

Then and Now: Some Cornwall Statistics

Getting hard statistical data about Cornwall is challenging. Until he moved away from Cornwall last year, the *Chronicle* relied on David Grossman to produce insightful analyses of census and other information. He is, alas, impossible to replace. Nevertheless, with the help of the Northwest Hills COG (Council of Governments), CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center) and most of all Michael R. Howser, director of the Connecticut State Data Center, I have attempted to put together some decently reliable comparative figures on demographics and incomes.

In assembling these population numbers, I discovered that the more up-to-date figures (for 2014, and projections for 2020, for example) showed such improbable fluctuations and had such high margins of error that to use them would be misleading. (This type of gyrations is not surprising, given our small population and the tiny sample size used by the Census Bureau in between decades.) So I contented myself with a 20-year comparison using the reliable figures from the decennial censuses of 1990, 2000, and 2010; these numbers are derived from an actual house-to-house survey. Rightly or wrongly, I had fewer misgivings about using the recent income figures, since such data has always been derived from a limited sample (either the old “long form” or the American Community Survey method adopted in 2005 by the Census Bureau).

—Paul De Angelis

	Population	Median Age	Under 21	% of Total Population	21–44	% of Total Population	45–64	% of Total Population	65 & over	% of Total Population
Cornwall 2010	1420	50.1	322	23%	253	18%	548	39%	297	21%
2000	1434	43.5	373	26%	394	27%	415	29%	252	18%
1990	1414	39.5	329	23%	479	34%	357	25%	249	18%
Litchfield County 2010	189,927	44.4	46,596	25%	50,127	26%	62,862	33%	30,342	16%
2000	182,193	39.6	49,963	27%	59,403	33%	46,886	26%	25,941	14%
1990	174,092	35.5	47,075	27%	67,450	39%	34,974	20%	24,593	14%
Connecticut 2010	3,574,097	40	963,915	27%	1,084,574	30%	1,019,049	29%	506,559	14%
2000	3,405,565	37.4	972,587	29%	1,173,807	34%	789,420	23%	470,183	14%
1990	3,287,116	33.9	894,855	27%	1,295,027	39%	651,410	20%	445,477	14%

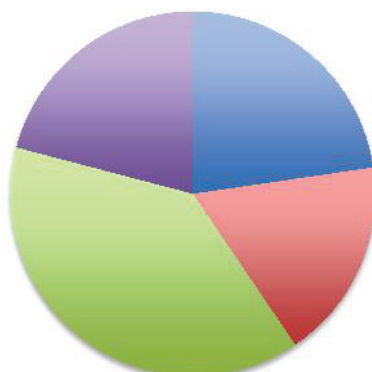
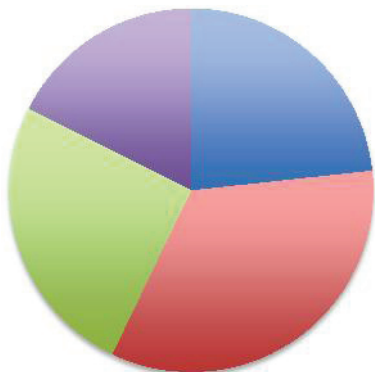
Fulltime Population of Cornwall, 1990 to 2010

The big change in age distribution over these two decades was between younger and older working-age adults (ages 21 to 44 and 45 to 64, respectively). The younger category declined precipitously (from a 34 percent to a 22 percent share), while the share of older working age adults jumped from 25 percent to 39 percent. This shift in proportion accounts for the jump in the median age from under 40 years old to over 50. During the same period there was only a slight decline in the percentage of kids ages 0 to 20 (from 24 percent to 21 percent), and only a slight corresponding increase in the percentage of seniors 65 and older (from 18 percent to 21 percent). A similar trend can be seen in neighboring towns and both county- and statewide, though it is not quite so dramatic at the greater geographic level.

Cornwall Population by Age Group

1990

2010



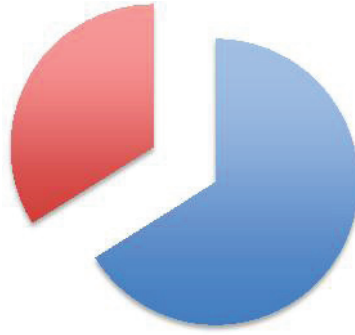
Blue: Under 21
 Red: Ages 21–44
 Green: Ages 45–64
 Purple: Ages 65 and over

Cornwall Population Including Part-time Residents

1990



2010



Blue: Fulltime residents
Red: Second/vacation home residents

	Total Housing Units	Second Home Housing Units, "for occasional use"	Fulltime Population	Est. Second Home Population	Total Population	% 2nd Home
Cornwall 2010	1,007	311	1420	728	2,148	33%
2000	873	227	1434	533	1,967	27%
1990	822	156	1414	367	1,781	21%
Litchfield County 2010	87,550	5,795	189,927	14,893	204,820	7%
2000	79,267	4,579	182,193	12,170	194,363	6%
1990	74,274	4,135	174,092	10,751	184,843	6%
Connecticut 2010	1,487,891	29,618	3,574,097	78,192	3,652,289	2%
2000	1,385,975	23,379	3,405,565	63,123	3,468,688	2%
1990	1,320,850	20,428	3,287,116	55,155	3,342,271	2%

Total Cornwall Population (full- and part-time), 1990 to 2010

The decennial census does not attempt to survey part-time or second-home population, but it does track the number of housing units officially labeled "vacant: for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use." Following David Grossman's example, I have derived what seems to me a reasonable estimate of this population total by multiplying the number of such "housing units" by the median owner-occupied household size. The result shows a doubling of this number over the past twenty years, and an increase in its percentage of the combined full-time and part-time population from 21% to 33%, a 12% increase that dwarfs the increases in neighboring towns (Salisbury 5%, Warren 6%, Sharon and Kent 7%) not to mention the minimal increases on the county or state level.

	Cornwall	Canaan (Falls Village)	Goshen	Kent	North Canaan
2014	<i>\$80,234</i>	\$68,021	\$81,528	<i>\$64,648</i>	<i>\$63,607</i>
2010	<i>\$80,179</i>	\$54,219	\$76,705	<i>\$68,481</i>	<i>\$46,417</i>
2000	<i>\$55,329</i>	\$56,094	\$64,891	<i>\$51,775</i>	<i>\$37,756</i>
1990	<i>\$38,937</i>	\$35,950	\$45,417	<i>\$42,029</i>	<i>\$35,922</i>

	Salisbury	Sharon	Warren	Litchfield County	Connecticut
2014	<i>\$84,141</i>	<i>\$72,083</i>	<i>\$100,150</i>	<i>\$72,068</i>	<i>\$69,899</i>
2010	<i>\$63,587</i>	<i>\$70,104</i>	<i>\$87,857</i>	<i>\$69,639</i>	<i>\$64,032</i>
2000	<i>\$52,156</i>	<i>\$55,395</i>	<i>\$63,162</i>	<i>\$56,136</i>	<i>\$53,935</i>
1990	<i>\$41,141</i>	<i>\$41,500</i>	<i>\$46,875</i>	<i>\$42,565</i>	<i>\$41,721</i>

Median household income for Cornwall & neighboring towns, 1990 to 2014

The above figures for median household income from 2010, and 2014 are derived from the American Community Survey of the Census Bureau, while those for 1990 and 2000 are derived from the old census "long form" and come from the NHCIS (National Historic Geographic Information System) Census file, and actually reflect values from the preceding year. Italicized values come with significantly high margins of error, and all of the figures should probably be taken with a large grain of salt. Nonetheless, certain trends seem definitive: that 1) the median income in Cornwall and most neighboring towns has risen dramatically over the last 20-some years, perhaps even doubling; 2) the increase has also been dramatic both county- and statewide, though less so.