

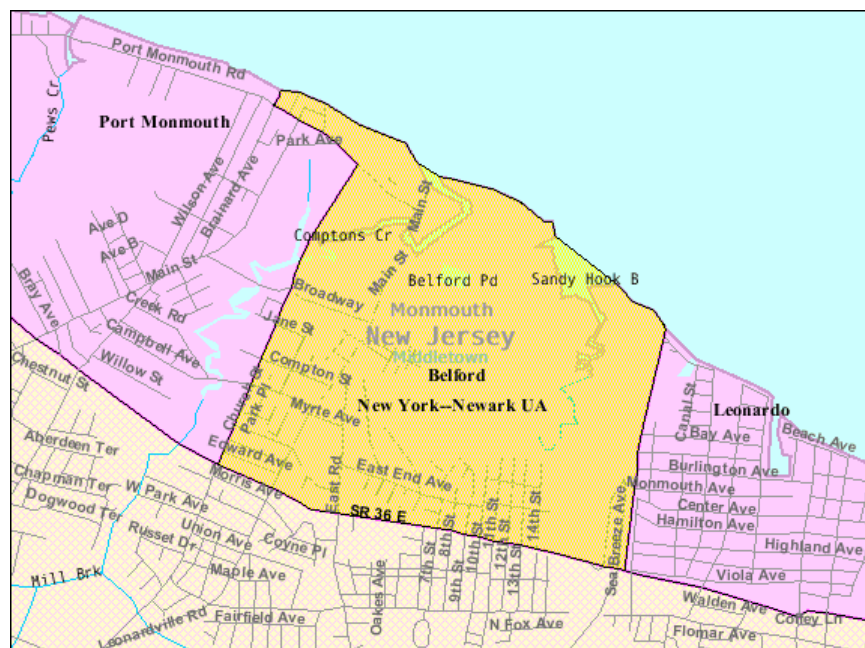
BELFORD (MIDDLETOWN), NJ¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

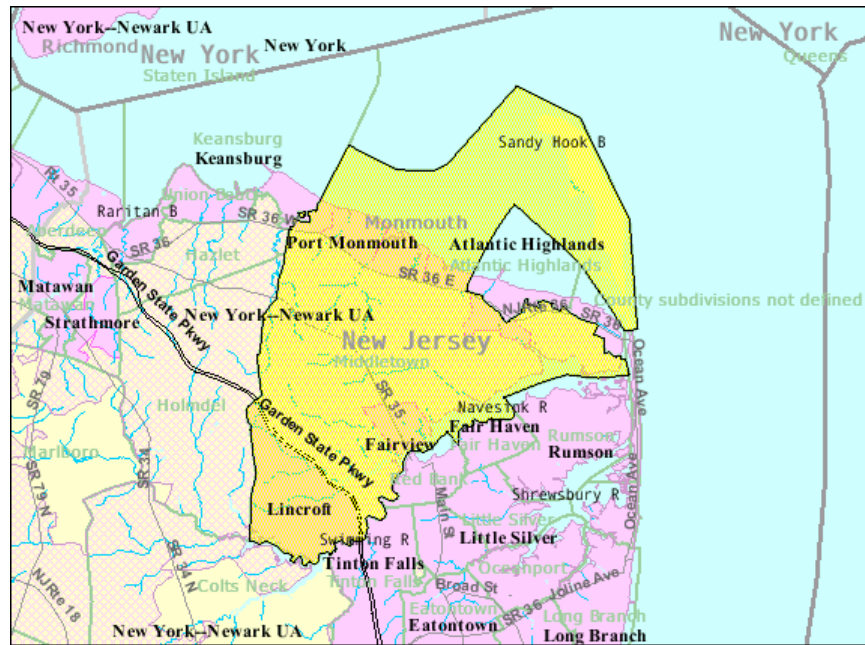
The community of Belford, New Jersey (40.42° N, 74.09°W) is located on the Bayshore in the township of Middletown, in Monmouth County. Middletown is bordered by Raritan Bay/Sandy Hook Bay in the north and the Navesink River to the southeast (McCay et al. 2005). Belford lies along Sandy Hook Bay (part of the Raritan Bay complex), and occupies 1.3 square miles of land (USGS 2008; see Maps 1 and 2) While most fishing activity takes place in Belford, some of the surrounding communities within Middletown also play a role in the fishery.



Map 1. Census reference map of the location of Belford, NJ (US Census Bureau 2000)

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.”



Map 2. Census reference map of the location of Middletown, NJ

Historical/Background information

Fishing has been a long tradition in this area; the Lenni Lenape Indians fished in the bay here before white settlers arrived and the Dutch were fishing here in the 1600s (Jones 2004). Belford is part of the township of Middletown, which was first established as a township in 1664 (McCay et al. 2005). Middletown has 14 distinct villages, of which four, North Middletown, Port Monmouth, Belford, and Leonardo, lie along the Bayshore (McCay et al. 2005). The area known today as Belford, along with what is now Port Monmouth, was originally known as Shoal Harbor. Shoal Harbor was relatively isolated until the mid-1800s when the construction of a road here as well as a nearby railroad opened this area up allowing farmers and fishermen to sell their wares in New York City and other areas (Jones 2004). Belford was officially established in 1891 when a rail station was built here, separating from Port Monmouth (Township of Middletown nd). A menhaden processing plant was built in Belford in the late 1800s, which operated until 1982 (Jones 2004); this was once the town's largest employer (Township of Middletown nd). The presence and stench of the menhaden plant helped maintain Belford as a relatively unchanged fishing port while the rest of the shore around it was subject to intense development and tourism. Belford has notoriously been home to pirates, blockaders, rum runners, and even through the 1980s, fish poachers. There is a long tradition among some Belford fishermen of not obeying fisheries regulations (Jones 2004). Some consider Belford to be the longest continuously operating fishing village on the East Coast.

Demographics³

Belford CDP

According to Census 2000 data, Belford had a total population of 1,340⁴; 1990 population data was unavailable for Belford for comparison. Of this total in 2000, 50.4% were female and 49.6% were male. The median age was 35.8 years and 69.6% of the population was 21 years or older while 11.8% were 62 or older.

The population structure for Belford indicates that this is a community of young families. The largest percentages of residents were between 30-39 and 40-49 years of age (Figure 1). There were also a large number of children between the ages of 0-9, and a significant decline in the number of residents over the age of 60. Like many fishing communities, Belford's population showed a dip in the number of residents between the ages of 20-29 and even in the 10-19 age bracket, as young people left to go to school or in search of jobs. This is more prevalent for males than for females for the 20-29 age bracket.

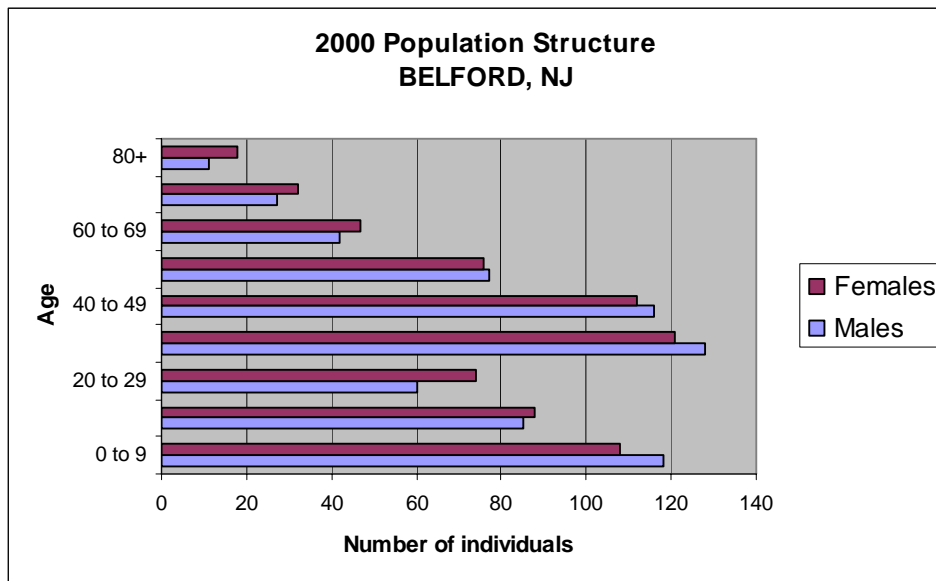


Figure 1. Population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population of Belford in 2000 was white (97.2%), with 0.3% of residents black or African American, 0.4% Native American, 0.7% Asian, and 0.1% of residents listed as Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (Figure 2). Only 4.7% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (44.0%), Italian (38.2%) German (23.6%), and Polish (8.6%). With regard to region of birth, 63.2% were born in New Jersey, 32.3% were born in a different state and 2.7% were born outside of the U.S. (including 0.4% 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 <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>; census data used are for Belford CDP

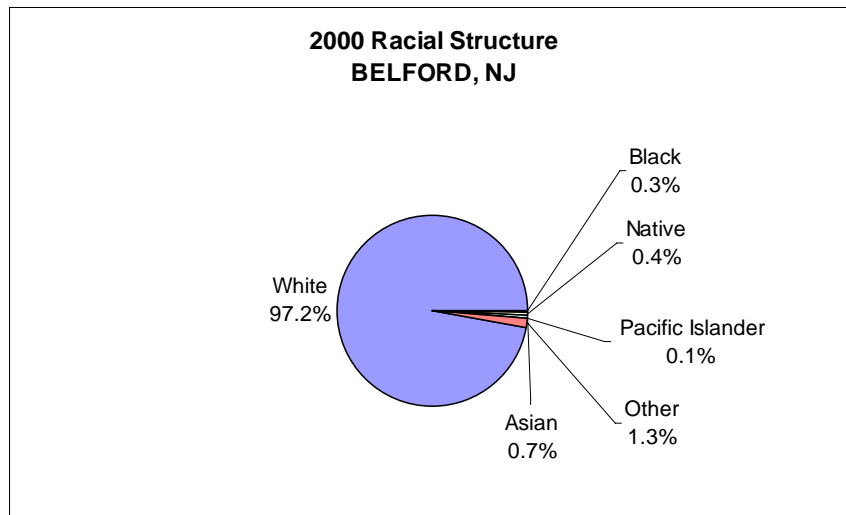


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

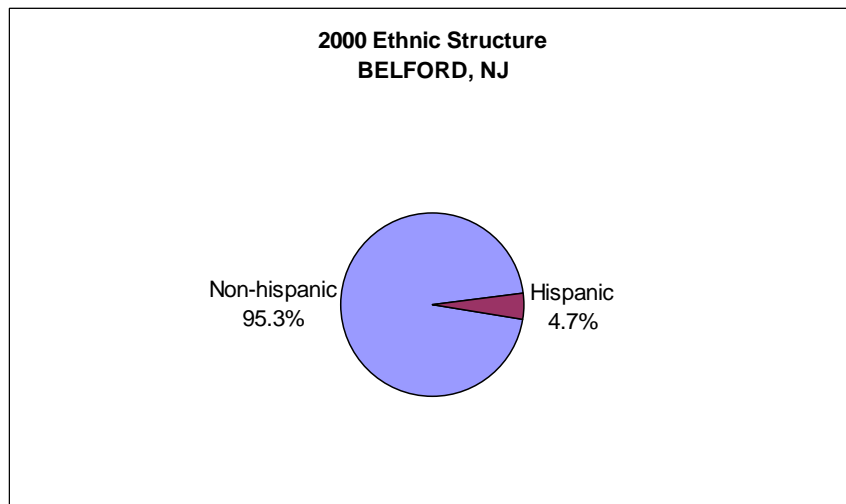


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau)

For 90.0% of the population 5 years old and higher in 2000, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 10.0% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 3.0% of the population who spoke English less than “very well.”

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.7% were high school graduates or higher and 16.8% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 1.0% did not reach ninth grade, 9.3% attended some high school but did not graduate, 41.6% completed high school, 24.3% had some college with no degree, 7.0% received their associate’s degree, 13.3% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 3.4% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Middletown

According to Census 2000 data, Middletown township had a total population of 66,327, down 2.7% from 1990. Of this total in 2000, 51.4% were female and 48.6% were male. The median age was 38.8 years and 70.8% of the population was 21 years or older while 15.0% were 62 or older.

The population structure for Middletown indicates that this is a community of young families. The largest percentages of residents are between 40-49 years and 30-39 years of age. There are also a large number of children between the ages of 0-19, and a significant decline in the number of residents over the age of 60 (Figure 4). Like many communities, Middletown’s population has a dip in the number of residents between the ages of 20-29, as young people leave to go to school or in search of jobs.

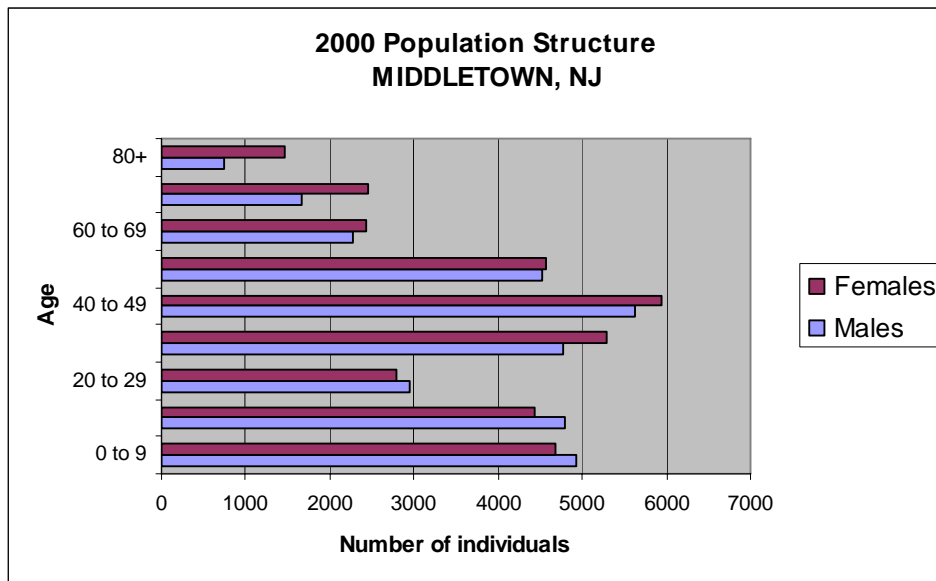


Figure 4. Population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population of Middletown in 2000 was white (94.6%), with 1.4% of residents Black or African American, 0.2% Native American, 2.9% Asian, and 0.1% of residents listed as Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 5). Only 3.4% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 6). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (32.9%), Italian (28.9%), German (17.4%), English (8.8%), and Polish (8.7%). With regard to region of birth, 58.7% were born in New Jersey, 34.1% were born in a different state and 6.4% were born outside of the U.S. (including 2.5% who were not United States citizens).

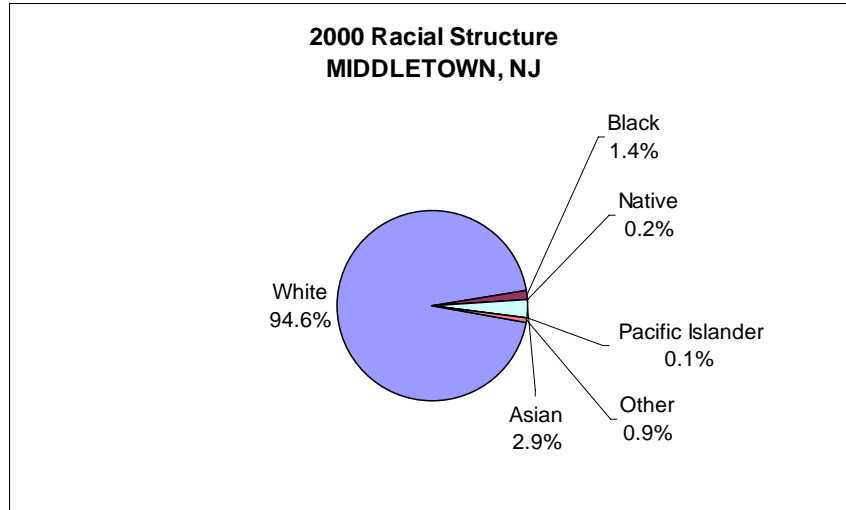


Figure 5. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

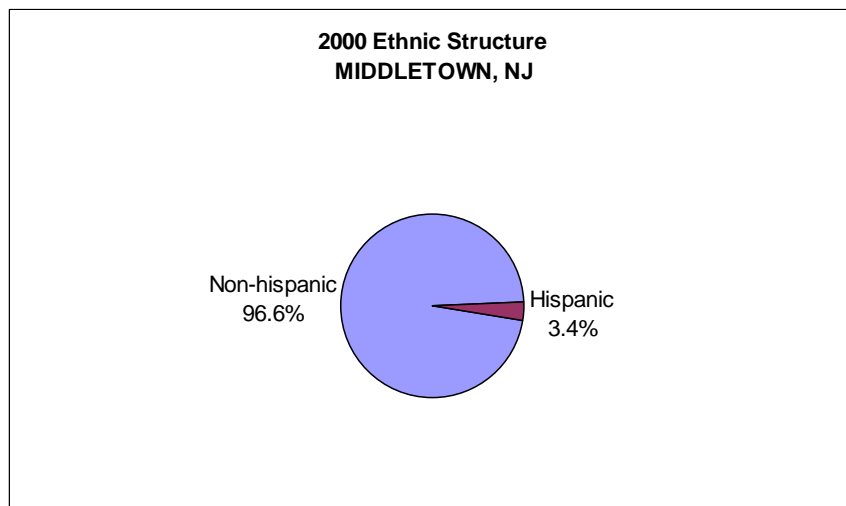


Figure 6. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 91.1% of the population 5 years old and higher in 2000, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 8.9% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 2.3% of the population who spoke English less than “very well.”

Of the population 25 years and over, 90.7% were high school graduates or higher and 35.0% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 2.7% did not reach ninth grade, 6.5% attended some high school but did not graduate, 29.2% completed high school, 19.7% had some college with no degree, 6.9% received their associate’s degree, 22.4% earned their bachelor’s degree, and 12.6% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the American Religion Data Archive (ARDA) in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Monmouth County was Catholic with 50 congregations and 289,183 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Jewish (42 with 65,000 adherents), United Methodist (47 with 12,992 adherents), and Muslim (5 with 9,455 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion increased 38.9% from 1990 to 2000 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

The promised clam depuration plant and renovation of the cooperative and other fishing infrastructure in Belford, which may be of great benefit to the fishing community here, have been continuously postponed, and fishermen are concerned that condominiums will be built on the property instead. The project was being headed by the Bayshore Economic Development Corporation, which later became surrounded with controversy and had some of its state funding cut off.

As Belford becomes more accessible to commuters to New York City and elsewhere, and as housing is increasingly scarce around the city, many people are moving to Belford and forcing up the price of homes. The resulting increase in property taxes may force some residents who have lived in Belford their entire lives to relocate (Jones 2004). Belford represents some of the last untouched waterfront real estate in New Jersey within commuting distance to New Jersey, and development pressures here are increasing (NJEDA nd).

There is frequently conflict between menhaden purse seine vessels from Belford and recreational fishermen, who criticize the vessels for catching large amounts of oysters and sport fish species along with the menhaden. For this and other reasons, there is frequently animosity between recreational and commercial fishermen (Jones 2004).

Cultural attributes

The site of the Belford Fisherman's Co-op has an interpretive exhibit about the commercial fishing industry here (NPS nd). Monmouth County wishes to promote the co-op as a regional tourist attraction (van Develde 2003). The Leonardo Party and Pleasure Boatman's Association hosts fishing tournaments out of the Leonardo State Marina.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

The largest employers in the township of Middletown are the following: AT&T (3,300+ employees; McCay et al. 2005), Food Circus Supermarkets, Inc. (1,263 employees), Brookdale Community College (737 employees), and T&M Associates (engineering - 200 employees). There are many other large employers throughout Monmouth County where Middletown residents are likely to be employed (Monmouth County nd). Additionally, many of Middletown's residents commute to work in New York City (McCay et al. 2005).

Belford CDP

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 76.4% (799 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force, of which 2.2% were unemployed, 1.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 71.3% were employed (see Figure 7).

⁵ 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.

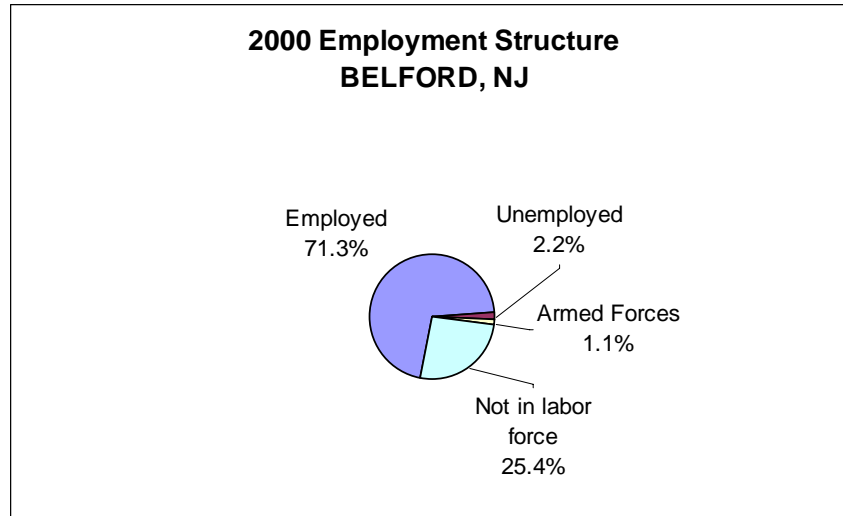


Figure 7. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, in Belford jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 17 positions or 2.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 46 positions or 6.2% of jobs. Construction (17.5%), educational, health, and social services (16.5%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.8%), and manufacturing (8.9%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Belford in 2000 was \$66,964 (1990 population data was unavailable for Belford) and per capita income was \$25,412. For full-time year round workers, men made approximately 47.9% more per year than women.

The average family in Belford consisted of 3.29 persons. With respect to poverty, 1.3% of families (1990 population data was unavailable for Belford) and 3.2% of individuals were 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, 14.4% of all families of any size earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Belford had a total of 548 housing units, of which 95.2% were occupied and 94.2% were detached one unit homes. More than one-third (35.9%) of these homes were built before 1940. No mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. were found for Belford; 96.4% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$146,000. Of vacant housing units, 4.5% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, while of occupied units 13.5% were renter occupied.

Middletown

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁶, 66.4% (33,789 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force, of which 2.2% were unemployed, 0.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 64.1% were employed (see Figure 8).

⁶ 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.

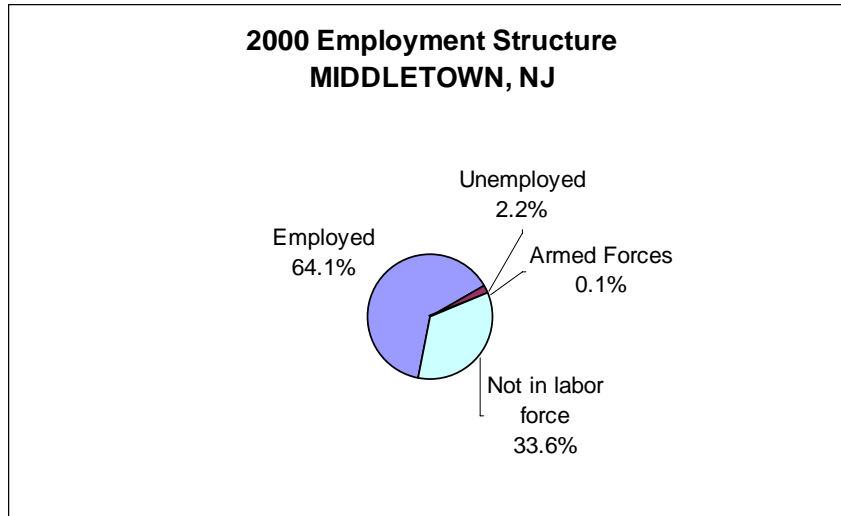


Figure 8. Employment Structure in 2000

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 95 positions or 0.3% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 1,587 positions or 4.9 % of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (18.6%), finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (13.4%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.6%), and retail (12.0%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Middletown in 2000 was \$75,566 (up 38.6% from \$54,503 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$34,196. For full-time year round workers, men made approximately 67.7% more per year than women.

The average family in Middletown consisted of 3.27 persons. With respect to poverty, 1.9% of families (similar to 1.8% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 3.1% of individuals were 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, 11.3% of all families of any size earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Middletown had a total of 23,841 housing units of which 97.5% were occupied and 80.6% were detached one unit homes. Just over ten percent (12.1%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc. accounted for 0.1% of housing; 80.0% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$210,700. Of vacant housing units, 12.3% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, while of occupied units 13.6% were renter occupied.

Governmental

Middletown is governed by a five-member township committee, which includes the mayor, who is designated for one year by the other members. Each committee member serves a three-year term. Belford is one of about a dozen villages within the township of Middletown (Township of Middletown nd).

Fisheries involvement in government

In 2006 the Town of Middletown was awarded a \$75,000 Smart Future planning grant from the state to study ways to improve the economic vitality of the fishing industry in Belford (Anon 2006).

Institutional

Fishing associations

“Belford is believed to have the oldest continually operating fishing cooperative on the east coast. It was founded in 1953... The Belford Seafood Cooperative handles members’ catches, purchases fish from non-members, arranges for the sale and transportation of the fish, and leases a lot of the docks to the fishermen” (Jones 2004).

[Garden State Seafood Association](#) in Trenton is a statewide organization of commercial fishermen and fishing companies, related businesses and individuals working in common cause to promote the interests of the commercial fishing industry and seafood consumers in New Jersey.

The [Jersey Coast Anglers Association](#) (JCAA) is an association of over 75 saltwater fishing clubs throughout the state. Founded in 1981, the purpose of the organization is to unite and represent marine sport anglers to work towards common goals. The JCAA website (www.jcaa.org) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

Fishery assistance centers

Information on fishery assistance centers in Middletown/Belford was unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related organizations

The Leonardo Party and Pleasure Boatman’s Association hosts fishing tournaments. The [NY/NJ Baykeeper](#) is working to protect and preserve the Hudson/Raritan Estuary for the benefit of both natural and human communities. The organization worked unsuccessfully in conjunction with the Belford fishermen in an attempt to prevent the construction of the New York City ferry dock in Belford.

Physical

Belford is located within the shelter of Sandy Hook (NJFishing nd). The Belford Seafood Cooperative “includes the Pirate’s Cove Restaurant and retail fish establishments, as well as a net house, the dock, and the boats. There is also a wholesale and retail lobster facility nearby called Shoal Harbor Lobster. The co-op is on Compton’s Creek, which runs directly into Raritan Bay. A relatively new wastewater facility and a brand-new ferry terminal share the creek with the fishermen.” When the New York City ferry was put into place in Compton Creek, the creek was widened and more bulkheads were put in, providing more docking space for fishing vessels (Jones 2004). The town of Middletown has at least three marinas and a boat ramp. Bayshore Waterfront Park, in Port Monmouth, has a large fishing pier and is home to the Monmouth Cove Marina (McCay et al. 2005). The Leonardo State Marina, located in the village of Leonardo, has 179 berths, a bait and tackle shop, fuel, and a boat ramp. There are both charter and party boats found here (NJDEP nd). There are bait and tackle and other marine-related businesses located along Route 36 in Belford (McCay et al. 2005).

The township of Middletown has a NJ Transit rail station and several NJ transit bus stops. Route 36 runs through Belford, and the Garden State Parkway and Route 35 run through Middletown (McCay et al. 2005). Belford is about 30 miles from Point Pleasant, 35 miles from Newark, and about 44 miles from New York City. The nearest airport is Newark Liberty International Airport. In 2002 [ferry service between Belford and Pier 11](#) in Manhattan began operation. There are 500 parking spaces available at the Belford Ferry terminal. The commute takes about 40 minutes.

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁷

Commercial

Belford is listed as one of the six major commercial fishing ports in the state of New Jersey (NJDA nd). Belford has a tradition of fishing for menhaden that dates back to the 1800s, when a processing plant was constructed here. Although the plant is no longer in existence, today menhaden are still pursued from Belford with trawlers fitted with purse seines (Jones 2004). Menhaden have experienced a resurgence recently (2006), primarily for use as bait (NJ Fishing nd). The commercial fishing activity is based out of Compton Creek. Commercial catches all go through the Belford Seafood Cooperative, which sells most of its product to Fulton Fish Market and to other markets along the East Coast. There are about 20-30 vessels associated with the Co-op, including about 14-15 draggers, about 12 lobster boats, and a number of crabbing boats. There are about 40 vessels in total located in Belford. Much of the fishing here is done less than a mile from shore; this is primarily a baymen's port. Shoal Harbor Lobster, also located in Belford, is an independent wholesaler; the lobsters sold here come from many different places (Jones 2004). They provide all lobsters sold in A&P Supermarkets in New Jersey and Long Island (Peet 2001). Shoal Harbor sells some lobsters from local vessels; they used to have their own boats but they sold them. There are 4 employees at this business.⁸

While some landings and vessel data are listed for Middletown, the majority are listed for Belford, and they have been combined in this profile. The number of vessels listed for Belford is relatively consistent, with a high of 39 in 2004 (see Table 2). The number of home ported vessels was higher in all years than the number of vessels with owners living in Belford/Middletown, indicating that some vessel owners live in other communities. On average for 1997-2006, the most valuable species grouping in Belford was summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, followed by the "other" species grouping (see Table 1). For both the 2006 landings values were higher than the 1997-2006 average landings. Most years saw few if any landings listed for Middletown.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Shoal Harbor Lobster Company, personal communication, June 28, 2006

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

BELFORD/MIDDLETOWN	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	1
Other⁹	2
Lobster	3
Largemesh Groundfish¹⁰	4
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	5
Smallmesh Groundfish¹¹	6
Surf Clams, Ocean Quahog	7
Bluefish	8
Monkfish	9
Dogfish	10
Skate	11
Scallop	12
Herring	13
Tilefish	14

(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 Year¹²

Table 1. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels(owner's city)
1997	36	20
1998	31	20
1999	31	19
2000	36	21
2001	36	21
2002	35	21
2003	37	28
2004	39	30
2005	36	27
2006	34	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 residence¹³)

⁹ "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹⁰ Largemesh groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redfish, and pollock

¹¹ Smallmesh multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

Recreational

Recreational fishing is important to the Bayshore region; there are a number of bait and tackle shops and marinas located here. However, there is little recreational fishing in Belford itself (Jones 2004). Port Monmouth has a fishing pier and marina at Bayshore Waterfront Park (McCay et al. 2005). Leonardo State Marina has a bait and tackle shop as well as both charter and party boats which dock here (NJDEP nd). The Leonardo Party and Pleasure Boatman's Association hosts fishing tournaments out of the Leonardo State Marina.

In New Jersey the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120 ft long and carry over 150 people.¹⁴

Subsistence

Information about subsistence fishing in Belford/Middletown was either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

The Middletown Master Plan recognizes the importance of Belford as a fishing community and expresses a determination to maintain this character. There is a proposed fishing center for Belford called the Bayshore Technology Center, which would include a research and development facility, a fish farming center, and a clam depuration plant. The goals of the technology center would be to create jobs, promote growth in the Bayshore's commercial fishing industry, and secure the future of the cooperative (Jones 2004). The Bayshore Development Corporation has been working with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey among others to encourage economic development in the Belford harbor area (McCay et al. 2005). There are also plans in the works to refurbish the cooperative itself (van Develde 2004). These plans have recently been stalled, but the town has just received a grant from the state to begin working on this project itself (Anon 2006). The township and county have been making major infrastructure improvements in and around Belford to roads, bridges, etc. in an effort to revitalize the community and to draw people from elsewhere (Jones 2004).

The community of Belford, despite its proximity to many large urban centers, had been relatively isolated and underdeveloped. However, recently ferry service began between Belford and New York City, and a large upscale condominium development was built, bringing an influx of people to the community. Fishermen anticipate the community will change a great deal. The town has expressed a desire to maintain fishing here, but commercial fishermen perceive this as referring to only recreational fishing activity. There is concern that the new residents won't like the sight and smell of the fisherman's co-op, and the resulting conflict will harm the fishing industry. Many fishermen believe the proposed construction of a clam depuration plant could boost the industry; currently all clams taken from the bay need to be purified to rid them of pollution, and the depuration plants in nearby communities don't have the capacity to take many clams from Belford (Jones 2004).

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¹⁴ Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, October 2, 2007

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