

Princeton, California

People and Place

Location

Princeton, founded in the early 1900s, is one of several unincorporated Mid-Coast communities south of San Francisco. Located along the San Mateo County coast, the town is approximately 25 miles south of San Francisco and 44 miles northwest of San Jose. Princeton, also known as “Princeton-by-the-Sea,” lies at 37°30’18”N, 122°29’09”W.

Demographic Profile

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census the population of Princeton was 489. In 2000 the percentage of males and females was 49.9% and 50.1% respectively. The racial composition of the population was predominantly White (82.6%), followed by American Indian and Alaskan Native (4.9%) and Asian (3.1%). There were no “Pacific Islanders” or “Black or African American” living in Princeton in 2000. Overall 6.7% identified themselves as belonging to some other race and 2.7% classified themselves as belonging to two or more races. Overall, 16.8% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

The median age of the population in 2000 was 38.6 which was higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In 2000 approximately 41.3% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 59. Of the foreign-born population (9.6%), 78.2% were born in Mexico and 18.2% in Korea. A total of 88.1% of the population of Princeton was living in family households in 2000. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 78.2% of the population of Princeton over 18 years of age had received a high school degree or higher, 15.3% had received a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 1.9% 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 also 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.

Princeton, along with several other coastal communities in the area, was established between 1906 and 1909 during the real estate boom that followed the construction of the Ocean Shore Railroad. The Princeton Inn, constructed in 1908 as a seaside resort hotel, originally attracted numerous tourists from San Francisco via the Ocean Shore Railroad. When the railroad failed, the tourist atmosphere in the town faded, but the hotel became popular again during the 1920s as a brothel and as a haven for rumrunners.

Originally envisioned as an ocean resort, today Princeton is principally known for its harbor, Pillar Point. The land adjacent to Pillar Point is primarily an industrial area for boatbuilding and other marine-related industries. The Johnson Pier, built in the 1960s, is a popular spot among local anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. A trail heading north from Johnson Pier leads to a public fishing pier on the inner breakwater. Today increased commercial development is occurring along Capistrano Road, at the harbor's entrance, where you can find restaurants selling local seafood. Harbor Day, held the last Saturday of September, is sponsored by the Half Moon Bay Fishermen's Marketing Association and offers local and tourists a chance to try local seafood and purchase crafts from vendors. For more information on the area see the El Granada, Half Moon Bay, and San Francisco Community Profiles.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the top three industries in Princeton in 2000 for the eligible labor force 16 years of age and over were "agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining" (35.1%), "educational, health, and social services" (19.7%), and "transportation, warehousing, and utilities" (14.3%). At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 25.5% 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 34.6% of Princeton's population was employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census a total of 46.3% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 7.8% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population of Princeton over 16 years of age 49.8% was not in the labor force in 2000, slightly more than the national average of 36.1% for the same year. For whom poverty status was determined, 21.8% of the city's population was living below the poverty line in 1999. The median household income in 1999 was \$40,417 and the per capita income was \$17,481. There were 219 housing units according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The percentage of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 68.5% and 31.5% respectively. The percent of vacant housing units was 17.4%, of which 60.5% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

As an unincorporated community, San Mateo County levies a 8.25% sales and use tax on regular purchases and a 10% transient lodging tax.^{4,5} Under Proposition 13 the maximum property tax rate for San Mateo County is 1% of the property's net taxable value.⁶ California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁷ 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.⁸ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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.¹²

The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories located 65 miles southeast in Santa Cruz and there is a NMFS Regional Office located approximately 405 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has a marine field office located about 16 miles east in Belmont. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is 25 miles north in San Francisco. The Pacific Fishery Management Council holds meetings approximately 19 miles northeast in Foster City. Princeton 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

Princeton is accessible by ground and air. The major roads connecting Princeton to neighboring cities are State Highway 1 north to San Francisco and south to Santa Cruz, and State Highway 92 and Interstate 280 east to San Jose. The closest public-use airport is Half Moon Bay Airport, located just outside of Princeton. The San Francisco International Airport is located approximately 25 miles north in San Francisco. San Mateo County Transit District provides SamTrans bus service throughout San Mateo County and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto.

Children in Princeton attend school in the City of Half Moon Bay. The College of San Mateo, serving over 5000 students, is located 17 miles northeast in San Mateo. The nearest San Mateo County library is located 5 miles south in Half Moon Bay. Freshwater is provided to El Granada residents by the Coastside County Water District. The Granada Sanitary District administers wastewater services to town residents. Electricity and natural gas are supplied to community residents by Pacific Gas and Electric. Public safety in the town is provided by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Pillar Point, located in Princeton, is a working fishing harbor with 369 berths. The harbor was first constructed in 1961 and the inner breakwater was added in 1982. Pillar Point offers a modern fish dock, a six-lane boat launch ramp, an ice-making facility, and also serves as a fish-buying hub for local commercial fleets. Towards the north end of the harbor approximately 40

families live aboard their vessels in a floating community. Pillar Point's Search and Rescue service, averaging 110 rescues annually, maintains a 32-foot fiberglass boat in the Harbor.¹³

The Half Moon Bay Yacht Club is also located at the harbor. The San Mateo County Harbor District operates Oyster Point Marina in the City of South San Francisco, a 600-berth recreational boating marina. Pillar Point Harbor is also home to other marine-related businesses including: California Canoe and Kayak, Essex Marine Electronics, Half Moon Bay Surf Company, Half Moon Bay Diving Company, Harbor Fuel Dock, and others. Internet resources indicate that several restaurants are also located at the Harbor such as The Fresh Fish House, Ship-to-Shore Fish Market and Barbeque, and Barbara's Fish Trap.

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

Princeton residents owned zero vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries. However 336 commercial fishing vessels made landings at the port group Princeton/Half Moon Bay in the same year. Landings data for Princeton includes records from the nearby community of Half Moon Bay. In 2000 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). See the Half Moon Bay Community Profile for additional information about this community.

Community members owned zero vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Princeton residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/0).¹⁵ According to available data, zero individuals in Princeton held commercial fishing permits in 2000.

Exclusive Freshness Inc., founded in 1984, is the only fish processor operating at Pillar Point Harbor. They process over 25 species of fish and employ approximately 30 employees.¹⁶ Fishermen are also allowed to sell fresh-caught fish "off-the-boat" directly to the public at Pillar Point Harbor.

Sportfishing

There are no sportfishing license vendors located in Princeton and there was zero Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels licensed to Princeton residents in 2002 and 2003.

Available data indicates that there are at least four sportfishing businesses that moor at Pillar Point Harbor: Queen of Hearts, Riptide Sportfishing, Huck Finn, and Captain John's Sportfishing. These businesses offer sportfishing, whale watching, ecotourism, and specialty trips.

Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Princeton 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 Princeton residents were scarcely involved in North Pacific fisheries. In 2000, residents owned zero vessels that participated in North Pacific fisheries and available data indicates that zero landings were in Princeton in the same year.

Additionally, in 2000 there were zero Princeton 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 three Alaska sportfishing licenses were purchased by Princeton 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 Muwékma Ohlone Tribe. No date. Mewekma Ohlone Tribe: A brief history and the federal recognition process, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.muwékma.org/history/tribe.html> (access date - November 2004).

⁴ 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).

⁵ 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).

⁶ 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).

⁷ 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).

⁸ 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).

⁹ 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).

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ 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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- ¹² 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).
- ¹³ Half Moon Bay Review. 1995. Harbor is pillar of Community, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.montara.com/HMBReview/vis/vis.harbor> (access date - January 2005).
- 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 P. Bruno, Owner Exclusive Freshness Inc., Pillar Point Harbor, Princeton, C.A. Pers. commun., 19 January 2005.