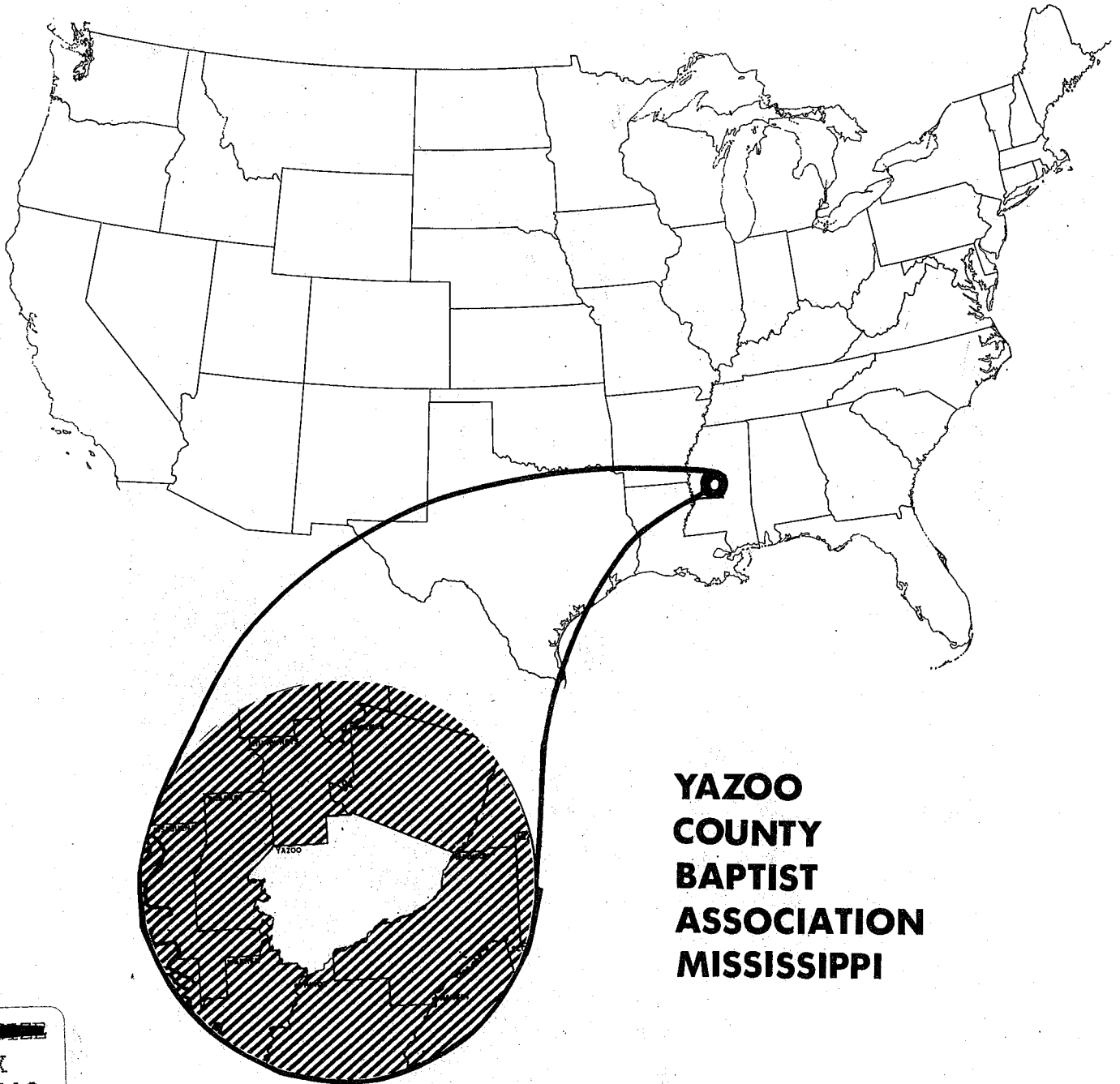


# A SPECIAL STUDY OF



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DEPARTMENT OF SURVEY AND SPECIAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SURVEY AND SPECIAL STUDIES HOME MISSION BOARD S.B.C.



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A SPECIAL STUDY OF YAZOO COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION  
MISSISSIPPI

October, 1968

Jointly prepared by the

DEPARTMENT OF SURVEY AND SPECIAL STUDIES

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A SPECIAL STUDY OF THE YAZOO COUNTY BAPTIST  
ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

Yazoo City, Mississippi is built at the base of the fall-line of the Central Highlands and the Delta on the banks of the Yazoo River. Its history has been colorful even though the old town was built upon bootlegging and slave trade. The city fathers were very much against secession from the Union and the Civil War, even though the Confederate Naval Yard was located in Yazoo City. Today, the City is typical of many communities of the Delta where marriages between prominent families have taken place for several generations. A person may live in such a city for twenty years and still be regarded as a "newcomer."

City and County Population Characteristics

The County is part hill-country and part delta. The bluffs which separate the two regions run on a north-northeast line through Yazoo City. The County is the largest in land area for the State but ranks twentieth in total population among the other counties in Mississippi. Over sixty percent of the population are nonwhite, the majority of whom are Negroes. Table 1 contrasts the population in 1960 and 1965 by race and age groups.

TABLE 1

YAZOO COUNTY POPULATION ESTIMATE BY RACE AND AGE GROUPS<sup>a</sup>

Age Groups	Years					
	1960			1965		
	Race			Race		
	Both	White	Nonwhite	Both	White	Nonwhite
0 - 5 . . . . .	5,038	1,585	3,453	5,072	1,499	3,573
6 - 14 . . . . .	7,044	2,504	4,540	8,023	2,781	5,242
15 - 44 . . . . .	10,740	4,796	5,944	10,857	4,684	6,168
45 & older . . . . .	8,831	3,977	4,854	9,060	3,947	5,113
Total . . . . .	31,653	12,862	18,791	33,007	12,911	20,096

<sup>a</sup>Mississippi State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, Sociology and Rural Life Series, No. 17, August 1966.

The population in Yazoo City has increased by more than 65% in the last seventeen years. More than 5,000 persons have been added to the population of the City since 1960, according to the local planning department estimates.

TABLE 2

POPULATION WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF YAZOO CITY  
1950, 1960, 1967

Years	Number
1950 <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	9,746
1960 <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	11,236
1967 <sup>b</sup> . . . . .	16,400

<sup>a</sup>Bureau of the Census, April 1 of each year.

<sup>b</sup>Yazoo Planning Department, October 1 estimate.

Yazoo City, and the County, like most delta areas, have a dualistic society which not only is reflected in the Negro-white differences but in the low and high income levels as noted in Table 3. Both the City and County have an above average percentage of population with income \$10,000 or more and with incomes under \$2,500. This polarization, whether racial or not, highlights the above statement that two societies exist with separate and unrelated levels of living, in greater contrast than that which exists throughout the State. The Sales Management Magazine did not include data on Yazoo City past 1964.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS IN EACH CASH INCOME GROUP FOR YAZOO COUNTY,  
YAZOO CITY AND THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
1961, 1965, 1967<sup>a</sup>

Income Group	State			County			City		
	1961	1965	1967 <sup>c</sup>	1961	1965	1967 <sup>c</sup>	1961	1964 <sup>b</sup>	1967 <sup>b</sup>
\$ 0 - 2,499 . . . .	53.5	37.9		62.6	43.2		54.2	39.6	
2,500 - 3,999 . . . .	16.0	20.7		11.3	20.2		11.4	19.2	
4,000 - 6,999 . . . .	18.9	24.0		14.5	19.4		16.7	19.5	
7,000 - 9,999 . . . .	5.6	9.5		5.3	8.0		7.0	8.7	
10,000 & Over . . . .	6.0	8.8	14.7	6.3	9.2	18.7	10.7	13.0	
Total . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Sales Management magazines.

<sup>b</sup>1964 was the last year data was published on Yazoo City.

<sup>c</sup>A new grouping of incomes make comparison impossible except for the \$10,000 and over group.

Table 4 shows the effective buying income per household as reported in the Sales Management magazines, 1961 through 1967. The per capita EBI are listed for Yazoo City through 1964 and for the County through 1966. In 1965, Yazoo City was dropped from all listings in Sales Management Magazine and the

per capita figures are no longer calculated. Nevertheless, these data do show the rapid progress in the economic development that is being experienced in Yazoo County, which has increased from below the State average in 1961 to exceeding it in 1967. If the per household EBI in Yazoo City exceeds the County level by approximately 12%, we could estimate the 1967 figure to be approximately \$7,450. These data indicate there is a decreasing gap between the economic level of the rural and city residents within the County. This would also imply that there is not the strain on the rural churches for economic survival as great as it was during the past years. A comparison of Tables 1, 2, and 3 shows that the rural areas are continuing to decrease in total population, however, especially in small children and young adults.

TABLE 4

DOLLARS PER CAPITA AND PER HOUSEHOLD EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME  
FOR YAZOO COUNTY, YAZOO CITY AND STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
1961 - 1967<sup>a</sup>

Year	State		County		City	
	Per Capita	Per Household	Per Capita	Per Household	Per Capita	Per Household
1961 . . . . .	1,137	4,357	1,006	3,949	1,396	4,762
1962 . . . . .	1,220	4,675	1,089	4,219	1,489	5,021
1963 . . . . .	1,265	4,839	1,140	4,442	1,553	5,323
1964 . . . . .	1,388	5,314	1,258	4,858	1,685 <sub>b</sub>	5,675 <sub>b</sub>
1965 . . . . .	1,453	5,536	1,325	5,091	. . b	. . b
1966 . . . . .	1,569 <sub>b</sub>	5,961	1,480 <sub>b</sub>	5,643	. . b	. . b
1967 . . . . .	. .	6,579	. .	6,650	. .	. .

<sup>a</sup>Sales Management magazines.

<sup>b</sup>These data no longer published.

Yazoo City has had substantial areas of deteriorated and delapidated housing. For the most part these have been non-white with the largest concentration in two areas: (1) the Champlin Avenue neighborhood, including the

area extending south of U.S. Highway 49-W and west of the railroad, and (2) the Brick Yard Hill section of the Grand Avenue-Brick Yard neighborhood.

Substantial deductions in the number of deteriorating and dilapidated housing can be noted on Table 5. Most of the reported communicable diseases occur in the two areas named above. More adult arrests and complaints of adult crimes and misdemeanors come from the areas of the poor non-white housing in the Champlin neighborhood and the adjacent area west of Water Street than from any other part of the City. Here fights, drunks, cases of disturbing the peace, and more serious offences are common. This is

TABLE 5  
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND CONDITIONS IN YAZOO CITY  
1960, 1966, 1967<sup>a</sup>

Characteristics/Conditions	Year		
	1960	1966	1967
Owner-renter occupied:			
Owner occupied . . . . .	1,818	2,206	2,252
White . . . . .	979	1,321	1,348
Nonwhite . . . . .	839	885	904
Renter occupied . . . . .	1,605	1,891	1,888
Units dilapidated and deteriorating:			
Units dilapidated . . . . .	857	181	92
White . . . . .	110	65	22
Nonwhite . . . . .	747	116	70
Units deteriorated . . . . .	983	225	131
White . . . . .	296	71	44
Nonwhite . . . . .	687	154	87
Units deteriorating and lacking private toilet, bath and running water . . . . .	563	81	37
White . . . . .	13	17	4
Nonwhite . . . . .	550	64	33
Total housing units . . . . .	3,423	4,097	4,140

<sup>a</sup>Yazoo City Activity Records.

also the largest area of dilapidated housing, however, one of the areas of high juvenile delinquency is Woolwine Homes, the white housing project on Gordon Avenue. Apparently the high density and possibility lack of play space are among the major contributing factors.

The Neighborhood Plan was completed in 1960 by the City and Industrial Planners, an engineering firm from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The report is in the process of being revised. As a result of the original plan, numerous projects have been undertaken including the reworking of Willis Creek Drainage District. A proposed park is scheduled for completion on the south part of Lake Yazoo. Another low rent housing project of 100 units is scheduled for the east portion of Jonestown Island.

The City participates in the "Workable Program of Urban Renewal" for the Central Business District. This is a two part program for an area shaped like a fish with Main Street as the backbone which includes residential and commercial renewal projects.

In Table 6, the neighborhoods are listed with estimates of the 1960 population and the maximum expected population for each area. No date is given for the future population which is estimated in terms of the maximum reasonable number of persons that can live in the areas according to the availability of space. These neighborhoods are displayed on Plate I.

TABLE 6

POPULATION OF FUTURE NEIGHBORHOODS<sup>a</sup>

Name	Location	Acres	Population		Terrain
			Present	Future	
Airport . . . . .	North of 15th Street	420	1,100	3,300	Level
Grand Avenue- Brickyard Hill. . .	15th Street to Canal St.	610	3,850	4,800	Level- rugged
Powell Street . . .	North of Broadway	490	1,350	3,400	Rolling- rugged
Highland . . . . .	South of Broadway, East of Ridge Road	790	815	3,700	Rugged
Champlin . . . . .	West of Lamar Street	680	70	4,600	Level- low
Scott's Bayou . . .	West of C.B.D.	410	180	2,800	Level
Jonestown Island. .	Bounded by Lake Yazoo	380	260	2,000	Level
South Bluff . . . .	Ridge Road W. to Hwy. 3	350	55	700	Rugged
Belle Vista . . . .	North of Grabball Rd.	300	70	2,000	Rolling
Barbour . . . . .	South of Grabball Rd.	610	70	2,500	Rugged
Enchanted Hills . .	North of Hwy. 16	560	0	2,000	Rugged
Learville . . . . .	South of Four Points	500	0	1,800	Rugged
C.B.D. . . . .	Central Business Dist.	140	790	0	. .

<sup>a</sup>Neighborhood Plan.

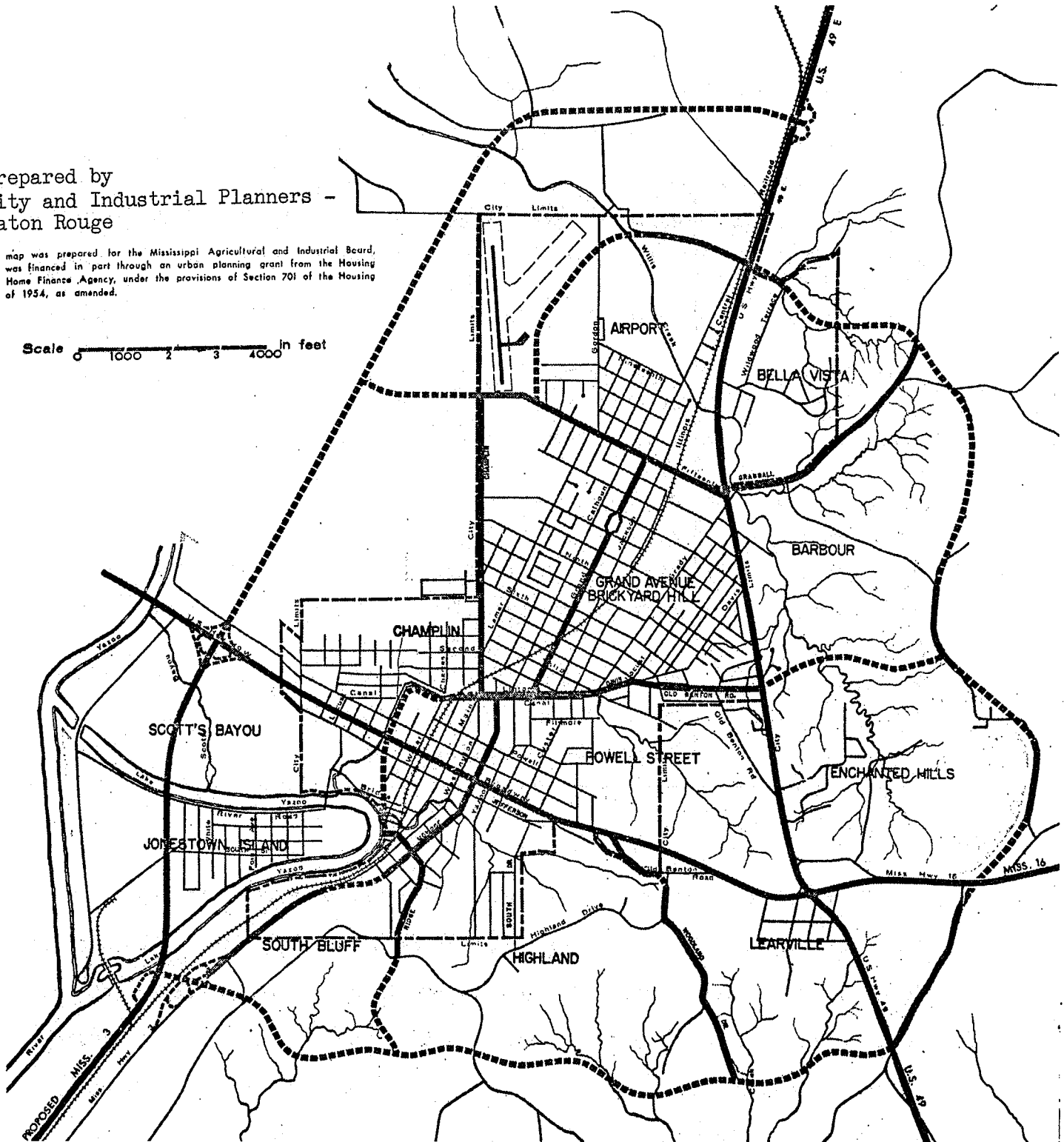
A substantial amount of the residential development is taking place north and eastward in the Willis Creek District, Bella Vista neighborhood area. Utilities and other services for the new subdivisions are worked out by contract between the developer and city. Approximately 350 lots have been subdivided for new development. These include 125 lots in the West Country Club Estates, seventy lots in Eastwood, 130 lots in Westwood (the area east and adjacent to the airport), and thirty-one lots in West Acres (south of the airport).

PLATE I

Prepared by  
City and Industrial Planners -  
Baton Rouge

This map was prepared for the Mississippi Agricultural and Industrial Board,  
and was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Housing  
and Home Finance Agency, under the provisions of Section 701 of the Housing  
Act of 1934, as amended.

Scale 0 1000 2 3 4000 in feet



Neighborhood Plan for Yazoo City, Mississippi with neighborhood area names  
and proposed thoroughfares.

The Religious Characteristics of the County

On Table 7, the number of churches and church members by various religious groups are listed from a 1957 national survey by the National Council of Churches. This table shows there are more Methodist churches in Yazoo County than Southern Baptist. The third largest number of churches is Church of God in Christ with only five congregations.

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF CHURCHES AND CHURCH MEMBERS REPORTED BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS  
FOR YAZOO COUNTY<sup>a</sup>

Religious Groups	Churches	Members
Adventist, Seventh Day . . . . .	1	23
Assembly of God . . . . .	1	25
Baptist, Southern . . . . .	22	5,052
Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) . . . . .	1	77
Church of God (Anderson, Ind.) . . . . .	1	65
Church of God in Christ . . . . .	5	b
Methodist . . . . .	26	3,849
Presbyterian, U.S. . . . .	1	469
Protestant Episcopal . . . . .	1	300
Roman Catholic . . . . .	2	614
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel . . . . .	1	16
Pentecostal Church of God of America . . . . .	2	b

<sup>a</sup>"Churches and Church Members in the United States," Series C, No. 45, 1957, Bureau of Research & Survey, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

<sup>b</sup>Not reported

When these figures are compared to the white population ten years of age and older of approximately 10,000, we note everyone was counted by at least one church. The main explanation is that Table 7 contains total reported members rather than resident members, thus we can assume that approximately twenty percent of the population ten years of age and older were not members of any local church.

Yazoo County Baptist Association Churches and Members

In 1955, the Association had twenty-one churches affiliated with it. By 1960, the number had increased to twenty-four but since 1964, Liverpool Church ceased to report data and therefore the number of churches in this study include only twenty-three.

The churches of Yazoo County Baptist Association are divided into three groups. Four churches constitute the City-Suburban group including Calvary, Center Ridge, Southside and Yazoo City. Five churches form the Village group: Bentonia, Eden, Holly Bluff and Satartia. The rest of the churches are grouped together under "Open Country."

In Table 8 are listed the number of resident members by study groups for selected years. These data show some moderate shifting in membership within the three groups of churches. The City-Suburban churches have generally shown membership increases with only a slight set-back in 1966, however, a substantial recovery was experienced in 1967. Very little change can be observed in the Village churches, but the Open Country experienced a considerable drop in membership through 1965 with moderate recovery since that time.

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF RESIDENT MEMBERS BY STUDY GROUPS FOR SELECTED YEARS<sup>a</sup>

Church Groups	Year					
	1957	1960	1963	1965	1966	1967
City-Suburbs . . . . .	1,549	1,718	1,850	1,918	1,910	1,971
Village . . . . .	646	599	654	661	689	679
Open Country . . . . .	1,419	1,458	1,210	1,188	1,224	1,247
Total . . . . .	3,614	3,775	3,714	3,767	3,823	3,897

<sup>a</sup>Annual Minutes of YCBA.

Yazoo County Baptist Association Growth Factors

Baptisms

The number of persons received by baptism for each of the study groups can be observed in Table 9. Two years, 1959 and 1964, when baptisms were exceptionally high, were not included in this table. Apart from these two unusual years, we note the number of additions by baptism have remained fairly stable in the City-Suburban area but have shown a tendency to decrease in the Village and Open Country churches. The thirty-two baptisms in 1963 for the Open Country churches were the lowest for the ten year period; 1965 was the crucial low for the Village churches.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVED BY BAPTISM BY STUDY GROUPS FOR SELECTED YEARS

Church Group	Year					
	1957	1960	1963	1965	1966	1967
City-Suburbs. . . . .	85	74	56	29	71	81
Village . . . . .	60	15	31	19	34	44
Open Country. . . . .	98	87	32	56	48	49
Total . . . . .	243	179	119	104	153	174

Letters

The number of persons received by letter or statement can be noted in Table 10. Very little difference can be observed among the City-Suburban churches over the years, however, substantial decreases in these types of additions in the Village and Open Country churches have been a major factor in the declines experienced by a number of these churches.

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVED BY LETTER OR STATEMENT BY STUDY GROUPS  
FOR SELECTED YEARS

Church Group	Year					
	1957	1960	1963	1965	1966	1967
City-Suburbs . . . . .	129	152	122	124	122	142
Village . . . . .	50	44	58	31	33	34
Open Country . . . . .	143	81	62	51	71	52
Total . . . . .	322	277	242	206	226	228

Losses

A total of fifty-three persons were reported on the list of "our beloved dead" in the 1967 Annual Minutes of the Yazoo County Baptist Association. Only nine of these were reported by City-Suburban churches, while forty-four were reported by Village and Open Country churches. Since approximately half of the resident members are divided between City-Suburban and Village and Open Country churches, we immediately note above that average losses by death are being experienced in these rural areas. At the same time, large numbers of persons are moving away and calling for their letters. When the total additions per year are compared to the net change in resident membership, it can be inferred that 274 persons left the Association besides the fifty-three deaths that were reported.

The 174 baptisms in 1967 represented 4.5 baptisms per 100 resident members. The 228 additions by letter represented 5.9 letters per 100 resident members, while the loss of 328 persons from the resident membership roll represented 8.4 losses per 100 members. This loss rate is among the lowest reported during the past ten years. The highest was 16.1 per 100 members in 1957 and 13.7 per 100 members in 1957 and 13.7 per 100 in 1963. These data

imply that several current factors, possibly within the economy, are helping to stabilize the outmigration of population and in turn are effecting the membership exchange of the churches.

### Membership Projections

If these trends in additions and losses continue, the Association can anticipate a net increase of resident members ranging between one and two percent a year. However, if outmigration accelerates, the overall membership projections for 1970 and 1975 for the Association.

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF RESIDENT MEMBERS: ACTUAL 1960 & 1965, PROJECTED 1970 & 1975

Range	Year			
	1960	1965	1970	1975
Reported . . . . .	3,775	3,767		
High . . . . .			4,123	4,531
Low . . . . .			3,920	3,960

The high projection for 1970 and 1975 assumes that the rate of increase experienced from 1966 to 1967 will continue each year through 1975. The low projection reflects the three year trend, beginning at the end of the 1964 church year and ending September 30, 1967. During this period, the baptism rate was lower and the loss rate higher than that experienced in 1967 alone.

The average weekly Sunday School attendance is also a good indicator of the support which resident members give to the general program of the churches. In 1967, the average weekly Sunday School attendance represented 47.4 persons per 100 resident members. This is a slight drop from 54.0 in 1957. Only slight difference can be observed between study areas: City-

Suburban churches have a rate of 46.2; Village churches, 54.9; and Open Country churches, 45.1. The pattern of attendance for Village and Open Country churches have consistently been at this level over the past ten years, however, the City-Suburban churches have been reporting increases in membership but slight decreases in Sunday School average attendance. The rate for the City-Suburban churches in 1957 was 61.2 per 100 resident members; in 1962, it was 52.5; and in 1967, it was 46.2.

TABLE 12

SUNDAY SCHOOL AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE AS A RATE PER 100 RESIDENT MEMBERS 1957, 1962, 1967 BY STUDY GROUPS

Church Group	Year		
	1957	1962	1967
City-Suburban . . . . .	61.2	52.5	46.2
Village . . . . .	55.4	50.2	54.9
Open Country . . . . .	45.6	38.5	45.1
Total . . . . .	54.0	47.5	47.4

Summary of Principal Ministries Needed in the Future

1. A strong and continuing evangelistic thrust.
2. Continued diversity in ministries to meet specific needs in the City-Suburban area.
3. Specialized ministry to the "low income" population in the City-Suburban area.
4. A long range plan of church extension to provide a nearby church-type ministry in the Highland neighborhood area.
5. Special assistance to churches in the declining rural areas,

including development of fields of churches when the work is too weak to adequately support a pastor full-time and to give encouragement to those churches which attempt to re-constitute with another church.

6. Special study should be made to fully utilize the "foster-missionary" program which should be ultimately expanded to include a resident associational superintendent of missions who is either fully employed by the Yazoo County Association or in cooperation with a neighboring association.

Whether a superintendent of missions is employed full time or part time, such services are needed in this Association. Wide socio-economic extremes exist as well as growing city-suburban areas and declining rural areas which require the abilities of a person who can objectively approach all segments of the population and the churches representing these elements to inspire creative ministries and programs of outreach.