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Tillamook

Native Americans of Oregon

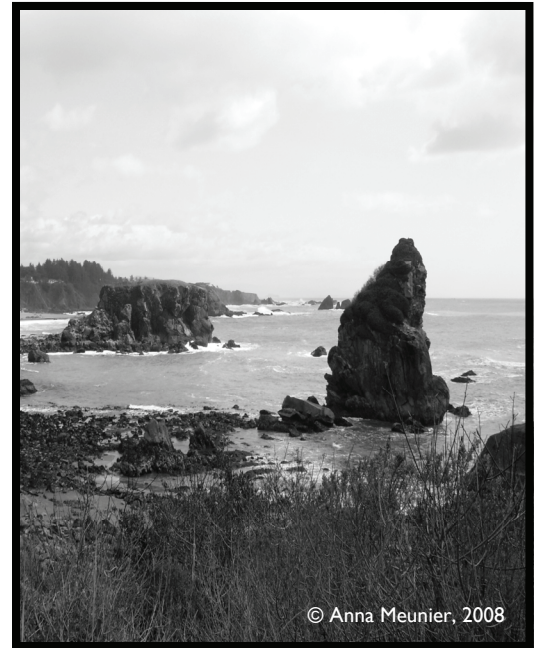
4th Grade Social Studies

Climate & Environment

Special Points of Interest:

- Men favored wearing cone-shaped shells through the cartilage under their nose. Both men and women wore jewelry in their ears.
- The Tillamook used a woven duck decoy covered in feathers. The hunter would slip into the water with the decoy on his head, sneak up on a duck, grab its feet, and pull it underwater drowning it.
- The Tillamook did not go out on whale hunts.
- Tillamook men and women were experts at canoeing.

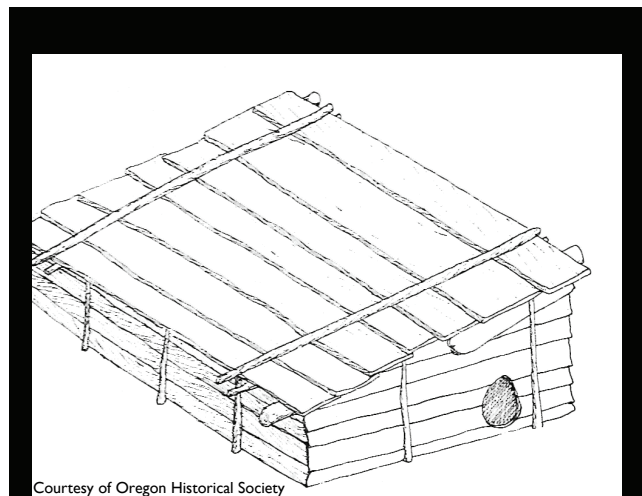
The Tillamook Native Americans lived on the northern Oregon Coast. The Tillamook lived in villages on the coast, rivers, marshes, streams, lakes and up the coastal mountain range. The low mountains receive cool, wet weather directly from the Pacific Ocean. This weather provides the mountains with an ample supply of rain. Some areas receive as much as 200 inches in a year! The low rolling hills are covered in lush forests. There is a lot of rain, fog and mist in the Tillamook area. Even though there is a lot of rain, it seldom gets cold enough to snow.



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Shelter

The Tillamook spent most of the year at their permanent village sites on the coast. They lived in permanent plank houses. The plank houses measured about 40 x 15 feet. The homes were dug into the ground 4 or 5 feet deep. The roof was made of overlapping boards at a 45° angle to let the rain pour off.



Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society

Tillamook Plank House

Inside the house was the fire pit. Around the fire pit were mats of woven cattail to sit on. Lining the walls of the house were several bunks. They often hung mats around their sleeping bunks for added warmth. Under the bed, the natives kept a ready supply of firewood.

Food

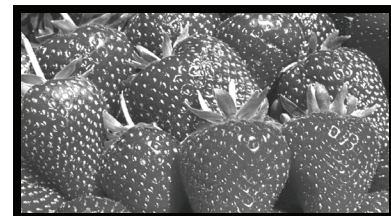
The ocean, beaches, rivers, streams and rainforest provided the Tillamook with a rich bounty of food. The main food source was the salmon. They also ate steelhead and trout out of the river. The shores along the ocean provided the Native Americans with many other food sources like sea lions, seals and porpoises. From the tide pools, the Tillamook collected edible mussels, Roman purple snails, clams and crab. The bluffs and cliffs next to the ocean supplied the Tillamook with several varieties of birds and eggs.



The foothills of the coast range added meat, berries and plants to the Tillamook's diet. The men of the Tillamook hunted elk, black-tailed deer, beaver, black bear, wildcat, otter, squirrel, muskrat, rabbit, and chipmunk. The foothills of the coast range not only provided the Tillamook with meat but added many berries and plants to their diet. Each summer, temporary berry camps were set up in the forests. The women and girls spent weeks collecting and storing

a variety of berries. They picked wild blackberries, strawberries, blueberries, huckleberries, thimbleberries and salmonberries.

The Tillamook collected and ate several types of plants. The women took their digging sticks and collected skunk cabbage, edible camas bulbs, wild asparagus, Wapato (a wild potato), wild onions, and edible thistles.



Clothing

Since the climate of the coastal region was so mild, the natives didn't have a need for a large variety of clothing. During the warmer months, the women wore grass skirts like the hula-skirts of the Hawaiians. They also wore a cape over the shoulders. The capes were made of the same grass as the skirts. It looked just like the skirt, but it tied together around the neck instead of the waist. These garments were made of cedar bark.



During the colder months, the women wore buckskin-hide dresses or skirts. The women also wore beautiful basket hats. These hats looked like an upside down bowl on their head.

The men of the village didn't need to wear many clothes either. During the warmer months, they wore a hide breechcloth held at the waist with a belt. When the weather turned cold, the men wore buckskin leggings and shirts.

Both men and women went barefoot on the coast. Leather moccasins would not hold up in such a wet environment.