

# Centennial of Bowling Green State University

## Wood County: A Hundred Year Portrait

In commemoration of Bowling Green State University's centennial, the Center for Family and Demographic Research created a descriptive demographic profile. The profile compares young adults, 18-22 years of age, living in Wood County during the University's inaugural year, 1910, and last year, 2008.

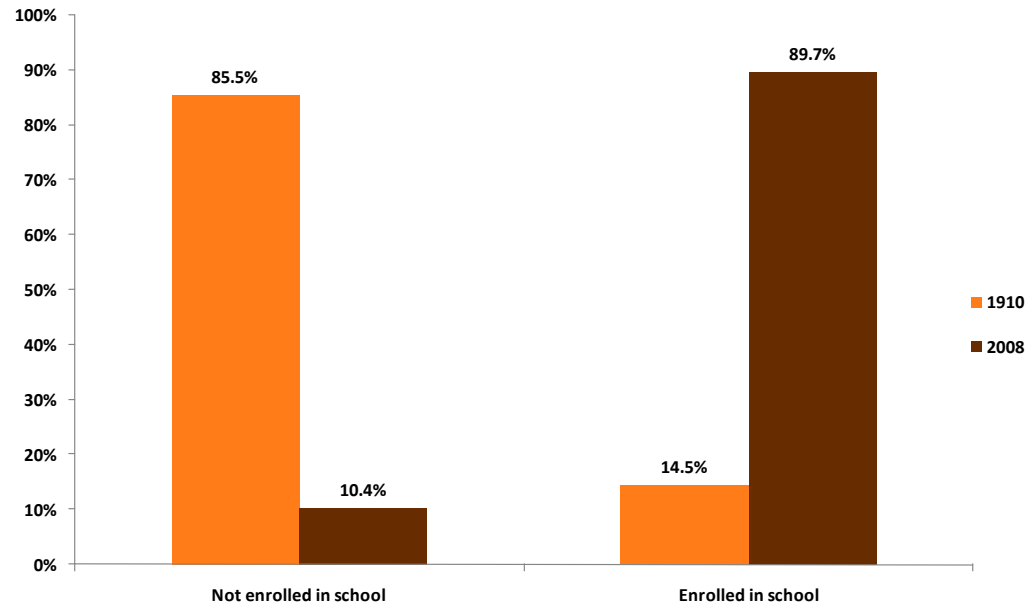
- In 1910, Wood County had a population of 49,936, and approximately 11% (5,520) of the total population was between the ages of 18 and 22.
- In 2008, the population size of Wood County (151,829) grew almost three times the size it was a century earlier. The number of 18-22 year olds (21,179) in Wood County has almost quadrupled in the same time period, and young adults now make up about 14% of the current population.

The population changes in size during the last 100 years have been accompanied by other demographic changes, some more pronounced than others.

- In 1910, most (85.5%) young adults in Wood County were not enrolled in school (Figure 1).
- In contrast, in 2008 the vast majority of young adults in Wood County were enrolled in school (89.7%).

Figure 1 illustrates this crossover in school enrollment between 1910 and 2008.

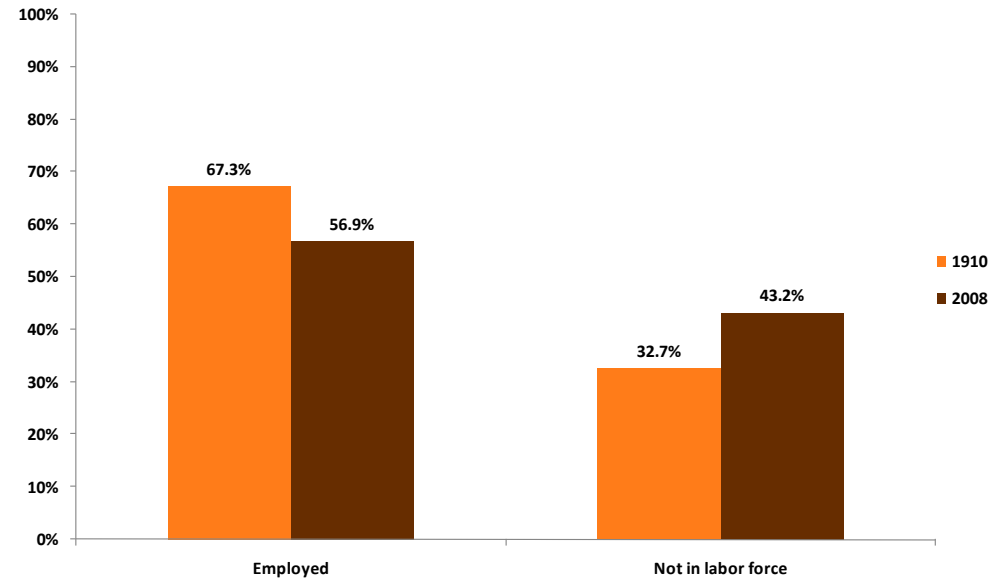
Figure 1: School Attendance of 18-22-Year-Olds, Wood County, Ohio: 1910 and 2008



Source: 1910 Census and the 2008 American Community Survey

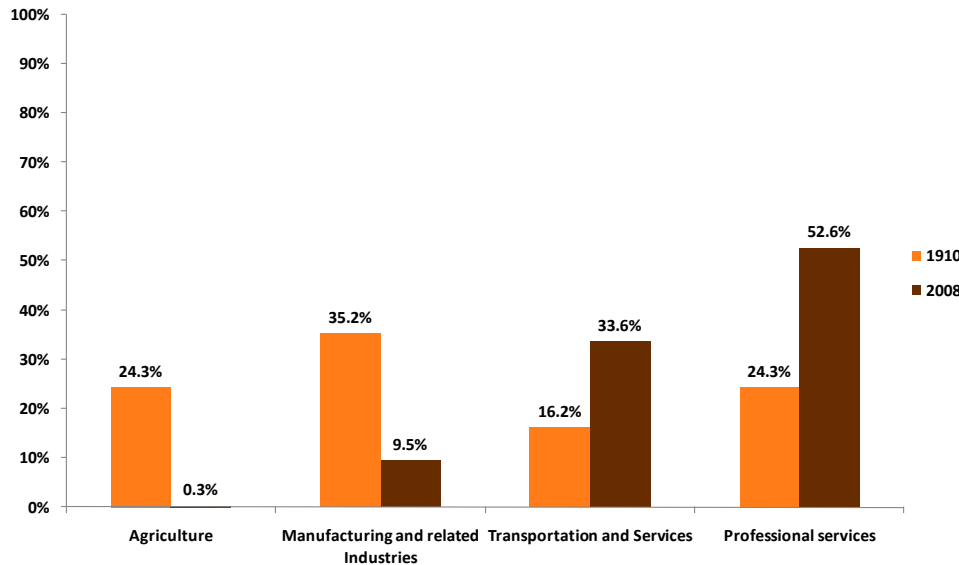
Mirroring the increase in school enrollment, there has been a corresponding decrease in labor force participation. In 1910, 67.3% of young adults were employed compared to 56.9% in 2008 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Employment Status of 18-22-Year-Olds, Wood County, Ohio: 1910 and 2008



Source: 1910 Census and the 2008 American Community Survey

Figure 3: Occupational Groups of 18-22-Year-Olds, Wood County, Ohio: 1910 and 2008

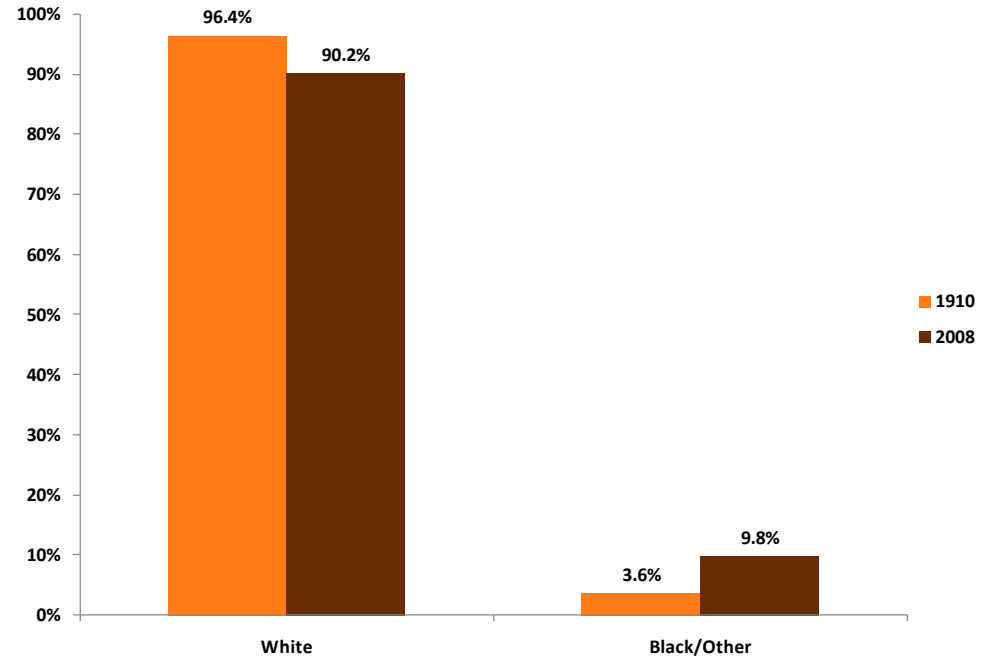


Source: 1910 Census and the 2008 American Community Survey

In 1910, most of the young adults were employed in manufacturing industries (35.2%) or equally split (24.3%) between agriculture and professional services (Figure 3). In 2008, there was a significant move away from agriculture (0.3%) and manufacturing (9.5%) to professional services (52.6%) followed by transportation and service occupations (33.6%).

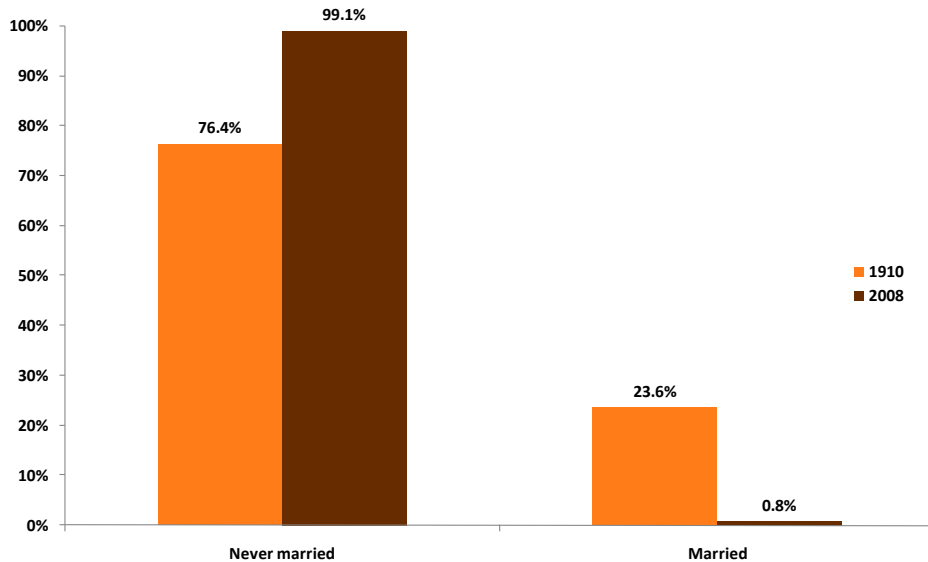
There has been little variation in the racial composition of the county from 1910 to 2008. As Figure 4 illustrates, the majority of the population in Wood County in 1910 and 2008 was white (96.4% vs 90.2%). There was a slight increase in the minority population from 1910 (3.6%) to 2008 (9.8%).

**Figure 4: Race Distribution of 18-22 Year Olds, Wood County, Ohio: 1910 and 2008**



Source: 1910 Census and the 2008 American Community Survey.

**Figure 5: Percent of 18-22 Year Olds Who Have Never Been Married, Wood County, Ohio: 1910 and 2008**



Source: 1910 Census and the 2008 American Community Survey.

Compared to 1910, there was a significant increase in the percentage of never married 18-22-year-olds in 2008. Almost all (99.1%) young adults in 2008 were single compared to 76.4% in 1910 (Figure 5). Young adults today are delaying marriage and taking longer to prepare for adult roles.



**The changes in the size and composition of the young adult population of Wood County over the last century reflect transformations in the larger social and economic context of the United States. There has been an increase in demand for higher education and academic institutions that are able to provide these services relevant to a constantly changing labor market. Bowling Green State University, since its inauguration, has been meeting this demand. From all indications in 2008, with the high enrollment in academic institutions among 18-22-year-olds in the county, the University will continue to play a pivotal role in the education of this group well into the next century.**

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