

TOMS RIVER, NJ¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

Toms River is located within Ocean County on the Atlantic coast of New Jersey. The town's area, 40 square miles, takes up the majority of the Dover Township (Toms River nd). While most of Toms River is on the mainland, Dover Beaches North and South are situated on the Barnegat Peninsula which separates Barnegat Bay from the Atlantic Ocean (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Toms River, NJ (US Census Bureau 2000a)

Historical/Background

The history of Toms River dates back to the mid-18th century. In 1767, the Township of Dover was officially chartered. According to the Township of Dover's history webpage, when the British attacked Toms River village in 1782, it temporarily stalled the peace discussions for the Revolutionary War (Mutter nd).

In the nineteenth century, Toms River became a center for shipbuilding, whaling, fishing, and iron and lumber production. Access to the Atlantic Ocean was important in the Dover Township, as during this time Cranberry Inlet (now the Chadwick Beach area) was open. Toms River was ranked as a leading port until a major storm in the early 1800s closed the inlet (Ocean County Library nd). The opening of the Garden State Parkway in 1954 dramatically increased

¹ These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

² For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov."

access to Toms River, as well as divided Dover Township into eastern and western parts (Mutter nd). Interestingly, in 2006, Toms River was ranked as the fourteenth safest "city" in the United States (Morgan Quitno 2006).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Toms River CDP had a total population of 86,327, up 1,047% from the reported population of 7,524 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 48.1% were males and 51.9% were female. The median age was 39.7 years and 72.8% of the population was 21 years or older while 19.3% was 62 or older.

The age structure of Toms River (see Figure 1) shows relatively similar numbers of females to males in each age group. The age groups of 0-9 and 10-19 year old residents are higher than most other fishing communities. This may be due to the large number of public schools in Toms River (four high schools, three middle schools, and several elementary schools).⁵

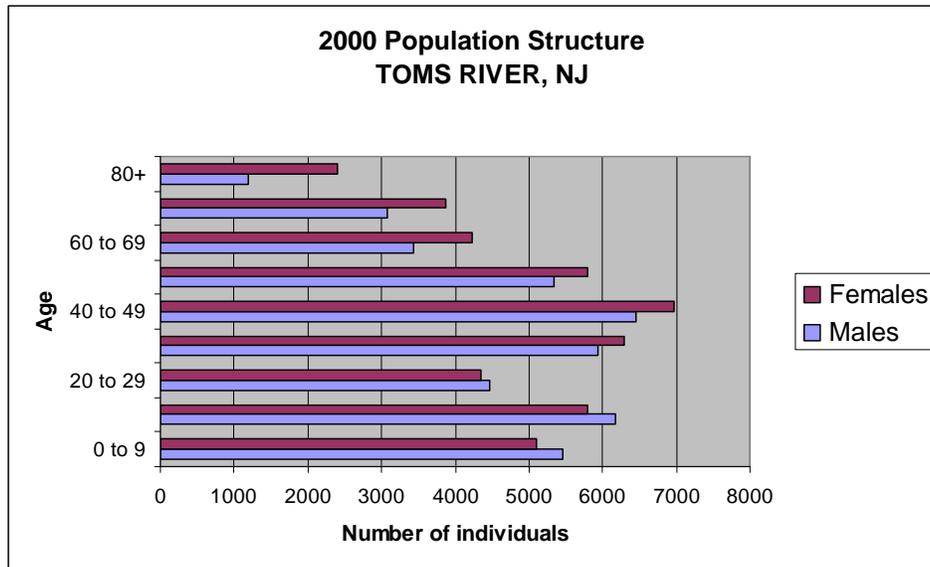


Figure 1. Toms River's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population was white (94.5%), with 1.8% of residents black or African American, 2.5% Asian, 0.1% Native American, and 0.02% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 4.6% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Italian (31.5%), Irish (24.1%), German (18.8%) and English (8.5%). With regard to region of birth, 69% were born in New Jersey, 22.9% were born in a different state and 7.1% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.6% who were not United States citizens).

³ While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

⁴ These and all census data, unless otherwise referenced, can be found at U.S. Census: American Factfinder 2000 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; census data used are for Toms River CDP (cited Jul 2007)

⁵ Personal communication, Tom Fote, JCAA Legislative representative, , JCAA, 22 Cruiser Court, Toms River, New Jersey 08753, 732.270.9102

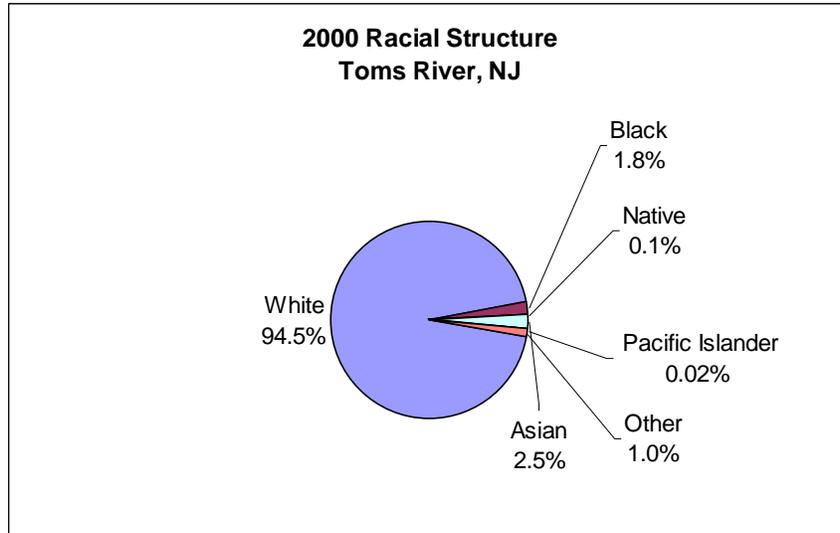


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

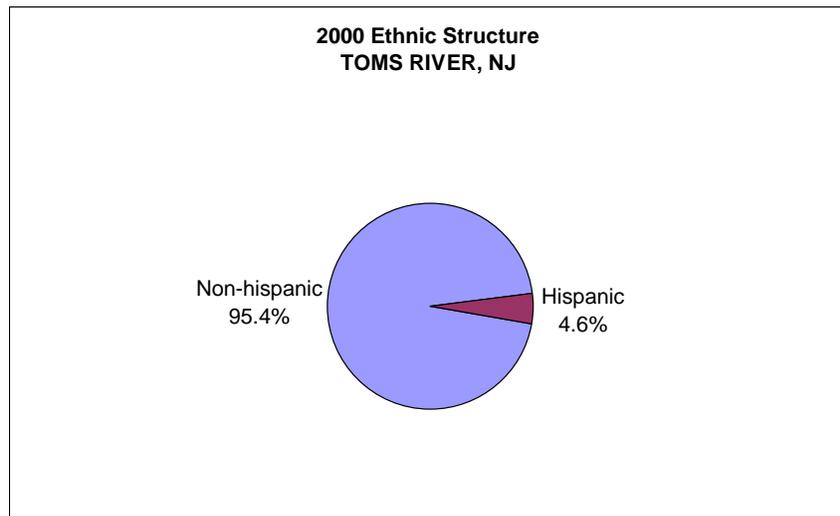


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 89.3% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 10.7% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 3.9% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 86.3% were high school graduates or higher and 23.7% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 3.3% did not reach ninth grade, 10.4% attended some high school but did not graduate, 35.0% completed high school, 21.7% had some college with no degree, 5.9% received an associate’s degree, 15.7% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 8.0% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Ocean County was Jewish with 35 congregations and 11,500 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Catholic (33 with 212,482 adherents), United Methodist (28 with 9,534 adherents) Episcopal (12 with 5,539 adherents), and

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (11 with 6,731 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 21.9% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

In 2002, a settlement was made by the chemical company Ciba-Geigy to 69 families of cancer victims, who were affected by the chemical waste produced and dumped in Toms River. The waste was disposed into Toms River in 1971 by a contractor of the Ciba-Geigy (Avril 2002). This company produced pollutants from dye- and resin-making operations, which have been characterized as pollutants by the EPA. The plant shut down in 1996, but a lawsuit requesting the removal of waste in an unlined landfill continues and many victims still suffer from cancer (Mikle 2005).

Current issues that pertain to fishing include the worries over chemical pollution leaking into the water, run-off that affects crabs and clamming, and the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant (heated water affects fish and habitat). Additionally, the sewer systems in the area were designed to pump water from the aquifer to the ocean resulting in a very low recharge to streams.⁶

There is discussion of changing the name of Dover Township to Toms River Township, which is how residents currently refer to the community. This is the seventh-largest municipality in the state of New Jersey, and the Toms River Business Development Corp. and others who support the name change believe changing the name to the more recognizable Toms River would lure more businesses to the area (Mikle 2004).

Cultural attributes

Although there are not any social fishing-related events in Toms River, residents participate in Governor's Surf Fishing Tournaments that are located only three miles from Toms River. Additionally, the [Jersey Coast Anglers Association](#) has a program to increase children's participation in fishing to help keep them off of drugs. The Toms River Seaport Society and Maritime Museum holds an annual Wooden Boat Festival, including a family boat building event (La Russo 2008).

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The largest employer in Toms River was the Ciba chemical plant until it closed in 1996. Now many people commute out of town to work in neighboring areas. The largest current employer in Toms River is the Community Medical Center with 2,870 full- and part-time employees. The Toms River school district is the second-largest employer in Toms River, with about 2,200 employees; the communities of Pine Beach, Beachwood and South Toms River are all included in the school district. The third-largest employer is the Ocean County government, based in Toms River, with 1,550 full- and part-time workers (Toms River nd).

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁷, 61.5% (42,053 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 2.9% were unemployed, 0.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 58.6% were employed.

⁶ Personal communication, Tom Fote, JCAA Legislative representative, , JCAA, 22 Cruiser Court, Toms River, New Jersey 08753, 732.270.9102

⁷ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

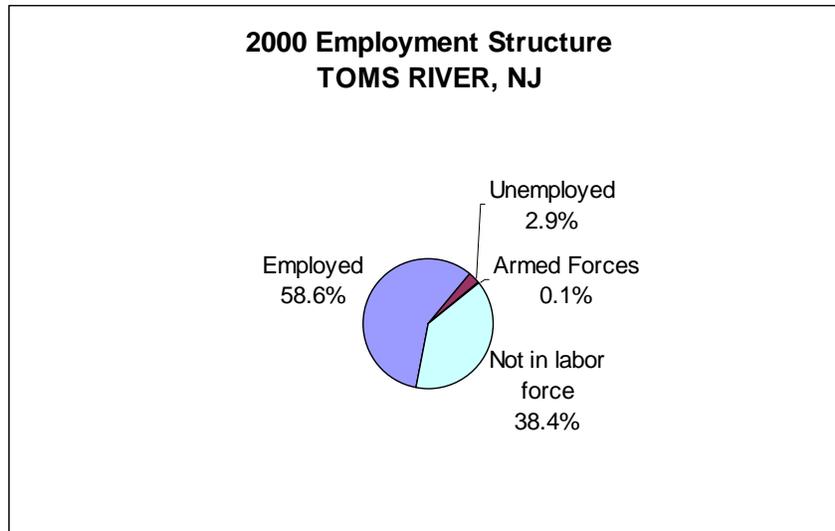


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000a)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 69 positions or 0.2% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 2,239 positions or 5.6% of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (23.5%), retail trade (15.6%), and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (9.6%).

Median household income in Toms River was \$67,084 (up 89.2% from \$35,464 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$24,831. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 35.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Toms River consisted of 3.1 persons. With respect to poverty, 4.0% of families (down from 5.0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 5.6% of individuals earned below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000, 20.7% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Toms River had a total of 34,388 housing units⁸ of which 92.2% were occupied and 81.5% were detached one unit homes. Less than one tenth (3.4%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, vans, and boats accounted for 3.2% of housing units; 88.2% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$148,900. Of vacant housing units, 3.5% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 16.3% were renter occupied.

Government

It is unclear what the official status of Toms River is (town, neighborhood, or other). According to one website, Toms River is a neighborhood within Dover Township, Ocean County. The Dover Township is run by a mayor and town council. The County is run by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The city council building is located in the “village” section of

⁸ Note: The 2000 U.S. Census website reports different numbers of total housing units for Toms River CDP in different tables (34,375 and 34,388).

Toms River (New Jersey Shore nd). There is also word of trying to change the name of Toms River so that it is just Dover Township, eliminating the confusion over the exact boundaries.⁹

Fishery involvement in government

Toms River has a NOAA Fisheries Port Agent located in the town. Port Agents sample fish landings and provide a ‘finger-on-the-pulse’ of their respective fishing communities (NOAA Fisheries nd).

Institutional

Fishing associations

There are several fishing associations to which residents of Toms River are members. These associations include Fish Hawk, Jersey Coast Anglers Association, and Jersey Shore Aquaculture Association. The Jersey Shore Aquaculture Association is housed in Toms River, but does not harvest any aquaculture in Toms River directly.¹⁰

[Garden State Seafood Association](#) in Trenton is a statewide organization of commercial fishermen and fishing companies, related businesses and individuals working in common cause to promote the interests of the commercial fishing industry and seafood consumers in New Jersey.

The [Jersey Coast Anglers Association](#) (JCAA) is an association of over 75 saltwater fishing clubs throughout the state. Founded in 1981, the purpose of the organization is to unite and represent marine sport anglers to work towards common goals. The JCAA website (www.jcaa.org) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

Fishing assistance centers

Information on fishing assistance centers in Toms River is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

Toms River has a NOAA Fisheries port agent located in the town. This location is central between Barnegat Light (~30mins by car) and Point Pleasant (30-35mins by car), where the port agent collects landings data for stock assessments of commercially harvested species. As of 2005, Joanne Pellegrino, the port agent in Toms River, covers only Point Pleasant because the Barnegat Light and Belford ports are covered by the Cape May port agent office. The port agent office in Toms River is strategically located on the Garden State Parkway.

Physical

According to the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) in 2001, Dover Township “is one of the key regional travel destinations in all of Ocean and Monmouth Counties.” The three major North-South roads are the Garden State Parkway, Route 9, and Route 166. The Garden State Parkway provides access for many residents to employment in the North Jersey and New York City area,

⁹ Personal communication, Tom Fote, JCAA Legislative representative, , JCAA, 22 Cruiser Court, Toms River, New Jersey 08753, 732.270.9102

¹⁰ Personal communication, Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Extension Center, 1623 Whitesville Rd., Toms River, NJ 08755-1199, 07/07/05

as well as connections with Atlantic City and the employment opportunities associated with the casino industry.

New Jersey Transit offers frequent bus service from the Toms River Bus Terminal to New York, Atlantic City, and southern Ocean County communities, as well as Jersey City and Newark. A connection to Philadelphia is also provided, via transfer through the Lakewood bus terminal. Local bus routes are also provided through Ocean County Department of Transportation's Ocean Ride (Ocean County Library nd). Tom's River is roughly 60 miles from Philadelphia, 65 miles from Newark International Airport, and 74 miles from New York City (MapQuest nd). [NJ Transit](#) trains to New York City are available from nearby Bay Head or Point Pleasant Beach, about 17 miles from Tom's River.

There are two marinas in Toms River which provide public access to fishing and charge for parking.

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹¹

Commercial

According to the NOAA Fisheries port agent, Toms River is not a commercial fishing port¹² and therefore, does not have any landings records for federally managed species. However, since there is data available listing vessels both with their home port and owner's city as Toms River, there may be commercial fishing taking place in state waters. Most years between 1997 and 2006, 10 to 12 vessels listed Toms River as their city of residence. Few vessels have Toms River as their home port, ranging from two to seven between 1997 and 2006. There were no landings reported by vessels home ported in the years 1997, 1998, and 1999. However, in 2000, the value of landings reported by vessels home ported in Toms River was nearly \$177,000 and this value more than tripled by 2006 (see Table 1).

¹¹ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

¹² Personal communication Joanne Peligrino, Toms River NMFS port agent in 2005, July 2005

Vessels by Year¹³

Table 1. All columns represent vessel permits or landings value combined between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	2	10	0	0
1998	3	7	0	0
1999	4	10	0	0
2000	6	11	176,970	0
2001	7	11	290,697	0
2002	6	11	352,793	0
2003	5	11	371,632	0
2004	5	12	511,081	0
2005	6	10	793,439	0
2006	6	7	648,450	0

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport
 # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁴
 Level of fishing home port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries associated with home ported vessels
 Level of fishing landed port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries landed in location)

Recreational

Recreational fishing in Toms River is more prevalent than commercial fishing. There are at least five bait and tackle shops in Toms River and Dover Township, two marinas, and residents that are members of one or more of the several nearby fishing clubs. In addition, most of New Jersey's sportfishing activities take place in Ocean County.¹⁵

Throughout the state of New Jersey, the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120ft long and carry over 150 people.¹⁶

Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Toms River is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

Future

Dover Township is considering purchasing an abandoned marina to create a municipal marina for the town, making available 150-200 boat slips and a ramp (Mikle 2005a). The town also plans to develop several hundred affordable housing units in Toms River to accommodate

¹³ Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

¹⁴ The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

¹⁵ Personal communication, Tom Fote, JCAA Legislative representative, JCAA, 22 Cruiser Court, Toms River, New Jersey 08753, 732.270.9102

¹⁶ Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, 1201 Route 37 East, Suite 9, Toms River, NJ 08753, October 2, 2007

some of the town's many low-wage workers who cannot afford to live in the community (Mikle 2004a).

The enormous growth in population over the last thirty years and the growing year round economy as opposed to the traditional summer resort business have led to a growing traffic problem especially in the major north/south arteries through Toms River (Dover Township).

REFERENCES

- Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA). 2000. Interactive Maps and Reports, Counties within one state [cited October 2005]. Available from: <http://www.thearda.com/>
- Avril T. 2002. Toms River cancer deal gives children \$13 million. Philadelphia Inquirer, 2002 Jan 23.
- La Russo JA. 2008. Downtown shows off Toms River's arts, music & culture. Toms River Times, 2008 May 21.
- MapQuest. nd. Web site: maps [cited Oct 2008]. Available at: <http://www.mapquest.com>
- Mikle J. 2004. Toms River, NJ, development board backs township's plan to change name. Asbury Park Press, 2004 Jul 21.
- Mikle J. 2004a. Toms River, NJ, clergyman pushes affordable housing. Asbury Park Press, 2004 Nov 11.
- Mikle J. 2005. Appeals court: State to oversee Ciba dump. Asbury Park Press, 2005 Jul 6.
- Mikle J. 2005a. Brush proposes acquiring defunct bayside marina. Asbury Park Press, 2005 Sept 23.
- Morgan Quitno. 2007. The safest and most dangerous city listing. Lawrence (KS): Morgan Quitno Press.
- Mutter JM. nd. Toms River Township New Jersey [cited Sep 2005] Available at: <http://www.townshipofdover.com/htoday.htm>
- New Jersey Shore. nd. Toms River [cited Sept 2005]. Available at: <http://www.newjerseyshore.com/toms-river.shtml>
- NOAA Fisheries. nd. Fisheries Statistics Office [cited Feb 2007]. Available at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/fso/>
- Ocean County Library. nd. Dover Township community profile [cited Jul 2007]. Available at: <http://theoceancountylibrary.org/Branches/TR/trcomprofile.htm>
- Toms River. nd. Toms River NJ web site [cited Sep 2005]. Available at: <http://www.toms-river.net/>
- US Census Bureau. 1990. 1990 Decennial Census [cited Jul 2008]. Available at: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
- US Census Bureau. 2000a. United States Census 2000 [cited Jul 2007]. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/>
- US Census Bureau. 2000b. Poverty thresholds 2000 [cited Jun 2007]. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh00.html>
- US Geological Survey (USGS). 2008. US Board on Geographic Names: Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) [cited Sep 2008]. Available at: <http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/>