

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF COMMUNITY RELOCATION IN ILLINOIS
AFTER THE 'GREAT FLOOD OF 1993'**

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Department of Geography
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ABSTRACT

The 'Great Flood of 1993' caused immediate and extensive damage to Illinois communities along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Acting through the National Flood Insurance Program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the federal government seized the opportunity in the recovery period to mitigate future flood damages by requiring widespread relocation of floodplain occupants. Thousands of property owners received compensation for damaged homes, but they were required to rebuild above the 100-year floodplain or move elsewhere. For the majority of rural river communities, the flood and the relocation program simply accelerated a long-standing trend of population and economic decline. A few Illinois communities overcame many obstacles and attempted to retain residents by providing relocation sites within their communities. This research documents the relocation efforts of Grafton, Hardin, Keithsburg, and Valmeyer and analyzes key similarities and differences between the four communities and their relocation processes.