

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Callowhill Neighborhood, City of Reading, Berks County

REGIONAL SETTING

The Callowhill neighborhood is a diverse area situated in the southwest part of the City of Reading. Within its boundaries lies the Callowhill Historic District, which dates to the late 1770s. The “neighborhood” is bounded on the south and west by the Schuylkill River, on the north by Penn Street, which is the north/south dividing line of the city, and on the east by 7th Street and the adjacent railroad tracks.

Berks County is an urban county strategically located in the New York-Washington, DC corridor. Philadelphia is the closest city with a population greater than 200,000 and is 58.7 miles southeast. Baltimore is 95 miles south, and New York is only 125 miles northeast.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Berks County

(Berks County Recorder of Deeds Web Site)

The first European settlement in Berks County was made in 1701 by the Swedes near the mouth of the Manatawny Creek. This was soon followed, further upstream and into the rich Oley Valley, by the French Huguenots after 1704, the Germans in 1712, and the English after 1720. The English also settled throughout the Maiden Creek Valley, and, after 1730, along the Allegheny and Hay Creeks, south of the Schuylkill.

Also among the early settlers were the Welsh in southwestern Berks along the Wyomissing and Cacoosing Creeks; a small group of Hebrews who settled in Reading and Myerstown; Negro slaves of the early ironmasters; and the substantial migration of Germans after 1723 from upstate New York into the Tuipohocken Valley of western Berks.

In 1790, the first federal census of the County reported 30,189 residents, 22,345 of whom were German or of German descent. There were almost 7,000 English and Welsh, and small numbers of Scotch, Irish, Dutch, French, and mulattoes or African Americans. Reading Town, the only sizeable settlement, had 2,225 residents. The area grew steadily through the years, and by 1860, seventy years later, the County's population had increased to 93,818, of whom 23,162 lived in Reading.

Most of the increase in population through the years has been due to a combination of natural growth (i.e., an excess of births over deaths) and internal migration (i.e., from other areas of the United States into Berks). The County also shared in the great activity in immigration between 1851 and 1920, when almost 34,000,000 people entered the United States from foreign countries. By 1970, or 180 years after the first census, some 296,382 persons resided in Berks. About 200,000 people lived in Reading and its urbanizing area of 40 square miles. The remaining third were scattered throughout the balance of 820 square miles. Principal growth trends in the past several decades (and within the foreseeable future) indicate that the County should continue to

grow at a moderate rate, with most of the growth taking place in the Reading urban area. This is the area between Leesport Borough on the north, Birdsboro Borough on the east, Lancaster County on the south, and Wernersville Borough on the west.

Callowhill

As mentioned above, the Callowhill Historic District dates back to the 1770s. In its prime, this area bustled with activity as a well-to-do residential and business district. Well into the 20th Century this area was the home of many professionals such as doctors and dentists, many thriving mercantile establishments, and industry that was served by both the rail lines and the river. Many wealthy and well-established families lived in the area and many of the “First” churches in Reading were founded there.

In the last half of the 20th Century, the downtown area, which is adjacent to the Callowhill neighborhood, began a decline that led to the affluent and middle class residents moving to the suburbs. Over the last twenty-five years, the Callowhill area has struggled to re-establish itself. Recently, a number of new businesses have opened in the area. Many of these businesses are owned by Hispanic residents.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the Callowhill neighborhood, the City of Reading, and the County of Berks 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 neighborhood 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 neighborhood’s and city’s future position within the City and 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).

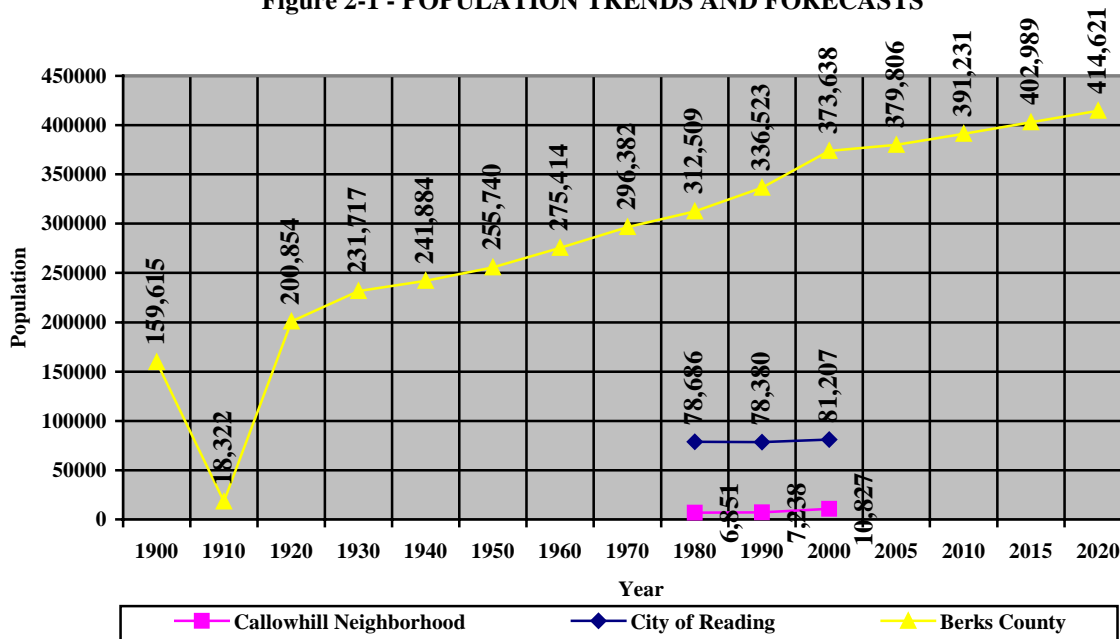
Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years Berks County's population has changed significantly. There has been a steady increase in the Berks County population over the last hundred years. From a population of approximately 300,000 in 1980, Berks County has grown to 373,638 in 2000; an increase of approximately 22 percent. Berks County's population is predicted to increase by nearly 10 percent from 2000 to 2020.

The City of Reading's population has remained relatively steady since 1980. From 1980 to 2000, the City of Reading's population increased 3.1 percent. The Callowhill's population has decreased over the past ten years. The Callowhill's population has increase 36.7 percent since 1990.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of Callowhill shows a trend towards a multicultural community over the past twenty years. There was a decrease of 39.9 percent in the White population of Callowhill since 1990. There was a 4.1 percent increase in the Black population and a 33.7 percent increase in the Latino population. There was also a 2.0 percent increase in the Other populations of Callowhill.

A similar analysis of the City of Reading shows a similar pattern. There was a 33.4 percent decrease in the White population of the City of Reading. There was a 10.0 percent increase in the Black population and a 27.5 percent increase in the Latino population of the City of Reading. Berks County's trend of racial composition shows a similar pattern of racial composition. The White population of Berks County decreased by 9.3 percent while the Black population increased by 0.9%. The most sizeable change in the racial composition in Berks County was the 6.8% increase in the populations of Latino persons over the last two decades. (See Table 2-1 – Racial Composition, 1980-2000)

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

	White	Black	Latino	Other
Callowhill Neighborhood				
1980%	67.3%	10.0%	20.6%	2.1%
1990%	50.4%	14.2%	34.1%	1.3%
2000%	27.4%	14.1%	54.3%	4.1%
Percent Change 1990-2000	-39.9%	4.1%	33.7%	2.0%
City of Reading				
1980%	81.5%	0.8%	9.8%	0.9%
1990%	71.6%	8.8%	18.5%	1.1%
2000%	48.1%	10.8%	37.3%	3.8%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-33.4%	10.0%	27.5%	2.9%
Berks County				
1980%	94.1%	2.4%	2.9%	0.6%
1990%	91.3%	2.7%	5.1%	0.8%
2000%	84.8%	3.3%	9.7%	2.1%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-9.3%	0.9%	6.8%	1.5%

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 the Callowhill neighborhood, the City of Reading, and the Berks County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of Callowhill neighborhood, the City of Reading, and the Berks County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. However, what is missing is data relative to changes in the age distribution based upon race.

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

	Callowhill Neighborhood					City of Reading					Berks County				
	1990 Pop.	% of Pop.	2000 Pop.	% of Pop.	% Change	1990 Pop.	% of Pop.	2000 Pop.	% of Pop.	% Change	1990 Pop.	% of Pop.	2000 Pop.	% of Pop.	% Change
00-04	623	8.6	899	8.3	-0.3	6,480	8.3	7,037	8.7	0.4	22,510	6.7	23,032	6.2	-0.5
05-09	463	6.4	955	8.8	2.4	5,653	7.2	7,221	8.9	1.7	22,539	6.7	26,574	7.1	0.4
10-14	434	6.0	858	7.9	1.9	4,905	6.3	6,555	8.1	1.8	20,865	6.2	26,874	7.2	1.0
15-19	474	6.5	681	6.3	-0.2	5,446	6.9	6,318	7.8	0.9	22,727	6.8	26,494	7.1	0.3
20-24	544	7.5	864	8.0	0.5	6,786	8.7	6,669	8.2	-0.5	23,438	7	21,972	5.9	-1.1
25-34	1,105	15.3	1,698	15.7	0.4	13,520	17.2	12,244	15.1	-2.1	54,135	16	47,454	12.7	-3.3
35-44	785	10.8	1,421	13.1	2.3	9,361	11.9	11,261	13.9	2.0	49,668	15	60,489	16.2	1.2
45-54	501	6.9	1,164	10.8	3.9	6,403	8.2	8,339	10.3	2.1	34,648	10	51,305	13.7	3.7
55-59	264	3.6	419	3.9	-3.0	6,781	8.7	2,989	3.7	-5.0	16,194	4.8	18,388	4.9	0.1
60-64	301	4.2	340	3.1	-1.1	6,984	8.9	2,506	3.1	-5.8	17,273	5.1	14,866	4	-0.8
65-74	784	10.8	712	6.6	-4.2	4,773	6.1	4,940	6.1	0.0	29,701	9	28,766	7.7	-1.3
75-84	760	10.5	555	5.1	-5.4	1,288	1.6	3,759	4.6	3.0	17,574	5	20,164	5.4	0.4
85+	254	3.5	261	2.4	-1.1	6,480	8.3	1,369	1.7	-6.6	5,251	1.6	7,260	1.9	0.3
Total	7,238	100	10,827	100		78,380	100	81,207	100		336,523	100	373,638	100	

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. This fact, notwithstanding, the percent median family income change over the past two decades is greater in Berks County and the City of Reading than in the Callowhill Neighborhood. A closely related factor to income is employment, which (See Table 2-4) shows a rate of unemployment in the Callowhill that has been consistently higher than the City of Reading and the County as a whole over the past three decades.

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

Income and Education	Callowhill	City of Reading	Berks County
1980			
Median Household Income	\$6,016	\$12,123	\$17,530
Median Family Income	\$10,333	\$16,262	\$20,696
NO DEGREE	67.4%	53.2%	41.5%
High School Graduate	21.7%	33.2%	38.4%
Some higher education	5.5%	6.8%	8.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	5.4%	6.9%	11.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a
1990			
Median Household Income	\$13,778	\$22,112	\$32,048
Median Family Income	\$21,955	\$27,277	\$37,755
NO DEGREE	55.2%	41.6%	40.9%
High School Graduate	29.0%	37.3%	39.0%
Some higher education	11.1%	12.6%	11.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4.6%	8.5%	15.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1.9%	3.1%	5.0%
2000			
Median Household Income	\$16,704	\$26,698	\$44,714
Median Family Income	\$20,788	\$31,067	\$52,997
NO DEGREE	27.1%	37.7%	36.5%
High School Graduate	58.0%	37.3%	39.4%
Some higher education	11.8%	16.4%	38.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.1%	8.7%	18.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1.1%	3.0%	6.5%
Percent Change from 1980-2000			
Median Household Income	64.0%	54.6%	60.8%
Median Family Income	50.3%	47.7%	60.9%
NO DEGREE	-40.3%	-15.5%	-5.0%
High School Graduate	36.3%	4.1%	1.0%
Some higher education	6.3%	9.6%	30.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	-2.3%	1.8%	7.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. In 2000, the percent of Callowhill's population that is in the labor force increased by 0.2% from 1980. On the other hand, the percent of unemployment over the past two decades has been higher than the County as a whole. What these statistics do not know show, however, are those who have "dropped out" of the labor market and who are no longer actively seeking employment. There was an 29.5% increase in the Callowhill's population of persons 16 years old and over. The City of Readings's population of individuals 16 years and over fell 4.6%. Its labor force decreased 0.1%.

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

	Callowhill		City of Reading		Berks County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980						
Persons 16 years and Over	5,677	100.0%	61,791	100.0%	244,814	100.0%
In labor Force	2,740	48.3%	36,042	58.3%	154,351	63.0%
Civilian Labor Force	2,740	48.3%	36,029	58.3%	154,261	63.0%
Employed	2,517	44.3%	33,354	53.9%	145,975	59.6%
Unemployed	223	3.9%	2,675	0.4%	8,286	3.3%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	13	0.0%	90	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	2,937	51.7%	25,749	41.7%	90,373	36.9%
1990						
Persons 16 years and Over	5,552	100.0%	60,360	100.0%	266,721	100.0%
In labor Force	2,656	47.8%	37,487	62.1%	174,416	65.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,656	47.8%	37,425	62.1%	174,191	65.3%
Employed	2,343	42.2%	34,188	56.6%	166,292	62.3%
Unemployed	313	5.6%	3,237	5.4%	7,899	3.0%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	62	0.1%	225	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	2,896	52.2%	22,873	37.9%	92,305	34.6%
2000						
Persons 16 years and Over	8,057	100.0%	59,101	100.0%	291,683	100.0%
In labor Force	3,911	48.5%	34,542	58.4%	190,703	65.4%
Civilian Labor Force	3,897	48.4%	34,478	58.3%	190,552	65.3%
Employed	3,251	40.4%	31,299	53.0%	180,881	62.0%
Unemployed	646	8.0%	3,179	5.4%	9,671	3.3%
Armed Forces	14	0.2%	64	0.1%	151	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	4,146	51.5%	24,559	41.6%	100,980	34.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000						
Persons 16 years and Over	29.5%	n/a	-4.6%	n/a	16.1%	n/a
In labor Force	0.2%	n/a	-0.1%	n/a	2.4%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	0.1%	n/a	0.0%	n/a	2.3%	n/a
Employed	-3.9%	n/a	-0.9%	n/a	2.4%	n/a
Unemployed	4.1%	n/a	5.0%	n/a	0.0%	n/a
Armed Forces	0.2%	n/a	0.1%	n/a	0.1%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-0.2%	n/a	-0.1%	n/a	-2.3%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

Not unlike many older urban areas in the City of Reading, the proportion of housing 30 years or older (76.8%) in Callowhill 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 3.2% over the past two decades. What is not known, however, is the quality of the occupied housing units. What is significant is that over the past decade, the number of units valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 2.3%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in the City of Reading. (See figure 2-3). On the other hand, the housing market analysis of the neighborhood as whole suggests that real estate values may be more depressed than in the City of Reading as a whole. While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that approximately 49.1% of the families spend less than 30% (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) of their household income for rent.

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

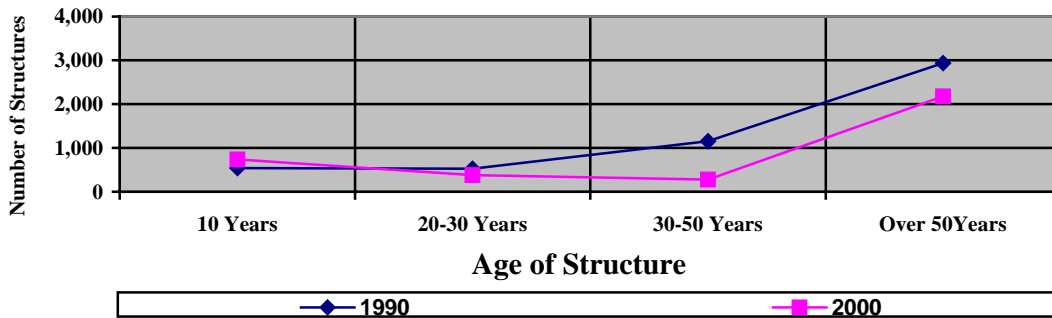


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

