

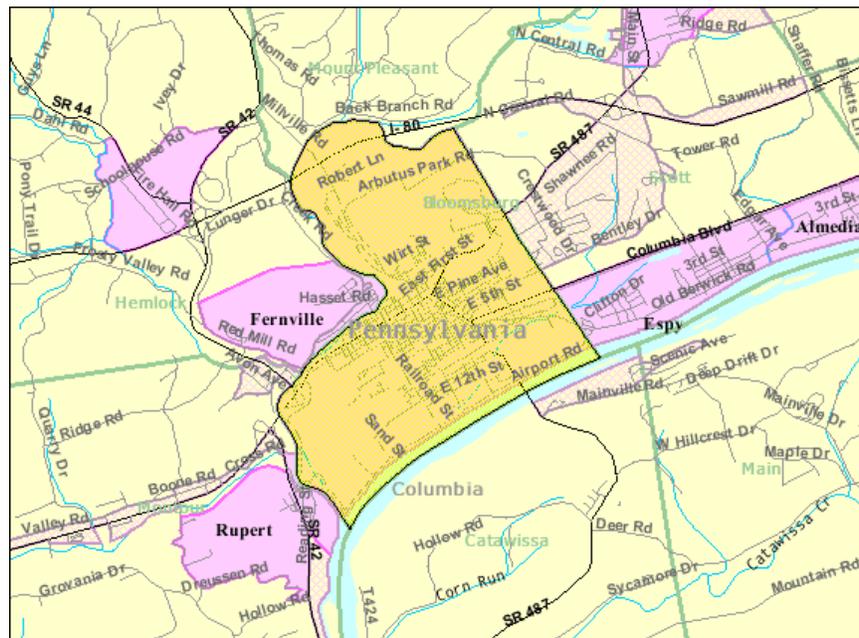
# BLOOMSBURG, PA<sup>1</sup>

## Community Profile<sup>2</sup>

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

Bloomsburg (41.00° N, 76.45° W) is located on the Susquehanna River in the state of Pennsylvania (see Map 1). The town is situated in Columbia County in the central-eastern part of the state, between Interstate 80 and the Susquehanna River (USGS 2008). (*Note: This community was included in the profiling process because of its role in the seafood processing industry, rather than the importance of harvesting activities to the community.*)



Map 1. Location of Bloomsburg, PA (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Bloomsburg was founded in 1802 (Columbia Mountour Chamber of Commerce 2007) and is the only incorporated town in Pennsylvania (by an act of the General Assembly in 1870). Other municipalities of its general size are considered boroughs. Bloomsburg's earliest development was closely associated with the Indian period of American history, with the Susquehannock Indians being the first occupants of the Susquehanna River Valley. An early log cabin built by James McClure near the banks of the river in 1772 marked the start of the township. The discovery of iron ore near Bloomsburg led to a flourishing iron industry that

<sup>1</sup> These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact [Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov](mailto:Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov)."

lasted three-quarters of a century. By the turn of the century, the iron and agricultural resources were largely depleted. Soon after, Bloomsburg experienced an influx of textile mills and small manufacturing businesses, industry that is still characteristic of the town today (Barton nd)

### Demographics<sup>3</sup>

According to Census 2000 data, Bloomsburg had a total population of 12,375, down 0.51% from the reported population of 12,439 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 43.7% were male and 56.3% were females. The median age was 22.4 years and 61.8% of the population was 21 years or older while 12.5% were 62 or older.

The age structure of Bloomsburg (see Figure 1) shows a large population of youth between the ages of 10 to 29, with the largest age bracket represented by 20-29 year old people. In both the 10-19 and 20-29 age brackets, there were a larger number of females than males. The age structure is indicative of college age students attending Bloomsburg University in the downtown area (almost half of the population attends the University). Adult age categories, as seen in Figure, are consistent and similar, with a generally higher number of females than males represented in each age bracket.

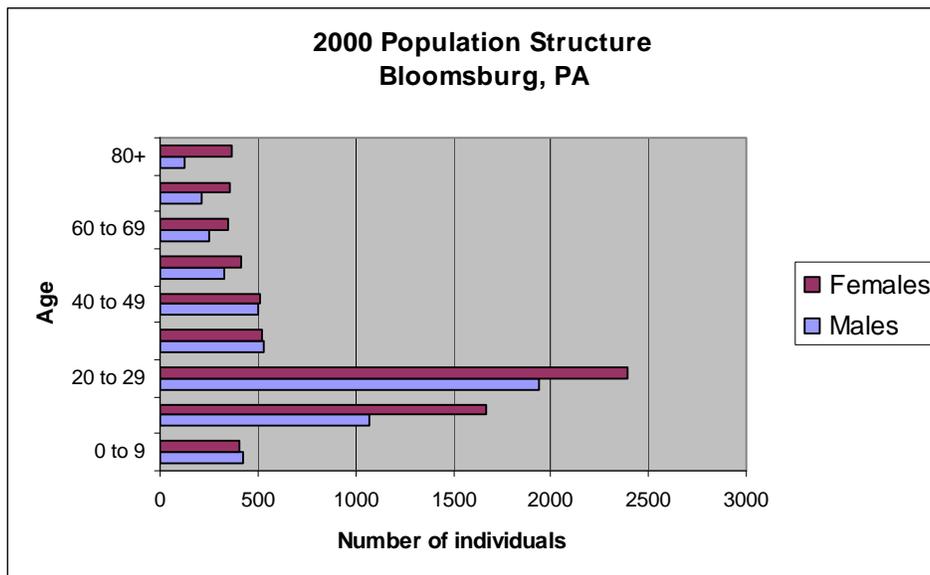


Figure 1. Bloomsburg's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population of Bloomsburg was white (94.1%), with 3.0% of residents black or African American, 0.5% Native American, 1.3% Asian, and 0.2% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.7% of residents identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including the following: German (28.9%), Irish (16.1%), Italian (7.6%), Polish (7.4%), and English (6.6%). With regard to region of birth, 80.7% were born in Pennsylvania, 17.0% were born in a different state and 1.8% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.1% who were not United States citizens).

<sup>3</sup> While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

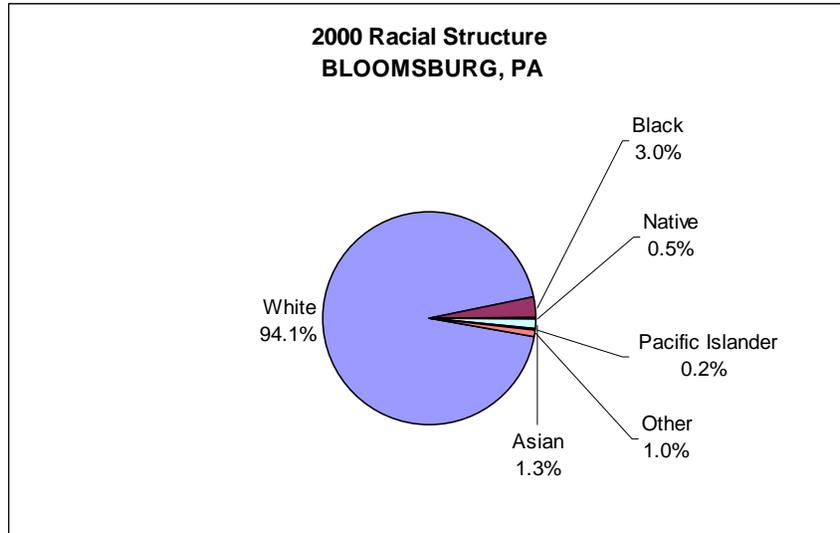


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

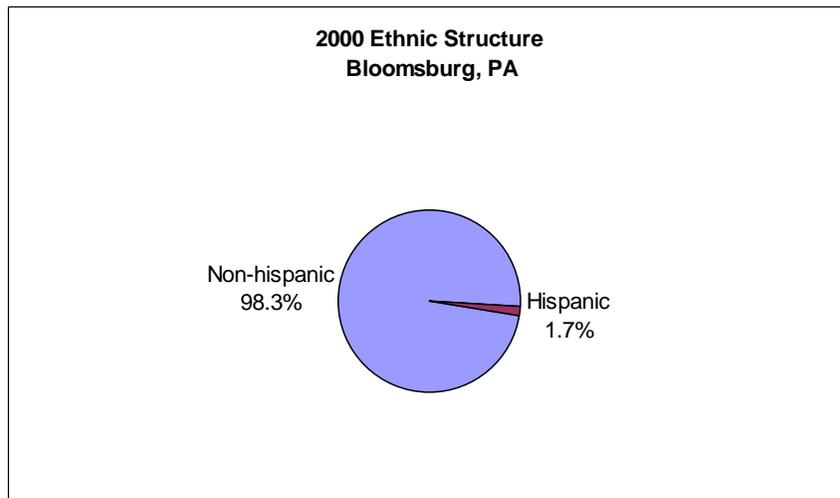


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.5% of the population 5 years old and higher, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 4.5% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.7% of the population who spoke English less than “very well.”

Of the population 25 years and over, 84.6% were high school graduates or higher and 26.0% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.7% did not reach ninth grade, 11.7% attended some high school but did not graduate, 39.5% completed high school, 16.0% had some college with no degree, 3.0% received an associate’s degree, 16.8% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 9.2% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Columbia County was the United Methodist Church with 43 congregations and 8,608 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were: the Catholic Church (7 with 8,142 adherents), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (14 with 5,594 adherents) and United Church of Christ (10 with 1,659 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 8.8% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

## Issues/Processes

The lack of developed acreage for business use represents the biggest economic issue facing Columbia County, according to a 2003 report by the [Columbia Alliance for Economic Growth](#) (Columbia Alliance for Economic Growth 2003).

Flooding is a primary and recurrent problem along the Susquehanna River near Bloomsburg. The flooding is a result of the morphology of the Susquehanna River and the regional topography, and when the Susquehanna River and a local tributary, Fishing Creek, both rise above flood stage, water can cover up to 33 percent of the landmass within the Town's boundaries. In 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was considering a project to install earthen levees, floodwalls, railroad and road closure structures, and roadway relocations to protect against future flood damage (Department of Defense 2003).

## Cultural attributes

The Annual Renaissance Jamboree, the Bloomsburg University Community Arts Council, and the [Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble](#) represent and conduct significant cultural events in the area. [The Bloomsburg Fair](#), one of the largest in the state, is held in September/ October. The fair features harness races and agricultural, horticultural, manufacturing industries exhibits.

[Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania](#) adjoins the downtown area and has an enrollment of approximately 6,000 students. [The Town Park](#) is situated on the river front and hosts various festivals throughout the year and features restored "swimming holes" open to the public. The Boy and Girl Scouts, Lions Club, BPW, Kiwanis, Rotary and Soroptimists are among the 150 clubs and organizations represented throughout Bloomsburg (Town of Bloomsburg 2007)

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census 2000, 56.0% (6,198 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 6.1% were unemployed, 0.2% were in the Armed Forces, and 49.7% were employed.

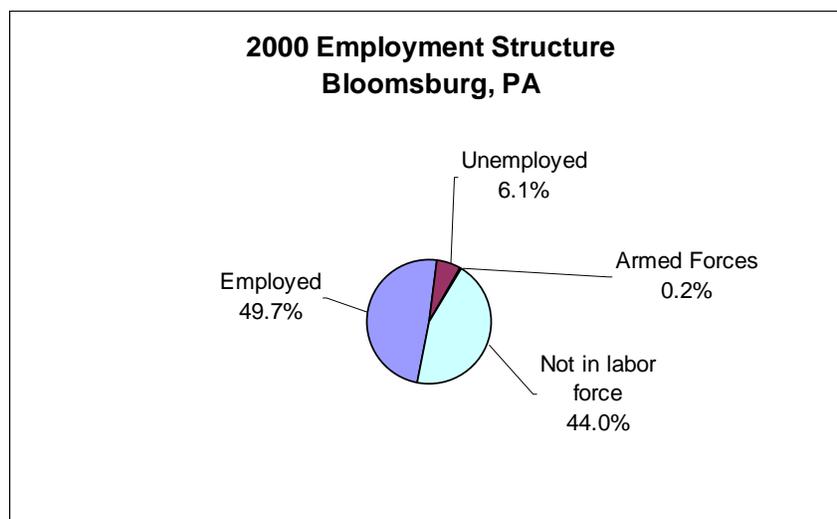


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

[Impress Metal Packaging Holdings](#), headquartered in Amsterdam, acquired all of the [H.J. Heinz](#) Company's can-making assets in their North American food processing plants in Bloomsburg (PR Newswire 2000). Heinz is a global U.S.-based food company most famously known for ketchup and condiments. Impress produces cans for seafood products such as tuna, herring, sardines, mackerel, anchovies, shellfish, and salmon.

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 16 positions or 0.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 253 positions or 4.6% of jobs. Educational, health and social services (34.3%), arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (16.5%), retail trade (13.1%), and manufacturing (12.7%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Bloomsburg was \$24,868 (up 5.7% from \$23,534 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$12,819. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 33.3% more per year than females.

The average family in Bloomsburg consisted of 2.83 persons. With respect to poverty, 10.5% of families (up from 8.0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 31.2% of individuals were below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000, 62.7% of families in 2000 earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Bloomsburg had a total of 4,403 housing units of which 7.3% were occupied and 40.0% were detached one unit homes. Almost half (49.7%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs and vans accounted for 2.8% of the total housing units; 34.3% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$86,000. Of vacant housing units, 3.1% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 60.7% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

As an incorporated town, the governing body is made up of six members with the Mayor as presiding officer. The terms of the mayor and council members are 4 years, with 3 elected every 2 years. Council members are elected at large, and the mayor presides at all meetings. The mayor participates in all discussions and has a vote on all questions, but does not have veto power (Town of Bloomsburg 2007).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Information on fishery involvement in government in Bloomsburg is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

There are several fishing associations in Bloomsburg: [Columbia County Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#); [Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association](#); [Fishing Creek Watershed Association](#); [Orangeville Sportsmen's Association](#); [Catawissa Creek Restoration Association](#); and [Roaring Creek Watershed Association](#).

### *Fishing assistance centers*

Information on fishery assistance centers in Bloomsburg is unavailable through secondary data collection.

### *Other fishing-related organizations*

Bloomsburg was among the first towns to address the clean streams program of the state of Pennsylvania by floating a bond issue of \$1.25 million to provide a combined sewage disposal and incinerator plant (Town of Bloomsburg 2007).

The Columbia County Conservation District, formed in 1949, is a subdivision of the state government, whose purpose is to promote protection, maintenance, improvement, and wise use of the land, water, and other natural resources. The Conservation District supports the CREP Program at Kocher Park each year.<sup>4</sup> The Conservation District is based in Bloomsburg and works with the local [Fishing Creek Watershed Association](#). As well as working to repair flood damage along the creek, the Watershed Association is helping to purify the water which is also impacted by acid rain, possibly coming from nearby industrial plants or auto exhaust (Meinhart nd).

### **Physical**

The Susquehanna River forms Bloomsburg's southern boundary, and Fishing Creek forms the northern and western boundary (Town of Bloomsburg 2007). Downtown Bloomsburg is considered an historic college town and is two miles from Interstate 80 and State Route 11 is the Main Street (Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce 2007). Bloomsburg is about 58 miles from Reading and 114 miles from Philadelphia. Bloomsburg Municipal Airport has daily flight schedules in and out of the area. Philadelphia International airport is located about 137 miles from downtown Bloomsburg (MapQuest). Bloomsburg has a [Greyhound Bus Station](#) which services most cities across the U.S.

## **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES**

### **Commercial**

Information on commercial fishing activity in Bloomsburg is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist. It is likely that commercial activity does not exist since the town is not situated near the ocean.

### **Recreational**

The Town Park is located on the banks of the Susquehanna River, and offers a lagoon for fishing in the summer months.

### **Subsistence**

Information on subsistence activity in Bloomsburg is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

## **FUTURE**

The downtown area has been undergoing revitalization, fueled by a National Trust for Historic Preservation. The goal is to make the downtown area more culturally rich, with art

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<sup>4</sup> Community review comments by David Kurecian, Executive Director, Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau, 121 Papermill Road, Bloomsburg, PA 17815, September 28, 2007

galleries, cafes, music, and events. The Main Street program also seeks to strengthen and support existing businesses and is a volunteer-based endeavor (Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce 2007).

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