Lake County

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

Lake County borders Illinois and Lake Michigan in northwest Indiana and is bordered by the following counties: Newton to the south, Jasper to the southeast, and Porter to the east. Interstate Highways 65, 80 and 90 cross the county. Elevation is 550-750 feet. The terrain is nearly flat in the north and south and slightly sloping in the central area. The landscape features oak and hickory trees. Almost all of the county is in Northern Illinois and Indiana Heavy Till Plain land resource area, except the far northwestern sector, which is in the Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana Drift Plain land resource area.

Lake county is in the Central Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 12°/34° in January and 60°/86° in July. Annual precipitation is about 36 inches and snowfall about 35 inches. The first freeze of the season typically occurs sometime between October 5 and 30, depending on the part of the county. The last freeze occurs around May 1-5, except in the southeast (May 5-10). The growing season lasts about 148-198 days.

Agricultural activity is diversified with corn for grain, soybean and vegetables. Less than half of the land is in farmlands and about four-fifths of that land is in cash crops. Additional crops include hay, oats, and winter wheat. Apples are an important fruit. Important vegetables include cucumbers, sweet peppers, dry onions, sweet corn, head cabbage, squash, and snap beans. Popcorn is a special crop. Livestock include hens/pullets, cattle/calves, milk cows, hogs/pigs, and sheep/lambs. Cement, lime, crushed stone and forestland are important natural resources. Water resources include Cedar Lake, Lake Dalecarlia, Golf Lake, Francher Lake, Hermit Lake, Lakes George, Lake of the Four Seasons Nos. A, B, and C, Redwing Lake, and Wolfe Lake; and the Kankakee, Deep, Little Calumet and Grand Calumet Rivers.

Communities include the cities of Crown Point (the county seat), East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Hobart, Lake Station and Whiting; and the towns of Cedar Lake, Dyer, Griffith, Highland, Lowell, Merrillville, Munster, New Chicago, St John, Shererville, and Schneider.

Sources: Map from PCensus for MapInfo; Geographic Notes from Indiana Facts: Flying the Colors by John Clements, 1995.
3. Location and Historical Notes

Famous sons and daughters of Lake County include football player Tom Harmon, Karl Malden and Jerry Ross. Harmon (1919-1990) of Gary played at Gary Mann High School and at the University of Michigan, where he won the Heisman Trophy in 1940. He was the first and perhaps only Hoosier to ever win the coveted Heisman Trophy. He went on to play in the NFL, then served in the Air Force during World War II, was seriously wounded and won a Purple Heart. He played two more seasons and retired to become a sportscaster.

Karl Malden, also of Gary, is known for his television and movie success. The son of Serbian immigrants, he became well known for such performances as in *The Streets of San Francisco, A Streetcar Named Desire, and Fatal Vision.*

Astronaut Jerry Ross grew up in a rural area near Crown Point, where he was born in 1948. His cheerful and vivacious personality endeared him to the world during the Atlantis space flight. For some hears he held the record for hours of spacewalk.


Lake 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):