



# David Spilman Fine Books

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707-975-5062 | PO Box 577, Sebastopol, CA 95473-0577 USA



**Edward S. Curtis**

**The North American Indians, Volume X, 1915**



## 1914 Photogravure Prints on Japanese Tissue of The Kwakiutl, Northern Vancouver Island, and coast of British Columbia



### **The Kwakiutl**

*"The Kwakiutl are one of several Indigenous First Nations that inhabit the western coast of British Columbia, Canada, from central and northern Vancouver Island to the adjacent mainland coast. Kwakiutl bands consist of four clans: the Raven, Killer Whale, Eagle, and Wolf clans ... each claiming their own ancestor, chiefs, oral histories, and entitlement to certain lands, religious rites, and songs and dances associated with particular family names and masks." (from Milwaukee Public Museum and Franz Boas (1858-1942)). Curtis's narratives describe a rich culture of spirituality, myths, and songs. The ritual masks and costumes represent animals and other spirits that are used in dances and songs to tell moral stories, family achievements and histories of the clan.*

### **Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868-1952)**

Curtis was an American photographer, author, publisher, and Native American ethnologist. With only a sixth-grade education, Curtis honed his skills in photography and developing images on his own and through apprenticeships. Early in his career he photographed Chief Seattle's family and other Puget Sound natives. He won many awards and became well-known in the Seattle area.

On a trip to Mt. Rainier, he met a climbing party of members nationally known in the areas of conservation, Indian ethnography, and publishing. George Bird Grinnell was a nationally known anthropologist, historian, and interested in Native American life. He later introduced Curtis to methods of gathering scientifically valid information on Native Americans for reports and to enhance his ability to interact with Native American tribes and gain their trust. Grinnell introduced Curtis to many other people for advice and assistance. In 1898, C. H. Merriam, co-founder of the National Geographical Society, invited Curtis to participate in the Harriman scientific expedition to Alaska (May to July, 1899) as the official photographer. During the expedition, with Merriam and Grinnell, Curtis added to his knowledge of ethnographic research.



By 1903, Curtis shifted his photography on images of Native Americans and began to seek publishers for his Indian prints. Walter F. Russell (a well-known eastern society portrait painter) whom Curtis had met earlier, was impressed by Curtis' portraits and artistic skills. He introduced Curtis to Theodore Roosevelt who became a friend and supporter of Curtis.

Over the next two years, Curtis participated in and organized exhibitions, published his works, and advanced his reputation as a photographer. He was also developing a publication design on the lives of Western North American Indians. Unable to interest publishers in the project, Curtis reached out to friends to invest in the publication. Theodore Roosevelt supported the project and introduced Curtis to potential investors, including J. P. Morgan.

### **'The North American Indians' Publication**

In 1906, J. P. Morgan invested \$75,000 for Curtis' field work over the next five years to produce the photographs and narratives in exchange for 25 sets of the publication and more than 300 original prints. The 20-volume set was to cover all the major Native American tribes in the western United States, British Columbia, and Alaska. The first volume was printed in late 1907 and released in early 1908 on the Apache, Jicarillas, and Navaho tribes.

'The North American Indians' was written, illustrated, and published by Edward S. Curtis; edited by Frederick Webb Hodge and with a foreword by Theodore Roosevelt. The Standard version was printed on Dutch Van Gelder or Japanese vellum paper with 3/4 binding at 12.5 inches high by 10 inches wide. The Deluxe, known as the Tissue version, was printed on Japanese tissue, mounted in the chine-colle technique, on Van Gelder paper in full Levant binding. In addition, a larger format Portfolio set of unbound images included with each of the 20 volumes (23 inches high by 19 inches wide on Van Gelder paper). It is estimated that only 15% of the bound sets were Deluxe Tissue sets. The publication was planned as 500 sets of a 20-volume photographic and ethnographic study and portfolio. It was a monumental production spanning 23 years from 1907 to 1930. Each set was sold by subscription only for \$3,000 to \$3,850 (today \$77,000 to \$99,000).

By 1915, the first 10 volumes had been published and 175 subscriptions were sold. Curtis had underestimated the costs and time needed to complete the 20 volumes and was having difficulty managing the entire process. In 1913, J.P. Morgan unexpectedly died. The Morgan family continued to support the publication with additional investors and created The North American Indian, Inc., Corporation to take over the publication management from Curtis. Also, Curtis revised the estimated number of sets to be published to 300..

During World War I and the 1920's, sales lagged to only 35 sets and were impacted later by the Depression. In 1935, the Morgan family then disbanded the corporation and sold the remaining stock of 14 bound sets and many unbound text and plates to Charles Lauriat Books of Boston for \$1,000. Over the entire production run it is estimated that only 238 sets had been sold by 1935. Lauriat created a variant binding for an additional 30 to 50 sets. Lauriat continued to sell the bound sets at a reduced price, and the unbound plates from the volumes and the portfolio into the 1960's. (The above information is from the Curtis Legacy Foundation)

### Provenance

The illustration and images were from the library of the late Dr. G. Warren Smith (1941-2021) of Pennsylvania. He had a long career as a university professor and administrator, and was a collector of over 6,000 books, maps, illustrations, and artifacts relating to the Arctic, Alaska, and Pacific Northwest.

**[Click on images to access item webpage]**

## 1. A Tsawatenok House-front



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 18]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Hand colored illustration on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; age toning and spots to fore edge, light smudges at mounting points. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

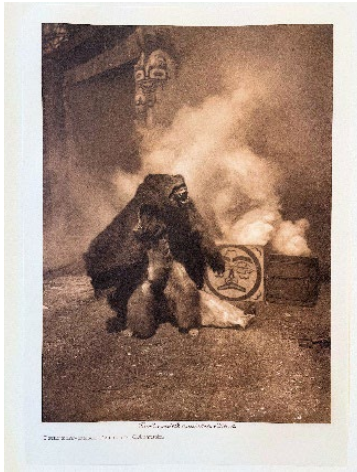
Very Good.

(14161)

\$275

**Illustration** - 'A Tsawatenok House-Front' From Curtis, "The plate presents the painting that formerly adorned the house of Kyoti, Chief of the Raven gens of the Tsawatenok at Kwasustums. The upper figure is 'sisiutl', the double-headed sea-serpent; the lower is 'qiqis' (sea-eagle), a crest derived by marriage from the Guauaenok."

## 2. Grizzly-Bear Dancer - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 202 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14162) \$300

**Image** - Dancer wearing Grizzly bearskin in ceremonial dance with painted shield and totem in smokey background

## 3. Kaloqutsuis - Qagyuhl

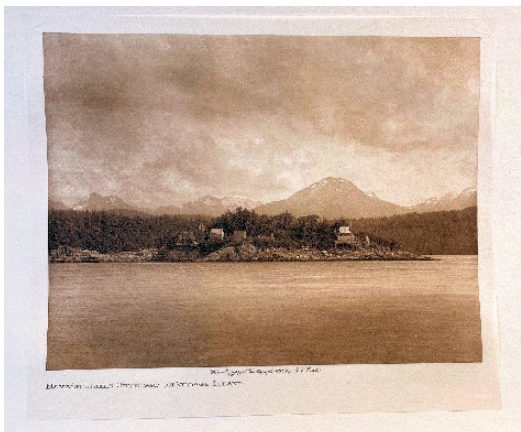


[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 162 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14163) \$390

**Image** - Kaloqutsuis - Qagyuhl - Ceremonial mask representing a raven.

## 4. Mamalelekala Cemetery on Village Island



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 56 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14164) \$150



*Image - Mamalelekala Cemetery on Village Island*

## 5. Mask of Octopus Hunter - Qagyuhl

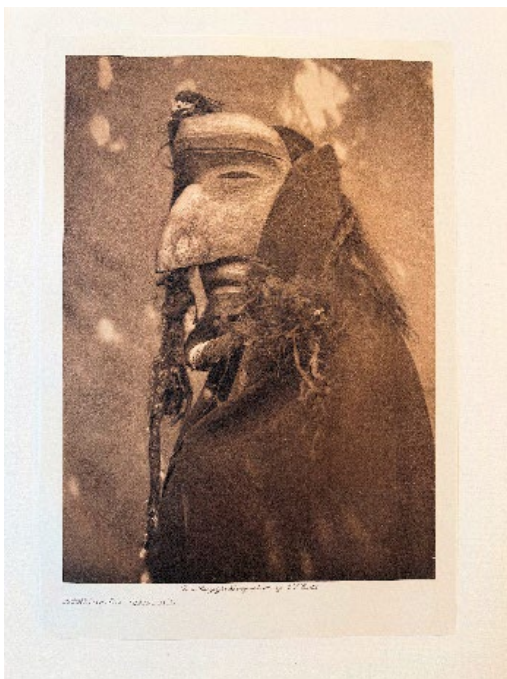


[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 246 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14165) \$300

*Image - Mask of Octopus Hunter - Qagyuhl*

## 6. Nuhlimahla - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 216 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Hand colored illustration on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; light age toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14167) \$300

*Image - Nuhlimahla - Qagyuhl* The Nuhlimahla pretends to be crazy and assists the grizzly-bears in protecting the hamatsas (TNAI, p157) A ceremonial mask of the Nuhlimahla during the during the Winter Dance ceremony. These characters impersonated fools and were noted for their devotion to filth and disorder (Library of Congress).

## 7. Paqusilahl – Qagyuhl

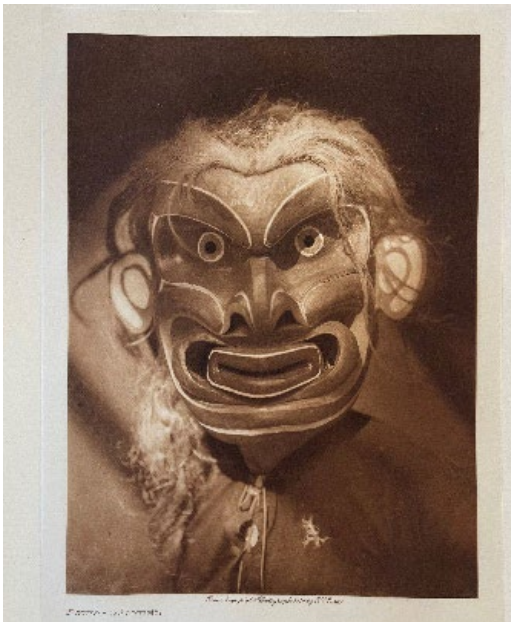


[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 166 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edges. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14166) \$300

**Image - Paqusilahl - Qagyuhl** ("man-of-the-ground embodiment") This character represents paqus, a wild man of the woods (TNAI, p156) Dancer representing Paqusilahl ("man of the ground embodiment"), wearing a mask and shirt covered with hemlock boughs, representing paqus, a wild man of the woods. (Library of Congress)

## 8. Pgwis - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 262 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good. (14168) \$300

**Image - Pgwis - Qagyuhl** Kwakiutl person wearing mask of mythical creature Pgwis (man of the sea) (Library of Congress)



## 9. Tawihyilahl - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 230 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good.

(14169)

\$525

*Image - Tawihyilahl - Qagyuhl* The "mountain-climber [i.e., mountain-goat] embodiment") (TNAI, p156)

## 10. The Hand-game - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 48 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good.

(14170)

\$150

*Image - The Hand-game - Qagyuhl*

## 11. The Octopus Hunter - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 298 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning of fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good.

(14171)

\$250

**Image - The Octopus Hunter - Qagyuhl** Ceremonial mask worn by a dancer portraying the hunter in Bella Bella mythology who killed the giant man-eating octopus. The dance was performed during Tluwulahu, a four-day ceremony prior to the Winter Dance. (Library of Congress)

## 12. Waswaslikyi - Qagyuhl



[Printed on Japanese tissue (India Proof paper) and mounted to Dutch Van Gelder paper] [The North American Indians (1907-1930), Volume 10 - The Kwakiutl, (1915), Facing page 248 ]. Cambridge: The University Press, 1915; First Edition. Limited edition [7.625x5.5in 19x14.2cm image, 12.5x9.5in 23x17cm plate]; Brown ink photograph on Japanese tissue with printed title and 1914 copyright, mounted on Val Gelder paper by chine-colle method, protected by tissue guard, top edge trimmed, others untrimmed, plates are not numbered; Light age-toning to fore edge. [Curtis Legacy Foundation, Howes 965] CS

Very Good.

(14172)

\$625

**Image - Waswaslikyi - Qagyuhl** ("Dog again and again," therefore, Chief Dog) part of a young man initiation dance and ceremony (TNAI, p157)

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