

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Ingalik call themselves “Deg Hit’an” (the People from here) (2, p. 1). Athapaskan, Ingalik-Koyukon (1, p. 1).

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): ing (1, p. 1).

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): At the time of Russian contact in the 1830s the Ingalik lived in several villages on the lower Yukon and Innoko rivers, and on the middle Kuskokwim River, in southwestern Alaska. Their territory was bounded by Eskimo groups downriver and in the coastal regions and other Athapaskans upstream – Koyukon on the Yukon, Kolchan on the Kuskokwim. Major settlements in historic times included the villages of Shageluk on the Innoko, Anvik, Bonasila and Holy Cross on the lower Yukon, Kvygympaynagmyut and Georgetown on the middle Kuskokwim. The environment was subarctic boreal forest, characterized by short warm summers and long cold winters (2, p. 1). In the interior of Alaska on the banks of the Kuskokwim, Anvik, Innoko and lower Yukon rivers (Leitch, p. 193).

1.4 Brief history:

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The gold rush in Alaska affected the region by increasing boat traffic on the Yukon River (Leitch, p. 195). Recent years have brought only minor changes to the Ingalik. In the 1970s, the Ingalik continued to rely on hunting and gathering pursuits plus some wage work (Leitch, p. 195). Russians, Americans and Europeans dramatically altered trade (5, p. 1). Russians and Americans had direct influence on the political system (8, p. 1).

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: In the 1830s, the Ingalik had a population estimated at between fifteen hundred and two thousand. Following the introduction of European diseases, numbers fell to six hundred by 1900. Particularly devastating was the smallpox epidemic of 1838-1839. The present population is over five hundred, although this figure does not take into account significant intermarriage with Eskimo and other groups (2, p. 1). Numbering around 600 in the 19th century, in the 1970s there were probably several hundred Ingalik living in the same area (Leitch, p. 193).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Salmon berries, blueberries and cranberries were gathered in the late summer and early fall (VanStone, p. 3).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Caribou, moose, bear, wolverines, wolves, lynx, beavers, Lamprey eel, salmon, trout, grayling and blackfish (Leitch, p. 194).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Communal surrounds, bow and arrow spears and snares, traps, nets and weirs (Leitch, p. 194). Stone axes and wedges (Leitch, p. 195). By 1914, the European fish wheel had been introduced into the region and by the 1930s had largely replaced the use of fish traps (5, p. 1).

2.4 Food storage: Raised pole food caches (4, p. 1). Log caches for food, elevated on posts and fish drying racks (Leitch, p. 194).

2.5 Sexual division of production: Ingalik men were the primary providers, responsible for trading, most hunting, fishing and the construction of dwellings, tools, sleds and snowshoes. Both sexes cooperated in making birchbark canoes. Women snared small game and tended fish nets near the village, made clothing, prepared food and manufactured pottery and baskets (5, p. 1).

2.6 Land tenure: Individuals and families had the right to occupy and use land within the territory of their village group. Rights to use certain fish-trapping and caribou-hunting sites belonged to families (5, p. 1).

2.7 Ceramics: Simple pottery (5, p. 1).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos: There were numerous taboos and prohibitions, many of which related to animals (9, p. 1).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: Birchbark canoes (Leitch, p. 195),(5, p. 1).

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

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):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce was uncommon, particularly when there were children. A divorce woman returned to her mother's house (7, p. 1).
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Marriage was monogamous, with occasional polygyny by wealthy men (7, p. 1).
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Songs, dances and the right to wear certain masks at ceremonies passed from father to son. At death, most property was inherited by the spouse and children, although that of a wealthy person would later be distributed at a potlatch. Rights to family hunting and fishing sites were inherited (7, p. 1)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): The aboriginal Ingalik practice local endogamy (7, p. 1).
- 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):
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?:
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Sometimes potlatches were shared with other groups (8, p. 1).
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?:
- 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?: Joking relationships aided in social control (8, p. 1).

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Bilateral kinship system (3, p. 1). The Ingalik were bilateral. Formerly matrilineal, they changed through contact and intermarriage with the bilateral Eskimo (6, p. 1).

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: Ingalik avoided marriage to first cousins (7, p. 1).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?:

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?): Intermarriage with other groups was common and very high with Eskimos (2, p. 1).

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?:

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Warfare was probably infrequent, mitigated by the importance of trade between groups (8, p. 1).

4.15 Out-group vs. in-group cause of violent death: Although travel in another group's territory for trading purposes was permitted, relationships were sometimes tense. Raids were group decisions, often in retaliation for an earlier raid, a dispute over caribou hunting grounds, or some other longstanding animosity. Raids were surprise attacks carried out at night during the fall or early spring. Attackers would blockade house and kashim entrances, and shoot arrows through smoke holes. All men were killed if possible, the village looted, and women and children abducted (8, p. 1).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: A murder or accidental killing usually led to revenge by a male relative and sometimes a blood feud. When a murder occurred between the Ingalik and other groups, it could lead to warfare. During the early-contact period, attacks also took place on Russian trading posts. Beginning in the American period, conflict was controlled through a system of marshals and courts (8, p. 1).

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): By 1900, through intermarriage with Eskimo, the Kuskokwim Ingalik had ceased to exist as a cultural entity, and by 1980, Holy Cross village on the Yukon was at least 50% Eskimo (3, p. 1). Situated between Athapaskans and Eskimos, the Ingalik traded with both. Following Russian contact, the Ingalik occasionally visited posts such as Nulato on the middle Yukon to trade. Not as warlike as other groups, the Ingalik's traditional enemies were the Koyukon, although there was occasional friction with Eskimo and the Kolchan (3, p. 1). The importance of trade tempered traditional hostilities between the Ingalik and their neighbors (5, p. 1).

4.18 Cannibalism?:

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Winter dwellings were occupied by more than one family, and a winter village would contain fifty to a hundred or more people (4, p. 1). The typical winter village house was occupied by two or more nuclear families, usually fifteen to twenty persons. Units in the spring and summer fishing camps were smaller. Contemporary Ingalik live predominantly in single and extended family units (7, p. 1).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Winter dwellings were more permanent, while in the spring and summer they traveled several miles and stayed in temporary fishing camps (4, p. 1). One man who is restless or who has had troubles may like to go to some other village and visit his friends. Most of the people, however, do not move around much except between their various dwelling places or on a ceremonial occasion when they, as part of a large group, accept the invitation of some other village for a feast (Osgood, p. 61-62).

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Villages were independent, recognized nearby communities as linguistically and culturally similar, and sometimes intermarried and shared potlatches with them. Russian and American agents introduced the idea of chiefs during the early-contact period. Today, elected leaders and participation in collective political and economic organizations have replaced traditional patterns. Shamans were considered powerful and often served as opinion leaders (8, p. 1).

5.4 Post marital residence: Residence after marriage was initially with the wife's family. The couple then lived with the husband's family until the man could build his own house (7, p. 1).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization: A typical village contained a men's house, five to ten smaller semisubterranean winter dwellings, food caches and racks for canoes and sleds. Spring and summer fishing camps consisted of less substantial A-frame or gabled dwelling built of logs covered by planks or bark (4, p. 1). The winter village contained dome-shaped, earth-covered dwellings housing from one to three families. Summer villages contained houses of spruce planks, spruce bark or cottonwood logs, as well as gabled-roofed smoke houses. Temporary brush houses were used on trips (Leitch, p. 194).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): A single large kashim or semisubterranean ceremonial men's house (4, p. 1). The communal kachim, or men's house, was a one-room structure with a fireplace in the center and benches around the periphery for sleeping. The men used it for sleep, work, sweat baths and as a residence for boys. It was also the village ceremonial center (Leitch, p. 194).

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: On benches (Leitch, p. 194).

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Clans were unknown, although the Ingalik "partner system – a special relationship between two people in separate villages – was a widespread Athapaskan trait and may have been a vestige of the clan system (6, p. 1).

5.12 Trade: Although the Ingalik traded with other groups, most exchange was with Eskimo. The Yukon Ingalik traded with the Eskimo of Norton sound, exchanging wooden utensils and furs for beluga and seal oil, sealskins and Siberian reindeer skins. Tobacco, tea and metal tools reached the Ingalik via Siberian trade routes. The Kuskokwim Ingalik traded primarily with the Kuskowagamiut Eskimo downstream, exchanging furs and birchbark canoes for seal oil, sealskins, fish and dentalium shells. During the Russian and early American period, metal tools, firearms and cloth became increasingly significant as trade items. The availability of European trade goods led to a dependence upon the fur trade to acquire them, with significant changes in subsistence patterns and traditional social relations (5, p. 1).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: Status came from the ownership of material objects, especially fish. Furs, a large house, canoes, red ocher and dentalium shells were also prized. In aboriginal time leadership was situational, with some men excelling in subsistence activities, others in ritual, trade or warfare. Rich men and shamans were often leaders. Joking relationships, kinship and the partner system also served as social control mechanisms (8, p. 1).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Shamans were considered powerful and often served as opinion leaders (8, p. 1). Shamans derived their power from dreams, often of animals and had animal spirit helpers. Shamans were of either sex and owned particularly powerful songs. Shamanistic power could be used for either good or evil, to kill people or to cure illness, to attract fish and game and ensure success in warfare (9, p. 1).

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): The Ingalik ceremonial cycle consisted of seven major observances, the majority concerned with ensuring a plentiful food supply. In the fall, a shaman conducted a brief Doll ceremony, using dolls to predict the game supply. A Bladder ceremony was performed at any time during the winter, offering animal bladders food to increase game. The peak of the ceremonial calendar came at midwinter, with the Potlatch for the Dead. This festival honored a deceased relative of the giver through a four-night ceremony of gifts of food and clothing to guests. Often preceding or following the Potlatch for the Dead was the Animal's ceremony. Given by one village and attended by others, this was a series of symbolic and imitative dances and singing intended to enhance the game supply. The Hot Dance was an evening of dancing and sexual license often occurring on the fourth night of the Potlatch for the Dead. In spring, the Mask Dance was given for guests from another village, with feasting and giving of gifts. The Partner's Potlatch could be given at any time of year to bring prestige to a village. These were reciprocal with nearby villages and involved the exchange of food and gifts between "partners" from the two communities. There were a variety of "putting down" ceremonies involving presentation of food or gifts to mark rites of passage (9, p. 1).

6.4 Other rituals: Increase ceremonies were performed to attract game and ensure a steady supply of food. The Ingalik also used a variety of "songs" or magical chants to maintain the balance between the human and spiritual worlds. Songs were used to gain good hunting and fishing luck, enhance skills, cure illness and communicate with the spirits. Several lesser rituals were given to please important spirits (9, p. 1).

6.5 Myths (Creation): In the beginning, men, animals, and inanimate objects lived together and shared many traits. They later separated and lost the ability to communicate. People were dependent on animals for food and thus had to remain on good terms with them. This they did by observing taboos and treating animals with respect so they would continue to be available for food. The Ingalik world was created by Denato, an otiose Father figure (9, p. 1).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Traditional Ingalik crafts included extensive woodworking in the manufacture of containers, sleds, birchbark canoes, snowshoes, dwellings and weapons. Simple pottery, some twined basketry, birchbark containers and tailored skin clothing were also made (5, p. 1). Dancing and singing to the accompaniment of tambourine drums and wooden clapper sticks (9, p. 1).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect: Russian Orthodox priests arrived among the Ingalik in 1845 and baptized 437 Indians in two years, though understanding of Christianity remained superficial. By 1887-1888, Episcopal and Roman Catholic missionaries had appeared on the lower Yukon, mission schools had been established and the Orthodox faith largely replaced. Today, the Ingalik are nominal Christians, with the last mission school closing in 1957. Russian and American priests viewed shamanism as pagan and worked to eradicate it. By the 1930s, it was no longer a significant feature in Ingalik culture. Neither the Doll ceremony nor the Bladder ceremony has been performed since the late 1800s. Others survive only in simplified form or have merged with Christian observances (9, p. 1).

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: When a person died, his yeg generally went to the upper underworld, although certain yegs went to the other two worlds, depending on the manner of death. The dead were usually placed in wood coffins in coffin-houses or buried in the ground. More rarely the bodies were cremated. A four-day ceremony was sometimes held, followed by a 20-day mourning period during which certain taboos were observed. Potlatches were often given as memorial to the dead (Leitch, p. 193-194). Some items belonging to the dead were burned or placed in the coffin for use by the deceased in the afterlife. The house of the deceased adult was temporarily abandoned and sometimes burned (7, p. 1). Following death, the body was placed in a sitting position in the kashim. After four days of symbolic feeding, singing and dancing, the deceased was traditionally given a coffin burial. Cremation and exposure were also practiced. At death, a person's spirit traveled to the underworld, a journey of four days. There, the deceased joined other spirits who lived in villages. A person's property was disposed of by burning, inhumation, giving it away or inheritance. Close relatives observed a period of mourning and observance of taboos. Together with the increase ceremonies, death and its commemoration was a principal feature of the Ingalik Ceremonial round (9, p. 1).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: There were numerous taboos and prohibitions, many of which related to animals (9, p. 1).

6.12 Is there teknonymy?:

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): They had a complex mythology, based upon the belief that all things of nature, such as people, animals, river, lakes and the elements, had spirits, or yegs. Religious life centered around a multitude of ceremonies, many of which were intended to increase the numbers of various game animals. Important ceremonies included the Mask Dance, the Dolls Ceremony, the Bladder Ceremony, and, especially, a 14-night Animals Ceremony. They also had potlatches, where were ceremonial gift distributions akin to those of the Northwest Coast tribes. The Ingalik universe consisted of four

levels: earth; “top of the sky”; an upper underworld where the culture hero Raven dwelled; and a lower underworld called “fish tail” (Leitch, p. 193). The Ingalik shared the Northern Athapaskan worldview of a universe in which all objects had a spirit or soul, yeg. The Ingalik had a rich mythology in which animals and the ritual number 4 were prominent. Many spirits and beings inhabited the Ingalik world, the most dangerous being Giyeg, the spirit of death. Helpers of the Giyeg included the Nakani, a malevolent forest spirit common among Northern Athapaskans. Particularly important were the various animal and salmon people (9, p. 1).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings: Wore dentalia earrings and nose pendants (Leitch, p. 195).

7.3 Haircut: They were not known to cut their hair (VanStone, p. 1).

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Necklaces (Leitch, p.195). Amulets, often bits of animal skin, bone or feathers, were worn by all and were often associated with animal songs. Amulets brought specific kinds of luck or conferred special abilities (9, p. 1).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Working primarily in spruce wood, the Ingalik produce a variety of masks, bowls and ceremonial objects. Clothing was decorated with strips of fur and caribou skin. Porcupine quills, feathers and dentalium shells were also used for ornamentation. Wooden objects often had painted designs in red or black and skins were sometimes dyed. Pottery was incised with lines and dots (9, p. 1).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Ingalik women were traditionally tattooed with short, straight lines on their chins or hands, and the men wore carved labrets or lip plugs (9, p. 1).

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: Ingalik kinship terms follow the Eskimo system with identical parallel and cross-cousin terms, which are differentiated from those for siblings (6, p. 1).

8.2 Sororate, levirate: The levirate and sororate were practiced, the latter rarely (7, p. 1).

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Kin terms imply generational differences, and lineal kin are distinguished from collateral. Also present is the Athapaskan distinction between older and younger siblings (6, p. 1).

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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