

# SOUTHWEST HARBOR, ME<sup>1</sup>

## Community Profile<sup>2</sup>

### PEOPLE AND PLACES

#### Regional orientation

The town of Southwest Harbor, Maine (44.15°N, 68.19°W) is located in Hancock County. The town is 14 miles from Bar Harbor, 85 miles from Rockland, and 124 miles from Augusta. Southwest Harbor contains 13.9 square miles of land area (State of Maine 2004).



Map 1. Location of Southwest Harbor, ME (US Census Bureau 2000)

#### Historical/Background

Southwest Harbor, “a small community on a great harbor,” is actually a community of two halves. The main community is at Manset, with a smaller community on the northern peninsula at Clark’s Point. The community at Clark’s Point gained prominence in the 1850s through the energy and vision of Deacon Henry Clark and his wife Caroline. A Christian and leader in the Congregational Church, Deacon Clark built a wharf large enough to accommodate steamboats and later a cannery was built. By 1866, the cannery was boiling 2,500 lobsters a day, providing a new opportunity for fishermen by increasing demand for a product sometimes used as fertilizer. The main community at Manset housed the community post office, the Customs House, the Union Church and, in 1860, numerous shipyards and fishing outfits. By the late 19th century, this was a major center for cod fisheries, providing dried cod for eastern markets. The communities at Southwest Harbor were part of Tremont, which would also include McKinley (later Bass Harbor), Bernard and Seal Cove.

<sup>1</sup> These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of citation please use the following template: “Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact [Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov](mailto:Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov).”

Community differences and disagreements in development led to the breakaway of Southwest Harbor in 1905. The steamboats brought great changes. After the Civil War, steamboats brought travelers on vacation from the Eastern cities.

Today's economy is based on tourism and summer homes are prevalent. The canneries are gone and the cod fishery has declined but fishermen still use the harbor (Honey 2002).

### Demographics<sup>3</sup>

According to Census 2000 data<sup>4</sup>, Southwest Harbor had a total population of 1,966, up 0.7% from the reported population of 1,952 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 47.6% were males and 52.4% were females. The median age was 42.4 years and 75.9% of the population was 21 years or older while 22.7% was 62 or older.

Southwest Harbor's age structure (Figure 1) shows the highest percentage of the population between the ages of 40-59 years. The 20-29 year age group was smaller than the 10-19 years and the 30-39 years age groups, illustrating that young people are leaving the community after high school.

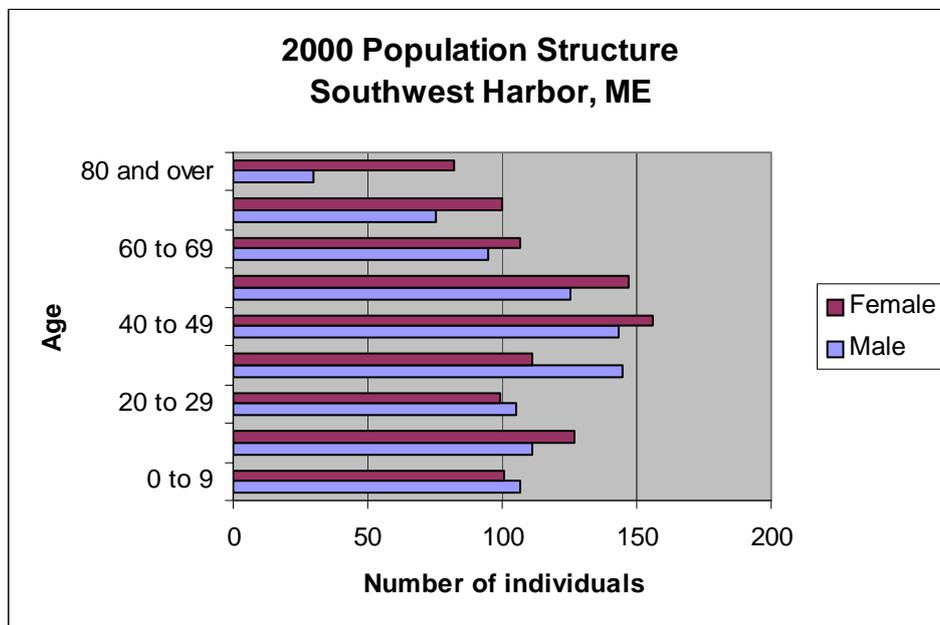


Figure 1. Southwest Harbor's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population was white (98.4%), with 0.3% of residents black or African American, 0.2% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and none Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 0.6% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: English (29%), Irish (13.5%), and German (10.8%). With regard to region of birth, 57.5% were born in Maine, 39.6% were born in a different state and 1.7% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.9% who were not United States citizens).

<sup>3</sup> While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

<sup>4</sup> These and all census data, unless otherwise referenced, can be found at US Census: American Factfinder 2000 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; data used are for Southwest Harbor town (cited Jul 2007)

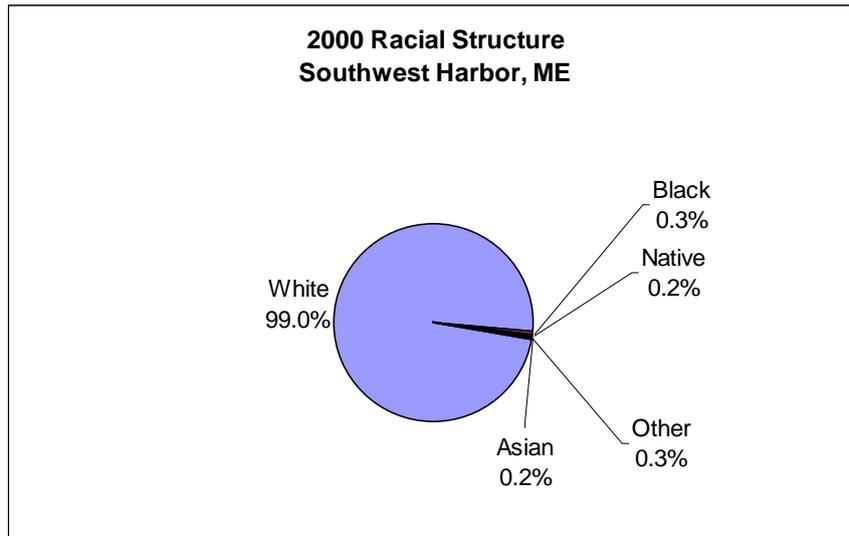


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

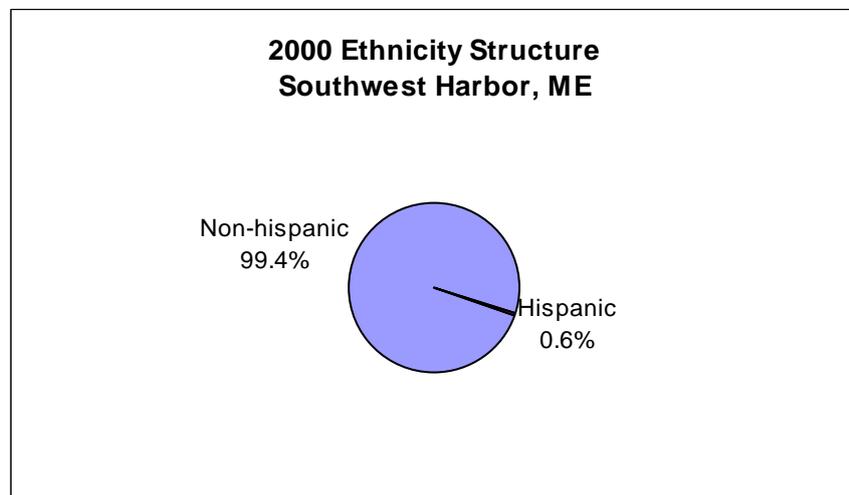


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 97.9% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 2.1% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 1.1% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 82.8% were high school graduates or higher and 32.6% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again, of the population 25 years and over, 2.5% did not reach ninth grade, 14.7% attended some high school but did not graduate, 28% completed high school, 17.2% had some college with no degree, 5% received an associate’s degree, 21.3% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 11.3% received a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Hancock County was Catholic with 10 congregations and 6,292 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were the United Church of Christ (19 with 1,957 adherents), and American Baptist Churches of USA (17 with 1,774 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was up 25.2% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

## Issues/Processes

In June of 2007, the Bangor waterfront is getting a new cruise boat. The *Patience* was docked at Southwest Harbor, before moving to Bangor. The boat is a replica of a 19th century steam ferry and was built in Stonington in 1982 when it was used on Cape Cod. The ferry will offer one hour cruises, Thursday through Sunday, on the Penobscot River (Downeast Windjammer Cruises 2008).

In 2006, the State of Maine passed the Working Waterfront Tax Law, to address the problem of working waterfront property being heavily taxed based on its projected market value. The goal of this tax is “to encourage the preservation of working waterfront land and to prevent the conversion of working waterfront land to other uses as the result of economic pressures caused by the assessment of that land for purposes of property taxation.” The law requires the tax assessor to value the property based on what it is worth as working waterfront land, rather than what its market value would be if it were sold and converted to residential or other uses (State of Maine 2005).

## Cultural attributes

The Quietside Festival and Boat Show in Southwest Harbor is a weeklong event (usually in July) and features a parade, Coast Guard open house, Centennial Concert and more (Mount Desert Islander 2006).

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Current Economy

Southwest harbor has several boat building companies (Maine Harbors 2006). Southwest Lobster and Fish Unlimited and [Beal's Lobster Pier](#) are seafood retailers in town (SHTCC 2008).

According to the U.S. Census 2000<sup>5</sup>, 63.4% (1016 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 3.3% were unemployed, 2.5% were in the Armed Forces, and 57.6% were employed.

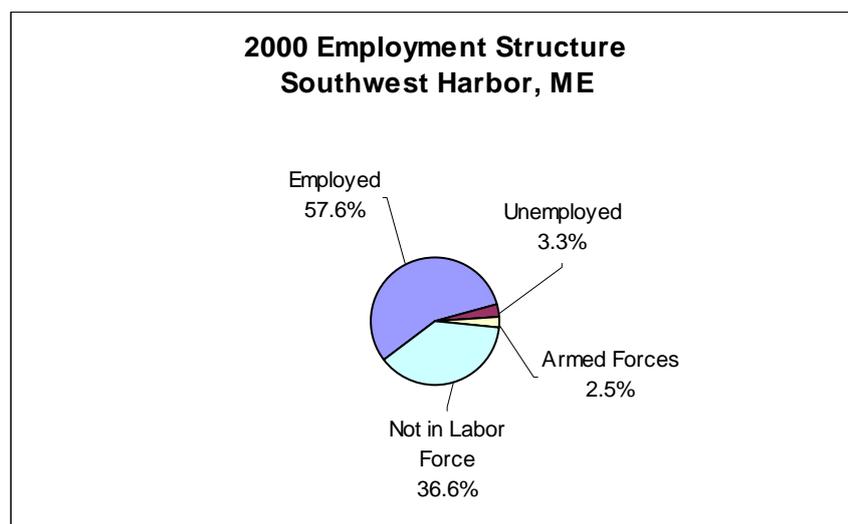


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

<sup>5</sup> Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 42 positions or 4.6% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 134 positions or 14.5% of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (13.2%), manufacturing (13.2%), retail trade (12.6%), and construction (11.5%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Southwest Harbor was \$36,555 (up 44.5% from \$21,509 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]). For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 23.9% more per year than females.

The average family in Southwest Harbor consisted of 2.76 persons. With respect to poverty, 8.8% of families (down from 2% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 12% of individuals earn below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239 through \$35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000a). In 2000, 47.1% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Southwest Harbor had a total of 1,288 housing units of which 69.8% were occupied and 72.3% were detached one unit homes. Approximately one-third (30.1%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, vans, and boats accounted for 7.4% of housing units; 86.8% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$121,600. Of vacant housing units, 25.3% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 34.6% were renter occupied.

## **Government**

Southwest Harbor's local government is comprised of a town manager, and five Selectmen (Ellsworth American 2007).

### *Fishery involvement in government*

Southwest Harbor has a harbormaster; further information on fishery involvement in government in Southwest Harbor is unavailable through secondary data collection.

## **Institutional**

### *Fishing associations*

The fishing associations that serve Southwest Harbor fishermen are the Downeast Lobstermen's Association located in Deer Isle, Maine, and the [Maine Lobstermen's Association](#) (MLA). The MLA was founded in 1954, and works to protect the lobster resource and the lobstermen's way of life. The association was founded by lobstermen with a goal of empowering Maine's lobster industry by representing lobstermen with a united front. The MLA is the largest commercial fishing industry group on the east coast, and represents the interests of 1200 lobstermen.

### *Fishing assistance centers*

The Working Waterfront Coalition is a statewide collaboration of various industry associations, non-profits, and government agencies with the goal to support Maine's working waterfronts. The [Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program](#), administered by the Department of Marine Resources, provides money to applicants such as municipalities, fishing co-ops, private commercial fisheries businesses and more, ranging from \$7,000 to \$475,000. The intention of the program is to preserve commercial fisheries working waterfronts and to help secure property for these businesses. As of December 2007, the \$2 million pilot program has reportedly supported over 400 jobs, 194 boats, and assured access to clam flats, parking,

wharfage and fisheries in six towns (Maine DMR 2005). Voters [approved an additional \\$3 million](#) to continue the program in 2007.

#### *Other fishing related organizations*

The [Maine Fishermen's Forum](#) was founded in 1976, and its goal is to provide continuous opportunities to educate the public and the fishing industry about marine resource issues and fisheries, as well as to provide a platform for discussion and decision making. The Forum also holds an annual three day event which focuses awareness on issues that affect the commercial fishing industry (Maine Fishermen's Forum 2007).

#### **Physical**

Hancock County - Bar Harbor Airport is located halfway between Ellsworth and Bar Harbor, and it is approximately 15 miles from Southwest Harbor. Regional service is provided between this airport and Logan Airport in Boston, Massachusetts. The international airports of Portland, Augusta, and Bangor are respectively 176, 124, and 47 miles from Southwest Harbor. For ground transportation, the [Island Explorer](#) bus provides seasonal service to Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor Airport, Bar Harbor, and Southwest Harbor. It features eight bus routes linking hotels, inns, and campgrounds with destinations in Acadia National Park and neighboring village centers. Seasonally, [Bay Ferries](#) provides ferry transportation from Bar Harbor, Maine, to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and the Maine State Ferry Service provides year-round transportation from Bass Harbor to Swans Island and Frenchboro (State of Maine, no date).

[Beal's Lobster Pier](#) in Southwest Harbor sells fresh seafood, fuel, and ice, and provides moorings and tie-up floats.

### **INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES<sup>6</sup>**

#### **Commercial**

Lobster was by far the most significant species landed in Southwest Harbor (see Table 1). The value of lobster landed in Southwest Harbor in 2006 was less than the average value of landings for the period 1997-2006. The number of vessels homered in Southwest Harbor declined from 26 in 1997 to 19 in 1998, but rose back to 25 vessels by 2006 (see Table 2). The number of vessels with owners living in Southwest Harbor (owner's city) increased in this time period, from 16 in 1997 to 26 in 2006.

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<sup>6</sup> In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

## Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Scallop	2
Other <sup>7</sup>	3
Largemesh Groundfish <sup>8</sup>	4
Monkfish	5

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

## Vessels by Year<sup>9</sup>

Table 1. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# vessels (owner's city)
1997	26	16
1998	19	16
1999	19	18
2000	20	19
2001	19	15
2002	20	16
2003	25	20
2004	20	19
2005	24	22
2006	25	26

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport, # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence<sup>10</sup>)

## Recreational

At least one fishing charter company runs out of Southwest Harbor: [Masako Queen Fishing Company](#).

## Subsistence

Information on subsistence fishing in Southwest Harbor is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

## FUTURE

Information on the future of Southwest Harbor is unavailable through secondary data collection.

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<sup>7</sup> "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

<sup>8</sup> Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

<sup>9</sup> Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

<sup>10</sup> The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

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