

## Unaliit Indians (Cree First Nation) of Long Ago

Long ago Unaliit Indians started thinking of the usefulness of axes because Unaliit (Cree) Indians live where there were trees and they needed an axe. These they made themselves. They started off with axes similar to ones made by Inuit. Stone axes fastened with rope to a wooden handle were used by Unaliit Indians so they could use them to cut trees. But first they had to find a hard stone. It had to be sharp for cutting wood, but could also be used for other things. So they started thinking about an axe long ago before they saw any Qablunaat. They always had stone axes that were used for meat and wood. They also made qajaqs (canoes) out of trees using an axe.

They wore animal skin clothing which was supplied by hunting. Both Inuit and Unaliit Indians used animal skin clothing. Unaliit Indian clothing had pointy thing in the hood and the front part of the coat was open with tie strings. Itqiliit (Chipewyan) Indian's caribou outer coats were long. They used summer caribou skins for clothing and made them pliable like Inuit do by tanning them. But Unaliit Indians hunted different animals like moose and caribou- the caribou that stay in the tree line. But they never ate raw meat; they ate only cooked food by scorching the meat slowly near a flame.

When beads were brought in by Qablunaat, they started making beaded foot wear and beaded personal items to make them look nice. Their women did most of the beading by decorating their sewing. Even Itqiliit Indians hunting clothes were beaded when Qablunaat brought the beads to sell them. Beads were really sought after by Inuit and Itqiliit Indians and Unaliit Indians. Itqiliit Indians had more food varieties because they had more animal variety in the tree line. Their food was eaten both by Itqiliit and Unaliit Indians because Itqiliit and Unaliit Indians main diet were animals.

Before rifles came, Unaliit and Itqiliit Indians had to make bow and arrows to use in hunting game. They used stones and animal bones for survival a long time ago. Itqiliit Indians are closer to us than Unaliit Indians because they lived around near Churchill. But Unaliit Indians apparently lived further south and further inland where there are more trees.

Itqiliit Indians use to come up to the Inuit land in the summer to where there are no trees. This is after they had met Inuit people and had stopped

warring with them. Itqiliit Indians and Inuit became best of friends and wanted to trade their possessions, like dogs and personal items. Some Inuit even learned to speak Itqiliit Indian language, and Itqiliit Indians also learned to speak Inuit language. There was an Itqiliit person in Churchill that could speak Inuktitut.

Written by Louis Angalik (2008)