

Freedom Matters

A News & Opinion Paper

Dane County, Wisconsin

Preserving Property Rights

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Our republic limits government to securing individual unalienable rights to life, liberty, and property. These rights are eroded by legislatures, and by courts complicit with them. To encourage wise jurists and journalists to help, *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore that republic.

Falk's "Attain Dane": Part 4 Falk's Fallacies on Our Population Growth

by Bob Bowman
with the data assistance of John Oltman

Falk is hawking "Attain Dane," a proposal for central control of land use, by claiming that Dane is the fastest growing county in Wisconsin because it added the most people in 1990-2000. No, we showed in Part 3 that one must compare counties via **density** (people per square mile). In 1990-2000, Dane was **average** in growing its **density**, re the curve of **all Wisconsin counties**, adding 59,441 people (50 / sq. mi.) to attain a population of 426,526 (355 / sq. mi). Four counties grew **faster**. The fastest, Waukesha, grew at **twice** Dane County's rate.

Falk's mentor for the "Attain Dane" idea, professional land use planner Mike Slavney, speaking as a planner to a meeting of planners, on March 4, a few days ago, asserted that Dane County grew at a consistent rate of 60,000 people per decade **for the last few decades**, a rate of growth he imputed into the future as the fuel which was powering his version of "Attain Dane." That imputation has also fed Falk's "Attain Dane" fervor.

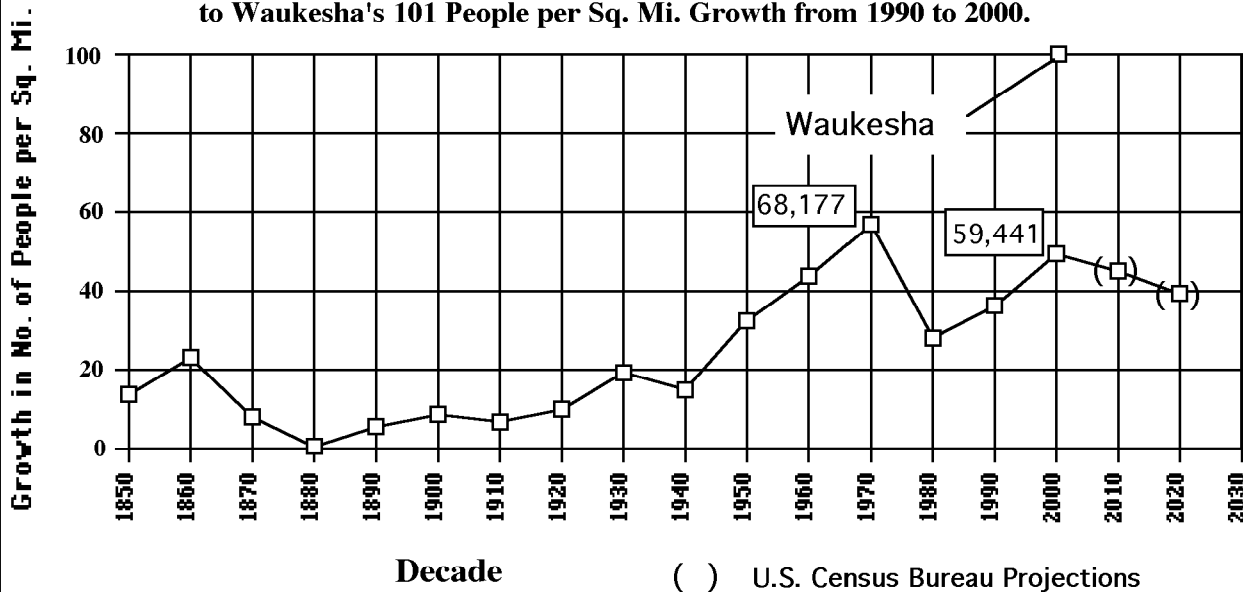
The data say otherwise (U. S. Census Bureau). The graph just below shows Dane County's population growth per decade from 1850 to 2000, plus U. S. Census

Bureau projections for 2010 and 2020. Lest some readers wonder why those projections are heading down, keep in mind that the U. S., like industrial nations worldwide, has fallen below a replacement birth rate. The populations of Europe, Russia, and Japan are already in decline, and that of the U. S. would be, except for increased longevity and immigration. Readers of *Freedom Matters* (www.freedommatters.org) learned of this before *Time* and *National Geographic* reported it.

Even the birth rate in the non-industrial world is in decline, although it has not fallen below replacement level as yet. This decline in birth rate was first noticed in France in the early 1800s, and has slowly spread and accelerated throughout the industrial nations ever since. Thus, it is a long-standing trend, suggesting that it is not likely to reverse. Thereby, we need to face the probable future that world population will peak in number before the end of the century. Statistical predictions suggest an ultimate worldwide population peak of about 10 billion people; we are already over 6 billion of the way there.

Slavney talked about an urban "build out" that could eventually house 3.5 million people in Dane County. Not likely. Statistical analysis of population growth suggests that Dane County may never attain even a million people. In a word, Dane has no doomsday population crisis, and hence no land shortage. We need not destroy our freedoms, property rights or capitalist prosperity in order to "protect" rural land. *(To be continued)*

Dane County's Growth in Each Decade from 1850 to 2030 Relative to Waukesha's 101 People per Sq. Mi. Growth from 1990 to 2000.



Dane County peaked in rate of growth in 1960-1970, when it added 68,177 people, and in 1990-2000 when it added 59,441, as indicated in the graph. Census projections have its growth declining thereafter. Thus, it is now growing at only about 1% per year. Extrapolating this decline suggests about 650,000 people by 2050, 750,000 by 2090, and maybe about 800,000 people in Dane County at its maximum.

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