

# Meyers Chuck

## Place and People

### Location

Meyers Chuck is located at the confluence of Clarence Strait and Ernest Sound, on the northwest tip of Cleveland Peninsula. It lies 40 miles northwest of Ketchikan. The area encompasses 0.6 square miles of land and 0.2 square miles of water.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Meyers Chuck had only 21 inhabitants. The community was 90.5% White, and the remaining 9.5% of its residents identified with more than one racial group. A total of 9.5% of the population recognized themselves as all or part Alaska Native or American Indian. The gender ratio in the community was skewed with 52.41% male and 47.6% female. The median age, 50.3 years, was much older than the national average, 36.5 years; 66.7% of the population is over the age of 45 and there were no community member between the ages of 10 and 24 years.

All community members lived in households and there was no group housing. The community has a large amount of vacant housing; 81.5 % of housing units were unoccupied or used seasonally. Of those 25 years of age and over in Meyers Chuck, 100% had graduated from high school or gone on to further schooling, and 38.5% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

### History

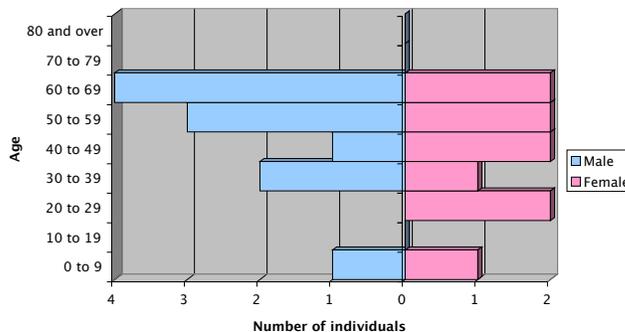
The natural conditions of Meyers Chuck, with a well-protected harbor that makes a natural shelter for boats, attracted Russian and European settlers. White settlers began living year-round at Meyers Chuck by the late 1800s. "Chuck" is a Chinook jargon word meaning "water" and applied to lake areas which fill with saltwater at high tide.

Prince of Wales Island and Cleveland Peninsula are in the middle of the transition area between Haida and Tlingit cultural areas. These two Native American groups had historically occupied the island, engaging in very elaborate economic systems including fishing, hunting, and harvesting practices, and intricate trading networks.

In 1916, the in-shore fishing industry was introduced to the area. A cannery was founded at Union Bay. This facility, mainly selling to Japan,

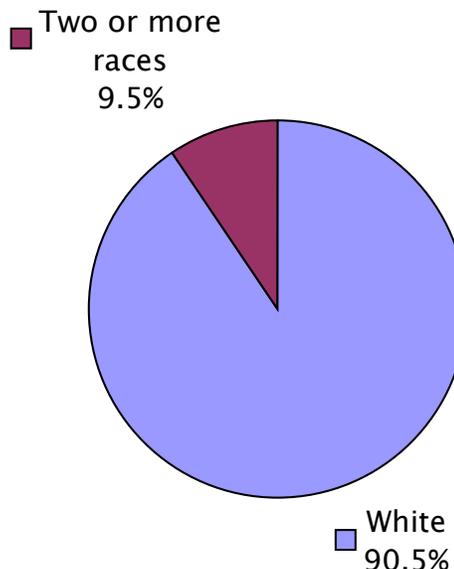
**2000 Population Structure  
Meyers Chuck**

Data source: US Census



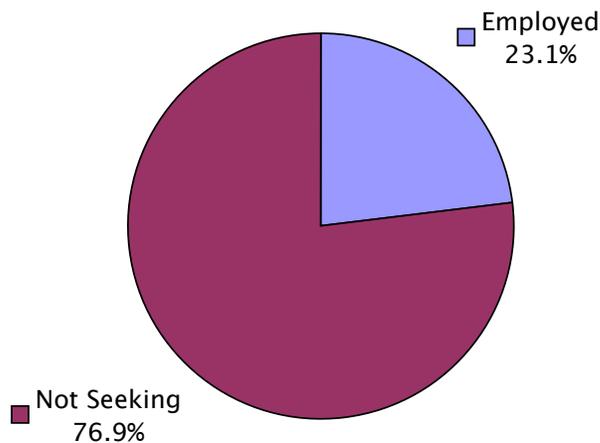
**2000 Racial Structure  
Meyers Chuck**

Data source: US Census



**2000 Employment Structure  
Meyers Chuck**

Data source: US Census



received the fish caught by local fleets until 1945. In addition, a floating clam cannery and a herring reduction plant were also present in the area during this time. The town developed around these economic activities. The positive economic cycle related to salmon runs started to decline in the 1940s and with it the community's demographic expansion started to stagnate and even recede. The cannery burned down in 1947 and was never reopened. In 1977, in an attempt to revive the fishing industry, five residents donated funds to establish a fish hatchery. A State land disposal sale was offered in 1986.

In the last 15 years the community has recovered its seasonal character, though nowadays it is related not to the fishing industry, but to tourism.

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

Meyers Chuck is a very small community without many options for a cash-based economy. Fishing is the fundamental productive activity of Meyers Chuck's population. In 2000, eight residents held commercial fishing permits. Subsistence activities, hunting, and fishing are a fundamental component of the local economy and diet. Deer and fish provide the majority of meat.

The employment structure of the community shows that 23.1% of the total potential labor force was employed at the time of the 2000 US Census. In this small community no one declared themselves to be unemployed and 76.9% of the adult workforce was not searching for employment. In 2000, the average per capita income in Meyers Chuck was \$31,660 and the median household income was \$64,365. In this community no one lived below poverty levels.

### Governance

Meyers Chuck is an unincorporated village, not organized under a borough. Although it is a predominantly White community, Meyers Chuck belongs to the regional Native corporation, SeaAlaska Native Corporation, which is headquartered in Juneau. The closest ADF&G and BCIS offices are nearby in Ketchikan. NMFS has its closest office in Petersburg.

### Facilities

Meyers Chuck is a very small community with little or no facilities. It does not have a school or police

department. Very basic health care is provided by the local EMS. Although there is a centralized system of water distribution, there is no equivalent sewage system available. Power is provided by individual generators.

The only regular plane visiting Meyers Chuck is the mail plane. The few planes that go to Meyers Chuck use a state-owned seaplane base. Ketchikan, as the micro-regional center of the area, provides most of the needed commodities. There are charter services and barge transport services connecting Meyers Chuck with Ketchikan. A boat dock provides 650 feet of moorage, and the site is a natural sheltered harbor.

## Involvement with North Pacific Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

Although this is a very small community, it has relatively significant involvement with the North Pacific fisheries. In 2000, 8 members of the community held 27 commercial fishing permits (16 permits fished). The village also had two owners of vessels working on federal fisheries, five owners of salmon fishing boats, and five residents registered as crewmen.

*Halibut:* There were three statewide permits issued to catch halibut in 2000 (three fished). Two of them were for longliners under 60 feet, and one permit for a vessel over 60 feet with longline gear.

*Salmon:* The bulk of Meyers Chuck's permits were devoted to the salmon fisheries. The village had ten permits issued in 2000 (six fished): three statewide permits for hand trollers (none fished), six statewide permits for power gurdy troll (five fished), and one fished permit to use dinglebar in the southeast.

*Other Groundfish:* The community had six permits pertaining to groundfish (three fished): two to catch miscellaneous saltwater finfish with a longline vessel under 60 feet (one fished), and two non-fished permits for mechanical jig. There was also one statewide permit to catch lingcod with dinglebar troll and one to catch demersal shell rockfish with a longline vessel under 60 feet in the southeast (both fished).

*Other Shellfish:* There were two permits to catch shrimp with pot gear in the southeast (one fished), and one permit to use beam trawl in the southeast (not fished). There were also two permits to harvest geoduck clam (not fished) and sea cucumbers with diving gear in the southeast.

*Sablefish:* Two issued and fished permits for longliners: one for vessels under 60 feet, and one for vessels over 60 feet, the former with a statewide range, and the latter limited to the northern southeast.

*Crab:* There was one permit issued to harvest Dungeness crab in the southeast with 75 pots or 25% of maximum capacity (not fished).

In Meyers Chuck there are no processing facilities. Its small fleet delivers to other harbors in the area.

### **Sport Fishing**

In 2000, this community issued 27 sport fishing licenses, 13 of them purchased by Alaska residents. This small number of permits does not preclude the possibility that the area could be visited by numerous outsiders getting their permits here or elsewhere. In 2002 the village had no business licenses for fishing guide services.

### **Subsistence Fishing**

In a survey conducted on behalf of ADF&G in Meyers Chuck, the community demonstrated the significance of subsistence practices for traditional Alaska communities. All households participated in the use of harvested resources. In relation to the main marine resources: 100% of residents used subsistence

salmon, 80% used other types fish (herring, cod, flounder, halibut, rockfish, and char), 0% marine mammals and 90% marine invertebrates. The results reflect that the inhabitants of the community were harvesting 413.87 lbs per person per year. The daily per capita harvest of wild food was 1.13 lbs (1987 report). These statistics emphasize the importance of subsistence for these communities. Compositional breakdown of subsistence harvest illustrates the relative importance of each resource: salmon 25.33%, other fish 41.96, land mammals 11.60%, marine mammals 0%, birds and eggs 2.23%, marine invertebrates 15.42%, and vegetation 3.46%.

In 1999, Meyers Chuck had only one Alaska salmon household subsistence permit, and the catch was mainly sockeye. In addition, the inhabitants of this community (rural residents or members of an Alaska Native tribe) 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.