



KWAKIUTL

by jared

The Kwakiutl lived in northwestern British Columbia, Canada. More Kwakiutl were found on Queen Charlotte and Vancouver Islands. Explorers from Europe were charting the Pacific Coast when they found the Kwakiutl. The Kwakiutl gave the explorers furs. Soon the pioneers began to settle in the area.



The Kwakiutl lives centered on the sea. The cold deep waters of the northern Pacific coast provided the world's greatest fishing grounds. The most important fish to the tribe was the salmon. Other fish the Indians caught were herring, smelt, cod, and eulachon. Besides fish, the Kwakiutl hunted seals, porpoises, sea otters, and sea birds. They also ate crab, octopus, squid, and other seafood.



Cedar-bark blanket

During cold and wet weather, the Kwakiutls needed warm, water-repellant clothes. The most common garment was a woven cedar-bark blanket. They wrapped the blankets around their bodies and tied them shut. During the summer, the Kwakiutls wore few clothes. Men wore just a breechcloth or nothing at all. Women usually wore only a small skirt. Most of the time, the people went barefoot.

Every family in the Kwakiutl tribe had a specific rank and worked hard to increase this rank. Wealthier families had to invite their neighbors to special feasts called potlatches. The family made speeches, sang songs, danced, and gave away gifts. If a lot of gifts were given away, this would be sung about at future potlatches. Potlatches were also done for weddings and deaths.



Mask used at Potlatches