

LIVING
through
HISTORY

Native Americans

Foundation Edition

The
Indigenous
Peoples of
North America

Fiona Reynoldson

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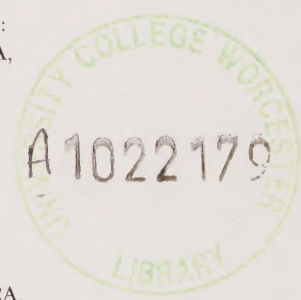
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1.1 WHERE DID THE NATIVE AMERICANS COME FROM?

The first people who went to America

Thousands of years ago, people lived in Africa, Europe and Asia. They hunted animals and gathered berries and roots.

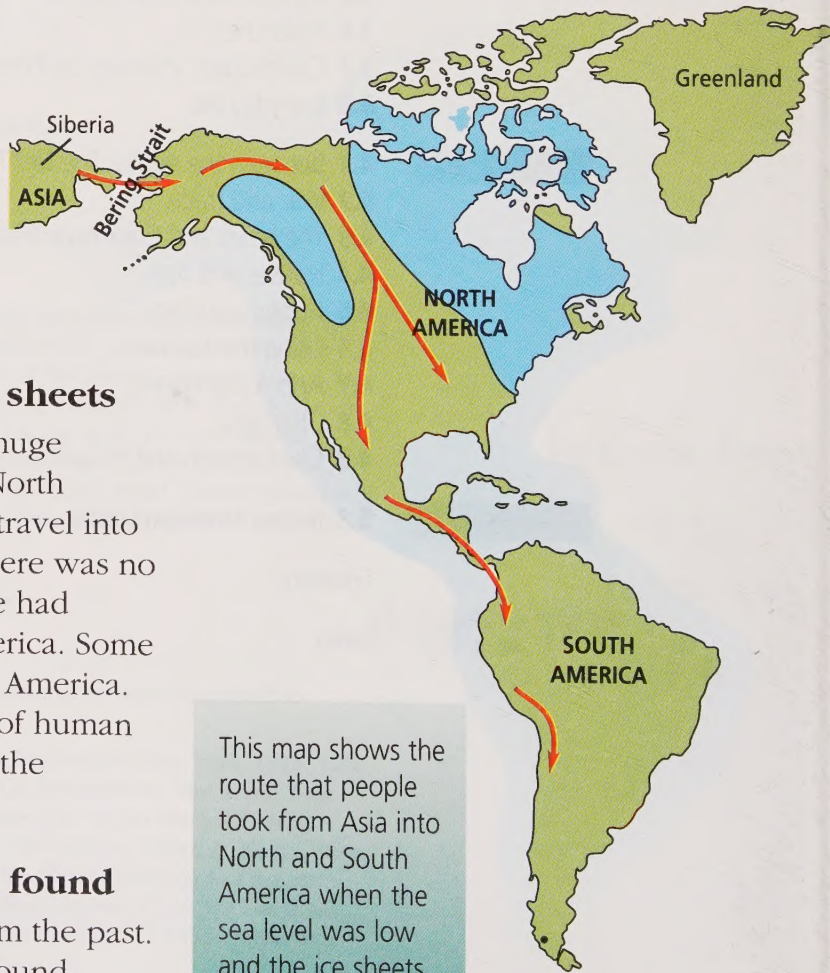
About 20,000 to 40,000 years ago, people crossed from Asia to what is now North America. They could do this because the sea level was much lower than it is today. This meant there was a land bridge from Asia to North America. We call this land bridge, Beringia.

They study old stone tools, pottery and bones. Archaeologists have studied the remains of human settlements all over North and South America. They have found stone tools and weapons, animal bones and human bones in many places. Some of the stone tools are over 20,000 years old. So we know that people have been in the Americas for at least 20,000 years.

What language experts have found

Language experts study the languages that we speak. They can tell a lot about where people came from by the language they

- ice sheets
- remains of human settlement 11,500 years ago
- ➔ route of human beings into America



Travelling around the ice sheets

At the time of this land bridge, huge sheets of ice covered much of North America. So people could only travel into America through parts where there was no ice. By 11,000 years ago, people had travelled right across North America. Some people had travelled into South America. We know this because remains of human settlements have been found at the southern tip of South America.

What archaeologists have found

Archaeologists study objects from the past. Often these are buried in the ground.

This map shows the route that people took from Asia into North and South America when the sea level was low and the ice sheets had melted a little bit.

Source A



This picture is of the Bering Strait. This strait is a big stretch of water between Asia and North America where Berengia used to be.

speak. European people first reached America in about AD 1500. There were about 200 Native American languages spoken. Each one was different. However, the languages had some things in common. This meant that the different people of the Americas were originally from the same group of people. Some language experts think there were three main times (or waves) when people crossed from Asia to America. They

walked across the land bridge Berengia. Later, they may have gone by sea.

Different language groups

The people who live in the very north of North America are different. They crossed over from Asia at a different time. They speak languages that are different from the languages of the rest of the Americas. These people are the Aleut and the Inuit.

The three main times when people crossed from Asia to America

- First wave (before 11,500 years ago).
- Second wave (about 9000 years ago).
- Third wave – Aleut and Inuit (about 4000 years ago).

Things to do

- 1 About when did people first cross from Asia to America?
- 2 What was Berengia?
- 3 What does an archaeologist do?
- 4 What does a language expert do?
- 5 When did the third wave of people (the Aleut and Inuit) cross to America?
- 6 Why do language experts think that the Aleut and Inuit crossed to America at a different time from other Native American people?

1.2 THE AMERICAS BEFORE THE WHITES

Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus wanted to find a new route to India. He set sail in 1492. He sailed west and weeks later he landed on an island. He thought he had found islands close to India. So he called the islands the 'West Indies'. He called the people he found there 'Indians'. In fact, he had found islands near a huge continent. The people of Europe soon began to call this continent 'America'. By this they meant modern day North and South America and the islands close to them.

The native people of America

Many experts think that there were 20 million to 50 million people living in the Americas in 1492.

The Aztecs

The Aztecs lived in Mexico. Some of their cities were very large. The Aztecs built temples as well as cities. They also had **irrigation works** to bring water to their fields.

The Hopewell people

The Hopewell people in Ohio, North America farmed and traded. They made beautiful ornaments. There were many other tribes, too, who were skilled fishermen, hunters and farmers.

The Inca people

The Inca people lived in South America. There were about 12 million of them. They built roads and canals. They knew about mathematics and **astronomy**. They had a well-organised army.

Tribes in the north

The tribes on the north-west coast of America, such as the Makah, were expert fishermen and some could use large sea-going canoes to capture whales. In the far north, the Inuit were clever enough to make houses from snow. They could hunt sea and land animals, and live in the coldest part of the earth.

The wheel and the plough

Columbus and other explorers wanted to claim the land they had found. But it already belonged to other people. This did not stop them fighting to get it. They had horses. And they had better technology. This included guns. It also included knowing about the wheel and the plough. Native American tribes did not use the wheel. For one thing they did not have any animals to pull carts. They did not use the plough either. Again, they did not have any animals that could pull a plough.

The Americas

The Americas is the land of North and South America and the islands around the continent. The name America comes from Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian explorer.

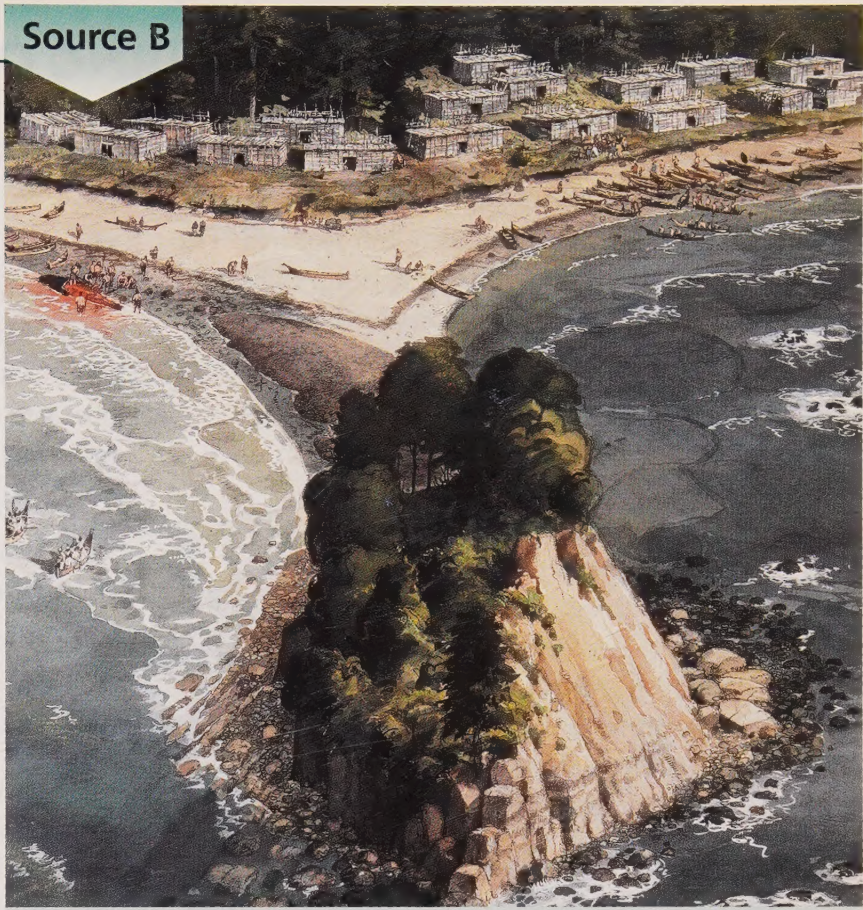
Source A

Adapted from a book describing the names of tribes.

When Christopher Columbus arrived, he called us Indians. This was because he thought he was lost in India. But what did we call ourselves before Columbus came?

The answer is that every single tribe called themselves more or less the same thing. In our language the word is Ninuog. This means 'the people'. When the Europeans arrived, we knew who we were, but we didn't know who they were. So we called them Awaunageesuck which means 'the strangers'.

Source B



This picture shows Ozette, a village close to where Seattle is now. The village belonged to the Makahs, who were a tribe on the north-west coast of America.

Things to do

- 1 Why did Columbus call the people in the Americas, Indians?
- 2 What did the Aztecs do that shows they were well organised?
- 3 What were tribes like the Makah good at?
- 4 Read Source A. What does the writer say tribes called themselves?

Source C



This is a sewing kit that was used by the Inuit. The Inuit used kits like this one to help make garments that kept them warm.

1.3 FINDING OUT

Archaeology

We find out about people in the past by looking at the things they left behind. The Native Americans have left behind plenty of tools, pottery, weapons and bones. These are all studied by archaeologists. They tell us how people lived.

Stories

We also find out about people in the past by reading what they have written. However, most Native Americans had no written language. So we do not know what they thought about years ago. We do know some of their thoughts from their stories. These stories were told rather than written down.

Writing

Another way we know is by reading what other people have written about the Native Americans. These people were explorers, traders and so on. Of course, these writings show what the white explorer thought about Native Americans.

How many things are left behind?

Many of the things that were used by Native Americans were made of things that wear out or rot. Things made of wood or skins have disappeared. Things made of pottery or bone are often still around.

Things changed when white people arrived

White people brought things such as metal. The Native Americans soon started to use metal for many things from kettles to knives. So we know that when archaeologists find metal goods these

date from after the arrival of white people.

Horses

White people also brought horses. Again some Native Americans quickly started to use horses and this changed their way of life. For instance, the horse could carry a man faster than the man could run, so he could hunt more animals.

The native people studied in this book

In this book we will look at three groups of native people.

- **The Inuit**

The Inuit lived in the very cold land in the far north. In winter there is thick snow. The sea freezes and the nights are very long.

- **The tribes of the north-west coast**

These tribes lived in the mild, wet lands by the Pacific Ocean. The rainfall is about 300 cm a year.




- **The Nez Perce**

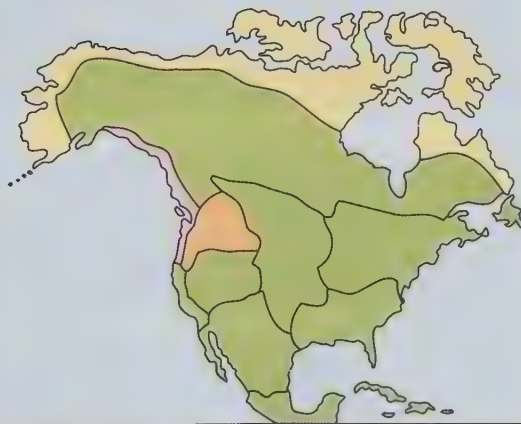
The Nez Perce lived on high lands known as the Plateau all winter but went down to the Plains to hunt in the summer.



A Nez Perce warrior.

North America

-  North-west region
-  Plateau region
-  Arctic region



This map shows where each of the native people that we are studying in this book lived.

Things to do

- 1** What sort of things do archaeologists study to tell them about people in the past?
- 2** Did the Native Americans tell their stories or did they write them down?
- 3** What do we know when archaeologists find metal goods?

2.1 LIVING ON THE EDGE: THE INUIT

Living in the Arctic

The Inuit live in the Arctic. The land is frozen for most of the year. In the summer the sun melts the top few centimetres of soil. Then the plants can grow and flower for a short time. The days are very long. In the winter it is dark most of the time, and there is thick snow and ice over the land and sea.

The different groups of Inuit

In this book we will look at the five main groups of Inuit. These were the Mackenzie, Copper, Central, Labrador and Caribou. The first explorers called them Eskimos but the native people called themselves Inuit.

The Mackenzie, Coppers, Central and Labrador Inuit

These people lived on the coasts. They hunted sea mammals (such as seals) for most of the year. In summer they went inland to hunt caribou (a type of reindeer).

The Caribou Inuit

These people hunted caribou all year. When the caribou went south in the winter, the Caribou Inuit had to catch what other animals they could.

Source A



This picture is typical of where many of the Inuit lived and had to catch their food. The map opposite shows where the five main Inuit groups were based.

Eskimo

The European name given to the Inuit.



Things to do

- 1 Where do the Inuit live?
- 2 Read 'Living in the Arctic' and look at the picture in Source A. Write a few sentences on what it would be like to live in the Arctic.

2.2 SNOW HOUSES

It was so cold in winter that the Inuit made their houses out of snow. In the summer they lived in tents. In October, they moved to winter houses. In some places these were made of logs and turf. In other places they used huge whalebones and turf. But, in central Canada, the Inuit built snow houses.

Building a snow house

When the snow was just right, the man cut blocks of it, which he set in a circle around him. His wife, or other helper, passed the blocks to him. He built up the walls and put on the roof, which was a single block of snow. Then he knelt down, cut a doorway in the snow blocks and crawled out. Round the inside walls, the man built a ledge of snow blocks. Caribou furs covered the ledge on which the family sat and slept.

Inside a snow house

Once the family were inside the snow house, they lit a lamp. Then the snow melted slightly. The water sealed the cracks and because it was so cold outside it froze again very quickly. The temperature inside the snow house could be as high as a cosy 16°C, especially if the wife was cooking. Fresh air came in through the low tunnel doorway. Stale air went out through a small hole in the window, which was made of seal intestines.

Keeping warm

At night, the wife put frozen pieces of **blubber** in the lamp to keep it going at a low level. She blocked the hole in the window with dry grass and put a big stone in the doorway to keep out the dogs. People visited each other in wintertime and some groups made large snow houses so everyone could fit in.

Source A



Building a small snow house.

Source B



Inside a snow house. The woman in the picture is chewing skin to soften it.

Source C

A government report on the Inuit written in 1932.

The Inuit lit their winter houses with a stone lamp burning oil from the blubber of sea mammals or the fat of caribou. Many Inuit used this lamp to cook food in winter. Only during the summer did they cook outside with driftwood or other fuel from the treeless land such as heather and dwarf willow.

Things to do

- 1 What did the Inuit make their houses out of?
- 2 What other things did they make their houses out of?
- 3 How did the Inuit cook in winter and in summer?
- 4 Why do you think the winter was a good time for visiting?

2.3 SEAL HUNTING

Summer and winter

The Inuit living on the coasts hunted seals for most of the year. In the summer they hunted from boats. In the winter they hunted on the ice.

Catching a seal

Seals have to breathe, so when the water is frozen they come up to a hole in the ice. They have very good hearing. So a seal hunter must move quietly. He would wait patiently by the breathing hole. When a seal came up to breathe, the hunter would plunge his **harpoon** into it. Then he would pull the seal out.

Different types of seal

Three main types of seal were important to the Inuit. These were:

- the Walrus
- the Bearded seal
- the Ringed seal.

Bears also hunted the Ringed seal. Then the Inuit hunted the bears.

The Walrus

The Walrus moved further out to sea as the sea ice got thicker.

The Bearded seal

The Bearded seal has stronger claws on its flippers than the Walrus. It can keep a breathing hole open even when the ice is 20 to 25 centimetres thick. The Inuit hunters knew all the places where the Bearded seal liked to be.

Source A

This story was told to a young explorer in 1910.

Killing the seal

The man stood beside the seal hole. When it came up he saw it was a Bearded seal. He was a strong man so he killed it and dragged it from the hole.

Pretending it is a small seal

He looked round and saw that the other hunters were far away. So he decided to pretend he had caught a small Ringed seal – then he could keep it to himself. (If one hunter killed a big Bearded seal, all the hunters shared it).

Selling the skin

The hunter knew he could sell the skin to a tribe nearby who hardly ever caught Bearded seals. He cut the animal up and told his wife to tell no one.

The story leaked out

But the story leaked out. The other hunters took away the skin and the meat.

Going blind

The hunter felt crushed by the disapproval of his people. But worse was to come. Within two years he was completely blind.

Remember his story

He said to me that while he was sure I was a good man, I should remember his story and pass it on, warning others to avoid selfish ways.



The Ringed seal

The Ringed seal is the most common seal. It can be caught all winter at its breathing holes.

In the summer the seal lie on the ice and sleep. The Inuit hunters lie on the ice and pretend to be seals. Every time the seal drops off to sleep, the hunter moves forward. The seal only sleeps for a minute or so before looking round. So hunting in this way takes a long time.

An Inuit seal hunter waiting by a breathing hole. He is holding his harpoon ready.

Things to do

- 1 How did the Inuit hunt seals in the summer?
- 2 How did the Inuit hunt seals in the winter?
- 3 What weapon did a hunter use to kill a seal at a breathing hole?
- 4 Read Source A. Why were the other hunters angry with the hunter who had caught the Bearded seal?

Source A



An Inuit hunter. He has pushed his snow goggles on to his forehead.

Why the Inuit moved in summer

Most of the Inuit lived near the sea for most of the year. However, in summer they moved inland to hunt the caribou and to fish.

Groups of hunters

A few men hunted together. They took their families with them for the summer. If a young man wanted to marry a girl, he hunted with her family for a year or two.

Caribou for clothes

The Inuit liked to hunt caribou (which were like reindeers). Caribou skins made good clothes. The best time to get skins was near winter. A caribou would be growing a new long coat at this time. The

hairs of the caribou are hollow. This makes the fur very light to wear. It also means that the fur can be worn inwards. Because the hairs are hollow they are not thick and so a person does not sweat. In the cold, sweating could easily make the person become cold. That would be dangerous. The person could catch a chill.

Caribou for meat and tools

Eating caribou meat was a change from eating seals. The Inuit enjoyed everything from the marrow in the bones to the half-digested **vegetation** in the stomach. They also made tools from the antlers and the bones. They made sewing thread and fishing lines from the sinews. (Sinew is very tough, and joins the muscles to the bones.)

Source B

A story about an explorer who wanted to hire an Inuit to help him hunt.

Hiring Kirkpuk and his wife

We were to set off soon and we wanted to hire Kirkpuk (an Inuit hunter) and his wife. Natkusiak and I could hunt, but we needed a clever woman to do the sewing for us. Most of all we needed waterproof seal-skin boots.

The new baby

I was surprised that Kirkpuk and his wife agreed to go with us. They had a new baby. However, they told me that they would leave the baby with the grandmother. They would be ready in a day or two. But first, Kirkpuk's wife had to finish cutting up the blubber, then storing it.

Kirkpuk changes his mind

Two days later the weather had changed but Kirkpuk had changed his mind too. During the night he and his wife had thought how much they would miss their baby. And also, Kirkpuk remembered he had promised his friend that he would hunt with him that summer. I was annoyed. But this was unfair. These people are very independent. They do not work for each other. He had changed his mind and that was all.

Storing food

The Inuit ate food as they hunted it. If there was any left over they stored it for when it was needed.

There were several ways to store food:

- One way was to bury it in the frozen ground.
- Another way was to cover it with heavy stones.
- A third way was to build a high platform and put the meat or other food on it.

However, wolves, bears and other animals were very clever. They pushed over stones and they climbed up to platforms to steal the food.

Things to do

- 1 Make a list of all the things the Inuit used the caribou for.
- 2 What were the three ways in which they stored food?
- 3 Read Source B. What was Kirkpuk's wife very clever at?

2.5 SLEDGES AND DOGS

Source A



Winter travel

From November until May the water is frozen. The ice is thick enough to take the weight of a dog sledge with people riding on it. Families travel miles to visit friends. Before the worst winter storms, men went hunting. They could pile all the meat and furs on to the dog sledges and drive home with food for the worst of the winter.

The dogs are harnessed so they can all pull the sledge equally.

How the sledges were made

The sledge was usually made from wood. The runners were made from bone or antler. After white people came to the area, the Inuit sometimes used metal on the bottom of the runners. However, they often preferred to use mud. They put mud on the runners. They let the mud freeze. Then they scraped it smooth. They put some warm water on it to make a layer of ice. This made the runner glide over the snow.

Source B

An extract from a book about the Arctic year, published in 1958.

Death in the snow

A few years ago a family wanted to travel. They made a sledge from frozen caribou skins, frozen meat and frozen salmon. Off they went. The going was fine and everyone could sit on the sledges except for going up steep hills.

But one night, a warm wind blew. They woke up to find that their sledges had thawed. As usual the dogs were not tied up during the night. They had eaten the sledges and eaten their harnesses too. The weather quickly became cold again and snow fell. The family could not hunt. They had to eat their dogs and even some of their clothes. They were found by hunters in the spring.

The dogs

The dogs were fierce. They lived outside the houses. They were strictly controlled by the hunters. The dogs worked together as a pack (group). One of the dogs was the leader of the pack. A good team of twelve dogs could pull a sledge of up to a half tonne and could travel at up to 32 kilometres an hour.

Looking after the team

Often hunters had fewer dogs, and if the dogs were hungry or old they could not run so fast. The hunters valued their dogs and looked after them well. When the ice was rough and salty, the men made small skin boots for the dogs' feet to stop them from becoming sore.

Things to do

- 1 What was a sledge usually made from?
- 2 What other things could a sledge be made from?
- 3 Read Source B. Why was the warm wind such a disaster for the family?

2.6 MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Women's work

Women worked on the meat and the skins of the animals their husbands killed. The women did the cooking and looked after the children. They helped with the fishing. Most of all they made clothes from the animal skins. They were very skilled.

Men's work

The men hunted seals and other animals. They made tools, sledges and winter houses. Their job was to provide food.

Marriage

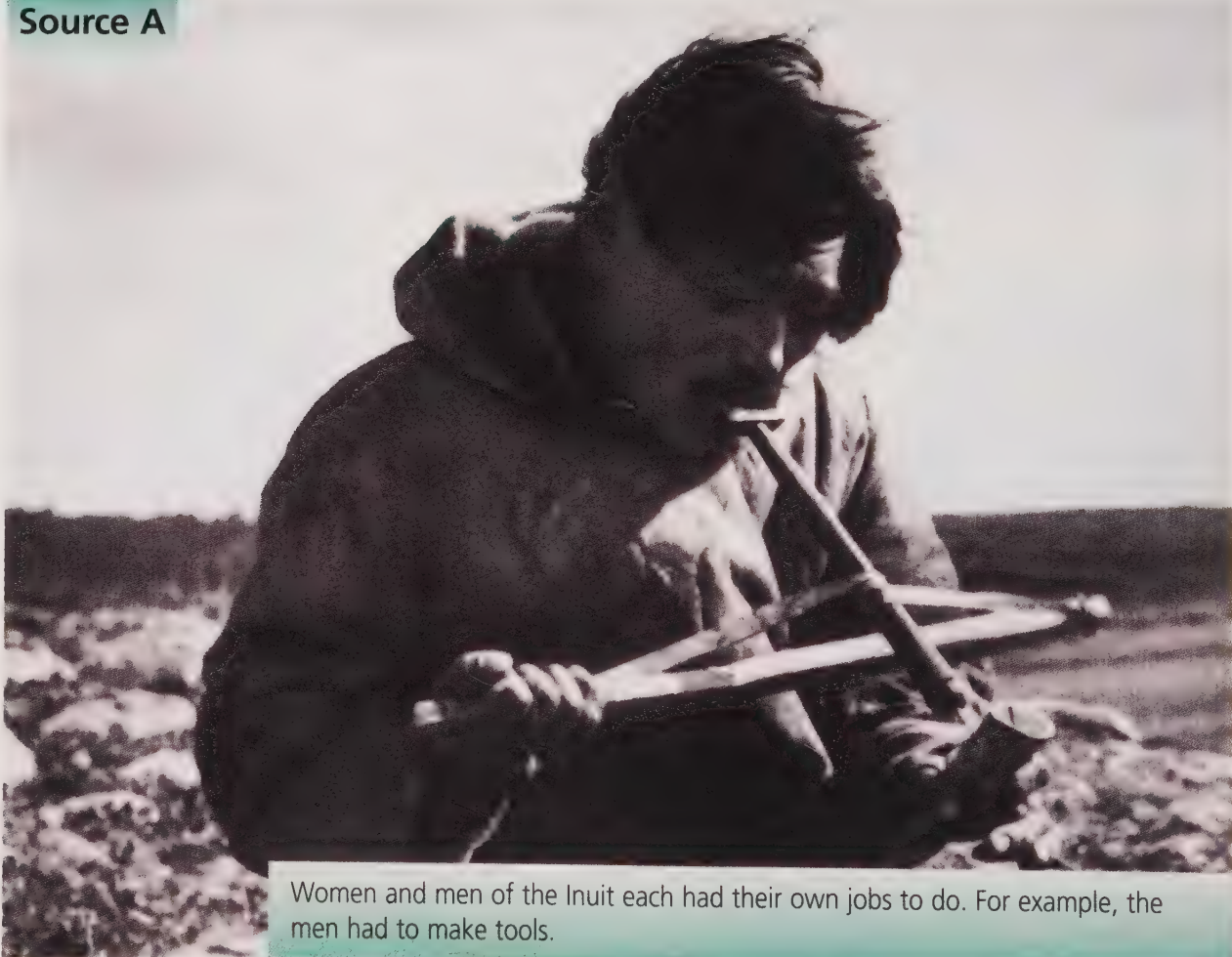
There was no marriage ceremony. Men and women usually stayed together once they

had children. However, sometimes they lived with someone else for a while. They might have children with their new partner. All the children were counted as brothers and sisters whether they had the same parents or not. And all the people, parents and children were linked together.

The importance of friends and relations

It is very hard to live in the Arctic. If a hunter did not catch enough meat or if he fell ill, his whole family might starve to death. It was very important to have a network of friends and relations. Lots of brothers and sisters was one network.

Source A



Women and men of the Inuit each had their own jobs to do. For example, the men had to make tools.

Source B



Inside a snow house.

Source C

From a book giving details of the Arctic year, published in 1958.

The children are always running in and out. In April the days are long. The children don't go to bed. They just lie down on the sledges and sleep outside. Sometimes they lie down among the dogs. These dogs are very fierce. It is amazing to see little children stroll in among the dogs. They push them to one side and lie down to take a nap. They ignore the snarls and grumbles.

Other networks were a wife's family or a husband's family. Then there were friends. The Inuit liked to sing and dance. People who sang together formed friendships called singing partners. Sometimes people adopted children.

In all these ways, the Inuit formed networks. In good times these networks were fun. In bad times, these friends helped each other with food and shelter.

Things to do

- 1 What work did women do?
- 2 What work did men do?
- 3 Read Source C. What sort of freedom did Inuit children have?
- 4 Networks of friends and relations were fun in good times. What use were these networks in bad times?

2.7 FISHING, WHALING AND WHITE PEOPLE

Source A



Kayaks

The Inuit made kayaks. A man made a framework of wood. Then his wife covered the framework with seal skins. The kayak was used by one person. He wore a long waterproof seal-skin jacket that was fixed around the hole in which he sat. This jacket made the boat and the man waterproof even if the boat capsized.

In the summer men hunted seals and fished from their kayaks. In the winter when the sea was frozen, the kayaks were stored close to the winter houses.

Umiaks

Umiaks were bigger boats. They could hold up to ten people and they were used to sail far out to sea to hunt whales. The men either paddled the umiak or used a sail.

This man went fishing in his kayak. He would be able to stay dry on the water, because a sealskin jacket would cover the hole where he sat.

White people

White people came to the Arctic to hunt whales. This was the first time the Inuit had seen them. Unfortunately, the white people brought diseases such as smallpox and influenza (flu). The Inuit were not used to these diseases. If they caught them, they often died. However, the Inuit thought there were good things, too, about the coming of white people.

The whalers

In 1860 white people's whaling ships came into Hudson Bay. The local Inuit got jobs on the boats hunting whales. They were paid in goods. For instance, if an Inuit hunter killed a whale, he might be given a wooden whaleboat. The big American whaling ships spent all winter frozen in the ice in Hudson Bay. The Inuit built their winter snow houses next to the ships. They hunted for fresh meat for the ship's crew. The white whalers built a large wooden hut on the deck of the ship. The Inuit joined the whalers for meals and for dancing and singing. The last whaling ships left Hudson Bay in 1915.

Source B

From a book in which Leah Arnaujaq says what it was like when the white whalers left.

We wondered, but we never really knew why the whalers didn't come back. We remembered how good their food tasted and we remembered being like a big family.

Hudson's Bay Company

- Hudson Bay is the large bay in northern Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company was founded in England in 1760. Its job was to keep looking for a sea passage to the Pacific Ocean and Asia. It also traded in the area, particularly in furs.

Things to do

- 1 How did a man and a woman make a kayak?
- 2 What was an umiak used for?
- 3 Why were diseases such as smallpox and influenza so serious for the Inuit?
- 4 Read Source B. What were the good things that Leah Arnaujaq remembered about the white whalers?

2.8 I WAS THE FIRST WHITE MAN THEY HAD EVER SEEN

Source A

Vilhjalmur Stefansson describes some of his experiences when he met Inuit who had never met white people.

Reaching the village

We approached the village. Every man, woman and child was outdoors, waiting for us.

The man we had met explained to them that we had come from a long distance and that we were friendly. Immediately, the whole crowd (about 40 people) ran to us.

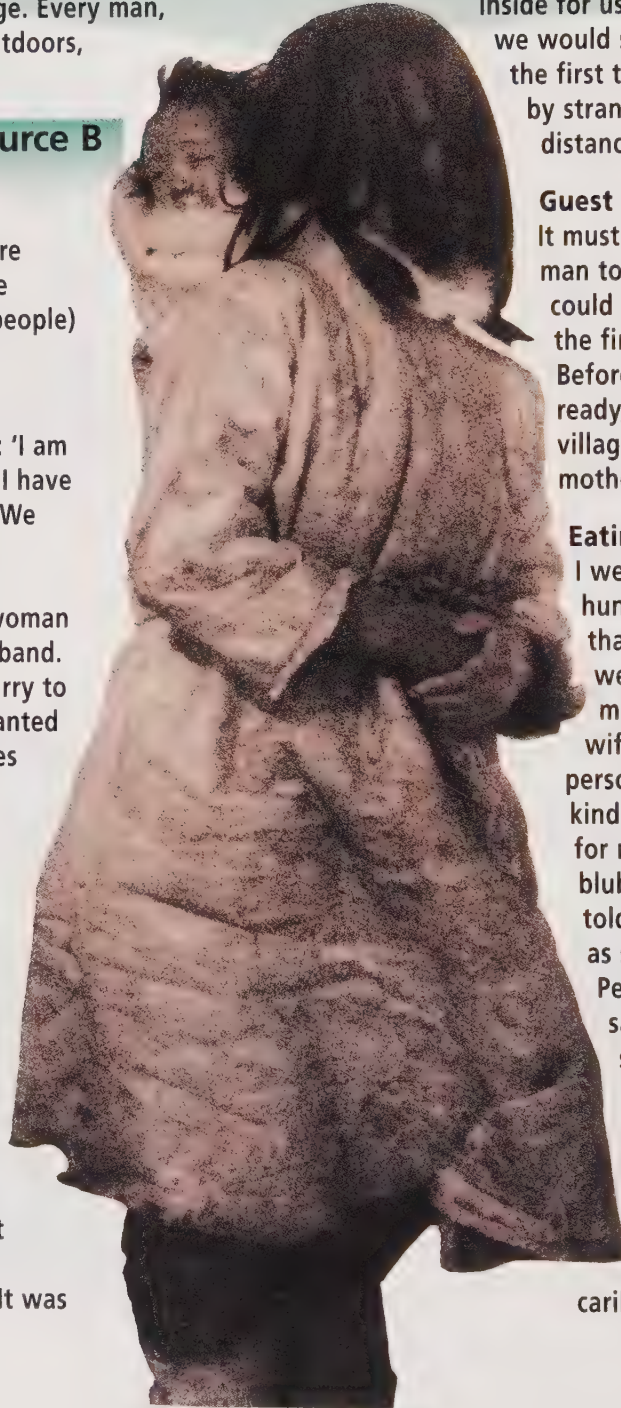
Meeting people

As each came up he said: 'I am So-and-so. I am friendly. I have no knife. Who are you?' We replied in the same way. Sometimes a man would introduce his wife or a woman would introduce her husband. The women were in a hurry to meet us because they wanted to go back to their houses and cook for us.

Building the snow house

We agreed to camp about 200 metres from the other houses. This was to keep our dogs from fighting with theirs. The men then sent some young boys to get their fathers' snow knives and house-building gloves. The best housebuilders set about building a house for us. It was

Source B



An Inuit woman and child.

soon finished. They put skins and lamps inside for us. They told us they hoped we would stay a long while. It was the first time they had been visited by strangers from such a great distance.

Guest of the Inuit

It must be rare that the first white man to visit a primitive people could speak their language. From the first we could talk easily. Before the snow house was ready, children ran from the village to tell us that their mothers had dinner cooked.

Eating dinner

I went to the house of the seal hunter we had met. He told us that his wife came from the west and would like to talk to me. It turned out that his wife was not a talkative person. She was motherly and kind. She had boiled seal meat for me. She asked if I liked the blubber boiled or raw. When I told her that I liked it raw, just as she did, she was delighted. People were much alike, she said, though they come from such a great distance. After I had eaten the fresh seal meat and drunk two pint cupfuls of blood-soup, my host and I sat on the bed platform. We leant back on the bundles of soft caribou skins and talked.

Who was Vilhjalmur Stefansson?

Vilhjalmur Stefansson was an explorer. He could speak the Inuit language. In 1910 he met the Inuit who lived around the Dolphin and Union Strait. They had never seen a white person before.



Things to do

- 1 Who was Vilhjalmur Stefansson?
- 2 Read Source A.
 - a How many people lived in the village?
 - b Write down one sentence that shows the Inuit were friendly and hospitable.
 - c What was the dinner that the Inuit woman had cooked?

3.1 FAR FROM THE EDGE: THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH-WEST COAST

The land

The **climate** is mild on the north-west coast of America. The rainfall is about 300 centimetres a year. There are many rivers and the trees grow very tall. This is a very different land from the Arctic where the Inuit live.

Summer homes

In the summer people went to live by the rivers. They built simple houses of wood or brush. They spent the summer catching salmon and collecting berries. They dried both salmon and berries so they had plenty of food in the winter time.

Winter homes

The winter homes were bigger wooden houses. They were on the coast so people could go by boat from village to village. Each village had about 30 houses in it. Some houses were very large. They held about 100 people. Other houses were small and held about 12 people. In winter time people could eat the stores of food they had saved up. So they had plenty of time to visit each other and watch singing and dancing.

Clans

Clans were large groups of people similar to an extended family. These clans had animal names. Below are three of them:

- Raven
- Wolf
- Eagle.

A person from one clan had to marry a person from another clan. Everyone had their own place in the clan and in the village they lived in.



The areas where the north-west coast tribes lived.

Status – who you were

Who you were and how rich you were were very important to all the people who lived in the villages up and down the north-west coast of America.

Source A

Villages and clans.

- Each village had a head chief. He came from the most important family.
- Each clan in the village had a clan chief.
- Each household had a household chief.
- The relatives of chiefs were nobles.
- Most other people were commoners.
- Shamans were doctors and spiritual leaders.
- Slaves were the least important people.

Things to do

- 1 Where were the summer homes?
- 2 Where were the winter homes?
- 3 Give the names of two clans.
- 4 There were three sorts of chiefs in each village. Write down the three sorts of chiefs.

Living well

The people of the north-west coast lived well. They lived by fishing, hunting and gathering.

Springtime

The chief owned the hunting lands. But each spring he said he would allow his people to hunt and fish, and gather plants on his grounds. The first animals caught and plants picked were given to the chief. The chief then gave a feast for everyone.

Fishing in the rivers

Every spring, the salmon swam up the river from the sea to spawn. Sometimes there were so many that they spilled on to the banks on either side. The fishermen stood on the banks and speared the fish. Sometimes they built traps in the river to catch them. The men took the fish home for the women to clean. Many of the fish were eaten straightaway. The rest were hung on racks to dry. This dry fish would feed the family during the winter.

Eulachon fish

Another popular fish was the eulachon fish. It was also known as the candle fish. This was very oily. The oil was used for cooking. The body of the fish could also be used as a candle. And a piece of string was used for the wick (which was used to light it).

Fishing at sea

Fishermen caught many other fish at sea, such as herring and halibut. Further out to sea they caught seals and sea otters (for their fur). Some tribes, such as the Nootka, travelled in large canoes, far out to sea to hunt for whales. They might be gone for days.

Source A

Captain Lewis writing about the tiny candle fish in 1806. (Captain Lewis and Captain Clark led the first expedition by the US government to reach the Pacific coast of North America.)

I find them best when cooked in Indian style which is by roasting a number of them together on a wooden spit. They are so fat they require no additional sauce, and I think them superior to any fish I ever tasted.

Source B



A page from Lewis's diary showing the candle fish.



A modern drawing of a whale hunt.

Hunting whales

Hunting whales was dangerous. The men set out in a canoe made from the trunk of a cedar tree. It was about ten metres long. At least three canoes went on the hunt and maybe as many as ten. When they got near the whale, one man plunged a harpoon in near the whale's head. The harpoon had a long line of rope attached to it. The whale swam away but it was attached to the men in the canoe by the rope from the harpoon. The whale swam for hours or even days until it died. The men had sealskin floats like big balloons attached to the harpoon so that the dead whale could not sink.

Gathering other food

Whale hunting was exciting and dangerous. Men who hunted whales had a high **status**. However, much of the day-to-day food was gathered from the forests and beaches. The women and children gathered berries, fruit and roots. They also collected shellfish. The women smoked and dried food so there was plenty for winter time.

Things to do

- 1 Who owned the hunting lands?
- 2 When did the men go to the rivers to fish for salmon?
- 3 Why couldn't the whale escape when the harpoon was in it?

Source A



How houses were made

People made houses from cedar wood. They built a frame of cedar poles. Then they covered the frame with cedar planks. All the planks rested on the frame. They were tied on so they would not blow away.

Roofs and windows

One or two planks on the roof were left loose so they could be moved to make a smoke hole. The windows could be covered with cedar bark mats if it rained. Some houses had large flat roofs. Some had sloping roofs.

Inside a large wooden house.

In the houses

The biggest houses were about 100 metres long and 20 metres wide. Many families lived in one big house. Each family had all the space between two cedar poles of the framework. The sleeping benches were usually along the wall. And each family's section was divided from the next one by a cedar mat curtain or planks.

Sitting round the fire

Each family shared a fire with the family opposite. In smaller houses, all the families shared one fire in the centre of the house.

Winter houses

These houses were for winter time. They were in convenient places.

- They were close to the beach.
- People could visit each other by canoe.
- They could gather shellfish on the beach.

They only left these houses for a few months in summer.

Source B

Adapted from a book written by an explorer.

We went into the house. It was very large. Three enormous trees, carved and painted, formed the roof frame. They were supported by massive carved tree trunks.

Big planks covered the building to keep out the rain. In the middle of this big room there were several fires.

The door by which we entered was the mouth of one of the carved faces. We climbed up a few steps on the outside, through the mouth, and down the chin into the house.

There must have been about 800 men, women and children in the house.

Things to do

- 1 What were the houses made of?
- 2 How was the rain kept out of the windows?
- 3 Where were the fires?
- 4 Where were the sleeping benches?

3.4 TOTEM POLES

What totem poles are

Totem poles are tall poles carved from the trunk of a cedar tree. The carvings represent the history of the family.

Greater wealth

Explorers and traders came to the north-west coast in the eighteenth century. They saw carved poles inside the houses they visited. In the nineteenth century the native people began to put up single poles outside their houses. This was because they had metal tools to carve with instead of stone tools. Also they were wealthier.

Why they were wealthier

White fur traders bought all the furs that the native people could trap and hunt. Many native people could afford to have a new totem pole carved and painted outside their house. However, after about 1860, the people were less wealthy.

Reasons for loss of wealth

There were a number of reasons for the loss of wealth.

- There was so much hunting that the sea otter nearly died out.
- There was fighting between some of the tribes.
- Also European diseases such as smallpox killed many of the native people.

A Mortuary Pole. The dead person's ashes were put in the box at the top of the pole.



The different types of totem pole

- Welcome poles were near the village beach to welcome people.
- House poles were carved indoor poles.
- House frontal poles were doorways.
- Memorial poles were poles in memory of a chief or important person.
- Mortuary poles had a place to bury a person's remains.
- Shame poles were carved to shame someone you thought had harmed you.

How poles are read

A totem pole should be read from the top to the bottom. The top figure may be a clan figure, such as a Raven or Eagle. The most important figure that the story is about is often at the bottom.

Things to do

- 1 What was a totem pole?
- 2 What did the native people sell to the white fur traders in the nineteenth century?
- 3 What were the three reasons for the loss of wealth?

3.5 MYTHS, CRESTS AND LEGENDS

Stories from the past

The native people of the north-west coast would say that there was a time when humans and animals were not separate. They could change from one to the other. It is from this time that many of their stories come. These stories are about animals and people such as Raven, Killer Whale, Split-Person and Fog-Woman and many others.

Inheriting a family crest

Apart from belonging to a clan, a family had a crest. This crest was handed down from parents to children. The family crest might be Raven or Bear, or some other animal or person. The family owned this crest because an ancestor had met with this animal or person. They owned the story that went with this meeting. And if there was a song or dance that went with the story, they owned that too. Moreover, they carved this animal or person on everything they owned – from totem poles to dishes.

Other ways to get a crest

A family could get a crest by conquering an enemy and taking their crest. They could buy a crest from someone else or take one over when a family died out. A person could also marry to get another crest.

Legends

Legends sometimes told how a family got a crest. Sometimes they told how things began. Below is a legend about how salmon came to the rivers.

The legend of Fog-Woman

Fog-Woman was skilled at basket making and made a watertight basket. 'Watch what it can do,' she said to her husband, Raven. She dipped her hands into the water in the basket and brought out a large salmon.

Every day, Fog-Woman dipped her hands in the basket and brought out a salmon. Soon the fish drying rack was hung with rows and rows of dried and smoked salmon.

Source A

The native people of the north-west coast have many stories. The best known story is 'How Raven Stole the Sun'.

There was a time when the world was in darkness. This was because a greedy chief kept the Sun, Moon and Stars in three wooden boxes in his house. Raven heard about the boxes and he made a plan.

The chief's daughter went to the stream every day to fetch water. Raven turned himself into a hemlock needle (type of leaf) and floated down the stream. The chief's daughter took the water back to the house and drank some. She swallowed the hemlock needle. As a result she got pregnant. She gave birth to a dark, beady-eyed boy. He cried a lot. He wanted the box with the bright, shiny ball inside but the chief would not give it to him. The child went on and on until the chief gave in and let his grandson play with the ball.

As soon as he had the ball, Raven turned back into a bird. He picked the ball up in his beak and flew out of the smoke hole in the chief's house. Higher and higher he flew, spreading light all around the world. Then he flung the shining ball into the sky, and there it remains to this day.

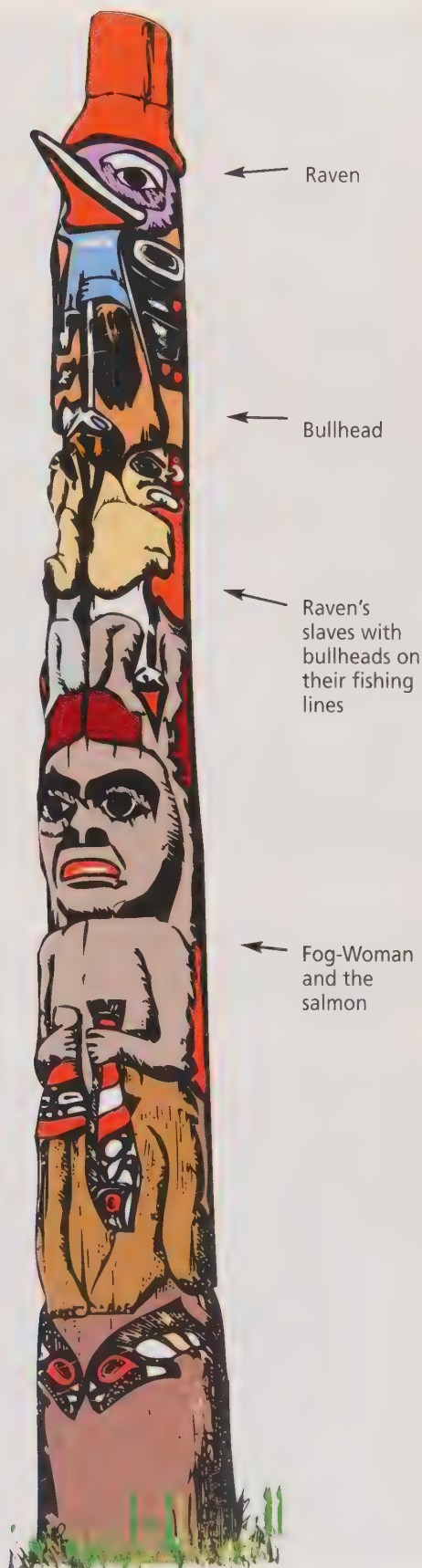
Raven boasted about the salmon and this annoyed his wife. They quarrelled and Raven hit Fog-Woman with a dried salmon. She ran out of the house and down to the beach. As Raven reached out to grab her she turned into fog. Then all the dried and smoked salmon left the racks and followed her into the sea. Raven was left holding a bullhead fish.

Nowadays it is Fog-Woman's daughter, Creek-Woman, who lives at the head of every stream. It is she who brings back the salmon up the streams and rivers every year. This totem pole tells the legend of Fog-Woman. It was carved in 1981.

Things to do

- 1 Name one animal that might be a family's crest.
- 2 Write down one way in which a person might get a crest.
- 3 Write a list or draw the things you would put on a totem pole to tell the story of 'How Raven Stole the Sun'. (Look at the totem pole of Fog-Woman's story to help you.)

This totem pole was carved in 1981 to commemorate the Tlingit people of the Tongass area. It tells the legend of how the first salmon came to the rivers. It is at a heritage centre in Alaska.



3.6 POTLATCHES

Source A



A painting of a potlatch in 1859.

What a potlatch was

The world potlatch means 'to give'. Important chiefs gave huge potlatches or parties. At the potlatch the chief gave away presents to all the guests. A chief had to give a big feast and give away many presents to show how important he was. The potlatch could last for days.

Reasons for a potlatch

Sometimes there was a particular reason for the potlatch. Below are a few reasons:

- the coming of age of a son or daughter
- the raising of a new totem pole
- to remember a dead chief
- to celebrate a new chief.

Arriving at a potlatch

Guests arrived for a potlatch by canoe from other villages up and down the coast. The more important the chief, the larger his canoe and the more people he came with. If he was very important he had plenty of slaves to paddle the canoe. Everyone waited in their canoes so that the most important chiefs and people landed first.

The potlatch

The guests came into the village and talked together. There was a huge feast. There was singing and dancing. There was story telling and speeches. All the guests heard the host chief laying claim to his family's stories, songs, dances and rights. (These might be the right to hunting lands or to who his children could marry.)

There was no written language so the tribe's history was passed on in this way. Guests might help to raise a totem pole. They pulled on the ropes. Then they listened to the speeches about the totem pole. Sometimes there were ceremonies such as naming a new baby.

The presents

The presents were given out towards the end of the potlatch. Chilkat blankets were very special presents. They were woven by Tlingit women from the **fleece** of mountain goats.

The most prized presents were coppers. These were pieces of copper about one metre high. They were only given to the most important chiefs.

The wealth

By the middle of the nineteenth century the people of the north-west coast were wealthy because of the fur trade. They gave more and more potlatches. More presents were given. In 1884, the Canadian government said that there would be no more potlatches because they were wasteful. But the government changed their minds again in 1951.

Source B



A Chilkat robe for dancing.

Things to do

- 1 What does the word 'potlatch' mean?
- 2 Give one reason for giving a potlatch.
- 3 Look at Source A. What things tell you that the native people have had contact with non-Native Americans?

3.7 CEREMONIES, SHAMANS AND MEDICINE

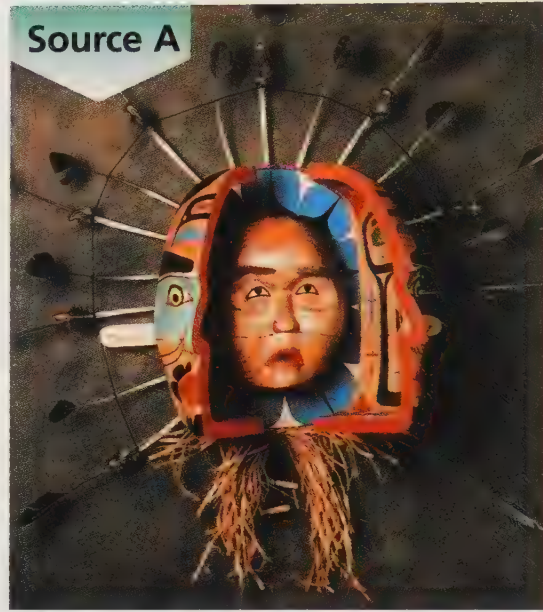
Winter ceremonies

In winter the people of the north-west coast enjoyed many ceremonies. They gathered round the fire in the big wooden houses. They watched the dances and listened to the songs and stories. They felt the world of the spirits was very close.

Shamans

The most powerful spirits belonged to the shamans or medicine people. Shamans were often the children of shamans. However, sometimes ordinary parents thought their child might be gifted with the right spirit. They would take him or her to a shaman. If the shaman accepted the child, the parent would pay for the training. Some shamans specialised in healing. Others specialised in bringing back lost souls. Some brought success in war or other things.

Source A



Many masks and costumes were used to show how it was thought that animals, people or spirits could change into each other. Wooden masks would often open up, so that you could see another face inside.

Source B



A winter ceremony.

Healing

Families used herbs to treat illness. They only called in the shaman if the herbs had failed. Illness was often thought to be something sent into the sick person's body by an enemy or angry spirit. The shaman had to find this and remove it by acting out the removal.

Bringing back lost souls

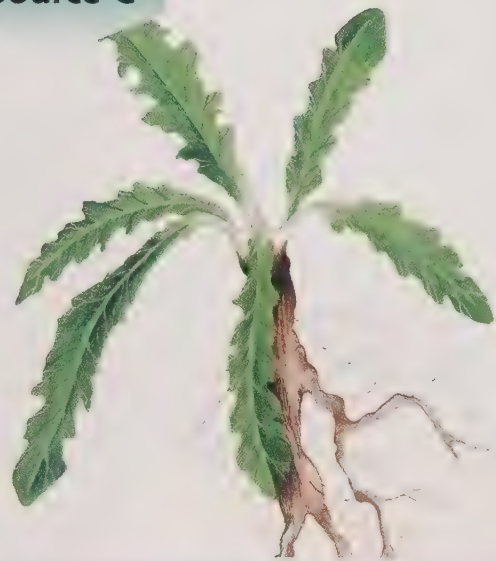
Shamans often went on pretend journeys to the land of the dead to bring back a lost soul. Nowadays we might see the loss of the soul as a mental illness.

Herbal medicines

The men and women of the north-west coast knew a great deal about herbal medicine. Here are some of the herbs they used:

- a type of cabbage for inflamed joints
- pine bark for casts for broken bones
- cherry bark, as well as spiders' webs, to bind wounds
- hot water poured on dandelion roots to make a tea to treat stomach pain
- juniper as a cough medicine.

Source C



Dandelion root has been used all around the world as a herbal medicine. It has been used for hundreds of years.

Things to do

- 1 What was a shaman?
- 2 What might we call 'loss of the soul' nowadays?
- 3 Write down one plant used as a medicine and what it was used for.

Looking for a bride

Marriage was a contract. It was agreed by two people and their families. First the bridegroom's family spoke to the girl's family. There was a feast and the bridegroom's family gave speeches saying what a good husband he would make. They also gave presents to the bride's family. These presents were called the bride price. Often the bride's family would refuse the presents the first time or even three times. Refusing the bride price showed how important the family was.

Getting married

Among some tribes, the bride's father gave presents to the new bridegroom, but these were not always handed over until the first child was born. When the presents were handed over the marriage could end or the contract could be renewed. To renew the contract the bridegroom gave presents to his bride's father.

Divorce

This was simple. Either the wife or husband moved out. As long as this was done in a friendly way it did not matter. But if any of the families felt insulted there could be anger and fighting.

Source A



A young girl. Her future husband's family would try to impress her family and give them gifts.

Source B



Some of the things that the north-west coast people liked to buy from white traders were metal tools. With these metal tools, they would be able to carve a box like the one shown in this picture.

How cooking was done.

Cooking was done by using hot stones. A woman put the stones in the fire. When they were hot, she lifted them out with sticks. She dipped them in water to wash off the ashes. Then she dropped them into her cooking box which was partly filled with water.

The cooking box might be made of wood. The stones were hot enough to make the water boil. The fish, meat or vegetables were put in an openwork basket and lowered into the boiling water.

Food could also be cooked on the hot stones or steamed in pits.

Women's work

The wife's work was to collect firewood and to gather berries, roots and fruit from the forest. She also gathered shellfish and seaweed from the beaches. She wove baskets and hats. She carried home the animals her husband had killed. She prepared the meat and the skins. She did the cooking and looked after the children.

Men's work

The husband hunted and fished. He made tools and wooden goods (from canoes to spoons). Canoes were made from hollowed out logs of cedar trees. The hollowing out took a long time using fire and stone tools. When white people came they brought metal tools which made carving much quicker.

Things to do

- 1 Write down two of the jobs done by the wife.
- 2 Write down two of the jobs done by the husband.
- 3 Read the information box above. How was cooking done?

4.1 BETWEEN THE EDGES: THE NEZ PERCE

Source A



The Nez Perce fished in the rivers.

The Plateau tribes

The Nez Perce tribe lived on high land. It was an area called the Plateau. Many other tribes lived there too.

They lived by fishing for salmon, and hunting animals such as deer and mountain goat. They gathered berries, fruit, nuts and **camas** bulbs which were very sweet to eat.

Trade

The tribes traded with other tribes. They bought shells from the tribes of the north-west coast. They bought buffalo skins from the tribes who lived on the Plains. By the nineteenth century they traded in white people's goods too, such as:

- kettles
- blankets
- knives
- guns.

Horses changed the way the Nez Perce lived

The Spanish brought horses to the Americas. Some escaped. By the eighteenth century many tribes used horses. Horses could carry heavy loads and they could travel fast. They were very useful on the flat land of the Plains and on the Plateau.

Horses changed the way the Nez Perce lived. They lived on the Plateau in the winter. But in the summer they rode down to the Plains. There they lived like the Plains tribes. They hunted buffalo and lived in tipis.

Advantages of horses

Horses could:

- carry heavy loads such as blankets and buffalo skins
- carry people
- travel fast.

The first explorers to meet the Nez Perce

The grass on the Plateau was very good for horses. So very soon, the Nez Perce had thousands of horses. Lewis and Clark were two explorers. They met the Nez Perce in 1806. They liked the Nez Perce and were very impressed with the horses and the people.

Trading fairs

Trading fairs were when the tribes met together to buy and sell.

Source B

From a book about Lewis and Clark's explorations. This is about the Nez Perce.

They are among the most amiable men we have seen. They are placid and gentle.

Things to do

- 1 Where did the Nez Perce live?
- 2 What changed the lives of the Nez Perce?
- 3 What did the explorers Lewis and Clark think of the Nez Perce?

4.2 WAR AND TRADE

Travel and trade

Once the Nez Perce owned horses they travelled further. When they travelled down to the Plains, they took things to trade. These things included:

- dried fish
- salmon oil
- cakes of camas
- berries
- hemp for rope
- soapstone
- eagle tail feathers
- spoons made of horn
- shells.

Some things they had made or hunted themselves. Other things, such as shells, were bought from the tribes of the north-west coast.

Buying and selling

The Nez Perce were famous for the bows they made. They made them from the horns of the mountain sheep. The horns were boiled until they were soft. Pieces of horn were glued together. Then they were bound with sinews. The bow was very strong but easy to bend. The tribes of the Plains would pay as much as one horse for a bow. The Nez Perce bought buffalo skin clothes and head dresses from the Plains tribes.

War

From early in the eighteenth century more white people came to America. This changed the way the different tribes lived. The white people brought horses and guns. The Nez Perce and other tribes travelled further on horseback. They then met and clashed with other tribes. In about 1750, the Blackfoot tribe bought guns. They drove the Shoshoni and Flathead tribes off the Plains and back to the Plateau. The Shoshoni, Flathead and Nez Perce joined together to fight the Blackfoot. In the early nineteenth century, the Nez Perce bought some guns. Then they and the Flathead tribe were able to drive the Blackfoot back.

Plains style warfare

The Nez Perce became involved in fighting on the Plains. Honour in battle was more important for a man's status among the Plains tribes than how many goods he had. Counting coup and scalping were two battle honours. Counting coup was riding close to an enemy and touching him with a stick. Scalping was skimming off the top part of the flesh and hair on the enemy's head, usually when dead. Scalps gave the warriors status and control over the enemy's soul when dead.

Things to do

- 1 Write down two things that the Nez Perce took to the Plains to sell.
- 2 What were the Nez Perce bows made of?
- 3 Why did the arrival of white people bring changes to tribes such as the Nez Perce?

Source A



The Nez Perce painted markings on their horses which brought luck in battle. The riders used saddles or rode without a saddle at all. Having a saddle and stirrups meant the rider was less likely to be knocked off his horse by a blow from a spear.

4.3 THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION 1804-6

Why the expedition was sent

In 1800, most white Americans lived on the east coast. They did not know anything about the rest of America. The American president was Thomas Jefferson. He wanted to send men to explore as far as the Pacific coast. He sent an expedition. It was led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Crossing the mountains

By September 1805, Lewis and Clark and the men they led had left the Plains. They had to cross the Plateau and the mountains to reach the Pacific coast. They were exhausted and hungry.

The men continued to climb the mountains. They ate some of their horses. They ate anything they could hunt or they had left in their packs. One meal was just soup and candles. Another meal was dry peas and bear oil. The men were getting weaker. Then on the 22 September, they staggered out of the mountains. They were in the land of the Nez Perce.

Source A

Adapted from what one man in the expedition wrote.

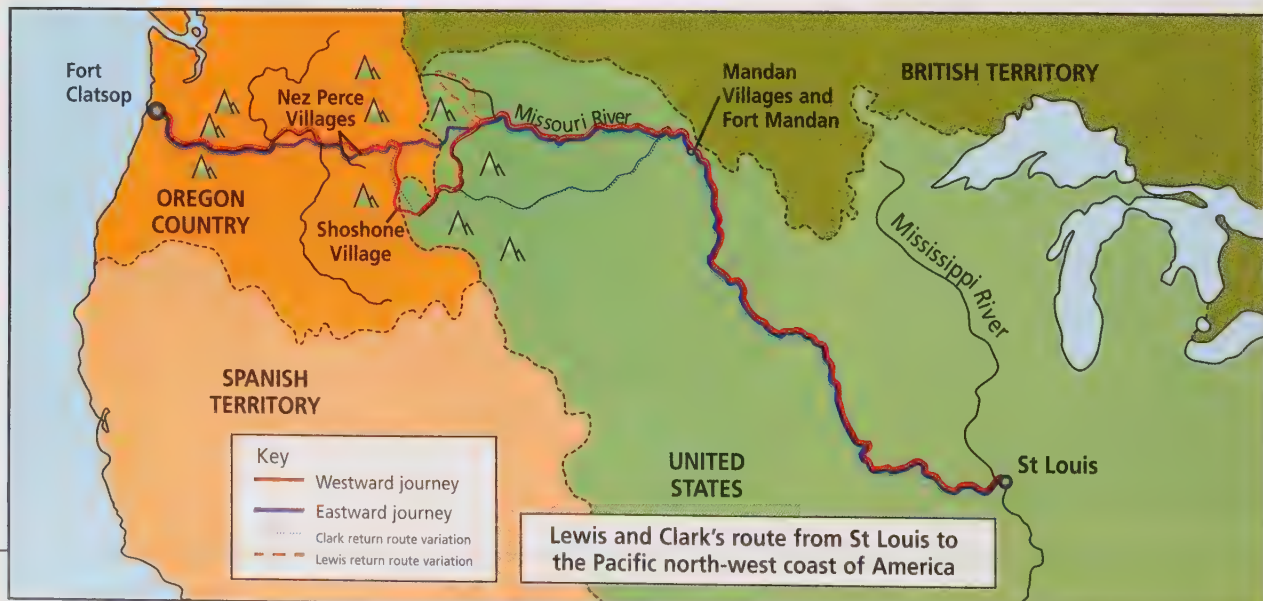
16 September: When we awoke this morning we were covered with snow. Captain Clark shot at a deer but did not kill it.

Some of the men without socks wrapped rags on their feet. We loaded up our horses and set out without anything to eat.

Source B

This is what Captain William Clark wrote.

16 September: I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life. Indeed I was at one time fearful my feet would freeze.





Meeting the Nez Perce

The Nez Perce had never seen white people. Some of the tribe wanted to kill the white people. They wanted to take their goods (particularly the guns). But an old woman spoke up. When she was young she was captured by a Plains tribe. They sold her. In the end she was sold to a white man in Canada. Although she escaped and got back to her own people, she always remembered that the white man had been kind to her. Her story helped to persuade the Nez Perce chiefs to help Lewis and Clark.

Making canoes

The Nez Perce helped the white men to make canoes so they could travel on the rivers down to the Pacific coast. One of the chiefs went with them on the first part of the journey.

Looking after the horses

The Nez Perce also promised to look after the expedition's horses until Lewis and Clark and the others returned.

A photograph of the Nez Perce about 80 years after Lewis and Clark met them.

Things to do

- 1 a Who was Thomas Jefferson?
b What did Thomas Jefferson want to do?
- 2 Write down one sentence that shows the men on the expedition were nearly starving.
- 3 How did the Nez Perce help the white men?

4.4 HOUSES AND TIPIS

Big winter houses

Big winter houses had a frame of wood for the top and the sides. There was space at the top all along the roof to let the smoke out. Then big rush mats were tied to the frame to make the roof and sides of the house. Dry grass was piled around the bottom to keep out the wind. Some houses were long and some were conical in shape.

Small winter houses

Small winter houses were just for one family. They were conical in shape. This is how they were made.

- About seven poles were propped together to make a frame.
- The frame was covered with mats.
- When it was cold more mats were added and earth was piled at the bottom to keep out the wind and cold.
- Skins were hung on the inside to keep it warmer.

Summer houses on the Plains

The Nez Perce went to hunt on the Plains in summer. They copied the houses of the Plains tribes.

The Plains people lived in houses called tipis. They were made of a wooden frame and covered with buffalo skins. The skins were lighter than using rush mats as a covering. A horse could pull them on a **travois** or even carry the skins on a saddle pack.

Source A

Adapted from a book about Lewis and Clark. They are describing some winter houses.

There were two houses. One contained eight families. The other one was the largest we had ever seen. It looked like a shed. It had a roof of straw and mats. It was 156 feet long and about 15 feet wide. There were doors on each side.

It was open inside and each family had a fire in the centre of the hut.

Things to do

- 1 What did the Nez Perce use to make the frames of their houses?
- 2 What did they use to make the roofs of their houses?
- 3 What was the long house like inside according to Lewis and Clark?
- 4 Why did the Nez Perce copy the tipis of the Plains tribes?

Source B



A tipi on the Plains. The wooden poles that made the frame were covered in buffalo skins.

4.5 HUNTING BUFFALO

From about 1750, tribes from all around the Plains hunted buffalo. This was because they had horses.

Source A



The tribes have 'rounded up' a herd of buffalo. They are shooting at them with their bows and arrows and with guns.



Things to do

- 1 What weapons are being used to kill the buffalo in the picture?
- 2 What does the artist think of the men who are hunting the buffalo?

4.6 USING THE BUFFALO

After the hunt

Many buffalo were killed in one hunt. The men cut up the meat. Then they loaded everything on horses and went back to the camp. The women and children unloaded the horses while the men slept. The women and children roasted the best bits of the buffalo. Then they got to work cutting up the meat and cleaning the skins. Some of the meat was dried to eat later.

Cleaning the flesh and hair off the skin

The women stretched the skins on the ground and pegged them out. They scraped all the meat and fat off the skin. They used a sharp stone tool. After white people came, they used metal tools. The skin was left to dry. Then the skin was turned over. The hair and the top layers of skin were scraped off.

Tanned hide (soft leather) was used for tipi covers, robes, moccasins, trousers and saddle blankets.

Rawhide (hard leather) was used for belts, bags, horses' bridles and saddles, ropes and

Dung was dried for fuel.

Tail was made into a decoration or fly swat.

Every part of the buffalo was used. The parts such as the liver, which went bad quickly, were eaten straightaway.

Fur was made into blankets and winter clothes.



Stomach was made into a cooking vessel or into containers.

Fat was used to make soap and for cooking.

Hooves were used to make glue and tools.

Meat was eaten raw (particularly the tongue and liver). Otherwise it was boiled or dried for later use.

Softening the skin

After scraping, boiled brains and liver were rubbed over the skin and it was folded up for a few days. The next job was to stretch it on a frame and scrape off the brains and liver and wash the skin. Women then rubbed the skin with sandstone. Lastly, they took plaits of sinew. They pulled the sinew tight.

The women pulled the skin back and forth across the sinew. This softened it even more.



Brain was used to tan the skins.

Tongue was used as a hairbrush or food.

Hair was used as padding for saddles and pillows, for rope and clothing decoration.

Bones were used to make tools, needles, arrow heads, sledge runners and dice. Bone marrow was eaten raw or cooked.

Things to do

- 1 Look at the information on these pages.
 - a Why was the liver eaten straight away?
 - b How was meat preserved for later use?
 - c Which things made from bones might be made from metal once white people had brought metal to trade?

4.7 APPALOOSA HORSES

Source A



How the Nez Perce used to live

The Nez Perce lived by gathering berries, fruits, nuts and camas bulbs, and by fishing. Their rivers were not very good for fishing so they were not a rich tribe. However, their land was good for horses. Once they began to keep horses they became a rich hunting tribe. They travelled much further to hunt.

The horses

The Nez Perce only allowed the best horses to breed. They castrated the less strong stallions or sold them to other tribes. They built up herds of hundreds of good horses. The horses were sure-footed and strong.

A Nez Perce chief. He is riding an Appaloosa horse and wearing the sort of clothes and head-dress that Plains tribes wore.

Horses and trading

The Nez Perce traded the horses they did not want. They kept three sorts of horses.

- Gentle horses to carry heavy loads and for women and old people to ride.
- Comfortable, sure-footed horses for travelling over the mountains.
- Fast horses for hunting buffalo and to ride to war. (The Nez Perce never sold these horses.)

Fast horses

A fast horse had to be able to give a buffalo a 400 metre start. Then it had to gallop and catch up with the buffalo in about 3 kilometres. The horse was trained to gallop up close to the buffalo. It had to be so close that its rider could touch the buffalo with his foot. The rider shot the buffalo and the horse turned quickly away. This was to save both horse and rider from the buffalo's horns.

Short bows

The Nez Perce were also famous for their bows. These bows were short so they were easy to use from horseback. Other tribes were always keen to buy the bows and a good bow could cost the same as a good horse. The bows were so good that sometimes the arrow went right through a young buffalo and hit the animal next to it.

Back on the Plateau

At the end of the summer the Nez Perce rode back over the mountains to the Plateau. They loaded their horses with buffalo skins. They also carried things they had bought from the Plains tribes. These included clothes made of soft buffalo skins and feather head-dresses.

Source B

This is adapted from what Meriwether Lewis said about the Appaloosa horses.

Their horses are an excellent breed. They are tall and well made. They are active and have stamina.

Some of the horses are patterned with white spots. But most are of one colour – brown or black with white on their face or feet. They are very like our best horses.

Things to do

- 1 What sort of horses did the Nez Perce keep for carrying goods, old people and women?
- 2 What sort of horses did they keep for riding over the mountains?
- 3 What were the best horses used for?

Source A



The arrival of white people

The Lewis and Clark expedition met the Nez Perce in 1806. These were the first white people the Nez Perce had met. Soon other white people came. There were fur trappers, traders, then settlers. The Nez Perce decided they had to learn the white people's ways. They asked for teachers. Several Christian missionaries were sent. Two of them were Henry and Eliza Spalding.

Teaching the Nez Perce 'white people's' ways

The Spaldings taught reading and writing. They taught farming. They built a church. Some of the Nez Perce changed to become farmers. Other Nez Perce wanted to live in the old way. The young men still liked to hunt and to race their horses. They still wanted to ride down to the Plains in the summer to hunt buffalo. But life was changing.

The Oregon Trail.

The Oregon Trail

By 1850 it was a common sight to see the covered wagons wending their way westward loaded with white settlers seeking a new life in the west. It took six months to drive from the east to California. The railway took five to six days.

The map opposite shows the route of the Oregon Trail.

White people's diseases and treaties

More white people came. They wanted to settle down and farm. Unfortunately, they often brought disease with them. Like all Native Americans, the Nez Perce had no **immunity** against outside diseases. They easily died from measles, smallpox and influenza. Sometimes the tribes thought that the missionaries were poisoning them. The Spaldings left the Nez Perce and the US government sent soldiers to keep the peace.

Treaties

The US government made a **treaty** with the Nez Perce in 1855. The treaty allowed the Nez Perce to keep certain lands. However, in 1860 gold was discovered on the Nez Perce land. Thousands of white people came to **mine** the gold. The US government offered a new treaty. There was even less land for the Nez Perce.

Settlers on the Nez Perce lands

White farmers settled around the Nez Perce lands. They turned their cattle and horses on to the Nez Perce land. Then they complained that Nez Perce horses ate all the grass. There were more and more complaints. The US government decided to round up all the Nez Perce and put them in one reservation. They could stop keeping horses and learn to farm. However, the Wallowa band of the Nez Perce did not want to go to the reservation. They were led by a young chief called Joseph.



Source B

Adapted from Captain George Currey's report in 1863.

The chiefs of the Nez Perce met together. They talked about the new treaty but they could not agree. They decided that they would disband the tribe. Each chief would lead his own village.

I withdrew my soldiers. I had seen the end of the most powerful Indian nation to the west of the Rocky Mountains.

Things to do

- 1 What did the Spaldings teach the Nez Perce?
- 2 What happened in 1860?
- 3 What did the white farmers complain about?
- 4 What did the US government decide to do with all the Nez Perce after the white farmers had complained?

4.9 CHIEF JOSEPH AND HIS PEOPLE

Chief Joseph decides not to go to the reservation (1877)

Chief Joseph and his people owned several thousand horses. The US army came to escort the Nez Perce to the new reservation. So Joseph rounded up all their horses. He and his people intended to escape. They had to swim rivers and cross mountains. Some of the young men were angry and raided some white people's farms.

The chase

For the next three and a half months the US army chased Chief Joseph. There were several battles.

On 9 August, the army killed 89 of the Nez Perce. This included 50 women and children. Chief Joseph decided to head for Canada where he thought they might be safe.

The surrender: 5 October 1877

More soldiers were sent to capture Chief Joseph. On 30 September, the soldiers caught up with the tribe. They made a surprise attack in the morning. There were 600 soldiers and 120 fighting men of the Nez Perce. However, the Nez Perce stopped the attack.

Then more soldiers arrived and after six days, Chief Joseph had to surrender. Most of his fighting men were dead and the children were starving. Only two chiefs were left alive. One was Chief Joseph. The other was his brother White Bird who escaped to Canada.

Source A



Chief Joseph.

The end of the Nez Perce

Chief Joseph surrendered. He and his people were moved around to several camps. Many died and although Chief Joseph asked for their land back, they never got back to the Wallowa Valley on the Plateau. Joseph died in 1904. When the Nez Perce surrendered in 1877, all their horses were taken and sold.

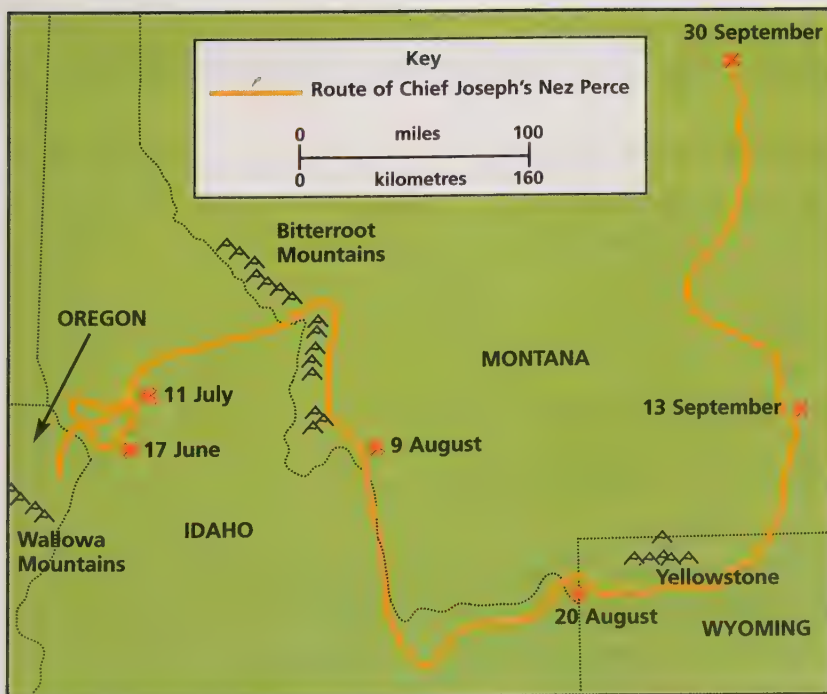
The map shows the route taken by Chief Joseph's Nez Perce.

Source B

Adapted from a speech by Chief Joseph to the US government in 1879.

I only ask of the government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in some country where my people will not die so fast. Let me be a free man – free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself – and I will obey every law.

I have asked some of the great white chiefs why they can say the Indian must stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.



Things to do

- 1 When did Chief Joseph surrender to the US army?
- 2 Read Source B.
 - a What does Chief Joseph only ask?
 - b Write down two freedoms that Chief Joseph wants.
 - c What has Chief Joseph asked the great white chiefs?

5.1 NATIVE AMERICANS TODAY

The first 400 years

Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas in 1492. At that time there were many millions of people living in the Americas. Over the next 400 years, the Native population went down to less than 250,000. Most native Americans died from disease. Diseases such as smallpox sometimes killed as many as nine out of every ten people in a tribe. Native Americans had no immunity against European diseases.

White people also drove the native people from their lands. By 1900, the Native Americans were vanishing. Children were sent to schools where they only learnt English. They began to forget the old tribal life. Some tribes lived in reservations. Reservations were large areas of land that were set aside for the tribes to live on. Sometimes they farmed but it was very different from their old way of life.

As cities began to grow, native people went there to find work. One group made a success of this. In 1886, twelve men from the Mohawk tribe got jobs working on high buildings and bridges. They were very good at working at great height. They taught other members of their tribe. By the 1930s the Mohawks were famous for working on the **skyscrapers** in New York.

However, for most of the time the Native Americans were neglected. But things have changed.

Today the native population is increasing

The Native Americans did not disappear. Today the population is increasing. By 1998 it was about 2.5 million.

Living today

The Native Americans have gained more rights. In 1991, the Canadian government agreed with the Inuit to set up a **self-governing** Inuit area called Nunavut. Other tribes such as the Cherokee have set up their own organisations. The Navajo is a tribe in Arizona. They live on the largest **reservation** in the United States. They live in their traditional ways. They earn money from making jewellery.

Some of the things that have changed

- 1946: The US Indian Claims Commission dealt with treaties between the government and the native people.
- 1951: The Indian Act in Canada gave rights to native people about things like education, fishing and holding ceremonies.
- From the 1960s the US and Canadian governments gave money for tribal schools.
- In the 1970s legal help groups were set up. For instance, the Lakota (a Plains' tribe) won a \$105 million claim against the government for a broken treaty.

Source A



A Native American working in a gambling casino owned by his tribe.

Problems

There are problems. It is difficult for tribes to decide how much to live in the modern American way. For instance, a law was passed in 1988. It gave native people rights over their own land. Some tribes decided to open gambling casinos. These have been very successful. The profits are used to pay for better housing, health and education. However, some people say the gambling will have a bad effect on the people of the tribe.

Things to do

- 1 What did most Native Americans die of?
- 2 What language did Native American children have to learn at school?
- 3 **a** What are the good effects for the tribes of running gambling casinos?
b What do you think the bad effects might be?

GLOSSARY

Astronomy the study of stars and other things in space

Blubber the fat of whales and other sea animals

Camas a plant eaten by the Nez Perce

Climate the general weather of a country

Fleece coat of wool from an animal such as a sheep

Harpoon barbed dart, especially for killing whales

Immunity resistant to disease

Irrigation works building canals to water fields

Mine dig for things such as gold

Myth traditional story, such as telling how the world began

Reservation a place reserved for the native people to live in North America

Self-governing when a country or people rule themselves

Skyscraper very tall building

Status rank or position of importance

Trading fair place where people met to buy and sell

Travois a frame for carrying things that is pulled behind a horse or a dog

Treaty an agreement between countries

Vegetation plants

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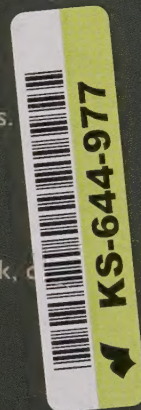
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