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Paradigms of Collecting from Ethnography to Documenting the Individual Artists: Grace Nicholson and the Art History of Native Northwestern California Basketry During the Arts and Crafts Period, 1880-1930

by

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ABSTRACT

During the Arts and Crafts period, from about 1880 to 1930, popular perceptions of Native Americans and their basketry emphasized pristine cultures prior to the effects of contact with Europeans. Pasadena basketry collector and dealer Grace Nicholson used an ethnographic approach, along with mass-marketing, when selling Native Northwestern California baskets in order to cater to Arts and Crafts period collectors' expectations of traditional Indian baskets. In addition, Nicholson expanded her collecting methods to include documenting individual weavers in the field, though she rarely used this documentation as a sales strategy. Before Nicholson began traveling and collecting baskets directly from Native American weavers in Northwestern California, basketry from this region was almost always collected or sold as the work of an anonymous weaver. This approach -- what I refer to as the ethnographic paradigm in the dissertation -- featured the traditional, pre-contact context of the basketry, but not the documentation of individual innovation. Grace Nicholson started a new paradigm or model for collecting Native Northwestern California basketry through her select documentation of individual artists. Nicholson's documentation of Elizabeth Hickox, master weaver of Northwestern California baskets during the Arts and Crafts period, has been thoroughly addressed in Art Historical scholarship. I argue that Nicholson also recorded information about other Northwestern California weavers from Hickox's generation, such as Yurok weaver Nellie Cooper. In this dissertation, I demonstrate that the Nicholson archival collection, along with other important archival sources, can be used by researchers to help identify lesser-known Northwestern California weavers from the turn of the 20th century today.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Dissertation

Basketry of the Native American peoples of California is renowned throughout the world as both aesthetically pleasing and technically fine. Perhaps because of this level of achievement in weaving, basketry of Native California has been a topic of extensive research, especially in the fields of anthropology, and in recent decades, art history.¹ Despite the large historiography of the subject and of the region, I chose to study the basketry of Northwestern California for my doctoral dissertation because, in addition to finding the basketry so beautiful, I found it to be an intriguing example of artistic innovation of Native American artists in response to non-Native patronage of the Arts and Crafts period, 1880 to about 1930. The Arts and Crafts Movement in America was characterized by an appreciation for hand-crafted works and a nostalgic view of the pre-industrial past. Attracted to romantic stereotypes of Native Americans and their art, followers of the movement desired to purchase Native American baskets for their homes. As early as the 1930s, scholars have analyzed the changes in basketry from this region due to non-Native market influences.² In general, however, detailed study of the cross-cultural patronage relationships for the region, has just begun.

This dissertation addresses these patronage relationships and the different models or paradigms used when collecting and writing about Northwestern California baskets. I discuss a number of different collectors from the region spanning the 19th century into the mid-20th century. I focus mainly upon the collecting practices of Grace Nicholson, the most important and influential collector and dealer of Northwestern California baskets during the Arts and Crafts period. From 1902 until

the 1940s, Nicholson ran a successful business marketing Native American baskets in Pasadena, California, where she was an active participant in the Arts and Crafts Movement. She was the first non-Native collector to record individual weavers' names when purchasing, and occasionally selling, these baskets. This change in her collecting methods marked the beginning of an important shift in how baskets would be received and appreciated. Acknowledgement of the individual artist would remain largely insignificant, despite Nicholson's attempts to promote certain weavers, throughout the Arts and Crafts period. By the end of the 20th century, such acknowledgement had become a primary focus of most literature on basketry and Nicholson's records have since become the subject of further study.

Throughout the dissertation, I refer to paradigms of collecting: approaches non-Native collectors have used in assessing the value of the basket, what information they chose to record, and what factors contributed to purchasing the piece. From the earliest stages of basketry collecting in Northwestern California (and elsewhere in North America), the dominant approach was to collect baskets that best illustrated traditional, pre-contact daily and ceremonial life, as well as the diversity of cultural practices of California Indians, such as acorn gathering, processing, and cooking. I refer to this approach as "the ethnographic paradigm." This paradigm has been, and continues to be, most useful in understanding the high level of technical skill of basket-weaving and the close integration of basketry in traditional Northwestern California Native life.

The ethnographic paradigm continued throughout the 20th century and is still evident in recent publications, as I discuss in Chapter 3. Considering the recent

interest in identifying weavers and their creative output, the limitations of this paradigm are obvious. As the function of the basket is explained, the creator often remains anonymous. Despite the fact that literature of the Arts and Crafts period celebrated the creativity of the woman weaver, the individual artist remained a romantic reflection of the Indian past, not a living, recognized individual. As saleswoman to Arts and Crafts period clientele, Nicholson catered to this romantic notion of the Indian artist and to the ethnographic approach to baskets. As I demonstrate in Chapter 6, however, her records and methods for collecting baskets changed after 1906, as she traveled and established patron relationships with individual weavers. She began documenting who created certain baskets and from whom she purchased them.

I refer to Nicholson's new method of collecting as the "individual artist paradigm." This paradigm is not necessarily separate or distinct from the ethnographic approach. Individual weavers often had great knowledge of basketry traditions and traditional culture, and Nicholson often recorded such information from her Indian friends. In comparison to the other principal non-Native collectors and dealers in the region I discuss in Chapter 5, Nicholson seems to have been the only one actively to take an interest in documenting weavers' names. Nicholson never had much success using the individual artist paradigm as a means of selling her baskets, even with the extraordinary collection of Elizabeth Hickox's baskets. Hickox is the most well-known Northwestern California weaver from the Arts and Crafts period primarily because Nicholson collected and documented over seventy of her baskets. Nicholson's diaries, ledger, and other documents serve as evidence of the beginnings

of the individual artist paradigm. In addition to documenting Hickox's basketry, they also provide clues for identifying a generation of weavers born in the 1870s and 1880s that remain difficult to identify today.

Within the last ten years, in publications addressing Northwestern California basketry, authors have turned more and more to the need to identify individual basket weavers. The logical resource for finding out about these individuals is interviewing their families and friends. Using this method, much progress has been made in recognizing weavers of the early 20th century and their legacy. I discuss this recent literature in Chapter 3, when I show the change in historiography of the basketry in more depth. However, authors are rarely able to include weavers born before the 1890s. The generation of Northwestern California weavers who were adult women during the time of Nicholson's travels have been almost entirely ignored in recent publications. Oral history collected from the region is limited in understanding this generation. As a result, Grace Nicholson's documents, as well as anthropologist Lila M. O'Neale's field notes and other archival sources, can serve as resources in reconstructing the biographies and the work of this early generation of individual weavers. I demonstrate this potential use of the Nicholson materials in Chapter 6. Although not copious, information can be combined with other sources to aid in the reconstruction. Nicholson's expansion in methods to include the individual artist paradigm has made future research into the lives of lesser-known weavers possible.

Grace Nicholson's interest in the individual weaver made her a forerunner of the common approach used today by writers on California Native basketry. Although she identified a number of weavers' baskets, Nicholson spent the latter part of her

basketry career trying to sell her collection of Elizabeth Hickox's work. Hickox (1872-1947), who was of Wiyot and German descent, lived in Karuk country and largely worked in a style of basketry characteristic of Northwestern California. Hickox's basketry, however, differs from that of others in the region in a number of significant ways, due both to Hickox's high level of technical skill and to her innovative approaches to the art. This dissertation will not address Hickox's work as it has been thoroughly addressed elsewhere. I introduce these sources in Chapters 2 and 3.

It is important to mention Nicholson's patron relationship to Elizabeth Hickox because it has resulted in the omnipresence of Hickox's work in museum exhibitions and basketry literature from outside of the region of Northwestern California *at the expense of* other weavers in her generation. As sole patron of Hickox's weaving, Nicholson removed the majority of Elizabeth Hickox's baskets from the local area. This, of course, has been a source of deep regret for local weavers. But it has also resulted in the dominance of Hickox's style as "Karuk style" within the larger field of Native American art studies. This fact is somewhat ironic considering that the high level of Hickox's weaving resulted in her style of basketry being unique in comparison to other basketry from the area.

Elizabeth Hickox is the most famous and well-publicized weaver of Northwestern California because of her skills as a master weaver. The extent to which her style has been used to exemplify Karuk weaving, or Northwestern California weaving in general, is at least partially due to the extent to which her basketry left Northwestern California through Grace Nicholson as dealer. I argue that this is one of

the negative results of Nicholson's adopting the individual artist paradigm. It is certainly useful to recognize Elizabeth Hickox's unique contribution to the art of basketry and to better understand her biography. The dominance of her work in major museum displays, however, such as the 1994 Customs House exhibition for the Smithsonian's new National Museum of the American Indian in New York, has colored or distorted popular perceptions of Northwestern California basketry. Rather than presenting a typical selection of Northwestern California basket styles, an emphasis upon Hickox's work supports her distinctive style as characteristic of the region.

Grace Nicholson not only acknowledged Hickox's skill, but ensured that others, in particular museum professionals, would also recognize her individual pieces. I argue that this phenomenon of Hickox's dominance in popular perceptions of Northwestern California basketry can be changed by reevaluating Nicholson's documents. I demonstrate that Nicholson did record the baskets of other weavers and that her diaries and correspondence can provide information about lesser-known weavers from Hickox's generation, such as Yurok weaver Nellie Cooper (1875-1947). As recent basketry literature addresses individual contributions of weavers in more depth, researchers can reassess the basketry history from Elizabeth Hickox's generation to be more inclusive of other weavers' styles. This type of work, using methods I suggest in Chapter 6, can be used in the future to broaden the foundation of recognized weavers from the generation prior to those artists coming to the forefront in recent basketry literature.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the methods I used in researching and writing the dissertation. I review the various approaches scholars have taken recently in basketry studies. Some of these approaches were difficult to apply to a study of the lesser-known weavers I was attempting to identify. I write about my shift of focus from researching primarily baskets in museum collections to archival materials, such as the Nicholson documents at the Huntington Library. Chapter 3 describes the Native Americans of Northwestern California and their basketry, providing an overview of ethnography and history. It also introduces the historiography of the Native Americans of the region and of the basketry, showing the emphasis upon the ethnographic approach in early literature and the development of interest in the individual weaver.

Chapter 4 moves to a discussion of the Arts and Crafts Movement in California. For this chapter, I researched periodical literature from the early 20th century, especially *The Craftsman*. I used this literature, along with secondary sources on the Arts and Crafts, to address the popular interests in baskets during the movement. I discuss how baskets were made into mythic creations that reflected stereotypes of Native Americans and their art popular in the early 1900s. The romantic appeal of baskets resulted in the promotion of the ethnographic paradigm in collecting and writing about Native American basketry. In Chapter 5, I trace the history of basketry collecting in the region of Northwestern California through original archival research I conducted in the area. I explore the various ways baskets were collected and marketed, such as the mass-marketing methods of the A. Brizard

Company. I discuss how patron relationships were established by merchants and other collectors working locally in the region.

This leads to Chapter 6, which focuses upon the collector and dealer Grace Nicholson and how she both continued the marketing methods of the local Northwestern California dealers and explored new strategies including the documentation of individual weavers. I based this chapter upon original archival research I did at the Huntington Library, the Bancroft Library, and the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology. I suggest how textual data, such as the archival materials at the Huntington and the Bancroft, can be used to help identify the style and biography of lesser-known weavers from Northwestern California. I hope these suggestions for methods of research will contribute to more studies in the future into the lives and work of a past generation of weavers who remain unidentified today. Though slim, such evidence can help to expand the art history of the region. Chapter 7 offers a summary and a conclusion.

The main objective in the dissertation is to show how and why Nicholson implemented a new approach, the individual artist paradigm, into her collecting practices and how her use of this paradigm can contribute to recent methodology concerned with identifying the individual weaver of earlier times. I argue that Grace Nicholson developed market strategies beyond the typical approaches of the period. I conclude that Nicholson's technique of establishing patron relationships in the Klamath River region extended well beyond her relationship with the well-known and published artist Elizabeth Hickox. By repeatedly visiting northwestern California in the early 1900s, Nicholson built a whole network of connections with weavers and

other local residents that changed the face of collection history in the region and contributed to some changes in the reception of the baskets.

¹ In Chapter 3, I discuss the historiography of Northwestern California basketry in depth. Sources addressing basketry in the context of the Arts and Crafts period are included in Chapter 4.

² See discussion of Lila O'Neale's fieldwork in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Methods Explored in the Research Process and Writing of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I will explain the original proposal for the dissertation and discuss subsequent changes and current objectives. Certain scholars and their methods of researching and writing about Native American basketry affected the development of the dissertation and contributed to my reworking of the initial proposal. I will discuss methods that were models for me at various stages of my research and writing of the dissertation. Although I include a section on historiography in the next chapter, I mention briefly these methods of analysis because they directly affected how the thesis of the dissertation developed and changed. Though I see the value of these approaches to the study of basketry, I found some of them difficult to apply to the collections chosen initially for this study and to the available resources for Northwestern California basketry from 1880 to 1930. Below I outline the initial proposal, problems encountered with this proposal, other methods considered at various stages of research, and the shape of the final thesis and revised objectives.

In retrospect, my initial dissertation proposal was too broad and lacked focus towards a specific thesis statement. I had proposed visits to study and photograph several major museum collections in various parts of the country, which simply was not practical in terms of funding.¹ After documenting collections in the San Francisco Bay area, such as the John Daggett collection at Stanford University and the Oakland Museum, I realized my problem. The scope of my proposal, including the coverage of these major collections, was not going to result in the clear, stylistic chronology of basketry changes during the Arts and Crafts period that I had anticipated.

My idea of establishing a chronology was based upon my study of two articles by Dorothy Washburn: "Dealers and Collectors of Indian Baskets At the Turn of the Century in California: Their Effect On the Ethnographic Sample" (1984) and "Symmetry Analysis of Yurok, Karok, and Hupa Indian Basket Designs" (1986), both published in *Empirical Studies of the Arts*. In these two articles, Washburn analyzed changes in design structure and, to a lesser extent, basketry form, in Northwestern California basketry in response to the non-Native market during the Arts and Crafts period.² Washburn applied "symmetry analysis," which involves analyzing changes and continuities in arrangement of motifs on a basket. In other words, it describes design structure, the way design elements are arranged and consistently used.³

One of Washburn's principal objectives in the study was to establish a means to differentiate between baskets created in a pre-contact style and form (prior to outside market influences or made for indigenous use) and those created for the non-Native market. She noted that most baskets in anthropological collections, such as those of the Phoebe Hearst Museum at the University of California, Berkeley, were collected during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a postcontact period of transition from basketry made for indigenous use to basketry made for sale to non-Native consumers. On a superficial level, much of this basketry appears "traditional,"⁴ since the weavers were responding to collectors' desires for authentic, pre-contact basketry. In actuality, Washburn argued, differences can be noted in stylistic analysis between baskets made for Native use and baskets made for non-Native collectors.

In order to establish a context for her “symmetry” and stylistic analysis, Washburn set up a general chronology of changes in four phases. Since these four phases date to the period after contact with Europeans has taken place, the chronology does not account for earlier changes in baskets, though certainly change did take place prior to European contact. They mark changes that resulted from responses to the Euro-American market for baskets. Because this chronology was an important foundation and inspiration for my initial dissertation proposal, I will briefly outline it here and discuss problems I encountered implementing it.

According to Washburn, the first phase of change in basketry after contact began in the late 1800s. In fact, this is not a stage of “change,” but the initial period of extensive non-Native collecting of traditional, old baskets (baskets made for Native use, not for sale).⁵ I found this phase to be correct in a general sense, but not fully accurate when actually studying individual collections. For example, the John Daggett collection mentioned above and discussed in Chapter 5, much of which dates to this early first phase of collecting, represents what I found to be true of all the basketry collections I studied. The collection was a blend of both baskets made for Native use (and other ethnographic objects) and baskets showing stylistic change as if they had been made for sale. I determined this by studying acquisition records, such as those from the Daggett collection at Stanford University, and by observing the types of baskets Daggett collected. In general, collections dating from the late 19th century tend to include more old, traditional baskets, probably because they were more readily available to collectors at that time. Baskets made clearly in response to the new, non-Native market, however, do appear in collections during this first phase.

Washburn did not give specific dates for subsequent phases. The second phase discussed is made up of baskets that resemble forms found in non-Native culture, such as teacups or bottles. Weavers created these to try to cater to non-Native, Victorian taste. According to Washburn, these baskets were not well received by the dealers since they did not reflect the traditional art form. They are, however, fairly numerous in basket collections. The third phase is characterized by the extensive interest in collecting referred to as the “basketry craze.”⁶ At the turn of the century, this phase featured a rush of basket purchasing in which buyers sought out traditional baskets, especially older pieces from the 19th century. Washburn noted, however, that all types of basketry collecting flourished. Finally, in the fourth phase, weavers responded to the desire for traditional forms by abandoning the second phase curio forms and creating what they saw the buyers wanted in a traditional form. This new, traditional form, what Washburn called “transformed traditional,” was the subject of much of her stylistic analysis.⁷

When I planned my initial proposal, one objective of the dissertation was to apply Washburn’s chronology to a number of important collections of Northwestern California basketry not included in Washburn’s earlier studies. I anticipated expanding upon her suggested framework. I also hoped to arrive at some conclusions about these phases and possibly the dating of some aspects of basket style and form. In addition to finding phase one problematic, I also quickly found out that phases two, three, and four were not as uniform as I imagined. For example, phase four collections are usually as eclectic or more than those of phase one. Washburn did not

offer her suggestions for specific dating of these phases, though she did place them during or before the 1920s.⁸

Collections that I studied from the early 20th century included both old, traditional use baskets and baskets that obviously displayed changes for the non-Native market. In addition, some early 20th-century collections (“phase four”) clearly showed an interest in curio forms, baskets made for sale and in Victorian forms, as well as older indigenous basketry forms and styles.⁹

Though these four phases help to create a chronological and historical context for Washburn’s stylistic analysis, I concluded that they were too nebulous and artificial to apply to my research as I had proposed. Washburn’s overall conclusions from these two articles are still intriguing in that they help make the reader aware of the subtle as well as obvious changes that were taking place in basketry style during the Arts and Crafts period. Rather than pursuing Washburn’s chronology through the stylistic analysis of various basket collections, I decided to build upon the collections I had been able to document and to continue with another important part of my initial dissertation proposal, the use of textual data. This entailed extensive review of archival materials in California. These materials were studied in order to describe the historical context and to assess the influence of patronage and the establishment of patronage relationships of private collectors and commercial dealers and their impact upon Northwestern California weavers. I had originally chosen four case studies as a focus for my archival research.¹⁰

After assessing the available material in archival, museum and library collections, however, I found it more useful to expand beyond case studies and pursue

a broader perspective. This research supports the overall thesis of the dissertation regarding various paradigms of collecting and is presented in Chapter 5. While I was working on this component of the dissertation, I learned of the importance of the Grace Nicholson materials at The Huntington Library in San Marino.

I had included the Grace Nicholson materials in my initial proposal, though she was not one of my original four case studies. I knew that the Nicholson materials had been used extensively by basketry scholars Marvin Cohodas and Sally McLendon, and that they were a great resource for addressing Elizabeth Hickox. After personal conversations with Sally McLendon, Sherrie Smith-Ferri, and Joan Berman, I realized the potential of the Nicholson materials to provide a wealth of information about my topic and about weavers from the area, in general, not just Hickox. At this point, I applied for and received funding to research the Grace Nicholson collection for a month through the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation fellowship, at The Huntington Library. This research is presented in Chapter 6.

I had hoped that the Nicholson materials would provide needed information for the Chapter 4 I had designed in my initial proposal. I had proposed that Chapter 4 would consist of biographical sketches of important early weavers, their work, and style. Unfortunately, the Nicholson materials contained little detailed information about the lives or work of specific artists. It did contain enough brief references to lesser-known weavers for me to combine information from her documents and other archival materials, in particular Lila O'Neale's fieldnotes (1929) and the California Indian Census (1928). I was able to begin to reconstruct the art history of the basketry

and weavers of Elizabeth Hickox's generation; I include the weaver, Nellie Cooper, in Chapter 6, as an example of this work.

References to Klamath River weavers and to Nicholson's relationship to them as both patron and friend revealed insights into Nicholson's business that went beyond the conclusions of other scholars, such as Marvin Cohodas, on the relationship of Nicholson and the Hickoxes (see Chapter 3). The Nicholson materials remain a remarkable source for understanding her role as patron and dealer, as well as her perception of herself in this role and as an ethnographer of sorts. In addition, the Nicholson materials include valuable information about the Lower Klamath River region and the marketing of basketry during the Arts and Crafts period. Most relevant for this dissertation, they represent the extent to which Nicholson initiated the individual artist paradigm in collecting Northwestern California baskets and how her work can contribute to the use of this paradigm in basketry scholarship today.

When researching the lives and work of individual weavers in the Nicholson collection, I attempted to base my research methods on models Sally McLendon discussed in "Preparing Museum Collections for Use as Primary Data in Ethnographic Research" (1981). McLendon's article is a seminal work establishing the potential to identify baskets and other ethnographic materials through the use of photographs, correspondence, and other archival materials. McLendon showed how such data can be used to further document museum collections by suggesting possible uses for the objects or by identifying original owners or makers of the objects. Her examples included important Pomo artists Joseppa Dick and Mary Benson, whose baskets she identified through photographs. She also used the collector John

Hudson's catalogue in conjunction with the photographs to date the baskets. She continued by describing the untapped potential of the Grace Nicholson materials available at the Huntington Library and the Nicholson ledger of baskets at the Phoebe Hearst Museum.

I encountered limitations in applying McLendon's models for research of my topic. I was attempting to document lesser-known weavers, however, whose work was less thoroughly noted in the Nicholson ledger and whose correspondence, for the most part, was sparse. References were fewer and less detailed in Nicholson's diaries. I found that what McLendon and Cohodas had done to document weavers like Mary Benson and Elizabeth Hickox was complicated in my case by the lack of evidence available. Yet, traces of these lesser-known weavers are present throughout the Nicholson diaries and records, albeit in small amounts. These references do show that Nicholson's marketing strategies extended beyond the documentation of one master artist. I hope in my future research to identify a collection of works by some of these lesser-known weavers, such as Nellie Cooper and Julia Jones, Yurok artists discussed in Chapter 6 and supported by Nicholson's patronage.

In "Preparing Museum Collections for Use as Primary Data in Ethnographic Research," McLendon discussed another problem I encountered in implementing her methods:

...there is little certainty of success if one starts from a particular specimen, no matter how beautiful or important. One can, however, start from the documentation with consistently rewarding results, particularly if the documentation consists of photographs that associate people with objects, or records that associated objects with numbers and/or images.

Next most important is that one needs a strong visual memory, and/or access to as many other people with strong visual memories...as possible.¹¹

I began with the Nicholson photographs and written sources, but found it impossible in the limited period of dissertation research to access the baskets, which were sold by Nicholson to various collectors and eventually to museum collections across the country. A strong visual memory is certainly needed when trying to locate and identify the extensive number of baskets of the collecting career of Grace Nicholson! The Grace Nicholson ledger of baskets includes clear illustrations of specific baskets by Elizabeth Hickox. This is of great assistance to identifying Hickox's baskets in museum collections. On the other hand, illustrations of the baskets of lesser-known weavers, such as Cooper and Jones, are less detailed, are much fewer in number, or simply do not exist in the ledger. The methods developed by McLendon were impractical for the scope of this dissertation. I hope that opportunities will develop out of my research of the Grace Nicholson collection at the Huntington Library as I get more chances to explore museum collections after the completion of the dissertation. What I was able to do in Chapter 6 is show how Nicholson's material can complement other sources in order to reconstruct some background information about lesser-known weavers. This information can then be combined with a few examples of documented baskets by these weavers in museums to build a more complete art-historical picture of this era of basketry production.

Another author who suggested a method useful for determining individual weavers' styles in basketry was Andrea Laforet. In her article, "Regional and Personal Style in Northwest Coast Basketry" (1990), Laforet explained how aspects

of style and technique in basketry can be seen as vocabulary dictating the characteristics of tribal or community style. She pointed out that additional distinctions in style or technique, beyond what was recognized as community-based, allow a scholar to identify individual style. She noted that the extent to which an individual weaver's basketry *departs* from the standard of the tribe or community increases the possibility of distinguishing that weaver's work.¹²

Like McLendon, Laforet chose to use a well-known weaver, the Haida artist Isabella Edenshaw, to demonstrate her methodological approach.¹³ Laforet's model of research requires a recognized corpus of work by a particular weaver in order to determine the salient features of her style and to attribute more baskets to the artist. In addition, by choosing a widely recognized weaver, like Isabella Edenshaw, Laforet could obtain biographical information quite readily, in contrast to lesser-known artists. These aspects of Laforet's model remind me of the limitations of McLendon's methods, which require easy access to museum collections on a continual basis. These two approaches are much harder to apply when trying to identify lesser-known artists for whom a corpus of identified work does not exist.

Laforet's point about the weaver's style being easier to identify the more the weaver deviates from the norm of style for her community is easily exemplified in the case of Elizabeth Hickox and Northwestern California basketry. Hickox's unique style has been thoroughly documented and celebrated in publications, while other weavers working in a more typical Northwestern California basketry style have been ignored. This helps to illustrate the limitations of Laforet's model of research for my dissertation research. In Chapter 3, I introduce the indigenous peoples of this region

and note the overall conformity of basketry style between Yurok, Hupa, Karok, and neighboring groups. Owing to lack of documentation or the limitations of available resources, it was difficult for me to document a corpus of work by one of the lesser-known weavers at the turn of the century.

If such a corpus can be identified in the future, perhaps more attributions of basketry from Northwestern California can be made. Certain salient features or distinct aspects of style can be noted in the work of Northwestern California weavers. When I discuss the weaver Nellie Cooper in Chapter 6, I mention aspects of her style and preferences for motifs that can be determined through sources other than the baskets themselves, such as oral history or archival materials like anthropologist Lila M. O'Neale's interviews with Northwestern California weavers from 1929. I was able to assess some stylistic attributes of Cooper's basketry by reading her and other weavers' comments to O'Neale recorded during the interviews. I discuss O'Neale's interviews in more depth in the next chapter. However, without a fairly large recognized body of Cooper's work, an accurate list of stylistic attributes is difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

Scholars who have worked with the basketry of Elizabeth Hickox, such as Marvin Cohodas, Ron Johnson, and Coleen Kelley Marks, have been fortunate to have a large body of the weaver's work as well as her strong, individual style which deviates much in technique and appearance from typical Northwestern California work. Laforet's model is easy to apply to Elizabeth Hickox's work, and much work has been done to identify her style.¹⁴ Hickox, however, is a unique artist of Northwestern California. Again, like McLendon's work, Laforet's suggestions for

methods to the study of individual style in basketry are intriguing and hold much potential for successful attributions. However, a strong body of evidence including a corpus of identified work is needed. It has practical limitations to the extent it can be applied to most of the Northwestern California weavers working at the turn of the 20th century. Laforet's approach also seems biased towards valuing unique work and individuality, at the expense of acknowledging other weavers or basketry of the period, which though also distinctive, conform more to the basketry standards of the culture. In this dissertation, I address some of these methodological challenges by showing how textual data gleaned from archival sources such as the Nicholson collection can be used to help recognize lesser-known weavers whose work largely remains unidentified today.

More success has been achieved in recognizing individual weaving styles from the generation of artists born after Elizabeth Hickox and for those working during the later years of the Arts and Crafts period. More weavers can be identified through a corpus of work, whether in museum collections or private ownership, and more biographical evidence is available through the weavers' family, friends, and the Native American communities of today. The recent publications of Ron Johnson, Coleen Kelley Marks, Brian Bibby, and Larry Dalrymple discussed in Chapter 3 are excellent examples of groundbreaking work in the art history of this generation following the Arts and Crafts period.¹⁵ However, I anticipate the focus of this dissertation will contribute to further investigation into the Nicholson documents along with other archival materials as potential avenues of research into the lives of lesser-known weavers of earlier generations.

Unfortunately, as I discovered through my research attempts in the area, lesser-known Northwestern California weavers working at the turn of the 20th century are much more difficult, and in many cases impossible, to document through oral history projects with the Native American community of the region. Due to this situation and the difficulties I encountered when trying to use the Nicholson collection and other archival materials to document individual weavers' baskets, I chose to focus my dissertation upon the cross-cultural encounter between dealer/patron and weaver rather than solely upon basketry attribution.

The validity of this dissertation is supported by the fact that it contributes to a growing historiography of art history regarding collecting practices, the impact of patronage and the importance of the recognition of individual Native American artists. Marvin Cohodas's recent text *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* (1997) includes the notion of baskets as "interethnic commodities" defined by the consumers as well as the artists.¹⁶ The success of this approach and Cohodas's study specifically addressing the Hickoxes suggests the value of a similar study of Northwestern California basketry and the Lower Klamath region, in general, as I present in this dissertation. Collectors and dealers of Native American basketry, like Grace Nicholson, redefined the baskets according to the information they recorded, how they chose to promote them, and whether they chose to cater to the desires of their clientele. These redefinitions often resulted in popular perceptions of the basketry, such as the dominance of Elizabeth Hickox's style for the whole region of Northwestern California, as I discussed above. This dissertation addresses Grace Nicholson, as well as other collectors and dealers, in order to

illustrate their paradigms of collecting that have shaped both popular perceptions of Northwestern California baskets and scholarly writing. It also shows how the work of the same collector, Nicholson, can be used to expand beyond these popular perceptions and biases.

In recent decades, historians of Native American art have become interested more and more in the development of their discipline. This self-reflective study has primarily addressed the establishment of major museum collections, the work of anthropologists in the field, and their contributions to museum collecting practices.¹⁷ This has led scholars in even more recent times to address the role of the dealer and private collector in creating both private and museum collections of Native North American art. Principal concerns in these studies are the effect the non-Native market has upon the artist and the resulting artwork, such as in Washburn's articles;¹⁸ and how meaning in Native American art is constructed through collecting practices and the impact of the patron.

In their article "Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-presenting Native American Arts" (1995), Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips summarized the central importance of understanding collecting practices in the current state of Native North American art history in the postcolonial era:

The vast majority of Native American objects in private and public collections is the legacy of the high period of colonialism that lasted from about 1830 to 1930. In the subfield of art history devoted to the arts of Native North America, the most urgent issues surrounding the collecting and display of these objects arise directly from the imperialist histories of their formation.¹⁹

They continued by describing how the dynamics of these imperialist histories and our awareness of their effects contribute to our understanding of Native North American art objects in the era of multiculturalism and pluralism of the late 20th and into the 21st century.

Berlo and Phillips presented a strong case for the study of collection history. The need for a better understanding of cross-cultural interactions between collector/patron and Native artist is paramount today in Native North American art studies. This recent interest in scholarship in the 1990s builds upon a historiographical foundation established in the 1970s as non-Western art history of “tribal” or small-scale communities expanded to include more studies of tourist arts or arts of acculturation. *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World* (1976), an anthology of essays edited by Nelson H.H. Graburn, made a pivotal contribution to this developing historiography.

In his “Introduction: The Arts of the Fourth World,” Graburn argued that “Fourth World arts” or the arts of non-Western societies²⁰ are changing arts (as are all art traditions) and reflect the “emerging ethnicities” of the artists upon contact with “commercial and colonial stimuli” of Western culture.²¹ He noted the importance of considering the changing sociocultural contexts of the art and the relationship between artist/producer and consumer. A unique context is created through the dialogue of artist and consumer, who interact to stimulate the creative process and the eventual meanings given to art works.²² This dissertation contributes to this methodology in Native North American art history originally advocated by Graburn and continuing today through the work of scholars such as Marvin Cohodas, Sherrie

Smith-Ferri, and Molly Lee in basketry studies. It recognizes the importance of the consumer, or in this case, dealer, Grace Nicholson, as constructor of meaning. She consciously chose to identify the baskets by maker as well as by function or tribe.

In “Basket Weavers, Basket Collectors, and the Market: A Case Study of Joseppa Dick” (1993), Sherrie Smith-Ferri applied the methodology described by Graburn through her analysis of the working relationship that existed between the Pomo weaver Joseppa Dick and dealers and collectors of the commercial basket market at the end of the 19th century. Smith-Ferri discussed the dynamics of this cross-cultural interaction, especially how it affected the personal life of Joseppa Dick. Like Smith-Ferri, in Chapters 5 and 6, I use archival research, especially the Nicholson collection, to address the sociocultural context of cross-cultural interaction between Native weavers and non-Native patron/consumers of Northwestern California basketry. I also mention briefly how Nicholson’s practices, such as the purchasing of ceremonial objects, affected the personal lives of weavers and their families.

Even more influential to my reworking of my methodology for this dissertation, in her introduction, “The Human Faces of Pomo Indian Basketry,” in the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology’s reprint edition of Samuel A. Barrett’s *Pomo Indian Basketry* (1996), Sherrie Smith-Ferri demonstrated how archival sources can be combined to identify lesser-known Pomo weavers from the late 19th century. Even though she was not able to identify many baskets by these weavers, she was able to give them some recognition as the artists behind Barrett’s ethnographic study. She complemented this identification of the weavers by introducing the key non-

Native collectors from the Mendocino area as I do for Northwestern California in Chapter 5.

I summarize the historiography of Native American basketry and the commercial market of the Arts and Crafts period in Chapters 3 and 4. I want now to mention the methodology of Molly Lee because her work is based upon another model for researching and writing about basketry I apply in the dissertation. In “Appropriating the Primitive: Turn-of –the-Century Collection and Display of Native Alaskan Art” (1991), Lee argued the need of investigating the recontextualization of Native North American art through the collecting practices of tourists in Alaska. She analyzed how the appropriation of Native art by non-Native collectors into Victorian, and later Arts and Crafts, homes resulted in transformation of the meanings of the art and definitions of authenticity.²³ She used as evidence Arts and Crafts period literature, especially journal articles. I also use similar periodical literature in Chapter 4. Lee’s approach addressed Western perceptions of Native peoples and their art rather than the interaction of weaver and consumer. She studied the basketry and its interpretation after the art had been purchased and was no longer a part of the weaver’s domain. This recontextualization within the turn-of-the-century American home, in turn, influenced market strategies of dealers and the interaction between collectors and weavers. It also raises interesting questions regarding meaning and authenticity in art after it leaves the hands of the artist.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I consider how non-Native followers of the Arts and Crafts ideology, especially collectors and dealers catering to Arts and Crafts sensibilities, recontextualized Northwestern California baskets. This

recontextualization process resulted in a paradox. Non-Native collectors and dealers of Northwestern California basketry argued for the preservation of traditional basketry and culture in their writings when, in actuality, the process caused considerable change in both the creation of basketry and its economic role in the lives of the weavers. Despite the changes taking place in Native American basketry, collectors and dealers continued to promote and pursue the art through the ethnographic paradigm, which supported tradition at the expense of innovation and anonymity at the expense of recognizing the weaver.

This point regarding the maintenance of the ethnographic paradigm through the recontextualization of the baskets by the Arts and Crafts collector is central to the thesis of this dissertation. Although Nicholson through her collecting methods had expanded beyond the ethnographic paradigm to recognizing individual weavers, she failed to establish this new paradigm because of current market demands. In addition to supporting my thesis, an analysis of this recontextualization is integral to understanding the sociocultural context of cross-cultural interaction, in general, between Native artist, dealer and consumer of turn-of-the-century basketry.

My approach to the dissertation topic builds upon these methods. I use these methodologies to understand better the complexity of meanings of Native American baskets and the sociocultural factors that contributed to the construction of these meanings at the turn of the 20th century and how they are carried through in basketry literature and museum exhibitions today. I argue that there are two dominant paradigms used in collecting and writing about Native Northwestern California basketry: the ethnographic and the recognition of the individual artist. Both are valid

and useful approaches. Unfortunately, due to the popularity of the ethnographic approach during the Arts and Crafts period, much of the initial potential of the individual artist paradigm started by Grace Nicholson remained untapped. As literature on basketry changes to include the recognition of more individual weavers, the contribution of Grace Nicholson and the potential of her documents as source materials need to be readdressed.

In our current postcolonial and postmodern age, this dissertation makes a valid contribution to literature that addresses and questions how we define meaning and authenticity in art and the impact of patronage upon interpretations of art and acknowledgement of artists. I recognize, however, that this is a limited perspective in a full appreciation of Northwestern California basketry. In his moving preface to *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox*, Marvin Cohodas discussed a dinner he had with Ron Johnson and Nancy Richardson Riley and Josephine Conrad Lewis, two contemporary Northwestern California weavers. Riley and Lewis felt that Cohodas's initial text misrepresented the Hickoxes' work because it did not include Native perspectives of the basketry, only the context of the curio trade. Cohodas continued by eloquently describing Riley and Lewis' viewpoints on the spiritual context of the baskets and the close connection of basketry materials to the weavers and to the changing seasons, the "web of connections" he ignored in the draft of the text.²⁴

Cohodas admitted to leaving Native perspectives out of his study because he himself is not Native American. However, he humbly acknowledged Riley and Lewis' points in a manner of respect.²⁵ Like Cohodas, I do not claim intimate

knowledge of contemporary Native American viewpoints on basketry as I am not of Native American descent. As a key component of a comprehensive understanding of Northwestern California basketry, the wealth of knowledge shared by Native American scholars and artists form a lasting legacy for the endurance of the art today. While conducting my research in Northwestern California, I consulted members of the Native American communities and found them to be supportive, encouraging and most knowledgeable. Because of the early date of the subject of this study, however, very little, if any, detailed information remains in the oral history from the region. As a result, I do not use first-hand interviews with Native American elders, though I do use published accounts, such as anthropologist Lila O'Neale's interviews with Northwestern California weavers from 1929. Though these Native perspectives do not play a major role in supporting the thesis of this dissertation, I can not overestimate the value of them. I recognize their importance in Chapter 3.

This dissertation may complement Native American perspectives by helping the reader to realize the complexity of meaning created by both artist and patron/consumer of Native American art of the Arts and Crafts period. Meaning created by patron or consumer often determined whether important information, such as the artist's name, was attached to an object when purchased. Reconsidering how meaning was constructed and how non-Native patrons played a role in these constructions of meaning may give clues to how basketry can be identified or better understood today. This is not meant to undervalue Native artistic innovation and creativity. This dissertation, I hope, will contribute to a better awareness of how Native North American art can be reinterpreted and recontextualized today. Perhaps

this may reveal the power of such recontextualizations to influence how we see contemporary Native American art and the artists who produce it in the new millennium.

¹ These museums included the Bowers Museum, Santa Ana, the Arizona State Museum, Tucson, the Heard Museum, Phoenix, the Denver Art Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC and the Heye Collection, National Museum of the American Indian.

² Dorothy Washburn, "Symmetry Analysis of Yurok, Karok, and Hupa Indian Basket Designs," *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, Vol. 4(1), 1986: 19.

³ *Ibid*, 20-21.

⁴ I use the term, "traditional," here to imply basketry made prior to the introduction of the European market. The term, "traditional," is problematic. All Native American art incorporates some aspect of "tradition" as well as innovation and change. The term "traditional culture" implies that the pre-contact past was static and unchanging. I choose to use the term in this context because it suggests how Arts and Crafts buyers perceived baskets as "traditional," free from White influence.

⁵ *Ibid*, 19.

⁶ Several writers referred to the Arts and Crafts period as the "golden age" of basketry collecting or the period of the "basketry craze." See, for example, John M. Gogol, "1900-1910, The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry," *American Indian Basketry*, Vol. 5 (1), 1985: 12-29.

⁷ The four phases are discussed throughout Dorothy Washburn, "Dealers and Collectors of Indian Baskets at the Turn of the Century in California," *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, Vol. 2(1), 1984:51-74.

⁸ Washburn, "Symmetry Analysis," 44.

⁹ See, for example, the Alice Spinas collection at the College of the Redwoods, Eureka, or the collection at the Phoebe Hearst Museum at the University of California at Berkeley.

¹⁰ These four case studies are the John Daggett collection at Stanford University and Oakland Art Museum, the Alice Spinas collection at the College of the Redwoods, Eureka, the Cecile Clarke collection at the Clarke Memorial Museum, Eureka, and the Alexander Brizard Co., Arcata.

¹¹ Sally McLendon, "Preparing Museum Collections for Use as Primary Data in Ethnographic Research," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 376, 1981: 225.

¹² Andrea Laforet, "Regional and Personal Style in Northwest Coast Basketry," in *The Art of Native American Basketry: A Living Legacy* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1990), 293.

¹³ *Ibid*, 293-296.

¹⁴ See, for example, Ron Johnson, editor, *Baskets from the Center of the World* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1991) and Marvin Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* (Los Angeles: The University of Arizona Press and the Southwest Museum, 1997), 133-142. Johnson's work is based upon interviews with descendants of Elizabeth Hickox and other members of the Native American community of Northwestern California. The extent of oral tradition that exists about the Hickox family is exceptional considering Elizabeth Hickox lived at the turn of the 20th century. Again, this is most likely due to the uniqueness and high quality of her work, which has made her somewhat of a legendary artist of the region.

¹⁵ See, for example, Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, editors, *From Women's Hands: Lena Reed McCovey and Ethel Jones Williams* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1992) and Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, editors, *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1997).

¹⁶ Cohodas, 4.

¹⁷ See, for example, Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985) and Janet C. Berlo, "Introduction: The Formative Years of Native American Art History," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992): 1-21.

¹⁸ See, for example, Shepard Krech III and Barbara A. Hail, *Collecting Native America 1870-1960* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999) and Victoria Wyatt, *Shapes of Their Thoughts: Reflections of Culture Contact in Northwest Coast Indian Art* (New Haven: Peabody Museum of Natural History and University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).

¹⁹ Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, "The Problematics of Collecting and Display, Part 1: Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-Presenting Native American Arts," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. LXXVII (1), 1995: 6-10.

²⁰ The terminology "Fourth World arts" is rarely used in current literature. It refers to non-Western, indigenous, small-scale communities embedded in larger colonial or postcolonial nations.

²¹ Nelson H.H. Graburn, "Introduction," in *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 2.

²² *Ibid*, 4, 30-31.

²³ Molly Lee, "Appropriating the Primitive: Turn-of-the-Century Collection and Display of Native Alaskan Art," *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 28(1), 1991: 6-15.

²⁴ Cohodas, "Preface," xiii-xvi.

²⁵ *Ibid*, xiii.

Chapter 3: The Native Peoples of Northwestern California, the Basketry and the Historiography

The art of Native American basketry from the northwest corner of California is one of the finest basketry traditions worldwide. Despite the large size of this geographic region, the art form is remarkably consistent. A twined basketry, it is marked by largely the same materials, techniques, and style from one tribal group to the next throughout the entire area. Illustration 1 is a photograph of Mrs. Dolly Sanderson, a Karuk weaver, selling her baskets on the Klamath River in the early 1900s. Baskets displayed include storage baskets, trays and a ceremonial cap. Northwest California encompasses four counties: Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity and Siskiyou. In addition, the very southern coastal area of Oregon fits within this Native American culture area.¹ Even though the basketry is indistinguishable in the region, the geography varies from fairly rugged coastal Redwood forest to inland mountainous terrain and forest of oak and Douglas fir. The Klamath River, as well as other smaller tributaries and coastal rivers, forms a central locus for the indigenous cultures. As a result, the area frequently is referred to as the Klamath River region. (Illustrations 2 and 3.)

The Native Americans of Northwestern California

The Native peoples of Northwestern California are as diverse linguistically as the local geography. The three principal tribal groups speak completely unrelated



Illustration 1: Mrs. Dolly Sanderson, Karuk weaver, selling her baskets on the Klamath River, photograph by Grace Nicholson, 1906. Album C, p. 29, #5, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

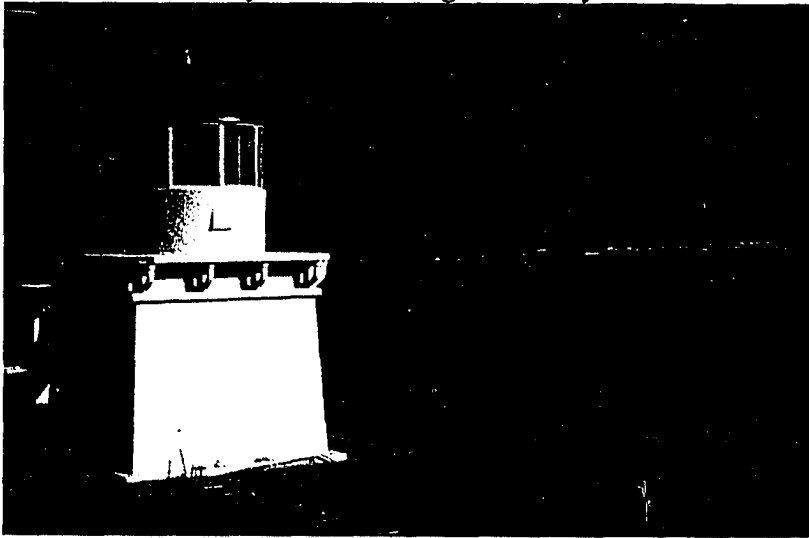


Illustration 2: Trinidad. Photograph by C. Cadge. This shows the rugged coastline of Humboldt County from the town of Trinidad, site of the Yurok village, Tsurai.

languages: the Hupa speak an Athapaskan (Na-Dene) language; the Yurok, an Algonquian language; and the Karuk (also spelled Karok), a language with unclear origins that is part of the Hokan family.² Yurok traditional territory is along the coast and lower portion of the Klamath, while that of the Karuk is in the more inland river areas of the northeast, still considered the Lower Klamath. Their name should not be confused with that of the Klamath people who reside traditionally in Southern Oregon and create basketry of a different style and of different materials. Many Karuk and Yurok people continue to reside in Northwestern California today, some Yurok in rancherias.³ The Hupa tribe, along with many Yurok, are located in the Hoopa Valley, which makes up the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation today. The reservation is divided by the Trinity River, a main tributary of the Klamath River. (See Maps 1 and 2.)

Although the Spanish must have been traveling farther north along the coast at earlier times, the first documented exchange between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of Northwestern California took place in 1775 at the Yurok village of Tsurai, modern-day Trinidad.⁴ (See Illustration 2). Trinidad Bay continued to be the site of 18th-century contact with the British as well as the Spanish. Not until the early 19th century did explorers reach other coastal areas, such as Humboldt Bay and the Yurok village, Requa, and inland regions of the Hoopa valley.⁵ Hudson Bay Company traders were probably the first Europeans to enter Karuk country, further inland. Then, in the mid-19th century, gold miners flooded the region, where they greatly affected Karuk life.⁶ By 1850, the populations of Native California tribes had

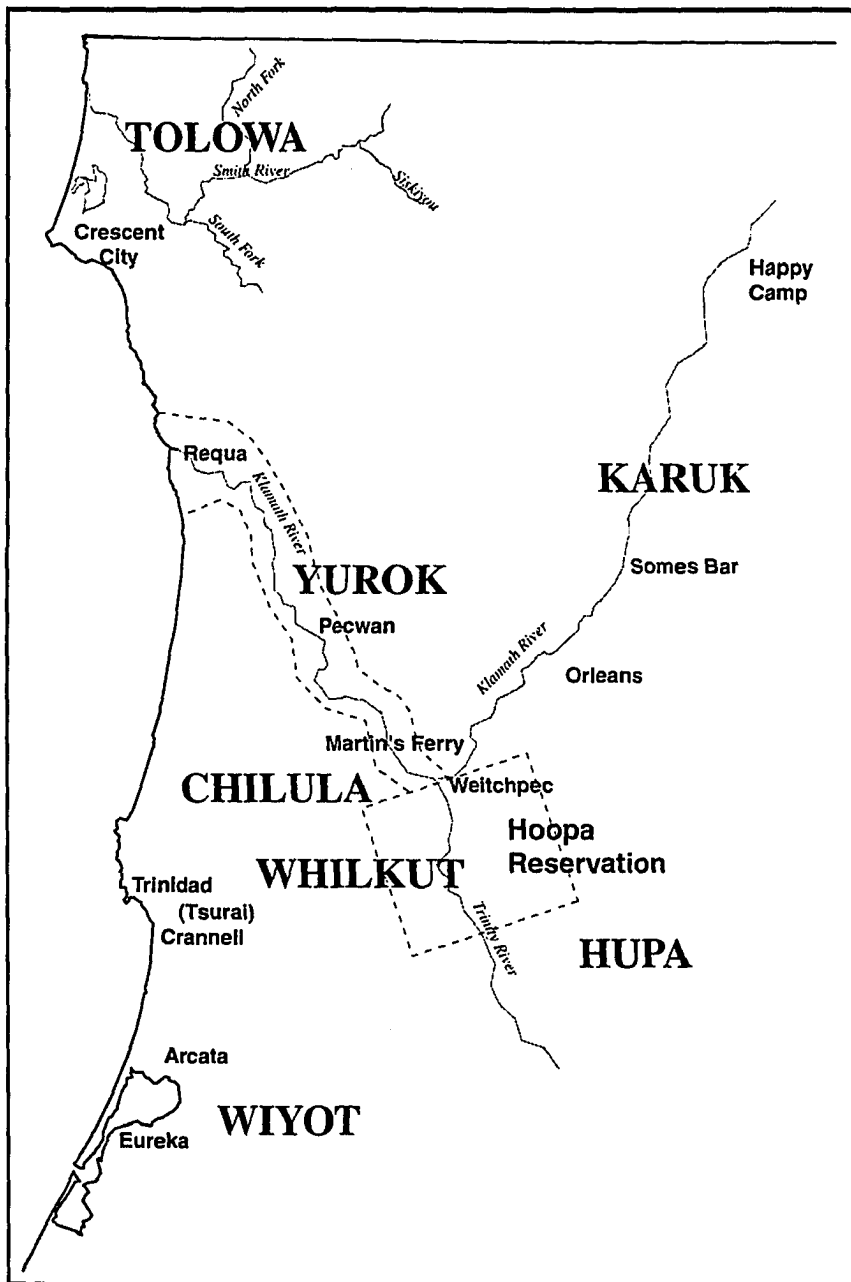
drastically decreased, possibly to as low as a third of the original numbers. This terrible decline continued in the late 19th century, as Native American populations rapidly fell even more due to the gold rush and European settlement. In addition to the effects of introduced diseases, Native Northwestern Californians suffered from enforced labor conditions of slavery and, at times, outright genocide at the hands of Euro-Americans.⁷

Close intertribal relations existed in all parts of Northwestern California from the pre-contact into the post-contact periods. People frequently spoke more than one dialect, and trade was extensive. Intertribal marriage was also common, as well as marriages with white settlers. During the Arts and Crafts period at the turn of the century, these intertribal bonds especially increased because of the summer work in the salmon industry in the Lower Klamath region. Native American employees came to Requa from all over Northwestern California. This is important because the Lower Klamath played a central role for the creation of basketry and for collecting in this period. In more recent decades, ceremonial occasions continue to bring people from different tribal backgrounds together.⁸ As a result, it is not surprising to find such similarities in the basketry and the indigenous lifestyle, as well as contemporary Native Northwestern California culture, from one tribal group to the next.

Because of the close intertribal connections of the region and the shared aspects of culture, I will introduce the indigenous lifestyle and material culture of the Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa collectively.⁹ These peoples based their lives on the rich resources available for subsistence in Northwestern California. Wild fish and game, as well as plant foods, were plentiful. Salmon and acorns provided the principal diet.



Map 1: Counties of Northern California.
Map by Patrick Moore.



Map 2: Native American Tribes of Northwestern California.
Map by Patrick Moore.

Other fish, such as steelhead and sturgeon, were also eaten. Eel was a popular food that is still a common delicacy along the Klamath River today. Fishing gear was complex. The Yurok and Tolowa built large, ocean-going redwood canoes as well as river canoes (Illustration 4).

Though many plants were harvested for use, acorns of the tan oak were by far the most important. Different types of baskets were used to process acorns, from collecting, to leaching, to grinding the meal. For example, baskets were used for cooking acorn soup with hot rocks. It was necessary to stir the soup constantly in order to keep the basket from burning. Many fine, old baskets show burn marks from use. Acorn soup is occasionally made in baskets today, especially for ceremonial occasions.¹⁰

Northwestern California villages were permanent and found along the rivers or the coast, and many Native families live close to the water today. Before the late 19th century, villages were composed of plank houses, where women and children slept, and smaller sweatlodges, used by the men for sleeping and social gatherings. Material culture included extensive woodcarvings for utilitarian purposes and elk antler purses for holding dentalium shell money.¹¹

Certain materials, such as dentalium, or objects, such as dancing regalia or large carved obsidian blades, accrued spiritual power, but also social status for villagers. Northwestern California peoples did not have political organizations, though certain members acquired authority within a village through personal actions or by owning wealth materials. Recent scholars have suggested that earlier writings, such as those by the anthropologist A.L. Kroeber, discussed below, placed too much



Illustration 3: View of the Klamath River today, Del Norte County. Photograph by C. Cadge.



Illustration 4: Johnnie Jack and his family from Weitchpec in a typical Northwestern California canoe, photograph by Grace Nicholson, 1906. Album A, p. 86, #6, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

emphasis on the concept and value of wealth among Native Northwestern California tribes.¹² Malcolm Margolin, in “Wealth and Spirit,” an essay written for an exhibition catalogue, *Indian Regalia of Northwest California* (1994), considered that perhaps Euro-American concepts of wealth have interfered with a true understanding by Euro-American writers of this region’s material wealth. Material objects of value in Northwestern California are spiritual in nature and are meant to be displayed through ceremony.¹³

Ceremonial life in Northwestern California revolves around the renewal and preservation of the earth. Two spiritual events, the Jump Dance and the White Deerskin Dance, take a number of days to complete and vary in date, place, and practice from one tribal group to another. Attempting to describe these ceremonies here would not do them justice, for they are very complex and carry much spiritual power and meaning for the people of this region.¹⁴ Unfortunately, these dances, for the most part, were ended at the turn of the century under the impact of Euro-American culture.

Much revival has taken place in the last three decades, however, and an active ceremonial calendar is in place today. Native Northwestern California mythology and sacred geography are intimately integrated into these ceremonies. Linguists, such as Julian Lang for the Karuk and Loren Bommelyn for the Tolowa, have been instrumental in the renaissance of ceremonial life. Increased interest in preserving and reviving the creation of ceremonial regalia has also occurred in recent years.¹⁵ Although the regalia from this region is remarkable in construction, materials, and

aesthetic beauty, I will discuss only Jump Dance baskets, since references to them in the Nicholson collection relate to the dissertation topic.

Although World Renewal ceremonies are the principal dances, other dances include the Brush Dance for healing a sick child, the Kick Dance for a beginning doctor, and the Flower Dance for girls coming of age.¹⁶ The Brush Dance includes dancing in a large, subterranean dance pit. In the pre-contact period, the dance pit was a dismantled house site. This practice allows the display of the dancers below the spectators, who can see the tops of beautifully decorated basketry caps worn by young women dancers. This is why the tops of basketry caps sometimes include decorations of spiritual wealth objects, such as dentalium and red scalp feathers of the pileated woodpecker. The Flower Dance, which has recently been revived as well, includes a small, specialized basket.

All these basic points about culture, for the most part, apply to the whole region of Northwestern California, which includes smaller, lesser-known tribes. Some aspects of ceremony were less developed, however, and variations in ceremonialism exist. These tribes are: the Wiyot, an Algonquian-speaking people from the Eureka and Humboldt Bay area; the Chilula and Whilkut, two Athapaskan-speaking tribes who occupied the lower Redwood Creek and upper Redwood Creek and middle Mad River areas, respectively; and the Tolowa, an Athapaskan-speaking people from the very northern edge of California and Southern coastal Oregon.

The Wiyot share many aspects of culture with their linguistic relatives, the Yurok. It is generally believed that the Wiyot population numbered less than half that of the Yurok, both before and after contact with Europeans, although this has been

debated.¹⁷ Owing to their location around the Humboldt Bay, the Wiyot population was greatly affected by contact with Euro-Americans. The early 1860s were especially devastating: a massacre of as many as 250 Wiyot people occurred on Gunther Island, near Eureka. The influential weaver Elizabeth Hickox was half Wiyot, and her mother witnessed the massacre at Gunther Island. Others were transferred out of the area to northern reservation land along the Klamath and Smith Rivers.¹⁸ The indigenous population of the Wiyot may have been significantly larger than currently estimated. Contemporary Wiyot weavers Leona Wilkinson and Cheryl Seidner help to revive interest in Wiyot basketry today.¹⁹

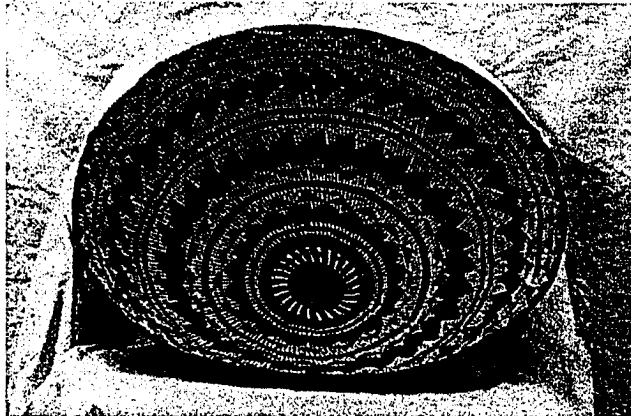
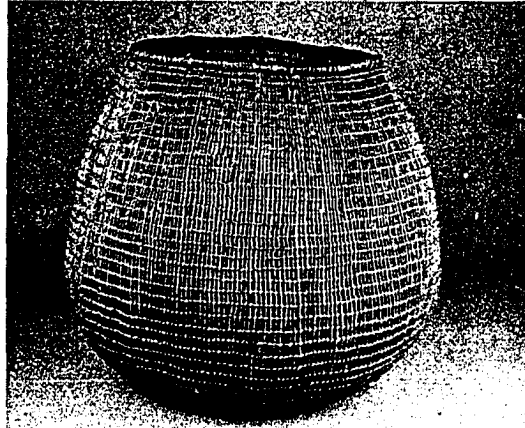
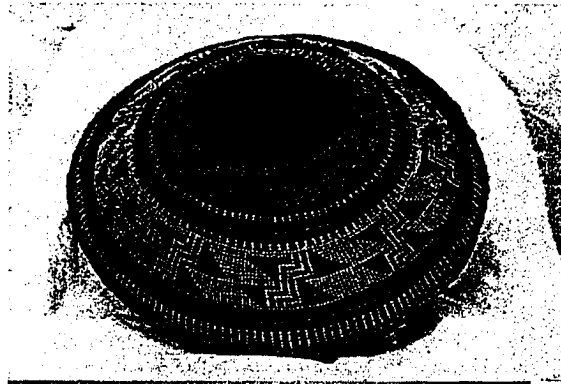
The Chilula and the Whilkut were linguistic relatives of the Hupa, but their populations were much smaller. Like the Wiyot, both tribes suffered terribly through contact with Euro-Americans who ran packtrains through their indigenous territory. Survivors were transported to the Hupa reservation. Some eventually returned, and a few descendants live in their original homeland today.²⁰ Very little ethnographic information exists about these tribes, especially the Whilkut. Both the Chilula and Whilkut cultures differed only slightly from traditional Hupa culture. Some aspects, such as examples of ceremonial paraphernalia, originate from other tribes further south.²¹ Basketry is rarely identified as Chilula or Whilkut in museum collections. Some examples undoubtedly exist, but the two groups' style appears to be almost indistinguishable from other Northwestern California baskets. However, in *American Indian Basketry of Northern California* (1989), many of the baskets identified as Whilkut have full-twist overlay decoration rather than the half-twist that characterizes the large majority of Northwestern California baskets.²² I explain these basketry

techniques in the section on basketry later in the chapter. There are also a few examples of coiled baskets collected from the Whilkut, probably obtained through trade.²³

The Tolowa were and are a much larger Northwestern California group than the Whilkut or Chilula, perhaps close in population at the time of contact to the Yurok or Hupa, who numbered between 2000 and 3000 people each, though scholars disagree.²⁴ They lived in eight villages along the coast at the time of contact in the early 19th century. Tolowa traditional material culture, including basketry, is very similar, if not the same in cases, to that of the Yurok.²⁵ Many examples of Tolowa baskets are documented in museum collections, and archival materials exist.²⁶ Loren and Lena Bommelyn are contemporary Tolowa artists actively working to revive Tolowa ceremonialism. Loren is also an accomplished weaver, as well as a Tolowa linguist, and his basketry is some of the best openwork twining created today.²⁷

The Basketry of Northwestern California

Native American artists from Northwestern California were making utilitarian and ceremonial baskets centuries before the arrival of Europeans. In addition to creating elaborate gift baskets, weavers frequently bartered baskets along with other goods to neighboring groups.²⁸ Baskets played a role in all aspects of life, from ceremonies marking life passages and for spiritual renewal, to all aspects of harvesting and processing foods. (Illustration 5, 6 and 7.) Table A lists basketry materials. In Table B, I provide examples of the many types of baskets and their uses



Illustrations 5,6 and 7: Examples of traditional, pre-contact basketry types. Top: Acorn flour hopper, Middle: Openwork (Open-twined) Burden basket, Bottom: Acorn flour sifter or winnowing tray. Catalogue #1994.8.30, Trinidad Historical Society Museum, H16.186, Courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California, 1994.8.29, Trinidad Historical Society Museum.

Table A: Materials Used in Northwestern California Basketry

Warp materials – shoots or sticks	Common: Hazel , sandbar willow and red willow	Less common: Myrtle, deer brush
Weft material - roots	Conifer root: Yellow and Jeffrey pine, spruce, redwood, willow	Sugar pine, alder, wild grape root, digger pine, cottonwood, Oregon ash
Overlay decoration	Bear grass, red-dyed (with alder bark) woodwardia fern, maidenhair fern	Less common: porcupine quills usually dyed with wolf moss, Oregon grape or Durango root

Adapted from *The Hoover Collection of Karuk Baskets* (Eureka: Clarke Memorial Museum, 1985) and Moser, Christopher, *American Indian Basketry of Northern California* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1989).

Table B: Types and Functions of Northwestern California Baskets

<i>Type of Basket</i>	<i>Weave – All are Twined</i>	<i>Function</i>
Hopper See Illustration 5	Closed – the openwork start is removed to create an open bottom, braided rim, overlay decoration	Grinding acorn meal. Set on grinding stone and mat or shallow basket to keep flour from falling away
Stick plate	Open, may have bound rim, close twined bands (may have overlay on bands)	Drying and serving foods
Sifter (winnow), mat, tray See Illustration 7	Closed with lattice rod reinforcements Some 3-strand twining, overlay decoration	Sifting acorn meal, serving meat, storing tobacco leaves ***By flattening this form, weavers adapted this type of basket into the popular 20 th -century circular wall plaques
Large, globular See Illustrations 9, 11	Closed, lattice rod reinforcements, minimal overlay decoration	Cooking with hot rocks ***This type of functional basket, along with the trinket basket, was adapted into the popular, large commercial fancy basket
Small globular See Illustration 9	Closed, may have lattice rod reinforcements, overlay decoration	Serving foods ***This type was also adapted into a fancy basket form, frequently with Victorian style knobbed and fitted lids
Ceremonial cap See Illustration 1	Closed, some 3-strand twining on top and between bands, elaborate overlay decoration common in a tripartite composition	Women wear as part of ceremonial regalia. Also commonly sold to non-Native commercial market
Work cap	Closed, some 3-strand twining, little overlay decoration	Worn by men and women while working, slight differences between men and women's caps, a special cap was worn by a widow
Gambling tray	Closed, overlay decoration can be extensive (like a sifting mat but more decoration)	Gambling games – to hold sticks or hide sticks under ¹
Dipper	Closed, never decorated, pine root weft with lattice twined reinforcements	For dipping water in acorn soup while cooking and leaching the acorns

¹ Christopher Moser described the use of the gambling tray as follows, “Under a mat, one team arranged a set of decorated sticks in a pattern or combination which the opposing team had to guess. Once the opposing team made their guess as to the pattern the mat was turned to reveal the sticks. In another the sticks were cast like dice onto the mat.” *American Indian Basketry of Northern California* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1990): 20.

Baby basket	Openwork, all hazel except root wrapped rims, may vary in size according to the age of the child, may have twined sun shade attached	For carrying a baby – may be decorated with various attachments suggesting sex of the baby or to personalize it for the child ***smaller doll carrier also made
Jump Dance basket	Closed twined woven cylinder with painted buckskin ends, basketry may have extensive overlay decoration, buckskin trim and feather attachments ²	Carried and swung by men dancers during the Jump Dance, a major Northwestern California World Renewal ceremony (see Chapter 2 for brief description)
Conical burden basket	Openwork, reinforced or braided rims, often closed twined decorated bands (with overlay)	Carrying firewood or other large items, may be used with a tumpline over the forehead
Storage basket, may have conical seed collecting basket as lid See Illustration 6	Can be openwork or closed, openwork examples may have decorated closed twined bands, overlay decoration may be extensive on body or lid	Storing dried fish, acorns, smaller baskets may be used for personal objects
Seed beater	Round or fan-shaped openwork basket with handle	Beat seeds into collecting baskets
Fish or eel trap	Open twined tube with narrow opening	Fishing, eel
Tobacco basket	Closed with dome-shaped lid, leather attachments, variegated design	Holding tobacco
Trinket or gift basket, often with lid	Closed often with extensive overlay decoration, handle may be attached ***Changes in the Arts and Crafts period include openwork gift baskets with decorative, closed-twined bands	Many uses. Holds personal objects. ***Adapted into popular lidded fancy basket made for non-Native sale. Lid may include elaborate Victorian knob and an inner flange for better tight fit.
Wall plaque	May be closed or open or a combination of both techniques. May have extensive open-work scalloped trim. Overlay decoration.	Commercial market or for friends or home use. Hangs on wall and is purely decorative. Adapted from sifter or tray Probably 20 th century form.
Covered bottle	Closed twined, may have some openwork areas, frequently extensive overlay decoration	Commercial market, but also for personal enjoyment or as a gift. Not based on any pre-contact, traditional form. Type of object covered can vary and does not just include glass bottles.
Mail pouch	Combination of closed and openwork, may use scalloped edging or other decorative trim along with overlay.	20 th -century development for commercial sale, gift or personal use.
Pedestal fruit basket (Footed basket) See Illustration 10	Closed or combination of open and closed twining, bound rim or scalloped edging, frequently extensive overlay	Probably 19 th -century development for commercial market, though may have been traditional, pre-contact form.
Tea cups, napkin rings, ear rings, hair ornaments, etc.	Combination of closed and openwork, may incorporate beadwork, quillwork.	20 th -century development for commercial sale, gift or personal use. As these objects are small and require less time, they are very popular forms made today. Weavers have been very creative throughout the Arts and Crafts period and later developing novel basketry shapes.

² Lila O'Neale documented the processes used for making a Jump Dance basket in her 1929 field notes. Techniques vary, but involve the woman weaving the twined base and the man sewing the cylinder together with sinew and buckskin, painting the buckskin and adding attachments.

within traditional Northwestern California culture. I also list acculturated forms that possibly developed out of earlier traditional basket types. Despite the emphasis placed upon traditional ethnographic use by Arts and Crafts dealers and consumers of baskets, weavers created a variety of novel basketry forms that represent on-going innovation and creativity on the part of the individual weaver.

The origin of baskets, as well as their central place within the culture, is represented in Northwestern California myths and oral tradition. When conducting workshops or other events, contemporary weavers may recount these stories, illustrating the close integration of both mythology and basketry within contemporary ethnic identity. Baskets were and still are frequently used to create a sense of family identity for the weaver or Native basketry owner. For example, baskets remind the owner of past memories of the weaver or of the family's use of the basket on ceremonial occasions.

Supporting family ties, the art of basketry is usually taught by an older family member, such as a mother, grandmother, or aunt. Most weaving is traditionally a woman's art, though men weave open-work, utilitarian baskets. A wife's skill in basket weaving was and is a source of great pride for some husbands. Weavers refer to the special, spiritual nature of basketry in their lives, especially in building and supporting close familial and intimate friendships. The materials, which require much work in collecting and processing, allow a weaver to develop a close sense of the natural world, the seasons of the year, and the deep, spiritual sense of their native homeland. Relationships between friends and families are strengthened and nurtured through sharing the experience of collecting materials and working with them.²⁹

While I focus on less spiritual aspects in this dissertation, I recognize that these core values of human relationships and relationships to nature supported by the art of basketry are an integral aspect of the art form's place within Northwestern California Native culture.

Northwestern California basketry is primarily a plain, 2-strand twined basketry that exhibits a number of techniques and materials. It is usually firm and tightly woven, allowing it to take the place of ceramics in the pre-contact era. Plain, 2-strand twining involves two horizontal wefts that alternate, front to back, between static vertical warps. Both open and close twining are done; open twining features spaces between the weaving while closed creates a solid surface. Three-strand twining, involving a third weft, is often used on the base or the rim of the basket for extra durability. Decoration is applied using half-twist overlay, and, in some cases, full-twist overlay. These techniques involve lying the decorative material, such as beargrass, over the wefts and allowing it to show only on the exterior of the basket, using a half-twist, or fully twisting the material so that it appears on the inside of the basket as well as on the outside. Overlay may include single- or double- element overlay where one or both wefts are covered by the decorative material.³⁰ Lattice-twining, which uses an additional horizontal rod held in place by the wefts on the exterior, may be used for reinforcement. The twining pitch (direction) of the weft is down to the left and crossed warps compose the starts.³¹

A number of excellent sources recount the ethnobotany of the region as it pertains to basketry and basketry processing and weaving techniques.³² Materials can only be gathered at certain times of the year, under certain conditions, and weavers

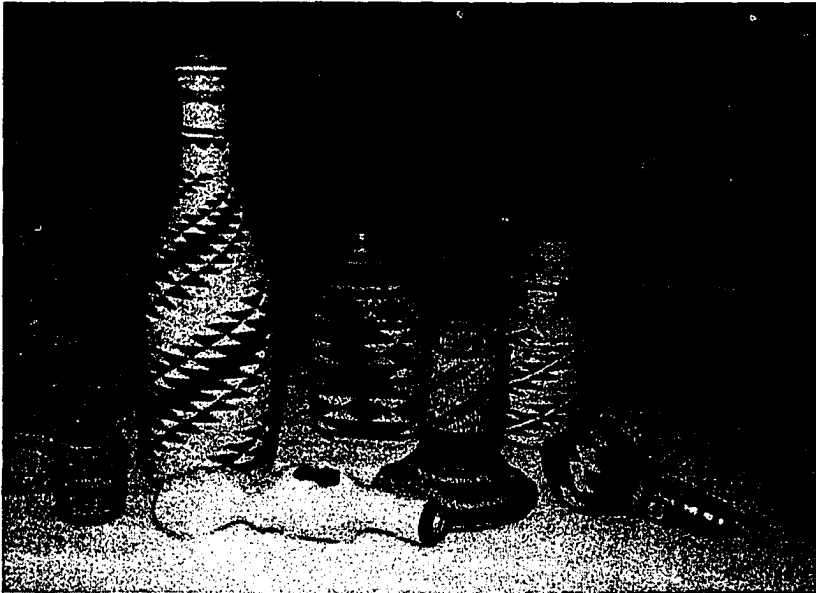
often have preferred locations for gathering. Some materials, such as beargrass, benefit from periodic burning for renewal the following year. Harvesting and processing basketry materials consume considerable time and effort and are crucial to making a successful basket.

Decorative basketry motifs are generally geometric and non-representational, although they may have a representational name, such as “snakenose.” Compositions are sometimes fairly constant, such as the tripartite composition of caps, or variable, as with trinket baskets. Cooking and other utilitarian baskets generally have fewer decorative areas, often at the rim. Color combinations and choice of motifs follow established conventions that were strictly adhered to in the past, though they were sometimes altered during the Arts and Crafts period.³³ These established conventions regarding style were passed down through many generations and contributed to the overall consistency of style evident in the region. Before the 19th century, weavers also followed strict rules of behavior when creating their art. For example, a woman was not allowed to weave during her menstruation. Some of these rules have been revived by contemporary weavers today.³⁴

A brief description of some changes in turn-of-the-century basketry demonstrates the active response of Native American weavers to the economic opportunities they perceived from the interests of Arts and Crafts collectors. Prior to Native contact with Europeans, Northwestern California basketry tended to be a relatively conservative art form. However, by the end of the 19th century, basketry changed and much more innovation took place. Many baskets were made in response to contact with non-Native consumers and culture. Even though Arts and Crafts

period collectors encouraged maintenance of tradition, weavers experimented with new shapes of baskets and basketry motifs from white culture. In some cases, new designs appeared, such as butterflies, floral patterns, letters, as well as motifs introduced from quilting or crocheting. New shapes included fruit bowls with a pedestal base (footed basket), mail pouches and trinket baskets with elaborate Victorian knobs. (See Table B.) Illustrations 8 and 9 show examples of new basketry forms and motifs created for the non-Native commercial market, such as bottles (demijohns) covered with basketry (including a lightbulb) and bowls with anthropomorphic motifs and lettering.

Illustration 10 includes fruit bowls (footed baskets). In Lila O'Neale's field interviews (1929), introduced in the section on historiography below, weavers disagreed over whether or not the fruit bowl form was an innovation made in response to commercial trade.³⁵ O'Neale's informants also provided information regarding motifs and whether they were considered old or new. It is impossible to provide a definitive list of pre-contact basketry motifs in the dissertation since publications vary in their descriptions and names of motifs. In O'Neale's study, however, weavers' input as to which motifs were new during the Arts and Crafts period suggests the extent of innovation of the period. Innovation in motifs discussed below is based upon the weavers' perceptions of these motifs. Basket diagrams and photographs in *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (1932, 1995), O'Neale's published thesis, can sometimes be matched with specific baskets in the Phoebe Hearst Museum collection by using information in her field notebooks at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Illustrations 8 and 9: Top: Example of basketry covered bottles (large bottle: Catalogue # 1-255029a,b), Bottom: Lettering motif (Catalogue # 1-236788) and anthropomorphic motif (1-70997). The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

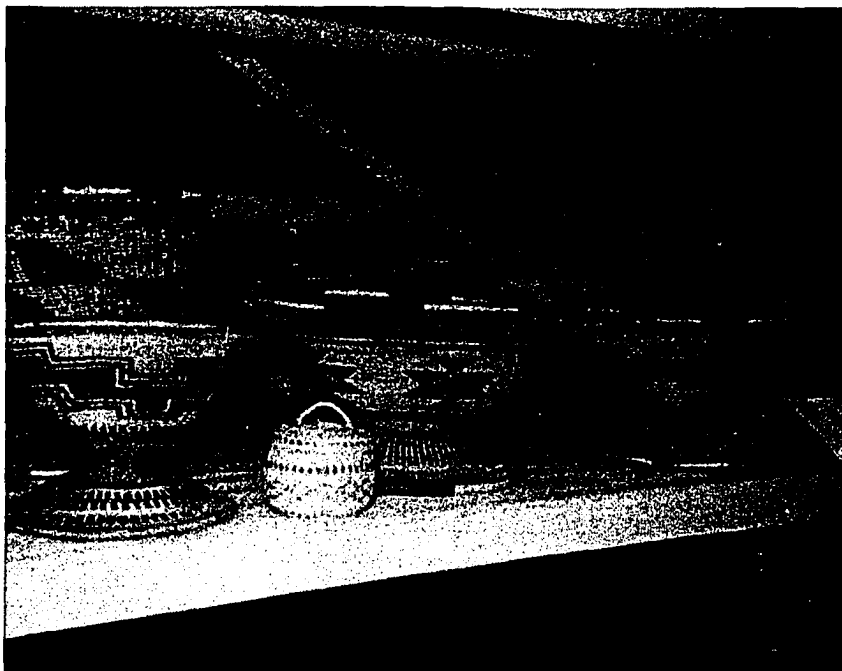


Illustration 10: Fruit Pedestal (Footed) basket (Center: Catalogue # 1-235224). The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.



Illustration 11: Globular basket used as an example of weavers' opinions regarding new motifs by Lila O'Neale. Catalogue # 1-373. The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

Illustration 11 includes a large globular basket similar in size to a traditional cooking basket. The extent of overlay decoration on the piece shows that it was not made for cooking, but was probably for sale. The motif on the basket can be matched to Figure 20, motif L, in *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers*.³⁶ Weavers' individual responses as to whether the motif is new or old can be studied in both the published text and O'Neale's interview notes. Such information can then be used to assess a weaver's stylistic preferences and tastes. I explore further these methods in Chapter 6. For this introduction to Northwestern California basketry, this example demonstrates that basketry innovation, according to the weavers, was taking place in terms of motif choice and style, not just changes in basketry forms. O'Neale's fieldnotes also show that there was quite a bit of controversy among weavers over what aspects of style or which motif choices were innovative and which were traditional.

As these changes in basketry were taking place, the need for utilitarian baskets used for traditional purposes declined when Native communities gradually adopted a more Euro-American lifestyle.³⁷ Manufactured pots and pans replaced traditional utilitarian baskets. Some types of baskets created for indigenous use, however, continued to be made and used. Basketry caps, baby baskets, trinket and tobacco baskets, for example, are still popular baskets used today. They have never lost their appeal within the Native communities of Northwestern California.

Between 1940 and 1960, a combination of the lack of interest in weaving among young Native women and the move of many Native weavers and their families to big, urban areas in response to the post-war economy resulted in a decline in basket-weaving in Northwestern California. In addition, racist attitudes held by the

majority in American society devalued Native American cultures and identities for young Native American women. A few weavers, such as Ella Johnson (1900-1990) for the Yurok, kept basketry traditions alive through this period of decline.³⁸

Fortunately, within the last few decades, there has been an active renaissance in Northwestern California weaving.

New obstacles confront the weavers, such as limited access to materials, problems with finding areas for necessary burning for certain materials, and exposure to chemical spraying of pesticides in areas for collecting materials. This spraying has resulted in serious, if not deadly, health conditions for people exposed to it. In 1992, the California Indian Basketweavers Association (CIBA) was founded to help weavers fight these problems. CIBA members work hard to remove these obstacles for weavers, as well as sponsoring meetings, workshops, and other events for artists to share knowledge in support of the basketry revival. Contemporary basket-weaving in Northwestern California is a way for artists to build a sense a cultural or tribal identity and for discovering their ethnic heritage.³⁹

Historiography: Early Writings of Anthropologists and Journalists (1850-1950)

For parts of California, ethnographic accounts of Native cultures extend back to the 16th century, at the time of Spanish contact.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, documentation of Northwestern California Native cultures is slim from the early period of contact. Most writings date from after 1850, when California became a state. As a result of the devastation of contact with Europeans, by the 1870s, when most of the first extensive ethnographic documentation was taking place, only a small percentage of indigenous

people remained in Northwestern California, and much information was permanently lost.⁴¹ This is important considering the dominance of the ethnographic paradigm in the scholarship of Northwestern California basketry throughout the history of basketry collecting and documentation. The fact that the Native cultures of the region had already changed substantially by the time the ethnography was written suggests the limitations of this particular way of approaching basketry studies. Certainly some of the pre-contact knowledge regarding basketry remained. In Chapter 6, I show how some weavers interviewed by O’Neale, such as Nellie Cooper, carried on this knowledge. But how much change had taken place? By expanding methodology to include the paradigm of the individual artist, more recent writers incorporate individual artistic innovation as part of ethnographic change.

Nineteenth-century sources, however, present mostly a static view of the pre-contact traditional past. For example, one of the earliest accounts of Hupa life was written in 1853 by George Gibbs, an interpreter for a treaty expedition and, later, a gold miner. This manuscript, published in the 1970s by Robert Heizer at the University of California, Berkeley, contains only information about pre-contact culture for the Hupa, even though change had already taken place as a result of the gold rush.⁴² Also Stephen Powers, a journalist, was the first to collect data and publish an ethnographic article about Native Americans from Northwestern California. His articles, also republished by Heizer in 1975, document Native American life free from any suggestion of contact with Europeans.⁴³ Originally appearing in *Overland Monthly* in 1872, Powers’s “The Northern California Indians” was included in his *Tribes of California* (1877). It became one of the only sources of

information on these tribes prior to Alfred L. Kroeber's work and the establishment of the anthropology department at University of California, Berkeley. Heizer's republication of both Gibbs and Powers demonstrates the extent to which scholars value these early sources of ethnography. However, they remain limited because of their attempts to recapture a pristine view of pre-contact Native cultures.

Otis T. Mason's report, "The Ray Collection from Hupa Reservation," published in the *Smithsonian Institution Annual Report* (1886), also fits within this genre of ethnographic writing. However, this work focuses upon material culture collected as early as 1840 at Fort Gaston in Hoopa Valley for the Smithsonian Institution, as an attempt to complement information published in Powers.⁴⁴ It is helpful for getting a sense of Hupa material culture prior to the 1880s and the Arts and Crafts period, even if this material does show change after contact with Europeans.

In sum, these early examples of discourse addressing the Native cultures of Northwestern California focus upon documenting and preserving what they saw as the traditional, pre-contact lifestyle. They are biased in their approach, looking at the cultures as if they were pristine and unaffected by European contact, although contact had taken place several decades before the 1870s and 1880s. Basketry is analyzed from an ethnographic perspective, demonstrating its function from within the pre-contact cultural context. This bias in approach is maintained in most Arts and Crafts literature in the early 20th century and is still evident in basketry writing today.

Other major early sources describing the Native peoples of Northwestern California and their basketry date from the turn of the century. The first decade of the

20th century marked both the beginning of academic anthropology in California and the “golden era” of basketry collecting, or “basketry craze.”⁴⁵ In addition to the popularity of private collections, major ethnographic museum collections were created in this decade. Both academics and non-academics believed that Native California cultures were fast disappearing and that the Indian race was “dying.” They responded by initiating a collecting frenzy especially for material culture that suggested a traditional, pre-contact existence.

Alfred L. Kroeber, the first doctoral student of Franz Boas of Columbia University, began studies of Native California when he established the anthropology department at University of California, Berkeley. The period was characterized by tensions between Kroeber, who attempted to dominate the field of studies through his and his students’ work, and non-academics who pursued research, such as C. Hart Merriam, John Hudson, and John P. Harrington.⁴⁶ I note similar tensions between Kroeber and the collector Grace Nicholson in Chapter 6. Kroeber maintained the bias for documenting traditional, pre-contact Native cultures seen in Gibbs’s, Powers’s and Mason’s earlier studies. He also chose to ignore the changes brought about through contact with European culture. This is similar to the ethnographic paradigm in basketry collecting I describe for followers of the Arts and Crafts movement.

According to Kroeber, the Northwestern subculture area is one of five principal subcultures of California. Most literature addresses the Yurok, Hupa, and Karuk peoples, rather than the lesser-known Tolowa, Chilula, Whilkut, and Wiyot. Extensive published material exists on Native Northwestern California from this early period. In *Ethnography and Folklore of the Indians of Northwestern California*

(1986), Joan Berman suggested that the intense scholarly interest in the area was due in part to the “language/culture” question. Anthropologists have been fascinated by the shared culture of these groups despite their separate linguistic origins. Unlike the rest of California, the Northwestern tribes have a culture with traits that resemble the more northern Northwest Coast groups.⁴⁷ Turn-of-the-century anthropologists were interested in the origin of cultures and its relationship to linguistics. Northwestern California served as an intriguing case study.

In terms of historiography, Kroeber is important both for his own writing and for his guidance of the writings of his pupils. In his own studies, Kroeber focused extensively, though not exclusively, upon the Yurok, devoting over fifty years to the tribe. Because of this, ethnographic information available about Northwestern California is dominated by the Yurok.⁴⁸ However, Kroeber was a generalist in the beginning of his academic career at the turn of the century, resulting in his publication *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1925). The *Handbook* remains as a foundation text on the whole of Native California and a basic resource for the Northwestern tribes.

Early in Kroeber’s profession, his teaching role was not stressed. Instead, museum research and collecting were paramount and included trips up the Klamath River, especially among the Yurok. Because of the dominant notion of the times that Indian cultures were vanishing, Kroeber sought to preserve collections of traditional art and material culture, rather than acculturated examples such as those made for sale to an outside market. According to Ira Jacknis, in “Alfred Kroeber as Museum Anthropologist” (1993), Kroeber adopted a Boasian model of ethnography through

his museum research and collecting. The actual artifact or art object was not as important as the ethnographic context it illustrated, or the language used to describe the object. Kroeber's fieldwork stressed oral texts, sound recordings, photographs, and other ethnographic documenting as much as material culture. These aspects of Kroeber's museum work affected the approach of his writings.⁴⁹

Kroeber published several studies on basketry in which he demonstrated his approach to art as a means of revealing motor habit and custom of culture, rather than an interest in the art for its own merits.⁵⁰ In other words, the conventions used to create baskets and the established means of production, as well as the conservative nature of the art, were analyzed. His "Basket Designs of the Indians of Northwestern California," published in *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* (1905), primarily addresses language such as Native terminology of designs, materials, and types of baskets. Established traditions in the art of basketry are emphasized rather than recent change. Kroeber did not consider the impact of individual creativity, but rather the conventions of tradition. The legacy of Kroeber's work and the extent to which his publications dominated Native California studies, especially Yurok ethnography, probably contributed to the popularity of the ethnographic approach to collecting Northwestern California basketry, even though it was a common approach to collecting Native basketry throughout North America.

Recent criticism of Kroeber's "Basket Designs of the Indians of Northwestern California" focuses on the difficulty he had in accurately naming basket designs as they vary from one weaver to another or from one period to another. This demonstrates the problem inherent in Kroeber's emphasis on an unchanging view of

traditional culture rather than the dynamic changes that were taking place within Northwestern California cultures in the early 20th century. In the Arts and Crafts period, weavers' creativity included combining motifs, which may then be given a new name or composite name. This has resulted in the giving of different names to the same motifs in various publications. The problem has been compounded recently by contemporary weavers who carry on some names through tradition while creating new names as the art evolves.⁵¹ Kroeber's text, however, is still useful as a document of weaving practices and basic weaving knowledge at the turn of the century. It is also a useful record of Native language through terminology.

Kroeber's text on basketry designs serves as an example of his Boasian approach to ethnography and his desire to record what he believed to be evidence of a vanishing culture and artistic tradition. Several other anthropologists who worked in the first half of the 20th century also sought to document traditional Native life in the Klamath region. Some of their publications, as well as their unpublished field notes, remain as sources of information about the techniques, materials, and style of Northwestern California basketry. However, I will only mention them briefly here because they were not concerned with moving beyond the ethnographic paradigm to recognize individual weavers or with the changes made in basketry due to the non-Native market. A key exception is Lila M. O'Neale whom I discuss below and in Chapter 6.

Pliny Earle Goddard, assistant in anthropology under Kroeber at Berkeley, produced a standard ethnography of the Hupa, *Life and Culture of the Hupa*, in 1903. It was the first publication of the series *University of California Publications in*

American Archaeology and Ethnology, which included a number of major studies of Native California cultures during this period.⁵² Goddard was a missionary in the Hoopa Valley from 1897 to 1900, allowing him time to record a thorough and detailed study.⁵³ Considering the extent to which commercial dealing in baskets was in place by 1900 (see Chapter 5), Goddard's emphasis on traditional, pre-contact ethnography is frustratingly limited.

Several other ethnographies were included in the UCPAAE series that also contribute basic information about the peoples of Northwestern California: Goddard's work on the Chilula (1914); Llewellyn Loud's on the Wiyot (1918); and Philip Drucker's on the Tolowa (1937). One particularly intriguing and influential study is T.T. Waterman's *Yurok Geography* (1920). In addition to being an important ethnography of the Yurok based upon Kroeber's, as well as his own, field notes, the study demonstrates the importance of place and place names within the Yurok worldview. University of California publications include important linguistic studies that are too numerous to discuss here, though they form part of the standard ethnographic knowledge of the region.⁵⁴ Kroeber's *Yurok Narratives* (1942), which records myths told by Robert Spott, a Yurok informant, serves as an informative source about the Spotts and the village of Requa mentioned in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

Other than the University of California publications, John P. Harrington's *Tobacco Among the Karuk Indians of California* (1932) is the most thorough anthropological study of the region. Despite the title's limitation of "tobacco," this work is the major ethnographic account of the Karuk. It is also a detailed record of

the weaving of a tobacco basket and presents information about basketry provided by the Karuk weaver Mrs. Phoebe Maddux. Harrington, a linguist for the Bureau of American Ethnology, spent almost a year in Washington, D.C., recording Maddux's extensive knowledge of Northwestern California life. In addition, between 1925 and 1929, he conducted several field trips along the Klamath. He never published much information acquired through these experiences.⁵⁵ They are useful in the sense that Maddux often noted information that white anthropologists would not have deemed important, such as weavers' names. The Harrington field notes are located in the National Anthropological Archives.

In her Master's thesis "Karok Basketry: Mrs. Phoebe Maddux and the Johnson Collection" (1981), Linda L. Eisenhart summarized Harrington's work with Maddux, providing detailed information about all aspects of the basketry and basketry techniques and materials. She emphasized Karuk words describing basketry, revealing Harrington's linguistic focus. Since his study is so similar in its concern with basketry terminology, Harrington must have been competing with Kroeber. Unlike Kroeber's study of basketry designs from all three major tribes, Hupa, Yurok and Karuk, Harrington's work deals just with Maddux and a Karuk perspective. However, as Eisenhart noted, Harrington seemed at times to be checking the validity of Kroeber's earlier *Basketry Designs of Northwestern California*.⁵⁶ Although he did not criticize Kroeber's work directly, Harrington contradicted the conclusions of Kroeber's text in his discussion of Maddux's comments. This is because Harrington's information, based upon Maddux's Karuk culture and terminology, was not consistent with Kroeber's information, derived from all three tribes. Maddux's comments do

reveal the complexity and inconsistency evident when weavers discuss basketry motifs and composition.⁵⁷ Thus Kroeber's work can be seen as problematic.

Finally, Lila Morris O'Neale's *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (1932), a doctoral dissertation published in the *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, and her unpublished field notes at the Bancroft library, Berkeley, are crucial resources in helping to identify an individual weaver's work and style from the Arts and Crafts period. O'Neale's work is a rare documentation of weavers' responses to their art and the impact of the non-Native market. It forms an important component in the argument I present in Chapter 6, in that her field notes serve as a unique archival source for recreating the art history of a generation of lesser-known weavers working at the turn of the 20th century in Northwestern California. Even though O'Neale's study dates to 1929, many of the older weavers she interviewed were from this early, undocumented generation. As a graduate student of A.L. Kroeber at the University of California, O'Neale was encouraged to pursue studies in Native California. Her methodology, however, was unlike her mentor's obsession with documenting only traditional ethnography "disappearing" from the region or with art as a cultural convention.

A new methodological model devised by Franz Boas and his students at Columbia after 1910 and into the 1920s inspired O'Neale. Boas's work changed at this point from a historical-diffusionary approach, as represented by Kroeber's studies of motifs, their form and meaning, to a psychological model more concerned with cultural change and the role of the individual artist.⁵⁸ Following these ideas, O'Neale devised a system of interviewing fifty Yurok and Karok weavers, and a few Hupas,

showing them photographs of baskets in the University of California, the California Academy of Sciences, and private collections. She then elicited responses. Referred to as ethnoaesthetics, her approach was very innovative in California at the time and not fully appreciated until recently. By focusing upon the opinions of the individual weavers, O'Neale was able to extend beyond Kroeber's limited views and reveal individual creativity through the process of basketry weaving.⁵⁹ The Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology republished *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* in 1995. The reprint includes a list of the weavers' names that had been left out of the original publication. This list, in conjunction with O'Neale's notebooks at the Bancroft Library, is extremely useful in helping to identify some lesser-known weavers along the Klamath River. For example, my work in Chapter 6 identifying some aspects of style and technique of Yurok weaver Nellie Cooper derives from matching O'Neale's list of informants' names to the written interview notes and then matching the interview notes with examples of baskets in the Hearst collection. I explain methods for using this material in more depth in Chapter 6. O'Neale's field notes work well in conjunction with information provided in the Grace Nicholson archival materials. Further research needs to be done on this material in the future.

In a series of largely biographical articles, Margot Blum Schevill discussed O'Neale's innovative fieldwork as well as her overall remarkable career. Her work serves as an intriguing comparison with the collecting career of Grace Nicholson and Nicholson's interest in the individual weaver, as well as ethnography.⁶⁰ Schevill made two observations regarding gender that can also be applied to Nicholson, a non-academic collector. One was Kroeber's hesitancy to take O'Neale as his student,

perhaps because she was a woman and he felt she would have difficulty obtaining a job after completion of her degree.⁶¹ In fact, O'Neale eventually became professor of decorative art and associate curator of the Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.⁶² As I discuss in Chapter 6, Nicholson was frequently praised for her work on ethnography and documentation of basketry *despite the fact*, those praising her note, that she was a woman and a non-academic.

The second observation Schevill made is the ease with which O'Neale could work with weavers because she was a woman and was more readily accepted by the weaving community.⁶³ Nicholson, too, was able to establish important patron relationships and close friendships with weavers partly because she was a woman in a male-dominated profession. These observations concerning gender and women's roles as fieldworkers illustrate both the challenges and opportunities women, such as O'Neale, faced as professional academic anthropologists and as non-academic collectors in the early 20th century.

Shevill also wrote that O'Neale may have been one of the first researchers to analyze tourist arts or acculturated arts, popular subjects in academic literature today.⁶⁴ This aspect of O'Neale's study makes it an unusual and exceptional early document of Northwestern California baskets made prior to 1930. By recording firsthand knowledge from the weavers themselves about what qualities in the baskets were innovative, what were older signs of established traditions, and how the weavers defined these qualities, O'Neale provided standards of authenticity and creativity for basketry held by the Native American community at that time. In addition, these standards, along with other commentary offered by the weavers, allow us to

determine some of the criteria desired by the non-Native collectors. We can then distinguish these criteria from Northwestern California Native preferences in baskets.

Journal articles, mainly written by non-academics during this early period of historiography, are also useful in determining the criteria held by non-Native collectors of the Arts and Crafts period. Most articles address Native American or Native California basketry, in general, rather than the Northwestern region specifically. The approach can vary quite a bit in these articles. Some study baskets from within the Native context taking a somewhat ethnographic, if not romantic, view of Native American life, while others place the basketry within the Arts and Crafts home and its possible uses there.

Baskets appear in periodicals that vary from popular journals, such as *Sunset* or *House Beautiful*, to Arts and Crafts period publications, such as *The Craftsman*, and museum journals, such as the Southwest Museum's *Masterkey*. Arts and Crafts period authors also produced texts on the subject of Native American basketry, such as George Wharton James' *Indian Basketry* (1909). These non-academic sources contribute much more to our understanding of the non-Native interest in basketry and their perceptions of Native American cultures as a reflection of Arts and Crafts period ideology than they do to that of the basketry or the Native cultures. They are too numerous to summarize here. However, I quote from several examples and include illustrations from them in Chapter 4 when discussing the Arts and Crafts movement and collectors' desires for the ethnographic approach to collecting baskets.

Other non-academic sources from this early period of historiography derive from various published and unpublished materials from the local region of Humboldt,

Del Norte, Trinity, and Siskiyou Counties. Again, these sources are too numerous to summarize here; they form an important foundation for Chapter 5. Two books are particularly useful in developing an historical context for basket-collecting in Northwestern California as well as providing a more intimate view through personal experience in the region. Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed, two government field matrons working among the Karuk in 1908, described their views of Northwestern California Native life in *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* (1957).⁶⁵ The book includes several subtle insights into basketry collecting and basket weavers along the Klamath not found in other types of sources. *To the American Indian: Reminiscences of a Yurok Woman* (1916), by Lucy Thompson, provides an unusual opportunity to read a Native Northwestern California woman's perspectives on her people, their way of life, and on the influx of white settlers and white culture. Though not a rich source on basketry, specifically, Thompson's text is a fascinating, personal account of ethnography and cross-cultural encounter that complements the more academic approaches of Kroeber and his students.

Recent Literature Addressing Native California Basketry

A number of recent basketry publications exist that can be useful sources depending upon the type of information one is seeking about Northwestern California baskets. For example, for general information about basketry materials, techniques and uses, some of the best sources on Native Northwestern California baskets are

survey books covering basketry from larger regions in California, all of California, or even Native North America as a whole.⁶⁶ The catalogue *American Indian Basketry of Northern California* (1990), written by Christopher Moser for the exhibition of the Riverside Museum's permanent collection, covers a much broader area than just Northwestern California. It is a remarkably detailed account, especially in its description of basketry materials. In order to narrow the historiography to sources that best support the dissertation's thesis, however, I will focus solely on those sources that address the need for the individual artist paradigm. These sources include identification of individual artists' baskets or biographical information about weavers.

Following Lila O'Neale's *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers*, very few texts have been published addressing basketry of the specific Northwestern California region or of one tribe, such as the Yurok. In 1985, the Clarke Memorial Museum in Eureka published a unique exception, *The Hover Collection of Karuk Baskets*, edited by Virginia Fields. It is a catalogue presenting the Hover collection of 144 Karuk baskets supplemented by a brief history of the collection. The catalogue includes fairly extensive, though primarily introductory, coverage of cultural context, basketry materials, techniques, and designs. It is also one of the few recent books to bring together and introduce some of the major turn-of-the-20th century Karuk weavers in addition to the well-known artist, Elizabeth Hickox. A very informative section provides biographical information on individual basketmakers, such as weaver Nettie Ruben (c.1875-1957), mostly derived from earlier written sources, such as O'Neale's thesis, censuses, and genealogical records, and family remembrances.⁶⁷ Although very brief in information about weavers, this text inspired me to attempt to identify

other weavers using the Nicholson and O'Neale materials. It is not only one of the few books to even mention lesser-known Karuk weavers from the generation of Hickox, but it is also the only published catalogue of a specific basketry collection from Northwestern California.

Two more recent publications addressing California Native baskets, in general, briefly explore the biographies of this early generation of weavers. In *Indian Basketmakers of California and the Great Basin* (2000), Larry Dalrymple introduced Nellie Cooper, whom I discuss later in Chapter 6, as the mother of weaver Nettie McKinnon (1898-1987). However, most of his discussion centers around the later generation of artists from McKinnon's era, such as Yurok weaver Ella Johnson, and Karuk weaver Florence Harrie (1889-1980).⁶⁸ Brian Bibby also introduced the Yurok weaver Minnie Reed (1889-1985), along with Elizabeth Hickox and several later-generation weavers in the exhibition catalogue, *The Fine Art of California Indian Basketry* (1996).⁶⁹ This book is interesting in layout since it applies the useful ethnographic paradigm (still popular today!) in organizing the book by basketry function, such as seed beaters or burden baskets. It then lists specific examples by either weaver's name or, if unknown, tribe, and brief informative captions, often including biographical information on the weavers. Several of Ron Johnson's and Coleen Kelley Marks's recent exhibition catalogues also describe the generation of weavers coming after Elizabeth Hickox and Hickox herself. These are discussed more below.

These publications acknowledging individual Northwestern California weavers' contributions show an important shift in historiography, mostly in the last

five years, to a concern with documenting weavers' biographies and styles along with recognizing specific examples of their work. The individual artist paradigm started by Grace Nicholson in Northwestern California in the early 1900s has become an important method for writers of current basketry literature. Unlike other regions of California where weavers have been documented from the early or mid 19th century, little, if any, success has been made in representing the work of Northwestern California weavers born before 1890. The obvious exception to this is Wiyot weaver Elizabeth Hickox.

Because Hickox's basketry was so extensively documented by Grace Nicholson, who took the baskets out of Northwestern California and sold them to private collectors and museums from the early 1900s until the 1940s, her work has been featured in a number of Native American art history texts as well as general Native American basketry books. Hickox is always the Northwestern California weaver acknowledged and is usually the only one, especially in books published before the late 1990s. Even the very recent publication *Art of the North American Indians: The Thaw Collection* (2000) presents an ethnographic section about the Native cultures and their art of Northwestern California and then highlights the exceptional work of Elizabeth Hickox.⁷⁰

The Thaw collection catalogue's approach is partially the result of the recent writings of Marvin Cohodas on Hickox. Cohodas provided a detailed summary of Hickox's life and work in the Thaw collection catalogue. Certainly one could argue that Hickox's work deserves such highlighted treatment. Considering her work is so unusual and not actually typical of the region and also considering the fair amount of

recent scholarly attention given to acknowledging other weavers working after Hickox, more mention, even brief, of other individual weavers would have been appropriate. Illustration 12 depicts an example of Elizabeth Hickox's basketry and its unique style. This basket was sold by Nicholson to a collector and then was given to the Southwest Museum. The fine weave, extensive use of the dark maidenhair fern and porcupine quillwork as overlay, and the elaborate high Victorian knob are all obvious features of Hickox's work.

Owing to Nicholson's role as patron and dealer, Elizabeth Hickox's baskets found their way into major collections, such as the Heye collection and the Denver Art Museum collection. Influential Native American art publications, reaching a large popular audience, give pride of place to Hickox's work and identified her as the artist. For example, Frederick Dockstader's classic survey of the Heye collection, *Indian Art in North America: Arts and Crafts* (1961), includes only one Northwestern California basket, a Hickox gift basket. In *Native American Art in the Denver Art Museum* (1979), by Richard Conn, two Elizabeth Hickox baskets are identified by artist and that they were purchased through Grace Nicholson out of about a dozen unidentified Northwestern California baskets.

Given the extent to which Elizabeth Hickox's work is known outside of Northwestern California and that of other weavers is not, it is not surprising her works and her life dominate basketry literature. I hope that, given the recent attempts to document other artists, the exceptional and unusual work of Hickox will be complemented by the inclusion of weavers working more within the regional style.

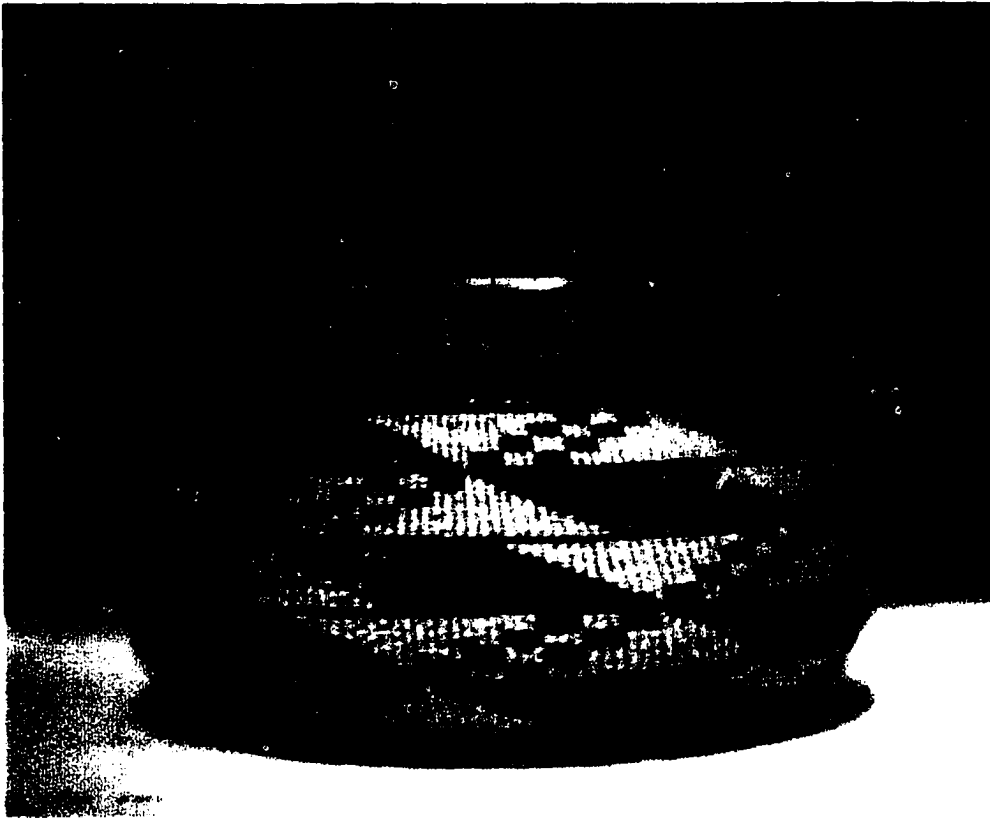


Illustration 12: Trinket Basket, Wiyot/German (Karuk style), Elizabeth Hickox, c.1920. Courtesy of the Southwest Museum, Caroline B. Poole Collection. Catalog # 811.6.1895 Photograph by Ron Johnson.

The focus of this dissertation is Grace Nicholson's contribution to the individual artist paradigm that I also see currently in place in the field of Native North American basketry. I hope that, by suggesting ways Nicholson's and O'Neale's archival records can be used to recreate the biography and style of lesser-known weavers, I will contribute to new methods of basketry studies within the individual artist paradigm in the future.

Recent Writing Addressing Basketry Collection History

Only a few studies have been published about the larger context of collecting Northwestern California baskets at the turn of the century. Again, it is useful to turn to more general books regarding collecting practices of Native American basketry or to studies of collecting in other regions of California. Although it is about Central California, Craig D. Bates and Martha J. Lee's *Tradition and Innovation: A Basket History of the Indians of the Yosemite-Mono Lake Area* (1990) provides an introduction to basketry collecting during the Arts and Crafts period. Their study, as well as other articles by Bates, reveals the dynamic innovation and creativity of individual weavers responding to the Arts and Crafts. It shows the extent to which thorough research of various archival materials and basket collections can be used to reveal biographical information about weavers and their baskets.

Studies of specific turn-of-the-20th century collectors or museum professionals can offer insight into collecting practices in Northwestern California. In the exhibition catalogue *Natives and Settlers: Indian and Yankee Culture in Early California, the Collections of Charles P. Wilcomb* (1979), edited by Melinda Young Frye, the work

of Oakland Museum curator Charles Wilcomb encompasses much more than Native American basketry. But Wilcomb's interest in ethnographic materials from Northwestern California makes him a useful case study for understanding the cultural context of the "basketry craze" that included Northwestern California baskets and the ethnographic paradigm.

The publications of Marvin Cohodas, several already cited, explore the issue of patronage and the role of the individual artist of the Arts and Crafts period. In his essay "Louisa Keyser and the Cohns: Mythmaking and Basket Making in the American West" (1992), Cohodas analyzed in detail the impact of the patrons Abe and Amy Cohn upon the Washoe basketry artist Louisa Keyser. He used this example to illustrate turn-of-the-century stereotypes of Native Californians promoted by Arts and Crafts period collectors.

The Cohns created a fictional account of Keyser's biography and basketry that exemplifies certain misconceptions about Native peoples believed by many Euro-Americans at the time. The biography created reflects the Arts and Crafts collectors' emphasis on the traditional past at the expense of the true individual. It is one of the few studies in Native California art history that addresses in depth the influence of non-Native private collectors on a specific artist. In addition, Cohodas described the redefinition of Keyser's baskets as sculpture rather than functional objects. His work on Keyser and Washoe basketry is also helpful as a guide to doing stylistic analysis of California basketry, as he described Keyser's unique style in depth.

Even more valuable for this dissertation is Marvin Cohodas's *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* because it is the only

published text to address Arts and Crafts period collecting practices specifically within the region of Northwestern California. More recently, Cohodas also published an article, “Elizabeth Hickox and Karuk Basketry: A Case Study in Debates on Innovation and Paradigms of Authenticity” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (1999), which summarizes many of the same points he made in his larger text.

Since I was aware of Cohodas’ research and manuscript prior to its publication and at the time I chose my dissertation topic, I decided to study the basketry of the Lower Klamath River region, in general, and to avoid in-depth study of Elizabeth and Louise Hickox, the central artists of Cohodas’s work. Although parts of the book serve as a model for my more expanded research of collecting practices in the region, I will not be exploring his ideas concerning the Hickoxes’s social status within the community, a main part of his thesis, though I will briefly discuss it. The issue of high social status and its impact upon the relationship of the Hickoxes to their primary patron, Grace Nicholson, and the production of their baskets is relevant only to the Hickoxes and their unique position as a family along the Klamath River. Rather, I will build upon Cohodas’ notion of baskets as “interethnic commodities” consumed and defined by people of a different race than the producers.⁷¹

Cohodas expressed his frustration with what he sees as the inadequacies of conventional art historical and anthropological methods in studying this topic.⁷⁵ In particular, this is because of Elizabeth Hickox’s unique style of weaving combined with her high social position and her mixed ethnic background. He adopted two aspects of methodology that are central to his text. He argued that both Arts and

Crafts period basketry production and its consumption revealed tensions between social classes. Class tensions existed for the Native weavers, in the case of the Hickoxes within their community, and for the bourgeois collectors and their urban environment with lower classes of immigrants as well as people of minority races. Issues of class conflict, racial boundaries and gender merged and influenced how baskets were made and how they were received by non-Native consumers. To Cohodas, the appeal of basketry to Arts and Crafts patrons and the way basketry was addressed in Arts and Crafts literature represented their desire for perceived racial boundaries between Native and non-Native peoples. In actuality, these boundaries, along with those of gender and class, disappear when considering the Hickoxes and the true complexity of the era. I discuss some of these ideas related to class tensions, the Arts and Crafts movement, and basketry collecting in Chapter 4.

Cohodas moved beyond the typical approach to studying images of Native Americans during the Arts and Crafts period in terms of racial stereotypes alone. Instead he turned to a methodology that stemmed from class conflicts like that found in the writings of certain historians rather than art historians writing about this period. Cohodas approached the Arts and Crafts period from a similar socioeconomic perspective to that of Alan Trachtenberg in *The Incorporation of America* (1982). The appropriation of California Native basketry into the Arts and Crafts period home reflects the larger context of class formation, as well as racial and ethnic divisions taking place in American society at the turn of the century. Cohodas often stressed issues of social class rather than race:

By placing class rather than race at the center of my analysis, however, consumption of the “premodern” appears strategically

connected to relations of wealth, power, status, and mode of labor – in short, to relations of production and dominance.⁷⁶

In general, Cohodas' analysis of the Arts and Crafts period is extensive and very thought provoking in his detailed research.

The second point about Cohodas' methods is most obvious when considering his chosen subject, Elizabeth and Louise Hickox. He based this point on the idea of "ethnographies of the particular" of the anthropologist, Abu-Lughod.⁷⁷ Cohodas wished to move away from the generalizations of past anthropology, such as that of Kroeber and his students, which is criticized today. The Hickoxes were of mixed, Indian and white descent and held a high social position on the Klamath. For Cohodas, they serve as intriguing examples of how individual histories can distort or avoid categorizations about social position or race. Issues of race and class tension again merge with gender as factors for understanding the Hickoxes's position and success as artists at the turn of the century. This particular approach of Cohodas to interpreting the Hickoxes's work became a point of controversy among some members of the contemporary Native American community of Northwestern California who contested his ideas.⁷⁸ However, Cohodas provided great insight into the role of ethnicity and intermarriage in Northwestern California social relations and the subsequent advantages for the Hickoxes and the effects upon the creation and reception of their baskets.

Using reception theory, Cohodas presented a strong argument that the basket dealer Grace Nicholson supported the individual creativity of Elizabeth Hickox as fine artist while presenting this creativity within the context of traditional basketry

standards.⁷² Cohodas concluded that Nicholson chose to promote Elizabeth Hickox, as she also did Pomo artists the Bensons, as “the greatest weaver, who ever lived of these people.”⁶⁹ This marketing strategy ignored other weavers in order to increase the value of select individuals’ works as fine art, products of artistic genius. Cohodas considered Nicholson’s competition with Abe and Amy Cohn, basketry dealers from Nevada who chiefly promoted the work of Louisa Keyser (Dat-So-La-Lee) as unique and superior to other Washoe weaving.⁷⁰

Although Nicholson did establish a strong patron relationship with Elizabeth Hickox, buying on commission most of her baskets, Cohodas exaggerated the extent to which Nicholson solely supported and promoted Elizabeth’s work rather than that of other weavers. He referred at one point to the fact that basketry was a family enterprise for the Hickoxes and that Nicholson failed to promote Elizabeth’s daughter Louise at the expense of Elizabeth’s reputation.⁷¹ However, Cohodas ignored entirely the other weavers Nicholson supported. Nicholson may not have sold baskets identified by other weavers than Hickox, but she did document them. Evidence I present in Chapter 6 shows that other weavers were recorded in the Nicholson archives at the Huntington Library and her ledger at the Hearst Museum.

As in his earlier writings on Abe and Amy Cohn and Washoe basket weavers, Cohodas built a similar methodological model stressing the solitary relationship between Elizabeth Hickox and Grace Nicholson at the expense of promoting other Klamath River weavers. Nicholson did engage in more correspondence with Elizabeth Hickox than with other weavers and sold Hickox’s work at a much higher value; however, careful study of the Nicholson collection reveals that she worked on

establishing connections with other weavers, photographed them, and documented their work.

Cohodas mentioned that Nicholson promoted Elizabeth Hickox in her sales literature and left out Louise and other weavers.⁷² Yet this promotional literature does not exist in the Nicholson collection and it is not clear what literature Cohodas was referring to, for he did not cite his source. Although Hickox was celebrated for her talent in Nicholson's letters, promotional literature focusing on Elizabeth Hickox solely was not produced as the Cohns did for Keyser. Using his work on the Cohns as a model, Cohodas assumed the sole patronage relationship between Nicholson and Elizabeth Hickox was the key marketing strategy used by Nicholson in the Arts and Crafts period.

Cohodas's generalization that Nicholson promoted only Elizabeth Hickox and not other weavers was maintained in other basketry publications, such as Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks' *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (1997).⁷³ In the introduction, the authors noted that in contrast to the "mass market approach" of the Brizard company, Grace Nicholson "only collected the finest baskets directly from the greatest Indian weavers in California" and that she promoted the "idea of superstar Indian weavers."⁷⁴ I argue that this is an incorrect conclusion and generalization of Nicholson's market strategies. Although she certainly did support and promote the unique, fine art creations of Elizabeth Hickox, her correspondence, diaries, ledger, photographs, and other memorabilia demonstrate that, less than Elizabeth Hickox, Nicholson actively supported other weavers and documented their work. She also used the mass market approach, as well. In fact,

these aspects of Nicholson's role as dealer have been entirely neglected by other scholars.

Similar to his work on Washoe basketry artists, Cohodas' text on the Hickoxes is strong in stylistic analysis and insights into changes in the Hickoxes' basketry style as a result of the Arts and Crafts period. Almost all of his stylistic analysis in conjunction with the particular sociohistorical (and racial) situation of the Hickoxes is limited in its application to this dissertation. What is useful here is his thorough reevaluations of Lila O'Neale's and Grace Nicholson's work and his interpretation of their interaction with Elizabeth Hickox. These reevaluations affected my analysis of O'Neale and Nicholson in relation to other, lesser-known weavers who did not share Elizabeth Hickox's high social status or artistic success. However, I disagree with Cohodas in his analysis of Grace Nicholson. I discuss this point in more depth in Chapter 6.

Other Recent Publications on the Basketry of Elizabeth Conrad Hickox and Recognized Northwestern California Weavers

The exhibition catalogue *Elizabeth Conrad Hickox: Baskets From the Center of the World* (1991), edited by Ron Johnson, Julian Lang, and Coleen Kelley (Marks), presents a completely different perspective on the life and work of Elizabeth Hickox than Cohodas's text. Cohodas's text is also an exhibition catalogue, though it was published at a considerably later date than its exhibit, which was at the Southwest Museum in 1990. The exhibit, *Elizabeth Conrad Hickox: Baskets From the Center of*

the World, was held at Humboldt State University in response to the Southwest Museum's show, which was unable to travel to Arcata. The local community was eager to see Hickox's baskets that had left the area many years ago. Contemporary weavers were inspired by the twenty-two baskets by Elizabeth and four by her daughter, Louise, that were borrowed from private collections and museums from all over California. They had not seen so many examples of Hickox's work at once, and many could not make the trip south to see the Southwest Museum's show.⁷⁹

In the catalogue, excerpts from archival materials provide a sense of Elizabeth's own reactions to her art, such as her letters to Grace Nicholson and her interview with Lila O'Neale. Other voices from the past come from portions of Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed's *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* (1957) and John Harrington's papers. These are followed by transcribed interviews with members of the Northwestern California Native community who had personal recollections or knowledge of Elizabeth Hickox or the Hickox family. The interviews provide many detailed insights into the personality of Hickox and her personal approach to basketry weaving. In comparison to Cohodas' description of Hickox's high social status and economic position, the people interviewed in this catalogue give a sense of the warm and compassionate side of the artist.

In his introduction to *Elizabeth Conrad Hickox (1873-1947): Baskets from the Center of the World*, titled "They are Still Living," Julian Lang described Hickox as a "queen," but he noted that the title is not one of birth, but of behavior. He explained by showing how Elizabeth took care of the underprivileged in her community. He also stressed her strong involvement with her spiritual heritage through ceremony.⁸⁰

By comparing the Humboldt State catalogue with the one by Cohodas for the Southwest Museum, one can see the importance of hearing the Native Northwestern California community's voice as well as that of outside scholars for a comprehensive understanding of the basketry.

Another contribution to Native American perspectives on Northwestern California baskets is Lang's discussion of the spiritual importance of basketry, in "They are Still Living":

Within this cultural context, baskets must be perceived as stemming from a divine prescription, a divine understanding, and ultimately a priceless gift. Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk baskets are products, not just of tradition, but of deep psychic and cultural origins. From the cultural perspective, baskets need to be displayed and are living entities. They are important actors in our traditional ceremonies to Fix the Earth.⁸¹

Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks applied the method of interviewing the Native Northwestern California community in two more exhibits at Humboldt State University. In 1992, they conducted and transcribed interviews with the families of two great 20th-century Yurok weavers, Lena Reed McCovey (1898-1985) and Ethel Jones Williams (1900-1979). Both these weavers were remarkably talented, but their weaving has been known mostly by family members or Brush Dance participants from within the local region. Unlike Elizabeth Hickox, whose finest baskets were sent away to her patron, McCovey's and Williams's work has remained mostly in private, Native American collections in Humboldt County.⁸² The exhibition and catalogue, titled *From Women's Hands* (1992), builds upon Johnson's and Marks' methodology of documenting Native voices about the basketry. They also expand knowledge about accomplished weavers who were not an active part of the non-Native market.

The third, most recent Humboldt State exhibition was *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (1997, revised 1999), focusing upon basketry caps. The exhibition catalogue, again edited by Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, includes a wealth of information about individual weavers, many not well known and mostly from the 20th century after the Arts and Crafts period. Some Arts and Crafts period weavers are included through selections from O'Neale's field notes. Since most of the weavers are from recent generations, this catalogue is composed of transcribed interviews with the artists, themselves, as well as other members of the local Native community. The catalogue provides extraordinary detail of the weaving process and its cultural context. In addition to the interviews, Ron Johnson's introduction to the catalogue offers quite a bit of information about the history of the non-Native market and O'Neale's work.

Washburn's Symmetry Analysis as a Methodological Tool

Rather than working with the Native American community through interviews, Dorothy Washburn documented the baskets in a limited number of museum collections through symmetry analysis. In "Dealers and Collectors of Indian Baskets at the Turn of the Century in California: Their Effect on the Ethnographic Sample" (1984) and "Symmetry Analysis of Yurok, Karok, and Hupa Indian Basket Designs" (1986), Washburn analyzed the impact of the "basketry craze" at the turn of the century upon Native California basket designs. She recognized that the

majority of baskets in museum collections date from this period, even though they are frequently called traditional. The first article presents a summary of the history of collecting during the Arts and Crafts period, which is quite extensive and informative for an article in a periodical.

In the second article, Washburn used symmetry analysis, a technique studying choice in composition and in combinations of basketry motifs, and data collected by Lila O'Neale in 1929 to assess the differences between traditional designs made for Native use and new designs and design systems made for sale to non-Native collectors. She concluded that the designs created for sale to non-Natives were actually rather consistent, resulting in increased homogeneity in basketry at the turn of the century. This homogeneity, in part dictated by collectors in their desire for authenticity, in turn allowed for preservation of tribal identity. Although an intriguing argument, Washburn's thesis is supported by a limited ethnographic sample. This dissertation will expand upon Washburn's work by presenting more in-depth research into the network of relationships formed between weavers and basketry collectors that resulted in basketry change.

Washburn's conclusions are useful in support of this dissertation thesis because they are based upon the fact that the ethnographic paradigm was the dominant point of view when collecting baskets. Although weavers did create new compositions and combinations of motifs, they did so only within the context of what they perceived non-Natives would recognize as "traditional" and would purchase. Originality in choice of motif or motif placement was in a sense hidden from the Arts and Crafts collector. In Chapter 6, I demonstrate how Lila O'Neale's field interviews

can be used to analyze weavers' acceptance of certain levels of creativity within basketry tradition and how weavers also acknowledged the individual creativity of style choices of their neighbors. Washburn also used O'Neale's interviews to assess the level of innovation or tradition within the compositions and motif choice on baskets in the California Academy of Sciences collection. In this dissertation, I use similar information gathered by O'Neale in her interviews, but I apply this information to the search for identifying individual weavers' particular styles and choices regarding the creation of basketry.

Other Sources Outside of Basketry Studies

Other sources that help to illustrate the cultural context of Northwestern California basketry do not include specific references to basketry. They are worth noting, however, as they contribute to recent reevaluations of turn-of-the-20th century perspectives on Northwestern California culture and have affected the development of the dissertation thesis. Thomas Buckley has contributed to recent anthropological writing about Northwestern California, addressing gender issues in his article, "Menstruation and the Power of Yurok Women: Methods in Cultural Reconstruction" (1982). This work reveals the limitations of the male-dominated field of turn-of-the-20th-century anthropology, which also contributed to a restricted understanding of basketry weaving. Another recent scholar, Richard Keeling, in "Kroeber's Yurok Myths: A Comparative Re-evaluation" (1982), pointed out the singular perspective of A.L. Kroeber and his followers when describing Yurok culture.

On the other hand, Grace Nicholson's recording of weavers in basketry documentation, along with Lila O'Neale's novel approach to methodology, both represent the extent to which women's contributions to basketry collecting and studies in the early 20th century can expand the field of basketry studies today. As the historiography of Native Northwestern California changes to include more recognition of lesser-known weavers, these women's unique methods increase research possibilities. I see this dissertation as one way of moving beyond the limitations of the male-dominated field of anthropology and its strong effect upon Northwestern California Native studies that Buckley and Keeling have noted.

Northwestern California Native basketry has not been the subject of many publications. Those sources that exist, however, demonstrate a number of possible methods of study and analysis. In addition, some of the many publications that encompass the ethnography of the region or other aspects of culture, such as ceremonialism, can supplement the historiography.

Recent Critical Studies of Collection History, Collecting Psychology, Travel Writing, Colonialism and Ethnic Tourism

In addition to specific studies addressing Northwestern California, general approaches to collecting, travel writing, and colonialism serve as examples of ways to analyze Grace Nicholson's marketing strategies and their impact upon the reception of Native American basketry and its subsequent presentation in basketry texts. A number of recent publications in cultural studies can be mentioned. I chose a few representatives in order to introduce these recent methods of analysis. For instance, in

the area of traveling writing, I selected Sara Mills's *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991), which is only marginally related to my exploration of Nicholson's travel diaries. Mills's approach to travel writing through both the context of colonialism and the methods of gender studies, however, inspired me to consider Nicholson's travels and their role in the promotion of her basketry business in light of gender studies and colonialism.

Recent writers addressing colonialism and non-Western art collecting have noted the importance of reception theory when analyzing collection history. In *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (1991), Nicholas Thomas argued that if we consider the appropriation of Western material culture by the non-Western "Other" in ethnographic studies, we, in turn, must consider European appropriation of non-Western objects and how European collecting practices recontextualize non-Western objects to convey alterity and colonial agendas. He concluded "that both sides have creatively changed the purposes of abducted treasures, represented the other, and imagined a narrative of contact objectified in artifacts of alterity and artifacts of history."⁸³ Studies in Native American art history, such as W. Jackson Rushing's *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde* (1995), reveal how the reception of Native American cultural objects shifted as Modern artists and art institutions perceived of these objects as "art."

Several recent writers have offered innovative approaches to studying cross-cultural interactions and colonial perceptions of the "Other" that are useful when looking at Grace Nicholson. These include James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and*

Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (1997), along with Mills's *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991) mentioned above. Both texts attempt to break away from perceptions of cross-cultural contact as a static, black-and-white situation of one culture meeting the other. Clifford discussed how travels, both by the ethnographer visiting a culture and by the members of the culture being studied themselves, have been denied in previous scholarship, ignoring the dynamism and fluidity evident in all places and all peoples.⁸⁴

As I discuss in Chapter 5, modes of transportation, such as mule packtrains and ferries, often acted as intercultural methods of communication and exchange, establishing patron relationships for the selling of Native basketry in Northwestern California. Nicholson's travels within this region resulted in her extensive acquisitions as well as her abilities to directly commission Native American art or control its consumption as commodity. Nicholson's development of the individual artist paradigm in marketing baskets resulted from her travel experiences and the dialogue with the Native community created through these travels.

As Clifford pointed out, class and race often determined whether a person was a "traveler" or not in the Victorian period.⁸⁵ In a similar sense, Nicholson's role as bourgeois traveler contributed to the value of her collections. Even though she was accompanied by her assistant, Carrol S. Hartman, by "Friday,"⁸⁶ her Native American assistant, or by one of her Native American companions as she collected, Nicholson was perceived as the independent traveling collector.⁸⁷ Clifford noted the myth of this type of independent bourgeois voyager. However, it was Nicholson's travels, along

with her buyers' perceptions of her intimate exchanges dealing with Native peoples and their basketry, that supported, at least in part, both the success of her curio business and her abilities to document individual weavers. Nicholson's travel experiences added prestige and authenticity to her collecting practices.⁸⁸

Sara Mills approached the topic of women's travel writing of the mid-19th to early 20th centuries through critical and feminist theory. She argued that scholars tend to discuss women travelers to non-Western regions of the world during the height of colonialism as oddities, exceptional "spinsters" working outside the context of their age.⁸⁹ In her text, she placed some examples of these women authors within the discursive structures she described were evident in the larger context of colonialism.

Mills described the different discursive frameworks and pressures in place for women during this late Victorian period. She claimed that British women did not write within the same frameworks as men and that they struggled between contrasting discourses of imperialism and femininity. She concluded, for example, that these women were able to discuss non-Western people more as individuals than as representatives of a race.⁹⁰ Although Mills analyzed women's travel writing from the British Empire, her approach is interesting when considering Grace Nicholson. In addition to being a woman, Nicholson did not work within the framework of professional anthropology, unlike many of the other commercial dealers and museum collectors. Although unpublished, her diaries and letters reveal a discourse affected by her gender, her intimate friendships with weavers, and her status as Arts and Crafts collector working outside of academia.

Nicholson worked alongside academics in the field and engaged in selling her collections to museums as well as private collectors, in a context of colonial hegemony. Although the subject of this dissertation differs quite a bit from Mills' text, it is intriguing that Mills found the women writers of her study ambivalent in their position in relation to colonial power.⁹¹ Sometimes these women supported colonialism through their viewpoints and actions; other times, they adopted an approach that empowered Native peoples at the expense of a colonialist agenda. Throughout Nicholson's writings, she expressed a similar ambivalence between maintaining Native American traditions, whether "old" style baskets or ceremonies, and encouraging change in art and the adoption of a non-Native lifestyle. Another source of ambivalence was her shrewd sense of economics versus her concern for the welfare of her Indian friends and the preservation of knowledge. Nicholson's diaries and correspondence suggest she was divided at times between making a large profit and helping to maintain traditional Native American ways of life.

A certain ambivalence is evident in Nicholson's adoption of the individual artist paradigm and her maintenance of the ethnographic and mass-market approaches. As a woman, non-academic collector, Nicholson was able to establish friendships with Native Americans in Northwestern California, and this close rapport allowed her to expand beyond current popular perceptions about the anonymous weaver of the traditional pre-contact past. Her travels into the region and her active correspondence with weavers and their families contributed to her reevaluation of her collecting practices to include an appreciation of the individual behind the work. The resulting individual artist paradigm in basketry collecting marked a shift away from

the dominant stereotypes of California Native peoples and their baskets presented in Arts and Crafts literature. However, Nicholson's curio operation continued the ethnographic approach, which is also carried through in her diaries and letters as well, and mass-market methods in order to be successful in the competitive business of basketry sales. There also seems to be a certain degree of ambivalence in her continual use of the ethnographic paradigm, as I describe in Chapter 6.

In addition to critiques of travel writing, publications in Collection Studies, an area recently developed in Museum Studies, illustrate how Grace Nicholson fits into the larger framework of types of collecting. The dominant type of collecting practiced by Nicholson and encouraged by her for private collectors was the systematic approach explained below. This approach forms the basis for the ethnographic paradigm that continues to dominate basketry literature today. Both Grace Nicholson's discourse in her diaries and the discourse of her clients in her letters reveal insights into the types of criteria used in acquiring baskets during the Arts and Crafts period and the types of collections created.

Susan M. Pearce, in "Collecting Reconsidered" (1994), listed three categories of collections: Souvenirs, fetishistic collections, and systematic collections.⁹² Despite the rare instance when Nicholson kept a basket for personal remembrance of a trip, person, or event, her collecting and selling practices did not involve souvenir collecting as Pearce described.⁹³ Fetishistic collecting, obsessive and unorganized, is simply the desire to obtain as many objects as possible. Neither Nicholson nor most of her clients appear to fall within this category of collector. An occasional exception exists when reviewing the Nicholson collection, such as a letter from Hazel C. Nevin,

a private collector. Nevin wrote of her own obsessive basket collecting whose origin is “rather vague.” Her collecting habits do not appear to have been particularly “systematic” as she enjoyed collecting a number of baskets for the sheer joy of owning them!⁹⁴ On the other hand, most Arts and Crafts period collectors, including Nicholson, are examples of systematic collectors as is evident through their writings.

Pearce noted several key characteristics of systematic collecting that are easy to identify through the Nicholson collection and are important for understanding her impact as patron in Northwestern California and the reception of baskets. Rather than composed of random samples as in fetishistic collections, systematic collections are organized so as to include an example of each type of object. Representing a complete set, systematic collections illustrate a point about “baskets” or the subject of the collection. Unlike the other two types of collecting which rely upon the personal, emotional response of the collector, systematic collecting involves both collector and an audience, whether the collector’s friends or family or eventually a museum-going public.⁹⁵ Nicholson sought to collect examples to complete sets in a systematic fashion in order to represent either types of basketry or the cultural life of a particular tribe.

This method of collecting, the ethnographic approach, is found at times throughout the history of collecting in the region, as I discuss in Chapter 5. Most of Nicholson’s clients, in turn, strove to complete their collections with representative examples of types of baskets or ones from specific tribes. Later in Nicholson’s life, as her records of individual weavers became more instrumental in selling the works of Elizabeth Hickox, systematic collecting of Arts and Crafts period baskets expanded to

include sets of artists' work. The notion of collecting a set of a specific artist's baskets, however, seems rarely to have continued among non-Native collectors beyond the Arts and Crafts period (after the 1930s).⁹⁶ Even during the Arts and Crafts period, Nicholson's shift in her systematic methods from the ethnographic approach to sets of individual weavers' work remained largely unsuccessful financially. However, as I discussed earlier in the chapter, her attempts to promote Elizabeth Hickox as individual artistic genius affected the subsequent historiography of basketry outside of the local region of Northwestern California.

In "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting," included in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (1994), edited by Susan Pearce, Frederick Baekeland added another characteristic of much systematic collecting: the desire of the collector for "old things" of the past rather than present. Baekeland stressed the symbolic value of objects to collectors and the way collections enhance the reputation and self-definition of the collector.⁹⁷ Collecting objects may involve an identification process⁹⁸ where the collector, as in the case of baskets, identifies with the Indian weaver and a nostalgic and romantic view of the traditional Native American past. This element of the Arts and Crafts collector's attraction to baskets is discussed in Chapter 4. Romanticized images of the Indian weaver supported the anonymous craftswoman maintaining traditions of the past. As a result, buyers were drawn to the ethnographic approach to collecting, supporting tradition, rather than the creative innovation of the individual promoted through the individual artist paradigm.

Baekeland also pointed out that collectors' identification with their collections and desire for past or historic objects may reflect the desire for immortality on the

part of the collector as his or her name remains with the collection when it is acquired by a museum. Thus a collection may be seen as a kind of “self-portrait” of the collector that permanently becomes a part of history as part of a museum collection.⁹⁹ Certainly a collector would want a systematic collection that reflected the dominant values and sentiments held by followers of the Arts and Crafts period. Collectors’ identification with their collections required a secure value for the objects. Nicholson’s lack of success in promoting the individual weaver demonstrates the common perception of the period that sets of individual artists’ baskets held little value in comparison to the ethnographic approach.

Ironically, however, when analyzing weavers’ comments made to Lila O’Neale, documented in her fieldnotes discussed above, individual artistic innovation in basketry, done within the larger context of the traditional art form, was obviously accepted and celebrated by weavers during the Arts and Crafts period. I discuss such views in more depth in Chapter 6. Similar examples of creativity and the changing definition of ethnicity are evident throughout recent literature addressing tourism and the arts. A series of articles published in *Annals of Tourism Research* (1984) addresses the impact of ethnic tourism on non-Western cultures and “re-created ethnicity.” In the introduction to the issue, Pierre L. van den Berghe and Charles F. Keyes noted that tourists visiting host communities are not just interested in the exotic, but also the authentic. However, the authors continued by noting that this is staged authenticity.¹⁰⁰ Even though Nicholson was not an ethnic tourist nor did she sell to tourists, similar desires for authentic art underlied her collecting and marketing. Like ethnic tourists longing for “authentic” examples of other cultures,

Arts and Crafts collectors' desires for "authentic" and "old" baskets reinforced cultural boundaries between Native Americans and Euro-Americans.¹⁰¹

Despite these notions of authenticity promoted by Nicholson, she also supported subtle stylistic change, curio forms and, as Marvin Cohodas has noted of Elizabeth Hickox, creative innovation.¹⁰² In "The Evolution of Tourist Arts," (1984), Nelson H.H. Graburn concluded that the pressure for authenticity encouraged by ethnic tourists does not necessarily result in a decline in arts or loss of power by indigenous artists.¹⁰³ Re-created ethnicities include new, evolving arts that may be interpreted as "authentic." Nicholson, though always seeking to find and purchase "old" baskets in the field, also supported fine, new work displaying innovation. She did this by disguising re-created ethnic art as "authentic" to the potential buyer.

These few examples of recent writings in cultural studies and colonialism, as well as collection history and psychology, provide methods and, in terms of collecting, a framework for looking at Grace Nicholson's collecting practices in Chapter 6 of the dissertation. In order to understand why two paradigms in writing about Northwestern California basketry, the ethnographic approach and the approach of the individual artistic genius of Elizabeth Hickox alone, have remained dominant in recent basketry literature from outside of Humboldt county, we must analyze Arts and Crafts period writers' role in defining popular perceptions of baskets from the region. I introduce the context of the Arts and Crafts period and its respective historiography in the next chapter.

¹ Both Tolowa and Karuk traditional territory extends into Southern Oregon. However, most texts addressing Native American cultures in Oregon included only brief reference, or no reference at all, to the Tolowa and Karuk. See, for example, Carolyn M. Buan and Richard Lewis, editors, *The First Oregonians: An Illustrated Collection of Essays on Traditional Lifeways, Federal-Indian Relations, and the State's Native People Today* (Portland: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 1991). The Shasta, eastern neighbors of the Karuk, also lived in Oregon as well as California. I do not address the Shasta in this dissertation as I consider them to fall within the Northeastern California culture area. Shasta basketry and Northeastern California basketry, in general, share a similar style with Northwestern California basketry. However, it is distinct enough to form its own regional style.

² For a discussion of the problems with determining the origins of the Karuk language, see William Bright, "Karak," in *Handbook of North American Indians: California*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 180.

³ A rancheria is a small reservation in California, usually just big enough for a small number of residences.

⁴ Pilling, 140. For an account of this early contact and of Tsurai, see Robert F. Heizer and John E. Mills, *The Four Ages of Tsurai: A Documentary History of the Indian Village on Trinidad Bay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bright, 188.

⁷ See James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984) and Jack Norton, *Genocide in Northwestern California: When Our Worlds Cried* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1979).

⁸ Arnold R. Pilling, "Yurok," in *Handbook of North American Indians: California*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 138.

⁹ There are a number of excellent summaries about Northwestern California Native life. See, for example, Clarke Memorial Museum, *The Hover Collection of Karuk Baskets* (Eureka: Clarke Memorial Museum, 1985): 13-26, or Julian Lang, "Introduction," in *Ararapikva: Creation Stories of the People* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1994): 9-31. Lang provided a very personal, informal account from his Native Karuk perspective.

¹⁰ Anyone attending the ceremonial dances today in Humboldt County can taste acorn soup. Most information about the use of basketry in making acorn soup I learned while attending Ron Johnson's course, *Art of the Northwest Coast*, in 1994 and 1995.

¹¹ For an excellent description of the art of carving, see Ira Jacknis, *Carving Traditions of Northwest California* (Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum, University of California, 1995).

¹² See Rupert Costo, "Errors Multiply in Smithsonian Handbook on California," *Indian Historian*, Vol. 12 (3), 1979.

¹³ A similar view is held by Native Northwestern Californians regarding basketry. See "Recent historiography" section below.

¹⁴ For an excellent account of ceremonialism and ceremonial regalia, see Julian Lang, "The Dances and Regalia," in *Indian Regalia of Northwest California* (Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum, University of California, 1994): 14-21.

¹⁵ Ibid. See also Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Humboldt State University, 1997): 216.

¹⁶ *The Hover Collection of Karuk Baskets*, 23. The Flower Dance has been recently revived by Julian Lang and others in the Karuk community.

¹⁷ Albert B. Elsasser, "Wiyot," in *Handbook of North American Indians: California*, Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 156.

¹⁸ Ibid, 162. The Wiyot people massacred at Gunther Island are remembered every year through a candle vigil at the massacre site.

¹⁹ See Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, editors, *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1997). The editors included an interview with Leona Wilkinson. Wilkinson provided much information about her grandmother, Winnie Buckley, a weaver. She also described distinct motifs of Wiyot basketry and the Wiyot weaver's unique use of black rush root rhizomes as a decorative element. She discussed the recent revival of Wiyot weaving and her part in it.

- ²⁰ William Wallace, "Hupa, Chilula, and Whilkut," *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 179.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 177,179.
- ²² Christopher Moser, *American Indian Basketry of Northern California* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1989): 38-39.
- ²³ Wallace, 179.
- ²⁴ See the several essays on individual tribes of Northwestern California from *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978) for discussions about population statistics.
- ²⁵ Richard A. Gould, "Tolowa," in *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 128-130.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 136.
- ²⁷ Johnson and Marks, *Her Mind Made Up*, 216.
- ²⁸ Sandra Corrie Newman, *Indian Basket Weaving: How to Weave Pomo, Yurok, Pima and Navajo Baskets* (Flagstaff: Northland Pub., 1974): 27.
- ²⁹ Marvin Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox*. (Los Angeles: The Southwest Museum and the University of Arizona Press, 1997): xiv. For examples, see also Johnson and Marks, *Her Mind Made Up*.
- ³⁰ Cohodas, 119.
- ³¹ Moser, 44. Moser included an in-depth discussion of the technical style of weaving.
- ³² See Moser and Clarke Memorial Museum, *The Hover Collection*.
- ³³ See Chapter 5.
- ³⁴ Susan Burdick, who teaches weaving classes at Humboldt State University, instructs her class not to weave on their "moon time," during menstruation, according to traditional rules for creating basketry.
- ³⁵ Lila M. O'Neale, *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum, 1932, reprint 1995): 44.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 90-91.
- ³⁷ Craig D. Bates, "Yosemite Miwok/Paiute Basketry: A Study in Cultural Change," *American Indian Basketry*, Vol. 2 (8), 1982: 10, 16.
- ³⁸ Brian Bibby, *The Fine Art of California Indian Basketry* (Sacramento: Crocker Art Museum, 1996): 4.
- ³⁹ *Ibid*, 4-6.
- ⁴⁰ Robert F Heizer, "History of Research," in *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978): 6.
- ⁴¹ Heizer, "History of Research," 7.
- ⁴² Robert F. Heizer, *Two Nineteenth Century Ethnographic Documents on the Wiyot and Yurok of Northwestern California and the Comanches of New Mexico and Texas* (Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, 1973): 1-23.
- ⁴³ Robert F. Heizer, *Northern California Indians: A Reprinting of 19 articles on California Indians Originally Published 1872-1877* (Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, 1975): 1-42.
- ⁴⁴ Heizer, "History of Research," 8.
- ⁴⁵ Several writers referred to the Arts and Crafts period as the "golden age" of basketry collecting or the period of the "basketry craze." See, for example, John M. Gogol, "1900-1910, The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry," *American Indian Basketry*, Vol. 5 (1), 1985: 12-29.
- ⁴⁶ Ira Jacknis, "Introduction: Museum Anthropology in California, 1889-1939," *Museum Anthropology* 17/2 (1993):4.
- ⁴⁷ Joan Berman, *Ethnography and Folklore of the Indians of Northwestern California: A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography* (Salinas: Coyote Press, 1986): 1.
- ⁴⁸ Ira Jacknis, *Carving Traditions of Northwest California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995): 2.
- ⁴⁹ Ira Jacknis, "Alfred Kroeber as Museum Anthropologist," *Museum Anthropology* Vol. 17 (2), 1993: 28-29.
- ⁵⁰ Janet C. Berlo, "Introduction," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992): 11.

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- ⁵¹ Clarke Memorial Museum, 54.
- ⁵² Heizer, "History of Research," 8.
- ⁵³ Berman, 5.
- ⁵⁴ See Berman for a summary of linguistic texts.
- ⁵⁵ Linda L. Eisenhart, "Karak Basketry" Mrs. Phoebe Maddux and the Johnson Collection," M.A. Thesis, George Washington University, 1981:2-3.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 45.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 61.
- ⁵⁸ Ira Jacknis, "'The Artist Himself': The Salish Basketry Monograph and the Beginnings of a Boasian Paradigm," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992): 136.
- ⁵⁹ Margot Blum Schevill, "Introduction," in *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): ix-x.
- ⁶⁰ See Chapter 5.
- ⁶¹ Margot Blum Schevill, "Lila Morris O'Neale: Ethnoaesthetics and the Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers of Northwestern California," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992): 166. Schevill also mentioned age as a possible factor in Kroeber's discouraging O'Neale from pursuing her degree. It is not clear it was a gender issue, though gender did seem to play a role in Kroeber's choice of graduate students.
- ⁶² *Ibid*, 162.
- ⁶³ Schevill, "Introduction," xiii.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid*, xiv. Also see Chapter 3.
- ⁶⁵ Field matrons were women who worked in rural areas among Native American families, introducing Euro-American lifestyles and cultural practices in the hopes of improving living standards. I mention their work in Chapter 6.
- ⁶⁶ See, for example, Sarah P. Turnbaugh and William A. Turnbaugh, *Indian Baskets* (West Chester, Pa.: Schiffer Pub., 1986). For a survey book of Native North American baskets, this book provides a good coverage of materials and techniques.
- ⁶⁷ Virginia M. Fields, *The Hover Collection of Karok Baskets* (Eureka: Clarke Memorial Museum, 1985), 35-36.
- ⁶⁸ Larry Dalrymple, *Indian Basketmakers of California and the Great Basin* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000), 13-17.
- ⁶⁹ Brian Bibby, *The Fine Art of California Indian Basketry* (Sacramento: Crocker Art Museum, 1996), 27.
- ⁷⁰ The catalogue includes a general ethnographic essay by Andrew H. Whiteford and a detailed summary of Cohodas' work on Hickox. *Art of the North American Indians: The Thaw Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 255-261.
- ⁷¹ Marvin Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* (Los Angeles: The University of Arizona Press and the Southwest Museum, 1997), 4.
- ⁷⁵ Cohodas, 36.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 14.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 64.
- ⁷⁸ See the preface of Cohodas.
- ⁷² In the discipline of art history, reception theory involves the analysis of how an object's meaning can be affected by the collector or receiver of the art.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 250. Cohodas did not footnote exactly the source of this quote by Nicholson.
- ⁷⁰ Cohodas, *Basket Weavers*, 251.
- ⁷¹ Cohodas, *Basket Weavers*, 252. It is unclear what promotional material Cohodas was referring to in this section. He did not cite his sources.
- ⁷² *Ibid*, 250-252.
- ⁷³ Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1997), 14. Even though this publication predated Cohodas' text, the authors read his manuscript prior to publication as they had provided me with a copy before 1997. Although they were critical of certain parts of Cohodas' manuscript, they seem to have supported his generalization regarding Nicholson's collecting practices.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ron Johnson, Julian Lang, and Coleen Kelley Marks, *Elizabeth Conrad Hickox (1873-1947): Baskets from the Center of the World* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1991): 7.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 10.

⁸¹ Ibid, 9.

⁸² Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, *From Women's Hands* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1992): 5.

⁸³ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 184.

⁸⁴ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997), 23.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 33.

⁸⁶ Nicholson's diaries referred to her assistant, "Friday," otherwise unidentified. See, for example, July, 14th, 1906, Box 16, Grace Nicholson (GN) Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino. She made obvious references to the literary character in *Robinson Crusoe* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

⁸⁷ A number of loose articles supported this point in Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, Addendum, GN Collection.

⁸⁸ Clifford, 23, 32-35. This point regarding the importance of Nicholson's trips for establishing patronage relationships varies from Cohodas' argument that Nicholson was imitating Abe and Amy Cohn by focusing her support on one artist. Cohodas discussed Nicholson's trips, but not her establishment of patronage relationships with other weavers besides Hickox. Marvin Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* (Los Angeles: University of Arizona Press and Southwest Museum, 1997), 251.

⁸⁹ Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge Press, 1991), 6.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁹¹ Ibid, 10.

⁹² Susan M. Pearce, "Collecting Reconsidered," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 195-202.

⁹³ See, for example, Grace Nicholson. Letter to Alice Pfromm. Requa. 23 July 1908. GN Collection.

⁹⁴ Hazel C. Nevin. Letter to Grace Nicholson. 15 June 1946. GN Collection.

⁹⁵ Pearce, 202.

⁹⁶ Native American collectors did collect the work of specific artists, especially family members. Private collections owned by Native American families in the region today often strongly represent the work of one or two weavers.

⁹⁷ Baekeland, Frederick, "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 206-207.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 210.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 217

¹⁰⁰ Pierre L. Van den Berghe and Charles F. Keyes, "Tourism and Re-created Ethnicity," *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 11 (3), 1984: 349. See also in the same issue, Nelson H.H. Graburn, "The Evolution of Tourist Arts," *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 11 (3), 1984: 393-419.

¹⁰¹ See Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade*, 33

¹⁰² Ibid, 267-268.

¹⁰³ Graburn, "The Evolution of Tourist Arts," 415.

Chapter 4: Introduction to The Arts and Crafts Movement in California and the Support of the Ethnographic Paradigm

Between 1880 and 1930, the period often referred to as the “Basketry craze” or “golden age of basketry collecting,”¹ Euro-American collectors avidly purchased California Native basketry, along with other examples of Native North American baskets and art. The extensive curio trade during this period reflected a nostalgic sentiment for the simple, pre-industrial life of the Native American. Many private collectors were also participants in the contemporaneous Arts and Crafts movement. Arts and Crafts ideology embodied idealistic notions of life and art free from the effects of industrialization, supporting a similar view of Native American cultures. Arts and Crafts followers turned Native American baskets into mythic creations reflecting stereotypes of the Noble Savage.

In actuality, Arts and Crafts period discourse represents a response to rapid changes occurring in modern life and American culture at the turn of the century, especially in cities. Followers of the American Arts and Crafts movement did not support a return to pre-industrial life, whether for Native Americans or Americans, in general. On the other hand, they promoted the values of a simpler, pre-industrial culture, such as “traditional”² Native American communities, as a way to improve modern life and smooth its transition into the modern, industrial, capitalist forms they saw as inevitable results of progress. Although Arts and Crafts supporters idealized Native American cultures and arts, they also actively promoted the assimilation of Native Americans into the American industrial work force. While Native Americans

living at the time of the Arts and Crafts Movement were encouraged to assimilate to mainstream American life through education and wage labor, basketry collectors of the period romanticized the art of basketry as a skill of the past done by the anonymous Indian basket weaver.

Beginning in the 19th century, anthropologists tended to explain the development of culture from an evolutionary perspective. Pre-industrial cultures were believed to represent an early, childlike phase of humanity. Although eventually replaced by cultural relativism in the early 20th century, the evolutionary perspective of Native American cultures persisted in popular literature of the period. These cultures recalled past eras of Western civilization and a simpler, happier time before the advent of urban and industrial living. Arts and Crafts period writers interpreted Native cultures as less developed than European cultures. As a result, they supported educational reform and programs designed to help Native American people become integrated into Euro-American society.³

Simultaneously, these same writers embraced aspects of traditional Native American life and culture, especially the art of basketry, as a solution to the lack of aesthetic and moral meaning within the Arts and Crafts home. Native California baskets appealed to Euro-American collectors, because they suggested principal themes of the Arts and Crafts movement. As a result, followers of the Arts and Crafts movement mourned what they saw as the inevitable loss of Native American cultures due to the impact of modernity. They embraced the common stereotype of the period of the “vanishing Indian.” This recognition of losing Native American cultural

wisdom added to the enthusiasm for collecting basketry before it disappeared forever.⁴

Ironically, basket collectors and writers lamented the loss of the art form but acknowledged only a handful of the weavers working at the time. Basketry was analyzed and recorded through the ethnographic paradigm without reference to the individually named weaver. This was the cultural context in which Grace Nicholson collected, recorded and sold her baskets. Though recognizing weavers and working with them as a patron helped Nicholson's basketry business expand, using the individual artist paradigm in sales would not have been readily encouraged by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The only exception to this is the possibility of promoting a master weaver, such as Elizabeth Hickox. Nicholson would have seen this model of basketry sales and promotion with Abe and Amy Cohn and their support of Louisa Keyser in Nevada.⁵ However, Nicholson did record other weavers' works and may have tried to sell them that way. Not until 1929, near the end of the Arts and Crafts period, did Lila O'Neale instigate her ethnoaesthetic approach, and even then her published thesis did not include the weavers' names.⁶

This chapter will describe some of the reasons for the popular appeal of Native American basketry and the ethnographic approach at the turn of the 20th century in order to provide a foundation for further study of the specific context of collecting Northwestern California basketry during the Arts and Crafts period. The historiography of the Arts and Crafts period, in general, includes insights into how the Arts and Crafts movement mirrors the larger cultural and social context of turn-of-the-20th century America. These insights help to illustrate the popular appeal of

basketry as an ethnographic source about traditional Native life and the romantic stereotype of the anonymous weaver of the past. Periodical literature of the Arts and Crafts period exemplifies how Native American baskets were recontextualized to fit into Arts and Crafts interior design and to express values sought for the Arts and Crafts home. These values required seeing the baskets as functional objects that ideally served a traditional use within the weaver's home rather than as pieces made for sale. While baskets were incorporated into the Arts and Crafts home, their traditional ethnographic function was also important because of the romantic stereotypes of Native cultures at the time. They represent the ways in which Euro-Americans perceived of Native Americans through a myth of the "primitive" rather than as contemporary individual artists.

The Myth of the "Primitive"

The myth of the "primitive" embodied by the Arts and Crafts movement is an enduring stereotype of the Noble or Romantic Savage. The Native American as Noble Savage represents all the virtues of humanity unspoiled by civilization. In *The White Man's Indian* (1978), Robert Berkhofer, Jr., traced the story of this popular stereotype. Berkhofer described how the image of the Noble Savage was used by Europeans to criticize their own culture during particular historic periods, such as the Enlightenment.⁷ More recent authors, such as Brian Dippie and Julie Schimmel, have expanded upon Berkhofer's analysis of Euro-American perceptions of Native Americans. Schimmel discussed how images of Native Americans in the 19th century represent either the "good" Indian, the Noble Savage, or "bad" Indian according to

the particular historic period. Dippie showed how stereotypes of Native Americans reflect and support U.S. policy towards Indians and justify Western expansion.⁸

Similar to Berkhofer's view that Europeans saw Native American cultures as a critique of their own culture, followers of the Arts and Crafts movement appropriated Native American baskets, as well as other arts of Native cultures, as visual symbols of their opposition to or critique of industrial American society. The image of the Noble Savage expressed a general opposition to the problems created by industrialism, which the Arts and Crafts movement attempted to address. Rather than presenting an accurate picture of turn-of-the-20th century Native American life or recognizing many of the individual weavers working at the time, Arts and Crafts followers described the ideal, pre-contact Noble Savage in order to support their social and aesthetic agendas. The ethnographic paradigm adopted by collectors of Northwestern California basketry discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 fits neatly into this picture of the appeal of the Noble Savage.

Other scholars discussed primitivism from varying perspectives. Primitivism has been analyzed through the impact of artistic appropriation of non-Western art styles and traditions by European and Euro-American artists.⁹ The study of primitivism or the myth of the "primitive" also reveals how popular stereotypes of Native Americans or other non-Western cultures can be perpetuated through popular or fine art illustrations.¹⁰ A typical approach in recent writings, such as Sally Price's *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (1989) or Marianna Torgovnick's *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (1990), is to analyze European or Euro-

American/Canadian perceptions of the “Other” in order to better understand Western appropriation of “primitive” art and cultures.

These ideas concerning the Noble Savage and its use as a form of critique of Western culture and a means of gaining insight into European perceptions of the “Other” are very valuable for understanding the Arts and Crafts movement and its appropriation of Native American arts. However, other interpretations of the myth of the “primitive” attempt to move away from binary constructions of “us” and “them” (the “Other”) or “good” versus “bad” Indian.¹¹ These authors, such as Molly Mullin discussed below, see issues of class relevant to a particular historical era as adding complexity beyond binary constructions that contribute to the promotion and reception of Native American art.

The American Arts and Crafts Movement

The American Arts and Crafts movement had its origins in the British Arts and Crafts movement, though fundamental differences between the two national movements exist.¹² Responding to the Industrial Revolution, most followers of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain believed that design reform in art could support and contribute to positive change in industrial society. By removing the divisions between art and industry, current societal problems would be relieved.¹³ A form of utopian socialism, the British Arts and Crafts movement was a response to harsh working conditions of the poor and the resulting bad designs evident on commercially mass-produced objects.¹⁴ Ideally, the designer and maker of an object should be the same person.

This idea of the union of designer and maker appealed to Americans at the time, because they increasingly found their work fragmented, with a reduced sense of autonomy and control. American Arts and Crafts followers sought relief from the boredom of office work, especially the upper classes who now worked only with their intellect, not their hands. They idealized manual labor. Many turned to the image of the pre-industrial artisan, like the medieval worker, and the ideal image of wholeness in the work of handcrafted art.¹⁵ The British Arts and Crafts movement featured the revival of past artistic traditions based upon the ideals of the pre-industrial artisan. A similar fascination with past handcrafted traditions and artisans carried over into the American Arts and Crafts movement, including a strong interest in America's own pre-industrial past of Native America. Ironically, despite the ideal image of the worker and revived appreciation for handcrafted work, the American Arts and Crafts Movement's embrace of the pre-industrial Native American past did not include acknowledgement of the contemporary Native artist.

These idealized notions of pre-industrial workers were rooted in the Arts and Crafts struggle for moral reform both in the home and the workplace. Moral reforms through art of British artist-philosophers, such as John Ruskin, William Morris, Thomas Carlyle, and Augustus Pugin, were a major source of inspiration for the American Arts and Crafts movement. Their writings, particularly those of Ruskin and Morris, were widely read in the United States at the end of the 19th century.¹⁶ Some of the key promoters and writers of the American Arts and Crafts movement, including Charles Eliot Norton, professor of Fine Arts at Harvard University, Oscar Lovell Triggs, University of Chicago professor, Edward Pearson Pressey, founder of the Arts

and Crafts community of New Clairvaux, and Gustav Stickley, publisher of *The Craftsman* (1901-1916), depended heavily upon the ideas of Ruskin and Morris in shaping the American Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁷ These writers and the moral messages embedded in their writings about art and design, in turn, influenced the tone of moral reform evident in writings addressing Native American basketry of the period. The prime example of this is the publications of basketry enthusiast George Wharton James, which I discuss later in the chapter.

Unlike the ideas of Ruskin and Morris in Britain, the principal agenda of the American Arts and Crafts writers was not to remove the harsh realities of industrialism for the working class through utopian socialism. Since the American Arts and Crafts movement was created and supported by the upper and middle classes, the center of critical attention was the bourgeois home, and the movement supported cultural hegemony of the upper classes. Improving working conditions and lifestyle for the poor and immigrant families was instrumental to relieving class tensions and for maintaining the current class divisions by helping to ease the plight and discomfort of the working class. The emphasis was not on removing class distinctions and industrialism, as in British Arts and Crafts ideology, but in easing class tensions and maintaining the status quo. In essence, the main issue of the American Arts and Crafts movement was “the wise use of the machine rather than its rejection.”¹⁸

Typical of this attempt to help the Native American worker by improving lifestyle while encouraging assimilation is the work of the field matrons of the Northern California Indian Association, a branch of the non-profit Woman’s National

Indian Association, a group supporting Indian rights and education. Letters written in the early 1900s by field matrons, such as Marie Johnson, who resided at Requa, Northwestern California, were published in *The Indian's Friend*, a journal of the National Indian Association. Certainly with good intentions, the field matrons introduced new skills like sewing and baking bread to help Indian women adjust to white society. They saw basketry as a means for making an economic exchange or for acquiring non-Native goods; it was not encouraged for its artistic value or for traditional cultural use. It was used to ease Indian women through the larger transition to Euro-American society.¹⁹ Field matrons appreciated basketry as an art of the past that had limited applications in helping Native women assimilate to White culture. This notion of basketry as a tool for transformation and change reflects some of the ways historians, such as T.J. Jackson Lears, have characterized the American Arts and Crafts movement in general.

In *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (1981), T.J. Jackson Lears argued that the aim of the American Arts and Crafts movement was accommodation. Even though it was a response against modern overcivilization, it encouraged a transformation of modern culture that actually supported bourgeois social structure and hegemony in an age of progress. A prime example of this point was the support for manual training in public schools by Arts and Crafts followers. Manual training was a means of social control of the lower classes as well as immigrants and Native Americans.²⁰ On the surface, the dominant theme of the American Arts and Crafts movement was psychic renewal

for the individual worker; in practice, it reaffirmed modern class distinctions through its social programs.²¹

Arts and Crafts periodicals featured articles that reveal the unconscious intentions as well as the conscious objectives of the followers of the movement. Some of the general points presented above about the Arts and Crafts period can be illustrated through quotes from periodical literature. The concern of Arts and Crafts intellectuals to improve working conditions for the lower classes and immigrants, as a way of relieving class tensions and maintaining morale for the working class, is evident in “John Ruskin,” an article about the British writer in a 1901 edition of *The Craftsman*. The author, Irene Sargent, an art historian from Syracuse University active in promoting the Arts and Crafts movement, described the potential for social unrest between classes due to poor working conditions. What can result

from a man, the play of whose intelligence is confined to the endless repetition of a single mental process, and whose physical exercise is restricted to the working of certain unvarying muscles?” He “will develop morbidly, and his mind will offer a resting-place for destructive and chaotic ideas...being not without personal claims to dignity and power, he becomes an insurrectionist, perhaps even a perverser and a criminal.”²²

In another article in *The Craftsman* from 1906, Gustav Stickley, the magazine’s publisher, an avid spokesman for the Arts and Crafts, clearly stated the social agenda underlying the aesthetic objectives of the movement. He wrote:

When a useful thing is beautifully made, and the user and maker have equal interest in the making, a point of contact is at once established between the one who has the power to make it and the other who has the means to possess it, and mutual respect and friendliness spring up between the two.²³

This passage suggests Stickley's belief that fine workmanship when appreciated and encouraged by the upper and middle classes will contribute to the happiness of the worker and social stability between classes.

A similar idea existed in the support for manual labor training and artistic pursuits for Native Americans during the Arts and Crafts period. As a handcrafted art suitable for the Arts and Crafts home, basketry was a means of both economic support and joyful labor for Native American women. Although it was a symbol for the pre-industrial past, basketry was a skill that could help Native Americans to make the transition into the Euro-American market economy. In addition to the traditional arts of basketry or weaving, other skills, such as the construction of Arts and Crafts furniture at the Sherman Institute, encouraged Native Americans to assimilate into the Euro-American work force through enjoyable and aesthetically appealing craftsmanship. Some Arts and Crafts writers saw manual labor training as a possible saving grace for Indian workers. In "The Indian Woman as a Craftsman," from a 1904 issue of *The Craftsman*, Constance Goddard Du Bois lamented the loss of "primitive" Native American working methods:

Let our students of industrial conditions consider the factors of primitive industry, and reproduce them so far as is possible in modern life. Only by an effectual resistance to the leveling tendencies of industrial organization, as at present practised, only by a return to the freedom of individual expression, can we regain that blessing to the craftsman, the lost joy in labor.²⁴

However, she also sees the potential for training Native Americans in non-Native industries.

Since their contact with civilization has deprived the Indians of almost all their native industries by destroying the balance of primitive economics, and robbing them equally of materials and opportunities for work, the introduction of the white man's industrial arts has been tried of late as a means of salvation for the remnants of a perishing race. Under these circumstances, the white man's industry, however exotic or inappropriate in theory, becomes a means of salvation both to life and character... (for the Native American).²⁵

Lears discussed the importance of antimodernist thinking in turn-of-the-20th century America for the upper and middle classes not as a means of escapism, but as a complement to their enthusiasm for material progress. Antimodernism, the main sentiment of American Arts and Crafts supporters, can certainly be seen as a reaction to the dominant faith in positivism of the 19th century and a longing to return to the primitivist roots of art and culture. However, as Lears argued, these supporters, as educated intellectuals of the bourgeois and upper classes, express the needs and desires of a particular class and power position. Lears wrote, "Antimodernists were far more than escapists: their quests for authenticity eased their own and others' adjustments to a streamlined culture of consumption."²⁶ American antimodernists of the Arts and Crafts period sought to improve the resulting conditions of capitalism and industrialism and to maintain their positions of power and class distinct from the working class.

Throughout the 19th century, Americans celebrated the potential of technology to expand both the powerful position of America as a nation and to improve the comforts of everyday life. As many Arts and Crafts followers sought to accommodate machines and technology into their movement, the trend of a machine age continued into the 20th century with radical changes to transportation with the automobile and

the home with electricity. The railroad was perhaps the greatest American symbol for technological growth.²⁷

The expansion of the railroad into the American West contributed to the growing fascination with the cultural heritage of the West as well as a general enthusiasm for California and the Southwest.²⁸ Native American cultures and art became a popular part of this enthusiasm and closely integrated into American Arts and Crafts ideology. This supported the fundamental difference between the American Arts and Crafts movement and the socialist objectives of Ruskin and Morris as well as others of the British Arts and Crafts movement. Although Americans celebrated Native American life as their country's past achievements, they supported Western expansion and corporate development.

For the American Arts and Crafts movement, Native American cultures and art were tied closely to national identity. Appropriation of Native American art of the Far West, such as California, or the Southwest, represented Americans' desires to shift away from European cultural identification so prevalent in the Northeast. Attempts were made at this time to create a distinctly American cultural identity and the indigenous arts of Native America suited well this agenda.²⁹ Part of this appropriation of Native American art as national identity included a glorification of the ideal Native American past as America's ancient history.

Wanting to replace Europe's historical roots with a distinctly American past, Arts and Crafts followers admired traditional Native American cultures. But this admiration was of pristine art and cultures, devoid of the influence of Euro-American society. The ethnographic paradigm was the only approach suitable for the Arts and

Crafts movement. Recognizing the individual weavers, who, when documented, were recorded with their anglo names or husband's anglo names, did not fit within this pristine image of America's past. Basketry as an ancient American art form was created by the anonymous tribal woman, closely integrated with her natural surroundings. As signs of America's past, baskets were not documented as contemporary creations done by recognized individual weavers.

The Arts and Crafts Movement's Roots in the Victorian Domestic Ideal

Despite the difference in social agenda between the two national movements, Arts and Crafts followers in both Britain and America were concerned with what they saw as a degeneration of morality, especially threatening within the bourgeois family structure.³⁰ The issue of morality within the home originated in the Victorian domestic ideal. With the rise of capitalism, Victorian families celebrated the home as an environment for moral development and as a haven for men from the harsh, competitive reality of Victorian society. A clear division between home and work, women's and men's spheres, characterized Victorian culture. Women became the guardians of morality in the home, while men saw the home as the embodiment of their longings for escape from the commercial world. The Victorian domestic ideal also encouraged a position of cultural and psychological power and influence for women over men in the home.³¹

The Arts and Crafts philosophy of the bourgeois home was built upon the Victorian domestic ideal through its attempts to preserve the moral function of the home environment and the housewife. The turn of the 20th century marked a period of

changing perceptions of identity for women as more of them entered the work force outside the home while others fought for women's suffrage. Americans of the time were caught in an ambiguous position in terms of gender roles in society as well as ambivalent feelings regarding expanding technological change, urban growth, raising immigrant populations and the overall effects of modernism. While women became more visible outside the home, the workplace also changed through economic developments, the impact of universal expositions and world's fairs, the establishment of corporations, the creation of a new middle, professional class, and other changes resulting from the shift to a consumer society.³²

The Victorian domestic ideal and the position of the bourgeois family were threatened by these changes. The Arts and Crafts movement included rhetoric in support of the Victorian domestic ideal and morality in the home partially in reaction to the ambivalence of the period. Followers of the movement reinforced the image of the Victorian domestic ideal in their writings. Ironically, some of these followers, such as the dealer, Grace Nicholson, worked in jobs outside of the home and represented some of the new opportunities open for women at the turn of the 20th century. Basketry collectors provided new economic support for Native American weavers as well. Despite these changes for women, the Arts and Crafts writers did not challenge the concept of the housewife as integral to the Victorian domestic ideal.³³

This ambivalence towards the complexity of modern American society and the shifting position of women is reflected in the marketing strategies and perceptions of basketry by women collectors during the Arts and Crafts period. The Native American weaver was seen as an ideal homemaker of the pre-industrial past.

Weaving baskets was part of her moral duty to family and tribe. Her sense of pattern and her abilities to work natural materials into pleasing forms made her a moral guidepost for the modern woman. But in order to be this ideal craftswoman of the past, she was not recognized as an individual living and creating new work today. Rather her work was seen as only an ethnographic example of traditional cultural practices.

Perhaps the best example of an Arts and Crafts writer who captured the moral implications of basketry aesthetics for the domestic sphere is George Wharton James, who wrote numerous articles praising the art during his basketry collecting career. In his book, *What the White Race May Learn From the Indian* (1908), James discussed favorably only weavers of traditional work of the past and condemned the work of the current age that had been corrupted by outside influence. He described the “traditional” artist and her aesthetics:

Turning to Nature for her original inspirations she is not a mere copyist of what others have done. All her forms are based upon utility and therefore meet the first and highest requirement of all art when applied to articles that are to serve a useful purpose, viz., adaptation to use. There is no reversal of principles in manufacture, as is so often the case with white workers who value appearance, so-called ornament, finish, etc., rather than adaptation to purpose or utility. Wherever anything is allowed to usurp the place of this primary element, the work is doomed even before it is made. On the other hand, frankness, honesty, simplicity, directness, characterize the manufactures of the Indian. They are to serve such and such a purpose; that purpose is openly denoted. The result is that, to the unperverted eye, the artistic work of the unspoiled Indian is as perfect in form as it can be. There is no wild straining after unique effect; no fantastic distortions to secure novelty; everything is natural and rational, and therefore artistically effective.³⁴

For James, and for many other Arts and Crafts period authors and collectors, the moral appeal of Native American basketry lay in its purity and usefulness to traditional ways. It is not about artistic novelty or individual creativity. James celebrated ideal qualities of Indian womanhood, not the individual weaver behind the basket. The continuation of the Victorian domestic ideal in the Arts and Crafts movement supported the ethnographic approach to collecting Native American baskets and the denial of the individual weaver's identity. This is because Native American basketry symbolized the perfect merger of form, motif, and function that represented the Indian woman's ideal role within the domestic sphere as homemaker, not as innovative artist. The basket weaver became a model for the Victorian and Arts and Crafts period homemaker. As a symbol of this role, the basket was not praised as a unique artistic creation, but rather as a functional object. According to James, because the basket was purely functional, and thus beautiful, it served as a useful model for the white homemaker.

Incorporation of Native American basketry into the Arts and Crafts Home

Another aspect of the American Arts and Crafts period that is similar to the movement in Britain is the interest in earlier pre-industrial art from various historic periods and exotic, handcrafted art from non-Western cultures. The British Arts and Crafts movement revived various folk arts of England, as well as promoted an interest in Asian and East Indian art. These alternatives to contemporary Western art were collected and displayed in the home as a means of exemplifying the virtues of a pre-industrial society and the beauty of the handcrafted object.

American folk arts, such as Appalachian women's quilting, and immigrant arts, such as Italian lacemaking and embroidery, evoked similar sentiments.³⁵ An interest in promoting the folk arts of immigrant groups represented the Arts and Crafts collectors' concern for improving the work ethic, especially in America.³⁶ By reviving folk arts, immigrant workers would be more content in their industrial occupations. Moral satisfaction would result from an association between handicrafts and labor.³⁷ A similar justification logically applied to Native American weavers, who were encouraged to revive basketry as an economic source while also pursuing manual labor and non-Native educational opportunities. For an example of how Arts and Crafts period collectors encouraged assimilation, see the section on Ruth Roberts in Chapter 5.³⁸ Reflecting these issues, Arts and Crafts period homes incorporated Native American baskets into interior design.

The popularity of Native American basketry in American homes was evident earlier in the 19th century, prior to the Arts and Crafts movement, with the increase in ethnic tourism of the Victorian period.³⁹ Experiencing Native cultures offered an exotic appeal and became a common part of tourism in Western North America.⁴⁰ Throughout the 19th century, Native American artists responded to this growing interest in ethnic tourism by creating more basketry for the tourist market. In a Victorian home, collectors often exhibited souvenirs randomly in a bric-a-brac display filled with a wealth of objects, or as part of a curio cabinet representing exotic specimens of natural history and ethnology. Another common type of Victorian display was the cozy corner. A corner of a room was decorated with a number of objects that often suggested a theme, such as Native American art.⁴¹ Typically, Native

American baskets were not integrated into the larger design scheme for the Victorian home interior.

This interest in ethnic tourism and the collecting of Native American art during the Victorian period provided a foundation for the later enthusiasm for Native peoples and their art expressed by followers of the Arts and Crafts movement⁴². However, rather than isolating examples of Native basketry in a bric-a-brac display, curio cabinet or cozy corner, the Arts and Crafts collector incorporated basketry and designs inspired by Native California basketry into an Arts and Crafts aesthetic and the entire interior design of a room.

Another aspect of the Victorian home that was carried over into the Arts and Crafts period was the potential of interior design to embody moral values. Home interiors could function as a didactic tool, creating an environment that would encourage a proper Victorian lifestyle and family values. The home served as an escape from the stress of urban and industrial society.⁴³ The Arts and Crafts movement included a similar assessment of interior design. The inside of a home, decorated with handcrafted objects, would suggest the advantages of a pre-industrial and simple life. The didactic implications of Arts and Crafts philosophy originated in the utopian socialism of the British Arts and Crafts movement and in the Victorian domestic ideal discussed above. Certain visual characteristics of the American Arts and Crafts home, however, distinguish it from these earlier models.

In the American Arts and Crafts home, simplicity of decoration and design was achieved through unity of design between furniture and architecture and through dedicated, straightforward, and simple craftsmanship. The natural finish of materials,

as well as organic motifs, suggested a close tie with nature. Décor was kept to a minimum in contrast to that of the Victorian home, and handcrafted objects were emphasized. As in Britain, in addition to art of Native America, art from many other non-Western places, such as parts of Asia and the Middle East, decorated American Arts and Crafts period homes as a way of demonstrating the value and beauty of handcrafted work and manual labor.⁴⁴

American Arts and Crafts participants considered Native American art to be an integral part of interior design. They wanted design to complement or accent the utilitarian function of an object. On Native American basketry, decorative motifs emphasized the shape or materials of an artwork. By extension, these motifs were applied to other Arts and Crafts artwork, such as silver pieces, and into the larger design scheme for a room in order to suggest the simple and functional beauty of the American Arts and Crafts style. This was especially apparent in California. In “Bungalow Life: The Cost of Living It,” from *Sunset*, January, 1913, Charles F. Saunders wrote that a California home should include

rugs and couch-covers in cheerful colors, Oriental or Indian; Indian ollas of quaint designs for flower holders; Indian baskets set here and there for receptacles or hung on the walls as plaques...all such things help to give the unconventional touch which goes with bungalow living.⁴⁵

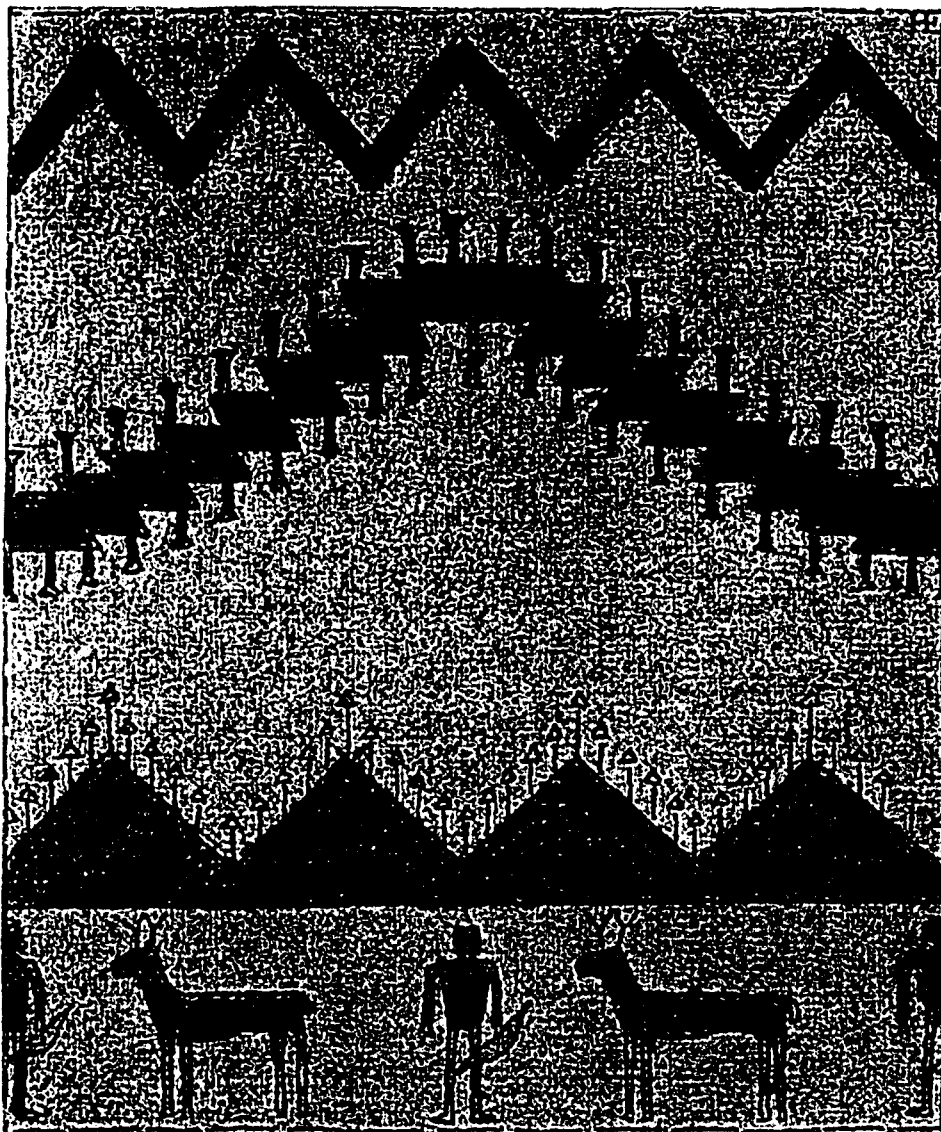
Arts and Crafts promoters did not just include examples of Native American basketry in the home. They also adapted basketry motifs to wallpaper, curtains, and other aspects of interior design in order to create a harmonious environment. For example, Mary W. Mount, in her article, “Fitting Up the Summer Bungalow,” in *House*

Beautiful, August, 1911, suggests ways in which draperies and other décor may use or blend with Native American basketry patterns.

Arts and Crafts period writers advocated the use of Native American designs in interior spaces as a way of instigating domestic moral reform through the teaching potential of these designs. For example, in “Nursery Wall Coverings In Indian Designs,” from the October, 1903, issue of *The Craftsman*, an anonymous writer explains the didactic potential of basketry motifs used as wallpaper in a child’s room. Illustrations from the article, such as “The Happy Hunting Grounds,” incorporate California basketry patterns (Illustration 13). The writer suggested that the childlike and simple designs were especially appropriate for the developing child’s mind, “This study, if rightly presented to the child, will appeal to him through his imagination, and develop him without awakening in him the consciousness that he is doing work.”⁴⁶

An evolutionary approach to culture is evident in this article. Native American basketry patterns were equivalent to a child’s artistic abilities. The author also presented the Arts and Crafts ideal that the home should teach proper aesthetic awareness and an interest in moral values. The writer continued by adding an educational message provided by the use of Indian wallpaper designs. The article concluded,

The beginnings of the stories of races and nations will not be dry and hateful to him [the child], for the memories of his earlier childhood will give him a means of comparison residing in all that he learned, by legend and bright-colored symbol, of the primitive people of his own country.⁴⁷



The happy hunting grounds

Illustration 13: "The Happy Hunting Grounds," from "Nursery Wall Coverings In Indian Designs," *The Craftsman*, October, 1903: 99. Note use of California Indian basketry patterns as geometric designs.

California basketry motifs are appropriated into the overall design of the child's room to evoke the virtues of the Indian past and of his country's history.

Definitions of Basketry as "Art" and Concepts of Authenticity

One of the results of the popularity of Native American baskets within the Arts and Crafts home was the elevation of the utilitarian basket into fine art sculpture. Basketry was no longer simply a product of ethnic tourism of the Victorian period, but purchased often from dealers for home décor. Baskets were not separated into cozy corners, but integrated into the interior design as art. This recognition of the changing status of the basket into artwork rather than tourist curio represented the general shift in the definition of "craft" as "art" during this period.⁴⁸

Several scholars have applied Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "taste" and the distinction between art and craft as a reflection of class tensions, power struggles, and hegemony to the interest in Native American basketry and other arts during the Arts and Crafts period.⁴⁹ In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), Bourdieu suggests that definitions of taste held by classes in a position of power reinforce social control and legitimize inequality. As Arts and Crafts movement promoters redefined Native American basketry as fine art, they in turn helped to build economic independence for Native American women artists who could revive traditional arts and maintain a more traditional, rural life rather than succumb to industrial labor. Discourses addressing Native American basketry during this period, however, reflect the doubts concerning mass-produced commodities and consumer capitalism held by Arts and Crafts followers. For example, a principal fear

voiced in Arts and Crafts literature is of the demise of Native American cultures as Native American artists responded to tourism by becoming mass-producers of cheap souvenirs.⁵⁰ Quality in basketry remains rooted in strict notions of tradition, not in the innovations of individual weavers.

In “The Patronage of Difference: Making Indian Art “Art, Not Ethnology”” (1992), Molly H. Mullin argues that the redefinition of Native American arts as “art” by patrons during the 1920s and 1930s helped to maintain class and racial distinctions and to affirm cultural difference.⁵¹ The idealization of traditional Native American culture, art, and values during the Arts and Crafts period established clear boundaries between races and classes at a time when the potential for those boundaries to break down became ever more present. One of the ways this redefinition affected the creation and reception of Native American arts was a shift from valuing only authenticity to both authenticity and artistic quality.⁵²

Collectors of Native American art did not only seek the “authentic ethnographic artifact,” but also the “fine art basket” that exhibited a high level of technical and artistic skill. This skill, however, had to be rooted in tradition in all aspects. This explains the rise in the 1920s and 1930s of philanthropic organizations primarily concerned with maintaining and reviving quality of Native American art and to protect the art from degradation due to commercial dealers. These organizations, such as the Southwest Indian Art Association, and their sponsored Indian art shows, created an alternative to commercialism and, in the case of Southwest Native American arts, more opportunity for individual innovation through artistic freedom.⁵³

With the new appreciation of Native American baskets as fine art, why were the baskets of Northwestern California not more widely identified by the individual weaver? Grace Nicholson did try to cater to this trend in appreciating the baskets as art by recording weavers' names and using weaver's identification in selling baskets, especially Elizabeth Hickox. The ethnographic paradigm, however, remained the most widely applied method in basketry collecting and sales by Nicholson and others. Rather than the artistic freedom as an alternative to commercialism supported in the Southwest, conformity to tradition in materials, technique and style were the signs of authenticity for Northwestern California baskets. The strict attitudes held by Arts and Crafts followers against commercialism and innovation away from tradition resulted in the continuation of the ethnographic paradigm with an added appreciation of technical and artistic skill. The creative input of the individual weaver was deemphasized unless one was addressing a master weaver, such as Hickox. The ethnographic paradigm resulted in valuing the basket from a traditional perspective that allowed little room for individual innovation. Authenticity of a basket, even as a work of fine art, was through its connection with a romanticized Indian past and with its maintenance of tradition.

Gender Ideology and the American Arts and Crafts Movement

Other changes in the domestic environment from the Victorian period to the Arts and Crafts Movement suggest the larger social, cultural and political contexts regarding gender roles at the turn of the 20th century. Native American baskets exhibited in the Arts and Crafts home play a part in this shifting domestic

environment. The collecting of baskets as well as their placement in the home can convey information about gender ideology of the period, especially regarding the position of women.

During the Arts and Crafts period, white women who pursued crafts, such as pottery or basketry, became artists with the potential of gaining professional status.⁵⁴ The presence of Native American baskets as art integrated into interior design was a potent symbol of the changing status of women's crafts and of women's position both within the family structure and in the larger social context. As professional opportunities for women increased, clear gender roles within and outside of the domestic environment also shifted.⁵⁵ In addition to creating more economic opportunities for women, the Arts and Crafts movement reevaluated the common notion of the artist as "lone genius." As more non-Native women were recognized as artists and as crafts were redefined as art, communal approaches to artistic process were welcomed, breaking down the former marginality and special status of the artist's position in the 19th century.⁵⁶

A similar shift in gender ideology of the period is reflected through the changing position of Native American women weavers as they increasingly engaged with buyers from outside of the Native community. In turn, Native American arts traditionally created by women, including weaving, rugmaking, bead embroidery, and basketry, became popular arts and crafts of Euro-American women of the period because of the association of these arts with the female gender.

Native American women and their arts became ideal symbols of womanliness and femininity at the end of the 19th century. One of the principal and earliest sources

of this symbolism was the popular novel, *Ramona*, written by Helen Hunt Jackson in 1884. The novel criticized federal policy towards the indigenous peoples of California. As a result, it sparked much interest in a reform movement to improve the conditions and the treatment of Native Americans. However, the image Jackson created of Ramona was of a female “Noble Savage,” a basket weaver in tune with the natural world. It reflected the ideal woman of domesticity as expressed by the Arts and Crafts movement. Many subsequent images of Native American women in 19th-century popular literature were clearly based upon Jackson’s Ramona as a symbol appropriate for proper womanly virtues.⁵⁷

The image of the Indian basket weaver providing for her family became the ideal of the domestic woman for non-Native women readers, reaffirming an essentially conservative view of women’s place within the home.⁵⁸ Ironically, while the Arts and Crafts movement expanded opportunities for women, Native and non-Native, to work outside of the domestic realm, the movement’s supporters continued to value domesticity for women as their highest calling. As a result, American Arts and Crafts followers ignored economic realities and social changes taking place for women at the time.⁵⁹

Middle and upper class women turned for inspiration to immigrant women and their traditional arts, which the upper classes attempted to support through public programs, as well as Indian basket weavers. Settlement houses were established by bourgeois women to aid immigrant workers and to help revive their traditional arts. For example, in Boston, Denison House promoted traditional Italian arts for immigrant women to teach and to learn. Often women involved with establishing

these settlement houses also belonged to organizations for women's suffrage.⁶⁰ As women's suffrage represented individual freedom for women, these traditional immigrant women's crafts represented a means for financial and professional freedom for some women. These changes drew women of all classes into the public domain and, at the same time, brought them together in common pursuit, creating supportive bonds. In "Crossing Boundaries: The Gendered Meaning of the Arts and Crafts" (1993), Eileen Boris described this bond for middle and upper-class women:

The social settlement houses and suffrage parlors were decorated with craftsman furniture, as if to express their solidarity with the new age of sturdy simplicity that would lessen housework and provide women with more time for public life.

A sisterhood of art, perhaps, was the most significant gain for these middle- and upper-class women. Like other talented women of the day, they found support and understanding in lifelong female friendships, forging a sense of community that developed through networks of friends and common activity.⁶¹

In addition to the women of the middle- and upper-classes, the immigrant, working class women benefited through supportive bonds created with other working class women at settlement houses.

One of the results of the more public lives of women during the Arts and Crafts period was what historian Sara Evans called a "maternal commonwealth that fused public and private concerns, domesticity and politics."⁶² Women struggled to clean up the various problems of society through voluntary associations and through social service work. While women were bringing housecleaning into the public domain, men pursued making and collecting crafts at home as a way of relieving their own sense of the lack of meaning in their work lives. Men also became important collectors of Native American baskets and they extolled the value of these baskets in

the Arts and Crafts home. As a result, the period is also characterized by changing gender roles for men, who played an increasingly larger role in interior design and the incorporation of Native basketry.⁶³

Middle-class women also played an important role in the Arts and Crafts movement by reviving among themselves many types of art forms, such as china painting, pottery, book binding and weaving.⁶⁴ In addition to collecting Native American baskets, Euro-American women imitated Native basketry techniques and styles, replicating Native American baskets for the home. Instruction books were published showing how to recreate a Native basket. Women also formed work groups to study basketry.⁶⁵ Although men sometimes worked at basketry, interest in replicating baskets was primarily a woman's hobby. Rather than factory or housework, Native American women's arts, as well as other folk arts, represented healthy and moral occupations for women. These types of home industries created by women offered another alternative to commercial industrialism.⁶⁶ Ironically, Arts and Crafts women's groups were simultaneously promoting the assimilation of Native peoples through manual labor training and pursuing the Native American art of basketry as an escape from industrial modern life. I give examples of this paradox in Chapter 5.

Although changes in the workforce allowed women more economic opportunities, American society during the Arts and Crafts movement continued to support the dominant male hegemonic order because most work in artistic production available for women still emphasized the domestic sphere.⁶⁷ In the region of Native Northwestern California, weavers definitely benefited from the economic rewards of

the Arts and Crafts market for women's arts like basketry. Collectors, however, continued to value most the domestic function of the basket within the Native culture or the technical achievement of the weaving, rather than the artistic creativity of the individual weaver.

The California Arts and Crafts Movement

In California, a particular regional version of the Arts and Crafts movement reflected the unique qualities of the state's landscape and its distinct Spanish-Mexican past.⁶⁸ Native American basketry was associated with landscape and nature because of the indigenous materials used and because basketry reflected a past era when humans were closer to nature. This association of nature and basketry was especially strong in the California Arts and Crafts movement. Arts and Crafts participants noted California's geographical isolation from the Classical influences of Europe. More than any other part of the United States, California had the potential for the development of a distinct, indigenous art style.⁶⁹ Californians also expressed idealism regarding California's role as a new Eden, evoking the idea of Manifest Destiny.

Manifest Destiny, the belief in the divine right of Euro-Americans to settle the American West, along with all of North America, was strongly promoted in popular literature extolling the virtues of California life. For example, in "Southern California," George Wharton James wrote:

The logic of the trend of history for centuries has pointed to Southern California as the final "promised land" of the human race....God has destined this to be the home of his newer and better "chosen people." It is the new and better Eden, and to us is entrusted its present care.⁷⁰

California Arts and Crafts followers emphasized the characteristics that made the land unique as a means of reinforcing the belief in California's ideal environment. Since they were indigenous, Native California peoples were associated with this distinct regionalism. Native California basketry suggested a connection with the local landscape, evoking a sense of pride in California collectors in their home state and its Native heritage.

One of the ways California Arts and Crafts participants expressed identification with nature was to integrate architecture into the surrounding environment by using indigenous materials, such as redwood.⁷¹ They felt California homes should retain a wooden interior without much wallpaper and should be characterized by a rustic appearance.⁷² Craftsman furniture became identified with leisure time and summer homes, a respite from the work world.⁷³ These ideals of the California Arts and Crafts movement resulted in the regional development of a rustic Bungalow-style architecture and simply crafted mission-style furniture. Native American basketry, with its subtle natural colors, suited California's Mediterranean climate, what Pasadena collector Arthur Jerome Eddy, has described "the dry, hot light of California summers."⁷⁴ Basketry also conveyed a sense of the California landscape through its use of indigenous materials.

For many people, "bungalow architecture" and "mission style" are synonymous with the California Arts and Crafts period. The terms reflect the idealism of the movement for California's historic past and its unique lifestyle. Popular literature gave it a paradisiacal meaning, "Mama and me are planning to go out to Pasadena and buy a bungalow."⁷⁵ "Mission" came to represent more than just solidly

constructed and simple furniture. It connoted “missionary” and brought to mind moral reform so important to the principles of the Arts and Crafts.⁷⁶

Many magazines addressing women’s interests and home décor, such as *House Beautiful* and *Ladies’ Home Journal*, introduced the Arts and Crafts aesthetic to women in California as well as across America.⁷⁷ *The Craftsman*, however, was the principal journal of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Edited by Gustave Stickley, the magazine was a monthly publication founded in 1901 that ran for sixteen years.⁷⁸ Stickley believed that California, with its isolation and unique geography, especially evoked the ideals of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Examples from the California regional version of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic were particularly prevalent in *The Craftsman*, outnumbering articles on all other areas of the United States.⁷⁹ Various issues of *The Craftsman* demonstrate the importance of Native American basketry in the California Arts and Crafts movement.

Most issues of *The Craftsman* contain a wide variety of references to Native American cultures, including examples of poetry and drawings depicting romantic stereotypes. A cover of *The Craftsman*, dated October, 1908, shows a Native American painting pictographs on a hide canvas (Illustration 14). The image combines aspects of 19th-century Plains Indian life, such as tipis, with what appears to be California Native basketry bowls and a pictograph of an Eastern Woodlands canoe. It is not an ethnographically correct representation as the artist seems unconcerned about mixing details from various Native American regions. Instead, it evokes the romantic notion of the pre-industrial Native artist admired by Arts and Crafts followers. Rather than a contemporary view of Native American life, such as a

worker in an Arts and Crafts program for manual labor training, this Indian is depicted in a pristine, natural setting. Wearing only buckskin trousers and a feather in his hair, he paints in the traditional ways of his forefathers with no recognition of European influence. Far from reality for Native peoples at the time, the image is an anachronism, recalling an earlier time free from the intrusions of white culture.

The late 19th century was characterized by a rapid urbanization of California, partially due to the completion of the transcontinental railroads.⁸⁰ Through its advertisements, the Santa Fe Railway stressed California's sunny weather to encourage settlers and tourists to go to the West coast. California was considered a nirvana, which offered visitors ways to restore health through a warm climate.⁸¹ A Santa Fe Railway ad, in *House Beautiful*, December, 1915, associates a Pueblo Indian mother and child with the ideal climate and landscape of the American Southwest. Euro-Americans perceived of Native peoples of the Southwest and California as part of the land's intrinsic appeal and distinct regionalism (Illustration 15).

Although the photograph features Pueblo peoples of Arizona, the text of the ad focuses upon what California has to offer, such as "outdoor delights of mountains and sea and the romance of old Spanish days." Along with its unique geography and history, California is celebrated as a welcoming place for the traveler. The Spanish and Indian past of California distinguishes the state from the East. The small text lists the "picturesque" Pueblo Indians together with the Grand Canyon, equating Native Americans with the Southwest landscape. The ad points out all of these special features of California and Arizona as a way of demonstrating the distinctive appeal of

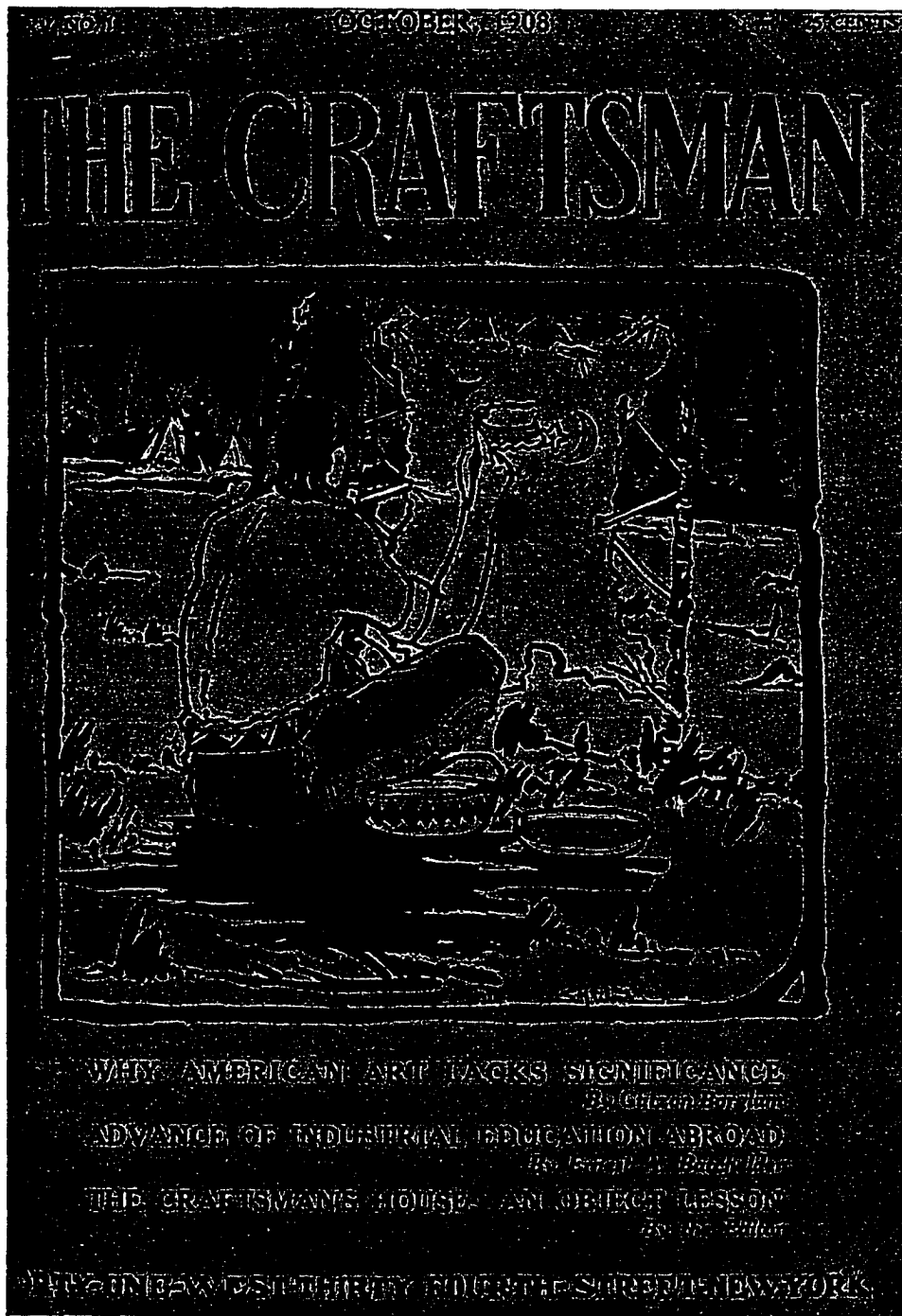


Illustration 14: Cover of *The Craftsman*, October, 1908.

the American West. Romantic images of Native American peoples, such as the mother and child in her traditional Pueblo village, reinforced the identification of Native Americans and their traditional cultures with California's popular appeal.

The inclusion of Native American basketry in the California Arts and Crafts movement represents a response to the rapid changes that were occurring in turn-of-the-20th century California. The increased industrialization and urbanization of the late 19th century were particularly dramatic on the West Coast. The rural, frontier life of the pioneer was replaced rapidly by an urban environment. Euro-American pioneers felt morally justified in their relocation of Native peoples because of the perceived need to settle the land. However, in an expanding urban setting, racial and class differences were more ambiguous and harder for the predominantly white upper- and middle-class to distinguish.⁸²

The Arts and Crafts movement in California, as in other parts of America, was supported essentially by the white middle class. Unlike the racial and class tensions that existed between the middle class and immigrants in the East, class divisions in California existed mainly between middle-class whites and Mexicans, Native Americans or Asian Americans.⁸³ As discussed above, Arts and Crafts participants promoted manual labor education and improvement of factory working conditions for the lower working class. Class differences resulted in middle-class fear of potential rebellions among workers. An interest in restoring joy in labor through good craftsmanship, as well as reviving traditional folk arts, served as a means of appeasing industrial workers and relieving the fears and guilt of the more affluent

The latch-string
always is out in
sunny

California

After December
the expositions
are closed. But
glorious Califor-
nia welcomes the
traveler any day,
any year—

You will enjoy—
the resort hotels
golf and polo
motoring along roy-
al roads
outdoor delights of
mountains and sea
and the romance of
old Spanish days

On your way are the picturesque Pueblo
Indians and the Grand Canyon of Arizona
Four daily trains to California, including
the California Limited. Also the Santa Fe
de Luxe, weekly in winter. Free Harvey meals
Ask for Grand Canyon Outlines, California
Outlines, and California Limited folders
and BLACK PINE Folders. ALL S.F. Ry.
407 Railway Exchange, Chicago.

Illustration 15: Santa Fe Railway ad, *House Beautiful*, December, 1915.

social elite. Traditional arts, such as basketry, were seen as a means of helping California Native peoples assimilate into Euro-American culture. Beginning in the late 19th century, the federal government encouraged Native peoples to develop their arts into profitable industries. Complementing the government's efforts, Arts and Crafts associations in California supported Indian reform groups that tried to aid Native American assimilation through art and industrial education.⁸⁴ Women's clubs were extremely popular and they promoted moral values in the home and various philanthropic activities. They encouraged the teaching of Euro-American crafts, such as lacemaking and quilting, along with basketry, to Native American women.⁸⁵

In Southern California, a group of women started the Redlands Indian Association in 1894. Redlands became a branch of the Woman's National Indian Association. Meeting in private homes, the Redlands group addressed Indian rights and education, as well as Native California arts. It exemplified a common phenomenon in America during the period. Redlands is an example of the paradox evident in the Arts and Crafts movement in their approach to Native American cultures and arts. Participants romanticized pre-industrial Native America. Often giving lectures and writing articles on pre-contact Native ethnography or art, they contrasted the ideals of traditional Native American life with the ills and shortcomings of contemporary American culture. However, their philanthropic activities supported assimilation of Native peoples into Euro-American society.

Some of the work of the Redlands Association helped the Sherman Institute, a federal Native American manual-arts boarding school in Riverside, east of Los Angeles. Since its opening in 1901, the school included a course that taught the

making of mission-style furniture. Some of this furniture may have ended up in the Mission Inn, a successful resort hotel that included a museum-like center selling Native American arts to middle class visitors.⁸⁶ Participants in the California Arts and Crafts movement tried to aid Native American assimilation by supporting schools, such as the Sherman Institute, and by advocating the creation of Arts and Crafts industries by Native peoples.

The paradox evident in the California Arts and Crafts movement is also represented by the real estate investments of some of its key exponents. For example, Charles Keeler of Berkeley and Charles Fletcher Lummis of Pasadena were both major advocates of the Arts and Crafts movement who were also real-estate promoters.⁸⁷ Lummis's contributions to the Arts and Crafts movement especially reveal an inherent contradiction. A Harvard-trained archaeologist and journalist, Lummis worked for philanthropic organizations addressing Native American issues and the conservation of California missions. His home, El Alisal, combined a Spanish-Colonial architecture with his extensive collection of Native California and Southwest art, including basketry.⁸⁸ As founder of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, Lummis' personal life and writing were characterized by romantic nostalgia for California's Native and Colonial past. However, his keen interest in real estate expressed his simultaneous desires for the economic development and industrialization of California.

Lummis was a member of a group of Los Angeles Arts and Crafts promoters known collectively as the Arroyo culture. As Kevin Starr noted, in *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (1985), the Arroyo culture was not

an organized movement, but a common lifestyle.⁸⁹ It involved a passionate interest in Native American peoples and in collecting Native art. Participants included George Wharton James and other well-known Arts and Crafts writers and artists, such as photographer Adam Clark Vroman. Their work frequently expressed a nostalgic and selective view of Native American art and cultures. Rather than presenting Native peoples' current situation, followers of the Arroyo culture favored a romantic view of Native Americans living a pre-industrial life prior to contact with Europeans.⁹⁰ Grace Nicholson, a member of the Arroyo culture, was influenced by these romantic perceptions when she created her basketry enterprise. Although she would begin documenting individual weavers, her dominant marketing and collecting strategy, the ethnographic paradigm, reflected this context of the Arroyo culture and its impact upon Nicholson and her buyers.

Arroyo culture publications, such as George Wharton James' article, "Primitive Inventions" (1903), describe the creation of Native arts only within a pre-contact cultural milieu. James did not include references to the contemporary reality for California weavers in most of his writings. Other writers and collectors created fictional biographies of artists or false interpretations of basketry motifs to cater to Western idealistic notions of Native peoples or to increase the economic value of basketry.⁹¹ In Arts and Crafts journals, some articles emphasize the inevitable demise of pre-industrial cultures due to contact with Western civilization.⁹² These romantic perceptions of the Native American past and enduring stereotypes of pre-contact Native American cultures in the present contributed to the popularity of basketry collecting from the ethnographic approach within the Arroyo culture. Basketry was

valued according to how well it represented traditional Native American life and culture. Native American baskets, along with weaving and pottery, became visual symbols of these Arts and Crafts ideals.

Of all the American Arts and Crafts writers and spokespeople, George Wharton James probably had the most impact upon popular perceptions of Native Americans, basketry, and ideals of femininity. Besides the publications already discussed, James produced many articles for *The Craftsman*, of which he eventually became associate editor. He also wrote a book, *Indian Basketry* (1909), and edited a short-lived periodical, *The Basket: The Journal of the Basket Fraternity; or, Lovers of Indian Baskets and Other Good Things* (1903-1904). Many of his writings and lectures addressed subjects related to other aspects of the Arts and Crafts movement, such as the California missions or the British Arts and Crafts leaders like William Morris.⁹³ Throughout over a hundred publications, James sought to educate the American public, especially women, about Native American life and the cultural heritage of the West, infusing his writing with many references to the morals and goals of the Arts and Crafts movement. As discussed above, his work promoted a romantic image of the Noble Savage.

James praised many aspects of traditional Native American life, from sleeping outdoors to sun-bathing in the nude. Much of his writing reads like preaching, as he attempted to persuade his Euro-American readers to adopt these alternative lifestyles which he saw as beneficial for all. He also applied such idealized viewpoints of Native American cultures to moral concerns, such as raising children correctly.⁹⁴ A collector himself, James argued that basketry collecting and weaving were the best

means for Euro-Americans to tap into the wisdom and return to the creativity inspired by nature that Native Americans possessed.

James clearly saw basketry as a means of escape from the plight of modern life. Perhaps a combination of these romantic notions, from basketry's association with nature and the natural life to its use as an escape from the ills of industrial society, contributed to James' lack of interest in the current identity of actual weavers. Although he valued fine technique and pursued motif analysis, James almost always avoided the artistic involvement of specific weavers and instead focused upon the anonymous tribal representative or simply referred to tribal style alone.⁹⁵ James's publications are characteristic of Arts and Crafts basketry literature that almost exclusively addressed basketry through the ethnographic paradigm, including tribal or regional style but rarely the impact of the individual Indian weaver.

James also serves as an excellent example of the paradox evident in the treatment of Native Americans by Arts and Crafts movement promoters. James was an active spokesman for social reform regarding the policies towards Native Americans. He worked for both the preservation of the art of basketry and what he saw as the inevitable assimilation of Native Americans into modern Euro-American life.⁹⁶ Like many important figures of the Arts and Crafts movement, James sought to improve the government's treatment of Indians, as well as the conditions they suffered under. It seems odd that James' concerns for social reform for current Native peoples did not in turn inspire him to be more interested in their current development of the art or individual artistic output. Rather, James always seemed to lament the same thing: the corruption of the traditional basketry art from commercial materials

and influences. James was only concerned with using the ethnographic paradigm in understanding the traditional art of basketry and did not bother to explore the individual artist paradigm tested by Nicholson.

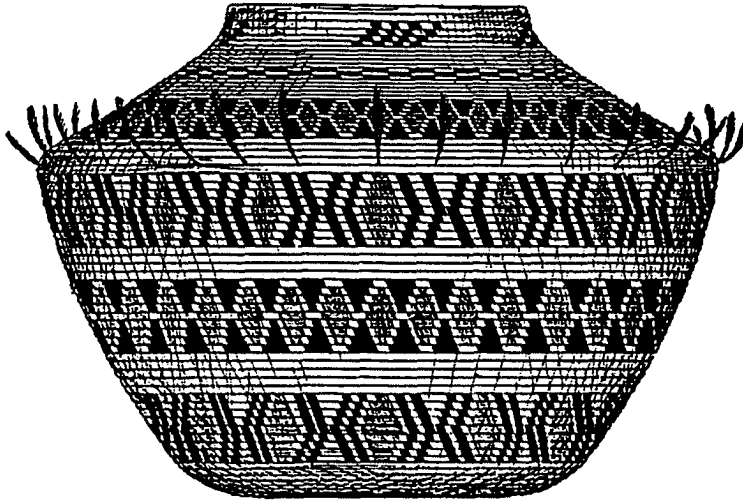
Otis T. Mason, like James, reflected Arts and Crafts ideology in his basketry publications. His writing on Native American basketry shows another dimension of the ethnographic paradigm and the romantic Indian past. The ethnographic function of the basket helps to demonstrate how form follows function and how both are tied to the evolutionary development of the arts in general.

In his book, *Indian Basketry: Studies in a Textile Art Without Machinery* (1904), Mason discussed basketry in comparison with other Native arts, such as pottery. He described basketry as being more “honest” in its obvious relationship of construction to materials and finish. The visibility of the means of construction and the resulting connection between process and aesthetic object fits nicely into the Arts and Crafts ideal of the integration of form, function and beauty.⁹⁷ Mason also traced basketry, which he called “the mother of all loom work and beadwork,” back to the origins of Native American art, and thus the ancient roots of all art. Both Mason and James, as well as other Arts and Crafts period writers, claimed the origins of art could be seen in basketry. These origins, in turn, captured primal roots of interconnectedness with nature that could benefit modern society.⁹⁸

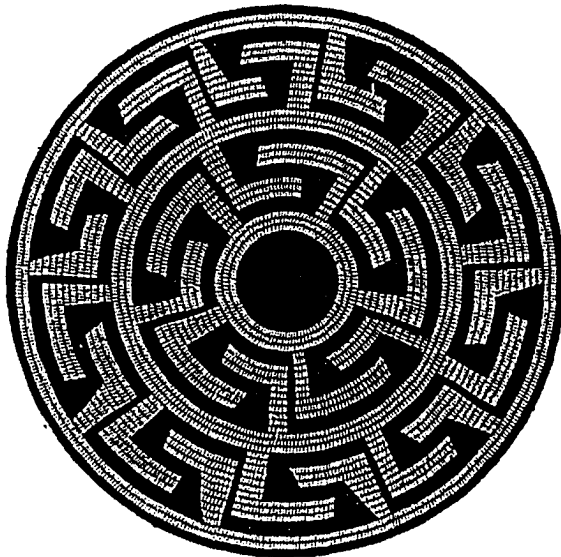
Some Arts and Crafts period writers placed basketry within an evolutionary framework as the origins of art. Such placement reinforced the notion of basketry’s connection with the pre-contact past and with the primitive artist rather than the contemporary weaver. By using an ethnographic approach to collecting or

appreciating Northwestern California basketry, Arts and Crafts dealers and collectors, like Grace Nicholson, did not necessarily assume an evolutionary perspective regarding baskets. They did not necessarily see them as more primitive or less developed than other arts. However, it is remarkable the extent to which basketry is described as a primitive art form at the beginnings of the evolution of art in Arts and Crafts literature. This common association between Native American basketry and the primal past may partially explain collectors' interest in mainly "old" baskets (those showing long time use and a traditional form) as fine art. Since an evolutionary perspective sometimes accompanied the ethnographic approach to documenting baskets, the traditional past and the anonymous weaver became the logical subject. Recognition of the individual weaver was not only unnecessary, but detrimental to the illusion that the baskets were from a traditional and primitive past.

Some stereotypes of California Native peoples and their basketry were based upon a common assumption of the Arts and Crafts period that all cultures evolved through several similar stages of development.⁹⁹ In her article, "Indian Basketry: Its Structure and Decoration," from December, 1904, Irene Sargent wrote, "In examining baskets from the hands of these women of the red race of America, we gain a retrograde vista into the times "when Adam delved and Eve span," such as can be afforded by no other extant objects."¹⁰⁰ She then continued by illustrating her article with photographs and illustrations of Native American baskets. These are accompanied by captions comparing the works either to the art of barbarians or to examples of much older Western or Asian art (Illustration 16). Basketry is clearly seen as a primitive art form low on the evolutionary scale and worthy of study as the



A BARBARIAN WOMAN AS AN EXPERT DESIGNER OF TEXTILES



THE INDIAN BASKET MAKER AS A SPACE DECORATOR

Illustration 16: "A Barbarian Woman As An Expert Designer of Textiles," and "The Indian Basket Maker As A Space Decorator," From Sargent, Irene, "Indian Basketry: Its Structure and Decoration," *The Craftsman*, December, 1904.

early forerunner to modern art forms. This article represents the late 19th-century evolutionary perspective of culture as supported in popular discourse of the Arts and Crafts period. It also shows the popular notion of the time that Native American arts, such as basketry, can symbolize a return to a pre-industrial past no longer existing for Western European cultures. Stereotypes about Native Americans and their art reveal how Arts and Crafts participants reinterpreted Native cultures as a means of critiquing their own society.

Another illustration titled, “The Indian Basket Maker As A Space Decorator,” included in Sargent’s article, depicts a Southwest Native basket (Illustration 16). Although this illustration’s caption does not imply the evolutionary perspective of the first example, Sargent used this basket to illustrate a section arguing for the significance of basketry and basketry patterns as a precursor of pottery worldwide and of ancestral traditions of the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁰¹ Typical of a lot of Arts and Crafts period literature, Sargent’s article presents basketry as an essential component in understanding the origins of design. Basketry’s value is its attachment to the past and to a primitive era.

Part of basketry’s primitive roots was its use of natural materials and its close relationship with the natural world. Another author, Edna Cain, suggested the way basketry can restore one’s connection with nature. In “Pine-Needle Basketry: A New Development in American Handicraft,” from *The Craftsman*, November, 1913, Cain described:

Basketry is a craft which appeals perhaps more than any other to the nature-lover, for its woodland origin remains unconcealed in texture, materials and in workmanship however

finished. It retains always the poetic suggestion of a bird's nest, Nature's most exquisite bit of craftsmanship.¹⁰²

Cain praised basketry's close resemblance to natural phenomenon. The natural qualities of basketry reinforced popular stereotypes that Native American peoples and their art were an integral part of the land and inseparable from nature. This intimate connection with nature embodied the Arts and Crafts ideal of art's ability to provide an escape from urban life with its rapid changes in population and industry. It also suggests basketry's connection with a primal past, a natural world free from the effects of high civilization.

Writers in *The Craftsman* sometimes critically evaluated industrial and urban changes in Euro-American society and presented traditional Native American cultures as an alternative reality.¹⁰³ Again, in "The Indian Woman as a Craftsman,"

Constance Goddard Du Bois noted that in her contemporary society

the race gains at the expense, to a certain extent, of the individual. Degeneracy, insanity, and crime increase on the one hand; the individual qualities of courage, self-expression, original invention, insight into the visible workings of nature, sincerity [sic], fidelity to an idea are lost or diminished: all these qualities being found, perhaps, in an ignorant old Indian basketmaker; while the average society woman may possess not one of them.¹⁰⁴

Du Bois used the image of the Native basketmaker to criticize the shortcomings of members of her own race and social class. She expressed the principal purpose of the Arts and Crafts appropriation of Native American arts. Basketry served as a means of calling attention to what was lacking in an industrial urban lifestyle. Ironically,

however, she still used the notion of the anonymous weaver of the past despite her plea for recognition of “the individual qualities of courage, self-expression, original invention.”¹⁰⁵ The basket weaver was able to serve as a model of critique for Du Bois because she was “old,” a reflection of the primitive past.

Articles about collecting basketry during the Arts and Crafts period suggest that the ethnographic approach not only evoked a past era of Indian life, but also was most useful as a way of recording this traditional life before it vanished forever. In “Marvels in Basketry Undreamed Of,” from the *San Francisco Call*, 1897, Florence Percy Matheson proclaimed the virtues of the new past time of basketry collecting. She discussed Mrs. Belle Jewett, an important collector from Pasadena who would later purchase baskets from Grace Nicholson. The ethnographic approach to collecting baskets was praised as a way of documenting and sharing ethnology, Indian history, and weaving technology. Variety and completeness were key features in developing collections of value. Again, a common theme this article shared with other basketry literature of the period was the importance of a collection representing the traditional cultures of Native Americans, although this time the completeness of a collection was also encouraged. For dealers like Grace Nicholson, who tried to serve collectors’ desire for completeness, the ethnographic approach to collecting and selling baskets seemed the logical path.

Arts and Crafts participants made Native American baskets into mythic creations that embodied various stereotypes of the Noble Savage. Because these enduring stereotypes of Native Americans affected how writers and collectors analyzed baskets, the ethnographic paradigm as an approach to collecting baskets

dominated the Arts and Crafts period. Despite Grace Nicholson's attempts to use the individual artist paradigm when collecting Northwestern California baskets, the ethnographic paradigm best suited the Arts and Crafts fascination with the traditional past and an evolutionary perspective.

Native American basketry symbolized California's natural landscape, as well as the virtues and benefits of a pre-industrial, primitive life. The Arts and Crafts movement expressed a nostalgic view of the past by emphasizing a pre-contact Native American ethnography. An evolutionary perspective of culture resulted in comparisons between Native American societies and an ideal recollection of Western civilization's past. Arts and Crafts writers used examples of Native American peoples and their art to reevaluate their own culture and values. However, this reevaluation depended upon an exclusively traditional and nostalgic view of Native Americans and art from a pre-contact period at the expense of acknowledging contemporary weavers and artistic innovation. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, the ethnographic paradigm and the emphasis on traditions of the past characterize much of the collecting and dealing of basketry within the specific region of Northwestern California as well.

Despite this emphasis on the value of the traditional past, Arts and Crafts associations, such as the Redlands Indian Association, encouraged Native American education of manual labor and the profitable production of Native arts. Their philanthropic activities supported the assimilation of Native Americans into the dominant Euro-American society. These activities may have represented an attempt to appease class and racial tensions between Arts and Crafts advocates, who were

primarily a white, middle-class group, and the lower working classes. Arts and Crafts ideology contains a hidden paradox. Arts and Crafts participants idealized romantic stereotypes of the Noble Savage and the virtues of a pre-industrial culture. Yet they actively promoted Native American assimilation.

Another paradox is evident when considering gender issues in turn-of-the-20th century America. Arts and Crafts followers denied the changing gender ideology of the period, especially that of women, both of Native and non-Native descent. However, the Arts and Crafts redefinition of basketry as “art” helped to elevate the position of non-Native women as artists. As a result, an increase in economic opportunities became available for both Native and non-Native women. In some cases, women were able to work outside of the domestic sphere and to gain increasing independence. Despite the economic improvement for Native American women as basketry sales increased, almost all weavers continued to be unrecognized as individual artists in basketry sales and literature. Only a few exceptions were noted as master artists.

Native American art directly influenced the American Arts and Crafts aesthetic. In addition to being incorporated into interior design, Native American basketry inspired both the creation of Arts and Crafts basketry and the adoption of Native American basketry motifs into Arts and Crafts décor and art. Native American basketry served as a visual symbol of Arts and Crafts ideology that reflected a romantic perspective of Native American cultures. It contributed to the development of Arts and Crafts philosophical and aesthetic values at the turn of the 20th century.

This, in turn, reinforced the desire for the ethnographic paradigm when collecting Native American baskets during the era.

When exploring basketry's legacy as the forerunner to contemporary art and design, Arts and Crafts period writers, such as Irene Sargent and Otis Mason, perpetuated Native American basketry's association with a romantic Indian past. In order to cater to these ideas, basketry was collected and sold through the ethnographic paradigm with an emphasis on traditional use and construction. The ethnographic paradigm also allowed some collectors, like Belle Jewett, to build collections of ethnological importance at a time when Native American basketry was perceived to be a vanishing art. In the next chapter and in Chapter 6, these points about the Arts and Crafts movement and turn-of-the-20th century America will be discussed through the history of collecting Native American basketry in the region of Northwestern California.

¹ See John M. Gogol, "1900-1910, The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry," *American Indian Basketry*, Vol. 5 (1), 1985: 12-29. Gogol provided a basic, historical account of the various publications addressing Native American basketry during the Arts and Crafts period. He also introduced several of the major dealers of basketry. He offered little interpretation.

² As I mentioned in the notes for Chapter 2, the term, "traditional," is problematic. All Native American art incorporates some aspect of "tradition" as well as innovation and change. The term "traditional culture" implies that the pre-contact past was static and unchanging.

³ Later in the chapter, I discuss examples of Arts and Crafts literature that demonstrate the evolutionary perspective of culture. Examples of the educational reform and programs of the period can be found in Weitze, Karen J., "Utopian Place Making: The Built Environment in Arts and Crafts California," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, ed. Kenneth R. Trapp (Oakland: The Oakland Museum, 1993): 83-84.

⁴ Melanie Herzog, "Aesthetics and Meanings: The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Revival of American Indian Basketry," in *The Substance of Style: Perspectives on the American Arts and Crafts Movement*, ed. Bert Denker (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1996): 69.

⁵ Marvin Cohodas, *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox* (Los Angeles: The Southwest Museum and the University of Arizona Press, 1997): 172-173. Cohodas pointed out that dealers were able to increase the value of certain baskets by promoting exceptional weavers as master artists. However, overall, this approach was not widely used in Arts and Crafts period literature or by collectors working in Northwestern California except for Nicholson's promotion of Elizabeth Hickox.

- ⁶ The Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology released a reprint of O'Neale's study which includes a list of the names of the weavers and their corresponding numbers used by O'Neale in her original study and text. Lila M. O'Neale, *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers*. 1932. (Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum, University of California, 1995).
- ⁷ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978): 76.
- ⁸ Julie Schimmel, "Inventing the 'Indian'," in *The West As America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier*, ed. William H. Truettner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991): 149-189. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1982) and Brian W. Dippie, "The Moving Finger Writes: Western Art and the Dynamics of Change," in *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 89-116.
- ⁹ See, for example, Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*. 1938 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1986). Goldwater is the classic study of European artists and the appropriation of "primitive" art. For a more recent general study, see Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (New York: World of Art, Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1994). For a recent study of primitivism and the reception and appropriation of Native American art, see W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).
- ¹⁰ See, for example, Deborah Doxtator, *Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianness* (Brantford, Ont.: Woodland Cultural Centre, 1988). Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).
- ¹¹ See, for example, Molly H. Mullin, "The Patronage of Difference: Making Indian Art "Art, Not Ethnology"," *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7 (4), 1992: 395-424.
- ¹² For a thorough comparison of the two movements, see T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981) and Roger B. Stein, "Artifact as Ideology: The Aesthetic Movement in Its American Cultural Context," in *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1986): 23-51.
- ¹³ Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 1991): 10.
- ¹⁴ Lionel Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsman: The Arts and Crafts Movement from Cotswolds to Chicago* (London: Astraga Books, 1980): 6.
- ¹⁵ Lears, 60-61, 69-70.
- ¹⁶ Cumming and Kaplan, 143.
- ¹⁷ Lears, 68.
- ¹⁸ Richard Guy Wilson, "'Divine Excellence': The Arts and Crafts Life in California," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life*, ed. Kenneth R. Trapp (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993): 20.
- ¹⁹ "Field Matron's Work," *The Indian's Friend*, October, 1906: 9.
- ²⁰ Lears, 64-65, 83.
- ²¹ Lears, 91-96.
- ²² Quoted in Lears, 71.
- ²³ Quoted in Lears, 85.
- ²⁴ Constance Goddard du Bois, "The Indian Woman as a Craftsman," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 6 (4), 1904: 393.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, 391.
- ²⁶ Lears, xiv, see also 60.
- ²⁷ Lears, 8. Richard Guy Wilson, "The Arts and Crafts After 1918: Ending and Legacy," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993): 238.
- ²⁸ Herzog, 78.
- ²⁹ Mullin, 398-400.
- ³⁰ Lears, 4-6.
- ³¹ Lears, 15-16.
- ³² Janet Kardon, "Introduction," in *The Ideal Home, 1900-1920: The History of Twentieth-Century American Craft*, ed. Janet Kardon (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and American Craft Museum, 1993): 26. Stein, 23.

³³ I make these conclusions based upon my analysis of Arts and Crafts period literature, which I discuss in more depth later in the chapter.

³⁴ George W. James, *What the White Race May Learn From the Indian* (Chicago: Forbes and Co., 1908): 240-241.

³⁵ Cumming and Kaplan, 152.

³⁶ Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986): 103.

³⁷ James B. Gilbert, *Work Without Salvation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977): 85.

³⁸ The section on Ruth Roberts in Chapter 5 is on pages 185-188.

³⁹ The term, ethnic tourism, refers to tourism based upon the observation of a people from a culture distinct from the tourist. It can include visits to a particular area where an ethnic group lives or participation in cultural events.

⁴⁰ Molly Lee, "Appropriating the Primitive: Turn-of-the-Century Collection and Display of Native Alaskan Art," *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 28 (1), 1991: 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴² Terminology for this period in American history and art varied from one author to the next. Art historians, such as Roger Stein, referred to the late 19th century as the period of the Aesthetic movement though it overlapped both chronologically and in terms of ideology with the Arts and Crafts period. Both movements seem to have originated from or to be reactions to the Victorian era. Antimodernism was another term used to describe aspects of the Arts and Crafts movement. Historians referred to the time period as the Progressive Era.

⁴³ Lee, 9.

⁴⁴ Kardon, 27.

⁴⁵ Charles F. Saunders, "Bungalow Life: The Cost of Living It," *Sunset*, Vol. 30 (1), 1913: 34.

⁴⁶ "Nursery Wall Coverings in Indian Designs," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 5 (1), 1903: 96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁸ For an example of how basketry was reinterpreted as fine art, see Marvin Cohodas, "Louisa Keyser and the Cohns: Mythmaking and Basket Making in the American West," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History*, ed. Janet Berlo (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992): 88-133.

⁴⁹ For example, see Marvin Cohodas and Mullin, 395-424.

⁵⁰ Mullin, 412.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 395.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 397.

⁵³ Edwin L. Wade, "The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest, 1880-1980," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. ed. George Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985): 176. Wade discussed the art market in the Southwest., which was where most of the support for Native American artists in the 1920s and 1930s took place. Weavers in Northwestern California, on the other hand, suffered greatly during the Depression and there was a subsequent decline in basketry weaving.

⁵⁴ Boris, *Art and Labor*, 99.

⁵⁵ Boris, "Crossing Boundaries: The Gendered Meaning of the Arts and Crafts," in *The Ideal Home, 1900-1920: The History of Twentieth-Century American Craft*. ed. Janet Kardon (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993): 32-33.

⁵⁶ Stein, 37.

⁵⁷ Several authors pointed out the importance of *Ramona* to the creation of popular stereotypes of Native American women during the Arts and Crafts period. See, for example, Herzog, 71.

⁵⁸ Herzog, 86.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁰ Boris, "Crossing Boundaries," 38-40.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁴ Gilbert, 84-85.

⁶⁵ Lee, 12.

⁶⁶ Boris, *Art and Labor*, 122-123.

- ⁶⁷ Stein, 28.
- ⁶⁸ Trapp, 9-10.
- ⁶⁹ Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 14.
- ⁷⁰ Quoted in Cheryl Robertson, "The Resort to the Rustic: Simple Living and the California Bungalow," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993): 107.
- ⁷¹ Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 22.
- ⁷² Robert Judson Clark, "The Pacific Coast," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1876-1916* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972): 81.
- ⁷³ Boris, "Crossing Boundaries," 77.
- ⁷⁴ Quoted in Robertson, 106.
- ⁷⁵ Quoted in Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 16.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid. The name "mission" originally came from a chair designed for the Swedenborgian Church of New Jerusalem in San Francisco in 1894.
- ⁷⁷ Cumming and Kaplan, 144.
- ⁷⁸ Lambourne, 152.
- ⁷⁹ Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 14.
- ⁸⁰ Clark, 81.
- ⁸¹ Trapp, 10.
- ⁸² Cohodas, "Louisa Keyser," 89.
- ⁸³ Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 24.
- ⁸⁴ Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983): 3-5.
- ⁸⁵ Karen J. Weitzel, "Utopian Place Making: The Built Environment in Arts and Crafts California," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993): 78-80.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid, 82-84.
- ⁸⁷ Wilson, "'Divine Excellence'," 25.
- ⁸⁸ Robertson, 90-92.
- ⁸⁹ Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 108.
- ⁹⁰ The dealer Grace Nicholson did not always promote pre-contact art, though she avidly sought pre-contact style basketry or ceremonial objects. She did commission baskets, such as fancy baskets, that did exhibit aspects of an innovative, post-contact style. See Chapter 6.
- ⁹¹ For example, see Cohodas, "Louisa Keyser."
- ⁹² For example, see Frederick Monsen, "The Destruction of Our Indians," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 11 (6), 1907.
- ⁹³ Herzog, 73-74.
- ⁹⁴ Paul Arreola, "George Wharton James and the Indians," *Masterkey*, Vol. 60 (1), 1986: 15.
- ⁹⁵ For example, see George Wharton James' *Indian Basketry 1909* (New York: Dover publications reprint, 1972).
- ⁹⁶ Arreola, 17.
- ⁹⁷ Herzog, 81-83.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ For example, see Elizabeth Stone MacDonald, "Preventive Aesthetics: The Childhood of Art," *House Beautiful*, Vol. 39 (6), 1916: 195.
- ¹⁰⁰ Irene Sargent, "Indian Basketry: Its Structure and Decoration," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 7 (3), 1904: 321.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid, 331-332.
- ¹⁰² Edna Cain, "Pine-Needle Basketry: A New Development in American Handicraft," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 25 (2), 1913: 201.
- ¹⁰³ For example, see Charles A. Eastman, "My People": The Indians' Contribution to the Art of America," *The Craftsman*, Vol. 27 (2), 1914.
- ¹⁰⁴ Du Bois, 391.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Collecting and Selling Baskets in Northwestern California, 1880-1930: The Ethnographic Paradigm to the Mass-Market Approach

Very little research has been done on the collectors and dealers of Northwestern California basketry. On the other hand, several authors have written about the art market in the American Southwest at the turn of the 20th century.¹ Due to the introduction of the Santa Fe Railroad and the resulting influx of tourists, the number of ethnic art dealers in the Southwest increased dramatically. In Northwestern California, however, the lack of rail transportation, the rugged redwood interior, and the relative isolation of the region kept tourism at a minimum, especially in the early years of the Arts and Crafts period.² Despite the smaller commercial market for Native American art in the region in comparison to the Southwest, Arts and Crafts collectors did appreciate Northwestern California baskets, which they desired to purchase. Dealers and private collectors in the region often approached the collecting and selling of baskets through the ethnographic paradigm popular throughout the Arts and Crafts period.

Other ways of approaching the collecting and dealing of baskets also developed within Northwestern California. These collectors, often merchants or local businessmen, were not always as interested in or exposed to the ethnographic paradigm so evident in Arts and Crafts literature of the era. Some, like John Daggett, were well aware of and caught up in the Arts and Crafts enthusiasm for documenting the “vanishing Indian” and the traditional arts and cultures of the region. But most local collectors and dealers received baskets through a barter system or as gifts and

were more concerned with the economic incentives of dealing in basketry. Eventually the major commercial dealer of basketry in Northwestern California, the A. Brizard Company, adopted a mass-marketing approach along with a continuation of some ethnographic interests in the pieces.

In this chapter, I introduce the A. Brizard Company and several examples of smaller basketry collecting and dealing operations within the region of Northwestern California. This is in order to show the local collecting context Grace Nicholson entered into and to contrast the methods these local collectors used with Nicholson's adoption of the individual artist paradigm in the early 1900s. In many ways, Grace Nicholson's work demonstrated continuity with these other collectors. She very much maintained the ethnographic paradigm used by special access collectors like John Daggett. She applied the mass-marketing methods of the A. Brizard Company to expand her overall sales of Northwestern California baskets. In addition, she received baskets as gifts and through bartering, like X.A. Phillips, William Bailey, and the Sharps of Bulwinkle discussed in this chapter. Certainly with some of these baskets she received as gifts or through trade, she had little control over them in assessing quality or noting ethnographic use.

A brief description of this context of local Northwestern California basketry collection history illustrates how Grace Nicholson expanded beyond these models by beginning to record and acknowledge the individual weaver, as well, in the early 1900s. Changes in the basketry collecting of this early Arts and Crafts period to include more appreciation and named recognition of weavers carried through to some extent to the collecting practices of some local non-Native collectors in the region in

the later Arts and Crafts period and into the mid-20th century. However, the majority of collectors, except for Native American collectors and their families, continued to value Northwestern California basketry almost entirely through the ethnographic paradigm only throughout the 20th century. The individual weaver was never acknowledged much.

Rather than the tourist collectors of the Southwest, more characteristic of Northwestern California were seasonal residents or workers eager to tap into the financial resources of the area, first gold, then lumber and salmon fishing. Developing a love for the distinctive redwood environment, these migrant residents, along with the growing non-Native permanent population, frequently collected baskets that had been given as gifts by Native Americans or perhaps purchased or bartered for goods. These collections sometimes represented added income for local businesses as shop owners realized the potential reward of becoming commercial dealers in Native American art.

The increase in tourism to Alaska at the end of the 19th century resulted in a similar phenomenon to that of the Southwest. Recent scholarship has addressed commercial dealers in this region as well.³ In her article, "Tourism and Taste Cultures: Collecting Native Art in Alaska at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" (1999), Molly Lee identified three "taste cultures" responsible for the purchasing and collecting of Native Alaskan baskets and other Indian art works. In addition to Arts and Crafts period collectors and tourists, she also documented "special access collectors," mostly men (though also some examples of women) in Alaska for professional reasons for extended periods or repeated visits. Lee noted, "special-

access collectors call into question the conventional definition of tourism. Like tourists, they were away from home, but unlike them, they pursued a leisure activity while working.”⁴ This category of special access collector applies well to several of the collectors working in Northwestern California at the end of the 19th and into the 20th century.

Like the situation in Alaska, Native art collectors working in Northwestern California in the 19th century included both men and women, though mostly men. It is difficult due to lack of evidence to ascertain if gender played a role in determining who collectors were in the 19th century. Collectors, such as John Daggett, were professionals working part of the year in the Northwest who chose to collect partly as a pastime and partly as a way of preserving the “vanishing heritage” of Native America through the ethnographic approach to collecting. By the early 1900s, as the market for Indian art was expanding throughout the country, especially in the West, special access collectors increased in Northwestern California, and this category now appeared to include more women. Women dominate as collectors in the 20th century. These women special access collectors continued the preference for the ethnographic paradigm in collecting baskets that represented traditional Native American ways of life.

By the 1930s, nearing the end of the Arts and Crafts period, special access collectors in rural Northwestern California, a large group of basketry collectors in the region, were almost entirely women, primarily school teachers. As teachers, they stressed the ethnographic context of basketry, which they wished to record and preserve. Most of these women were now permanent residents in the area, though

some continued to spend part of the year in more populated urban areas, usually farther south in California.⁵ Teaching was an avenue of social mobility open to women. It was also a career that involved social interactions with many families in the rural communities. As teaching was seen frequently as a woman's mission during the Arts and Crafts period, more women collectors came in contact with Native American weavers through the profession.

In addition to these women special access collectors, permanent businessmen in the area eventually developed more established enterprises to deal Indian basketry. Probably no longer a pastime or area of interest for the collector, these dealers were more interested in the economic incentive of dealing and can no longer be termed "special access collectors." They did, however, continue the preference for the ethnographic paradigm as a way of catering to the desires of the Arts and Crafts period collector. They also added to this paradigm a mass-market approach to selling baskets with little or no concern for documenting cultural use or value.

In "The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest, 1880-1980," Edwin L. Wade described the interdependence of the art market, art collecting and art scholarship in the Southwest. A similar interdependent triad can be noted in Northwestern California. But this triad worked on a much smaller scale than the market in the Southwest. Local Northwestern Californian merchants turned art dealers supplied many of the baskets collected by private Arts and Crafts period enthusiasts as well as museum professionals. In addition, many of the private collections amassed during the Arts and Crafts period were, in turn, donated to large museums. Wade also wrote, however, about a clear distinction between dealers and

collectors of Native American art in the Southwest. He noted that traders, eager to increase economic reward, encouraged mass production and the resulting technological and aesthetic change. Collectors, on the other hand, sought fine craftsmanship and excellence in maintaining tradition in the art.⁶

The difference in terms of the level of quality of artistic production encouraged by dealers and collectors can also be seen to some extent in Northwestern California, especially with the rise of the mail-order catalogue business in basketry. In order to increase financial gain, the largest basketry dealer in Northwestern California, the A. Brizard Company, instigated a system of grading basket quality in order to increase production and sales.⁷ Baskets were categorized as second, medium or first grade as a marketing strategy and to increase the monetary value of finely woven pieces. I discuss this grading system in more depth and with illustrations from the catalogue later in this chapter. The A. Brizard Company's methods for selling basketry marked a shift in Northwestern California basketry sales beyond the strictly ethnographic approach to mass-marketing strategies.

However, as both dealers and collectors saw basketry increasingly as fine art during the Arts and Crafts period, Grace Nicholson, along with the women special access collectors of the period, pursued high quality basketry supporting a strong maintenance of tradition. In rare instances, Nicholson also patronized artistic innovation and creativity, as in the case of Elizabeth Hickox. In the next chapter, I discuss how Nicholson began a new approach, the individual artist paradigm as well, though with limited success. Perhaps as a means of competing with the A. Brizard

Company and other commercial businesses handling Native American art, Nicholson also collected and sold baskets through a mass-market approach.

As Marvin Cohodas argued in “Elizabeth Hickox and Karuk Basketry: A Case Study in Debates on Innovation and Paradigms of Authenticity” (1999), Nicholson supported the unique changes in basketry style of Hickox because she both intentionally disguised Hickox’s innovation by describing her style as traditional and encouraged public perception of Hickox as an exceptionally gifted artist. Cohodas also concluded that Nicholson probably chose one artist from the region, Hickox, to promote as “genius” to increase the potential value of Hickox’s weaving.⁸ As I noted in Chapters 2 and 3, I see Cohodas’ text as limited in its perspective. In addition to her promotion of the exceptional artist, Elizabeth Hickox, Nicholson’s overall approach to dealing baskets, including the work of other individual weavers, catered to collectors’ notions of both tradition and high quality. In the next chapter, I show that Nicholson recorded other artists besides Hickox. She recognized the individual weaver as a potentially significant part of the basket’s value. This recognition helps researchers today work to identify lesser-known weavers and to expand beyond the ethnographic paradigm to include the identification of the individual weaver.

In the Arts and Crafts period, a general shift away from Wade’s definition of dealer as promoter of mass production to a concept of dealing that supported higher quality work parallels the shifting perceptions of baskets from simple commodity to fine art. By the end of the 1920s, the mass-market approach of the A. Brizard Company lost its appeal, while the ethnographic paradigm and collectors’ appreciation of tradition and quality in basketry continued beyond after the Arts and

Crafts period. Changing gender roles of collecting and dealing are also evident as more women became active participants in the Arts and Crafts period market for Indian basketry than appears to have been the case in the 19th century. In many ways, Grace Nicholson can be seen as an exceptional patron, for she was concerned with documenting individual artists and supporting quality work at the expense of quantity. As more women became involved with the collection of Northwestern California baskets in the 20th century, however, criteria of high quality and artistic tradition among private collectors and at least one commercial dealer, Grace Nicholson, were applied to baskets. Dealers and collectors determined what constituted the criteria, which were only partially based upon the weavers' perceptions of their work. I demonstrate this point in Chapter 6. Thus the reception of baskets was based upon relative concepts of authenticity that changed along with the needs of the patrons of the period.

In their introductory remarks for *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (1999), Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner discussed the unstable definitions of authenticity, as well as categories such as art, artifact, and commodity. Indian art created for an outside market has frequently been considered as inauthentic ethnic art.⁹ In fact, the value of art is usually closely tied to its economic value and potential as commodity in the outside market.¹⁰

Really, the very act of collecting and the mindset of the collector create the authenticity of the art object for the non-Native market. The definition of an authentic basket held by a Native American weaver is usually not considered, but rather the collector's or dealer's notions of artistic authenticity. Phillips and Steiner concluded,

the very impermanence of the boundaries that separate the “good” from the “bad” reveals the mystification imposed by the whole system of classification and its judgment of taste. Distinctions between categories of art, artifact, and commodity are projections of individual experience that reveal, in the end, far more about those who collect objects than those who produce them.¹¹

These notions about the fluid definition of authenticity, what Nelson H.H. Graburn called the “construction of authenticity,”¹² suggest that the reception of baskets from Northwestern California changed due to the changes in patronage. Ironically, the same basket sold as an inexpensive commodity through mail order by the A. Brizard Company in the 1900s may be documented as the artistic achievement of an identified weaver by the dealer Grace Nicholson.¹³ Degrees of authenticity, such as whether a basket showed “traditional” or “inauthentic” designs, varied according to who was receiving the basket or setting the standards. Standards of authenticity held by a collector or dealer affected whether individual weavers’ names were recorded or whether the object’s function was noted. To show how these standards of authenticity changed in accordance with changes in patronage, including possibly the gender of patrons, this chapter will continue by documenting briefly some of the history of basketry dealing in Northwestern California.

19th-Century Special Access Collectors

Only a few collectors are documented from Northwestern California during the 19th century, generally at the very end of the century. Government field matrons provided medical and other community services in Klamath country between 1898 and 1919. They encouraged basketry production to bring in additional economic

support for Native communities. At times these matrons sent basketry outside the Northwest to be sold by members of the Northern California Indian Association.

The novel *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* (1957) serves as an in-depth account of the field matron's experience, as well as conveying a sense of the rugged, isolated region. By the early 20th century, field matrons exemplified how philanthropic institutions of the Arts and Crafts period, such as the Northern California Indian Association, sought to help Native Americans through assimilation policies while also supporting the sale of traditional art forms such as basketry. Field matrons introduced Euro-American values through changes in lifestyle, such as skills in sewing, baking bread, and crocheting, but supported the art of basketry little except for economic means.¹⁴

Very few residents of Northwestern California are documented as collecting Native basketry in the 19th century. Martha J. Herrick, manager of the Humboldt County exhibit at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, is an exception. Herrick, who received a medal for the Chicago exhibit, had an extensive collection of Indian artifacts that included basketry. Part of her basketry collection was sold in Chicago to pay her trip expenses. Other baskets were donated to the Clarke Memorial Museum in Eureka, California. Herrick displayed her Indian collection along with examples of the natural history of Humboldt county. Her exhibit resembled the "curiosity cabinets" of 18th-century European collectors. Herrick emphasized the ethnographic aspects of her collection.¹⁵ The few baskets that have been catalogued as originally belonging to Herrick at the Clarke Museum display

traditional old motifs, such as the obsidian blade, and are in a pre-contact style and form, such as functional sifting baskets.¹⁶

Also stressing an ethnographic perspective on basketry, John Daggett is the best documented example of a special access collector working at the end of the 19th century in Northwestern California. Daggett's basket collection, which includes other ethnographic objects from the region as well, was purchased in part by Jane Stanford for Stanford University in the early 1900s.¹⁷ Some of the Daggett collection was also acquired by the Oakland Museum. The objects Daggett collected reveal his interest in documenting the cultural practices of the Northwestern tribes, especially the Karuk and Yurok. Like Herrick and other special access collectors of the 19th century, Daggett was not concerned with the documentation of individual weavers.¹⁸

Functional objects that helped to illustrate traditional lifestyle were of clear interest to Daggett. Daggett's collection was exhibited along with Martha Herrick's collection in the California State building at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Ethnographic use is the central theme of the collection. Daggett, who had worked as a commissioner planning the California display at Chicago, was interested more in the promotion of California's Native heritage as an aspect of state history than in basketry as an art form. The Official report for the fair described the collection as

wearing apparel, ornaments, games, food products so arranged as to illustrate methods of procuring and preparing same, Indian baskets, stone and elk-horn utensils, fish nets, bows and arrows with fox-skin quiver, obsidian from which arrow points are made, money with elkhorn purse, pipes, comb, caps, baby baskets, etc.¹⁹

The baskets collected by Daggett are mixed; his collection includes numerous functional baskets, such as cooking baskets or baby baskets, while also containing quite a few acculturated forms, such as mail pouches and footed baskets (or pedestal fruit baskets). (See Table B: Basketry Forms.) Perhaps two reasons for the eclectic nature of Daggett's collection were his methods of access to basketry and his interests as a part-time hobbyist. John Daggett was a very successful entrepreneur in gold mining, establishing the Black Bear Mining Company. In addition to the Black Bear, Daggett had leased mining areas and hired Native workers at the Doe and Daggett, Live Yankee, and other mines.²⁰ His business in Siskiyou County in the Karuk region built for him many connections with the local Native American community.

Daggett probably had many opportunities to purchase baskets and other ethnographic objects from Native American employees in the mines as well as other acquaintances. In addition, he must have received baskets in barter or as gifts while working in mining. Daggett was continually traveling between the remote areas of the Northwest and San Francisco, which undoubtedly made him an important connection in the region for those who remained isolated along the Klamath River. As baskets were obtained randomly or perhaps with little choice as gifts or barter as well as through purchases, it is difficult to assess which aspects of Daggett's collection were intentional and which developed from chance.

Daggett's collection contains both old, traditional style baskets and new, acculturated forms. His collection shows that acculturated forms were created from an early period in the history of collecting in Northwestern California. The Daggett collection includes a type of basket popular with collectors from within Northwestern

California, but not seen often outside the region. This type of basket, a handled carrying basket, represents how some of Daggett's pieces were probably randomly selected. Daggett followed an ethnographic approach to collecting as is evident in his writing.²¹ He probably would not have chosen a handled carrying basket as a traditional example of a functional basket.

A carrying basket purchased from Daggett by the Oakland Museum in 1909 features a combination of closed and open twined weaving, a characteristic of many acculturated baskets that date from the Arts and Crafts period or later (Illustration 17). It has a reinforced rim and handle of hazel sticks. Carrying baskets with handles, probably inspired by Euro-American baskets introduced to Northwestern California in the 19th century, were perhaps initially created by lower Klamath River weavers in response to the desires of non-Native local buyers. Yurok weaver Nellie Griffin, who was interviewed by the anthropologist Lila Morris O'Neale in 1929, commented to O'Neale that "strings were alright to hold on to, but that no handles or loops were used formerly."²²

This type of carrying basket came into everyday use by both Native and non-Native residents along the north coast of California (Illustration 18). Baskets with handles were used for a variety of chores such as gathering eggs, picking apples or carrying laundry.²³ They are very common in private collections in the region today. However, Northwestern California carrying baskets designed after Euro-American baskets do not appear in the records of Grace Nicholson, who would have seen them as inauthentic and not representative of the ethnographic context. Also, handled

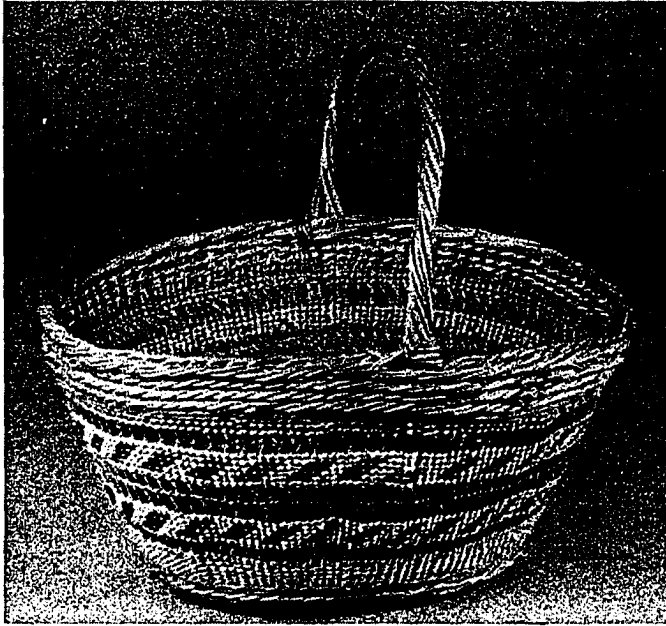


Illustration 17: Carrying Basket, Northwestern California, John Daggett Collection, catalogue #H16.228. Courtesy of The Oakland Museum of California.



Illustration 18: Yurok Weavers Nellie Griffin and Rosie McDonald (carrying a basket with a Euro-American handle), Bailey's Store, Requa, c. 1904-5. Photographer unknown. Del Norte County Historical Society Photograph. Note: The two women wear the traditional 111 chin tattoos for Native Northwest California women.

baskets were not featured later in the A. Brizard Company catalogue from between 1900 and 1910.

Daggett's interest in the Indians of Northwestern California and their culture as a part-time hobby contributed to the overall ethnographic emphasis of his collection and his concern for traditional rather than acculturated objects. Daggett was the type of individual who wore many hats, all of which reflected his pride in California as a state and his dedication to politics at the state level. He was a powerful politician concerned with the economic development of Northwestern California. In addition to representing Del Norte and Klamath counties in the State Assembly, Daggett served as Lieutenant-Governor from 1882 to 1887.²⁴ In 1893, he was appointed superintendent of the U.S. Mint in San Francisco.

Daggett saw himself as a cultural ambassador from urban San Francisco to the rural north. He published articles and gave lectures on Northwestern Native life. Although these activities were Daggett's hobby, since he was an active politician and successful businessman, his interests in Native life of Northwestern California were certainly tied to his interest in the economic development and public awareness of the region. However, Daggett's desire to create a collection suitable for a museum purchase also reflects his interest in personal recognition as amateur ethnographer and collector. By the end of the 19th century, collectors in Northwestern California became more intrigued by the economic incentives offered through dealing in baskets.

Commercial Merchants as Basketry Collectors and Dealers

The Alexander Brizard Company of Arcata, California is the best-known example of a Humboldt County commercial enterprise selling Northwestern California basketry during the Arts and Crafts period. Founded in 1863, A. Brizard, Inc. was a general mercantile store that served a large area of Northern Humboldt, Del Norte, and Siskiyou Counties through numerous branch stores including ones at Orleans, Somes Bar, Weitchpec, Hoopa, Requa, and Blue Lake; communities with a large Native American population as well as mining prospectors and a few settlers. (See Maps 1 and 2.)

Born in eastern France, Alexander Brizard was taken to California by his father, who was seeking his fortune in mining (Illustration 19). As a boy, Brizard lived briefly in Peru, where his father ran a transportation operation between Lima and Callao.²⁵ This is significant, since the development of a means of transportation in a mercantile business later became the foundation of Alexander's success in Humboldt County. This transportation-based business contributed to the establishment of patronage relationships needed for basketry collecting and dealing. After a failed attempt to enter the mining profession, Alexander worked as a clerk for a mercantile operation in Arcata, then known as Union Town. When an opportunity arose in 1863, Alexander and a fellow clerk and friend, J.A.C. Van Rossum, took over the mercantile business of Spencer, Manheim and Stern, after the death of one of its owners. In 1870, when Van Rossum retired, Alexander became the sole proprietor of A. Brizard, Inc.²⁶



Illustration 19: Photograph of Alexander Brizard, c. 1870. Photographer unknown. Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of the Humboldt State University Library.



Illustration 20: A. Brizard Company Store basketry display, c. 1910, probably Arcata branch store. Photographer unknown. Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of the Humboldt State University Library. Note other ethnographic objects for sale, such as the beargrass apron, necklaces and bows in foreground.

It is impossible to ascertain when the A. Brizard Company first started to sell Native American basketry, since few company records exist documenting their basketry enterprise²⁷ (Illustration 20). In his article, “1900-1910: The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry,” John M. Gogol published a copy of a receipt and letter signed by A. Brizard to a collector, Mrs. Cora Russell of Seattle, dated Jan. 12, 1904. The letterhead includes an illustration of two baskets and a Native American in Arts and Crafts style, stating “A. Brizard Dealer in Indian Baskets & Curios of the Hupa & Klamath Tribes exclusively.”²⁸ Since the company’s basketry business seems fairly developed by 1904, it may have begun in the late 19th century.

In his publication addressing the Wanamaker expedition among the Western Indians for the University of Pennsylvania, Stewart Culin described the extensive basketry operation of Alexander Brizard and his son among the Hupa as early as 1901:

I was directed to Mr. Brizard, a merchant, who has branch stores in many towns in this region, including among others, a store at Hupa, where he purchases most of the basketry made by the Indians. Mr. Brizard greatly facilitated my work. He was in daily communication with the valley, and at once procured a team and driver to take me over. His son had recently made a collecting trip to Hupa and secured everything the Indians were willing to dispose of. This collection he sold me on most reasonable terms.²⁹

In another article, “The Indians of Hoopa Valley,” in *Mariposa Magazine* (1898), the author, listed simply as A.K.D., did not mention specifically the Brizard company, but the store at Hoopa which had developed “quite a traffic...in baskets, which are shipped from Hoopa to all parts of the United States...”³⁰

Sometime between the establishment of the business in the 1860s and the known documentation in the early 1900s, Alexander began to sell baskets in his stores

and through mail-order correspondence. Brizard acted as a middleman collecting baskets probably obtained through barter with Native Americans living along the Klamath and remote areas and selling them to museum professionals living outside of the area.³¹ Exactly how Brizard and his employees acquired the baskets during this early period is not documented and is conjecture. The Brizard business had rural outposts and merchants who ran them. Most of these outposts remained fairly isolated throughout the early 20th century and required travel by canoe or horseback to reach. Supplying much needed trade goods to miners as well as a mailing system for the gold to leave the area, the Brizard business also introduced trade goods into Native communities. Baskets served as a medium of exchange in these remote areas.

In addition to the remote outposts of the Brizard company, the business depended upon the continual movement of packtrains of mules that were able to work their way into the twisting routes and rough terrain of the redwood forest (Illustration 21). Key to Brizard's success as a merchant were the packtrains which ran mail, goods, and mining machinery into the Klamath River region from the 1860s until the 1920s. Perhaps Alexander had developed this important system of transportation through inspiration he received as a child watching his father's transportation business in Peru. Most of the packtrain operators were from Latin America.³² Of more relevance to this dissertation was Brizard's recruitment of Native American packtrain operators. Documentation exists that at least some of the packtrain operators, including one well-identified pack train leader, Ben Billie from Weitchpec, were local Yurok, Hupa, and Karok men.³³ These men, like those Native Americans who navigated canoes and ferries along the rivers, knew the local trails and



Illustration 21: Brizard Co. Packtrains at Blue Lake, Photographer unknown, c. 1900, Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of the Humboldt State University Library. The man in the foreground on mule has been identified as Yurok packtrain operator, Ben Biilie.

landscape. Negotiating with the local Native communities and hiring men who could support these negotiations and aid means of transportation and communication must have been instrumental in expanding the Brizard network into these isolated regions.

Written documents discussing community affairs in rural Northwestern California at the end of the 19th century mention Brizard merchants and their interactions with both the Native and non-Native community.³⁴ A. Brizard Company merchants who operated regional stores corresponded with Pasadena basketry dealer Grace Nicholson, discussed in the next chapter. These same men, such as William Barney, Brizard merchant at Requa around 1916, were often involved with providing other services such as medical aid to members of the rural Klamath River region. Since some of these merchants must have had frequent interactions with weavers, they probably provided the baskets to the packtrain operators who in turn brought them into Arcata for export.

Packtrain operators themselves probably acted as mediators between women weavers living in isolation and the A. Brizard company. For example, Yurok weaver Nellie Cooper, discussed in the next chapter, lived part of her life near Weitchpec, where Ben Billie was from and they may have been from the same family since Cooper's maiden name was William or Billy. Although packtrain operators had access to weavers' names and recording such information, there is no evidence suggesting the A. Brizard Company ever collected such documentation. It certainly was not information that buyers requested. As commercial dealers but probably not collectors themselves, the Brizard merchants maintained the popular ethnographic paradigm in marketing baskets, while also increasing sales to meet demand.

Another way the A. Brizard company probably obtained baskets was through seasonal workers who came to Arcata for summer work in the fields. The farming community around Arcata used Native American workers during the more labor-intensive times of the agricultural year. Early historical documents recounting the 19th century history of Arcata mention temporary “towns” for migrant Native workers in the outlying fields of the town. These workers were allowed few privileges of town life, having to follow a strict curfew marked by the ringing of a town bell to note when they must return to their temporary field homes. Present outside Arcata for only a few months of the year, these workers could bring with them baskets made along the river to barter for goods in town.³⁵

When Alexander Brizard died in 1904, he left his family business to his three sons, Henry, Brousse, and Paul. During this period, a different chapter of the Brizard basketry enterprise unfolded. Around the time of Alexander’s death, the company expanded and went through a prosperous period. Although documentation does not exist to pinpoint exactly the beginnings of the Brizard mail-order catalogue business, the catalogue may have increased the importance of basketry sales in the early 1900s for the A. Brizard Company, especially to private collectors rather than museums. However, despite the apparent success, there only seems to have been one catalogue ever published.

The original A. Brizard Company store in Arcata, now called the Jacoby Storehouse, was enlarged in 1907, about the time of the catalogue’s publication (Illustration 22). The building’s expansion included adding two stories to the main floor and large glass showcase windows. Basketry was placed in the glass windows

every summer for many years as part of the local celebration of California's Union Day.³⁶ The third floor of the store was equipped with shelves for storage and display of basketry and other Indian art objects. A photograph of the inside of the Brizard store, probably the one in Arcata, shows the variety of types of baskets and other Native American materials carried to cater to ethnographic interests. The photo also includes a number of finely woven baskets showing not only a high level of technical skill, but also artistic innovation and change from tradition. Unfortunately, the weavers remain unknown. (See Illustration 20.)

Responsible for the shift in sales strategy to mail order was Alexander's son, Paul. Sometime in the early 1900s, Paul left Arcata and worked for a brief period in the curio market in Arizona where he managed a curio shop with art dealer A.M. Benham in Phoenix. In the Southwest Paul became inspired, through the large curio mail-order operation of the Benham family, to create a Brizard catalogue for Klamath River baskets³⁷ (Illustration 23). Although not dated, the one catalogue Paul produced for the A. Brizard company was probably issued after 1900.³⁸ The cover of the catalogue reveals the company's interest in appealing to Arts and Crafts clientele as the Art Nouveau design and lettering reflect the art style of the era. The Native American woman depicted on the cover reflects romantic stereotypes of the Arts and Crafts period. (See Chapter 4.) She is an old woman perhaps from a generation born prior to the arrival of Europeans. She carries a burden basket on her back demonstrating a traditional use of basketry. Her age suggests a past, nostalgic view of "old" Native American life and the stereotype of the "dying" or "vanishing" Indian common at this time.



Illustration 22: Jacoby's Storehouse, formerly A. Brizard Company store, Arcata, Ca. Photo by C. Cadge, 1996.

Illustration 23: Cover, A. Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue, c. 1900-1910. Private collection.

At this point, the company had at least twenty employees in the Arcata store alone and operated numerous packtrains. Native American employees probably continued to aid as liaisons with the more remote Native region. In *Carving Traditions of Northwest California* (1995), Ira Jacknis noted at least one Native American, Frank Gist, who was a purchasing agent for Brizard.³⁹ Gist would later become a competitor of Grace Nicholson. The short-lived catalogue operation must have thrived on these Native American connections.

The A. Brizard Company did not maintain a mass-marketing approach to selling baskets beyond the early years of the Arts and Crafts period. Why the catalogue was not reissued remains a mystery. Perhaps not enough baskets were available to maintain the mail-order business, though the A. Brizard company did continue to carry baskets until the company went out of business in 1974.⁴⁰ More likely, the limited scope of the catalogue (it only carried Klamath river baskets) may have made it difficult to compete with the rise of larger catalogue operations dealing in baskets from all over North America during this period. Also, outside collectors acting as dealers, like Grace Nicholson, became a chief source of competition.

The catalogue reveals a system of grading used by the A. Brizard Company to determine prices for baskets. (Illustrations 24 and 25.) According to the text in the catalogue, "They vary in price according to quality and size, the weave and pattern taking precedence over the size."⁴¹ These standards may have been based upon weavers' selling prices, for they would have charged the Brizard merchants more for fine weave and more difficult patterns, whether acculturated or not. Caps are graded into three categories: Second grade (\$1.25 to \$1.75), Medium grade (\$2.00 to \$2.25)

and First grade (\$2.50 to \$5.00). On page 4 of the catalogue, "Squaw Caps," the use of color on the caps is distinguished between "old women's caps" and the rest of the lot. By noting the differences in color between old and new caps, the Brizard catalogue caters to the desire for traditional objects and the ethnographic accuracy of the baskets held by an Arts and Crafts clientele: "Caps are made and worn today as they have been for centuries."

On the next page, "Baskets for General Use," the catalogue lists baskets with traditional (pre-contact) patterns, what it calls "usual style pattern" along with acculturated motifs termed "very unusual design."⁴² Although those baskets with acculturated patterns depicted in the catalogue appear to be priced slightly lower than those with traditional patterns, it is impossible to assess the extent to which age of patterns played into the prices given to the baskets. Other features such as the fineness of weave or the size of the baskets probably factored heavily into the pricing. Despite the fact the pricing reflects a concern for quality in the basket, the A. Brizard Company catalogue and its mass-marketing methods ignores the individual weavers' identities.⁴³

Whatever the pricing criteria used, the A. Brizard Company advertised the sale of both new and old style baskets. Two baskets purchased by the Oakland Museum in 1910 give a sense of how baskets were graded and how they included both old and new styles. (Illustrations 26 and 27.) The A. Brizard Company sold a small trinket basket with traditional motifs to Oakland curator Charles Wilcomb for \$1.25. A slightly larger fancy basket with an unusual display of acculturated motifs sold for \$4.00. The catalogue also included acculturated forms, like basketry-covered

S q u a w C a p s .

Illustrations No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 represent the most typical form of basketry made by the Hupa and Klamath Indians. The women of no other tribe adorn themselves with such handsome and artistic headgear. The ever varying form of the patterns with which the caps are decorated renders their collection of never-ceasing interest. Caps are made and worn today as they have been for centuries. Of these very popular baskets a desirable specimen can be procured at a reasonable price. The elaborate specimens, such as are illustrated, of course command higher prices.



No. 1



No. 2



No. 3

Second Grade Caps, \$1.25 to \$1.75.

Medium Grade Caps, \$2.00 to \$2.25.

First Grade Caps, \$2.50 to \$5.00.

In ordering state Grade and Price.

Second Grade Caps are rather coarse and rough but answer the purpose as specimens of the type.



No. 4

Medium Grade Caps include the great bulk of those made. They are very popular in price and quality.

First Grade Caps include only the fine ones and elaborate patterns. They show the highest degree of skill in the art.



No. 5

Illustration 24: Page 4 (Caps), A. Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue, c. 1900-1910. Private collection.

Baskets for General Use.

These baskets are made in all sizes from about one inch high by two inches in diameter to about eighteen inches high by thirty inches in diameter. They vary in price according to quality and size, the weave and pattern taking precedence over the size.



No. 6

No. 6. A very unusual design in maiden-hair fern stems. Fine and even weave.

Size, 6 in. by 9 in., price, \$5.00.



No. 7.

No. 7. A very perfect basket with a usual style pattern.

Size, 7 in. by 12 in., price, \$8.00.



No. 8.

No. 8. A very fine basket considering its size. Design in maiden-hair fern stems.

Size, 10 in. by 14 in., price, \$13.50.



No. 9.

No. 9. Unusual form of design in red and brown. The light portions of the design are the brown of the spruce roots.

Size, 12 in. by 18 in., price, \$12.00.

Illustration 25: page 5 (Trinket Baskets), A. Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue, c. 1900-1910. Private Collection.

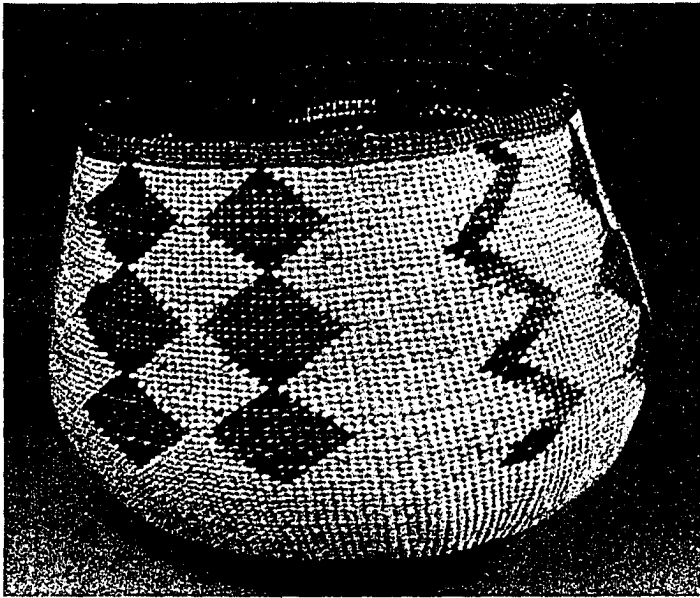


Illustration 26: Trinket Basket with traditional, pre-contact motifs, Northwestern California, purchased from the A. Brizard Co. for \$1.25. Catalog # H16.1045. Courtesy of The Oakland Museum of California.



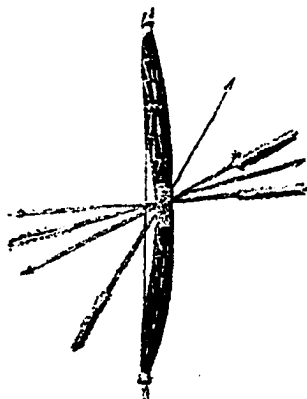
Illustration 27: Fancy Basket with new, acculturated motifs, Northwestern California, purchased from the A. Brizard Co. for \$4.00, Catalog # H16.1042. Courtesy of The Oakland Museum of California.

bottles or demijohns that were not popular with other dealers, like Grace Nicholson, who focused on traditional forms and the ethnographic paradigm (Illustration 28).

It seems that although the company carried both old and new style baskets with little difference in price, the desire to attract Arts and Crafts collectors through a reverence for the traditional past is still apparent. Paul Brizard was certainly aware of the romantic sentiments of Arts and Crafts collectors for Native American art and culture. Romanticized illustrations of traditional Native American life, drawn by a San Francisco design firm and apparently based on A.W. Ericson and E.S. Curtis photos, decorate the catalogue. The company made the claim, "We are now making every effort to interest the capable basket weavers in their vanishing art and are gradually obtaining from them what little is left of their rare, old work."⁴⁴

Although the A.Brizard Company merchants were aware of the popular appeal of the ethnographic paradigm and catered to this interest in the catalogue, the actual pricing of the baskets seems based upon availability of the basketry rather than age or ethnographic value. The A. Brizard catalogue lists traditional functional baskets, such as acorn baskets, cooking baskets, and hoppers ("Indian Mill baskets"), as available as both new and old. Ironically, the old -- rare and, hence, unique -- basket sells for less money than the new! For example, "Old Acorn Baskets, 12 to 20 in.high, \$4 to \$12.50. New Acorn Baskets, same sizes \$5 to \$20.00."⁴⁵ Perhaps this was the result of the Brizard system of acquiring baskets. Brizard stores had an inventory based upon availability of those baskets through barter or purchase, while new ones probably required a commission and an artist willing to fulfill it.

Bows and Arrows.



No. 25

No. 25. Sinew covered bows with sinew strings, highly decorated. The finest bow made.

Bows, 26 to 30 in. long. \$1.50 to \$4.00.

Arrows, bone and metal points, 25c. each, \$2.00 per dozen.



No. 26

No. 26. Covered Demijohns—to order only.

Price, according to size, \$10.00 to \$25.00.

Nos. 27 and 28. Covered Bottles and Flasks—All kinds of fancy bottles and flasks, according to size and quality, \$1.00 to \$7.50.



No. 27 No. 28

Other local merchants collecting and dealing in baskets did not attempt the mass-marketing nor mail-order systems of the A. Brizard Company. I describe briefly a few examples of these local merchant collectors to show that most collecting in Northwestern California during the Arts and Crafts period was done rather haphazardly with some possible interest in the ethnographic paradigm as a sales strategy to visiting collectors. There is no evidence supporting any interest in the individual weaver's identity or creative innovation that Grace Nicholson would adopt. The merchant from Crescent City, Del Norte County, best known for dealing in basketry was X.A. Phillips. Like the A. Brizard Company, Phillips' "traveling emporium" established important patronage ties to rural Native American weavers through transportation to remote areas. From around the turn of the 20th century, X.A. Phillips was a peddler carrying merchandise in a horse-drawn carriage to settlers, as well as Native communities such as Requa, between Gold Beach (north of Arcata) and Crescent City, and into the interior (Illustration 29). Peddlers served isolated homes that were often far from a general store, especially before the first road was built along the Klamath in 1909.⁴⁶

Friendly and charming, X.A. Phillips was welcomed by many in the region and often took baskets in trade, establishing strong relationships of trust with Native families. Eventually Phillips rented a permanent store in Crescent City, where he maintained a mercantile business until 1923. He had a regular clientele of Native American families whom he had met as a traveling salesman. These families continued to do business with Phillips in Crescent City. He was always willing to



Illustration 29: X. A. Phillips and his Traveling Emporium, c. 1900. Photographer unknown. Del Norte County Historical Society Photograph.



Illustration 30: Photograph of Requa, c. 1915. Photographer unknown. Schoenrock Collection, Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of Humboldt State University Library. Note A. Brizard's store next to Klamath Inn. On the right edge of the photo, barely visible, is Bailey's store, a salmon cannery is in the foreground along the water.

accept baskets in exchange for much-needed supplies.⁴⁷ How Phillips went about selling his baskets and whether he engaged a market outside Del Norte County is unknown. It is also impossible to discern the criteria, if any, Phillips used in purchasing baskets or pricing them for resale. As he made friends of many of his regular customers, Phillips undoubtedly knew weavers and could have recorded their names. However, like most of the dealers of his day, such documentation no longer exists.

Like John Daggett and others who received baskets as gifts or in exchange for goods, Phillips probably did not have much control over the types of baskets he collected. Unlike professional dealers from outside of the region, local merchants who traded for and marketed baskets like Phillips probably did not limit their approach to the commonly applied ethnographic paradigm. Perhaps then Phillips may have encouraged more creativity in basketry and acceptance of acculturated forms. Unfortunately, little information exists concerning types of baskets collected by Phillips and so it is impossible to speculate on the extent to which such local merchants worked outside the ethnographic paradigm.

Another way modes of transportation affected the buying and selling of baskets can be seen at major points along routes of travel. Since neither the railroad nor stagecoach ran through most of the region of the Klamath River, travel into the area was done on horse or muleback, or by canoe. An important spot was the Yurok village of Requa at the mouth of the Klamath, where a ferry carried visitors across the river (Illustration 30). John Daggett and his family used this ferry, as did A.L. Kroeber. The ferry placed Requa along the main traveling route through Del Norte

County at the turn of the 20th century, bringing more non-Native people through Requa and increasing local business. The Requa Inn was a place of rest in route upriver. ⁴⁸

Along with the A. Brizard company, which established a store at Requa, a small mercantile business was run by William Bailey, who also operated a salmon cannery at this locale. Bailey was a local entrepreneur who had several business ventures in the area. In addition to receiving a contract to build a road along a portion of the Klamath, Bailey and a partner started the cable ferry across the river at Requa in 1896. ⁴⁹ Around 1900 Bailey's store advertised baskets according to an early photograph of Requa (Illustration 31).

Bailey was co-owner and superintendent of the Klamath Packing and Trading Co. cannery, which undoubtedly introduced him to many local Yurok weavers. The commercial salmon cannery was a major industry at Requa until commercial fishing was made illegal in the area in 1933. Another salmon cannery in the region was known for hiring Native women who were also accomplished weavers because of the dexterity of their fingers and their excellent hand and eye coordination useful for canning. ⁵⁰ Yurok residents of Requa who worked in the cannery probably exchanged baskets as well as their labor for goods at Bailey's store. Bailey had established his prime position as middleman; he was employer within a Native community that was the place of passage for the few tourists or explorers working along the river. Like Phillips, Bailey may not have had much choice regarding the baskets he purchased and sold at his store. His business did not have the vast influence of the A. Brizard Company, so his ability to obtain baskets would have been much more

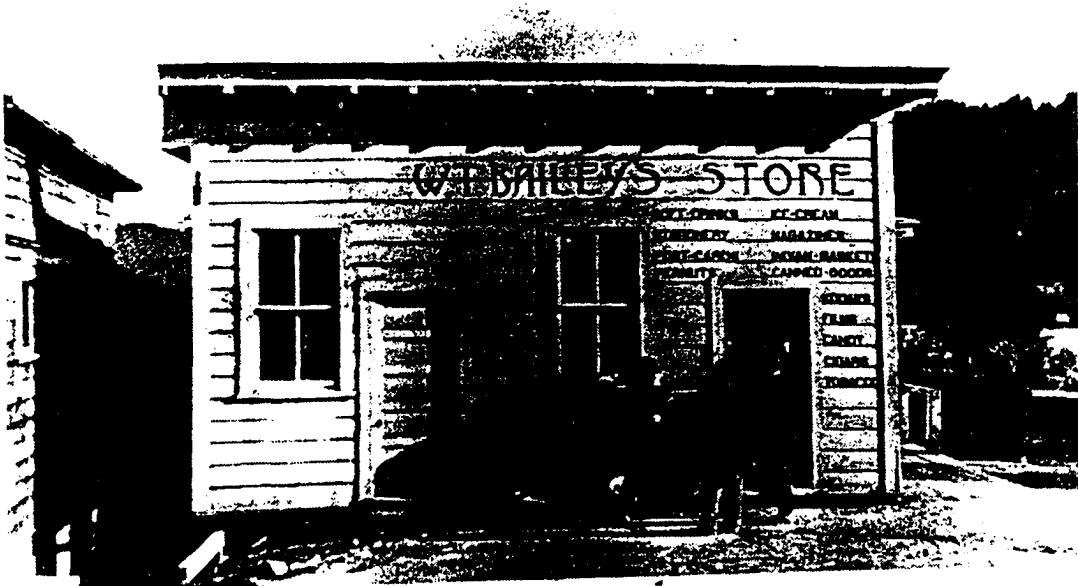


Illustration 31: W.T. Bailey's Store, Requa, c. 1900. Photographer unknown. Schoenrock Collection, Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of the Humboldt State University Library. Note Indian baskets for sale.



Illustration 32: Company Store, Bulwinkle, c. 1910. Photographer unknown. Private Collection.

limited than Brizard's. However, considering Requa attracted outsiders due to its convenient location for travelers and important collectors, such as Kroeber or Grace Nicholson, who stayed there for collecting purposes, Bailey undoubtedly tried to cater to the ethnographic approach of collectors and their interest in traditional baskets.

On a smaller scale than Paul Brizard and more like William Bailey, another storekeeper, Craigie Sharp, accepted baskets in exchange for goods in the lumber town of Bulwinkle, about 45 miles south of the mouth of the Klamath, near the dividing line between Yurok and Wiyot traditional territories. Bulwinkle, later named Crannell, was established in 1907 as the company town for the Little River redwood mill. In the 1930s, the company merged with Hammond Redwood Co. and eventually was sold to Louisiana-Pacific. The town was abandoned in 1969 and the site converted to corporate timberland today. However, between 1907 and 1930, Bulwinkle was a bustling town of over 100 homes, a railway, post office, movie house, school and a large general store. A self-contained community, families at Bulwinkle received their salaries mostly in the form of credit for use in the company town. Although the remaining salary was given in cash, most families at Bulwinkle actually received no currency.⁵¹ Baskets exchanged through trade probably fitted neatly into the economic system in use at Bulwinkle.

For more than twenty years, Sharp was the purchasing agent and manager for the Bulwinkle Company Store (Illustration 32). A collection of about seventy baskets was gathered by Sharp and his wife, Lillian Estelle, between 1908 and 1930.⁵² Sharp's collecting practices serve as an excellent example of the extent to which collectors used the bartering system as a means of access to baskets. Like the

bartering system of Brizard's and Bailey's companies, the bartering of baskets with Sharp probably affected the content of his collection in that he may not have had as much control over the types and styles of baskets received. It is difficult to assess the extent to which choice of baskets was available to Sharp. Craigie Sharp's wife, Lillian, may also have received baskets as gifts. A ceramicist, Lillian appreciated the craftsmanship of basketry like many women collectors of the Arts and Crafts period.⁵³

There is no evidence suggesting whether or not the Sharps sold the baskets they acquired through their store like the Brizard and Bailey Companies did. Nor is it possible to assess the extent to which they considered themselves "collectors" or "dealers." A complete inventory of the Sharp collection could possibly reveal information regarding the aesthetic criteria held by collectors during the Arts and Crafts period and the possible impact of such criteria on the creation of lower Klamath River basketry. However, like the other examples of basketry collectors and dealers given in this chapter, the bartering system used by the Sharps probably left little opportunity for choice or selection in basketry. Nor, as with the other examples, has the Sharp collection remained completely intact. When donated to museum collections or passed down to family members, most basketry collections from the Arts and Crafts period were broken into smaller collections.

Representative examples, however, give a sense of the initial Sharp collection. For example, a basket in the collection combines open and closed twining techniques, an acculturated form characteristic of the Arts and Crafts period, and a lower Klamath River motif referred to as "spreading apart" or "foot," according to motif

interpretation recorded by A.L. Kroeber⁵⁴ (Illustration 33). This motif dates to prior to the Arts and Crafts period and can be described as “traditional.” On the other hand, another basket displays an innovative motif of the Arts and Crafts period on a simple closed twined form (Illustration 34). This motif does not appear prior to the Arts and Crafts period, though the technique and form of the basket are “traditional.” Another example from the Sharp collection is a finely woven small lidded trinket basket decorated in overlay of woodwardia fern, maidenhair fern and porcupine quillwork and depicting the friendship motif common in traditional lower Klamath River basketry (Illustration 35). The lidded form with knob, however, is a typical acculturated form.

These examples of baskets collected by the Sharps at the Bulwinkle Company Store represent the extent to which local collections of the region can be eclectic with no particular preference for the ethnographic paradigm. Some collectors from Northwestern California, such as John Daggett, certainly were interested in Native American ethnography and basketry’s use to illustrate it. But collectors who developed their interest through mercantile operations, like the Sharps, seem to have collected baskets that combine old and new motifs or old and new construction with little concern for old, traditional forms, the ethnographic paradigm, or documentation of the specific artist. Perhaps this was an issue of social class and economic means as Daggett was from a prestigious class position and could afford to collect baskets that illustrated specific ethnographic purposes.

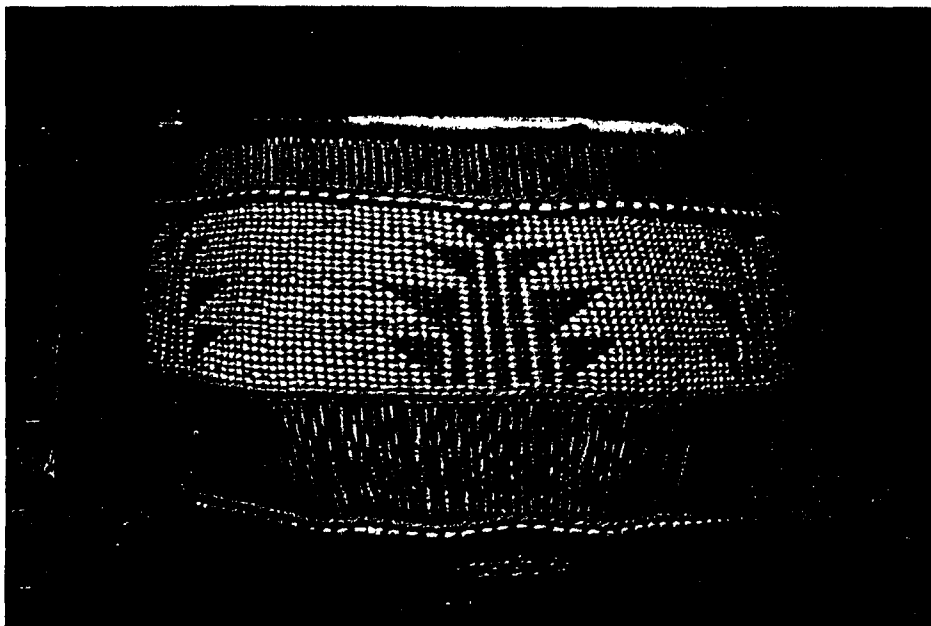


Illustration 33: Basket, Northwestern California, c. early 20th century. Originally from the Bulwinkle Company Store. Private Collection.

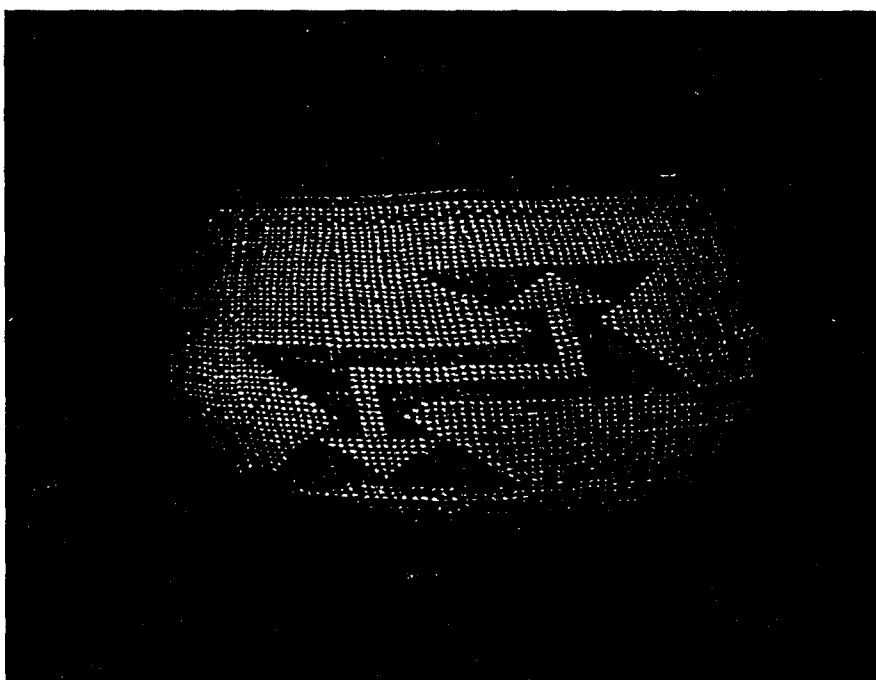


Illustration 34: Trinket basket, Northwestern California. Originally from the Bulwinkle Company Store. Private Collection.

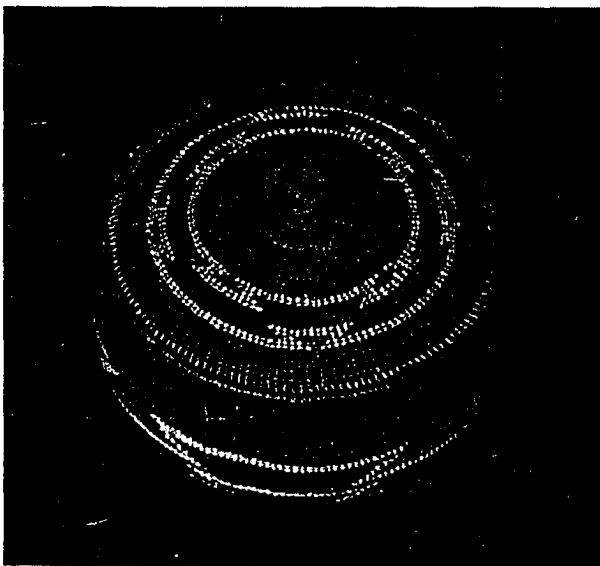
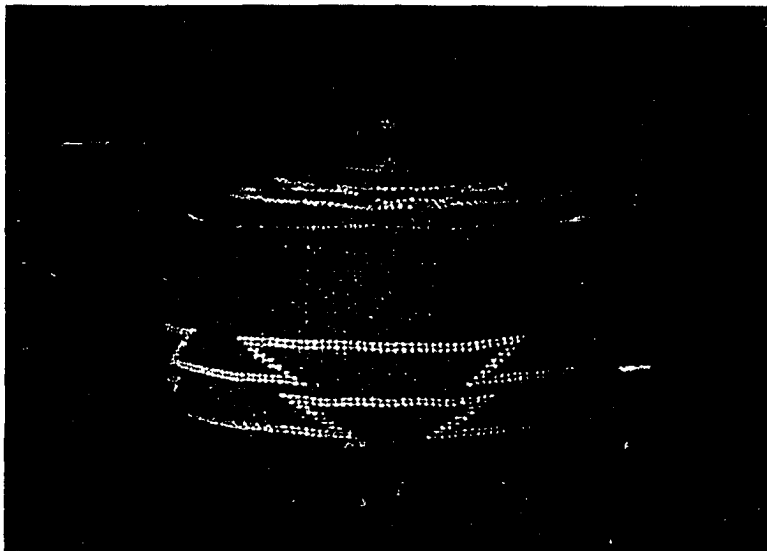


Illustration 35: Fancy Basket. Originally from the Bulwinkle Company Store.
Private Collection.

The extent to which the A. Brizard Company and other mercantile businesses seem to have approached the collection and sale of baskets as a commodity rather than art or ethnographic object distinguishes the enterprises from that of John Daggett or, later, Grace Nicholson. Mercantile businesses as local collectors did not always seem to have the ethnographic paradigm as a sole method of approach to collecting. The larger business of A. Brizard attempted a mass-marketing approach, while smaller businesses like those of X.A. Phillips, William Bailey or Craigie Sharp, probably did not have access to enough baskets or a selection of baskets to use these specific methods of basketry collecting.

In the next chapter, Grace Nicholson's practices as collector and dealer will be contrasted with those of the A. Brizard company, to demonstrate how the reception of baskets shifted from less expensive commodities to finer examples of high art. This shift corresponded to the change in patronage at the time from late 19th-century special access collectors to mercantile businesses interested in added income, to dealers specializing in basketry, like Grace Nicholson, and to 20th-century special access collectors, primarily women. The shift in basketry reception also marked the beginning of the individual artist paradigm as an approach to basketry collecting instigated by Grace Nicholson through her documentation of weaver's names.

20th-Century Special Access Collectors

Before exploring the practices of Grace Nicholson in depth, I introduce two 20th-century special access collectors, primarily to show how the reception of baskets

from the 19th into the 20th century essentially remained the same despite the emphasis on individual artists in it by Nicholson and the growing interest in baskets as fine art in the Arts and Crafts period. In general, more Northwestern California special access collectors appeared by the 1930s probably due to the expanding Euro-American communities in the region. The majority of these collectors were women and most were school teachers because of the access teachers had to weaver's families and the fact that baskets were frequently given as gifts to teachers. In addition, teachers often held a common fascination for local history and documenting Indian life.

In all these collections, a continuation of the ethnographic approach is obvious. Despite Nicholson's promotion and recognition of individual weavers, few subsequent collectors appear to have adopted her model. Perhaps this may have to do with the decline in basketry sales after the Arts and Crafts period and the shift from dealing to collecting baskets more for educational use and interest.

A few of these women collectors have played important roles in the foundation of museums or other important collections in Northwestern California; as a result, it is difficult to narrow this discussion to just two.⁵⁵ However, I focus on two collectors that represent the continuation of the ethnographic approach as well as an increasing concern for the welfare of Indians and the preservation of Indian art in museums. Ruth Roberts also exemplifies another Arts and Crafts period ideal, improving the educational and economic situation of Native peoples.

Ruth Roberts, a part-time resident of Requa from 1915 to 1933, can be considered a special access collector of the years directly following the primary collecting activity of Grace Nicholson (Illustration 36). Although her basketry

collection has not remained intact, she documented examples of the creation and use of basketry during the Arts and Crafts period through a collection of over 500 photographs, mostly snapshots. This collection, now a part of the Humboldt County Collection of the Humboldt State University Library, acts as a visual record of Requa during this time. Like Bailey, Roberts began her association with the community of Requa through the salmon cannery. Her husband, Harry Roberts, was the accountant for the Klamath River Packers Association, and the couple spent May to September of every year until the 1930s at Requa.⁵⁶

Roberts was a close friend to many Yurok residents, especially Alice Spott, the sister of the important Yurok ceremonial leader Robert Spott. Roberts's relationship with Alice and other Native weavers extended beyond the patronage relationships of the A. Brizard Company or of earlier collectors like John Daggett. However, like Daggett and Brizard, Roberts demonstrated little interest in recording basket weavers' names when collecting baskets. This seems particularly odd since she was such a good friend with the Spotts and other Native American local residents. Roberts' writings reveal her interest in documenting Yurok ethnography and history with little concern for recording individual contribution to Yurok basketry. On the other hand, she did show a strong interest in individual contributions to ethnography, like that of Robert Spott.⁵⁷

In the 1930s, Roberts and other women of the Lower Klamath River region created a Klamath River Harmony Club, with the intentions of improving relations between Native and non-Native residents. The chairman of the club was Mrs. Emma McBeth, who sponsored an "Indian party," at which members donned



Illustration 36: Photograph of Ruth Roberts in Alice Spott's Ceremonial Dress, c. 1920. Photographer unknown. Ruth Roberts Collection, Humboldt County Collection. Courtesy of the Humboldt State University Library.

Indian dress and used McBeth's extensive basketry collection, now at the Del Norte County Historical Museum, for cooking and serving food.⁵⁸ Along with the obvious romanticizing of Native culture, the Harmony Club's concern for improved relations was a typical objective of Arts and Crafts organizations in their Indian policies.

Between 1935 and 1955, the Roberts lived in Piedmont in the San Francisco Bay area, but kept in close contact with the Spotts and the Native American community in Del Norte County. Acting as a typical Arts and Crafts matron, she took young Yurok women to the Bay area and helped them find education and employment, such as domestic work.⁵⁹ Perhaps seeing no other solution, she supported these opportunities, a form of assimilation, while at the same time collecting materials for the museum she would eventually open.

Returning north to Crescent City in 1955, Roberts served as President for several years of the Del Norte County Historical Society where she encouraged the beginnings of the Del Norte County Historical Society Museum. She was also responsible for many private donations to the museum. Although the Del Norte museum has an extensive collection of about 350 baskets and other local Native American objects, only 10 Northwestern California baskets are identified as the Ruth Roberts collection. Unfortunately these baskets are not identified by the weaver.⁶⁰

Roberts' photos and writings show her interest in documenting Yurok ethnography, including basketry. Roberts' life work with Northwestern California Indians and their cultures contributed greatly to documenting ethnography and history in Del Norte County. However, the lack of interest she showed to documenting individual weavers and their work represents how the individual artist paradigm

started by Nicholson did not continue as a popular method in the region for non-Native collectors after the Arts and Crafts period. This interest would not be revived until the very end of the 20th century.

Melba Thoma, another woman collector from the period following the work of Grace Nicholson, received many baskets as gifts. Ironically, once they ended up in a museum collection, some of the baskets had to be identified by a friend of Thoma's who knew when she had acquired them.⁶¹ The collection of about 50 pieces was given to the Trinidad Historical Society Museum at the time of Thoma's death in 1994. Thoma, a school teacher in Arcata and neighboring McKinleyville for thirty years, was a local enthusiast of Native Northwestern California art and culture (Illustration 37). Thoma purchased or received baskets as gifts over an extended period of time.⁶²

Located about 40 miles south of the mouth of the Klamath, Trinidad is a very small community, home of the Trinidad Rancheria and the site of the Yurok village of Tsurai. Like other small towns near the Klamath region, Trinidad had commercial businesses that accepted basketry both as gifts and in exchange for goods⁶³ (Illustration 38). Thoma probably acquired some of her baskets through such businesses. Due to the small size of her community, Thoma probably could have identified some of the weavers of the baskets even though they had been purchased.

Dated to about 1920, a very finely woven cap in the Thoma collection displays an innovative design that combines the snakenose and rectangle with a motif based upon a child's suspender buckle (Illustration 39). In Lila O'Neale's fieldnotes, the suspender motif is discussed by the Lower Klamath River weaver, Mrs. Myers, as



Illustration 37: Melba Thoma dressed in her Native American collection, c. 1940s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Trinidad Historical Society Museum.



Illustration 38: Inside of the Underwood Store, Trinidad, c.1900. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Note baskets on table for sale. The Yurok woman on the right has been identified as Jane Childs.

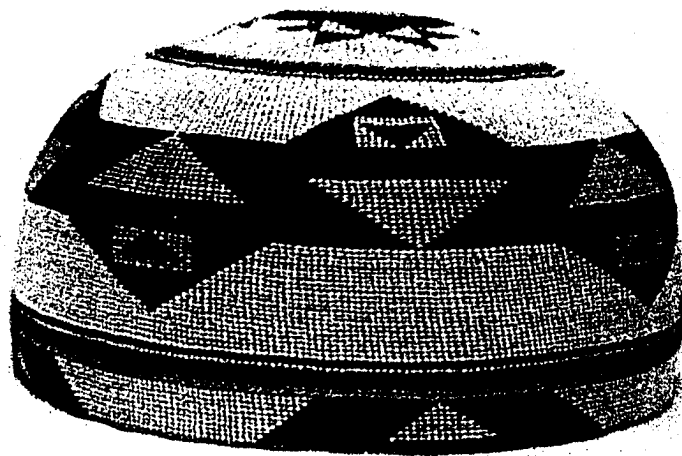


Illustration 39: Ceremonial cap, Northwestern California, c. 1920. Catalog # 1994.8.12, Melba Thoma Collection. Courtesy of the Trinidad Historical Society Museum.

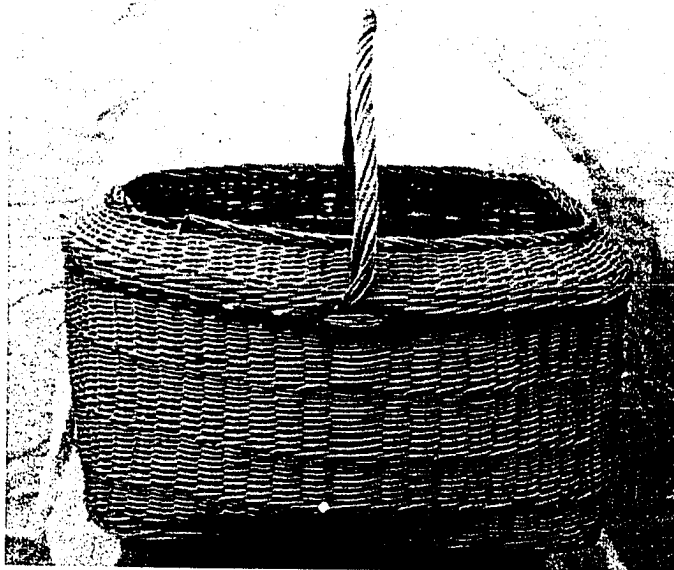


Illustration 40: Carrying Basket with handle, Yurok, Daisy Dick, c. 1940. Catalog # 1994.8.44. Courtesy of the Trinidad Historical Society Museum.

a new motif popular among basketweavers working along the river during the Arts and Crafts period.⁶⁴ Such a basket can be studied and appreciated for its creative innovation. Its weave is extremely fine. Despite the exceptional work exhibited by the cap, however, the artist of the piece remains unidentified.⁶⁵

Close friends and acquaintances of Melba Thoma have been most helpful in identifying some of the weavers of the other baskets. Yurok weaver, Vera Ryerson, identified a small, lidded basket, c.1930, as the work of her mother, Nellie Cooper, another Lower Klamath weaver interviewed by O'Neale in 1929. (See Chapter 6, Illustration 54.) A carrying basket with a handle of the functional type noted earlier in the chapter was made by Yurok weaver, Daisy Dick, from Blue Lake Rancheria (Illustration 40). Daisy Dick is especially well known for her work in shopping baskets made of hazel stick.⁶⁶ According to the Trinidad museum acquisition files, both baskets were identified by the person who gave them to Thoma as gifts.

Baskets in the Melba Thoma collection exemplify how examples in local Humboldt and Del Norte collections can possibly be identified by weaver by members within the communities of Northwestern California today. However, it seems odd that a teacher who showed so much interest in Native American life and who received at least some of her baskets from friends as gifts did not seem to record the weavers' names. Within this context of collection history of Northwestern California basketry, Grace Nicholson's collecting strategy of identifying the individual weaver seems to be unusual for the area and reflects her creative strategies as dealer. In the next chapter, I trace Nicholson's change in collecting practices to include this important new approach.

¹ See, for example, Jonathan Batkin, "Tourism is Overrated: Pueblo Pottery and the Early Curio Trade, 1880-1910," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 282-297.

² An interesting note concerning the lack of tourism in the region is found in the A. Brizard company catalogue. It states, "The responsibility for this lack of knowledge and meagre representation of our basketry lies in the fact of the complete isolation of the tribes, and the dirth of tourists to the country owing to the distance, expense and hardship of a trip here." A. Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue (Arcata: A. Brizard Co., nd), 1.

³ See, for example, Molly Lee, "Tourism and Taste Cultures: Collecting Native Art in Alaska at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 267-281.

⁴ *Ibid*, 277

⁵ See, for example, Ruth Roberts and Melba Thoma discussed at the end of this chapter. I assume the majority of collectors were women by the late period of the Arts and Crafts movement. I ascertain this from my thorough exploration of collection history in the region and the study of archival sources. Women outnumbered men as private collectors.

⁶ Edwin L. Wade, "The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest, 1880-1980," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 167.

⁷ See A. Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue (Arcata: Brizard Company, nd). The A. Brizard Company Basketry catalogue is very rare and difficult to find in archival collections. In his article, "Tourism is Overrated: Pueblo Pottery and the Early Curio Trade, 1880-1910," Batkin noted the rarity of such catalogues and how this may have contributed to the lack of scholarship of the Arts and Crafts Native American art market.

⁸ Marvin Cohodas, "Elizabeth Hickox and Karuk Basketry: A Case Study in Debates on Innovation and Paradigms of Authenticity," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 151.

⁹ Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, "Introductory Remarks: Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 3-4, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 19.

¹² Nelson H.H. Graburn, "Ethnic and Tourist Arts Revisited," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 350.

¹³ A comparison of Grace Nicholson's ledger and the A. Brizard Company catalogue reveal these differences. See chapter illustrations.

¹⁴ For a thorough discussion of the field matrons, see Elizabeth A. McKee, *Civilizing The Indian: Field Matrons Under Hoopa Valley Agency Jurisdiction: 1898-1919* (Master's Thesis, History. Sacramento: California State University, 1982).

¹⁵ Glen N. Nash, "When Humboldt Area Showed Its Best At Chicago Fair," *The Humboldt Historian*, Vol. 33 (4), 1985: 12-13.

¹⁶ Accession Files, Herrick Collection, Clarke Memorial Museum, Eureka.

¹⁷ Carol M. Osborne, *Museum Builders in the West: The Stanfords as Collectors and Patrons of Art, 1870-1906* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Museum of Art, 1986), 61.

¹⁸ John Daggett Accession Files, Stanford University Museum of Art.

¹⁹ Osborne, 61.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ See, for example, John Daggett, "Daggett Writes of Humboldt Indians," *Arcata Union*, May 13, 1911.

²² Lila Morris O'Neale, Fieldnotes, 1.1, "Requa-Johnson's-Up Klamath," Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

²³ Brousse Brizard, Jr., Personal Communication, October 7, 1995. Brousse is Alexander Brizard's grandson and the nephew of Paul Brizard. He had many memories about Arcata in the early 20th century.

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- ²⁴ Newspaper indexes, California Information File, California State Library, accessed at Marin County Library.
- ²⁵ Leigh H. Irvine, *History of Humboldt County, California, with Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men and Women of the County* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1915), 175.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 175-176.
- ²⁷ A. Brizard Company records and correspondence regarding basketry sales no longer exist according to Brizard descendants today. Letters from Paul Brizard to Grace Nicholson in the Grace Nicholson collection date as early as 1902.
- ²⁸ John M. Gogol, "1900-1910: The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry," *American Indian Basketry*, Vol.5 (1), 1985: 26-27.
- ²⁹ Stewart Culin, "A Summer Trip Among the Western Indians (The Wanamaker Expedition)," *Bulletin of the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Pennsylvania*, Vol. 3 (2), 1901: 106.
- ³⁰ A.K.D., "The Indians of Hoopa Valley," *Mariposa Magazine*, 1898: 82. For references to the influence of merchants collecting baskets at the end of the 19th century, see Winifred S. Fry, "Humboldt Indians: A Sketch," *Out West*, Vol. 21 (53), 1904: 503-514.
- ³¹ Ira Jacknis, *Carving Traditions of Northwest California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 5. Jacknis discussed how museum professionals from the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum purchased Native American objects from Brizard Company employees.
- ³² Andrew Genzoli, "Sturdy Pack Mules Served Faithfully: The Frontier's Real Unsung 'Hero'," *The Humboldt Historian*, Vol. 30 (6), 1982: 3-7.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ³⁴ See, for example, "Helping Hands," *Humboldt Times*, March 5, 1963, accessed in Ruth K. Roberts Folder, Del Norte Historical Society Museum. Roberts discussed the extent to which Brizard employees "doctored" Native Americans in rural areas.
- ³⁵ Brousse Brizard, Jr., Personal Communication, October 7, 1995.
- ³⁶ Jacoby Store Folder, Humboldt County History Collection, Humboldt State University.
- ³⁷ Brousse Brizard, Jr., Personal Communication, October 7, 1995. Letterhead on correspondence from the Benham company also documents Paul Brizard as an employee. These letters are dated 1902-1906 in the Grace Nicholson Collection, Huntington Library.
- ³⁸ It is impossible to accurately date this catalogue. Since the writer of the catalogue commented, "It is only since the year 1900 that any decided step was taken to place these beautiful baskets before the collector...", we can assume it was published after that year. However, it could have been any time in the 1900s. In *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way*, Ron Johnson dated the catalogue to 1900. Johnson and Marks, 14. The actual date is probably several years later.
- ³⁹ Jacknis, *Carving Traditions*, 5.
- ⁴⁰ Jacoby Building Folder, Humboldt County Collection, Humboldt State University Library.
- ⁴¹ Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue (Arcata: A. Brizard Co., nd), 5.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Johnson referred to this as the "mass-market" approach. In this dissertation, I adopt this terminology as well. Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks, *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, 1997), 14.
- ⁴⁴ Brizard Company Basketry Catalogue, 2.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁴⁶ Arnold Pilling, "Cloth, Clothes, Hose and Bows: Non-Sedentary Merchants Among the Indians of Northwestern California," in *Migration and Anthropology: Proceedings of the 1970 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), 104.
- ⁴⁷ X.A. Phillips Folder, Del Norte County Historical Museum.
- ⁴⁸ William Schoenrock Collection summary, Humboldt County Collection, Humboldt State University Library, 4.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ Kaaron Carver, Personal Communication, August 24, 1995.
- ⁵¹ Albert J. Lima, "Crannell: A Company Town," *Noyo Hill House Notes*, Vol. 2 (2), 1993:3.
- ⁵² Tom Sharp, Personal Communication, October 1, 1995.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ See Table B.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Barbara Lani Stites, "The Legacy of Miss Cecile Clarke," *The Humboldt Historian*, Vol. 43 (1), 1995: 20-21. Clarke, a school teacher, founded the Clarke Memorial Museum, Eureka.

⁵⁶ Dale Valory, "Ruth Kellett Roberts, 1885-1967," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*, (38), 1968: 1-10.

⁵⁷ Ruth K. Roberts Folder, Del Norte County Historical Museum.

⁵⁸ Eva Paul Mohr, letter to the Del Norte County Historical Museum, January 20, 1938, Del Norte County Historical Museum Collection.

⁵⁹ Theresa Williams, "The Life and Education of a Young Indian Girl," Ruth K. Roberts Folder, Del Norte County Historical Museum.

⁶⁰ Indian Basket Inventory, Del Norte County Historical Museum.

⁶¹ Accession Files, Trinidad Historical Society Museum.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Lila Morris O'Neale, Fieldnotes, 1.1, "Requa-Johnson's-Up River," Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

⁶⁵ Accession Files at the Trinidad Historical Society Museum suggest that Elizabeth Hickox may have woven the cap (author- Rosemary Hunter). Ron Johnson disagrees because of the way the weaver added sticks in its construction which does not resemble Hickox's technique. Ron Johnson, Personal Communication, October 12, 1995.

⁶⁶ Accession Files, Trinidad Historical Society Museum.

Chapter 6: Changing Strategies to Include the Individual Artist Paradigm: Grace Nicholson as Traveler, Collector and Dealer in the Arts and Crafts Period

In this chapter, I show that the collecting and dealing practices of Grace Nicholson illustrate how the reception of basketry by non-Native collectors, both private and museum professionals, started to change during the Arts and Crafts period to include some documentation of the individual weaver. Overall, however, the ethnographic approach to collecting basketry continued to dominate the field. Individual artists were rarely identified in correspondence, museum acquisition files, or dealer inventories. Nicholson, on the other hand, did change her methods of documenting baskets by recording the artist's name when possible. A researcher may work to reconstruct the biography and aspects of a weaver's work by analyzing the Nicholson materials along with other rare manuscripts of the period which document weavers, such as Lila O'Neale's fieldnotes or John P. Harrington's interviews of the weaver Phoebe Maddux.

At the end of this chapter, I demonstrate such a reconstruction through the examples of the weavers, Julia Jones, Daisy Jacobs and Nellie Cooper. I hope that future research will reveal the lives of lesser-known Northwestern California Native weavers and their artistic innovations. Nicholson's appreciation of the value of identifying individual Native artists not only offers a new paradigm to looking at baskets beyond the common ethnographic approach. It also provides a possible avenue for recognizing individual weavers' work from the turn of the 20th century, which has remained mostly unidentified in museum and private collections outside of Northern California.

A number of possible reasons explain Nicholson's change in documenting baskets and her interest in recording the weavers. As some of Nicholson's correspondence quoted in this chapter shows, the dealer became a very close friend with a few of the artists and Native families. Identifying the weavers may have been meaningful personally to Nicholson because of her intimate friendships with them. Identifying the weaver, however, also appears to have been related to increasing the economic value of the baskets.

As a talented entrepreneur, Nicholson crafted ingenious ways of marketing basketry, along with Native American ceremonial objects, which increased the value of her collections. These marketing strategies reflected continuity with late Victorian colonial collecting practices by maintaining an interest in "old" baskets and in preserving the "vanishing" cultures of Native America. Nicholson, however, modified the way the baskets were received by expanding beyond this model to include an increased appreciation for the artist and owner of the objects.¹ This dissertation primarily addresses the fact that Nicholson identified individual weavers. However, the Nicholson collection reveals that she also documented the names of owners of Native Northwestern California ceremonial regalia as well. Her correspondence with museum professionals and basketry collectors suggests that she saw the identity of the weaver as a possible asset to a basket's economic value. This is especially true of her records concerning master weaver Elizabeth Hickox, in Nicholson's later life.

One reason for Nicholson's change in reception of the baskets may have been the increasing importance of buying from the Native American weavers or their families directly, rather than solely from merchants or local residents in Northwestern

California. As a woman, Nicholson had the opportunities to develop close friendships with weavers.² She also initiated methods of fieldwork that included documentation of her patronage relationships through written diaries as well as photographs that helped her to maintain an on-going dialogue of exchange with Native Americans, both men and women, for a period of over thirty years. Unlike the other collectors and dealers discussed in Chapter 5, Nicholson's basketry collecting was not a sideline operation, and she did not have another career during this time.³ Her focused commitment to basketry collecting contributed to her economic success. This is revealed in her correspondence with collectors and museum professionals. In turn, this focus allowed for the time and financial opportunity for travel, which resulted in Nicholson's close relationships with Native Americans and her changing reception of their baskets and her strategies collecting them.

Another factor that affected this changing reception of baskets was Grace Nicholson's status as the professional collector and dealer working outside a museum or anthropology department. As a non-academic, Nicholson developed her own strategies for documenting and selling baskets. Some of these strategies relied upon the ethnographic paradigm characteristic of most scholarship of the era, but others imitated the mass marketing of commercial dealers. Most intriguing, Nicholson created her own methods of documenting individual weavers that expanded beyond the current academic methodology of anthropologists like Kroeber. Encouraged by the growing Arts and Crafts market for Indian baskets, as well as other ethnographic objects, Nicholson developed an active trade that relied upon her close personal

relationships with Native Americans and that affected her methods of documentation and basketry sales.

Introduction to Grace Nicholson's life and work

Grace Nicholson was born December 31, 1877, the daughter of Rose Dennington and Franklin Nicholson of Philadelphia (Illustration 41). Since her mother died when she was a baby and her father died when she was a teenager, Nicholson developed a strong, independent personality and was remarkably self-reliant at a young age. Her grandparents cared for her until they also passed away when Nicholson was twenty-four. In 1901, the same year her grandparents died, Nicholson used her small inheritance to move to Pasadena in Southern California. Since she had been trained in secretarial work, she opened a small office for typing. In the next few years, she developed an interest in Native American baskets, so popular in Pasadena at that time.⁴ Thyra Maxwell, an employee of Nicholson's, handled her basketry collection and estate after Nicholson's death. Maxwell noted in a brief biography of Nicholson that "She had a short time of secretary work but had more ambition and a great curiosity, borrowed \$500 on her "face" from a Pasadena banker and plunged into the collecting field."⁵ Eventually, by August, 1902, she opened The Old Curio Shop "to handle choice Indian baskets and Indian curios."⁶

Three scrapbooks of newspaper articles and other materials addressing Indians in the Grace Nicholson collection include some items that suggest possible sources of inspiration for Nicholson's basketry business. Almost all of the material is dated 1902 or 1903 and features many articles on Indians. Especially relevant are several ads for



Illustration 41: Grace Nicholson Along the Trinity River, photographer unknown, 1906, #4, Album A, Grace Nicholson Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

Campbell's Curio Store and its "1000 Indian baskets." Two 1902 newspaper articles concerned the Basket Day of members of the Ruskin Art Club, the "largest attendance for the club in months."⁷

One of the articles mentioned Mrs. Belle Jewett of Pasadena, a well-known basket collector who would later purchase basketry from Nicholson. Jewett was noted as traveling among the Indians herself, where she "procured her own specimens, studying weaves and patterns with the squaws who did the work."⁸ Neither article about Basket Day mentioned Grace Nicholson. It is not until the end of the first scrapbook that an ad for Nicholson's shop appears, undoubtedly a result of her growing enthusiasm for Indian culture in these early years. Perhaps she was also inspired by the travels of Jewett to begin collecting in the field by exploring remote areas of California.

In addition to several articles by George Wharton James, a small pamphlet about The Fred Harvey Ethnological Collection, by George A. Dorsey, stressed the importance of California baskets to Native American ethnology. Dorsey mentioned the Hupa baskets as the second most important aspect (next to Pomo baskets) of the Harvey collection.⁹ The baskets of both these tribes became central to Nicholson's collecting practices when she began travel in Northern California; two of her most important artists, Mary and William Benson, were Pomo. The Fred Harvey collection of Hupa baskets and ethnographic objects was probably acquired through either the A. Brizard Company or through the Hupa Valley Indian agent or field matrons. This collection, as well as the collections of other dealers of the period, must have contributed to Nicholson's decision to travel into the Klamath River region herself.¹⁰

Also from this early period, one other article from the first scrapbook is worth noting. Along with references to other curio businesses, Nicholson included an ad for The Wanamaker Store, John Wanamaker, N. Y., which listed mail-order information for baskets, including Klamath River baskets – 6-7 inches across and a fine weave – \$2, \$2.50, \$3, \$4. Fairly comparable to the A. Brizard catalogue prices, these prices were similar to the cost of Nicholson's main stock of baskets that were unidentified by weaver in her ledger. Next to the ad, a brief article referred to "Penn's Museum Given Rare Indian Relics" stating that "Mr. John Wanamaker has presented to the Free Museum of Science and Art of the University of Penn. one of the best ethnological collections." Nicholson probably used the ads and newspaper clippings as guidance in establishing the details of her basketry trade, as well as for ideas for establishing a museum clientele. ¹¹

In addition to the potential for financial rewards that the above articles demonstrated about basketry dealing, some materials in Nicholson's personal scrapbooks suggested other possible motives for collecting and dealing in baskets. The Wanamaker ad discussed above illustrated how gifts to museums may have contributed to a collector's reputation. There was also a philanthropic incentive behind museum gifts, which seemed to have played an important role in Nicholson's career later in her life.

Nicholson may have been responding, at least in part, to the common concern of Arts and Crafts period writers and supporters of Indian rights for better economic living standards for Native Americans. For example, the National Indian Association's publication *Two Ways to Help the Indians* (1903), by Mrs. F.N.

Doubleday, is included in Nicholson's collection of early 1900s literature about Indians. Throughout the small book, Doubleday endorsed basketry in schools as a solution to the economic and cultural demise of the Indians. As Nicholson was a member of the Arroyo culture in the Los Angeles/Pasadena area (see Chapter 4), she certainly felt an affinity with those fighting for Indian rights and for improving standards of living for Native Californians.¹²

Nicholson may not have agreed with the methods of basketry patronage supported by the National Indian Association, for she was quite critical of the Association's field matrons in her diaries.¹³ Nonetheless, as I will explore more in the section addressing her discourse below, Nicholson's writings were full of contradictions. She saw basketry sales and her patronage as a source of improving Native life. Yet, at the same time, she always sought to gain the greatest economic reward for herself from a bargain even at the expense of the Native seller in need of money.

Grace Nicholson's collecting trips in California began in 1905, shortly after her business started. She stopped traveling in the region in 1916.¹⁴ Although she continued to correspond with Native Americans in the Northwest and with buyers, both private and from museums, through letters till the time of her death, the major period of basketry collecting for Nicholson had passed by the 1920s. Seen as a financial foundation for future art investments, the basketry trade of the Arts and Crafts period must have been instrumental in the remarkable success of Nicholson's art enterprise by the time of her death in 1948.

Beginning at 41-43 South Raymond Avenue as a small antique store, Nicholson's business eventually moved to 45-46 North Los Robles Avenue in the 1920s. A newspaper clipping from the Nicholson collection titled "Miss Nicholson's Reception" (no date) listed the many kinds of antiques and curios her business carried after its expansion:

Grace Nicholson will hold a reception in her Arts and Crafts Studio... It will be an exhibit of her collection of artistic furnishings and art objects consisting of Indian baskets, Navajo blankets, camphor chests, jewelry and gems, dainty miniatures, fine ivory carvings, exquisite drawn work, old Mexican and Mission relics, Alaskan and South Sea products, Spanish embroidered shawls and rebosos, odd bits in boxes, chains, bags and spoons, Mission and colonial brasses, coppers, silver, oil and watercolor paintings of local scenery, by leading California artists. A fine Alaskan collection consisting of over 2000 remarkable examples of Eskimo and Indian handicraft will be exhibited.¹⁵

This quote gives a little idea of the variety of art and ethnographic objects Nicholson eventually collected and displayed. During this later period in her life, her shop became a common tourist attraction and Pasadena favorite. Illustration 42 is a photograph depicting a corner of Nicholson's home and shop and part of her extensive Native American basketry collection. The extent of Nicholson's basketry collection, along with other fine arts and antiques, made her home and shop a local attraction. Nicholson herself was well known within Pasadena social circles, even writing briefly a column for the local paper, "Grace Nicholson says..."¹⁶

In addition to the collecting trips to Northwestern California discussed in the dissertation, Nicholson traveled to Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and into British Columbia to purchase Indian objects. By the 1930s, as the market for



Illustration 42: Inside of Grace Nicholson's home and shop at 45-46 N. Los Robles, Pasadena, c. 1920s, photographer may be Nicholson, p.13, #8, Album F, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

Asian art was becoming more lucrative than Indian baskets, she had traveled in China and Japan as well. Contributing to her growing prosperity, she amassed an extensive Asian art collection. Before the hardships of the depression, she earned enough money to build a model of a Chinese palace to house her collection. After Nicholson's death, this building became the Pasadena Art Institute, then Pasadena Art Museum, and finally the current Pacific Asia Museum.¹⁷

Thyra Maxwell, an employee of Nicholson's since 1942,¹⁸ was responsible for selling Grace Nicholson's Indian collection and for taking care of Nicholson's written documents and personal memorabilia, which were given to the Huntington Library after Nicholson's death. The archival collection is unique; Nicholson was the only Arts and Crafts curio dealer and collector of Northwestern California baskets to have maintained such an extensive record of business correspondence, as well as diaries, notes, and photographs of her collecting trips. The diaries cover her trips made in 1906, 1908, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1914, 1915, and 1916. These materials form the basis of the rest of this chapter. In addition to the value Nicholson's diaries, notes and correspondence have for analyzing the basketry trade and the introduction of the individual artist paradigm of the Arts and Crafts period, the collection is a valuable source about Native American dances and other aspects of community life in Northwestern California.

Another important resource regarding Grace Nicholson's collecting practices is her basketry ledger at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum, University of California, Berkeley. The ledger, unfortunately incomplete and undated, lists part of Nicholson's

inventory, assigning each basket a number, providing measurements, color and cost. It is organized by tribe, but the numbers are not listed consecutively. Some of the most prized and highly priced baskets on the ledger include a sketch of the basket. This has allowed some scholars, such as Marvin Cohodas working with Elizabeth Hickox's work, to identify specific baskets in collections. The vast majority of the baskets listed on the ledger are not matched with a sketch or identified by artist, though a number of weavers' names are recorded and, in some cases, who the basket was collected from (Illustration 43). On a few examples, Nicholson has written in who purchased the basket.

For the pages listing baskets from Northwestern California: 113 are identified by artist (72 are listed by Elizabeth Hickox, 4 by Julia Jones, 1 by Daisy Jacobs, 2 by Nellie Cooper, 5 by Emma Dusky. The rest are identified as the work of other weavers.), 16 are identified by purchaser, 15 are identified by whom they were collected from, 291 are accompanied by an illustration of the basket. These numbers are out of a total sample of 1758 baskets.¹⁹ Due to the lack of consistent identification and date and because the numbers are not consecutive, the ledger is difficult to decipher. It does suggest the extent to which Nicholson documented and promoted specific weavers' work, mostly the work of Elizabeth Hickox. Although only a very small percentage of baskets are identified by weaver, this small percentage marks a significant change in collecting strategy and a change in reception.

Some baskets drawn on the ledger can be matched to Nicholson's photos of her collection and also with references to her collecting in her diaries. However, since the majority of the ledger entries do not include the name of the person to whom the



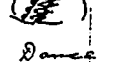

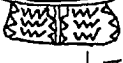
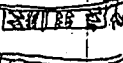

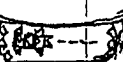
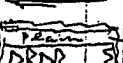



	5716	20.00	June 2. finder	20 long - 4 1/4 -	Red Sandy
	5717	20.00	"	14 1/2 - 4 1/4, wide bottom Red Sand - with Buckskin and hand painted in design in center -	
	5718	18.00	"	15 1/2 - 4 1/4, lined with Blue -	
	5864	5.00			17 1/2 - 5. brown - old -
Hopper	6118	3.00			8 - 4 - 3 1/4, cooking
"	6457	3.00			3 1/4 - 3 1/4 - 2 1/2 Buckskin
cooking	6594	5.00	Dance		12 - 2 - 3 1/2 - plain
"	6599	10.00	"		12 - 2 - 3 1/2 Red black -
"	6600	10.00			12 - 1 - 5 - Black -
cooking	6601	17.50			14 - 5 - 5 - Black - old whiskey jar -
acorn cooking	6602	12.50			16 - 3 - 4 - Black -
	6603	12.50			17 1/4 - 3 - 5 1/2 Brown - Buckskin and -
gift	6605	20.00			16 1/2 - 5 - 5 - Black fine Buckskin and binding - decorated -
"	6606	15.00			cut here - unfinished 66 - 6 - 6 - Black
"	6612	4.00			5 - 3 - 2 1/2 Mrs Sam Jones 3 Black.
"	6609	8.00			7 - 5 1/4 - 3 1/2 Red black Mrs Jones.
6 - 7 1/2 - 4 1/4 cover Black lined -	6667	25.00			length 4 1/2 - 5 1/2 wide - Buckskin pattern - Black. lined with and -

Illustration 43: Sample page of the Grace Nicholson Ledger, Yurok baskets, p.354. Courtesy of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley. Note: Although most of the baskets are unidentified by weaver, two on the page are by Mrs. Sam Jones (Julia) and are accompanied by illustrations. These baskets have not been found yet in any known collections. Jones, who is included in the Nicholson diaries, is discussed below in the section addressing identification of individual artists.

basket was sold to, locating the basket today becomes problematic. For example, top of page 53 of the ledger (Illustration 44) includes a drawing of a basket by Hupa artist Emma Dusky (b.1871). Nicholson wrote, “Beautiful basket with cover – made by Emma Dusky- Best weaver. Design all maidenhair fern.” It sold for \$30.00, a high price in comparison to the unidentified baskets below it, priced between \$2.00 and \$3.00.

This particular basket can be identified in the Nicholson photo collection at the Huntington Library (Illustration 45). To whom Nicholson sold the basket and where it is today remain unknown. Considering that Nicholson thought of Emma Dusky as the best Hupa weaver, it is surprising so little information can be found about this weaver today. The Census roll of the Indians of California (1928) lists Emma Duskey with her date of birth under her married name, Emma Duskey Frank, and her Hupa name, Tu-san-ge. She resided on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation. Her basketry has remained unidentified.

Very few Hupa weavers from Emma Duskey Frank’s generation have been recognized by name. This is especially so for Hupa weavers because only a handful were interviewed by Lila O’Neale in 1929.²⁰ Out of her fifty informants, only seven were Hupa weavers, and she provided no brief biography on these weavers as she did for her Yurok and Karuk informants. One Hupa weaver she interviewed (No. 48) was listed as Mrs. Emma Dushey Frank.²¹ Certainly this was the same weaver as Nicholson’s Emma Dusky and the census listing, Emma Duskey Frank. The census lists no one going by the name Dushey or Dusky.

Nicholson’s diaries provide brief anecdotes about individual weavers that can


No				
458	2.00	Dama	17 1/2 - 4 - Design black	
359	2.00	"	16 1/2 - 4 - "	
466	20.00	"	16 - 5 - " "	
149	3.00		8 1/2 - 11 1/2 - 7 1/2. Beautiful bush with cover - made by Emma Ducky - Best weaver Design not made on line	
311	2.50	cap	Black	
348	2.25	"	"	
300	2.50	"	"	
312	3.50	"	"	
343	2.75	"	"	
352	2.25	"	"	
330	2.25	"	"	
322	2.25	"	"	
315	3.50	"	"	
298	2.50	"	"	
288	2.50	"	"	
289	2.50	"	"	
327	2.25	"	"	
320	2.25	"	"	
268	2.00	"	"	
271	2.00	"	"	
293	3.50		yellow	
283	4.50		" "	

Illustration 44: Grace Nicholson Ledger, p. 53, Hupa baskets. Courtesy of The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.



Illustration 45: Grace Nicholson baskets, p. 72, #1, Album B, center basket by Emma Duskey Frank, Grace Nicholson Collection. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

give us clues to the weaver's personality. Nicholson probably avoided setting up a productive patronage or friendship with Duskey (Dusky) since the weaver was unwelcoming and abrasive to Nicholson. Emma Dusky was mentioned several times in Nicholson's diaries as "old Snappy," a moody, difficult woman who made beautiful baskets.²² Parallels between O'Neale's fieldnotes and Nicholson's ledger and diaries suggest possible future identification of Hupa weavers, like Emma Duskey Frank, from this generation. Later in this chapter, I discuss this method for identifying individual weavers and their baskets from Northwestern California in more depth.

Grace Nicholson's Professional Reputation and Its Development

Identification of individual weaver's work began when Nicholson changed her acquisition methods and established direct patronage relationships with Native American weavers and their families. Travel as well as correspondence between trips allowed these friendships to develop. In addition to the greater access to purchasing baskets, Nicholson's change in acquisition methods increased her knowledge of the region and, in turn, contributed to her growing professional reputation as an expert in baskets. Although she was technically a non-professional within the field of anthropology, her insight into Native art and culture was often held in high regard by academic anthropologists. Recent interest in the role of non-professionals in anthropology, such as curio dealers and collectors, has resulted in a reevaluation of their contribution to the early years of Native American art history.

Basketry authority Otis T. Mason considered Nicholson a reliable source for ethnographic information. Mason and Nicholson's friendship began early in Nicholson's career when she wrote him inquiring about Mission baskets. Mason commented that he thought basketry was an ideal area of interest for Nicholson because she was a woman. Women, Mason suggested, were in the unique position to develop close relationships with weavers who were also women. They would be given much greater access to ethnographic information about the art of basketry. Between 1902 and 1906, Mason and Nicholson exchanged information, and letters in the Nicholson collection show that Mason asked Nicholson for much information. A 1904 letter reveals his appreciation for "specialists" working outside of academia,

I shall always be glad to hear of any discoveries that you make in the identification of the tribal and local description of baskets. We have to rely upon our friends who are specialists, because in such matters we are here today and gone tomorrow...²³

A series of letters to Nicholson, of 1902 to 1915, from William H. Holmes, head curator, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, demonstrate how museum professionals valued Nicholson's access to ethnographic information and individual artists. Holmes wrote her in search of a carver of obsidian blades from Northwestern California.²⁴ In her diaries, Nicholson referred to her friendship with noted anthropologists Samuel Barrett, Edward Gifford, and A.L. Kroeber.²⁵ The diaries also suggest a degree of tension existed with professional anthropologists, especially Kroeber.

Nicholson was competitive with other collectors and seemed to resent the position of Kroeber and his access to monetary resources. In her 1906 diary, she

wrote about her frustration at arriving at a location and finding all the baskets already bought up.²⁶ She recorded the purchases Kroeber made, while making amusing remarks about his collecting habits and teasing his young wife, who seemed to have particularly irritated Nicholson. She wrote, “She hung on to her Doctor as she called him and tried to steady herself in her French heels.” She also noted the faulty collecting of Kroeber, “Dr. picked up a cover to a baby basket upon which a skin was stretched to dry thinking he had found something new...”²⁷

One of the ways Nicholson expanded her reputation as a knowledgeable collector working outside academia was to become involved in professional organizations, such as the American Anthropological Association²⁸, and conferences addressing Indian issues.²⁹ Nicholson was involved not only in acquiring ethnographic knowledge of Indians but also with the Arts and Crafts movement and its proponents’ concern with Indian welfare. She participated in the movement to help Indian people improve their living conditions along with professional anthropologists, like Dr. Putnam and Arts and Crafts spokesmen Charles Lummis and George Wharton James.³⁰ It is difficult to assess the extent to which Nicholson saw her collecting business as contributing to this movement for Indian Rights, or if she saw her participation as a way of building her own recognition as a concerned collector.

In either case, the Arts and Crafts movement and its social circle and public events helped to build a network of relationships with professional anthropologists and museum curators for Nicholson. This network, in turn, contributed to her own market strategies and changing reception of baskets. It may have also resulted in her growing recognition of individual weavers. The Nicholson collection includes

references to many articles by James and other Arts and Crafts followers. These authors noted the potential of the support of basketry to aid in solving the problems Native Americans encountered because of assimilation and the impact of contact with European culture.³¹

According to Mabel Clausen, a Pasadena friend and lawyer for Nicholson, Nicholson always wanted to write books about Indian lore, yet never published records of her ethnographic knowledge.³² The Nicholson collection is filled with loose sheets of miscellaneous information pertaining to Native American cultures.³³ She used these details in her letters to prospective buyers and sent very detailed notes along with her baskets to museum collections.³⁴ For the most part, documentation sent to museums and collectors stressed the ethnographic approach, rarely with references to weavers. These useful additions documenting the baskets probably contributed to her professional reputation as a dealer to major museums.

The Nicholson collection shows that she sold baskets to most major museums in North America, including the Harvard Peabody Museum, Denver Art Museum, University of Pennsylvania Museum, Museum of the American Indian, and the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology. She gave gifts of baskets and ethnographic objects to the Field Museum, Chicago, Southwest Museum, Smithsonian Institution, and the University of Pennsylvania. In fact, in a letter from the John Lee Clarke, Inc., a successor of the Benham Indian Trading Co., the merchant noted that the Peabody Museum purchased large items only through Grace Nicholson and that Clarke, Inc., needed to work through her in order to sell to the museum.³⁵

The high esteem museum curators held for Nicholson stemmed from her travels and personal experiences with Native California weavers. Thus, in turn, the encouragement she received from museum professionals to maintain her fieldwork and personal relationships with Native Americans may have supported her documentation of individual weavers. Frederick W. Putnam, of the Harvard Peabody Museum, wrote to Grace, “Mrs. Putnam and I often talk of you and all you have done and just glory in your success.”³⁶ However, other museum professionals recognized the advantage of her trips to her position as collector and resented her high prices. George Gordon Byron, Assistant Curator at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote Nicholson after purchasing some of her pieces despite their high price, “so high in fact that I have decided to go to the Pacific Coast myself.”³⁷

Grace Nicholson’s Collecting Criteria Used to Cater to the Desires of Her Clientele

Despite the fact that Nicholson’s diaries and ledger recorded the individual artist, her correspondence with basketry buyers still emphasized systematic collecting and the ethnographic paradigm. As was noted in Chapter 3 under the historiography of collecting psychology, Grace Nicholson catered to her clients’ desires for systematic collections where baskets of various types were chosen as sample representatives. Criteria used by both Nicholson and her clients in assessing quality in baskets supported the strong preference for the ethnographic paradigm in the collecting practices of Arts and Crafts period buyers.

Several letters in the Nicholson collection referred to “completing” their collection in a number of categories. For example, collector Harry L. George wrote

Nicholson in 1918 seeking certain baskets to complete his collection organized by a linguistic category. He also noted that he used a systematic approach to cataloguing in order for him to be better able to access specific examples. As in Susan Pearce's definition of systematic collecting (discussed in Chapter 3), the central concern for George was the concept of the entire collection and his ability to use the collection to illustrate ideas (in his case about linguistic differences between tribes).³⁸

Another letter of a client of Nicholson's, W.T. Coatsworth, reveals the extent to which Arts and Crafts period collectors were aware of types of weaves and level of skill in basketry. This collector was quite adamant about wanting a Pomo "chuset" weave to complete his/her collection. This particular collector introduced another factor when considering the systematic collecting practices of Arts and Crafts collectors: aesthetic preference. There were certain baskets, such as Washoe and Panamint, the collector did not want simply because he or she did not find them attractive. Coatsworth was also very explicit about the need of a certain size basket for the fireplace mantle and the criteria regarding the shape of the basket, its sides, and the opening. This letter illustrates that although most collectors were primarily concerned with representative types of baskets, other factors, especially aesthetic appeal, contributed to the decision to purchase specific baskets.³⁹ Recognition of the individual weaver, however, did not play a significant role.

The age of a basket enhanced the basket's authenticity and its ability to evoke the traditional, pre-contact past. A collector's letter written to Nicholson exemplifies the high value placed upon old baskets that did not show the effects of contact with Euro-American culture. Trying to convince Carrol Hartman, Nicholson's assistant, to

buy one of her baskets, Mrs. Ida Selby wrote, "This basket is probably over hundred years old and was made long before curio seekers ever thought of collecting such things as Indian baskets. I know I have a jewel."⁴⁰ Ironically, a drawing of the basket in the letter shows a style clearly made for the curio trade!

Nicholson's diary entries show the most reverence for old baskets and concern for authenticity. This is ironic given that it is in her diaries that she also expressed an interest in the individual weavers currently working in new styles as well as old. Throughout her travels, she made frequent reference to collections of old and fine baskets, which she coveted, as opposed to "new coarse baskets."⁴¹ Native Americans buying materials for Nicholson wrote to her commenting they were looking for "genuine old Indian articles" in response to her inquiries.⁴² Part of Nicholson's interest in "old" baskets had to do with the quality of the weave, which tended to be fine in older baskets. She did refer in her diaries to young weavers making fine, new work.

Another reason for Nicholson's interest in "old" work, however, had to do with her ambition to sell quality work to museums. In 1906, she returned a Northwestern California Jump Dance headdress to Paul Brizard because it had "too many ear marks of the White man, such as thread, cloth and feathers." She continued that she was interested in "especially old articles, which would be suitable for museums."⁴³ As early as 1906, Nicholson was making distinctions of quality and judgements of authenticity with both baskets and ceremonial material that differed from the purchasing and sales strategies of commercial merchants such as the A. Brizard company. In this case, she clearly was following the ethnographic paradigm

to collecting jump dance baskets and was responding to their appeal to museum collectors as traditional, pre-contact ceremonial baskets.

Nicholson maintained the ethnographic approach that originated in the 19th century with collectors like John Daggett, but, as her ledger shows, she also applied a mass-market approach of companies like the Brizard's. Certainly the ethnographic approach seemed a logical choice considering the desires of her clientele. It was also in 1906, however, when her diaries began to expand upon her friendships with weavers and when documenting the individual weaver also became a part of her work.

As was demonstrated in Chapter 4, concern for the maintenance of tradition and quality in "new" baskets and the preservation of "old" baskets were dominant themes in the writings of the Arts and Crafts period. The Nicholson collection contains a number of files and scrapbooks filled with articles by noted Arts and Crafts writers, such as George Wharton James. One section of the collection includes among written references and citations a quote given to Nicholson by her business associate, Hartman, summing up an article by Charles Lummis. Hartman noted, "He puts things alright at times." The quote reads:

Encourage the fine old crafts and to discourage the ridiculous perversion and vulgarization of them by chromo-minded patrons who have come near to spoiling all the Indian arts. The old time Indian basket, blanket and other artifacts are uncomparably (sic) more artistic and incomparably more valuable even in our own modern market than the sophisticated articles made today to sell with their hideous aniline colors, their tenderfoot patterns and their degraded handiwork.⁴⁴

Even though Nicholson did purchase fine, new baskets and, in rare instances, encouraged stylistic innovation and change, the Nicholson collection shows her

support of Arts and Crafts notions of authenticity as well and the ethnographic approach to collecting baskets.

On Nicholson's ledger and correspondence, her use of the words "old" or "old style" referred both to depicted motifs and, in other examples, to forms of baskets used in the pre-contact life of Native Americans.⁴⁵ "Old" also referred to age, as with a basket collected in 1872.⁴⁶ When discussing current artists' work, the usage of the expression "old" in reference to motifs is an example of Nicholson's attempts to create "authenticity" and to validate the works of contemporary weavers she was selling. In places, what definition of "old" Nicholson was using on the ledger and in her diaries is difficult to determine, and her use of the term is ambiguous.

An interesting comparison can be made with the ambiguity the weavers themselves held about motifs and whether they were "new" or "old" and "good" or "bad." In *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (1932), O'Neale revealed the extent to which individual weavers, both young and old, disagreed on the relative age or appropriateness of certain motifs. (See Chapter 3 and Illustration 11.)⁴⁷ O'Neale found it difficult to distinguish between criteria used by different weavers to assess whether a motif was copied from white sources or if it was a combination of "old" motifs creating a new composition. New compositions of "old" motifs were often praised and admired by weavers. Innovation was both accepted and criticized by artists in O'Neale's study, complicating a clear definition of "authenticity" in Arts and Crafts period basketry of Northwestern California. The weavers were aware, however, that "though a mixture of designs to be woven in the same fancy basket may be ordered, white buyers are dissatisfied with any pattern they suspect of being un-Indian."⁴⁸ The

weavers realized non-Native buyers had their own idea of “authentic” baskets, even if the weavers, themselves, did not agree on such a category.

Although O’Neale’s study was conducted twenty years after the beginning of Nicholson’s business, many of the same weavers that Nicholson worked with appear in O’Neale’s study. An intriguing example of weaver’s notions of “old” and “new” is Nellie Cooper’s interview. In O’Neale’s field notes, her interview with Cooper reveals the weaver’s knowledge and maintenance of many aspects of traditional Northwestern California weaving. For example, Cooper was critical of both open-twined weaving combined with closed twined (a new acculturated style – see Illustration 33) and “double sticks,” using double sticks to quicken the weaving process in baskets made for sale. She insisted she did not weave this way. But in comparison to many other weavers O’Neale interviewed, Cooper was more tolerant of experiments with new motifs. She tended to describe new motifs through seeing them as a combination of older, more acceptable motifs. She also used motifs on her baskets that other weavers judged as invented or new.⁴⁹ (See Illustration 53).

O’Neale also noted that not only motifs, but the category of trinket or “fancy” basket, a form associated with the “new” Arts and Crafts market, was believed by some weavers to be a “traditional” form of the “old-time trinket cipnuk, but smaller and more elaborately patterned.”⁵⁰ Another form, the pedestal basket or fruit basket (with a footed base), also considered an introduced form by O’Neale, was considered “traditional” by a number of O’Neale’s informants, even elderly women.⁵¹ (See Illustration 10 and Chapter 3.)

In *Basket weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox*, Marvin Cohodas demonstrated the ambiguity between “old” and “new” in Elizabeth Hickox’s basketry. Though using primarily “old,” traditional motifs, her baskets involved innovation in a number of ways, such as form, fineness of weave, extent of overlay decoration, and decoration on the inner base of the basket. By studying the representation of other artists’ work, like Emma Duskey Frank, on the Nicholson’s ledger, the ambiguity of Nicholson’s position is evident, since she promoted both “fine, old” work (old in style) while also distinguishing the work of select artists as exceptional, unique, and higher in price.

Exceptional Native American weaving involving innovation during the Arts and Crafts period was mostly represented as an authentic tradition through Nicholson’s marketing. This point recalls the concept of “re-created ethnicity” in tourist arts scholarship I discussed under the historiography section in Chapter 3. This hidden contradiction in Nicholson’s work also parallels the paradox discussed in Chapter 4 concerning the Arts and Crafts discourse addressing Native American cultures and arts. Arts and Crafts writers simultaneously promoted a romantic view of Native American traditional, pre-contact cultures while also advocating change and assimilation for Native Americans through Euro-American work. Nicholson promoted traditional, pre-contact basketry styles for Arts and Crafts collectors, but she also recorded weavers’ names and supported them as they responded to a contemporary commercial market.

Only in rare instances did a basket unidentified by weaver sell for over \$20.00 on the Nicholson ledger and these were usually listed as “old.” In addition to Jump

Dance baskets which sold between \$20.00 and \$30.00, a “very old, rare carrier” basket sold for \$20.00 and an “old storage with cover used for packing acorns” sold for \$75.00. Both were unidentified by weaver.⁵² These examples of a few unidentified baskets were listed at high prices in comparison to the several hundred listed with little accompanying information and at very cheap prices. Before proceeding with describing Grace Nicholson’s acquisition methods and her adoption of the individual artist paradigm, it is important to note that she did continue not only a preference for “old things” but also the mass-market approach in basketry sales. The majority of Grace Nicholson’s inventory of baskets continued to be sold for very low prices following the mass-marketing strategy of other commercial dealers like the A. Brizard Company. But it was her change in acquisition methods that provided her with new insights into her collecting practices.

Acquisition Methods of Grace Nicholson

Nicholson acquired baskets to sell through either local Northwestern California middlemen or from the weavers themselves. Prior to her own collecting excursions along the Klamath, Nicholson purchased her baskets mostly from curio dealers and occasionally from private collectors. For example, in 1905, an exchange of letters with John Daggett shows that Nicholson made inquiries into purchasing Daggett’s collection.⁵³ In one letter, Daggett mentioned that he had heard she planned to travel into the remote Indian country of the Northwest and warns her of the difficult travel conditions in Siskiyou County.⁵⁴ Until this time, secondary sources provided Nicholson’s material. Examples of letters signed by Paul Brizard when he

worked for the A.M. Benham curio business in Arizona are dated from as early as 1902. These letters show that the Benham Company sold baskets to Nicholson.⁵⁵ On the other hand, by 1906, she was sending the Benham Company baskets and was selling to them.

After she began traveling in order to collect in 1905, Nicholson continued to work with middlemen, or “middlewomen.” In fact, throughout the Nicholson diaries, her discourse shows that Nicholson pursued any possible angle in order to collect the greatest number of fine baskets at good prices. She was a shrewd businesswoman in all her transactions and would leave no rock unturned in her search for baskets. It was her visits to the Klamath region that opened up new opportunities for purchasing and for identifying baskets. During her travels, she was able to establish patronage relationships with weavers that, in some cases, lasted many years. By working directly with Native artists, their husbands, and families, Nicholson was able to record the work of a specific artist. Nicholson’s travels and the opportunities established through them provided the means for her to expand and adopt the individual artist paradigm. Even though recognition of some of the lesser-known weavers recorded by Nicholson did not carry on into collector’s records or museum acquisition files, the Nicholson materials can be used to develop a brief art history concerning these weavers and their work.

Perhaps many baskets that remain unidentified and are listed like cheap commodities on Nicholson’s ledger were purchased through local middlemen. It is impossible to conclude from which source most of Nicholson’s baskets come. Correspondence from the Nicholson collection includes Brizard merchants, such as

S.R. Frame from the Somes Bar store, as well as smaller mercantile merchants, such as William Bailey.⁵⁶ These letters are filled with references to their desire to buy for her and to keep “her goods from others.”⁵⁷ These same merchants acted as mail handlers for her as well, sending her packages of baskets south.⁵⁸ Nicholson frequently mentioned purchasing collections at other stores, but did not give the merchant’s name. For example, in her diary of 1906, on July 15th, Nicholson bought “13 baskets at Druggists for 14.50” at Blue Lake, but then did not mention the druggist again.

Nicholson’s middlemen were not only merchants. As I discussed in Chapter 5, special access collectors worked in many other occupations. Some were Native Americans, others non-Native seasonal workers or local residents. As late as 1930, the Hoopa Indian Agent tried to distribute baskets through Nicholson’s shop in hopes of bringing added income to the reservation.⁵⁹ Nicholson sought out an earlier agent, Frank Kyselka, also at Hoopa, wanting to know if he would ever sell his collection and at what price.⁶⁰ She also purchased baskets from Kyselka and other non-Native residents on the Hoopa reservation during her 1906 trip.⁶¹

In addition to the Indian agent, Nicholson acquired baskets from a missionary, Miss Chase, living in Eureka,⁶² two judges, one from Blue Lake, the other from Arcata,⁶³ a dentist,⁶⁴ as well as numerous other local private collectors in Northwestern California. Along with many other loose notes about Native Americans and their cultures and art, Nicholson’s collection includes lists of names of these collectors and potential sources almost in an obsessive fashion.⁶⁵ They represent the extent to which Nicholson worked to establish a useful networking system in the

region and how she devised ways of maintaining this system and building upon it as she continued to travel over an eleven year period from 1905 to 1916.

Some of the most helpful middlemen acquiring baskets for Nicholson were Native American or part Native American men who acted as mediators for Nicholson by communicating with other Native Americans, either artists or owners of baskets and regalia. Some of these middlemen became quite successful basket collectors themselves. A number of references were made to the Gists, a Yurok family – John Gist of Weitchpec and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gist of Arcata – and the extensive collecting they did.⁶⁶ Probably the best example of this type of mediator for Nicholson was Dick Baldy who was mentioned in both her diaries (as “Baldie”) and in her correspondence.

In a 1908 letter, Baldy wrote Nicholson to thank her for photographs she sent, to offer ethnographic information and dates for the dances, and to comment that he has Indian men working for her. He acquired carvings and other ethnographic objects from Canyon Tom, an important dancer in the region.⁶⁷ In her diary of 1908, Nicholson spoke highly of Baldy, who went down river with them to collect. While visiting an elder Native American who was “rich in possessions,” Nicholson noted that the man’s things were being used shortly in a dance and would then go to “old Baldie” who would become a “big man.”⁶⁸ Later, in her diary of 1911, when she heard that Old Baldy was dead, she decided not to go to Hoopa at all since he was no longer there.⁶⁹

An exchange of letters with a Yurok middleman, Weitchpec Frank, shows the extent to which these middlemen were able to persuade Native peoples to sell and

their attempts at negotiation. Mrs. E.L. Wright, the wife of a Brizard dealer at Weitchpec, wrote the letters for Frank, and thus acted as an additional mediator. The letters started in October of 1911 and did not end until March of 1913. Throughout this period, Nicholson tried to buy a ceremonial “roll,” a headdress used in the Jump Dance that was owned by a Native American referred to as “Old Dave.” Weitchpec Frank, obviously being helped by Nicholson, sent a thank you for the baby shoes Nicholson bought his baby. Old Dave, in the meantime, needed to sell the roll for medicine for his family and for money to bury his son. The letters continued over the next year and a half debating the price: Dave wanted \$60.00, Nicholson offered \$30.00. Eventually, the roll’s true owner, Dave’s father-in-law, Blind Charlie, passed away and Dave was free to sell it (perhaps at a lower price?). Mrs. Wright wrote Nicholson in 1913,

Dave was asking for you. He wanted to know why you didn’t come to buy baskets last summer. He expected to sell you the woodpecker roll. I told him he was foolish for not selling it when he had a chance, but one day he would say he wouldn’t sell it for less than fifty dollars, and then a few days later he would want sixty. But he can sell the roll now as Old Charlie is dead, and the roll really belonged to Nellie and her father Blind Charlie.⁷⁰

This quote exemplifies the ways Native and non-Native locals interceded for Nicholson in helping her purchase materials. Although this case involves ceremonial materials, other brief references allude to baskets being sold in a similar fashion. What is also striking in the series of letters are the firmness Nicholson maintained in terms of price, and her tenacity through the years. Unlike many of the baskets, ceremonial materials like the Jump Dance roll were not made for sale and were still being danced. It was not until the elder Blind Charlie passed away that the roll truly

became available. By maintaining relationships over the years, both through mail and through her summer trips, Nicholson was able to acquire extraordinary amounts of Native American art of Northwestern California.

Like ceremonial materials, Nicholson almost always purchased her finest baskets from Native American weavers or their families. Exceptions to this are the “fine, old” baskets of traditional use mentioned above. Many of these, however, were also purchased from weavers. By far the most expensive baskets from Northwestern California that Nicholson carried were commissioned directly from Elizabeth Hickox.⁷¹ But Nicholson also purchased baskets on her trips and through mail from a number of other weavers in the area.

Even though Nicholson would send gifts to Native Americans who provided work for her on occasion, she did not actively support or supply much economic aid to Native American families.⁷² This seems again to reflect the ambivalence Nicholson held towards her position in the Arts and Crafts period. She appears to have rejected two inquiries to handle baskets on commission for non-profit organizations. It is difficult to conclude for certain, since so little of Nicholson’s original correspondence in response to the letters preserved exists. She turned down the request of the superintendent of the Hoopa Agency in 1930 to sell baskets for their benefit because she had several hundred in stock and “buys museum material only.” Baskets are “not salable now.”⁷³

In an earlier letter of 1910 to Nicholson, Marie Johnson, field matron at Requa, inquired about a “suitable market” for Indian baskets at no commission for herself. As I discussed in Chapter 4, field matrons, sponsored by the National Indian

Association, sought economic improvement for Native Americans.⁷⁴ According to her diaries, Nicholson knew the field matrons, Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed, who worked inland along the Klamath, but apparently did not help these field matrons sell baskets.⁷⁵ Nicholson bought baskets from a woman identified as Miss Chase in the Nicholson diaries. She may be M. E. Chase, who worked as a field matron in Humboldt County.⁷⁶ Nicholson identified Chase as a missionary. Although Nicholson bought baskets from Chase, it seems likely that Nicholson did not aid Chase in any non-profit endeavor nor provided any support to her as field matron.⁷⁷

Nicholson must have been in a difficult position at times, as she was attempting to act both as a dealer and as an Arts and Crafts period collector. The discourse used in her diaries and letters reveals the tension of her position as both “friend” of the Indian and “businesswoman.” Her diary of 1910 included her leaving to go to Hoopa “loaded up with presents for my Indian friends,” a patronizing tone to the note.⁷⁸ But at the same time she wrote of the stubborn and moody temperaments of some of the Native Americans she worked with.

Nicholson’s letters to Alice Pfromm, a woman friend of hers from childhood, reveal some of Nicholson’s more intimate reflections on her trips into Northwestern California. Much of Nicholson’s apparent frustration at the rugged terrain and inaccessibility of the weavers was mixed with an exotic sense of the adventure. She described “miserable” Requa and the extreme heat (112 degrees in the shade), stating she was just too tired to write. All the weavers lived at least a mile apart and on the steepest hills. Yet their “squaws” were “good natured” because of their need for money.⁷⁹ When discussing the weavers, she referred to both the difficult and mean

Emma Dusky and the young, friendly Nancy Young. Young, who traveled seven miles to see Nicholson, “may go to Riverside School this winter.” The letter shows the developing intimacy Nicholson achieved with certain weavers as well as the business acumen she was able to maintain.

It was this struggle, perhaps, between the roles of intimate friend, patron, and entrepreneur acquiring baskets that resulted in Nicholson’s documentation of individual weavers’ work, which in turn, she probably hoped would eventually expand the value of her collection. By the 1920s, Nicholson moved more and more into the direction of selling to museums. When writing to a collector, G.G.Green, Jr., about the value of her collection in 1940, Nicholson referred to a Karuk “artist” (Elizabeth Hickox) whom she claimed she supported and encouraged to weave twice as fine by offering her twice the pay.⁸⁰ Even if Nicholson exaggerated in this letter the extent to which she encouraged finer weaving through her patronage, she was seeking to sell baskets at this late date by exclaiming their value as the work of an individual artist. This may have been a result of the decline in the private market for Indian baskets and Nicholson’s needs to increase her collection’s value for museums.

Even though the increased value of the work of individual artists, like Hickox, arose later in Nicholson’s discourse, recording the weaver’s name was, at least in part, a natural development from the close friendships she was able to make with Native Americans during her trips in the early part of the century. Grace Nicholson’s acquisition method of buying from the weaver directly resulted in her developing a friendship and personal interest in certain individual weavers. For example, the Yurok weaver Julia Jones (also called Mrs. Sam Jones) (b.1882) has never received the

recognition for her work that Elizabeth Hickox did. Her weaving was not as fine nor as accomplished as Hickox's, according to Nicholson.⁸¹ This is evident on Nicholson's ledger where Jones' baskets were listed, identified as her work, but only sold for \$10.00 or less.⁸²

Yurok weaver Julia Jones is an example of a lesser-known weaver whose work remains mostly unidentified in museum collections. Two exceptions are a photograph of a cap from the Colburn collection files at Stanford University (Illustration 46) and another cap from the Del Norte Historical Society (Illustration 47). These examples show that Jones' skill improved from her earlier work, the piece from the Colburn files, to her later, more polished weaving, in the Del Norte example. For both caps, Jones chose traditional motifs.

Illustration 46, the cap from a photograph included in the Colburn files, is not definitely Julia Jones' work, but it is labeled "Mrs. Sam Jones." It is a most unusual example for the Frona Colburn files as baskets are not identified by artist in her records. Since Colburn donated her baskets in the 1930s, the cap must be an example dating from before that time, early in Jones's life. Whether this is a valid attribution or not is impossible to determine. The basket is only an average example of weaving and depicts a very common motif, the sturgeon back. The Del Norte Historical Society cap, dating from c. 1940 to 1950, is a much finer-woven example with extensive overlay decoration in porcupine quillwork as well as maidenhair fern and bear grass. It shows a variation on the snake nose pattern, the friendship design, a very common, traditional motif of Northwestern California basketry. If the caps are correctly attributed, they show that, despite the finer weaving of Jones' later work,

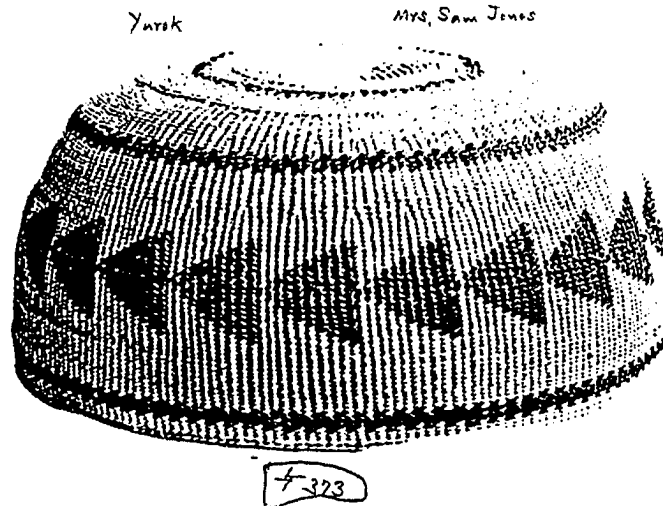


Illustration 46: Cap, Yurok, Mrs. Sam Jones?, before c. 1930s, #373. Acquisition files, Colburn Collection, Stanford University.

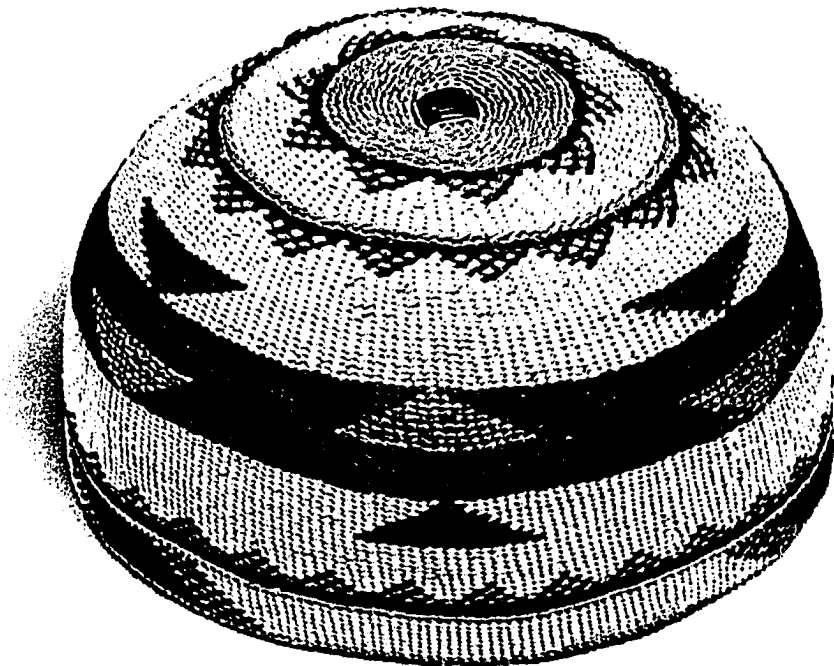


Illustration 47: Cap, Yurok, Julia Jones (Mrs. Sam Jones), c. 1940-1950. Del Norte County Historical Society. Photo courtesy of Ron Johnson.

her style of basketry is more conservative and less experimental than that of Elizabeth Hickox.

Yet Nicholson chose to record Jones's name on her ledger. Perhaps this was because Jones served as a middlewoman for Nicholson when purchasing baskets and Nicholson used her records, like the ledger, to help maintain such networking relationships. Other Nicholson materials suggest a strong personal friendship between her and Jones. A letter (1907) from Jones to Nicholson reveals their close friendship and Jones' interest in their patronage relationship:

I will send the little basket today. Some of the people and my relatives say the two little baskets is (sic) the finest weave they ever saw. And it is cheap for the price I sell it for. But I told them it is for a dear lady friend. And I took a great pain to make it fine so as to please her. And I hope you will be well satisfied for it is much finer and prettier design than the one you saw at Mr. Pitts.⁸³

Jones continued in the letter by discussing her personal life, family problems, and community events with Nicholson. Nicholson was making the change at this early point in her career to consider the baskets she purchased more as the work of an individual artist, despite the level of quality. Part of this growing intimacy with weavers probably came about because Nicholson was giving both money and gifts to weavers so that they might be encouraged to weave.⁸⁴

On one of her earliest trips in 1906, Nicholson recorded in her diary giving money to Julia Jones (listed as Sam's wife) to make baskets after having a lovely encounter with her and her family. She photographed them and their little baby on the river bank near Weitchpec⁸⁵ (Illustration 48). Nicholson eventually photographed a number of Native Americans, including several weavers. For example, the Yurok

weaver, Nellie Cooper, who I discuss later in the chapter and whose work also appears on the Nicholson ledger, is documented in a photograph (Illustration 52).

Nicholson used these photos as gifts of friendship, which helped in creating good patron relationships for her future purchasing trips. These photos, in turn, document the individual weavers and are very useful for scholarship today as they are some of the only photos taken of these lesser-known weavers early in their lives. After this picnic and the friendship between Nicholson and Jones were established, Julia Jones' baskets were then identified in the ledger. Perhaps this kind of intimate and friendly encounter with weavers resulted in the identification of their work and eventual recognition of them by Nicholson as individual artists.

Nicholson's purchasing of Julia Jones' work continued until at least 1912. The weaver sent her a box of baskets in 1911,⁸⁶ and commented in a 1912 letter that she would send more. Nicholson was protective of her patron relationship with Jones. Her correspondence suggests she felt threatened by Frank Gist, an active collector in the region from whom Nicholson sometimes bought baskets. Nicholson refused to do more business with Gist after she felt he took advantage of her. He had paid the weavers small amounts and then sold the baskets to Nicholson for a lot more. She used correspondence to secure her business connections with Jones. So, even though Nicholson did not consider Jones' basketry as artistically accomplished as Hickox's, she obviously valued her patronage relationship with Jones as an acquisition method.⁸⁷



Illustration 48: Julia Jones (Mrs. Sam Jones) with her baby on the beach. Photograph by Grace Nicholson, 1906. Album A, p.11, #2, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library. Note baby basket in use and baskets in the background.

Grace Nicholson's Identification of Individual Weavers

Although Nicholson was most successful and tried the hardest with her promotion of Elizabeth Hickox, I argue that she also recognized several other weavers by identifying them as individual artists, photographing them, and, in the case of Julia Jones, corresponding with them. It is difficult to ascertain whether Nicholson actually promoted these artists' baskets when selling them by providing biographical information or photos of the weavers with their work. However, she did expand her documentation to include weavers' names.

Unlike other Arts and Crafts dealers who promoted individual artists' works, such as Abe and Amy Cohn in Nevada, Grace Nicholson created a large network of Native artists and informants through her friendships established during her travels over the years. This network extended far beyond her patron relationship with Elizabeth Hickox. Nicholson's basketry sales never increased because she acknowledged these lesser-known weavers and most of these baskets remain unidentified today. This expansion of her collecting methods beyond the limitations of the ethnographic paradigm to include the individual weaver, however, helps researchers today attempt to identify this past generation of weavers.

Several weavers whose work appears on the ledger exemplify this point. Emma Duskey Frank, mentioned above, and Daisy and Alice Jacobs were all held in high regard by Nicholson as accomplished weavers. The prices of their baskets, like most of the baskets identified by weaver on the ledger, are at least double or triple the price of similar unidentified baskets, which generally sell for less than \$5.00. For example, a Duskey (written as Dusky) trinket basket is listed for \$10.00 when the

majority of similar trinket baskets on the ledger sell for less than \$2.00, with a few around \$4.00 to \$5.00.⁸⁸ Duskey's baskets are almost always listed as "old and fine," a few with large sketches. The many examples of Elizabeth Hickox's baskets sold by Nicholson list for over a \$100.00 a piece.⁸⁹

Identified by her work on Nicholson's ledger, Karuk weaver Daisy Jacobs (b. 1875), is an intriguing example of the way Nicholson's documenting of individual weavers can contradict her simultaneous promotion of traditional basketry through the ethnographic paradigm (Illustration 49). In Lila O'Neale's dissertation, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers" (1932), O'Neale interviewed members of the Jacobs family, including Daisy.⁹⁰ Alice, who is also identified on the ledger, probably had passed away as she does not appear in the census records of 1928. O'Neale wrote that the Jacobs were "recognized experts." She continued about the family, "They are full of the traditions of the craft, but do not hesitate to turn from them to meet any demand for innovations. One daughter, especially, is credited with superior ability to invent new objects and designs."⁹¹

Although it is impossible to tell if this daughter was Daisy or her sister Sara, it is interesting that O'Neale described the family as strong innovators. On Nicholson's ledger, some examples of the Jacobs family baskets, listed as "fine," are identified through the artist's name, a sketch, and are priced as high as \$30.00.⁹² Nicholson's records do not include written references to innovation in the Jacobs' baskets. However, a drawing she provided in the ledger of an Alice Jacobs basket -- the same drawing is also used to illustrate a Daisy Jacobs basket right below -- shows a



Illustration 49: Karuk weavers, Sally and Daisy Jacobs, Photograph by Grace Nicholson, c. 1920s. 'Karak' Box, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

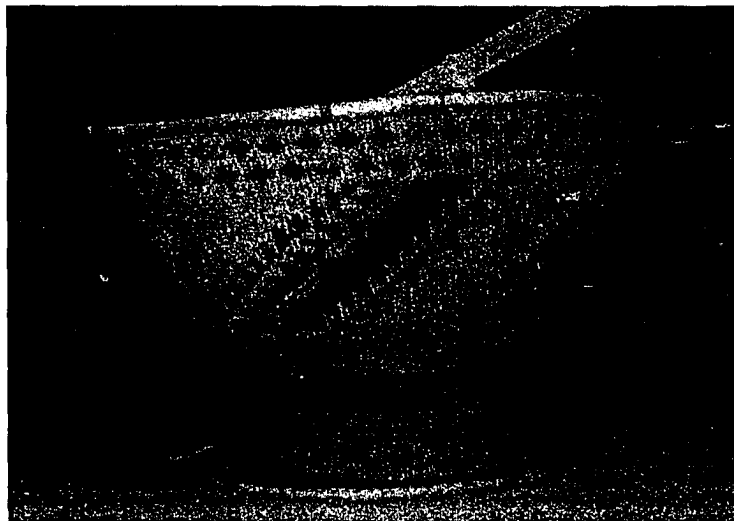


Illustration 50: Pedestal (footed) basket, Karuk, possibly made by Daisy Jacobs, before 1929. #27057. Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology Collection, University of California, Berkeley.

Victorian knob and fitted lid not much different from the novel forms of Elizabeth Hickox. These two baskets sell for \$15.00 and \$30.00 respectively.⁹³

Nicholson documented these apparently valuable baskets as the work of individual, named weavers. However, she did not promote them as the work of innovative artists expanding beyond traditional styles and forms. This point demonstrates that although Nicholson was the first non-Native collector/dealer of Northwestern California basketry to adopt the individual artist paradigm, her marketing strategies still relied upon the preference for the ethnographic paradigm of the Arts and Crafts period.

The Daisy Jacobs basket listed for \$30.00 on the ledger appears listed by ledger number with the weaver's name in a letter from Victor J. Evans, who purchased the basket, along with others, from Nicholson in 1919.⁹⁴ So, at least in this one case of Daisy Jacob's basket, Nicholson provided the weaver's name with the basket when it was sold. Evans, a private collector, amassed a collection with the intentions of donating it to the National Museum in Washington, D.C. The importance of identifying the weaver, Daisy Jacobs, carried over from the ledger into the purchaser's correspondence. This basket can then be traced to the Evans collection today and properly identified as Daisy Jacob's work.

Another basket possibly by Daisy Jacobs reveals her interest in acculturated forms (Illustration 50). I identified this pedestal fruit basket (or footed basket) in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum collection as possibly Jacob's work from O'Neale's interview with Yurok weaver Melissa Meyers.⁹⁵ Unidentified by weaver, the basket appears as plate 54a in "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers" and was one of O'Neale's

basket samples shown as photographs to her informants. Meyers described the pedestal basket as “lots of hard work” and said that it was possibly by Daisy Jacobs. According to the catalogue records of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum, this basket was collected in 1890 and was labeled as Yurok. If this information is correct, it seems unlikely the basket would be by Daisy Jacobs. Even if Meyers was wrong and this particular pedestal basket was not made by Daisy Jacobs, her answer does imply that Daisy Jacobs was known for making this difficult acculturated form. Describing the varying reactions weavers had to the basket, O’Neale labeled it, “The subject of many arguments as to origin; probably copied from lamp or dish.”⁹⁶

Although she listed baskets by Daisy Jacobs on her ledger, Nicholson did not include a pedestal basket. In fact, despite Meyers’s note that her aunt made these quite frequently for sale to the non-Native market, Nicholson only included one pedestal basket in her entire ledger for Northwestern California. This seems to follow Nicholson’s marketing strategy in selling mainly what buyers perceived as traditional basketry forms through the ethnographic paradigm. Lidded trinket baskets, even with Victorian knobs and extensive overlay, were acceptable as traditional since trinket baskets were used in pre-contact times. This was the type of basket Nicholson collected from Daisy Jacobs. Even though O’Neale’s informants argued over whether or not the pedestal basket was an old or new form, Nicholson and her buyers apparently perceived it as “made for sale.” Nicholson did not collect Jacobs’ pedestal baskets.

As Nicholson adopted the individual artist paradigm by recording the Jacobs family’s baskets, her selective collecting suggests she also continued to seek pre-

contact tradition at the expense of individual experimentation. However, scholars in search of identifying a more complete picture of Northwestern California weavers' styles, like that of Daisy Jacobs, can combine pieces of information about weavers and their basketry making preferences from the Nicholson ledger and archival records with what little can be found in Lila O'Neale's interviews and text. Though limited in scope, such a combination of resources aids in supplementing the art history of Northwestern California basketry from the turn of the 20th century.

The ledger serves as an illustration of the marketing strategies of Grace Nicholson. While the majority of her stock remained unidentified and at low value, select baskets, undoubtedly of finer weave, were sold at high prices and celebrated as "authentic" either through their identification as "traditional" or "old" or through their identification with the skills of an individual accomplished artist, such as Duskey or Jacobs. Despite the fact that some identified baskets sold for higher prices, Nicholson did not seem to ever write about or promote the creativity or innovation of these recognized weavers. Although the importance of Elizabeth Hickox as exceptional artist is obvious through the large number of her baskets and their high prices listed on the ledger, some other artists' baskets were identified and priced higher than other works.

As noted earlier in the chapter, some baskets, such as those by Julia Jones, were identified on the ledger but were priced low. This suggests that Nicholson may have recorded some artists' names more as a way of documenting the source of the baskets in order that she might access this source again in the future. Documenting the artists' names may have been a networking strategy. Nicholson was so thorough

in record-keeping; she may have written Jones's name down simply as a way of noting the purchase.

Yurok weaver Nellie Cooper (1875-1947) is another artist whose life and work can be better identified through a combination of the Nicholson materials and O'Neale's field notes, along with other archival sources. Nellie Cooper's baskets remain mostly unidentified in museum collections despite the fact that some of O'Neale's informants considered her one of the best Yurok weavers of the time.⁹⁷ It is also surprising that Cooper's basketry is not better known considering her two daughters became important 20th-century weavers widely acknowledged today. Baskets by Nellie Cooper's daughter, Nettie Cooper McKinnon (1898-1987), were recently featured in Larry Dalrymple's *Indian Basketmakers of California and the Great Basin* (2000), and an example of McKinnon's basketry is in the permanent collection at the British Museum in London. Another daughter, Vera Ryerson (1916-1996), was a great basketry teacher in the region. Some information about Nellie Cooper can be accessed through family living today in Northwestern California, and some of her baskets have been identified in private collections of Native American families.⁹⁸ Dalrymple included some biographical information about Nellie Cooper he learned through his friendship with Nettie Mc Kinnon, though he did not illustrate any of her baskets in his publication.

Dalrymple did reproduce a photo of Nellie Cooper with Lila O'Neale from the time O'Neale was working in the field (Illustration 51). This same photograph was used as a cover illustration on the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum reprint of "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers" in 1995. At the time of publication, Cooper was listed as

“unidentified Klamath River basket weaver.” Since then, Cooper’s daughter, Vera Ryerson, who passed away only a year after in 1996, identified the photo on the cover as that of her mother.⁹⁹ This is a good example of how family members can complement archival sources in documenting basket weavers from earlier generations. Another photograph of Cooper from the Grace Nicholson collection dates twenty years earlier and makes an interesting comparison with the later photo (Illustration 52). The little girl with Cooper in Nicholson’s photo from 1906 is too young to be Nettie Cooper and may be one of Nellie’s three other daughters. In addition to the photographs, another way the Nicholson archival collection can be used to help identify lesser-known weavers from the turn of the 20th century is through Nicholson’s brief references to her encounters with the weavers in her diaries and other notes. As I noted above, Nicholson described several times the difficulties she had interacting with Hupa weaver Emma Duskey Frank, who apparently was less open to engage in trade with non-Native outsiders than Jones or Cooper. Another series of references to Julia Jones and her husband, Sam, provide clues to his occupation as foreman at the ranch at Martin’s Ferry.¹⁰⁰

Nicholson’s references to Nellie Cooper are very brief, yet intriguing. The Cooper family’s residency at Bluff Creek, near Weitchpec, can be assumed from references through her notes from 1906 all the way to 1912.¹⁰¹ This helps to supplement O’Neale’s brief biography which simply noted that Cooper lived in the Otsepor district or the census listing of 1928 which documented her residence at Weitchpec.¹⁰² It also complements information recorded through family members by



Illustration 51: Lila M. O'Neale and Yurok Weaver Nellie Cooper, photographer unknown, probably Martha Thomas, O'Neale's personal companion, 1929. Lila M. O'Neale's Field notes. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Illustration 52: Nellie Cooper and daughter (?), Weitchpec, photograph by Grace Nicholson, 1906. Album A, p. 77, #6, GN Collection. Courtesy of The Huntington Library.

Larry Dalrymple. Dalrymple noted the Cooper family moved to Bluff Creek in 1904 because of a small pox epidemic in Weitchpec.¹⁰³

Sometimes a reference Nicholson made to a weaver is not supported by other archival sources, but remains a mystery. In her 1908 diary, Nicholson referred to Nellie Cooper as “the prettiest Indian woman” whom she learned was “1/4 Chinese extraction.” She proceeded to buy several of her “fine baskets.”¹⁰⁴ Considering Nicholson learned of Cooper’s Chinese ethnicity from Cooper herself, perhaps it is correct information. This contradicts the 1928 census listing, which listed Nellie Cooper as a full-blood Yurok. However, the census also listed that Nellie was allotted Hoopa Valley land, while her husband, who was Wintun, was not allotted land. Perhaps it was necessary for Nellie Cooper to be documented on the census as a full-blood Yurok in order for her to qualify for land rights.

References to Cooper’s baskets on Nicholson’s ledger are scarce and do not include sketches. However, biographical information about Cooper from the Nicholson collection can be supplemented with references to her basketry in other archival sources. In her interview with O’Neale, Cooper identified a basketry cap used as a sample in the study as possibly being her own work.¹⁰⁵ Published as an unidentified cap, plate 24b, in “Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers,” the basket was labeled “Unequal sizes of flint marks criticized; inner motives not conventional”¹⁰⁶ (Illustration 53). The cap’s display of an invented motif shows that Cooper was experimental and innovative.

O’Neale’s interview notes with Cooper provide many references to her creativity in response to the commercial market. When asked by O’Neale if the

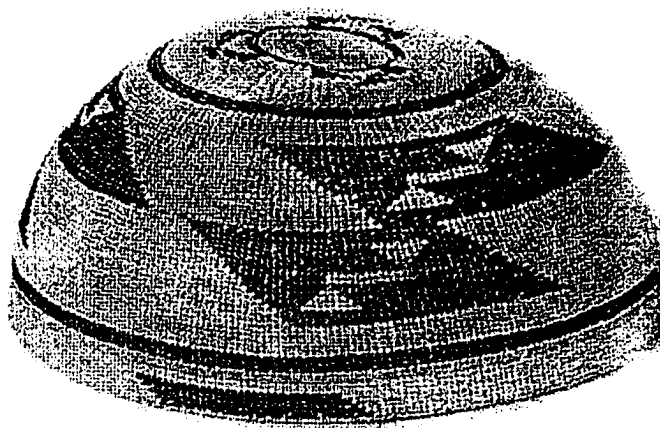


Illustration 53: Cap, Yurok, possibly by Nellie Cooper, c. 1901. Catalog # 1-1692. Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

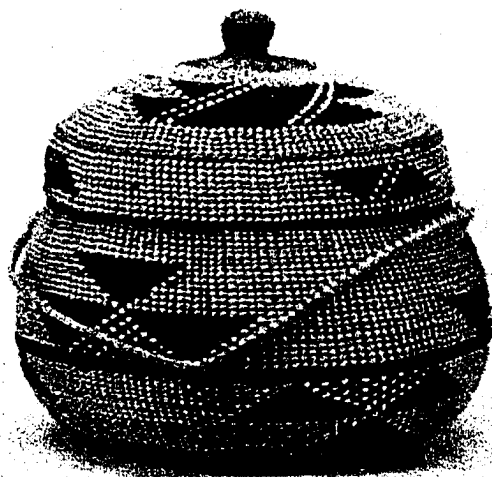


Illustration 54: Lidded Trinket Basket, Yurok, Nellie Cooper, c. 1930. Catalog # 1994.8.22. Melba Thoma Collection, Trinidad Historical Museum, Trinidad.

weavers would like copies of her sample basket photos used in the interviews, Cooper was one of only a few weavers to choose photos of “fancy baskets” rather than the more traditional caps. In fact, she was also the only weaver to choose an example of basketry from outside Northwestern California, a Wintun basket, perhaps because her husband was Wintun.¹⁰⁷ Cooper was obviously interested in new ideas and innovation while carrying on tradition as well. Cooper’s interview notes also contain ethnographic details demonstrating Cooper’s extensive knowledge of basketry traditions.

In her interview with O’Neale, Yurok weaver Mrs. Elsie Young mentioned Mrs. Cooper’s use of willow sticks rather than hazel as warps. She noted that this was unusual since willow sticks were smoother than hazel, but not flexible or strong. Although this is a trait found in many other weavers’ basketry, it is an aspect of Cooper’s weaving technique that can be combined with other common traits, such as her favorite choices in motifs, to help researchers in the future to possibly identify Cooper’s basketry. O’Neale’s interview with Cooper includes her preferences for certain motifs that can aid in this process of discerning characteristics of her style.

These common traits can be confirmed by studying the few examples of baskets that are identified as the work of Nellie Cooper. For example, a lidded trinket basket, c. 1930, in the Melba Thoma collection at the Trinidad Historical Society Museum has been identified by Vera Ryerson as the work of her mother (Illustration 54). This basket uses willow sticks as warp material rather than hazel and the common snake nose motif, also a popular motif for Cooper, according to the O’Neale interview.¹⁰⁸

These examples represent how the Grace Nicholson collection of archival materials can be used along with other sources, such as the 1928 California Indian census and Lila M. O'Neale's 1929 field notes, as a means of reconstructing an art history of turn-of-the-20th-century Northwestern California basketry and its makers. Grace Nicholson was the first collector of Northwestern California baskets to document individual weaver's names along with their baskets as her ledger at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum demonstrates. Over twenty years later, in 1929, anthropologist Lila O'Neale also documented information from individual weavers through her method called ethnoaesthetics.

Neither Nicholson nor O'Neale published their insights into the identity of specific weavers and their basketry styles. Nicholson continued to sell and promote her baskets primarily through the popular ethnographic approach of the era. The ethnographic paradigm remains a valid and important approach to basketry studies today. As more researchers explore the lives of individual weavers and their contributions to the art of basketry in the 21st century, however, the contributions of Nicholson and O'Neale to the individual artist paradigm open new avenues for research.

Nicholson's marketing strategies as represented on the ledger developed through the two principal means Nicholson used to acquire baskets. These were through the established mercantile middlemen or other special access collectors in the northwest, such as the A. Brizard company or John Daggett, and through her own interaction with Native American weavers and their families. By extending her purchasing potential and traveling herself into Northwestern California, Nicholson

was able to identify select basketry work and record information about weavers, which, in turn, can be used by scholars investigating basketry and weavers from that era today.

The Later Years of Nicholson's Basketry Business and the Individual Artist Paradigm

As baskets became less and less popular with private collectors in the 1920s and “old” examples became less available, Nicholson became more and more interested in purchasing ceremonial objects, such as Jump Dance baskets and obsidian blades, from Northwestern California. Her clientele shifted to include more museum professionals, as the Arts and Crafts basketry “craze” waned. Ceremonial materials seemed to hold a higher value for Nicholson and perhaps she thought they would be more desirable than baskets to museum collectors. New baskets were easy to acquire, but there was a relative scarcity of ceremonial things and they were more challenging to purchase.¹⁰⁹

From 1925 to the time of her death, Nicholson exchanged letters with Frederick Douglas of the Denver Art Museum in the hopes of selling a significant collection of baskets and ethnographic art to the museum. The letters reveal the frustration of both parties as Douglas attempted to find a donor to pay for the purchase. They also demonstrate that although Nicholson mentioned the importance of her patronage of Elizabeth Hickox several times in her other correspondence from her later years, Nicholson's sales strategies to museum collectors like Douglas remained focused upon the ethnographic value of her collection through the 1930s.¹¹⁰ The later years of Nicholson's basketry career reveal a similar merging of both the

ethnographic and individual artist paradigms in her approach to selling baskets as she had used when collecting them in her early years.

The Denver Art Museum purchase would have undoubtedly contributed to Nicholson's reputation. Perhaps she saw it as a potential legacy to the museum world of her work as a collector. In one letter, however, she referred to another possible motive. She wrote that she needed to place the objects in a museum due to the way she acquired them. She had assured her Indian friends that by selling their heirlooms to her, she would guarantee their protection and preservation in a museum.¹¹¹ Of course, it is difficult to determine the truth of this statement as Nicholson was certainly trying her best to persuade Douglas of the collection's value. However, her persuasive discourse does represent the importance of museum acquisitions to Nicholson in the latter part of her collecting career. It also shows how her strategy of working closely with Native American individual artists and regalia owners may have contributed to her strong desire to have parts of her collection acquired and preserved by a major museum.

Another short letter from Nicholson to Douglas exemplifies Nicholson's changing notions of her baskets as "fine art" and how, by 1941, she resorted to this new definition of her baskets as an aid in persuading Douglas to purchase them. In the 1941 letter, Nicholson wrote him just to tell him about the inclusion of "at least four" of her artifacts in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibit on Native American art and its value as "fine art."¹¹² This letter shows that near the end of her life, Nicholson was moving gradually towards reevaluating her baskets as fine art, not just as ethnographic artifacts. As the Arts and Crafts period waned, new notions about

Native American art as “primitive art” became popular through the Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition.¹¹³ Perhaps Nicholson was reacting, at least in part, to this shift in Native American art history of the 1940s.

Increasing her professional reputation as dealer of Indian baskets to museums undoubtedly contributed to her expanding interest in recording not only ethnographic information, but the names of individual weavers. In a letter (1910), Homer E. Sargent, a well-known basket collector, responded to Nicholson’s concern about obtaining information regarding weavers in the field. Sargent referred to “Old Harry” who seems to have been a middleman, perhaps Native American, whom “Mr. H”, Carrol Hartman, Nicholson’s associate, would be dealing with:

It will take time and patience to handle Old Harry but with both of these and plenty of care I think Mr. H will get out of him all the information you wish. With Harry probably, a basket is entirely a commercial proposition and he relies more on excellence or fineness to sell them than anything else: hence he thinks the names of the weavers etc. in all foolishness or bordering too much on sentiment. If he looked at it from a museum point of view he would see the difference.¹¹⁴

The letter shows that by as early as 1910, Nicholson along with collectors concerned with museum donations and purchases, were aware of the potential value of documenting the individual weaver.

Other discourse Nicholson used in correspondence at the end of her life shows the importance she placed on the individual weaver and her role as patron. At this point in her career, she often stressed her fine collection of Elizabeth Hickox’s baskets, which she tried to sell to a museum curator or to a collector who would donate them to a museum. Her impact as patron on the creation of Hickox’s “art,”

especially its high level of fine weave was noted. The value of her collections as museum purchases supported her important contribution as collector. All of these points were closely tied in with Nicholson's own sense of self-identity through her life work. She wrote about Hickox to the collector J. Pyatt in 1946, a few years before her death:

It will be of interest, when I tell you, that there never would have been the fine Karuk baskets, such as you mention, if I had not encouraged and paid the woman to make them twice as fine, if I paid her twice as much, until she could make them no finer than the one you have. So, whenever you see any of those baskets you will know the source. I have a few on hand...If I ever get time to publish the notes I have it will be interesting to those interested. I collected over 40,000 specimens of their work, ceremonial material, besides baskets, which are in leading Museums and collections...It is our only American art and there is no danger of a revival.¹¹⁵

The letter shows Nicholson's perception of the uniqueness of her collection both from the ethnographic perspective and from its representation of Hickox's work. It was a one-of-a-kind example of the art of the "vanishing Indian." But its value also lied in the identification of Hickox and Nicholson's promotion and support of her. Nicholson placed emphasis on Hickox's basketry and her role as patron to Hickox in Nicholson's later years as she attempted to sell off the remainder of her basketry collection. Perhaps this is one reason for the common identification of Hickox's baskets today, rather than other weavers' works, in museum collections, like that of the Denver Art Museum.

Over the years she traveled up along the Klamath River, Grace Nicholson spent time researching who owned objects and who were the Native American artists. She established friendships, visiting people two or three times before she was able to

purchase the art she desired.¹¹⁶ Her collecting trips caused her to adopt new market and collecting strategies for increasing basketry patronage and purchasing opportunities. It was these new strategies involving direct interaction with weavers that encouraged the documentation of individual weavers and the changing reception of baskets as fine art.

Her strategy of documenting individual weavers may have been linked to the economic value of the baskets. As the market for baskets decreased in the 1930s and Nicholson moved on to focus upon Asian art dealing, art collecting in Northwestern California mostly returned to the ethnographic approach. Only in recent decades has interest been revived in acknowledging individual weavers' styles of Northwestern California. Because of Grace Nicholson's identification and promotion of Elizabeth Hickox's baskets, especially near the end of her life as her sales to major museum collections increased, Hickox's work is best known today as representing Northwestern California basketry from the Arts and Crafts period. As new research possibilities using archival materials like the Nicholson collection become evident, the individual artist paradigm can be expanded more fully through the identification of other weavers of Hickox's generation in future basketry studies.

¹ Nicholson frequently worked closely with Native American men from the region when acquiring ceremonial regalia.

² Other than with Elizabeth Hickox's baskets, Marvin Cohodas does not address this aspect of Grace Nicholson's work in *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade: Elizabeth and Louise Hickox*. Los Angeles: The Southwest Museum and the University of Arizona Press, 1997.

³ Nicholson eventually focused upon Asian art by the 1920s. But Indian baskets were the main inventory of her shop for the first twenty years.

⁴ There are several brief biographies of Nicholson included in archival sources. I used the summary report for the Grace Nicholson Collection and "Collector's Choice: An Exhibition in Honor of Grace Nicholson," a two-page summary provided by the Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena.

⁵ Family and Building Papers, Box 12, GN Collection.

⁶ Grace Nicholson. Letter to Mr. Mentz. Porterville, Ca. 28 August 1902. GN Collection.

⁷ Scrapbooks of Newspaper clippings, Book 1, Addendum, GN Collection.

⁸ Ibid.

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- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Box 2, Addendum, GN Collection.
- ¹³ I address this later in the Chapter. Diary, Friday, July 17, 1908. Box 16, GN Collection.
- ¹⁴ See Grace Nicholson Collection Summary Report, Huntington Library.
- ¹⁵ Indian Notes: List of Articles, Box 14, GN Collection.
- ¹⁶ Box 4, Addendum, GN Collection.
- ¹⁷ "Collector's Choice," exhibition summary, Pacific Asia Museum.
- ¹⁸ Folder 1, Box 1, Grace Nicholson correspondence, Museum of the American Indian, New York. This information was provided by Joan Berman, Humboldt State University.
- ¹⁹ This breakdown of how baskets are listed on the Grace Nicholson ledger at the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, is based upon a careful reading of the pages listed for Northwestern California tribes. In many cases, it is difficult or impossible to read Nicholson's writing and to distinguish whether names are weavers, purchasers, or Native Americans involved in selling the baskets. In addition, the ledger, itself, is incomplete and, thus, only shows a portion of Nicholson's collecting and dealing records.
- ²⁰ A few important exceptions to this, Lucinda Jack (c. 1879-1957) and Minnie Frank (1895-1974), are discussed by Ron Johnson and Coleen Kelley Marks in *Her Mind Made Up: Weaving Caps the Indian Way* (Arcata: Humboldt State University, 1997): 184-197. Johnson and Marks commented that O'Neale may not have included the Hupa interviews because she found their work too commercial and innovative and that Lucinda Jack was difficult to interview.
- ²¹ Lila M. O'Neale, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* (32), 1932: xviii-xix, 169-179.
- ²² See, for example, diary, July 12, 1908. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ²³ Otis Mason. Letter to Grace Nicholson. 1 July 1904. Box 5. GN Collection.
- ²⁴ William H. Holmes. Correspondence to Grace Nicholson. Washington, D.C. 1902-1915. Box 3. GN Collection.
- ²⁵ Diary, July 18-19, 1914. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ²⁶ Diary, August 6, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ²⁷ Diary, July 20, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ²⁸ American Anthropological Association. Letter to Grace Nicholson. New Haven, Conn. 25 October 1904. Box 1. GN Collection.
- ²⁹ Article, ND. Box 14. GN Collection. This article mentioned Nicholson's involvement in a conference for better living conditions for Native Americans.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ See Indian Notes. Box 14. GN Collection.
- ³² Mabel Clausen. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Pasadena. 11 October 1943. Box 2. GN Collection.
- ³³ See, for example, Box 15. GN Collection.
- ³⁴ For example, a newspaper clipping (ND) from the Nicholson collection mentioned the detailed information she sent the Harvard Peabody Museum along with the art she sold. Box 14. GN Collection.
- ³⁵ John Lee Clarke. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Phoenix, Az. 5 September 1908. Box 2. GN Collection.
- ³⁶ Frederick Putnam. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Cambridge. 26 May 1908. Box 8. GN Collection.
- ³⁷ George Gordon Byron. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Philadelphia, Pa. 6 February 1907. Box 3. GN Collection.
- ³⁸ Harry L. George. Letter to Grace Nicholson. St. Joseph, Mo. 28 October 1918. Box 3. GN Collection.
- ³⁹ W.T. Coatsworth. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Buffalo, N.Y. 14 November 1910. Box 2. GN Collection.
- ⁴⁰ Ida Selby. Letter to Carrol Hartman. 28 June 1908. Box 9. GN Collection.
- ⁴¹ See, for example, Diaries, July 15, 1906, July 13, 22, 1908. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁴² See, for example, Elizabeth Hickox. Letter to Grace Nicholson. 6 October 1908. Box 4. GN Collection.
- ⁴³ Grace Nicholson. Letter to Paul Brizard. Pasadena. 19 October 1906. Letterbook 2. GN Collection.

- ⁴⁴ Indian Notes. Box 14. GN Collection.
- ⁴⁵ See, for example, Grace Nicholson Basketry Ledger, 58.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 337.
- ⁴⁷ O'Neale, 74-75, 89-96.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 44.
- ⁴⁹ 1.2 Yurok-Karok notebooks, 1st notebook, Lila M. O'Neale field notes (1929), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, 43.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 44.
- ⁵² GN Ledger, 71, 355.
- ⁵³ John Daggett. Correspondence to Grace Nicholson. 1905. Box 2. See also Indian Notes. Box. 15. GN Collection. Nicholson succeeded in buying some of Daggett's collection.
- ⁵⁴ John Daggett. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Siskiyou county. 14 May 1905. Box 2. GN Collection.
- ⁵⁵ Paul Brizard. Correspondence to Grace Nicholson. Phoenix, Az. 1902. Box 1. GN Collection.
- ⁵⁶ See Chapter 5.
- ⁵⁷ S.R. Frame. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Somes Bar, Ca. ND. Box 3. GN Collection.
- ⁵⁸ Grace Nicholson. Letter to W.C. Bailey. Requa. 26 October 1906. Letterbook 2. GN Collection. Bailey also wrote that he was sending her a canoe.
- ⁵⁹ Grace Nicholson. Letter to O.M. Boggess. Pasadena, Ca. 18 September 1930. Box 10. GN Collection. By that late date, Nicholson showed no interest in buying baskets from Boggess.
- ⁶⁰ Grace Nicholson. Letter to Frank Kyselka. Hoopa, Ca. 19 October 1909. Letterbook 2. GN Collection.
- ⁶¹ Diary, July 16, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁶² Diary, July 24, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁶³ Diary, August 5, 1910. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁶⁴ H.H. Stuart. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Eureka, Ca. 4 May 1951. Box 10. GN Collection.
- ⁶⁵ Indian Notes: Miscellaneous. Box 14. GN Collection.
- ⁶⁶ Mrs. E.L. Wright. Letter to Grace Nicholson. 22 April 1912. Box 11. GN Collection. See also Diary, July 14, 1906. Box 16. After visiting with Gist's wife, Nicholson wrote that she "bought his entire collection which was rich in "fine" baskets."
- ⁶⁷ Dick Baldy. Letter to Grace Nicholson. 30 October 1908. Box 1. GN Collection.
- ⁶⁸ Diary, July 13, 1908. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁶⁹ Diary, July 25, 1911. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁷⁰ Mrs. E.L. Wright. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Orleans, Ca. 21 March 1913. Box 11. GN Collection.
- ⁷¹ See GN Ledger.
- ⁷² This is difficult to determine for certain. The GN Collection includes no reference of such support except for letters Nicholson wrote herself later in her life to collectors, such as Jullian D. Pyatt. I discuss this letter later in the Chapter. Grace Nicholson. Letter to Mr. Julian D. Pyatt. Pasadena. 8 December 1945. Box 7. GN Collection.
- ⁷³ Grace Nicholson. Letter to O.M. Boggess. Pasadena. 18 September 1930. Box 10. GN Collection.
- ⁷⁴ Marie Johnson. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Requa. 23 March 1910. Box 4. GN Collection.
- ⁷⁵ Diary, July 13, 1908. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁷⁶ Joan Berman, Personal Communication, September 22, 2000.
- ⁷⁷ I am assuming this from the lack of any mention of such support in Nicholson's diaries and extensive correspondence.
- ⁷⁸ Diary, August 3, 1910. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁷⁹ Grace Nicholson. Letter to Alice Pfromm. Requa. 23 July 1908. Box 7. GN Collection.
- ⁸⁰ Grace Nicholson. Letter to G.G. Green, Jr. Pasadena. 11 July 1940. Box 7. GN Collection. Cohodas argued that Hickox's innovative style was developed prior to her relationship with Nicholson. Marvin Cohodas, "Elizabeth Hickox and Karuk Basketry: A Case Study in Debates on Innovation and Paradigms of Authenticity," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 158.
- ⁸¹ I have not been able to locate many of Julia Jones' baskets in museum collections, though I hope to pursue this in the future.
- ⁸² GN Ledger, 70.

- ⁸³ Julia Jones. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Weitchpec. 11 September 1907. Box 4. GN Collection. Mr. Pitts was the merchant at Martin's Ferry.
- ⁸⁴ Diary, July 18, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection. On this day, Nicholson gave Susie Little a dress for making a basket.
- ⁸⁵ Diary, July 18, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ⁸⁶ Gretchen Krause. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Pasadena. 20 August 1911. Box 3. GN Collection. Krause was Nicholson's housekeeper. She wrote Nicholson about Jones' shipment of baskets while Nicholson was away on business.
- ⁸⁷ Grace Nicholson. Letter to Julia Jones. Pasadena. 10 August 1907. Letterbook 2. GN Collection.
- ⁸⁸ GN Ledger, 56.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid, 336-339.
- ⁹⁰ Alice Jacobs is not listed. This list of weavers interviewed by O'Neale was not included in the original publication (1932). It was added to the recent edition (1995).
- ⁹¹ O'Neale, 178.
- ⁹² GN Ledger, 334.
- ⁹³ GN Ledger, 334.
- ⁹⁴ Victor Evans. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Washington, D.C. 19 June 1919. Box 3. GN Collection.
- ⁹⁵ 1.1 Yurok-Karok Notebooks, 1st notebook, Lila M. O'Neale field notes, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- ⁹⁶ O'Neale, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," Plate 54a.
- ⁹⁷ See, for example, interview with Mrs. Lottie Markussen, 1.1 Yurok-Karok notebooks, Lila M. O'Neale field notes, Bancroft Library or O'Neale, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," 172.
- ⁹⁸ For example, a Nellie Cooper basket is in Yurok/Karuk weaver Vivien Hailstone's collection. Native American weavers and their families often maintain knowledge of who created a particular basket in their collections. These are valuable resources today.
- ⁹⁹ Ron Johnson, Personal communication, July 8, 2000. Johnson had published this information in his obituary of Vera Ryerson in the Fall, 1996 edition of *News From Native California*.
- ¹⁰⁰ Diary, July 18, 1906. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ¹⁰¹ See, for example, Box 15, Indian Notes, 1907 folder, 1st notebook or 1912 folder, 1st notebook. GN Collection.
- ¹⁰² O'Neale, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," 172.
- ¹⁰³ Larry Dalrymple, *Indian Basketmakers of California and the Great Basin* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2000), 14.
- ¹⁰⁴ Diary, July 14, 1908. Box 16. GN Collection.
- ¹⁰⁵ 1.2 Yurok-Karok notebooks, 2nd notebook, Lila M. O'Neale field notes (1929), Bancroft Library, Phoebe Hearst Museum, University of California, Berkeley.
- ¹⁰⁶ O'Neale, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," plate 24b.
- ¹⁰⁷ 1.2 Yurok-Karok notebooks, 1st notebook, Lila M. O'Neale field notes, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- ¹⁰⁸ Acquisition files, Melba Thoma Collection, Trinidad Historical Museum, Trinidad, California.
- ¹⁰⁹ E.L. Wright. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Weitchpec, Ca. 28 March 1912. Box 11. GN Collection.
- ¹¹⁰ See, for example, Grace Nicholson. Letter to Frederick Douglas. Pasadena. 15 August 1938. Box 6. GN Collection.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹¹² Grace Nicholson. Letter to Frederick Douglas. Pasadena. 29 April 1941. Box 6. GN Collection.
- ¹¹³ For a thorough discussion of the concept of "primitive art" and the early 20th-century art world, see W. Jackson Rushing. *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- ¹¹⁴ Homer E. Sargent. Letter to Grace Nicholson. Worcester, Ma. 12 May 1910. Box 1. GN Collection.
- ¹¹⁵ Grace Nicholson. Letter to J. Pyatt. Pasadena. 28 March 1946. Box 7. GN Collection.
- ¹¹⁶ H.H. Stuart. Letter to Thyra Maxwell. Eureka, Ca. 4 May 1951. Box 10. GN Collection.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Pasadena basketry collector and dealer Grace Nicholson started a new model of collecting Native Northwestern California baskets in the early 1900s. I call this new model the individual artist paradigm. In addition to using the already established ethnographic and mass-market approaches, Nicholson documented the work of individual weavers when she traveled to remote parts of California. Why was Nicholson concerned with noting the artists' names if this was not the standard practice in her profession? I argue that changes in Nicholson's acquisition methods, which expanded in 1905 to include purchasing trips among Native Northwestern California weavers, resulted in her documenting the individual artists, who became both her assistants and her friends. Despite Nicholson's adoption of the individual artist paradigm in her collecting practices, her marketing strategies largely continued to emphasize pre-contact traditions and context at the expense of weavers' identities and innovation. I refer to this collecting and marketing model as the ethnographic paradigm.

Both the individual artist and ethnographic paradigms are valuable perspectives that remain popular in basketry studies today. However, because of the dominance of the ethnographic approach, especially in relation to traditional context, during the height of basketry's popularity in the Arts and Crafts period, the contribution of individual Native Northwestern California weavers to the art of basketry has been largely ignored until the last few years. Thanks to Nicholson's sales strategies near the end of her career, when she sought a buyer for her large collection of baskets, the Wiyot/German weaver Elizabeth Hickox became an exception and her

baskets are widely recognized today. The recent publications of Marvin Cohodas have also contributed to the popular awareness of Hickox's basketry.

In this dissertation, I argue that the individual artist paradigm started by Nicholson in her collecting practices can be expanded today to basketry studies in general as a way of making the art history of Native Northwestern California baskets more inclusive of other weavers in addition to the widely recognized master artist Elizabeth Hickox. The Grace Nicholson collection at the Huntington Library in San Marino serves as a resource for researching the life and work of lesser-known weavers from Northwestern California. Emma Duskey Frank, Julia Jones, Daisy Jacobs, and Nellie Cooper are examples of turn-of-the-20th-century basketry weavers who can be at least partially documented through the Nicholson materials. By adding other archival sources, especially the field notes of anthropologist, Lila M. O'Neale, scholars can build a more complete picture of these weavers whose work has remained mostly unidentified through the years.

In the late 19th century, when the Arts and Crafts movement began, collectors of Northwestern California baskets were primarily concerned with documenting traditional, pre-contact cultures. Like the literature of the period, collectors stressed the function of the basket along with other types of material culture. Special access collectors recorded Native life in an attempt to preserve the "vanishing Indian." This ethnographic approach emphasized the use of the basketry within the Native cultures prior to any European influence. As a model for collecting baskets, the ethnographic approach persisted throughout the Arts and Crafts period, including in Grace

Nicholson's business, and continued in the local region of Northwestern California after interest in baskets waned in the 1930s.

Followers of the Arts and Crafts movement in California idealized traditional Native American cultures in their writings. However, they also supported various philanthropic projects to help Native Americans assimilate to Euro-American society. For example, field matrons working in Northwestern California encouraged the making of basketry along with adopting aspects of a Euro-American lifestyle. Grace Nicholson's response to the Arts and Crafts movement included her interest in ethnography, preservation of basketry traditions, and her desire for 'old' things.

In response to the popularity of baskets during the Arts and Crafts period, commercial merchants, such as the A. Brizard Company, developed a mass-market approach to selling baskets as cheap commodities in their stores or through mail order. Merchants working in the rural, rugged regions of Northwestern California took advantage of their control of modes of transportation and access to Native families to purchase baskets for the Arts and Crafts market. Many of these merchants also received baskets as gifts or through a barter system. They probably had little control over types of baskets they collected or documentation they could access. The Grace Nicholson ledger shows that Nicholson also sold numerous baskets at a low price with little identification. She also used the mass-market approach in selling most of her basketry. These were probably the baskets she acquired second-hand from local Northwestern California merchants, like Brizard employees and William Bailey.

Nicholson also developed a new strategy for buying and selling baskets. In the early 1900s, she made a series of trips up along the Klamath River and other remote areas of Northwestern California. On these travels, she established close friendships with a number of Native Americans. She maintained these friendships through written correspondence as well. In her diaries and letters, Nicholson's discourse reveals a tension between her role as basket dealer and as friend to Native weavers. Her ledger and photographs document individual artists. After she stopped traveling in the region and the market for baskets waned, she continued to promote strongly her collection of Elizabeth Hickox's work with the hopes of selling it to a museum. However, at the height of her basketry business, Nicholson recognized the work of several other weavers, including Emma Duskey Frank, Julia Jones, Daisy Jacobs and Nellie Cooper.

Because these weavers, as well as others, worked in a style of weaving that was more conservative and characteristic of Northwestern California, their baskets remain largely unidentified today in comparison to the unique work of Elizabeth Hickox. Nicholson's new model of documentation probably developed from the collecting methods she used. Rather than just buying from the regional merchants like the A. Brizard Company, Nicholson traveled herself to Northwestern California and collected directly from Native Americans. Nicholson's choice to promote individual weavers probably was rooted in increasing the economic value of the baskets. However, it may also have to do with raising the value of the baskets as museum acquisitions and as fine art. Nicholson may have been responding to new definitions of Native American art as both "primitive art" and fine art as the Arts and Crafts

period ethnographic paradigm was challenged by a modernist interpretation in the 1940s.

A few academic anthropologists and museum professionals acknowledged the achievements of Grace Nicholson in the field of anthropology. Otis Mason commented that as a woman, Nicholson was in a better position than a man to document the art of basketry. Certainly, her gender helped Nicholson to establish a close rapport with weavers. By 1929, Lila Morris O'Neale was also taking advantage of her increased access to weavers as a woman during her fieldwork among the weavers of Northwestern California. It is intriguing that O'Neale, like Nicholson before her, was also interested in the individual weaver. Although she did not acknowledge weavers by name in her published text, she based her research on ethnoaesthetics, the individual weavers' remarks on the art of basketry.

Continuity and change in the collecting and marketing strategies of dealer and collector Grace Nicholson demonstrate how the reception of baskets -- how they were perceived when bought and sold -- reflects the context of the Arts and Crafts movement. Perceptions of baskets as traditional or as the work of an anonymous Indian of the pre-contact past contributed to the expanding market value of baskets for both private consumption and museum acquisition. However, in addition to catering to this ethnographic model, Grace Nicholson also experimented with the documentation of the individual weaver. As the Arts and Crafts movement ended and basketry collecting declined, recognition of individual weavers also decreased except within the local Native American community of Northwestern California. In recent

years, however, as Northwestern California basketry collecting is again becoming popular, basketry scholars are turning back to the identification of individual weavers.

Today, as art historians pursue studies of reception theory and Native American baskets, questions arise concerning the economic implications of recognizing individual weavers' work and the power of scholarship. What will be the impact upon the value of these baskets as new research acknowledges the individual weaver? As the economic value of baskets may increase through the recognition of the basket's maker, will such studies contribute to the colonial legacy of collecting Native American art? These questions, along with self-reflective study of collection history and the 'history of Native American art history' lead us into new ground for the next millennium. Art historians need to continue to address these concerns while developing new methods of research as I suggest in this dissertation.

By elucidating some of the ways basketry reception took place during the Arts and Crafts movement, this dissertation contributes to our awareness of how basketry can be defined not just by the artist but by the collector. I argue that Grace Nicholson changed collecting practices during the Arts and Crafts period to include the recording of individual weavers. However, I also offer in this dissertation a model of research for expanding the documentation of lesser-known weavers from Northwestern California. I hope that this methodology may contribute to future research using the individual artist paradigm popular in publications on basketry today.

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