

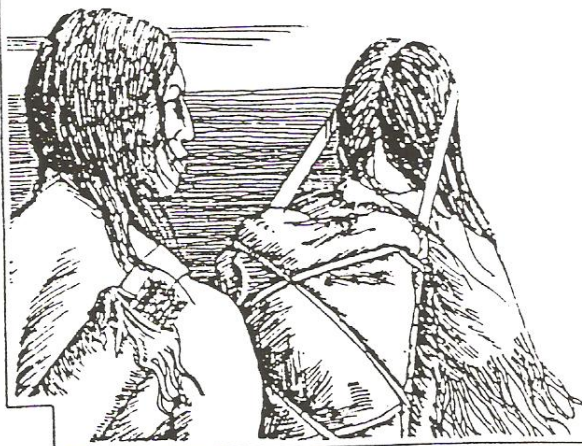


CHILCOTIN  
STUDIES:

BASKETS.



BY: DAVE FALCONER.



# CHILCOTIN STUDIES

# CHILCOTIN STUDIES: BASKETS

## Chilcotin Studies:: Baskets

Chilcotin women make two main types of baskets. One kind is the birch-bark basket. Another kind is the woven basket.

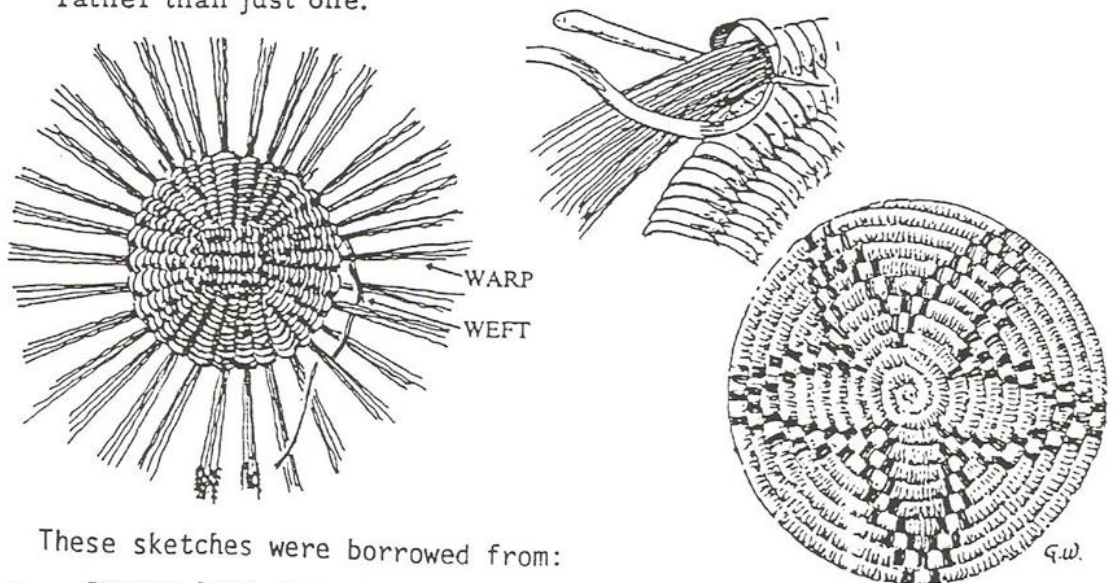
### Birch - bark Baskets

These baskets are made from choice pieces (or sheets) of bark from the birch tree. These baskets are sewn together with a type of thread made from the smaller roots of a spruce tree. To make these baskets stronger, a sapling was sewn or bound to the top inner rim. Designs are sometimes scratched or cut into the outer sides of the birch-bark baskets.

### Woven Baskets

Many of the Chilcotin (woven) baskets are made from the smaller roots of the spruce tree. Most are what is known as coiled baskets. That is, the basket is made from long strands or strings of spruce roots that are coiled from the bottom up.

In making coiled baskets, we call the coiled spruce root the WEFT, or WOOF. We call the "spokes" the WARP. The warp strands are used to hold together the weft coils. According to James Teit (pronounced TAYT), who studied many woven Chilcotin baskets back in 1900, most woven Chilcotin baskets have a strengthening hoop of willow stitched onto the outside of the basket, a little below the rim. Teit observed (page 765) that a few of these baskets have 2 hoops, rather than just one.



These sketches were borrowed from:

INDIAN ARTS, Robert Hofsinde,

(New York:Wm. Morrow and Co., 1971) pp. 51,52.

COILED BASKETRY

# CHILCOTIN STUDIES CHILCOTIN STUDIES

(The basketry sketches below were borrowed from: THE SHUSWAP, (Chilcotin Appendix); James Teit, A.M.N.H., 1909.)



Chilcotin baskets are often ornamented with various dark/light designs. The darker material is often either grass stems or wild cherry wood bark, which is woven into the lighter colored spruce root coils. The designs are mostly of a geometric shape; though some have bird or animal designs.

The shape of many Chilcotin baskets is somewhat rectangular, with flat bottoms. Sometimes, the sides flare outward a little, so that the opening at the top is larger than the bottom of the basket.



Fig 258 (4174) Birch-Bark Basket. Height, 21.5 cm.

Chilcotin Indian baskets.



Cooled basket. Chilcotin. Height, 23 cm.



## QUESTIONS QUESTIONS

### Baskets: Questions



1. List the two main types of baskets made by Chilcotin women.
2. What two things are bark baskets usually made of?
3. Give two terms that weavers give to the coils in a woven basket.
4. What term do weavers give to the "spokes" that hold the coils in a woven basket together?
5. How do Chilcotin basket weavers make the sides of some baskets much stronger?
6. What types of designs are found on the sides of Chilcotin baskets?
7. In 2 - 3 of your own descriptive sentences, describe the most common shape of Chilcotin baskets.

# BASKET



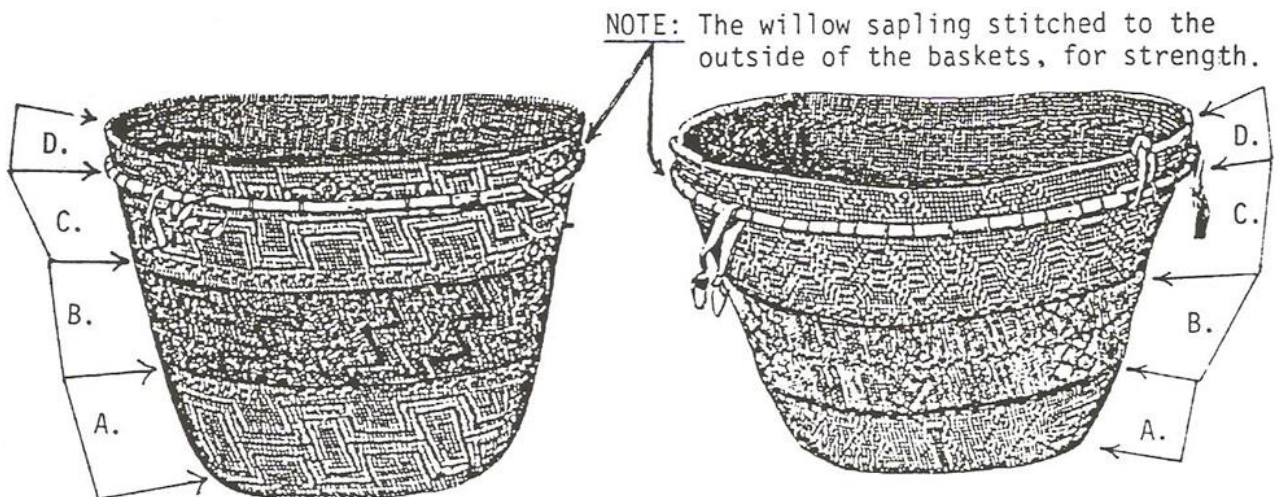
# DESIGN

## (CHILCOTIN STUDIES)

### CHILCOTIN STUDIES: Basket Design

The designs on most Chilcotin Indian baskets are divided into four separate bands ( or "fields"); one on top of the other. The widths of these 4 bands are not necessarily the same as each other. That is, one band might be 9 cm. wide; another might be 4 1/2 cm. wide; another might be 3 1/2 cm. wide; and the fourth might be 8 cm. wide.

Many of the designs that are placed within each band are geometric in nature. That is, they are made up of straight lines, triangles, squares, and other shapes. Many of the designs that are geometrical represent some part of an animal, bird, reptile, or other being. Other geometrical designs represent geographical features, such as mountains, lakes, streams, rivers and such. Less often, a non-geometrical design of an animal, or bird might be seen on a Chilcotin basket, in one or more of the four bands. Sometimes, one or two of the bands will contain no design at all.



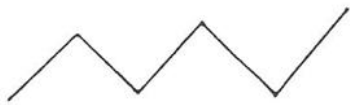
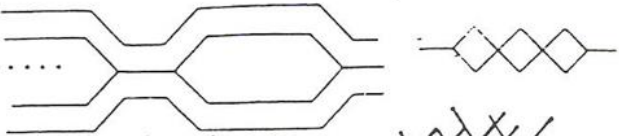
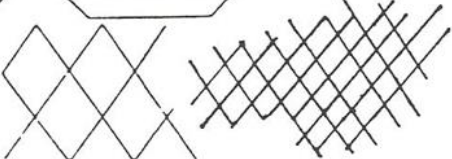
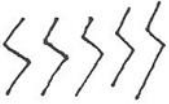
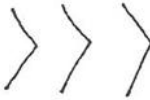




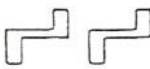
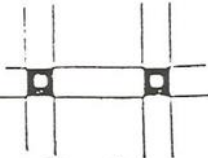

TWO CHILCOTIN COILED BASKETS (recorded by James Teit, 1900-1901).

In the 2 Chilcotin coiled baskets above, take special notice of the FOUR separate bands of design.

( Teachers:..... Copies of the "Chilcotin Appendix" of THE SHUSWAP, by: James Teit, may be obtained from either the School District # 27 Resource Centre...ask for Iris Cooper; or from the S.D.#27 Coordinator of Indian Education...Alan Haiq-Brown).

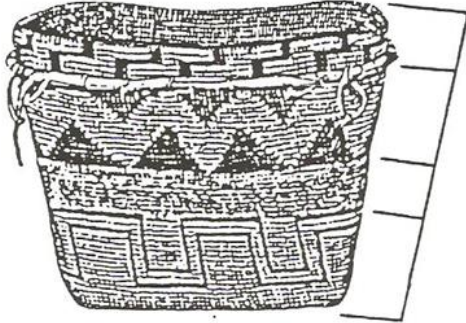
Below are a few of the designs that the Chilcotin basket-makers explained to James Teit back in 1900-1901:

There are other designs as well as these. The meanings of some of the designs have apparently been lost. Or perhaps some of the designs never had any special meanings.

1. Snake..... 
2. Lakes or streams..... 
3. Fish-net..... 
4. Fish Ribs..... 
5. Ribs or Fish..... 
6. Arrowheads..... 
7. Ribs of Mammals..... 
8. Ribs and backbone..... 
9. A Stone..... 
10. Ducks..... 
11. Beaver trails..... 
12. Tree or trees..... 

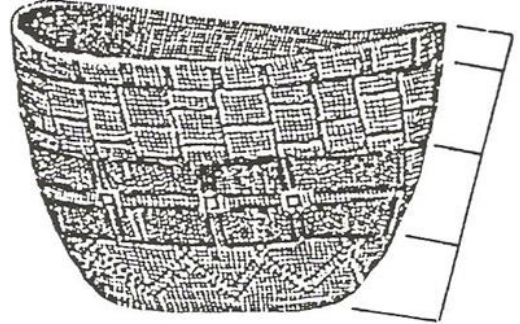
**SAMPLE DESIGNS;  
CHILCOTIN BASKETS.**

Below, are some baskets that were examined by James Teit. Under each drawing is a short explanation of the meaning of the designs in each of the four bands.



Chilcotin coiled basket.  
 Height: 24cm.  
 Lowest row: sacks.  
 Next row up: no design.  
 Next row up: arrowheads.  
 Top row: ducks.

\*\*\*\*\*

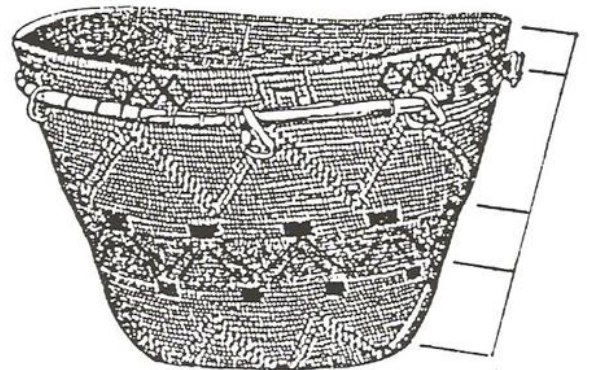


Chilcotin coiled basket.  
 Height: 22cm.  
 Lowest row: snake or mountains.  
 Next row up: beaver-trails.  
 Next row up: stones.  
 Top row: ribs or fish-bones.

\*\*\*\*\*



Chilcotin coiled basket.  
 Height: 39cm.  
 Lowest row: net design, with arrowheads.  
 Next row up: sacks.  
 Next row up: arrowheads under a net.  
 Top row: fish and mammal ribs.



Chilcotin coiled basket.  
 Height: 58cm. (a large basket).  
 Lowest row: snake, under stones.  
 Next row up: snake, under stones.  
 Next row up: snake.  
 Top row: meaning not known.

CHILCOTIN  
 STUDIES

BASKET

DESIGN