## INDIAN NATIONS OF THE NW

## **History**

The Northwest had the most densely populated areas of indigenous people ever recorded. The land and waters provided rich natural resources through cedar and salmon; highly structured cultures developed in relatively dense populations. Many different nations developed, each with their own distinct history, culture, language type or dialect and society. Some cultures in this region were very similar, while others differed. Prior to contact, and for a brief time after colonization, some of these groups regularly conducted war against each other through raids and attacks. Through warfare they gathered captives for slavery.



Native tribes had great difficulty in talking to one another.

The Northwest is an area of exceptional linguistic diversity and contains languages belonging to a large number of unrelated families. The close proximity of multiple languages created some mutual interaction, with the result being linguistic areas of the Salishan, Wakashan and Chimakuan families. Other families were the: Tsimshianic, Chinookan and Sahaptian languages, as well as Kutenai, a language isolate. All these languages are known for their complex phonetic systems, particularly their large number of dorsal obstruents. Tlingit, for example, has about 24 different stop consonants and fricatives in the velar, uvular, and glottal areas (as well as 5 different lateral obstruents). Other consonants that are unfamiliar to English speakers, such as pharyngeal consonants and ejectives.

Several of languages (Quileute, Lushootseed, and Makah) are without nasal consonants. Nasal consonants occur when air comes out through the nose but not through the mouth, as it is blocked by the lips or tongue. Example English words with: "m" (mom, Mary, mice), "n" (nine, name, Nancy) or 'ng" (sing, ring, long) are nasal. These 3 NW languages are one half the 6 known languages lacking nasal sounds (others: Amazon....)

Pioneers planned their takeover of NW lands in English. It is remarkable the native peoples formed forces large enough to resist.

## **Ethnobotanical Gardens**

Native plant "starts" from Bonhoeffer Gardens (to your SW, by the I-5) illustrate 99 foods and materials available to the American peoples who lived here 10,000 years without the need to develop agriculture. Planter boxes contain:

| American Designer (4) | Baldels piece (7) |

## **Legends & Lessons**

Natives would leave the shells of clams and oysters in piles (middens) and over 1,000s of years, they became quite large; often 1,000s of feet long, attaining heights of 20 feet. To the north, in British Columbia, maritime shell midden sites date to at least 10,000 years ago. In Oregon, similar sites are known to date to 6,000 BC.

For this farm and many others like it (see the flat pasture land to the East of where you stand) farmers logged and drained the lands, ditched the creeks, and used those ditches as fences. Pure calcium carbonate from shell casings provided lime to sweeten the ground to grow peas, beans, corn, lettuce, etc. This area's midden, totally eliminated now, was found west of the Franklin Road. To your West, view a small replica of that midden. How many American Indiginous lived here before smallpox, no one truly knows.







