

# Pleasantville, New Jersey

## People and Place

### Location

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

### Demographic Profile

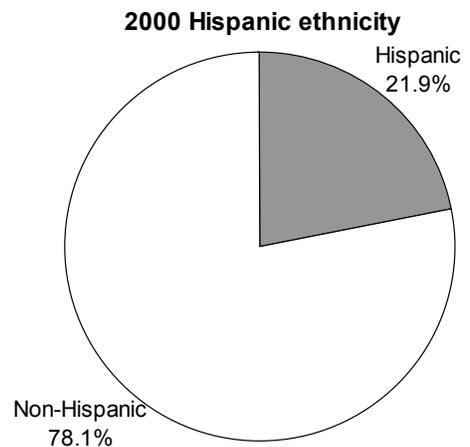
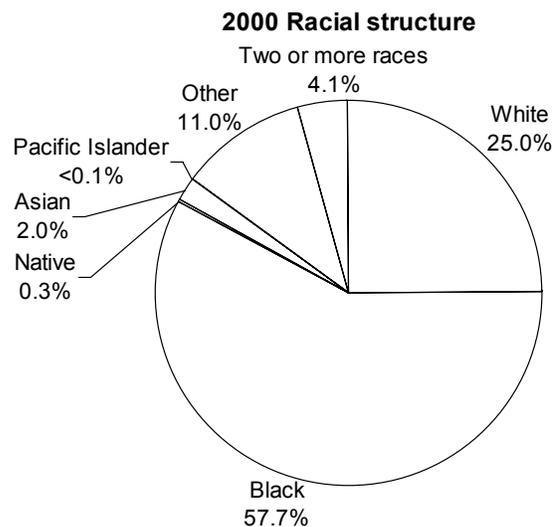
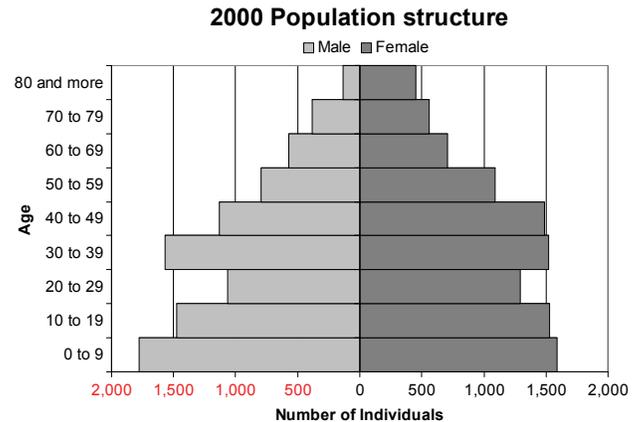
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Pleasantville was 19,012, an 18.6% increase over 1990. The gender structure was 53.1% females and 46.9% male. The median age in 2000 was 32.7, lower than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 68.9% had a high school education or higher, 9% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 2.7% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. A high school diploma or equivalency was the highest attainment for 39.2%.

The racial structure of Pleasantville was predominantly black (57.7%), followed by white (25%), individuals who identified with some other race (11%), individuals who identified with two or more races (4.1%), Asian (2%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.3%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (<0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate 21.9% identified as Hispanic, and 12.9% of the population was foreign-born. Of the foreign-born population, 24.9% were from the Dominican Republic and 23% were from Haiti.

In 2000 83.4% of the population lived in family households.

### History

The area surrounding Pleasantville was originally inhabited by the Leni-Lenape Indians, who form the base of the contemporary Delaware (Lenape) Tribe. The Leni-Lenape lived within several loosely confederated independent communities and inhabited the Delaware River Valley in present day New Jersey and Pennsylvania. They moved 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>

Europeans first explored the Atlantic County area in the sixteenth century and Henry Hudson surveyed it in 1609. The first permanent European settlers arrived in the 1690s. Many early settlers were whalers. Shipyards, mills, iron furnaces, and brickyards soon became the foundation of the local economy.<sup>2</sup> Shipbuilding in particular became an important local enterprise. The community that would become Pleasantville was first settled in the seventeenth century, along a stagecoach route from Port Republic to the Somers Point Ferry. The community was originally part of Egg Harbor Township, which 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. It read “Lake’s Store, Pleasantville, New Jersey,” and the name became permanent.<sup>3</sup>

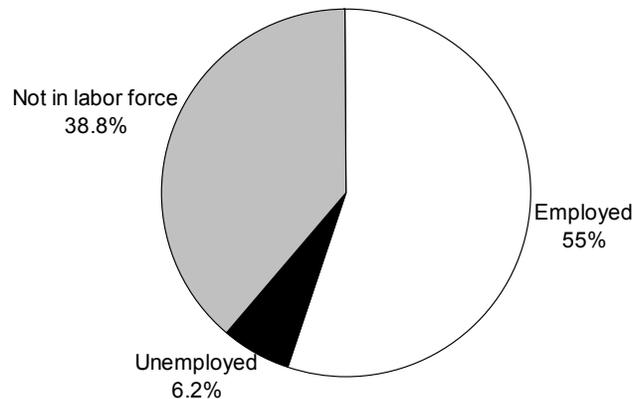
Pleasantville is known as the “Gateway to Atlantic City.” The community has been designated as a New Jersey Urban Enterprise City and markets itself as a prime location for casino and hotel industries.<sup>4</sup> Businesses established in Pleasantville are known as Urban Enterprise Industries and benefit from 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 New Jersey Urban Enterprise Program (UEP) is part of an aggressive redevelopment plan meant to revitalize the local economy.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 55% of Pleasantville’s potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 6.2% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 10.2% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), well above the national unemployment rate of 5.7%. In addition, 38.8% were not in the labor force (not actively seeking work). The primary employment sectors were arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (27.7%), education, health and social services (16.2%), and local, state, or federal government (13.8%). Reportedly, no one worked in natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining, but this may be misleading because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

2000 Employment structure



Pleasantville relies heavily on revenue from 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, Pleasantville’s per capita income in 1999 was \$17,668, below the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was \$36,913, also less than the national median household income of \$41,994. About 15.8% lived below the poverty level, compared to the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 Pleasantville had 7,042 housing units, of which 90.9% were occupied and 9.1% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 56.3% were by owner and 43.7% were by renter.

### 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 the 6% statewide rate). The state 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 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 requires commercial fishermen to purchase various fishery and gear-specific licenses and pay additional associated fees.

Pleasantville is within the jurisdiction of the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. The nearest council meetings are held in Atlantic City, which is also home to a U.S. Coast Guard station. The National

Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office is 369 miles away in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The Southern Region Office of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife is 35 miles away in Sicklerville.

## Facilities

The Pleasantville Public School District has a high school, middle school, and four elementary schools.<sup>10</sup> The city also has one private elementary school. The Pleasantville Police and Fire departments administer public safety. The Pleasantville Department of Public Works operates the wastewater system. South Jersey Gas Company provides natural gas, and the New Jersey American Water Company supplies water. Connecticut Energy supplies electricity.<sup>11</sup>

Atlantic City International Airport is 5 miles northwest of Pleasantville. The city has several major hotels, including several with gambling facilities. The nearest major hospitals are located in Atlantic City and Somers Point (8 miles).

Atlantic City has the closest commercial and recreational marine fishing facilities: Farley State Marina and Kammerman's Marina. It also has 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, no Pleasantville residents were involved in West Coast fisheries in 2000.

### Sportfishing

In 2000 Pleasantville residents may have been active in sportfishing in the West Coast fisheries, however, no data on this activity are available.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

In 2000 one Pleasantville resident held a federal permit for North Pacific fisheries, a License Limitation Program (LLP) scallop permit.

### Sportfishing

Two Pleasantville residents purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

## 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 Atlantic City focuses almost exclusively on harvesting surf clams and ocean quohogs.<sup>12</sup> The local fleet consists primarily of larger vessels (70 to 150 feet long) 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 the National Marine Fisheries Service and published by the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture, approximately 2,706 people were employed full-time by the state's commercial fishing industry in 1998.<sup>13</sup> About 1,078 worked in fish and seafood processing, 100 in aquaculture, 909 in wholesale trade, and 3,278 in retail trade. 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.

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. A single license agent sells sportfishing licenses in Pleasantville.

## Notes

1. Atlantic County Government. 2004. Leni-Lenape Indians. Online at <http://www.aclink.org/HISTORY/mainpages/LENAPE.asp> [accessed 11 April 2007].
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13. New Jersey State Department of Agriculture. 1998. 1999 employment and economic contributions of New Jersey fisheries. Online at [http://www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov/emp\\_eco.html](http://www.jerseyseafood.nj.gov/emp_eco.html) [accessed 11 April 2007].