

## **Pleasantville, New Jersey**

### **People and Place**

#### *Location*

Pleasantville is located in Atlantic County, New Jersey, along the Atlantic City Expressway. The community lies about 5 miles west of Atlantic City, approximately 57 miles southeast of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and 120 miles south of New York, New York. The geographic coordinates of Pleasantville are 39°23'23"N, 74°31'28"W. Pleasantville covers 5.8 square miles of land and 1.6 square miles of water.

#### *Demographic Profile*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Pleasantville was 19,012, an 18.6% increase over the 1990 census population. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (53.1%) than males (46.9%). The median age was 32.7, which is slightly lower than the national median of 35.3 for the same year.

For the population 18 years and over, 68.9% had a high school education or higher, 9.0% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 2.7% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment for 39.2% of the population was a high school diploma or equivalency. In 2000, 83.4% of the population lived in family households.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census the racial composition of Pleasantville was predominantly Black or African American (57.7%), followed by White (25.0%), and Asian (2.0%). American Indian and Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent of the population (0.3% and 0.2% respectively). Overall, 11.0% of the population classified themselves as belonging to some other race, and 4.1% of the population identified with two or more races. A total of 21.9% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 12.9% of the population was foreign-born. Of the foreign-born population, 24.9% were born in the Dominican Republic and 23.0% were born in Haiti.

#### *History*

The area surrounding Pleasantville was originally inhabited by native peoples known as the Leni-Lenape, which form the base of the contemporary Delaware (Lenape) Tribe. The Leni-Lenape, which lived within several loosely confederated independent communities, inhabited the Delaware River Valley in present-day New Jersey and Pennsylvania. They migrated seasonally between permanent inland villages, where they cultivated corn, squash, beans, pumpkin and tobacco, and the nearby Atlantic Coast, where they harvested clams and oysters during the summer season. They also hunted extensively in wooded areas in what is now Pennsylvania and boiled maple sap to make sugar.<sup>1</sup>

The Atlantic County area was first explored by Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was formerly surveyed by Henry Hudson in 1609. The first permanent European settlers arrived in the area in the 1690s. Many of these early settlers made their living working in the whaling industry; shipyards, mills, iron furnaces, and brickyards soon became the foundations of the local economy.<sup>2</sup> Shipbuilding, in particular, became a critical local enterprise. The community that would become Pleasantville was first settled in the 17<sup>th</sup>

century, along a stagecoach route from Port Republic to the Somers Point Ferry. The community was originally part of Egg Harbor Township and became a borough in 1888. The first town council meeting was held in January 1889. According to local lore, the present name was coined when a local storeowner named Daniel Lake asked the local wheelwright to make a sign for his storefront. The wheelwright constructed a sign reading, "Lake's Store, Pleasantville, New Jersey," and the name became permanent.<sup>3</sup>

Pleasantville is now known as the 'Gateway to Atlantic City.' The community has been designated as a New Jersey Urban Enterprise City and markets itself as a prime location for casino and hotel industries.<sup>4</sup> Businesses established in Pleasantville are known as Urban Enterprise Industries and benefit from use-tax exemptions, unemployment tax reductions, property tax abatements, other corporate tax breaks, and low-interest business loans. In addition, retailers can offer customers a 50% reduction in state sales tax on eligible goods. The Urban Enterprise Program (UEP) is part of an aggressive re-development plan meant to revitalize the local economy.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

Pleasantville is registered as a New Jersey Urban Enterprise City and depends heavily on revenue from combination of retail, professional and light industrial businesses. Major employers include: Coach USA, Kmart, South Jersey Publishing, Verizon, AC Coin & Slot, International Gaming Technology, and Tri County Building Supply.<sup>5</sup>

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 55.0% of Pleasantville's potential labor force was employed. There was a 10.2% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), a value well above the national unemployment rate of 5.7% for the same year. Of the population over the age of 16, about 38.8% were not in the labor force (not actively seeking work). Of the employed civilian population, 27.7% worked in 'Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services,' and 16.2% worked in 'Educational, Health and Social Services.' A total of 13.8% of the employed civilian population worked for 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' sector. Only 0.4% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in the 'Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting' industries.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Pleasantville's per capita income in 1999 was \$17,668, a value below the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was \$36,913 compared to a national median household income of \$41,994. Approximately 15.8% of residents were living below the poverty level in 1999, a value in excess of the national poverty level of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 7042 housing units in Pleasantville, 90.9% of which were occupied and 9.1% of which were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 56.3% were owner-occupied and 43.7% were renter-occupied. Of the vacant housing units, 35.8% were "for rent" and 18.3% were "for sale only."

### *Governance*

Pleasantville is governed by a Mayor and a seven-member City Council.<sup>6</sup> Because Pleasantville falls within an Urban Enterprise Zone, it levies a sales and use tax of only 3% (versus a state-wide rate of 6%). The State of New Jersey also levies a 5% lodging tax.<sup>7</sup>

New Jersey levies a 10% excise tax on sportfishing equipment, which is used to fund state fish and wildlife conservation programs.<sup>8</sup> Commercial fishing vessels and commercial party boat sportfishing vessels are exempt from state sales and use taxes and are eligible for a refund of state motor fuel taxes.<sup>9</sup> The State of New Jersey Division of Taxation does not levy landing taxes on commercially harvested fish and shellfish, but the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife does require commercial fishermen to purchase various fishery and gear-specific licenses and pay additional associated fees.

Pleasantville lies within the jurisdiction of the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. The nearest council meetings are held in nearby Atlantic City (5 miles). The closest United States Coast Guard Station is also located in Atlantic City. Pleasantville falls under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office, headquartered 369 miles away in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the Southern Region Office of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife located in 35 miles away in Sicklerville, New Jersey.

### *Facilities*

Pleasantville lies along the Atlantic City Expressway. Atlantic City International Airport is located just northwest of Pleasantville along this major thoroughfare (5 miles). Pleasantville hosts several major hotels, including a few that feature gambling facilities. The nearest major hospitals are located in the communities of Atlantic City (5 miles) and Somers Point (8 miles).

The community lies within the Pleasantville Public School District, which offers a high school, a middle school, and four elementary schools.<sup>10</sup> The city also hosts one private elementary school. Law enforcement and fire safety services are administered by the City of Pleasantville Police and Fire Departments. The City of Pleasantville Department of Public Works coordinates the community's sewer services. Gas is provided by the South Jersey Gas Company, and water is provided by the New Jersey American Water Company. Connectiv supplies electricity to residents of the Pleasantville area.<sup>11</sup>

The closest commercial and recreational marine fishing facilities are located in nearby Atlantic City, which hosts the Farley State Marina, Kammerman's Marina, and a number of casino-hotels with marina facilities. Farley State Marina offers transient dockage and fuel. Kammerman's Marina is a full service facility with transient docking, slips, and fuel.

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

According to available data there was no involvement in West Coast fisheries by Pleasantville residents in 2000.

### *Sportfishing*

A number of charter vessels operate out of the Pleasantville area targeting tuna, blue fish, fluke, sea bass, striped bass, drum, flounder, and shark off the coast of New Jersey. There is a single license agent selling sportfishing licenses in Pleasantville. Pleasantville residents may have been very active in sportfishing in the West Coast fisheries in 2000. However, no data on this activity are currently available.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000 there were no vessels owned by Pleasantville residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries, and no Pleasantville residents served as crew members on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries. One resident held a single federal permit for North Pacific fisheries, a License Limitation Program (LLP) scallop permit.

### *Sportfishing*

While the majority of the charter boats in Pleasantville target west coast fisheries, two community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000. In the same year there were no sportfishing businesses in Pleasantville that participated in Alaskan fisheries.

## **Additional Information**

### *Involvement in East Coast Fisheries*

Pleasantville area residents are heavily involved in East Coast Fisheries, and commercial fishing contributes substantially to the New Jersey economy. The commercial fishing fleet operating out of the marina in nearby Atlantic City (5 miles) focuses almost exclusively on the harvest of surf clams and ocean quohogs.<sup>12</sup> The local fleet consists of mainly larger vessels (70- to 150-feet in length) equipped with hydraulic dredges. Because there are no clam processors in Atlantic City, landings are taken elsewhere in New Jersey or on the Delmarva Peninsula to be processed into minced clams and clam strips.

According to data collected by NMFS and published by the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture, approximately 2706 people were employed full-time by the state's commercial fishing industry in 1998.<sup>13</sup> About 1078 of these employees worked in fish and seafood processing, 100 in aquaculture, 909 in wholesale trade, and 3278 in retail trade. In the same year, commercial and recreational marine fishing contributed an estimated \$625 million to New Jersey's economy. Fishing enterprises also generated an estimated \$100 million in federal, state, and local taxes.

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<sup>1</sup> Atlantic County Government. 2004. Leni-Lenape Indians, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/mainpages/LENAPE.aspH](http://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/mainpages/LENAPE.aspH) (access date - June 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Atlantic County Government. 2004. Atlantic County History, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/homepage.aspH](http://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/homepage.aspH) (access date - June 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Atlantic County Government. 2004. Pleasantville, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/mainpages/PVILLE.aspH](http://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/mainpages/PVILLE.aspH) (access date - June 2005).

<sup>4</sup> City of Pleasantville. 2004. Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.pleasantville-nj.orgH](http://www.pleasantville-nj.orgH) (access date - June 2005).

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- <sup>5</sup> City of Pleasantville. 2004. Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.pleasantville-nj.org/index.html> (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>6</sup> City of Pleasantville. 2004. Elected Officials, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://www.pleasantville-nj.org/government.htmlH> (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>7</sup> State of New Jersey. 2004. New Jersey Hotel and Motel State Occupancy Tax Return, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/pdf/other\\_forms/hm100.pdfH](Hhttp://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/pdf/other_forms/hm100.pdfH) (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>8</sup> New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. 2004. New jersey Free Fishing Days, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ffd03.htmH> (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>9</sup> State of New Jersey Legislature. 1998. Assembly, No. 1957, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.njleg.state.nj.us/9899/Bills/a2000/1957\\_i1.pdfH](Hhttp://www.njleg.state.nj.us/9899/Bills/a2000/1957_i1.pdfH) (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>10</sup> Pleasantville Board of Education. 2005. Pleasantville Public Schools Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://www.pleasantville.k12.nj.us/district/H> (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> Atlantic County Economic Development. No Date. About Atlantic County Utilities, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.acbiz.org/Main%20Pages/About/ECD\\_about\\_util.htmH](Hhttp://www.acbiz.org/Main%20Pages/About/ECD_about_util.htmH) (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Garden State Seafood Association. No Date. Atlantic City, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://www.fishingnj.org/portac.htmH> (access date - June 2005).
- <sup>13</sup> New Jersey State Department of Agriculture. 1998. 1999 Employment and Economic Contributions of New Jersey Fisheries, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/rural/seafood/1999contributions.htmH> (access date - June 2005).