

**NATIVE AMERICANS
PEOPLE OF THE
NORTHWEST COAST**

Educational Video
27 Minutes

DISCOVERY EDUCATION
1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 100
Evanston, Illinois 60201
toll free: 1-800-323-9084

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BEHIND THE SCENES

Every care has been taken to make this video as accurate and authentic as possible.

The featured village is 'Ksan, a recreated Gitksan (a division of the Tsimshian group) village located on the Skeena River in northwest British Columbia. 'Ksan is internationally acclaimed for its authentic portrayal of Northwest Coast life as it existed hundreds of years ago. It is the most extensive recreation of its type in North America.

This video was taped entirely on location in British Columbia and all locations are authentically portrayed. All actors are Gitksan and the dialogue occasionally heard in the video is Gitksan as well. Many key crew and supervisory positions were filled by Gitksan people.

All featured museum pieces were verified by the Museum of Northern British Columbia.

The producers relied only on highly respected books, articles, academic advisors, and original documents. They conferred with Native leaders to insure an accurate and sensitive portrayal of the Northwest Coast people.

The producers also worked closely with educational consultants to assure that this program is specific to textbook, framework, and syllabus objectives.

PRINCIPAL CREDITS

Producer, Writer and
Director:

Peter Matulavich

Associate Producers:

John Olson
Libby Hart

Consultants:

Michael Kew, Ph.D.
*Dept. of Anthropology
and Sociology
Univ. of British Columbia*
Mike Worosz, M.A.
Curriculum Consultant

Music:

Miriam Cutler

Videography:

Peter B. Good

Assistant Director:

Ron Jackson

Animation:

Don Smith

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'Ksan Historic Indian Village
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Museum of Northern British
Columbia, Elaine Moore,
Curator
Hazelton Secondary School

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Peter Matulavich Productions
Akron, Ohio

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INTRODUCTION

This video is designed to introduce students to Native Americans of the Northwest Coast and to help establish an affinity for their culture.

Students will see that the Northwest Coast is a unique region of remote coastlines and rugged mountains cut by wild rivers and fjords. It is an area rich in natural resources and the home of many accomplished tribes: the Coast Salish, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, Tlingit, and many others.

The focus of the video is pre-1600's before significant European intrusion into the Northwest Coast, when the culture of the Indians revolved around clan associations and the bountiful supply of fish and marine mammals that teemed in the waters.

The video depicts the day-to-day life of a typical Gitksan clan as told through the narrative voice of Golden Sparrow, a 15-year-old Gitksan girl. Students will learn how the Gitksan fished, hunted, cooked, made tools, weapons and clothing. Also discussed is the Indian's concept of religion, spirits, and the natural world.

Painstakingly researched and authentically recreated, this video provides a rare glimpse of a unique culture in an engaging and entertaining format.

New in this revision is a discussion of how the way of life of the Ojibwa would be forever changed when a new people, the Europeans, entered America. Also featured are sequences depicting modern-day life on reservations.

OBJECTIVES

After viewing the video, students should know:

- where Native Americans originated
- the unique natural environment of the Northwest Coast
- the names of other Northwest Coast tribes
- how Northwest Coast Indians hunted and fished
- types of implements used in hunting and fishing
- how the Coast Indians cooked and preserved fish
- how cedar trees were cut down and used in the construction of houses, canoes, and totem poles
- types of food eaten by the Coast Indians
- the role of clan associations in daily life
- some of the games played by Coast children
- the Northwest Coast view of the natural and spiritual world
- the role of the shaman in Coast culture
- that while Northwest Coast children may have led different lives, they had many things in common with children of today
- how a new people, the Europeans, entered America, and changed forever the way of life of all native peoples.
- what reservation life is like for Native Americans today.

Summary

The video opens with dramatic aerial scenes of the natural environment of the Pacific Northwest Coast: images of isolated and rugged shorelines, rivers, and deeply wooded forests.

Historic black and white photographs, many by Edward Curtis, show us some of the native peoples of this region: Nootka, Salish, Kwakiutl, Quilcene, Tsimshian. The narrator states that while each has a different name and language they all share a common background: they were a great fishing people, traveling the ocean and rivers in cedar canoes in search of fish and sea mammals.

Students will see how the Coast people utilized cedar, stone, bone, and iron. Featured are museum pieces including elaborately carved wooden masks important in Coast oral tradition, ornately carved figures on bowls and stone chests, intricately woven cedar baskets, and a variety of Coast tools.

Students learn that the people believed that everything in the natural world had a spiritual life that was interconnected with the physical world.

Posing the questions "Who were the Coast people?" and "Where did they come from?", the video segues to an animation sequence that shows the probable migratory route of all Native Americans: from Asia, across the Bering Land Bridge that existed some 30,000 years ago.

Animation also shows how Native Americans settled into various regional groups, distinguished by common adaptations to unique natural environments. Students learn that one of the groups, Native Americans of the Northwest Coast, inhabited a region consisting of dense forests and rugged coastlines. The people who inhabited the coastline became expert at ocean fishing while those who lived inland hunted forest animals and fished the fjords and rivers.

Posing the question, "What would it have been like to have lived like the Coast people?" the video segues back into time, to the way life may have been hundreds of years ago.

Golden Sparrow, a 15-year-old Gitksan girl is featured as she watches the Dance of the Bear in her clan's cedar house. In voice-over, Golden Sparrow tells us the Dance of the Bear is more than a dance for it tells the story of bravery among her ancestors. Golden Sparrow tells us that if it weren't for bravery, she would never have been permitted to marry Danewak, the boy she loved, all because of clan rules.

Golden Sparrow reflects on how clan rules are important in all aspects of daily life. Clans share the same houses and there might be as many as three or four families living in the same house. We see that the houses were large and were made from massive beams and planks hewn from cedar trees.

We learn that clans also had their own hunting areas and we see Golden Sparrow's father and brother setting a snare in their clan's territory. We next see Golden Sparrow's mother and sister gathering in an area set aside for their clan.

Clans also fell trees in their own areas and the video shows fallers using adzes and fire to fall a giant cedar.

We next see how men used pounding stones and wedges to split the cedar into planks, and how bark was stripped from the trees.

Back at the village one of the women weaves a basket and other useful items from cedar bark that has been softened in hot water. We also see a carver adding the finishing touches to a wolf mask he has just carved.

Golden Sparrow continues to speak of the special privileges of the clan, one of the most important being the right to fish in clan territory. At the river Golden Sparrow's father and another man are shown spearing large salmon.

Salmon is then shown being cooked two different ways: braced by sticks and roasted by the fire, or made into a stew by boiling it in a wooden box. The box, of course, couldn't be placed directly on a fire and the water was heated by dropping hot rocks into the box.

Students will appreciate that the Coast people believed that everything in nature had a spiritual life, and thus had to be respected. We see Golden Sparrow returning salmon bones to the river during an annual rite. It was believed that salmon offered themselves to the people and that their bones had to be returned to the water so that the fish could resurrect themselves and return the following year.

Next, a shaman is shown calling upon spirit helpers to help him cure a sick child. The shaman uses a rattle and an eagle feather to help purify the body of the child.

Village children are next shown playing a variety of Northwest Coast games. Featured are foot racing, tug of war, wrestling and stick fighting: the latter intended to teach boys to become good warriors.

The climax of the video shows Danewak saving the Chief's grandson from a falling cedar tree. Because of his bravery, Danewak and Golden Sparrow are permitted to marry.

In a revised epilog students learn that the ways of life of Northwest Coast tribes were forever changed with the arrival of Europeans on this continent and how a series of conflicts resulted in the complete conquest of the forest people and all Native Americans.

The video then features a number of sequences featuring what life is like on modern-day reservations. Students will learn that while alcoholism and unemployment rates are high, life on most reservations is improving.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When and how did Native Americans arrive in North America?

Most anthropologists today accept the theory that all Native Americans are descendants of Asian peoples who migrated to this continent in pursuit of game animals as long ago as 30,000 years, crossing a land bridge that once existed where the Bering Sea is today.

2. How long did the migration take?

There were probably several migrations spread over thousands of years.

3. Where did these Asian people settle?

They settled in all parts of North and South America, adapting to the unique natural environments found in the various regions.

4. How are Native Americans classified?

While Native Americans can be classified in a number of ways, including language and tribal affiliation, the video focuses on classification by group, according to the common habits and customs acquired to adapt to a region's natural environment.

5. How many groups are there?

Seven are featured in this video which covers all U.S. states, excluding Hawaii and portions of Alaska. The seven featured groups are the Eastern Woodlands, the Plains, the Southwest, the Plateau, the Great Basin, California, and the Northwest Coast.

6. What are some of the tribes of the Northwest Coast?

Nootka, Salish, Kwakiutl, Quilcene, Tsimshian, Tlingit.

7. What did all these tribes have in common?

Chiefly, they fished the ocean and rivers, and built their homes from the giant cedar trees that grow in the area.

8. Did Northwest Coast Indians have a religion?

They believed in good and evil spirits and that everything in the natural world was connected in a spiritual way.

9. Who were shamans?

Men and women who were believed to have supernatural powers and could cure the sick.

10. What were the region's sources of food?

Primarily, salmon, other fish, sea mammals and forest animals.

11. What method of catching salmon is featured in the video?

Spearing was shown, where a man beats the water with a stick, driving the salmon toward the spearer.

12. How were salmon and other fish preserved for storage over the winter?

Fish were smoked in smoke houses.

13. How did the Coast people cook?

Two methods are featured in the video: roasting and boiling.

14. Why were the salmon bones returned to the river?

It showed respect to the salmon spirits so the fish would return the following year.

15. What did the people of the Northwest Coast use as cooking vessels and storage containers?

They used wooden cooking and storage containers, and tightly woven baskets woven from cedar bark.

16. How did the Coast people catch small mammals?

They used traps and snares.

17. Which two clans are named in the video?

The Wolf and Frog clans.

18. What is the significance of clans among the Coast Indians?

Each clan had specific rights to hunt, fish and gather in certain territories.

19. Did clans use symbols to identify themselves?

Yes, they often carved clan figures on totem poles and made symbolic paintings on their houses and boxes.

20. Why was it not possible for Golden Sparrow and Danewak to marry?

The family had arranged a marriage between Golden Sparrow and Jahgo.

21. How were cedar trees cut down?

A wedge was cut into the tree and then a fire was built in the recess and allowed to burn through the cedar.

22. How were cedar planks cut from the felled tree?

Men used pounding stones and wedges to split the wood and it was then pried off in planks.

23. How did the Pacific Northwest Coast Indians acquire iron for their tools?

Through trade, possibly from Siberia.

24. In what ways was cedar used?

In houses, canoes, totem poles, masks, bowls, boxes, and woven baskets, clothing, mats, and ropes.

25. How was the inner bark from the cedar tree prepared to make baskets?

After it was split, the bark was soaked in hot water to make it soft and pliable.

26. Name some of the games played by the children depicted in the video.

Foot racing, tug of war, wrestling, and stick fighting.

27. Where did the U.S. government put Indians after they were forced to give up their land.

On reservations.

28. What did the government do with many Indian children?

Forced them to attend strict boarding schools.

29. How many Indians choose to remain on reservations today in the U.S.?

More than a half million.

30. What are two major problems found on most reservations today?

Unemployment and alcoholism.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to encourage classroom discussion

1. This video shows the Northwest Coast Indians fishing for salmon, then smoking their catch.

Question: Why is this important?

Salmon return to the coast only from May to September each year. The smoking of salmon preserved it for the following winter and spring, until the salmon returned. They also used the surplus fish for trading. (Salmon jerky was one form of smoked salmon.)

Question: What methods do we use today to preserve food?

Smoking, canning, freezing, and vacuum packing.

2. We are shown fishing, hunting, and gathering of food. These people did not cultivate crops or raise animals for food.

Question: Can you think of other types of food that can be obtained from their environment?

From the ocean and shoreline: fish, sea mammals, birds, bird eggs, shellfish, and seaweed. From the land: game animals like deer and moose and a wide variety of berries, roots, and wild edible plants.

3. Native peoples of the Coast were very artistic and used items found in their environment to decorate themselves and their surroundings.

Question: Can you name some things native people typically used for decoration?

Shells and animal teeth were typically strung into necklaces. Horns, antlers, and bone were carved in a variety of ways. Dyes were made from roots, berries, plants, and minerals.

Questions: With the arrival of Europeans, Coast materials were replaced by what sort of materials?

Woolen clothing replaced cedar clothing. Metal replaced bone and stone tools.

4. The video explains the importance of the shaman in Northwest Coast life.

Question: Are there counterparts to shamans in modern society?

Priests, ministers, rabbis and other religious leaders fulfill many of the same functions as shamans and act as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual worlds.

5. When we think of the Northwest Coast Indians we often think of totem poles.

Question: Were totem poles used for religious purposes?

Contrary to common belief, poles did not have religious significance. While poles were used for a variety of purposes, one common usage was for clan identification and this type of pole was typically erected in front of a clan's house.

Question: Do people in modern society have similar ways of identifying their family ancestry?

Family crests and coats-of-arms are used in much the same way as some poles.

6. The utilization of a region's natural resources is an important part of adapting to that region.

Question: How did Northwest Coast Indians utilize the natural resources of their region?

Answers include:

- made houses, canoes, poles, and masks from cedar wood
- made clothes from cedar bark and animal hide
- made cooking boxes and utensils from wood
- wove baskets and rope out of bark
- carved spear and harpoon points from stone, bone, and sometimes ivory

Question: If the Coast Indians hadn't had cedar trees, what other materials might they've used to build dwellings?

Answers include:

- deerskin
- furs

- tree branches

- whale bones

7. The video explains that Coast Indians did not have a written language.

Question: How did Coast Indians keep track of important events?

Through oral traditions: myths, legends, songs, stories, etc.

8. Many children are fascinated by Native American life as it was in the past.

Question: Comparing it to modern life, how would life have been better or worse than today?

There are countless specific answers. In general, Native Americans led comparatively simple lives, living close to nature. People today have modern conveniences but must live with stresses such as crime, congestion, pollution, etc.

9. The video features life on reservations today.

Question: Is it better for Indians to remain on reservations or leave them?

By staying on reservations, Indians maintain familiarity with family, friends and customs, but there are few employment opportunities there. Leaving can bring employment opportunities but can also lead to a loss of identity.

10. The video discusses some problems facing modern-day reservation Indians.

Question: What contributes to the high rate of alcoholism found on many reservations and reserves?

High rates of alcoholism is largely due to the high unemployment and resultant loss of hope found on many reservations. Without employment and something to work toward, many Indians lose their self-esteem and fall into idleness and despair. Many turn to alcohol as a way to escape their problems.

ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to encourage students to learn more about some of the things covered in the video.

1. The video discusses Native Americans as descendants of Asian peoples who migrated to this continent as long ago as 30,000 years, crossing a land bridge that once connected Asia with North America. Many Native Americans living today don't accept this explanation, citing accounts of their own which have been passed down orally from previous generations.

Activity: Ask students to research books on Indian legends at the library and report back to the class how a selected tribe explains its origin.

2. Houses of the Northwest Coast were massive structures built from cedar beams and planks.

Activity: Have students build miniature cedar plank houses using small dowels and flat sticks.

3. The Northwest Coast extends approximately 2,000 miles from northern California to Alaska.

Activity: Have students draw a map of the region with its significant topography, natural resources, and the names of the tribes that lived there.

4. The video show the weaving of a simple basket from cedar strips.

Activity: Have students weave baskets from strips of paper, using paste to stick the strips together.

5. The totem pole has come to symbolize the people of the Northwest Coast.

Activity: Have students design and draw their own poles using symbolic figures from their own imagination.

6. This video discusses how Europeans entered the Pacific Northwest Coast and changed the way native peoples lived.

Activity: Ask students to research and report how Coast Indian life changed with the arrival of the Europeans.

8. The video discusses how more than a half million Indians live on reservations today.

Activity: Have students draw a U.S. map featuring modern-day Indian reservations.

GLOSSARY

adz: a heavy curved tool with a broad flat end made of metal or stone mounted on a wooden handle.

alcoholism: a disease caused by repeatedly drinking too much alcohol.

ancient: old.

ancestors: people of one's family who lived generations before him.

anthropologist: person who studies the origins, characteristics, customs and beliefs of a people.

brace: support or hold together.

braided: strips of material woven together.

clan: extended family group that regulated marriage, inheritance of wealth, fishing and hunting rights.

courageous: brave, fearless.

environment: that which comprises all the things of a specific place or region.

fjord: narrow inlet of the sea, bordered by steep cliffs.

herb: plant valued for its medicinal properties.

incision: cut, gash or notch.

ingenious: clever, smartly designed.

isolated: separated from other persons or things.

ivory: material from the tusks of elephants and walruses, etc.

migration: movement of people or animals from one region to another.

ornate: showy, richly decorated.

pliable: easily bent.

preserve: prepare food to last many months.

pried: raised or moved by leverage.

privilege: right or benefit.

remote: out of the way, distant.

reservation: an area of land set aside by the government for the use of Native Americans.

respect: show regard or consideration for.

resurrect: bring to life again.

shamans: medicine men and women said to possess supernatural powers.

shank: shaft-like part that connects two objects.

snare: noose for capturing birds or small animals.

spirit: supernatural being without physical form.

supernatural: beyond normal explainable natural laws or capability.

technique: manner or method of doing something.

traditions: beliefs, legends and customs handed down from generation to generation.

weave: interlace strips or strands of material.

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SCRIPT

Narrator

Along the Northwest Coast of the United States and into Canada is a land of great beauty, where ocean, forest and rock live together in harmony.

Remote and isolated, all that is usually heard are the sounds of the natural world: the waves, wind, seabirds.

But if you listen carefully, you can sometimes hear a song. An ancient song of the people who call this land their home:
the people of the Northwest Coast.

Super Main Title: Native Americans: People of the Northwest Coast

The people of the Northwest Coast have many names: Nootka, Salish, Kwakiutl, Quilcene, Tsimshian and many others.

Each have different names. Each speak different languages. But they all share a common background.

They were, and still are a great fishing people, fishing the many rivers and streams that cut through this land.

They built great cedar canoes and traveled the ocean and rivers in search of game.

They hunted sea mammals, even whales.

From the great cedar trees that grow here, they built impressive wooden homes, decorating them with ornate carvings and paintings.

They carved totem poles. The symbols represent animals and spirits.

They wore clothing woven from the bark of trees, as well as animal hides.

While the people didn't have a written language, they did have rich oral traditions, and passed down their legends during ceremonies.

They carved wooden masks which often represented supernatural beings important to the history of the people.

Ornately carved figures were common in many wooden items. This is a bowl.

They also carved stone. This is a small chest.

A bowl.

From cedar bark, they wove beautiful baskets.

They designed ingenious fishing hooks. These have wooden shanks, and the barb is carved from bone.

Spear and harpoon points were carved from stone, bone and sometimes ivory.

A variety of tools were used to work the cedar forests. The Coast people were among the first Native Americans to use iron in their tools. The source of the metal may have been Siberia, reaching the Northwest Coast through trade.

But even after they obtained metal, they continued to use stone for some tools.

The people felt closely related to all things in the natural world.

They felt that everything in the natural world had a spiritual life, and that everything was connected to everything else in a spiritual way.

Who are the Coast people? How did they get here? Where did they come from?

While all tribes have their own origin stories, most anthropologists accept the following:

About 30,000 years ago, North America looked much as it does today.

A narrow stretch of ocean separated Asia from this continent. There were no people living here. Then, ice began to advance across the Northern Hemisphere. As it did, sea levels dropped, exposing a land bridge connecting Asia with North America.

Large game animals like bison and mammoth crossed this land bridge, entering the new continent, soon followed by Asian hunters.

There were probably several migrations, over thousands of years, and eventually the people spread throughout North and South America, as the ice retreated and the land bridge became covered by water again.

There were hundreds of tribes, but each can be classified into one of several groups, according to the natural environment in which they lived.

The names of these groups are the Eastern Woodlands, the Plains, the Southwest, the Great Basin, the Plateau, California, and the Northwest Coast.

Each of these groups lived in an environment that was unlike the others.

None of the others lived in an environment quite like this one: the Northwest Coast, the land of the Coast people.

This region consists of dense forests and rugged coastlines. The climate is mild; a lot of rain and little snow. The people who inhabited the coastline became expert at ocean fishing and the hunting of sea mammals.

While those who lived inland hunted forest animals and fished the fjords and rivers.

What would it have been like to have lived back then, to have lived like the Coast people, hundreds of years ago?

Golden Sparrow

This is the dance of the bear. But it is more than a dance. For it tells a story. A story about our courageous ancestors.

The most important part of the dance is when the bear threatens our chief.

The chief must ignore the threats, proving to everyone that he is very brave.

Bravery is important to our people.

Funny, it was never that important to me, until recently. My name is Deshutahi. It means Golden Sparrow. I have lived for 15 winters here with my people, the Gitksan, in the House of the Frog Clan.

So why is bravery important to me now? To explain that, I have to tell you a little about our people.

We live in a small village along the Ksi'yan River in five cedar houses.

This is our food storage house. It's built on stilts to help keep it dry during heavy rains and snow.

And this is our smoke house where we smoke fish to preserve them during the long winters.

In front of each house is a pole with many carved figures. One of the figures is very special. Like this one, the wolf. This tells everyone that this house belongs to the wolf clan.

My clan is the frog, and that's why there's a frog carved in the top beam of our house.

Clans share the same houses together. There might be as many as four to five families living in a single house, so it's a good thing our houses are so big. And even here we've carved special figures important to our clan and its history.

Our houses are made from cedar logs and planks we cut from our forests. And there's an opening at the top to let out smoke.

We sleep along the outside edges of the house. That's my mother tucking in my two younger brothers. Our blankets are bearskins and they are very soft and warm.

On one wall in our house is our clan symbol, the frog.

So what does all this have to do with bravery? You see, clans are very important to our people. They are like big families, and it is forbidden to marry someone from your own clan. I wanted to marry a boy from the wolf clan. His name is Danewak and he's kind and caring. But my parents wanted me to marry Danewak's older brother, Jahgo. Jahgo was the oldest eligible boy in another clan, so that's who my parents insisted I marry. This is the way of clans and parents arrange all marriages and everyone has to obey clan rules.

When you belong to a clan, you get special privileges, like being able to hunt in clan territory. My father is a very good hunter and he and my brother hunt for deer and elk in our forests.

They also set traps and snares. This is a snare. A string is tied to a bent tree. At the other end of the string is a loop. When a small animal runs through the loop, it triggers the snare.

This is just a stick, but it could've easily been a rabbit or squirrel.

Women do gathering in areas set aside for their clan. We gather fruit and berries and other things that grow in our forest. Wild strawberries are my little sister's favorite.

Clans also cut trees in their own areas. Cedar trees are the ones we use to make our houses, poles and canoes. The men use adzes to start the cut. The blade of the adz my father is using is made of iron which we get by trading with people far to the north. Iron blades work better than the stone blades we used to use but tree falling is still hard work. .and that's why the men will set a fire in the place cut out for it. The fire will eventually burn its way through the cedar.

Next, the men use pounding stones and wedges to split the tree into planks.

You can hear the tree splitting. Cedar splits easily when wedged properly.

The men may get 50 planks out of a small tree like this one.

We use cedar to make lots of things. Sometimes we strip the bark from the cedar. This is done by first making incisions in the bark using a small adz. The bark is then pried away from the cedar. Finally, it is stripped. A good bark stripper like my father can strip the bark a long way up. When done properly, stripping does not harm the cedar.

The brown outer bark is then stripped away as only the inner bark can be used.

Later, the bark strips are soaked in hot water to make them soft and pliable. The strips are laid out and then woven together, one strip going under every other strip. This is the start of a basket.

And this is what the basket looks like when it's nearly complete. The strips folded back and then tied off with string made from root.

My little sister watches every step, for soon she will have to know how to make baskets herself.

Bark can also be braided, and made into rope, belts, headbands, and even clothing.

Several men in our clan are excellent carvers. They carve many things, but some of the most important things they carve are masks.

The masks represent supernatural beings and animals important to our clan. They're never used for play, but for special ceremonies. This mask is the wolf.

I mentioned how clans have special privileges. Another one is the right to fish in certain areas. One way we fish is with spears. The points are first sharpened with a stone.

One man will beat the water with a stick, driving a salmon toward the spearer.

Then it's up to the spearer to have an accurate aim and not let the salmon off the spear.

Using this technique, two men should be able to spear enough salmon in one afternoon to feed the entire village.

There are a number of ways to cook salmon. One way is by bracing it with sticks, and then roasting it over a fire, just far enough away to keep the sticks from burning

This gives the salmon a smoky flavor.

Another way to cook salmon is by boiling. A hot rock is placed in a box filled with water. This causes the water to boil. Next, my mother adds green plants like wild onions, and then sections of salmon, for salmon stew. Salmon stew is not my favorite.

Every year, the bones from the first salmon caught must be returned to the water from which they came. We believe that salmon offer themselves to our people so that we may eat them. For this, we must show them great respect.

By returning their bones to the water, the salmon will be able to resurrect themselves and return to our people the following year.

Our people show respect for everything in the natural world, for we believe everything in nature has a spirit life. As long as we show proper respect, we will lead good and healthy lives and never do without.

But there are evil spirits in the world, and when things go wrong, like sickness, it is sometimes because of the evil spirits.

Shamans, or medicine men, have been specially trained to deal with illness.

Many times they use herbs and medicines to cure the sick. But sometimes it is necessary for the shaman to call upon spirit helpers and perform special acts to cleanse and purify the bodies of those who are contaminated. The shaman works very hard, sometimes for days, before he is successful.

I don't want you to think we never have time for games, because we do. One of my favorite games is foot racing.

Another game we play is tug-of-war.

Boys' games are a little rougher. Like wrestling.

And stick fighting teaches boys to become good warriors. There was no question Jahgo would become a good warrior, and that's who I would've had to have married if Danewak hadn't proved himself. Here's what happened.

Our chief had brought his grandson to the forest to show him how cedars were cut. Danewak was the fire-tender that day.

The chief wanted to give instructions to the men and left the boy alone.

Suddenly the cedar began to fall.

Danewak was the first to see it.

Danewak dove and pushed the boy away just as the tree hit the ground.

The boy was shaken up, but he'd be all right.

Needless to say, the chief was very thankful his grandson was saved.

So thankful, in fact, he talked to my parents, telling them how brave Danewak had been that day.

My parents were so impressed, they finally agreed to let me marry Danewak instead of Jahgo.

Narrator

Golden Sparrow and Danewak would eventually marry but their family would be the last to live entirely in the old ways. A new people, the Europeans, had entered the continent. In just a matter of years, the way of life of native peoples would be forever changed.

Wanting the land occupied by Indians, the newcomers engaged in a series of conflicts that would eventually result in the complete conquest of all native peoples.

Indians everywhere were forced to give up their way of life and to live on small reservations and reserves, areas of land set aside for Indians.

No longer able to hunt and fish in the old ways, the Indians were rationed food and clothing by the government. Some agents who were supposed to help the Indians were dishonest. They stole money and supplies, so the Indians never got all that they were entitled to. As a result, the Indians lived in total poverty and many starved.

Tribes were forced to give up many of their traditions and could no longer perform many of their religious rites and ceremonies.

Many Indian children were separated from their families and were sent to strict boarding schools where they were forced to give up their Indian ways.

In the 1950s, the United States government encouraged Native Americans to relocate to the nation's cities, where they could find jobs and live in modern ways, but not all Indians chose to do this.

Today, Indians can live anywhere they want, and many choose to live off reservations in cities and towns, employed in the same sorts of jobs as other Americans.

But more than a half million Indians prefer to remain on reservations throughout the United States.

Life here is much better than it used to be and, in some ways, is similar to life anywhere else.

Indians drive cars and live in modern dwellings, like other Americans.

They shop in stores and wear modern clothing.

Many attend Christian churches.

Indian children go to schools that look like schools anywhere. . .and study the same kinds of subjects.

They enjoy the same sorts of things as other American children.

While reservation life is a lot like life anywhere else, there are some big differences. Unemployment is very high. On some reservations, four out of five people are out of work, and because of it, alcoholism and poverty are widespread.

Many tribes have opened gambling casinos in order to create jobs and bring in additional income. But only a few tribes -- those near major cities -- have actually profited from casinos.

Along the Northwest Coast, some Indians are fortunate to have jobs in the lumber industry. This mill in British Columbia not only employs a lot of native people, it is one of the few mills that is native owned. That means that most of the money the plant makes stays in the native community where it is sorely needed.

Others find employment in the fishing industry. This work pays a lot but it's dangerous and only lasts for a few weeks in the summer, when the ocean salmon return to their spawning grounds.

Some of the fish end up in native-owned canneries and smoke houses like this one in British Columbia. This is a small operation, but it provides important jobs for people who wouldn't have jobs otherwise.

Some native people earn modest incomes in more traditional ways.

Bark peeling has been a tradition along the Northwest Coast for thousands of years and it is still being done today. Bark peelers use simple techniques that are similar to those used in the past. Cedar bark can be used to make many things, like this basket, which will fetch a good price from a tourist.

The Haida tribe is famous for its carvings in argillite, black stone that is relatively easy to cut. Haida carvers can earn thousands of dollars for a beautifully carved piece. This sculpture is that of a raven, an important character in northwest coast legends and a popular subject of carvers.

Other tribes are famous for their carvings in wood. This is a shaman's rattle, a type of rattle shamans used to use during ceremonies. Today these rattles are favorites among tourists and collectors, and command high prices. This carving is an eagle, another popular subject for carvers and collectors.

Canoes have been an important part of Northwest Coast life for thousands of years. They were used for transportation, fishing, trading and war.

Today the canoes are mostly gone, but a few native craftsman are still trying to keep the ancient art of canoe making alive. Using the simple tools of their ancestors, these craftsman are carving a 52-foot long canoe out of a red cedar log. A canoe like this can take more than a year to make and when it's done it will be used in special events and ceremonies.

The people of the Northwest Coast have always been identified with the carving of totem poles, and they are still being carved today. Totem poles are carved from a solid red cedar log using simple tools that are very similar to those that have been used for centuries. A pole this size can take a team of carvers months to carve, and when it's done, it will take its place next to poles like these that are found in small native villages throughout the Northwest Coast.

While cedar canoes seldom paddle these waters and you no longer find the great cedar houses, the people, their spirit and many of their traditions live on.