

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Borough of Hamburg, Berks County

REGIONAL SETTING

The Borough of Hamburg is located at the foot of the Blue Mountains, along the Schuylkill River, just south of the Schuylkill County. The community, named for the city in Germany, is located in Berks County, which is in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

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 Tuipheocken 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 Negroes. 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.

Hamburg

(Hamburg, PA website and the community's own profile)

Hamburg was once named Kaerchertown after its founder Martin Kaercher, Jr., on or about 1787. Formally organized in 1837, Hamburg has been a natural crossroads of commerce since settlement of the area took place. Many of Hamburg's first inhabitants were Germanic, speaking a dialect that still lingers today.

The first economy of Hamburg was agricultural but was soon followed by a flourishing iron furnace industry taking advantage of the region's natural resources. These industries could only grow and prosper with a viable transportation system to move goods to market.

The Centre Turnpike (1809-1816) was the first established road north through the Schuylkill Gap. The war of 1812 pointed out the need for cheap and efficient internal transportation in the nation. The Schuylkill River Valley afforded a natural area of development for the port of Philadelphia, a gateway to the world. Preliminary plans for a canal began in 1814 with the first water entering in 1824 to a 22 mile section below Reading. The Schuylkill Canal system was the busiest of all the nation's man-made waterways, enjoying its greatest prosperity between 1835 and 1841. The Hamburg area also prospered dramatically with the Schuylkill Canal and served as the hub for docking and an extensive boat-building business.

The ever growing anthracite coal industry pointed out the need for a railroad and the first charter was granted in 1826 for a 21 mile section from Tamaqua to Port Clinton and, when built, brought coal to the canal. On January 1, 1842 the first train ran the entire distance from Philadelphia to Mount Carbon along the Schuylkill river valley. The Pennsylvania Railroad served as Hamburg's main freight carrier until about 1950.

Hamburg's geographic location allowed its industrial base to remain resilient through many difficult times for the country. Only the last 25 years have seen a steady loss of jobs, with only a few hundred in the manufacturing sector remaining. Although Hamburg's industries prospered with the accessibility to markets, it is the commercial base which proved to be Borough's strongest sector and is currently the same today.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the Borough of Hamburg 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).

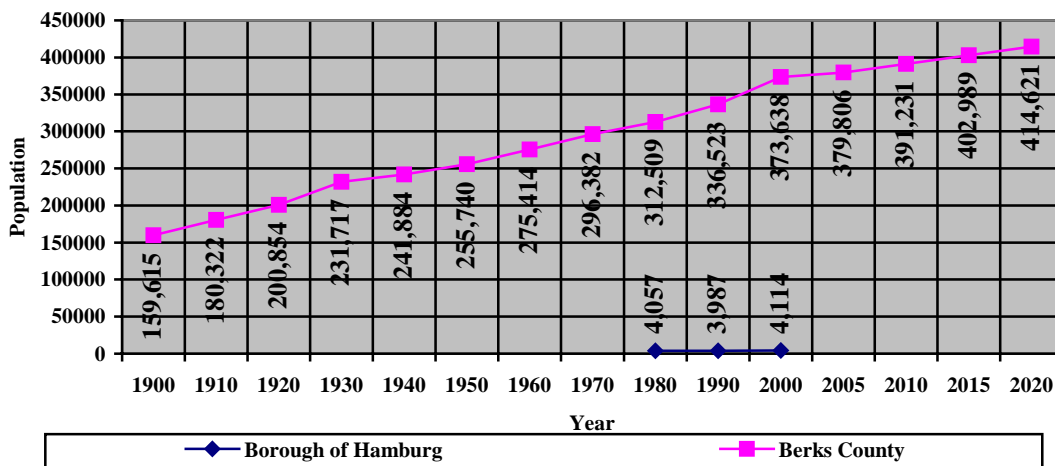
Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years 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.

Hamburg's population increased 1.4 percent from 1980 to 2000; a rate considerably lower than Berks County however. (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). While future population trends for Hamburg cannot be predicted with certainty, if the population trend follows the pattern of Berks County, the population of the Borough of Hamburg could reach 4,500 in 2020.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of Hamburg, which is predominantly White (approximately 98%), shows little change in the racial composition over the past twenty years. There was a 1.2 percent increase in the White population of Hamburg and a 0.3 percent increase in the Black population over the last two decades. Other racial populations decreased by 1.8% during the same time period. On the other hand, the White population of Berks County decreased by 4.1 percent while the Black population increased by 1.3%. The most sizeable change in the racial composition in Berks County was the 7.5% increase in the populations of persons from other races over the last two decades. (See Table 2-1 – Racial Composition, 1980-2000)

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

	White	Black	Other
Borough of Hamburg			
1980%	96.7%	0.0%	3.3%
1990%	99.6%	0.1%	0.3%
2000%	97.9%	0.3%	0.9%
Percent Change 1980-2000	1.2%	0.3%	-1.8%
Berks County			
1980%	94.1%	2.4%	0.6%
1990%	93.5%	3.0%	3.5%
2000%	88.2%	3.7%	8.1%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-4.1%	1.3%	7.5%

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 Hamburg and Berks County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of Hamburg and Berks County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. While there is little difference between Hamburg and Berks County in the percent of persons under the age of 25, the percent of those 60 years of age or older in Hamburg (24.7) is somewhat higher than Berks County (19 percent). Moreover, 1 in 5 residents in Hamburg are age 65 or older. The median age in Hamburg is 40.5, which is significantly higher than the median age in Pennsylvania (32.1).

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

	Hamburg					Berks 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	224	5.6	248	6.0	0.4	22,510	6.7	23,032	6.2	-0.5
05-09	211	5.3	242	5.9	0.6	22,539	6.7	26,574	7.1	0.4
10-14	224	5.6	257	6.2	0.6	20,865	8.0	26,874	7.2	-0.8
15-19	219	5.5	209	5.1	-0.4	22,727	6.8	26,494	7.1	0.3
20-24	263	6.6	205	5.0	-1.6	23,438	7.0	21,972	5.9	-1.1
25-34	559	14	586	14.3	0.3	54,135	16.1	47,454	12.7	-3.4
35-44	581	14.6	558	13.5	-1.1	49,668	14.8	60,489	16.2	1.4
45-54	379	9.5	590	14.3	4.8	34,648	10.3	51,305	13.7	3.4
55-59	210	5.3	203	4.9	-0.4	16,194	4.8	18,388	4.9	0.1
60-64	263	6.6	170	4.1	-2.5	17,273	5.1	14,866	4.0	-1.1
65-74	457	11.5	422	10.3	-1.2	29,701	8.8	28,766	7.7	-1.1
75-84	322	8.1	325	7.9	-0.2	17,574	5.2	20,164	5.4	0.2
85+	75	1.9	99	2.4	0.5	5,251	1.6	7,260	1.9	0.3
Total	3987	100	4114	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 in Hamburg increased in almost every category from 1980-2000. However, in 2000, the percent of those in Hamburg (31.9) with 'some higher education or above' is lower than Berks County. (45.2%)

Over the past 20 years, the median household income in Hamburg has increased 53.2 percent, though not as high as the percent increase in Berks County (60.8). Moreover, the 2000 median household income in Hamburg (\$37,683) is slightly below the Pennsylvania median household income of \$40,106. By contrast, Berks County median household income of \$44,714 is higher than the state.

In terms of poverty, approximately 5 percent of families in Hamburg fall below the level, compared to 7.8 percent in Pennsylvania and 9.2 percent nationally based upon Census 2000 data.

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

Income and Education	Borough of Hamburg	Berks County
1980		
Median Household Income	\$17,645	\$17,530
Median Family Income	\$21,002	\$20,696
NO DEGREE	45.5%	41.5%
High School Graduate	37.4%	38.4%
Some higher education	6.2%	8.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	10.8%	11.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a
1990		
Median Household Income	\$34,375	\$32,048
Median Family Income	\$35,405	\$37,755
NO DEGREE	34.2%	30.1%
High School Graduate	39.1%	39.0%
Some higher education	17.1%	15.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	9.7%	15.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.6%	5.1%
2000		
Median Household Income	\$37,683	\$44,714
Median Family Income	\$50,957	\$52,997
NO DEGREE	15.7%	20.0%
High School Graduate	42.5%	39.4%
Some higher education	14.2%	20.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14.1%	18.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.6%	6.5%
Percent Change from 1980-2000		
Median Household Income	53.2%	60.8%
Median Family Income	58.8%	60.9%
NO DEGREE	-29.8%	-21.5%
High School Graduate	5.1%	1.0%
Some higher education	8.0%	11.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.3%	7.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. In 2000, Hamburg's population in the labor force decreased by 1.6% from 1980, while the population of persons 16 years and over increased by 0.9%. Further, unemployment in Hamburg has averaged only 2.2 percent over the past twenty years, which is an indication of a strong labor market and what is considered as close to full employment. Berks

County's population of individuals 16 years and over grew by 16.1 % and its labor force increased by 2.3% over the past twenty years. In terms of unemployment, the average percent in Berks County over the past twenty years was 3.2; also an indicator of a strong labor market.

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

	Borough of Hamburg		Berks County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980				
Persons 16 years and Over	3,262	100.0%	244,724	100.0%
In labor Force	2,170	66.5%	154,351	63.1%
Civilian Labor Force	2,170	66.5%	154,261	63.0%
Employed	2,074	63.6%	145,975	59.6%
Unemployed	96	2.9%	8,286	3.4%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	90	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	1,092	33.5%	90,373	36.9%
1990				
Persons 16 years and Over	3,292	100.0%	266,721	100.0%
In labor Force	2,103	63.9%	174,416	65.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,103	63.9%	174,191	65.3%
Employed	2,032	61.7%	166,292	62.3%
Unemployed	71	2.2%	7,899	3.0%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	225	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,189	36.1%	92,305	34.6%
2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	3,292	100.0%	291,683	100.0%
In labor Force	2,137	64.9%	190,703	65.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,137	64.9%	190,552	65.3%
Employed	2,085	63.3%	180,881	62.0%
Unemployed	52	1.6%	9,671	3.3%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	151	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,155	35.1%	100,980	34.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	0.9%	n/a	16.1%	n/a
In labor Force	-1.6%	n/a	2.3%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	-1.6%	n/a	2.0%	n/a
Employed	-0.3%	n/a	2.4%	n/a
Unemployed	-1.3%	n/a	-0.1%	n/a
Armed Forces	0.0%	n/a	0.1%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	1.6%	n/a	-2.3%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

The proportion of housing 30 years or older (72.8.0%) in Hamburg 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 at 94.4 percent the level of occupancy of existing housing was high in 2000, though it has decreased 2.1 percent over the past decade. Homeownership rates (65.5%) are high in Hamburg. Over the past decade, the number of units in Hamburg valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 12.7%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in Berks County. (See figure 2-3). While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that only 12.9 percent of Hamburg families spend 30 percent (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) or more of their household income for rent. This data would indicate that the supply of affordable housing, based on household income, is relatively high in Hamburg.

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

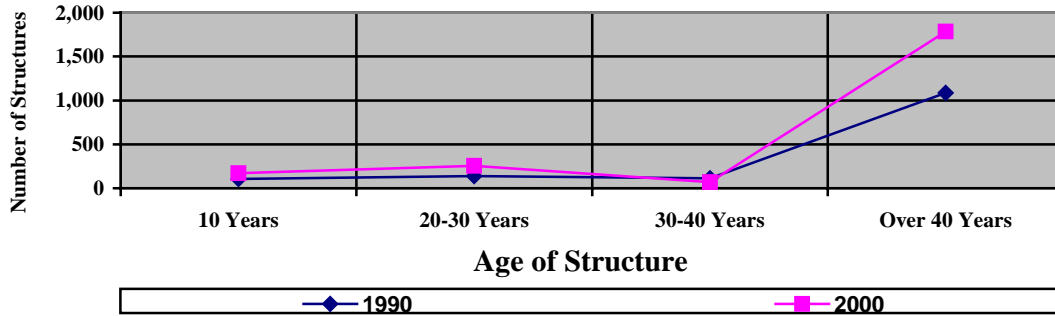


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

