

# Valley Ford

## People and Place

### Location

Valley Ford is located in northern California's Sonoma County 6 miles inland from the coast on U.S. Highway 1 and about 58 miles north of San Francisco. The community is a part of the Santa Rosa metropolitan area and covers an area of 3.27 square miles. The geographic coordinates of Valley Ford are lat 122°55'23"W, long 38°19'05"N.

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Valley Ford was 60. The gender composition was 46.6% female and 53.4% male. The median age in 2000 was 30.7, younger than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 100% had a high school education or higher, 26.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher and 13.2% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

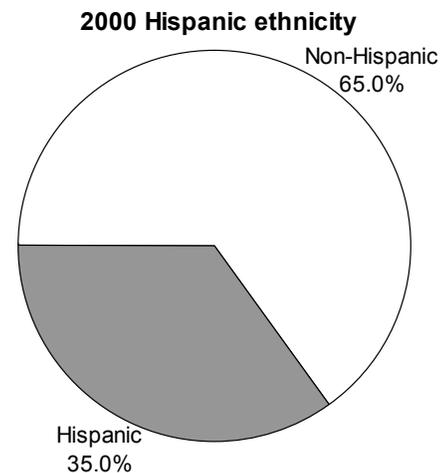
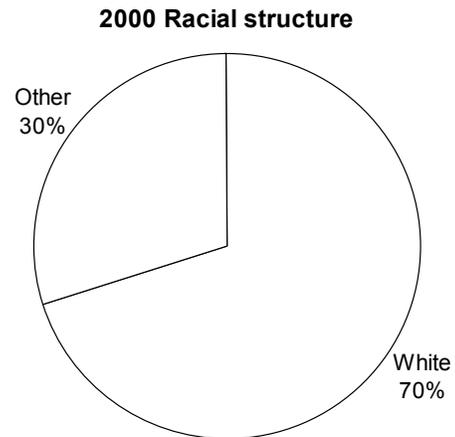
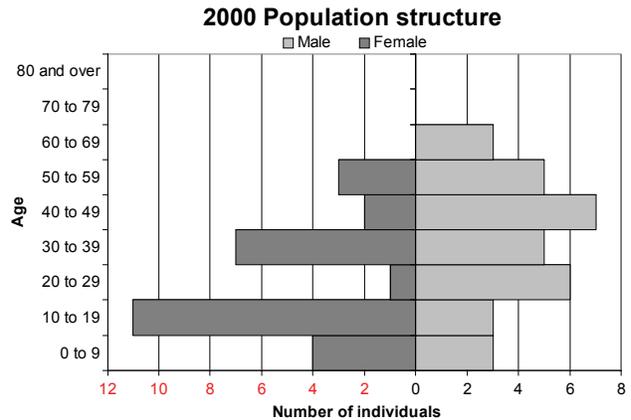
The majority of the racial structure was white (70%) and 30% identified with some other race. Ethnicity data indicate 35% identified as Hispanic and there were no foreign-born residents.

In 2000 78.3% of the population lived in family households.

### History

Valley Ford is inland from Bodega Bay, a community in which fishing plays an important role, and with which it shares much of its history. Long before Euro-Americans inhabited the area surrounding Sonoma County, the Miwok and Pomo Indians lived throughout region. The Coastal Miwok fished, hunted, and gathered on a seasonal basis in the coastal areas. During the summers, the Pomo harvested clams, seals, and bird eggs, and fished in coastal waters. The Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo banded together in the 1990s and were recognized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria in 2000. Indian fishermen harvest salmon and various other species. Salmon holds cultural significance for the Miwok and Pomo, as it was historically a staple of their diet. In recent decades, salmon numbers have declined, although the coho salmon population seems to have risen in the last few years.<sup>1</sup>

Europeans first visited the area in the early 1600s, but it was not until the 1700s that explorers anchored there.<sup>2,3,4</sup> The first European settlers were Russian fur



traders who came south from Alaska in 1812. They sought otters and seals as well as a warmer climate to grow food for their northern outposts. They built Fort Ross, 24 miles north of Bodega Bay, with the help of local Indians. The Russians enslaved the Pomo and exploited the area's natural resources. Spanish missionaries began inhabiting coastal California in the late 1700s and set up a number of missions.

By the 1800s the Spanish had begun to use the local Miwok and Pomo Indians as laborers. California came under Mexican control during this time and plots were granted to Mexican citizens, who built ranchos along the Sonoma coast. The Russians left the area around 1841. Many of the area's Indians went into servitude to Mexicans who controlled much of the land. By 1850 those Indians not working as farm laborers fished for their livelihood.<sup>5, 6</sup>

Residents of Valley Ford rely predominantly on marine facilities in Bodega Bay. The area's fishing industry received a boost when rail lines were created between Sonoma County and San Francisco in the 1870s. These rail lines opened up a large market for local fishermen.<sup>7</sup> Commercial fishing grew rapidly during World War I, connecting the area to a global economic network. The industry, primarily focused on salmon, drove the local economy and structured local life. The industry fluctuated significantly over the past century, due in large part to human-influenced changes in the marine and coastal environment, and to transformations in the industry itself. These fluctuations are reflected through migration in and out of the area.<sup>8, 9</sup>

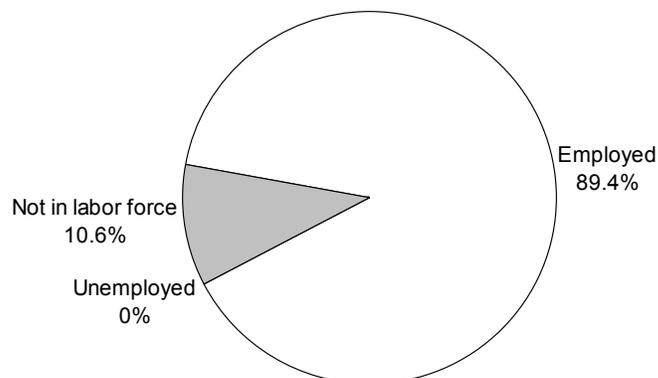
Contemporary commercial fishermen harvest albacore, Chinook salmon, halibut, rockfish, Dungeness crab, sole, and more recently sea urchin. In recent years, silt deposits have become a problem. The depth of Bodega Bay's channel has decreased to five feet in some areas, and numerous vessels have run aground. The siltation problem is important to the community as Bodega Bay is the only port between San Francisco and Fort Bragg large enough for many of today's ocean-going vessels. The channel was dredged under a project from 2004 to 2005.<sup>10</sup>

## Infrastructure

### Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 89.4% of Valley Ford's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed and the unemployment rate was reported to be 0%. In addition, 10.6% were not in the labor force. About 15% were employed in natural resource jobs such as agriculture, fishing, forestry, or hunting, but this percentage may not be accurate because

**2000 Employment structure**



many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Valley Ford's per capita income in 1999 was \$24,750, compared to the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was 45,903, compared to the national median household income of \$41,994. In 2000 Valley Ford had 21 housing units, all occupied either by owners (57.1%) or renters (42.9%).

### Governance

Valley Ford is an unincorporated area within Sonoma County. Residents pay a 7.5% sales and use tax rate, and the county levies a 9% transient lodging tax. The county is governed by a board of five supervisors. The board also manages the county landfill, the public water transmission system, and several wastewater treatment facilities.<sup>11</sup> See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

The nearest office of the National Marine Fisheries Service is 17 miles away in Santa Rosa. A California Fish and Game Office is located in Yountville 51 miles away. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Office is in San Francisco, which also hosts meetings of the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Neighboring Bodega Bay has a U.S. Coast Guard station.

### Facilities

Valley Ford is accessible by ground by California Highway 1 that connects Valley Ford to Bodega Bay and Tomales. Commercial airports are in San Francisco and Santa Rosa. Valley Ford's students attend school in Marin County Shoreline Unified School District, enrolling in Tomales Elementary and Tomales High School.

Pacific Gas and Electric supplies electricity. Residents tap groundwater for their water supply. The Santa Rosa Police Department and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office administer public safety. Nearby hospitals are in Santa Rosa and 10 miles away in Sebastopol. Valley Ford has a hotel and an inn. Other accommodations are available in Bodega Bay, Sebastopol, and Santa Rosa. Due to the community's inland location, Valley Ford has no marine facilities, however, facilities exist in Bodega Bay. See the Bodega Bay community profile for more information.

## Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

### Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Valley Ford residents owned one vessel that fished in the region and participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by community members that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/2, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.<sup>12</sup>

The number of residents holding state permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/3, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/1.<sup>13</sup>

In 2000 Valley Ford residents held at least seven permits, all state registered. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/5, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/2.<sup>14</sup>

### Sportfishing

Valley Ford did not participate in the local sportfishing industry in 2000.

### Subsistence

Specific information on subsistence fishing in Valley Ford is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game terms "recreational" fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or for 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 the residents of Valley Ford were not involved in North Pacific fisheries.

### Sportfishing

Valley Ford residents did not participate in Alaska's sportfishing industry in 2000.

## Notes

1. T. Colombo, Tribal Representative for the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Bodega Bay, CA. Pers. commun., 28 September 2004.
2. Bodega Bay.com. 2004. Bodega Bay area history—200 years of change. Online at [http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor\\_info/overviewmap.html](http://www.bodegabay.com/visitor_info/overviewmap.html) [accessed 9 April 2007].
3. Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. No date. Historical background. Online at <http://www.gratonrancheria.com/timeline.htm> [accessed 9 April 2007].
4. Go Boating America. 2004. Windswept getaway. Online at <http://goboatingmag.com/main/article.asp?id=528> [accessed September 2004].
5. See note 2.
6. See note 3.
7. See note 2.
8. Coldwell Banker. 2002. Bodega Bay area profile: Economy. Online at <http://www.bodegabayhomes.com/profile/economy.htm> [accessed 9 April 2007].
9. See note 4.
10. C. Benfell. 2004. Channel dredging to begin. Online at <http://www1.pressdemocrat.com> [accessed September 2004].
11. Sonoma County. 2004. Board of supervisors. Online at <http://www.sonoma-county.org/board/index.htm> [accessed 9 April 2007].
12. 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.
13. See note 12.
14. See note 12.