

Novato

People and Place

Location

Novato is in Marin County, 29 miles north of San Francisco and 78 miles southwest of Sacramento. The community encompasses 27.7 square miles of land and 0.6 square mile of water. The geographic coordinates of Novato are lat 38°06'27"N, long 122°34'07"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Novato was 47,630, a 0.1% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 51.6% female and 48.4% male. The median age of the population in 2000 was 39.6, higher than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 89.1% had a high school education or higher, 34.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 11.3% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

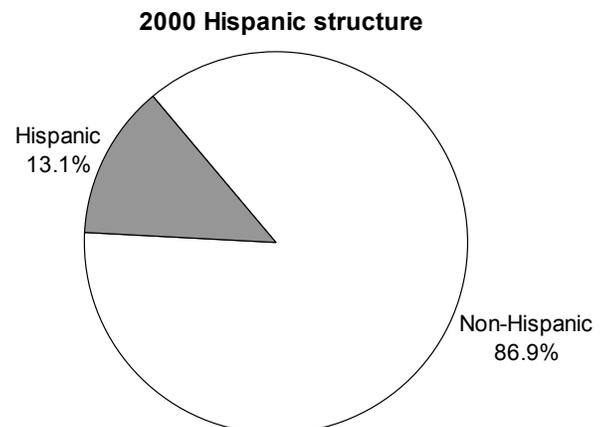
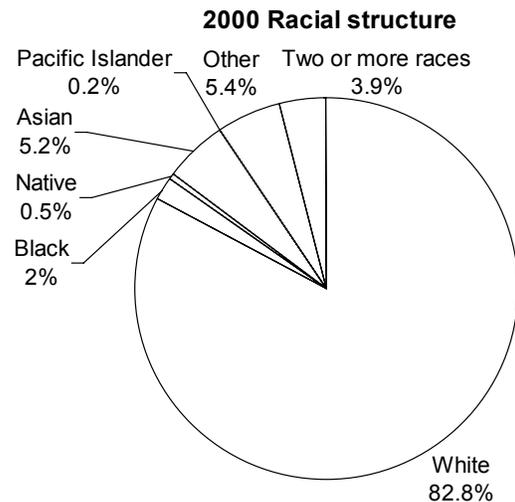
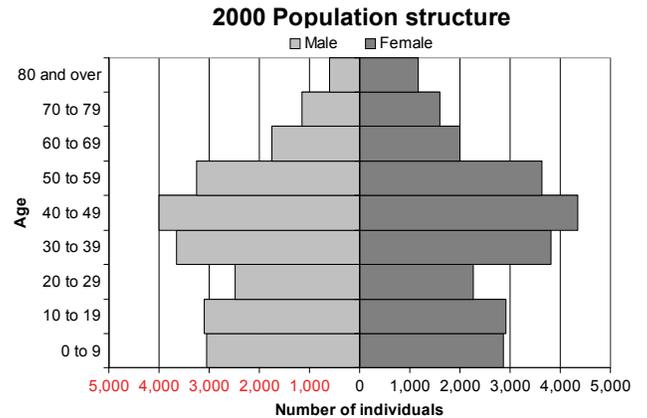
The majority of the racial structure was white (82.8%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (5.4%), Asian (5.2%), individuals who identified with two or more races (3.9%), black (2%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.5%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 13.1% identified as Hispanic. About 17.2% percent were foreign-born, of which 23% were from Mexico.

In 2000 81.1% of the population lived in family households.

History

The first inhabitants of the Novato area were Miwok Indians who lived in a village at the base of Mount Burdell at Olompali. The area is now a state historic park with a re-created Miwok village. The Coastal Miwok are part of the Penutian language family.¹ They occupied territory bounded on the north by the Cosumnes River, the east by the ridge of the Sierra Nevada, the south by Fresno Creek, and the west by the San Joaquin River.² The Miwok were the largest "nation" in California. It is said a tribal member could travel from the Cosumnes River to Fresno Creek and be understood without difficulty, so uniform was the language."³

The Coast Miwok inhabited about 885 square miles of Marin and southern Sonoma counties. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were 3,000 Miwok in about 40 villages; each village consisted of 75

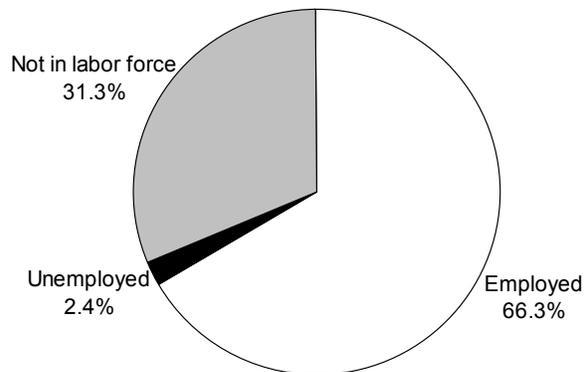


to 100 persons.⁴ By 1910 the population had declined to an estimated 699.⁵ The Miwok used boats made from tule reeds to travel around San Francisco Bay and to Angel Island, the largest island in the bay.⁶ The diet of the Miwok consisted primarily of nuts, pinole (a meal made of seeds), roots, fruit, jack rabbit, deer, sea lions, seals, sea otters, fish, and shellfish. Annual salmon spawning runs came through Raccoon Strait just offshore of Angel Island.⁷ Fish were taken by gorge-hook (made from bone) and spear, dip nets (netting attached to wooden frames on a handle), and by narcotization. They used woven surf nets along open beaches.^{8,9}

The Miwok's first contact with Euro-Americans occurred in 1579 when Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman to sail around the world, was greeted by Indians from a village near Tomales, 50 miles northwest of Sausalito. In 1775 Father Vincente, who arrived to claim San Francisco Bay with Captain Ayuala, described the Coast Miwok as "humorous, with courteous manners."¹⁰ During the Spanish Mission Era, the Coast Miwok learned to build with adobe and cultivate new food crops, which they traded to the Spanish missions.¹¹ For decades the Coast Miwok resisted the Spanish and Mexicans, but fell before European weapons. In 1953 Congress passed Public Law 280, which transferred law enforcement on California reservations to state and county agencies. By 1958 the federal government terminated the recognition of several tribes including the Coast Miwok.¹² In December 2000 legislation was signed granting the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria, formerly known as the Federated Coast Miwok, full rights and privileges afforded federally recognized tribes. Today there are more than 500 registered tribal members.¹³

Mexican governors made land grants in the Novato area beginning in the 1800s. In 1839 Rancho de Novato was granted to Fernando Feliz and the following year Ygnacio Pacheco received Rancho San Jose. In 1843 Camilo Ynitia, son of the last Coast Miwok chief, was granted Rancho Olompali. Rancho Novato was sold several times and was eventually purchased in 1856 by Francis DeLong and Joseph Sweetser. DeLong and Sweetser planted thousands of apple trees and Rancho Novato became one of the largest orchards in the world. In the 1870s Portuguese and Swiss-Italian farmers and dairymen began to settle in the area. The Northwest Pacific Railroad connected Novato to the north San Francisco Bay area in the 1880s. By 1910 vineyards, dairies, orchards, and chicken ranches formed the base of the economy. DeLong's 6,000 acres, purchased and subdivided by the Home and Farm Company in 1888, was the beginning of Novato.

2000 Employment structure



Hamilton Air Force Base was constructed in 1928 and remained in operation until 1975. The base served as Marin County's main employer during most of its operational years. In the 1940s water and sewer districts were formed in Novato. The city incorporated in 1960 and in 1963 the city hall was established in what was then the Presbyterian Church.

Today downtown Novato has an active retail area with several shops and restaurants. Because of its low population density, it has a rural atmosphere and offers visitors and residents more than 3,000 acres of preserves and open spaces and 27 city parks. The Novato History Museum, founded in 1976 in the home of Novato's first Postmaster, Henry F. Jones, offers a glimpse of area history. The Novato Historical Guild, a volunteer nonprofit organization also founded in 1976, publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Novato Historian*. Major community events include the Novato Festival of Art, Wine, and Music held in June; concerts and movies in Pioneer Park throughout the summer; an annual July 4 parade; and the city's Labor Day picnic at Stafford Lake.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 66.3% of Novato's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.4% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 3.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 31.3% were not in the labor force, less than the national average of 36.1%. In 1999 5.6% lived below the poverty line. The primary employment sectors were management, professional, and related occupations (43.4%), sales and office work (28.1%), service jobs (14.3%), and local, state, or federal government (12.3%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry,

fishing, and hunting employed 0.2%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company was the largest employer in Novato with more than 2,400 employees.¹⁴ Novato is also the corporate headquarters for the footwear company Birkenstock Footprint Sandals and gardening retailer Smith and Hawken.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Novato's per capita income in 1999 was \$32,402, the median household was \$63,453, and 5.6% lived below the poverty level. In 2000 there were 18,994 housing units in Novato, of which 97.5% were occupied and 2.5% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 67.6% were by owner and 32.4% were by renter. Of the vacant units, 10.9% were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Novato operates under a council-manager government. The mayor serves a one-year term and five city council members serve four-year terms. Residents pay a 8.25% sales and use tax and Marin County collects a 10% transient lodging tax.^{15, 16} See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center has laboratories 103 miles south in Santa Cruz and a NMFS Regional Office is located 426 miles south in Long Beach. The California Department of Fish and Game has offices in Bodega Bay, Sacramento, and Monterey. San Francisco has offices of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 50 miles south in Foster City. The Novato area is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay, one of the largest and busiest marine safety units in the USCG.

Facilities

Novato is accessible by land and air. Major roads connecting Novato to neighboring communities are California Highway 37, Interstate Highway 80 northeast to Sacramento and U.S. Highway 101 south to San Francisco. Golden Gate Transit provides bus service. The San Francisco International Airport is 40.7 miles south.

The Novato Unified School District consists of a number of elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative schools. The North Marin Water District and Novato Sanitary District provide water and wastewater services. Pacific Gas and Electric supplies electricity and natural gas. The Novato Police Department administers

public safety and Novato Community Hospital provides medical services. Additional facilities include a public library, senior center, museums, and city parks. Novato has no port facilities; the closest port is 30 miles south in San Francisco.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Novato were recorded as part of the Other Sonoma and Marin County Outer Coast Ports group including Bolinas, Cloverdale, Corte Madera, Dillon Beach, Drakes Bay, Forest Knolls, Greenbrae, Guerneville, Hamlet, Healdsburg, Inverness, Jenner, Kentfield, Marconi, Marshall, Mill Valley, Millerton, Muir Beach, Nicasio, Occidental, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, San Quentin, San Rafael, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Stewarts Point, Stinson Beach, Tiburon, and Windsor.

In 2000 landings for this port group were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic 135 t/\$116,723/15; crab 6 t/\$42,768/7; groundfish 1 t/\$1,704/9; 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. There are no fish processors located in Novato. See the Sebastopol, Dillon Beach, Corte Madera, Santa Rosa, and San Francisco community profiles for additional information.

Novato residents owned five vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, three of which participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Novato residents that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/3, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/2, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.¹⁷

In 2000 the number of Novato residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/4, crab 0/0/5, groundfish 0/0/1, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/18, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 0/0/9.¹⁸

Novato residents held 53 state permits in 2000. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/8, crab 0/0/5, groundfish 0/0/1, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/33, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 0/0/3.¹⁹

Sportfishing

Novato sport fishermen are involved in West Coast and Alaskan fisheries. There are three sportfishing license agents in Novato. There were two commercial passenger fishing vessels licensed in Novato 2002 and one in 2003.

Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Novato 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” for fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing in California is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 one Novato resident held a crew member license for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Novato residents purchased 129 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. E. Curtis. 1924. The Miwok. Online at <http://www.yosemite.ca.us/history/curtis/> [accessed 2 March 2007].
2. Access Genealogy. 2004. California Indian Tribes. Online at <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/californiatribes.htm> [accessed 2 March 2007].
3. See note 2.
4. Rohnert Park Historical Society. 2000. Miwok villages. Online at <http://www.rphist.org/html/miwok.html> [accessed 3 March 2007].
5. See note 1.
6. Angel Island Association. 2003. Miwok information. Online at <http://www.angelisland.org/miwok.htm> [accessed 2 March 2007].
7. See note 6.
8. See note 1.
9. Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin. No date. History of the Coast Miwok at Point Reyes. Online at http://www.pointreyesvisions.com/NewFiles/Science_Folder/Coast_Miwok.html [accessed 2 March 2007].
10. R. Walker. 2001. A hidden geography. Online at http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/AHiddenGeography.html [accessed 2 March 2007].
11. Novato Chamber of Commerce. No date. Novato’s history. Online at <http://www.novato.org/about/index.cfm> [accessed January 2005].
12. See note 9.
13. See note 9.

14. City of Novato. No date. About Novato. Online at http://www.ci.novato.ca.us/about_nov.cfm [accessed 2 March 2007].

15. California Board of Equalization. 2004. California city and county sales and use tax rates. Online at <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/pub71.pdf> [accessed 2 March 2007].

16. California Board of Equalization. 2001. California counties transient lodging tax revenue, rate and date for the fiscal year 2000–2001. Online at <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> [accessed 2 March 2007].

17. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

18. See note 17.

19. See note 17.