

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Names: Tanania, Dena'ina, Kinaskiy. Language family: athapaskan

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Central Alaska

1.4 Brief history:

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Traded fur with Russians, which caused frequent fighting.

Missionaries and gold rush individuals discouraged native language and beliefs. Corrupted Native Alaskans beliefs, sent children to boarding schools. Disease and alcohol still devastate tradition to this day.

1.6 Ecology: birch trees, some spruce and hemlock. There are swampy areas. There are marshy areas where birds nest. There are clear streams flowing down from the mountains, with salmon, and trout swimming up them in the summer and fall. There is tundra on the hills above the treeline. And there are many kinds of wildlife, such as moose, bears, sheep, clams, fish and birds.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Depends on season. In the winter smaller clans, in the spring, summer and fall may have larger clans. Home Range Size: between 20 and 40 people

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Roots and Berries.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Moose, caribou, salmon, mountain goats and marine animals.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Had bows made of birch tree and stone/animal teeth arrows. / Tools: made of birch wood, antlers, stone, wood and bone.

2.4 Food storage: Containers and baskets made from birch tree.

2.5 Sexual division of production: Husband and wife's brother did hunting. Both males and females know how to sew, but women do most of the hide sewing.

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics: No

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: shared within clan.

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Canoes made of birch tree, moose hide and cotton wood. Onland sleds with or without dogs.

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): Not sure; however, the Athapaskans believed that menstrual blood offended animal spirits and that contamination would adversely affect hunting success. At the onset of menses, girls were secluded in huts for long periods, during which they wore fringed hoods like the one here. The hood was to prevent them looking on the faces of hunters; it was believed that, if they were to do so, the hunt would be unsuccessful and members of their lineage might become ill or be killed by vengeful spirits. They drank only from drinking tubes, which might have a grease bag attached; smearing grease on the mouth was intended to reduce the need for food.

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Have at least 2 children.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Female after puberty.

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygynously is present.

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Work for wife's family for one year.

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):

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized? Uncles are given distinctive roles for his nieces and nephews to help guide them and understand their mothers' culture.

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). Marry within the same language family.

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? There are 'nuclear families' which live together in the same housing structure. Adults act as step-parents to other children and if a parent in that house dies, the children are accepted as their own.

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? Respect. Special bond between brothers and sisters.
- 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?
- 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?) Can marry within regional group.
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Elder clan members arrange marriage.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

- 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: Pre-contact: fighting between eskimo's and inates were somewhat frequent. These wars took the form of surprise raids and ambushes rather than open, planned, hand-to-hand combat. A war became a feud when two groups continually raided each other's settlements in retaliation of casualties incurred during previous attacks. The original motives for wars seem to have been desire for women and for goods, and, in the case of ongoing feuds, revenge. Post-contact: Fighting against Russians and whites.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Within regional group had potlatch in mid-winter to have celebration and have meeting on hunting grounds.
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Local bands 25 to 200 people, Average 100. Regional bands 2000.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Winter have semi-permanent housing inland and summer housing closer to the coast.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Each person was free to choose his local band affiliation within certain bounds. In general, a person was accepted into a band as long as he had relatives in the band. Aside from this limitation, people could choose among several local bands within a regional band. This allowed the local bands to be fluid groups, with individuals changing membership as personality conflicts or availability of game dictated.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Wife's family
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Assigned land usually only in winter when game maybe harder to obtain.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: Female isolation house during menstruation.
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Tanaina winter houses were also semi-subterranean, but they were larger than the interior Athabaskan houses, and housed several families. The outsides of Tanaina houses were composed of wood boards chinked with moss between the boards and then thatched with grass, rather than the bark/moss/dirt combination adopted by most Athabaskan bands. They were called "barabaras" by the Russians, and that name has since been adopted to identify Tanaina houses.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): In addition to family dwellings, Athabaskan villages often had sweat houses, fish and meat smokehouses, and small burial houses over graves. Many villages had a large community ceremonial house.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: A couple of families live together in the same home, the wealthiest person informally represents that clan. There is a chief of the village.
- 5.12 Trade: Traded fur with other groups nearby.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Within the nuclear family, one individual was appointed informal leader based on 'wealth.' Wealth was measured by successful hunting's, adornment, and gifts to others.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Shamans could be man or woman, looked after both the physical health and spiritual needs of the villagers. Shamans were the intermediaries between people and the spirit world.
- 6.2 Stimulants:
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Den'a ceremonies, feasts, and healing rituals as "potlatches," "feasts for the dead," "mortuary feasts," and "memorial potlatches." While a potlatch is formally defined as the distribution of material wealth as a means to increase social recognition, this is only a superficial description, overlooking the scope, intention, and deeper meaning of many Den'a ceremonies.
- 6.4 Other rituals: Believed every animal and some innate objects had spirits. There were very definite rules which people had to follow in dealing with animals based on this belief in animal spirits. The spirits enabled an animal to know more than was immediately apparent to him. The Athabaskans believed that at one time animals and people spoke a common language and shared a common society. Thus, animals had spirits that had to be treated with deference and respect.
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): The Raven was the creator.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Athabaskans had a number of games. They played tug-of-war and darts, wrestled, ran, and raced canoes. One of the games, shinny, resembled hockey. Four persons played. They buried a square wood block in the middle of a

field. Opponents raced to dig the block out of the hole and, using sticks, attempted to knock it to one or the other end of the playing field. In another game, one player pulled a moose skin from one point to a designated point while others tried to stop the skin's movement by poking sticks into it. If the person pulling the skin got it to the end of the course, he or she was considered shrewd and clever.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: When a member of a person's family was killed, it was his duty to avenge that death. If the murderers were of a different band and totally unrelated, the death of a member of the murderer's family was often the only satisfactory payment for the first murder. On the other hand, a family sometimes accepted payment in goods for the death of a relative, the amount of payment depending on the status of the dead person. People were more likely to accept payment from a close friend or relative than from strangers or members of an enemy group.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there tekonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.). The Raven created the earth by bringing rocks from a sea and building an island where mountains and forests emerged.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Yes made from berries, roots and minerals. Designs were not discussed.

7.2 Piercings: Yes used wood, bone, stone, ivory, antler, feathers, porcupine quills, animal teeth, shells, and grasses. Piercing locations not discussed.

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): clothing was made of caribou and moose hide. Moose and caribou hide moccasins and boots were important parts of the wardrobe. Styles of moccasins vary depending on conditions. Feathers and beads were used to decorate.

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: The bond between the wife and her brother is very important. Often after marriage, the wife's brother and her husband become hunting partners.

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

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

1. <http://www.aaanativearts.com/alaskan-natives/athabascan.htm>
2. <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=148>
3. <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=150>
4. <http://www.alaskanative.net/data/ALASKANATIVE/Files/File/PDF/cgdescriptions.pdf>
5. <http://www.mnh.si.edu/arctic/features/croads/athapask.html>
6. http://alaska.si.edu/culture_athabascan.asp
7. http://www.alaskanative.net/en/main_nav/education/culture_alaska/athabascan/
8. http://www.questconnect.org/ak_native_culture.htm
9. <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=150>
10. <http://www.native-languages.org/tanaina-legends.htm>