

## **1. Description**

### 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

The Mandan society belonging to the Siouan, Siouan Proper, Central, Mandan language family (1)

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

MHQ (1)

### 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

The Mandan traditionally lived along a 300 mile stretch of the Missouri river in North Dakota. Their home range started in the headwaters of the Knife River in the Killdeer Mountains Latitude: 47-26'45" N, Longitude: 102-55'58" W and stretched to the confluence of the Heart River and the Missouri near present day Mandan, North Dakota in Morton County Latitude: 46-49'46" N, Longitude: 100-53'17" W (5, pg. 84).

### 1.4 Brief history:

Aboriginal settlements of the Mandan are found along the Missouri River in North and South Dakota. Early historic documents suggest that before the smallpox epidemic of 1781 there were from six to nine Mandan villages along the Heart and Missouri rivers. Following the epidemic, these villages merged and moved north to the Knife River where Lewis and Clark found the Mandan living in the villages of Mitutanka and Nuptadi and the Hidatsa living nearby in three villages. David Thompson found the Mandan and Hidatsa sharing Villages, but by the time of Lewis and Clark, each village was inhabited primarily by members of a single tribe. The Mandan villages were composed of earth lodges arranged randomly around a central plaza with a shrine and ceremonial earth lodge. The earth lodges were constructed with four center support posts and an outer wall of smaller logs. Roof beams were laid close together from the wall to the center supports and covered with mats. Everything was covered with sod, so the whole structure took the shape of a windowless earthen dome with an elongated earth-covered entryway. The Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Knife River became centers of commerce on the upper Missouri and steam-boats regularly docked there. But the Sioux and smallpox reduced the number of warriors to the point where defense became difficult, and around 1845 refugee Mandan and Hidatsa moved upriver to establish Like-a-Fishhook Village. In 1862, the Arikara moved into the village, where the three tribes lived until the early 1880s, when government officials convinced them to move to ranches scattered across the Fort Berthold Reservation (2).

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

In the mid-1800s Father DeSmet, a Catholic priest, made regular visits to Like-a-Fishhook Village where he taught Christianity and baptized children. In 1876, a Congregational missionary established a permanent mission and school that attracted a number of converts. Today, Mandan participate in both Indian and non-Indian religion (2).

### 1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

The Mandan lived along two tributaries of the Missouri River in North Dakota and thus enjoyed a fertile environment beneficial to their semi-agricultural subsistence.

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

The Mandan population in 1750 is estimated to have been approximately 9,000 individuals, with a decline to approximately 4,400 individuals between the years 1750-1780, with the 1781 small pox epidemic leaving only 1,000-1,500 individuals. The Mandan were further reduced by the 1837 small pox epidemic which left them with fewer than 150 left alive. Their population for the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is estimated to have never reached more than 250-420 people. As of 1986 there is believed to be only 400 people descendent from Mandan lines making them nearly extinct as an independent society (9, pg. 352) & (1).

## **2. Economy**

### 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

As a mainly agricultural society corn and beans were common place carbohydrate staples, but other items such as squash, pumpkin and other gathered foods were common in Mandan society (5, pg. 180).

## 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

The Mandan traditionally relied equally upon hunting for their protein, their traditionally homeland provided an abundance of game which allowed them to not only rely on buffalo but also elk, deer, bighorn, bear, beavers, rabbits, ducks and geese As well as various fishes. Other animals such as wolves, foxes, ermine and panthers were hunted solely for their hides and birds of prey were hunted for their plumes (5, pg. 120).

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

The Mandan like other plains tribes used the traditionally cache of weapons: the bow and arrow, lance, shields, knives and tomahawks. Reference has also been made to a weapon known as a bow-lance, possibly a reference to an atlatl typed weapon. It appear that knives and other points followed the pattern of other indigenous societies, first being made from stone before evolving into steel points with the introduction of steel. Their bows were traditionally made from ash or elm wood and strung with twisted sinew, however, bone and/or horn bows have been found but appear to uncommon. Lances were generally six to eight foot long with double edge blades attached to one end and with the shaft being ornamented with tufts if eagle plumes (5, pg. 112).

## 2.4 Food storage:

Like other sedentary tribes the Mandan employed caches and storage pits for food storage. In the fall after the harvest, the corn was dried, shelled and then stored in deep pits, which generally were eight feet deep, with an opening just large enough for one individual to get in. Cache were also used to store food products were depending on the nature of the food could remain for years (5, pg. 110).

## 2.5 Sexual division of production:

Men were hunters and warriors, and the women were responsible for home and garden. The women constructed and owned the earth lodges as well as the results of their labor. Men and women could own the rights to certain skills and were paid by others wishing to learn those skills (2).

## 2.6 Land tenure:

“The Mandan shared a large buffalo-hunting territory with other tribes of the region. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 recognized Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara claims to 12 million acres of hunting land. In the bottomlands near the village, garden plots were marked out by the leading man of the family and cleared and worked by the women, the products of these gardens belonged to the women” (2).

## 2.7 Ceramics:

Mandan pottery was extremely common and of overall excellent quality, which is in of its self interesting considering that the Mandan lived on the Northwestern limit of the Native American pottery area. It was traditionally thin walled and black in color or occasionally a dull orange or red from the firing process. These wares were characteristically decorated in two forms, the incised and the cord-marked patterns (4, pg. 5).

## 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

When a hunter killed an animal, he generally was entitled to the liver, the kidneys and the marrow from the thigh bones, and shared the meat with the rest of the village. Furthermore, the entrails and the skins belonged to the hunter, however if a man of prominence came up shortly after the kill he could demand any part of the kill and was entitled to it and thus could not be refused (10, pg. 346).

## 2.9 Food taboos:

Evidence of food taboos are lacking however, the Mandan had an aversion to eating horse, ermine, scavenger birds such as the turkey-buzzard because they feed on dead bodies, and also greatly avoid serpents (10, pg. 277).

## 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

The Mandan employed a “bull boat” similar to that used by the Dakota and Lakota. These crafts were circular, made over a frame of bent willows, which consisted of two hoops held in position by cross pieces; the whole frame was covered with rawhide stretched and sewed to the upper rim. They generally averaged about six feet in diameter and were capable of carrying very heavy loads. The Mandan fashioned a paddle out of a long pole, five feet long, that was spilt at one end where a board was inserted and bound. These boats were traditionally paddled from the standing position making half a revolution every time it was paddled (5, pg. 113).

### **3. Anthropometry**

#### 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

Stature measurements are lacking for traditional Mandan's, however they have been described as "robust, broad shouldered, muscular individuals . . . and over 6 feet tall (10, pg. 255).

#### 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

Information Unavailable

### **4. Life History, mating, marriage**

#### 4.1 Age at menarche (f):

Information Unavailable

#### 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

Information Unavailable

#### 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

Information Unavailable

#### 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Information Unavailable

#### 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

Information Unavailable

#### 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Information Unavailable

#### 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Percentages are unavailable, nevertheless, polygamy was common in Mandan society with men seldom having more than four wives, generally seen among men of importance, but in general the average was only one wife (10, pg. 278).

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

The Mandan traditionally can be described as having a quasi-system of bride purchase, in which the groom to be, upon approval, takes a number of horses, generally derived from how many the women's father has and ties them to the girls lodge. The girl then gives the horses to her father who in turn takes the same number of horses from his remuda and ties them to the groom to be lodge. If the father does not have the same amount of horses given then his kinsmen provide the remaining horses (10, pg. 279-280).

#### 4.9 Inheritance patterns:

"Traditionally, the most important property belonged to the lodge group or the clan and inheritance passed from mother to daughter or father to son" (2).

#### 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

Children were praised and encouraged and never punished by their parents. When discipline was necessary, the mother's brother or another clan member living outside the lodge was asked (2).

#### 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

Information Unavailable

#### 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

According to the origin tradition of the Okipa, the Mandan consisted of 13 exogamous matrilineal clans grouped into east and west moieties, each clan composed one or more lineages. The west-side moiety, comprising six clans, established by Lone Man and was symbolically associated with the buffalo; representing peace. The east-side moiety comprised 7 clans, established by Clay on the Face and was symbolically associated with corn, representing war. The west side Waxikena clan was the dominant leadership clan because it held the rights to the Okipa (9, pg. 359).

#### 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

Information Unavailable

#### 4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

Information Unavailable

#### 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

Information Unavailable

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

Information Unavailable

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

Information Unavailable

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

Based on the evidence it appears that females had relative sexual freedom. For instances during the buffalo ceremony the wives of young active men would offer themselves to older or distinguished men who were believed to possess special powers. It was believed that through this interaction they could then obtain the power and pass it on to their husbands. Furthermore, with the appearance of Europeans the same interactions seem to have been common with women eagerly seeking to cohabit with fur traders (8, pg. 8).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

Information Unavailable

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

Information Unavailable

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

Due in large part to the nature of plains warfare the proportion of men to women was generally significantly unbalanced. In 1870-1872 the average portion of Mandan men was only 38% compared to 62% for women (3, pg. 82).

4.22 Evidence for couvades

No Evidence

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

No Evidence

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Information Unavailable

4.24 Joking relationships?

Information Unavailable

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

Information Unavailable

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

Information Unavailable

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

When a man wished to marry a woman and after obtaining the women's and the father's permission, he led horses to the door of the father and tied them there. The father then took the same number of horses and tied them in front of the grooms lodge. After this the women would cook corn each day and take it to the groom, this lasted for several days, until the groom went to the fathers house and claimed his wife (5, pg. 132).

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

Historically, on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day after the birth of a child the parents selected an individual from the father's clan to officiate a naming ceremony to name the new born. If the father had acquired eminence and owned a major tribal bundle then he or his sister named the child. However, if he had not a clan member was selected and the child was given a name relating to the tribal bundle held by that that member was in possession of. It was customary for the family of the child to present the officiator with gifts of robes and horses. For females it was the norm to keep their first name however, if they were unlucky or showed a pattern of being unhealthy her parents arranged for a renaming ceremony, however if she had reached adult hood her brothers assisted in preparing the renaming ceremony (3, pg. 59-60).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

Information Unavailable

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

Traditionally Mandan youths were free to court freely however, marriages had to be approved and arranged by the parents of both sets of parents (8, pg. 74-78).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

There is a very hierarchal system of scared bundles in Mandan society and as such families seek to gain and maintain status by selecting mates based on their family's status with in the tribe (8, pg. 74-79).

### **Warfare/homicide**

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Information Unavailable

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

Information Unavailable

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

Traditionally, the Mandan had a strong belief in internal harmony and intravillage disagreements usually resulted in the unhappy segment moving to another village (2).

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

Historically, the Mandan were closely allied with the Awatixa and Awaxawi divisions of the Hidatsa tribes and were on friendly terms with the Arikara and Crow tribes. Relations with other nearby nomadic tribes were generally hostile with their main rivals being the Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyenne, Plains Cree, Assiniboine, and Plains Ojibwa and by association with the Sioux and Cheyenne it would seem natural that they were hostile towards the Arapaho (9, pg. 349).

4.18 Cannibalism?

Maximilian reports that "[he] found no trace of this unnatural custom (cannibalism) among the Missouri nations", which included the Mandan's (10, pg. 278).

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

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

Prior to 1781 each village consisted of 75-130 lodges with an estimated 10 individuals per lodge, making the larger villages upwards of 1,000 individuals (9, pg. 353).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

Like other semi-sedentary tribes the Mandan established permanent villages during the spring and summer months where they grew crops and during the fall and winter months they follow the traditional winter camp of other Siouan tribes establishing temporary camps where they could trap game (7, pg. xiv).

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

"Traditionally, Mandan tribal leadership was vested in a hierarchy of scared bundle owners and/or priests who constituted a group of head man whose numbers depended on the status of the various bundles. From this group two leaders were chosen to lead the village and were expected to co-operate for the general welfare of the tribe. One of these two was picked for his exceptional war and/or peacemaking record and was appointed by the council of other leaders to be the war chief, while the other was generally selected based on his ceremonial bundles, the number of ceremonial rites performed and the number of feasts given, and was appointed to the general welfare of the tribe. These two individuals were entitled to wear headdresses of buffalo horns and ermine during council meetings, or on various social occasions and during peacemaking discussions with neighboring tribes" (3, pg. 33-34)

5.4 Post marital residence:

Historically, residence was matrilocal and lineages were intimately tied to "lodge groups", matrilineally related families who owned the lodge and its associated goods (9, pg. 359).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Information Unavailable

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

Information Unavailable

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

Information Unavailable

5.8 Village and house organization:

Traditionally villages were built on terraces overlooking the Missouri floodplain in order to be near water and firewood. Locations that were chosen for defense were protected by high palisades, reinforced with bastions or architectural strong points. Earth lodges were arranged around a plaza approximately 150 feet in diameter which was used for ceremonies and dances. On the north side of the plaza, was the ceremonial lodge for the Okipa ceremony with the remaining earth lodges surrounding the plaza being occupied by members of the Okipa religious society. Other lodges were not arranged in any discernible order. The lodges themselves were circular, earth covered structures averaging 30 feet in diameter and sunk into the earth with a four post central support and a covered entryway (9, pg. 352).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

Information Unavailable

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

Maximilian describes the Mandan's sleeping arranges as, "the beds standing against the wall [of the hut]; consisting of a large square case, made of parchment or skins, with a square entrance, and are large enough to hold several persons, who lie conveniently and warm on skins and blankets (10, pg. 271).

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

According to the origin tradition of the Okipa, the Mandan consisted of 13 exogamous matrilineal clans grouped into east and west moieties, each clan composed one or more lineages. The west-side moiety, comprising six clans, established by Lone Man and was symbolically associated with the buffalo; representing peace. The east-side moiety comprised 7 clans, established by Clay on the Face and was symbolically associated with corn, representing war. The west side Waxikena clan was the dominant leadership clan because it held the rights to the Okipa (9, pg. 359).

5.12 Trade:

"Prehistorically, the Mandan appear to have been hubs for trade centers that attracted many different tribes and, later, even white traders. Goods from the Rocky Mountain tribes were passed to the eastern Plains tribes, while items from the east went west. Even the tribes that maintained hostile relations with the Mandan were welcomed during trade fairs" (2)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

"Traditionally, Mandan tribal leadership was vested in a hierarchy of sacred bundle owners and/or priests who constituted a group of head man whose numbers depended on the status of the various bundles. From this group two leaders were chosen to lead the village and were expected to co-operate for the general welfare of the tribe (3, pg. 33).

**6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)**

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

Information Unavailable

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Ownership of sacred bundles acquired either through a vision or by ceremonial purchase, committed individuals to act as priests during ceremonies and sometimes provided instructions for curing (2).

6.2 Stimulants:

Information Unavailable

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

Information Unavailable

6.4 Other rituals:

Mandan life was filled with private and public rituals. The principal public ceremonies were held to make the crops grow, to bring buffalo to the village, to ensure success in warfare, and to cure. The Okipa, held in summer, was a four-day event dramatizing the creation of the earth and promoting general well-being and buffalo fertility (2).

### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

The Mandan believed in First Creator who contested with Lone Man to make the region around the Missouri River. Lone Man traveled around, making tobacco and people and precipitating events that resulted in ceremonies. Other people came from above and below bringing other supernatural beings and ceremonies with them. Of these other sacred beings, Old Woman Who Never Dies, the Sun, the Moon, Black Medicine, and Sweet Medicine were most important(2).

### 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Information Unavailable

### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

Information Unavailable

### 6.8 Missionary effect:

In the mid-1800s Father DeSmet, a Catholic priest, made regular visits to Like-a-Fishhook Village where he taught Christianity and baptized children. In 1876, a Congregational missionary established a permanent mission and school that attracted a number of converts. Today, Mandan participate in both Indian and non-Indian religion (2).

### 6.9 RCR revival:

Information Unavailable

### 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

The Mandan's burial customs were similar to other Siouan /plains tribes. After preparing the body it was placed on a scaffold behind the village, where they were left until all that remained were bones, and following the collapse of the scaffold the skulls were placed in circles on top of wild sage on the prairie, where members of the village would go and sit for hours attempting to communicate with the deceased ancestor (4, pg. 6).

### 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

Unknown

### 6.12 Is there teknonymy?

Unknown

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

The Mandan traditionally were vitally concerned with the acquisition of power, which could be obtained either through the vision quest or through the purchase of an inherited tribal bundle or other types of personal bundles. All aspects of the natural world, including animals and various mythic beings, possessed power. Ritual fasting away from the village was common for gaining power and could last from 4-10 days (9, pg. 357).

## 7. Adornment

### 7.1 Body paint:

Traditionally the Mandan practiced both body and face painting, employing red, yellow ocher, white clay and charcoal. Blackened faces generally indicated a warrior had killed an enemy. Occasionally one eye would be painted one color, while the other was painted a different hue. Often the forehead and jaw would be painted with red ocher. A hand painted on the chest and / or yellow horizontal stripes represented an enemy taken prisoner. Women were also permitted to paint themselves in this fashion and often painted their left eye and cheek red, placing two blue spots on the temple near the right eye (6, pg. 123-124).

### 7.2 Piercings:

The Mandan traditionally had piercing however, information is lacking on the meaning and method of these piercings.

### 7.3 Haircut:

Traditionally the Mandan cherished long hair; men often augmented their hair with human locks and/or horse hair so that it reached to the calf or even to the ground. Generally the men divided their hair into plaits or slabs two inch wide, which were fastened together with sinew, filled in with glue which was then painted red, once these hairstyles were achieved they often remained unchanged for years. Women wore their hair with a center part, often in two large braids, also wearing their hair as long as they could cultivate it naturally (6, pg. 122).

#### 7.4 Scarification:

The Mandan Okipa ceremony appears to be similar to the sun dance practiced by other plains tribes. During this ceremony strips of skin are cut from the breast and rawhide thongs inserted into the skin which the individual uses to suspend himself from the lodge. Additionally, the Mandan are reported to have habitually cut off fingers as a sign of mourning for kinsmen killed in battle (10, pg. 329-332).

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

Information Unavailable

#### 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Information Unavailable

#### 7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

Information Unavailable

#### 7.8 Missionary effect:

There does not appear to have been any substantial missionary effect on traditional Mandan adornment.

#### 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

Information Unavailable

### 8. Kinship systems

#### 8.1 Sibling classification system:

Siblings traditionally were classified by age and sex. A male classifies his male sibling according to age and uses a single term for female siblings regardless of age. Similarly a female uses the same term for all male siblings that a male uses for younger male siblings and classifies her sisters according to age (3, pg. 40).

#### 8.2 Sororate, levirate:

It was customary to marry a brother's widow as a way of providing for his children, should this occasion arise the man lived between two lodges, his and his brothers. A woman on the other hand who had several brothers did not traditionally marry her deceased husband's brothers as her brothers could provide for the children and would mean sharing a husband with women of a different clan and household. It was also customary that when a man married a woman he was also given all of her younger sisters when they became of marriageable age (3, pg. 81).

#### 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

The Mandan use a "Crow classificatory" kinship system where the father's brother are classed with the father and the mother's sisters are classed with the mother. A separation term is used when referring to grandparents to differentiate between grandfather and grandmother, however grandparent's sisters and brothers are referred to as grandfather or grandmother respectively. Additionally the paternal grandmother's brother is father whereas the brother of the maternal grandmother is mother's brother. In the parental generation the father's sister is designated by a special term "*ptuminiks*", which is further used for all female descendants (3, pg. 39).

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

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