

## 1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Wiyot (they have no distinctive name for themselves), Wiyot, Algic

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Between 40° and 41° N and 124° and 125° W (8, p.1). The Wiyot lived in the area of Northwestern California surrounding the Humboldt Bay. Their northern boundary was the southern watershed of the Little River, just south of Trinidad. The southern limit was the Bear River mountains which are south of Eel river. The eastern boundary crossed the Eel River at the mouth of Van Doosen fork, and Mad River just above Blue Lake, between these points following the ridge of the Humboldt Bay watershed. The area included 35 to 40 miles of coastline and was 14 feet wide, at most (2, p.67).

1.4 Brief history: The Wiyot and the Yurok are the farthest southwest people whose language has Algic roots; they are distantly related to the Algonquian languages (3, p.1). The Wiyot's were among the last natives in the U.S. to encounter white settlers (3, p.1). The Wiyot have always been a small, friendly and hospitable tribe (4, p.1). The way of life for these people was forever changed, and nearly completely destroyed by the settlement of Europeans (3, p.3), and by the Gold Rush and its aftermath (4, p.1). Relationships between the local non-natives and the Indians became hostile, marked by raids and vigilante justice (3, p.1). The Wiyot suffered a worse fate than most Native Americans, though. In 1860, a local man named Hank Larrabee stormed Indian Island with a few followers while the Wiyot women and children were preparing sacred ceremonies there and killed almost all of them. A majority of the survivors joined their allies the Yurok. The Wiyot descendants are currently trying to buy Indian Island back (3, p.1).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Wiyot people learned to work and live within the white community. They went to white schools, married European immigrants and helped build timber, fishing and agricultural industries. A church group purchased land for Wiyot homeless (5, p.2).

1.6 Ecology: Managed resources by burning for open grasslands, gathering edible bulbs and following strict hunting and fishing protocols (6, p.1).

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Pre-contact population was 1,500-2,000. After 1860, only 200 remained and after 1910 only 100 Wiyot remained (3, p.2). Currently the population is 600 and growing (5, p.2). Five to six houses constituted a village of fair size. No village had more than 12 houses, and each house had an average of 10 members per house (2, p.67).

## 2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Berries, acorns, pine nuts, bulbs, grass seed, seaweed and green shoots. Many were in short supply (6, p.1/2, p.76).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Fish, shell-fish, marine mammals (including the occasional whale), waterfowl, deer, elk and small land animals all were very plentiful (2, p.76).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bow and arrow, harpoons, traps, nets, elk-hide body armor, rawhide shields and dogs (8, p.1/9, p.1).

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production: Men: Hunting, priests, "soul-loss" doctors and ceremonial officials. Women: Weaving baskets and processing and preparing plant foods. Either sex could become a Shaman (8, p.1).

2.6 Land tenure: Dwellings were occupied by two or more Families and were privately owned. Fishing places, hunting and seed gathering lands and tobacco plots were also privately held. However, certain trees, fishing weirs and pens on weirs were not privately owned. Most likely the sweat houses were owned by the village and the beaches by the local group (8, p.1).

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Meat from a large animal kill was brought back to the village and divided amongst the people without a price (2, p.72).

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: Dugout canoes that were 3 fathoms (15') in length. The depth was measured with a man's leg and was made to be several inches above the knee. At the bow a strong spruce with was passed through a pair of holes in the sides and drawn together across the prow for added strength and to prevent splitting (2, p.71).

### **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: Adultery constituted divorce for both husbands and wives (10, p.1).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygyny was practiced by most prominent men, however, monogamy was most common (10, p.1).

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Marriage of two people in the same village begins sometimes with a secret courtship. Once the vows were exchanged they would tell their parents, at which time the father of the bride would send a message to the father of the groom requesting payment (2, p.81). The bride price was negotiated (10, p.1).

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 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): Wiyot were free to marry anyone as long as they were not blood relatives and fathers did not marry step daughters (10, p.1/2, p.80). Rich favored people from two separate villages marrying. Poor married within their village (2, p.81).

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?: There were no kin avoidances (11, p.1).

4.24 Joking relationships?

- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No blood relatives are allowed to marry (2, p. 80/ 10, p.1).
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: No formal ceremony (2, p.81).
- 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?): Rich with another village, poor within the village (2, p.81).
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin?): Marriages are not arranged (2, p.81).
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

### **Warfare/homicide**

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15 Out-group vs. in-group cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Murder, insults and poaching cause both in-group and out-group killing (9, p.1).
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Relationships were hostile with the Athapascan hill dwellers to the northeast, east and south (Chilula, Whilkut, Nongatl and Mattole), over territory. They had a peaceful relationship and coexistence with the Yurok (2, p. 68).
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

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

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: 50 to 150 persons (12, p.1).
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Permanent dwellings (12, p.1).
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The richest man is chief and his job is to settle disputes. The headman is in charge of hospitality. The second chief investigates disputes. There is no tribal organization and there are no clans (2, p.79-80/9, p.1).
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Live with the husband's family (2, p.81/10, p.1).
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): There were defined boundaries (2, p.68).
- 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): Sweat House's (12, p.1).
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Social organization was based on wealth and birth (9, p.1).
- 5.12 Trade: The Wiyot provided their neighbors to the south (Mattole) with dugout canoes, dentalium beads and local foods and they received tobacco, haliotis shells and locals in return. To the north and west they provided the Yurok with white deerskins and olivella shells while receiving iris-fiber rope (8, p.1).
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

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

## 6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Had shamans and they could be either sex (8, p.1).

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): The Mad River village observed a ceremony for female puberty rites called takawuwuk. People would assemble and sing for five nights, all night, standing and sitting, while striking two wooden batons together. A woman attendant sat or stood behind the girl with her hands on the girl's shoulders and swayed her from side to side to the rhythm of the songs. The girl would fast during the ceremony. Every night she would be led outside to run a certain distance from the house and back. The girl's head and face were constantly covered with a piece of deerskin. The Humboldt Bay village had a similar ceremony without the singing. There were no puberty rites for the boys (2, p. 80-81).

The dead were buried lying full length in a box. If they died of natural causes then they were placed with their head to the east. If they were killed then they were placed with their head to the southwest. The body was washed, dressed in best clothes and wrapped in a skin. Personal trinkets were buried with the person. There was no formal burial ceremony (2, p.82).

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation): The four principal mythological characters are identical, except in name, with those of the Hupa. Kudiqtat-kaqihl or Kutathidi-kaqihl (meaning: "above old man"), created earth, vegetation and people in a time when there was nothing but water. Adak-sora-hlukihl (meaning: "down-toward ocean he-went") travelled about the country changing the character of the earth and demanding for reward the favors of pretty maidens. Puchuri-ghurru (meaning: "pointed buttock") is the transformer hero, who destroyed numerous creatures hostile to human life. Witkahl (meaning: coyote) is the familiar buffoon.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: People that died from natural causes go to sirawata, which is under the earth. People that were killed go to a place that is unknown (2, P.82).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: The name of the dead person is not mentioned for years. Words incorporated in the name were taboo (2, p.82).

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): The Wiyot shared with other northern California groups' beliefs about creation and culture heroes, but they did not believe in a pre-human race. They had a conception of a supreme deity, "The Above Old Man", and a myth about a flood and Noah, these were without parallel in Northwest. Powers or guardian spirits allegedly could be heard by way of a sucking healer. The spirit would tell the healer what caused the illness or where the poison objects were located in the body. Ghosts, souls of the dead, were thought to be audible and visible (13, p.1).

## 7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Black and red wore during the dance for good luck (2, p.86).

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: Girls have between three and seven perpendicular lines tattooed on their chins. Men receive tattoos on their body (2, p.72).

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

## **8. Kinship systems**

8.1 Sibling classification system: No kinship avoidances and no development of elaborate kinship terminology (11, p.1).

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):**

War was ended by paying money for the deaths (2, p.68).

Sex with your mother-in-law is allowed (2, p.80).

## **Numbered references**

1. <http://www.ethnologue.com>
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4. <http://www.native-languages.org/wiyot/htm>
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