

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Uniontown (East End Neighborhood), Fayette County

REGIONAL SETTING

Uniontown is the county seat of Fayette County which is located in southwestern Pennsylvania. The city of Uniontown has a population of 14,422 and the East End Neighborhood maintains a population of 4,985.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Fayette County

(Taken from Fayette County Chamber of Commerce Website)

Fayette County's geographic location and the wealth of its natural resources have combined to produce two dominant periods of its history whose influences are still felt today - transportation via road and river, and the coal and coke era. Parallel with both have been agriculture and commerce, and the opportunities inherent in the scenic beauties of the county, especially in the mountain area.

The one feasible land route from Virginia to the strategic point of the Forks of the Ohio (the future site of Pittsburgh) ran through the wilderness of what would become Fayette County. In 1754, George Washington, led his Virginians to reinforce an earlier contingent sent to build a fort at the Forks of the Ohio, heading first for Redstone Old Fort (Brownsville), where a storehouse had been built. His expedition ended in defeat by the French and Indians at Fort Necessity. After the British finally won the French and Indian War, after capturing Fort Duquesne and renaming it Fort Pitt in 1758, the settlers came back over the mountains and set up subsistence farming. A connector was needed to the west and Col. James Burd supplied that in 1759, with the help of the Indian chief Nemacolin, by laying out a road from Gist's to Brownsville (where he built Fort Burd).

Communities grew up at natural geographical centers and in the 1770s the territory that would become Fayette County was claimed by both Pennsylvania and Virginia. The dispute was settled in 1780 when the Mason-and-Dixon Line was extended to the original limit of Penn's land grant, giving Virginia frontage on the Ohio River.

Fayette County was created out of the southern part of Westmoreland County in September 1783 and named for the young French hero of the Revolution, the Marquis de LaFayette. Uniontown, which had been founded on July 4, 1776, was chosen as the county seat.

In the late 1700's, the first industrialization appeared with the iron furnaces in the mountains, taking advantage of deposits of iron ore and abundant wood for charcoal. Strategically located on the Monongahela River, Brownsville quickly became a center for construction and dispatch of flatboats, keelboats and later, the new steamboats.

The National Road was built by the federal government from Cumberland to Wheeling in 1811-18, with its route through Uniontown, Brownsville and Washington assured by the early Fayette County politician and statesman Albert Gallatin. It brought prosperity, creating an entire culture of its own, with freight-laden Conestoga wagons, stagecoaches, “movers” heading west, and huge herds and flocks of livestock. The road opened up the Northwest Territory, reaching vast areas not accessible to rivers.

The presence of bituminous coal had been recognized early, and small mines were opened, but the soft coal could not withstand the rough handling of primitive transportation for long distances. The breakthrough came with the discovery of the coke-making process, and Fayette County coke was one of the essential ingredients upon which the Pittsburgh steel empire was built.

Ironmaster Isaac Mason experimented with coke at Plumsock (Upper Middletown) as early as 1815, but the first beehive oven was not built until 1841, at Connellsville. The first successful export of coke came in 1843 when Little Jim Cochran of Dawson floated a boat land down the rivers to Cincinnati.

The early pre-eminence of Fayette County and the adjoining section of southern Westmoreland County in the coal and coke industry was based on Connellsville coking coal, the best metallurgical coal ever discovered. The first great mines and coke yards sprang up in the 1870s and 1880s in the narrow section from Latrobe south through Scottdale, Connellsville and Uniontown to the Fairchance-Smithfield area. Later the coal fields expanded into the “Klondike” area, from Uniontown west to the Monongahela River. New towns appeared seemingly overnight to accommodate miners, many of them immigrants from Europe, and the county’s population exploded.

The coal and coke boom continued through ups and downs until about 1950s, by which time almost all of the large Fayette County mines were worked out. The beehive ovens, which had reached a total of 44,000, disappeared as the more efficient by-product ovens took over. At least 150 coal “patches” (housing communities built and owned by the coal companies) have been identified in Fayette County, of which more than 50 remain as sizable communities, with the houses now individually owned.

Fayette County’s population dropped from a high-water mark of 200,000 in 1940 to an estimated 150,000 today. Today, Fayette County possesses some diversified industry, in glass, water meters, steel fabrication and other enterprises. Some strip mining remains. The County retains its position as an important wholesale and retail trading center, still a crossroads area despite substandard highways. The future hope for industrial development, enhancement of tourism and commercial prosperity is wrapped up once more in better road and river transportation.

Uniontown

(Taken from the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce Web site. Adapted from the article by Jean Brownfield)

Originally Native American land, the area which eventually became Uniontown was purchased by Henry Beeson. Mr. Beeson and his family came over the Nemaquin trail in 1768, to live on the land he had bought the year before. Henry Beeson soon erected a mill on Redstone Creek, and the mill became a center for all the people in the area, and there, on July 4, 1776, Mr. Beeson put up a sign saying he had laid out a town of two streets, Peter and Elbow, and 54 lots were for sale.

During the Revolutionary War, few people came over the mountains. After the war, more people came to buy lots and open small shops. There was a Court House now since Uniontown had been chosen as county seat for the newly established Fayette County, taken from Westmoreland County. Though still a small town, the borough was incorporated in 1796.

Then Henry Clay, Andrew Stewart and Albert Gallatin persuaded the government to build a fine, long road to the West, and it went right up Main Street. It brought new life to the town. People on horseback, emigrating families in covered wagons, people in stage coaches all came riding through and some stopped awhile for rest for themselves and their horses. Many inns or taverns were built for their entertainment.

The National Road or "the Pike" had given much life to Uniontown, but in 1860, it was superseded by the coming of a railroad from Connellsville, East from Pittsburgh. It took the colorful traffic and the interest from the Pike, bringing more people to live here and more things for newer stores.

But without the road, life became more quiet and settled and moved at a more leisurely pace. Log houses were replaced by brick; water was brought from the mountains to replace the pumps in yards; some streets were paved. There were a few factories; glass and ice plants, brick works and for a time, a potter shop.

Then Mr. Taylor of Dawson found how to produce coke, and it was found that under the town and in the few miles up and down the valley there lay a bed of what was called the Connellsville coking coal--the best in the world for making steel. People hurried to try to buy "coal land" and tracts became very valuable so that at one time Uniontown was said to have more millionaires per capital than any town in the United States. Gas and electricity became available for elaborate homes being built and for lighting the streets.

No thought was given to establishing other industries except the mining of coal, nor to the time when all coal might be mined out. But the time came soon after; and the town had a little private depression of its own due to the failure of Mr. J.V. Thompson's First National Bank. Very gradually new industries were induced to come; the miners still lived here but traveled to other places for work.

The decline in the City of Uniontown paralleled the decline of the steel and coal industries in the region after the end of World War II. The closure of steel and coal mining operations has been followed by the closure of other area manufacturing operations that employed many Uniontown residents and supported local businesses. Unfortunately, the city did not participate in the

economic growth and prosperity of the 1990's that occurred throughout the country. At present the city has a relatively high percentage of the population working in service and wholesale/retail trade jobs that are typically lower paying. At the same time, Uniontown has a high proportion of professional, management and public sector workers since it is the county seat for Fayette County.

In recent years, private citizens have contributed to the redevelopment of Uniontown, and the city has engaged the public in Neighborhood Meetings to allow public input into updating the Uniontown Comprehensive Plan. In 2002, the City of Uniontown approved the update of the Uniontown Comprehensive Plan. The efforts of private philanthropists have created a positive atmosphere that encouraged the major stakeholders and citizens of the community to coordinate their approach to community development and planning.

The citizens of Uniontown feel that the most attractive assets of the community are its community facilities, such as churches, entertainment, and schools, and its public services. Housing is affordable and there are many fine historic homes in the city. There is much potential for economic development in Uniontown since the cost of business space to purchase or lease is relatively low. As the county seat for Fayette County, Uniontown is a natural hub for commercial, educational and government activities. The city has a small-town character with many friendly neighborhoods, and it is close to recreational areas such as the Laurel Mountains, the Youghoigheny River system, and the Yough River Bike-Hike trail.

DEMOGRAPHICS

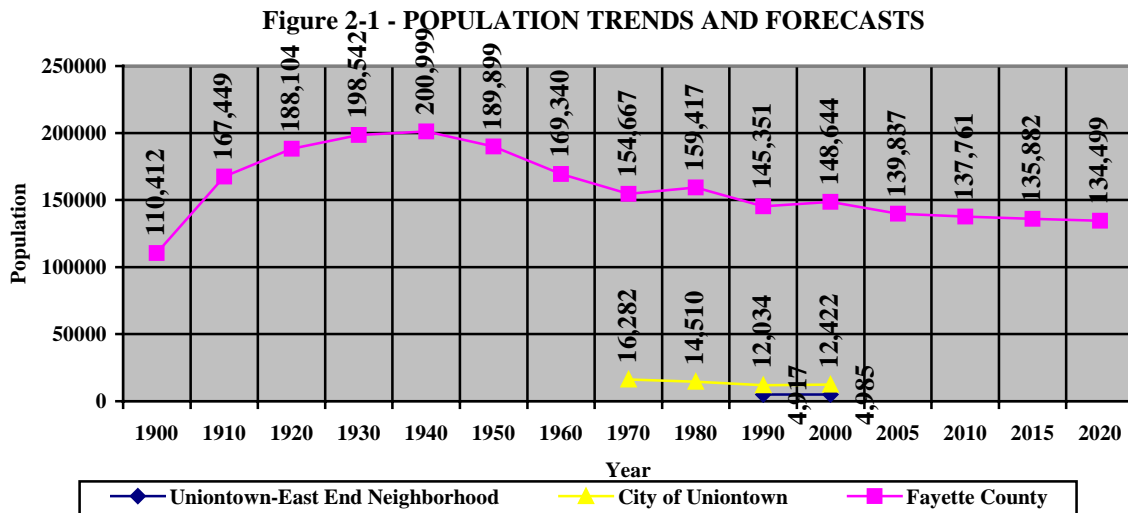
In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the East End neighborhood of Uniontown and its residents, a broad analysis of demographic factors is presented in this profile. Reviewing population trends and estimates, age distribution, and employment enables the neighborhood to better 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 future position within the County. All following data used in the profile is extracted from 1990 and 2000 Census. (U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau).

Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years, the populations of Uniontown, its neighborhoods such as East End, and Fayette County have changed significantly. These changes have followed the same pattern as other major manufacturing regions of the U.S. and particularly Pennsylvania. Fayette County's population grew steadily, peaking in the 1940s. From 1900 to 1940, for example, Fayette County's population increased 45.1%. Starting in the 1940's, Fayette County's population began to decline due to out-migration and other social and economic changes occurring in the Southwestern PA region. From 1940 to 2000, there was a population decrease of 35.2% in Fayette County. Fayette County's population is predicted to decrease slightly, by another 10.5%, from 2000 to 2020.

The City of Uniontown's population has been steadily declining since the 1970's, to its current level of approximately 12,422 in 2000. From 1970 to 2000, Uniontown's population decreased 31.1%. The East End's population has also shown trends of decline. From 1990 to 2000, East End's population decreased 1.4 % (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). Whether any future significant changes - similar to what is predicted for the City of Uniontown - will occur in the size of East End's population occur is difficult to forecast.



Racial Composition

The racial composition of the East End neighborhood, the City of Uniontown and Fayette County has remained relatively stable over the past ten to twenty years. In the East End neighborhood, there has been a decline of 5.1 percent in the White population, an increase of 3.1 percent in the Black population, and an increase of 2.1 percent in the Other populations. However, the racial composition for the neighborhood has remained close to an average of 74 percent White population. The City of Uniontown's population follows this trend with a 6 percent decrease in the White population, a 4.3 percent increase in the Black population, and an average of 84 percent White population. Fayette County shows stable racial composition, with a 0.4 percent decrease in the White population, a 0.3 percent decrease in the Black population, and no change in the Latino population. There was a 0.7 percent increase in the Other populations. The racial composition trends for the City of Uniontown and Fayette County are averaged over a twenty year period, but the data for the East End neighborhood is available only since 1990. (See Table 2-1- Racial Composition, 1980-2000)

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

	White	Black	Latino	Other
East End Neighborhood				
1990%	76.4%	22.6%	0.6%	0.4%
2000%	71.3%	25.7%	0.5%	2.5%
Percent Change 1990-2000	-5.1%	3.1%	-0.1%	2.1%
City of Uniontown				
1980%	89.8%	9.2%	0.4%	0.6%
1990%	87.6%	11.4%	0.5%	0.5%
2000%	83.8%	13.5%	0.5%	2.1%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-6.0%	4.3%	0.0%	1.5%
Fayette County				
1980%	95.4%	3.8%	0.4%	0.4%
1990%	95.4%	3.5%	0.3%	0.3%
2000%	95.0%	3.5%	0.4%	1.1%
Percent Change 1990-2000	-0.4%	-0.3%	0.0%	0.7%

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 East End Neighborhood, the City of Uniontown, and Fayette County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of East End, Uniontown, and Fayette County have remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000.

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

	East End Neighborhood					City of Uniontown					Fayette 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	373	7.6	375	7.5	-0.1	751	6.2	719	5.8	-0.4	8,812	6.1	8,454	5.7	-0.4
05-09	397	8.1	403	8.1	0.0	755	6.3	738	5.9	-0.4	9,638	6.6	9,384	6.3	-0.3
10-14	303	6.2	356	7.1	0.9	710	5.9	720	5.8	-0.1	10,271	7.1	9,874	6.6	-0.5
15-19	313	6.4	348	7.0	0.6	706	5.9	737	5.9	0.0	10,329	7.1	9,546	6.4	-0.7
20-24	263	5.3	289	5.8	0.5	688	5.7	752	6.1	0.4	8,810	6.1	7,994	5.4	-1.0
25-34	757	15.4	628	12.6	-2.8	1,664	13.8	1,502	12.1	-1.7	20,535	14	18,188	12.2	-1.8
35-44	609	12.4	711	14.3	1.9	1,603	13.3	1,738	14.0	0.7	20,887	14	22,237	15	1.0
45-54	408	8.3	638	12.8	4.5	1,003	8.3	1,703	13.7	5.4	14,580	10	21,401	14.4	4.4
55-59	255	5.2	226	4.5	-0.7	511	4.2	582	4.7	0.5	6,925	4.8	7,931	5.3	-0.5
60-64	281	5.7	166	3.3	-2.4	771	6.4	492	4.0	-2.4	8,488	5.8	6,705	4.5	1.3
65-74	551	11.2	385	7.7	-3.5	1,582	13.1	1,138	9.2	-3.9	15,521	11	13,441	9	-2.0
75-84	288	5.9	332	6.7	0.8	991	8.2	1,174	9.5	1.3	8,355	6	10,292	6.9	0.9
85+	119	2.4	128	2.6	0.2	299	2.5	427	3.4	0.9	2,200	1.5	3,197	2.2	0.7
Total	4,917	100	4,985	100		12,034	100	12,422	100		145,351	100	148,644	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 East End and Uniontown increased in almost every category over the past ten to twenty years. Similar increases in level of educational attainment are also evident over the same period in Fayette County.

As expected, the median family income has also increased in East End over the past twenty years, and has kept pace with the similar increases in Fayette County; although the median income growth in the latter has been consistently slightly higher. Compared to the state of Pennsylvania as a whole, the median income in East End in 2000 was 48.9% less than the state's. It should be noted, however, that a similar disparity in median income between Fayette County and the state of Pennsylvania also exists.

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

Income and Education	East End Neighborhood	City of Uniontown	Fayette County
1980			
Median Household Income	n/a	\$12,271	\$14,282
Median Family Income	n/a	\$17,806	\$17,282
NO DEGREE	n/a	37.7%	42.2%
High School Graduate	n/a	39.2%	43.5%
Some higher education	n/a	10.6%	7.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	n/a	12.6%	7.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a	n/a
1990			
Median Household Income	\$13,765	\$15,383	\$19,195
Median Family Income	\$15,691	\$21,289	\$23,578
NO DEGREE	30.0%	26.9%	41.4%
High School Graduate	49.8%	46.8%	46.0%
Some higher education	12.5	14.1%	9.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	7.7%	12.2%	9.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.5%	4.4%	4.0%
2000			
Median Household Income	\$20,499	\$19,477	\$27,451
Median Family Income	\$25,928	\$28,523	\$34,881
NO DEGREE	31.1%	26.3%	35.9%
High School Graduate	43.7%	46.8%	47.9%
Some higher education	15.6%	14.1%	28.2%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.2%	12.2%	11.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.6%	4.4%	4.3%
	Percent Change from 1990-2000	Percent Change from 1980-2000	Percent Change from 1980-2000
Median Household Income	32.9%	37.0%	48.0%
Median Family Income	39.5%	37.6%	50.5%
NO DEGREE	1.1%	-11.4%	-6.3%
High School Graduate	-6.1%	5.7%	4.4%
Some higher education	3.1%	4.0%	21.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.5%	1.7%	4.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	0.1%	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Census data, several employment characteristics of the East End neighborhood, the City of Uniontown, and Fayette County are evident. There has been a decline in the number of persons 16 years and over in all three areas. In East End there was a decrease of 6.7 percent, for the City of Uniontown there was a 17.5 percent decrease, and a 1.7 percent decrease in Fayette County. The Census data for Fayette County and the City of Uniontown are from 1980 thru 2000, but the East End neighborhood Census data has been available only since 1990.

With the decline in the population from which the labor force comes, there should be a decline in the number of individuals in the labor force, but such is not the case. There has been an increase in number of individuals in the labor force. The East End neighborhood and Fayette County have seen large increases, 4.1 percent and 5.7 percent respectively, and the City of Uniontown has experienced a small increase of 0.6 percent in its labor force. These statistics do not account for those who have “dropped out” of the labor market and are no longer seeking employment.

The increase in the number of individuals working in the East End neighborhood, the City of Uniontown and Fayette County does not reflect the loss of higher paying manufacturing jobs and the rise of lower paying service and retail sector jobs. The rise in the rate of poverty for families in the City of Uniontown, from 20.1 percent in 1990 to 22.0 percent in 2000, may reflect a possible consequence of this change. Within the East End neighborhood, 28.3 percent of the families live below the poverty level. This rate of poverty is almost four times higher than the Pennsylvania rate of 7.8 percent and three times higher than the national rate of 9.2 percent. The very high percentage of families living below the poverty level in East End is an indicator of significant economic distress.

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

	East End Neighborhood		City of Uniontown		Fayette County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980						
Persons 16 years and Over	n/a	n/a	11,649	100.0%	120,853	100.0%
In labor Force	n/a	n/a	5,550	47.6%	58,649	48.5%
Civilian Labor Force	n/a	n/a	5,550	47.6%	58,613	48.5%
Employed	n/a	n/a	5,090	43.7%	52,120	43.1%
Unemployed	n/a	n/a	460	3.9%	6,493	5.4%
Armed Forces	n/a	n/a	0	0.0%	36	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	n/a	n/a	6,099	52.4%	62,204	51.5%
1990						
Persons 16 years and Over	3,814	100.0%	9,695	100.0%	114,694	100.0%
In labor Force	1,740	45.6%	4,465	46.1%	56,861	49.6%
Civilian Labor Force	1,730	45.4%	4,451	45.9%	56,792	49.5%
Employed	1,361	35.7%	3,786	39.1%	49,221	42.9%
Unemployed	369	9.7%	665	6.9%	7,571	6.6%
Armed Forces	10	0.3%	14	0.1%	69	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	2,074	54.4%	5,230	53.9%	57,833	50.4%
2000						
Persons 16 years and Over	3,573	100.0%	9,911	100.0%	118,862	100.0%
In labor Force	1,777	49.7%	4,781	48.2%	64,371	54.2%
Civilian Labor Force	1,777	49.7%	4,781	48.2%	64,335	54.1%
Employed	1,531	42.8%	4,179	42.2%	59,017	49.7%
Unemployed	246	6.9%	602	6.1%	5,318	4.5%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	36	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	1,796	50.3%	5,130	51.8%	54,491	45.8%
	Percent Change from 1990-2000		Percent Change from 1980-2000		Percent Change from 1980-2000	
Persons 16 years and Over	-6.7%	n/a	-17.5%	n/a	-1.7%	n/a
In labor Force	4.1%	n/a	0.6%	n/a	5.7%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	4.3%	n/a	0.6%	n/a	5.6%	n/a
Employed	7.1%	n/a	-1.5%	n/a	6.6%	n/a
Unemployed	-2.8	n/a	2.2%	n/a	-0.9%	n/a
Armed Forces	-0.3%	n/a	0.0%	n/a	0.0%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-4.1%	n/a	-0.6%	n/a	-5.7%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

Like many older urban areas, the East End neighborhood of Uniontown has an old housing stock with more than 85% of housing over thirty years old. Over the past decade, the number of units valued at over \$100,000 has increased slightly by 5.4%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in the City of Uniontown. However, the majority of housing is still valued under \$100,000; this fact may indicate affordable housing opportunities. (See figure 2-3).

The exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined. The data indicates that approximately 47.3% of the families in East End spend 30% or more of their household income for rent. Since the generally accepted threshold of affordability - that is the maximum amount of household income that should be spent on housing - is 30%, this figure demonstrates that almost one-half of East End families are spending close to or above the recommended amount of household income on rent.

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

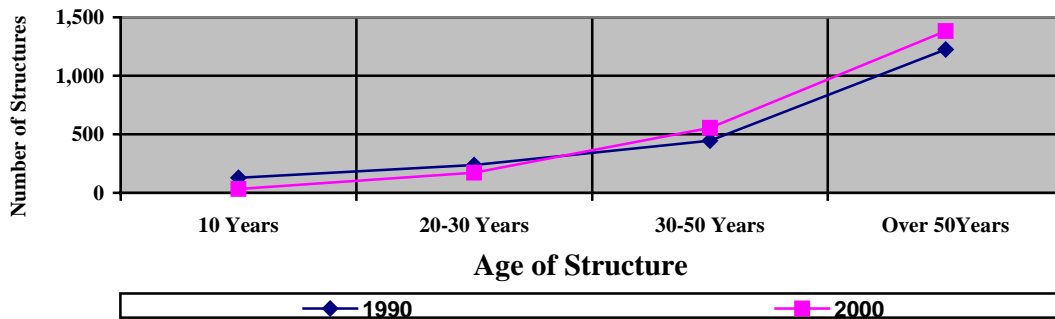


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

