

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

The society is Coahuilteco, the language was Coahuilteco, the language group was Coahuiltecan. What languages fall under the Coahuiltecan Family and whether or not it is an actual language family are still under debate. Originally, Coahuilteco was one of several distinctly different languages spoken throughout southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. Following the arrival of Spanish Missionaries, Coahuilteco became a lingua franca in the area. There are no known speakers of the language today.¹

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): Coahuilteco does not have an ISO Code.

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Inland southern Texas. 29.3327° N, 98.4553° W.²

The Coahuilteco ranged across the entirety of Texas between San Antonio and the Rio Grande as well as into the Mexican province of Coahuila.

1.4 Brief history: The early history of the Coahuiltecos is unknown². They were first encountered in the 1500s by the Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca³. In the 1600s Franciscan missions were established in Nadadores, San Antonio, and along the Rio Grande for the express purpose of converting the Coahuilteco³. In 1690 there were an estimated 15000 Coahuilteco in over 200 scattered bands. By the late 19th century, disease, attacks by other tribes, and cultural integration had shrunk that number to two or three tribes on the southern side of the Rio Grande, none of whom spoke Coahuilteco³.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Coahuilteco were decimated by diseases brought by Spanish missionaries as well as assimilation into Mexican culture and attacks by Comanche and Apaches from the north³.

1.6 Ecology: The Coahuilteco lived in the arid brush of the south Texan plains. Large game animals were scarce so the Coahuilteco relied on vegetation to provide much of their nourishment².

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: The Coahuilteco were divided into four tribes, each consisting of an unknown number of largely independent bands of unknown size, range and density². It is estimated that there were around 200 bands in the late 1600s. This number had shrunk to two or three bands by the late 19th century³.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The staples of the Coahuiltecan diet were cacti, agave, nuts, mesquite beans, and sotol².

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Large game was rare though there is evidence that bison were occasionally hunted when they wandered into south Texas². Deer, antelope, collared peccary, rabbits, other rodents, reptiles, birds and bugs were the main sources of protein-lipid². Frogs and snakes were excluded from the Coahuiltecan diet. These were seasonally important though none were prevalent enough to provide a continuous food supply². When available, they supplemented their diets with fish⁴.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

The Coahuilteco favored the bow for hunting and warfare³. The bow was made from the root of a mesquite tree and strung with the fibers of the lechuguilla plant⁴. The arrows were made from shafts of cane 18 to 20 inches in length and tipped with a barbed point made of stone, though iron was used whenever it was available⁴. When hunting, bows were often supplemented by various traps, including pitfalls and stakes hidden behind barriers⁴.

2.4 Food storage: N/A

2.5 Sexual division of production: Hunting, fishing, fighting, and fire making were carried out by the men⁴. During times of peace the men were also responsible for trade though this duty shifted to the women when they were at war⁴. Women were responsible for gathering plants, water, bringing back the men's kills, and weaving baskets⁴. They could fish using the bow and arrow but they were not allowed to touch fishing nets⁴. When the tribe was at war, women were responsible for bringing supplies to the men and could fight if necessary⁴.

2.6 Land tenure: The land a band lived on and all of its resources were considered to be the property of the entire band.

2.7 Ceramics: There is no evidence that the Coahuilteco produced any sort of ceramics.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Data on the Coahuiltecan concept of property is extremely limited⁴. It is known that all food was communal and a hunter was not allowed to eat anything he had slain⁴. The hide of the animal, on the other hand, was the exclusive property of the hunter⁴.

2.9 Food taboos: Snakes and frogs were not eaten⁴.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft: There is only one recorded instance of the Coahuilteco using dugout canoes².

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):N/A

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):N/A

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):N/A

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):N/A

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):N/A Though it seems there were more males than females².

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):N/A

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):N/A

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:N/A Marriage only lasted as long as both spouses wanted it to. If they wanted a divorce they simply stopped living with each other².

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Almost all men were only married to one wife². Shamans occasionally had more than one wife².

- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: The husband provided meat, hides, and tools to the family of the bride². Bows were favored over all else².
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Men owned all of the property in the family so it is believed to be patrilineal⁴.
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Not much is known. According to de Vaca parents were not very close to their children².
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: A class of homosexual men known as berdaches existed who dressed as women, did women's work, and lived with other men².
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Marriage always occurred between members of different bands².
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?: Paternity was more about the husband "accepting" his role as father of the children than actually being the father².
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): N/A
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? :N/A
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:N/A
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin):Spouses from outside the band were preferred, other than that there is no information available².
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: Yes, premarital chastity was preferred but not required for women².
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:N/A
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?:N/A
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females:N/A
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: To signal his acceptance of his position as the father, the husband would spend the week after the birth sitting on his pallet receiving congratulations from friends and family².
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older):N/A
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?:N/A
- 4.24 Joking relationships?:N/A
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: All descent is believed to be patrilineal through there is no solid evidence.⁴
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:N/A
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: The potential husband courts his bride by giving a gift of hides, meats, and tools to her family. If they accept him into their home to eat with them after that, then he is considered to be married to the bride. There is no formal ceremony beyond that².
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?:N/A
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): Marriage outside the community is preferred for both sexes².
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? : Marriages are not arranged.² The husband courts his bride through her family and they decide if she will marry him or not.²
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:N/A

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:N/A
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:N/A
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: War over resources is the most common reason for out-group killing.⁴
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):N/A
- 4.18 Cannibalism?: N/A

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: N/A
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The Coahuilteco moved their camps every few days⁴.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Each band was led by a chief. The position of chief was not hereditary⁴.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: The wife resided with her husband².
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Each band had their own defined territory and would defend it violently⁴.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):N/A
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:N/A
- 5.8 Village and house organization: The house belonged to the man and would be passed to his son upon death⁴.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):N/A
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: The Coahuilteco slept upon pallets of grass².
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:N/A
- 5.12 Trade: Bands and tribes traded with each other frequently⁴.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?:N/A

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:N/A
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): The Coahuilteco had shamans who performed healing rituals and led religious ceremonies².
- 6.2 Stimulants: Consumption of peyote was common in Coahuilteco religious ceremonies².
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): de Vaca mentions puberty rituals though he does not elaborate on them².

- 6.4 Other rituals:N/A
- 6.5 Myths (Creation):N/A
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):N/A
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:N/A
- 6.8 Missionary effect:N/A. Those who converted integrated almost completely into Mexican society.¹
- 6.9 RCR revival:N/A
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:N/A
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?:N/A
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?:N/A
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Coahuilteco religious belief is a mixture of animism and minor ancestor worship.

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: De Vaca describes a boy with lines painted onto his forehead and cheeks. No other mention is made of body paint.²
- 7.2 Piercings: de Vaca describes lip and nipple piercings though he does not say if there are any differences between men and women².
- 7.3 Haircut:N/A
- 7.4 Scarification:N/A
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):Breechcloths were often intensely adorned with animal teeth, seeds and other adornments.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:N/A
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:N/A
- 7.8 Missionary effect:N/A
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:N/A

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system:N/A
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate:N/A
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):N/A

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them): The Coahuilteco did not seem to be very picky about who became a shaman. In the weeks he spent with them, Cabeza de Vaca became a well-respected shaman².

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