

COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter describes the Boroughs in the context of the past, present, and future and its place in the region. It identifies the historical events that shaped the Boroughs and the region as a whole, and analyzes each community's demographics. The knowledge of the Boroughs' past will assist in charting a course for their future.

REGIONAL SETTING

The Borough of Lansdowne is located in the eastern Delaware County, Pennsylvania (see Map 2-1 – Regional Setting). Clifton Heights Borough borders Lansdowne to the west, Upper Darby Township to the north and east, and Yeadon to the south. East Lansdowne is located east of Lansdowne and is bordered on all sides by Upper Darby Township. Delaware County resides just west, and in the metropolitan statistical area, of the City of Philadelphia, in the region known as the Delaware Valley. The Delaware Valley is centrally located between Washington D.C. and Boston in the highly developed east coast “megalopolis”.

Lansdowne Borough occupies 1.2 square miles and has a population of 11,044 (2000 Census). East Lansdowne has a population of 2,586 (2000 Census) and covers an area of 0.2 square miles. The Boroughs are easily accessible by public transit on the SEPTA R-3 Philadelphia to Elwyn regional rail line and by bus service on five routes. Baltimore Avenue runs east west through the Boroughs and provides access via car to Philadelphia and Route 476, which provides convenient access to Interstate 95 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Lansdowne and Union Avenues in Lansdowne provide access to destinations north and south of the Boroughs and Long Lane connects East Lansdowne with the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township.

A BRIEF HISTORY

East Lansdowne Borough

East Lansdowne's history is somewhat different from other present day Delaware County communities. The joining of numerous individual farm parcels in a piecemeal fashion created most other townships and boroughs, however East Lansdowne retains the distinct history of having been bought as one family farm, specifically for residential development. Along similar lines with nearby municipalities is the attachment of the original farm parcel with notable settling families – in this case the Sellers/Lewis/Smith families.

At the turn of the century, this area was geographically a part of Upper Darby Township, and belonged to Dr. George Smith. Dr. Smith, a well known figure in the region's development, was State Senator, a Delaware County Judge, the enactor and advocate of the public school system, first superintendent of the schools of Delaware County,

president of the school board of Upper Darby, on the Board of Directors for the West Chester and Philadelphia Rail Road, an incorporator of the Delaware County Mutual Insurance Company and founder of the Delaware County Institute of Science, among a vast many distinctions. He is also well known for his book on the history of the county, published in 1862. Smith's wife, Mary, was originally part of the Upper Darby Lewis family, and a cousin of the Sellers and Pennocks. Although the Smith's are noted to have lived in Upper Darby, this farm, which was to become East Lansdowne Borough, was a part of the Smith family's land holdings.

In 1902, Wood, Harmon Company purchased the farm from the Smith family heirs. This real estate firm was headed by Clifford B. Harmon, a pioneer aviator and balloonist. Harmon called his new development East Lansdowne, and brought in civil engineers Harris and Damon, from Darby, to survey and plat the approximately 130 acres into streets and lots. Opening day for lot sales was June 9, 1902. The prices for lots were between \$160 - \$440, \$2 down and \$1 - \$2.20 per week. There were no taxes, no mortgages, and no interest for a year. With an offer as desirable as this, development began to occur. There were already 30 homes built and occupied by June of the following year, including one twin house and one store.

The town experienced a building boom following their separation from Upper Darby and incorporation on June 3, 1911. Growth happened rapidly, in an overall view of municipal development. The land surface of East Lansdowne was built-out by the 1940s and the decade of the '50s saw the peak population of this borough, at approximately 3,500. The residents had previously started up the "East Lansdowne Improvement Association" in 1904, to serve as the unofficial governing body. From this group grew Fire Company No. 1, as well as the idea to become their own municipality. Every property owner was eligible for membership in the East Lansdowne Improvement Association and likewise encouraged to advocate in all measures for the ultimate benefit of the community. Although the Association was dissolved in 1916 for the forming of the first Borough Council, the ideals of true community have never been forgotten in East Lansdowne.

Lansdowne Borough

Up until the late nineteenth century, the Borough of Lansdowne was a part of rural Upper Darby Township. However, settlement in this area began towards the end of the 17th century. Much of the land was first surveyed for George Wood, grandfather of Jacob Bonsall, in 1682. Around this time, Lansdowne was little more than a crossroads at Lansdowne Avenue (then called Darby Haverford Road) and Baltimore Avenue.

In Lansdowne's early days, the Darby Creek attracted men such as Joseph Cruikshank and Morris Trueman to build industry in the forms of textiles, paper, cotton and dye, with the Beehive Mills in 1778 and the Kellyville Mills in 1812. Lansdowne's locale was a center for the florist trade, with successful businesses operated by William Leonard, August Valentine Doemling, and the Pennock family. There was also a small settlement of Quakers associated with some of these early businesses families, quite influential to the founding and development of the community. When the rail lines made their way

Map 2-1 – Regional Setting

through the future Borough in the mid/late 1800s, the stage was set for continued development.

The addition of a second rail track by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the 1880s assisted in the construction boom by making it easier for wealthy Philadelphians to find retreat in the picturesque countryside. This also helped the rail company's business to expand from the increased transporting of building materials and later, people. Lavish mansions and tourist hotels began to dot the landscape, some of which still exist today having been converted into apartments after World War I.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a division was beginning to form between those focused on opportunities for real estate development in what was soon to become Lansdowne, with the agrarian ideals of Upper Darby Township. Progress won, and by the June 7, 1893 incorporation, this new Borough was well becoming a very fashionable commuter suburb for the middle-class, with both residential and commercial growth extending on either side of the railroad tracks. Around the turn-of-the-century, a large number of the homes built were those that give Lansdowne its prominent visual character still cherished today. These are the large Vernacular twins and singles with roomy porches, placed neatly on tree-lined streets. The variety of sizes of early American architectural styles provided an appealing place to live and work. Renowned architects, such as Frank Furness, left their mark on community treasures of homes, buildings and even the train station. The trolley line down Baltimore Avenue in 1902 added yet another attractive amenity, in the form of another link to and from Lansdowne.

As Lansdowne continued to gain distinction as a desirable community in which to live, they added schools, parks, meeting halls, civic associations, businesses, churches and a movie theatre to meet the needs of the residents. The built environment, which remains in this Borough, provides a glimpse into Lansdowne's progressive past – one that was clearly centered on the needs of the citizens, who remain committed to their community still today.

DEMOGRAPHICS

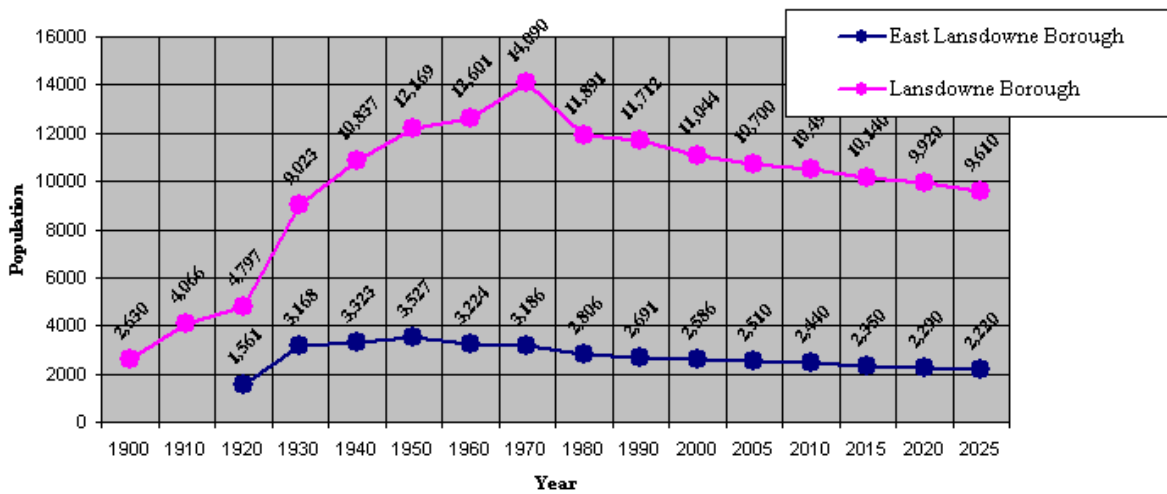
In order to realize the present and future needs of the Boroughs and their residents, a broad analysis of demographic factors needs to be performed. Reviewing population trends and estimates, age distribution, and employment enables the Boroughs to better understand the needs and concerns of the community. This examination helps to determine the amount and type of services that are and will be required and also provides an understanding of the Boroughs' future position within the County. All demographic data is from the 2000 Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. Forecasts for the years 2005-2025 were provided by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC).

Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the last one hundred years the Boroughs’ population trends followed similar patterns. Census data indicates that between 1900 and 1950 the Boroughs’ populations combined experienced an increase of around 38%. In East Lansdowne, population continued to increase until 1950, where it reached its peak at 3,527 before starting to steadily decrease. Lansdowne’s population more than tripled between 1900 and 1930, saw steady growth between 1930 and 1960 before peaking in 1970 at 14,090, and then steadily decreasing between 1970 and 2000. DVRPC forecasts suggest that populations will continue to decline over the next twenty-five years (see Figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts).

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

An analysis of the racial composition of the Boroughs reveals a trend towards more multicultural communities. Though still the majority in the Boroughs at around 70%, the white population experienced a 24.7% decrease since 1990. During the same period, the black population increased an overwhelming 320.8% and other population segments 197%.

**TABLE 2-1
RACIAL COMPOSITION**

	White	Black	Other
East Lansdowne			
1990%	94.9	0.7	4.2
2000%	69.4	19.8	8.0
Percent Change	-27.8	2550.0	81.4
Lansdowne			
1990%	90.3	5.1	1.4
2000%	73.2	18.7	5.7
Percent Change	-24.0	247.0	277
Boroughs Combined			
1990%	93.7	4.3	2.0
2000%	70.5	18.2	5.9
Percent Change	-24.7	320.8	197
Delaware County			
1990%	86.5	11.2	2.3
2000%	81.3	14.7	4.0
Percent Change	-6.6	30.3	74.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

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 the Boroughs and the County between 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 2-2
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1990 AND 2000

Age	Lansdowne					East Lansdowne				
	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	881	7.2	730	6.6	-17.1	201	7.47	154	6.10	-23.4
05-09	644	5.3	727	6.6	12.9	222	8.25	186	7.36	-16.2
10-14	601	4.9	725	6.6	20.6	172	6.39	189	7.48	9.9
15-19	593	4.9	554	5.0	-6.6	153	5.69	205	8.12	34.0
20-24	787	6.5	544	4.9	-30.9	201	7.47	155	6.14	-22.9
25-34	2,363	19.4	1,700	15.4	-28.1	515	19.14	336	13.30	-34.8
35-44	1,807	14.8	1,907	17.3	5.5	390	14.49	424	16.79	8.7
45-54	1,071	8.8	1,679	15.2	56.8	199	7.40	350	13.86	75.9
55-59	917	7.5	550	5.0	-40.0	102	3.79	98	3.88	-3.9
60-64	492	4.0	391	3.5	-20.5	131	4.87	67	2.65	-48.9
65-74	1,156	9.5	694	6.3	-40.0	227	8.44	178	7.05	-21.6
75-84	664	5.4	644	5.8	-3.0	142	5.28	129	5.11	-9.2
85+	211	1.7	199	1.8	-5.7	36	1.34	55	2.18	52.8
Total	12,187	100.0	11,044	100.0		2,691	100.0	2,526	100.0	

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.

Economics

Income and Education

The U.S Census records income by 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 rose over the past decade.

Employment

In 2000, the number of Borough residents 16 years and over **decreased** by 7.6%. This downturn brought about a 6.4% decrease in the Boroughs' overall labor force, defined by the Census as all people classified in the civilian labor force (both employed and unemployed), plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces. As Table 2-4 shows, the Boroughs saw the civilian labor force decrease by 6.2% (-2.4% Countywide) and armed forces drop to zero in 2000.

TABLE 2-3
INCOME AND EDUCATION, 1990 AND 2000

Income and Education	East Lansdowne	Lansdowne	Average/ Combined	Delaware County
1990				
Median Household Income	\$31,321	\$39,896	\$35,609	\$37,337
Median Family Income	\$39,896	\$44,171	\$42,034	\$44,323
NO DEGREE	39.5	30.8	32.5	36.9
High School Graduate	34.9	27.3	28.7	26.7
Some higher education	17.2	19.0	19.8	18.8
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4.4	13.5	12.4	11.5
Graduate or Professional Degree	4.1	9.3	8.8	6.1
2000				
Median Household Income	\$44,205	\$47,017	\$45,611	\$50,092
Median Family Income	\$53,021	\$60,305	\$56,663	\$61,590
NO DEGREE	46.6	32.7	38.4	42.6
High School Graduate	23.9	29.0	20.0	21.9
Some higher education	17.4	20.2	19.7	15.5
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.6	14.3	13.5	12.1
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.5	9.9	8.4	7.8
Percent change from 1990-2000				
Median Household Income	41.1	17.8	28.1	34.2
Median Family Income	32.9	36.5	34.8	39.0
NO DEGREE	13.3	11.5	11.9	16.2
High School Graduate	-34.2	-34.1	-34.1	-17.3
Some higher education	-2.6	0.1	-0.4	-16.7
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	93.0	2.8	8.9	5.5
Graduate or Professional Degree	-18.0	-3.8	-5.1	28.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 2-4
EMPLOYMENT, 1990 - 2000

	East Lansdowne		Lansdowne		Combined		Delaware County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1990								
Persons 16 Years and Over	2,078	100.0	9,497	100.0	11,575	100	434,766	100
In Labor Force	1,431	68.9	6,596	69.5	8,027	69.3	279,485	64.3
Civilian Labor Force	1,418	68.2	6,587	69.4	8,005	69.2	278,800	64.1
Employed	1,318	63.4	6,334	66.7	7,652	66.1	266,074	61.2
Unemployed	100	4.8	253	2.7	353	3.0	12,726	2.9
Armed Forces	13	0.6	9	0.1	22	0.2	685	0.2
Not in Labor Force	647	31.1	2,901	30.5	3,548	30.7	155,281	35.7
2000								
Persons 16 Years and Over	2,025	100.0	8,665	100	10,690	100	429,983	100
In Labor Force	1,320	65.2	6,190	71.4	7,510	50.3	272,268	63.3
Civilian Labor Force	1,320	65.2	6,190	71.4	7,510	50.3	272,092	63.3
Employed	1,243	61.4	5,908	68.2	7,151	47.9	258,782	60.2
Unemployed	77	3.8	282	3.3	359	2.4	13,310	3.1
Armed Forces	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	176	0
Not in Labor Force	705	34.8	2,475	28.6	3,180	21.3	157,715	36.7
Percent Change from 1990-2000								
Persons 16 Years and Over	-2.6	n/a	-8.8	n/a	-7.6	n/a	-1.1	n/a
In Labor Force	-7.8	n/a	-6.2	n/a	-6.4	n/a	-2.6	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	-6.9	n/a	-6.0	n/a	-6.2	n/a	-2.4	n/a
Employed	-5.7	n/a	-6.7	n/a	-6.5	n/a	-2.7	n/a
Unemployed	-23.0	n/a	11.5	n/a	1.7	n/a	4.6	n/a
Armed Forces	-100.0	n/a	-100.0	n/a	-100.0	n/a	-74.3	n/a
Not in Labor Force	9.0	n/a	-14.7	n/a	-10.4	n/a	1.6	n/a

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.