

Sebastopol, California

People and Place

Location

Sebastopol is located in Sonoma County about 58 miles north of San Francisco, 7 miles west of Santa Rosa, and 16 miles east of Bodega Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The geographic coordinates of Sebastopol, California are 38°24'08"N and 122°49'22"W. The community occupies a land area of 1.88 square miles.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Sebastopol supported a population of 7774 in 2000. The community's gender structure at the time was uneven, with more female (55.2%) than male (44.8%) residents. The median age was 41.5, more than 6 years higher than the national median age of 35.3 for the same year.

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that the racial composition of Sebastopol was predominantly White, (85.3%), followed by Asian (1.5%), Black or African American (0.6%), and American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.6%). Several residents identified as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, but they comprised less than 0.1% of the population. Less than 0.1% of Sebastopol residents classified themselves as belonging to some other race, and about 2.3% of the population identified with two or more races. A total of 9.3% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and about 6.3% of the population in 2000 was foreign-born. Of the foreign-born population, 46.1% were born in Mexico, 13.8% in Canada, 12.7% in the United Kingdom, 5.5% in Germany, 4.7% in China, 3.1% in Greece, 2.9% in Chile, and 2.8% in Italy.

For the population 18 years and over, 66.3% had a high school education or higher, 24.7% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 8.9% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma/equivalency for 13.6% of the population. Sebastopol's population in 2000 lived in 3250 households, with 76.1% of residents living in family households.

History

The area surrounding the contemporary community of Sebastopol was first inhabited by the native Miwok and Pomo peoples. There has never been a single Pomo Tribe, but rather 72 independent tribes speaking seven related but distinct languages.¹ Pomo groups wove intricate basketry and fashioned beads from clamshells and magnesite that were used as a regional trade currency. All Pomo communities subsisted via hunting and gathering, and coastal groups relied heavily on salmon, marine shellfish, and sea mammals (particularly Stellar sea lions, California sea lions, sea otters, Northern fur seals, and harbor seals).² Acorns were also an important vegetable food, and some Pomo bands also relied heavily on edible roots and tubers. The Miwok also fished, hunted, and gathered on a seasonal basis in the coastal areas and inland portions of what is now Sonoma County. Today, the Coast Miwok have reorganized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and are currently seeking federal recognition.³

Spanish explorers arrived on the Pacific Coast near Sebastopol as early as 1607, but European settlement did not begin until the late 1700s, when Spanish missionaries and Russian fur traders established permanent residence in the area. While nearby coastal communities like Bodega Bay developed as lucrative hubs of the regional fishing industry, the fertile inland region surrounding Sebastopol became a critical site of agricultural production. The community of

Sebastopol first took shape in the 1850s, when local farmers established a post office and a small agricultural trade center. With the Gold Rush in full swing, the local population grew tremendously throughout the 1850s. Early residents began to refer to the outpost as Sebastopol following a heated fistfight between two local men that was said to resemble Britain's siege of the Russian seaport Sevastopol during the on-going Crimean War, one of the first wars to be widely covered by international journalists and photographers.⁴

In the 1880s, a number of local farmers began cultivating apples near Sebastopol. These ventures were a success, and Sebastopol soon became the center of a lucrative apple industry and the location of the world's first applesauce cannery. In 1890, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad began service to Sebastopol, and by 1904, the community was connected to Santa Rosa and Petaluma via an electric passenger train line. The City of Sebastopol was incorporated on June 13, 1902.

Starting in the mid 1900s, Sebastopol's apple industry began to decline amidst competition from other apple-producing regions. Although apples are no longer Sebastopol's largest industry, the area continues to provide the majority of the world supply of Gravenstein apples, and the community hosts an annual apple blossom festival.⁵ More recently, Western Sonoma County has become a significant producer of wine-quality grapes, and the Sebastopol region now hosts a number of wineries that attract revenue and tourists. The nearby Russian River Recreation Region also draws numerous visitors that utilize services in Sebastopol.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 63% of Sebastopol residents 16 or older were employed in 2000, and 35.2% were not in the labor force (were not actively seeking work). The community displayed a 2.5% unemployment rate, which fell below the national unemployment rate of 5.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). According to the City of Sebastopol, the community's major employers include O'Reilly and Associates (a publisher of computer-related books), Safeway Stores, Analy Union High School, Sebastopol Union School, and Palm Drive Hospital.⁶ Of the employed civilian population, approximately 24.4% worked in 'Educational, health and social services,' 11.3% in 'Manufacturing,' 10.8% in 'Construction,' 10.3% in 'Retail trade,' and 6.6% in 'Professional, scientific, and technical services.' A total of 17.2% of the employed civilian population was employed by federal, state, and local governments; however none of these employees worked in government services related to 'Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining.' Only 0.6% of the employed civilian population was involved in 'Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.' Many fishermen living in Sebastopol likely commute to nearby Bodega Bay, which hosts extensive marina facilities.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Sebastopol's per capita income in 1999 was \$22,881, a value slightly higher than the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was \$46,436 compared to a national median household income of \$41,994. About 6.9% of residents were living below the poverty level in 1999, a value below the national poverty level of 12.4% for the same year.

In 2000, there were 3321 housing units in Sebastopol, 97.9% of which were occupied and 2.1% of which were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 55.9% and 44.1% were owner and renter occupied respectively. Of the vacant housing units, 16.9% were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Sebastopol was incorporated as a city on June 13, 1902. The community operates under a Council-Manager form of government and features a five-member City Council.⁷ The City of Sebastopol levies an 8% sales and use tax⁸, and Sonoma County levies a 9% transient lodging tax.⁹

California state law assesses commercial fishing vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value for tax purposes.¹⁰ California also levies a fuel tax of 18 cents per gallon. A portion of this tax goes towards administration, marine safety and education programs, and boating facility development in the state. California has a Ballast Water Management Fee of \$500 per qualifying voyage, not to exceed \$1,000 per vessel voyage.

Commercial fishermen and licensed fish wholesalers and processors are required to pay a landing tax on commercially fished species. The tax ranges from \$0.0013 – \$0.0500 per pound depending upon the species. For tax information on specific species see California Fish and Game Code: Section 8040-8070.¹¹ The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

The nearest California Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Region Field Office is located approximately 16 miles away in Bodega Bay. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Southwest Regional office is located in Long Beach (455 miles). The closest United States Coast Guard stations are located in nearby Bodega Bay and San Francisco (58 miles). Sacramento (107 miles) hosts the nearest Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Field Office is located in San Francisco.

Facilities

Sebastopol is located near U.S. 101 and California State Highways 12 and 116. Sonoma County Airport in nearby Santa Rosa (7 miles) provides passenger and freight services, and the nearest major international airport is located in San Francisco (58 miles). Local bus service is provided by Sonoma County Transit. The City supports a number of hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast inns that cater to tourists.

The Sebastopol Union School District operates two elementary schools and one middle school.¹² Students living in Sebastopol attend two high schools operated by the West Sonoma County Union High School District which serves residents of Western Sonoma County from north of Petaluma up the coast to near Fort Ross. This district is headquartered in Sebastopol.¹³ The City of Sebastopol Department of Public Works provides water and sewer services to community residents. Natural gas and electricity are supplied by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. The City of Sebastopol and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department administer law enforcement services, and the Sebastopol Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection. The main health care facility in Sebastopol is the Palm Drive Hospital, which serves the surrounding region.¹⁴

The nearest marine facilities are located in Bodega Bay (15 miles), which hosts a total of four marinas. Spud Point Marina features 244 berths (80% of which are allocated to commercial fishing), shower facilities, a Laundromat, service dock, and a boat yard. Mason's Marina features 115 berths, a hoist, several docks, fuel, and a convenience store. Porto Bodega Marina supports

95 berths, several boat docks, a launch, and trailer hook-ups. In addition, the Golden Hinde Inn features an adjacent marina, and Sonoma County provides boat launching at Doran and Westside parks in the vicinity of Bodega Bay.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Sebastopol were recorded as part of the Other Sonoma and Marin County Outer Coast Ports port group which includes the nearby communities of San Rafael, Inverness, Bolinas, Jenner, Windsor, Marshall, Petaluma, Novato, Stewarts Point, Dillon Beach, Drakes Bay, Healdsburg, Kentfield, Muir Beach, Guerneville, Sonoma, Nicasio, Greenbrae, Forest Knolls, Occidental, Cloverdale, San Quentin, Rohnert Park, Corte Madera, Mill Valley, Tiburon, Stinson Beach, Hamlet, Marconi, Millerton, and Santa Rosa. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (135 t/\$116,723/15), crab (6 t/\$42,768/7), groundfish (1 t/\$1704/9), highly migratory species (confidential/confidential/1), salmon (5 t/\$31,805/4), shrimp (3 t/\$23,875/6), and other species (4 t/\$23,656/16). See the Novato, Dillon Beach, Corte Madera, and Santa Rosa Community Profiles for additional information on these communities. According to available data, there were no seafood processors in Sebastopol in 2000.

In 2000 zero vessels delivered landings to Sebastopol. However, Sebastopol residents owned nineteen fishing vessels active in West Coast commercial fisheries, eleven of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Sebastopol residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/0), crab (0/0/4), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/13), shellfish (NA/1/NA), shrimp (NA/1/0), and other species (1/0/0).¹⁵

In 2000, four Sebastopol residents held a total of five federal groundfish permits. Recorded data for the same year indicates that the number of Sebastopol residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/9), crab (0/0/7), groundfish (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/23), shellfish (0/1/NA), shrimp (0/1/3), and other species (1/0/7).¹⁶

According to available data, there were at least 82 commercial fishing permits were held by Sebastopol residents in 2000, including 77 state registered permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Sebastopol residents in 2000 in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/15), crab (0/0/7), groundfish (0/0/2), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/0/40), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/5), and other species (1/0/7).¹⁷

Sportfishing

In 2002, at least eighteen charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Sebastopol. There are three license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Sebastopol. In 2000 Sonoma County sold: 27,938 resident sportfishing licenses, 51 non-resident sportfishing licenses, 993 sport salmon punch cards, 7115 abalone report cards, 3362 steelhead report cards, and 5965 striped bass stamps.

In 2000, the Princeton-Bodega Bay port complex received a total of 147,926 commercial passenger fishing vessel landings, which were made by a total of 27,274 anglers. The top five

species landed, in descending order, were unspecified rockfishes, king salmon, lingcod, cabezon, and albacore.

Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Sebastopol is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, residents of Sebastopol owned zero vessels or permits within North Pacific fisheries. However, at least five Sebastopol residents served as crew members in North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Sebastopol community members purchased 63 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000. In the same year, there were no sportfishing businesses based in Sebastopol that participated in Alaskan fisheries.

¹ Ortiz, B.R. Houghton Mifflin Encyclopedia of North American Indians: Pomo, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_030100_pomo.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/naind/html/na_030100_pomo.htm) (access date - July 2004).

² Smith, C.R. 1999. California’s Native People, The Northwest Region: Subsistence, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.cabrillo.edu/~crsmith/anth6_nwcoast_subsist.html](http://www.cabrillo.edu/~crsmith/anth6_nwcoast_subsist.html) (access date - July 2004).

³ Harris, Paula. 2000. Tribal Spirit. *Sonoma County Independent*, March 9-15, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/03.09.00/nativeamerican-0010.html](http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/03.09.00/nativeamerican-0010.html) (access date - June 2005).

⁴ City of Sebastopol. 2005. History, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/history.shtml](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/history.shtml) (access date - June 2005).

⁵ City of Sebastopol. 2005. Our Community, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/ourcommunity.shtml](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/ourcommunity.shtml) (access date - June 2005).

⁶ City of Sebastopol. 2005. City Statistics, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/citystatistics.shtml](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/citystatistics.shtml) (access date - June 2005).

⁷ Sebastopol Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center. About the Sebastopol Area – Demographics, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.sebastopol.org/sebastopolarea/demographics.html](http://www.sebastopol.org/sebastopolarea/demographics.html) (access date - June 2005).

⁸ State of California. 2005. California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates - Cities, Counties and Tax Rates, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/cgi-bin/rates040105.cgi?LETTER=S&LIST=CITY> (access date - June 2005).

⁹ State of California. 2004. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, [Online]. Available URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July 2004).

¹⁰ State of California. 1997. Property Tax Rules: Rule 151, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).

¹¹ State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code: Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fgc&group=08001-09000&file=8040-8070> (access date – July 2004).

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- ¹² Sebastopol Union School District. No Date. Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://sebastopolschools.org](http://sebastopolschools.org)H (access date - June 2005).
- ¹³ West Sonoma County Union High School District. 2005. Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.wscuhd.k12.ca.us/H](http://www.wscuhd.k12.ca.us/H) (access date - June 2005).
- ¹⁴ City of Sebastopol. 2005. City Statistics, [Online]. Available: URL: [Hhttp://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/citystatistics.shtml](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/citystatistics.shtml)H (access date - June 2005).
- ¹⁵ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
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