The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
3. Geographic and Historical Notes

Gibson County is located in Southwestern Indiana on the Illinois border, north of Evansville. It is bordered by the State of Illinois to the west and by the following Indiana counties: Knox to the north, Pike to the east, Warrick to the southeast, Vanderburgh to the south, and Posey to the southwest. U.S. Highway 41 and State Highways 64 and 65 cross the county. Elevation is 400-550 feet. The center of the county is nearly level but is ringed by moderately to steeply sloping terrain, except for the western area near the rivers, which is also nearly level. The landscape features oak and hickory trees. The county pertains mainly to the Central Mississippi Valley Wooded Slopes land resource area, except the southern corner, which is part of the Kentucky and Indiana Sandstone and Shale Hills and Valleys land resource area.

Gibson county is in the Central Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 22°/39° in January and 66°/89° in July. Annual precipitation is about 44 and snowfall about 16 inches.

Typically the first freeze of the season occurs October 20-25 (east) and October 26-30 (west). The last freeze varies from April 10-15 (western two-thirds) and April 15-20 (eastern third). The growing season lasts about 183-203 days.

Agricultural activity is diversified. About three-fourths of the land is farmland of which about four-fifths is commercial crops. Main crops are corn for grain, soybeans, and winter wheat. Pumpkins, sweet corn and watermelons are main vegetables. Livestock includes hens/pullets, cattle/calves, milk cows, hogs/pigs and turkeys. Popcorn is a special crop. Main natural resources include coal, petroleum, and forestland. Water resources include Big Bayou, Burnett’s Pond, Foots Pond, Long Pond, Gibson Generating Plant Lake (3200 acres), Lafayette Park Lake, Lake Gibson, New Lake, and Old Lake. Major rivers include the Wabash River, Patoka River, Black River and White River.

Communities include the cities of Princeton (the county seat) and Oakland City. Towns include Fort Branch, Francisco, Haubstadt, Hazelton, Mackey, Owensville, Patoka, and Somerville.

Sources: Map from PCensus for MapInfo; Geographic Notes from Indiana Facts: Flying the Colors by John Clements, 1995.
Famous sons and daughters of Gibson County include Gil Hodges, famous first baseman, born in Princeton in 1924. He played for the Brooklyn, and later the Los Angeles, Dodgers until he was traded to the New York Mets. Later in his career he led the New York Mets, then called the “Miracle Mets,” to a World Series championship. He died in 1972. (Nelson Price, Indiana Legends, Carmel: Guild Press of Indiana, Inc., 1997, p. 123, 244, 258, 259)

Gibson County is not a tobacco-producing county, according to the Strategic Development Group’s “Alternative Agricultural Strategy” (Bloomington, March 15, 2001) report, which is part of Governor Joseph E. Kernan’s “Recipient Final Reports for Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture Grant Programs” (http://www.in.gov/oca/grants/valueadd/VAFinalReports.html):