

Port Townsend, Washington

People and Place

Location

Port Townsend is located on the Olympic Peninsula and marks the passage between the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound. The area encompasses approximately 7 square miles of land and 2.5 square miles of water. Port Townsend lies at 48°07'46''N and 122°45'43''W. At a driving distance of about 60 miles from Port Townsend, Seattle is the nearest major U.S. City.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Port Townsend was 8334, a gradual increase from the 1990 population of 7001. The 2000 U.S. Census records show that 53.9% of the population of Port Townsend was female and 46.1% was male. The median age of the population was 46.6 years, which is considerably higher than the national average for that year of 35.3. The age structure of Port Townsend demonstrates usual population trends for a community without a major tertiary education provider and a large retiree community. A total of 98.5% of the population lived in family households in 2000.

The majority of the Port Townsend population recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was White (93.3%), followed by Asian (1.3%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.2%), Black or African American (0.6%), and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (0.2%). A portion of the population identified with some other race (0.9%) or with two or more races (2.5%). According to the 2000 U.S. Census approximately 2.3% of the surveyed population identified as Hispanic or Latino.

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 3.9% of the population was foreign-born. The majority of the foreign-born population was from Asia, followed by several people from the Americas outside of the United States. The largest numbers of people denoting ancestry associated themselves with German or English backgrounds.

Of the population 18 years and older in Port Townsend in 2000, 90.6% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 31.2% had earned a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher, and 11.7% had attained a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.9%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. For 22.8% of the surveyed population, a high school degree or equivalent was the highest level of educational attainment.

History

For centuries before the arrival of Euro-Americans to the Northwest several Indian tribes were located near *Kah-tai*, present-day Port Townsend, including the Chemakum (or Chimacum), Klallam, and Twana (the Kilcid band, now referred to as Quilcene). Since the headland had little running water it is unlikely that any tribe used the area as a permanent village. Instead, the Indians used *Kah-Tai*, meaning “to carry” or “pass through,” to haul their canoes from the Strait to Port Townsend Bay, avoiding the rip tides off Point Wilson. The Klallams were the largest of the three tribes, their land extended from the Hoko River eastward 100 miles to Port Townsend. The Chemakums lived on land from Discovery Bay to the mouth of Hood Canal. The Twanas, or S’Kokomish, occupied both sides of Hood Canal.¹ During the winter these Salish-speaking people lived in permanent villages of plank and pole houses and participated in ceremonial and religious activities; during summer months they traveled to

traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering sites, using rush mats and notched cedar poles for temporary shelter.²

In 1855, when the Point No Point Treaty was signed by the S’Klallam, Skokomish (Twanas), and Chemakum Tribes, the S’Klallam were sharing territory at Port Townsend with the Chemakum. The Treaty ceded approximately 750,000 acres of land to the federal government but reserved their aboriginal right to fish, hunt, and gather in the area. In 1853 lumber mill owners asked the S’Klallam Tribe at Port Gamble Bay to relocate across the bay to the spit at Point Julia. They called their community at Point Julia “Little Boston.”³ “Boston” was the Indian name for an American.⁴ At the time of the Treaty the Skokomish reserved a small tract of land at the bend of Hood Canal and the S’Klallam were forcibly moved to the Skokomish reservation, which was small and far removed from their traditional fishing grounds. Consequently many S’Klallam purchased land around Point Julia. Unfortunately most of the land was lost to county tax foreclosures in the 1930s.⁵

In 1792 Captain George Vancouver sailed down the Strait of Juan de Fuca and named the area Port Townshend for his friend, the Marquis of Townshend. State records note that Port Townsend filed for city status in 1851, six months before Seattle and second to Olympia. When filing the “h” in Townsend was dropped. During the first half of the 19th century fur traders occupied the area trading fur for iron tools, fabric, and ornaments.⁶ The years between 1880 and 1890 were a period of rapid growth for the city; the population of Washington Territory increased almost 500%, from 75,000 in 1880 to 375,000 in 1890. It was during this time period that many of the town’s Victorian homes and buildings were constructed. Port Townsend served as port of entry for the entire Puget Sound region from 1854 to 1913. However changes in marine technology, specifically the emergence of steam powered vessels, caused Port Townsend’s importance as a maritime destination to decline, as ships were able to bypass the city when entering and leaving Puget Sound.⁷

Several forts were constructed in the late 19th century to defend Puget Sound cities and the naval shipyard at Bremerton from attacks by foreign vessels. In 1908 Fort Worden was designated the headquarters for the Harbor Defenses of Puget Sound. The Navy gave up use of the beach and dock areas in 1965 but retained use of the upper hills until the mid-1970s. Fort Worden is now on the National Register of Historic Places, as an Historic District. Centrum, a center for arts and creative education, is also located at the fort.⁸

The history of Jefferson County, and Port Townsend, is largely shaped by its location at the northwest end of Puget Sound. Port Townsend lies on a large, protected natural harbor, and is therefore a popular destination for commercial and recreational marine traffic. The combination of climate and terrain – nearly all of the 1815 square miles of the county is hilly to mountainous – made logs and lumber the principal cash crop of the area.⁹ Today, many of the city’s industries are still based in maritime trades, manufacturing, tourism, and timber. Although today Port Townsend is dominated by small and mid-size businesses, Port Townsend Paper remains the largest employer in the area. The combination of the area’s history, natural beauty, and varied economy make Port Townsend a unique place to live and visit.¹⁰

Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 17.5% of the employed civilian population 16 years of age and over was employed within local, state, or federal governments. The majority of Port Townsend’s employed civilian population 16 years of age and over (37.8%) was employed in

“management, professional, and related occupations.” “Sales occupations” and “Service occupations” employed 22.3% and 19.5% respectively. Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 0.4% of the population in 2000. The economy of Port Townsend relies heavily on small businesses. Several hundred small businesses involved in service, retail, and manufacturing have been started in the Jefferson County; today approximately 2300 businesses exist in the County. Additionally there are three major industrial parks: the Port of Port Townsend’s Marine Industrial Park, the private Port Townsend Business Park, and Glen Cove Industrial Area.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census 56.4% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 7.2% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In 2000 approximately 39% of the population over 16 years of age was not in the labor force, as compared to the national average of 36.1%. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that in 1999 the income of 14% of the population was below the poverty level. The median household income in 1999 was \$34,536 and the per capita income was \$22,395. In 2000 there were 4250 housing units in Port Townsend. The percentages of occupied housing units that were owner versus renter occupied were 65.2% and 34.8% respectively. About 7.8% of the housing units were vacant, of which 38.4% were vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Founded in 1851 Port Townsend is the largest and only incorporated community in Jefferson County. Port Townsend is the County Seat and serves as the major commercial center. The City utilizes the Council-Manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and five Council members. Jefferson County levies an 8.2% sales tax and a 2% lodging tax.

Several taxes directly impact commercial and recreational fishermen. Commercial fishermen operating in Washington waters are subject to the Business and Occupation (B&O) tax under the “extraction” classification (0.48%); those fishing outside of Washington waters but selling fish within Washington are subject to the tax under either the “wholesaling” or “retailing” classifications (0.48% and 0.47% respectively), unless the fish are sold in interstate or foreign commerce.¹¹ Those who both catch and sell fish in Washington are eligible for a Multiple Activities Tax Credit (MATC).¹²

Washington State levies a Food, Fish, and Shellfish Tax, paid by the first commercial processor of food fish or shellfish, including: Chinook, coho, and chum salmon or eggs (5.62%); sockeye and pink salmon or eggs (3.37%); oysters (0.09%); sea urchins/cucumbers (4.92%); and shellfish and other food fish or eggs (2.25%). Tuna, mackerel, and jackfish are exempt from this tax. Additionally, there is an Enhanced Food Fish Tax, which applies to the “first possession of enhanced food fish by an owner in Washington State” and is based on the “value of the enhanced food fish at the point of landing.”¹³ The rate of the tax depends upon the species of fish or shellfish.

Vessels used for commercial fishing purposes part-time are subject to an annual Washington State Watercraft Excise Tax levied at 0.5% of the fair market value of the boat. Vessels used for commercial fishing purposes full-time are subject to personal property taxes at the base rate levied by the state. Washington also levies a 10% excise tax on fishing equipment, a three percent tax on electric motors and sonar fish finders, and import duties on tackle and pleasure boats to fund sportfish restoration programs.¹⁴ Washington State levies a tax of \$0.28 per gallon on motor vehicle fuel. Since most of this tax is used to maintain terrestrial roadways,

Washington boaters are entitled to a refund of about \$0.17 per gallon. The difference includes state sales tax and a penny per gallon contribution to a Coastal Protection Fund. Most diesel fuel sold at docks has already had this tax removed.¹⁵

Several services and organizations are located approximately 60 miles southeast of Port Townsend in Seattle, including: a National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. A Department of Fish and Game office is located about 110 miles south in Montesano, Washington. The nearest U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Group/Air Station is located nearby in Port Angeles. The station is home to several USCG cutters and a Dolphin Helicopter. The Station is responsible for marine safety westward to Pillar Point on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, north to the Canadian border, east to the western shore of Whidbey Island, and south through Admiralty Inlet to Olele Point. Port Townsend is home to some USCG services including the USCG Cutter *Osprey*, one smaller vessel, and shoreside facilities.

Facilities

Port Townsend serves as a base for people exploring the Olympic National Park and as a port for the Washington State Ferry. The City is accessible by ground, sea, and air. Port Townsend is easily reached via highway 20, connecting to state highway 101 approximately 13 miles south of the City. Jefferson Transit provides regularly scheduled bus service throughout Port Townsend and the County. Links to public transit in Clallam and Kitsap Counties provide service to Seattle and Port Angeles. The Washington State Ferry System provides service between Port Townsend and Keystone and Whidbey Island. The Jefferson County International Airport, open for public use, is located 4 miles southeast of Port Townsend. The nearest airport certified for carrier operations is located nearby in Port Angeles. The Sea-Tac International Airport, 90 miles to the southeast in Sea Tac, Washington, is the closest airport offering international service to destinations other than Canada.

The Port Townsend School District offers 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 public high school. Additionally there are several alternative education options in Port Townsend including three private schools, a parental-involvement program, and an active home-school program. Peninsula College, located in Port Angeles, has an Extension Site in Port Townsend.

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for providing electricity, water, wastewater, and solid waste services to City residents. Public safety in Port Townsend is administered by the City of Port Townsend Police Department. The community supports Jefferson General Hospital and several smaller health care clinics. The tourism industry in Port Townsend is fairly developed with over 20 Victorian hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts in the city. There are several community businesses including the Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce, rotary clubs, and several places of worship.

A number of non-profit organizations working in Port Townsend focus on fishery-related issues, including the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative through which a local marine resource committee (MRC) was created to bring a scientific and grassroots approach to protecting and restoring marine resources in the area. Serving on the MRC are representatives from the scientific community, local and tribal governments, and economic, recreational, and conservation interests. Current MRC projects include: Discovery Bay Olympia Oyster Seeding, Tarboo/Dabob Bay Fish Assessment, and Anchor-free Eelgrass Protection; meetings are open to the public and held nearby in Port Hadlock. Additional water-related organizations include:

Adventuress (sea education), the Dungeness River Management Team and Natural History Center, the Menzies Project (boat tours), and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.

The Port of Port Townsend owns and operates several marine facilities including the Port Townsend Boat Haven, five boat launches, two marinas, and a shipyard. The Boat Haven is a full-service marina that is home to 475 commercial and recreational vessels and 60 marine trade businesses. The Port Townsend School of Wooden Boatbuilding is located in Port Townsend. Point Hudson Marina and Resort, located at the northeast corner of the City's commercial district, has 45 slips, 800 feet of linear dock, a recreational vehicle park, and several marine businesses. The Quilcene Marina is located on the west side of Quilcene Bay, opening to the Hood Canal south of Port Townsend. The marina offers 50 slips and takes reservations for transient moorage. Services include fuel, ice, showers, restrooms, and a pump-out station. Completed in 1997, the Port of Port Townsend Shipyard features a heavy boat haul-out facility, capable of lifting vessels up to 150-feet long and weighing 330-tons. The Shipyard also offers numerous repair facilities, upland and covered storage, and do-it-yourself space.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

A total of 349 unique vessels delivered landings to Port Townsend in 2000, including: 275 tribal commercial vessels, 63 commercial vessels, and 10 personal use. The remaining vessel types are confidential. In 2000 there was at least one seafood processors operating in Port Townsend, New Day Fisheries Inc.

According to recorded data landings in the community were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (confidential/confidential/1), crab (67 t/\$318,825/31), groundfish (confidential/confidential/3), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/3), salmon (116 t/\$172,223/53), shellfish (71 t/\$713,777/183), shrimp (319 t/\$331,823/8), and other species (89 t/\$208,118/24).

Port Townsend residents owned 24 vessels in 2000. Community members owned 10 vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Port Townsend residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/0), crab (5/0/0), groundfish (7/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (9/0/0), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (14/0/0).¹⁶

In 2000 recorded data indicates that the number of Port Townsend residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/3/1), groundfish (2/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (13/3/1), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (2/0/0), and other species (11/0/0).¹⁷

Fifty-three state permits were registered to Port Townsend residents in 2000. According to recorded data the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), crab (5/0/0), groundfish (8/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (16/3/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (4/0/2), and other species (13/0/0).¹⁸

Sportfishing

Sport fishermen in Port Townsend are involved in both the West Coast and Alaskan fisheries. Available data indicates that in 2000 there were zero salmonid charter fishing operators

based in Port Townsend. In 2003 at least one non-salmonid charter fishing operator was based out of Port Townsend.

There is one licensed agent selling fishing permits in Port Townsend. In 2003 a total of 6352 sportfishing license transactions valuing \$96,496 were recorded in the community. In Catch Record Card Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) the 2000 sport salmon catch was 12,608 fish, including: 4351 Chinook, 8253 coho, and 4 chum salmon. The 2000 salmon catch occurred over an estimated 43,629 marine angler trips in the same area. In 2000 the bottomfish catch for Area 9 was 1745. The recreational harvest of clams (lbs) and oysters (#) for the same area in 2000 was estimated to be 84,233 and 6091 respectively; harvest occurred over an estimated 13,151 user trips.

Subsistence

Subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering activities are fundamental to the way of life of some coastal community members. Both tribal and nontribal individuals participate in subsistence fishing. Subsistence fishing is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, Port Townsend residents owned 42 vessels that were 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 Island (BSAI) groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), other finfish (5 t/\$1700/6), Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish (2144 t/\$1,295,170/7), halibut (229 t/\$1,282,100/9), and salmon (1496 t/\$1,249,970/25).

In 2000 a total of 60 Port Townsend residents served as crewmembers in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year 42 community residents held registered state permits and 54 held registered federal permits.

A total of 96 state and federal permits were registered to individuals in Port Townsend in 2000. In the same year residents of Port Townsend held 15 groundfish License Limitation Program permits. In 2000 Port Townsend residents held 3 GOA, 14 BSAI groundfish, 15 halibut, 4 herring, and 30 salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. The halibut and sablefish individual fishing quota shares for people residing in the community were 4,603,280 and 3,421,955, respectively.

Sportfishing

A total of 110 Alaskan sportfishing licenses were purchased by Port Townsend community members in 2000. In the same year at least two sportfishing businesses in Port Townsend participated in Alaskan fisheries.

¹ Fort Worden. No date. Fort Worden History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fortworden.org/history.html> (access date - February 2005).

² The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. 2005. Culture and History, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.pgst.nsn.us/content/culture_history/pride_heritage.htm (access date - February 2005).

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- ³ The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. 2005. Culture and History, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.pgst.nsn.us/content/culture_history/ (access date - February 2005).
- ⁴ The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. 2005. Culture and History, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.pgst.nsn.us/content/culture_history/pride_heritage.htm (access date - February 2005).
- ⁵ The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. 2005. Culture and History, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.pgst.nsn.us/content/culture_history/ (access date - February 2005).
- ⁶ Fort Worden. No date. Fort Worden History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fortworden.org/history.html> (access date - February 2005).
- ⁷ Port Townsend Film Festival. 2004. Port Townsend as a Movie Backdrop, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fortworden.org/history.html> (access date - February 2005).
- ⁸ Fort Worden. No date. Fort Worden History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fortworden.org/history.html> (access date - February 2005).
- ⁹ Washington State USGenWEB Project. 2005. Jefferson County History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wajeffe/history.html> (access date - February 2005).
- ¹⁰ Port Townsend Guide. 2005. Port Townsend Community, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ptguide.com/community/index.htm> (access date - February 2005).
- ¹¹ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2004. Commercial fishing, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/Industry/Fish/default.aspx> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹² Washington State Department of Revenue. 2002. Information on Washington's Tax Structure: Fish Taxes, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/industry/fish/default.aspx> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹³ Washington State Department of Revenue. 2001. Commercial Fishing, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/taxes/Industry/Fish/default.aspx#enhanced> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁴ National Conference of State Legislatures. 2004. Environment, Energy, and Transportation Program: Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/esnr/FISHHUNTWILD.htm> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁵ Washington State Department of Licensing. 2003. Fuel Tax Frequently Asked Questions, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dol.wa.gov/vs/ft-faq.htm> (access date - July 2004).
- 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.
- ¹⁷ '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.
- ¹⁸ '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.