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National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation - Grace Nicholson: Inventories and Clippings, 1928-1968

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A cave was killed, the birds became general and in the end one group moved away to the south into what is now known as the Verde River Valley. This was the Vinapai Tribe, those remaining at Hualapai Mountain were the Hualapai Tribe. The cave was being preserved by the Hualapai in

[illegible]

Figure 10-4

that is quite attractive when woven into a basket. The outer side or bark is always exposed in the weaving. Chemehuevi decorative designs cover a considerable scope, ranging from conventional patterns to figures of snakes, bugs, and geometric designs. Some patterns, such as the "Tree of Life," are traditional with the tribe.

One of the most famous of the Chemehuevi weavers I have known is Mary Snider. Mary is about 98 years old and when I visited her three years ago I was interested in getting a picture of her at home, weaving a basket. We found Mary at her granddaughter's, about a quarter of a mile from her home. When I told Mary what I wanted, she very graciously consented to pose for me. When I found that the field lying between us and her home was freshly plowed, I had some misgivings about Mary being able to walk across it. We started out and she was soon far ahead and was waiting for us when we arrived. I am told that Mary does not weave any more; that the eyes that enabled her to do such fine beautiful weaving have grown tired. I have several of her baskets that are among the finest in my collection, and those made twenty or more years ago are far superior to those of later years. She, like many of the old weavers of other tribes, cannot be replaced and her craft, like theirs, will soon be among the lost arts of our Indian people. Our Government realizes this and has set up the Indian Bureau an Arts and Crafts Department. This is not designed to teach weaving or other crafts to Indians, but to assist them in marketing their products, creating distribution centers, and in arranging the financing of tribal cooperative enterprises. In other words, it is an effort on the part of the Government to help the Indians to help themselves.

We do not want to make the Indian over into a white man, but rather, through education and training in the white man's ways, to fit him to compete with other citizens in the economic life of his community. We would not have him forget his old traditions, his arts, and his crafts. We want to help him become a good and useful citizen, but we respect his desire, his right, and his pride in being an Indian.

[[image - photograph of three designs]]
[[caption]] Famous bug designs of Mary Snider - Chemehuevi.
[[/caption]]

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