

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Okanagon (Okanagan); Sinkaietk or Southern Okanagon, and Northern Okanagon; Salish speaking people. (1) Okanagon-Colville, Okanogan. Salishan, Interior; Salish, Southern. (2)
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): North central Washington, and adjacent British Columbia. (1) South central British Columbia, east of Fraser Valley and west of Kootenai. Also in United States. Colville Reservation, Washington. (2)
- 1.4 Brief history: The whole book is set in 1932, and only mentions brief instances of “in the old days”. Much of the information in the book is based on individual accounts of informants for the author.
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Christianity may have introduced the idea that the universe had been created by the supreme god to the Okanagon people. They had no story of creation.(1)
- 1.6 Ecology: Territory comprised of the drainage system of the Okanagon River and the upper Methow River, both northern tributaries of the Columbia River, from Okanagon Lake and the Similkameen valley in British Columbia southward to the mouth of the Methow. (1)
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population: has not much exceeded 300 since the fur traders came into this country, sometime between 1780 and 1841. Population as of 1907: 348. Now, a few remaining families are found on gov't allotments scattered in the vicinity. (1) 400 in Canada. 110 United States (2000 census) (2)

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Roots such as camas and kouse(?). Wild carrots, wild onions, potatoes and pine tree sap were taken during April and May. Seeds, nuts, mushrooms were also sought and consumed. (1)
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Salmon. Two distinct seasons influence where and when the Okanagon hunt/gather food. Bears were taken in March and April, soon after they come out of hibernation because they were still fat. During April and May, people left their winter quarters for the bitter-root areas. Men hunted while women dug. From June-October salmon were running, and the bulk of roots and berries were ripening along the river. Trips were made to hunt for camas and rabbits, and other hunting. The people made semi-permanent camps at salmon traps, or temporarily at root and berry grounds. October brought the great fall hunts for deer. Groups of families camped together in the hills, men hunting, women staying at the camp, cutting and drying meat, and digging roots and gathering moss. Rabbits, beavers, ground hogs, ground squirrels, ducks/geese, eggs, and other various birds were hunted. (1)
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Self and sinew-backed bows were in use. Arrows for small game were not provided stone heads, but were only sharpened to a point. War arrows and those for larger game were fitted with bone or flint heads. Sometimes arrows both for war and chase were poisoned with a concoction of rattlesnake heads, or yellow jacket nest. War clubs made of the “slave-killer” type were made of a kind of stone; deer-horn clubs made of horn from which the tines had been cut. Spears of various lengths were used in warfare, and to a very limited extent in deer hunting. Spears were not thrown; they were thrust, held at the end of the shaft with the thumb back and knuckles up, hand moving forward from over the shoulder. Salmon/fish spears were utilized. Shields were used in warfare; mainly as parrying instruments, held in the left hand by a man with a club. One type was circular, one was square. Armor was made of thick deer and elk rawhide among the southern bands. Among northern bands, armor was made of eight (?) thicknesses of tanned moose hide. (1)
- 2.4 Food storage: Stored in arbors (15-20 ft sq., 7.5-8 ft off the ground) in the woods, rock shelters, pits in the ground, inside houses. (1)
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men hunted, while women stayed behind at the camps and gathered roots and berries, and prepared/dried the meat. (1)
- 2.6 Land tenure: Very mobile. Moved freely. (1)
- 2.7 Ceramics: Nothing of ceramics is mentioned, although there are extensive sections (in reference) of different types of baskets used for various things by the Okanagon. (1)
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Each woman dried her own lot of camas roots and carried them home, keeping it for her family and to trade as the occasion arose. (1)
- 2.9 Food taboos: During the first three days of the fall hunt, women could not eat the ribs of the deer unless they were dried. None of the inside parts could be eaten by them until the fall hunt was ended. During this hunt, women must not go upstream from camp nor beyond the hunters to fetch wood, or for any purpose. No woman might touch slain deer nor walk in that part of the house where deer were placed. If she made a mistake, she would usually tell. Men must then sweat and prepare their sweathouse with fir boughs before they could go out for deer again (2-3 days). Women must not be permitted to cross the trail of a deer while it was fresh. (1)
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: Dugout canoes used to some extent by S. Okanagon, but were scarce. Bark canoes altogether absent, but were common among the N. Okanagon. Rafts, made of logs tied together with service berry or other withes, were also used to some extent by the N. Okanagon. Spruce bark canoes abundant among N. Okanagon, some families owning two. Maximum length 14 feet, maximum load 4 people. (1)

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): N/A (1)
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): N/A (1)

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): N/A (1)
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): N/A (1)
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): N/A (1)

- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): N/A (1)
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): N/A (1)
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No numerical figures presented. Adultery was a reason for divorce. A man or woman may also grow tired of their mate and leave, or force the other to leave (usually the woman with children). If a woman was married to an older man, a younger former lover of hers may come kidnap her. Often camps would divide, and feuds arise over marital infidelities. Feuds lasted generations if they led to killing. (1)
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Most men who were married had at least two wives, but chiefs, shamans, and good hunters often had more. Polygamy is mentioned several times (in resource). A man with several wives may leave each one with her family, or share a house with them all and takes turns staying the night with each woman. Many times sisters married the same man. Often times the man had a favorite wife (loved her more, usually the first), that had authority over the others. (1)
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Other than by infant betrothal marriage consisted in the boy's parents taking seven to ten horses to the girl's parents and bringing her back. A year later the girl's parents returned equivalent gifts. The exchange of presents often an arranged marriage of infants, mostly of food, was given to the boy and girl, symbolic of the pursuits of each sex. (1)
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Three types of inheritable properties: material possessions, personal names, and power. Power is inherited in a dream. (1)
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: If a man were married to just one woman, they would live with either of the parents for some time, and then move to the other set of parents. They would usually stay with the males family first, and the woman would help her mother in law. Specific circumstances dictated how close this relationship was and how much they shared and did together, and how much they did separately (of chores, cooking, eating, supplies, etc.). After some time, they could move on their own, but often did not do this until they had many children. (1)
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Nothing about homosexuals are mentioned, although berdaches, or transvestites were known. They were described as individuals who, though male, preferred woman's dress and occupations. Not considered particularly powerful. People much given to joking might make such a one his butt. (1)
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): No pattern necessarily. See 4.29 (1).
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?: It seems to be known that the father plays a role in the impregnation of a woman. They (should) know who the father is because the woman (married) is supposed to be only with her husband (adultery frowned upon). (1)
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): Nothing is specifically mentioned of the woman's role in pregnancy, it seems that they have a general understanding of how it works (1)
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? N/A (1)
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: Girls commonly wore a broad and of buckskin between the legs as a protection against rape. (1)
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): Not apparently. (1)
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: Chastity in a girl was valued. Larger gifts would be given for girls with the reputation for it. Illegitimate births occurred, and the shame of them was lived down. At the time of the occurrence, it was considered rather shameful, and the girl felt it. (1)
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: None so recorded. (1)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? N/A (1)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: N/A (1)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: In a sense: when the baby was born, the father was notified. He shot arrows, beat a dog, forced a horse to run hard, and performed other such acts in order to assure the safety of the child. (1)
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older):
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: N/A (1)
- 4.24 Joking relationships?: Harsh words and unkindness appeared to be absent, no personal jokes or sly digs. Great tolerance on the few occasions it was needed. Joking between individuals was fairly common. Verbal jokes are common, practical jokes are rare. (1)
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: After a death, forms of address toward certain relatives change. A widow and her husband's brothers use a new reciprocal term. The parents of a deceased mate and the living spouse use a new reciprocal term, and a special term is used for a deceased parent's siblings. (1)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No marriage to a blood relative was allowed. Incest was exceedingly rare, it never occurred between parent and child. Rarely, young brothers and sisters might have incestuous relations. Both children would be killed. This happens often in myths. (1)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: The information with regard to the ceremony of marriage is in rather a confused state. It was, most of the Sinkaietk insist, a completely informal affair. "It was not marriage; it was just taking each other." Various patterns which were claimed to have existed are here: Childhood betrothal, with subsequent exchanges between parents, and unceremonious consummation; Payment by the groom, to be repaid later, but not ceremoniously, and not in full; Purchase, on part of a wealthy or unattractive man, particularly with a girl having a reputation for chastity. There were no ceremonies, no gifts, no special clothing. (1)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?: The naming feast took place about a year after a child was born. It was at this time that the full introduction of the infant into society took place. There was no special way of selecting the name to be given. The grandparent who was to perform the ceremony might make the decision. It was always that of some dead relative on either side of the house. A name of an elderly could give their name away only to a relative. At puberty or after, a man might change his name for a variety of reasons: in honor of a newly deceased relative, at suggestions of his power, or for variation or amusement. (1)

- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): It was preferred to marry within the tribe, but marriages outside of the tribe took place. Rich and poor married quite freely, a man was poor only because he lacked power. Marriages took place occasionally with all the surrounding peoples: Chelan, Methow, Moses Columbia, Nez Percé, Yakima, Coeur d'Alène, Wenatchi, and Thompson. If from another tribe, the groom's father would bring first to the bride's parents. Returning with the girl, he carried presents from her parents. Sometimes there were gifts exchanged in return, and again from the groom's family to show appreciation for the value of the bride. Commonly there was a feast, supplied by the parents of either bride or groom. The girl's father announced to the guests that his daughter was married. There were no ceremonies, no gifts, no special clothing. (1)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?: No marriage to a blood relative was allowed. Many second cousins married. It was preferable to marry "a daughter of a man who had married one's grandmother's sister". The marriage of close relatives was a disgrace, but after a lapse of some time, the offense was forgiven or forgotten. (1)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: The only mention of conflict of interest is when it is the interest of the girl, or the lover of a girl to be married to another man, but she usually seems to accept that she is to be married. Women do have some choice in their decision to get married or not, and to whom, when it is not arranged. (1)

Warfare/homicide

- The Sinkaietk have evidently been a peaceful people for at least several centuries. ". . . Honest, quiet tribe. . . They do not muster more than 200 warriors." They fought to protect themselves in case of attack by other tribes, and the only recorded instances of warfare outside their immediate territory were those in which the Sinkaietk pursued a raiding party of enemy warriors. (1)
- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: N/A (1)
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Minimal accounts of Okanagon chasing enemy raiders; and account of the Okanagon killing the chief Shuswap warrior. Several cases of ingroup killing reported. (1)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Sometimes a man would kill his daughter for disgracing the family (based on desire to pursue relations with men than anything else). If a woman had a child illegitimately, and could hide the birth, it was said that sometimes the child was killed. (1)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): They fought with tribes, made treaties with them, and traded with them. Deny any participation in battle with whites, and were well disposed with whites in their first contact. (1)
- 4.18 Cannibalism? No case of cannibalism is recorded. (1)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No numerical information given. (1)
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): At all seasons of the year some families live in the hills. Single families are moving throughout the year, but at all times the villages along the rivers have the densest population, more so in winter than at any other season. (1)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): No feeling of class distinction among these people. Every individual is free to make their own decisions and to choose their own manner of existence within the limitations of the culture pattern of the group. Thus, a man may fish, hunt, or gamble when and where he chooses. (1)
- 5.4 Post marital residence: A man may establish himself and his family in any one of the village sited belonging to his immediate band or to a friendly band. Wherever he resides he must recognize the chief of that area as leader, but if the methods of a specific chief are displeasing, he may always move elsewhere. (1)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (Defined boundaries, active defense): Since raiding seems to have been a chronic misfortune to cope with, the Sinkaietk were vigilant and constantly prepared for an attack. (1)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): All ages and genders interact consistently. (1)
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: There was no conventionalized joking relationship. Joking between individuals was, on the other hand, fairly common. Verbal joking was common, practical joking was not. (1)
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Two or three houses are always built together, a family never attempting winter in isolation. The mat houses are built in a single row along a creek or river. Ten or twelve lodges (underground) were found in each winter village. A winter village of one group had one long house, holding three to six families, with one or two tipis, or a larger gillage as three or four long houses with five or six tipis. (1)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): N/A (1)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? N/A (1)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: An individual receives his nationality, not from the place of his nativity, but from the place where he resides the greater portion of his life. Thus, a Sinkaietk child captured and raised by the Blackfoot becomes, to a Sinkaietk mind, a Blackfoot of Sinkaietk parentage. (1)
- 5.12 Trade: Most trade routes followed the rivers prior to the coming of the horse. Trading is a complement of food gathering. Trade in food is carried on entirely by the women. Some people travel a great distance to hunt and trade. Horses were traded to the Plains People because they could catch buffalo. (1)
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: In each band of Sinkaietk chiefs are hereditary and the most important persons in the tribe regarding moral influence. Not necessarily the wealthiest. This is usually the case, however, because of the gifts received from the people. A chief and his family exemplify (are supposed to) virtues of the group. (1)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: Power is obtained through quests and signs from animals or other symbolizations. One can gain multiple powers, and also lose power. This is a part of their life that is constantly at work and aids them daily in their lives. (1)

- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Both men and women could be shamans. They all had some general curing ability, and their powers were usually specialized. Sometimes they had several powers. Two schools of Okanagon medicine are clearly to be distinguished: one secular, employing splints, bandages, hot and cold applications, herbs, and so on, and open to all who could learn the techniques; the other religious, closely bound up with power, entered only by those whose guardian spirits, especially strong, had directed them into the curing profession, and who, usually, had given several winter dances. (1)
- 6.2 Stimulants: Nothing other than tobacco mentioned. (1)
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Mourning took place when a person died, and the body was prepared and buried, but no account of any type of ritual is mentioned. (1)
- 6.4 Other rituals: Obtaining and using ones power(s) is ritualistic. (1)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): They had no story of creation until possibly Christianity introduced the idea that God is the creator of all things.
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The Okanagon had many games including the hang game, card games, stories, dice games, shinny, racing and wrestling, ball bat and hole game, hoop and pole game, etc. They crafted baskets that they used for their daily life and work. They also had many dances including: the winter dance, the dream dance, war dance. Drums were not know to be used, other instruments such as shakers were known.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: N/A (1)
- 6.8 Missionary effect: see 1.5
- 6.9 RCR revival: N/A (1)
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Not mentioned (1)
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? Not mentioned (1)
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy? Not mentioned (1)
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The religion of the Okanagon expressed itself in the affiliation of the individual man or woman with a material object or class of objects, usually with an animal, bird, or insect. "Power" in English refers to this relationship, as well as to anything which functioned for a person in the way, and to the physical and spiritual potency which one possessed by virtue of this affiliation. (1)

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: Face and body painting was used only on special occasions, such as dances. Red, yellow, and white clay mixed with grease were used as paints. Alder wood furnished a dark red, charcoal black, both with a grease base. Sometimes the whole face was painted, Women never painted about the mouth or chin, and never used white. At puberty, girls painted their faces red and yellow except for the chin and mouth. A boy on his puberty quest painted himself red. Painting was more common when work was light. Paint was applied with a tiny stick over a base of deer grease. (1)
- 7.2 Piercings: Both men and women pierced the upper lip from side to side just below the nose and inserted a shell or string with a bead on each end. A very few wealthy people also pierced the nasal septum and wore a shell through it. When girls were two or three years old, their ear-lobes were rubber numb and pierced with a bone awl. Bone ear ornaments and flattened gold nuggets were also worn. Boys had their ears pierced too, though not as frequently as girls. (1)
- 7.3 Haircut: Men wore their hair in two braids hanging in front of the ears or on the side, and suspended in front of the shoulders. The front hair was cut off at about the level of the eyebrows and combed straight back. Sometimes the braids were tied together and drawn over the shoulders so the joined ends rested against the back of the neck. When riding women tied their braids together in front to keep them from blowing about. At puberty girls folded up each braid and fastened it with a buckskin thong so that a roll hung on each side of the face. Men and women wrapped bits of fur into their braids. Porcupine quills were used in these knots. At the winter Power dance, both men and women left their hair loose. Grease was applied to the hair by women, and less frequently by men. Combs were made of dogwood or willow, with hemp or buckskin. Men plucked out their facial hair. (1)
- 7.4 Scarification: No mention of scarification (1)
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Feathers, body paint, special clothing, piercings, props used ceremoniously, such as rattles or (uncertain) drums.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Dances: Body paint and special clothing used. The marks which the dancer painted on his face or body were determined individually in the same way. All such adornments helped the wearer spiritually and displayed his power. Dancers unbound their hair and let it hang loose during the ceremonies.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: The shaman painted figures of his most powerful guardian spirit on some article of his clothing if the spirit had told him to do so and wore this garment at the winter dance only. Women did not do this, but might have special dance garments with perforations, or feathers attached to the shoulders, according to the dictates of their power. (At dances). (1)
- 7.8 Missionary effect: As a result of the teachings of the Roman Catholic mission, few children now (1930's) undertake the quest of acquiring their powers through going out into the woods and mountains in search of a guardian spirit. (1)
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: All cousins, parallel and cross, are siblings, addressed as older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister. Parents are man's father, woman's father, man's mother, woman's mother, and children are son and daughter. Nomenclature for paternal and maternal affiliations is bifurcate collateral in the parent and grandparent generations. Maternal and paternal aunts and uncles are differentiated by four terms, which are also applied to their cross and parallel cousins and cousins-in-law.
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: A man may marry the sister of his wife. (1)
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): Mackenzie Basin (1)

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- Women who were not interested in getting married, and liked to hunt, were not called by the same term as the berdaches (transvestites). It was not considered by the community to be really a sexual disturbance. Women of this type were sometimes forced by their fathers to marry some satisfactory suitor.
- If a man saw a woman exposed, she had to marry him.

Numbered references

1. General Series in Anthropology. Number 6. The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanagon of Washington. Cline, Walter, et al. George Banta Publishing Company. 1938.