

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Coos, Coosan, Oregon Penutian

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Oregon- Umpqua Valley

1.4 Brief history: Made up of three tribes/four bands: Siuslaw Tribe, Lower Umpqua Tribe, Miluk Coos, and the Coos tribes split into two bands, the Hanis Coos and the Miluk Coos. The Coos tribe lived in Southwest Oregon along the coast. The Lower Umpqua lived in the Umpqua River. The Siuslaw lived along the Siuslaw River. The hunter/gatherers lived in cedar longhouses around which the men hunted and the women gathered from the forest. Smallpox and measles wiped out many villages due to European invasion. The Coos, Umpqua, and Siuslaw signed a treaty for protection in 1955, which has since been broken and forgotten. The next year the whites and Indians fought in the Rogue River War, followed by the enforcement of the Indians into the Siletz reservation.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Coos acclimated to American education systems. Their goal is to send their youth through high school and hope to even send them to college. Their education department collaborates with their cultural department to keep their education based on their tribal heritage. Relied on ancient cultural practices such as exogamy to ensure survival in 20th century. Often married into Coquille community to maintain strong relations with near tribes (Coos-Coquille). Little missionary influence—mostly influenced by fur traders and gold miners.

1.6 Ecology: The Coos tribes lived in the Northwest ecosystem and the NW coastal, avoiding the Great Basin and blending into the plateau areas. They stayed mostly on the western side of the state, toward the southwest and central parts where the ecosystem is wet with many rivers (Umpqua and Rogue) and the Pacific coast. They foraged for edibles from the forests such as berries and acorns, fished in the rivers and lakes for salmon, perch, herring, and shelfish, and hunted from the forests. They also used the large supply of cedar to create their homes. They trapped for fur (mink and beaver) and used skins for clothing. Oysters are common in Coos Bay, as well as varieties of fish and animals that drink from the Bay and hunt in the area. Year-round rain keeps the forests healthy and able to provide food throughout all seasons, which keeps a consistent ecological balance between supply and demand.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: The Miluk population size is estimated at 2,000 members in 1780, and in 1937 the population of “Kus” Indians was numbered 55. Home ranges were two to three miles from the village, and most villages were located on various parts of the Umpqua, Rogue, and Coquille Rivers.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Acorns, berries, roots (fern and skunk cabbage)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Elk, ducks, halibut, cod, salmon, trout, herring, muscles, and some grasses.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Blowguns, sharpened elk antler for spears, knives, arrows, etc., nets for fishing at estuaries (used salmon eggs for bait to catch trout).

2.4 Food storage: Stored foraged acorns and berries in woven baskets, meat was cooked over hot rocks from the fire

2.5 Sexual division of production: men hunted, woman gathered and prepared.

2.6 Land tenure: awarded 6.1 acres by the government but claim the Southwest regions of Oregon specifically Umpqua and Rogue areas. Each tribe had a typically 3 mile plot of land surrounding their sedentary village that they considered their own. Often around rivers.

2.7 Ceramics: mainly used wood for pots, dishes, and other utensils. They also did some weaving.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Canoes, three men could build one in a day.

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): Common age of physical menarche between 12.5-14

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): One male with many wives depending on wealth.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): sometimes boys were only 3 or 4, as were some woman. If married this young it was because the parents had purchased the marriage, and the kids aren't allowed to live together until old enough to do so. Often a young woman is married to an older man with established wealth (14 year old female to 70 year old male has been recorded).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Marriage was a business deal as well as a union between male and female. Women could not break marriage because they were typically paid for. To break that would tarnish the name of her family.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: A wealthy man might purchase more wives (polygamy) but wives were not jealous of each other for chore sharing was appreciated.

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Yes brides were purchased and marriages were arranged as “business deals,” but most often marriages were arranged at young ages to maintain a connection to various tribes (exogamy).

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Patrilineal family structure, so typical patrilineal inheritance including responsibilities and possessions. Inherit names over time, some names aren't given until adulthood but inherited nicknames are used. For example: a child's name was given to his future unborn grandson at a naming ceremony so that his spirit can look after him.

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Midwives were used after every birth, males have very little role in life of child.

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Brides from another village (exogamy).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? The role of males in conception is that of the giver of the seed and a marriage rite. Much of what happens during pregnancy is based on superstition that falls on the female. For example, if the baby has a difficult birth it means that the father was not faithful during its conception.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): The mother’s role in procreation is to incubate a new member of the community that will have much to offer the community, especially if male. She is preparing a new member for his role.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No, conception happens after marriage and continuously over time.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Rape occurred as war crimes but was considered the woman’s burden if impregnated.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Exogamous from another tribe, often wives are purchased so preferential marriage is determined based upon wealth and social status (hierarchy).
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? Women were the property of their husbands. Monogamy was the norm and breaking monogamy would tarnish the woman’s family name.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring?
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? The father would still be there, but the mother’s sisters or if no sisters then their mother would watch the children.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: older women in the tribe would always be motherly like to other children, especially within same family.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) Wealth and social status was the main factor. Often elderly men were given/purchased very young women from other tribes.
- 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 for everything.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: The Coos didn’t support incest
- 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? When a child was born, after five days a feast was held, in which the child would receive its name. The naming was done in the following way: first the guests agreed upon a name, which was submitted to the mother for approval. Next, if satisfactory, two men sitting on opposite ends of the group guests, and appointed by the nearest relatives of the parents, called out in a loud voice the name given to the child. Then the whole audience repeated it, and the ceremony was over. Children of poor parents were named by the parents themselves. A boy of 5 or 6 could not be called by his childhood name and not be mortally offended.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Preferred in the community, but marriage outside the community did occur, especially with tribes like the Coquille.
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Marriages arranged by parents of the bride, who was purchased from them. Ten fathoms of beads, a couple blankets, an otter hide, or a canoe were usually what was given.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: If a young woman didn’t want to marry a man, then the only way she could get out of it is if the man didn’t provide enough gifts or pay the family enough, so if the woman didn’t like the man, she could get out of the marriage.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: found no percentages, but death from warfare did occur.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Warfare in the tribe was minimal and depended from person to person; they were peaceful people with no jealousy or negative thoughts toward each other to keep crime low. Many of their myths talk of that.
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: No exact numbers, but if there was a murder, the murderer was expected to pay a fine to the chiefs who then gave it to the family of the murdered person.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Many relationships created in concern for external relations. All marriages were exogamous. The Coos tribe reaches over many other tribes such as Siuslaw Tribe, Lower Umpqua Tribe, Miluk Coos, and the Coos tribes split into two bands, the Hanis Coos and the Miluk Coos, so keeping business and peace between those tribes was very important.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? Found no information about the Coos being cannibals.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): The Coos people were sedentary hunters/gatherers, meaning they traveled into the forest for food and supplies but kept their village at the same location.
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): 2 Chiefs per village
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 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:
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): underground houses, lumber houses, and grass houses

- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade: Traded with fur traders initially, but traded among each other things like fur, nets, weapons, shells.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? 2 chiefs in each village, elected according to their intellectual and social qualities. They were usually wise men, good speakers, and somewhat wealthier than the rest of the people. Marriage was also an indication of social hierarchy, more wives equals more wealth.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: no specific ceremonies of great importance except shamans and deaths, feasts were held when a child was born and for the naming of the child.
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Shamans specialized in spiritual and physical health. Helped with child birthing, death, and disease. To become a shaman you had to possess all 5 shamanic powers.
- 6.2 Stimulants:
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Birthing rituals lasted for 10 days with each day bringing something different (bathing, wrapping, removal of naval) and some rituals continued on from 6-8 years old (wearing the naval in a leather satchel around the neck to prevent the child from crying and searching for its naval).
- 6.4 Other rituals: When one was murdered, they would have ceremonies that the murderer had to put on. These dances would usually last five days. This was said to turn the murderers blood black and kill him in the course of time.
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): *Arrow Young Men*: Two young men were traveling through an Earth that was only covered with water. They found five disks of dirt and began placing the disks in the water, creating land. They noticed that waves were not absorbed properly in the shore, so they split a woven basket and placed it at the shore, allowing the water to absorb and making gentler waves. Then they realized that there were no trees, so they stuck Eagle feathers into the ground and they became fir trees. They also created animals. One day they found human tracks on a beach and, after following, found a medicine man sitting atop a rock. They killed him for intruding and spilled his blood in all directions. Then one became pregnant but the child would not come out. They had to take the pregnant male to a medicine man up north, praying that the north wind shall come five times and create waves, which is where 5 breakers originated. The medicine man of the north helped the man give birth to a woman, and she caused people to multiply and inhabit the world. The two men both had bows and began shooting them at the sky. One man wanted the other to shoot his arrow at the shaft of his own so that they would become connected. They did, and when the arrows fell the two men began climbing the shafts up into the sky, looking down at the world they created.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Games are a big part of a child's life, most of their days are spent playing various games as well as learning the gender specific roles they will perform as adults. Boys rode canoes on the breaking waves in the ocean and shot arrows at bundles of grass hung from a string and tied to a branch. Girls played "cat cradle," a game created to ignore boys. Girls and boys played a game called "snipes" where they ran back and forth on a beach with the ocean waves pretending to be little birds. Another game called the "falling game" where, from descending order of height, the children would touch fingers and make the sounds of a tree falling down, when the tree would fall they yelled "BOOM!" and all fell with laughter.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Shamans were always male and had to have the 5 sacred qualities. Women are the only gender affiliated with birthing other than contraception (and shamans).
- 6.8 Missionary effect: None, mostly affected by traders.
- 6.9 RCR revival: Once a shaman became a shaman they held a dance in celebration.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Once dead a person's name is never to be spoken
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Shamanism was the main practice

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: Shamans used body paint for healing rituals, especially in birthing. They painted two lines in red and white paint from the naval to the vagina and would say "Follow me outside" to babies that were having difficult births.
- 7.2 Piercings:
- 7.3 Haircut:
- 7.4 Scarification: The Coos did not practice tattooing
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Only the wealthy (who were usually chiefs) wore beads. Others who wore buckskin hats would wear feathers in them.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: they painted themselves for dances and ceremonies
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Chiefs would wear fancy beads and feathers unlike the others
- 7.8 Missionary effect: Minimal. Coos maintain a loyalty to their personal myths and do not have a catholic or Christian stronghold.
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

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. St. Clair, Harry H., and Leo J. Frachtenberg. "Traditions of the Coos Indians of Oregon." *The Journal of America Folklore* (1888-2012): n. pag. Print.
2. Beers, Jesse. "Culture." *The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians*. N.p., 2012. Web. 2 Dec. 2012.
3. Hall, Roberta L. "Language and Cultural Affiliations of Natives Residing near the Mouth of the Coquille River before 1851." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 48.2 (1992): 165-84. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/stable/3630409?seq=8>>.
- 4) Swanton, John R. "Oregon Indian Tribes." *Access Genealogy*. US Government Printing Office, n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2012.
- 5) Frachtenberg, Leo Joachim. "Creation Myth." *Coos Texts*. New York: AMS, 1969. N. pag. *Internet Sacred Text Archive*. John Bruno Hare, 2010. Web. 6 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.sacred-texts.com>>.
- 6) Whereat, Don. *The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians: Our Culture and History*. Newport, OR: Don Whereat, 2011. Print.