

Half Moon Bay, California

People and Place

Location

The City of Half Moon Bay is located in San Mateo County, situated approximately 30 miles south of San Francisco and 40 miles northwest of San Jose. Half Moon Bay, covering 6.5 square miles of land, lies at 37°27'49"N, 122°25'39"W.

Demographic Profile

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Half Moon Bay was 11,842. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Census reports that the population of Half Moon Bay increased 33.3%. In 2000 the percentage of males and females was 53% and 47% respectively. The racial composition of the population was 77.3% White, followed by Black or African American (3.9%), Asian (3.4%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.4%), and Pacific Islander (0.1%). A large percentage, 11%, identified themselves as belonging to some other race and 3.8% classified themselves as belonging to two or more races. Overall, 23.2% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Of the foreign-born population (24.1%), 53.6% were born in Mexico.

The median age of the population in 2000 was 38.7, higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In 2000 approximately 63.6% of the population was between the ages of 22 and 64. A total of 78.9% of the population of Half Moon Bay were living in family households in 2000. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 74.6% of the population of Half Moon Bay over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 32.4% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 12.3% received a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

History

In 1769 Gaspar de Portola, the Captain of a Spanish exploration team, found San Francisco Bay while searching for Monterey Bay. Upon Portola's arrival in the area there were over 10,000 Indians living in central California's coastal areas between Big Sur and San Francisco Bay. This group of Indians consisted of approximately 40 tribal groups ranging in size from 100-250 members. When the Spanish arrived they referred to the tribal groups collectively as "Costenos," meaning "coastal people." The name was eventually changed to "Costanoan." Native Americans in the San Francisco Bay area were referred to as Costanoans for years until descendants chose to call themselves Ohlones, meaning "the abalone people."¹

The Ohlones utilized hunting and gathering technology, taking advantage of the rich natural resources in the area. Adult males hunted several large game animals including deer, elk, bear, whale, sea lion, otter, and seal. Freshwater and saltwater fish were important in the Ohlone diet, including steelhead trout, salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey. Shellfish were also important to the Ohlone. People that lived along Monterey and San Francisco Bays gathered mussels, abalone, clams, oysters, and hornshell from the local tidelands.²

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, one of several Ohlone groups, is comprised of lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Dolores, Santa Clara, and San Jose. The aboriginal homeland of the Muwekma Tribe includes several counties, including San Mateo County. Between 1982 and 1984 the Muwekma Tribal

Council was formally organized and tribal members are currently working for federal recognition.³

During the 23-years of Mexican rule San Mateo County became the site of 17 large ranchos. Two years after the Mexicans were defeated in 1846 gold was discovered in the area and the population of the San Francisco peninsula grew rapidly. Many of the areas most influential persons purchased land in San Mateo County, building large mansions on the old Mexican land grants. In 1856 San Mateo County, which up to this point had been part of San Francisco County, was created out of a political deal.

Half Moon Bay is the oldest town in San Mateo County, dating back to 1840. There were so many Spanish-speaking people living in the area when the first Americans arrived during the Gold Rush that they named the area “Spanishtown.” In 1974 the name was changed to Half Moon Bay. The 20th century brought several changes to the area. Founded in 1908 the Ocean Shore Railroad carried passengers through Half Moon Bay, en route between San Francisco and Tunitas Glen. The coastal area, with its hidden coves and fog, came alive during Prohibition as an ideal setting for rumrunners from Canada. From the 1920s onward growth in the area has been slow and steady. Original farms can still be found in the area along with miles of sandy beaches, fields, and hiking and biking trails along ocean bluffs and ridges. For more information on the area see the El Granada, Princeton, and San Francisco Community Profiles.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three occupations in Half Moon Bay for the eligible labor force 16 years of age and over were “management, professional and related occupations” (43.2%), “sales and office occupations” (23.2%), and “service occupations” (14.7%). Half Moon Bay’s top six employers in 2000 were Nurserymen’s Exchange, (600); The Ritz-Carlton, (475); Bay City Flower Company, (375); Cabrillo Unified School District, (312); Safeway Stores, (160); and Seton Medical Center Coastside, (157).⁴ At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 12.5% of the city’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 only 2.2% of Half Moon Bay’s population was employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census a total of 62.5% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 4% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). A total of 34.9% of Half Moon Bay’s population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force in 2000, which is slightly less than the national average of 36.1% for the same year. For whom poverty status was determined, 6.1% of the city’s population was living below the poverty line in 1999. The median household income in 1999 was \$78,473 and the per capita income was \$37,963. There were 4114 housing units according to 2000 U.S. Census data. The percentage of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied was 75.4% and 24.6% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 2.7% of which 36.4% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Half Moon Bay was incorporated in 1959 and lies just south of San Francisco. The city is governed by a Mayor, Vice Mayor, and three City Council members. Half Moon Bay levies a 8.25% sales and use tax on regular purchases and a 10% transient lodging tax.^{5,6} Under

Proposition 13 the maximum property tax rate for San Mateo County is 1% of the property's net taxable value.⁷

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁸ 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.⁹ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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.¹² 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.¹³

The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories located 61 miles south in Santa Cruz and there is a NMFS Regional Office located approximately 400 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has a marine field office located about 12 miles northeast in Belmont. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is 30 miles north in San Francisco. The Pacific Fishery Management Council holds meetings approximately 15 miles northeast in Foster City. Half Moon Bay falls under the jurisdiction of the USCG Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay, one of the largest and busiest marine safety units in the Coast Guard.

Facilities

Half Moon Bay is accessible by sea, ground, and air. The major roads connecting Half Moon Bay to neighboring cities are U.S. Highway 1 north to San Francisco and south to Santa Cruz, and Interstate 280 southeast to San Jose. The Half Moon Bay public-use airport is located 6 miles north of the city and San Francisco International Airport is 12 miles away. San Mateo County Transit District provides SamTrans bus service throughout San Mateo County and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto.

Half Moon Bay is served by the Cabrillo Unified School District that operates four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one high school, a continuation school, and an adult education program. San Mateo College is located approximately 13 miles northeast in San Mateo and serves over 5000 students. Freshwater is provided to El Granada residents by the Coastside County Water District. The Sewer Authority Mid-Coastwide administers wastewater treatment to residents of Half Moon Bay. Pacific Gas and Electric supplies electricity and natural gas to community residents. The closest hospital, St. Catherine's, is located 7 miles in north in Moss Beach. Public safety in the city is administered by the Half Moon Bay Police Department. Additional local facilities include a public library, city parks, community centers, and several museums and galleries.

The nearest port facilities are located approximately 0.25 miles northwest at Pillar Point, just outside of Princeton. Pillar Point is a working fishing harbor with 369 berths. The San Mateo County Harbor District also operates Oyster Point Marina in the City of South San Francisco, a 600-berth recreational boating marina. The Half Moon Bay Yacht Club is also located in Princeton at Pillar Point Harbor.

The San Mateo County Harbor District supports the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries, a recently formed group of fishermen from the four harbors that adjoin or lie within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary: Pillar Point, Santa Cruz, Moss Landing, and Monterey. Pillar Point fishermen are actively participating in Alliance activities including: attending hearings regarding the Marine Life Protection Act, Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings, conferences, and other meetings regarding fishing in the area.¹⁴

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Half Moon Bay includes records from the nearby community of Princeton. Landings in the communities were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (319 t/\$53,582/30), crab (165 t/\$879,522/72), groundfish (699 t/\$766,728/89), highly migratory species (16.3 t/\$36,204/22), salmon (350 t/\$1,465,453/231), shrimp (confidential/confidential/2), and other species (52 t/\$276,978/57). Available data indicates that there was one seafood processor, LaRocca's Seafood Specialties, operating in the community in 2000. Morgan Moon Dabs, a wholesaler and receiver of sanddabs also operates in Half Moon Bay. See the Princeton Community Profile for additional information about this community.

Half Moon Bay residents owned 15 vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, 13 of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Half Moon Bay residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), crab (0/0/14), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/1/16), and shellfish (NA/0/NA).¹⁵

Eight Half Moon Bay residents held Federally Managed Groundfish fishery permits in 2000. According to recorded data for the same year, the number of Half Moon Bay residents that held permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/5), crab (0/0/15), groundfish (0/0/5), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/2/29), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/9).¹⁶

According to available data, 92 state and federal permits were registered to Half Moon Bay residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/10), crab (0/0/16), groundfish (0/0/6), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/2/48), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/10).¹⁷

Sportfishing

In Half Moon Bay sportfishermen are involved in both West Coast and Alaskan fisheries. There are two sportfishing license agents located in Half Moon Bay. There was zero Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels licensed in Half Moon Bay 2002 and 2003.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Half Moon Bay area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Half Moon Bay 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, Half Moon Bay residents owned one vessel that was involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Groundfish (confidential/confidential/1) and other finfish (confidential/confidential/1). In the same year one community resident held registered state permits and two held registered federal permits.

In 2000 one Half Moon Bay resident served as a crewmember in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year community residents held seven registered state permits. In 2000 residents of Half Moon Bay held four groundfish License Limitation Program permits and one BSAI Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit.

Sportfishing

A total of 29 Alaska sportfishing licenses were purchased by Half Moon Bay community members in 2000.

¹ National Park Service. No date. An 'Unvanishing' History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/sfprehis.htm> (access date - November 2004).

² Santa Cruz Public Libraries. 1991. An Overview of Ohlone Culture, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.santacruzpl.org/history/spanish/ohlone.shtml> (access date - November 2004).

³ The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. No date. Mewekma Ohlone Tribe: A brief history and the federal recognition process, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.muwekma.org/history/tribe.html> (access date - November 2004).

⁴ Half Moon Bay Coastside Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau. 2002. Employment, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.halfmoonbaychamber.org/community_info/employment.html (access date - December 2004).

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).

⁷ 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).

⁸ 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).

⁹ 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).

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ 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).

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- ¹² 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).
- ¹³ State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁴ San Mateo County Harbor District. 2003. Pillar Point Harbor, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.smharbor.com/pillarpoint.pppress.htm> (access date - December 2004).
- ¹⁵ ‘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.
- ¹⁶ ‘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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