

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Wenatchi, Columbia-Wenatchi (alternative names are: Chelan, Columbian, Moses-Colombia Salish, Moses-Colombia, Nxa'amxcin, Wenatchee), Southern Interior Salish (Salishan) (1)

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): between 42N 49N and 117W 120W, North central Washington, Colville Reservation

1.4 Brief history:

There is a considerable difference of opinion among earlier authorities as to the identity and number of bands included under the term Wenatchi. Historically and in later anthropological treatments, the name Wenatchi has been differentially applied to one of several bands of Middle Columbia Salish living among the western banks of the Columbia River and on the Wenatchee, Entiat, Chelan rivers, and is sometimes used to include those on the Methow River.(4)

Dialectally, the Wenatchi are classed as part of the larger Middle Columbia Salish, a term includes the Columbia and Moses Band Salish living east of the Columbia River in central Washington. The dialect group, in this case, includes Columbia, Chelan, Methow, Wenatchi and the St'ske't amix. The last-named group is part of the Wenatchi band. (Ray 1933; 10-11). Within the total Middle Columbia Salish group minor dialectic differences do occur; slight differences in speech and a few words do occur between those living on the west and east bank of the Columbia River. (4)

The Wenatchi proper, through their chief Tkolukn, and possibly the other bands, were parties to the treaty of 1855. It was planned to remove the proposed Yakima reservation of all of these upper Columbia tribes. The treaty meant little to them, however and very few ever joined the Yakima. Some eventually settled on the Colville reservation, but the majority of the Wenatchi bands exercised the privilege of taking allotments within their native range.

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

Since early days they have been on intimate terms with the Yakima bands, and are much intermarried, so that many Shahaptian words have been incorporated into their language; and indeed the remnants of the Salishan bands of the upper Yakima River have adopted the Shahaptian tongue.

1.6 Ecology:

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

Their numbers were conservatively estimated to be 1,400 in 1780 for the Wenatchi tribe itself.

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Although not mentioned as a staple, berries were a carbohydrate source. Chokeberries and huckleberries were two of the most important.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Salmon was the staple along with, depending on the season, spring roots, game, Bitterroot in April

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bow and arrow

2.4 Food storage: Dried salmon and berries was very important to the Wenatchi bands. They crushed and combined them to make into cakes to be consumed during the winter.

2.5 Sexual division of production: Women tanned hides and weaved baskets. Men chipped new points and repaired bows.

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Used canoes

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):

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):

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity portable? 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?

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)

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

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 seems to have mostly taken place within the tribe/band but a deal of marrying outside one's own close tribe did happen with friendly neighbors.

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Leading chieftain families would often arrange marriages between their children into prominent families of neighboring tribes.

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

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

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

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Changed locations with the seasons while having a permanent settlement for the winter months.

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

The Wenatchi were a “tribe” less in a political sense than linguistic. This was the case with most Indians on the Columbia Plateau. Although the Wenatchi were also unified geographically, the bands never used a common name for themselves or recognized a common chief. Rather, each band was autonomous under the leadership of its own chief and headsman and was known by its own

name. The trend of all bands to unify under a single tribal chief developed only when they were collectively threatened by war with another tribe or by the invading whites.

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):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Constructed ground dwellings with sticks and covered them with mats and straw for their semi-permanent winter dwellings. They were big enough to host multiple families. Winter villages seemed to be their only permanent residence, in which they had subterranean pit houses. Summer lodges consisted of a circular framework of three foundation poles around which was laid tule mats. After the introduction of the horse from the plains Indians, buffalo skin tepees came to replace many of the tule mat lodges.

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Had huge annual gatherings of Wenatchi bands and other mid-Columbia tribes where council, trade, socializing and horse racing took place. By the mid-eighteenth century the councils were frequently concerned about relations with the whites.

5.12 Trade: Traded copper, beads and other items obtained from the coast with surrounding native groups. Introduction of the horse enabled the Wenatchi to deal in more bulky but valued items on the coast such as buffalo robes, dried berries, and root cakes as well as smaller items like stone pipes, tobacco, Indian hemp, and dressed skins in return for white dentalium shells, highly prized large, bright colored shells and other objects.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Had shamans, or a religious leader of the tribe

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Believed that during adolescence one could acquire a supernatural power for guidance and protection throughout life. Followed a spirit quest that lasted several days or more at a remote location. Had a roots feast each spring. Roots were gathered then ceremonially distributed and eaten by all in reverence to the Creator. A similar ceremony inaugurated the salmon fishing season and was known as *Quiyachetum*.

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation): Believed that the Columbia River had once been devoid of fish until Coyote broke the dam made by the five evil Beaver Women in the lower Columbia. The fish then followed him upstream; and, because the people along the Wenatchee River treated him graciously, he promised that the fish would return each spring

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect: There was influence of Catholicism after fur traders began to arrive in larger numbers. Several people were baptized at Fort Colvile and several more at fort Okanogan a few days later. (2)

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Believed in a Creator that had fashioned everything to have usefulness. Firmly believed that in ancient times before the appearance of man, Coyote and other animal people did actually exist. Evidence of their actions were visible in such formations as the Owl Rocks and Saddle Rocks near present Wenatchee and, as the elders could point out, Coyote's Race Track on the Camas Land.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Garments were richly ornamented with colorful quillwork and fringing. Feathers and beads were very much a part of their adornment as well, decorating traditional head gear and breast "plates".

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

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):

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Numbered references

1. ethnologue.com
2. The Wenatchi Indian: Guardians of the Valley. Edited by Richard D. Scheuerman
4. Interior Salish and Eastern Washintong Indians IV: Ethnohistorical Reports on Aboriginal Land Use and Occupancy (Spokan, Palus, Columbia Salish, and Wenatchi Salish) Stuart A. Chalfant