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# Lewis County, Washington

40 languages

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**Lewis County** is a county in the U.S. state of Washington. As of the 2020 census, the county's population was 82,149.<sup>[1]</sup> The county seat is Chehalis,<sup>[2]</sup> and its largest city is Centralia. Lewis County comprises the Centralia, WA Micropolitan Statistical Area, which is also included in the Seattle-Tacoma, WA Combined Statistical Area.

## History

The county was created as Vancouver County on December 19, 1845, by the Provisional Government of Oregon,<sup>[3]</sup> named for George Vancouver. In 1849, the county name was changed, to honor Meriwether Lewis.<sup>[4]</sup> At the time, the county included all U.S. lands north of the Cowlitz River, including much of the Puget Sound region and British Columbia.<sup>[5]</sup> The initial establishment of a county seat was Claquato in 1862, the honor being relinquished in 1874 in favor of Chehalis.<sup>[6]</sup>

The first recognized court hearing in the Washington Territory was held in Lewis County at the John R. Jackson Courthouse, the oldest standing courthouse in Washington.<sup>[7]</sup>

The county received official recognition as a "Purple Heart County" in November 2019.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Geography and natural features

According to the United States Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 2,436 square miles (6,310 km<sup>2</sup>), of which 2,403 square miles (6,220 km<sup>2</sup>) is land and 33 square miles (85 km<sup>2</sup>) (1.4%) is water.<sup>[9]</sup> One of the world's tallest Douglas fir trees was in the town of Mineral within Lewis County, attaining a height of 120 metres (390 ft).<sup>[10]</sup>

### Geographic features

- Cascade Mountains
- Chehalis River
- Cowlitz River
- Nisqually River
- Lake Mayfield
- Riffe Lake
- Big Horn, the highest point in Lewis county
- Boisfort Peak, the highest point in the Willapa Hills
- Walup Creek Falls

### Major highways

- Interstate 5
- U.S. Route 12
- State Route 6
- State Route 7

### Adjacent counties

- Grays Harbor County – north/northwest
- Thurston County – north
- Pierce County – north/northeast
- Yakima County – east
- Skamania County – south/southeast
- Cowlitz County – south
- Wahkiakum County – south/southwest
- Pacific County – west

### National protected areas

- Gifford Pinchot National Forest (part)
- Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (part)
- Mount Rainier National Park (part)
- Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (part)

## Demographics

### 2010 census

As of the 2010 Census, there were 75,455 people, 29,743 households, and 20,104 families residing in the county.<sup>[16]</sup> The population density was 31.4 people per square mile (12.1 people/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 34,050 housing units at an average density of 14.2 units per square mile (5.5 units/km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>[17]</sup> The racial makeup of the county's population: 89.7% white, 1.4% American Indian, 0.9% Asian, 0.5% black or African American, 0.2% Pacific islander, 4.0% from other races, and 3.2% from two or more races. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 8.7% of the population.<sup>[16]</sup> In terms of ancestry, 24.1% were German, 14.9% were Irish, 12.5% were English, 7.7% were American, and 5.1% were Norwegian.<sup>[18]</sup>

Of the 29,743 households, 30.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 51.2% were married couples living together, 10.9% had a female householder with no husband present, 32.4% were non-families, and 25.7% of all households were made up of individuals. The average household size was 2.51 and the average family size was 2.97. The median age was 41.5 years.<sup>[16]</sup>

The median income for a household in the county was \$43,874 and the median income for a family was \$53,358. Males had a median income of \$43,695 versus \$31,720 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$21,695. About 10.3% of families and 13.3% of the population were below the poverty line, including 18.2% of those under age 18 and 8.6% of those age 65 or over.<sup>[19]</sup>

### 2000 census

As of the 2000 Census,<sup>[20]</sup> there were 68,600 people, 26,306 households, and 18,572 families in the county. The population density was 28 people per square mile (11 people/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 29,585 housing units at an average density of 12 units per square mile (4.6 units/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the county was 92.96% White, 0.38% Black or African American, 1.22% Native American, 0.69% Asian, 0.18% Pacific Islander, 2.55% from other races, and 2.01% from two or more races. 5.37% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race. 18.7% were of German, 11.8% United States or American, 11.1% English, 8.7% Irish and 5.7% Norwegian ancestry.

There were 26,306 households, 31.60% of which had resident children under age 18, 55.90% were married couples living together, 9.90% had a female householder with no husband present, and 29.40% were non-families. 24.00% of households were made up of individuals, and 11.20% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.57 and the average family size was 3.02.

The age distribution of the county's population: 26.50% under age 18, 8.20% from 18 to 24, 25.20% from 25 to 44, 24.50% from 45 to 64, and 15.50% at or over age 65. The median age was 38 years. For every 100 females there were 98.30 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 95.40 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$35,511, and the median income for a family was \$41,105. Males had a median income of \$35,714 versus \$23,453 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$17,082. About 10.40% of families and 14.00% of the population were below the poverty line, including 18.60% of those under age 18 and 9.40% of those age 65 or over.

## Government and politics

### National level

In modern times, Lewis County is the most conservative county in western Washington. It is significantly more Republican than adjacent counties. Unlike much of western Washington, it has a strong tinge of social conservatism. In 2000, George W. Bush received over 60% of the county's vote. In 2008 John McCain defeated Barack Obama by over eighteen percent — his only victory in a county west of the Cascades. McCain lost all the neighboring counties except Yakima.<sup>[21]</sup> Since Washington's statehood in 1889 only three Democratic presidential candidates have carried the county — William Jennings Bryan in 1896, Franklin D. Roosevelt three times in 1932, 1936 and 1940, plus Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964.<sup>[22]</sup>

All told, as of 2024, 18 of the last 19 Republican presidential tickets successfully carried Lewis County, the only exception being that of Barry Goldwater who lost to the aforementioned Johnson.

It is part of Washington's 3rd congressional district, which has been represented by Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez since 2023.

### Gubernatorial races

**Lewis County**

County



Lewis County Historic Courthouse



Location within the U.S. state of Washington



Washington's location within the U.S.  
Coordinates: 48°35′N 122°24′W﻿ / ﻿48.583°N 122.4°W﻿ / 48.583; -122.4

<b>Country</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United States
<b>State</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Washington
<b>Founded</b>	December 19, 1845
<b>Named for</b>	Meriwether Lewis
<b>Seat</b>	Chehalis
<b>Largest city</b>	Centralia
<b>Area</b>	
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Total	2,436 <span> </span> sq <span> </span> mi (6,310 <span> </span> km <sup>2</sup> )
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Land	2,403 <span> </span> sq <span> </span> mi (6,220 <span> </span> km <sup>2</sup> )
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Water	33 <span> </span> sq <span> </span> mi (90 <span> </span> km <sup>2</sup> ) 1.4%
<b>Population</b> (2020)	
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Total	82,149
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Estimate (2022)	85,370 <span><span><span>▲</span></span></span>
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Density	32.5/sq <span> </span> mi (12.5/km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Time zone</b>	UTC−8 (Pacific)
<span> </span> • <span> </span> Summer (DST)	UTC−7 (PDT)
<b>Congressional district</b>	3rd
<b>Website</b>	<span>www.lewiscountywa.gov</span> <sup>[2]</sup>

### Historical population

Census	Pop.	%±
1850	558	—
1860	384	−31.2%
1870	888	131.3%
1880	2,600	192.8%
1890	11,499	342.3%
1900	15,157	31.8%
1910	32,127	112.0%
1920	36,840	14.7%
1930	40,034	8.7%
1940	41,393	3.4%
1950	43,755	5.7%
1960	41,858	−4.3%
1970	45,467	8.6%
1980	56,025	23.2%
1990	59,358	5.9%
2000	68,600	15.6%
2010	75,455	10.0%
2020	82,149	8.9%
<b>2022 (est.)</b>	<b>85,370</b> <sup>[11]</sup>	<b>3.9%</b>

U.S. Decennial Census<sup>[12]</sup>  
1790–1960<sup>[13]</sup> 1900–1990<sup>[14]</sup>  
1990–2000<sup>[15]</sup> 2010–2020<sup>[1]</sup>

United States presidential election results for Lewis County, Washington<sup>[23][24]</sup> [hide]

In the 1970s, Democratic candidates for governor won the county, but this was something of an anomaly. The last Democratic candidate for Governor to win the county was Booth Gardner in 1984.<sup>[25]</sup>

## State representation [ edit ]

The county's government is the 20th district of the state. It is represented solely by Republicans.<sup>[26]</sup>

- Senator John Braun—Republican
- Representative Peter Abbarno—Position 1, Republican
- Representative Ed Orcutt—Position 2, Republican

## County level [ edit ]

The county's government is solely Republican.

- Lewis County Assessor: Dianne Dorey—R
- Lewis County Auditor: Larry E. Grove—R
- Lewis County Clerk: Scott Tinney—R
- Coroner Warren McLeod—R
- Lewis County Prosecuting Attorney: Jonathan Meyer—R
- Lewis County Sheriff: Rob Snaza—R
- Lewis County Treasurer: Amy Davis—R

Commissioners<sup>[27]</sup>

- Sean D. Swope, District #1—R
- Dr. Lindsey Pollock, District #2—R
- Scott J. Brummer, District #3—R

## Arts and culture [ edit ]

### Art [ edit ]

The county is home to the ARTrails of Southwest Washington initiative. The cooperative, begun in 2003, showcases local artists, art studios and galleries throughout the region, and holds an annual autumnal studio tour that incorporates events in smaller towns within Lewis County.<sup>[28][29]</sup> The Lewis County Historical Museum hosts a permanent ARTrails gallery.<sup>[30]</sup> and Centralia is home to the nexus of the event and an ARTrails-owned gallery.<sup>[31][32]</sup>

### Charitable organizations [ edit ]

The Lewis County branch of the **American Association of University Women** (AAUW) has been in existence since 1923. The organization has held an annual *used book* sale since 1979. The proceeds help to fund scholarships, day camps, film festivals, and career days for young women in middle and high school.<sup>[33]</sup>

## Education [ edit ]

The county is home to **Centralia College**, founded in 1925. Located in the middle of Centralia, it is the oldest continuously operating community college in the state.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Parks and recreation [ edit ]

As of 2022, Lewis County directly oversees 164.0 acres (66.4 ha) of parks with a department budget of \$65,000. A proposal was introduced in 2020 that would transfer 180.0 acres (72.8 ha) of Washington state parks land to Lewis County. The undeveloped parcel is situated alongside the **Cowlitz River** near Packwood.<sup>[35]</sup>

The county honors the travels of pioneer **Ezra Meeker** on the **Oregon Trail** with several historical markers throughout the region. Markers are located in Centralia, Chehalis, **Claquato**, and Toledo.<sup>[36]</sup>

The Lewis County Historic Bike Ride is an annual, mid-spring fundraising event that began as a county-held historic celebration in the early 1990s. The ride starts in **Mary's Corner** and through a variety of course options, participants can travel to several small towns and communities in the county, including Evaline, Salkum, Saint Urban, and Vader, and can bike through Centralia and Chehalis. The route is often used as a warm-up by riders of the **Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic** (STP) due to the similarities in elevation gains and topography.<sup>[37]</sup>

## Communities [ edit ]

### Cities [ edit ]

- Centralia
- Chehalis (county seat)
- Morton
- Mossyrock
- Napavine
- Toledo
- Vader
- Winlock

### Town [ edit ]

- Pe Ell

### Census-designated places [ edit ]

- Fords Prairie
- Mineral
- Onalaska
- Packwood

### Unincorporated communities [ edit ]

- Adna
- Alpha
- Boisfort
- Bunker
- Ceres
- Cinebar
- Curtis
- Doty
- Dryad
- Ethel
- Evaline
- Galvin
- Glenoma
- Harmony
- Klaber
- Kosmos (former - now under Riffe Lake)
- Lacamas
- Littell
- Mary's Corner
- Nesika (former, now inundated by S edge of Riffe Lake)
- Newaukum
- Randle
- Riffe (former, now inundated by Riffe Lake)
- Ruth
- Saint Urban
- Salkum
- Silver Creek
- Wildwood

## See also [ edit ]

- National Register of Historic Places listings in Lewis County, Washington
- Lewis County Transit

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- ↑  <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup> "DP-1 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 Demographic Profile Data". United States Census Bureau. Archived
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- ↑ "DP03 SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS – 2006–2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates". United States Census Bureau. Archived from the original on February 13, 2020. Retrieved March 6, 2016.
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- ↑ Menendez, Albert J.: *The Geography of Presidential Elections in the United States, 1868–2004*, pp. 332–334 ISBN 0786422173
- ↑ Leip, David, "Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections". *uselectionatlas.org*. Retrieved April 6, 2018.
- ↑ The leading "other" candidate, *Progressive Theodore Roosevelt*, received 2,032 votes, while Socialist candidate Eugene Debs received 1,637 votes, Prohibition candidate Eugene Chafin received 410 votes, and Socialist Labor candidate Arthur Reimer received 36 votes.
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Year		Republican	Democratic	Third party		
	No. of	% of	No. of	% of	No. of	% of
2020	29,391	<b>64.87%</b>	14,520	32.05%	1,398	3.09%
2016	21,992	<b>62.48%</b>	9,654	27.43%	3,553	10.09%
2012	20,452	<b>59.59%</b>	12,664	36.90%	1,204	3.51%
2008	20,278	<b>57.99%</b>	13,624	38.96%	1,067	3.05%
2004	21,042	<b>64.89%</b>	10,726	33.08%	660	2.04%
2000	18,565	<b>61.91%</b>	9,891	32.99%	1,530	5.10%
1996	13,238	<b>47.89%</b>	10,331	37.37%	4,075	14.74%
1992	12,316	<b>45.33%</b>	7,810	28.75%	7,042	25.92%
1988	14,184	<b>61.04%</b>	8,629	37.13%	425	1.83%
1984	15,846	<b>66.22%</b>	7,634	31.90%	451	1.88%
1980	13,636	<b>59.94%</b>	6,962	30.60%	2,151	9.46%
1976	10,933	<b>51.65%</b>	9,026	42.64%	1,208	5.71%
1972	12,071	<b>58.64%</b>	6,946	33.74%	1,568	7.62%
1968	8,779	<b>47.03%</b>	8,444	45.23%	1,445	7.74%
1964	6,933	36.45%	12,070	<b>63.45%</b>	19	0.10%
1960	11,012	<b>56.53%</b>	8,411	43.18%	57	0.29%
1956	11,949	<b>60.69%</b>	7,714	39.18%	25	0.13%
1952	12,287	<b>62.78%</b>	7,115	36.35%	169	0.86%
1948	9,047	<b>50.39%</b>	8,394	46.76%	512	2.85%
1944	8,896	<b>53.19%</b>	7,706	46.07%	124	0.74%
1940	9,228	49.28%	9,280	<b>49.56%</b>	218	1.16%
1936	5,885	35.23%	9,619	<b>57.58%</b>	1,201	7.19%
1932	4,647	29.80%	8,454	<b>54.21%</b>	2,493	15.99%
1928	9,253	<b>71.12%</b>	3,591	27.60%	166	1.28%
1924	6,973	<b>58.07%</b>	1,544	12.86%	3,490	29.07%
1920	6,160	<b>54.59%</b>	2,212	19.60%	2,913	25.81%
1916	5,186	<b>48.92%</b>	4,318	40.73%	1,097	10.35%
1912	3,200	<b>32.70%</b>	2,471	25.25%	4,115	42.05%
1908	3,170	<b>60.45%</b>	1,412	26.93%	662	12.62%
1904	3,098	<b>69.93%</b>	896	20.23%	436	9.84%
1900	1,907	<b>55.40%</b>	1,382	40.15%	153	4.45%
1896	1,594	48.35%	1,654	<b>50.17%</b>	49	1.49%
1892	1,350	<b>41.49%</b>	1,014	31.16%	890	27.35%

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## Further reading

 [ edit ]

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- Early history of Lewis County  on Drizzle.com

## External links

 [ edit ]

- Lewis County Official Website

Places adjacent to Lewis County, Washington	<span>[</span> show <span>]</span>
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<div><span><span></span></span> V<span>·</span>T<span>·</span>E</div>	<b>State of Washington</b> <span>[</span> show <span>]</span>
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