MAKAH & NORSE LONGHOUSES

History

The 1st non-native settlement north of San Francisco Bay, west of the Rockies and in the U.S. proper was built in 1792 at Neah Bay by the Spanish, 100 miles due west of where you stand. Just inside the west/south entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, this is the home of the Makah Nation, more akin to the Haida and Tlingit than the Coast Salish. They, like Scadanavian Vikings, lived in longhouses: a type of long, proportionately narrow, single-room building built by peoples in various parts of the world including Asia, Europe, and North America. Many were built from timber and often represent the earliest form of permanent structure in many cultures. These structures, often with many families, created more like than unlike social structures.



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:

Accordance (C.) Adultion anticolorium (C.) Adult

Legends & Lessons

Around 1560 via radiocarbon dating, a mudslide engulfed part of a Makah village 110 miles to your West. After a storm in February 1970, tidal erosion exposed hundreds of well-preserved wooden artifacts. The excavation of the Ozette site began shortly after. University students worked with the Makah under the direction of archaeologists using pressurized water to remove mud from six buried long houses. The excavation went on for 11 years and produced over 55,000 artifacts, many of which are on display in the Makah Museum at the Makah Cultural and Research Center in Neah Bay.

Houses like these hosted potlatches, tribal parties where the wealthy gave away their possessions to the needy (but not slaves). These parties coincided with births, funerals, and marriages. Canada's view was that this caused the First Nation's people to be wealthy, but always appear poor. This was a problem for governments financed by property taxes. Their solution was the Potlatch Ban passed by the Government of Canada in 1885 and lasting until 1951, thus stripping these cultures of their identities.