



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation - Grace Nicholson: Notes and Photos, 1903-1968

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 11:38:52

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

The reddish brown of the coarser Pomo baskets is the bark of "red-bud," a handsome shrub with masses of magenta-colored blossoms which appear in the spring before the leaves. The split, peeled stems of the red-bud are also used as a basket fiber. The bark is striped in long bands and coiled to dry. Roots of the digger pine torn into long strips provide the staple fiber for the lighter color in coarse baskets. Roots of other pines or of Douglas spruce may be substituted for this tough pliable digger-pine root, but they are less satisfactory. Each material must be collected at the proper time and, with the exception of the willow, is coiled and hung up to dry. The smoke and dust of the house deepen and enrich the color before the fiber is made into baskets.

William's Minute Baskets

William and Mary are proud of the fine quality of their work, and to show what he was able to do in the way of minute weaving, William made a set of tiny baskets ranging from the size of a small finger-nail to a pin-headed model that has to be kept in a bottle for safety and is doubtless the smallest specimen of basketry ever made. This minute basket can be seen by means of a magnifying glass to be a remarkable specimen of the weaver's art. William's trained eyes were able to design and execute the tiny model with no artificial aid. He had a hard time getting the bottom started, William explained, and he left about two inches of the hair-like fiber attached because if he cut it off there would be no easy way of handling this smallest basket. The finger-nail model is canoe-shaped and carries an ornamental design.

The Role of the Basket in Pomo Life

Basketry has always meant a great deal to the ancestors of William and Mary and it means much to this faithful pair of weavers, who have all of the old tribal skill. As has been pointed out by those who have spent many years among these people, baskets entered importantly into the everyday life of the Pomo. He was cradled in a papoose basket and in it, hung from a broad band on his mother's forehead, he made his earliest journeys. His home was a great thatched basket house, his toys were modeled after the large baskets he saw about him, he ate from a "dala" of flat basket, and drank from a "tci-me" or round one. The seeds from which his meal was made were ground in a "cu-tic," or mortar basket, and his fish and meat were cooked in large mush bowls or "tic-mas". A large "tci-ma" was his water basket, his fish was caught in a gish-basket, his meal was winnowed in great winnowing baskets, and when he traveled his belongings were carried in a "bu-gi," the conical burden basket which answered every purpose of the white man's wheelbarrow or wagon. If the Pomo gardened, his fences were of wicker. On Clear Lake, the art of basketry applied to tules was used in making canoes.

In basket making the Pomo exhausted his ingenuity in weaves and shapes, and he wove into it his mythology. He copied nature

-2-

The reddish brown of the coarser Pomo baskets is the bark of "red-bud," a handsome shrub with masses of magenta-colored blossoms which appear in the spring before the leaves. The split, peeled stems of the red-bud are also used as a basket fiber. The bark is striped in long bands and coiled to dry. Roots of the digger pine torn into long strips provide the staple fiber for the lighter color in coarse baskets. Roots of other pines or of Douglas spruce may be substituted for this tough pliable digger-pine root, but they are less satisfactory. Each material must be collected at the proper time and, with the exception of the willow, is coiled and hung up to dry. The smoke and dust of the house deepen and enrich the color before the fiber is made into baskets.

William's Minute Baskets

William and Mary are proud of the fine quality of their work, and to show what he was able to do in the way of minute weaving, William made a set of tiny baskets ranging from the size of a small finger-nail to a pin-headed model that has to be kept in a bottle for safety and is doubtless the smallest specimen of basketry ever made. This minute basket can be seen by means of a magnifying glass to be a remarkable specimen of the weaver's art. William's trained eyes were able to design and execute the tiny model with no artificial aid. He had a hard time getting the bottom started, William explained, and he left about two inches of the hair-like fiber attached because if he cut it off there would be no easy way of handling this smallest basket. The finger-nail model is canoe-shaped and carries an ornamental design.

The Role of the Basket in Pomo Life

Basketry has always meant a great deal to the ancestors of William and Mary and it means much to this faithful pair of weavers, who have all of the old tribal skill. As has been pointed out by those who have spent many years among these people, baskets entered importantly into the everyday life of the Pomo. He was cradled in a papoose basket and in it, hung from a broad band on his mother's forehead, he made his earliest journeys. His home was a great thatched basket house, his toys were modeled after the large baskets he saw about him, he ate from a "dala" or flat basket, and drank from a "tci-me" or round one. The seeds from which his meal was made were ground in a "cu-tic," or mortar basket, and his fish and meat were cooked in large mush bowls or "tic-mas". A large "tci-ma" was his water basket, his fish was caught in a fish-basket, his meal was winnowed in great winnowing baskets, and when he traveled his belongings were carried in a "bu-gi," the conical burden basket which answered every purpose of the white man's wheelbarrow or wagon. If the Pomo gardened, his fences were of wicker. On Clear Lake, the art of basketry applied to tules was used in making canoes.

In basket making the Pomo exhausted his ingenuity in weaves and shapes, and he wove into it his mythology. He copied nature

-2-



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)