

Section 2.

Human Capital

Table 2.1 – Northfield Population Characteristics

	Northfield Village	Northfield Town¹	Town Remainder²
Total Population, 2000	3,208	5,791	2,583
Total Population, 1990	1,889	5,610	3,721
Absolute Population Change, 1990-2000	1,319	181	-1,138
Percent Population Change, 1990-2000	69.8%	3.2%	-30.6%
Persons per Square Mile, 2000	1,782.2	151.2	70.8
Persons per Square Mile, 1990	1,049.4	146.5	101.9
Area in Square Miles	1.8 ³	38.3 ³	36.5 ³
Percent Dependent, 2000 (under 18 and over 65)	26.8	31.1	36.4
Percent Rural, 1990		100.0	
Percent Rural Farm, 1990		0.3	
Percent Native Born (United States), 1990		97.5	
Percent Reporting French/French Canadian Ancestry, 1990		26.5	

¹Town population numbers include Village numbers.

²Remainder equals Town numbers minus Village numbers.

³There is a discrepancy between the town/village area data given by the Census and by the Northfield Town and Village Reports. For the sake of local accuracy, the Town and Village Report numbers are used in this profile. Logically, this also affects the *Persons per Square Mile* and *Town Remainder* calculations.

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>
Town of Northfield, VT. 2000. Report of the Officers.

U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American Factfinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Village of Northfield, VT. 2000. Report of the Officers.

Table 2.1 shows that the Village contains the majority of Northfield's population (55.4%). In fact the Town lost 30.6% of its population between 1990 and 2000, while the Village increased by 69.8%. Overall Northfield grew by 3.2%. It is also interesting to note that Northfield possesses significant French and French Canadian roots, common in Vermont, with 26.5% of Census respondents claiming ancestry in 1990.

Many Different Groups...

From the late 18th Century to the early 19th Century, Northfield was settled by people from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and older Vermont towns like Westminster. The Irish arrived in the 1840's, drawn to Northfield because of the availability of jobs working for the railroad. In the 1850's and the 1860's the Welsh came to work in the slate quarries. In the 1890's Italians, Spaniards, and the Scottish arrived to work in the granite sheds. Starting in the 1880's, French Canadians came to Northfield, many buying farms that were abandoned in the decades after the Civil War.

Table 2.2 – Age and Gender Demographic Comparisons

	Northfield		Washington County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Percent 0-19 Years Old	31.0	29.3	28.1	26.4
Percent 20-44 Years Old	42.1	40.1	40.3	34.8
Percent 45-64 Years Old	15.6	19.0	18.8	26.0
Percent 65+ Years Old	11.3	11.6	12.6	12.8
Percent 18-24 Years Old	25.7	27.2	10.1	8.9
Median Age	N.A.	29.7	N.A.	38.5
Percent Male	57.0	54.9	49.0	49.0
Percent Female	43.0	45.1	51.0	51.0
Percent Male (18-24)	36.8	35.6	11.9	10.5
Percent Female (18-24)	11.0	17.0	8.3	7.5
Percent Male 65+	4.2	4.4	4.7	5.1
Percent Female 65+	7.1	7.3	7.8	7.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000. American Factfinder.
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

County experienced a slight decrease in the younger cohorts between 1990 and 2000.

Table 2.2 illustrates the effects that Norwich University has upon town demographics. The amount of young people in Northfield is much higher than in surrounding Washington County, as evidenced by the Median Age (29.7) and the percent of 18-24 year-olds (27.2%). The presence of a college in town bolsters the younger cohorts.

The military nature of the college has an effect upon the gender ratios in town as well. The overall percent of males is higher (54.9%), although this number has decreased slightly from 1990. In contrast, Washington County has a higher percentage of females (51.0%), in keeping with the rest of the nation.

As is common in Vermont, both Northfield and Washington

Table 2.3 – Northfield Housing and Family Characteristics

	1990	2000
Number of Families	1,194	1,225
Number of Households	1,682	1,819
Average Family Size	N.A.	2.95
Average Household Size	2.61	2.46
Single-Mother Households	111	182
Total Children in Single-Parent Families	223	N.A.
Total Housing Units	1,877	1,958
Number of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,168	1,244
Number of Renter-Occupied Housing Units	514	575
Median Housing Unit Value	\$82,400	N.A.
Median Rent	\$344	N.A.
Median Gross Rent as % of Household Income	24.0%	N.A.
Percent Increase in Households (1990-2000)		8.1
Percent Increase in Housing Units (1990-2000)		4.3

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>
 U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American Factfinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

these trends. It should be noted that much of the 2000 income data has yet to be released by the U.S. Census.

Table 2.3 shows that the number of families in Northfield, including overall households, increased between 1990 and 2000. The number of single-mother households also rose. In contrast, the number of housing units did not keep up with the number of households over the ten-year period with an 8.1% increase vs. 4.3%. This is in keeping with the declining housing vacancy rates in northwestern and central Vermont. The decline in average household size only exacerbates the situation. Perhaps the higher social prevalence of divorces nationwide is having an effect upon

The Famous Paines...

Elijah Paine was born in Brooklyn, Connecticut. In 1781 he graduated from Harvard College. Paine was one of the original Northfield grantees, and in 1784 he moved to the town. He served on the Vermont legislature, and was appointed commissioner to settle New York's claim to Vermont land.

Charles Paine was Governor of Vermont, and also a railroad official. In fact, Charles financed and built the line of the VT Central Railroad that ran through Northfield in 1847. He is responsible for incorporating the town into the main route of the railroad. Charles was Elijah Paine's son.

Table 2.4– Town, County, and State Income & Poverty Comparisons

	Northfield	Washington County	Vermont
Annual Average Wage, 2000	\$24,015	\$28,306	
Per Capita Income, 1989	\$10,455	\$13,547	\$13,527
Median Family Income, 1989	\$35,364	\$35,596	\$34,780

Median Household Income, 1989	\$29,609	\$29,623	\$29,792
Persons for whom Poverty Status was Determined, 1989	4,354	52,450	541,372
Poverty Rate, 1989	8.9%	8.3%	9.9%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18 years), 1989	15.6%	9.9%	11.5%
Elderly Poverty Rate (persons 65 years or over), 1989	12.9%	11.9%	12.4%
Percentage of Households with Public Assistance Income, 1989	5.9%	6.8%	7.2%

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>
U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American Factfinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 2.4 allows the reader to compare the financial situation of Northfield’s residents with the county and state at large. By and large average wages and median incomes are lower in the town than in Washington County and Vermont, except for the state’s Median Family Income. Northfield’s Poverty Rate (8.9%) is higher than Washington County’s (8.3%) but much lower than that state’s. Unfortunately the town’s Child Poverty Rate (15.6%) is the highest all around. It should be noted here as well that the U.S. Census income data for 2000 has not been released yet. Consequently, 1989 numbers are all that can be discussed here, with the exception of the Annual Average Wage.

Table 2.5– Educational Attainment, 1990 (persons 25 years and older)

	Northfield	Washington County
Less than High School	18.1%	18.7%
High School Diploma	41.8%	35.9%
Some College	12.0%	14.0%
Bachelor’s Degree	11.2%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.9%	9.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990. American Factfinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

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