

The clothing used by
the native people of
the north west coast



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Topic: The Clothing used by the Native People of the North West Coast
The first clothes made by the Northwest coast people was with Cedar bark which was scrapped until it was soft and then woven into fabric for garments. The cloth was brought to life by using the roots and barks, which were interwoven

onto the garment to make it more attractive. The colder the area more the insulation required, this was got from animal skins and fur used along with the

bark fiber to make the garment. This creation was called Chilkat, which had a lining of cedar bark to which mountain goat wool was interwoven.

The coastal people had an ingenious way of making cedar clothing in which, the

cedar bark was twisted into threads and woven into a soft warm cloth that was

perfect for the cold weather. Cedar rain ponchos were made of shredded cedar

barks woven together which may not have been very comfortable but served the

purpose of keeping warm.

Furs of otter, wolf and fox were used for lining the garments. The northwestern

people had a close proximity to nature and thereby used raw material like animal

skin to make the garments in which quills and shells were used for decoration.

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Flint blades were used as scissors for cutting processed leather and sinew which was the dried back muscle of craibou was used as thread to stitch the material together. The holes were made using bone awl which were sewed together with fine bone needle. The women had excellent sewing skills and were

masters in making very tiny stitches with sinew thread. The sewing done with

bone needles and sinew, swelled when wet, making the garment watertight.

This

has been replaced by steel needles and polyester threads today. Caribou hide

with the hair on it was an excellent insulating material and was used in making

boots along with dried sealskin to protect the feet from frostbites.

The cedar bark weaving was done on a circular loom, which allowed continuous

weaving leaving no seams. The cloth made with the cedar bark was then lined

with animal fur to make it more warm during the cold winters. The circular disc

with a centre pole carved out of whale vertebra was the spindle whorl, which was

used to spin their wool into yarn. The spindle whorl came in various sizes, which

determined the thickness of the yarn strands.

Parkas and coats with hoods made of caribou hide was a favorite with the <https://assignbuster.com/the-clothing-used-by-the-natvie-people-of-the-north-west-coast/>

people

of the Northwestern coast. These are usually so well made that they lasted a few

generations. The cloth was spun from vertical looms with a combination of wool

and cedar barks. The two popular styles of weaving were Raven's tail and Chilkat.

The Ravens tail is usually made of basic black and white yarn, woven in geometric patterns and is unique due to the use of two or three strand twining

methods. It is set on the loom vertically and in separate rows horizontally which

gives the finished product a symmetrical finish.

Chilkat weaving is commonly followed throughout the northwester coast, where

the women were the weavers and the men the designers. This yarn was spun

from the mountain goat wool which was dyed with different colors. The twinning

techniques brought out the creativeness of the weaver who worked on each design individually until it was completed. The designs were first painted on wood called pattern boards before producing them. The weaver had to duplicate

the design on both sides giving it a fabulous striking effect as these robes were

worn in dance regalia. The shirts had sea otter fur on the collars, necks and <https://assignbuster.com/the-clothing-used-by-the-natvie-people-of-the-north-west-coast/>

cuffs. The back was typical of all Chilkat shirts, having horizontal bands with blue

and yellow running zigzag from top to bottom.

The northwestern coastal people were also experts in beadwork. The original

wooden beads, porcupine quills and dentalia shells used for decorating garments

were replaced with glass beads. The men wore breechcloths, which is a rectangular piece of hide that hung from hips to the bottom in the front and back.

Leather leggings were used along with it in winter. Other tribes wore short kilts or

even thick fur pants. Women were dressed in leggings and skirts. The materials

and designs differed with each tribe.

The designs created by these skills artisans were masterpieces, which enhanced

the personality of the person wearing it. Special attention was given to collars,

which were decorated with elaborate beadwork. Garments made of quivit, which

is the undercoat of the musk ox were colorful and charming. Quivit weavers are

still famous for their exquisite specialty made from this unique material.

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