



### II: Liberty Township History & Demographics

#### 2.1 Concise History of the Township

In 1803 the Legislature of the State of Ohio divided the Hamilton County, establishing Butler County. The Legislature of the State of Ohio appointed County Commissioners on April 15, 1803, who in turn appointed associate judges. The associate judges in Butler County established five Townships: Liberty, Fairfield, Lemon, St. Clair, and Ross. In 1804 the Legislature passed a law empowering County Commissioners to alter the boundaries of Townships and to set up new Townships. On June 2, 1823 Union Township (now known as West Chester Township) was formed from part of Liberty Township.

The last decade of the eighteenth century saw the first settlers in Liberty Township. Into the beginning of the nineteenth century, these pioneers, mostly from Maryland and New Jersey, bought large tracts of land for agricultural pursuits. Even by 1840, the land was still owned in quarter and half sections by a relatively small number of people. The early activities in the Township were farming and some commercial and industrial enterprises in the fledging villages. The earliest villages were platted in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century along the turnpike roads. The busy and self-sufficient character of these town's early histories, particularly of Princeton and Huntsville, with such enterprises as shoemaking, brick making, pork-packing, distilleries, and stores, suggest communities in relative isolation from larger centers where they could get such services. These villages served the surrounding agricultural countryside throughout the nineteenth century.



Fig. 2. The restored Hughes School, built 1887

Several churches were in the Township by the mid-nineteenth century. The first church was a Methodist-Episcopal, founded in the Huntsville area in the center of the Township. This M. E. Church was also the first in the county of this denomination. Another M. E. Church was established in Princeton in the 1830's and a third, called the Auburn M. E. Church was built in the northwest corner of the Township. A group called the New Lights built a brick church in Huntsville in the 1830's. In the 1850's a Universalist Church was built in Princeton, but by the Civil War it had languished. An Old School Baptist Church was erected in the mid-nineteenth century on Princeton-Glendale Road, north of Princeton, and appears to have lasted into the early twentieth century.

There were rudimentary schools in the Township before the mid-nineteenth century, but it was a very small number. A law establishing public schools in 1853 caused the formation of district schools in the Township. One school dates from nearly this time,

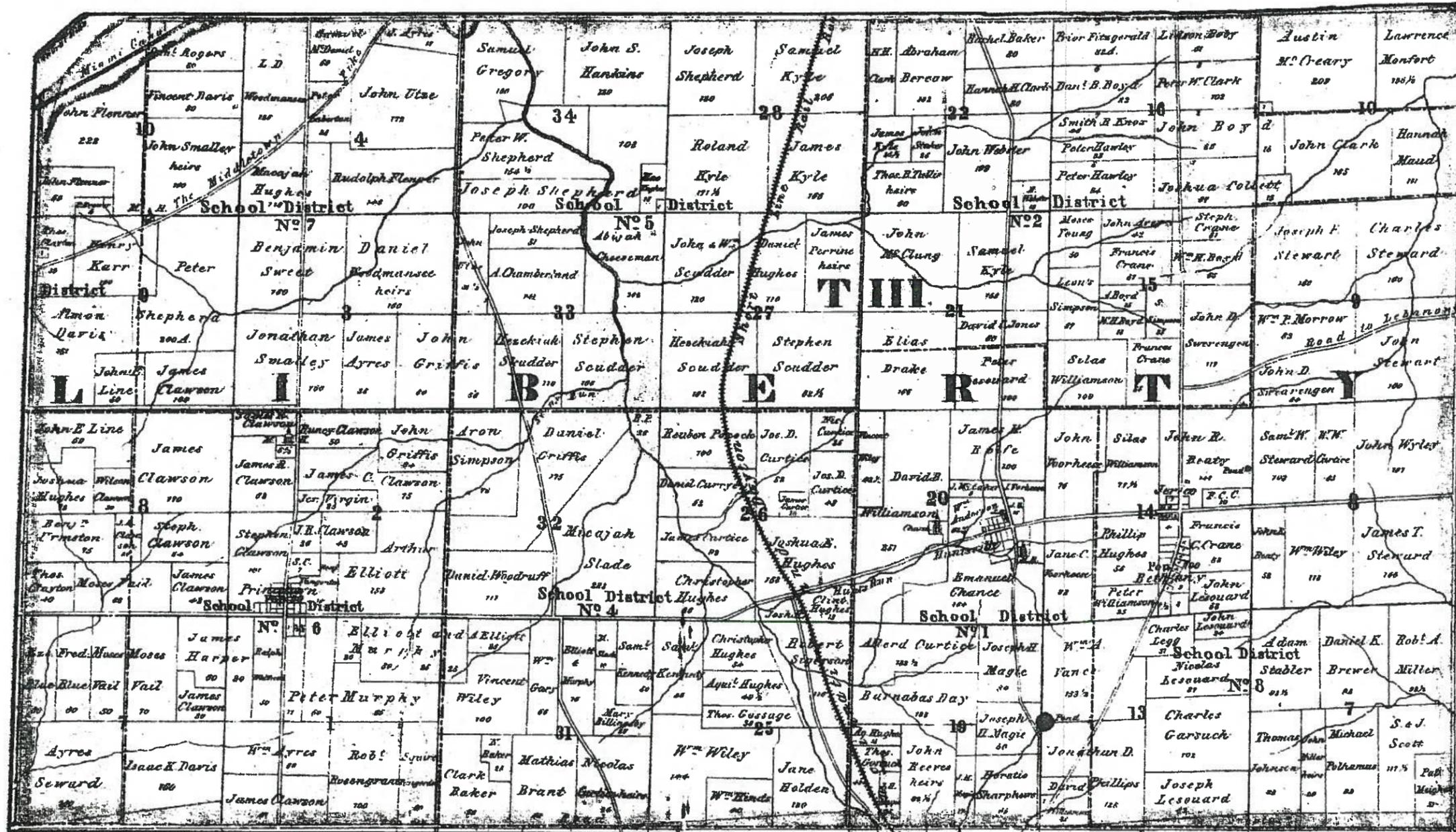


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# LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

REPRODUCED FROM MAP OF BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO  
by John Crane, Surveyor, HAMILTON 1855

No. 12



PUBLISHED BY THE BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2008



the District No. 5 School or Kyles School on Kyles Station road, which dates from 1858. The other schools, dating from 1871 (two of them), 1887 and one from the 1880's, were replacements of earlier district schools in the same location. Two other schools in the Township, one located on Princeton Glendale Road, north of Kyles Station Road, and one on Yankee Pike in Huntsville, are the only schools that are not in existence today.

The towns were thriving at mid-century, still possessing their early character as agricultural centers and as stops on the turnpike roads. Bethany was becoming the largest village, presumably because the Great Miami Turnpike (now Cincinnati-Dayton Road) on which it was located, was the busiest of the roads throughout the Township. A number of industries including wagon makers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, mason and carpenters, were located in Bethany throughout the nineteenth century as were a variety of stores. By mid-century the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Huntsville, the first in the Township, was moved to Bethany.

Many farmhouses were constructed during the mid-nineteenth century, a fertile period of growth in Liberty Township's history. These farmhouses, many still in existence today, replaced earlier log cabins or brick and frame houses.

After the Civil War, the biggest event in the Township was the construction of a railroad line through this area. The Cincinnati and Dayton Short, also called the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad, was built through the center of the Township in 1872. Two stations, known as Hughes Station and Kyles Station, were established in the Township. Small settlements grew up around both stations, which like the earlier villages served the surrounding agricultural community. Bethany was still growing in the late nineteenth century, probably achieving its peak growth in the 1870's and 1880's. The other early villages were losing their self-sufficient character by this time while Bethany

appears to have become the "town" for the community. A new church building replaced the earlier 1830's structure for the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Princeton in 1859, indicating some vitality here, but the Universalist Church and the Auburn M.E. Church organizations were basically gone by the Civil War. A new brick structure for the Methodist-Episcopal Church was built in Bethany in 1875 (Fig. 3). That same year the Cumberland Episcopal built a church in Bethany, at the south end of the village.

A small number of farmhouses, for the most part of frame construction, were built in the Township during the 1880's and 1890's, but the largest concentration of farmhouses still existing are those dating from before 1870.

A new set of railroad tracks was put through the Township in 1911 that of the New York Central Railroad, and the older tracks removed. Since the new tracks were generally in the same location as the earlier line, the two railroad communities of Kyles Station and Hughes Station remained



Fig. 3. Bethany United Methodist Church, built 1875 in Bethany



## Section II: Township History and Demographics

unchanged, although a grain mill and elevator were constructed at both stations. The Township Hall, which was built in the 1890's at Hughes Station, presumably because of its central location and proximity to the railroad, remained here to serve as the community's voting hall.

A small industrial community known as Rockdale, assumed to have been established by either a paper company or an asbestos manufacturing company, appeared in the early twentieth century in the northwest corner of the Township between the Great Miami River and Route 4. Very little is known about the community, except that the industry moved houses here, presumably for its workers. Although the community is shown on the 1810 U.S.G.S. map, the majority of the buildings in this vicinity date from the 1920's – 1940's.

Another small settlement, known as Maustown, grew up along Princeton-Glendale Road in the 1920's – 1950's, named for members of the Maus family who owned the first lots here. Princeton Glendale Road today is heavily traveled, and it is assumed that it had a similar character in the early twentieth century when the small houses with large setbacks were built. A number of workers in Hamilton's many industries were the residents here, perhaps looking

for a more pastoral, suburban location for their homes and yet within easy access to the City of Hamilton.

The district schoolhouses were disbanded in the 1920's, the result of the Rural School code of 1914, which eliminated the sub-district units of organization. The result was the creation of the Liberty School District in Liberty Township. The small schoolhouses were superseded by a large consolidated school on Princeton Pike in 1928, which is now Liberty Early Childhood School. In 1957, the Liberty and Union School Districts were combined into the Liberty-Union School District which was renamed the Lakota Local School District in 1970.

A number of bungalows were built in the 1910's – 1920's, most of them small farm complexes built out of the larger tracts of nineteenth century farm complexes.

The future of Liberty Township's subsequent development was first seen in 1948, with the establishment of the Horse Shoe Bend subdivision along Route 4 in the northwest corner of the Township. The small frame and concrete block houses on the road are assumed to have been built for laborers, who worked in Hamilton's industries.



**Fig. 4. Nineteenth century houses in Bethany**

Interstate 75 was built through the eastern portion of the Township in the 1960's, sewer was extended north along Gregory Creek in the late 1970's, and the Butler County Veterans Highway opened in 1999. This highway and utility connectivity brought a wave of new suburban housing development to Liberty Township beginning in the 1980's and continuing to this day. Presently, the southern and western portions of the Township are the most developed, while the central and northeastern areas of the Township are more rural in character, but are also experiencing recent development pressure.



Lakota Local Schools' growth in the 1990's and early 2000's mirrors the rapid suburban growth during this time, and has also had a significant impact on the landscape of the community. Between 1992 and 1994, three new schools opened in Liberty Township (Heritage – 1992, Cherokee and Independence – 1994), along with additions to six other schools in the district. Lakota East High School opened in 1997. Then in 2003, Van Gorden Elementary, Lakota Plains Junior School, and the Central Office Building were opened. Finally, in 2008, Wyandot Early Childhood School and Lakota East Freshman Campus were opened (source: Wikipedia). Also during this time, Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School opened its doors in 2002.

Commercial and other non-residential development has been an important component of Liberty Township's recent growth, bringing services, institutions, and employment to compliment the rapidly growing population. Commercial growth over the past decade has been largely focused in two areas: in the southeast corner of the Township, around the Cincinnati-Dayton Road interchange with SR 129 (CBD), and also in the northwest corner of the Township along State Route 4.

In 2009, The Liberty Way Interchange with I-75 and SR 129 was opened, along with the extension of Cox Road, improving access to more than 400 acres of land planned for commercial development in Liberty Township. This area, in which a \$325 million dollar mixed use retail development is currently proposed, along with the SR 747 corridor and possible future Millikin Road interchange at I-75 are seen as the future growth centers for commercial development.

While still a decidedly bedroom community, the recent commercial growth offers the start of Liberty Township becoming more of a complete community where people not only enjoy living, but also where people come to work and shop, where businesses thrive, and where residents come together as a community.

## 2.2 Recent Demographic Trends and Projections

Today, Liberty Township is a fast growing community characterized by a decidedly family oriented population base. This is not only seen statistically in a high average household size (3.22

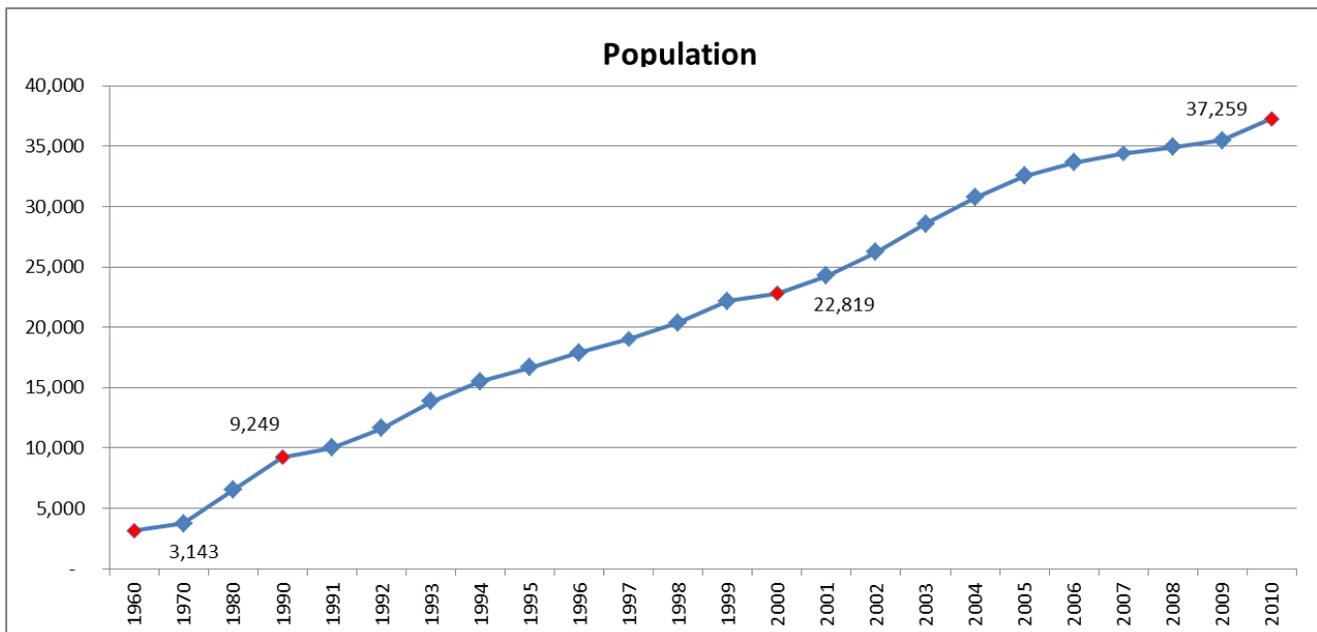


Fig. 5. Population Growth 1960 to 2010. (source: US Census Bureau)



persons per household), but also in the growth of single family detached housing subdivisions, recent boom in school expansion, and numerous youth sports leagues in the community. The recent pace of population growth in Liberty Township is unmatched in the region, and age and income trends suggest that it is an influx of relatively well educated, relatively high household income families with children driving this growth.

### 2.2.1 Population

Liberty Township has been one of the fastest growing communities in southwest Ohio over the past two decades, growing from a population of 9,249 in 1990 to 37,259 residents in 2010 (fig. 5). This amounts to a 400% increase over that time. As seen in the comparison chart (fig. 6), the only community in southwest Ohio which comes close to matching this growth rate is Hamilton Township in Warren County. However, Hamilton Township's overall population is roughly half that of Liberty Township.

The average persons per household increased from 3.08 in 1990 to 3.22 in 2010. This increase shows that it is primarily an influx of families with children which is driving the population growth in Liberty Township.

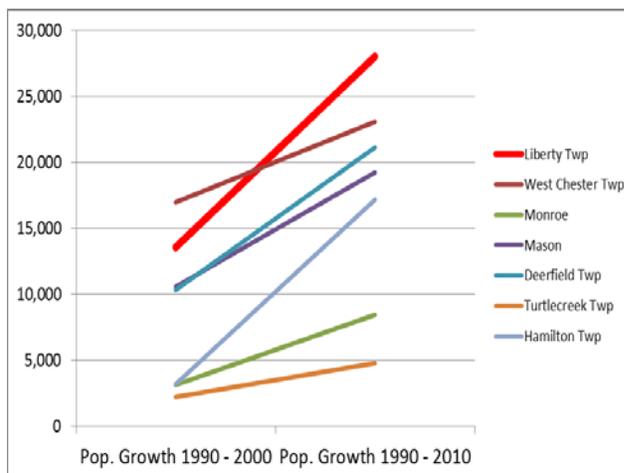


Fig. 6. Population Growth of Communities in Southwest Ohio

While the recent economic downturn has seen a temporary drop off of new housing permits, it has done little more than bring population growth back to the 20 year trend line as shown in the chart of projected population growth (fig. 7). Through the early to mid-2000's, population growth in Liberty Township was accelerating even faster than growth between 1990 and 2000.

Using population growth of the past twenty years as a guide, future population growth can be projected into the future. Looking at the past data, the population growth over this time has been relatively linear. Therefore, projecting this linear trend line forward, anticipated population levels can be estimated for future years. The chart showing Projected Population Growth (fig. 7) shows anticipated population levels every five years out to the year 2035. This chart anticipates a population of 51,000 by 2020, up to 72,000 in 2035. Using these population growth

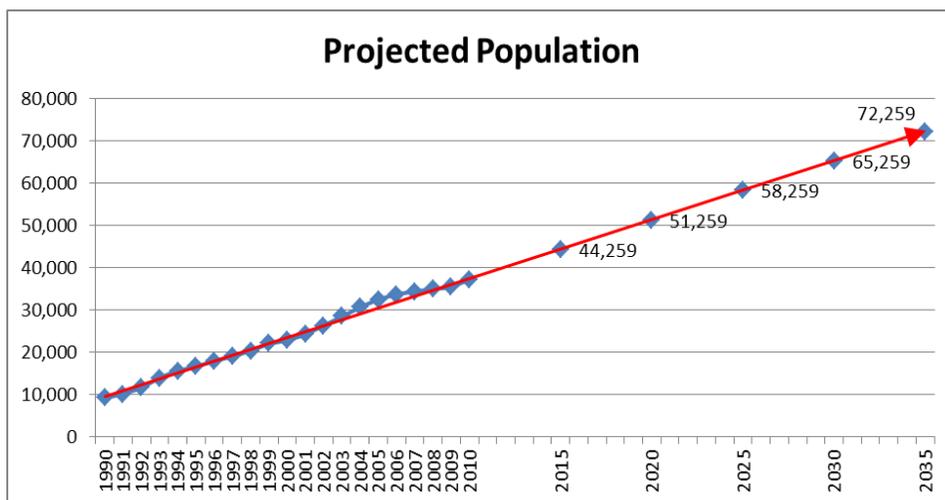


Fig. 7. Projected Population Growth

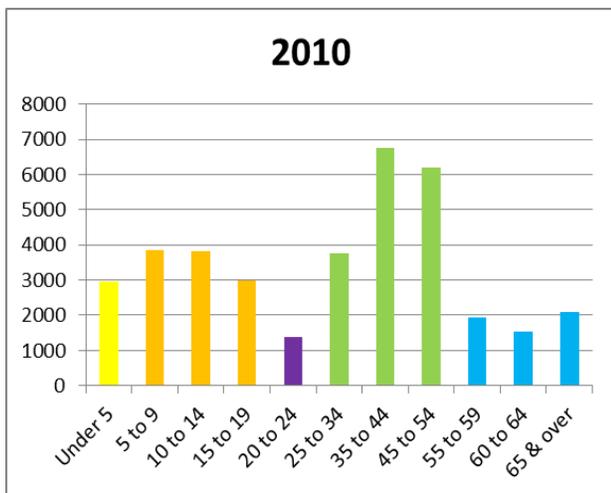
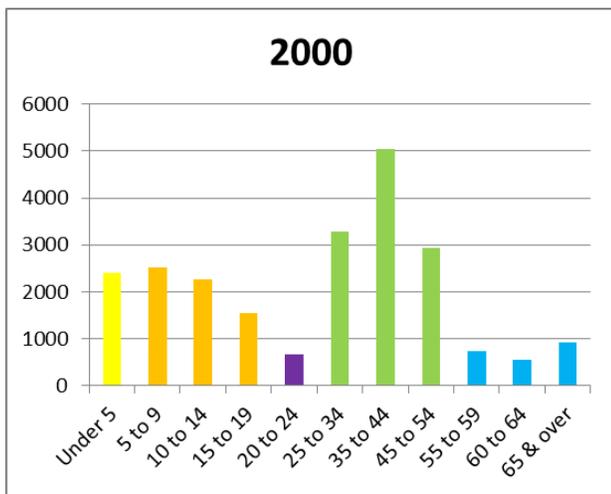
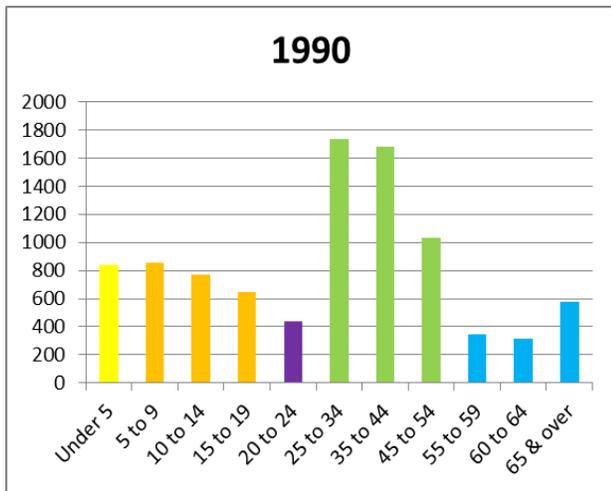


Fig. 8. Population Age 1990, 2000, and 2010

projections, along with the average persons per household, which has remained steady at around 3.22 over the past decade, the additional 35,000 residents anticipated by 2035 will require an additional 10,870 housing units to accommodate the anticipated growth. How these additional dwellings are incorporated into the Township is one focus of this plan.

### 2.2.2 Age

The strongest evidence of Liberty Township being a family oriented community can be seen by looking at the age demographics of the community. Looking at the charts of age breakdowns of the population (fig. 8), the two strongest groups are children under 19 and adults aged 25 to 54. Conversely, the groups of young adults age 20 to 24 and older adults age 55 and over make-up smaller segments of the population.

The charts use color to categorize the different age cohorts into groups based on typical life stages. Starting with the youngest age group, under 5, which is shown in yellow and represents children who are not yet of school age. The next grouping which includes the 5 to 9, 10 to 14, and 15 to 19 age cohorts are shown in orange and represents school age children. Next, the 20 to 24 age cohort is shown in purple to represent the young adult / young professional age demographic. The next grouping shown in green represent adults in the prime career and childrearing ages, which include the 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 age cohorts. Finally, the 55 to 59, 60 to 64, and 65 and over age cohorts are grouped together by the color blue to represent empty nester and older adults.

One interesting thing to note is how the age makeup of Liberty Township has subtly gotten older between 1990 and 2010. In both 1990 and 2000, the population under 10 years old was noticeably greater than children between 10 and 19 years old, while in

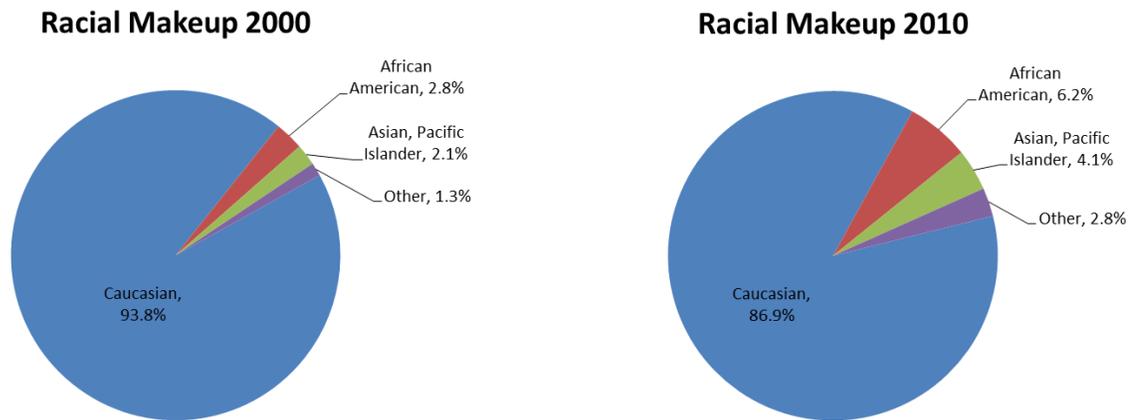


Fig. 9. Racial Makeup, 2000 and 2010

2010 the two age groups are equally balanced. Similarly, in 1990, the 25 to 34 age group was the most populous cohort within the career / childrearing adults grouping, but in 2000 and again in 2010 the age shift progressed to favor the older age cohorts. This age shift is important to note because in the coming decade, more of the population will be progressing into the young adult and empty nester age groups. These are age groups which do not currently have a large presence in the community and tend to seek different housing options and activities than families with children. While Liberty Township’s overall demographic makeup will be decidedly family oriented for the foreseeable future, without doing more to accommodate the needs of the young professional and empty nester groups, the Township risks having residents ageing into these groups move away.

minority population groups doubled their percentage of the total Liberty Township population. This shows that over the past decade, the population has become more diverse. This, along with the large overall growth in population of the Township, demonstrates that Liberty Township is a popular destination for families looking to move up within the region, as well as families new to the area.

**2.2.3 Race**

Statistics on the racial makeup of the Township are available for both the 2000 and 2010 Census. Looking at the data on racial makeup (fig. 9), it shows that

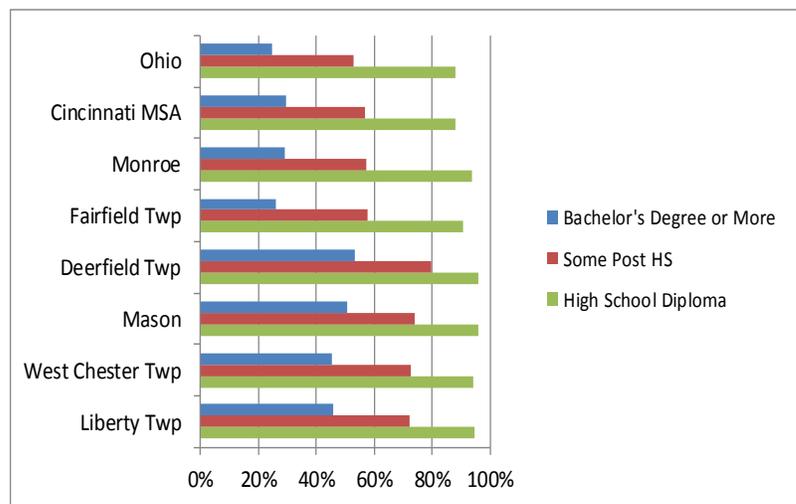


Fig. 10. Educational Attainment by % of residents age 25 and older.



### 2.2.4 Education

Liberty Township boasts a population with relatively high educational attainment compared with the region (Cincinnati, Hamilton, Middletown MSA) and Ohio as a whole. Looking at the chart showing educational attainment (fig. 10), the Township's population compares well with other peer communities like Mason, West Chester Township, and Deerfield Township. This shows that Liberty Township; along with other adjacent communities provide a large workforce of talented and well educated people as an important resource for businesses in the region.

### 2.2.5 Income

While the ten years between 2000 and 2010 have not been banner years for the national economy, these years have seen a dramatic increase in median household income for Liberty Township residents. In this time, median household income has increased 31.5% from \$76,341 to \$100,351. Furthermore, looking at the chart of Household Income in 2000 and 2010 (fig. 11), the percentage of households in Liberty Township earning over \$100,000 almost doubled from 27.5% to 50.3%. Astoundingly, the percentage of households earning

over \$150,000 nearly tripled. At this same time, the percentage of households falling into each of the income categories earning below \$100,000 decreased from the year 2000. It is likely that the increase is mostly due to the earning level of incoming residents. Since higher earnings and a higher level of educational attainment typically go hand in hand, the continuation of this trend of attracting higher earning new residents would also lead to a continuing improvement of the level of educational attainment among the Township's population.

In the following chapters on Housing and Economic Development, the Plan looks at how these demographic trends have, and will continue to shape development in the Township. Over the past two decades, new single family subdivisions have attracted highly educated, higher earning families with children. The Housing Chapter looks at factors which has caused this trend, and potential threats to its continuation. The Economic Development Chapter, in part looks at the potential for Liberty Township's resource of highly educated professionals to attract businesses, and even corporations to locate in the Township.

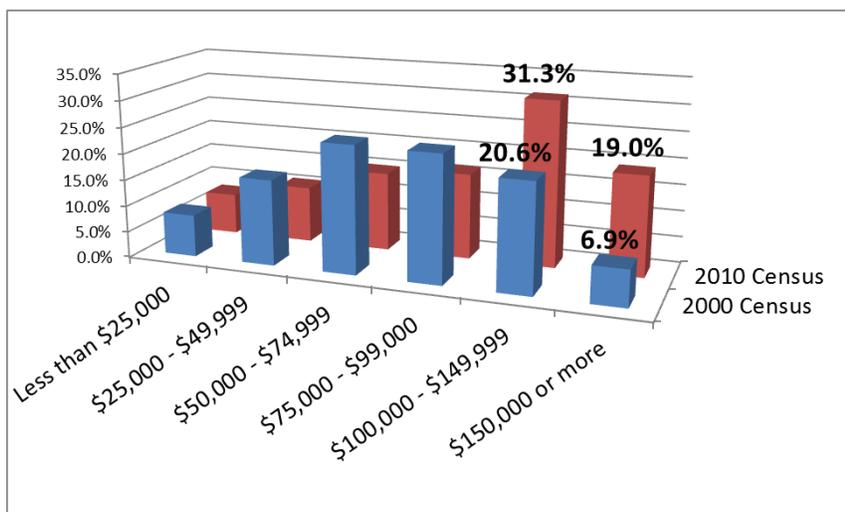


Fig. 11. Household Income 2000 and 2010