

BRISTOL

TOWN

**Addison County,
Vermont**

A Community Profile

**Prepared for the
Vermont Council on Rural Development
Community Visit October, 2004**

**By
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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 processes must be a work in progress. Materials below are organized to reflect community characteristics and resources. Please join us in this profiling effort and call attention to omissions, inaccuracies, and errors of fact.

Thank you,

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Section 1. Town Organization

The town of Pocock, named for Admiral Pocock, was granted by Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire on June 26, 1762. Pocock was a successful British naval officer credited with the capture of Havana in the early 1760s. The Vermont legislature changed the name to Bristol on October 21, 1789 (Swift, 1977:32). Bristol was incorporated in March of 1903 (Vermont Year Book, 2000-2001).

The commercial success of Bristol, Rhode Island in that era is believed to have influenced the name change in Vermont. Rhode Island's Bristol, in turn, had been named for the Bristol in Gloucestershire, England, where the name meant "place by the bridge." This provides an appropriate definition for Vermont's Bristol, describing thereby this community's ongoing efforts to maintain bridging of the New Haven River over the past two and a half centuries. Just this, wet summer of 2004, Bristol was challenged again to stabilize its "place" by the bridge(s). The New Haven River clearly delineates lowland Bristol from the sharply emerging Bristol Cliffs to the south of town and both Bald Hill and Hogback Mountain to the east.

These features create a dramatic and scenic western edge to the state's dominant Green Mountain Range, often viewed from below at the Bristol Memorial Forest Park and from higher ground in the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness area. Forest and mountain ecology define the town with well over half the total land area (26,880 acres) lying within the Green Mountain National Forest. To the north and west of the Bristol Town center lie more gently rolling, agricultural countryside attesting to the location of the town as a part of one southern bay to the great inland sea, a feature proceeding the last ice age.

The centrally located village of Bristol, approximately 8 blocks running east west by 4 spreading to the north, has been, and continues to serve as the population concentration in the town. Small clusters of inhabitants occupy Rocky Dale, a neighborhood to the east of the village, the remainder of the town characterized by scattered rural and farm housing. Attesting to the stability of this population cluster in Bristol village, Swift notes that the post office opened in 1804 and is the only one the town has had. Route 17 runs from west to east through the village, crossing the Green Mountains at Lincoln Gap. Route 116 runs north from Middlebury, bends east with 17 through the village and then heads north again, following the long Huntington River valley toward Hinesburg and eventually the Burlington area.

Bristol's neighbors with significant shared borders, include Monkton and Starksboro to the north, Lincoln to the east, Middlebury to the south and New Haven to the west. With the exception of Middlebury each of these towns have limited commercial and retail services and, to a degree, find Bristol a service center.

Community Profile –Bristol, VT

Table 1.1 General Town Characteristics	
Town Name	Bristol
County	Addison
Date of Town Charter	1762
Incorporated Village(s)	Bristol Village
Other Villages and Neighborhoods (past and present)	Monkton, Starksboro, Lincoln, Middlebury, New Haven
Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. <i>Vermont Indicators Online</i> . http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators	

Table 1.2 Bristol General Planning Characteristics	
Vermont Forum on Sprawl Category	1 - “Traditional Center”
Town Plan	February, 1995
Zoning Ordinance	March 1998
Subdivision Ordinance	No
Septic Approval Process	Yes
Source: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. <i>Vermont Indicators Online</i> . http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators	

Section 2. Natural Resources

Table 2.1 Bristol Town Selected Natural and Geographic Information	
Land Area (square miles)	41.77
Water Area (square miles)	.4
Percent Conserved Lands, 1999	25.6%
Change in Forest Land to Developed Land, 1970-90 (acres)	50.5
Change in Forest Land to Non-Forested Land, 1970-90 (acres)	56.0
Change in Non-Forested Land to Developed Land, 1970-90 (acres)	115.4
Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. <i>Vermont Indicators Online</i> . http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators	

Section 3. Human Resources

Total Population, 2000	3,788
Total Population, 1990	3,762
Absolute Population Change, 1990 – 2000	26 inhabitants
Percent Population Change, 1990 – 2000	.69%
Persons per Square Mile, 2000	90.69
Persons per Square Mile, 1990	90.06
Area in Square Miles	41.77
Percent Dependent, 2000 (under 18 and over 65)	38.6%
Percent Rural, 2000	100.0%
Percent Rural Farm, 2000	0.2%
Percent Native Born (United States), 2000	98.0%
Percent Reporting French/French Canadian Ancestry, 2000	30.2%
Percent Reporting English Ancestry, 2000	15.3%
Percent Reporting Irish Ancestry, 2000	14.9%
Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. <i>Vermont Indicators Online</i> . http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators US Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. <i>American FactFinder</i> . http://factfinder.census.gov	

	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2015 Projection
Bristol	3762	3788	.69	3,918
Monkton	1482	1759	18.69	2,028
Starksboro	1511	1898	25.61	2,249
Lincoln	974	1214	24.64	1,403
Middlebury	8034	8183	1.85	8,238
New Haven	1375	1666	21.16	1,933
Sources: Department of Aging and Disabilities and U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. <i>American Factfinder</i> . http://factfinder.census.gov				

Community Profile –Bristol, VT

Table 3.2 Ethnicity (Not Hispanic/ Hispanic) by Race for Town of Bristol

	Bristol	Addison County	Vermont
Total Population	3788	35,974	608,827
Not Hispanic/ Latino	99.5 %	98.9 %	99.1 %
White alone	98.0 %	96.2 %	96.2 %
Black or African American Alone	.2 %	.5 %	.5 %
American Indian and Alaskan Native Alone	.1 %	.3 %	.4 %
Asian Alone	.4 %	.7 %	.8 %
Some other race alone	.1 %	0 %	0 %
Two or more races	.7 %	1.2 %	1.1 %
Hispanic/ Latino	.5* %	1.1 %	.9 %
White alone	.4 %	.6 %	.6 %
Some other race alone	.1 %	.2 %	.1 %
Two or more races	0 %	.1 %	.1 %

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

* Hispanic race population percentage is **significantly below** state average.

(Source:www.city-data.com/city/Johnson-Vermont.html 2004).

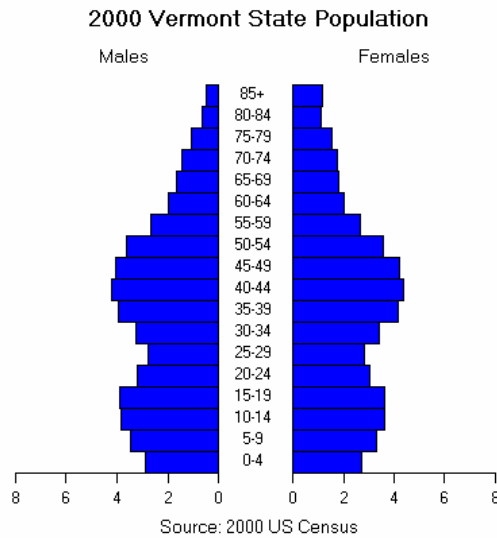
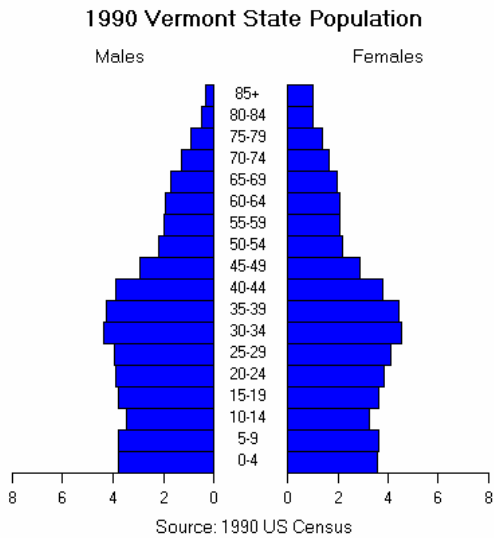
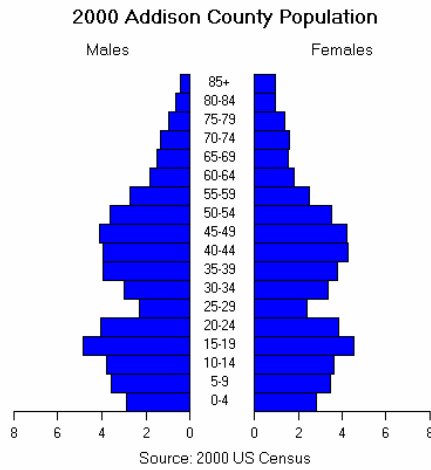
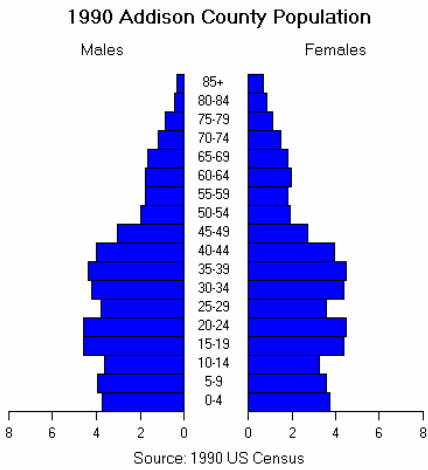
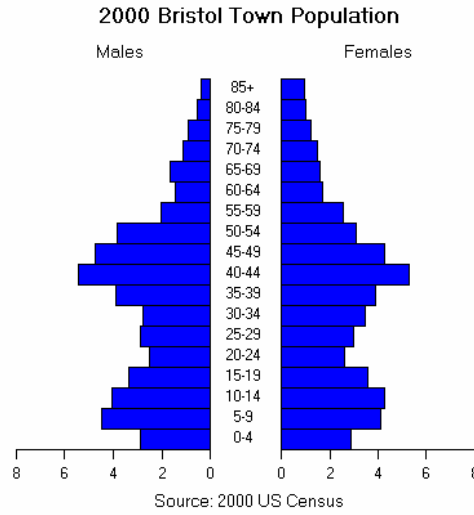
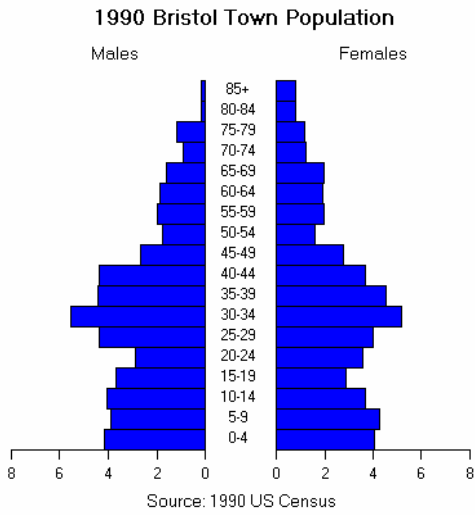
Table 3.3 Age and Gender

	Bristol		Addison County		Vermont	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Population	3,762	3,788	32,953	35,974	562,758	608,827
Percent 0-17 years old	28.5	27.7	26.1	28.9	25.4	24.2
Percent 18-24 years old	8.6	7.0	13.8	12.5	11.3	9.3
Percent 25-44 years old	36.2	30.7	32.7	27.0	33.4	29.0
Percent 45-64 years old	16.6	23.7	17.0	24.3	18.2	24.8
Percent 65+ years old	10.1	10.9	10.4	11.3	11.8	12.7
Median Age	Na	37.1 yrs	Na	36.1 yrs	Na	37.7 yrs
Percent Male	49.8	48.9	49.8	49.4	49.0	49.0
Percent Female	50.2	51.1	50.2	50.6	51.0	51.0

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

Community Profile –Bristol, VT

Figure 3.1 Vermont State, Addison County, and Bristol Town Age/Sex Pyramids 1990, 2000



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Table 3.4 Bristol Housing and Family Characteristics

	1990	2000
Number of Families	1009	1013
Number of Households	1376	1460
Average Family Size	Na	3.03
Average Household Size	Na	2.58
Single-Mother Households	87	102
Total Children in Single-Parent Families	196	237
Total Housing Units	1471	1546
Number of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	922	1007
Number of Renter-Occupied Housing Units	454	453
Median Housing Unit Value	\$89,400	\$109,000
Median Gross Rent	441	\$545
Median Gross Rent as Percent of Income	24.0%	21.9%
Percent Increase in Households (1990-2000)	Na	6.1%
Percent Increase in Housing Units (1990-2000)	Na	5.1%
Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. <i>Vermont Indicators Online</i> . http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/ U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. <i>American Factfinder</i> . http://factfinder.census.gov		

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Table 3.5 Town, County, and State Income & Poverty Comparisons

	Bristol	Addison County	Vermont
Annual Average Wage, DET 2002	\$25,495	\$29,556	\$31,041
Per Capita Income, CENSUS 1999	\$19,345	\$19,359	\$20,625
Median Family Income, CENSUS 1999	\$48,458	\$49,351	\$48,625
Median Household Income, CENSUS 1999	\$43,250	\$43,142	\$40,856
Persons for whom Poverty Status was determined, 1999	388	2,891	55,506
Poverty Rate, 1999	10.4%	8.6%	9.4%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18 years), 1999	15.69%	2.9 %	2.8%
Elderly Poverty Rate (persons 65 years or over), 1999	11.1%	.1%	1.1%
Percentage of Households with Public Assistance Income, 1999	2.8%	3.8%	4.8%

Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2004. *Vermont Indicators Online*. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>
 U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. Summary File 3. *American FactFinder*. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Section 4. Business and Infrastructure Resources

Table 4.1 Bristol Employment Characteristics

Top Five Industries, 2000 (employed persons 16 years and over)

1 Education, Health, Social Services	25.7 %	
2 Manufacturing	21.2 %	
3 Construction	11.3%	
4 Retail Trade	10.3 %	
5 Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Waste Management Services	5.5 %	
	Bristol Town	Addison County
Unemployment Rate, 2000 (Not Season Adj.)	2.6 %	3.2 %
Annual Average Employment, 2000	2,014	18,896

Sources: Center for Rural Studies / VCGI. 2002. *Vermont Indicators Online*. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators>
U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. *American FactFinder*. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 4.2 Bristol Property Valuation & Taxation

Average Residential Value (on less than 6 acres), 1999	\$103,667
Total Value of Grand List, 2004	\$1,595,351.83
Effective Property Tax Rate (rate per \$100), 1998	2.27%

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
Bristol Town Clerks Office. 2004

Table 4.3 Bristol Town Local Transportation Behavior

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for State Highways, 2000	45,892
Total Number of Accidents, 1997	11
Number of Accidents involving fatalities, 1997	0
Percent Commuters who Drive Alone, 2000	75.35%
Percent Commuters who Carpool, 2000	13.48%
Commuters who use Public Transit, 2000	.5%

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

Section 5. Social Capital

Table 5.1 Bristol Elementary School (K-6): General School Information

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	State (2002-03)
Total School Enrollment	447	429	405	368	99,978
Attendance Rate	95.6%	95.3%	95.9%	95.4%	95%
Retention Rate	2.3%	1.2%	1.0%	.8%	2.2%
Student/Teacher Ratio	13.7	13.3	12.6	11.9	11.7
Eligible Special Education	11.9%	11.4%	12.8%	12%	12.7%

Source: Center for Rural Studies and VT Department of Education. 2004. *VT School Report*.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/schlprt>

Table 5.2 Bristol, Statewide 2003-2004 Elementary and Secondary Public School Enrollment

	Female	Male	Total Enrollments
Bristol Elementary	48.6%	51.4%	360
Statewide Elementary Total	48.3%	51.7%	50,865
Mount Abraham SDHD #28	51.6%	48.4%	959
Statewide Secondary Total	51.5%	48.5%	48,239

Sources: VT Department of Education. 2004. *Public School Enrollment Report FY03* and Vermont Supervisory Union 2004.

Table 5.3 Bristol Town Educational Attainment, 2000 (percent persons 25 years and older)

	Bristol	Addison County	Vermont
Less than High School	19.3%	13.6%	13.6%
High School Diploma	40%	33.8%	32.4%
Some College	14.1%	15.8%	16.9%
Bachelor's / Associate's Degree	18.1%	24.9%	26.0%
Graduate / Professional / PhD Degree	8.5%	11.9%	11.1%

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

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>

Vermont Dept. of Education. 2004. *Vermont School Report*. <http://maps.vcgi.org/schlrpt/>

For text:

Addison County Chamber of Commerce 2004, <http://www.midvermont.com/bristol.html>.

Bristol Website <http://www.virtualvermont.com/towns/bristol.html>.

Vermont Historical Society: Local Historical Societies. 2004 website <http://www.vermonthistory.org/lhs/lhsindex.htm>.

The Power of Place, Bristol <http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=25093>

For maps and images:

Bristol town website. 2004. <http://www.city-data.com/city/Bristol-Vermont>.

<http://www.mapquest.com>

The written sources used were:

Bearse, Ray - editor

1966 Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State, The New American Guide Series, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Swift, Esther Munroe

1977 Vermont Place-Names: Footprints of History. Brattleboro, Vermont. The Stephen Greene Press.