

Kneeland

People and Place

Location

Kneeland is in Humboldt County, about 12 miles east of Humboldt Bay and roughly equidistant (14 miles) from Eureka and Arcata. It is approximately 283 miles north of San Francisco and 315 miles north of Sacramento. Kneeland has no formally defined boundaries.¹ The geographic coordinates of Kneeland are lat 40°45'41"N, long 123°59'37"W.

Demographic Profile

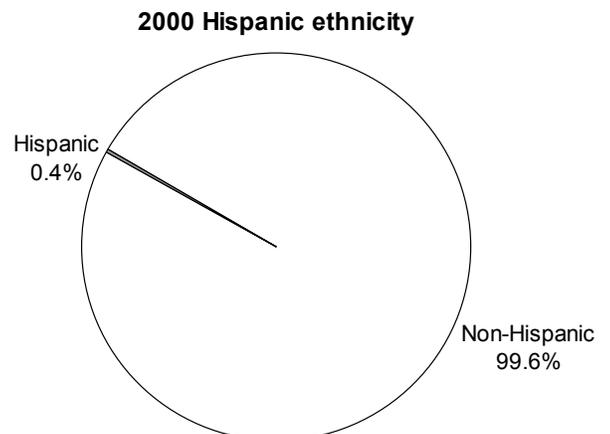
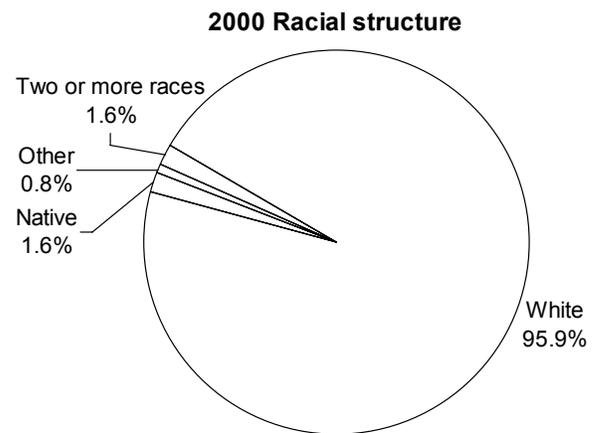
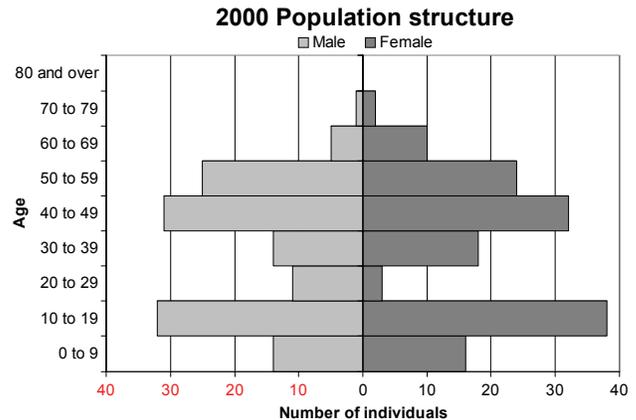
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Kneeland was 244. The gender composition was 51.6% female and 48.4% male. The median age in 2000 was 41.5, higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 89.3% had a high school education or higher, 39% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 9.6% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the racial structure of Kneeland was white, (95.9%), followed by individuals who identified with two or more races (1.6%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (1.6%), and individuals who identified with some other race (0.8). Ethnicity data indicate only 0.4% identified as Hispanic. A small percentage (2.2%) was foreign-born; of which 50% were born in Guatemala.

History

Several Indian groups occupied the Humboldt County area before the arrival of Euro-Americans. Kneeland lies within the original territory of the Wiyot, who relied on salmon, locally harvested roots, and marine resources for subsistence. Native groups may have used the prairies surrounding Kneeland as hunting grounds through the practice of strategic burning. Prior to 1860, an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 Wiyot were living in the area.² By 1920 their numbers had declined to around 100 due to introduced diseases and deadly conflicts with settlers and the military. Today many Wiyot descendants live on the Table Bluff Reservation, located 16 miles south of nearby Eureka.

The first nonnative explorers entered Humboldt Bay in 1806, but the region was not permanently settled by Euro-Americans until the 1850s, when the California Gold Rush brought a flood of new residents.³ The nearby coastal communities of Eureka, Arcata, and Trinidad quickly developed as shipping and supply centers for the



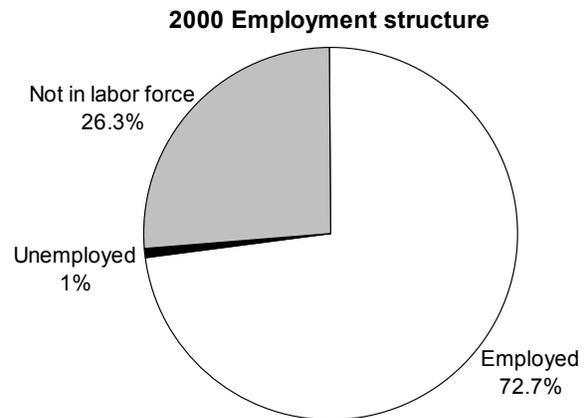
mining industry. After the gold rush waned, area residents began to capitalize on locally abundant timber, land, and marine resources, and the region became a major center for logging, ranching, and fishing.

The Kneeland area, which is above the timberline and dominated by prairie vegetation, attracted settlers interested in cattle and sheep ranching. Initially known as Kleizer's Prairie, the area features prime grazing land and climate conditions suitable for cultivating hay and other fodder crops.⁴ In 1852 John A. Kneeland and his sister Mandana established a ranch in the area, which then became known as Kneeland's Prairie. Other ranchers followed suit, taking advantage of lucrative markets for meat products in nearby mining and logging communities.

The 1850s were marked by heated conflict between white settlers and Indians who sought to defend their claims to the land surrounding Kneeland. Indian resistance was severely undermined when the U.S. Army established two stations in the vicinity and began regular patrols to defend settler's ranches. Conflicts among squatters also characterized this period until the Homestead Act of 1862 established a framework for formally settling the area. The early 1860s brought a wave of homesteaders from elsewhere in the United States and from foreign countries (especially Ireland), but many of these settlers sold their land to larger ranching operations during a period of consolidation in the 1870s. At the turn of the century, several large ranches owned by prominent local families dominated the area.

Community interdependence among these isolated ranches was fostered by the need to keep roads passable and coordinate access to markets for meat and agricultural products.⁵ In 1869 area residents constructed the first Kneeland School, which also served as a church and a central meeting place. A post office was constructed in 1880, and some hotels catering to stagecoach passengers traveling from Humboldt Bay to San Francisco briefly operated in the 1880s. Beginning in the 1940s, extensive commercial logging became an important economic activity in the Kneeland area, including a short-lived sawmill. In 1962 a small airport was constructed in an area that had long been a convenient site for emergency landings when weather or navigation problems prevented pilots from reaching Eureka.

Today Kneeland is a loose collection of horse, sheep, and cattle ranches (many still owned by descendants of the first Euro-American settler families), and rural residences. The community has no central commercial district or downtown area, but the Kneeland Post Office, Kneeland Elementary School (built in 1952), Kneeland Airport, and Kneeland Volunteer Fire



Department provide services and form a central location for community activity. Logging continues in the surrounding forested areas by Pacific Lumber and other local companies.⁶

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 72.7% of Kneeland's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 1% was unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 1.3% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 26.3% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were local, state, or federal government (32.3%), education, health, and social services (25.5%), construction (11.4%), and manufacturing (9.4%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, and fishing employed 10.1%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

Most Kneeland area residents derive income from farming and ranching or commute to jobs in nearby Eureka, Arcata, and other Humboldt Bay area communities. Fishing, lumber, and tourism are also major employers.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Kneeland's per capita income was \$22,832 in 1999, comparable to the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was \$53,750, higher than the national median household income of \$41,994. In 1999 0.4% lived below the poverty level in 1999, compared to the national poverty level of 12.4%. In 2000 Kneeland had 102 housing units, of which 90.2% were occupied and 9.8% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 87% were by owner and 13% were by renter. Approximately 40% of

the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Kneeland is an unincorporated community within the jurisdiction of Humboldt County, whose seat is at Eureka (14 miles). The sales tax is 7.25% and Humboldt County levies a 10% transient lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in California.

Kneeland is 669 miles from the Southwest Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in Long Beach, 320 miles from the NMFS Newport, Oregon, field station, and 357 miles from the NMFS Santa Cruz laboratory. The nearest California Department of Fish and Game field office is in Eureka, and the closest U.S. Coast Guard Station is in McKinleyville (20 miles). Kneeland is 286 miles from the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Center in San Francisco. The closest meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management Council are held in Foster City, 307 miles from Kneeland. The nearest North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 420 miles away in Portland, Oregon.

Facilities

Kneeland is 12 miles east and inland from the nearest major thoroughfare, U.S. Highway 101, which runs along the edge of Humboldt Bay and passes through Eureka and Arcata. A single rural road, Kneeland Road, connects the town to the highway. The Kneeland Airport has two paved public runways, and the Arcata/Eureka Airport (14 miles) offers carrier flights. The nearest major international airport is 272 miles away south of San Francisco.

Kneeland has a single elementary school but no middle or high school facilities. Students attend middle schools in Arcata and Freshwater (5 miles), and high schools in Eureka. Pacific Gas and Electric provides electricity, and the Kneeland Volunteer Fire Department and the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office administer fire safety and law enforcement services. There are no water or sewer services available in Kneeland; residents rely on private wells and septic tanks.⁷ The closest health care facility is St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka. Kneeland offers no lodging, but neighboring communities have a number of hotels.

The nearest marine facilities are within the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District in Eureka. These facilities include the Port of Humboldt Bay and the Woodley Island Marina. Humboldt Bay is the only deepwater port along the West

Coast between Coos Bay, Oregon, and San Francisco. The Port of Humboldt Bay supports four shipping terminals that offer a variety of features and services. Fairhaven Terminal includes one berth with a 500-foot wooden pile dock; Fields Landing Terminal includes one berth with a 900-foot dock; Schneider Dock has one berth with a 400-foot concrete, unlimited load dock; and Sierra Pacific Industries/Eureka Dock has one berth with a 475-foot wooden dock.⁸ The Woodley Island Marina provides 237 slips for commercial and recreational vessels, guest docking facilities, hoists, work area, café and bar, laundry, ships chandlery and boat sales, and rentals.⁹

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 no vessels delivered landings to Kneeland and the community had no seafood processors. Kneeland residents owned four commercial vessels in 2000, of which all participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Kneeland residents in 2000 that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/1/2, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/1.¹⁰

In 2000 one community member held a single federal groundfish permit. The number of Kneeland residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/2, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/1/3, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 0/0/1.¹¹

Kneeland residents held 14 registered state commercial fishing permits in 2000. The number of state permits held by residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/2, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/5, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/4, and other species 0/0/1.¹²

Sportfishing

In 2002 at least three charter businesses served sport fishermen and tourists in Kneeland. Currently no agents sell sportfishing licenses in Kneeland. In 2000 Humboldt County vendors sold 122,642 resident sportfishing licenses, 66 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 9,572 sport salmon punch cards, and 2,605 abalone report cards. In the northern California port group consisting of Fort Bragg, Eureka, and Crescent City, 15 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 11,574 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 49,983 landings composed of at least nine species. Rockfish (unspecified) and Chinook

salmon accounted for 81.2% and 16.1% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may engage in subsistence fishing in the Kneeland area. The California Department of Fish and Game captures those fishermen who do not earn revenue from fishing, but use it to provide food for personal consumption, under “recreational” data. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Kneeland is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 no Kneeland residents were involved in North Pacific commercial fisheries.

Sportfishing

One Kneeland resident purchased an Alaska sportfishing license in 2000.

Notes

1. Field notes, Humboldt County Community Development Services, 12 April 2005.
2. Wiyot Tribe. No date. History and culture. Online at <http://www.wiyot.com/history.htm> [accessed 21 February 2007].
3. S. Van Kirk. 1999. Humboldt County: A briefest of histories. Online at <http://www.humboldthistory.org/briefhist.html> [accessed 21 February 2007].
4. R. Cooper. 1987. Kneeland through the years. The Humboldt historian, January-February.
5. See note 4.
6. See note 3.
7. Field notes, Humboldt Municipal Water District, 14 April 2005.
8. Humboldt Bay Harbor. Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Port of Humboldt Bay: Shipping terminals. Online at <http://www.humboldtbay.org/portofhumboldtbay/terminals/> [accessed 21 February 2007].
9. Humboldt Bay Harbor. Recreation and Conservation District. No date. Woodley Island Marina: Facilities. Online at <http://www.humboldtbay.org/woodleyislandmarina/> [accessed 21 February 2007].
10. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
11. See note 10.
12. See note 10.