

Clatskanie, Oregon

People and Place

Location

Clatskanie is located along U.S. Highway 30 in Columbia County between Rainier and Astoria, approximately 62 miles northwest of Portland, Oregon, and 53 miles northwest of Vancouver, Washington. Clatskanie, encompassing 1.2 square miles of land and 0 square miles of water, is geographically located at 46°06'05" N, 123°12'20" W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Clatskanie was 1528, a 6.2% decrease from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was relatively evenly divided, with slightly more females (52.5%) than males (47.5%). The median age was 35.7, comparable to the national median of 35.3 for the same year. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 29.6% of the population was under the age of 18, 44.5% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 59, and 12.2% was age 70 or older. For the population 18 years and over, 85.2% had a high school education or higher, 10.9% had attained a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 2.7% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalency for 36.8% of the population and 32.1% reported some college but no degree. In 2000, 82.9% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that the racial composition was predominantly White, 93.9%, followed by American Indian and Alaskan native, 1.2%. Asian, Black or African American, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent (0.7%, 0.1%, and 0.3% respectively) of the population. Overall, 1.0% of the population classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 2.8% identified with two or more races. A total of 3.3% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately one percent (1.1%) of the population was foreign-born, including 33.3% which were born in Canada.

History

The Clatskanie Indians (also spelled Tlatskanai), who spoke an Athapaskan language, occupied the lower Columbia River area prior to European contact. Their populations at one time were concentrated near the mouth of the Skookumchuck River in present-day southern Washington State, on the north bank of the Columbia. They moved across the Columbia River into present-day Oregon in search of more productive game hunting, and have resided along the Clatskanie River, a tributary of the Columbia River, ever since.¹

Captain Robert Gray sailed into the mouth of the Columbia River on an exploration mission in 1792, investigating areas only a short distance from the coastline. Captain Nathan Winship arrived along the Columbia River aboard a ship dubbed "The Albatross" in 1810 with a small crew and members of his family, planting what is considered the earliest garden in Oregon territory and building a small log structure at a point on the river they called "Oak Point." After the late spring floods of that year inundated their settlement, however, they abandoned it.²

More widespread settlement occurred in the area following the Land Donation Act of 1850, and skirmishes with local Indian tribes, including the Clatskanie and the Chinook, were frequent. By the 1850s, the Clatskanie Indian Tribe, which once numbered up to 3000 members, died off entirely as the result of a smallpox epidemic, and the surviving members were incorporated into other nearby tribes.

Columbia County was officially formed in 1854 by annexing parts of Washington and Clatsop Counties. In 1852, Enoch Conyers and other Euro-American settlers, along with their families, traveled by boat down the Columbia River to settle the area surrounding present-day Clatskanie. The home of the Conyers family served as a stopping point for many of the early settlers. The Conyers family also built Clatskanie's first steam boat, named "The Novelty," which carried passengers, mail, lumber, and supplies out to the Columbia River where it connected with larger river boats. In 1918, the Columbia River Highway was completed, linking Clatskanie to the growing towns of Portland and Astoria.³

Clatskanie has been an important hub for the logging industry. In addition, commercial fishing, farming, and timber processing make up a large share of historical economic activity. Today Clatskanie is a vibrant community of more than 1500 residents.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The natural resource sector, including timber and fishing, is an important part of Clatskanie's economy. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 58.9% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 5.9% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, 37.4% were not in the labor force. Of the employed civilian population, 23.4% worked in "Educational, health and social services" while 19.4% worked in "Manufacturing." A total of 16.7% of the employed civilian population was employed by the government at some level (local, state, or Federal); however none were reported as working for the government in the "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining" industries. Of the employed civilian population over the age of 16, 6.9% was involved in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting" according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Clatskanie's per capita income in 1999 was \$16,717 according to the 2000 U.S. Census, while the median household income was \$35,833. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 11.5% of the population was below the poverty level in 1999. In 2000 there were 659 housing units in Clatskanie, 92.3% of which were occupied and 7.7% vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 66.8% were owner-occupied and 33.2% were renter-occupied. Almost half (45.1%) of the vacant housing units were "for rent."

Governance

Clatskanie City is governed by a Mayor, a 6-member City Council, and a City Manager. The State of Oregon has no general sales tax but levies a 1% tax on overnight lodging.

Fishing businesses located in Oregon or deriving income from Oregon resources must pay a corporate excise or income tax totaling 6% of their net Oregon income. Wholesale fish dealers, cannerys, and bait dealers pay a landing fee that is determined from a percentage of the value of the food fish purchased from commercial harvesters.

Salmon and Steelhead Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) landing fees are \$0.05 per pound for round, \$.0575 per pound for dressed, and \$.0605 per pound for dressed with heads off. Other regular landing fees are based on value; salmon and steelhead are 3.15% of value (including eggs and parts); all other fish and shellfish are 1.09% of value, and near-shore species are 5% of value.

Vessel owners must pay registration and title fees, and marine fuel taxes that support boating facilities, marine law enforcement, and boating safety education. Fishing boats and equipment may be taxed as personal property if they are valued at less than \$1 million. If their value exceeds this amount, they are taxed as industrial property. In 2004, title transfer fees are \$30 and registration fees are \$3 per foot based on center length of vessel. Oregon levies a fuel tax of \$0.24 per gallon of gasoline and use fuel. The Oregon Department of Agriculture administers four commodity commissions, Oregon Albacore Commission, Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, Oregon Salmon Commission, and Oregon Trawl Commission. Fishermen pay fees to these commissions for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and U.S. Coast Guard all have offices in Astoria, 35 miles west of Clatskanie. The nearest Pacific Fisheries Management Council and North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held in Portland, approximately 62 miles southeast of Clatskanie.

Facilities

Clatskanie is located on U.S. Highway 30 and is accessible primarily by road and rail. Greyhound provides bus service to nearby communities and to greater metropolitan areas throughout the country and Amtrak passenger service on the Astoria-Portland line provides service to Clatskanie. The nearest small airports are the Kelso-Longview airport, located approximately 15 miles northeast of Clatskanie, and the Astoria Regional Airport, located approximately 35 miles to the west. The nearest major airport is located in Portland, approximately 62 miles southeast of Clatskanie.

Local schools in Clatskanie include one elementary school and one middle/high school.⁴ Electric and water utilities are provided by the Clatskanie People's Utility District. There is a small medical clinic located nearby in Longview, and a larger hospital located in Astoria. The Clatskanie Police Department, the Columbia County Sheriff Department, and Clatskanie's volunteer fire department administer public safety in the area. The tourism industry in Clatskanie is not well developed with only one hotel based in the City.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

According to available data, there were no seafood processors operating in Clatskanie in 2000. Zero vessels delivered landings to Clatskanie in the same year. However, 25 commercial vessels were owned by Clatskanie residents in 2000, seven of which participated in the federal groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Clatskanie residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/29/0), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/0).⁵

In 2000, no federal groundfish permits were held by Clatskanie community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Clatskanie residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/1/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (4/30/0), and shellfish (0/0/NA).⁶

According to available data at least 40 state commercial fishing permits were registered to Clatskanie residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Clatskanie residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/1/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (5/34/0), and shellfish (0/0/NA).⁷

Sportfishing

Available data indicates that at least one registered sportfishing charter business operates out of Clatskanie, targeting salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon. There was one licensed charter vessel owned by Clatskanie residents in 2000; the vessel operated out of Depoe Bay. Two sportfishing licensing agents were located in Clatskanie in 2000. In the same year, they sold 1017 sportfishing licenses at an approximate value of \$16,792.

Astoria is the nearest port to Clatskanie that reported catch in the 2000 Oregon recreational catch reports. The 2000 recreational salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was 766 Chinook salmon and 13,712 coho salmon. The recreational non-salmonid catch in the Ocean Boat Fishery was a total of 1533 fish. The top species landed was black rockfish (82.8%).

Subsistence

Subsistence harvest by both tribal and nontribal fishermen for marine species may exist in the Clatskanie area. Under the trust doctrine, the federal government is charged to protect tribal resources and by constitutional mandate to protect natural resources. The government-to-government agreements made between tribal groups and the United States through treaties guarantee fishing rights on traditional grounds. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Clatskanie is not discussed in detail in this profile due to the lack of available data on both state and federal levels.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 there were ten vessels owned by Clatskanie residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. These vessels landed 204 t in the Alaska salmon fishery, at a value of over \$307,390. In 2000, one vessel owned by a Clatskanie resident made landings of “other finfish” in the North Pacific, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

Twenty-seven Clatskanie residents served as crew members on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in 2000. A total of ten community residents held state permits and two residents held federal permits for Alaska and North Pacific fisheries respectively.

A total of 12 commercial fishing permits were held by Clatskanie residents in 2000, including ten Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) salmon permits and two groundfish License Limitation Program (LLP) permits.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the charter boats in Clatskanie target West Coast fisheries, 26 Clatskanie community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000. There were no sportfishing businesses in Clatskanie that participated in Alaskan fisheries in the same year.

¹ Access Genealogy Indian Tribal Records. No date. Oregon Indian Tribes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/oregon/> (access date September 2004).

² Parrish, P.H. 1931. Before the Covered Wagon. Binford and Mort, Portland.

³ Rea, Christopher and Larry Rea. No date. The Founding of Clatskanie, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.twrps.com/ccor/clat.html> (access date - October 2004).

⁴ National Center for Education Statistics. No date. Search for Schools, Colleges, and Libraries, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/> (access date - April 2005).

⁵ '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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