

The Bella Coola

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: “The name “Bella Coola: is a corruption of the words “Bilxula,” by which name the tribe is known to the Kwakiutl.

There is no term in their own language embracing all the tribes speaking the Bella Coola language.”

“The language spoken by the tribes belongs to the tribe belongs to the Salishan family, more particularly to the group of dialects spoken along the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.”

“Vocabulary and grammar have been highly modified, particularly by and extensive elision of vowels. The relation of their language to the other dialects of the Coast Salish is similar to that of the Tillamook, another language belonging to the Salishan family.”
(Boas)

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): “The Bella Coola are a small tribe inhabiting the coasts of Dean Inlet and Bentinck Arm, two long and narrow fjords situated in about latitude 52 degrees north, In British Columbia. Their habitat extends along the Bella Coola River, which empties into North Bentinck”

1.4 Brief history: “The Bella Coola were latecomers to the region, probably arriving around 1400. In 1793 they encountered the explorers George Vancouver and Alexander Mackenzie; the Indians traded fish and skins to them for iron, copper, knives, and other items. As the fur trade developed, Hudson’s Bay Company maintained a local fort/post from 1833 to 1843. During this period, the Bella Coola prevented furs from the Carrier Indians (an Eastern group) from reaching the coast, thus maintaining a trade monopoly with the whites.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA234&lpg=PA234&dq=the+bella+Coola+indians+housing&source=bl&ots=91yLfB-y95&sig=IoviKLnfiPvVn8AaVUcACquDsDM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=_5BWUMQs9IbJAZW8gNgE&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=the%20bella%20Coola%20indians%20housing&f=false

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: “Protestant missionaries penetrated the Bella Coola territory in the 1870s and 1880s” (<http://what-when-how.com/native-americans/bella-coola-native-americans-of-the-northwest-coast/>)

1.6 Ecology: Historical information not found

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: in 1902, 311; 1995, 1,140 (<http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/Eras/prehistory/bellacoola.htm>)

“perhaps 1,400 Bella Coolas lived in their villages in 1780. In the 1970’s roughly 600 lived on their reserves and in Northwest cities.”

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Blue Camas and also “Important plant foods included

berries and the cambium layer of the western hemlocks (steamed with skunk cabbage leaves, pounded, dried, and mixed with eulachon grease.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=cgyxvOa8LjYC&pg=PA302&lpg=PA302&dq=haircuts+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=mSyg4Rm_cx&sig=j2r-F7S5SY89DJfcMJDBiFU1b_A&hl=en&sa=X&ei=s3VYULbKKMjMyQGXgIG4DQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=haircuts%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: “The Bella Coola enjoyed a fairly regular food supply.

Fish were the staple, including five types of salmon plus steelhead trout, rainbow and cutthroat trout, eulachon, Pacific herring, and others. All fish was boiled, roasted, or smoke dried. Eulachon was very valuable, perhaps more for its grease than as food.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=cgyxvOa8LjYC&pg=PA302&lpg=PA302&dq=haircuts+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=mSyg4Rm_cx&sig=j2r-F7S5SY89DJfcMJDBiFU1b_A&hl=en&sa=X&ei=s3VYULbKKMjMyQGXgIG4DQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=haircuts%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns, Moose-hide shields, wood armor, bow-and-arrow, clubs, spears.

2.4 Food storage: In woven baskets that the women made

2.5 Sexual division of production: Women/girls weave baskets, gather berries, men hunted

2.6 Land tenure: Not found

2.7 Ceramics: “Wood carving was probably the preeminent Bella Coola art. Masks, entry poles, house frontal poles (with entrance through a gaping mouth), and carved posts were often painted and decorated with crests figures. They had no fully developed totem pole. They also made pictographs and petroglyphs.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=ZxWJvc4ST0AC&pg=PA169&lpg=PA169&dq=food+storage+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=y-R3a48O_l&sig=fvAJ9xzxYKMs6SqCpZbHglOBbIs&hl=en&sa=X&ei=15aUMKLGqPWYQGy4oDwCA&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=food%20storage%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Most food was divided up between all members of the Bella Coola tribe. See also: boys first hunt was shared, girl’s first berries gathered were shared among the tribe.

2.9 Food taboos: Not found

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Made canoes out of cedar wood

(<http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/Eras/prehistory/bellacoola.htm>)

The **Bella Coola** used several types of canoes, including long, narrow canoes of a single red cedar log for rivers (most common), plus four types of seagoing canoes. Canoes were decorated with crest designs or painted black. Hunters also wore two types of snowshoes in winter. (<http://what-when-how.com/native-americans/bella-coola-native-americans-of-the-northwest-coast/>)

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): “Upon reaching puberty, girls were “scheduled”, and their activity and diet were restricted for a year.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

“It is impossible to obtain definite data on the fertility of Bella Coola women, or on the period elapsing between marriage and the birth of the first child. Sterility is rare, though by no means unknown; on the other hand, there are several families with as many as eight or nine children. Pregnancy usually occurs during the year following marriage.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA361&lpg=PA361&dq=birth+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK6-ExqXZ&sig=uegoCJwju3XqbpuXx3NWLb1NM8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-2BaUP6DMueqywHn74HYCQ&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=birth%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false>

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Generally a male/female pairing had between 2 and up to eight children

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): see 4.2

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Although specific information was not found, marriage seemed to happen at a younger age.

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: “Cruelty, neglect, and infidelity were considered grounds for a divorce>”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Suitor would give the bride’s family generous gifts- and continue to do so after marriage as a sign of wealth.

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

“The oldest son was expected to share lands belonging to the family with other members, but he was in control of those lands belonging to the family with other members, but he was in control of those lands and directed their use.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Homosexuals did not generally give any indication of their homosexuality, although there is no information on how open homosexuals were treated.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): “Marriage depends entirely on kinship, but many of the villagers were virtually endogamous through the desire of the people to prevent their “story” from going to strangers.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Fn-q3FV9gE8C&pg=PA85&lpg=PA85&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+marry+for+lif e&source=bl&ots=zBoSVBWiJr&sig=GT-FUq4GabOr5ZK4olsEW-bL7Ro&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LnxUL22M6K8yAGhloH4Bg&ved=0CDgQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%20marrage&f=false>

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? “The Bella Coola, religiously minded in this as in all other aspects of life, ascribe the condition to the four *Mesmesalanux* acting on the behest of *Atquantam*. It is believed that the Carpenters carve out the child who is to be born in the same way that a human craftsman manufactures some complicated object. Most individuals do not theorize to any extent upon the course of biological development, but are content to assume that *Atquantam* has made the coming birth possible.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA361&lpg=PA361&dq=birth+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK6-EqxXZ&sig=uegoCJwjxu3XqbpuXx3NWLb1NM8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-2BaUP6DMueqywHn74HYCQ&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=birth%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false>

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) see 4.13

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? see 4.13

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape cases of rape was either unknown or very rare

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA425&lpg=PA425&dq=marriage+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK57LvDW_&sig=d0YAjnt9sWb-ic34gQ- ytWoP0Jk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=A3tYUPPIEZCDyAGOkICABA&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=marriage%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

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

“Marriage with a close relative, including a first cousin was prohibited, but marriage with a more distant cousin was possible and even preferred.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=M7KRhRt3i2cC&pg=PA335&lpg=PA335&dq=shamans+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=sz1B45INzn&sig=F9E_HKSLvZ4DB EbmAorLdMmomsA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=uw1aUI3tCsX5ygGjjoCACQ&ved=0CEAQ6A

[EwAw#v=onepage&q=shamans%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false](#)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? It was always assumed that a girl of rank was a virgin at marriage, but most other women had more freedom. “at the same time, public opinion was unfavorable to a man who consorted with many women, or to a women who allowed herself to be at the disposal of many men.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA425&lpg=PA425&dq=marriage+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK57LvDW_&sig=d0YAjnt9sWb-ic34gQ-ytWoP0Jk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=A3tYUPPIEZCDyAGOkICABA&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=marriage%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

The act of giving gifts was very common (to show higher status) but specific evidence as to giving extramarital gifts was not found.

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? Father and other family members

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

Not found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: This rarely occurred with the Bella Coola people.

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

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? “According to the kinship responsibilities and rights prevailing among the Coast Salish, older relatives of the same generation and those in ascending generations owed protection and assistance to those who were younger or in descending generations. When a parent died, his or her siblings and cousins had increased obligations to the surviving children. In return for this aid from older relatives of ego’s generation and from the first ascending generation, ego was expected to obey and to respect them and help them in case of need. Rules governing kin behavior spread as relationships could be traced.”

[http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection\('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06'\)&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668\)](http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06')&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668)

4.24 Joking relationships? see 5.7

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations “The “story”, which comprises the history of the “crest” is inherited from both father and mother, the family name in the patrilineal line alone. Family privileges pass in the patrilineal line.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=Fn-q3FV9gE8C&pg=PA85&lpg=PA85&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+marry+for+life&source=bl&ots=zBoSVBWiJr&sig=GT-FUq4GabOr5ZK4olsEW-bL7Ro&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LnxaUL22M6K8yAGhloH4Bg&ved=0CDgQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%20marrage&f=false>

“residence in father’s family tends to reinforce patrilineal lines”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

4.26 Incest avoidance rules They usually tried to avoid any incest within their family.

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? “Ceremonial marriages are sometimes carried out for special reasons. If the husband at a real marriage feels that he is over-indebted to his wife’s relatives through the name and prerogatives they have brought him, he sometimes arranges to restore some of these and thus even the transaction by ceremonially marrying one of his youngest female relatives to one of his wife’s family.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA425&lpg=PA425&dq=marriage+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK57LvDW_&sig=d0YAjnt9sWb-ic34gQ-ytWoP0Jk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=A3tYUPPIEZCDyAGOkICABA&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=marriage%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? see 4.25

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) “Regular intermarriage occurred between the Bella Bella and the Bella Coola. Marriages between close cousins was condoned if it furthered one’s status. The bride was a key ingredient of a marriage; in cases of divorce it was generally refunded.”

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/52075500/Native-Americans-Encyclopedia>

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

“Parents and elderly relatives arranged marriages, around which there were many rituals and opportunities to increase status. The relatives of high-status brides were expected to “rebuy” the woman (donate goods) every time her husband gave a potlatch.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: Oftentimes a bride could be “bought back” or “re-bought” by her family, in which case her husband would have to buy her back. There were times when someone else would try to buy the bride, resulting in conflict.

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: Although specific information was not found, it would seem that the percentage would be low since the Bella Coola deserted battles when they were losing.

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): neighboring societies with whom Bella Coola occasionally fought: Carrier: Chilcotin, Kwakiutl. Peace reigned during the winter (because everyone was more focused on survival?). Lack of centralized authority in Bella Coola culture made it difficult for them to retaliate against attacks, and when they did attack if the fighting didn't go in their favor, they often deserted the cause. "Attacks were made at dawn; women and children were taken as slaves, but all the men were killed. Before leaving, the raiding party looted and burned the village. When the successful raiding party got within sight of its home village, the captain of each canoe sang a victory song"

([http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection\('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06'\)&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668](http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06')&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668))

4.18 Cannibalism? No evidence of cannibalism.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: "Between 30 and 60 autonomous villages, each consisting of 2 to 30 houses arranged in a row along a river or creek bank."

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Chiefs; general lack of centralized authority? (More research to come) ([http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection\('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06'\)&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668](http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06')&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00615&offsetId=ne0600900668&tocOffsetId=tocne0600900668))

"Judging from conversational remarks by elderly men, it seems probable that in the old days there was a considerable slave population in every Bella Coola village, comprising at times as much as thirty to forty percent of the total population. Like any other commodity slaves were bought and sold."

[http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-](http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA158&lpg=PA158&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+have+slaves&source=bl&ots=RqK56IzzWR&sig=g2oalziDN9dxNIVxRP7rV13AOvo&hl=en#v=onepage&q=did%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians%20have%20slaves&f=false)

[DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA158&lpg=PA158&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+have+slaves&source=bl&ots=RqK56IzzWR&sig=g2oalziDN9dxNIVxRP7rV13AOvo&hl=en#v=onepage&q=did%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians%20have%20slaves&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA158&lpg=PA158&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+have+slaves&source=bl&ots=RqK56IzzWR&sig=g2oalziDN9dxNIVxRP7rV13AOvo&hl=en#v=onepage&q=did%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians%20have%20slaves&f=false)

5.4 Post marital residence: (see 4.25)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): Irregular conflict with neighbors, but very little active defense. If the Bella Coola realized or thought that they were losing a battle, they quickly deserted the fight.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Social interaction was divided by status, not by age or sex.

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

"If several people are talking together, one is sure to hear bursts of laughter every few minutes. it takes little to interest them; a story they have heard a hundred times, the

troubles of a neighbor with his wife, the eccentricity of a white man, the stupidity of the investigator, any of these is enough to cause a hearty laugh. Their sense of humor is not refined; jests about sexual matters are common and are enjoyed alike by men, women, and children. They have no hesitation in poking fun at their friends.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=RA1-PA529&lpg=RA1-PA529&dq=joking+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK6_NwDXY&sig=hBbXPaXurbqeSX5Gu6f-7AIh9jg&hl=en&sa=X&ei=s1NaUP_ziYT9ygGO-4CICg&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=joke&f=false

5.8 Village and house organization: “Permanent houses were large, planked structures. They were constructed of red cedar and often built on stilts against floods and enemies. House fronts were decorated with the owner’s crest. Houses were inhabited by extended families. Entrance was through carved house posts.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA158&lpg=PA158&dq=did+the+bella+Coola+indians+have+slaves&source=bl&ots=RqK56lzzWR&sig=g2oalziDN9dxNIVxRP7rVI3AOvo&hl=en#v=onepage&q=did%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians%20have%20slaves&f=false>

See also: 5.1

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): see 5.8

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Long houses- red cedar wood
(<http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/Eras/prehistory/bellacoola.htm>)

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

“The units of social organization included the household, village, and descent group, or all those with a common ancestral mythology.”

(<http://what-when-how.com/native-americans/bella-coola-native-americans-of-the-northwest-coast/>)

5.12 Trade: “The Bella Coola received herring eggs from the Bella Bella as well as some canoes from the Bella Bella and other Kwakiutl groups. They also traded with some Plateau Indians.”

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl>

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? “Social status was important and clearly delineated. The ability (and obligation) to give away gifts on ceremonial occasions (potlatches) was a key component of social status... even slaves might obtain dance prerogatives and thus achieve some status.”

also: High status children had their nasal septa pierced

also: two secret societies, one for children/relatives of chiefs, and one for those that had interaction with the supernatural

(<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: A great deal of time was committed to religious ceremonies

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): “The Bella Coola believed that their first ancestors were so close to the supernatural that virtually all of them were shamans.

Later, human beings had much less power, although each regardless of status, had the potential to receive supernatural power, allowing him or her to become an aluk”la ‘shaman’, an asqnk”uk ‘shaman with power from ghosts’, or sxak ‘sorcerer’.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=M7KRhRt3i2cC&pg=PA337&lpg=PA337&dq=economy+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=sz1B45HQwn&sig=Is-lmhzzpEwqJZciBFeuxHD06gk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=4QpaUJv3KIaOygHC3IGwAg&ved=0CEMQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=economy%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false>

6.2 Stimulants: The smoking of tobacco and alcohol were introduced into the society and quickly became a part of their lives.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): “The Bella Coola not only carry out elaborate rituals soon after the actual decease, but hold lengthy commemorative and mourning ceremonials in later years. As these require the co-operation of a large number of people, the death of an individual affects a wider circle than his own relatives, and the celebrations have, therefore, an important social as well as religious significance.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA425&lpg=PA425&dq=marriage+of+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK57LvDW_&sig=d0YAjnt9sWb-ic34gQ-ytWoP0Jk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=A3tYUPPIEZCDyAGOkICABA&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=marriage%20of%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

Girls’ activity and diet were restricted for a year after puberty. “There were no boys’ puberty rituals, although their first hunted game was distributed and eaten ritually as were the first berries gathered by girls.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>

6.4 Other rituals: “The Bella Coola also make offerings to the Sun. Hunters throw four small slices of seal-meat, of mountain-goat tallow, ect., into the fire as an offering to the Sun, in order to obtain success in hunting.”

“Sick people burn parts of their clothing, which they decorate with red cedar-bark, as an offering to regain health.”

(Boaz)

6.5 Myths (Creation): “The Bella Coola state that the Sun created number of men whom he sent down to a mountain on Skeena River, and that they became the ancestors of a

part of the Tsimshian. Another group of men was sent down to the Bute Inlet, and later on migrated to Bella Coola River.”

(Boaz)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “Bella Coola songs can be grouped into two major categories: ceremonial and nonceremonial. Ceremonial songs include the following types: Headdress or Sisaok, Hamatsa, or Mourning, Dance of the Kusiut, and Entrance songs. Nonceremonial songs include: love, lahal (bone game), animal, and story and game songs. Shamans' songs were used both in ceremonial and nonceremonial contexts” “Ceremonial songs were composed by specialists who met secretly to discuss which newly composed melodies would be employed for an upcoming ceremony. Texts and wordless choruses were then added. Singing of these songs was an indispensable feature of the validation of ancestral prerogatives. Although considered private property, these songs were sung by a choir (who used sticks and drums to outline the rhythmic design) led by three principal performers: a main singer, an announcer, and a prompter. Various wind instruments, employed to symbolize supernatural beings, were sounded outside the singing area” ([http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection\('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06'\)&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00674&offsetId=ne0600900668\)](http://ehrafworldcultures-beta.its.yale.edu/ehrafe/fullContext.do?method=fullContext&forward=searchFullContext&col=collection('/eHRAF/ethnography/NorthAmer/NE06')&docId=ne06-009&page=ne06-009-00674&offsetId=ne0600900668)))

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: there is no visible difference between the equality of men and women for the RCR because they seem to have deities for their worship from both genders. For example the ruler of the highest level of heaven is a woman, but in the other level of heaven a man is the ruler.

(Boaz)

6.8 Missionary effect: “Missionaries were invited to come to Bella Coola at a time when people’s faith in the old ways had been greatly shaken by the smallpox epidemic of 1862-63. The first Methodists missionary in Bella Cools, William Henry Pierce, was invited from neighboring Bella Bella by a Nuxalk leader. Upon his arrival in 1883 Pierce converted many of the survivors of the epidemic to the Methodist faith.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=7LD4Qx4BAeYC&pg=PA36&lpg=PA36&dq=missionary+effect+on+the+Bella+Coola&source=bl&ots=raONNJZWxB&sig=8-jPSidcIshUc9oJiv2_wK9YEG8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=7ZdaUOT7IoSPyAHHooH4DQ&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=missionary%20effect%20on%20the%20Bella%20Coola&f=false

6.9 RCR revival: Any idea of reviving came from the Bella Coola’s origin myths, “*Natci* carried out all her instructions at the next village and was able to restore all to life.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=PA346&lpg=PA346&dq=reviving+of+the+dead+of+the+Bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=RqK6-FuwTT&sig=T_CgPzmYhCtZw8iPrWtMfzfgw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=GpdaUI3BE4WoyAHSOYHACw&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=reviving%20of%20the%20dead%20of%20the%20Bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: “The Bella Coola believe that there are five worlds, one above another, the middle one is our own world, the earth. Above it are spanned two

heavens, while below it there are two underworlds. In the upper heavens resides the supreme deity, a woman who interferes comparatively little with the fates of mankind. In the centre of the lower heaven, that is the zenith, stands the house of the gods, in which reside the Sun and all the other deities. Our own earth is an island swimming in the ocean. The underworld is inhabited by the ghosts, who are at the liberty to return to heaven, whence they may be sent down again to our earth. The ghosts who die a second death sink to the lowest world, from which there is no return.”

“the upper heaven is called Atsa’axl, and the deity ruling there is a woman called Qama’its. This heaven is describe as a prairie without any trees. In the center of the lower heaven, which is called Sonx, stands the house of the gods. This house is named Nusme’ta.”

(Boaz)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? “Among the Coast of Salish of the Northwest Coast, a person’s name become taboo immediately after death. At a following feast a word phonetically similar to the name is made taboo and replaced by a descriptive phrase: the taboo is lifted when the name is later given to a member of the deceased person’s lineage.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=9p5UqHtb2goC&pg=PA165&lpg=PA165&dq=taboo+of+naming+the+dead+northwest+indians&source=bl&ots=hL4arfIuvJ&sig=8mgZ856s_GIoZvqkEZvK-CJDFCI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=hplaUJWICYmByAG-YDoCA&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=taboo%20of%20naming%20the%20dead%20northwest%20indians&f=false

6.12 Is there teknonymy? “On the Northwest Coast, some names and titles merged. In households, lineages, or “tribes.” a ranked series of names denoted ranked positions within the group. When an individual took a name, particularly on high in such a series, he assumed a social position and its associated obligations and benefits. Rules of succession and requirements for validation of what can thus be called name-titles differed among Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Kwakiutl, and Nootka communities, but the linkage of name and title appeared in all groups.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=-RnOijPup3YC&pg=PA202&lpg=PA202&dq=tekononymy+of+the+Bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=NMpg0Ofz3F&sig=3pou8qCBv_V0c-q4jp0HxePsdrg&hl=en&sa=X&ei=i5paUNLWCOiFywH9yYBo&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=tekononymy%20of%20the%20Bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

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

“The religion of the Interior Salish, like the other Salish, was animalistic, believing that the world was populated by a great variety of supernatural beings. Through the guardian spirit quest any child or adolescent could seek these beings. If the child was successful, he had a dream or vision in which a spirit appeared to him, taught him a song and dance, and instructed him as to the type of power he was bestowing. The child was expected to repress this memory until adulthood, when he would fall sick with the spirit’s return. The adult was then required to sponsor a winter ceremony in

which he danced and sang as his spirit had earlier instructed him. Throughout life the guardian spirit assisted him in many different ways, although some spirits bestowed special abilities as in hunting or gambling”

(Boaz)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: paint that was used for the body was obtained from a kind of rock near the head of a creek entering the Bella Coola from the south near Sinxt. It was then brought to a boil with water, and then they would pulverize it and run off the semi-liquid mixture into a small box.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=9k-DAOIDPoUC&pg=RA1-PA542&lpg=RA1-PA542&dq=body+paint+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=RqK57LtD-T&sig=FMcBXZtaLIEStGAJWTV74FE06VA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=XnNYUMisHIO-yQGzkYHgAw&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=body%20paint%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false>

7.2 Piercings: “The nose septum and both ears of boys and girls were pierced with porcupine quills during childhood. The nose was furnished with a nose ring and the ears were decorated with copper, abalone shells, or dentalium shells.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=M7KRhRt3i2cC&pg=PA331&lpg=PA331&dq=piercings+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=sz1Ad5DQyi&sig=bpuur-Bg_ziBIS4OnKIyfZ7J9e0&hl=en&sa=X&ei=sHRYUPaJjsi9ywGFjoGgAw&ved=0CD4Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=piercings%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false

“The Bella Coola pierced the nasal septa of high-status children, both boys and girls.”
(<http://books.google.com/books?id=y84rc5HGKpEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=Bella+Coola+historical+weapons&source=bl&ots=91yLbD-u09&sig=h6k7e0sNU57ZMSiECWZ3-skge-Q&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Bella%20Coola%20historical%20weapons&f=false>)

7.3 Haircut: “The hair was worn short or long. When long, it was braided and smeared with oil and red ocher. The women often fastened ornaments into the braids.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=cgyxvOa8LjYC&pg=PA302&lpg=PA302&dq=haircuts+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=mSyg4Rm_cx&sig=j2r-F7S5SY89DJfcMJDBiFU1b_A&hl=en&sa=X&ei=s3VYULbKKMjMyQGXgIG4DQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=haircuts%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false

7.4 Scarification: Many times scarification was used to enhance ceremonial adornment.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): “Jewelry was beautifully made and extensively worn. ears and noses were pierced at puberty, so that nose rings, early of abalone, later of silver, and ear ornaments could be worn; earrings were of many materials-shark teeth, bone, abalone shell cut into round or square shapes, clusters of dentalia, and thin copper rolled into tubular beads.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=cgyxvOa8LjYC&pg=PA302&lpg=PA302&dq=haircuts+of+Bella+Coola+Indians&source=bl&ots=mSyg4Rm_cx&sig=j2r-F7S5SY89DJfcMJDBiFU1b_A&hl=en&sa=X&ei=s3VYULbKKMjMyQGXgIG4DQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=haircuts%20of%20Bella%20Coola%20Indians&f=false

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: “Ornamental coppers (two to three inches long) were worn as personal adornment on clothing or as earrings by rich people and did not figure in potlatch exchange, but their significance was greater than mere adornment. Important ceremonies were conducted for the ear-piercings of the children of high-ranking individuals, who were privileged to wear earrings.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=TSALAAAIAAJ&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=ceremonial+adornment+Bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=J8wpT289ZA&sig=e3t22_d5RjuXC9XHGo9z1MbFfE4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=M59aUNnQPOT8yAGp8oCYAg&ved=0CEIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=ceremonial%20adornment%20Bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: It was more based on the ranking of the families rather than gender. See 7.6.

7.8 Missionary effect: “Most missionaries repudiated the theory held by many whites that the Indians were doomed to extinction. They determined that by teaching “progressive” hygiene practices along with Gospel truths they would halt the deterioration caused by the Indians’ low resistance to newly encountered, highly contagious diseases. While Indians seldom totally rejected the traditional healing arts with their emphasis “on supernatural inspiration and magic knowledge,” they began to turn to the missionaries for help.”

<http://books.google.com/books?id=LJ4jo7VRRLwC&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=missionary+effect+the+bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=v2QY4R1anF&sig=0GOx1ZhniIvgURQV6wTdf6Eo8Fk&hl=en&sa=X&ei=UnZaUNTLDSiVyQGB2YHIAQ&ved=0CEIQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=missionary%20effect%20the%20bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false>

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: Many of the same traditions were continued through European interventions, but were slightly changed to accommodate newer and exotic goods.

8. Kinship systems “Concerning their kinship system, the consanguineal terms are of the bifurcate collateral type with different terms for mother’s brother, father’s brother, mother’s sister, and father’s sister. Further, the terms for all “cousins” and brothers and sisters are divided into four categories: those of the younger male and the younger female relatives, and the older male and the older female relatives. This distinguishing of older consanguineal relatives of one’s own generation from younger ones seems to be present in most, if not all, Salish kinship systems.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=FFnaBwUIMdMC&dq=Bella+Coola+Indians+Religion+&lr=&source=gbs_navlinks_s

8.1 Sibling classification system: “Rank depended, not alone upon birth in a certain family, but also upon the order of the birth within it. Within any given family, the possession of valuable items and resources of wealth and of ceremonial prerogatives was the important criterion of status. As a rule, this correlated *pari passu* with the order of birth, for in general all rights were inherited. A fifth son in an aristocratic family therefore ranked far below the first, and his first cousin far below himself.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=FFnaBwUIMdMC&dq=Bella+Coola+Indians+Religion+&lr=&source=gs_navlinks_s

8.2 Sororate, levirate: “Levirate and sororate practices were common.”

http://books.google.com/books?id=M7KRhRt3i2cC&pg=PA332&lpg=PA332&dq=Sororate,+levirate+Bella+Coola+indians&source=bl&ots=sz1B5-GOAK&sig=iltPljUoeAt7VD1gl1-4y6quUSo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=lqJaUI3bE8S_yQH43oHwAQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Sororate%2C%20levirate%20Bella%20Coola%20indians&f=false

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): see 4.29

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Boas, Franz. *The Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians*. [New York]: n.p., 1898. Print.

At home with the Bella Coola Indians