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## Enrollment Potential for St. James Church School during the 1980s

David R. DiMartino  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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ENROLLMENT POTENTIAL  
FOR ST. JAMES CHURCH SCHOOL  
DURING THE 1980'S

by

David R. DiMartino



Center for Applied Urban Research  
University of Nebraska at Omaha



June, 1984

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The author is indebted to all those acknowledged for their assistance. Responsibility for the views and interpretations expressed in this report lie solely with the author.

## Purpose

This analysis was designed to estimate the trend in St. James school enrollments through the 1980's. The trend was determined by analyzing the actual and estimated population of elementary school age from 1980 through 1989 for the area included within St. James and St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes.

## The Area

St. James School serves both St. James and St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes. The school's service area is defined as the territory bounded on the east by 78th Street, the west by 144th Street, the north by State Street, and the south by Maple Street and West Maple Road. The school territory includes areas both within and outside the Omaha city limits in Douglas County. (See Graphics 1 and 2.)

Since much of the data used for this report are aggregated by census tract (or subcensus tract) unit areas, census tract equivalency for the school's service area is shown on Graphic 2. Much of the area in census tracts 65.01, 73.05, and 74.14, located south and east of I-680, is included in the school district. West of I-680, much of tracts 73.06 and 74.15 is included, plus small portions of tract 73.07 (its southeast section) and tract 74.16 (its northeast section). The base data for this report--population by age--were compiled by block and block group areas, the subunits of which census tracts are made.

## Procedure

The childhood population of St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes in 1980 was compiled from the 1980 Census of Population and Housing. Births from April of 1980 through 1983 were added to the childhood population base. Next, the 1980 population (plus newborns from 1980 to 1983) were "aged" through 1989. The childhood population from 6 to 13 years of age was then totaled for each year to determine all elementary school aged children in the parish area for each of the years 1980 through 1989. This procedure produced both an estimate of the pool of elementary school children from each year and the trend in school age population through the 1980's.

The influence of housing construction on the childhood population in the area was considered. In addition, the relationship between public school and St. James enrollments as well as trends in parish affiliation were examined in order to apply the population trends to the parish school context.

## Findings

St. James School can expect stable to increasing school enrollments from now through the end of the 1980's. The qualifications, considerations, and reasons for that conclusion are discussed in this section.

The Context of Parish Population and Housing. The area included in St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes contained 27,900

residents in 7,460 families and 9,817 households, according to the 1980 Census.\* The average household size was 2.84 persons, reflecting the fact that families constituted 76 percent of all households. That strong family component of the area's population suggests the potential for continued child-bearing in the area, although births and natural increase tapered off during the early 1980's. (See Table 1A, B, and C.)

The parish area east of I-680 contained the majority of residents (60 percent), families (60 percent), households (56 percent), and housing units (55 percent) in 1980. However, a greater number of births in the early 1980's (Table 1C), and greater housing construction in the 1970's (Table 2) occurred in the parish area west of I-680. Those trends and the much greater area of open space available for additional housing construction west of I-680 suggest that the western portion of the parish area will become a more significant proportion of the total in the 1980's.

Childhood Population. The distribution of childhood population by age (ages 0 to 18) is shown in Table 3 (column 2) for St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parish area in 1980. Though these data do not show children by individual years (due to the census age groupings), the trend in childhood population by age is apparent and does correspond to the national trend. (See Graphic 3.)

The distribution shows a relatively greater number of teens than preteens among school age children and a relatively greater

\*Households include families as well as unrelated people living together in the same residence and persons living alone.

number of preschoolers than school age children. The figures represent an increase in the annual number of births since the mid-1970's.

The increase in annual births for the parish area may be attributed in part to housing construction in the area (Table 2). With the construction of new suburban housing usually comes an influx of young families. These families typically are of child-bearing age, and these areas normally have relatively greater numbers of young children.

In addition, the increase in births and preschool children since the mid-1970's is part of a national trend--the baby-bubble. The baby-bubble refers to the increase in births during this period due to the entrance of the post-World War II baby-boom generation into their child-bearing years (after some well-documented delays due to family planning and female career development).

Births in the parish area tapered off during the early 1980's (Table 3, Row 1).<sup>\*</sup> That decrease in the annual number of births may or may not continue beyond the current period. The trend will depend on the same childbearing patterns that created the baby-bubble and on the future development of housing construction in the parish area.

Elementary School Population. More directly related to the topic of this report is the trend in elementary school population through the 1980's. That trend was determined by adding births

<sup>\*</sup>Computation of births in the parish area is demonstrated in Table A in the Appendix. Data on births were acquired from the vital statistics office of the Omaha-Douglas County Health Department.

to the population through 1983 in the St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes, aging that population through 1989, and focusing on the 6- to 13-year-old population in each year. (See Table 4.)

The total elementary school age population available for enrollment in St. James School is shown by year and by subareas in Table 4. The table shows a minimal decrease in children aged 6 to 13 from 1980 to 1983, followed by a substantial increase (35 percent) in that age group through 1989. Thus, the pool of children aged 6 to 13 available for enrollment in St. James school will increase through the 1980's.

By subarea, the parish area west of I-680 will experience at least a 90 percent increase in children aged 6 to 13 throughout the 1980's. The area east of I-680 will witness a decrease in elementary aged children until 1985 and an increase thereafter, for an overall increase of 1.5 percent throughout the period.

Parish Enrollments. The increase in children of elementary school age (6 to 13) in the St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes area does not necessarily mean that enrollment at St. James School will increase through the 1980's. The children living in the parish area may or may not enroll there.

Several pieces of evidence may be used to infer whether the overall trend in elementary school age children will parallel or depart from St. James School enrollment trends. Primary among these is the trend in parish enrollments as compared to public school enrollments in the area. In addition, trends in church membership and baptisms may yield evidence of identity with the

church and the likelihood of parents enrolling their children in the church school.

Parishioners comprised 35.2 percent of the total population in the parish area in 1980. (See Table 5.) An extremely rudimentary estimate of the change in the area's total population from 1980 to 1983 was compared to the number of parishioners over the same period. Parishioners as a proportion of the total population decreased but only marginally. (See Appendix, Table B.) Furthermore, the number of parishioners varied from year to year but appeared to vary around a mean trend line of 9,700 during the period.

While parishioners comprised 35.2 percent of the total population in 1980, baptisms amounted to approximately 2 percent of the parishioners in 1980. (See Table 5.) Baptisms as a proportion of parishioners varied from 1979 to 1983 but within a fairly narrow range of 1.6 to 2.2 percent. Baptisms did not always vary in the same direction as births from 1980 to 1983, and baptisms decreased less than births (26.6 percent as compared to 39.6 percent for births). Thus, Catholics appear to constitute a disproportionately greater share of the births in the area, which would mean a greater potential for future St. James school enrollments.

In addition to the fairly stable affiliation of area Catholics with their parish (registered parishioners) and baptisms of their children, a pool of non-Catholic children is available for church school enrollment during the 1980's.

Finally, and most importantly, the enrollments at St. James

Parish School compared favorably to public school enrollments in the area from 1980 through 1983. (See Table 6 and Graphic 4.) While St. James School enrollments declined throughout the 1980-1983 period, total loss was only 70 students from 1980 to 1983. The loss in public school enrollments for the parish area was more than three times as great--249 students. (The same is true for the 1979-83 period.) Likewise, the percentage change in St. James School enrollments (-8.9 percent) compared favorably to the total change in public school enrollment (-11.0 percent) in the area. With the increased births in the area beginning in the mid-1970's, school enrollments should stabilize and increase for both St. James and some area public schools during the remainder of the 1980's.

#### Conclusion

St. James Parish School can expect stable to increasing enrollments during the remainder of the 1980's. Total population in St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parishes has increased through the 1970's and will increase in the future depending upon the role of home construction in its open space areas. That home construction and related influx of young families have resulted in an increased number of children since the mid-1970's. These children have recently entered elementary school and should have a positive impact on elementary school enrollments through the 1980's.

While enrollments at St. James Church School are partly dependent on the less easily measured affinity of Catholics to

their church and parochial education, the trend in church membership and baptisms suggests positive circumstances locally. The stable church membership, coupled with overall growth in elementary school age population in the area, yields the conclusion of a positive trend in church school enrollments through the decade.

TABLE 1

## GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ST. JAMES/ST. ELIZABETH ANN PARISH AREA

## Part A: Parish Area Demographics by Subarea and Census Tracts in 1980

Tract <sup>1</sup>	Population	Families	Households (Occupied Housing Units)	All Housing Units (Including Vacant)
East of I-680:				
65.01	4,922	1,345	1,524	1,550
73.05	2,401	624	864	1,038
74.14	<u>9,327</u>	<u>2,479</u>	<u>3,141</u>	<u>3,226</u>
Subtotal	16,650	4,448	5,529	5,814
West of I-680:				
73.06	2,329	622	920	1,108
73.07	251	71	101	104
74.15	7,010	1,854	2,660	2,869
74.16	<u>1,660</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>607</u>	<u>627</u>
Subtotal	11,250	3,012	4,288	4,708
Total Area	27,900	7,460 (76 percent of all households)	9,817 (average of 2.84 persons per household)	10,522

<sup>1</sup>See Graphic 2 for tract locations.

Part B: Natural Increase<sup>2</sup> in Total Area of Tracts Intersecting the Parish Area, 1980 to 1983

	Census Population	Annual Natural Increase in Population	Cumulative Population	Percentage Change in Population
1980	41,068	542	41,610	—
1981	—	1,250	42,860	3.0
1982	—	647	43,507	1.5
1983	—	620	43,817	1.4
1980-83	—	3,059	—	7.4

<sup>2</sup>Natural increase is computed as births minus deaths for any unit area.

TABLE 1 - Continued

## GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ST. JAMES/ST. ELIZABETH ANN PARISH AREA

Part C: Births in the Parish Area by Subarea and Census Tracts<sup>1</sup>

	1980 <sup>2</sup>	1981	1982	1983	1980-83
East of I-680					
65.01	58	58	52	41	
73.05	33	102	40	66	
74.14	<u>146</u>	<u>170</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>153</u>	
Subtotal	237	330	241	260	1,068
West of I-680					
73.06	67	204	123	82	
73.07	3	8	5	4	
74.15	104	266	154	145	
74.16	<u>46</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>50</u>	
Subtotal	<u>220</u>	<u>601</u>	<u>338</u>	<u>281</u>	1,440
Total area	457	931	579	541	

<sup>1</sup>The total number of births in a tract was multiplied by a computed percentage (ratio) in order to determine the number of births in the parish portion of the tract. The percentage (ratio) was computed as the number of people in the parish portion of a tract divided by the total population in that tract.

<sup>2</sup>April through December

TABLE 2

## HOUSING GROWTH IN THE PARISH AREA

## Part A: Housing Growth by Subarea and Census Tract, 1970-1980

Tract	Total Housing Units, 1980	Year Built			Built 1970-80	Built 1970-80 As % of Total
		1970-74	1975-78	1979-80		
East of I-680						
65.01	1,550	395	256	0	651	42.0
73.05	1,038	658	94	39	791	76.2
74.14	<u>3,226</u>	<u>1,240</u>	<u>187</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>1,469</u>	45.5
Subtotal	5,814	2,293	537	81	2,911	50.1
		(458.6 per yr.)	(134.3 per yr.)	(40.5 per yr.)	(291.1 per yr.)	
West of I-680						
73.06	1,108	540	285	158	983	88.7
73.07	104	62	27	15	104	100.0
74.15	2,869	1,662	605	186	2,453	85.5
74.16	<u>627</u>	<u>214</u>	<u>301</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>588</u>	93.8
Subtotal	4,708	2,478	1,218	432	4,128	87.7
		(495.6 per yr.)	(304.5 per yr.)	(216.0 per yr.)	(412.8 per yr.)	
Total area	10,522	4,771	1,755	513	7,039	66.9
		(954.2 per yr.)	(438.8 per yr.)	(256.5 per yr.)	(203.9 per yr.)	

## Part B: Housing Growth in Omaha Development Zone, 1980's\*

	1980	Lots Platted			Housing Starts				
		1981	1982	1983	1977-78	1979-80	1981	1982	1983
West Maple to Fort Street	481	443	393	364	238	174	86	50	29
Fort Street to the north and east	712	767	739	708	117	167	50	28	31
Total					<u>355</u>	<u>341</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>60</u>
					(177.5/yr)	(170.5/yr)			

\*Figures were computed from *Urban Development Policy Evaluation, 1983*, Omaha City Planning Department. Figures are based on October to October time intervals. See Map in Appendix for unit areas.

TABLE 3

## CHILDHOOD POPULATION BY AGE IN ST. JAMES SCHOOL AREA, 1980-89

Ages	Population by Age, as Reported by the 1980 Census	Population from 1980 Census, Distributed by Single Years of Age	April to December 1980	Age of Population for Each Year													
				1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989				
<1 (births)	546	546	+ 457 = 1,003*	931	579	541											
1 }	1,026	{ 513		513	1,003	931	579	541									
2 }		{ 513		513	513	1,003	931	579	541								
3 }	925	{ 462		462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541							
4 }		{ 463		463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541						
5	464	464		464	463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541					
6	401	401		401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541				
7 }	1,463	{ 487		487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541			
8 }		{ 488		488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541		
9 }		{ 488		488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	931	579	541	
10		465		465	488	488	487	488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	
11 }	1,860	{ 465		465	465	488	488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	
12 }		{ 465		465	465	488	488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003	
13 }		{ 465		465	465	465	488	488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513	513	1,003
14		501		501	465	465	465	465	465	488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513
15 }	2,508	{ 501		501	501	465	465	465	465	488	488	487	401	464	463	462	513
16 }		{ 502		502	501	501	465	465	465	465	488	488	487	401	464	463	462
17 }		{ 502		502	502	501	501	465	465	465	465	488	488	487	401	464	463
18 }		{ 502		502	502	502	502	501	501	465	465	465	488	488	487	401	464

\*Births in 1980 may be exaggerated due to methodology.

TABLE 4

CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 13 IN ST. JAMES SCHOOL AREA,  
SUBAREAS, AND CENSUS TRACTS, 1980-89

Year	East of I-680				West of I-680					Total Area
	Census Tract Number			Total	Census Tract Number				Total	
	65.01	73.05	74.14		73.07	74.15	74.16	73.06		
1980	694	332	1,331	2,357	16	891	203	257	1,367	3,724
1981	671	322	1,328	2,321	16	898	215	273	1,402	3,723
1982	635	312	1,317	2,264	18	907	238	294	1,457	3,721
1983	598	302	1,307	2,207	20	916	260	314	1,510	3,717
1984	563	309	1,307	2,179	23	933	288	344	1,588	3,767
1985	539	308	1,304	2,151	26	942	305	365	1,638	3,789
1986	583	345	1,434	2,362	36	1,062	376	469	1,943	4,305
1987	558	401	1,432	2,391	43	1,211	469	636	2,359	4,750
1988	549	409	1,445	2,403	45	1,264	492	724	2,525	4,928
1989	518	444	1,431	2,393	46	1,293	510	763	2,612	5,005

TABLE 5

MEASURES OF CATHOLIC CHURCH AFFINITY  
IN THE ST. JAMES/ST. ELIZABETH ANN PARISHES AREA

Part A: Parish Membership and School Enrollment

$\frac{9,819 \text{ parishioners in 1980}}{27,900 \text{ people in parishes area in 1980}}$	<p>= 35.2% of total population are parishioners</p>
$\frac{789 \text{ parish school enrollment in 1980}}{3,724 \text{ children aged 6 to 13 in parishes area in 1980}}$	<p>= 21.2% of elementary school children are enrolled in St. James School</p>

Part B: Baptisms as a Proportion of Parishioners

	Baptisms	÷	Parishioners	=	Proportion
1970	151		4,820		3.1
1975	190		8,360		2.3
1979	179		9,525		1.9
1980	218		9,819		2.2
1981	186		9,588		1.9
1982	198		9,499		2.1
1983	160		9,840		1.6
1979-83					Average 1.9

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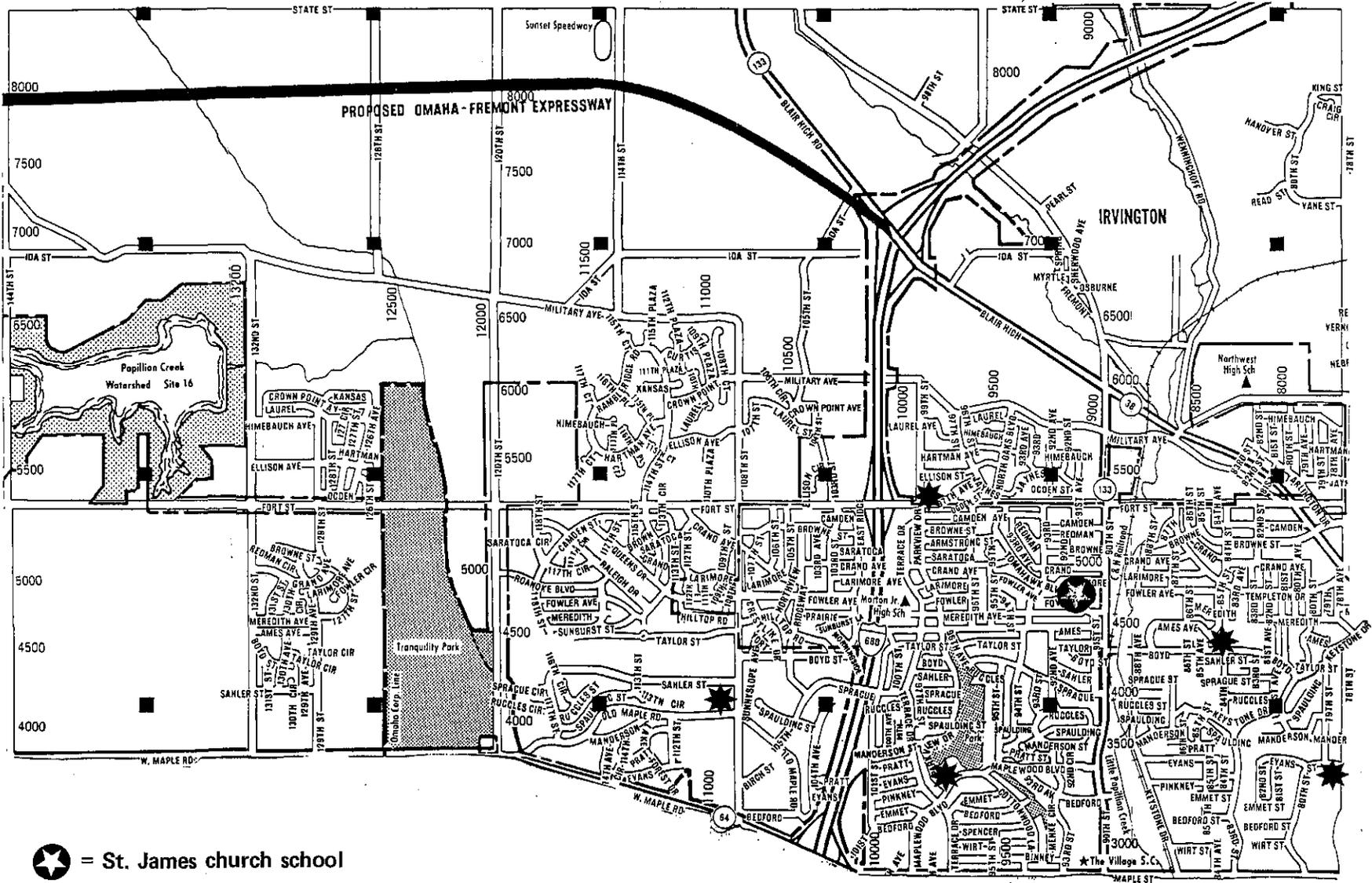
TABLE 6

## ENROLLMENTS FOR SCHOOLS IN THE PARISH AREA, 1970-1983

School	Enrollments by Year						Enrollment Change 1980 to 1983	
	1970	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	Number	Percent
St. James	783	813	789	759	723	719	- 70	- 8.9
All elementary public schools	--	--	--	--	--	--	- 249	- 11.0
Individual elementary public schools:								
Adams 3500 N 78	509	268	263	272	273	273	+10	+3.8
Boyd 84 & Boyd	653	361	445	411	412	376	- 69	- 15.5
Dodge 3520 Maplewood	875	554	548	526	506	489	- 59	- 10.8
Masters 5505 N 99	548	653	675	624	572	580	- 95	- 14.1
Sunny Slope 10828 Old Maple Rd.	106	729	582	524	554	546	- 36	- 6.2

Graphic 1

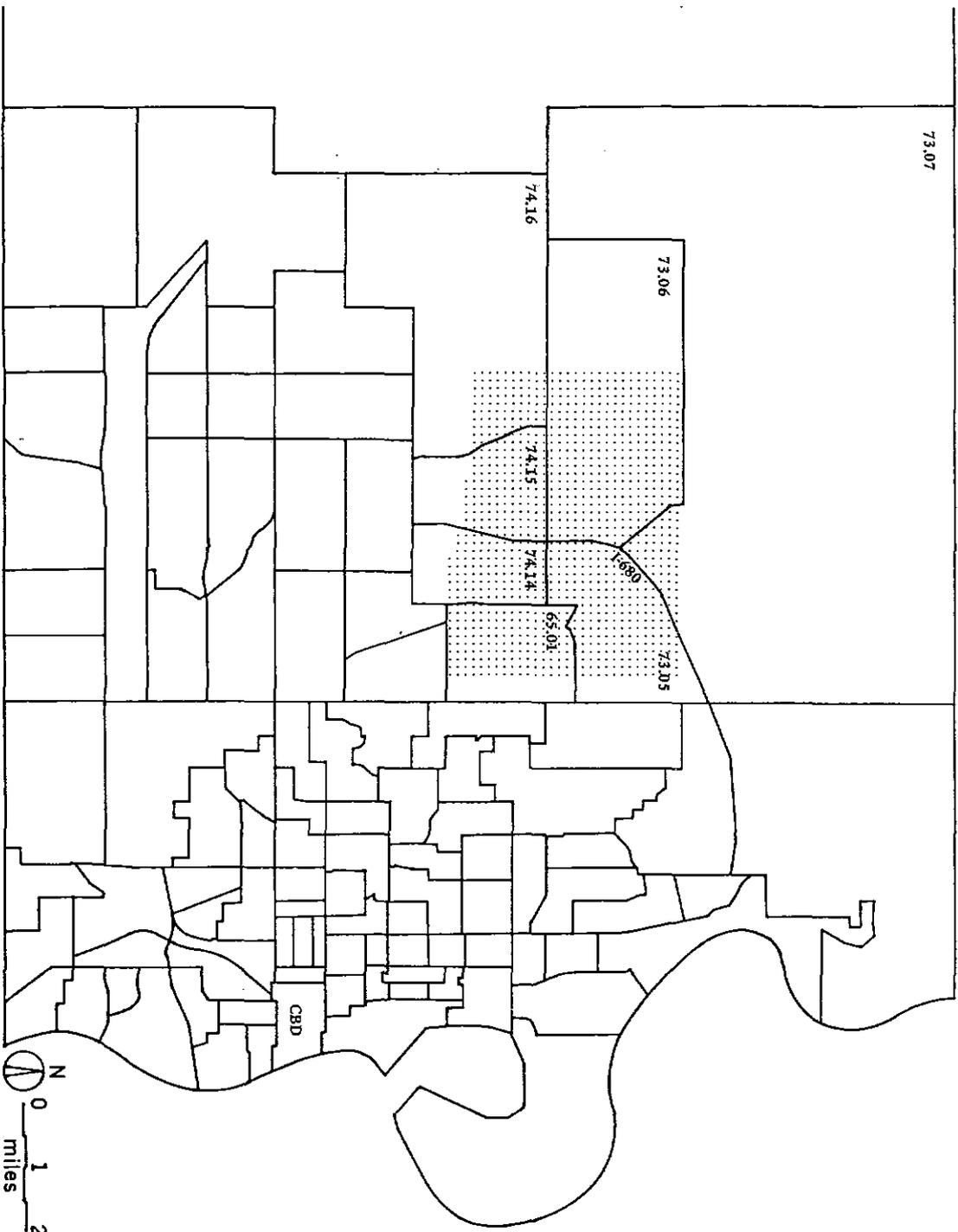
St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parish Area, School Locations



- ★ = St. James church school
- ★ = Public elementary schools

Graphic 2

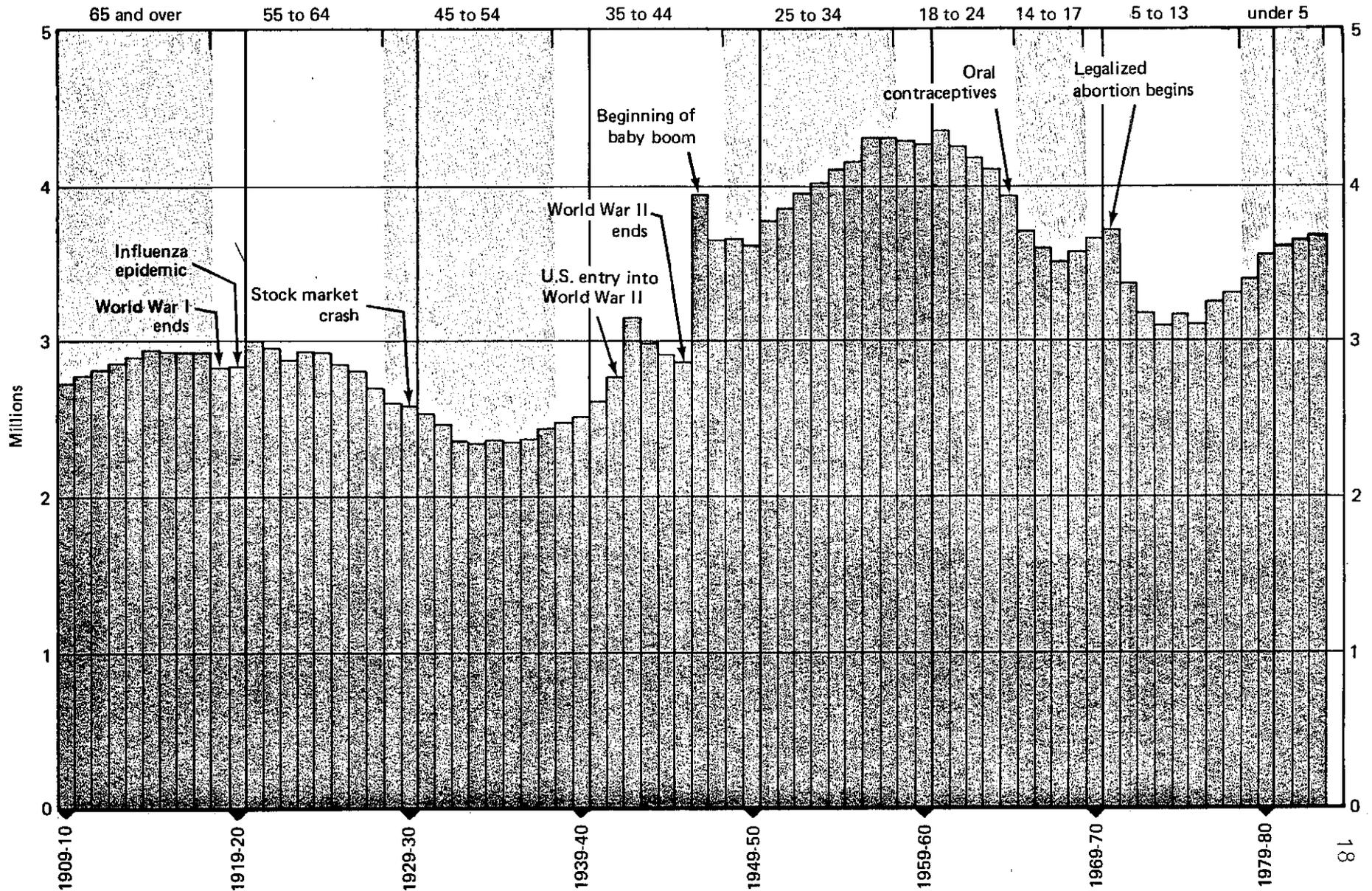
Location of St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parish Area within Douglas County (1980 Census Tracts)



Graphic 3

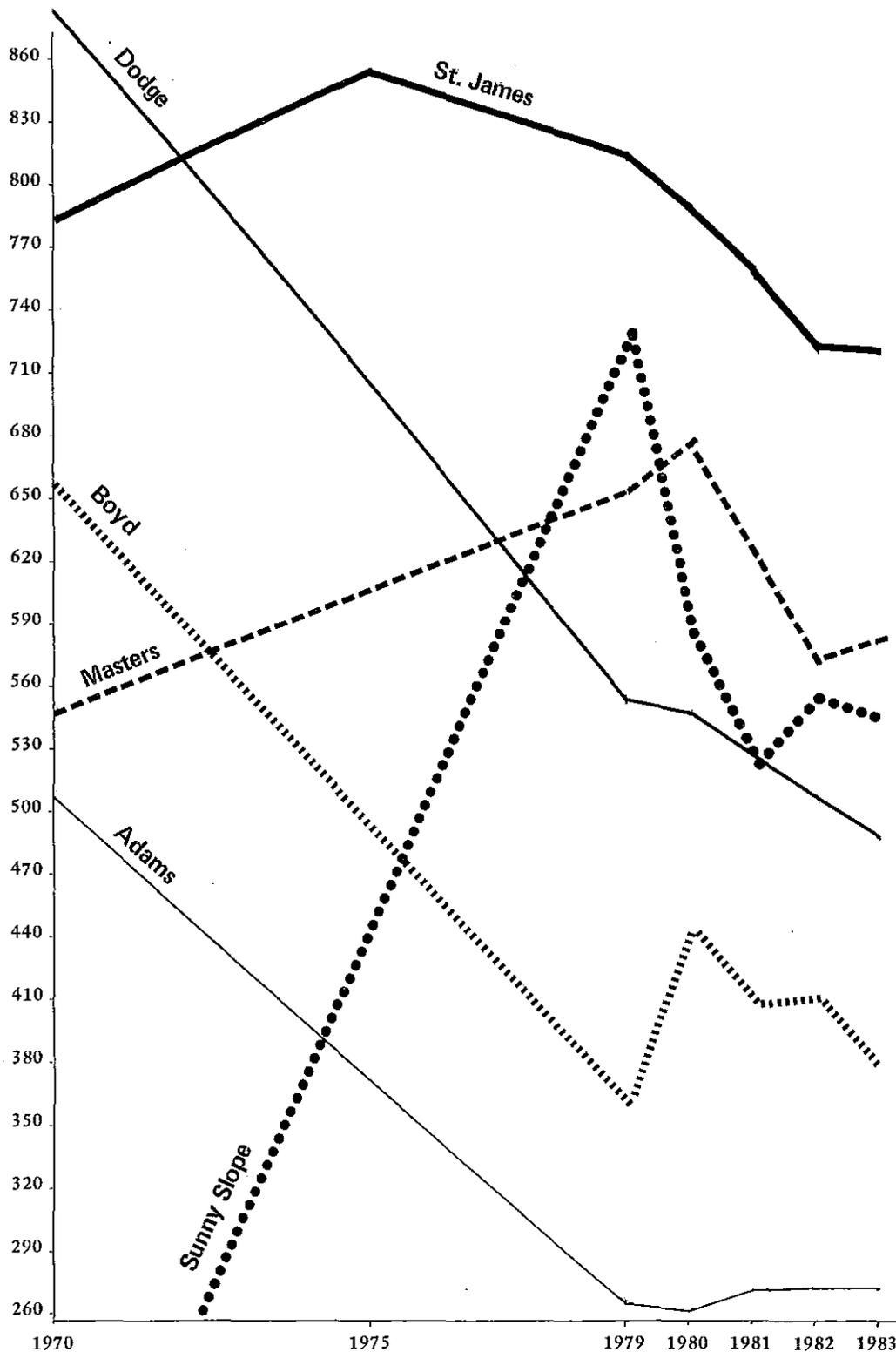
National Population Profile, 1983

Age as of July 1, 1983



Source: Current Population Reports: Estimates of the Population of the United States, by Age, Sex, and Race: 1980 to 1983

Graphic 4  
Elementary School Enrollments,  
Schools in St. James/St. Elizabeth Ann Parish Area,  
1970-1983



Source of data: St. James enrollments from St. James Parish, and public school enrollments from research department, administrative offices of Omaha Public Schools.

APPENDIX

TABLE A

COMPUTATION OF BIRTHS IN PARISH AREA BY TRACT  
AS A PROPORTION OF ALL BIRTHS BY TRACT

Tracts	1980		1981		1982		1983	
	Tract Births	Parish Ratio* Births						
65.01	86	$.68 = 58$	85	$.68 = 58$	77	$.68 = 52$	60	$.68 = 41$
73.05	46	$.72 = 33$	151	$.72 = 102$	55	$.72 = 40$	92	$.72 = 66$
73.06	68	$.98 = 67$	208	$.98 = 204$	126	$.98 = 123$	84	$.98 = 82$
74.14	194	$.75 = 146$	226	$.75 = 170$	198	$.75 = 149$	204	$.75 = 153$
74.15	111	$.94 = 104$	283	$.94 = 266$	164	$.94 = 154$	154	$.94 = 145$
73.07	24	$.12 = 3$	68	$.12 = 8$	39	$.12 = 5$	32	$.12 = 4$
74.16	169	$.27 = 46$	456	$.27 = 123$	207	$.27 = 56$	186	$.27 = 50$
		457		931		579		541

\*Ratio computed as (population within part of tract in parish area, 1980) divided by (the total population in the tract, 1980).

COMPUTATION OF PARISHIONERS  
AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL POPULATION

Part A. Computation of Total Population According to 1980 Census, Natural Increase, and Housing Construction

	Population (1980 Figures Plus Natural Increase)		Houses Built	Average No. of Persons	Subtotal		Houses Built ÷ by (Half the Area)	Average No. of Persons	Subtotal	Total in Area
1980	28,442	+	[(71	x 2.84)	= 201.6]	+	[57/2 = 29	x 2.84 = 82.4]	= 28,726	
1981	29,692	+	[(86	x 2.84)	= 244.2]	+	[50/2 = 25	x 2.84 = 71.0]	= 30,007	
1982	30,339	+	[(50	x 2.84)	= 142.0]	+	[28/2 = 14	x 2.84 = 39.8]	= 30,521	
1983	30,649	+	[(29	x 2.84)	= 82.4]	+	[31/2 = 16	x 2.84 = 45.4]	= 30,777	

Part B. Computation of Parishioners as a Proportion of Total Population

	Parish Population		Total Population		Parishioners as Projection of Total Population
1980	9,819	/	28,726	=	34.2
1981	9,588	/	30,007	=	37.0
1982	9,499	/	30,521	=	31.1
1983	9,840	/	30,777	=	32.0