

## 1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Chumash

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): spread out throughout California focusing on the Santa Barbara region

1.4 Brief history:

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

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Village size would reach up to 1000 people but most were considerably smaller, total population size is estimated between 8,000 – 10,000

## 2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): plant foods were utilized extensively mainly seeds, bulbs, roots, tubers, fruits and nuts were eaten

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: it is believed that the Chumash ate the Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, tule elk, and mountain sheep with the mule deer being the most important of the listed the Chumash would also eat coyotes and domesticated dogs on occasion. The Chumash would also hunt marine mammals including the sea otter all species of seals and sea lions and possibly some types of porpoises. The Chumash did not hunt whales but would eat stranded whales that were found. Fish, shellfish, and birds would also be found

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: bows and arrows were most common with tips of bone, stone and wood employed. Spear throwers were also used in “proto-historic” times, the spears themselves were still used, as were clubs, harpoons, and nets. Fishhooks made out of bone, and or mussel or abalone shell was used

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: hunting was left to the young men while the women, elderly men, and children would collect plant foods except during the “acorn” season when every able bodied member would help collect acorns

2.6 Land tenure: land ownership was placed by each “clan” and was respected, except in times of war

2.7 Ceramics: Stone tools, and bowls were used for eating and other purposes, baskets were also used (they were supposedly woven tight enough to hold water)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: there appears to be no set sharing patterns in place

2.9 Food taboos: no food taboos are known

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: both plank, and tule balsa canoes were used

## 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): Girls are usually married no more than 3 years after puberty

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

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): There appears to be no real pattern marriage is allowed with whoever so, however in times of war the Chumash are more suspicious of exogamous couples

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?: it is believed that the father is known as he is the one who determines if the woman is pregnant, it is believed that he is overcome by a spirit and then he can give the woman the child to nurse inside.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): the mother is believed to nurse the child inside of her until it is able to join the rest of the world

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No it is believed to be brought on by a spirit that has visited the father

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

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): there is only one father per child

- 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: [Patrilineal, virilocal](#)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: [no marriage rules, or taboos, appear to be in place](#)
- 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?): [marriage was allowed in our out of the rancheria \(clan\)](#)
- 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: [N/A](#)
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: [same as below fighting over food was common \(especially during the winter\) usually in outgroup not ingroup](#)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: [food scarcity causing suspicion and theft between members](#)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): [the Chumash fought rarely but when fighting occurred it was usually with the Luiseno in times famine. During these times out group marriages were suspicious for spies. Surprise attacks and witchcraft was the most common form of attack](#)
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

### **5. Socio-Political organization and interaction**

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): [villages were abandoned when water and or food started becoming scarce](#)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): [Chiefs inherited their position patrilineally so long as the village did not disapprove. His main role was war leader and patron of village feasts the men of his lineage held the actual duties of command making the chief more of a figure head, except during warring times](#)
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): [Rights to hunting, fishing, and gathering grounds seems to be placed but there appears to be no true defense](#)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: [it appears that immediate family members would share the same house but specifics can not be found](#)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): [sweat houses were used to relax and cleanse the body. Used mostly by men a fire was used to keep the hose piping hot.](#)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? [The Chumash appear to sleep on animal skins on the ground](#)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: [A main Chumash village was made up of unilineal descent groups which were patrilineal and virilocal](#)
- 5.12 Trade:
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? [The family of the chief appears to hold the most power while the chief had power in times of war, a currency of beads was in place making a class system of high, middle and low class however exact distribution of currency is unknown](#)

### **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

- 6 Time allocation to RCR:
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): [Shamans were believed to have obtained their powers from a guardian spirit through dreams or visions. There were at least four different kinds of shamans: rattlesnake shamans, weather shamans, grizzly bear shamans, and curing shaman](#)
- 6.2 Stimulants:
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): [When boys reached puberty there were puberty ceremonies that involved initiation temples \(specifics unknown\) while dancers adorned with feathers would dance with ceremonial poles. At the winter solstice sticks were decorated with feathers and offered to their guardian spirits, along with deer, fish and beads, in the hope of a successful hunt and good harvesting year. There were also shrines along game trails for offerings to be placed to ensure good hunts](#)
- 6.4 Other rituals:
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): [The Chumash believed the universe was made up of three worlds which were arranged one above the other, like flat circular trays with the surface of the earth being a island \(middle world\) while the upper world was the sun and supernatural beings lived. The lower world was inhabited by dangerous creatures that come up to the middle world at night.](#)
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): [Music and games were very important to Chumash life the most popular game was similar to hockey in that a small stick was used to hit a ball into the opponents goal post. The winners would receive winnings from bets that would take place during the game.](#)
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:
- 6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Names are never reused, reasons appear to be out of respect for the dead.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? There does not appear to be any teknonymy, everyone seems to be referred to by their own name

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

## 7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: body paint was practiced extensively by both sexes. Different designs were used allowing different groups to distinguish each other

7.2 Piercings: both men and women pierced their ears, and nasal septum's for earrings and nose plugs

7.3 Haircut: a flint knife was worn in the hair for safekeeping

7.4 Scarification: does not seem to be practiced

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): on occasion they would wear capes of varying lengths made out of deer hide, bird feathers or woven strips of rabbit, fox or otter fur. Women wore knee length skirts made of two aprons of buckskin and from the waist up would sometimes wear animal skin cloaks. Women also wore basketry caps. Both men and women would wear tools around the waist for starting a fire.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: every garment listed above was worn for rituals although the specific ceremonies are unknown. The only thing worn regularly were the tools for starting fires and the knives

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: listed above

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: N/A

## 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): shell beads were used as currency and was called "ponca". Transvestites were accepted and believed to be due to a spirit that will not leave the individuals body.

## Numbered references

1. The Chumash Indians of Southern California By Leif C. W. Landberg
2. California's Chumash Indians By: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
3. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology
4. <http://www.sbnature.org/research/anthro/chumash/custm.htm>