

# Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>A Region Apart—An Introduction</b> .....	xv
<b>Chapter 1 The Realities of Deprivation</b> .....	1
Low Income.....	1
High Unemployment.....	4
Lack of Urbanization.....	4
Deficits in Education.....	8
Deficits in Living Standard.....	10
A Changing Citizenry.....	16
In Summary.....	16
<b>Chapter 2 The Legacy of Neglect</b> .....	19
<b>Chapter 3 The Beginnings of Adjustment</b> .....	23
Progress Through State and Local Leadership.....	24
The Need for Regional Development.....	26
<b>Chapter 4 The Elements of Program</b> .....	31
Access.....	32
Highways.....	32
Airports.....	34
Water Resource Development.....	36
Natural Resources.....	37
Agriculture.....	38
Timber.....	39
Minerals.....	42
Power.....	44
Recreation.....	45
Human Resources.....	48
Training and Education.....	49
Vocational Rehabilitation.....	50
Employment Services.....	50
Welfare Services.....	50
Health.....	51
Nutrition.....	51
Housing.....	51
Summary.....	52
Community and Area Development.....	53
Industrial and Commercial Development.....	53
Community Development.....	55

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Chapter 5 The Means To Achievement</b> .....	57
The Appalachian Regional Commission.....	59
Financing the Commission.....	61
Federal Review.....	61
Financing the Appalachian Program.....	62
Direct Federal Projects.....	62
Grant-in-aid Projects.....	63
Local Development Districts.....	63
An Interim Organization.....	64
<b>Chapter 6 In Conclusion</b> .....	65
<b>Appendices:</b>	
Appendix A—List of Appalachian Counties.....	66
Appendix B—Highway mileage and Construction Cost in Each Appalachian State.....	70
Appendix C—Selected Data on the Appalachian Region.....	71
Appendix D—Persons participating in studies con- ducted by the President's Appalachian Regional Commission.....	86

## Introduction

### A Region Apart

● Appalachia is a region apart—geographically and statistically. It is a mountain land boldly upthrust between the prosperous Eastern seaboard and the industrial Middle West—a highland region which sweeps diagonally across 10 States from northern Pennsylvania to northern Alabama.<sup>1</sup> Its ridges and twisted spurs and valleys measure to 165,000 square miles—an area 10 times the size of Switzerland.

Appalachia has natural advantages which might normally have been the base for a thriving industrial and commercial complex. Below its surface lie some of the Nation's richest mineral deposits including the seams which have provided almost two-thirds of the Nation's coal supply. The region receives an annual rainfall substantially above the national average. More than three-fifths of the land is forested. Its mountains offer some of the most beautiful landscapes in eastern America, readily lending themselves to tourism and recreation.

Yet this natural endowment has benefited too few of the 15.3 million people of Appalachia. The average Appalachian, whether he lives in a metropolis, in town, on the farm, or in a mountain cabin, has not matched his counterpart in the rest of the United States as a participant in the Nation's economic growth.

In a region so large, there is a range of productive activity and social achievement between subregions which seems to belie the general statistics of the geographic whole. Where coal, limestone and salt occur together, as in western West Virginia, or where the hinterland coal comes to the service of transported ore, as in northern Alabama and western Pennsylvania, industrial cities have grown. On the highland perimeter, where the valley opens, or where rivers join, other cities have emerged to serve as brokers between the resource-rich interior and the surrounding nation.

In some of these urban complexes, income and living standards far exceed the regional norm and in some cases surpass the national average. It is obvious that the problems of the rural interior counties of Appalachia cannot be equated with those of the larger cities.

But these cities, standing with one foot in Appalachia and one foot in industrial America, prosperous as they are, fall far short of the

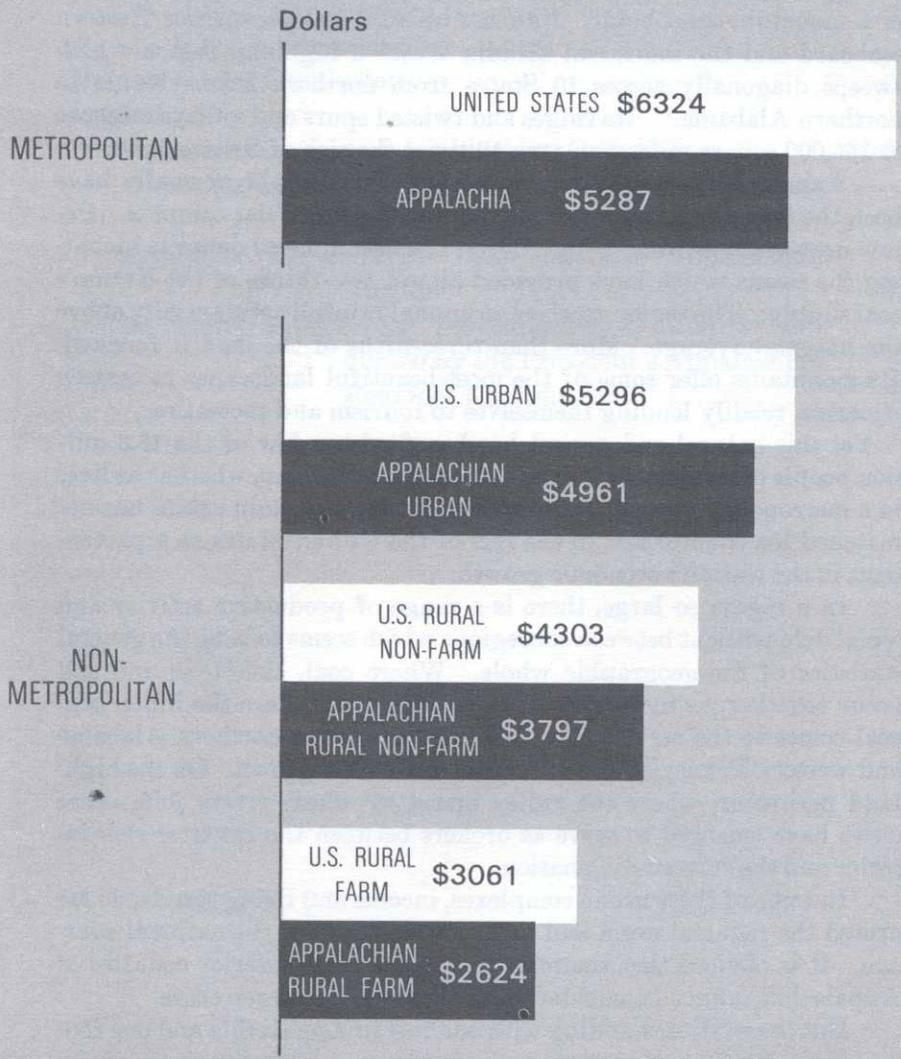
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<sup>1</sup>This report will make continued reference to Appalachia as a ten-State region; however, the action programs recommended will apply to only the nine States that have signed the report. This will necessarily exclude Ohio which did not wish to sign the report.

# THE INCOME GAP I

FIGURE 1

Median Family Income for Appalachia and the U.S., 1960

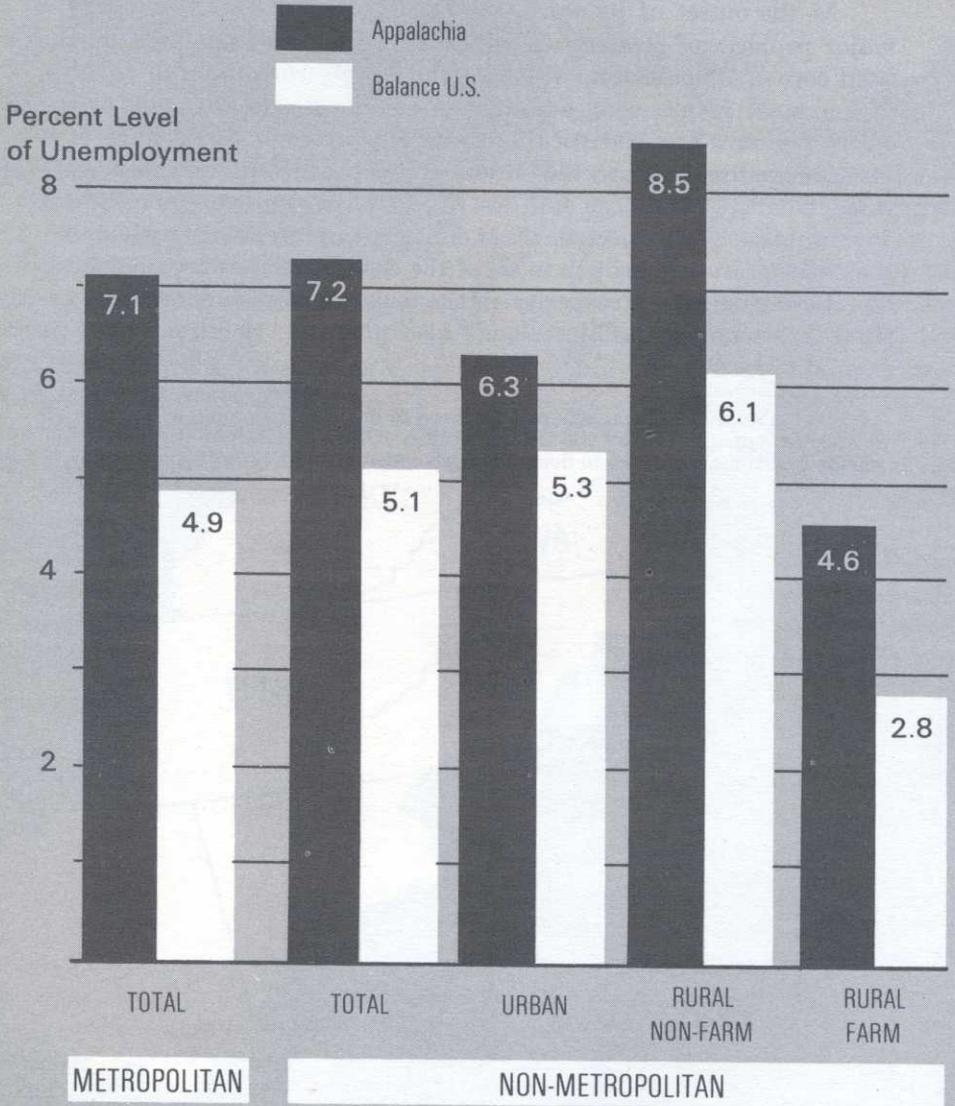


Source: Compiled from the U.S. Bureau of the Census Published Reports and Based on Tables C - 1, 2, Appendix.

# UNEMPLOYMENT

FIGURE 2

A Comparison of Unemployment in Appalachia and Balance of U.S., 1960



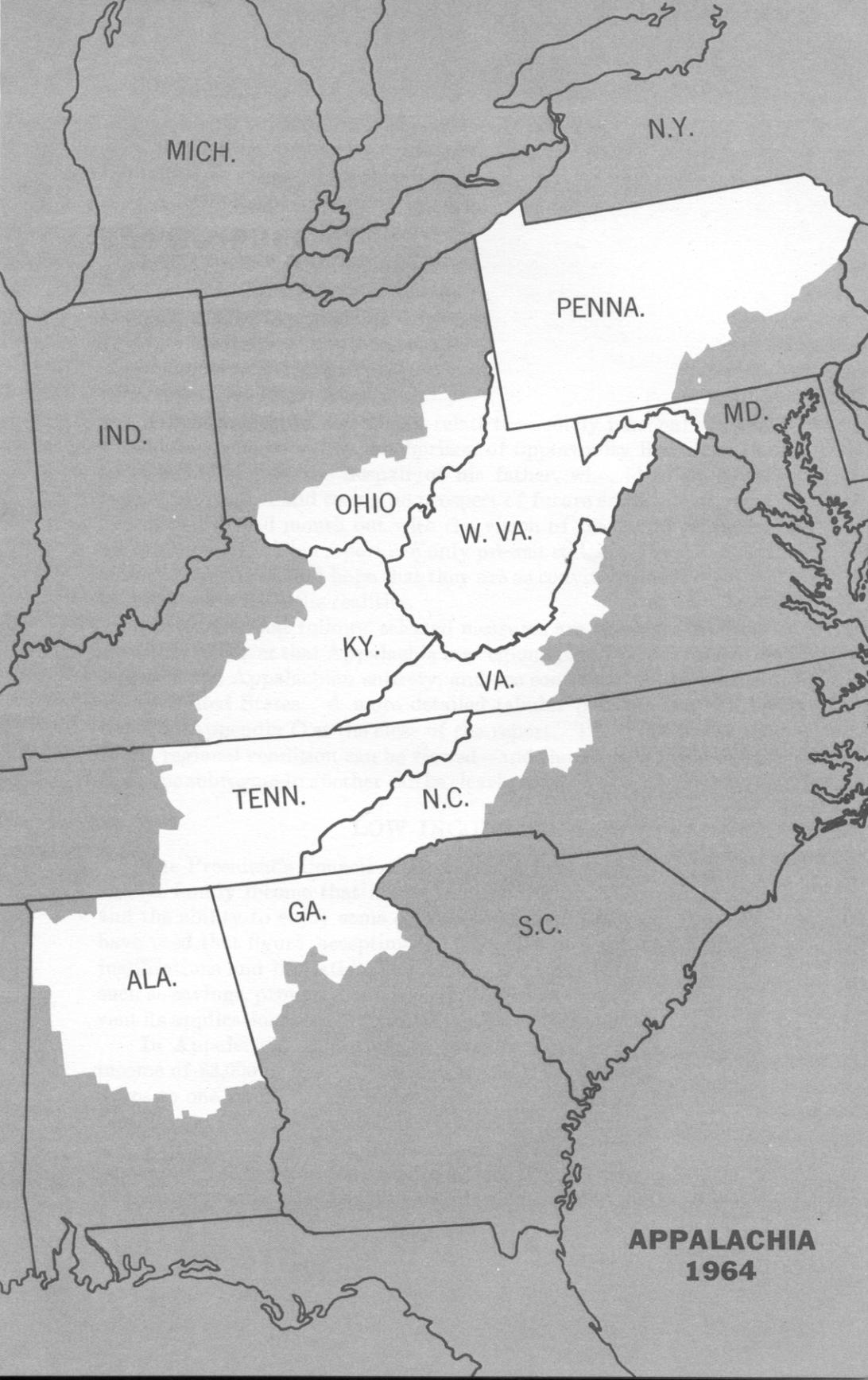
Source: Compiled from the U.S. Bureau of the Census Published Reports and Based on Table C - 3, Appendix.

performance of urban areas in the rest of the country. They continue to reflect hard core Appalachia's underdevelopment. For Appalachia is more striking in its homogeneity than in its diversity. Unlike though they may be, its subregions share an unhappy distinction: *rural Appalachia lags behind rural America; urban Appalachia lags behind urban America; and metropolitan Appalachia lags behind metropolitan America.* [See figs. 1 and 2.]<sup>2</sup>

At the outset of its work, the Commission was confronted by a major problem of strategy: whether to concentrate its efforts on the hard core of Appalachian distress—the largely rural interior country of marginal farms, coal, and timber—or devote its attention to the entire region. The statistical analysis that follows would have been far more compelling had the chronically depressed interior been separated from its neighbors and described by its own subregional data. That approach was rejected. Economic growth has lagged throughout the region. Future growth in all of the Appalachian subregions must be interdependent. Prosperity in the urban centers cannot reach desired levels unless the hinterlands also prosper. Solutions must be devised to assist both.

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<sup>2</sup> We have selected two sets of data here to demonstrate the gap between all sections of Appalachia and the United States. Other sections of the report will provide additional evidence to document this conclusion.



MICH.

N.Y.

PENNA.

IND.

MD.

OHIO

W. VA.

KY.

VA.

TENN.

N.C.

ALA.

GA.

S.C.

**APPALACHIA  
1964**