

Ferndale

People and Place

Location

Ferndale is in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountain range on the shore of northeastern Puget Sound. Situated in Whatcom County, the city encompasses 6.2 square miles of land and 0.1 square miles of water. The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, a 98-mile drive south, while Vancouver, British Columbia, is a 43-mile drive north. Ferndale's geographic coordinates are lat 48°50'48"N, long 122°35'23"W.

Demographic Profile

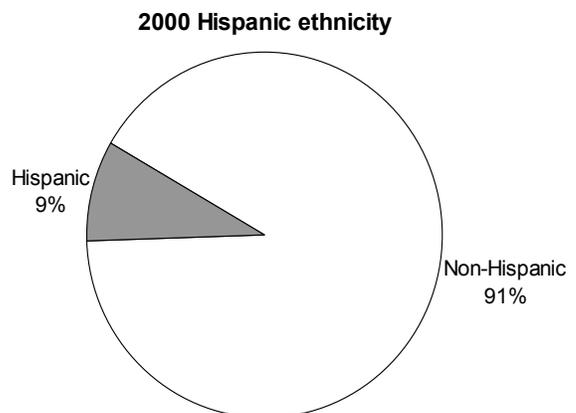
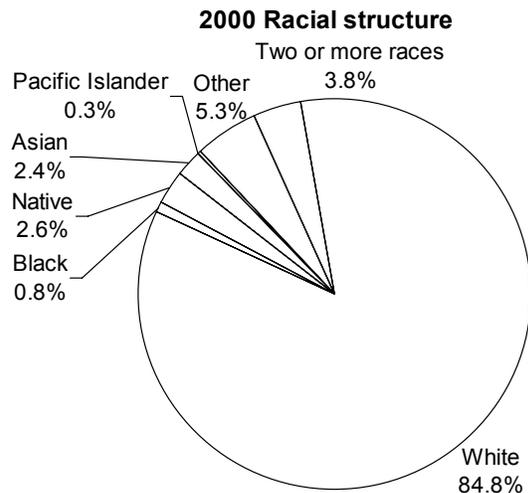
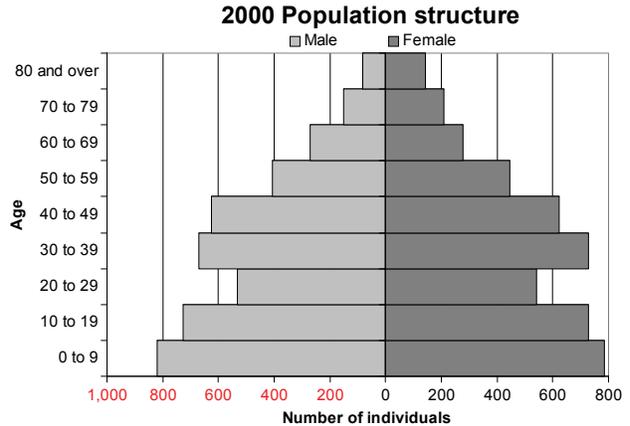
At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, Ferndale's population was 8,758, an increase from 5,398 in 1990. The gender composition was 51.1% female and 48.9% male. The median age of 32 years was below the national average of 35.3. The age structure demonstrates usual population trends for a community without a major tertiary education provider. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 81.8% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 16.4% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 5.2% had attained a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.9%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. For 37.2%, a high school degree or equivalent was the highest level of educational attainment.

The vast majority of Ferndale's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (84.8%), followed by people who identified with another race (5.3%), people who identified with two or more races (3.8%), American Indian and Alaska Native (2.6%), Asian (2.4%), black (0.8%), and Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.3%). Ethnicity data indicate that 9% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 3.7% were foreign-born, with the majority from the Americas outside of the United States, followed by people from Europe. The largest numbers of people denoting ancestry were German, English, Irish, and Norwegian.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 87.6% lived in family households in 2000.

History

Ferndale is located close to the homes of the Lummi and Nooksack tribes, and the ancient history of the area involves the Coast Salish people who lived by hunting, fishing, gathering, and trading in the region. European explorations in the late 1700s followed by trappers, traders, and gold miners in the early 1800s were



harbingers of major changes to come. In 1855 the Lummi signed the Treaty of Point Elliot with the United States. The Nooksack never signed a treaty with the United States and in 1873 were ordered to move to the Lummi Reservation on the coast. However, because the Nooksack did not feel an affinity toward the Lummi, most returned upriver to their ancestral lands. In the 1970s, after receiving federal recognition as a tribe, the Nooksack established a small reservation at Deming.

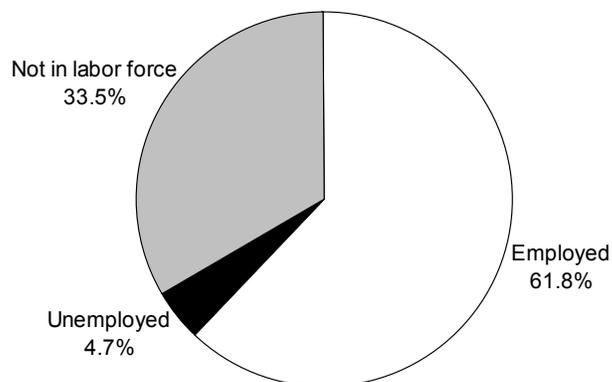
The history of Whatcom County is described in some detail in the Bellingham community profile. History specific to the location of Ferndale indicates a typical Western Washington pattern of agricultural and natural resource-based settlement by European Americans in the late 1800s, marked by a rivalry between towns for growth and regional supremacy.

Ferndale grew around the Nooksack River. According to some sources, about 15 families had settled in Ferndale by 1872.¹ Billy Clark, Cecelia Chanique, his Native American wife, and their children, who built a home in 1873, were the first pioneers to settle in the Ferndale area. Clark was from Texas, but had gone to Canada to work for the Hudson's Bay Company and became an English subject. Therefore, despite occupying the house on the Nooksack River for more than a decade, he was unable to file claim on it under the Homestead Act. Family friend Darius Rogers filed the claim and was technically the first nonnative property owner in the area.

The name Ferndale was adopted in 1876, having been coined by Alice Eldridge, the first teacher on the Nooksack River, to replace the informal name Jam, referring to the nearby logjam on the river. The Lummi called the area Te-tas-um. Ferndale's place as a center of commerce was challenged by upstart West Ferndale on the other side of the river, but eventually the east side prevailed. By 1882 Ferndale had two stores, two saloons, one hotel, and a post office, and was considered a contender for county seat (won by Fairhaven, now a part of Bellingham). By 1889 there were more stores, two schools, a church, a saw mill, and a telegraph office. In addition that year Ferndale had the county champion baseball team and a notable coronet band.² The Hovander Homestead built in 1903 is now a park. In recognition of Ferndale's pioneer heritage, the Hovander farmhouse, barn, and other buildings on the property have been restored and are open to the public.

As the land near Ferndale was cleared of timber, agricultural production increased. A bridge across the Nooksack River was built in the 1930s. Farming continued to be important to Ferndale as other industries developed. In the 1960s Interstate 5 was built along the West Coast, passing along the northeastern edge of

2000 Employment structure



Ferndale. In 2003 Ferndale's downtown received a major makeover that included putting overhead electrical wires underground and widening the bridge across the river.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 61.8% of Ferndale's potential labor force 16 years old and older were employed, 4.7% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 33.5% were not in the labor force, compared to the national average of 36.1%. The largest employment sectors were education, health, and social services and manufacturing (20%) and local, state, and federal governments (12%).

Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed only 131 or 4% of 3,758 people 16 years of age and older in 2000, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

Ferndale refers to itself as "farm country"³ and has an important agricultural base in and around the city. Future Farmers of America and other agricultural programs are regular features of life. Whatcom County produces 65% of the raspberries grown in the United States.⁴ In addition to farming, oil and gas is an important industry. British Petroleum Cherry Point Refinery and Conoco Phillips Ferndale Refinery are major employers in Whatcom County, and are located in Ferndale. Aluminum producer Alcoa Intalco is the largest employer with 935 employees, with 20% residing in Ferndale.⁵

Ferndale has an important outdoor recreation industry. It is close to the Mount Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest and the Mount Baker National Recreation Area, which provides skiing, snowboarding, hiking, rafting, and camping recreations. To the west, the beaches of Birch Bay offer clam digging, swimming, and boating. Recreational fishing is available in salt water and in freshwater at the Lake Terrell Wildlife Refuge, 5 miles west of Ferndale. Duck hunting and bird watching also are popular in the refuge.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income in 1999 was \$15,982 and the median income was \$36,375. In 1999 13.2% lived below the poverty level, slightly above the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 3,292 housing units in Ferndale, with 65.6% owner occupied and 34.4% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 4.4%, with 5.5% due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

The City of Ferndale is organized as a mayor-council form of government. The mayor has responsibility for exercising general supervision over the administrative affairs of the city, the responsibility for the appointment and removal of personnel, and the execution of the laws and policies as adopted by the city council. The city council has seven members with staggered terms. Whatcom County, including Ferndale, levies an 8.4% sales tax and a 4% 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 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 nearest Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) office is 93 miles south in Mill Creek. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Station Bellingham was established in 1947 and provides six vessels. Its area of responsibility includes the San Juan Islands north to the Canada border and south to Admiralty Inlet. The USCG often works in close partnership with the Canada Coast Guard and is occasionally involved in international search and rescue and law enforcement operations.

Facilities

Ferndale is accessible by ground, sea, and air. The city is located on the Interstate 5 corridor (north-south). The nearest major highways running east-west are Interstate 90, 100 miles south in Seattle and Canadian

National 1, approximately 43 miles north in Vancouver, British Columbia. Washington State Route 20, the North Cascades Highway, also runs eastward but is closed in the winter. The Bellingham/Fairhaven Station (15 miles south) offers Amtrak service. The Bellingham International Airport is the nearest facility. There is also a municipal airport in Blaine (14 miles north). The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and the Vancouver (British Columbia) International Airport are the nearest major facilities. Ferndale does not have any marine facilities. The nearest marine facilities are located on nearby Lummi and Bellingham bays.

The Ferndale School District has six elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools, one of which is a “high tech” high school partially funded by grants from the Gates Foundation.⁶ There are no private schools in Ferndale, but there are 12 private schools in the Bellingham area. Colleges in Bellingham include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and the Northwest Indian College.

Puget Sound Energy is the primary electricity provider, and Cascade Natural Gas in Bellingham services Ferndale. The City of Ferndale Department of Public Works provides water and sewer services to the community; treated drinking water comes from the Nooksack River, from which Ferndale takes 1.5 million gallons a day. A small portion of the town’s residents draw drinking water from groundwater by individual wells or the Ferndale Mobile Village water system. The Ferndale Police Department and the Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 administer public safety. St. Joseph’s Hospital in Bellingham is the nearest major medical facility that provides a full range of inpatient and outpatient services. There are two hotels located in Ferndale and 30 or more within 10 minutes in Bellingham.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were zero unique vessels that delivered landings to Ferndale in 2000. That year Ferndale residents owned 25 vessels, including 18 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Ferndale residents participating in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/1, crab 8/0/0, groundfish 5/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 12/0/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 4/0/0.⁷

Two Ferndale residents held two federal groundfish fishery permits in 2000. The number of Ferndale

residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/0, crab 10/0/0, groundfish 2/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 25/0/0, and shellfish 0/0/NA.⁸

According to available data, 77 state and federal permits were registered to Ferndale residents in 2000. The number of permits held by community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 2/0/14, crab 21/0/0, groundfish 8/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 30/0/0, and shellfish 0/0/NA.⁹

In 2000 there was at least one seafood processor operating in Ferndale, Barlean's Fishery Inc. Barlean's owns and operates its own reefnet boat in an attempt to provide a higher quality product and a more consistent supply of wild salmon. Barlean's, open year round to buy and sell seafood, also offers halibut, Dungeness crab, spot prawns, wild sturgeon, clams, mussels, and Pacific oysters.¹⁰

Ferndale is near the Lummi and Nooksack tribal fisheries. Information about Lummi fisheries can be found in the Blaine and Bellingham community profiles. The Nooksack Tribe manages tribal fisheries for salmon, crab, shrimp, sea cucumber, and sea urchin. The Nooksack Natural Resources Department distributes salmon carcasses in the Nooksack River in an effort to restore nutrients to the water and rehabilitate declining salmon runs.

Sportfishing

In 2000 there were no registered charter fishing operators in Ferndale. In 2003 there were 1,851 sportfishing license transactions valued at \$29,388. In 2005 there was one license dealer in the city registered with the WDFW. 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, 2,644 coho salmon, 21 chum salmon, and 18 sockeye salmon. In 2000 marine anglers made 30,627 trips in the sport salmon fishery. Boat-based anglers caught 5,897 bottomfish in Area 7. The recreational harvest of clams (lbs) and oysters (#) for Area 7 in 2000 was estimated to be 115,273 and 0 respectively; harvest occurred over an estimated 19,752 user trips.

Subsistence

Local tribes (e.g., Lummi, Nooksack) fish in the lower Nooksack River in a ceremonial and subsistence fishery that is timed to minimize the potential catch of Endangered Species Act-listed Chinook salmon. 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

In 2000 Ferndale residents owned 26 unique vessels that were involved in North Pacific fisheries.

Community members landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): other finfish confidential/confidential/1, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, halibut confidential/confidential/2, herring confidential/confidential/3, and salmon 1,001t/\$882,210/19.

Ferndale residents held 50 state and federal permits in 2000, including 27 individuals who held state permits and 5 individuals who held registered federal permits. Residents held three crab License Limitation Program permits. Community members held 1 crab, 2 GOA groundfish, 6 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish, 5 halibut, 9 herring, 21 salmon, and 1 shellfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. Residents held 86,876 halibut individual fishing quota shares; however residents held no sablefish quota shares.

Ferndale residents held 54 crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

Ferndale residents purchased 113 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. WA GenWeb. No date. Geographic background of Whatcom County. Online at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wawhatco/geog.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].
2. Blaine Journal. 1889. Whatcom County settlements. Blaine Journal, Blaine, WA. 31 October 1889. Online at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wawhatco/towns.htm> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. Ferndale.net. 2002. Tour Ferndale's friendly farms. Online at http://www.ferndale.net/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=1103&page_id=24 [accessed 31 January 2007].
4. Ferndale.net. 2002. Welcome to Ferndale, Washington. Online at <http://www.ferndale.net/index.php?menu=1> [accessed 31 January 2007].
5. Field notes, community member, Ferndale, WA, 25 May 2006.
6. See note 5.
7. 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.
8. See note 7.
9. See note 7.
10. Barlean's Fishery Inc. No date. About Barlean's Fishery. Online at <http://www.barleansfishery.com/PageID/141/default.aspx> [accessed 31 January 2007].