

# Port Alsworth

## People and Place

### Location

Port Alsworth is located on the east shore of Lake Clark, within the Lake Clark National Park and Reserve. It is approximately 280 miles southwest of Anchorage across Cook Inlet.

### Demographic Profile

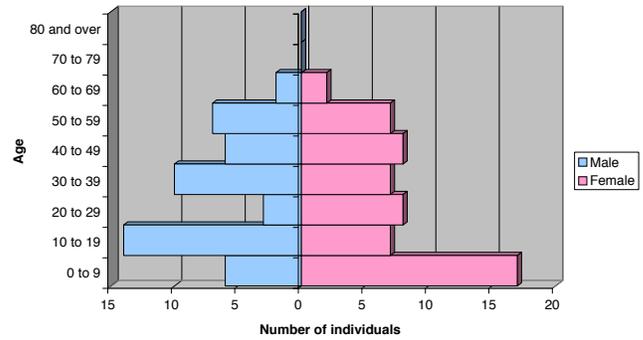
In 2000, Port Alsworth had 104 residents in 34 households. All residents lived in households rather than group quarters. The demographic composition of the community was as follows: White (77.9%), American Indian and Alaska Native (4.8%), and two or more races (17.3%). Overall, 22.1% of residents were all of part Alaska Native. The gender makeup of the community was slightly skewed, at 53.8% female and 46.2% male. The median age was 25.5 years, significantly younger than the U.S. national average of 35.3 years. In terms of educational attainment, approximately 93.1% of residents aged 25 years or older held a high school diploma. The population of Port Alsworth has grown steadily in recent years; the 2000 U.S. census reported a four-fold increase in population from 22 residents in 1980 to over 100 residents in 2000.

### History

The area around Lake Clark and Lake Iliamna has been the territory of Yup'ik Eskimos and Aleuts for at least the last 1,000-2,000 years. Prior to that time, there is evidence that the area was inhabited by people of the Paleoartic Tradition (National Park Service). The first Euro-American settlement was founded at Tanalian Point, the site of present-day Port Alsworth, by prospectors. In 1942, Leon "Babe" Alsworth and his wife Mary Ann moved to the area and established the community that is today Port Alsworth (National Park Service). The modern history of Port Alsworth is inextricably linked with the growth of the natural resource industries and the founding of the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The Lake Clark National Monument was founded in 1978 and upgraded to a National Park and Preserve in 1980 in accordance with the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA). Today Port Alsworth provides services, including hunting and fishing guides, to visitors to the national park and preserve.

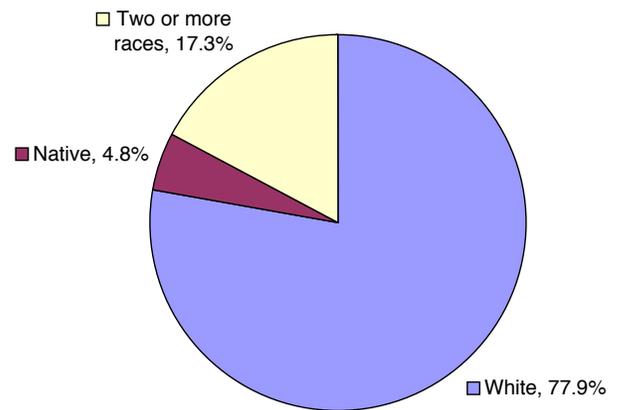
**2000 Population Structure  
Port Alsworth**

Data source: US Census



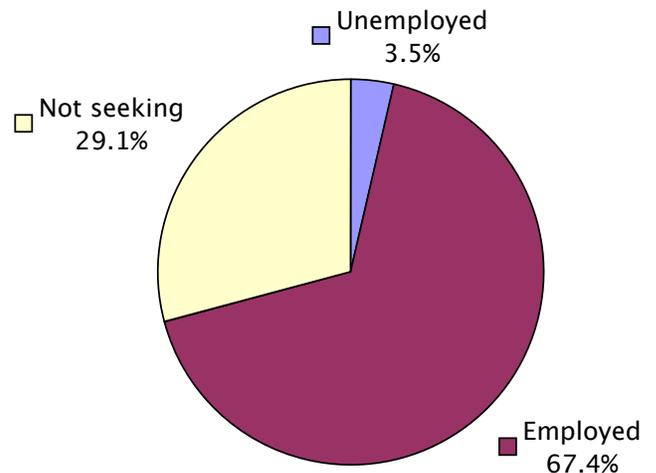
**2000 Racial Structure  
Port Alsworth**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure  
Port Alsworth**

Data source: US Census



## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

The economy of Port Alsworth centers around the tourism industry in the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The majority of local businesses are geared toward providing services such as tour guides, hunting, and fishing guides, and charter flights, to tourists visiting from outside the area. Commercial fishing is also an important part of the local economy, and some residents hold commercial fishing permits, primarily for the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. In addition, most residents supplement their incomes with subsistence hunting and fishing.

In 2000, the average annual per capita income in Port Alsworth was \$21,716, and the average household income was \$58,750. The unemployment rate was very low (3.5%), and 29.1% of residents aged 16 years and over were not in the labor force (i.e. not seeking work). Approximately 6% of local residents lived below the poverty level.

### Governance

Port Alsworth is an unincorporated community under the jurisdiction of the Lake and Peninsula Borough. All taxes and services are administered by the borough. There is a local village corporation, the Tanalian Corporation. In addition, the community belongs to a regional Native corporation, Cook Inlet Region, Inc. The nearest U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) office is in Anchorage. The nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) office is located in King Salmon. The nearest NMFS enforcement office is in Homer.

### Facilities

Port Alsworth is accessible by air, via a 4,000-foot gravel airstrip. There is no piped water or sewer system; individuals and families use wells and septic tanks. Electricity is provided by the local Tanalian Electric Cooperative, which uses a diesel generator. The community provides volunteer fire and emergency services. Port Alsworth is in the Lake and Peninsula School District, which is operated by the borough. There is one school in the community with two teachers and 16 students from grades K-12.

## Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

## Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing is an important part of Port Alsworth's economy. In 2000, four local residents held a total of four commercial fishing permits, all for the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. One permit was a drift gillnet permit (one fished), and the other three were set gillnet permits (none fished).

There was no commercial fish processing in Port Alsworth in 2000, and no registered landings. In 2003, the Lake and Peninsula Borough was granted \$442,002 in federal salmon disaster funds to compensate for falling salmon prices. The borough was also granted \$29,832 in Steller sea lion compensation funds for economic losses due to the protection of key sea lion habitat. A portion of these sums will likely be used for programs that benefit Port Alsworth.

### Sport fishing

Lake Clark and other surrounding lakes and rivers are critical salmon habitat for the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. Sport fishing and hunting are allowed within the Lake Clark National Preserve, an area adjacent to the national park. Sport fishing license sales in Port Alsworth totaled 554 in 2000. Approximately 64 of these were sold to Alaska residents; the rest were sold to fishermen from elsewhere.

Many local businesses in Port Alsworth are geared toward supporting the sport fishing industry in local lakes and rivers. In 2002, there were five sport fishing guide services for freshwater guides and one for saltwater guides. Major sport species include salmon (primarily sockeye), trout, Arctic grayling, Arctic char, and Dolly Varden.

### Subsistence Fishing

Alaska residents are allowed to harvest subsistence resources within the Lake Clark National Park, and subsistence is an important part of life in Port Alsworth. The ADF&G's Division of Subsistence reports that, in 1983, most Port Alsworth households used subsistence fish, including salmon (primarily sockeye) and non-salmon fish species (primarily trout and char). The annual per capita harvest of subsistence foods for Port Alsworth in 1983 was 361.1 lbs, and was comprised of the following resources: salmon (66.4%), non-salmon fish (3.2%), land mammals (26.8%), birds and eggs (1.2%), marine invertebrates (0.3%), and vegetation (2.1%).