

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

The Ohlone, They spoke Penutian, In the sub of the Utian language

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

ISO: 639-3

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

North central California, Monterrey and San Benito counties.

1.4 Brief history:

Formerly known as the **Costanoan**, are Native American people of the central and northern California coast.

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

From 1769 to 1833, the Spanish missions in California had a devastating effect on Ohlone culture. The Ohlone population declined steeply during this period.

1.6 Ecology:

They survived by hunting, fishing, and gathering,

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Approximately 50 nations or tribes have been recorded. With tribe populations ranging from 50 to 500 an average of (200).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Crushed acorns, seeds, nuts, berries

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Protein's consisted of hunted and trapped game (grizzly bear, elk, pronghorn, deer), fish (Salmon, Perch, Sickleback) and seafood (Mussels and Abalone). Waterfowl (ducks, geese, quail, etc.) was the primary lipid source it seems though.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Their primary weapons for hunting were nets and decoys. They don't seem to have been very violent, but I will assume the bow and arrow, rock knives, and clubs were present for warfare.

2.4 Food storage:

Smoke huts and standard drying procedures were used.

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Hunting was pretty much left to men; basket weaving was a standard process for women at the time. Women also gathered acorns and berries on occasion

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

Not so much ceramics, but there is a lot of evidence for basket weaving

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

Proscribed conditions. Basically if you make a big kill, share it with the group and when someone else gets a big kill he will share with the group. No real written rules though.

2.9 Food taboos:

There is evidence that they thanked spirits for each kill, as a method of conversation, so that leads to believe that there are certain spirits one could not eat.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Evidence of boats made of tule that they used double-bladed paddles to explore the bays around them.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

5'10" for men they were tall and strong tribes

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

unknown

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

early teens

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

a couple months in there were naming ceremonies for the child

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

3 to 4

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

There were supposedly strict rules saying 2 years between the birth of one child and intercourse.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

ranged, 16 was the youngest I saw recorded.

- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:
Few, but there was polygyny
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:
It was sort of a status symbol. If a man was wealthy enough to afford multiple then he had multiple wives.
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:
It was more a ritual to obtain a bride. The Fathers would speak behind the scenes and the young suitor would publically proposition the father of the girl he wished to propose to. Gifts would be exchanged between the suitor and the father. Normally leaving the suitor in symbolic debt to the father of the bride so that the younger man may work off his debt to his father while he and the bride are together.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:
Father gives to the son and the father or head of one family would give to another
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:
Father would teach hunting to his son along with other males in tribe. Mother would teach gathering, basket weaving and “homefront” activities to daughters
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
Surprisingly encouraged. Really made for harmonious tribes.
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):
extreme Exogamy
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?
No other fathers recognized. The one father of the one child the mother is bearing.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)
Carrying a very spiritual being. She is treated well and granted more food when there are feasts and similar. Father takes over a lot of gathering roles
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?
Conception is justified as spiritual after the actual conception has taken place.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape
No real record. Except perhaps in warfare situations there might have been.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)
Some cross tribe marriage but cross cousin seemed rare.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?
Females do not really enjoy sexual freedom. If a man has enough money he may have as many wives as he can afford.
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
If mother dies, other wives may step in to help the other child; whether the wives are married to the same man is frequent on occasion.
- 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)
Monetary, hunting skill; so these two suggest prosperity was important. Normally younger, but older men marrying younger was also possible
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
No specific examples but there are stories of famous jokers, such as animal spirits and such.
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
The father of a house would pass down what he had to his sons or son in laws. But there wasn’t really royalty. Although everyone did listen to the Shaman
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
Marriage between tribes was common.
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
At weddings the bride would carry plants and the groom would bring meat for the feast. They made sure everyone was invited. They made quilts for the groom and bride. The Ohlone tribe brought wild flowers for the bride.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
Name at birth and naming ceremony. Around adolescence boys go on a sort of spirit journey and bound with a spirit animal. They then cannot eat the meat of this spirit animal.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
it seems marriages were arranged outside the community
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
Many were arranged and they’re normally arranged by the parents. Mostly by the father.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Very few class issues. But if a boy wasn't considered particularly wealthy but the father of the bride approved then the father of the bride might let the suitor work for him under a debt of sorts.

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Minimal info on warfare is known

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

There were cases of warfare and in which case it seems there was conflict over land or resources.

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

Thievery or unnecessary attack on the family of a certain tribe.

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

At least 50 have been known to have existed at this time.

4.18 Cannibalism?

No cases of Cannibalism found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

between 50 to 500

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

would occasionally move in search of seasonal berries and such.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

Heads of families sort of elected an unofficial head of clan. There was also the shaman who always had a respected opinion

5.4 Post marital residence:

Would expand from the father of the brides house. To owning/ building own home (hut) for bride and family.

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

There were rough definition of areas. As in who's is who's? Not a very active defense. But there were definitely some conflicts caused because of territory ownership confusion

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

after the spirit journey of adolescence. The teenager no longer spends time with children. A similar pattern is found as men and women have another decade under their belts.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

Using their stories as evidence I believe there were friendly and joking relationships

5.8 Village and house organization:

small hut style place.

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

There was a common sweat lodge. It was a place of meeting and smoking and purging.

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

No account of bedding was found

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

There was an aspect to Kuksu shamanism that involved meetings of men in subterranean dance halls.

5.12 Trade:

Occasionally traded with own tribes and other nearby Natives. Would trade game and baskets for harvest crops and such.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Those who were most charitable were considered the richest.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

There were Kuksu ceremonies that were practiced in a very dance like fashion. There were seasonal ceremonies often.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

There was a Kuksu shaman who was always highly respected.

6.2 Stimulants:

Certain herbs were smoked. None were specifically named.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

There was record of a death ceremony. There would be a feast in the name of the deceased. Everyone would come and be given food and when they left they would take food with them.

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

The creation myth involves the universe creator coming down and tying a rope to Turtle. Turtle dove underwater looking for Dry land and was gone for 6 years. He came up with nothing but some dirt under his fingernails and that expanded into the universe we have now.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

The baskets they made were renowned pieces of art

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

There didn't seem to be many gender differences when it came to shamans.

6.8 Missionary effect:

It appeared that the Spanish missions that had made it there forced Catholicism on the Ohlone. The Ohlone were always returned to the missions and thus were forced to study Catholicism

6.9 RCR revival:

In recent years the Ohlone ancestors have begun reviving their culture.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

There was a spirit afterlife that could sometimes communicate with shaman.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

They didn't rename dead people, but they would celebrate their ancestors annually with a feast

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

Belief that spirits of their past and spirit world guides would point them in the necessary directions.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Tattoos were common with both men and women

7.2 Piercings:

both men and women had them

7.3 Haircut:

longer and straight for both men and women

7.4 Scarification:

not very big here

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

feathers were common adornments as Eagles were seen as magical animals

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Shamans would wear beads and many feathers

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

women would wear bracelets, but men and women both wore necklaces.

7.8 Missionary effect:

Minimal. Most still wore their items

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

The same ancestor celebrating societies have popped up and their adornment is becoming more common.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

Similar to our modern ones

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

Sororate

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

Bean, Lowell John, ed. 1994. *The Ohlone: Past and Present Native Americans of the San Francisco Bay Region*. Menlo Park, California: Ballena Press Publication. ISBN 0-87919-129-5. Includes Leventhal et al., *Ohlone Back from Extinction*.

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