

## **1. Description**

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

-Comanche, shifting to modern English but similar to Shoshoni and Timbisha

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

- COM

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

-Western Oklahoma Longitude: 97° 39.6'W Latitude: 35° 32.2'N

1.4 Brief history:

-Comanche are a split of the Shoshoni tribes. They were nomadic buffalo hunters, so they always followed the buffalo.

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

-

1.6 Ecology:

-Lived off of the land and the native buffalo population.

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

-200 (2000), decreasing. Ethnic population: 10,000 (2000).

## **2. Economy**

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

-Nuts, tubers

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

-Buffalo and other wild game like deer, but mostly buffalo

2.3 Weapons:

-Bow and arrow, blowguns? Bows and Arrows, war lances, tomahawks

2.4 Food storage:

-Since they were on the move food was usually dried

2.5 Sexual division of production:

-Men went out to hunt buffalo, while the women would cook all of the food and dry it for movement

2.6 Land tenure:

-Until being settled by the U.S. Government the Comanche never claimed land because they would follow the buffalo

2.7 Ceramics:

-Were carried sometimes, but the use of buffalo skins was more practical because of availability

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

-

2.9 Food taboos:

-Buffalo was always the choice

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

-The Comanche did not use watercraft

## **3. Anthropometry**

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

-M-5'9" F-5'4"

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

-M-000 F-000

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

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

-11-14

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

-M:15-16 F: 11-14

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

-

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

-1.5-2 years

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

-m-14 f-10

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

-Husband gets it all, wife gets her nose chopped off if caught cheating

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

-Polygamy was a good thing

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

-considered a treaty between families

- 4.9 Inheritance patterns:  
-passed down to sons
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:  
-have little interaction, usually left to oldest sister
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:  
-N/A
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):  
-would do both, but couldn't be related
- 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") what makes the baby grow
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?  
-Yes
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:  
-brothers of husbands could have relations with wife
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin) other non-related people in tribe  
-
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?  
-No
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:  
-very little
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?  
-Oldest daughter
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio:  
-number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females 1:1
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades:  
-none
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)  
-more younger than older
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?  
-Respect elders, do not marry your own family
- 4.24 Joking relationships?  
-No
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:  
-sons would acquire
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules:  
-Would be killed
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?  
-Very rarely
- 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?)  
-inside for both
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?  
-Yes, Parents
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

### **Warfare/homicide**

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:  
- No specific number, but there was an enormous amount of male deaths due to the Comanche being constantly at war (H a m a l a i n e n , 2 0 0 8 ).
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:  
- Much more out-group death than in-group. Fighting with settlers, Apache, and several others (Cash, 1976).
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:  
-Rival group with Apache. Unfair trading with Spanish. Comanche often stole horses. (H a m a l a i n e n , 2 0 0 8 ).
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):  
- Very similar to the Shoshone in many ways however the Comanche were much more violent.
- 4.18 Cannibalism?  
-None

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

### 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- Each band was 100 Comanche on average (Cash, 1974).

### 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

- Predominantly followed their resources. Mostly followed herds of buffalo but their society was largely dependent of horses as well (Hamalainen, 2008).

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

- Each band (or tribe) had it's own form of leadership. They were considered chief but it was not due to any formal election process. The one who was proven to be the best fighter generally became the leader. During war time, which was most of the time, the bands would choose a war time chief who would make all decisions until the war was over (Betty, 2002).

### 5.4 Post marital residence:

- Woman would go to live with the man. Favorite wife would live in the same tipi as the man and all other wives would live in nearby tipi (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- Due to frequent moving to follow food sources there were not strict boundaries. That is not to say that they did not have a territory that they spent most their time in (Cash, 1974).

### 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

- There were 5 basic age divisions which are equivalent to today's baby, child, adolescent, adult, and elder. Also, male youth was often cared for by the eldest sister but at puberty males and female siblings began avoiding each other (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

-

### 5.8 Village and house organization:

-Adult males lived in a tipi with their favorite wife. Other wives lived in a nearby tipi (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

- At puberty, males were given their own tipi in order to gain manhood and independence (Betty, 2002).

### 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

-Slept on the ground in tipi

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

-Many bands within the Comanche family (Betty, 2002).

### 5.12 Trade:

- The Comanche had a long tradition of trading with other tribes, settlers, etc. They became the leading horse distributor in their prime (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- Each band had its own leader. They also had peace chiefs and war chiefs (Hamalainen, 2008).

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

### 6 Time allocation to RCR:

-

### 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

-The had "power possessors" who acted as medicine men or shaman (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 6.2 Stimulants:

-

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

-Body was often laid to rest in a crevice on a hill near where the person died. Women mutilated themselves during mourning

### 6.4 Other rituals:

-Vision quest, invented peyotism, sun dance (Cash, 2004).

### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

-Believed in a creator often referred to as "big father." This entity was supposedly not very interested in human affairs and sent spirits to deal with them (Hamalainen, 2008).

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

-Some music but predominantly just art. Painted leather, extravagant headdresses, paintings

### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

### 6.8 Missionary effect:

### 6.9 RCR revival:

### 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

-Body was often laid to rest in a crevice on a hill near where the person died. Women mutilated themselves during mourning (Hamalainen, 2008).

### 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 the "Big Father." They believed in interpreting signs and spirits, omens, etc. They would go on vision quests for information before big decisions. No mention of an afterlife. Body was often laid to rest in a crevice on a hill near where the person died. Women mutilated themselves during mourning (Hamalainen, 2008).

## 7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

-Elaborate body painting especially during wartime (Cash, 1976).

7.2 Piercings:

-Both men and women had their ears pierced. Generally wore large hoop earrings (Betty, 2002).

7.3 Haircut:

-Long hair. Men: usually pulled back Women: Generally let hair hang free over shoulders (Cash, 1976).

7.4 Scarification:

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

-Beads and feathers were often worn in hair or headdresses (Hamalainen, 2008).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- Headdresses

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- Women: Looser clothing and satchels. Free flowing hair Men: Tight, hard leather clothing. Hair pulled back

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## 8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

-“Comanches reckon descent bilaterally and do not recognize clans. Kin ties generally reach horizontally though two marriage relationships from ego. Flexibility in the extension of terms allows the construction of networks involving consanguines, affines, and fictive kin, formerly including captives.” (Gelo, 2002)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

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

-No distinguishment between cross cousins and parallel cousins

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

-Extremely similar to Shoshone. Thought cows to be an inferior source of meat. Dogs were taboo to kill because of their relation to the sacred coyote.

## Numbered references

1. Hamalainen, P. (2008). *The comanche empire*. (1 ed., Vol. 1). Yale Publishing Press.
2. Cash, J. (1974). *The comanche people*. Indian Tribal Series.
3. Betty, G. (2002). *Comanche society: before the reservation*. Texas A&M University Press.
4. Gelo, D. *Comanche: encyclopedia of world cultures supplement*. 2002. Retrieved September 20, 2011 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3458100030.html>
5. <http://www.anthrobase.com/>
6. <http://www.ethnologue.com/>