

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Society: Delaware Munsee (alternate Munsie, Minsi, Delaware, or Ontario Munsee) (reference 12)

Language: Munsee

Language Family: Algic

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

639-2

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

40/-75

1.4 Brief history:

Timeline of Munsee according to Grumet.

11,500 ya – First people arrive in northeast North America

10,000 ya – Begin hunting small deer but focus switches to more intensive gathering because warming temperatures gave more opportunities in forest.

3,000 ya – Pottery developed

1,000 ya – Bows and arrows become present in archaeological sites.

500 ya – Europeans sail to North American shores

1524 AD – Giovanni da Verrazano writes from known account to mention Indians in this area.

1607 AD – Indian population in Munsee as large as 15,000

1616 AD – Large scale disease breaks out among Munsee

1634 AD – Indian population in Munsee declines to somewhere around 6,000

1658 AD – Malaria is reported

1661 AD – Smallpox strike

1664 AD – Number of Munsee reduced to less than 3,000

1701 AD – Population low at 1,000

1714 AD – Munsee sell last of their major landholdings east of the Delaware River

1727 AD – The name Munsee first begins to be used to refer to this people group

1801 AD – Munsees at Edgepillock agree to sell their Brotherton Reservation and move north to Oneidas

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

The presence of the Mohawk people made the Munsee less territorial. They often lived in peace with these neighbors mostly because they had no other choice. They would submit to the Mohawks over territorial issue and also marriage partner exchanging.

Obviously later on Europeans had a huge influence. Eventually the entire large group of Indians was all but wiped out.

Christian missionaries had a large impact. Believers in the Big House religion were nearly entirely converted to Christianity. The American Baptist Missionary Union supported a school built in 1835.

1.6 Ecology:

“Among the Delawares there existed family hunting territories consisting of parcels of wooded land of various sizes, bounded by streams, the seashore...” (page 39. Weslager, 2)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Population pre-Europeans – Around 15,000 people.

Density – Estimated at 0.66 people a square mile.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Corn, beans, pumpkins and squash from agriculture long before Europeans came (according to Weslager) (page 56 Weslager, 2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Deer (page 60 Weslager, 2)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Bows made of pliable wood, bowstring of a twisted thong of deerskin. Arrow tips with sharp flint, bone, or deer antlers. (page 50 Weslager, 2)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Both genders gather, while hunting is left to the men. The portion of their resources that came from agriculture would be gathered by both men and women while women would be the ones to prepare food. (page 57, Weslager, 2)

2.6 Land tenure:

- 2.7 Ceramics:
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
- 2.9 Food taboos:
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):
Male "The average height of males ranged from about five feet seven to five feet ten inches" (page 52 Weslager, 2)
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f):
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):
2-3 years (page 104 Weslager, 2)
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:
The answer I found was frequently. While it is wrong to have an affair their solution is no punishment for divorce as long of the man initiates it. I could not find numbers though. (page 104 Weslager, 2)
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:
"They generally have but one for they consider it wrong yet they some times have more" (page 103 Weslager, 2) I assume it may happen with men of higher status. Because it is considered wrong but certain men get away with it they probably have some sort of power.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:
Bride price. A deal is negotiated between man and the woman's parents. Marriage is considered official after man has paid the price (page 103 Weslager, 2)
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):
Loose borders let to some exogamy. Women were expected to marry proper strangers from appropriate families or communities. (page 9 Grumet, 1) People also could leave and marry neighboring groups like the Mohawk. In this case the Mohawks, being that they were more powerful, often were the ones to absorb the population, whether male or female. So the newly united couple would often go willingly or sometimes forced to go and live in Mohawk land. (Grumet)
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
Preferred to have no relation to spouse. Beyond that I could not find strong preferences (Weslager, 2)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?
Men and women can agree to mutually live together without being married. In this way they both enjoy freedoms. But this is thought to be dishonorable for both the man and woman. While married, neither male or female is permitted to have sexual relationships with outside partners. (Weslager, 2)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
Adultery is considered criminal, so there is no evidence. If it did happen I doubt people would be open about it since it is considered wrong. (page 104 Weslager, 2)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
The nearest relative. If no close relatives are living or available then children are given to some family with the means and desire to raise children. (page 102 Weslager, 2)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
None, other than the meeting of the parents to agree on a marriage contract. (page 103 Weslager, 2)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
Parents of the couple arrange marriage. (page 103 Weslager, 2)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

I could not find records of warfare in the Munsees, but this is evidence for nothing. Considering most of these Indian were wiped out long before Anthropologist cared to study them it's hard to determine their aptitude to warfare. When colonist first began to expand there are stories of war but it is difficult to determine for certain if this was with Munsee Indians and, if so, detailed accounts do not exist. People were not concerned with number tracking in early America...sadly.

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
Obviously not a good relationship. They now hardly exist due to their relationship with American settlers. As far as their contact with other Indians, they were not near as powerful as many of their neighbors. As mentioned in the 'Life History, mating, marriage section', they were smaller than their neighbors and often received the short end of the stick on deals (like marriage for example).
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
"If one must categorize Munsses at all, Fried's term egalitarian seems to most closely fit the situation here. Egalitarianism in the Munsee homeland was governed by particular sets of principles regulating ancestry, descent, affiliation, and sociability." (page 17 Grumet, 2)
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
Often if marriage occurred between two groups of Munsee people, the husband would be the one to move into wife's group. If marriage occurred between one Munsee person and another outside group, which group they would live with depended more on relative group strength and less on gender. (Grumet, 1)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):
No. They invited help that they could get from neighbors and also were very hospitable towards guests. Their boarder is difficult due to this because of their lack of boarder defense. (page 9 Grumet, 1)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization:
One-room bark huts normally built along or around water. No streets or public squares. Three types of huts: "round with dome-shaped roof, oblong with an arched roof, and oblong with a ridgepole and pitched roof." (page 50 Waslager, 2) All contained crude chimney.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):
Big House Buildings "churches". A place for worship found in most towns. Usually large buildings made of log with dirt floors. Often the faces of the 12 lesser deities (mentioned below) inscribed on the walls. (Grumet, 5)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
On ground inside wigwams (huts). (page 51 Weslager, 2)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade:
Trade occurred between Europeans and Munsees shortly after contact. Mainly furs would have been traded for metal objects. Also, polite Munsee men temporarily gave their wives to visiting men.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):
Weslager talks about the town of Hockingpomska being named after its most distinguished member, an old chief who gained his position from being a great *ma-ta-en-noo*, which is a type of shaman or medicine man) (Weslager, 2)
- 6.2 Stimulants:
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):
- 6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

One god, the Creator of all things. 12 deities that assist the god. One devil that is purely evil. These forces fight with each other.

Main purpose of religious activity is to keep the Creator pleased with humans. (Weslager, 2)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Two types of dancing for enjoyment. One more for religious purposes and the other strictly for fun. (Weslager, 2)

Also enjoy playing game such as racing, foot ball, wrestling and jumping.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

Missionaries mostly destroyed what we might have otherwise known about the Munsee's Big House Ceremony. By the time America was beginning to research these small Indian religions most of the people had already converted to Christianity. So the missionary effect was huge, converting nearly the entire population. (Grumet, 5)

6.9 RCR revival:

Attempts were made in the 1940s to revive the Big House Ceremonies with the Munsee people, but sadly failed. Population was at the point too small and many Munsee's no longer believe that religious. Christianity had been spreading in the culture since early missionary efforts by the Colonies. (Grumet, 5)

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

They believe a soul survived after the death of an individual. "the spirit departed from the body at death but remained in the vicinity for a designated number of days, after which it left the earth, making its way to the highest heaven where it lived on indefinitely in a place where pain, sickness, and sorrow were unknown." (page 55 Weslager, 2)

The deceased's belongings were taken to the burial site with the body. Some to be buried with individual and some to be distributed among living relatives. (56 Weslager, 2)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Face and body painting occurred year around, but very high amount during festivals and ceremonial dances. Paints include white, red and yellow clay, wood ashes, black shale, and juices of herbs and berries. Women commonly used red for their face. Men often used paint of more of their body than just the face, also thighs, legs, and chest. (page 52 Weslager, 2)

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

Hair was straight, coarse, and black. Older men grew hair down to shoulders while young men shaved their heads, sometimes leaving a long strip in the middle. (page 53 Weslager, 2)

7.4 Scarification:

Called tattooing. "Both men and women practiced tattooing, usually in snake, bird, and animal representations, which were accomplished by puncturing the skin with flint or sharp bone, then rubbing powdered tree bark or paint into the abrasions." (page 52 Weslager, 2)

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

Men would often wear a feather in their hair to attain the courage of an eagle. (page 53 Weslager, 2)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

It is interesting to note some of the shortest words in the Munsee language are the close relative terms (mother, father, brother, sister). Also, there is one word for sister and one word for older brother. No word for younger brother or on to designate age of sister. I would assume the is because between sisters age does not matter as much as between brothers. (Weslager, 2)

Sister – En,mieese (the prefix 'en' means my)

Elder Brother – En,hauze

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

"if the man appears to regret the loss of his wife and shuns the intercourse of women for a number of months, the relatives deceased will present him a suit of new clothes and give him as a wife the sister or some other relative of his former wife" (page 104 Weslager, 2)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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