

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Borough of Canonsburg, Washington County

#### **REGIONAL SETTING**

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The Borough of Canonsburg consists of about 1.1 square miles of land and is the oldest borough in Washington County – one of the five counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania. A municipality of approximately 8,607 people, Canonsburg is bordered by the municipalities of Houston on the South, Cecil on the North, Mount Pleasant on the West and Peters Township on the East.

#### **A BRIEF HISTORY**

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##### **Washington County**

*(Taken from the Pennsylvania Visitor's Network Web Page)*

In 1781, Washington County became the first county in the United States of America to be named in honor of General George Washington. Washington County was formed to allow "the inhabitants of the area west of the Monongahela River to have more convenient courts and public offices, rather than the inconvenience and hardship of being so far remote from the seat of justice" (Preamble of Legislation creating Washington County, March 28, 1781). Shortly thereafter, Canonsburg was chartered in 1802.

Washington County indeed has a proud historic heritage. While settled primarily by Scottish and Irish immigrants moving from Virginia, the county's history of community actually is much older. Washington County is home to Meadowcroft Rock Shelter that is one of the oldest known sites of human settlement in North America. In early colonial times the county was roamed by French fur traders and George Washington campaigned through the area during the French and Indian War. A log structure built in 1787 served as the first county courthouse in the town of Basset, later renamed Washington. The present-day Washington County Courthouse, completed in 1900 by the F.J. Osterling Company of Pittsburgh, is a registered national landmark.

The Whiskey Rebellion, one of the most famous events of early American history, took place in Washington County when David Bradford, noted attorney and community leader, directed area farmers against the Federal excise tax on whiskey passed in 1791. Governor Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee smashed the rebellion when he led Federal troops into Washington and Allegheny Counties.

Another tourist attraction preserved by the Washington County Historical Society is the residence of Dr. Francis J. LeMoyné, a leading abolitionist and founder of the Western Abolition Society in 1824. The Western Abolition Society also founded the Underground Railroad, which surfaced in such places as West Middletown and Washington where the

LeMoyne House remains today as a legacy to the Civil War. In 1875, Dr. LeMoyne also constructed the first crematory in the United States in the City of Washington.

George Washington's early years as a surveyor enabled him to see the need for a "national" road through the Allegheny Mountains connecting the eastern seaboard centers with the Ohio Valley and the western frontier. Completed in 1818 and still in use today, the National Pike (Route 40) runs through Washington County. Route 40 was America's first federally funded transportation system. Numerous antique shops and historical points of interest such as the Century Inn of Scenery Hill-the oldest hostelry along National Pike-is still located along Route 40.

Coal was discovered near the Monongahela River, which became a principal passage to ports within the U.S., its territories and foreign markets. As railroads worked their way westward, Washington County's economic prosperity was assured in 1849 by the opening of a telegraph office in the county seat.

The very nature of Washington County's industrial foundations (coal, steel, glass & oil) allowed the county to prosper and grow. At the turn of the century many of Washington County's communities had electric streetlights, streetcars and the "horseless carriage." This prosperity propelled the Monongahela River town of Charleroi into the fifth largest retail hub in Pennsylvania, where today people still shop in the collection of quaint stores that provide unusual and often homemade products unavailable elsewhere in the region. Scenic Washington County boasts a number of historic and architectural landmarks including 23 well-maintained covered bridges, the National Pike, and its renowned courthouse, which is considered one of the finest examples of Italian renaissance architecture in the United States.

Education has always been an important part of the county's history. California University of Pennsylvania began as an academy more than 140 years ago. In 1928, the academy was transformed into the institution of the California State Teachers College, which in 1959 became California State College, and in 1983 California University of Pennsylvania. Washington & Jefferson College was founded in 1781. It is the oldest college west of the Allegheny Mountains and the 11th oldest in America.

Today, Washington County has again transformed into an economy based on diverse industries such as high technology and advanced manufacturing. However, many of the qualities that attracted the original settlers to the county remain for residents and visitors to enjoy.

## **Canonsburg**

*(Taken from the Community's own profile)*

On February 22, 1802, Governor Thomas McKean signed an Act of the Pennsylvania General Assembly that incorporated the Borough of Canonsburg. The founder, developer, and proprietor was John Canon, whose flour and saw mill was at the foot of the hill.

Early in its history, Canonsburg became a market town. An academy was founded in Canonsburg in 1791, and in 1802 it was incorporated as Jefferson College. By 1840, the college had become the economic base of the town and was one of the largest colleges in the country. The Civil War, lack of alumni support, and conceived scholarship schemes drove Jefferson and Washington Colleges to merge in 1865, and in 1868, were united on the Washington campus.

A committee convinced the Pennsylvania Railroad to construct a branch line between Pittsburgh and Washington by way of Mansfield, now Carnegie. The railroad made it easier for merchants to get goods for their stores and put Canonsburg in a favorable position for industrial production. In 1902, when Canonsburg celebrated its centennial, the borough was in a dynamic period, with sewers, water and gas lines, electric and telephone wires in place. A trolley line was constructed; first between Washington and Canonsburg, then to Pittsburgh. New plants were built, and existing plants expanded. Manpower was needed and very soon other accents were heard: Italian, Russian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Greek, Polish, and Slovak.

In 1927, when Canonsburg celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the town was thriving and stable. Then, with the end of the depression and the outbreak of World War II, shortages in raw materials closed the mill. Canonsburg's other plants quickly shifted to war production. The plant that had been Standard Chemical when Madame Curie visited, Vitro Chemical Works, was engaged in secret work involving uranium for the Manhattan Project, research that would culminate in the production of the atomic bomb.

By the time Canonsburg celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1952, another longtime industrial operation, Continental Can Company, had shut down the previous year. By the following year, railroad passenger service and the trolley lines had disappeared. The largest employer in the county, Cooper Power Systems, formerly Pennsylvania Transformer and McGraw-Edison, shut down in 1994. After more than a century of operating, Canonsburg's newspaper, the Daily Notes, came off the press for the last time in 1980.

Today, the Bridge Works is gone, but Colonial Iron Works uses part of the old facility, while Pennsylvania Transformer Technology and other businesses use parts of the old transformer plant. East Pike Street has been renovated to the extent it is not recognizable. A jumble of dilapidated buildings has been replaced by modern structures with open spaces and adequate parking.

In spite of its past, Canonsburg remains an attractive place for people to live. It is rich in history, folklore, ethnic neighborhoods, and is reasonably close to Pittsburgh with low to moderate priced housing. While Canonsburg does not have in place a formal community development plan, the Borough's council and administration have cooperated with the Canonsburg Renaissance Group in a plan for the redevelopment of Canonsburg. The borough is also presently in the process of working on a comprehensive plan with Cecil Township.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

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In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the Borough of Canonsburg and its residents, a broad analysis of demographic factors is presented in this profile. Reviewing population trends and estimates, age distribution, and employment enables the Borough to better understand the needs and concerns of the community. This examination also helps to enable planning to occur relative to, for example, the amount and type of services that may be required. The data also provides an understanding of the Borough's future position within the County. All following data used in the profile is extracted from 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census. ( U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau).

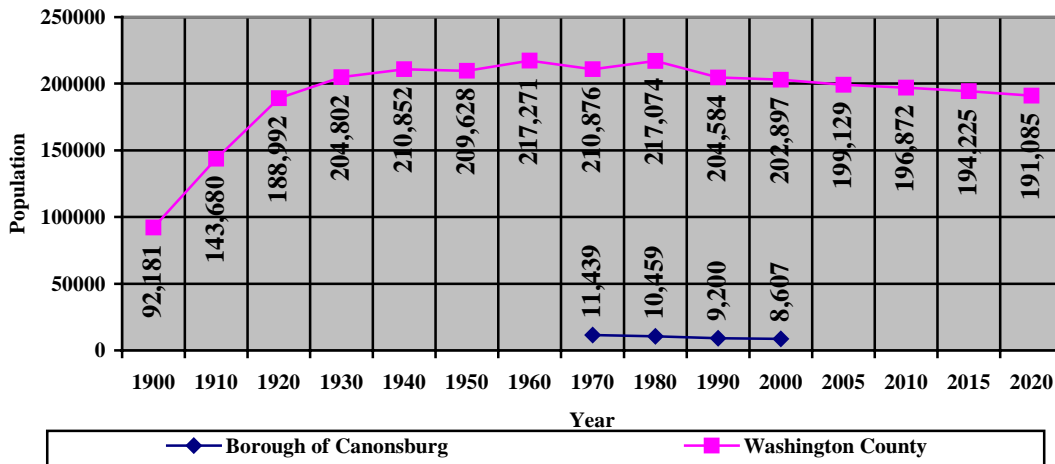
## Population

### Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years, the population of Washington County and the Borough of Canonsburg has changed significantly. These changes have followed the same pattern as many other urban areas of the U.S. Washington County's population grew steadily from 1900 to 1980, increasing 57.5% and peaking in the 1980s. Starting in the 1980's, Washington County's population began to decline as out-migration to other parts of the country and region began to occur. From 1980 to 2000, the population of Washington County declined by 7.0%. Currently Washington County's population is predicted to decrease slightly another 6.2% from 2000 to 2020.

Canonsburg's population also increased and declined over the past thirty years. In 1970, the Borough's population was 11,439 and by 2000, it had fallen to 8,607; a decrease of 32.9% (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). The extent to which future population trends in Canonsburg will mirror the 2020 forecast for the County is unknown.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



## Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of Canonsburg shows a steady pattern over the past twenty years. Though the Borough remains predominantly White (90.6%), there was a decline of 2.0 percent in the White population of Canonsburg since 1980 and a 0.1 percent decline in the Black population. However, there was a 0.3 percent increase in the Latino population and a 1.8 percent increase in the Other populations of Canonsburg. An analysis of Washington County shows a similar trend. There was a 0.7 percent decline in the White population of Washington County and a 0.3 percent decline in the Black population of Washington County from 1980 to 2000. There was no change in the Latino population. There was a 1.0 percent decrease in the Other populations.

**TABLE 2-1  
RACIAL COMPOSITION, 1980-2000**

	White	Black	Latino	Other
<b>Borough of Canonsburg</b>				
1980%	92.6%	6.6%	0.4%	0.4%
1990%	92.4%	6.7%	0.5%	0.4%
2000%	90.6%	6.5%	0.7%	2.2%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-2.0%	-0.1%	0.3%	1.8%
<b>Washington County</b>				
1980%	95.6%	3.5%	0.6%	0.3%
1990%	95.7%	3.3%	0.6%	0.4%
2000%	94.9%	3.2%	0.6%	1.3%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-0.7%	-0.3%	0.0%	1.0%

## Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community can suggest the levels of service and infrastructure necessary to meet the future needs of the various age groups. It can help to forecast future educational, recreational, and elderly facilities that may be needed. Table 2-2 compares the age distribution of Canonsburg and Washington County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of Canonsburg and Washington County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. However, though the differences are small, comparatively speaking, the percent of those under the age of 25 is larger in the County as a whole (29.9%) compared to Canonsburg (27.4%). Similarly, the percent of those 60 and older is smaller in the County (22.65) compared to Canonsburg (25.2%). It is also significant to note that, using year 2000 median age as a measure, Canonsburg's population at 41.5 median age is considerably higher than the State's median age. (32.1) It also should be noted that due to missing data this age distribution analysis does not include any racial differences.

**TABLE 2-2  
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1990 AND 2000**

	Borough of Canonsburg					Washington County				
	1990 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	2000 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	Percent Change	1990 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	2000 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	Percent Change
00-04	509	5.5	474	5.5	0.0	11,876	5.8	11,235	5.5	-0.3
05-09	489	5.3	490	5.7	0.4	12,811	6.3	12,753	6.3	0.0
10-14	490	5.3	491	5.7	0.4	13,158	6.4	13,127	6.5	0.1
15-19	565	6.1	469	5.4	-0.7	14,521	7.1	12,894	6.4	-0.7
20-24	619	6.7	435	5.1	-1.6	12,806	6.3	10,615	5.2	-1.1
25-34	1,344	14.6	1,177	13.7	-0.9	29,233	14	23,178	11.4	-2.6
35-44	1,232	13.4	1,248	14.5	1.1	30,592	15	31,952	15.7	0.7
45-54	909	9.9	1,174	13.6	3.7	21,970	11	30,465	15	4.0
55-59	459	5.0	430	5.0	0.0	10,085	4.9	10,973	5.4	0.5
60-64	533	5.8	367	4.3	-1.5	11,762	5.7	9,382	4.6	-1.1
65-74	1,179	12.8	834	9.7	-3.1	21,605	11	17,960	8.9	-2.1
75-84	702	7.6	782	9.1	1.5	11,294	6	14,112	7	1.0
85+	174	1.9	236	2.7	0.8	2,871	1.4	4,251	2.1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,607</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>204,584</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>202,897</b>	<b>100</b>	

## **Economics**

### **Income and Education**

The U.S. Census Bureau records income in two categories. Household income is defined as the yearly earnings of a group of unrelated people or one person living alone. Family income comprises a group of two or more people residing together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. As more residents obtain diplomas and degrees, their income earning potential improves, creating a direct positive correlation between the two. Table 2-3 shows that educational attainment increased in almost every category in Canonsburg over the past two decades. However, the percent of those with some higher education or higher, based upon 2000 data, is significantly higher in the County as whole (64%) compared to Canonsburg (37.4%).

While median family increases have occurred over the past twenty years in both Canonsburg and Washington County, the median income in the County has been consistently higher. Moreover, the actual dollar gap in median income between Canonsburg and the County has widened over the same period. It should also be noted, however, that the year 2000 median household income in Canonsburg (\$31,184) was considerably lower than Pennsylvania which was \$40,106.

In term of poverty level, a 5.8 percent of families in Canonsburg were below the poverty level compared to the Pennsylvania percent of 7.8 and the national percent of 9.2. It could be concluded that the Borough has a relatively low poverty level.

**TABLE 2-3  
INCOME AND EDUCATION, 1980-2000**

<b>Income and Education</b>	<b>Borough of Canonsburg</b>	<b>Washington County</b>
<b>1980</b>		
Median Household Income	\$15,146	\$17,664
Median Family Income	\$19,390	\$20,576
NO DEGREE	46.0%	37.6%
High School Graduate	37.2%	42.0%
Some higher education	8.3%	9.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.4	10.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a
<b>1990</b>		
Median Household Income	\$22,015	\$25,469
Median Family Income	\$28,667	\$31,239
NO DEGREE	34.0%	38.9%
High School Graduate	39.5%	42.0%
Some higher education	17.8%	12.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.7%	14.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.7%	5.0%
<b>2000</b>		
Median Household Income	\$31,184	\$37,607
Median Family Income	\$42,793	\$47,287
NO DEGREE	22.1%	32.0%
High School Graduate	44.1%	42.6%
Some higher education	20.7%	40.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	13.0%	18.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.7%	6.0%
<b>Percent Change from 1980-2000</b>		
Median Household Income	51.4%	53.0%
Median Family Income	54.7%	56.5%
NO DEGREE	-23.9%	-5.6%
High School Graduate	6.9%	0.6%
Some higher education	12.4%	30.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4.6%	8.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	a	n/a

### **Employment**

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. First, in 2000, the percent of Canonsburg's population that is in the labor force increased by 2.8% from 1980 despite a 16.8% decrease in Canonsburg's population of persons 16 years old and over. Second, unemployment in Canonsburg has been relatively low,

averaging 3.3% over the past twenty years; slightly lower than the average percent of 3.9 in Washington County over the same period. However, as in all cases, the unemployment rate does not include “discouraged” workers who may have dropped out of the labor force.

**TABLE 2-4  
EMPLOYMENT, 1980-2000**

	Borough of Canonsburg		Washington County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
<b>1980</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	8,283	100.0%	168,144	100.0%
In labor Force	4,774	57.6%	91,262	54.3%
Civilian Labor Force	4,769	57.5%	91,167	54.2%
Employed	4,460	53.8%	83,695	49.8%
Unemployed	309	3.7%	7,472	4.4%
Armed Forces	5	0.1%	95	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	3,509	42.4%	76,882	45.7%
<b>1990</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	7,673	100.0%	164,245	100.0%
In labor Force	4,159	54.2%	90,694	55.2%
Civilian Labor Force	4,159	54.2%	90,524	55.1%
Employed	3,956	51.6%	83,675	50.9%
Unemployed	203	2.6%	6,849	4.2%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	170	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	3,514	45.8%	73,551	44.8%
<b>2000</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	7,089	100.0%	163,159	100.0%
In labor Force	4,280	60.4%	96,043	58.9%
Civilian Labor Force	4,271	60.2%	95,899	58.8%
Employed	4,002	56.5%	90,861	55.7%
Unemployed	269	3.8%	5,038	3.1%
Armed Forces	9	0.1%	144	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	2,809	39.6%	67,116	41.1%
<b>Percent Change from 1980-2000</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	-16.8%	n/a	-3.1%	n/a
In labor Force	2.8%	n/a	4.6%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	2.7%	n/a	4.6%	n/a
Employed	2.7%	n/a	5.9%	n/a
Unemployed	0.1%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a
Armed Forces	0.0%	n/a	0.1%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-2.8%	n/a	-4.6%	n/a

## Housing and Real Estate

Not unlike many older urban areas in Washington County, the proportion of housing 30 years or older (81.1%) in Canonsburg is high, indicating that there has been relatively little new housing built in the last ten years. (See figure 2-2) The data further suggests that the level of occupancy of existing housing has decreased 32.5% over the past decade, which may suggest a more than adequate supply of housing. What is not known, however, is the quality of the occupied and unoccupied housing units. It is also significant to note that over the past decade, the number of units valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 21.5%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in Washington County. (See figure 2-3). On the other hand, the housing market analysis of the Borough suggests that real estate values may be more depressed than in the County as a whole. While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data, however, indicates that only approximately 30.3 % of the families spend 30 percent (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) or more of their household income for rent.

Figure 2-2 - AGE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

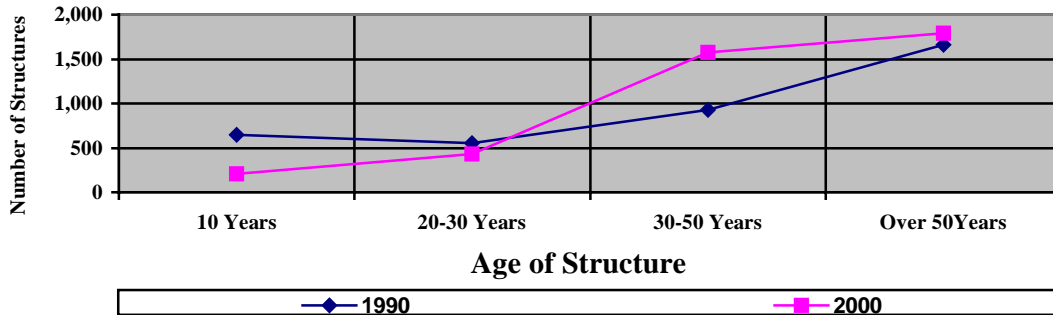


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

