

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Borough of Irwin, Westmoreland County

REGIONAL SETTING

The Borough of Irwin, one square mile in size, is located along U.S. Route 30 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike in western Westmoreland County, which geographically is situated in southwestern PA. The Borough, surrounded by North Huntingdon Township, is bordered by Sewickley Township on the South, North Irwin on the North, and Manor on the East. Irwin has a population of 4,366 and its defining feature is an attractive downtown business district comprising of approximately 18 blocks. The community has a well developed and well used park adjacent to the downtown district.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Westmoreland County

(Taken from inwestmoreland.com)

During the French and Indian War, in the middle of the 18th century, Britain and France fought for control of North America. In 1758, in what would become part of Eastern Westmoreland County, General John Forbes began a road across Pennsylvania. Forbes' Road was guarded by fortifications, and its ultimate aim was of aiding in the attack on Fort Duquesne. One of these fortifications along the Loyalhanna he named "Fort Ligonier" after Sir John Ligonier, his commander in Great Britain. In 1763, the Battle of Bushy Run decided the fate of the region in favor of the English, and by 1773, Westmoreland County was born.

The first county established in Pennsylvania west of the Allegheny Mountains, Westmoreland County originally encompassed a vast area of Western Pennsylvania, including what is today are Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties. Parts of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, and Indiana counties were also included in this "Mother of Counties."

The home of Robert Hanna was originally used for the county courts, and historic Hanna's Town, near Greensburg, PA, remains an ongoing archeological dig, a site registered with the National Register of Historic Places.

Today the Westmoreland County Courthouse is located in downtown Greensburg. Constructed in the Italian Renaissance style in 1906, it is the fourth courthouse to be built on the spot, and its main feature is a central dome 175 feet high. Designed by architect William Kauffman (1857 – 1945), the original courtrooms feature beautiful murals, Edwardian chandeliers, and deep coved ceilings.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Westmoreland County grew on the strength of the coal, steel, and rail industries, and while manufacturing remains a critical component of its economy, the 21st century is more likely to see Westmoreland County moving towards service and technology industries. Westmoreland County has been considered as one of the possible routes for the Pennsylvania High-speed Maglev project, and whatever occurs in the future for commerce and industry, it is certain that Westmoreland County has the workforce, intellectual resources, committed industry and governmental leaders, and the community spirit to remain a great place to live and work in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Irwin

(Taken from Community's own profile and modified)

Irwin's development has historically been dependant on agriculture and coal mining. These resources brought settlement to this region of Western Pennsylvania. As in many towns within this region, Irwin's coal industries prospered as a result of Western Pennsylvania's booming steel industry.

The mining industry had a large effect on the population of Westmoreland County, bringing in 28,000 miners. Between 1840 and 1890, Irwin's population increased from 2,000 to 10,000. With the town's growing importance to the area's industry and the subsequent rise in population, the Greensburg-Pittsburgh Turnpike continued to be expanded.

In the late thirties, with the advent of the Interstate System, Route 30 was re-routed. The road was shifted several hundred yards from its original location, no longer perpendicular to the town's Main Street. As the nationwide highway movement grew in popularity, the trend of creating commercial corridors flanking the nation's highways brought a number of motels and shopping centers along Route 30. This further reduced the number of travelers actually coming into the town and hurt Irwin's economic status.

With the collapse of the steel industry in the early 1980's, coupled with urban sprawl invading the agrarian landscape, the economy of several towns in the area experienced a decline. Irwin was one of these towns whose downtown businesses felt the effects of incoming "big-box" commercial businesses and developing strip-malls, which only added dramatically to the town's decline. These changes notwithstanding, however, Irwin still has several attractive characteristics. It still has the most defined and vibrant downtown district in area, is situated at a crossroads for shopping, educational, and recreation destinations and, significantly, is centrally located within a larger commercial and residential market area with some of the fastest growing communities in Western PA; a factor which has also created an upscale market for homes in Irwin.

Currently, Irwin is involved in what is called the *Irwin Project*; a revitalization initiative which is expected to culminate in a comprehensive planning process for the Borough. Several project initiatives, such as the historic restoration of the town's original Main Street, are presently underway.

DEMOGRAPHICS

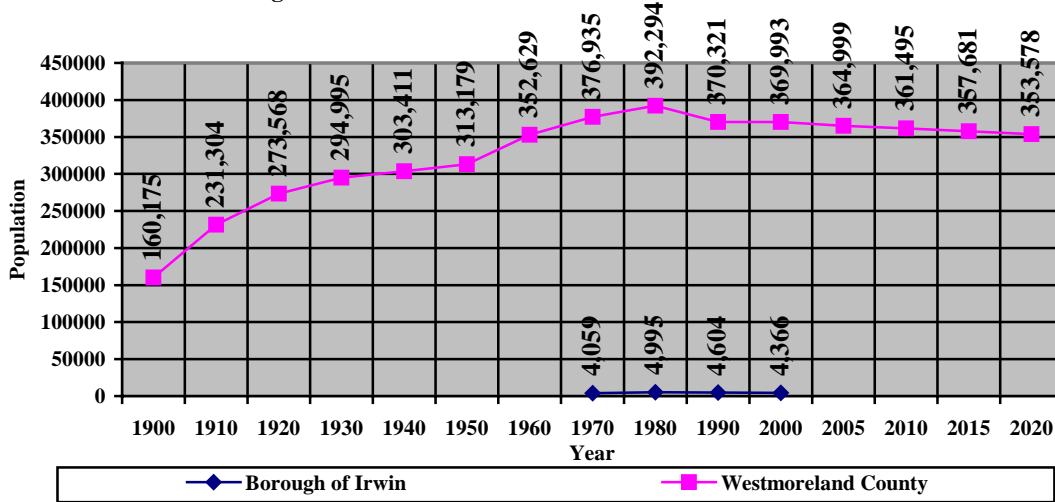
In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the Borough of Irwin and its residents, a broad analysis of demographic factors is presented in this profile. Reviewing population trends and estimates, age distribution, and employment enables the Borough to better understand the needs 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 Westmoreland County and the Borough of Irwin has changed significantly. These changes have followed the same pattern as many other metropolitan areas of the United States. Westmoreland County's population grew steadily and from 1900 to 1980 (the peak period of its growth) increased 59.2%. Starting in the 1980's, Westmoreland County's population began to decline as the population sprawled to suburbia past the county borders. From 1980 to 2000, there was a population decrease of 6.0% in Westmoreland County's population. Currently Westmoreland County's population is predicted to decline another 4.6% from 2000 to 2020. Similarly, Irwin's population has grown and declined over the past thirty years, reaching a peak of nearly 5,000 in 1980. However, from 1980 to 2000, the population of Irwin declined by 12.5%; a percent twice that of the County. (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). What is uncertain is the proportion – if any – of the projected decline in the population of Westmoreland County will occur in the Borough of Irwin.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of Irwin shows a very consistent pattern in its racial composition over the past twenty years. The White population, for example, has remained over 96%. Over this same period, there has been a 0.7 % decline in the Black population, a 0.1 % increase in the Latino population and a 1.5% increase in the Other populations of Irwin. A twenty year analysis of Westmoreland County shows a similar pattern in racial composition – a majority White population at 96% or above, a slight increase of 0.4% in the Black population and a 0.2% percent increase in the Latino population. In the County, however, there was a 0.9 percent decrease in the Other populations.

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

	White	Black	Latino	Other
Borough of Irwin				
1980%	97.0%	1.6%	0.6%	0.7%
1990%	97.7%	1.5%	0.5%	0.4%
2000%	96.2%	0.9%	0.7%	2.2%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-0.8%	-0.7%	0.1%	1.5%
Westmoreland County				
1980%	97.6%	1.6%	0.3%	0.4%
1990%	97.2%	1.8%	0.3%	0.6%
2000%	96.2%	2.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-1.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.9%

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 Irwin and Westmoreland County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of Irwin and Westmoreland County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. However, when only 2000 data is considered, the percent of those under the age of 45 in Irwin is higher (62.5%) compared to Westmoreland County as whole. (56.2) The Borough also has a smaller percent of those 60 years of age or older than in the County (19.8%). In terms of median age, Irwin is 36.9 and higher than the State's median age of 32.1.

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

	Borough of Irwin					Westmoreland 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	300	6.5	235	5.4	-1.1	22,122	6.0	19,175	5.2	-0.8
05-09	259	5.6	261	6.0	0.4	23,235	6.3	22,897	6.2	-0.1
10-14	260	5.6	254	5.8	0.2	23,516	6.4	24,430	6.6	0.2
15-19	259	5.6	255	5.8	0.2	23,950	6.5	23,040	6.2	-0.3
20-24	348	7.6	293	6.7	-0.9	22,091	6.0	16,794	4.5	-1.5
25-34	883	19.2	784	18.0	-1.2	54,572	15.0	42,331	11.4	-3.6
35-44	676	14.7	645	14.8	0.1	56,190	15.0	59,467	16.1	1.1
45-54	390	8.5	605	13.9	5.4	40,626	11.0	55,925	15.1	4.1
55-59	170	3.7	173	4.0	0.3	18,912	5.1	20,664	5.6	0.5
60-64	244	5.3	147	3.4	-1.9	21,635	5.8	17,489	4.7	-1.1
65-74	450	9.8	850	8.0	-1.8	38,606	10.0	34,453	9.3	-0.7
75-84	288	6.3	286	6.6	0.3	19,615	5.0	25,691	6.9	1.9
85+	77	1.7	78	1.8	0.1	5,251	1.4	7,637	2.1	0.7
Total	4,604	100	4,366	100		370,321	100	369,993	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 Irwin increased in almost every category. In 2000, over 64% of Irwin residents either had attained either some higher education or above, though slightly lower than the County as whole (71.2%)

Over the past two decades, the median family income in Irwin has increased by 52.3% and only slightly lower than the increase in Westmoreland county (55.5%). In year 2000, the median household income in Irwin was \$32,758 which was considerably lower than the median household income for Pennsylvania which was \$40,106.

In terms of the poverty level, 6.6% of Irwin families are below the poverty level. This is below the State of Pennsylvania percent of 7.8.

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

Income and Education	Borough of Irwin	Westmoreland County
1980		
Median Household Income	\$15,789	\$17,795
Median Family Income	\$19,992	\$20,469
NO DEGREE	25.9%	31.4%
High School Graduate	40.8%	45.7%
Some higher education	13.9%	10.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	19.4%	12.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a
1990		
Median Household Income	\$20,923	\$25,736
Median Family Income	\$23,958	\$31,360
NO DEGREE	12.3%	36.1%
High School Graduate	44.0%	42.0%
Some higher education	25.2%	14.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.4%	15.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.8%	5.0%
2000		
Median Household Income	\$32,758	\$37,106
Median Family Income	\$41,947	\$45,996
NO DEGREE	10.2%	31.3%
High School Graduate	34.2%	41.2%
Some higher education	30.2%	44.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	25.4%	20.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	8.8%	6.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000		
Median Household Income	51.8%	52.0%
Median Family Income	52.3%	55.5%
NO DEGREE	-15.7%	-0.1%
High School Graduate	-6.6%	-4.5%
Some higher education	16.3%	34.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	6.0%	7.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. First, from 1980-2000, the percent of Irwin's population in the labor force increased by 9.5% from 1980 despite a 13.3% decrease in Irwin's population of persons 16 years old and over. In the County as a whole, the decline in the percent of individuals 16 years and

over fell by only 1.3%, but the number of those in the labor force increased by only 3.1%. Second, the employment data indicates that over the past twenty years, Irwin has averaged a relatively low unemployment rate of 3.1. This compares to an average rate of 3.8 percent in Westmoreland County over the same period.

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

	Borough of Irwin		Westmoreland County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980				
Persons 16 years and Over	4,016	100.0%	302,139	100.0%
In labor Force	2,321	57.8%	170,008	56.3%
Civilian Labor Force	2,311	57.5%	169,886	56.2%
Employed	2,209	55.0%	156,687	51.9%
Unemployed	102	2.5%	13,199	4.4%
Armed Forces	10	0.2%	122	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	1,695	42.2%	132,131	43.7%
1990				
Persons 16 years and Over	3,739	100.0%	296,596	100.0%
In labor Force	2,207	59.0%	170,896	57.6%
Civilian Labor Force	2,184	58.4%	170,657	57.5%
Employed	2,048	55.7%	158,570	53.5%
Unemployed	136	3.6%	12,087	4.1%
Armed Forces	23	0.6%	239	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,532	41.0%	125,700	42.4%
2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	3,546	100.0%	298,300	100.0%
In labor Force	2,388	67.3%	177,124	59.4%
Civilian Labor Force	2,388	67.3%	176,959	59.3%
Employed	2,269	64.0%	167,853	56.3%
Unemployed	199	3.4%	9,106	3.1%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	165	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	1,158	32.7%	121,176	40.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	-13.3%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a
In labor Force	9.5%	n/a	3.1%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	9.8%	n/a	3.1%	n/a
Employed	9.0%	n/a	4.4%	n/a
Unemployed	0.9%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a
Armed Forces	-0.2%	n/a	0.1%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-9.5%	n/a	-3.1%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

Not unlike many older urban areas in Westmoreland County, the proportion of housing 30 years or older (74.3%) in Irwin 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 2.4% over the past decade, which suggest a relatively high level of stability. What is not known, however, is the quality of the occupied 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 33.2%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in Westmoreland County. (See figure 2-3). On the other hand, the housing market analysis of Irwin suggests that, comparatively, real estate values may be lower in Irwin than in the County as a whole; a fact which can be attributed, in large part, to the higher valued homes which have been built in the close-by market area. While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that approximately 20.9% of the families spend 30% (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) or more of their household income for rent.

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

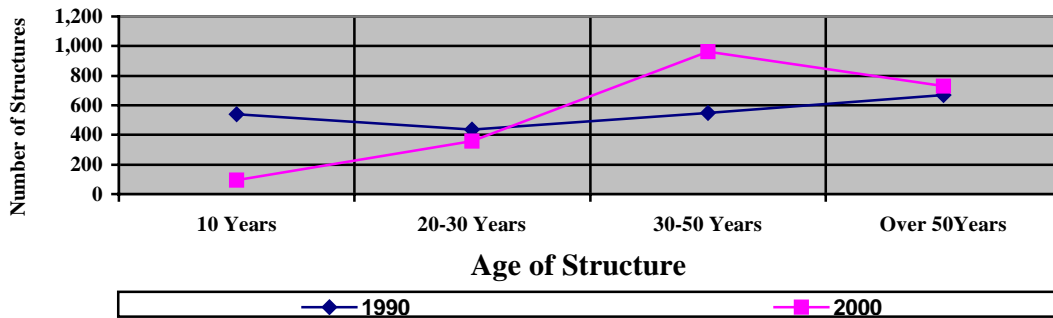


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

