

# Tacoma, Washington

## People and Place

### *Location*

Tacoma is located on Commencement Bay along the eastern shore of south Puget Sound and covers approximately 50.8 square miles of land and 12.5 square miles of water. Tacoma is approximately 29 miles north of the State capitol, Olympia, and 39 miles south of the City of Seattle. The geographic coordinates of Tacoma, Washington, are: 47°14'09" N, 122°26'21"W.

### *Demographic Profile*

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Tacoma was 193,556, a 9.6% increase from 1990. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (51.2%) than males (48.8%). The median age was 33.9, which is comparable to the national median of 35.3 for the same year. According to the same data, 21.6% of the population was 14 years of age or younger and 38.6% was between the ages of 25 and 49. For the population 18 years and over, 82.4% had a high school education or higher, 18.8% had attained a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 6% earned a graduate or professional degree; as compared to the national averages of 79.9%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that the racial composition was predominantly White (69.1%), followed by Black or African American (11.2%), Asian (7.6%), American Indian and Alaskan native (2.0%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.9%). Overall, 2.9% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 6.3% of the population identified themselves with two or more races. A total of 6.9% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Of the foreign-born population (11.9%), the majority (48.0%) was born in Asian countries and 16% was born in Mexico.

### *History*

The name Tacoma is derived from the Native American word 'Tacobet,' meaning 'Mother of the Waters.'<sup>1</sup> Tacobet is the native name for the snow-capped volcano which explorer George Vancouver named Mt. Rainier. The Puyallup Tribe had several settlements on the delta of the Puyallup River, where modern-day Tacoma is situated. Natives fished, hunted, and trapped in the area; never needing to go far in search of food. In 1841 U.S. Navy Lieutenant Charles Wilkes began his survey of Puget Sound from the area's natural harbor, which he then named Commencement Bay. A developer arrived in 1868 with intentions to build a city and promptly started a campaign to attract settlers. Five years later the Northern Pacific Railroad chose Commencement Bay as its western terminus;<sup>2</sup> Tacoma was born with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Roughly 200 inhabitants quickly became 5000. "From 1883, the first year passengers could ride the train uninterrupted from Chicago to Tacoma, to 1890, the population of Tacoma grew from about 5000 to more than 30,000."<sup>3</sup>

The city grew steadily in the early 1900s. Water and hydroelectric systems were built. During this period almost 75% of the Puyallup Reservation was taken, using federal laws, for industrial development. Both World War I and World War II brought industrial booms to the Tacoma area. During the Great Depression the area's economy suffered, but was lifted with military spending as the U.S. Army expanded Camp Lewis to Fort Lewis. In 1944 Tacoma and its rival neighbor Seattle co-sponsored a new airport between the two cities and named it Sea-Tac Airport. Tacoma was rocked by scandal in 1951 as widespread vice and official corruption

was brought to light. As a result, the style of government in Tacoma shifted to a voter approved City-Manager. In the 1970s the Port of Tacoma became an important link to Asia and Alaska, which continues today.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Current Economy*

Three major U.S. military operations, as well as the Boeing and Intel Corporations contribute greatly to the Tacoma economy.<sup>4</sup> According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 59.3% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 7.7% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), slightly higher than the 2000 national average of 5.7%. Of the population over the age of 16, 35.8% were not in the labor force. The top employment sector for Tacoma's employed civilian population was "Educational, health and social services," employing 21.3%, with the majority falling under "Health care and social assistance." "Manufacturing" and "Retail trade" contributed 12.5% and 11.9% to the civilian workforce respectively. A total of 16.6% of the employed civilian population were employed by the government at some level (local, state, or Federal); 0.3% of which were reported as working in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting." Less than one percent (0.9%) of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in 'Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting' according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Tacoma's per capita income in 1999 was \$19,130 according to the 2000 U.S. Census, while the median household income was \$37,879 (1999 dollars). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 15.9% of the population was below the poverty level in 1999, slightly higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000, 76.7% of the population lived in family households. In the same year there were 81,102 housing units in Tacoma, 93.9% of which were occupied, 6.1% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 54.7% were owner occupied while 45.3% were renter occupied. Of the vacant housing units 47.8% were for rent and 16.0% were for "sale only."

### *Governance*

Tacoma, incorporated in 1884, is governed by a nine-member City Council. The Council is comprised of a mayor, five district representatives, and three at-large representatives. A City Manager is appointed by the Council to administer day-to-day operations and to carry out Council policies. Tacoma is the largest city in Pierce County and serves as the County Seat. Tacoma has an 8.8% sales and use tax rate and a variable lodging tax rate of 2-5% depending upon the number of rooms in the establishment.

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.<sup>5</sup> Those who both catch and sell fish in Washington are eligible for a Multiple Activities Tax Credit (MATC).<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

The nearest federal fisheries enforcement office is located in Seattle and is the Northwest Enforcement Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service. The closest regional office for state fisheries, the Coastal Office of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is located 68 miles southwest in Montesano, Washington. Meetings of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and Pacific Fisheries Management Council have been held in both Seattle and Tacoma. Also located in Seattle are the headquarters of the 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Coast Guard District and the District Office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

### *Facilities*

Tacoma lies along Interstate 5, a major highway which extends from Canada to Mexico. Tacoma is also connected to Kitsap Peninsula in the west by State Highway 16. The nearest major airport, Sea-Tac International Airport, is only 18 miles away, and the Tacoma Narrows Airport, a municipally-owned airport is roughly 6 miles away. The Port of Tacoma operates under state-enabling legislation and is an independent, municipal corporation.

Tacoma’s public school system offers numerous elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Tacoma also provides a number of private schools at all grade levels. Additionally, Tacoma is home to a number of institutes of higher learning, including: University of Washington-Tacoma Campus, University of Puget Sound, Pacific Lutheran University, Pierce College, Tacoma Community College, and L.H. Bates Technical College.<sup>10</sup>

The City of Tacoma provides municipally-owned and operated water, sewer, and garbage service, as well as a curbside recycling program through Tacoma Public utilities. Public safety is administered by the City of Tacoma police and fire departments. Health services are provided by five health centers, including two hospitals and a children’s hospital. The tourism industry in Tacoma is well developed with several hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts.

The Port of Tacoma has 2400 acres used for a wide array of cargo shipping, warehousing, distributing, and manufacturing. The Port provides three dockside intermodal rail yards. Over 70% of the Port’s international container cargo comes from, or ends up, in the central and eastern regions of North America. In addition, the Port of Tacoma handles over 70% of the marine cargo moving between Alaska and the lower 48 states. The Port of Tacoma also serves commercial fishing interests. The Port is home to roughly 40 of Seattle-based Trident Seafoods' fishing and processing vessels. Trident prepares the vessels for fishing voyages, and maintains and repairs boats and equipment at the 33-acre Tacoma facility. Many of the Tacoma area's independently

owned and operated commercial fishing boats call in at the Port-owned City Marina. A majority of these boats are gill net or purse-seine vessels that fish for salmon in the waters of Washington and Alaska.<sup>11</sup>

## **Involvement in West Coast Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000 landings were delivered to Tacoma by 536 vessels, including: 99 commercial vessels, 99 personal use vessels, and 337 Tribal commercial vessels. Landings made by other vessel types are confidential. According to recorded data, landings in Tacoma were made in the following West Coast fisheries in 2000 (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels making landings): coastal pelagic (177 t/\$171,979/7), crab (3 t/\$14,813/4), salmon (352 t/\$542,002/235), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/2), shellfish (254 t/\$2,039,144/60), and other species (101 t/\$295,465/21).

Twenty-five commercial vessels were owned by Tacoma residents in 2000; 13 vessels participated in the federal groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Tacoma residents that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (2/0/0), crab (4/0/0), groundfish (5/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (15/6/0), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (7/0/0).<sup>12</sup>

In 2000 recorded data indicates that the number of Tacoma residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (3/0/0), crab (2/0/0), groundfish (3/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (28/5/3), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (5/0/0).<sup>13</sup>

A total of 66 state commercial fishing permits were registered to Tacoma residents in 2000. According to recorded data, the number of permits held by Tacoma residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (7/0/0), crab (3/0/0), groundfish (8/0/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (31/5/4), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (8/0/0).<sup>14</sup>

There were at least four seafood processors operating in Tacoma in 2000. Approximately 110 people were employed by these processors in the same year. The estimated total weight of their processed products in 2000 was 1,072,752 pounds, valued at \$8,035,010. Processed salmon products were the top products in terms of pounds and revenue (842,979 lbs/ \$6,593,303).

### *Sportfishing*

A number of charter vessels, principally targeting salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon, operate out of Tacoma. In 2000, at least five charter businesses serviced sportfishermen and tourists in Tacoma. There are 13 licensed vendors selling sportfishing permits in Tacoma. In 2003 Tacoma vendors made 23,877 sportfishing license transactions totaling just over \$387,701. The annual sport salmon catch in Catch Record Card Area 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) was 14,212 during the 2000-2001 license year. Based on catch card data, during 72,194 marine angler trips anglers took 8108 Chinook, 6054 Coho, and 50 Chum salmon. In the same year, six steelhead were caught in Area 11. The bottomfish catch for the same area during the 2000-2001 license year totaled 2611.

### *Subsistence*

Subsistence harvest for marine species may exist in the Tacoma area. However, the extent of subsistence harvesting is difficult to quantify due to a scarcity of data.

## **Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries**

### *Commercial Fishing*

In 2000 there were 47 vessels owned by Tacoma residents that participated 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), Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish (confidential/confidential/1), halibut (confidential/confidential/2), salmon (1407.8 t/\$1,310,380/28), and shellfish (confidential/confidential/3).

In 2000, 157 Tacoma residents served as crewmembers on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year, 35 community residents held state permits for Alaska fisheries and 18 Tacoma residents held federal permits for North Pacific fisheries.

A total of 57 North Pacific commercial fishing permits were held by residents of Tacoma in 2000. In the same year, Tacoma residents held 710,533 halibut and 1,240,556 sablefish Individual Fishing Quota shares respectively. In 2000, residents of Tacoma held 2 crab Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits, 7 CFEC BSAI groundfish permits, 4 CFEC halibut permits, 29 CFEC salmon permits, and 5 CFEC shellfish permits. There were also two crab License Limitation Program (LLP) permits and four groundfish LLP permits held by Tacoma residents in 2000.

### *Sportfishing*

While charter boats in Tacoma primarily target west coast fisheries, sportfishermen in Tacoma are involved in Alaskan fisheries as well. In 2000 at least two charter businesses in Tacoma offered fishing excursions in Alaska. In the same year, 957 Alaskan sportfishing licenses were purchased by Tacoma residents.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Tacoma. 1996. The City of Tacoma Brochure, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/default.asp?main=/21About/default.asp> (access date - August. 2004).

<sup>2</sup> History Link. 2003. Tacoma – Thumbnail History, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://seattle.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.historylink.org%2Fwelcome.htm> (access date - August. 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Sullivan, Michael. 1999. The Tacoma Eastern Railroad-Linking Puget Sound and Mount Rainier National Park. *Columbia Magazine* 13(4).

<sup>4</sup> City of Tacoma. 1996. The City of Tacoma Brochure, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/default.asp?main=/21About/default.asp> (access date - August. 2004).

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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).

<sup>7</sup> 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).

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<sup>8</sup> 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).

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> City-data.com. No Date. Tacoma, Washington, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Tacoma-Washington.html> (access date - September 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Port of Tacoma. 2000. Customers, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.portoftacoma.com/shipping.cfm?sub=50> (access date - September 2004).

<sup>12</sup> '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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