

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Borough of Tamaqua, Schuylkill County

#### **REGIONAL SETTING**

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Tamaqua is a borough located in eastern Schuylkill County and is the largest borough in the county. The nearest city with a population greater than 50,000 is Reading, PA, which is 31.7 miles from Tamaqua. Philadelphia is located 79.1 miles to the southeast.

The specific neighborhoods to be targeted are the South Ward, Downtown, and the Historic District of Tamaqua.

#### **A BRIEF HISTORY**

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##### **Schuylkill County**

*(Taken from Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau Web Site)*

The history of Schuylkill County officially dates back to 1811 when the county was formed from nearby Berks and Northampton Counties, yet our true historical wealth lies in the fossils and fuel beneath our surface. Before the first European settler ventured through our forests, Schuylkill served as a Native American hunting ground for the many tribes inhabiting the banks of the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers in Pennsylvania.

During the latter half of the 18th century, German settlers farmed the wide valleys during the era of the American Revolution. By the 1800's, the discovery of Anthracite Coal forged a new era of Industrial Revolution, as coal mining influenced immigration and further development of many boroughs and "patches" across the county. Transportation expansion, by the way of canal, railroad, and trolley followed as Schuylkill County, fueled by the Anthracite Industry, pushed into the 20th Century. A multi-ethnic immigration followed, making Schuylkill one of the United States' classic "Melting Pots" of society today.

While the anthracite hey-day has come and gone and newer industry now fuels its economy, Schuylkill still maintains several landmarks from that mining era. In addition, the original agricultural beauty from the 18th Century remains and can be best admired from a variety of scenic overlooks across the county.

The unique and rich history of Schuylkill County is represented through a variety of museums, interesting tours, scenic train rides, architectural styles, ethnic festivals and truly one-of-a-kind sculpture which abounds across the county.

## **Tamaqua**

*(Taken from the History of Schuylkill County, 1881 and the Community's Own Profile)*

The Borough of Tamaqua was laid out from parts of West Penn and Schuylkill townships in 1829, at which time the population was about 150. The original intent was to name it Tuscarora, but some enterprising person arose too early in the morning for the pioneers and gave that Indian name to the village four miles west. As the waters of the Tamaqua, rechristened Wabash, the west branch of the Little Schuylkill, passed through the tract; it was decided to name the area with the name of the creek, Tamaqua, which is Indian for running later. In 1832 the borough was incorporated.

Tamaqua is an anthracite coal town that boomed during the turn of the last century and has suffered economic decline since the loss of coal, railroad and manufacturing jobs. Despite losing one-half of its population since the decline of the anthracite and related industries, Tamaqua has struggled to remain a competitive place to live and work. It has been a serious struggle. Tamaqua has launched a multi-faceted approach to revitalizing the community that consists of Historic Preservation, Downtown Revitalization, Recreation, Neighborhood Revitalization and Economic Development. Tamaqua has worked to promote its historic resources including the Tamaqua Railroad Station, a major attraction in the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area. Many of these efforts were born out of a ten year visioning effort that started in 1994. In 2002, the Tamaqua Community Action Plan was developed.

Residents and visitors are attracted to Tamaqua for a variety of reasons, including its relatively low housing costs, compared to its neighboring areas, the borough's recreational amenities, the accessibility to state parks and trails, and its historic sites.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

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

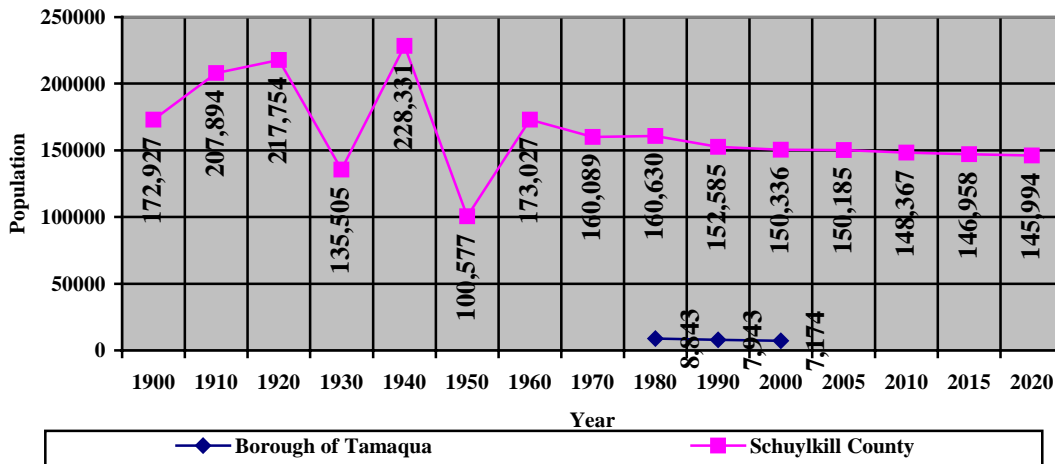
## Population

### Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years Schuylkill County's population has changed significantly. Early in the twentieth century, Schuylkill County's population increased (from 1900 to 1920) 20.6 percent. Over the next twenty years, from 1930 to 1950, Schuylkill's population declined after having peaked at 228,331 in 1940, and finally fell to its lowest point of the century in the 1950's at approximately 100,577. Having gone through a substantial population increase from 1950 to 1960, Schuylkill County's population began to decrease again, and from 1960 to 2000, it decreased 15.2 percent. Schuylkill County's population is predicted to decrease further by 4.5 percent from 2000 to 2020.

The population of the Borough of Tamaqua decreased 23.3 percent from 1980 to 2000; a percent decrease which was considerably higher than Schuylkill County for the same period. (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). The extent to which the projected future decline in Schuylkill's population will also be true for Tamaqua cannot be predicted with certainty.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



### Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of Tamaqua, which is predominantly White (approximately 98%), shows little change over the past twenty years. There was a 1.4 percent decrease in the White population of Tamaqua and a 0.2 percent increase in the Black population over the last two decades. Other racial populations decreased by 0.1% during the same time period. On the other hand, the White population of Schuylkill County decreased by 3.0 percent while the Black population increased by 1.9%. (See Table 2-1 – Racial Composition, 1980-2000)

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

	White	Black	Latino	Other
<b>Borough of Tamaqua</b>				
1980%	99.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
1990%	99.5%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%
2000%	98.3%	2.1%	1.3%	0.2%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-1.4%	1.9%	1.1%	0.1%
<b>Schuylkill County</b>				
1980%	99.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%
1990%	98.9%	0.6%	0.4%	0.1%
2000%	96.4%	2.1%	1.1%	0.4%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-3.0%	1.9%	0.8%	0.3%

### 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 Tamaqua and Schuylkill County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of Tamaqua and Schuylkill County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. While there is little difference between Tamaqua and Schuylkill County in the percent of persons under the age of 25, the percent of those 60 years of age or older in Tamaqua (25.9) is somewhat higher than Schuylkill County (24.4). Moreover, 1 in 5 residents in Tamaqua are age 65 or older. The median age in Tamaqua is 40.1, which is significantly higher than the median age in Pennsylvania (32.1).

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

	<b>Tamaqua</b>					<b>Schuylkill County</b>				
	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	490	6.2	362	5.0	-1.2	8,773	5.7	7,357	4.9	-0.8
05-09	451	5.7	401	5.6	-0.1	9,368	6.1	8,747	5.8	-0.3
10-14	471	5.9	497	6.9	1.0	9,469	6.2	9,455	6.3	0.1
15-19	567	7.1	445	6.2	-0.9	9,960	6.5	9,008	6	-0.5
20-24	527	6.6	353	4.9	-1.7	9,322	6.1	7,623	5.1	-1.0
25-34	1,124	14.2	986	13.7	-0.5	21,686	14	19,522	13	-1.2
35-44	949	11.9	1,050	14.6	2.7	21,109	14	23,004	15.3	1.5
45-54	727	9.2	880	12.3	3.1	15,133	10	21,224	14.1	4.2
55-59	875	11.0	341	4.8	-6.2	7,775	5.1	7,741	5.1	-6.2
60-64	1,005	12.7	335	4.7	-8.0	9,441	6.2	6,789	4.5	-7.1
65-74	608	7.7	738	10.3	2.6	17,776	12	14,552	9.7	2.9
75-84	149	1.9	596	8.3	6.4	10,404	7	11,438	7.6	6.0
85+	490	6.2	190	2.6	-3.6	2,369	1.6	3,876	2.6	-3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,433</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,174</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>152,585</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150,336</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 some increase in educational attainment in Tamaqua from 1980-2000. However, in 2000, the percent of those in Tamaqua (26.3) with 'some higher education or above' is slightly lower than Schuylkill County. (28.8%)

Over the past 20 years, the median household income in Tamaqua has increased 58.0 percent, though not as high as the percent increase in Schuylkill County (59.2). Moreover, the 2000 median household income in Tamaqua (\$27,899) is below the Pennsylvania median household income of \$40,106. However, Schuylkill County's median household income of \$32,699 is also lower than the state.

In terms of poverty, approximately 11.1 percent of families in Tamaqua 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**

<b>Income and Education</b>	<b>Tamaqua</b>	<b>Schuylkill County</b>
<b>1980</b>		
Median Household Income	\$12,148	\$13,340
Median Family Income	\$15,845	\$16,214
NO DEGREE	43.1%	43.7%
High School Graduate	42.6%	43.3%
Some higher education	8.3%	6.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	6.0%	6.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a
<b>1990</b>		
Median Household Income	\$19,589	\$23,028
Median Family Income	\$26,580	\$29,041
NO DEGREE	32.6%	31.6%
High School Graduate	47.9%	47.1%
Some higher education	13.3%	13.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.2%	5.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.0%	3.1%
<b>2000</b>		
Median Household Income	\$28,899	\$32,699
Median Family Income	\$36,406	\$41,279
NO DEGREE	22.7%	22.8%
High School Graduate	51.0%	48.3%
Some higher education	18.9%	18.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4.9%	7.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.5%	3.6%
<b>Percent Change from 1980-2000</b>		
Median Household Income	58.0%	59.2%
Median Family Income	56.5%	60.7%
NO DEGREE	-20.4%	-20.9%
High School Graduate	8.4%	5.0%
Some higher education	10.6%	11.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	-1.1%	0.9%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a

**Employment**

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. In 2000, Tamaqua's population in the labor force increased by 3.9% from 1980, while the population of persons 16 years and over decreased by 19.8%. Further, unemployment in Tamaqua has averaged 4.4 percent over the past twenty years. Schuylkill County's population of individuals 16 years and over decreased by 2.6% and its labor force

increased by 1.3% over the past twenty years. In terms of unemployment, the average percent in Schuylkill County over the past twenty years was 3.6; which is an indicator of a reasonably strong labor market.

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

	<b>Borough of Tamaqua</b>		<b>Schuylkill County</b>	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
<b>1980</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	6,986	100.0%	126,084	100.0%
In labor Force	3,583	51.3%	68,090	54.0%
Civilian Labor Force	3,583	51.3%	67,996	53.9%
Employed	3,209	45.9%	62,386	49.5%
Unemployed	374	5.4%	5,610	4.4%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	94	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	3,403	48.7%	57,994	46.0%
<b>1990</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	6,332	100.0%	122,962	100.0%
In labor Force	3,332	52.6%	68,567	55.8%
Civilian Labor Force	3,320	52.4%	68,425	55.6%
Employed	3,029	47.8%	64,562	52.5%
Unemployed	291	4.6%	3,863	3.1%
Armed Forces	12	0.2%	142	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	3,000	47.3%	54,395	44.2%
<b>2000</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	5,827	100.0%	122,842	100.0%
In labor Force	3,215	55.2%	67,989	55.3%
Civilian Labor Force	3,200	54.9%	67,889	55.3%
Employed	3,005	51.6%	63,902	52.0%
Unemployed	195	3.3%	3,987	3.2%
Armed Forces	15	0.3%	100	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	2,612	44.8%	54,853	44.7%
<b>Percent Change from 1980-2000</b>				
Persons 16 years and Over	-19.8%	n/a	-2.6%	n/a
In labor Force	3.9%	n/a	1.3%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	3.6%	n/a	1.4%	n/a
Employed	5.7%	n/a	2.5%	n/a
Unemployed	-2.1%	n/a	-1.2%	n/a
Armed Forces	0.3%	n/a	0.0%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-3.9%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a

## Housing and Real Estate

The proportion of housing 30 years or older (90.3%) in Tamaqua 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 (69.1%) are high in Tamaqua. Over the past decade, the number of units in Tamaqua valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 4.4 percent; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in Schuylkill County. (See figure 2-3). While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that only 25.1 percent of Tamaqua 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 reasonably good in Tamaqua.

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

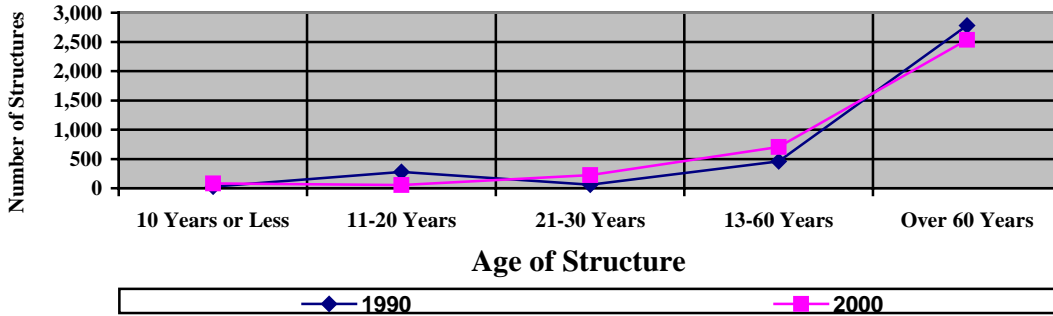


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

