



Looking at Algoma in 2001: A Population Demographics Perspective

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This report is based on *Statistics Canada. 2002. 2001 Community Profiles. Released June 27, 2002. Last modified: 2005-11-30. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 93F0053XIE.*

The Algoma District covers 48,737 square kilometres on the eastern shore of Lake Superior, the north shore of the St. Mary's River and along the northern shore of Lake Huron. The area is known for its natural beauty and natural resources. To understand the dynamics of Algoma's population, one should understand the history of the area's economy.

As with other areas in Northern Ontario, forestry, mining, and hydropower were historically the principal economic activities in Algoma. Mining (gold, uranium, and iron) was briefly an important industry but is no longer as large a part of the economy (although smaller gold mining operations continue); mining does not provide as many jobs as in the past. Agriculture is limited to a small part of the area and is mainly beef and dairy with some specialty products such as maple syrups. Forest harvesting and forest product manufacturing continue to be important, but more mills close than open year to year.

Healthcare, education, government services, and tourism are increasingly important parts of the economy. Sault Ste Marie is the main industrial area, with a steel mill, paper mill and others, but smaller industrial sites occur throughout the district. The majority of these industries are natural resource-based. As the economy across North America becomes concentrated in suburbs close to large urban areas, rural areas are losing population to larger cities (For example, Toronto is said to 'add another Sudbury' to its population every year.) The 2001 census data shows that, at least as of that time, Algoma followed that broad trend of out-migration.



Population Trends

The total population of Algoma was 118,567 according to the 2001 census. Sault Ste. Marie accounts for 63% of the population of Algoma; Elliot Lake, 10% (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Algoma Communities as a Percentage of Total Algoma Population for 2001*

Community	Population Count (2001)	Percentage of Algoma Population (2001)
ALGOMA	118,567	100%
North Algoma		
Township of Michipicoten	3,668	3.1%
Township of Dubreuilville	967	0.8%
Township of White River	993	0.8%
Township of Hornepayne	1,362	1.1%
Sault Ste. Marie and Area		
City of Sault Ste. Marie	74,566	62.8%
Prince Township	1,010	0.9%
Central Algoma		
Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional	1,452	1.2%
Laird Township	1,021	0.9%
Township of Plummer Additional	671	0.6%
Township of Tarbutt and Tarbutt Additional	466	0.4%
Township of Johnson	658	0.5%
Township of Jocelyn	298	0.3%
Township of Hilton	258	0.2%
Village of Hilton Beach	174	0.2%
Township of St. Joseph	1,201	1.0%
Town of Bruce Mines	627	0.5%
Town of Thessalon	1,386	1.2%
North Shore		
Municipality of Huron Shores	1,794	1.5%
Town of Blind River	3,969	3.3%
Township of The North Shore	544	0.5%
Township of Shedden (Spanish)	816	0.7%
City of Elliot Lake	11,956	10.1%
Unorganized Townships		
Algoma, Unorganized, North Part	6,114	5.2%
Algoma, Unorganized, Southeast Part	0	0
*Indian Reserves not included in this analysis.		
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Community Profiles		

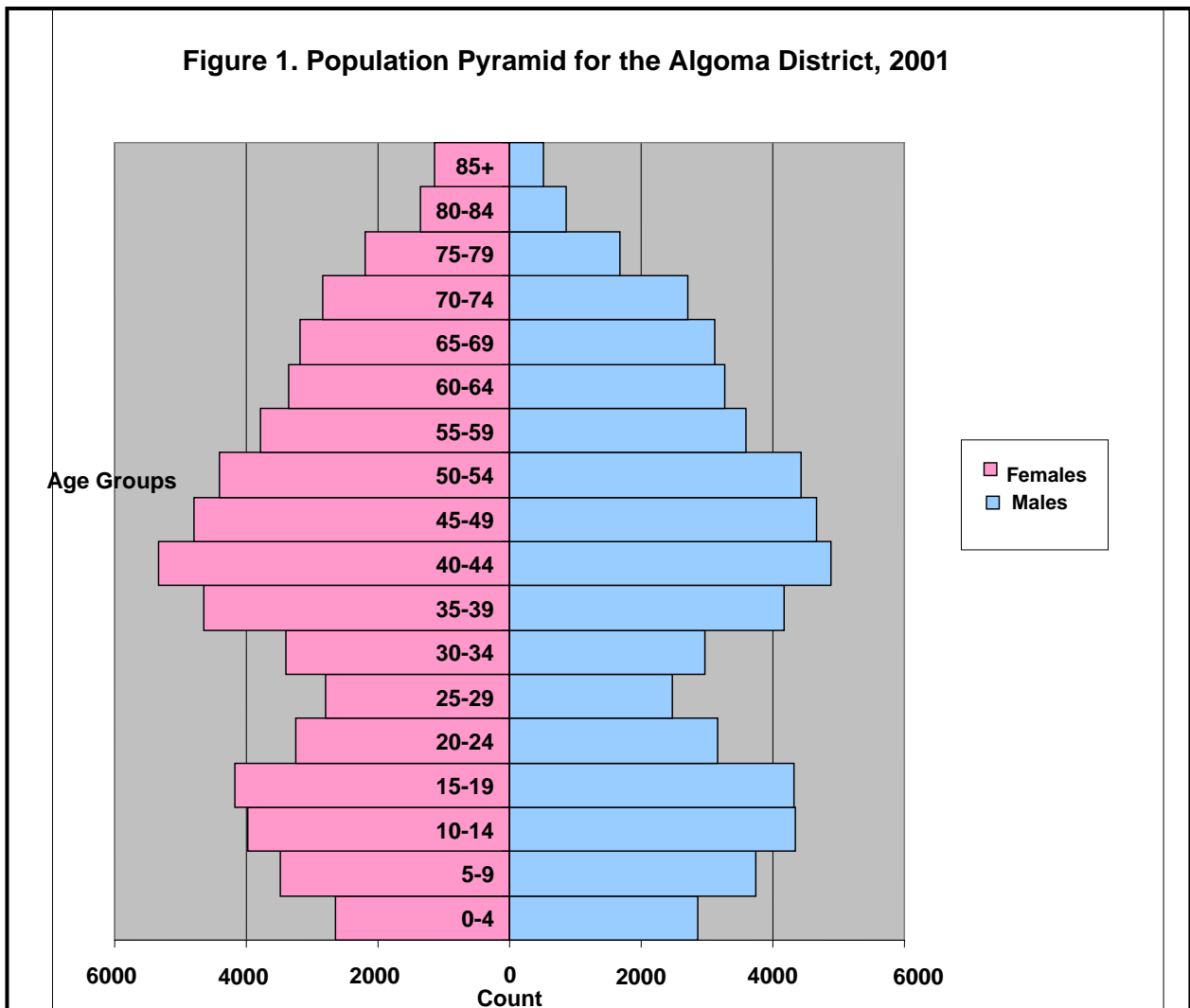
The remainder of the population is dispersed in a number of small communities and rural areas across the district (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Algoma's Population by Geographic Area for 2001 and 1996 and the Percentage of Change			
Community	2001	1996	% Change
ALGOMA	118,567	125,455	-5.5
North Algoma			
Township of Michipicoten	3,668	4,145	-11.5
Township of Dubreuilville	967	990	-2.3
Township of White River	993	1,022	-2.8
Township of Hornepayne	1,362	1,480	-8.0
Sault Ste. Marie and Area			
City of Sault Ste. Marie	74,566	80,054	-6.9
Prince Township	1,010	971	+4.0
Central Algoma			
Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional	1,452	1,521	-4.5
Laird Township	1,021	1,073	-4.8
Township of Plummer Additional	671	693	-3.2
Township of Tarbutt and Tarbutt Additional	466	442	+5.4
Township of Johnson	658	729	-9.7
Township of Jocelyn	298	294	+1.4
Township of Hilton	258	255	+1.2
Village of Hilton Beach	174	213	-18.3
Township of St. Joseph	1,201	1,235	-2.8
Town of Bruce Mines	627	653	-4.0
Town of Thessalon	1,386	1,485	-6.7
North Shore			
Municipality of Huron Shores	1,794	1,877	-4.4
Town of Blind River	3,969	4,374	-9.3
Township of The North Shore	544	678	-19.8
Township of Shedden	816	899	-9.2
City of Elliot Lake	11,956	13,588	-12.0
Unorganized Townships			
Algoma, Unorganized, North Part	6,114	6,161	-0.8
Algoma, Unorganized, Southeast Part	0	0	0
Indian Reserves			
Garden River 14	859	N/A	-
Goulais Bay 15A	N/A	N/A	-
Gros Cap 49	61	N/A	-
Missanabie 62	0	0	-
Mississagi River 8	360	328	9.8
Rankin Location 15D	N/A	N/A	-
Sagamok	870	N/A	-
Serpent River 7	323	295	9.5
Thessalon 12	123	N/A	-

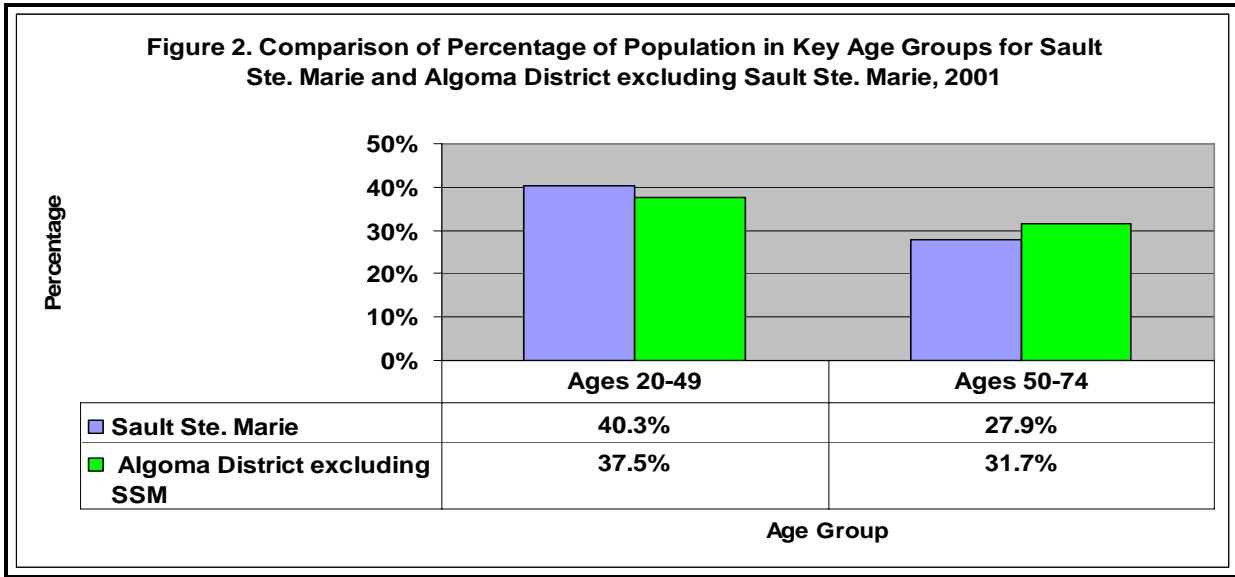
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Community Profiles

The population of northern Ontario declined slowly since the early 1980s, with a more rapid decline through the 1990s. The Algoma district followed this pattern. The population in the Algoma district fell from 125,455 in the 1996 census to 118,567 in the 2001 census, a 5.5% decline. All but six of the communities in the Algoma district (including two Indian reserves) declined in population from the 1996 to 2001 census, some with double-digit percentage declines (Table 2).

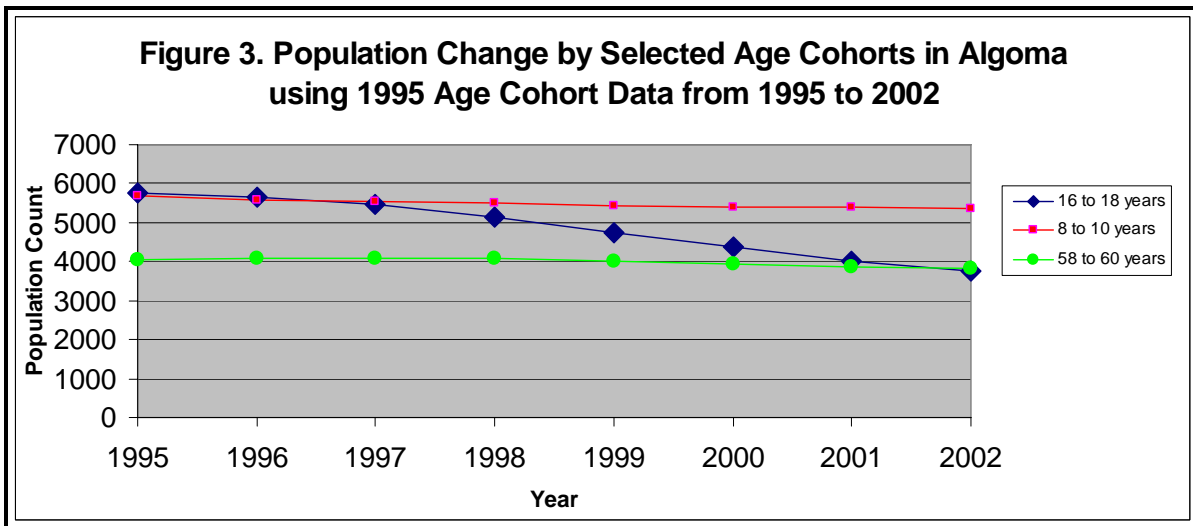
Algoma District had relatively fewer young adults compared to older adults (Figure 1).



This trend is even more pronounced outside of the Sault Ste. Marie municipality (Figure 2).



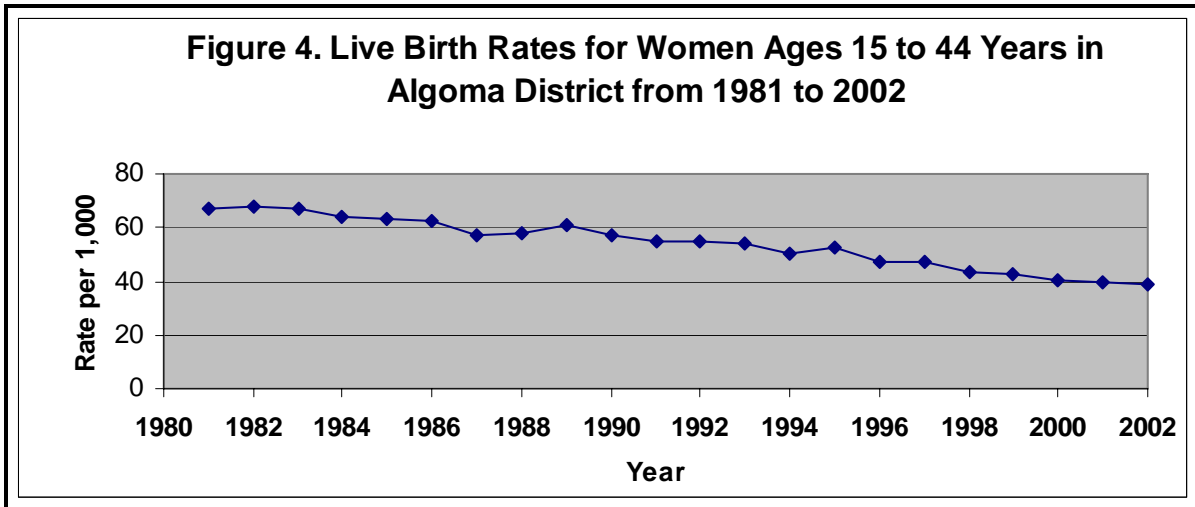
The out-migration of young adults is especially evident in the decline in population cohorts. For example, the population of people aged 16 to 18 in 1995 (and thus 17 to 19 in 1996, etc.) started out about the same as the number of people 8 to 10 in 1995 but declined year by year until it was about the same size as the cohort that was 65 to 67 years old in 2002 (Figure 3). Note that the size of the younger and older cohorts remained about the same over this period.



Business organizations around Sault Ste. Marie report a recent up tick in economic activity in 2006, with an associated increase in employment. Recently released information from the 2006 census confirms that Sault Ste. Marie population did increase by 0.5% from the 2001 to the 2006 census, but other areas in the Algoma district continued to lose population (Appendix 1). We look forward to the upcoming release of detailed data from the 2006 census to see if the population decline indeed may be turning around with an attendant increase in younger people moving back into the Sault Ste. Marie area.

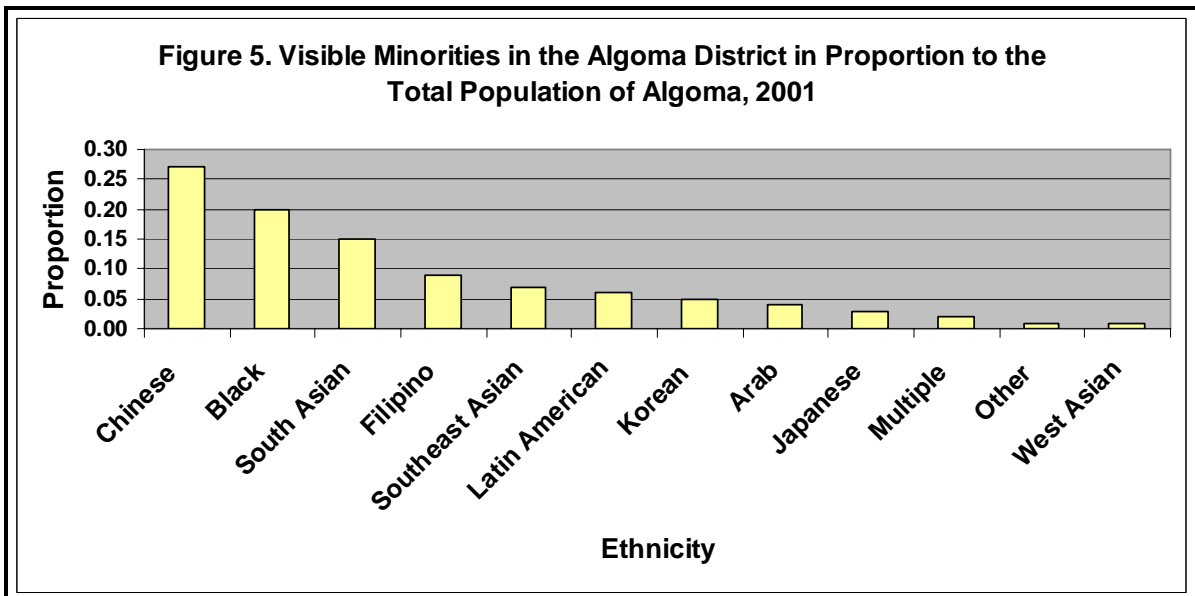
Birth Rates in Algoma

The birth rates in Algoma declined over the time period from 1995 to 2001 (Figure 4). A declining birth rate coupled with out-migration of young adults (which account for the majority of births) can result in a steadily declining population.



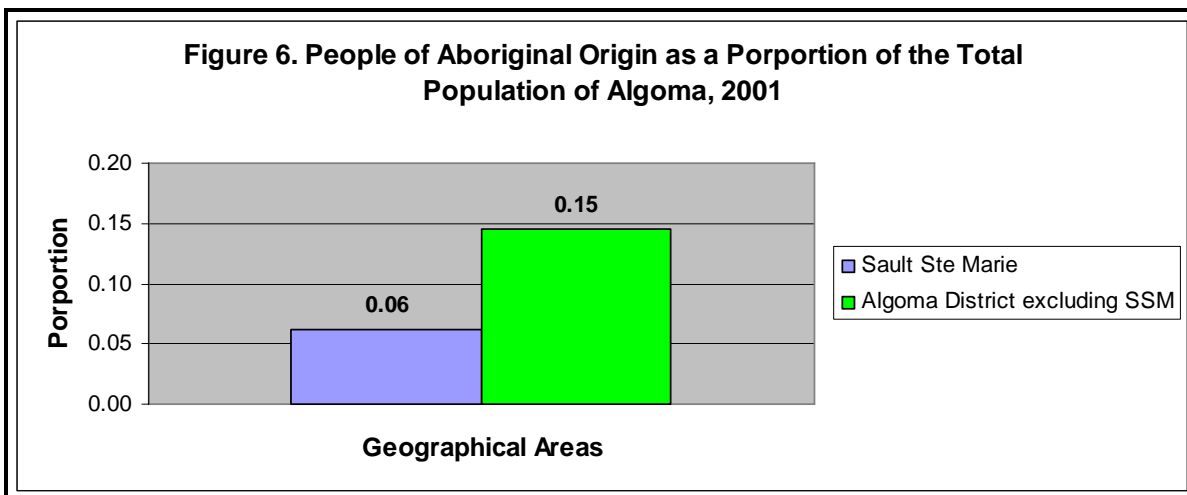
Racial/Ethnic Makeup

About 1% of the population of the Algoma district reported to be in a visible minority (not-including aboriginal) in 2001 with the largest groups being Chinese, Black, and South Asian (Figure 5).



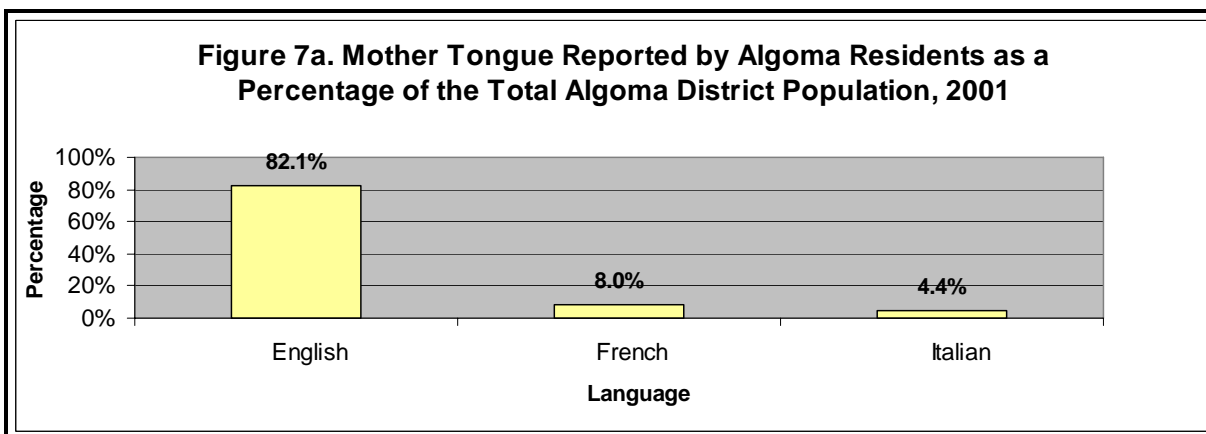
People who identify themselves as aboriginal ancestry made up about 9% of the population of the Algoma district. This percentage was 6% in the Sault; 15% in the remainder of the district (Figure 6). North American Indian ancestry accounted for the majority of this population (61 and 55 percent in Sault Ste Marie and the rest of Algoma, respectively);

Métis ancestry accounted for 39 and 40 percent in Sault Ste Marie and the rest of Algoma, respectively.



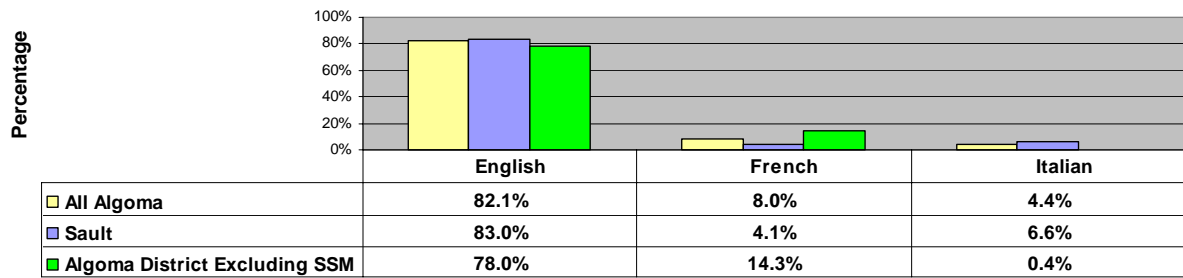
Languages

Eighty-two percent of the 2001 population of the Algoma district reported English as their 'mother tongue,' with 84% in Sault Ste Marie and 78% in the rest of Algoma (Figure 7a).



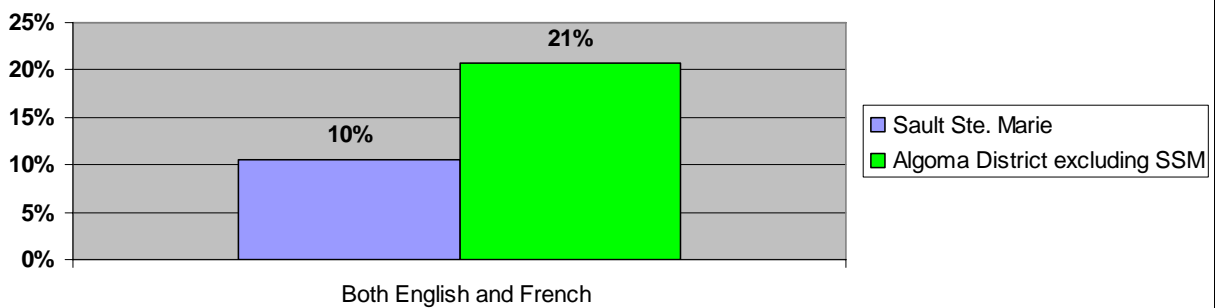
Eight percent of residents across the Algoma District reported French as their mother tongue, with 4% in Sault Ste. Marie and 14% in the rest of Algoma (Figure 7b). Within Sault Ste. Marie, 7% reported Italian as their mother tongue. German and Finnish were the only other languages for which more than 1% of the population reported as their mother tongue (with 1% each for these two languages across the Algoma district).

Figure 7b. Mother Tongue Reported by Algoma Residents as a Percentage of the Total Population of the Algoma District by Geographical Areas, 2001



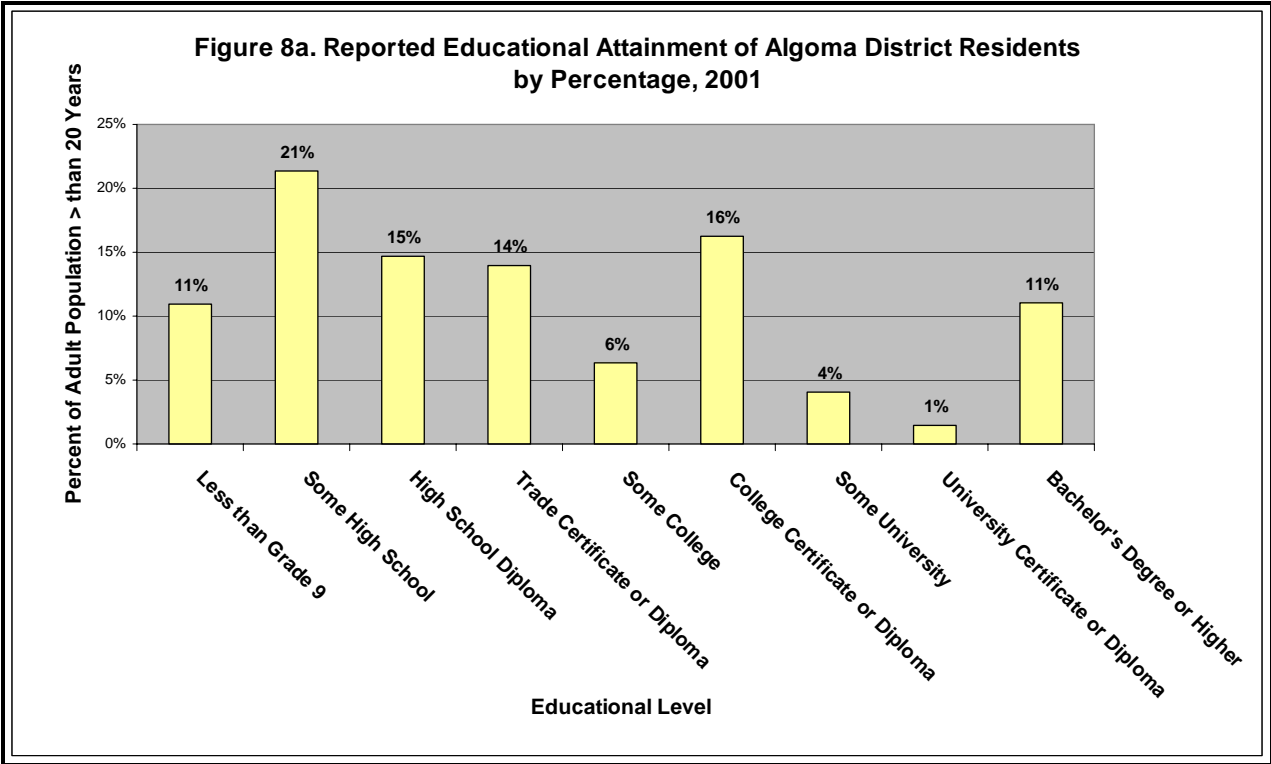
Ten percent of the residents of Sault Ste. Marie and 21% of the rest of Algoma residents reported knowledge of French and English (Figure 7c). Nearly two percent of the district residents not including Sault Ste Marie, reported knowledge of French only; one-tenth of 1% of Sault residents reported knowledge of French only.

Figure 7c. Algoma Residents with Knowledge of Both French and English by Algoma Residents, 2001

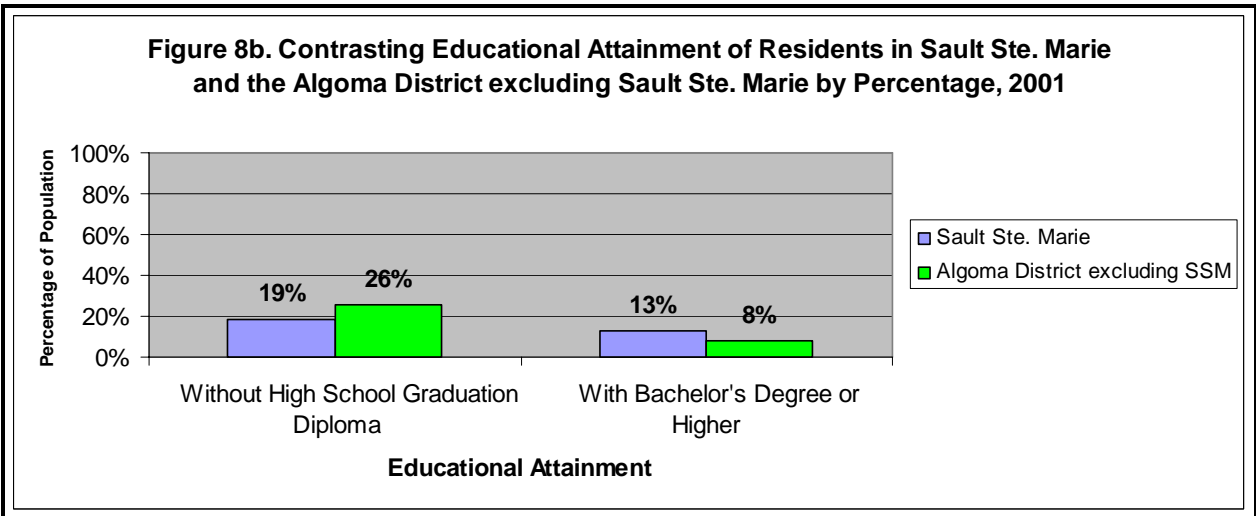


Educational Attainment

Across the district, nearly 11% of the 2001 residents reported a less-than grade 9 education (Figure 8a). Fifteen percent reported a high school diploma, 16% a college certificate or diploma and 11% a bachelor's degree or higher.



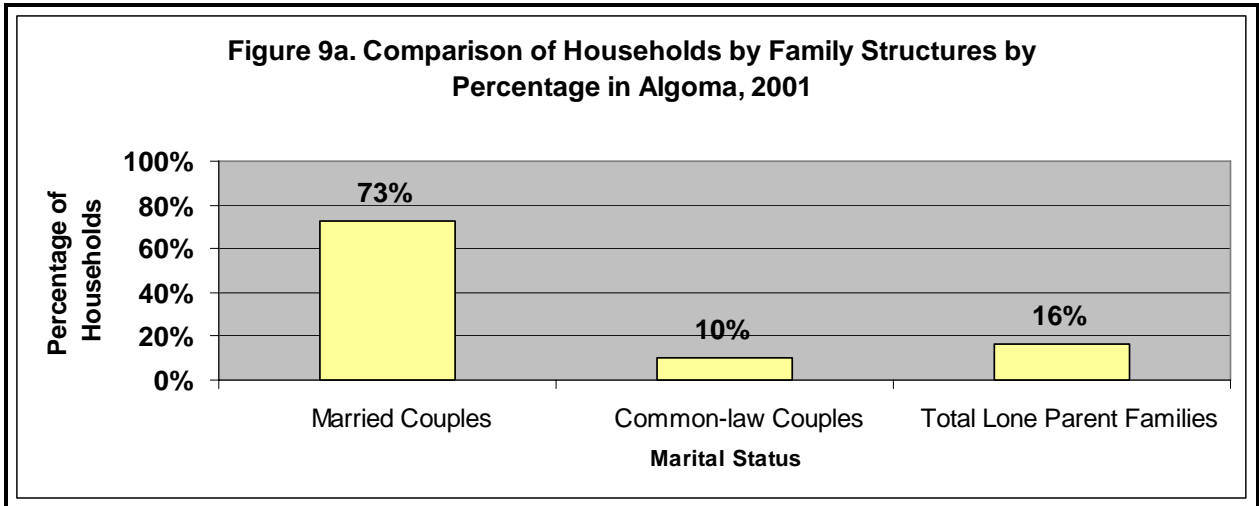
The proportions across educational attainment categories are similar in Sault Ste. Marie and the rest of Algoma except for completion of high school and bachelor's degree or higher. Nearly 26% of the district residents excluding Sault Ste. Marie, completed grade 9 but did not complete high school compared to 19% in Sault Ste. Marie and nearly 13% of Sault Ste. Marie residents reported bachelor's degree or higher compared to 8% of district residents (Figure 8b).



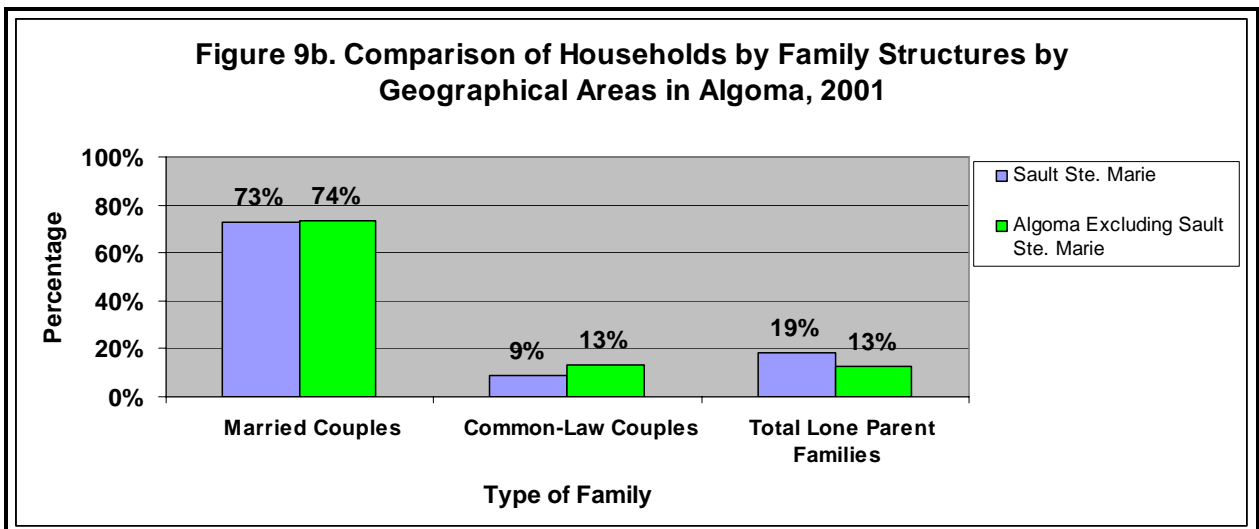
These data are not available by age group. According to some workers in the school district offices, the low level of educational attainment may represent an older generation for which education past grade 8 was considered a luxury. The level of educational attainment among residents less than 45 years old may be much higher. The 2006 census may reflect this expected increase in educational attainment.

Marital Status/Family Structure

A total of 35,355 families in private households were reported in the 2001 census for the Algoma district. (Sixty-two percent of those households were in Sault Ste. Marie.) The majority of households were comprised of married couples (73%) with 10% of households comprised of a couple in common-law status and 16% headed by a single parent (Figure 9a).



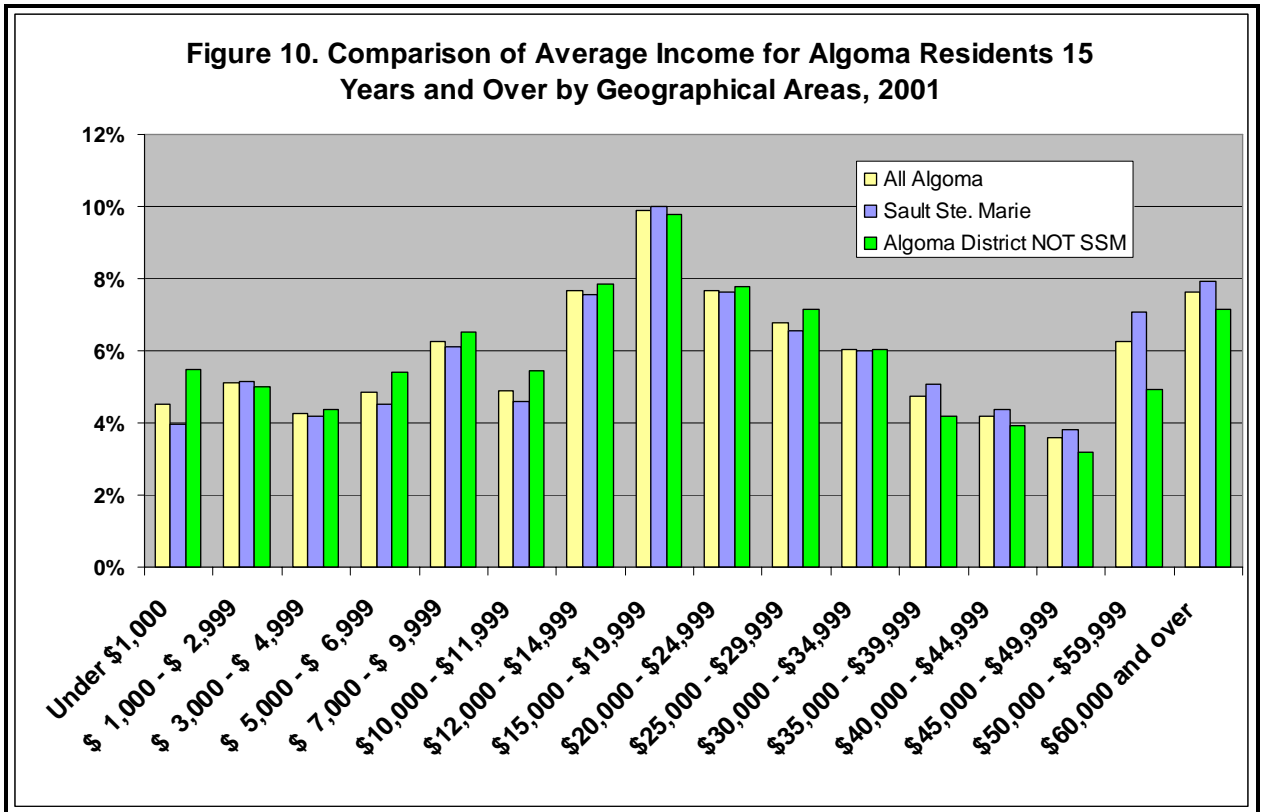
Common-law and single-parent families accounted for a slightly greater proportion of households outside of Sault Ste. Marie (Figure 9b).



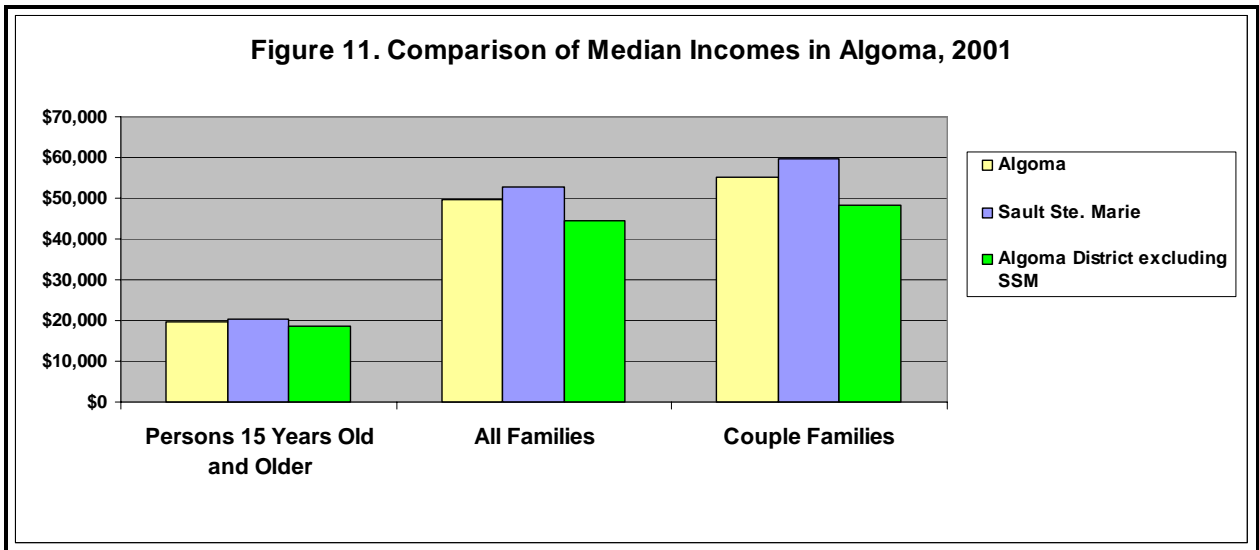
Eighty percent of single-parent households across the Algoma district were headed by a female (the value is similar in Sault Ste. Marie and in the rest of the district – 80% in Sault Ste. Marie, 78% in the rest of the district).

Income

The average income for persons over 15 years of age for all of the Algoma District in 2001 was \$26,072. It was \$27,070 in Sault Ste. Marie; \$24,320 in the district outside of Sault Ste. Marie. The distribution of income by categories shows that overall, incomes tend to be slightly greater in the city of Sault Ste. Marie than in the rest of the district (Figure 10).



Half of the individual incomes in the Algoma district were reported to be in the \$15,000 to \$19,999 range or below. This 'median income category' was similarly \$15,000 to \$19,999 for the district outside Sault Ste. Marie, but \$20,000 to \$24,999 for the city of Sault Ste Marie. Income varied by family status, with married couple families reporting greater family incomes than common-law or single-head-of-household families (Figure 11).



Note that families headed by a single woman reported about 40% of the income of a married couple family.

2006 Census Data

At the time this report was written, 2006 census data was beginning to become available. Total populations were released in spring 2007, with more detailed information scheduled for release beginning summer 2007. We will add those data to this report as they become available.

Appendix 1

Summary of Algoma's Population by Geographic Area for 2006 and 2001 and the Percentage of Change			
Community	2006	2001	% Change
ALGOMA	117,461	118,567	-0.9%
North Algoma			
Township of Michipicoten	3,204	3,668	-12.6%
Township of Dubreuilville	773	967	-20.1%
Township of White River	841	993	-15.3%
Township of Hornepayne	1,209	1,362	-11.2%
Sault Ste. Marie and Area			
City of Sault Ste. Marie	74,948	74,566	+0.5%
Prince Township	971	1,010	-3.9%
Central Algoma			
Township of Macdonald, Meredith & Aberdeen Additional	1,550	1,452	+6.7%
Laird Township		1,021	+5.6%
Township of Plummer Additional	625	671	-6.9%
Township of Tarbutt and Tarbutt Additional	388	466	-16.7%
Township of Johnson	701	658	+6.5%
Township of Jocelyn	277	298	-7.0%
Township of Hilton	243	258	-5.8%
Village of Hilton Beach	172	174	-1.1%
Township of St. Joseph	1,129	1,201	-6.0%
Town of Bruce Mines	584	627	-6.9%
Town of Thessalon	1,312	1,386	-5.3%
North Shore			
Municipality of Huron Shores	1,696	1,794	-5.5%
Town of Blind River	3,780	3,969	-4.8%
Township of The North Shore	549	544	+0.9%
Township of Shedden	728	816	-10.8%
City of Elliot Lake	11,549	11,956	-3.4%
Unorganized Townships			
Algoma, Unorganized, North Part	5,717	6,114	-6.5%
Algoma, Unorganized, Southeast Part	0	0	-
Indian Reserves			
Garden River 14	985	859	-14.7%
Goulais Bay 15A	82	N/A	-
Gros Cap 49	54	61	-11.5%
Missanabie 62	0	0	-
Mississagi River 8	414	360	-15.0%
Rankin Location 15D	566	N/A	-
Sagamok	884	870	1.6%
Serpent River 7	340	323	5.3%
Thessalon 12	112	123	-8.9%

Source: Statistics Canada