

# Corte Madera, California

## People and Place

### *Location*

The Town of Corte Madera, meaning “cut wood” in Spanish, is located in Marin County approximately 15 miles north of San Francisco and 84 miles southwest of Sacramento. Corte Madera, with 3.2 square miles of land and 1.2 square miles of surface water, lies at 37°59’30”N and 122°31’36”W.

### *Demographic Profile*

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Corte Madera was 9100. Between 1990 and 2000, U.S. Census data reports that the population of Corte Madera increased 10%. The gender distribution in 2000 was skewed with slightly more females (53.2%) than males (46.8%). The racial composition of the population was 87.7% White, followed by Asian (6.1%), Black or African American (0.9%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.3%), and Pacific Islander (0.2%). A small percentage, 1.3%, identified themselves as belonging to some other race and 3.6% classified themselves as belonging to two or more races. Overall, 4.8% of the population recognize themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

The median age of the population in 2000 was 40.7 which was higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In the same year approximately 51.2% of the population was between the ages of 30 and 59. Of the foreign-born population (15.2%), 10.3% was born in the United Kingdom, 8.4% in Brazil, 8.1% in Mexico, and 7.7% in China. A total of 80.4% of the population of Corte Madera were living in family households in 2000. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 94.5% of the population of Corte Madera over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 61.3% had received a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 22.4% received a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

### *History*

The first inhabitants of the area known today as Corte Madera were the Miwok Indians. The Coastal Miwok, called Olamentke by early writers, are part of the Penutian language family.<sup>1</sup> The Miwok occupied the territory bounded on the north by Cosumnes River, on the east by the ridge of the Sierra Nevada, on the south by Fresno Creek, and on the west by the San Joaquin River.<sup>2</sup> The Miwok are known to be the largest “nation” in California and it is said that a “man of any of their tribes or settlements may travel from the Cosumnes to the Fresno and make himself understood without difficulty, so uniform is their language.”<sup>3</sup>

The Coast Miwok inhabited about 885 square miles of Marin and southern Sonoma counties. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were approximately 3000 Miwok in about 40 villages; each village consisted of 75-100 persons.<sup>4</sup> In 1910 the Miwok population was estimated at 699.<sup>5</sup> The Miwok traveled in boats made from tule reeds from which they traveled around the Bay and to Angel Island, the largest island in San Francisco Bay.<sup>6</sup> The diet of the Miwok consisted primarily of nuts, pinole – a meal made of plant seeds, roots, fruit, jack-rabbit, deer, sea lions, seals, sea otters, and several kinds of fish and shellfish that were available year-round. Annual salmon spawning runs were made through Raccoon Strait, just offshore from Angel Island.<sup>7</sup> Fish were taken by gorge-hook (made from bone) and spear, in wicker traps, and by narcotization.<sup>8</sup>

The Miwok's first contact with Europeans occurred in 1579 when Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman to sail around the world, was greeted upon his arrival by Indians in a village near Tomales, approximately 40 miles northwest of Corte Madera. Later, in 1775, Father Vincente, who arrived to claim San Francisco Bay with Captain Ayuala described the Coast Miwok as "humorous, with courteous manners."<sup>9</sup> For decades the Coast Miwok resisted the Spanish and Mexicans but ultimately they fell before European firepower. In December 2000 legislation was signed granting The Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria, formerly known as the Federated Coast Miwok, full rights and privileges afforded federally recognized tribes. Today there are over 500 registered tribal members.<sup>10</sup>

Corte Madera was once part of the original land grant, the Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio, given to John Reed in 1836. Reed, a Dublin native, originally attempted to claim land in Sonoma County but the Miwoks were hostile and forced Reed southward into Marin County. Reed built a small mill which cut wood for the Presidio, and for which the nearby City of Mill Valley was named. He also started the first ferry service between Marin County and Yerba Buena.<sup>11</sup>

People living in the Corte Madera area quickly became involved in the logging of redwoods to build the Presidio in San Francisco. The local industry shifted to farming and cattle-raising after the majority of redwoods were harvested. John Van Reynegom and his family arrived in 1848 and settled land at the base of Christmas Tree Hill, near the north end of town. Amelia Van Reynegom's, John's daughter, married Frank Pixley – a rancher and publisher of the literary magazine, the San Francisco Argonaut – in 1853. Upon Frank's death Ameila donated acreage to the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District, kept 55 acres for herself, and sold the remaining land to her sister-in-law for development purposes.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the town attracted individuals and families from San Francisco who came to the area in the summer to recreate. Christmas Tree Hill was subdivided into tiny 25-foot square lots for weekend camping. After the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 many of the lots were used to build permanent homes, many of which are still there today.

Not long after incorporation in 1916 Corte Madera was chosen to host the first post office and the first railroad station between Sausalito and San Rafael. The town was also home to a harbor for the loading and unloading of cargo. Steamboats traveling from Larkspur to San Francisco would stop here to purchase produce, lumber, and beef and return to Corte Madera with manufactured goods from San Francisco. Corte Madera however remained a sparsely populated community until World War II when thousands of shipyard workers came from around the country to work at the nearby Marinship.

Corte Madera's post war population boom culminated with proposals for the extension of one of the town's shopping malls and calls for a new dumpsite. The proposals threatened the area's marshlands and spurred the development of Corte Madera's environmental movement. The Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, consisting of marshlands along the town's northern bay, is a product of this movement.<sup>12</sup>

Today the town boasts a 22-acre park, numerous bike paths and other recreational opportunities, an historic village square, and a weekly farmers market between June and October. Corte Madera is also known for the two shopping malls that border the freeway, moderate home prices and taxes, friendly neighborhoods, and the area's central location. The Corte Madera Reserve Sanctuary, Shorebird Marsh, and the Ring Mountain Preserve have been established in town to help protect the area's migrating birds and native wildlife.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three occupations in Corte Madera for the eligible labor force 16 years of age and over were “management, professional and related occupations” (60.7%), “sales and office occupations” (20.1%), and “service occupations” (10.9%). Corte Madera’s top three employers in 2002 were Constellation Concepts, Inc. (restaurant service), Il Fornaio Corporation (restaurant service), and Restoration Hardware Inc. (furniture and home furnishings).<sup>13</sup> At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 8.8% of the town’s eligible labor force was employed within local, state, or federal governments, all working outside of natural resource industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining). The 2000 U.S. Census reports that there were zero Corte Madera residents employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census a total of 69.2% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 1.9% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Approximately 29.5% of Corte Madera’s population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force, slightly less than the national average of 36.1%. For whom poverty status was determined, 4.5% of the town’s population was living below the poverty line in 1999. The median household income in 1999 was \$79,839 and the per capita income was \$46,326. According to 2000 U.S. Census there were 3850 housing units in Corte Madera. The percentage of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 72.5% and 27.5% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 1.9%, of which 18.9% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

### *Governance*

Corte Madera, incorporated in 1916, is a small town that extends from San Francisco Bay on the east side of Highway 101 to Mt. Tamalpais on the west. The town is governed by a Town Council-Manager form of government. Corte Madera levies a 7.25% sale and use tax on regular purchases and a 10% transient lodging (hotel) tax.<sup>14,15</sup> Under Proposition 13 the maximum property tax rate for Marin County is 1% of the property’s net taxable value.<sup>16</sup>

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.<sup>17</sup> Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.<sup>18</sup> Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.<sup>19</sup> California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.<sup>20</sup>

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.<sup>21</sup> The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.<sup>22</sup>

The National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories located 86 miles south in Santa Cruz and there is a NMFS Regional Office located approximately 415 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Region Office is located 37 miles south in Belmont. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services is 15 miles south in San Francisco. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management Council are located approximately 37 miles south in Foster City. Corte Madera falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay, one of the largest and busiest marine safety units in the Coast Guard.

### *Facilities*

Corte Madera is accessible by ground, air, and water. The major roads connecting Corte Madera to neighboring cities are Interstate 80 northeast to Sacramento and south to San Francisco via State Highway 101. The town is accessible by bus via Golden Gate Transit. San Francisco International, located 24 miles south of Corte Madera, is the nearest major airport. Corte Madera is accessible by Golden Gate Ferry via the City of Larkspur, located 1 mile to the north.

There are two elementary schools in Corte Madera, one operated by the Portola Valley School District and the other by Larkspur School District. Corte Madera students attend Redwood High School, part of the Tamalpais Union High School District. There are also several private schools in the area. The College of Marin, with a campus 3 miles north in Kentfield, serves almost 4000 students. Additional college and universities are located nearby in San Francisco.

The Marin Municipal Water District serves the southern Marin area, including Corte Madera. Wastewater and sanitary services are provided to Corte Madera residents by the Public Works Department of the Town of Corte Madera, while Pacific Gas and Electric supplies electricity and natural gas to the area's residents. Public safety in the town is administered by the Twin Cities Police Authority, serving Corte Madera and Larkspur. Several medical offices are located in Corte Madera but the nearest hospital, Marin General, is located 3 miles north in Greenbrae. There are no port facilities located in Corte Madera. The closest port is located approximately 15 miles south in San Francisco.

Other local facilities and services include a public library, city parks, and the Corte Madera Community Foundation. Environmental groups are active in the area such as Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed. The non-profit, volunteer-based organization was founded in 1995 to protect urbanized creeks and wetlands and increase the diversity of these ecosystems.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

Landings data for Corte Madera were recorded as part of the Other Sonoma and Marin County Outer Coast Ports port group which includes the nearby communities of San Rafael, Inverness, Bolinas, Jenner, Windsor, Marshall, Petaluma, Novato, Stewarts Point, Dillon Beach, Drakes Bay, Healdsburg, Kentfield, Muir Beach, Guerneville, Sonoma, Nicasio, Greenbrae, Forest Knolls, Occidental, Cloverdale, San Quentin, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, Mill Valley, Tiburon, Stinson Beach, Hamlet, Marconi, Millerton, and Santa Rosa. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (135 t/\$116,723/15), crab (6 t/\$42,768/7), groundfish (1 t/\$1704/9), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/1), salmon (5 t/\$31,805/4), shrimp (3 t/\$23,875/6), and other species (4 t/\$23,656/16). According to available data there were no fish processors operating in Corte Madera in 2000. See the Novato, Dillon Beach, Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, and San Francisco Community Profiles for additional information on these communities.

Corte Madera residents owned five vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, four of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Corte Madera residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/5), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (0/0/1).<sup>23</sup>

Corte Madera residents did not hold any Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits in 2000. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of Corte Madera residents that held permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/3), crab (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/6), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/2).<sup>24</sup>

According to available data, 24 state permits were registered to Corte Madera residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/8), crab (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/12), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/2).<sup>25</sup>

### *Sportfishing*

Corte Madera sportfishermen are involved in both West Coast and North Pacific fisheries. One license agent, Big 5 Sporting Goods, is located in Corte Madera. According to available data there were no Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels licensed in Corte Madera in 2002 and 2003. Available Internet resources indicate that there are some sportfishing guide businesses in Corte Madera, such as New Rayann Sportfishing.

### *Subsistence*

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Corte Madera is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000 Corte Madera residents were scarcely involved in North Pacific fisheries. In 2000, residents owned zero vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries and zero landings were made by community members in the same year.

Additionally, in 2000 there were zero El Sobrante residents serving as crewmembers in North Pacific fisheries. Data indicates that there was no state or federal permits registered to community residents in the same year.

### *Sportfishing*

A total of 25 Alaska sportfishing licenses were purchased by Corte Madera community members in 2000.

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- <sup>1</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>2</sup> Access Genealogy. 2004. California Indian Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/californiatribes.htm> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>3</sup> Access Genealogy. 2004. California Indian Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/californiatribes.htm> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>4</sup> Rohnert Park Historical Society. 2000. Miwok Villages, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rphist.org/html/miwok.html> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>5</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>6</sup> Angel Island Association. 2003. Miwok Information, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.angelisland.org/miwok.htm> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>7</sup> Angel Island Association. 2003. Miwok Information, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.angelisland.org/miwok.htm> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>8</sup> Curtis, Edward. 1924. The Miwok, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>9</sup> Wlaker, Richard. 2001. A Hidden Geography, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R\\_Walker/AHiddenGeography.html](http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/AHiddenGeography.html) (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>10</sup> Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin. No date. History of the Coast Miwok at Point Reyes, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science\\_Folder/Coast\\_Miwok.html](http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science_Folder/Coast_Miwok.html) (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>11</sup> Rohnert Park Historical Society. 2000. Miwok Villages, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rphist.org/html/miwok.html> (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>12</sup> Stafford, Matthew. No date. Corte Madera: Moving freight, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://www.cagenweb.com/marin/Census/ot\\_cm.html](http://www.cagenweb.com/marin/Census/ot_cm.html) (access date - January 2005).
  - <sup>13</sup> California Employment Development Department. 2002. Major Employers in Marin County, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/majorer/mariner.htm> (access date - December 2004).
  - <sup>14</sup> California State Board of Equalization. 2004. California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/pub71.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>15</sup> California State Board of Equalization. 2001. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, Rate and Date for the Fiscal Year 2000-01, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locrep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>16</sup> Office of the County Assessor. 2004. 2004-2005 Annual Report, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.scc-assessor.org/scc/assets/docs/653748ARfinal0405.pdf> (access date - November 2004).
  - <sup>17</sup> State of California Board of Equalization. No date. Property Tax Rules, Rule 151. Vessels Subject to the Four Percent Assessment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>18</sup> California Department of Motor Vehicles. 2003. How to register a vessel, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/boatsinfo/boatreg.htm#how> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>19</sup> State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/bllstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation. 2001. Provisions Governing the Distribution of State Motor Fuel Tax Receipts: California, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/hwytaxes/2001/california.htm> (access date - July 2004).
  - <sup>21</sup> State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycod?section=fgc&group=08001-8070> (access date - July 2004).

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<sup>22</sup> State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).

<sup>23</sup> 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

<sup>24</sup> 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

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