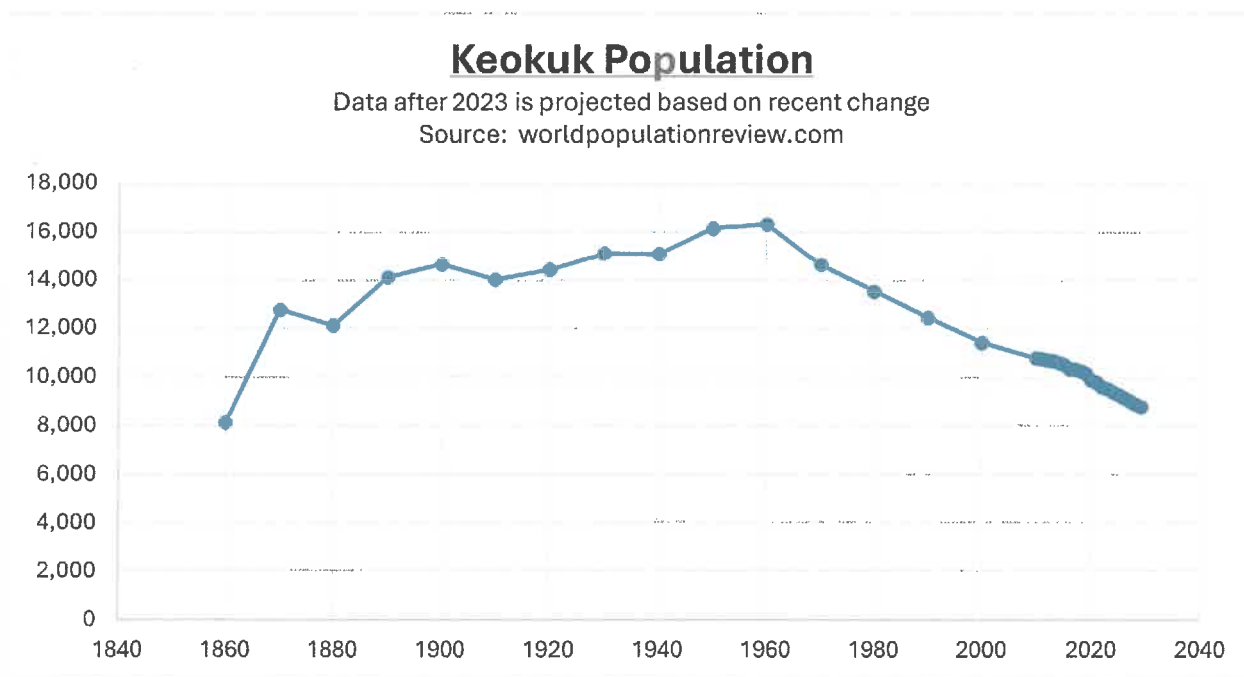


## **Historical Issues Affecting Keokuk's Financial Situation**

I had a friend share an article with me recently from the Des Moines Register on September 29, 2025, entitled "Iowa up, many cities down in population." It talked about the growth that has occurred in metro areas such as Des Moines over the past several decades, but also noted the significant decline that has occurred specifically in Mississippi River communities and rural areas. What stood out was how it addressed Keokuk: it noted that we have had the largest percentage hit of any town in Iowa, losing nearly a third of our population. We are not alone in this, though we have had the largest percentage reduction of any city in the state. Several communities on the Mississippi River have faced the same dynamic, and have had to deal with the consequences of this population decline. The following graph depicts the population loss in Keokuk visually:



Keokuk enjoyed significant robust growth for nearly a century, culminating in a population high of 16,313 in 1960, nearly 100% higher than its population in 1860. It's hard to imagine that by 2030 we are projected to have lost nearly all of that growth. It's sobering too. The social networks, the retail traffic, and the ability to support community needs are significantly less when nearly half of a community is lost. It has happened slowly, taking 70 years, but it has occurred.

There is a reason I am highlighting this issue now. As we approach our next budget cycle, we as a community are going to face the need to make significant changes to our general fund budget, in the neighborhood of \$2 million of changes on an \$11 million budget. There are many reasons for this, which I will try to address piece by piece over a few separate links, but one of them is

the issue of a shrinking population base in a community that is trying to maintain the same level of infrastructure and services. We will take time in the following posts to address other dynamics that impact our current financial position. We will also take time to look at how our current operating structure compares to other communities our size. Then we will take time to look at options that are available to us as we look to solve a \$2 Million gap in our general fund budget.

I encourage you to read through not just this entry, but the ones that follow. I want to make sure that everyone in our community has a thorough understanding of our context as we look to make significant decisions affecting what we are as a community not only in this next budget cycle but in the years to come.

**What Comes Next:    Property Taxes, the Driver of Funding to Support the General Fund**