

# Port Alexander

## People and Place

### Location

Port Alexander is located on the south end of Baranof Island, 65 miles south of Sitka. The area encompasses 3.8 square miles of land and 11.3 square miles of water.

### Demographic Profile

In 2000 Port Alexander had a total of 81 residents in 34 households. The racial composition of the community was as follows: White (84.0%), American Indian and Alaska Native (4.9%), and two or more races (11.1%). A total of 13.6% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. In addition, 4.9% of residents were of Hispanic ethnicity. The gender makeup was significantly skewed, at 53.1% male and 46.9% female. The median age was 37.8 years, slightly younger than the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. In terms of educational attainment, 88.4% of residents 25 years of age or older held a high school diploma.

### History

Baranof Island and the surrounding areas are the traditional territories of Athabascan Indians. Captain George Vancouver became the first White explorer to visit the area in 1795. The site was named in 1949 by Captain Tebenkov, Governor of the Russian American colonies at the time. Permanent European settlement did not occur in Port Alexander until the early 1900s, when fishermen and fishing families established a store, trading company, and other facilities. The collapse of fish stocks, along with WWII, caused serious economic turmoil for Port Alexander in the mid-twentieth century. Although the town has long been a hub for fishermen who work the productive waters of Chatham Strait, the permanent population of Port Alexander has remained small.

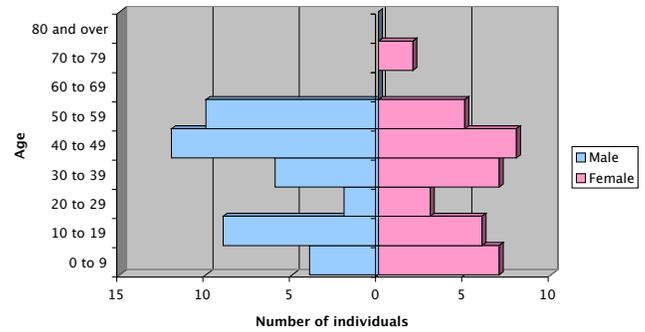
## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

The local economy of Port Alexander is primarily dependent on the commercial fishing industry. In addition, most residents supplement their incomes by using subsistence resources. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 6.3%, and 33.3% of residents 16 years

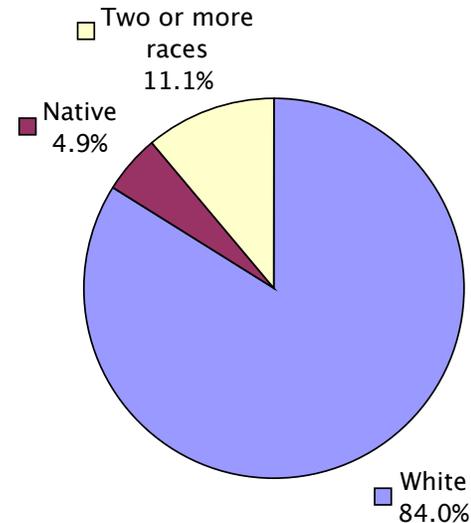
**2000 Population Structure  
Port Alexander**

Data source: US Census



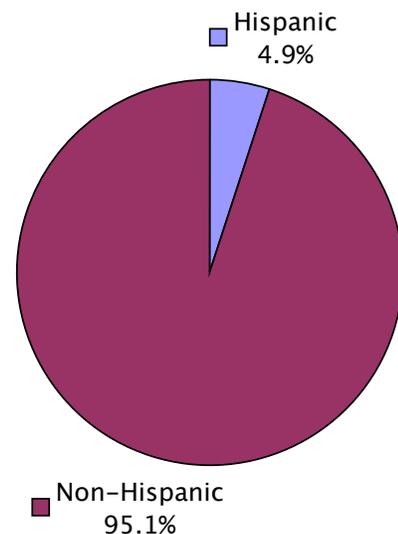
**2000 Racial Structure  
Port Alexander**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Hispanic Ethnicity  
Port Alexander**

Data source: US Census



of age and older were not in the labor force (i.e. not seeking work). Approximately 22.9% of individuals were living in poverty. The median annual per capita income was \$14,767, and the median annual household income was \$31,563.

## Governance

Port Alexander was incorporated as a second-class city in 1974. Prior to that time, it was under the jurisdiction of the Sitka Borough. It is now located outside of any organized borough. It has a weak mayor form of government. The city administers a 4% sales tax and a 6% accommodations tax. The nearest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is located in Sitka. The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) office is in Petersburg. The nearest office of the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) is located in Skagway.

## Facilities

Port Alexander is accessible by floatplane, via a state-owned seaplane base, and by boat. The marine facilities include a dock and small boat harbor. There are no roads in the community.

Most local homes have plumbing. The city has an operating water system, but no sewer system. Electricity is generated by individual household diesel generators. Most residents must go outside the community for health care services, groceries, and other services. There is one small K-12 school in the community with two teachers and 21 students.

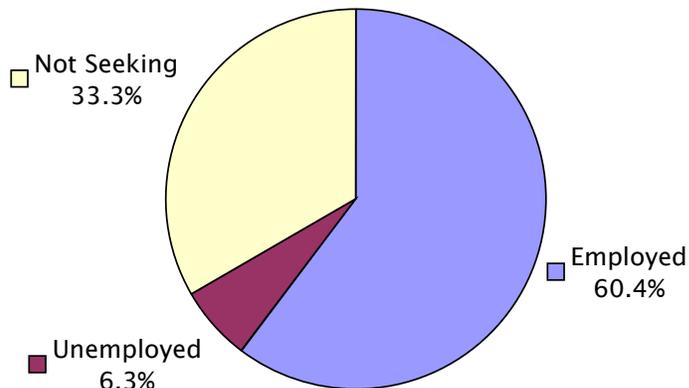
## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Despite its relatively small size, Port Alexander is heavily involved in commercial fishing. In 2000, there were 15 vessel owners with operations in federal fisheries and 20 vessel owners with operations in state fisheries (salmon) who resided in the community. In addition, there were 27 registered crew members. Thirty-five local residents held a total of 76 commercial fishing permits, primarily in the salmon, halibut, and groundfish fisheries. This section contains a detailed description of commercial fishing permits issued to Port Alexander residents in 2000.

*Halibut:* Eighteen residents held a total of 19 permits in the halibut fishery. These permits included the following: 13 halibut longline permits for vessels

**2000 Employment Structure  
Port Alexander**  
Data source: US Census



under 60 feet in statewide waters (all 13 fished), one halibut mechanical jig permit for statewide waters (one fished), and 5 halibut longline permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (5 fished).

*Sablefish:* Five local residents held six commercial permits in the sablefish fishery. These permits included the following: 4 sablefish longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (4 fished), one sablefish longline permit for vessels over 60 feet in the northern part of the southeast region (one fished), and one sablefish longline permit for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (one fished).

*Other Groundfish:* Fourteen residents held a total of 21 permits in the groundfish fishery. These permits included the following: six lingcod dinglebar troll permits for statewide waters (one fished), seven miscellaneous saltwater finfish longline permits for vessels under 60 feet in statewide waters (two fished), two miscellaneous saltwater finfish dinglebar troll permits in statewide waters (none fished), one miscellaneous saltwater finfish longline permits for vessels over 60 feet in statewide waters (one was actually fished), three demersal shelf rockfish longline permit for vessels under 60 feet in the southeast region (none fished), one demersal shelf rockfish dinglebar troll permit for the southeast region (none fished), and one demersal shelf rockfish mechanical jig permit for the southeast region (none fished).

*Other (Non-crab) Shellfish:* Two local residents held three commercial permits in the shellfish fishery. These permits included the following: one shrimp beam trawl permit for the southeast region (not fished), and

two shrimp pot gear permits for the southeast region (none fished).

*Salmon:* Thirty-five local residents held a total of 76 commercial permits for the salmon fishery. These permits included the following: 12 salmon hand troll permits for statewide waters (5 fished), and 15 salmon power gurdy troll permits for statewide waters (14 fished).

In 2000 there were no commercial fish processing plants and, therefore, no registered landings in Port Alexander.

### **Sport Fishing**

Although sport fishing activities in Port Alexander are limited by comparison to larger cities in southeast Alaska, sport fishing is part of the local economy. Sport fishing license sales in 2000 for Port Alexander totaled 64—most of them (50) to non-Alaska residents. In 2000, there were three registered saltwater sport fishing guides and two freshwater guides in the community. Major sport species include all five species of Pacific salmon, halibut, and trout.

### **Subsistence Fishing**

Subsistence resources provide an important supplement to the formal economy in Port Alexander.

The ADF&G's Division of Subsistence reported in 1987 that 100% of households in Port Alexander used subsistence resources. Approximately 94.3% of households used subsistence salmon (including all five species of Pacific salmon), and 100% used non-salmon subsistence fish (especially halibut, cod, rockfish, and char). Approximately 14.5% of households used marine mammals (mostly harbor seals) for subsistence, and 85.5% of households used marine invertebrates (including clams, crabs, octopus, and shrimp).

The annual per capita harvest of subsistence foods for Port Alexander in 1987 was 311.7 lbs, and was comprised of the following resources: salmon (22.4%), non-salmon fish (22.5%), land mammals (34.8%), marine mammals (0.8%), birds and bird eggs (0.4%), marine invertebrates (10.0%), and vegetation (9.1%).

Residents of Port Alexander who hold a valid Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate (SHARC) issued by NMFS, are eligible to harvest subsistence halibut. These allocations are based on recognized customary and traditional uses of halibut. Regulations to implement subsistence halibut fishing were published in the Federal Register in April 2003 and became effective May 2003.