

Basketry is the mother of all loom and bead work and the decorative genius of the red woman may be seen in many samples of this day, found around tepees and wigwams of the villages.

The first shuttles were women's fingers, and this is proved by the fine specimens found in ancient ruins, and there are many niceties of technique to which the machine device cannot yet aspire.

In making her baskets the Indian woman used a steel or bone gauge to regulate the width of her weft, and used steel or bone awls for sewing. In manufacturing her baskets the Indian woman ransacked the three kingdoms of nature—mineral, animal and vegetable. Some nations used clay inside the baskets as a lining to render them fireproof; but the Columbia river Indian women did not do this as a rule, leaving them with only the cedar bast lining exposed.

Many Indians of today use commercial dyes with which to color designs on their baskets, but the women of the older race did not resort to this means of beautifying their handiwork. These latter, as do some of the present day basket weavers, went to the woods for their colors, resorting to the Oregon grape and yellow tree lichen. Maiden hair stems make a beautiful shade of brown in the baskets. Twisted tule roots dyed in mud results in a black material which form one of the designs of the baskets. Cattails make the white designs often, while the squaw grass found in the high altitudes is used extensively. This latter plant forms the zigzag designs often seen on modern baskets.

The Indian women of today knows just the right time at which the various basket material is ripe for gathering. She may be seen during the entire season searching for tules, for cedar bast, for fern roots and stems of the various plants she uses for dyeing the beautiful, soft colors she finds to her liking. These plants must be gathered at just the right time and prepared by peeling, splitting, yarning or twisting, braiding, soaking, gauging, and coloring.

Hazel stalks, the young shoots that spring up from the ground that has been burned over, are often used in basketry.

The woman basketmaker is an artist, the creator of forms; the patterns are in her soul in memory and imagination, mountain, waterfalls, lakes and forest tales or myths. The tools with which she works are the crudest, only a rough knife, a pointed bone, but the combination in which they are used evolves a thing of beauty and a joy forever to the collector of basketry.

Imbrication work of the Klickitats, the Yakimas and Spokanes in their coil baskets is beautiful, an art to be preserved if possible. The foundation of the basket is in cedar or spruce root, while the sewing is done with the outer and tougher part of the root; the stitches pass over the upper bundle of splints and are locked with those underneath. On the out-