

Port Alberni is an especially pertinent case example. It is a paradigmatic staples-based single industry community: Events in the Alberni Valley timber industry, the economic base of that area, mirror the situation facing small communities and rural regions throughout the North American Pacific Northwest and elsewhere. And the community has been working for fifteen years to formulate and implement its own community development activities.

Port Alberni: Paradigmatic Single Industry Community

Port Alberni is located in the Alberni Valley at the head of Alberni Inlet, in south central Vancouver Island (Fig. 1). The first European settlement was established in the Alberni Valley in 1860, to prepare the way for a sawmill which began production the following year.³ The mill was built by the Anderson Company, a family owned British firm. The company had received land grants of 2,000 acres for a settlement and an additional 15,000 acres for a timber reserve.

Initially, output from the mill was shipped to Victoria where the company maintained a small office that chartered ships to transport Alberni lumber to markets around the world. However, vessels soon began loading directly at the mill. During the winter of 1861-62 fourteen ships loaded at Alberni Inlet for South America, Australia, and other parts of the world.

^{3/} The early history of Port Alberni is drawn from Drushka (1992), Peterson (1992) and Hay (1993).