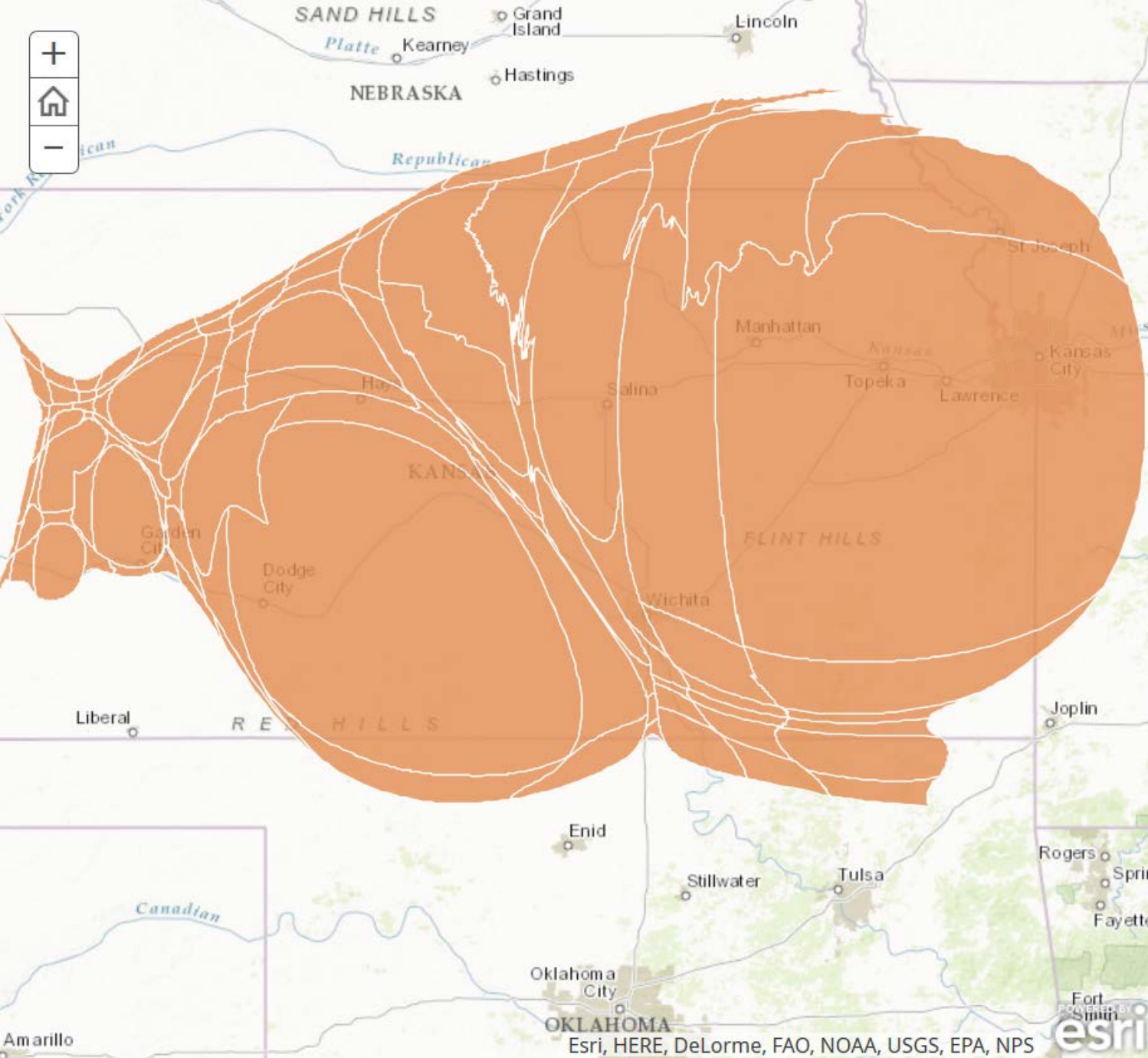
## Average American House and Yard Size, to Scale



While new houses are larger, they are being built on smaller lots leading to denser neighborhoods.

New single-family homes completed in 2015 in the U.S. are on average 50% larger than in 1978 while the average lot size was 13% smaller.

Source: Andrew McGill, "The Shrinking of the American Lawn", The Atlantic, July 6, 2016.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/lawns-census-bigger-homes-smaller-lots/489590/>



# The Future of Kansas?

Population projections from Wichita State University predict that 68% percent of the state's nearly 3.4 million people will live in five counties in 2064:

- Johnson 1,096,662
- Sedgwick 630,438
- Douglas 202,077
- Shawnee 194,353
- Wyandotte 186,845

What does the future hold for a Kansas with one-third of the population living in one county?





## A resilient people

"Why do we stay? In part because we hope for the coming moisture, which would change conditions so that we again would have bountiful harvests. And in great part, because it is home. We have reared our family here and have many precious memories of the past.

We have our memories. We have faith in the future, we are here to stay."

excerpt from "Black Blizzard" by Ada Buell Norris  
published in Kansas Magazine (1941).

Photo credit: "A True Kansas Sunset" by Matt  
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