

Seaford, Virginia

People and Place

Location

Seaford, located near the convergence of the York River and Chesapeake Bay, is 70 miles east of Richmond in lower York County. The community encompasses 3,220 acres of land, defined by Zip code 23696.¹ The geographic coordinates of Seaford are lat 37°11'53"N, long 76°26'00"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Seaford was 3,441. The gender structure was 50.2% female and 49.8% male. The median age in 2000 was 41.2, higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 88.7% had a high school education or higher, 27.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 10.1% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. The highest educational attainment for 25.1% was a high school diploma or equivalency.

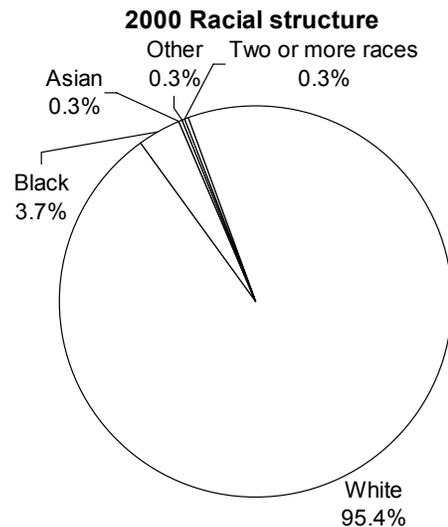
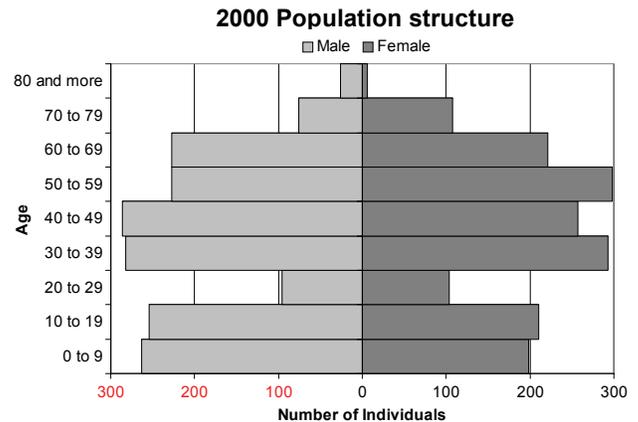
The majority of the racial structure of Seaford was white (95.4%), followed by black (3.7%), Asian (0.3%), individuals who identified with two or more races (0.3%), and individuals who identified with some other race (0.3%). Ethnicity data indicate 3.2% identified as Hispanic, and 1.7% of the population was foreign-born. Of the foreign-born residents, 29.3% were from Greece and 15.5% were from Japan.

In 2000 87.7% of the population lived in family households.

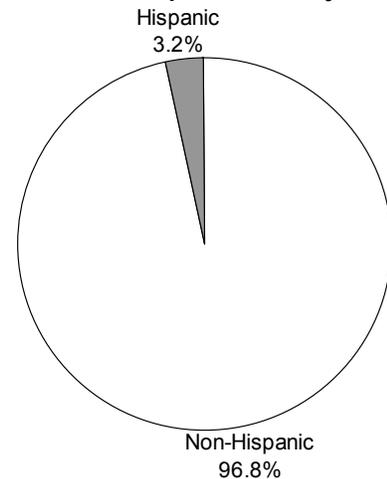
History

Algonquian-speaking Indians originally inhabited the Seaford area. They were united in the early seventeenth century by Chief Wahunsunacock, who later changed his name to Powhatan after the village where he was born.² The tribes united by Chief Powhatan came to be known collectively as the Powhatans or the Powhatan Confederacy. Their primary village was near Gloucester, but they had hundreds of satellite villages throughout the Chesapeake Bay area and the Virginia coastal plain.

The Powhatans cultivated corn and other vegetables and depended heavily on fish, oysters, clams, and waterfowl.³ They were the first Indians encountered by the European settlers who founded Jamestown in 1607. Chief Powhatan agreed to the marriage of his daughter, Pocahontas, and the leader of the colony, James Smith, in



2000 Hispanic ethnicity



the hope the gesture would prevent conflict between the two groups, but disease and bloody encounters with Euro-American settlers soon decimated the Indian population. Smith and Pocohontas never married. Powhatan tribes gradually lost control of their ancestral lands, but many descendants still reside in the area.

York County was established in 1634 as one of eight shires in colonial Virginia. The community that became Seaford was originally called Crab Neck, Crab Rock, and Calamar.⁴ Prior to the Civil War, only 30 families lived in Crab Neck. During the war, Northern troops tore down the local Methodist Church to build a hospital for Union soldiers. A post office first opened in 1889, and the first local elementary school was constructed in 1920.

Today the community remains small, and the majority of businesses are oriented toward fishing, boating, lighthouse construction, and other marine-related activities. The community also depends on scallop fishing (in both the Mid-Atlantic and North Pacific). Seaford has a large scallop processing facility, which operates more than 20 scallop dredgers and markets its products under the name Captain Wells Brand Scallops. The Seaford Scallop Company was founded in 1979 and quickly became one of the largest processing facilities on the East Coast. Today the company also includes Wells Scallops and Wells Ice and Cold Storage and supplies fresh scallops to consumers year-round.⁵

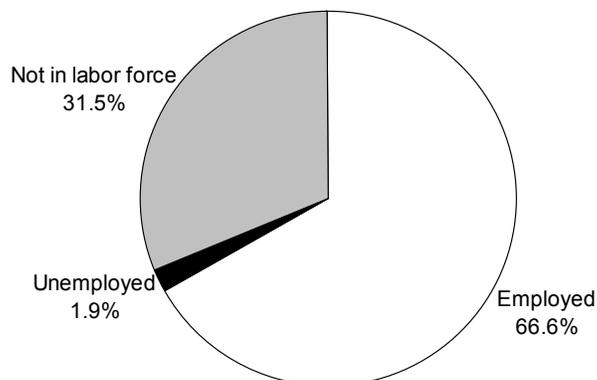
Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 66.6% of Seaford's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 1.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 2.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), less than half the national jobless rate of 5.7%. In addition, 31.5% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were local, state, or federal government (19.3%), manufacturing (18.2%), education, health and social services (14.8%), and the armed forces (7%). None were reported working 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.

Businesses in Seaford include Calvin Huges Welding and Machine Works, Lighthouse Marine Surveying and Consulting, Mill's Marina, Seaford Transfer, Seaford Scallop Company, Seaford Country Market, and the Seaford Yacht Club.⁶ A Coca Cola bottling plant is located in the community, which employs 112 people. The Seaford Scallop Company, Wells Scallop, and Wells Ice and Cold Storage, which

2000 Employment structure



operate jointly from a facility in Seaford, employ 62.⁷ Other major employers include York County Schools and York County Government. Two large industrial complexes, Virginia Power and the Yorktown Refinery (owned by Giant Industries), may also employ Seaford residents.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income in Seaford in 1999 was \$28,905, compared to the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income of \$64,392 was well above the national median household income of \$41,994. Only 3.3% lived below the poverty level in 1999, compared to the national poverty level of 12.4%. In 2000 Seaford had 1,354 housing units, of which 95.3% were occupied and 4.7% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 91.2% were by owner and 8.8% were by renter.

Governance

Seaford is not incorporated and has no local government. The community is under the jurisdiction of York County, headquartered in nearby Yorktown (9 miles). York County levies a 5% sales and use tax and a 5% lodging tax plus an additional \$2 per room, per night.⁸

Virginia has a 2% tax on the sale of watercraft, with a maximum tax burden of \$2,000. Motor vehicle fuel is taxed at 16 cents per gallon, but commercial watercraft operators are eligible for a refund of 14.5 cents per gallon. Commercial watercraft operators may also direct the state to credit their share of this motor fuel tax to the state's Marine Fishing Improvement Fund.⁹ Boats of more than five tons are taxed as personal property.

The Virginia Department of Taxation does not levy landing taxes on commercially harvested fish and shellfish, but the Virginia Marine Resources Commission requires commercial fishermen to purchase various fishery and gear-specific licenses and pay additional associated fees.

The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council holds its nearest meetings in nearby Hampton. The closest U.S. Coast Guard station is in Yorktown. The National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office is 652 miles away in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission has a law enforcement field office 10 miles away in Gloucester Point.

Facilities

Seaford is located at the junction of Virginia highways 718 and 622, about 3 miles east of U.S. Highway 17. The Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport is about 6 miles from Seaford in Newport News. The nearest hospital facilities are located in Newport News, Hampton (9 miles), and Yorktown. According to available sources, there are no hotels or motels in Seaford.

Seaford is located in the York County School Division, which is headquartered in Yorktown. Seaford students attend elementary school in Seaford and middle school and high school in Yorktown.

The York County Sheriff's office administers law enforcement services in Seaford and fire safety services are provided by Neighborhood Fire Station #6, located in Seaford and operated by the county.¹⁰ Dominion Virginia Power supplies electricity and Virginia Natural Gas provides gas. Most Seaford residents use private wells and septic tanks.

The community has a marina for commercial and recreational fishermen and a scallop processing facility with more than 20 scallop dredgers that operate along the Atlantic Coast. Mill's Marina, located on Chesapeake Bay at the mouth of the York River, is a full-service facility.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 available data indicates no Seaford residents involved in West Coast fisheries.

Sportfishing

Seaford residents may have been active in sportfishing in the West Coast fisheries in 2000, however, no data are available.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Seaford residents owned three vessels that participated in North Pacific fisheries. These vessels

made landings in the North Pacific scallop fishery, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

In 2000 five Seaford residents held commercial fishing permits for North Pacific fisheries. Two held state permits for Alaska fisheries and three held federal permits.

Residents held two Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission scallop permits and two License Limitation Program scallop permits.

Sportfishing

In 2000 four Seaford residents purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses.

Additional Information

Involvement in East Coast Fisheries

Seaford residents are heavily involved in the East Coast fisheries, especially the scallop fishery. Seaford Scallop, Wells Scallop, and Wells Ice and Cold Storage, which operate a scallop processing facility in Seaford, employ more than 60 full-time employees and operate more than 20 vessels active in the New England and Mid-Atlantic scallop fisheries.¹¹

Notes

1. Field notes, York County Government, VA, June 2006.
2. York County Government. 2004. Native Americans. Online at <http://www.yorkcounty.gov/cyc/native.html> [accessed 11 April 2007].
3. K. Spaar. No date. The Potomac Appalachian trail club-short history of the Powhatan Indians. Online at http://www.patc.net/history/native/ind_hist.html [accessed 11 April 2007].
4. B. Quass. 2003. Seaford Virginia home page. Online at <http://www.quass.com/seafordvirginia.html> [accessed 11 April 2007].
5. Captain Wells Scallops. 2005. History. Online at <http://www.captainwellsscallops.com/history.html> [accessed 11 April 2007].
6. See note 4.
7. York County Office of Economic Development. 2004. Top employers. Online at http://www.yorkcounty.gov/econdev/industry/top_employers.htm [accessed 11 April 2007].
8. York County Government. 2004. Business tax information. Online at <http://www.yorkcounty.gov/revenue/businesstax.htm> [accessed 11 April 2007].
9. Virginia Department of Taxation. 2005. Tax code of Virginia. Online at <http://www.policylibrary.tax.virginia.gov/OTP/Policy.nsf> [accessed 11 April 2007].
10. York County Government. 2004. Neighborhood fire station #6. Online at <http://www.yorkcounty.gov/fls/fstat/Stat6.htm> [accessed 11 April 2007].
11. See note 5.