

# Shelton

## People and Place

### Location

Shelton is on Oakland Bay, an inlet on the southwest side of Puget Sound. In Mason County, the city encompasses 5.6 square miles of land and 0.3 square miles of water. The nearest major U.S. city is Seattle, an 82-mile drive northeast. Shelton's geographic coordinates are lat 47°12'55"N, long 123°05'58"W.

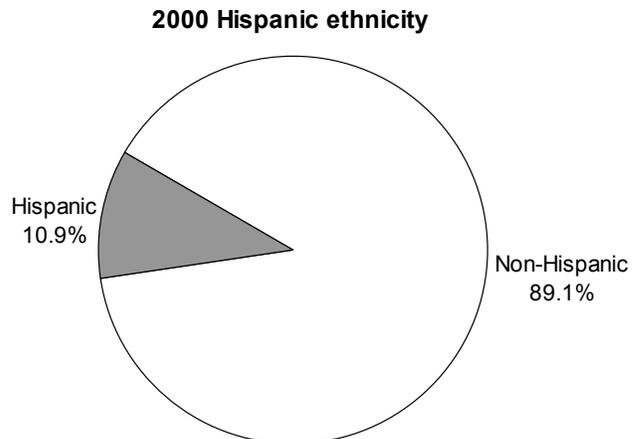
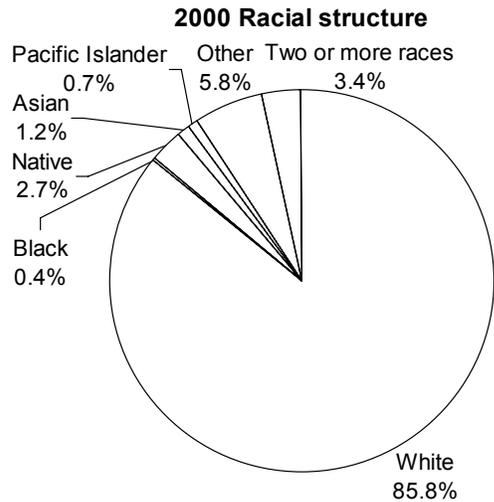
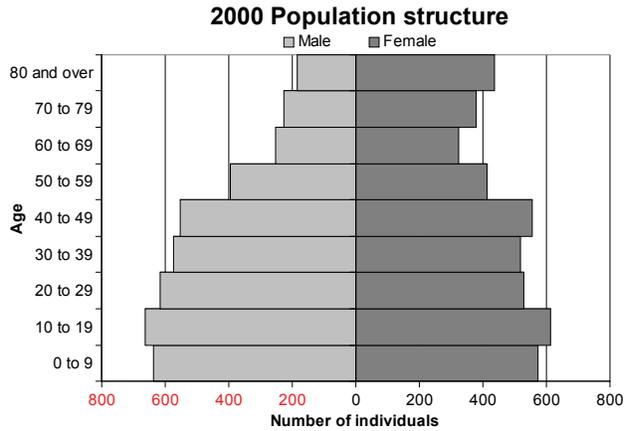
### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Shelton's population was 8,442, a 16.6% increase since 1990. The gender composition was 51.4% female and 48.6% male. The median age of 35.8 was comparable to the national median of 35.3. Shelton's age structure showed that 22% were 14 years of age or younger and 37.6% were between the ages of 25 and 54. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 75.6% had a high school education (including equivalency) or higher, 11.6% had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 3.0% had attained a graduate or professional degree, compared to the national averages of 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The vast majority of Shelton's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (85.8%), followed by people who identified with another race (5.8%), people who identified with two or more races (3.4%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (2.7%), Asian (1.2%), Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (0.7%), and black (0.4%). Ethnicity data indicate that 10.9% identified as Hispanic. In 2000 8.5% were foreign-born, with 72.4% from Latin America, including Mexico (43.5%) and Guatemala (28.9%).

### History

The first European exploration of what would become Mason County was completed by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and his expeditionary team around 1839. The expedition encountered the Skokomish and Squaxin Island tribes, native inhabitants to the area. The diet of these tribes consisted mainly of salmon, berries, and roots. For a decade after its formation in 1854, Mason County was called Sahewamish County, named after one of the region's smaller tribes. The county was renamed in 1864 to honor Charles Mason, the first secretary to the Washington Territorial Legislature. The town of Oakland, now extinct but then roughly 2 miles north of present-day Shelton, was the original county seat. In 1888, allegedly due to the fact that Oakland residents



would not allow a saloon in town, Shelton, referred to as Sheltonville prior to 1888, was selected as the new county seat. Shelton quickly became the center of local commerce, particularly for timber interests.

Mason County's economic structure was largely built upon the logging industry. Lumber mills quickly followed as logging commenced. Adding to local prosperity were the miles of rail laid by the region's logging and lumber interests.<sup>1</sup> Three railroads operated out of the area by 1887, moving timber within the borders of Mason County. Farming, fishing, and the oyster industry also were beginning in other areas of the county at that time.<sup>2</sup> Oysters were a valuable local commodity, so much so that local oyster beds were all but depleted by 1887. This resulted in the creation of the Puget Sound Oyster Association. By 1902 hundreds of acres of Mason County waters were under cultivation, annually producing more than 25,000 sacks of oysters.

By 1888 Shelton had grown into a fair-sized city with a newspaper, schools, hotels, a funeral home, and railroads. Today forest products and aquaculture maintain prominence in the local economy.

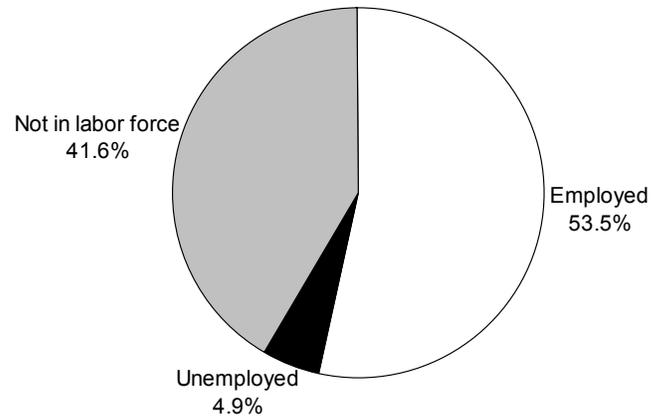
Squaxin Island Tribal members are direct descendants of the maritime people who lived and prospered along the shores and watersheds of South Puget Sound for centuries. Today the tribal headquarters are in Shelton. Squaxin Island Tribal Council, consisting of five persons elected to three-year terms by the general council, is the governing body. The tribe operates a health clinic providing primary care and dental services. Known as the "People of the Water," the tribe is comprised of seven bands that inhabited the headwaters of seven inlets. The Squaxin Island Tribe was one of the first Native American tribes to participate in the federal government's Self Governance Demonstration Project, moving to its reservation in modern-day Mason County in 1855. In addition to reservation lands on the mainland, the Squaxin Island Reservation occupies most of Squaxin Island, a small island north of Olympia. The tribe has sole access to the uninhabited island for fishing, hunting, camping, and recreational activities.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 53.5% of Shelton's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 4.9% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 8.5% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 41.6% were not in the labor force, compared to the national average of 36.1%. The major employment sectors were local, state, and federal government (25.6%,

**2000 Employment structure**



of which 3.5% were reported in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting), educational, health, and social services (17.0%), retail trade (13.2%), public administration (12.9%), and manufacturing (10.8%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 5.9%, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data. The two major employers are Taylor Shellfish Farms and Green Diamond Lumber (formerly Simpson Lumber).

The per capita income in 1999 was \$16,303 and the median household income was \$32,500. In 1999 18.9% lived below the poverty level, slightly higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000, 78.3% lived in family households. There were 3,403 housing units in Shelton, with 60.1% owner occupied and 39.9% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 6.2%.

### Governance

The City of Shelton was incorporated in 1889. Shelton's commission style of government is unique in Washington State. The city is governed by a three-member commission, with members are elected to four-year terms as either the mayor, commissioner of public works, or commissioner of public safety. Shelton levies an 8.3% sales and use tax and a 10.3% 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 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 Regional Office is 35 miles west in Montesano. The 13th U.S. Coast Guard District Headquarters are in Seattle. The Squaxin Island

Tribe's Natural Resource and Public Safety offices are in Shelton. Public safety officers patrol the Squaxin Island Reservation and South Puget Sound waterways.<sup>3</sup>

## Facilities

Shelton is accessible by land, sea, and air. The city is just east of U.S. Highway 101 that goes north from Olympia, around the Olympic Peninsula, and south along the coast. Sanderson Field Airport in Shelton is capable of handling business jet size aircraft. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is the nearest major facility.

The Shelton School District has six elementary schools, four middle schools (including one alternative middle school), and two high schools. All but one middle school and one high school are in Shelton. Christian and Seventh Day Adventist schools provide private education for grades 1–12 and 1–8 respectively. Olympic College has a 27-acre branch campus in Shelton and provides a variety of programs including vocational and technical degrees. Mason County Public Utility District No. 3 administers electricity. Shelton offers city-owned and operated water, sewer, and garbage service, as well as a curbside recycling program. The City of Shelton's Police and Fire departments administer public safety. Mason General Hospital in Shelton provides full medical service. There are at least three motels located in the community.

The Port of Shelton consists of the airport, two industrial complexes, and a marina. The port is governed by a three-member commission. Commissioners are elected to six-year terms by county residents. The marina, located within Shelton city limits, is currently managed by the Shelton Yacht Club. The marina has 106 slips and offers visitor and permanent moorage with emergency haul-outs, a public boat ramp, gas dock, and berthing for Shelton-based watercraft up to 50 feet. There are numerous other marine facilities in Shelton. The Oakland Bay Marina will come under the supervision of the Port of Shelton in 2007, but it does not offer emergency haul-outs or a fuel dock. Jarrell's Cove on Harstine Island is privately owned and provides overnight and permanent moorage, a pump-out station, and a fuel dock. Jarrell's Cove State Park is on Harstine Island. This facility provides a moorage dock and buoys, a pump-out station, 20 tent sites, toilets, showers, picnic shelters, and group facilities. Hope Island State Park is a 106-acre marine camping park on a quiet, boat access only island with five buoys. Moorage fees are charged year-round for mooring at docks, floats, and buoys. Public launching with parking for vehicles and boat trailers is available at Arcadia Point, owned by the Squaxin Island Tribe.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

There were at least three seafood processors operating in Shelton in 2000. Specific information (lb of product/value of product) is confidential. Oysters were the primary product in 2000.

Of the 449 vessels that delivered nonconfidential landings to Shelton in 2000, 6 were commercial vessels, 117 were personal use vessels, and 375 were tribal commercial 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 making landings): crab 19 t/ \$87,042/ 22; salmon 502 t/ \$647,097/ 245; shellfish 245 t/ \$1,878,716/372; shrimp 1.9 t/ \$11,347/7; and other species 49 t/ \$42,740/ 6.

Shelton residents owned three vessels in 2000, all of which participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Shelton residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 1/0/0, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 3/1/0, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 3/0/0.<sup>4</sup>

One Shelton resident held one federal groundfish permit in 2000. The number of Shelton residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 1/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 4/1/0, shellfish 1/0/NA, and other species 3/0/0.<sup>5</sup>

Shelton residents held 13 state commercial fishing permits in 2000. The number of state permits held by Shelton residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 1/0/0, salmon 6/1/0, shellfish 1/0/NA, and other species 4/0/0.<sup>6</sup>

Shellfish have been a mainstay for the Squaxin Island people for thousands of years and remain important today for subsistence, economic, and ceremonial purposes. The Squaxin Island Tribe runs Harstine Oyster Company and in cooperation with the State of Washington operates one of largest salmon net-pen programs in the Northwest. The net-pen facility, located between Squaxin and Harstine islands, releases about 2 million coho salmon into Puget Sound each year. According to their annual report, 203 tribal members harvested 305,934 pounds of Manila clams and 2,858 pounds of littleneck clams from 13 beaches in 2003. In two areas 57 tribal members harvested 298,423 pounds of geoduck and 3,448 pounds of horse clams. According to the same report, 57 tribal members harvested 14,398 pounds of Chinook salmon, 325,039 pounds of coho salmon, and 77,938 pounds of chum salmon.<sup>7</sup>

## Sportfishing

At least one salmonid charter business operates out of Shelton. A total of five vendors are licensed to sell sportfishing permits. In 2003 Shelton vendors made 11,587 sportfishing license transactions valued at \$187,931. The annual sport catch in Washington State's Catch Record Card Area 13 (south Puget Sound) was 5,131 fish during the 2000–2001 license year. Based on catch card data, marine angler made 26,089 trips and took 1,649 Chinook salmon, 2,226 coho salmon, and 1,256 chum salmon. The bottomfish catch in Area 13 was 8,025. The recreational harvest of clams (pounds) and oysters (number) for the same area in 2000 was estimated to be 30,147 and 65,007 respectively; harvest occurred over an estimated 7,065 user trips. Littleneck clams and Manila clams accounted for 45.6% and 32.2% of the harvest respectively.

## Subsistence

Subsistence harvest for marine species may exist in the Shelton area. However, the extent of subsistence harvesting is difficult to quantify due to a scarcity of data.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Shelton residents owned five vessels that participated in North Pacific fisheries. These vessels landed approximately 124 tons in the Alaska salmon fishery valued at more than \$183,000. One vessel owned by a Shelton resident made landings in the North Pacific herring fishery, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

In 2000 Shelton residents held 14 North Pacific commercial fishing permits, including 5 individuals who held federal permits and 9 who held state permits (note: it is possible for individuals to hold more than one permit at a time). Shelton residents held six salmon, three shellfish, two herring, and one Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits in 2000. A community member held one groundfish License Limitation Program permit. Residents held 115,207 halibut individual fishing quota shares.

Shelton residents held 21 crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

### Sportfishing

Shelton residents purchased 163 Alaskan sportfishing licenses in 2000.

## Notes

1. City of Shelton. No date. History of Shelton in Mason County. Online at [http://www.ci.shelton.wa.us/shelton/s\\_history.htm](http://www.ci.shelton.wa.us/shelton/s_history.htm) [accessed 31 January 2007].
2. Shelton-Mason County Chamber of Commerce. No date. History. Online at <http://www.sheltonchamber.org/49.php> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. Squaxin Island Tribe. No date. Public safety. Online at <http://www.squaxinistland.org/frames.html> [accessed 30 January 2007].
4. 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.
5. See note 4.
6. See note 4.
7. Squaxin Island Tribe. 2004. Annual report 2003. Online at <http://www.squaxinistland.org/frames.html> [accessed 31 January 2007].