

The Tlingit

What is today the busy city of Sitka, Alaska, was once the heart of the Tlingit homeland. In the 1700s the Tlingit lived in an area that stretched about 400 miles along the coast between Mount St. Elias in southeastern Alaska and the Portland Canal in British Columbia. The Pacific Ocean's warm Japan Current kept this area's weather mild and wet.

Like others in this area, the Tlingit got most of their food from the sea. In addition, they hunted animals in the forests and mountains. The Tlingit traveled by canoe to trade their surplus resources with other peoples along the coast. This trade helped to make the Tlingit wealthy.

The Tlingit built wooden plank houses large enough for several related families. A totem pole stood in front of most houses. The Tlingit were skilled crafts workers. In addition to carving totem poles, they wove baskets and blankets.

The Tlingit still live in Alaska today. As you will read on page 83, Jennie Thlunaut worked to preserve the Tlingit heritage. Her woven blankets are a Tlingit treasure.

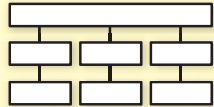
REVIEW How did the waterways of the Pacific Northwest help the Tlingit economy?
Summarize



What You Learned

- 5.1.1** Native Americans adapted to the varied land of the North American West. The Inuit learned to live in the Arctic.
- 5.1.2**
- 5.1.1** Native Americans in the six culture areas of California lived in very different ways.
- 5.1.2**
- 5.1.2** American Indians in the Pacific Northwest fished, gathered food, and made detailed wood products. The Tlingit in southeastern Alaska used the sea's resources for food and to trade with their neighbors.
- 5.1.3**

Lesson Review

- 1. Focus Question** How did the environments of **5.1.1** the West affect the lives of Native Americans who lived there?
- 2. Vocabulary** Write a paragraph about Pacific **5.1.2** Northwest Indians using these words.
potlatch **totem pole**
- 3. Economics** Why were waterways important **5.1.3** to the Tlingit?
- 4. Critical Thinking Problem Solving** **5.1.1** Whale hunting is difficult and dangerous. How did the Makah solve the problem of catching and using whales?
- 5. Reading Strategy Identify** 
5.1 **Main Idea and Details**
ELA **R2.3** Use the chart to record the main idea and details about Native American groups in California.
- 6. Write about** **THE BIG IDEA** Use the information **5.1.1** in your graphic organizer to write a paragraph about how geography affected the lives of Native Americans in California.
ELA **W2.3**
- 7. Link to Music** Music is very important to Makah **5.1.2** culture. Are there any songs that are important to your culture or to your family? Write a paragraph about the important songs in your own life.

Jennie Thlunaut 1892–1986

When Jennie Thlunaut was about ten years old, her mother taught her how to weave in the Tlingit tradition. Young Jennie found that she had a special talent for weaving and sewing. She used her skill to make blankets, baskets, and moccasins.

As she grew older, Thlunaut learned a traditional Pacific Northwest style of weaving called Chilkat. Chilkat blankets are woven from mountain goats' wool and are colored with natural dyes. This special kind of blanket is worn by dancers during ceremonies. Chilkat blankets have bold patterns and a long fringe.

As factory-woven blankets became popular, the art of Chilkat weaving was almost lost. Thlunaut spent her life keeping the skill of weaving Chilkat blankets alive. She also taught others how to weave at festivals and workshops.

One person who attended a workshop said, "Jennie amazed us with her speed at weaving." Thanks to Thlunaut's work to preserve her heritage, Chilkat weaving continues today.



How did Jennie Thlunaut keep the Tlingit traditions alive?



For more about Jennie Thlunaut, visit:

www.macmillanmh.com/ss/ca/bios

The Life of Jennie Thlunaut

1890

1892
Born in Klukwan, Alaska

1920

1902
Learns to weave

1950

1921
Gives birth to third child

1980

1984
Demonstrates weaving at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife

2010

1986
Dies at the age of 94