

Ohlone/Castanoan

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Costanoan, Costanoan, belongs to the Penutian language family.” [14]

Ohlone or Castanoan, Ohlone, Castanoan Family [3] There are eight Costanoan languages: Karkin, Ramaytush, Chochenyo, Temyen, Awaswas, Chalon, Mutsun, and Rumsen -- These languages come from the Utian language family of the Penutian language stock [4]

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3 [1]

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): 36.6315° N, 121.8813° W

North central California, Monterrey and San Benito counties [1]

“The Ohlone people lived in the area which now approximately covers San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey County.” [2]

1.4 Brief history: “In 1769, Carlos III, the king of Spain, sent Junipero Serra, a Franciscan priest, and Gaspar de Portola, a military commander, to lead an expedition to establish missions in what is now California. The missions were established for both religious and political reasons. The missionary plan was to teach the Native peoples how to be "civilized," for example: avoiding , eating with utensils, and most importantly, adopting the religion of Christianity. The missionaries believed that, through baptism, they were saving pagan souls from being put into hell for eternity. The original idea was that, after ten years of living in the missions, the Indians would become citizens of Spain (though this never happened). It was hoped that these citizens would then protect the new territory lands for Spain.

In the 1820's, Mexico won its independence from Spain, California became Mexican territory, and California Natives became Mexican citizens. The Mexican government took control of the missions. Some Indians left the missions, others stayed. At that time, the Mexican government granted large areas of land called "ranchos." One such rancho, Rancho San Pedro, was granted to Francisco Sanchez in 1839. He used the labor of Ohlone Indians to build his Sanchez Adobe, a grand ranch house. It was built on the site of an old Mission Dolores "asistencia," or outpost, that had supplied food to the mission. Archeological excavations show that this same site had been an Ohlone village centuries before the Spanish arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area.“ [2]

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

“Thousands of central California natives were baptized and brought to live in these missions. Once baptized, natives, by law, had to transfer their rights to the missionaries and completely comply to their will (but this was not made clear to them). Baptized Indians were not allowed to leave the missions, and if they did, they were forcibly returned by soldiers. If they tried to escape again, they were punished by being whipped and/or shackled. After being baptized, the natives were given new Spanish names and were prohibited from speaking their own language or practicing their own religion. Their everyday activities were controlled and strictly supervised. Unmarried Indian women were protected from Indian men in prison-like conditions. Women were taught and required to spin and weave cloth, wash clothes, and prepare meals. Men were required to till the soil, plant crops, and learn blacksmithing. Indians were taught

how to prepare hides, make soap, produce olive oil, and make adobe bricks for constructing mission buildings.” [2]

“The Indians caught various European diseases such as measles, cholera, mumps, influenza, and venereal disease, which accounted for 60% of the deaths at the missions. They also died from malnutrition and occasionally by violent means.” [2]

1.6 Ecology: “With the exception of the dog, we know of no plants or animals domesticated by the Ohlone. Some plant species were, however, cultured by deliberate pruning, burning, and reseeded that encouraged the growth of selected plants for use as food, herbs, medicines, and manufacturing in their material culture.” [8]

“Plants utilized by the Ohlone cover a wide range of grasses, shrubs, and tree forms” [8]

“Hunting, trapping, and in some cases, poisoning game were common pursuits for most of the adult males in Ohlone culture.” [8]

Used many plants for medicines. “ For example, Yerba Santa was used to cure headaches (heated leaves were applied to the forehead); asthma (chewing or smoking the leaves); rheumatism, colds in their early stages, and tuberculosis (drinking a leaf tea). The leaf tea also was ingested to purify the blood, wash sore or infected eyes, or it was combined with other herbs and used to wash infected sores. Two other multipurpose, cure-almost-anything plants were Black Sage and California Wild Rose . Black Sage leaf decoctions were drunk to cure coughs, leaves were placed in a bath to cure limb paralysis, and heated leaves, held against the ear, reduced earache pain or if wrapped around the neck, they relieved sore throat pain. California Wild Rose was used for treating numerous ailments, including sunburns (applying a paste made by frying the blossoms in olive oil); a sore throat or swollen tonsils (a gargle, made by cooking in water Rose flowers, Rattlesnake Weed, several small pieces of orange and pomegranate peels, and a little piece of alum); scabs (treated with an ointment made by combining toasted, ground Rose flowers with "a little hog kidney fat or olive oil"); fevers (a tea prepared from a mixture of the plant's flowers, Rattlesnake weed, and Malva roots); as well as indigestion and kidney ailments (a petal tea).” [9]

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

Pop Size: “Anthropologists aren't certain how many Indians lived in California prior to the arrival of the Europeans, but estimates range from about 130,000 to 350,000; some estimate as high as one million.” [2]

“Before the Spanish arrived, there were about 10,000 Ohlones. In the 40 years after the arrival of the Spanish, an estimated 8,000 Ohlones died as a result of the Spanish intrusion” [2]

- The Ohlone lived in villages. Each group had its own territory and villages. The villages could be as small as 50 people, or as large as 300 people. An average village contained about 200 people. The Ohlone also lived in camps for part of the year.

Temporary camps were used when the whole community was needed to gather seasonal foods, such as acorns. [4]

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Acorns were the most important as well as seeds from the dock and chia plants [4]

“ Acorns were probably the most important of the plant foods, with tanbark oak, black oak, valley oak, and coastal live oak supplying the acorn meal that came to be

predominant in the Ohlone diet. Other plants recorded as being part of the diet included: buckeye and laurel nuts, and the seeds of dock, tarweed, chia, holly leaf cherry, and digger pine. Among the berries gathered and consumed are blackberries, elderberries, gooseberries. and madrone berries. Roots, shoots, and the bark of a number of other plants were also used as food and herbs.” [8]

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Deer, elk, antelope, rabbit, and ground squirrel, doves, quail, and geese, and steelhead, salmon, and lamprey; on the coast they hunted for sea lions and beached whales as well as clams, mussels, and octopuses [4]

“Larger game animals that were hunted included deer, elk, bear, and antelope, with whale, sea lion, otter, and seal also being hunted on the coast. Smaller animals that were occasionally eaten included rabbits, tree and ground squirrels, rats, skunks, mice, moles, dogs, snakes, and lizards. Many species of birds were hunted or trapped; among these were geese, ducks, doves, robins, quail, and hawks. Along the major freshwater ways on the coast, fish were a regular food item. The more important fish included steelhead trout, salmon, sturgeon, and lampreys. Shellfish were extremely important to the Ohlone. For the people who lived near Monterey and San Francisco bays, the most commonly eaten shellfish were mussels, abalone, clams, oysters, and hornshell from the tidelands.” [8]

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: For hunting the Ohlone use rabbit clubs, bows and arrows, traps, and nets, knives [4]

“dart and arrow points were used for hunting and warfare.” [8]

2.4 Food storage/ Preparation: Dried meat and acorns crushed into meal. The meal was later used to make mush and bread [4]

“Grinding implements such as mortars, pestles, metates, and manos substantiate the manner of acorn and other seed processing. Scrapers, drills, and knives fashioned from sharp stones indicate the working of skins and vegetable materials, whereas dart and arrow points were used for hunting and warfare.” [8]

“ The tribe worked together in a large social celebration during the harvest to set aside stores for the upcoming winter. The women took care of these stores, and spent much of their time sitting together singing, chanting, telling stories, and chatting as they ground acorns or seeds with their mortars and pestles. They sang songs about acorns and tried to receive favor from the spirits that related to the plants and the process. Food preparation served an important role in the social and religious cohesion of the group. Bonds were made and strengthened with the human and spiritual worlds.” [13]

2.5 Sexual division of production:

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics: “They made baskets, but no pottery” [3]

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos: “A few animals were never eaten by some or all of the Ohlone, apparently for religious or supernatural reasons. These creatures included eagles, owls, ravens, buzzards, frogs, and toads.” [8]

“Each person had there own guardian animal. If the person's animal was a deer, they would never hunt to eat deer.” [10]

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? ...“their boats balsas or rafts of tules.” [3] the Ohlones built tule boats which lasted no more than a season, but which--when it came time to move on--could be left behind without an afterthought. [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:

“Men might have more than one wife.” [14]

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: “Small gifts given from groom to bride constituted the marriage formalities.” [14]

4.9 Inheritance patterns: Instead of having inheritance, which is a way of perpetuating wealth within a family, the Ohlones generally destroyed a person's goods after his or her death. [6]

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): “The Miwok man did often marry his first cousin; but only his mother's brother's daughter; that is, one of the two kinds of cross cousins, as they are called. Even these marriages were considered too close in some districts and were frowned upon; a first cousin once removed, or second cousin, or some such distant relative was the proper mate.” [12]

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: There seems to be evidence that this would be frowned

upon. [12]

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? “At weddings the bride would carry plants and the groom would bring meat for the feast. They made sure everyone was invited. They made quilts for the groom and bride. The Ohlone tribe brought wildflowers for the bride.” [10]

Chiefs sanctioned marriages [11]

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:

“The Indians caught various European diseases such as measles, cholera, mumps, influenza, and venereal disease, which accounted for 60% of the deaths at the missions. They also died from malnutrition and occasionally by violent means.” [2]

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

“It would be unfair to portray the Ohlone as a blissfully happy group where everyone loved and shared in paradise. There were wars with other tribes, disagreements with each other, fights, and other problems common to man.” [13]

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: 50 - 300 people, an average village contained about 200 people [4]

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): “The Ohlone also lived in camps for part of the year. Temporary camps were used when the whole community was needed to gather seasonal foods.” [4]

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): “Each Ohlone village had a council of elders and a chief. They protected and advised the people. The title of chief belonged to a family. It was usually passed on from father to son. If a chief did not have a son, his sister or daughter could serve as chief. The chief had an assistant. The assistant gathered items for ceremonies. He also invited other villages and nearby tribes to join in ceremonies or trade.” [4]

“True tribes did not exist in Costanoan territory, the groups mentioned below being small and probably little more than village communities, without political connection or even a name other than that of the locality they inhabited.” [3]

“Status was not to be gained by hoarding shells, jewels, and other such things. Instead of wealth, it was prerogative--where one sat in the sweat-house, how often one's family was consulted by the chief, whether one was asked to sweep the plaza before a dance, and a thousand other such distinctions--that defined a person's place in the village pecking order.” [6]

“ Sharing is a fundamental precept in the Ohlone philosophy, and so there was rarely a broad division of wealthy and poor. After a hunt, meat was distributed to friends, extended family members, and those members in the community who were in need. The hunter rarely kept any of the fruits of his hunt for himself, and women often gave their finest baskets or flour to another woman. They did not place value on the acquisition of physical wealth, but rather the esteem and friendship brought about by generosity. Sharing with others ensured a strong position in the tribal structure that guaranteed a man and his family security should anything bad befall them. Other members would care for them just as they had cared for others. Behaving generously was the only way they could conceive of acting appropriately. Living in moderation went hand in hand with the concept of sharing. It demonstrated that you were not greedy in accumulating wealth.” [13]

5.4 Post marital residence: “The new couple lived in the groom’s father’s house.” [14]

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): Adobe brick when missionaries arrived [2]

“Their houses were tule or grass huts” [3] domed tule houses [6]

“ Sweat houses, used by men and women, were dug into the side of a stream. Large houses or brush enclosures served as dance sites.” [14]

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? the ground [6]

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: “Eight social groups in the lands of the Ohlone were separately distinguished ethnic units. Contrasts in dialect or language, customs of dress and ornamentation, particular religious beliefs, kinship patterns, and to some degree, subsistence mainstay distinguish these units. From north to south, the eight subethnic groups recognized in protohistoric times were the Karkin, Chochenyo, Ramaytush, Tamyen, Awaswas, Mutsin, Rumsen, and the Chalon.” [8]

5.12 Trade: “Highly informative to the archaeologist are the trading patterns that occurred in Ohlone culture. They have left a tale of movement and interaction over central California, and even the West Coast. Several hundred different types of trade items have been documented for California Indians and discussed in the categories of food, beads and ornaments, household wares, clothing and attire, raw materials, finished articles, and miscellaneous goods... Shell and shell beads were the most frequently reported trade items by native informants... The shell trade items indicate extensive trade networks from central coastal California to as far as the Great Basin of Nevada, where a string of Olivella beads dating to 8,600 B.P. was found. Specific sizes and shapes of shell artifacts are so standard for Ohlone and other cultures in California that they prove to be sensitive time markers when found in an archaeological context.

Another important trade item to the Ohlone was the highly coveted cinnabar which was quarried at the New Almaden area of Santa Clara County... Included in other important trade goods imported or exported in Ohlone culture were abalone shells, projectile points, obsidian, dogs, tobacco, hides, bows, baskets, salt, acorns, and fish” [8]

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? No social hierarchies. They shared almost all of their possessions. [13]

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): medicine from nature were used. [6]

“The Ohlone, like many other California Indian nations, had several types of medicine persons. Some were well versed in the use of herbs, others, such as the weather shamans, could make rain begin or end, and still others could transform themselves into grizzly bears and then back into human form. But the most prominent shamans were the curing shamans, individuals who, according to the priests at Mission San Juan Bautista, in Mutsun Ohlone territory, "cure by chanting and by gestures and shouts... Almost all of the specifics concerning traditional Ohlone shamanism are no longer known. It is known that both women and men could become shamans, and in some instances a novice shaman obtained supernatural power during visions induced by ingesting decoctions made from the hallucinogenic plant Jimsonweed. And all novices were trained by an older shamans” [9]

6.2 Stimulants: tobacco [6]

Shamans ingested a hallucinogenic plant called Jimsonweed [9]

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): “They burned the dead.” [3]

“When someone died, everybody who came was fed, and when they left, they were sent home with food . Ohlone always remembered the person who died . Families had a big feast every year for the dead person” [10]

“The Ohlone tribe had big birth ceremonies.They would all gather around a campfire after their gigantic feast.The mom held the baby and would dance at the same time. Everybody in the tribe would have to learn the baby's name. Each person would bring gifts for the baby. “ [10]

Shamans did a puberty dance during puberty ceremonies. [14]

6.4 Other rituals: They would also have ceremonies or celebrations in honor of the gods, wearing elaborate body paint, feathers, and masks for their dances. [7]

“ Even more ceremonial was the way the men regarded the hunt. They went through intense physical and spiritual preparation, with strict guidelines as to correct behavior from beginning to end. They prepared their spirits with songs and dances; prepared their bodies through strict dietary provisions and by refraining from sexual activity; and prepared their minds through visits and meditations in the sweat lodge. The men followed these steps together and developed stronger relationships amongst themselves and their spiritual world. They paid due respect to the forces of nature and the supernatural.” [13]

“Widows cut or singed their hair, covered their heads with ashes or asphalt, and battered themselves, sometimes seriously.” [14]

6.5 Myths (Creation): The myths tell how Coyote, with the help of Eagle, created mankind and taught him the art of survival. They also describe our world covered in ocean in the beginning of time, except for one mountain, Mount Diablo. [7]

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: “Cremation of the dead was the usual but probably not universal practice of the Miwok. Widows singed their hair off and pitched the face. In the southern districts the pitch was put on over smaller areas. The levirate was observed, but perhaps not invariably. The annual mourning ceremony included dancing as well as wailing, culminated in a burning of property, and ended with a ritualistic washing of the mourners by people of the opposite totemic moiety. Rude lay figures were made and burned for people of rank.” [12]

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

“*Coyote*: The culture hero of the Ohlone tribes. In some tales, Coyote plays the mischievous trickster role common in California Indian folklore, but in others, he is a more serious protagonist who fathers the Costanoan tribes and teaches them the arts of civilization.” [5]

“Ohlone religion and ceremonies were not a huge aspect of their lives, but they did exist. They would often offer carved prayer sticks or poles to their gods.” [7]

“Each tribe had their own religion. They were all different, but they had one thing in common. They never wanted a spirit to be angry. Whenever there was a food gathering, there was a ceremony to thank the spirit gods. The Muwekma tribe thought that spiritual powers belonged to animals. Each person had their own guardian animal. If the person's animal was a deer, they would never hunt to eat deer. The Muwekma Indians thought that the eagle was the most sacred animal.” [10]

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Wore elaborate body paint during religious ceremonies. [7]

7.2 Piercings: “Finely cut, chiseled, and polished shells were turned into beautifully designed necklaces, pendants, and earrings.” [8]

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

“The men would usually wear no clothing, because of the warm weather, and they would wear capes made of animal skin or feathers when the weather got cold. The women, however would usually wear deerskin aprons and/or skirts of tule or shredded bark. They, also would wear capes in cold weather.” [7]

Wore feathers and masks during religious ceremonies. [7]

“They would wear shell beads, necklaces, abalone pendants, and bone or wood earrings.” [7]

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:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

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

8.4 Other: “It proves that all the female blood relatives that a man might marry come under the designation anisü, and all the kin that a woman could mate with are included in what she calls her angsi. Now angsi is also the word for “son” or “nephew” and anisü for mother’s younger sister or stepmother.” [12]

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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