

WOODSTOCK

Windsor County,
Vermont

A Community Profile

**Prepared for the Vermont Council
on Rural Development**

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Vermont**

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**Prepared for the
Vermont Council on Rural Development
Community Visit
October 2005**

**By
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A Note to the Reader

Just as a community never finishes adapting to and organizing its natural, political and social environments, an attempt to profile these dynamic processes must be considered a work in progress. Materials below are organized to reflect community characteristics and resources and draw heavily upon easily accessible information at the CRS web site. Please join us in this profiling effort by calling our attention to major omissions, inaccuracies and errors of fact.

Thank you,

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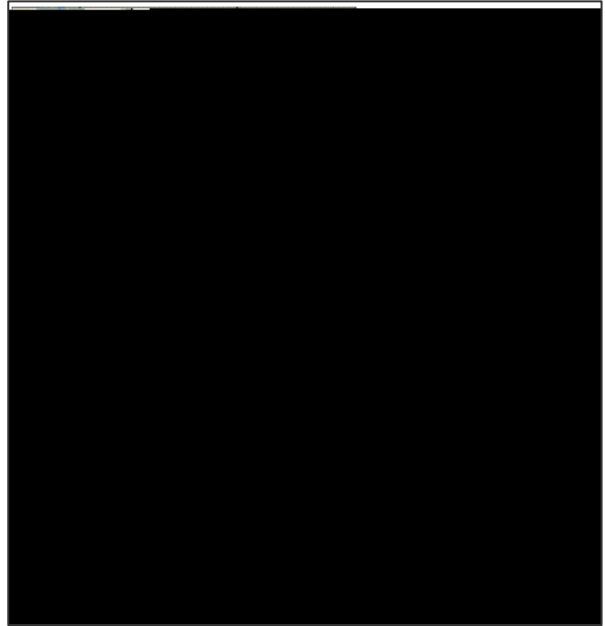
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Section 1.

Town Organization

Where is Woodstock?

The town of Woodstock is located in Windsor County just to the southwest of the White River Junction-Lebanon commercial area. Vermont towns of Pomfret and Hartford lie to the north and northeast respectively while Reading and Windsor lie to the south and southeast. Bridgewater lies to the west and Hartland lies between Woodstock and the Connecticut River to the east.



What's in a Name?

New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth chartered Woodstock, Vermont in 1761. The name of the town was most likely derived from Woodstock, Connecticut, which in turn was named for Woodstock, England where the traditional name suggests “a place in the woods.”

Governor Wentworth may have named the town directly after Woodstock in Oxfordshire, England, a medieval royal residence. A final theory on naming Woodstock is that Wentworth may have named the town after two earls, a father and son both named William Bentinck. They held the titles of Earl of Portland, Marquis of Titchfield, Baron Cirencester, and Viscount Woodstock. The younger Bentinck was related to Wentworth (Swift, 1977:564).

<http://www.woodstockvt.com>

Brief Chronology

- On July 10, 1761 New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth charts the Town.
- 1794 – Woodstock becomes the permanent Shire Town of Windsor County.
- 1797 – First post office opens in Woodstock Village.
- 1824 – Alvin Adams establishes the railroad express line.
- 1827 to 1856 – Woodstock Medical School in operation.
- 1869 – Marsh family home purchased by Frederick Billings and eventually becomes Billings Farm & Museum.
- 1890's – Summer visitors arrive in significant numbers.
- 1934 – The first ski tow in the U.S. is built in Woodstock on Mount Tom.

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Government and Civic Structure

As Woodstock grew, a number of small population clusters emerged. Four areas in particular remain as distinct neighborhoods

Section 2.

Human Resources

Woodstock’s growth rate -- just a shade over 6 tenths of a percent -- is well below the state average. With 3,232 inhabitants, it is in the top quintile of Vermont’s communities. Because Woodstock’s population is larger than 2,500, the town is considered as “urban” by some US Census definitions. However, the community’s independence from any adjacent place larger than 50,000 in population enables Woodstock to qualify as “rural” for many federal and state programs. Table 2.1 shows that Woodstock’s population density only grew slightly between 1990 and 2000. Nearly 40% of the town’s population may be considered “age dependent” (under age 18 and over age 65) in 2000. No significant changes toward greater ethnic diversity are indicated in Table 2.1. Typical of Vermont communities, minorities “of color” constitute a very small percentage of Woodstock’s residential population. In absolute numbers, several Hispanic families provide the largest single category here, followed by Afro-American and Native American peoples. Among those of European ancestry, English and Irish descendants form distinctive groups. Minority population distribution tends to follow general population distribution between the Village and the Town.

Population estimates through 2004 show insignificant growth rates in the residential population into this 21st century. Of considerable interest however, is the persistent stability over recent decades in the ratio of village to town population where roughly two-thirds reside in the town (some might call this open country), supporting descriptions of the town as characteristically rural.

Total Population, 2000	3,232
Total Population, 1990	3,212
Absolute Population Change, 1990 – 2000	20 inhabitants
Percent Population Change, 1990 – 2000	0.6%
Persons per Square Mile, 2000	72.6
Persons per Square Mile, 1990	72.1
Area in Square Miles	44.5
Percent Age Dependent, 2000 (Under 18 and over 65)	39.5%
Percent Rural, 2000	100%
Percent Rural Farm, 2000	0.8% (from 1.2% in 1990)
Percent Native Born (United States), 2000	96.4% (from 95.9% in 1990)
Percent Reporting English Ancestry, 2000	28.1% (from 28.7% in 1990)
Percent Reporting Irish Ancestry, 2000	19.7% (from 13.6% in 1990)
Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2005. Vermont Indicators Online. http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators US Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American FactFinder. http://factfinder.census.gov	

Age and Gender of Woodstock’s Residents

Table 2.2. shows that Woodstock reflects state and even national trends toward a graying of the population. The effect of the baby boom age cohort is shown in the decrease in the percentages of younger and middle-aged populations and corresponding increases in the 45+ populations between 1990 and 2000. The median age in Woodstock is older than in Windsor County as a whole.

Social Capital: Some Famous Citizens

Every Vermont community has citizens who exemplify notable characteristics or contribute to a community in significant ways. Given Woodstock's historical significance, numerous individuals deserve recognition. However, only a few are noted here to celebrate the resources such human "capital" can provide a community.

George Perkins Marsh is one of Woodstock's most famous native citizens. Born in Woodstock in 1801, he went on to graduate from Dartmouth College with high honors in 1820. After teaching, Marsh studied law and began practice in Burlington, Vermont in 1825. In 1844, he was elected to Congress on the Whig ticket and served two successive terms. During this time, Marsh became known as a staunch opponent to slavery and to the Mexican War. After joining the Republican Party in 1856, he was sent by President Lincoln as the first United States minister to Italy in 1860. Marsh continued as the minister to Italy for the rest of his life. The significance of Marsh's contribution was augmented by his key role in the founding of the Smithsonian Institute and later his imprint on the recent formation of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. His environmental writings have made him a critical part of Vermont's legacy as a leading force in the environmental movement. His well-known book *Man and Nature* was published in 1864 (George Perkins Marsh Collection, University of Vermont Special Collections).

Frederick Billings grew up and was schooled in Woodstock, Vermont. He graduated from Amherst College in 1884 and moved to Montana to begin a business career. A former president of the Northern Pacific railroad, Marsh later became a founder of the Yellowstone National Bank and National Historical Park (Vermont Living, <http://www.vtliving.com/towns/woodstock/>).

Senator Jacob Collamer, a Representative and Senator from Vermont, was born in Troy, New York. Collamer later moved to Burlington, Vermont and graduated from the University of Vermont in 1810. After serving in the War of 1812, Collamer studied law and practiced in Woodstock from 1813 to 1833. He went on to become a member of the State House of Representatives, and the State's attorney for Windsor County from 1822 to 1824. Collamer moved on to become a judge of the Superior Court of Vermont from 1850 to 1854, and in 1855 was elected as a Republican to the United States Senate. He served until his death in 1865 (Biographical Directory of the United States Congress).

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Table 2.5. clearly shows that Woodstock's proportion of those who have received associate or bachelor's degrees as well as graduate, professional, or PhD degrees are well above the county's rates. Similarly, Woodstock's percentages of those attaining some college or less are lower than the county's percentages.

Section 3.

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Property Values

Table 3.2. shows the municipal tax rate, educational tax rate for homesteads, educational tax rate for non-residential properties, and the common level of appraisal ratio.

Table 3.2.– Woodstock Property Valuation & Taxation	
Municipal Tax Rate (plus LAR & Highway) (per \$100), 2004	0.3850
Educational Tax Rate for Homesteads (per \$100), 2004	1.5445
Educational Tax Rate for Non – Residential (per \$100), 2004	1.5646
Common Level of Appraisal Ratio, 2004	0.9843
Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2005. Vermont Indicators Online. http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators	

Transportation

Woodstock lies at the intersections of VT Routes 4, 12, and 106. The town is less than 20 miles east of the Lebanon, NH/White River region where interstates 89 and 91 intersect. Woodstock’s proximity to these major transportation corridors and the population base of the Lebanon/White River region has undoubtedly contributed to its development over the years.

Table 3.3. depicts several indicators reflecting transportation in Woodstock. Based on the 2000 Census, more than half of workers in Woodstock both live and work in town. Residents rely on their autos to drive to work (typically alone).

Table 3.3.– Woodstock Town Local Transportation Behavior	
Total Number of Accidents, 2001	18
Number of Accidents Involving Fatalities, 2001	2
Percent Population who Work in Town of Residence, 2000	54%
Total Number of Workers 16 Years of Age and Older, 2000	1,652
...who Drove to Work Alone	1,168
...who Carpooled to Work	182
...who used Public Transportation	7
...who Commuted via other Means	130
...who Worked at Home	165
Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2005. Vermont Indicators Online. http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators	

Section 4.

Social Capital

Schools

A school is not just an educational resource, but serves also as a networking hub for the community. Woodstock's school system, which includes Woodstock Elementary, Woodstock Union Middle School, and Woodstock Sr. USHD #4, ranks well on many indicators for Vermont schools (see *Vermont School Report*)

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Table 4.3. – Woodstock Sr. UHSD #4 (9-12): General School Information

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	State 2003-04*
Total School Enrollment	489	477	475	440	99,104
Attendance Rate	93.4%	94.8%	94.9%	94.6%	95.0%
Retention Rate	7.0%	4.4%	6.5%	0.2%	2.0%
Estimated HS Cohort Graduation Rate	N/A	92%	89.9%	93.6%	84.6%
Student/Teacher Ratio	11.0	10.5	10.6	10.1	11.7
Eligible Special Education	7.0%	12.4%	14.0%	16.1%	13.9%
*All Vermont students K-12. Source: Center for Rural Studies and VT Department of Education. 2004. VT School Report. http://crs.uvm.edu/schlprt					

Table 4.4. shows that Woodstock’s Elementary and Secondary enrollment by gender data for these public schools closely mirrors statewide total trends. There are slightly higher percentages of males than females in both the elementary and secondary schools. In FY 2004, Woodstock Elementary’s female enrollment (47.7%) was a slightly lower percent of total enrollment than the statewide elementary percentage (48.6%) of females. Woodstock’s secondary schools have almost exactly the same female and male percentages of total enrollment as the statewide secondary totals (48.3% females, 51.7% males).

Table 4.4. – Woodstock and Statewide 2004 Elementary and Secondary Public School Enrollment by Gender

	Female	Male	Total Enrollments
Woodstock Elementary	47.7%	52.3%	195
Statewide Elementary Total	48.6%	51.4%	47,838
Woodstock Secondary Schools	48.3%	51.7%	646
Statewide Secondary Total	48.5%	51.5%	48,212

Section 5.

Natural Resources

Lakes and Rivers

The most significant river running through Woodstock is the Ottaquechee River. This river is respected as the body of water that rushes through the Quechee Gorge in the neighboring town of the same name. Other significant rivers include Beaver Brook, Gulf Stream, Happy Valley Brook, and Kedron Brook. The Gulf Stream is so named for its roots in the Barnard Gulf. The Barnard Gulf is a narrow notch or pass in the surrounding mountains.

Mountains and Hills

Mount Tom and Mount Peg are two of the most well known mountains in Woodstock, a town nestled nicely among many peaks. Gilbert Hill's historical significance is found in its name. Chester Gilbert built the first rope tow in the United States in the 1930's on this hill that now bears his name (Swift, 1977: 567). Table 5.1. presents critical natural resource information for Woodstock.

Section 6.