

VANDEMERE, NC¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The town of Vandemere (35.18°N, 76.66°W) is located in Pamlico County, in the middle of North Carolina's coastline, along Pamlico Sound. It is roughly 59 miles from Morehead City and 137 miles from Raleigh (MapQuest nd). Vandemere is 3.88 sq. km. in land area, and has another 0.31 sq. km. in surface water. It is situated where Vandemere Creek flows into the Bay River (USGS 2008).



Map 1. Location of Vandemere, NC (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

A website for Vandemere claims this community is more than just a “quaint, sleepy little fishing village”, but a “vibrant community with a proud history” (Pamlico-NC.com 1999). The name Vandemere comes from the German “van”, meaning village, and the French “de mer”, meaning “by the sea”, giving the town its nickname “Village by the Sea”. The Indian village of “Secotan” was located here at one time, and it was later renamed when it was settled in 1870 (Marine Realty Inc. nd). Around 1870, a Dr. Delon Henry Abbott arrived in Vandemere and was instrumental in spurring new businesses that came to foster the town. Some of these businesses included a sawmill, gristmill, store, storehouses, lumber and even a schooner by the name of *O.H. Folly*. Vandemere was the second town in Pamlico County to incorporate, in 1874

¹ 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.

² 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.”

(Pamlico-NC.com 1999). Timber, fishing, and farming were the way of life for the first European settlers here, and this hasn't changed much since the town was first settled.

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data⁴, Vandemere had a total population of 289, down 14.5% from the reported population of 338 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 44.6% were males and 55.4% were females. The median age was 44.9 years and 75.1% of the population was 21 years or older while 24.2% was 62 or older.

The age structure for Vandemere (see Figure 1) was somewhat different than many other fishing communities. There was a small decline in the population for both males and females in the 20-29 age bracket, which is generally expected of small fishing communities, but then for the 30-39 age bracket the number of women is more than twice the number of men, indicating that perhaps men are going elsewhere to seek employment at this age. Women continue to outnumber men in all age categories afterwards. Vandemere also appears to have somewhat of an older population, with many residents in the 60-69 and 70-79 age categories, indicating that this town may serve as a retirement community.

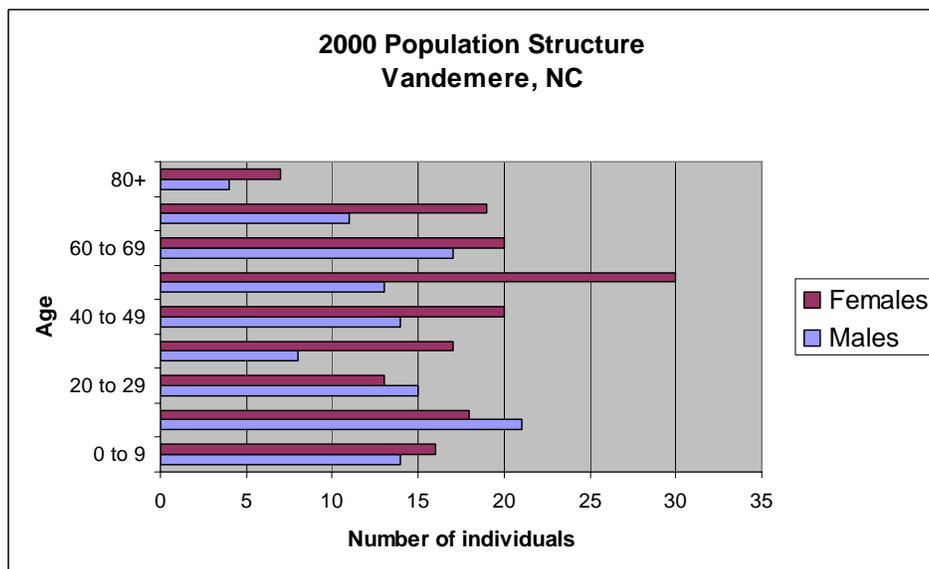


Figure 1. Vandemere's population structure by sex in 2000

The majority of the population was black or African American (53.1%), with 46.6% of residents white, 0.3% Native American, and no residents reporting any other racial background (see Figure 2). Only 2.1% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (10.3%), United States or American (10.0%), and other ancestries (40.6%). With regard to region of birth, 84.4% were born in North Carolina, 12.8% were born in a different state and 2.8% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.5% who were not United States citizens).

³ 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.

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

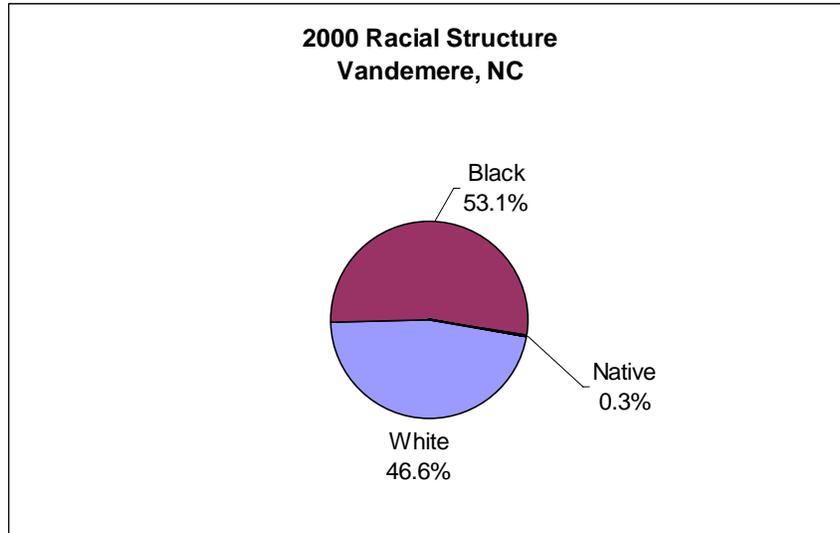


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

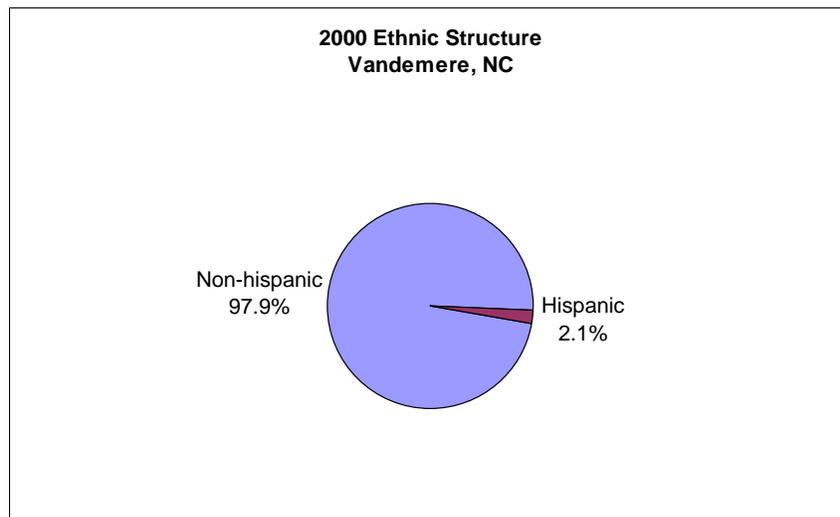


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 95.1% of the population, only English is spoken in the home, leaving 4.9% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 2.6% of the population who spoke English less than “very well” according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 69.1% were high school graduates or higher and 9.2% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 9.2% did not reach ninth grade, 21.7% attended some high school but did not graduate, 29.5% completed high school, 22.1% had some college with no degree, 8.3% received an associate’s degree, 6.1% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 2.3% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through the US Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Pamlico County was United Methodist with 8 congregations and 1,410 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Original Free Will Baptists (8 with 1,070 adherents), Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (3 with 492 adherents), and Southern Baptist Convention (3 with 492 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 17.0% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

Shrimp fishermen along the North Carolina coast have suffered because of decreasing prices of shrimp, resulting from an increase of foreign farmed shrimp on the market. North Carolina shrimp fishermen are working to promote their wild-caught shrimp to create a niche market and higher prices for their product (NCSG 2005). The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries was discussing minimum size limits for the shrimp that could be taken by trawlers, noting that foreign imports have cornered the market on small shrimp anyway (Smith 2005).

Crab fishermen along North Carolina's eastern coast have also seen an increase in competition from the global market, with an influx of imported crab meat from around the world. Many local Crab processors are unable to compete and are losing profit (NCSG 2002).

The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers (TAA) program has provided business education to shrimp fishermen in the state to assist them in recent changes in the marketing of shrimp, and has also provided some training to those who wish to exit the business (NCSG 2005).

The Neuse River which flows by Vandemere and a favorite spot for recreational fishing, is generally considered to be heavily polluted with agricultural runoff from upstream crops.⁵

Cultural attributes

The annual Pamlico County Blessing of the Fleet is held each June in Hobucken. The event features a parade of the fleet's vessels, seafood dinners, educational displays, and commercial fishing boat tours, all sponsored by the North Carolina Fisheries Association Auxiliary, Pamlico Chapter (NCFA 2002).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

Within Pamlico County, seafood processing, boat building, and government manufacturing account for most manufacturing. As much as 10% of the population of Pamlico County may be involved in the commercial fishing industry, whether directly or indirectly (PCCC nd). According to one man interviewed, fishing and farming are the only industries and sources of employment in Vandemere (McCay and Cieri 2000). The largest employers in Pamlico County are two camps, Camp Seafarer and Camp Seagull, which each employ 350 people seasonally (Pamlico County nd). Many residents are employed in farming as well, and there are a number of migrant Mexican workers who pass through the town to work on the farms or in fish packing.⁶

[Pamlico Packing Co.](#) in Vandemere, founded in 1941, is a seafood processing and distribution company specializing in North Carolina seafood, distributing to over 200 seafood wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, and hotels throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The company employs over 100 people during its peak season, who come from both within Vandemere and from beyond.⁷ Many of the company's employees are migrant Mexican laborers, some of whom are housed by the company (McCay and Cieri 2000). At its peak, Pamlico Packing operated 13 trawlers (Donald 2002), but today has far fewer (McCay and Cieri 2000). [Bayboro Dehydrating](#)

⁵ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

⁶ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

⁷ Personal communication, Pamlico Packing Co., Inc., PO Box 308, Vandemere, NC 28587, July 19, 2005

Co. in Vandemere manufactures and distributes seafood fertilizers and organic seafood compost, and recycles crab shells into crab meal used as animal feed.

Other residents commute outside of the town for work; some of the employers attract residents of Vandemere include the municipal government of the city of New Bern, hospitals in New Bern, NADAP, which is a government contractor supporting the Cherry Point Military Base, and PCS Phosphate, which is a quarry. Additionally, some residents work in forestry.⁸

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁹, 60.3% (149 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 5.7% were unemployed, none were in the Armed Forces, and 54.7% were employed.

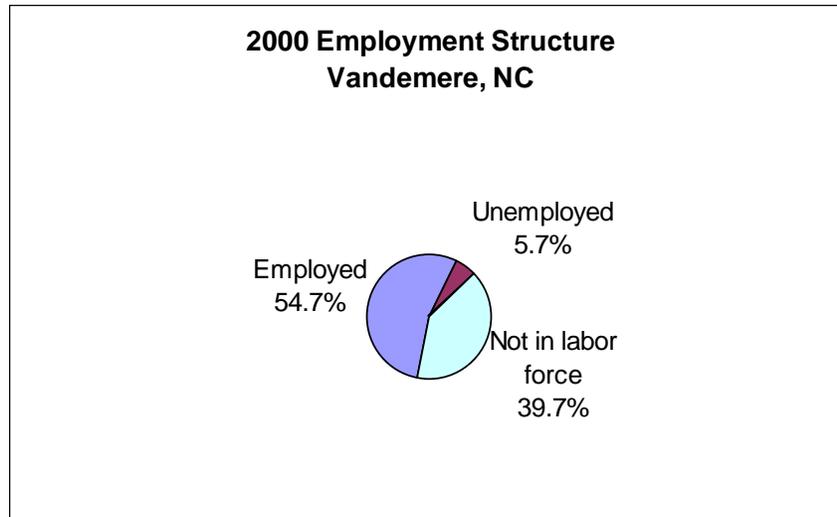


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 19 positions or 14.1% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 3 positions or 2.2% of jobs. Manufacturing (20.0%) and education, health, and social services (17.8%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Vandemere was \$32,917 (up 85.0% from \$17,788 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$13,570. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 36.4% more per year than females.

The average family in Vandemere consisted of 3.05 persons. With respect to poverty, 11.6% of families (down from 33.0% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 21.6% of individuals earned 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 2000b). In 2000, 54.2% of families in 2000 earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Vandemere had a total of 153 housing units, of which 80.4% were occupied and 71.8% were detached one unit homes. More than twenty percent (21.5%) of these homes were

⁸ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

⁹ 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.

built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 28.2% of the total housing units; 95.1% of detached units have between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$62,500. Of vacant housing units, 7.8% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units, 16.3% were renter occupied.

Government

The town of Vandemere has a Town Clerk and board of 5 Commissioners.

Fishery involvement in the government

Information on fishery involvement in government in Vandemere is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Institutional

Fishing associations

The [North Carolina Fisheries Association](#) has been supporting fishing families since 1952, with the goal “to celebrate and preserve commercial fishing families, heritage, and seafood” in North Carolina. The organization lobbies federal, state, and local legislators and supports public awareness projects. The North Carolina Fisheries Association Auxiliary has a Pamlico Chapter.

Fishing assistance centers

[Pamlico Community College](#) offers a number of job retraining and placement programs both on location at its facility in Grantsboro and for long-distance learners.

Other fishing related organizations

Information on other fishing related organizations in Vandemere is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Physical

Vandemere is located roughly 20-25 miles from Route 70, which travels to Raleigh, and Route 17, which travels to the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area of Virginia (MapQuest nd). Morehead City is 59 miles away, Washington is 57 miles away, and Raleigh is 137 miles from Vandemere. The closest airport, Craven County Regional Airport in New Bern, is 22.5 miles from Vandemere.

The fishing fleet in Vandemere generally accesses the ocean through Beaufort Inlet, and also sometimes through Oregon Inlet. The town has one public dock, primarily used for recreational vessels. Commercial fishing vessels tie up at one of the town’s two packing houses.¹⁰

¹⁰ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES¹¹

Commercial

At its peak, Pamlico Packing operated 13 trawlers (Donald 2002), but today has far fewer. There are also several independent trawlers that pack here (McCay and Cieri 2000). Pamlico Packing has space for 3-4 vessels to tie up to the dock at once. There are two seafood packing houses in Vandemere, both of which have declined considerably in the last 5-10 years.¹² There are also a number of smaller boats that bring in crabs and oysters (McCay and Cieri 2000). According to the Town Clerk, commercial fishing has all but ceased in Vandemere, with a few small fishing companies still in operation.¹³

The value of landings in Vandemere seems to have varied considerably between the years 1997-2006. While the value of landings reached a peak of \$1.5 million in 2000, in 2002 it was only \$16,000 (see Table 2). Likewise, the value of landings for home ported vessels saw a similar trend, although not quite as dramatically. The level of home port fishing in 2006 had fallen to zero, however. In 2006, the only species grouping landed in Vandemere was “other” species (probably shrimp and/or blue crab), which was also had the most valuable landings on average from 1997-2006 (see Table 1). The number of home ported vessels in Vandemere declined steadily in this ten-year time period, from six in 1997 and 1998 to zero by 2006.

Landings by Species

Table 1. Dollar value by Federally Managed Groups of landings in Vandemere

	Average from 1997-2006	2006 only
Other ¹⁴	496,655	290,227
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	104,000	0
Scallop	19,886	0
Monkfish	1,196	0
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	444	0
Bluefish	79	0

¹¹ 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.

¹² Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

¹³ Community Review Comments, David Peterson, Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, October 16, 2007

¹⁴ “Other” species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

Vessels by Year¹⁵

Table 2. All columns represent vessel permits or landings value combined between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)	Level of fishing home port (\$)	Level of fishing landed port (\$)
1997	6	4	428,997	382,163
1998	6	3	423,982	1,043,889
1999	5	1	260,754	1,516,704
2000	5	4	560,294	1,500,404
2001	5	5	147,217	67,239
2002	4	4	247,129	16,363
2003	4	4	591,332	43,929
2004	4	5	849,788	717,974
2005	2	3	CONFIDENTIAL	CONFIDENTIAL
2006	0	1	0	CONFIDENTIAL

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport

Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁶

Level of fishing home port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries associated with home ported vessels

Level of fishing landed port (\$) = Landed value of fisheries landed in location)

*Financial data is confidential if fewer than three vessels

Recreational

Recreational fishing is a billion dollar industry in North Carolina (Stoffle nd), and Vandemere provides access to both offshore fishing and fishing in Pamlico Sound. There are some visitors who travel from Raleigh and other areas to Vandemere to fish a number of species, including tarpon, red drum, croaker, and summer flounder. However, despite its popularity among anglers, (there are an average of about twenty recreational boaters/ fishermen that come to Vandemere on the weekends¹⁷) the town has yet to develop a real industry around recreational fishing.¹⁸

Subsistence

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

FUTURE

One co-owner of Pamlico Packing said that change in the industry is “inevitable” and that the next generation of fishers and processors will just need to be able to adapt to these changes (NCSG 2005). Steve Anderson, the Vandemere town clerk, believes that the community will see

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Community Review Comments, David Peterson, Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, October 16, 2007

¹⁸ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005

a shift from commercial to recreational fishing; recreational fishing does not draw significant numbers of tourists to Vandemere at the moment, but it may in the future.¹⁹

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¹⁹ Personal Communication, Steve Anderson, Vandemere Town Clerk, Vandemere Town Hall, 2nd St. Vandemere, NC 28587, July 26, 2005