

## **1. Description**

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Catawba, Catawba, Southeastern Siouan

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Catawba River Valley, From Southeastern North Carolina to Northeastern South Carolina 35.426803,-80.956741

1.4 Brief history: There are two theories about the Catawba's origins. One theory states that the Catawba migrated from the North, most from likely Canada, and battled the Cherokee to obtain their land. Another theory states that the Catawba had been in the region as long as the Cherokees. It is likely that they were significantly influenced by Mississippian culture in terms of their politics. Immediately upon European contact the Catawba suffered major wipeouts due to diseases brought by the Spanish. A series of epidemics from 1540 to the late 1700's helped to desecrate their culture, making it difficult to study their customs before contact. Furthermore, the Catawba Nation is actually comprised of a number of diverse and displaced tribes, who came together for protection throughout the 1700's, making it even more difficult to have a consistent understanding of their culture. The Catawba people are now primarily Mormon. As of 1960, the Catawba language is a dead language.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Most denominations did not bother to proselytize to the Catawba's until the Mormons. Traders in the Southeast influenced native cultures in the region through their desire for slaves, and deer skin. This, coupled with the availability of guns, caused increased intertribal warfare.

1.6 Ecology: They lived in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, which was a temperate and forested environment bordered by rivers.

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: It is difficult to determine their population size, as different smaller groups joined the nation after displacement and disease ravaged them and their homelands.

## **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Maize, beans, chenopod, barley

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Game animals, small animals, birds, Hickory nuts, acorns

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: The blowgun was used by the historically Catawba to hunt small animals. They also had metal weapons like axes, celts and blades. Later when the Spanish came they became dependent on guns and rifles.

2.4 Food storage: Ceramic pots were used for food storage.

2.5 Sexual division of production: It was the women's job to gather all the plant foods while men hunted and fished. Women practiced weaving and basketry.

2.6 Land tenure: They practiced small-scale agriculture, growing crops from Mesoamerica like maize.

2.7 Ceramics: Ceramics were used in the Catawba Valley from prehistoric periods. There are several phases of pottery in the Catawba Valley from as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and onward into historical times.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

### **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): male 18 female 15

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): male 18 female 15

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygynous marriages were practiced historically, and even into recent history as the Catawba adopted Mormonism.

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

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Bilineal, both sons and daughters received an equal share of the inheritance

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Parents generally do not like their married children to leave the home, even though residence is patrilocal.

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 partible? 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? Adultery was taken seriously. Women caught in adultery had their hair cut off, the male offender had a piece of his ear removed.

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: Amongst other Southeast tribes there is evidence of couvades, but there is not significant evidence for the occurrence of couvades amongst the Catawba. This may just be because the Catawba culture was wiped out more successfully during Colonialism, and therefore it is very possible this would have occurred earlier on.

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: Paternal and maternal lines of descent were equally significant to the Catawba.

- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: In the past they did not marry their cousins because it was considered incestuous.
- 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?)
- 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:
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: When the traders began asking for slaves and providing guns, out-group conflict increased.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):  
There are reports that they had some conflicts with the Cherokee over hunting grounds. They were highly connected to nearby and even distant tribes through trade networks. When native societies collapsed, the Catawban Nation took in many displaced groups.
- 4.18 Cannibalism? Not that I could find

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

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The Catawba historically had a chief who doled out punishments and fines. In the past the chief system was hereditary, but now the chief is chosen through election. They also had to assistant chiefs and a council. Prehistorically the Catawba were also organized into chiefdoms, evidenced by elaborate burial mounds.
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Patrilocal
- 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): Prehistorically in the Catawba Valley there were earthen burial mounds and substructure mounds.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- 5.12 Trade: There were extended trade networks that ran all along the Atlantic Coast and inland. They used commodities such as copper, mica and shells as currency.
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? Based on archaeological from 400-500 years before present, there is evidence of social hierarchies through elite burial sites. These people were prehistorically organized into chiefdoms.

### **6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR) Catawba religious beliefs, mortuary customs...**

- 6 Time allocation to RCR: Basically, after the conversion of the majority of the tribe to Mormonism in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, most of the tribes ritual and religious

knowledge was lost. The last dances were practiced in the 1870's, and by the time ethnographers started studying the Catawba, even the oldest members of the tribe only knew of the older customs through memory.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): In more recent times there are medicine men whose purpose is strictly curative, direct evidence of shamans is not present.

6.2 Stimulants: They used tobacco for divination during council meetings about how the council should proceed. After European contact they began using alcohol in many of their rituals.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): When a person died they put a bowl of water by their head, and when the water in the bowl rippled of no accord it was considered that the dead persons spirit had drunk the water, and was moving on to the other realm. Until that happened the relatives would wait by the bowl for up to three days, fasting. The body was then buried under the house and underneath their deathbed. Prehistorically they may have practiced human sacrifice. This is evidenced by archaeological data that shows an elite buried with several other bodies. These mass burials could also be attributed to mass death from disease, however.

6.4 Other rituals: Divination rituals involving water, fire, and smoke. Other Southeastern tribes practiced crystal gazing, chanting, ceremonial scarification and other rituals, but due to a number of factors related to civilization, most of the Catawbas original ritual practices are forgotten. They practiced a variety of dances, such as the Green Corn Dance and the Wild Goose Dance.

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Gourd rattles, turtle shell rattles, drums. There were Chunkey stones found in prehistoric burials. Chunkey was a game played by Mississippian people.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: Historically, women always dug the grave for the deceased.

6.8 Missionary effect: Contemporarily, Mormonism is the primary religion practiced amongst the Catawba. This is because other denominations did not bother to missionary to them, however the outcast Mormons and the Catawba could relate to each other, and thus the conversion happened easily.

6.9 RCR revival: There is some syncretism in the way the Catawba practice Mormonism. However, because of the inundation of European culture in the Carolina's early on, much of the Catawba's religious beliefs were already mostly diluted by the time the Mormons missionaries reached them in the mid 1800's.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: They believed that it was ghosts who brought disease.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? The name of the dead could not be spoken for a year.

6.12 Is there teknonymy? Not that I found

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): It is likely that the Catawba practiced an animistic spirituality, but by the time ethnographers began researching the Catawba in the 30's, most of their religion was already lost. Some of the older people at that time did believe in little people, witchcraft, and there is evidence of informal divination practices.

## **7. Adornment**

7.1 Body paint: I did not find evidence of this.

7.2 Piercings: I did not find evidence for this.

- 7.3 Haircut: I did not find evidence for specific haircuts, but at one burial site several people had flattened heads.
- 7.4 Scarification: In other nearby tribes they practiced scarification, so it is likely that at some point in Catawban history this could have occurred, but there is no record of it.
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): Feathers were of high importance to them. The chief carried a staff adorned with eagle or turkey feathers. They also had shell beads, copper beads, and stone and ceramic beads.
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: Through archaeological research shell masks and shell gorgets have been discovered.
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:
- 7.8 Missionary effect: Long before Mormonism would have altered their dress and appearance they were already wearing European clothes and dependent on European goods.
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Not that I could find

## **8. Kinship systems**

- 8.1 Sibling classification system:
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: Levirate: this was not strictly practiced, but considered acceptable. Based on linguistic studies, it seems that a sororate system may have been practiced or at least accepted historically.
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

The Catawba culture was basically altered very early on by European contact. They lost their traditional culture and identity more so than even other tribes in the area so it is very hard to study what they were like before contact. There aren't any good, recent ETHNOGRAPHIES on them. There are archaeological sources I found but not that answer all of the questions.

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