

A Note to the Reader

Just as a community is never finished modifying, adapting, and organizing its natural, political, and social environments, an attempt to profile those dynamic

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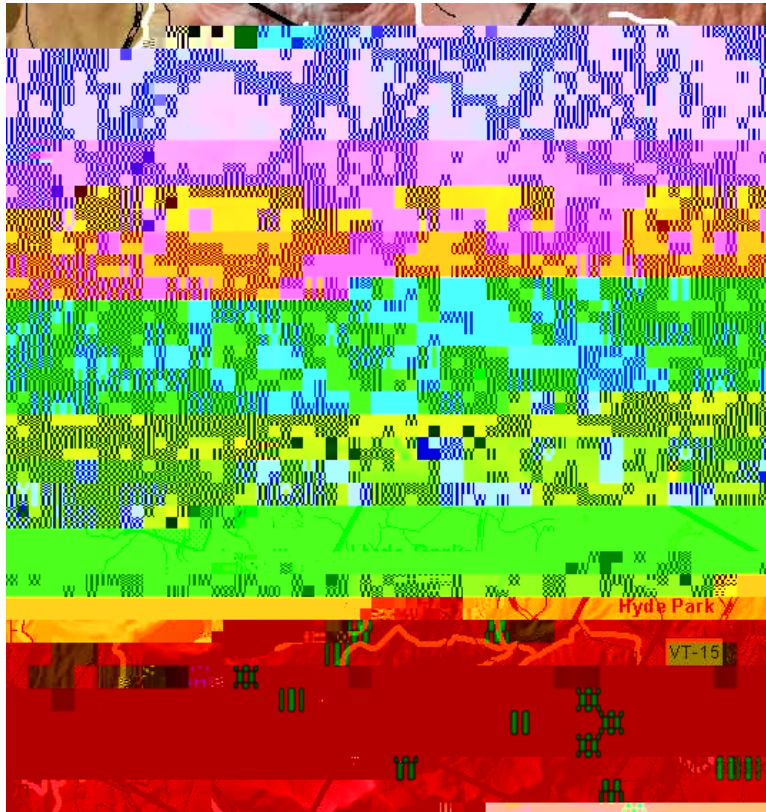
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Section 1. Town Organization

Where is Johnson?

Johnson Town is one of approximately forty Vermont towns that contain a village. Johnson Village lies in a south central position within the town straddling the Gihon River to the north and east of the confluence of the Gihon and the larger, Lamoille River. In fact, the Village is the hub of human activity in the town with residential and commercial density being the greatest in and around the village. Both the Lamoille and Route 15, which parallel one another, bisect the town and lead human commerce in an east-west direction. Route 100c springs fr



Community Profile – Johnson, VT

Chronology

1784 - First white settler, Samuel Eaton.

1785 - Jonathan McConnell builds a grist mill on the Gihon River, which becomes the town center.

1780s, late - William Samuel Johnson, a Connecticut Lawyer, lobbies Congress to get Vermont into the Union. *

1792 - Vermont Legislature charts the town, named for William Samuel Johnson.

1828 - Johnson Academy opens in village center; becomes a state Normal School in 1867 and a Teachers College in 1947 part of the Vermont State College System.

1842 - Johnson Woolen Mills begins operating on the Gihon River.

1860 - Charles Henry Bradley born in Johnson, later heads the Massachusetts Farm and Trades School in Boston for 35 years,* exemplifying the mid-19th century out migration of local talent.

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Civic Structure

The first post office was established at Johnson village in 1803 and is still in service. Another office emerged in the neighborhood known as East Johnson (often called Perkinsville) located several hundred yards northeast of the Power House Bridge on what is today route 100c. A small hamlet on the Lamoille was named McConnells Falls after an early settler who built a grist- and sawmill there about 1785. (Incidentally, this Jonathan McConnell was elected clerk, selectman and treasurer at the first town meeting.) A second hamlet, Ithiel Falls existed through the 1940's (see below). At the turn of the 20th century, "Buck" a railroad station was opened, serving a lumbering operation conducted by Orange and Abijah Buck.

Only the village and town are formally recognized as civil units in Johnson, the others join a number of local names for residential neighborhoods and noteworthy natural features of this 30,656-acre town. Table 1.1 shows some of the general characteristics of the town and village of Johnson. Table 1.2 highlights some of the general planning characteristics, including zoning ordinance and Vermont Forum on Sprawl Category.

Table 1.1 - General Town Characteristics

Town Name	Johnson
County	Lamoille
Date of Town Charter	1792
Incorporated Village(s)	Johnson Village
Other Villages and Neighborhoods (past and present)	East Johnson, Perkinsville, McConnell s Falls, Ithiel Falls, Buck

Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. *Vermont Indicators Online*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

Table 1.2 - Johnson General Planning Characteristics

<i>Vermont Forum on Sprawl Category</i>	1 - "Traditional Center"
Town Plan	October, 1997
Zoning Ordinance	No
Subdivision Ordinance	No
Septic Approval Process	1995

Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. *Vermont Indicators Online*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

Section 2. Human Resources

Johnson's 3.7% growth rate is below the state average and reflects a manageable slow but steady increase. At 3,274 inhabitants, it is in the top quintile of Vermont's communities. The fact that Johnson's population is larger than 2,500 would earn a town an urban designation by some US Census definitions, but the comm

Community Profile – Johnson, VT

* Hispanic race population percentage is **significantly below** state average. (Source:www.city-data.com/city/Johnson-Vermont.html 2004).

Age and Gender of Johnson’s Citizens

Table 2.3 shows that Johnson reflects a dramatic increase in the number of individuals in the 25 to 44 year age range. The effect of the baby boom is shown in the movement from the young middle aged to the older middle aged between 1990 and 2000 in Lamoille County as a whole. However, the decrease in numbers of people 65 and over in Johnson do not mirror state and national trends. Town officials will want to look carefully at changes in the under-five-year-old cohort, an age range that is not growing nearly as rapidly as it has in previous decades. According to figures 2.1 and 2.2 we can see that the “top” of the age/sex pyramids have grown since 1990. This movement signifies the aging of the population with a growing number of people over 30 residing in the town. There has also been a significant growth between 1990 and 2000 in the number of middle aged individuals who live in Johnson.

Table 2.3 - Age and Gender

Community Profile – Johnson, VT

Figure 2.1 - Age / Sex Pyramid 1990

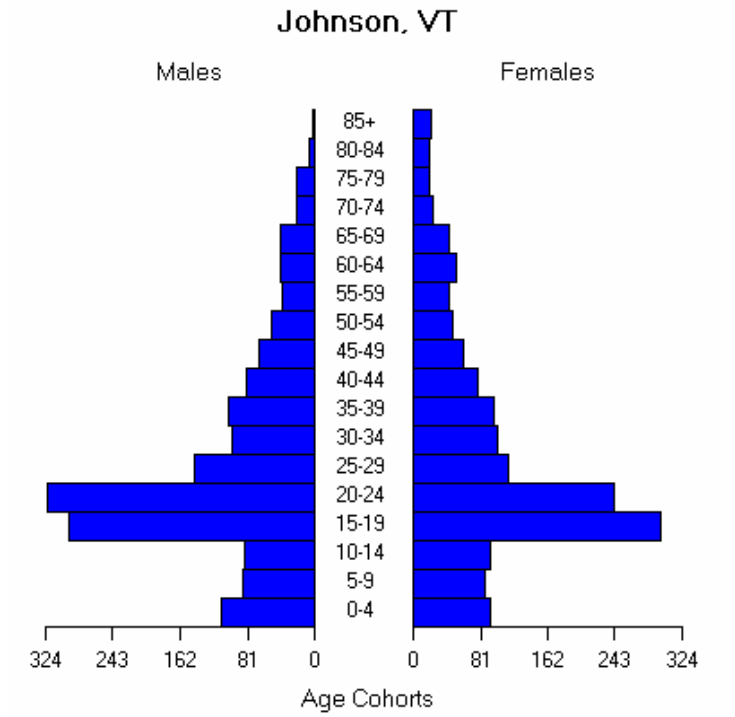
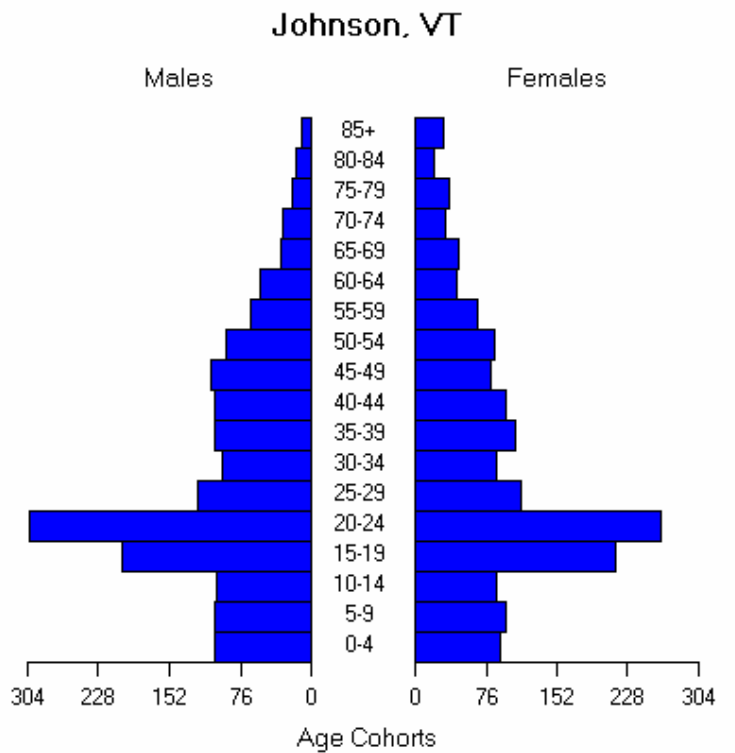


Figure 2.2 - Age/Sex Pyramid 2000



Community Profile – Johnson, VT

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Table 2.5 gives some insight into income data for Johnson, Lamoille County and the State. Johnson lags consistently on all income indicators listed except Annual Average Wage. Johnson’s poverty rate is twice that of the County and State while the amount of children deemed living in poverty is almost a quarter (23%) of all youth under 18. These statistics have important implications on the health and quality of life of youth as well as the community. Table 2.5 suggests that Johnson’s educational attainment figures mirror the county trends with slightly higher proportions of citizens with a ‘high school degree or less’ than the rest of the county.

Table 2.5 - Town, County, and State Income & Poverty Comparisons

	Johnson	Lamoille County	Vermont
Annual Average Wage, 2001	\$23,423	\$23,542	\$30,239
Per Capita Income, 1999	\$15,014	\$20,972	\$20,625
Median Family Income, 1999	\$38,224	\$44,620	\$48,625
Median Household Income, 1999	\$31,343	\$39,356	\$40,856
Persons for whom Poverty Status was determined	2,834	22,591	588,053
Poverty Rate, 1999	18.9%	9.6%	9.4%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18 years), 1999	22.6%	2.8%	2.8%
Elderly Poverty Rate (persons 65 years or over), 1999	11.7%	.9%	1.1%
Percentage of Households with Public Assistance Income, 1999	350003	Tc{(TJEterminated	vn3

Section 3. Business and Infrastructure Resources

History of Business and Employment in Johnson

In the early to mid 1800's Johnson was a town centered on manufacturing. It hosted an oil mill, distillery for potato whiskey, potash factory, and even a chair factory. The businesses steadily increased and new shops and factories sprung up. For almost a century and a half the Johnson Grist Mill served as a grain mill. In 1901, Harry Parker and Charles Stearns formed a partnership and build a new sawmill. They bought logs, manufactured lumber, and dressed and sold soft wood (*Smalley, Margaret et.al., History of Johnson, Vermont. Oread Library Club. 1962*). These businesses gave rise to the presence of early enterprise, along with which came numerous opportunities for employment, ranging from unskilled labor to highly skilled manufacturing positions.

Johnson's mercantile establishments have long been a major force in the local economy. Prior to 1840, locally owned shops such as a hardware shops, a tin shop, and a furniture store permeated the community (*Smalley, Margaret et.al., History of Johnson, Vermont. Oread Library Club. 1962*). The Sterling Trust Company was opened as one of the first banking institutions to come to the small town in 1916, and hotels and motels were numerous and prosperous at this time. The first telephone switchboard was installed in town in 1898 and in 1955, barely surviving flooding and flu epidemics, technological advances came to the town and the telephone system was converted from the old turn-style crank to the modern dial.

In 2000, Johnson's business and employment sector consisted of mainly educational services. As depicted in Table 3.1 the arts, entertainment, recreation, and retail combined played a significant role in maintaining Johnson's economic base for the town, accounting for more than 30% of the industries. The unemployment rate, however, was higher than Lamoille County as a

Community Profile – Johnson, VT

The top five businesses in Lamoille County today are Stowe Mountain Resort, in Stowe with 650 employees, Smuggler's Notch Resort in Smuggler's Notch with 300 employees, Copley Hospital Inc. in Morrisville with 275 employees, Johnson State College in Johnson with 205 employees, and topping out the top five is Springer-Miller Systems in Stowe with 200 employees. Rounding out the top three businesses in Johnson behind Johnson State College are Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc. employing 55 employees, and Johnson Woolen Mill, LLC, with 35 employees (Vermont Business Magazine, February 2004).

Property Values

Table 3.2 shows average residential value, the Grand List and the Effective Property Tax Rate. These data are not strictly comparable with other census indicators here and are collected by the state Tax Department.

Table 3.2 - Johnson Property Valuation & Taxation

Average Residential Value (on less than 6 acres), 1999 \$79,009

Total Value of Grand List, 2000 na

Effective Property Tax Rate (rate per \$100), 1998 2.41%

Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. *Vermont Indicators Online*. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>
Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review. 1998-2000

Transportation

Johnson lies on Vermont Route 15, just 17 miles southwest of Stowe, VT and 24 miles from Smuggler's Notch. Public transportation is limited though some services are provided by Rural Community Transportation in St. Johnsbury.

Table 3.3 depicts several indicators reflecting transportation in Johnson, but strictly comparable data is only now in the process of being released by Census 2000 and/or assimilated into the Center for Rural Studies databases. We will be eager to see the changes in these indicators over the decade.

Table 3.3 - Johnson Town Local Transportation Behavior

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for State Highways, 2000 53,168

Total Number of Accidents, 1997 24

Number of Accidents involving fatalities, 1997 0

Commuters who Drive Alone, 2000 1,088

Commuters who Carpool, 1990 172

Commuters who use Public Transit, 1990 11

Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2002. *Vermont Indicators Online*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>

Section 4. Social Capital

Schools

A school is not just an education resource, but also a great social networking hub for the community. Students in the public school system attend the Johnson Elementary school (PK-6) and the Lamoille SDHD #18 regional high school (grades 7-12).

Johnson Elementary School's total school enrollment is 277 and on the decline since the 1999-2000 school year (see Table 4.1). The student to teacher ratio is slightly higher than the state figures however students at Johnson Elementary still enjoy close to the same size classes as youth in the rest of the State.

Table 4.1 - Johnson Elementary School (K-6): General School Information

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	State (most recent)
Total enrollment					



Community Profile – Johnson, VT

Table 4.3 - Johnson Town Educational Attainment, 2000 (percent persons 25 years and older)

	Johnson	Lamoille County
Less than High School	15.1%	13.0%
High School Diploma	35.4%	30.6%
Some College	15.9%	17.1%
Bachelor's / Associate's Degree	22.4%	28.8%
Graduate / Professional / PhD Degree	11.1%	10.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. *American FactFinder*. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Town Activities

Johnson is an extremely innovative community that has cradled many innovative private sector organizations as well as collaborative and publicly oriented efforts. While this profile welcomes additions, a few examples of town activities include the Lamoille County Field Days (held in late July or Early August annually). Among other notable collaborative and

Section 5. Natural Resources

Rivers and Mountains

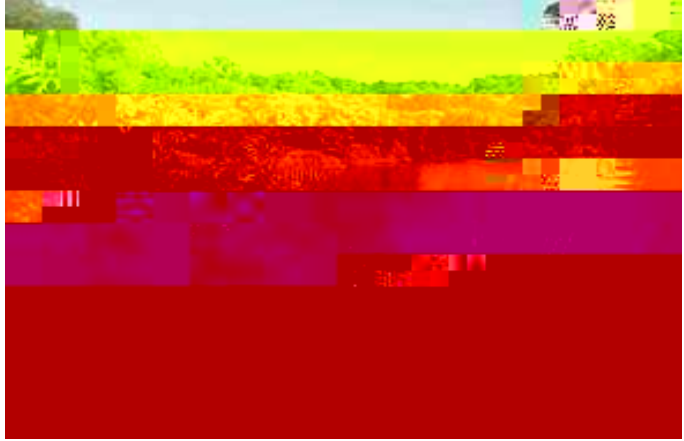
Johnson is in the Green Mountains of Northern Vermont, just minutes to Smugglers Notch and Stowe. The Gihon River joins the Lamoille River here on its journey to Lake Champlain; both are excellent trout water. Johnson reflects the beauty, clean water, and rich soil of all of Lamoille County. Ithiel Falls – a natural pool below a waterfall on the Lamoille between Johnson and Waterville - is accessible just off Hogback Road. The historic Ithiel Falls Camp Meeting has been held annually since 1898. Founded by a Methodist pastor, evangelist Ithiel T. Johnson began these camp meetings to “revive the spirit of religion but not take the place of regular church.”

Johnson is situated in the central part of Lamoille County, under the shadow of Sterling Mountain (alt. 3,715 feet). Johnson is at the junction of the Gihon and Lamoille Rivers with an elevation of 531 feet. There is an incorporated village within the township bearing the same name.

The average precipitation is 40". The average temperature in January is 18.2 degrees F.; while in July the normal is 70.0 degrees F. In March 1888, Johnson had a record snowfall of 62 inches which fell in three days.

The Long Trail runs through the town, crossing the main highway at the lower section. Three camps: French, Barrows, and Parker are located on the trail within the town and can accommodate from eight to twelve people.

Table 5.1 shows some of the natural and geographical statistics on Johnson, including land area, water area, forest land, and



Section 6. Sources

This Community Profile is an attempt to bring together information from many different sources.

The internet resources used include:

For data:

The Center for Rural Studies. 2004. *Vermont Indicators Online*. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>

The U.S. Census Bureau. 2004. *American FactFinder*. <http://factfinder.census.gov>