

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: **Salinan; Salinan language; Hokan language family [3] “Formerly 2 dialects, Antoniano and Migueleño.” [4]**
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): **sln**
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): **“The Salinan Indians inhabited parts of San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and perhaps San Benito Counties, their territory extending from the sea to the main ridge of the Coast range and from the head of the Salinas drainage to a short distance above Soledad.” [2] Lat: 36° 39' 46", Lng: -121° 36' 22.900**
- 1.4 Brief history: **“there is no pre-missionary history of the region.” [6]; “Little is known about them; no name for themselves as a body, for their language, or for any division, either in their own or in any other Indian language, is known; nor is it known what any such divisions may have been...The missions of San Antonio and San Miguel were established in Salinan territory in 1771 and 1797. The total baptisms at these missions reached 4,400 and 2,400 respectively, and it appears that these numbers included Yokuts. Like all the other tribes, the Salinan Indians decreased rapidly during mission times, the number, at each mission having fallen to fewer than 700 by 1831, and more rapidly after secularization.” [2]**
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: **Extensive impact of missionaries; “Salinans were among the first California natives to be impacted by Europeans. In 1602 the Spaniard Vizcaino, sailed up the California coast and spent time on shore near Monterey Bay.” [3]; See 1.4, 1.7**
- 1.6 Ecology: **“The Salinan Indians appear to have lived in houses of brush or grass and to have had no canoes. They hunted more than they fished, but depended for their subsistence principally on vegetal food, such as acorns and grass seed.” [2]; Lived on/around Salinas River, which empties into the Pacific Ocean [1]; “The country is, generally speaking, rough. The greater part of the coast is extremely rocky and mountainous, the cliffs generally rising sheer from the water to a considerable height.” [6]; “The Salinans were doubtless thoroughly sedentary in their habits and little given to travelling. Their habitat was restricted and mountainous and the rivers unnavigable.” [6]**
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: **“They ranged from the headwaters of the Salinas River, or perhaps only from the vicinity of the Santa Margarita Divide, north to Santa Margarita Peak, and an unknown point in the valley somewhere south of Soledad; and from the coast somewhere from about Point Sur south to some point above Morro Bay. They were all but destroyed by missionization and the influx of settlers after the gold rush. A few mixed blood remnants survive today.” [5]; “[Currently] have 371 baseroll members and 400 more waiting to be added after federal recognition,” [1]; Small population size throughout their history, reports state that there were less than fifty Salinan people alive during periods of the mid-19th century [6]; Highest population likely under 4000 shortly after European contact [6]; “Permanent villages with conical shelters of willow and grass or rushes were built along major rivers and streams of the homeland. Villages were comprised of family groups.” [3]**

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): **Survived mainly on plant foods; “Acorns, which are very abundant in the region, doubtless formed the principal staple,” Also ate seeds, pine-nuts, berries [6]; “Another seed is like rice, of a yellow color, and ripens best when there is the greatest rain. It has a very sweet flavor. This when cooked resembles vermicelli. They roast them to make their porridge. They have plenty of sugar and molasses.” [6]; “All wild berries and fruits were eaten fresh or dried for winter use. Edible roots were baked and enjoyed. Wild onions, garlic and sea kelp, for salt, added flavor. Honey sweetened. Seeds and nuts were gathered, and eaten then, or stored in special small above ground granaries woven from white willow” [3]**
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: **“game was more than ordinarily plentiful, especially deer, but with the primitive weapons upon which the aborigines depended, it is doubtful if venison could ever have been a staple food...smaller animals being also of more importance than the meat of larger game.” [6]; “Dove, quail, squirrel, rabbit, deer, antelope, all were favorite foods” [3]; Fish also an important dietary staple [6]**
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: **“their weapons were designed for hunting food, not for killing humans.” [3]; diamond-shaped arrow heads, sometimes barbed; flint spears were used [6]**
- 2.4 Food storage: **Dried meat into jerky; stored and dried berries and fruits for winter; maintained granaries for acorn surplus [3]**
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: **“Boys learned to build fires, make bows, arrows, tools and traps. They gained understanding of the seasons and animal habits and how to dress out game. It was important that they keep fit, able to run down a deer if necessary, all a part of survival in a world of hunters. In the men's sweat house were heard songs and stories relating to the tribe and help in learning to develop their manly power to protect and provide....the girls also learned womanly duties, they learned where and how to gather foods, how to cook, to process acorns, tan skins, build shelters, design and make basketry, and how to cultivate and use medicinal plants. It took many skills to care for one's family properly.” [3]**
- 2.6 Land tenure: **“the people practiced "agriculture" by burning off the brush under the oak trees to expose the ground where the acorns fell in the autumn. Often favorite medicinal herbs and food plants were transplanted to the village sites to be conveniently near when needed...The people were taught from infancy to take only what was needed, not to waste and to always leave seed for the future.” [3]; “The mission system destroyed this natural process by putting in large fields of plants needing cultivation and irrigation.” [3]**
- 2.7 Ceramics: **“The aboriginal usage [of pottery] among the Salinan is doubtful.” [6]; “Dishes were made of wood.” [6]**
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:
- 2.9 Food taboos: **“Like the other California natives, the Salinan Indians ate all flesh, fish, and fowl, with a very few exceptions, including most of the reptilia and some insects. Of the mammalia the skunk alone was specifically excepted, while the custom**

regarding the canine family is unknown. Old bears were not esteemed, but cubs were considered a delicacy. All birds without exception are said to have been eaten, as well as their eggs, which were prepared by boiling.” [6]
2.10 Canoes/watercraft? “The inland people probably never made or used boats or rafts.” [6];

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): “Physically, the Salinan natives seem to have been of medium stature and heavily built,” [6]. One typical middle aged man of full Salinan blood, measured in the late 19th century, stood 167 cm tall [6]; The Salinan, on the whole, appear to have been of a physical type superior to their neighbors,” [6]; Men had full beards that rivaled those of Europeans, unique among native American populations [6]; Early European contacts reported that the Salinan women were pretty, as opposed to the women of other tribes. [6]

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): The same man was weighed at approximately 160 lbs. [6]

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): “A girl was initiated into the world of womanhood at her first menstruation. Older women led her to the menstruation house where she began to learn about modesty, marriage, sex, birth, and other matters. Under the guidance of these women, the girls also learned womanly duties, they learned where and how to gather foods, how to cook, to process acorns, tan skins, build shelters, design and make basketry, and how to cultivate and use medicinal plants.” [3]

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:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: “Some, when their wife was pregnant or had given birth, changed their residence without taking leave, and married another. Others were married with two, three, or even more women.” [6]; appears to have been a fairly common practice

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: None; “They were as easily married as unmarried. For the former, nothing more was required than that the suitor should ask the bride from her parents, and at times it sufficed that she of herself should consent to join herself to the man, though more often verbal communication or agreement (trato) preceded.” [6]

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: “Among the coastal stocks south of San Francisco the custom [of berdaches or women-men] flourished, and the individuals termed “joyas” by the Spanish, were found at San Antonio. Those of the Santa Barbara channel “lived like women, associated with them, adorned themselves with beads, earrings, necklaces, and other feminine ornaments, and enjoyed great consideration among their companions.”; “there being two or three joyas to every village.” [6]

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?

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? “Young women were honored for their beauty but more importantly for their modesty. Illegitimacy was rare and usually brought dishonor.” [3]; Men were allowed multiple wives, but females did not enjoy this ability. [6]

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring. No, illegitimacy was frowned upon; see 4.18 [3]

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: “The couvade in modified form, imposing restrictions on both the father and the mother, and both before and after the birth of the child, exists almost everywhere in the state.”; “A few restrictions, now forgotten, had to be observed before the birth of the child, and for a month thereafter the mother stayed in seclusion and the father took care not to become drunk or to commit any other sin or crime.” [6]

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: “The usual restrictions between children and parents-in-law existed, communication between them being avoided except in cases of greatest necessity.” [6]

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: Patrilineal descent for social association

4.26 Incest avoidance rules:

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? No, “Little or no ceremony or restriction accompanies marriage or divorce... mutual agreement of all parties being generally sufficient for either joining or separating.” [6]; “Whenever a youth and maid appear in company, both marked by the scratches of finger-nails, they are thus known to have contracted matrimony on the preceding night. This alone is considered proof and they are publicly known as man and wife throughout the rancheria. But there is still more; the couple are not believed to be making a proper use of their marital privileges unless these are accompanied by the use of the finger-nails,” [6]

- 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)? **No evidence for arranged marriages**
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: **"Wars" lasted only a few days as this was a people that valued life. They did not have a war- oriented society, or a value structure that glorified war, their weapons were designed for hunting food, not for killing humans. The goal was to put the adversary out of action, not kill him. And because they did not have experience in conquering or being conquered, it made them more vulnerable to outsiders with combatant histories."** [3]
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: **See 4.14**
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): **See 1.4**
- 4.18 Cannibalism? **No evidence of Salinan practicing cannibalism; but mythology includes a story of a "dreadful one-footed cannibal" who is tossed in a pit of tar by two heroes, indicating the culture's taboo against the practice, and therefore their acquaintance with it, possibly from neighboring groups.** [6]

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): **Little seasonality in environment; little mobility due to rough terrain; see 1.6**
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): **See 5.13**
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): **"Always, much care was taken not to go beyond the tribal boundaries without express permission. It was up to the neighboring tribe to grant requests for access. This maintained peaceful relations with neighbors for trade. Repetitive stories and songs were used to memorize trees, rocks, streams and other natural objects used as the boundary markers."** [3]
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: **"Permanent villages with conical shelters of willow and grass or rushes were built along major rivers and streams of the homeland. Villages were comprised of family groups."** [3]
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: **"Adulthood brought membership into one of the two moieties, or social divisions of the people. The moiety was decided by lineage of the father. If the father was a Deer, all his children were Deer. If he was a Bear then his children were of the Bear moiety. Members could not marry someone from their same moiety. Bears could not marry Bears but they could marry Deer, etc."** [3]
- 5.12 Trade: **"After Mission San Miguel was built the eastern people continued to come there to trade and it was at this mission that they were baptized and brought their families to congregate. Yokut-Salinan trade and friendship have a longstanding history in the area. For trading, Salinans made flat pink, blue or white beads threaded on sinew to use for "money". The color and the length of a string of beads determined its value. There were also larger elongated beads, no one can recall their source, but these were so special that it took only two beads to make a man wealthy."** [3]
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? **"Every village had a head man selected for his bravery, who was responsible for the welfare of the people. He was not the "boss" or a dictator, his position was as an arbitrator or advisor. His power was limited by the council of elders and by public opinion. Each individual made his own decision. Everyone had an opportunity to speak and be heard and all of the decisions were based on consensus, everyone agreeing. It took much time and much deliberation to reach a conclusion, just as it does at council meetings now where consensus is still the procedure."** [3]

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): **Shamans were present; "The tribal healer or shaman was usually male. Cutting open the site and sucking out the poison was a treatment often used. Herbs and much singing were used in the healing process. The shaman was believed to possess supernatural powers, even able to control the rainfall. He was feared and no violence was attempted against him even when he repeatedly lost patients."** [3]
- 6.2 Stimulants: **Tobacco was used in religious ceremony as well as for hunting.** [6]
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): **Death ritual: "The bow and arrows of the deceased were placed on a high pole in the village and around this the inhabitants congregated, the relatives on one side and the other inhabitants on the other side. Then the former brought out all the personal property of the deceased and piled it at the root of the pole. As the objects were thrown down it was the privilege of any villager to seize any article he craved and endeavor to escape with it. If he could elude the pursuit of the relatives and make the circuit of the village three [sic] times, he was entitled to retain the article. If caught, the object was returned to the pile with the other possessions and burnt. After ten days of mourning the house of the deceased was burnt and another one built and occupied by the family. After a reasonable length of time it was necessary for the male relatives to find a husband for the widow."** [6]; see 6.4

- 6.4 Other rituals: Puberty rituals for both males and females: See 4.1; “At puberty boys were initiated into manhood by older males through special rituals. Boys learned to build fires, make bows, arrows, tools and traps. They gained understanding of the seasons and animal habits and how to dress out game. It was important that they keep fit, able to run down a deer if necessary, all a part of survival in a world of hunters. In the men's sweat house were heard songs and stories relating to the tribe and help in learning to develop their manly power to protect and provide.” [3]
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): “We know that Salinans believed in the Creator and that life was in all things. It is concluded that they did not make or worship effigies as none have been found. In the homeland, rock paintings have been found such as those at the special Painted Cave.” [3]; The eagle, coyote, and kingfisher are regarded as creators, and the creation myth revolves around the creation of man and woman, and their sexual relations. [6]
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “The people had many songs and dances for all occasions. All that was needed was a reason, such as the completion of a communal project or visitors arriving. Fall and Spring seasonal dances were probably held also. There were dances for men and dances for women. Sometimes they danced in a row of women and then a row of men, taking turns. Music was provided by eight or ten singers with dried cocoon or rattlesnake rattles. Clapper sticks, rasps, flutes and whistles were also used.” [3]
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: See 6.1; 6.4
- 6.8 Missionary effect: Extensive impact; transformed Salinan culture
- 6.9 RCR revival:
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Yes; “The dead were buried, except for distinguished ones, who were cremated. The ashes were collected and buried and the deceased's name was never spoken again.” [3]
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? No evidence for teknonymy.
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) “We know that Salinans believed in the Creator and that life was in all things. It is concluded that they did not make or worship effigies as none have been found. In the homeland, rock paintings have been found such as those at the special Painted Cave.” [3]

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: “The Salinan natives shared with the other stocks of the coast region a great fondness for painting themselves on frequent occasions. Red, white, blue and yellow were the favorite colors. The red was made from cinnabar, which is mined in the surrounding region, the yellow from the root of a plant, possibly *Psoralea macrostachya*. The blue may have been wad; the source of the white paint was not ascertained.” [6]
- 7.2 Piercings:
- 7.3 Haircut: “Their dark thick hair was usually worn long. The men plucked their beards.” [3]; “The hair was cut as a sign of mourning, following the custom practically universal in the state.” [6]
- 7.4 Scarification:
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): “Feathers may have decorated baskets, or the shaman's stick and the shaman may have had a single eagle feather worn in his forehead hair but feathers were not worn by most Salinans.” [3]
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: “Before the mission era, the wardrobe of the Salinan man was scanty, in summer he wore nothing but some abalone ear ornaments. In winter he had a fur cape for cold days. Salinans painted themselves but did not wear tattoos, or feathers. Feathers may have decorated baskets, or the shaman's stick and the shaman may have had a single eagle feather worn in his forehead hair but feathers were not worn by most Salinans. The men's hunting wardrobe usually contained a deer skin complete with head and antlers. It was worn over the head and shoulders when hunting deer, enabling them to get closer to their prey. Women occasionally wore skirts with a panel in front and panel in back, usually made of leather or woven grass or tule fiber. For warmth a cape of woven rabbit fur or tule fiber covered their shoulders, open in front. Children wore nothing until older, then they dressed like the adults. During extreme cold, mud was applied to hold in the body's heat.” [3]
- 7.8 Missionary effect:
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: “The Salinans, an ancient people that once populated what are now parts of San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties are still here. We do not look the same, dress the same, live the same or speak the same, but we are here.” [3]

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system:
- 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://salinantribe.com/>
2. <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/salinan-family.htm>
3. <http://www.missionsanmiguel.com/history/salinans.html>
4. <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/sln>

5. <http://www.fourdir.com/salinan.htm>
6. J.A. Mason, "The Ethnology of the Salinan Indians," *University of California Publications in American Anthropology and Ethnology*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Dec. 1912) 97-240