

Anacortes

People and Place

Location

Anacortes, the gateway to the San Juan Islands, is on the northern shore of Fidalgo Island. Situated in Skagit County, the city encompasses more than 12 miles of saltwater shoreline and encompasses 10.6 square miles of land and 2.4 square miles of surface water. The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, a 90-mile drive south, while Bellingham is a 40-mile drive northeast. Anacortes' geographic coordinates are lat 48°30'46"N, long 122°36'41"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Anacortes' population was 14,557, an increase of 27.1% from 1990. The gender composition was 51.7% female and 48.3% male. The median age of 42.6 was higher than the national median of 35.3. The population had an even age distribution. Of the population 18 years of age and older 87.4% had received a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 25.7% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.4% had attained a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

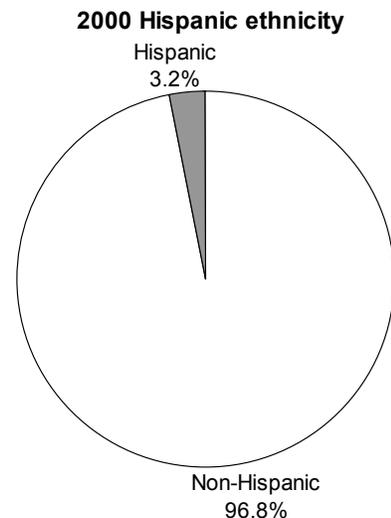
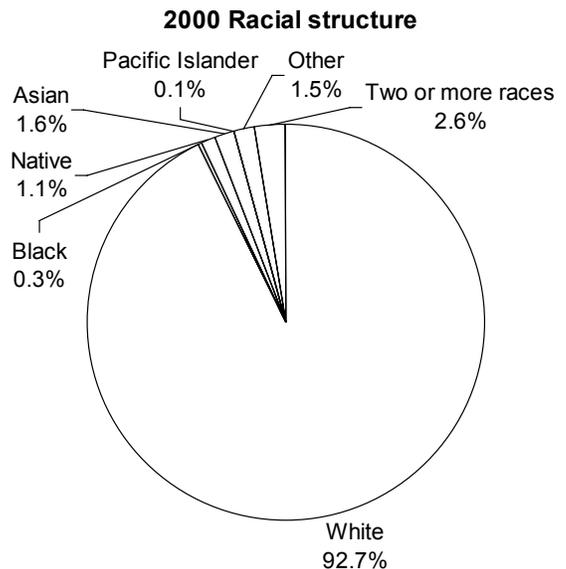
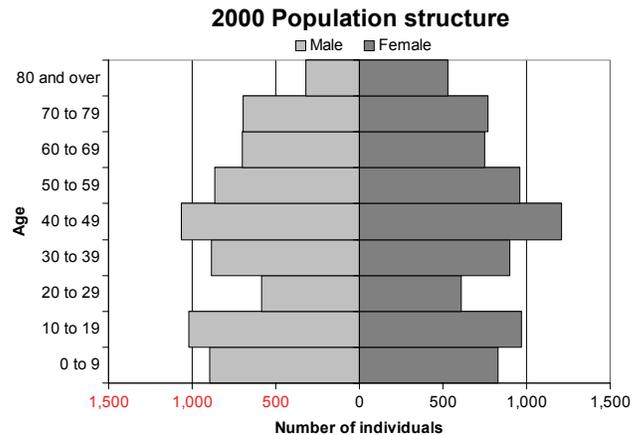
The vast majority of Anacortes' racial structure recorded in the 2000 U.S. Census was white (92.7%), followed by people who identified with two or more races (2.6%), Asian (1.6%), people who identified with another race (1.5%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.1%), black (0.3%), and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (0.1%). Ethnicity data indicate that 3.2% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 5% were foreign-born, with 26.8% from Canada, 12.1% from Mexico, and 9.1% from the Philippines.

In 2000 83.2% of Anacortes' population lived in family households.

History

Skagit County was created in 1883 from the southern portion Whatcom County. The county derived its name from the Indian tribe that lived along the river known by the same name, the largest watercourse in the north Cascade Mountains.

For more than 10,000 years people have lived in the Fidalgo Island and Guemes Island areas. Native people belonging to the Samish Indian Nation and Swinomish Tribe were signatories to the 1855 Point Elliot Treaty. The treaty gave Western Washington tribes the right to



self-governance and set aside several reservations, including one for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community on southeastern Fidalgo Island, home to 2,664 Swinomish tribal members (2000 U.S. Census) and a smaller reservation located beyond Sedro-Woolley, home to about 238 Upper Skagit tribal members.

In the 1700s Spanish, British, and Russian explorers and fur traders were the first nonnatives to enter the Skagit region. The first nonnative settlers, Richard and Shadrack Wooten, arrived in present-day Anacortes in 1865 and established claims along the western shoreline of Fidalgo Bay. The Cap Sante area, then called The Portage, was home to a few homestead families around 1870. Others lived along Guemes Channel, now known as Ship Harbor. In 1877 Amos and Anna Bowman, residents of Ship Harbor, established a post office and named it Anacortes, derived from Anna Curtis, Anna's maiden name.¹

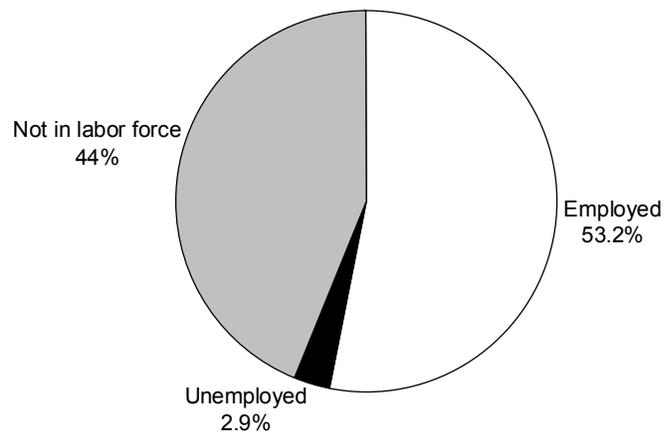
Fishing and logging industries began to dominate the town during its incorporation in 1891. Over the next several years salmon canning and codfish curing industries became established. By the early 1900s hundreds of Anacortes residents were employed in about a dozen fish processing plants in town. In 1925 the Anacortes Pulp Mill began operation and remained in production until 1978. Fieldwork indicates that the lumber industry is less prominent in the community today; the Port of Anacortes has ceased logging operations and only one log export yard remains.² Over the past 50 years the Anacortes economy has changed. Shell and Texaco built oil refineries on March Point in the 1950s. By the 1960s most of the fish processing plants had closed; only three processors remain in operation today. Large housing developments were built in the 1960s to meet the needs of people coming to the area, some of whom were retirees. The tourism industry in Anacortes also has grown, providing lodging, restaurants, shops, and marinas to incoming visitors. Several festivals attract visitors to the area including the Anacortes Arts Festival in August, the Waterfront Festival, and the annual "Oyster Run," which draws thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 53.2% of Anacortes' potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5.1% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 44% were not in the labor force, compared to the national

2000 Employment structure



average of 36.1%. The largest employment sectors were management, professional, and related occupations (33.1%), sales and office occupations (23.9%), and local, state, and federal governments (18.5%).

Industries dependent upon natural resources, particularly commercial fishing, in Anacortes have employed the lowest number of workers but have paid some of the areas highest salaries. In 2000 the annual average wage for commercial fishermen in the county was \$57,810.³ Finfish was the major fishery, employing 53 workers making \$83,016 annual average pay.⁴ And in the same year, only 91 Skagit County residents identified themselves as commercial fishermen.⁵ The economy of Anacortes today relies less on fishing and logging than it did throughout the 1900s. Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 2.3% of the population 16 years and older in 2000, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

The top employers in the Anacortes area were (number of employees) Puget Sound Refining Company (378), Tesoro Northwest Company (375), the Anacortes School District (240), Swinomish Casino and Bingo (218), Island Hospital (200), and Trident Seafoods (200). Sugiyo USA Inc. (100) and SeaBear Inc. (50) were included among the top 15 employers.⁶ Boat building, repair, and service industries also are quite large in Anacortes, with more than 40 businesses operating in the community.

According to 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income was \$22,297 in 1999 and the median household income was \$41,930. In 1999 7.7% lived below the poverty level, lower than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 6,551 housing units in Anacortes, with 68.8% owner occupied and 31.2% renter occupied.

The housing unit vacancy rate was 7.1%, with 25.2% vacant due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Incorporated in 1891, the City of Anacortes has a council-mayor form of government, with a mayor and a seven-member city council. Skagit County levies an 8% sales tax and a 2% lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in Washington.

The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Office and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services District Office are in Seattle. Meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management and North Pacific Fishery Management councils are routinely held in the Seattle-Tacoma area. The closest Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Regional Office is 60 miles southeast in Mill Creek. Anacortes falls within the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Station Bellingham's area of responsibility, which includes the San Juan Islands north to the Canada border and south to Admiralty Inlet. The USCG station was established in 1947 and has six vessels.

Facilities

Anacortes is accessible by ground, water, and air. Anacortes is located approximately 15 miles west of the Interstate 5 corridor (north-south). The western terminus of Washington Highway 20 (east-west) runs through Anacortes. There is a Greyhound bus terminal located in Mount Vernon (20 miles east). Skagit Transit provides public transportation between the cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley and Anacortes, and upriver through Concrete. Washington State Ferries run from Anacortes to the San Juan Islands and Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Amtrak's Cascade Corridor Service, stopping in Mount Vernon, provides national and international rail transport. The Anacortes Municipal Airport and the Skagit Regional Airport in Burlington (17 miles east) offer flights between Anacortes and the San Juan Islands, Bellingham, and Victoria, British Columbia, among others. The nearest airport certified for commercial carriers is located 40 miles northeast in Bellingham. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is the nearest facility offering national and international flights other than to Canada.

The Anacortes School District has four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Puget Sound Energy administers electricity. A city owned and operated regional water treatment plant on the east bank of the Skagit River near Mount Vernon provides drinking water. The Anacortes Wastewater Treatment Plant

provides wastewater treatment. Cascade Natural Gas offers services to residents of Skagit County. The Anacortes Police and Fire departments administer public safety. Island Hospital in Anacortes serves Skagit County, North Whidbey Island, and the San Juan Islands.

The City of Anacortes has several community services and organizations including the Anacortes Public Library, the Anacortes History Museum, a senior citizen center, and more than 3,000 acres of city-owned forestlands and parks, including the 220-acre Washington Park. The city holds several activities including the Waterfront Festival in May and the Anacortes Arts Festival in August. The tourism industry in Anacortes is well developed with more than 10 hotels.

The Port of Anacortes was established in 1926 and serves as the primary public cargo port in Skagit County. The port is located approximately 93 nautical miles eastward of the Pacific Ocean and 30 nautical miles south of the U.S.-Canada border. The port operates three marine terminals, covered storage warehouses, and serves as an offloading site for commercial fishermen. Curtis Wharf, primarily used for commercial boat and ships, provides temporary vessel moorage to a range of users. Several maritime companies including Dakota Creek Industries, Inc., a major shipbuilder and repair company, operate from the Port of Anacortes.⁷

Cap Sante Boat Haven, established in the 1950s, contains 1,050 slips, a fueling dock, boatyard, boathouses, and a small craft float. The Boat Haven has two docks, or 100 slips, dedicated to commercial vessels (i.e., fishing vessels, tugs, etc.) and 100–120 commercial fishing vessels moor at the Haven each year.⁸ Fieldwork revealed that community members foresee the need for bigger slips and deeper waterways to accommodate larger vessels, as insufficient accommodations for the working fleet will only have a negative impact on commerce.⁹ Several facilities exist for commercial fishermen at the Boat Haven including a loading or unloading dock, a forklift, two storage buildings (56 individual lockers), and an upland storage facility. The Boat Haven does not provide cold storage facilities or ice. Cap Sante Marine, Ltd., is located onsite and provides full-service boat construction, maintenance, and repair services.

There are only three large seafood processors in the Anacortes area today; however local fishermen sell seafood to several smaller companies including Thibert's Crab Market, Knudson's Crab Market, Wild Ocean Seafood, and Strom's Shrimp. For 42 years Thibert's has been buying crab, salmon, clams, and oysters from local fishermen. Thibert's sells their products retail and wholesale, and travels around Washington State providing Dungeness crab for local crab bakes.

Fieldwork indicates that Thibert's is the only business in the community that provides cold storage facilities for a small fee, allowing fishermen to store bait (e.g., clams, squid, and herring).¹⁰

Two aquaculture facilities are currently operating in the Anacortes area. Northwest Sea Farms LLC and Cypress Island Inc. are owned by Pan Fish USA Ltd., based in Campbell River, British Columbia. Pan Fish USA operates two hatcheries and six saltwater sites in Puget Sound and remains the only commercial salmon farming company in Washington State providing Atlantic salmon to the American market.¹¹

The Skagit County Marine Resource Committee (MRC), a Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, alternates monthly meetings between Anacortes and Mount Vernon. The purpose of the MRC is 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. Other community organizations include the Fidalgo Chapter of the Puget Sound Anglers, and several Seattle-based groups such as Puget Sound Vessel Owners Association, Puget Sound Gillnetters Association, and Puget Sound Crabbers Association.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Anacortes had at least three processor plants (Trident Seafoods, Sugiyo USA Inc., and SeaBear Inc.) that employed on average 107 people in 2000. That year the top three processed products were pollock, salmon, and yellowfin tuna, however the estimated total weight processed and value is confidential. Currently the same three processors are in Anacortes. Trident Seafoods built a secondary processing facility in the area in 1989 and boasts a large cold storage operation. The Anacortes plant, with roughly 225 employees, can produce 60 million pounds of finished product per year.¹²

In 2000 the total West Coast fisheries landings in Anacortes were 924,000 metric tons valued at \$3,655,818.

Of the 284 unique vessels that delivered landings to Anacortes, 163 were tribal commercial vessels and 114 were commercial vessels. The remaining vessels were personal and aquaculture vessels. Reported landings in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): crab 612 t/\$2,923,899/205; highly migratory species confidential/

confidential/2; salmon 104 t/\$192,040/91; shellfish 4 t/\$66,159/7; shrimp 30 t/\$95,460/14; and other species 89 t/\$209,502/37).

Anacortes residents owned 100 vessels in 2000 including 39 vessels that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Anacortes residents participating in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 2/0/3, crab 26/0/0, groundfish 9/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 31/0/1, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 16/0/0.¹³

One Anacortes resident held a single federally managed groundfish fishery permit in 2000. The number of Anacortes residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/5, crab 34/0/1, groundfish 1/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 59/0/1, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 5/0/0, and other species 7/0/4.¹⁴

Available data indicate 177 state and federal permits were registered to Anacortes residents in 2000. The number of permits held by community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was as follows: coastal pelagic 1/0/8, crab 76/0/1, groundfish 0/3/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 65/0/1, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 7/0/0, and other species 9/0/5.¹⁵

Many seafood processors operating in the area have closed, including Shannon Point Seafoods, Whitney Fidalgo, and Nelbro Packing Company. However several seafood companies from Western Washington come to Cap Sante Boat Haven to purchase product from local fishermen, including Best Fish (Seattle), Blaine Crab (Ferndale), Brant Island Seafood (Bellingham), Camco Seafood (Seattle), McDonald Fish (La Conner), Orient Seafood (Fife), Pacific Urchin Product (Tacoma), Trilogy Crab (Bellingham), Shannon Point Seafood (La Conner), New Day Fisheries (Port Townsend), and the Waterfront Fish Company (Everett).¹⁶ Fieldwork indicates that many fishermen have "broken down and purchased wholesale licenses" in order to sell fresh product from their vessels at Cap Sante Boat Haven. Boat Haven personnel view this as a positive trend due to the educational benefits the experience of buying "fresh seafood directly from the boat" affords the consumer.¹⁷

The tribal commercial fishery also plays a significant role in the local industry. According to the Boldt Decision,¹⁸ the usual and accustomed fishing areas of the Swinomish Tribal Community include the Skagit River and its tributaries, the Samish River and its tributaries and the marine areas of northern Puget Sound from the Fraser River in British Columbia south to and including Whidbey, Camano, Fidalgo, Guemes, Samish, Cypress, and the San Juan Islands, and including

Bellingham Bay and Hale Passage adjacent to Lummi Island.

Sportfishing

In 2000 four salmonid charter fishing business operated in Anacortes. At least five salmonid and one nonsalmonid charter fishing businesses operated in Anacortes in 2003. Internet fishing guide sources indicate that there are at least 10 charter boat companies in the Anacortes area offering fishing, whale watching, and ecotourism excursions; however fieldwork indicates that only five companies are directly involved in sportfishing in the area: Anacortes Highliner Charters, Catchmore Charters, Salmonater, Sea Hawk Salmon Charters, and R&R Charters.¹⁹ There are two licensed agents selling sportfishing permits in Anacortes. In 2003 there were 8,704 sportfishing license transactions valued at \$121,250 in Anacortes.

In Catch Record Card Area 7 (San Juan Islands) the 2000 sport catch, based on catch record cards, was 7,178 fish including 4,495 Chinook salmon, 2644 coho salmon, 21 chum salmon, and 18 sockeye salmon. Marine anglers made 30,627 trips in the sport salmon fishery. In 2000 boat-based anglers in Area 7 caught 75,897. The recreational harvest of clams (lbs) and oysters (#) for Area 7 was estimated to be 115,273 and 0 respectively; harvest occurred over an estimated 19,752 user trips.

Subsistence

Subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering activities are fundamental to the way of life of some coastal community members. Tribal and nontribal individuals participate in subsistence fishing. Today members of the Swinomish Tribe and other nontribal subsistence fishermen obtain fishery resources from the waters surrounding Anacortes. Subsistence fishing is not discussed in great detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Anacortes residents owned 109 vessels in 2000 involved in North Pacific fisheries. 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 and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish 62,234 t/\$16,043,900/4; other finfish 21 t/\$31,950/11; Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish 2166 t/\$2,141,830/18; halibut 499 t/\$2,852,150/15; herring 728 t/\$233,080/4; salmon

3180 t/\$3,510,960/60; and shellfish confidential/confidential/1.

In 2000 Anacortes residents held 204 registered state and federal permits, including 98 individuals who state permits and 64 individuals who held federal permits (note: it is possible for individuals to hold more than one permit simultaneously). Anacortes residents held 1 crab and 25 groundfish License Limitation Program permits in 2000. Residents also held 6 crab, 1 finfish, 22 halibut, 28 BSAI groundfish, 2 GOA groundfish, 3 shellfish, and 76 salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. Anacortes residents held 4,734,015 halibut and 5,728,263 sablefish individual fishing quota shares.

In 2000 164 Anacortes residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Anacortes residents purchased 192 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. Port of Anacortes. No date. Anacortes comprehensive plan. Online at http://www.portofanacortes.com/pdf/pdfemailed_102201/Introduction%20I-1.pdf [accessed 30 January 2007].
2. Field notes, Port of Anacortes, Anacortes, WA, 12 October 2004.
3. Skagit County. 2002. Skagit County profile. Online at <http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea/pubs/profiles/skagit.pdf> [accessed 30 January 2007].
4. See note 3.
5. See note 3.
6. Anacortes. No date. Major employers and manufacturers. Online at <http://www.anacortes.org/demographics.cfm?menuid=3&pagedemo=4#> [accessed 30 January 2007].
7. See note 1.
8. Field notes, Cap Sante Boat Haven, Anacortes, WA, 20 October 2004.
9. See note 8.
10. Field notes, Thibert's Crab Market, Anacortes, WA, 21 October 2004.
11. Pan Fish USA. 2003. Annual report 2003. Online at <http://www.panfish.no/static/2003eng/2003-Report.pdf> [accessed 30 January 2007].
12. Trident Seafoods. 2001. Northwest plants. Online at <http://www.tridentseafoods.com/navigate.asp?SecVar=b&SubSecVar=b7&SubSec2Var=b7b> [accessed 30 January 2007].
13. 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.
14. See note 12.
15. See note 12.
16. See note 8.
17. See note 8.
18. Ninth Circuit Court. 2000. Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. Lummi Indian Nation. Online at <http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/web/newopinions.nsf/0/9909aaf534e2be87882569b40066c5ec?OpenDocument> [accessed 30 January 2007].
19. Field notes, R&R Charters, Anacortes, WA, 21 October 2004.