

# **Kwakiutl**

## **Of the Pacific Northwest**

**SS4H1 The student will describe how early Native American cultures developed in North America.**

- a. Locate where Native Americans settled
- b. Describe how Native Americans used their environment to obtain food, clothing, and shelter.

# Location

The Kwakiutl, and other tribes with very similar cultures, inhabited the Pacific Northwest coast of the United States, as well as the coastal region of Canada.



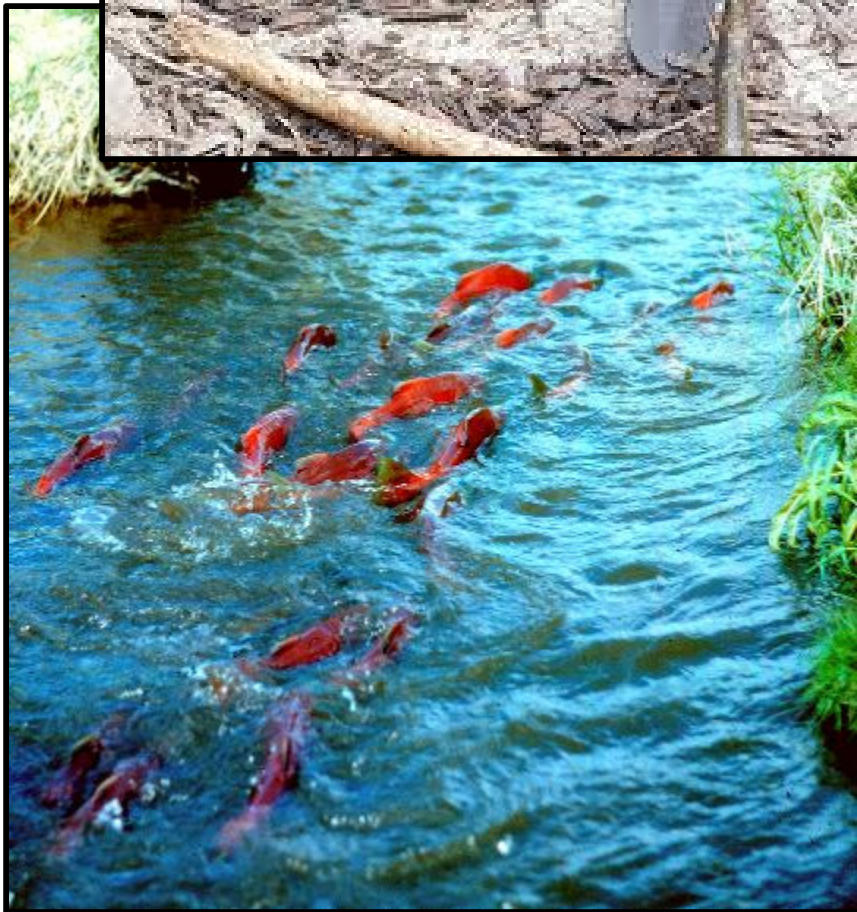


# The Pacific Northwest Coast of the United States

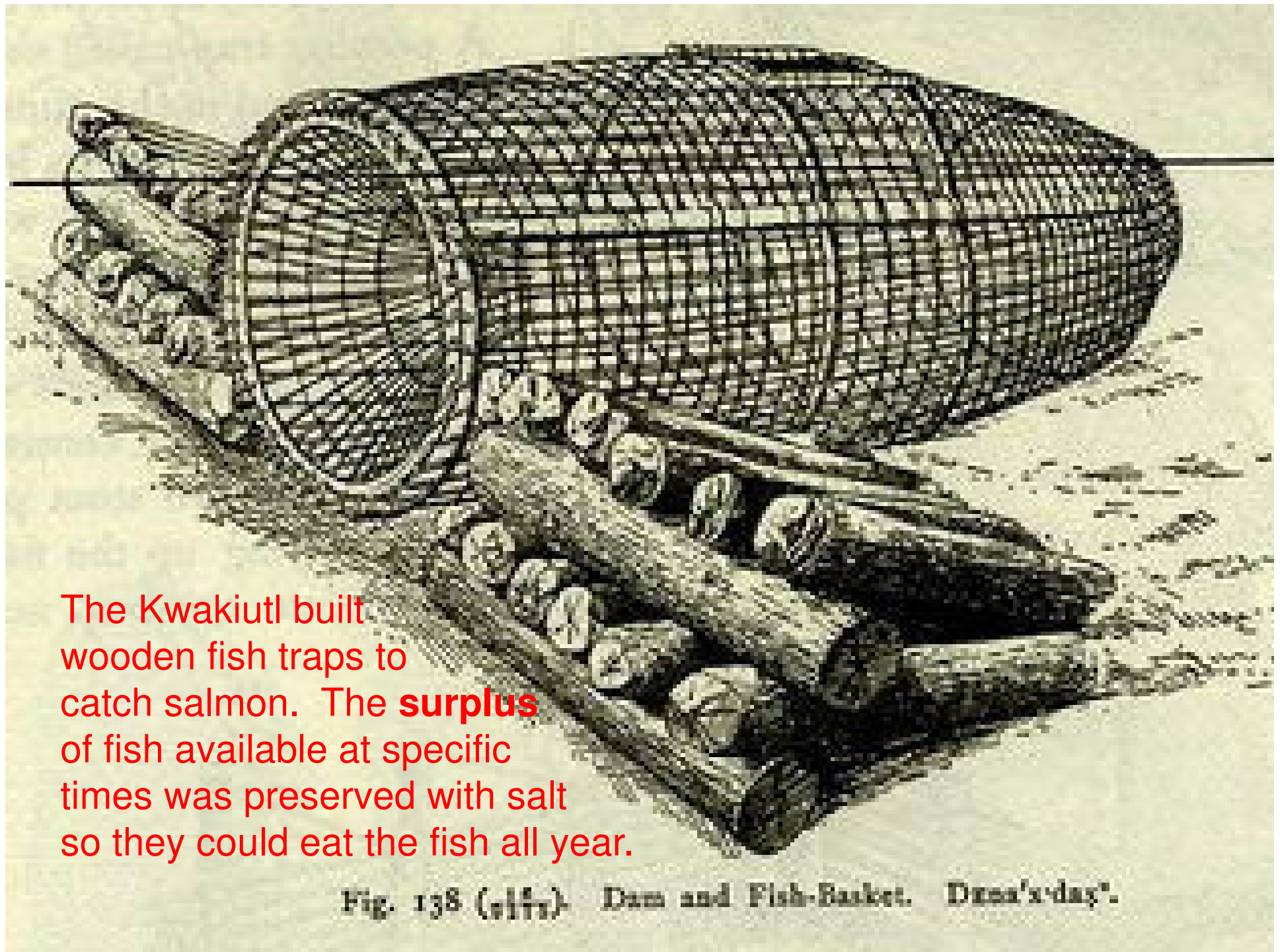
How does this coastal  
landscape compare or  
contrast to other coastal  
areas you have visited?



**The Kwakiutl territory included thick forests with many rivers. Resources were plentiful. Much of their food came from the forests and rivers. Trees were a major resource for the Kwakiutl.**



**The Kwakiutl hunted in both the rivers and the forests. They ate beaver, deer, rabbit, and fish. Caribou was a major source of food. They also used the skins, antlers, and bones. Women gathered roots and berries from the forests.**



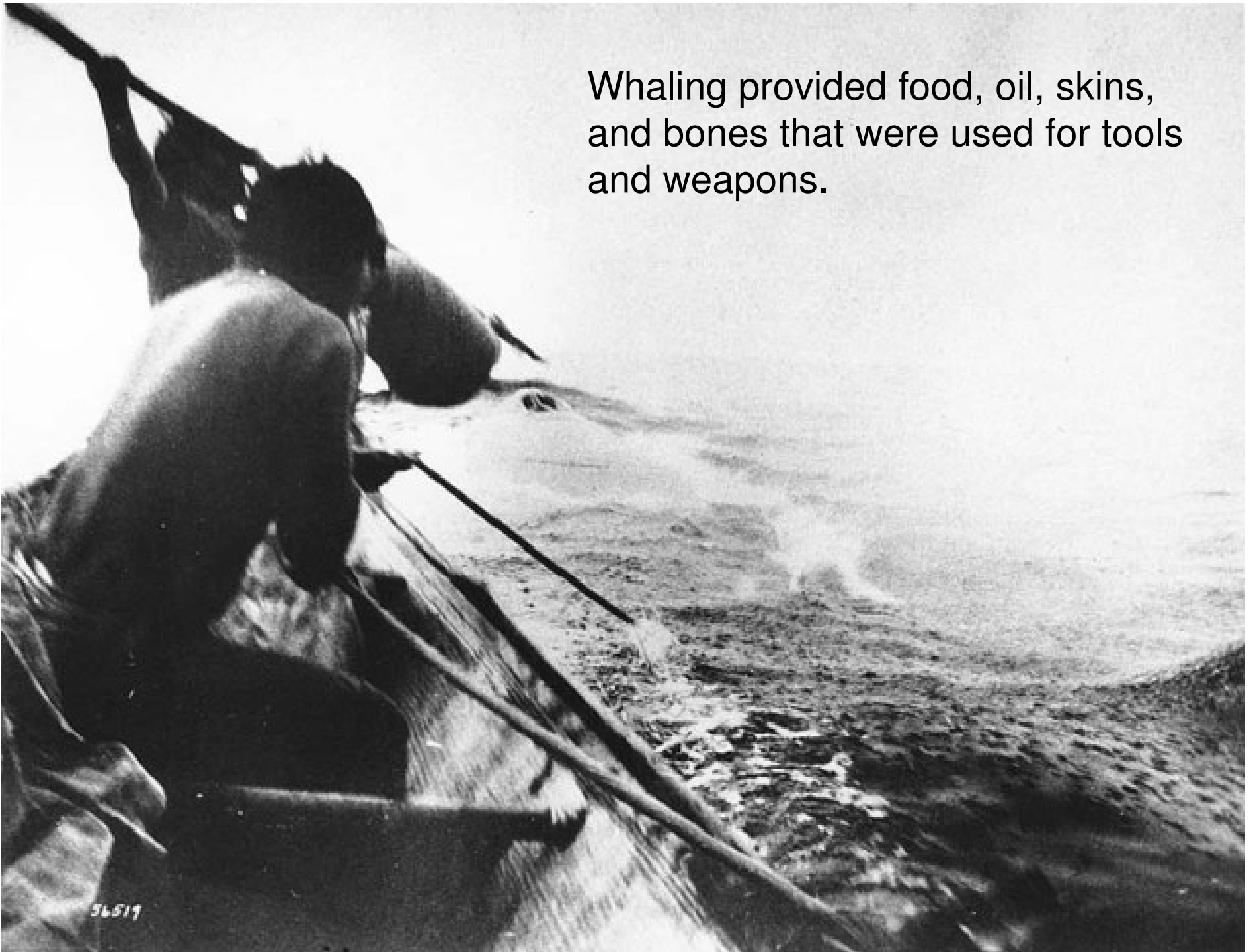
The Kwakiutl built wooden fish traps to catch salmon. The **surplus** of fish available at specific times was preserved with salt so they could eat the fish all year.

Fig. 138 (v/17) Dam and Fish-Basket. Drea's'day'.

The ocean also provided many resources for the Kwakiutl.



Whaling provided food, oil, skins,  
and bones that were used for tools  
and weapons.





The trees in the Pacific Northwest are some of the largest in the world.



To get a better perspective of the size of the tree, look for the man standing next to it.



To get a better perspective of the size of the tree, look for the man standing next to it.





The Kwakiutl used the large trees to carve dugouts.



Why do you think the front of the dugout is shaped that way?

**They also used the trees to build their homes. The Kwakiutl lived in long, narrow houses called long houses or plank houses. Up to 50 people from the same clan would live in one house.**





Totem poles are ceremonial statues that were carved by many of the tribes in the Pacific Northwest. The animals and figures on the totems represent the history of the family that lived in that house. The figures on the totems had specific meaning, and told of the family's heritage, power, and place in the community.

<http://mrtalbot.com/2012/10/03/history-of-kwakiutl-totem-poles/>

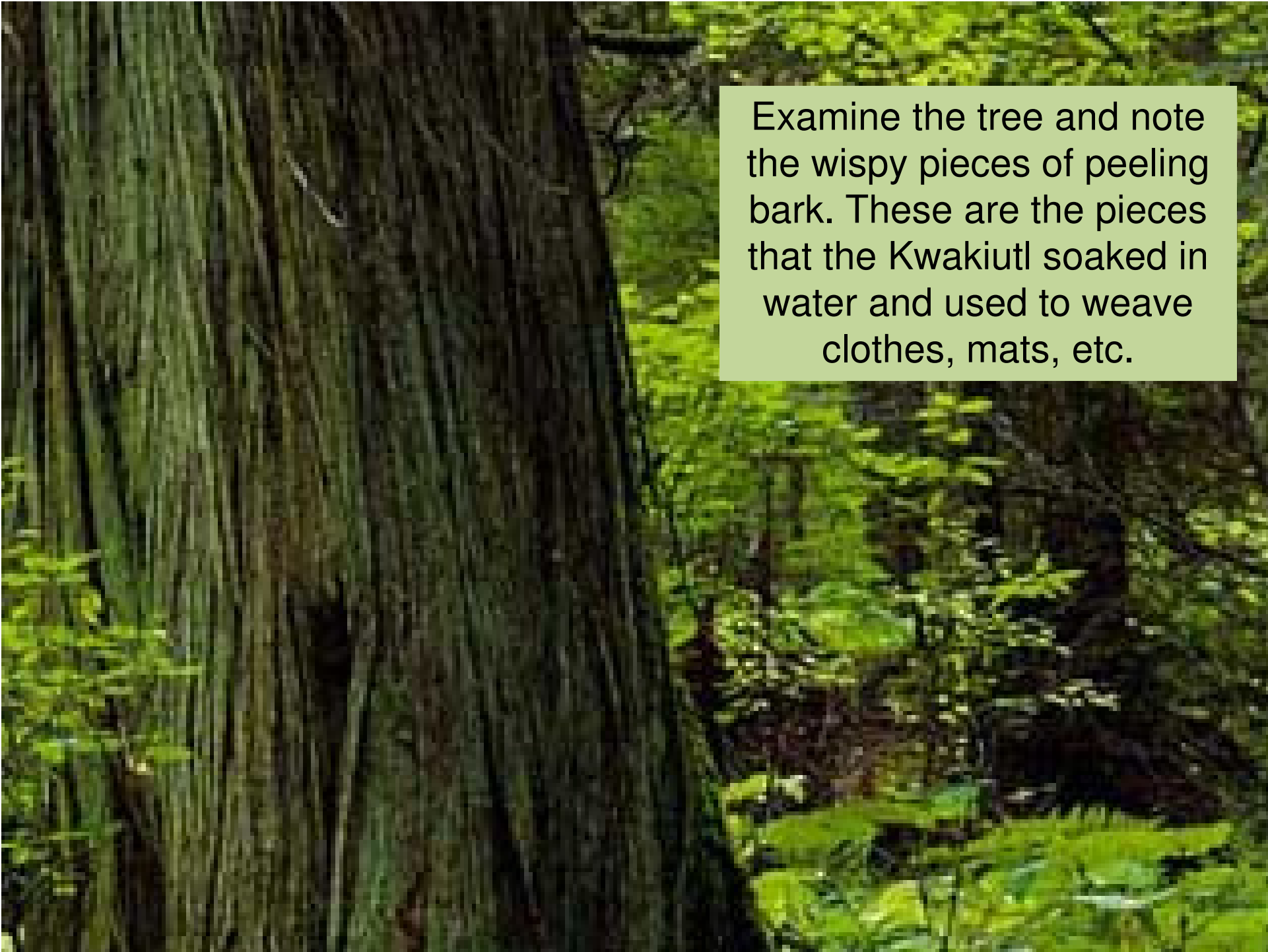
Link to a video presentation on the history of totem poles.

## **The Kwakiutl wove their clothes out of cedar bark twine**



**The bark from cedar trees was used to make twine. The twine was soaked in water to soften it, and then woven into clothing or other items.**



A photograph of a large tree trunk in a forest. The bark is dark and has a vertical, fibrous texture. There are several thin, wispy pieces of bark peeling away from the main trunk, hanging down. The background is a dense forest of green trees and foliage, slightly out of focus.

Examine the tree and note the wispy pieces of peeling bark. These are the pieces that the Kwakiutl soaked in water and used to weave clothes, mats, etc.



A Potlatch ceremony was a spiritual ceremony that took place for various reasons. At a Potlatch, the host of the ceremony would give gifts to the guests. At this Potlatch, the host is giving blankets as a gift.

How is the Kwakiutl tradition of gift giving at a Potlatch similar to or different from your family's cultural traditions?



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**1914 Kwakiutl wedding ceremony – an occasion for a Potlatch**

**What were the major resources for the Kwakiutl?  
How did the Kwakiutl use their resources for food, clothing, and shelter?**

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