

# Tokeland

## People and Place

### Location

Tokeland is in southwest Washington on the north side of Willapa Bay on the Tokeland Peninsula. Situated in Pacific County, the community encompasses 0.5 square miles of land. The nearest major city is Seattle, a 145-mile drive northeast. Tokeland's geographic coordinates are lat 46°42'24"N, long 123°58'50"W.

### Demographic Profile

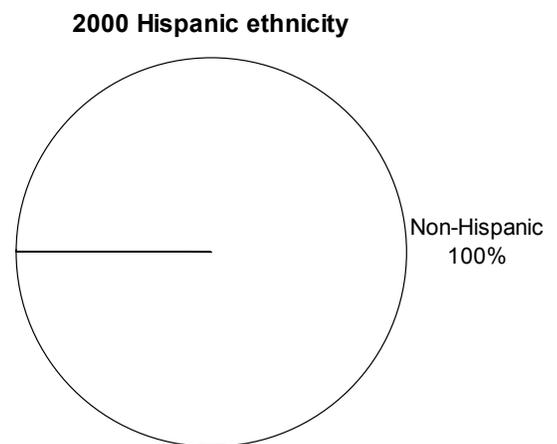
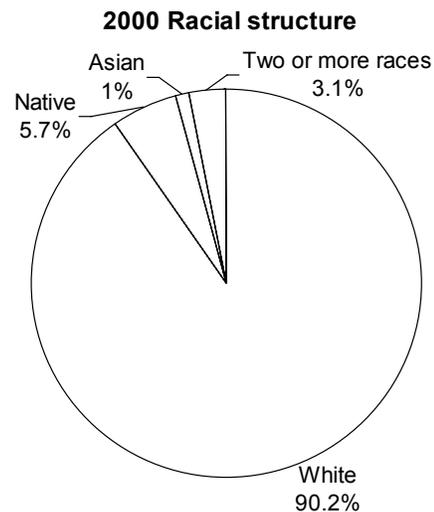
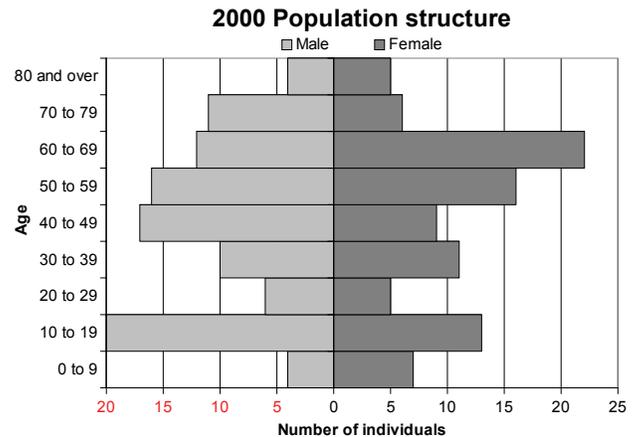
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Tokeland's population was 194. The gender composition was 51.5% male and 48.5% female. The median age of 48.3 was older than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 25.9% had a high school education, 86.2% had earned a high school diploma (including equivalency) or higher, 20.1% had received a bachelor's degree or higher, and 4.0% had attained a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The vast majority of Tokeland's racial structure recorded by the 2000 U.S. Census was white (90.2%), followed by American Indian and Alaska Native (5.7%), people identified as two or more races (3.1%), and Asian (1%). In 2000 4% were foreign-born.

Approximately 77.3% lived in family households in 2000.

### History

The Chehalis and Chinook peoples inhabited the areas around Tokeland prior to European American contact. A third tribe known as the Willapa occupied the inland portion of the county. Tokeland was named after Chief Toke of the Chehalis Tribe, whose extended family spent summers on Toke's Point, presently known as Tokeland. In 1788 John Meares captained an East Indian Trading Company ship that made the first recorded trip by Europeans to the area. Meares charted what is known today as Shoalwater Bay. European settlement began in large numbers in the mid-1800s. The earliest industries were timber and oyster harvesting. The bay was recorded as being rich with oysters and eventually attracted harvesters who sold their oysters to places as far away as San Francisco, California. The increased water traffic necessitated the building of a lighthouse on Cape Shoalwater (now known as North Cove) in the early 1850s.<sup>1</sup> The first processing and canning industries also came about during this time.

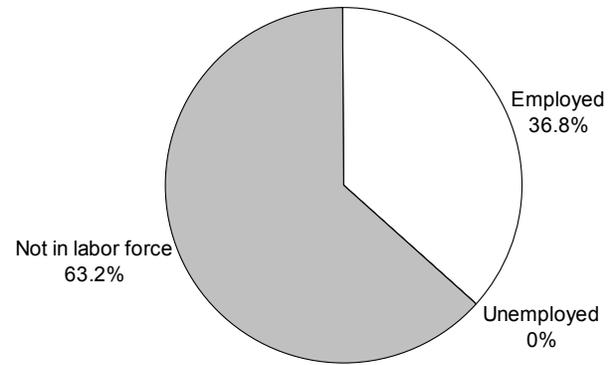


By midcentury many of the indigenous peoples who had inhabited the Pacific Northwest long before colonization had died as a result of contracting European diseases. In 1855 the federal government sought to cement control of what was once Native American land, and as a result the remaining Native Americans were forced onto reservations. Against the federal government's wishes the indigenous peoples of Shoalwater Bay chose a parcel of land on the inland side of the cove created by Tokeland Peninsula, about 3 miles from the town. The native peoples named their parcel Georgetown. The Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation was originally 334 acres of land set apart (i.e., not open to settlement) by the federal government in 1866 for the last remnant of nontreaty tribes including the Lower Chehalis and Chinook people. The Shoalwater Bay Indians pursued a mainly subsistence economy of crabbing, oystering, and fishing, and also sold surplus catch to the area's canneries.<sup>2</sup>

Encouraged by congressional enactment of certain land donation laws and Native American resettlement, citizens began settling in the more remote regions of the lower Columbia River, Puget Sound, and the adjacent Pacific Coast beginning in the 1850s. The Brown family was one of the earliest European American families to live in the Tokeland area. They opened what is now known as the Tokeland Hotel. This hotel has a long history and has served as a tourist retreat and a place for seasonal laborers to reside. By the 1870s the water traffic created by the oyster trade, logging, and settlers necessitated the construction of a lifesaving station on Cape Shoalwater (1878). The oyster industry collapsed in the 1880s, as the native oysters were overharvested. After several failed attempts to cultivate a new population of eastern oysters, Japanese oysters were planted and grew well in the waters of Shoalwater Bay. In 1890 a U.S. survey ship found the channel into the bay deep enough for large ships, and as a result Shoalwater Bay was renamed Willapa Bay. In 1905 the Tokeland Oyster Company was started with Lizzie (Brown) Kindred as one of its owners. During the early 1900s Tokeland continued to grow with the start of two more hotels.<sup>3</sup>

The 1920s and 1930s were rough times as the Great Depression impacted much of the country. The traffic that had once characterized Tokeland's transportation corridors slowly began to taper off. Cape Shoalwater had eroded, making Toke's Point more vulnerable to coastal storms. In the 1930s storms washed out several hotels and streets. During the same time Nelson's Crab and Oyster Company opened, canning local crab and shipping it to Portland, Oregon, and other urban areas.

**2000 Employment structure**



Nelson's company remains a prominent business in the industry today.

Tokeland persisted as an isolated locale well into the twentieth century as boats were the only means to reach the community from the east side of the bay until a roadway was built in 1962 along the north shore of Willapa Bay. The road allowed the residents of the neighboring communities of South Bend and Raymond to visit the area's beaches. Today Tokeland is a small community whose major industries are tourism and fishing. The community remains home to the Tokeland Hotel, the oldest resort hotel in the state, as well as the Tokeland Marina, and several fish processing plants. Tokeland Harbor houses approximately a half dozen boats that fish for crab in the bay, while locals and tourists take advantage of the area's crabbing, fishing, and clamming opportunities.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

Employment in Pacific County today is mainly concentrated in agriculture, manufacturing, government, tourism, and fishing. The manufacturing sector consists almost entirely of logging, sawmills, and food processing, which account for roughly 92% of all manufacturing in the county. The fishing industry employs more than 70% of the county's population, with an average wage in 1996 of \$18,449, almost \$4,000 higher than the statewide average.<sup>4</sup> The Shoalwater Bay Casino, located on the Shoalwater Bay Indian Reservation along Washington Highway 105, offers a variety of gaming opportunities and further supports the local economy.

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, 36.8% of Tokeland's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed and the unemployment rate was

0%. In addition, 63.2% were not in the labor force, compared to the national average of 36.1%. Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 0%, but this percentage may be artificially low given that many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data. In 2000 the major industries in Tokeland were accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

The per capita income in 1999 was \$12,170 and the median household income was \$24,531. In 1999 49.1% lived below the poverty level, significantly higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 197 housing units in Tokeland, with 75.3% owner occupied and 24.7% renter occupied. The housing unit vacancy rate was 54.8%, with 88% due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

## Governance

Tokeland is an unincorporated area and therefore falls under the governance of Pacific County. Pacific County levies a 7.8% sales tax and a 9.8% 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 Shoalwater Bay Tribal Reservation is located several miles to the north of Tokeland and is governed by a five-member tribal council. The tribe is a member of the South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency.

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 47 miles northwest in Montesano. The U.S. Coast Guard has two stations nearby, one to the south across Willapa Bay in Ilwaco and the other 17 miles northwest in Westport in Grays Harbor County.

## Facilities

Tokeland is accessible by ground, air, and sea. The community is situated a couple of miles south of Washington Highway 105 (east-west) and 20 miles west of U.S. Highway 101 (north-south). The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is 145 miles southeast.

Tokeland is in Ocosta School District in Westport, about 17 miles north of Tokeland. The district has an elementary school and a combined junior/senior high school.

Gray's Harbor Public Utility District administers electrical service. The community's water supply comes

from private vendors and local wells. Sewage in the community is handled by private septic systems. The Shoalwater Bay Police Department, the Pacific County Sheriff's Office, and the North Cove Fire Department in Tokeland administer public safety. The nearest hospital is located in South Bend, a 26-mile drive northwest around the harbor, with the next closest hospital in Aberdeen, 33 miles northeast. The Shoalwater Bay Tribe's health clinic provides health care for tribal members and nontribal individuals; more than half of the patients seen annually are nontribal. Tokeland has one hotel, one motel, and two recreational vehicle (RV) parks.

The Tokeland Harbor houses the Tokeland Marina, established in 1965. The Port of Willapa Harbor, with main offices 20 miles east in Raymond, operates the marina, which provides moorage for 45 vessels up to 45 feet. The marina is dredged to 10 feet below mean low tide, while the entrance from the bay is dredged to 15 feet below mean low tide. The Port of Willapa Harbor maintains various shoreside facilities, including a doublewide boat launch ramp, a 30-site Tokeland RV Park, and two industrial buildings housing Nelson Crab (a seafood processing plant with up to 80 seasonal employees), Cedar River Seafoods, and Tokeland Fish & Oyster Company (a seafood processor with one employee).<sup>5</sup>

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Tokeland were recorded as part of the Willapa Bay Port Group that includes Bay Center, Nahcotta, Naselle, South Bend, and Raymond. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic confidential/confidential/1; crab 444.9 t/\$1,941,008/44; groundfish 4.6 t/\$3,889/6; salmon 122.5 t/\$178,084/71; shellfish 26.8 t/\$73,534/63; shrimp 399.9 t/\$397,143/8; and other species 13.1 t/\$31,242/51. See the Naselle, South Bend, and Raymond community profiles for additional information about these communities.

Community members owned 34 vessels that fished in the region's fisheries in 2000, including 12 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/0, crab 12/0/0, groundfish 2/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 12/0/2, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 1/0/0.<sup>6</sup>

In 2000 the number of Tokeland residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 15/2/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 11/2/0, and shellfish 22/0/NA.<sup>7</sup>

Community members held 62 fishing permits, all state registered, in 2000. The number of state permits held by residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 22/0/0, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 18/0/0, and shellfish 22/0/NA.<sup>8</sup>

## Sportfishing

In 2003 individuals in Tokeland purchased 29 sportfishing licenses, up 28 from 2002. Pacific County has seven sportfishing license vendors, none of which are located in Tokeland. Although Washington State does not offer data for sportfish landings in Tokeland, the state provides data on the number of salmon and sturgeon landed in Willapa Bay. Community members landed 870 salmon, including 468 Chinook salmon, 354 coho salmon, and 48 jack salmon (immature males) in 2000. Anglers caught 96 white sturgeon.

A variety of shellfish (and other edible marine species) may be caught off the shores of the Tokeland area's beaches on a seasonal and year round basis including Dungeness crab, razor clams, littleneck (native and Manila) clams, butter clams, cockle clams, Eastern softshell clams, Macomas clams, geoduck clams, horse clams, oysters, mussels, goose barnacles, sand shrimp, and seaweed.

## 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 Shoalwater Bay Tribe and other nontribal subsistence fishermen obtain fishery resources from the waters surrounding Tokeland. 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 Tokeland residents owned six vessels that fished in the region. That year Tokeland residents landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landing in metric tons/value of said landings/ number of vessels landing): Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish confidential/confidential/1, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish confidential/

confidential/1, salmon confidential/confidential/1, and shellfish confidential/confidential/1.

Tokeland resident held 13 registered state and federal commercial fishing permits in 2000, including seven individuals who held state permits and five who held federal permits (note: it is possible for individuals to hold more than one permit at a time). Tokeland residents held one crab and three groundfish License Limitation Program permits and one herring, three salmon, two shellfish, and one BSAI groundfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permits. Community members held 5,659 halibut individual fishing quota shares in 2000.

In 2000 two community members held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

## Sportfishing

Tokeland residents purchased three Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

## Notes

1. R. McCausland. No date. Tokeland Hotel: A history by Ruth McCausland. Online at <http://www.tokelandhotel.com/history.pdf> [accessed 31 January 2007].
2. South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency. No date. The Shoalwater Bay Tribe. Online at <http://www.spipa.org/shoalwaterbay.shtml> [accessed 31 January 2007].
3. See note 1.
4. J. Langdon-Pollock. 2004. West Coast marine fishing community descriptions. Online at <http://www.psmfc.org/efin/abstracts-data.html#Communities> [accessed 31 January 2007]
5. Port of Willapa Harbor. No date. Tokeland Marina. Online at [http://www.portofwillapaharbor.com/pages/fac\\_tokeland.html](http://www.portofwillapaharbor.com/pages/fac_tokeland.html) [accessed 31 January 2007].
6. 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.
7. See note 6.
8. See note 6.