

## 1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Ditidaht, Alternate Names: Nitinaht, Nitinat (12)

- "...it should be noted that in October 1984 the Nuuchahnuulth Tribal Council meeting at Tin-wis near Tofino, British Columbia, proclaimed that the language and people previously known as Nitinaht be called henceforth Ditidaht" (3)
- Language family: Wakashan, Southern Wakashan (12)
- "...they have more words and changes of verbal form peculiar to themselves than any other of the Aht tribes" (6)
- "Much of the difference of their dialect from that of others of the Aht tribes consists in the fact that, in almost every instance, the *m* and *n* of the other tribes are changed by the Nitinahts into *b* and *d*" (6)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3 dtd

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- "The Ditidaht cultural heritage extends throughout Nuuchah-nulth (Nootka) territory and is most closely related through culture and extended families to the Port Renfrew to the south and the Makah Nation of Washington" (1)
- "Seaboard, south of Nitinaht Sound, and on the Nitinaht River" (6, 1860)
- "British Columbia, Malachan Reserve, Nitinaht Lake. Also previously in Pacheedaht Territory in the vicinity of Port Renfrew, British Columbia" (12)

1.4 Brief history:

- "Many of the Ditidaht were relocated to Coqualeetza in the Fraser Valley on the BC mainland and to Port Alberni on Vancouver Island [due to residential schools]" (1)
- "Today, only a dozen Elders speak the language fluently and approximately a dozen "junior" Elders are semi-fluent in that they understand the dialect but do not speak it. The dialect is spoken during occasional speeches at potlaches or during dinners and ceremonies. In the community, the dialect may be used during incidental visiting or meetings among Elders" (1)
- "Among those tribes living round Nitinaht (or Barclay) Sound, that called the Nitinahts is the largest tribe of all those both round the Sound and on the coast" (6)
- "In their early days of glory their seven villages totaled over eight thousand people" (1)

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

- "The missionaries attacked traditional Native beliefs and embarked on zealous programs of enforced cultural change. They encouraged the Nuuchah-nulth to abandon the large plank-clad houses that traditionally sheltered extended families and to reside in small, single-family, European-style houses" (1)
- "...as being a powerful tribe, represses, to a certain degree, the foreign intercourse of other seaboard tribes, and, therefore, naturally has most mixture of language, as the Nitinahts most visit and are visited by foreigners" (6)
- The relocation of the Ditidahts by the government into residential schools created a deficit in sustaining the cultural importance of the land, people, and their creators (1)

## 1.6 Ecology:

- Red pine, coastal over hanging cliffs and freshwater tributaries (5)

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

- Before contact: 8,000; Now: 700 (1)
- 80 people per tribe (6)
- "In Ditidaht territory, a community of 300 members lives "on reserve" and another 370 live in urban areas" (1)

## 2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- "...recognized 2 different varieties of edible wild clover: one with larger leaflets, was said to have creamy-coloured "roots"; the other, with smaller leaflets, had white "roots". These 2 varieties were differentiated nomenclaturally in Nitinaht folk taxonomy" [...] "Possibly the Nitinaht distinction relates to the different growth stages of the plant" (5)
- "One traditional way of cooking large quantities of the "roots" was by means of steaming in an underground pit" [...] "A large hole was dug in sandy soil, often on a nearby beach. The size of the hole depended on the quantity of "roots" or other food to be cooked. Frequently a communal cooking pit was used, with many women cooking their harvest at the same time.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- Lipid: cow-parsnip (8)
- "Many whales are killed every season by the Nitinahts, who live principally on the seaboard near Barclay or Nitinaht Sound"; used harpoons (6)
- "Ditidaht came up to Barkley Sound to get herring eggs" (10)
- Hummingbirds: "Ditidaht trapped with snail slime placed on Indian paintbrush" (10)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

2.4 Food storage:

- "The Nitinaht stored the dried bulbs [of camas] interspersed with layers of dried grass in large open work baskets of cedar bark, which were stowed up on the scaffolding house" (7)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- "The "roots" [of clover] themselves were used as ties, and, a least among the Nitinaht, each woman had her own special knot she used to tie her "roots", enabling her to recognize her own "roots" after they were cooked [in the communal pit]" (5)

2.6 Land tenure:

- “Elders of the Nitinaht and Saanich (Straits) groups have had recent success with transplanting and cultivating camas [bulbs]” (7)
- Believe that the singing of the Swainson’s Thrush causes the ripening of salmonberries (11)

#### 2.7 Ceramics:

- “The Nitinaht used sweetgrass culms for the bottom and ribs in basketry, making ropes, fishing line, mats and clothing” (9).
- White Pine: used as wood for small carvings; pitch used as protective coating for implements (10)
- Dune Grass: “Leaves used for sewing and binding, and for bag handles” (10)

(prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

#### 2.9 Food taboos:

- “Among the Nootka and the Nitinaht people, pregnant women were warned not to eat the flower bud stalks [of cow-parsnip]. One Nitinaht man stated that to do so would cause the woman’s child to become epileptic” (8).

#### 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- Great divers who would catch larger sea animals like seal pups (6)
- Were one of the most skillful canoe-making tribes who would sell their canoes to other tribes because of their perfect design (6)

### 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:

- Grandparents “teachings were especially directed to children, who were considered to be lineage carriers and so valuable as to be called *asab* (precious child, a treasure to the family)” (1)

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”)

- Seaweed: used as medicine to “predetermine gender of child” (10)

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?

- Both husband and wife “ate the leaves of Salal the night before their wedding in order to increase fertility” (4). This was used in hopes to produce a son (10).

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:

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):

- “The first explorers reported that the Pacheenaht (Nitinaht), and possibly some Nootka groups, were travelling to Straits (Salish) country for roots and fruits” (7)
- Would “separate during spring and summer into small parties, each under a separate had, but all still continuing under the chiefship of the principal chief of the tribe” (6)

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

- “In 1951, [the Indian Act] replaced existing authorities including the Chiefs, Band Councils, and missionaries and demanded integrated education” (1)
- “When the community is engulfed in controversy tribal council or staff members have always resorted to consultation with the Elders” (1)

#### 5.4 Post marital residence:

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

- “None of the natives have any clear views as to the mode in which the tribes acquired the land which they now claim as their own, beyond the general impression which some of them have, that it was bestowed by *Quawteah*” (6)

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

#### 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

#### 5.8 Village and house organization:

- Extended families resided in “large, plank-clad houses” (1)
- Fortified villages (6)

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

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

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

#### 5.12 Trade:

- “The Nitinaht also obtained camas bulbs from the Cowichan (Halkomelem Salish) on the east coast of Vancouver Island using dried salmon in exchange, and also dug their own bulbs in Salish territory, with permission of Straits and Halkomelem people” (7)

#### 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: Yes, hereditary chiefdoms (1)

- “Hereditary status was displayed in wood carvings. In the age of cloth, the hosting chief placed designs of his major ceremonial rites and family revelations onto curtains that were hung on display. A great deal of caution, care, and protocol are involved in creating the curtains, ranked according to *tayey* (eldest) status” (1)
- *Tupaat*: “hereditary chief’s land and ceremonies”; hereditary rights (1)
- *Baabiigs*: “person who is one’s senior”, younger generations called the older generations this and would “bow out” before them; was “an enduring form of family respect” (1)

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

#### 6 Time allocation to RCR:

#### 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- “The Ditidaht (Nitinaht) and Coast Salish peoples of Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland attributed echo-making powers to tree fungi. Some Ditidaht families who owned the right to tree fungus protective powers could use the fungus to reflect any evil or malicious thought directed towards members of the family back to the person who sent them” (2).

#### 6.2 Stimulants:

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

- Teachings:
  - “Children were trained for their purpose in life or *teechmis* (teachings about life), *iih.stamis* (things of importance), *h.uh.takshitl* (to learn), *lthaakshii* (please). This was done through spiritual pleading. When one said *ithaashii*, it wasn’t just please, it was pleading” (1)
    - Things of importance or *iih.stamis* “included dealing with issues or training for one’s purpose in life” (1)
  - “Learning is steeped in ideals of kindness and appreciation for all living things that provide sustenance” (1)
- Puberty rites: children are encouraged to “go the right way” or *chchabax.aweechtl*, which needs to be supported and guided by the parents (1)
- Willow Hooker’s: “roots used as scrubbers in adulthood training” (10)
- Dune Grass: “roots used for scrubber in manhood training to strengthen the body” (10)

#### 6.4 Other rituals:

- *C’iiqaa*: to perform a prayer chant (1)
- *Uusibch*: an individual’s quest that including taking reverence for the Creator (1)
- “The extent of spiritual quests is difficult to gauge, as the strength’s of one’s “quests” requires that it be done in private and without announcement” (1)

## 6.5 Myths (Creation):

- “A mythological personage, *Quawteaht*, is supposedly to have given them their tribal names, as *Toqu* to the *Toquahts*, *Ohy* to the *Ohyahts*, *Nitin* to the *Nitinahts*, the *aht* in all cases being added in respect of the memory of their legislator” (6).
- Trillium: “believed to cause fog and storms if picked” (10)

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

- Sacred Songs: (1)
  - Of Inheritance: acquired through spiritual quests
  - *T’abaa*: “public-fun songs... which celebrate any outstanding event”; “economic events”
    - By enjoying these, one was “steeped in the joys of the culture including their language and their mythology”
  - *Haaninaa*: “depicts schooner trips when the Ditidaht went on sealing trips to the Bering Straits”
  - Songs belong to certain families and lineages
  - Can cure social ills through song

## 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

## 6.8 Missionary effect:

## 6.9 RCR revival:

## 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- Important to “stand in support” of the bereaved at funerals (1)

## 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

## 6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

- Sun and moon worship, where the sun is considered feminine and the moon masculine (6)
- Belief that *Quawteaht* was once a human being like themselves who is now “chief of a happy shadow-land, whither they also hope to go at some time or other, to live as the guests *Quawteaht*” (6)

## 7. Adornment

### 7.1 Body paint:

- Warriors paint their faces black during wartime (6)
- “The women cease to paint [their faces] at twenty-five, and then wear feathers in their hair” (6)
- White Pine: pitch mixed with deer tallow for cosmetic salve (10)

### 7.2 Piercings:

- “The nose is remarkably well-shaped in some instances: a piece of cockle-shell, a brilliant ring, or a bit of brass, is often put through the cartilage, and similar ear ornaments are worn by both sexes” (6)

### 7.3 Haircut:

- “The men have but little beard or whisker – hair is never shaven, is black or dark brown” (6)

### 7.4 Scarification:

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

- Women wear feathers in their hair (6)
- “The men’s dress is a blanket; the women’s a strip of cloth, or shift and blanket” (6)

### 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:

- *Asabaakidicx*: “a sibling of high status”; “vital to the family lineage” (1)
- *Tayeey*: eldest male sibling (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):

- Medicines:
  - Arbutus: “leaves used as medicine for sore throat” (10)
  - Goatsbeard: “Root used as very strong medicine for fever, “measles”, and similar illness” (10)
  - Thistle, Bull: “roots used for good luck and protection against evil” (10)
  - Lichen, Dogtooth: kidney medicine (10)
  - Old Man’s Beard: used as sanitary napkins (10)
  - Liverwort: “spiritual medicine” (10)
  - Moss: “medicine for childbirth” (10)
  - Rockweed, Sea Wrack: “medicine for boys destined to be whalers” (10)

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