

COMMUNITY PROFILE

La Salle Street Area, Borough of Berwick, Columbia County

REGIONAL SETTING

The Borough of Berwick has a population of approximately 10,774 people and is situated on 13.1 square miles of land along the eastern border of Columbia County. The borough's entire southern border is formed by the Susquehanna River

While the topography of much of Columbia County is rugged, the Borough of Berwick is relatively flat. Excessively steep slopes are found along the Susquehanna River, extending for just a limited area inland. The nearest city with a population greater than 50,000 is Scranton, PA, which is 46.8 miles northeast. The nearest city with a population greater than 200,000 is Philadelphia, which is 105.4 miles from Berwick.

The La Salle Street Area was not defined in the application. For the purposes of this community profile, in order to attempt to define the La Salle Street Area, we used Census Tract 507 of Columbia County. This Census Tract contains La Salle Street. The LaSalle Street Area of Berwick has a population of approximately 5,034.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Columbia County

Columbia County was created on March 22, 1813, from part of Northumberland County. Its name is a poetic allusion to America. Bloomsburg, the county seat since November 30, 1847, was incorporated as a town on March 4, 1870, and still is the only incorporated town in the state. Its name comes from Bloom Township, which was named for Samuel Bloom, a commissioner of Northumberland County. Danville, the county seat from 1813 to 1846, is now the county seat of Montour. Columbia County (486 square miles), in the heart of Pennsylvania, is home to rural farmlands, state game lands, state forests, nature preserves and the Susquehanna River and its tributaries. Columbia County has 24 19th century bridges including the only twin covered bridges in the nation.

Berwick

(Taken from the Community's own profile)

The Borough of Berwick was founded in 1786 by Evan Owen. The name is taken from a Scottish-English city, Berwick-Upon-Tweed. Founder Evan Owen bought land consisting of present day Berwick from the Penns in 1783. He was impressed by the site because of its elevation, which would prevent flooding. Owen planned the community based on the scheme adopted in Philadelphia, which consists of straight streets at right angles. Streets parallel the Susquehanna River and cross streets extend from the river to the northern line of town, which is somewhere near 15th Street. The average lot size is 45 feet wide by 90 feet deep.

Transportation played a large role in the borough's development. In the early 1800s, a turnpike was established, which ran through Berwick and provided the community with an outlet for agricultural goods. Two decades later, Berwick was the groundbreaking site for the north branch of the Pennsylvania Canal System.

In the late 19th Century, rail became the transportation mode of choice, and Berwick was well-served by this development. Three lines connected the Berwick area with surrounding Pennsylvania towns, and Berwick became a major rail car manufacturing center. The American Car & Foundry Company (AC&F) employed 2,000 people at the turn of the century, which grew to 5,500 by 1913 and to more than 9,000 during World War II.

With employment opportunities came immigration and development. Around the turn of the century, more than 300 homes were constructed by development companies in a single year. Manufacturing, in general, and AC&F specifically, spurred much of the growth and development of the community's infrastructure and services. The abundance of jobs at the AC&F plant supported the development of businesses to service this population, which helped to position Berwick as one of the two major trade and service centers in Columbia County. But by the early 1960's, AC&F announced the closing of its plant.

Textile mills that produced garments were also a major industry in the community. At their peak, the various mills in Berwick employed about 1,300 people and they formed a nucleus of a group of small industries in the community that provided jobs to support Berwick's economy at an acceptable level following the closing of AC&F. However, there are a number of significant other employers in Berwick, which include, among others, Wise Foods, Inc., Deluxe Homes of Pennsylvania, Inc., and Lady Ester Lingerie Corporation.

Although faced with social and economic problems, e.g., the rise in crime, drug trafficking, and gang violence, the low cost of living, the availability of affordable housing, and low property taxes have served as an attraction for a growing number of transients from larger cities and surrounding states.

In recent years, the leadership of Berwick has been involved in a number of planning initiatives to respond to a number of revitalization concerns such as the abandonment of vacant store fronts and buildings and designing effective strategies to promote healthy and viable neighborhoods. However, a comprehensive plan for Berwick has not yet been developed.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the La Salle Street Area, the Borough of Berwick, and the County of Columbia 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

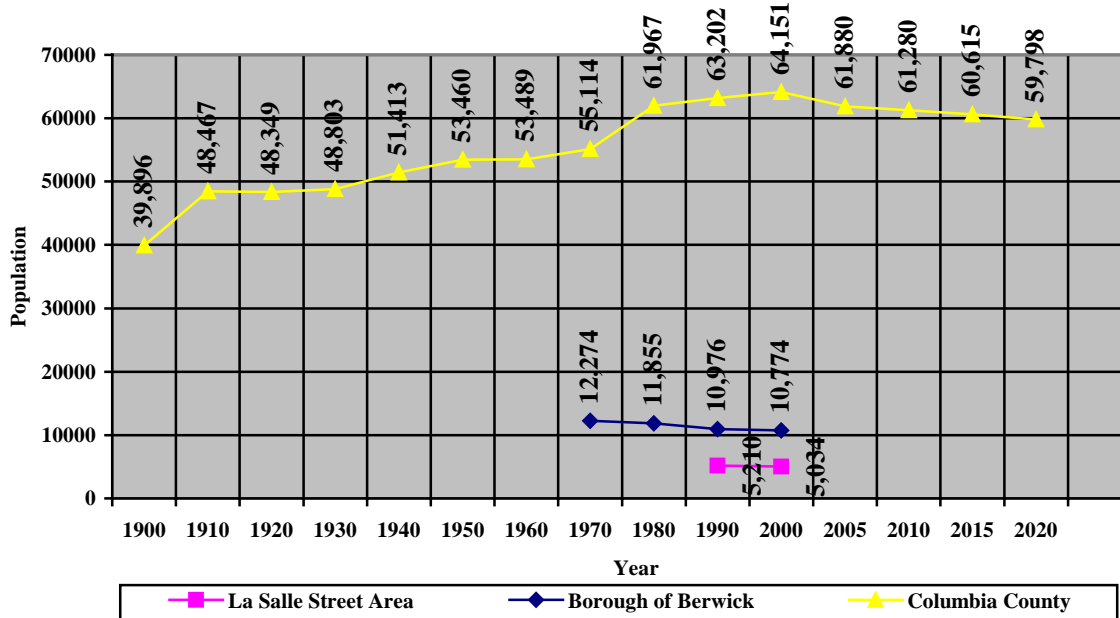
understanding of the section's and city's future position within the City and County. All following data used in the profile is extracted from 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census. (U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau).

Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years Columbia County's population has changed significantly, having experienced continued growth. From 1900 to 1950, Columbia County's population grew 25.4 percent. While many other counties' populations in Pennsylvania began to decline in the second half of the twentieth century, Columbia County continued to grow. From 1960 to 2000, Columbia County's population grew another 16.6 percent, which might be attributable to the movement to the County of Berwick residents. Currently Columbia County's population is predicted to decrease 7.3 percent from 2000 to 2020. In contrast to the growth pattern of the County over the past thirty years, the population of the Borough of Berwick has decreased 13.9 percent from 1970 to 2000. Similarly, the La Salle Street Area's population has declined 3.5 percent over the past ten years.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of the La Salle Street Area of Berwick suggests that the racial composition of the area has not undergone any significant change over the past twenty years. The only recordable changes were the decrease of 1.4 percent in the White population, a 0.3 percent increase in the Black population, a 0.5 percent increase in the Latino population and a 0.6 percent increase in the Other populations.

An analysis of the Borough of Berwick shows a similar pattern, with the only racial composition changes being a 2.5 percent decrease in the White population, a 0.5 percent increase in the Black population and a 1.2 percent increase in the Latino population. The consistency in racial composition is also true for Columbia County for the past twenty years. The only changes are small, and include a 1.9 percent decrease in the White population, a 0.6 percent increase in the Latino population and a 0.8 percent increase in the Other populations since 1980.

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

	White	Black	Latino	Other
La Salle Street Area				
1990%	98.7%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%
2000%	97.3%	0.9%	0.8%	1.0%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-1.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Borough of Berwick				
1980%	98.8%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
1990%	98.7%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
2000%	96.3%	0.8%	1.6%	1.2%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-2.5%	0.5%	1.2%	0.7%
Columbia County				
1980%	97.1%	0.7%	0.9%	1.2%
1990%	98.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
2000%	99.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-1.9%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%

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 La Salle Street Area of Berwick, the Borough of Berwick, and Columbia County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of La Salle Street Area of Berwick, the Borough of Berwick, and Columbia County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. However, there are two age distribution characteristics to be noted. First, the percent of those under the age of 25 in the LaSalle Area is lower (28.8%) than either the Borough (30.7), and Columbia County, which is 35 percent. Second, the percent of those 60 years of age or higher is slightly larger in the LaSalle Area (26%), compared to Berwick Borough (24.8) and to Columbia County, which has 20.3 percent in the 60 and above categories.

The median age of the LaSalle Area is 40.9, which is considerably higher than the median Pennsylvania age of 32.1.

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

	La Salle Street Area					Borough of Berwick					Columbia 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	317	6.1	252	5.0	-1.1	717	6.5	595	5.5	-1.0	3,747	5.9	3,154	4.9	-1.0
05-09	331	6.4	311	6.2	-0.2	685	6.2	744	6.9	0.7	3,895	6.2	3,681	5.7	-0.5
10-14	290	5.6	312	6.2	0.6	632	5.8	730	6.8	1.0	3,804	6	4,058	6.3	0.3
15-19	312	6.0	314	6.2	0.2	720	6.6	661	6.1	-0.5	5,789	9.2	5,666	8.8	-0.4
20-24	314	6.0	262	5.2	-0.8	703	6.4	583	5.4	-1.0	6,378	10.1	5,955	9.3	-0.8
25-34	735	14.1	659	12.7	-1.4	1,558	14.2	1,356	12.6	-1.6	8,840	14	7,382	11.5	-2.5
35-44	610	11.7	725	14.4	2.7	1,323	12.1	1,559	14.5	2.4	8,615	14	9,262	14.4	0.4
45-54	500	9.6	618	12.3	2.7	1,066	9.7	1,282	11.9	2.2	6,241	10	8,636	13.5	3.5
55-59	236	4.5	289	5.7	-3.9	482	4.4	595	5.5	1.1	2,810	4.4	3,360	5.2	0.8
60-64	303	5.8	224	4.4	-1.4	590	5.4	440	4.1	-1.3	3,109	4.9	2,795	4.4	-0.5
65-74	808	15.5	463	9.2	-6.3	1,466	13.4	927	8.6	-4.8	5,868	9	5,123	8	-1.0
75-84	392	7.5	510	10.1	2.6	795	7.2	977	9.1	1.9	3,174	5	3,896	6.1	1.1
85+	62	1.2	115	2.3	1.1	239	2.2	325	3.0	0.8	932	1.5	1,183	1.8	0.3
Total	5,210	100	5,034	100		10,976	100	10,774	100		63,202	100	64,151	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 in the LaSalle Area increased from 1990 to 2000 in only a few categories, and most noticeably in the 3.2 percent increase in those with a Bachelor's Degree. This compares to a 0.2 percent increase in the same category in Berwick Borough, and a 5.6 increase in Columbia County.

Though the median household income has risen by 28.2 percent in the LaSalle Area – and in year 2000 was similar in actual dollar amount to the Borough, the percent increase in median household income over the past two decades is greater in Columbia County. When the year 2000 median household income in the LaSalle Area (\$27,346) is compared to the Pennsylvania median household income (\$40,102), there is a considerable disparity

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

Income and Education	La Salle Street Area	Borough of Berwick	Columbia County
1980			
Median Household Income	n/a	\$13,315	\$14,148
Median Family Income	n/a	\$15,622	\$16,455
NO DEGREE	n/a	42.6%	36.5%
High School Graduate	n/a	40.8%	44.3%
Some higher education	n/a	8.3%	9.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	n/a	8.3%	10.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a
1990			
Median Household Income	\$19,623	\$20,423	\$24,211
Median Family Income	\$23,697	\$25,180	\$29,355
NO DEGREE	34.4%	33.1%	38.1%
High School Graduate	45.3%	46.4%	45.0%
Some higher education	15.3%	14.3%	11.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	5.1%	6.3%	12.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1.8%	1.9%	5.0%
2000			
Median Household Income	\$27,346	\$27,442	\$34,094
Median Family Income	\$33,891	\$32,347	\$41,398
NO DEGREE	30.3%	28.1%	33.3%
High School Graduate	48.1%	47.7%	46.4%
Some higher education	13.3%	15.7%	34.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.3%	8.5%	15.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.5%	2.9%	5.8%
	Percent Change from 1990-2000	Percent Change from 1980-2000	Percent Change from 1980-2000
Median Household Income	28.2%	51.5%	58.5%
Median Family Income	30.1%	51.7%	60.3%
NO DEGREE	-4.1%	-14.5%	-3.2%
High School Graduate	2.8%	6.9%	2.1%
Some higher education	-2.0%	7.4%	25.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.2%	0.2%	5.6%
Graduate or Professional Degree	0.7%	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. In 2000, the number of the La Salle Area population that was in the labor force declined by 1.6 percent from 1990 and there was also a 5.0 percent decrease in the area's population of persons 16 years old and over. The Borough of Berwick's population of individuals 16 years and over fell 5.4%. However, its labor force still increased 0.7%.

Second, using 1990 and 2000 data, the rate of unemployment in the LaSalle Area averaged 5.4 percent, which is approximately the same rate for the Borough. However, for the same period, the rate of unemployment in Columbia County has averaged 3.9 percent. 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.

In terms of the poverty, 11.7 percent of the LaSalle Area families fell below the poverty level, which is higher than the Pennsylvania poverty rate of 7.2 percent and the national rate of 9.8 percent.

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

	La Salle Street Area		Borough of Berwick		Columbia County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980						
Persons 16 years and Over	n/a	n/a	9,274	100.0%	48,472	100.0%
In labor Force	n/a	n/a	5,552	59.9%	28,604	59.0%
Civilian Labor Force	n/a	n/a	5,545	59.8%	28,579	58.9%
Employed	n/a	n/a	5,104	55.0%	26,338	54.3%
Unemployed	n/a	n/a	441	4.8%	2,241	4.6%
Armed Forces	n/a	n/a	7	0.0%	235	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	n/a	n/a	3,722	40.1%	19,868	41.0%
1990						
Persons 16 years and Over	4,205	100.0%	8,807	100.0%	51,034	100.0%
In labor Force	2,402	57.1%	5,004	56.8%	30,634	60.0%
Civilian Labor Force	2,392	56.9%	4,994	56.7%	30,579	59.9%
Employed	2,126	50.6%	4,537	51.5%	28,882	56.6%
Unemployed	266	6.3%	457	5.1%	1,697	3.3%
Armed Forces	10	0.2%	10	0.1%	55	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,803	42.9%	3,803	43.2%	20,400	40.0%
2000						
Persons 16 years and Over	4,006	100.0%	8,511	100.0%	52,499	100.0%
In labor Force	2,351	58.7%	5,149	60.4%	32,403	61.7%
Civilian Labor Force	2,351	58.7%	5,144	60.4%	32,376	61.7%
Employed	2,171	54.2%	4,571	53.7%	30,006	57.2%
Unemployed	180	4.5%	573	6.7%	2,370	4.5%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	27	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,655	41.3%	3,367	39.6%	20,096	38.2%
Percent Change from 1980-2000						
Persons 16 years and Over	-5.0%	n/a	-9.0%	n/a	7.7%	n/a
In labor Force	1.6%	n/a	0.5%	n/a	2.7%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	1.8%	n/a	0.6%	n/a	2.8%	n/a
Employed	3.6%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a	2.9%	n/a
Unemployed	-1.8%	n/a	1.9%	n/a	-0.1%	n/a
Armed Forces	-0.2%	n/a	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-1.6%	n/a	-0.5%	n/a	-2.8%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

Not unlike many older areas in the Borough of Berwick, the proportion of housing 30 years or older (81.3%) in La Salle Street Area is high, indicating that there has been relatively little new housing built in the last ten years. (See figure 2-2). Moreover, a significant proportion of the housing in Berwick is mobile. The data further suggests that the level of occupancy of existing housing has decreased 3.2% over the past two decades. Other information suggests that much of the housing in the Borough of Berwick is in poor condition. It is significant note, however, that over the past decade, the number of units valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 12.6%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in the County as a whole. (See figure 2-3). While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that approximately 17.4 percent LaSalle Area families spend 30 percent (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) or more of their household income for rent. On balance, there is evidence, comparatively speaking, that the Borough does have a reasonable supply of affordable housing.

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

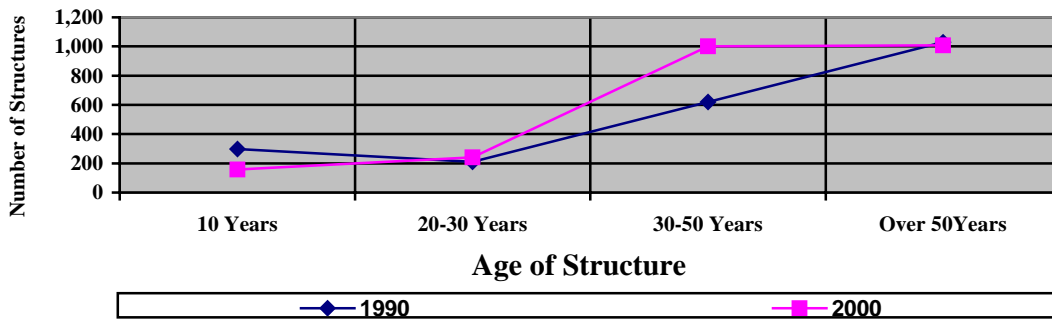


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

