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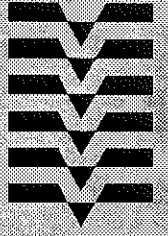
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*Unit 3*  
*Module 4*  
*- Weaving -*



## Learning Outcomes and Purpose of Module 4

To help students:

- demonstrate an appreciation of the values and the sophistication of traditional Stó:lō technology
- demonstrate an awareness of resource management through the continual adaptation of Stó:lō technology
- explain the cultural and spiritual dimensions of Stó:lō resource management
- demonstrate an awareness of the value of wool to everyday Stó:lō communities
- demonstrate an awareness of the value of weaving to everyday Stó:lō communities



### Teacher Information

**Note:** For more detailed information please refer to:

1. "Salish Weaving" Appendix A
2. H. Stewart, "Cedar", part 4.
3. Teacher Information/Reference Package p. 514 - 526

### A. Wool Weaving

Traditionally, woven Salish blankets were an integral part of Stó:lō social life. Blankets were used as clothing (cloaks, dancing aprons) and worn for ceremonies. They were also given as gifts at gatherings such as the potlatch, naming ceremony, marriages and funerals (the dead were honoured by being wrapped in woven blankets).

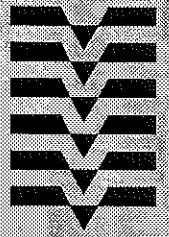
Blankets were a symbol of wealth and status, and in many ways were used similarly to currency.

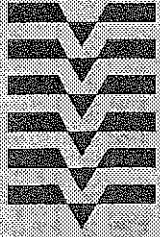
The Stó:lō used looms for their weaving. A single bar loom was used to make mats, dance aprons, rugs, sashes and tump lines. A two bar vertical loom was used for twilled blankets and twined ceremonial blankets.

Many women worked almost full time at weaving, however, weaving tools (creasers, spindle whorls, swords for beating wool and the posts of weaving looms) were made, carved and painted by men.

While most weaving designs used geometric shapes, many designs had special names. Rights to weave specific designs were often inherited. Patterns were often woven into a design in order to tell a specific story.

In the 1960's Salish weaving was revived and is known throughout the world today.





## B. Cedar weaving

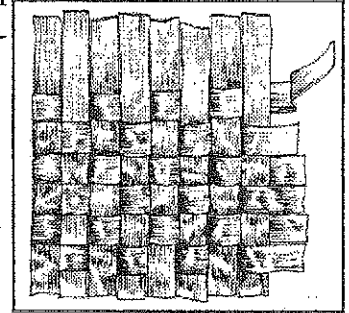
### 1. Plain, checkerboard weave.

This weave was a simple plaiting of one weft strand in and out over one warp strand and under the next. Sometimes the weave was varied in basket making by passing the weft over two, under two, or over one, under two.

This weave was used in the construction of cedar bark and rush mats, and in making baskets from coarse materials.

In mat making, the warp strands are draped over the loom so they hang evenly on either side. In order to secure them in position, two strands of bark are first twined once across. If the weaving is to be plain checkerboard, a woof strand of the same width as the warp is then carried across horizontally, passing alternately over and under the warp strands.

While weaving, the material is kept sufficiently damp to be pliable. (The weft or woof yarn is that which is woven across the warp).

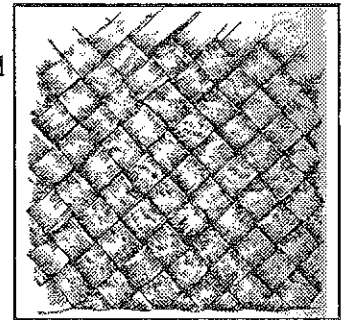


### 2. In diagonal weaving

This weave was used extensively in the making of mats, baskets and pack straps.

The warp and weft strands which are identical, are interlaced at right angles to each other. At the edges, they are bent over and continue at right angles to their previous course.

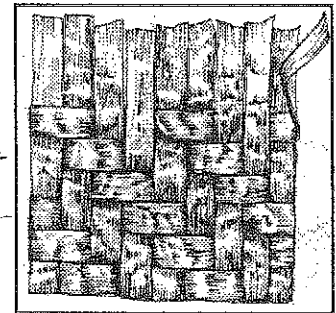
When baskets and bags are being woven of similar material, a square bottom is plaited and then suspended in a horizontal position by strings from the four corners and the ends of the warp strands hang down. The weaving then proceeds around the basket until walls are of required height.



### 3. Twilled weave

The twilled weave was the weave used in the production of the large Salish Goat hair blankets. It was used also for decorative purposes and in the weaving of such articles as ceremonial blankets. In twilled weaving, the warp and weft are usually of the same material. The weft crosses the warp over two, under two, or over two, under one. At the edge the weft is turned back and woven across in the opposite direction.

The order of crossing the warp is changed as each line is woven - that is, it is stepped along one warp, but the system of over two, under one is continued throughout the weave.



For a list of traditional and modern weaving uses and materials see (BLM 4a) p. 373. These may also be useful student information.



## Concept Outline

### A. Welcome Song (cassette)

Whenever the Stó:lō would have a gathering they would traditionally welcome their guests by singing a welcome or greeting song. These songs would vary slightly from village to village but everyone would recognize them as greeting songs. Greeting songs are still sung today in most Stó:lō gatherings .

*Play the welcome song as a means of introducing each lesson in the Stó:lō curriculum.*

### B. Weaving Story

The importance of weaving to the Stó:lō is reflected in their mythology. One legend, recorded by Charles Hill-Tout in 1904, describes how the art of weaving came into being.

The youngest of the Qeqals now said to his eldest brother, "You must do something for these kind-hearted people." Thereupon the eldest brother pulled out some of the hairs from his leg, and threw them on the ground outside, and they became metsetl (a fibrous grass from which the old Indians made their fishing lines and nets". He then took some of the metsetl and combed and prepared it and showed the old couple how to roll or spin its fibers into yarn on their thighs, and further taught them how to make nets from it, bidding them say as they finished each round, "Tcola! tcola! o pakshyil! Stretch! stretch! O leg-hair!" (in Maud, 1978:147).



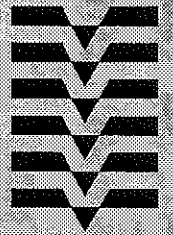
### C. Teacher Directed Discussion

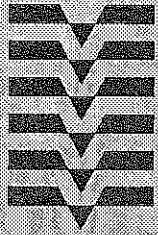
Teacher leads brain storming of traditional uses for weaving and traditional materials used for weaving. Students then meet in village groups to discuss and record modern uses for weaving and modern materials used. After completing village group discussion the teacher leads whole class recording of village group responses prior to giving students a copy of **(BLM 4a)** p. 373.



### D. Student Activity Cedar Weaving

Teacher shows pictures of basket weaving **(BLM 4b, 4c, and 4d)** p. 374-376 and discusses patterning in each. Students then draw their own 2 colour patterns on grid paper **(BLM 4e)** p. 377.





**E. Teacher Directed Discussion**  
**Wool Weaving**

Teacher shows examples of Salish blanket weaving (BLM 4f, 4g, 4h) p. 378 - 380

Discuss design elements such as geometric patterns, symmetry and use of colour. (Note: "Little attempt was made to produce ornamentation from colour in the weaving of blankets, or other items. Basic colours produced in both woolen and fibre weft materials were black, yellow, orange and brown." Salish Weaving, p. 10).

Some blankets tell stories and legends by using basic patterns (symbols) in a carefully sequenced design. This was one way that stories were preserved and passed through the generations.



**F. Student Activity**

Students then sketch out and paint their own blanket patterns using only the symbols from (BLM 4i) p. 381. Their blanket design may be geometrical and symmetrical or may incorporate a variety of symbols that are carefully sequenced in order to tell a story.



**G. Assessment and Evaluation**

Assess and evaluate student blanket designs using the Rubric (BLM 4j) p. 382 based on the following components.

Use of:

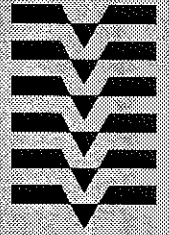
1. Symmetry
2. Geometric patterns
3. Authentic, natural colours
4. Detail in design
5. Consistent tension in the weave

This (BLM 4j) p. 382 could be used to assess and evaluate both the home project shoe box loom and the sketched/painted blanket patterns.



**H. Family Ties**

In preparation for home activity teacher shows and discusses pictures of spindle whorls (BLM 4k) p. 383 and looms (BLM 4l) p. 384. For more detailed explanation, see vocabulary at the end of the Concept Outline. Teacher demonstrates how to set up Shoe Box Loom. See (BLM 4m) p. 385.



Send home “family ties” letter (**BLM 4n**) p. 386 and Shoe Box Loom Sample Layout (**BLM 4m**) p. 385 to explain home activity. Students will try to reproduce their two colour grid design or create a new design, weaving with wool or string, using a shoe box loom.

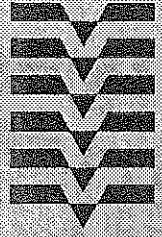
A copy of (**BLM 4b, 4c, 4d**) p. 374-376 could also be sent home to show some different weaving styles used by Stó:lō weavers. This project will be assessed and evaluated based on the criteria outlined on (**BLM 4j**) p. 382.

### **I. Extension Activity**

Experiment with natural items to produce colour dyes. Students collect rocks, roots, flowers, grass, berries and use dye from these items to produce a variety of colours and patterns.

Students could try out their dyes on paper towel, art paper, and/or on plain cotton rags.

**Note:** See page 399 & 400 of Salish Weaving by Oliver Wells (Appendix A) for a list of modern natural dyes used by the Stó:lō.



## Vocabulary

### A. Dancing apron

- used as a breech cloth - hung down the front and back from a belt, made from fine materials such as dog's hair and the down of fire weed - often the only garment worn by the dancer.

### B. Fire weed

- a rapidly growing flowering plant that grows in areas that have been cleared, burned off or logged. They require open space and produce a brightly colored flower that turns to a silky fibrous seed.

### C. Loom-

- the frame that is used for weaving. The Stó:lō had two main types. A two bar loom see (BLM 4d) p. 384 for a picture) and a one bar loom see Appendix A Salish Weaving p. 401.

### D. Mats

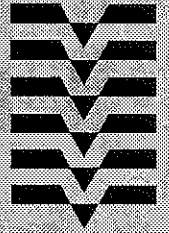
- used for beds and floors - made from cedar bark and rushes.

### E. Pack straps or tump lines

- carrying straps for use in packing almost any load over the trails - usually 5 - 10 cm. wide and 60 cm. long plus 1 meter of braided ends.

### F. Spindle whorl

- the device used for spinning the raw wool ready for weaving. It consisted of a long stick (about 1 to 1-1/2 metres long) and a heavy end (whorl) that acts as a flywheel; see (BLM 4k) p. 383. Also p. 518 - Teacher Information/Reference Package.



## Materials

### A. Audio Visual Equipment

- overhead projector/screen
- cassette player

### B. Supplies

- cassette (Welcome song)
- Appendix A - Salish Weaving -Primitive and Modern

### C. Blackline Masters

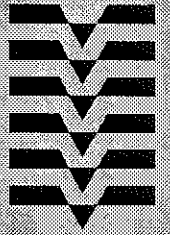
- Traditional and Modern Weaving - uses and materials (**BLM 4a**) p. 373
- Plain Checkerboard Weave (**BLM 4b**) p. 374
- Diagonal Checkerboard Weave (**BLM 4c**) p. 375
- Twilled Weave (**BLM 4d**) p. 376
- Grid Paper (**BLM 4e**) p. 377
- A Rare Salish Blanket (**BLM 4f**) p. 378
- Salish Blankets - Geometric/Story Pattern (**BLM 4g**) p. 379
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- Basic Pattern/Symbols (**BLM 4i**) p. 381
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- Family Ties - Parent Letter (Shoe Box Loom Project) (**BLM 4n**) p. 386

# *BlackLine Masters*

## *Unit 3*

### *Module 4*

*- Weaving -*



FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology



## Weaving Uses

### Traditional

- bed covers
- blankets - to wear in cold weather, to ceremonies or to be wrapped in for burial
- cloak
- belts and sashes
- baskets - for cooking in, gathering and storage
- mats - to sleep on, sit on
- dancing apron - like a short skirt with slits on both sides - worn to dance in at certain gatherings
- pack straps - straps attached to baskets, nets, boxes to hold together or for transporting

### Modern

- saddle blankets
- wall hangings
- rugs and tapestries
- chair covers

## Weaving Materials

### Traditional

- mountain goat wool
- dog's hair (from wooly dog - bred for this purpose)
- cedar bark
- Indian hemp (sweet grass)
- nettle fibre
- milkweed fibre
- willow bark

### Modern

- sheep wool
- cotton rags
- twine
- warp cordage spun from native grasses

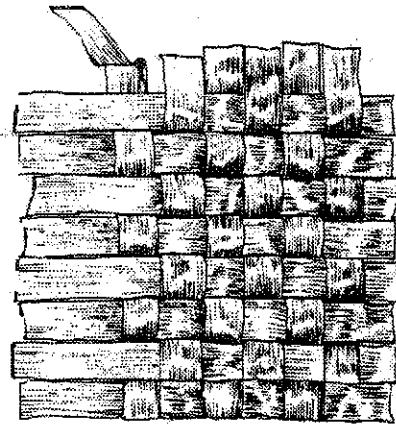




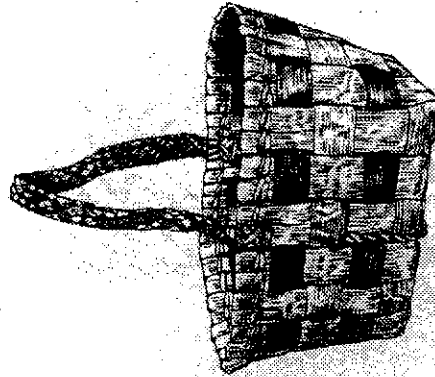
## Finished Samples

## Type of Weaving

### Plain Checkerboard Weave

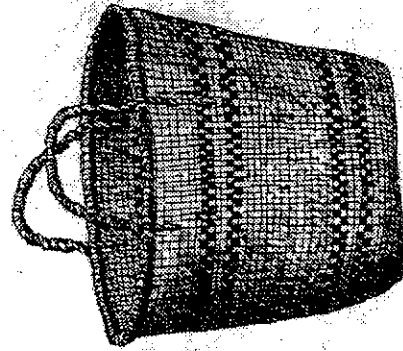


Plaiting — Checkerboard weave: weft strand crosses over and under one warp strand.



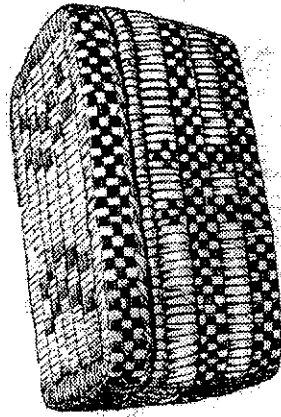
Quickly made basket using wide strands of bark, natural and dyed black. Bark of braided handle twisted into rope to support base.

16.5 cm [6.5"] high



Plaited cedar bark basket, handles of cedar bark rope, design of bark strands dyed black.

29 cm [11.5"] high, plus handles



Lidded basket of split cedar root, decorated with cherry bark "beading", i.e. bark that runs over and under the root strands.

23 cm [9"] high

STUDENT ACTIVITY • Plain Checkerboard Weave • BLM 4b

UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology



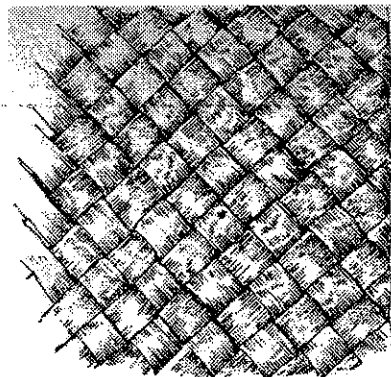


**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Diagonal Checkerboard Weave • BLM 4C**

**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**

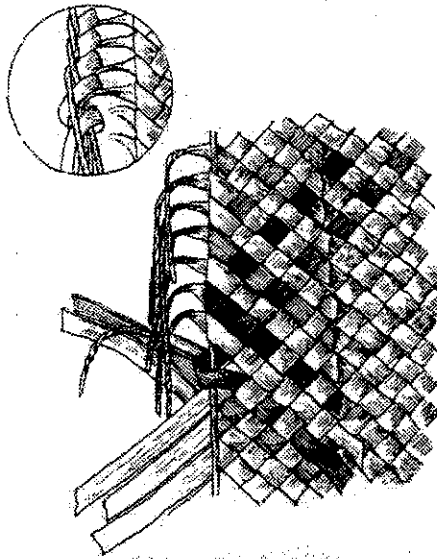
**Type of Weaving**

**Diagonal Checkerboard Weave**

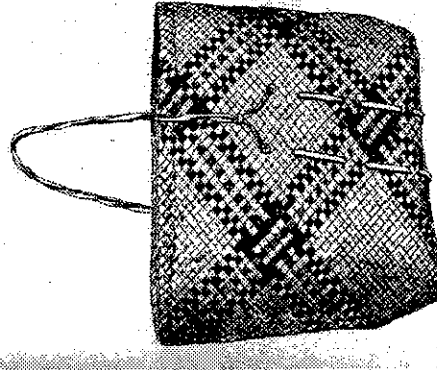


Diagonal plaiting – checkerboard weave, can also be twilled.

**Finished Samples**



Method of finishing rim of diagonally plaited basket. Inset shows final stage, forming rim.

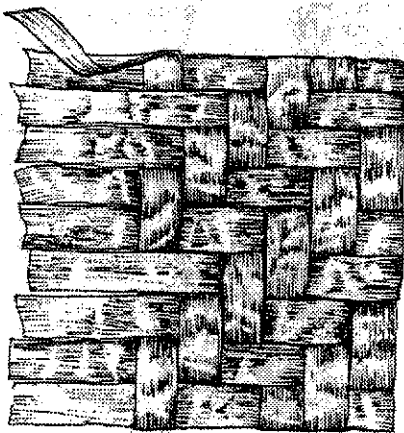


Flexible basket in diagonal plaiting with strands of cedar bark dyed red and black to create plaid design. Thonging for base support.  
25.5 cm [10"] high



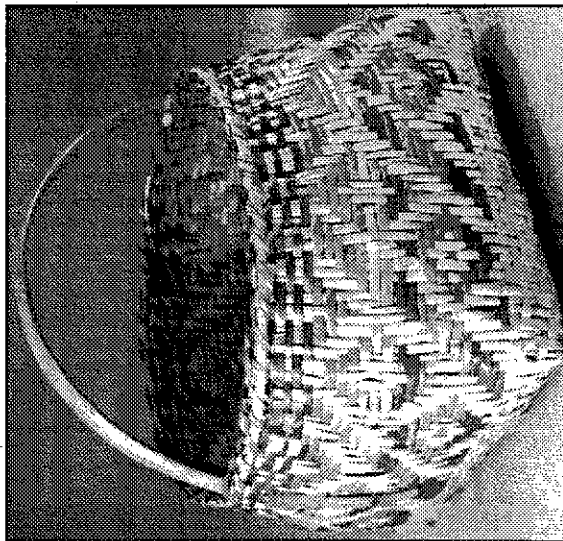
## Type of Weaving

### Twilled Weave

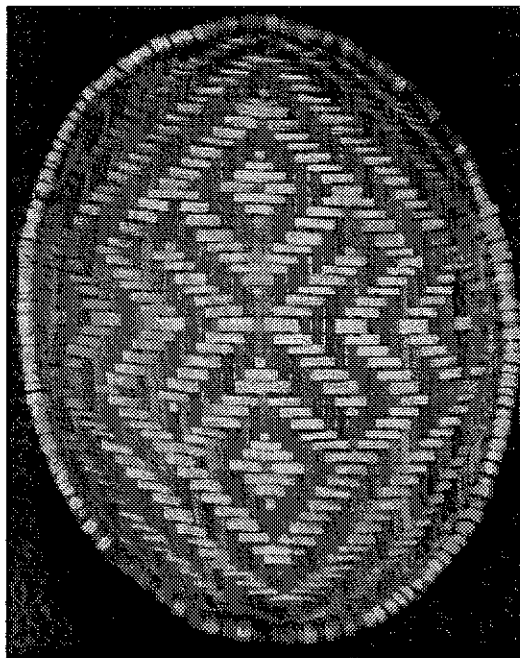


Plaiting – Twilled weave: weft strand crosses over and under two or more warp strands.

## Finished Samples



**Cherokee basket**, Southeast, early 20th century. This basket is a typical example of Southeast work in its use of glossy river cane (*Arundinaria* sp.), twill plaiting, and red, dark brown, and neutral polychrome color. The rim binding of bark suggests that the Cherokee or possibly the Catawba, both of North Carolina, may have made this basket. (Photo by Hillel Burger.)

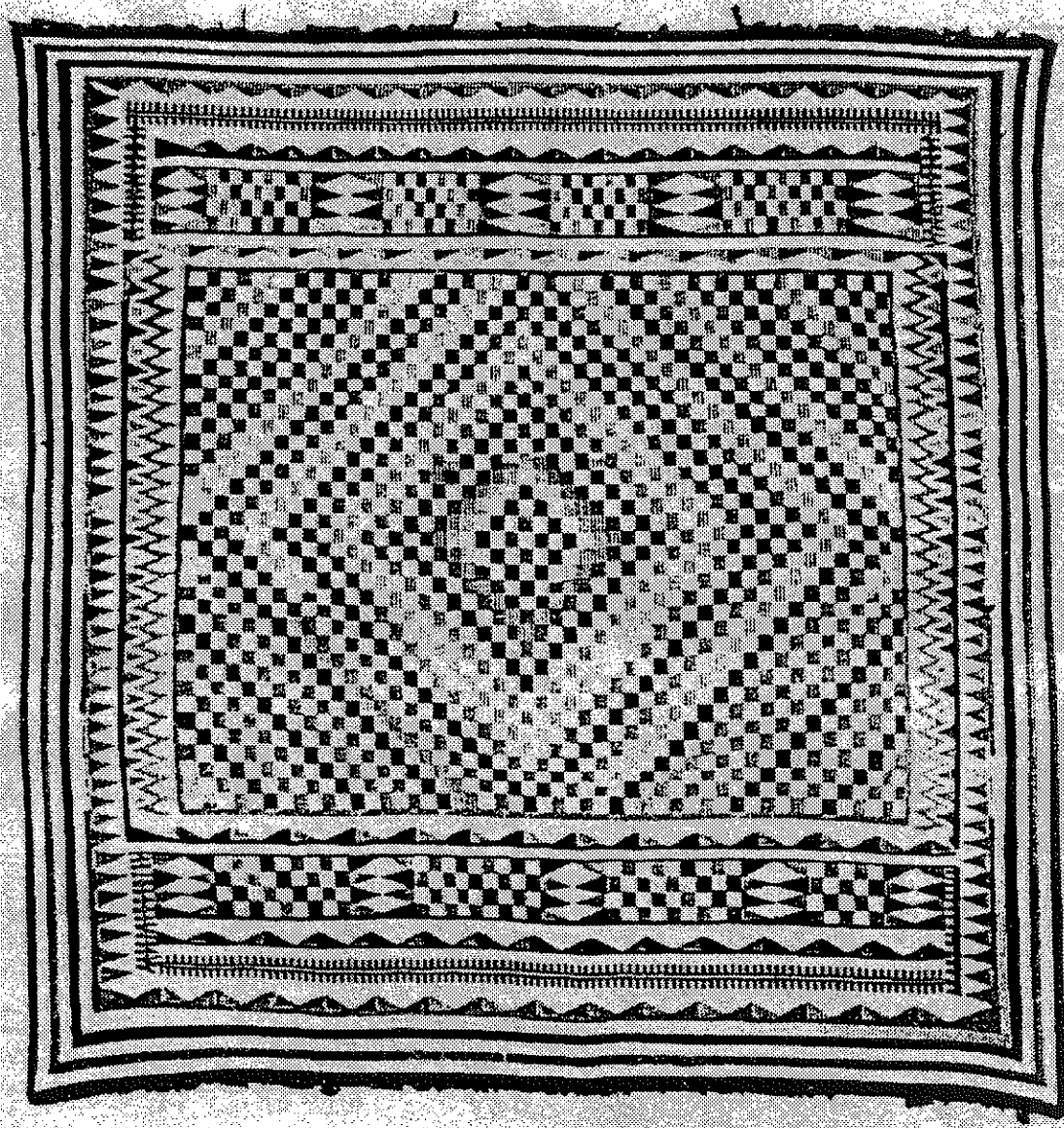


**Hopi ring basket**, Southwest, c. 1975. This twill plaited ring basket is probably the oldest continuous type of plaited textile to have been made in North America. It has been fashioned by Hopi and Pueblo basket makers and their direct ancestors, the Anasazi, for more than 1500 years. In this illustration, yucca splints in two shades have been manipulated to create a variety of the double diamond design element. A hoop or “ring” of willow or sumac is used to form the 11” (27.5 cm.) long rim of this distinctive basket type.

**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Twilled Weave • BLM 4d**

**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**





### A Rare Salish Blanket

Property of Museum of American Indian Heye Foundation N.Y.

Originally obtained about 1850 by Joe Mackay of Hudson Bay Co. from the Chief of the Tsakum band of Salish Indians at Yale, B.C.

#### Acknowledgement:

1. "Museum of the American Indian" N.Y. for use of color reproduction of "Rare Salish Blanket"
2. "The Beaver" magazine of H.B. Co. for permission to reprint "Return of the Salish Loom"
3. Pen Sketches by Marie Weeden.
4. Financial assistance by Chilliwack Arts Council.
5. Smithsonian Institution Press, Wash. D.C.

Published and copyrighted by Oliver N. Wells, Sardis, B.C. (1969)





Traditional Salish Weaving,  
by Weaver Monica Williams

Salish Blanket  
by Weaver Anabel Stewart

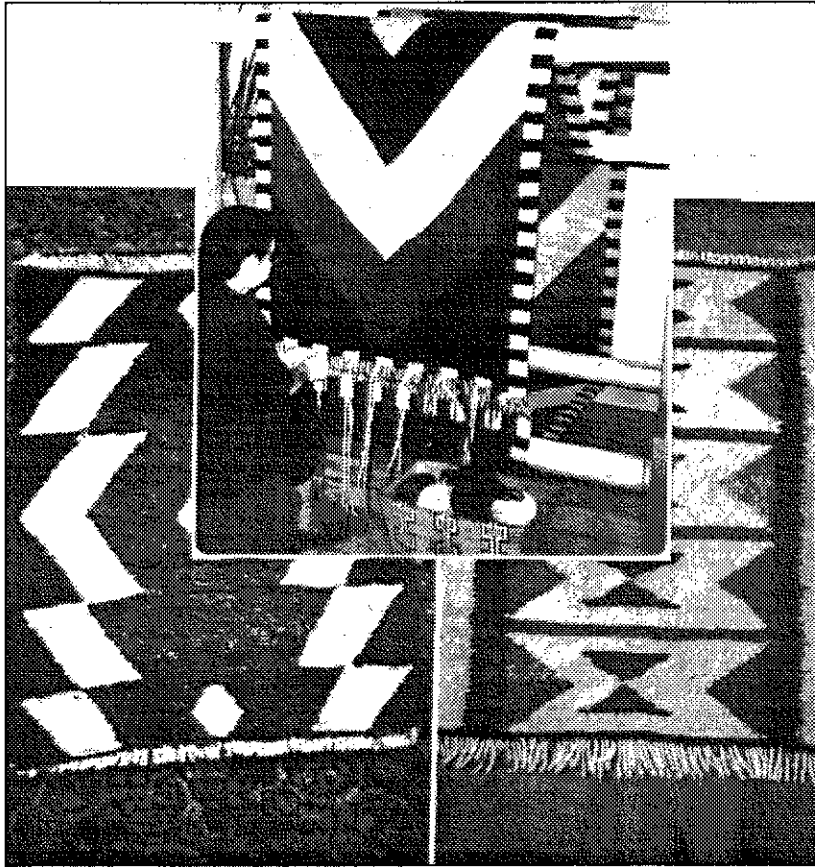


STUDENT ACTIVITY • Salish Blankets – Geometric/Story Pattern • BLM 4g

UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology



### Salish Designs



Anabel Stewart and Martha James at their Looms



**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Salish Loom Weaving • BLM 4h**  
**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**



**Basic Patterns/Symbols**

**Meaning**

	diamond	love and understanding
	half diamond	passage of time
	half diamonds joined	eternity
	running diamonds	eternity
	butterfly	everlasting life
	sun rays	constancy
	crossed arrows	friendship
	arrow	protection
	arrowhead	symbol of plenty
	bird	carefree
	lightning snake	lightning
	snake	wisdom
	arrows pointing in	warding off evil spirits
	rain cloud	good prospects
	lightning and arrow	swiftness
	days and nights	time
	running water	constant life
	raindrop rain	plentiful crops
	teepee	temporary home
	big mountain	abundance
	eagle feathers	chief
	rainbow	promise of better things
	deerhead	agility

**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Basic Patterns/Symbols • BLM 41**  
**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**

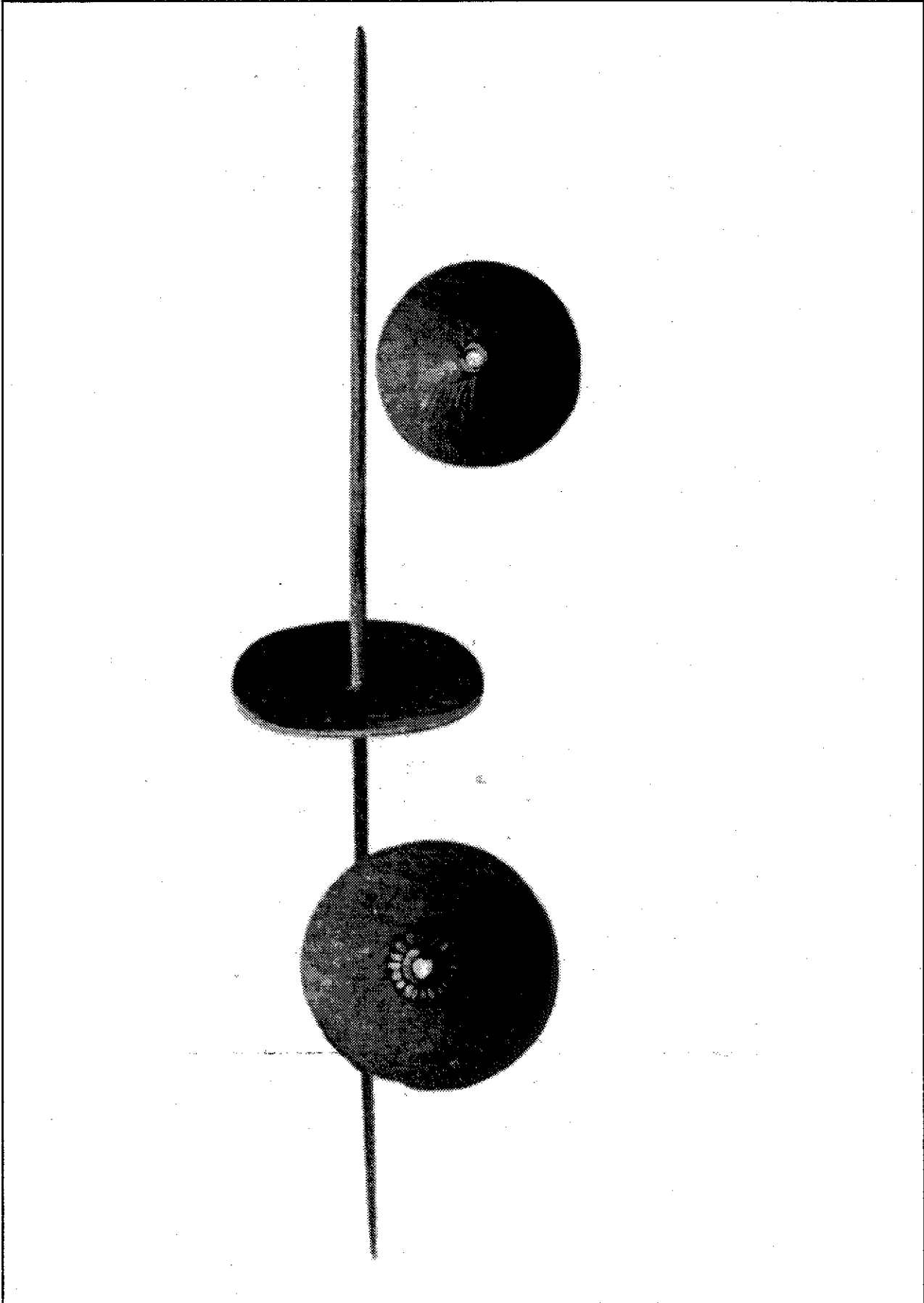


ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION • Rubric • Shoe Box Loom • BLM 4j

UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology

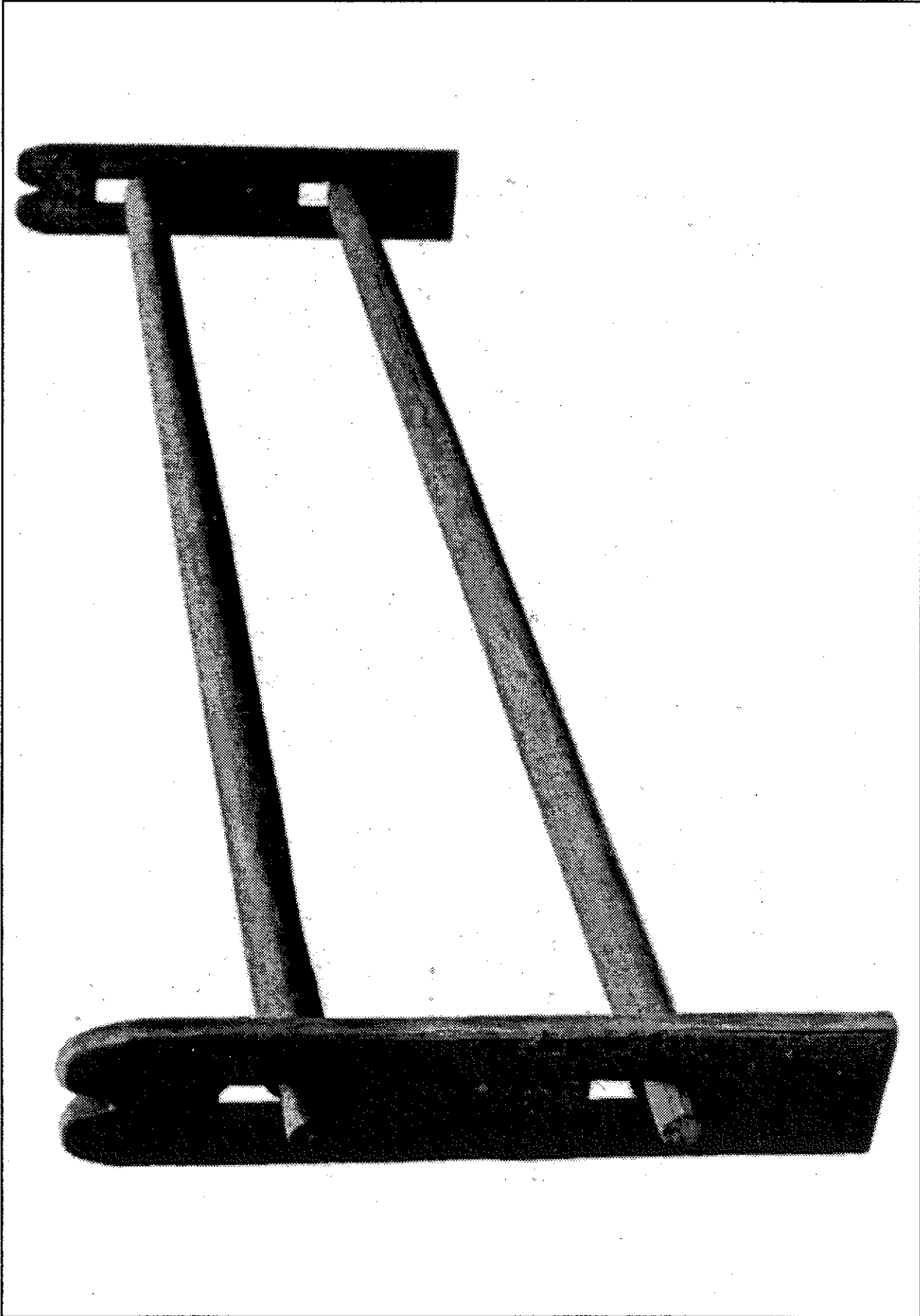
Name _____			Date _____				
Type of Weave _____							
			Poor	Fair	Sat	Good	Excellent
			1	2	3	4	5
Criteria			Student			Teacher	
Use of:  1. Symmetry  2. Geometric Patterns  3. Authentic, natural colours  4. Detail in design  5. Consistent tension in the weave							
Total							
A: 25 - 22  B: 21 - 19  C+: 18 - 16  C: 15 - 14  C-: 13  I: >13			Comments: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____				





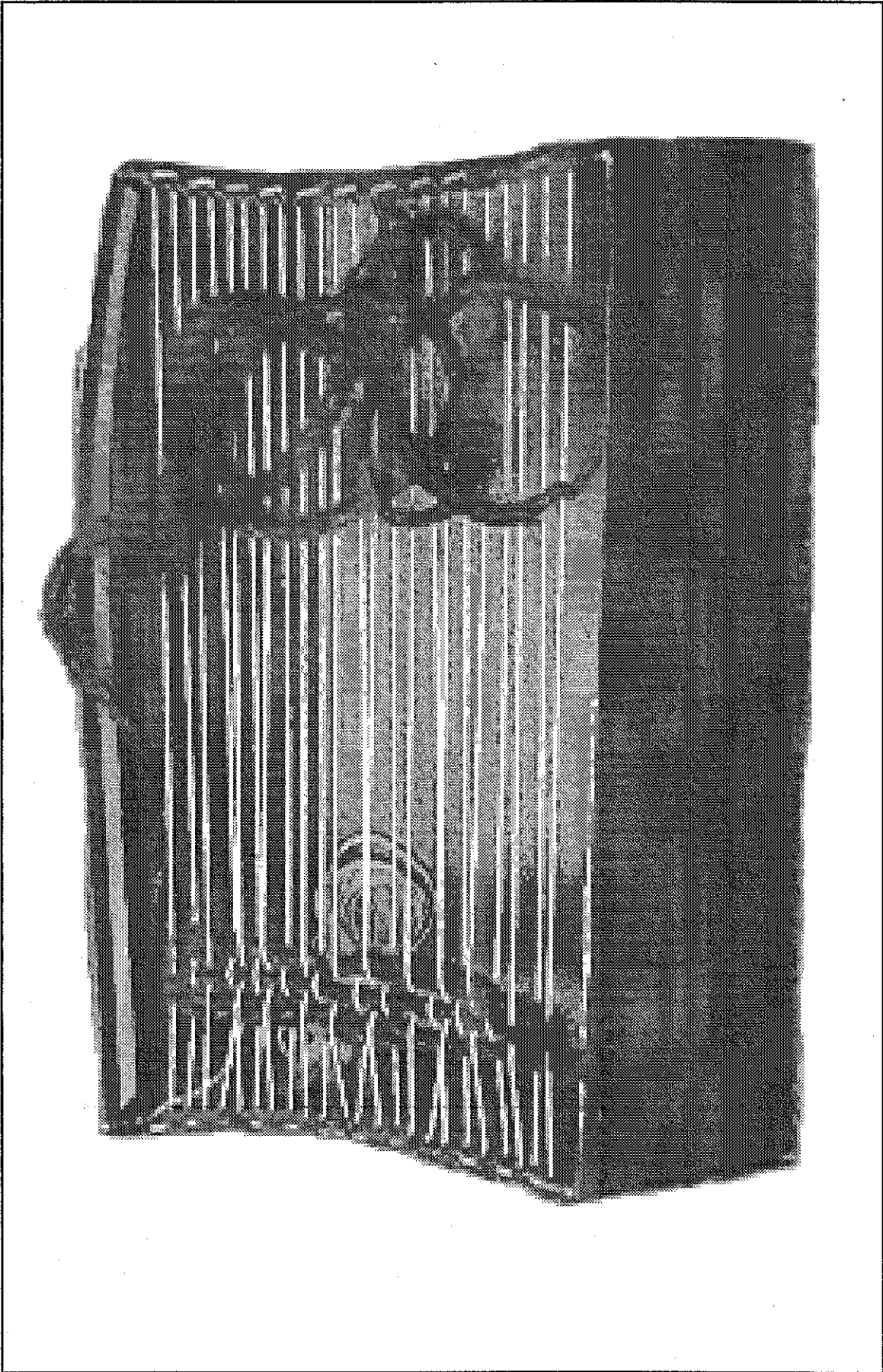
**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Spindle Whorls • BLM 4k**

**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**



**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Two Bar Loom • BLM 4I**

**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**



**STUDENT ACTIVITY • Shoe Box Loom Sample Layout • BLM 4m**

**UNIT 3 • Resources and Technology**



## Family Ties

Dear Parents,

In our unit on the Stó:lō we are studying the art of Salish weaving. Many products such as baskets and hats were woven out of cedar bark and cedar roots. Blankets were woven also but the materials consisted primarily of goat and woolly dog hair. Most weavings consisted of simple symmetrical and geometrical patterns, however some used a sequence of symbols to record a story.

The students have drawn simple patterns on grid paper in class. At home they have been asked to try some basic weaving using a shoe box loom and raffia or wool for weaving. As with all other home projects in this unit, your help is welcomed and encouraged.

Your child has brought home sample pictures of weaving and twining technique and finished baskets and blanket weavings. These can be used to guide you through this project or you may choose to experiment with your own weaving style.

Finished weavings should be symmetrical, use geometric patterns and authentic, natural colours, have some detail in design and a consistent tension in the weave.

Happy weaving.

Sincerely,



# Appendix A



## Salish Weaving

• Primitive & Modern •

by Oliver N. Wells





# Salish Weaving

*Primitive and Modern*

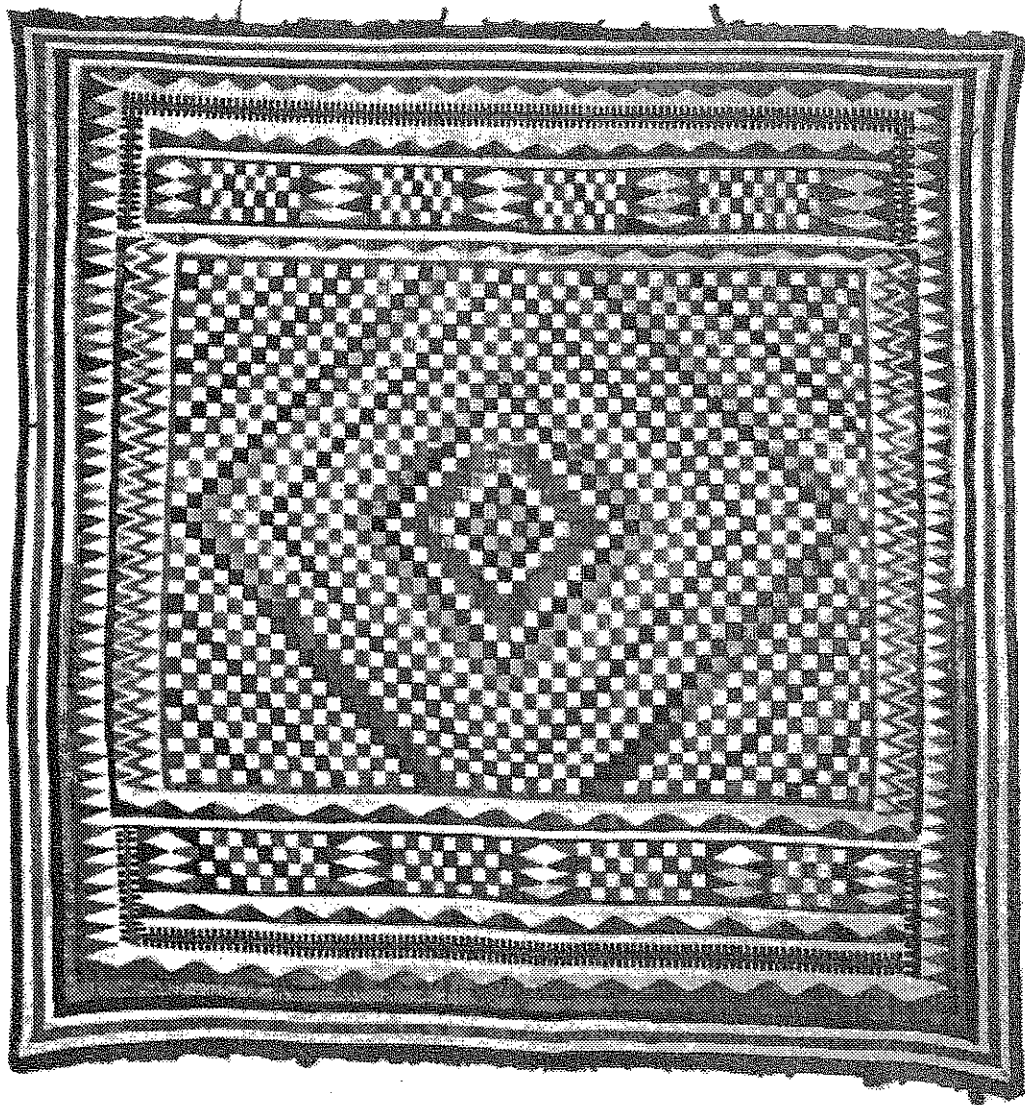
*By*

*Oliver N. Wells*

As practised by  
the Salish Indians of  
South West British Columbia

**Revised Edition**





## **A Rare Salish Blanket**

Property of Museum of American Indian Heye Foundation N.Y.

Originally obtained about 1850 by Joe Mackay of Hudson Bay Co. from the Chief of the Tsakuam band of Salish Indians at Yale, B.C.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Mrs. Albert Cooper, of Soowahlie Reserve, Chilliwack River.

Her interest and assistance helped to make possible "The Return of the Salish Loom."

Born at O'hamil Reserve, near Hope on the Fraser River, over eighty years ago, Mrs. Cooper has been a connecting link between the natives of the Fraser River Canyon, who were the weavers of the Salish "Nobility Blanket" and the Chilliwack River tribe, into which she married, as did many of the Canyon people of the Thompson tribe.

Mrs Cooper was educated at Coqualeetza Residential School at Sardis, B.C. and became proficient in the use of the English language. She retained a good command of the Halkomelem (\*hal-koh-MAY-lem) tongue as spoken by the Stalo (\*STAW-loh) tribes along the lower Fraser River. She has been devoted throughout her lifetime to the preservation of the native language and crafts.

## INTRODUCTION

The reader of this publication will come to realize that Salish weaving is today, as it was in the past, something unique among the crafts of the Indian tribes of North America.

The material utilized in this handbook is from the most reliable accounts on the subject which have been recorded to date. To this has been added the Author's personal observations and research during the past six years.

This publication is intended to be of interest and use to those native people of Salish origin who may wish to undertake the production of an article woven in the traditional Salish method, with native design for its ornamentation. It will also be of interest to weavers in general and to those who may acquire a piece of Salish weaving.

The first edition, published in the spring of 1969, brought favourable comment from the native Indians; the Provincial Museum; the Museum of the American Indian, N.Y. It has been accepted for library use in the major libraries across Canada, and has been extensively purchased by gift shops and by persons interested in handcrafts.

In this second edition are four pages of Salish design elements, taken from the Bureau of American Ethnology's Forty-first Annual Report. Also included, through the courtesy of Dr. Frederick Dockstader, Director of the Museum of the American Indian, Haye Foundation, New York, is a bibliography on the subject. It has been prepared and is included as a reference guide for those who may wish to undertake more detailed study of the subject.

\* Indicates a Salish word taken from "A Vocabulary of Native Words in the Halkomelem Language" which was published by the Author in 1965. These words are pronounced phonetically without difficulty; the syllable accented being indicated by the use of capital letters.

## Early History of Weaving in Western America

**(A) WEAVING IN GENERAL** - Leaving the south-west in early Indian days, you might have travelled for thousands of miles in any direction, except south, without seeing any weaving. Weaving was a northwestern speciality, for weaving was very unusual in America north of Mexico. You would not find a real loom anywhere until you got to the Puget Sound country.

Students of Indian history find that one of their most interesting problems is this one of loom weaving among a few northwestern groups. They are all Salish and they are gathered on two sides of the present Canadian border. They wove in wool.

Ruth Underhill, Ph.D in her "Indians of the Pacific Northwest, 1945" refers to the Salish blanket - "only a few of which are left anywhere in the country. There was not much use of colour until the Whites brought yarn in trade. Then a few women in Canada began making coloured designs and our Klallam and Cowlitz tried it also. A few really beautiful blankets were made in fine yarn and magnificent colour. However, there was no one to encourage them to make these for sale, as Indians are encouraged in the south west. They found that they could get Hudson Bay blankets with far less trouble and so they gave up the art some seventy-five years ago. If that had not happened, Salish blankets might have been as famous as those of the Navaho."

**(B) SALISH IN RELATION TO OTHER TRIBES** - "I shall not hazard any opinion in regard to the probable course of migration of the Saeliss, and other interior connections other than that I conceive it to have been from the south west and eastward, gradually advancing until interlocking with the Coast tribes."

From the study of literature published to date it would seem possible that the Salish people had the loom and were using it here, while the Pueblo people were at work with the loom far to the south. However, if the Salish occupation of their present territory came at a later date than the early weaving of the south west, it may well be that the loom came with the Salish to their present home between the Columbia and Fraser River systems on the West Coast.

Other tribes of the North West Coast were well known for their weaving of textiles.

The earliest known weaving in North America was brought to our knowledge by the discovery of 2,000 year old woven sashes and pack-straps in caves in the south west. These fabrics had been woven by a people known as the 'Basket-makers', who spun fibres of Yucca, Milkweed, Indian Hemp and Cedar bark into string or yarn. Evidence also was found which proved the existence and use of a single-bar loom among the people.

In the period 1100 to 1300, the Pueblo people began weaving cotton fabric on verticle looms similar to those used today among the Salish people.

1680 was the year of the Pueblo Revolt against the Spaniards, in which the Indians of New Mexico killed off, or drove out, all the Spanish settlers and captured large herds of sheep, cattle and horses. The Pueblo traded horses to other tribes. By 1690, horses had reached the Shoshoni in Idaho. The Blackfeet, Flatheads and the Nez Perces of the Columbia River system were good horsemen by 1800.

"The Haida women were artists in the exquisitely fine weaves to be seen in surviving specimens of the hats, baskets and other articles they made which attained a standard equal to that of their Tlingit neighbours. The Tsimshian women were close competitors with their Haida sisters in these fine types of weaving and possessed a skill unattempted by the Haida in their production of Chilkat Blankets, leggings and aprons."

Kwakiutl and Nootka women, using less rigid materials than the Haida and Tsimshian, displayed their skill in "bird-cage", "wrapped twine" and "twilled weaves applied to many purposes."

About this time, the Sepass family, a dominant family of the tribe on the Columbia, as recorded by Paul Kane. This family migrated into the Thompson River country of B.C., thence down the Fraser to take up permanent residence among the Chilliwack tribe of the Coast Salish. Chief Sepass was born in 1843. He saw Fort Hope established when a small boy. Before his death, Chief Sepass gave to Eloise Street "The Sepass Poems", which have proven to have great cultural and historical significance. Chief Sepass always asserted that his people had originally come from the south "... where they had clothes made of feathers and houses made of shell."

The Navaho and Apache tribes intermarried with the Pueblo and took the art of weaving North with them between 1300 and 1600.

Among the earliest primitive weaving of the Pueblo people was the feather, or fur blanket made by twining fibre across a warp of fur, or feathers.

"Readers of 'The Northern Paiute Indians' will remember that they too made this blanket and that their two-bar loom was often the opposite sides of a large wooden frame."

To substantiate the belief expressed by Chief Sepass as to the origin of his Salish family, there are a number of references which would indicate it was reasonable to believe that the Chief was right.

"The coming of the Aztecs to Central America is but as yesterday compared to the coming of the ancient people who dwelt by the Fraser long ago."

"We know, however, from other lines of evidence, that the Salish occupying this region today are an intrusive people, who came from the southwest."

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Historical Magazine Vol. VI1 No. 3. March 1863
- (2) AVERY, Charles "Navaho Weaving; Its Technic and History."
- (3) HAINES, Francis "The Nez Perces, Tribesmen of the Columbia Plateau ."  
University of Oklahoma University Press. 1955
- (4) RAVENHILL, Alice "The Native Tribes of British Columbia." 1938
- (5) STREET, Eloise "The Sepass Poems."  
Vantage Press N.Y. 1963
- (6) UNDERHILL, Ruth, Ph.D. "Indians of the Pacific North West."  
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- (7) UNDERHILL, Ruth, Ph. D. "Pueblo Crafts."  
Branch of Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs.  
Washington, D.C
- (8) "The Great Fraser Midden" Published by Vancouver Museum. Vancouver, B.C.

## Items Woven by the Salish.

### (A) PRIMITIVE

**The Common Solish Blankets** known to the native as \*SWOH-kwah-'tl.

The Salish tribes along the Lower Fraser River and on Vancouver Island in British Columbia were well known as weavers of the Salish Blanket - made usually with yarn which they had spun from the wool of the Mountain goat, or dogs which they maintained for the purpose of wool production.

The goat-wool blankets were the bed-covers of the "Aristocracy" of the tribes. They were 10 or 12 ft. Long when used as bed-covers. Others, five or six ft. long were used as a mantle, or cloak, in cold weather. Commoners wore blankets woven of cedar bark or cattail.

Usually white in colour, with a twilled weave, they were sometimes ornamented with brown or black wool crossing the blanket to form a large plaid.

**Ceremonial Blankets** - \* s'AH-uhl-'LOH-q

These blankets were for use as a cloak on ceremonial occasions. They were often a combination of twilled and twined weave, and sometimes made entirely by twined weaving. They were usually ornamented in colour, at least at the ends.

**Pack Straps or Tump-lines** - \*kah-SPEEL-tuh

These were woven from a large variety of materials to act as carrying straps for use in packing over the trails almost any form of burden.

Usually two to four inches in width, with about a two-foot length of woven material, plus three feet of braided ends of the warp used to secure whatever was being carried. Materials used in their construction - Cedar Bark, nettle fibre, goat wool, dog's hair, Milkweed fibre.

**Belts & Sashes** - \* SHWEE-uhm-tel

Made of similar materials to the pack straps.

**Dancing Apron** - \* say- UHP

This apron used as a breech cloth and hanging down both front and back from the belt was the only garment used by some dancers. It was woven of fine materials, including dog's hair and the down of the fire-weed.

The downy feathers of water fowl were also used, combined with wool, or dog's hair.

**Mats** - known as \* SLAW-qw-ehl for bed use and \*T'LAWK-wul for floor use.

Mats were woven from cedar bark and rushes, or reeds. The weaving was done in a variety of methods, plaiting, plain checker, or diagonally twilled.

**Baskets** - \* SEE-tel, or \*skoh-ahm (large basket).

The Salish tribe are known for the excellence of their coiled basketry which is sewn together rather than woven.

These people were, however, also weavers of basketry, using such materials as Cedar bark, reeds, grasses, nettle fibre and rushes.

These baskets were woven in a variety of weaves from simple plaiting of broad strips of Cedar bark to delicate twined weaving of Indian hemp, or wool, over a warp of nettle fibre, or bark fibre.

### (B) MODERN

To the above list of items woven originally by the Salish can now be listed the modern items of saddle blankets, wall hangings, rugs and tapestries, chair covers.

# Preparation of Materials

## (A) Production of Yarn and Thread

The ingenuity with which the primitive people made use of the natural fauna and flora of the country to satisfy their requirements for food, clothing and shelter is something beyond the knowledge of the average citizen of the land today.

In the preparation of materials for their use in the weaving of various items, the native of pre-white cultural influence was the possessor of a detailed knowledge, much of which has been lost with his passing.

The earliest records compiled by scientific research in the area have preserved some of the details, and the older native people of the present day have contributed local details of interest, which are recorded here.

### Mountain Goat's Wool - \* SAH-ay

Originally obtained by the Salish by picking shed wool in the high mountains where the Mt. goats spent the summer and shed their old wool. Also obtained from skins of goats killed for meat. The fresh skin, rolled up with flesh sides together, will, after several days, shed the wool which was plucked off for use in yarn making. The coarse, guard hairs of the fleece were removed. A white chalk-like clay was added to the wool, absorbing the grease and leaving the wool with a tendency for the fibres to cling together. Wool was then spun into a loose length of yarn, which was later attached to a spindle with which the native spun a yarn suitable for the use intended for the wool. For the warp of the heavy blankets, two of these strands of yarn were spun into one double strand of warp, simply by attaching the ends of two separate pieces of yarn to the spindle. As the spinning proceeds, the yarn is drawn from two balls, each in a separate container. Domestic wool has almost entirely replaced the Mt. Goat wool, which is now rarely obtainable.

### Dog's Hair - \* TSAH-ee

The Salish kept dogs for the purpose of wool gathering. These dogs, among some tribes were recorded to be of a Pomeranian type, mostly white in colour. The Chilliwack tribe had dogs which were similar to a coyote, with a deep, woolly undercoat covered by coarser long hair. The dogs were plucked for their wool. Dog's hair was then spun on the primitive spindle. During the spinning process, when the yarn was to be used for fine garments, the down of water fowl, or the down of the milk weed, or fire weed was often incorporated with it.

### Cedar Bark - \* SLAH

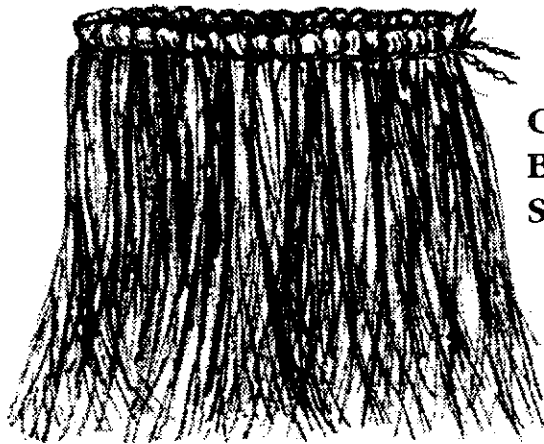
The bark of the Cedar trees which grew so prolifically in the land of the Salish was used in many forms for many uses.

For weaving, the inner bark of the trees was used. After the bark of the trees had been stripped from the trees in long ribbons, the inner bark was separated and stripped off.

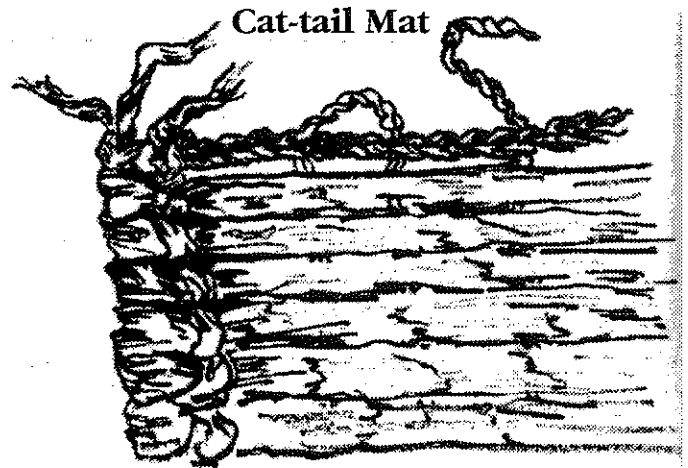
To make it soft and pliable, it was boiled for periods of up to two days. The wide strips were then worked into a soft pliable condition by bending and twisting and rubbing between hands covered with buckskin gloves for their protection. When the bark was soft and pliable, strips of desired width would be torn off ready for use in plaiting, or open-work basket weaving. If the work being undertaken required a finely spun material, the bark strips were pounded into shreds and combed into small separate fibres. These were then spun into a fine twine, or heavy cord as required. The bark of the Yellow Cedar was preferred to that of the Red Cedar.

## Indian Hemp

Sweet grass growing in many areas and other similar grasses were harvested and dried before maturity for later use. These were boiled to render them soft and pliable, and whenever they were being used in weaving, they were kept moist. The bark of the shrub, 'Rope bush', growing in the land of the interior Salish along with the buffalo grass of the mountains was taken in trade by the Coast Salish, who spun it into warp twine for use in the weaving of baskets. The Salish near Spuzzum on the Fraser River used Indian Hemp, or other strong vegetable fibre as a foundation warp material on which to weave the blanket cloak of dog's hair, or Mt. Goat wool.



Cedar  
Bark  
Skirt



Cat-tail Mat

## Nettle Fibre

Twine made from the bark of nettle stems was used extensively in the weaving of items requiring strength and refinement and firmness in the warp used.

Nettles were gathered in October and dried for future use. Various methods were utilized in the removal of the bark from the stems. Dried nettles were damped again sufficiently to make the bark tough and flexible, while the pith of the stem remained dry and brittle. By splitting the stem and rubbing it over a blunt edge, the bark would separate itself from the pith. This bark was then beaten and combed, or carded into a soft tissue which could be spun with the use of the spindle in a manner similar to the spinning of wool.

Twine produced from nettle fibre was of great strength and utilized in the making of nets and fishing line, as well as for a warp in weaving.

## Milkweed Fibre

Twine was made from the bark of the milk-weed, a native plant of the Thompson River Area, from the bark of which the finest of twine could be made, and from whose downy seed a soft down was obtained, which was combined with goat's wool and dog hair for the finest blanket weaving.

## Rushes and Reeds - Flat \*st' LEET-lihts or THAH-tuhl

- Round Stemmed \*WOOHL

The flat stemmed Cat-tail and the round stemmed bullrush were harvested far use in late summer. They were cut at water level, or below, and laid out on racks to dry in the sun. When dry, they were set aside for use in mat making etc. during the winter months. Prior to the actual start of weaving, the material to be used would be selected for its uniformity and strength and then dampened down to make it pliable. The inner core of the cat-tail was selected for use as twine. In some cases, it was spun into a cord-like string.

Round stem Bullrushes were woven into strong bags and matting.

## Willow Bark

Stripped from young willow shoots, the inner bark was boiled to make it soft and pliable. With the outer bark removed, willow bark could be woven while damp into many forms which held their shape and showed considerable strength and durability.

## Wool

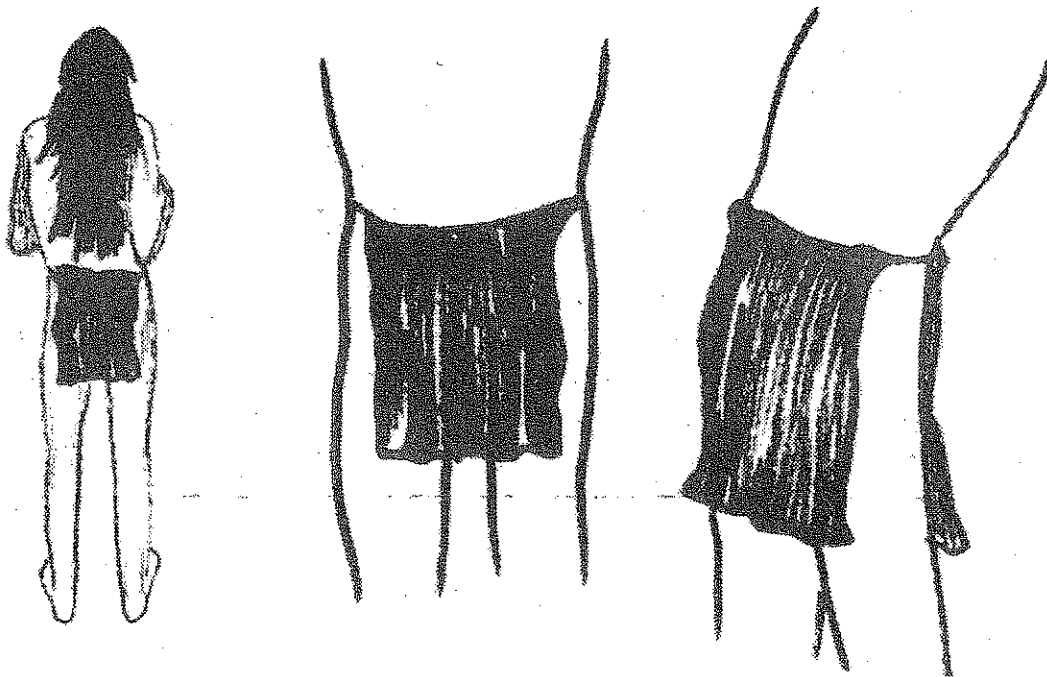
Modern weaving among the Salish has been restricted to the use of domestic sheep wool, \*mah-too-EHL-kel, cotton rags and twine, with a limited use of warp cordage having been hand spun from native grasses.

Commercial yarn has been in limited use in the weaving of tump-lines and belts, where commercial twine has been the warp material used.

Yarn produced from fleece wool of domestic sheep is the result of the following procedure.

The fleece is lightly washed in a tub of tepid water and then hung in the sun to dry. This wool is then "teased" - picked apart with the fingers to remove any matted condition and loose dirt. The wool is then carded with the use of two hand carders, or a revolving carder, which operation leaves the wool in soft "batts", in which the fibres, for the most part, lie lengthwise in the "batts". The ends of each batt are irregular rather than straight cut. The wool is then taken to the spinning machine, which in general among the native people is a hand-crafted device consisting of a spindle and flyer, which are driven by one belt. The wool is fed into the axel of the spindle by deft fingers, which in separating sections of the batt of wool allow the desired amount of spinning to take place before the tension is eased which allows the wool to wind on the spindle.

When the spindle has filled, the wool is unwound either into balls or skeins. Yarn of the desired weight for the intended use is thus made.



Dancing Aprons



# Production of Colour

## NATIVE DYES AND NATURE DYEING

### (A) PRIMITIVE

Little attempt was made to produce ornamentation from colour in the weaving of blankets, or other items. Basic colours produced in both woolen and fibre weft materials were black, yellow, orange and brown.

**Black** - \*S'kayq - was produced by the boiling of **Hemlock bark**, or **Birch-bark** with mud containing iron, or in an iron pot.

**Fern roots** were also boiled to produce a black dye. The wool yarn was boiled in the dye bath after the bark, or roots, had been soaked and boiled long enough to release colour.

**Yellow** - \*skwiq - was produced from the yellow lichen (*Evernia Vulpina*) which grew in the interior of the tribal area. It was taken in trade by the Coast Salish. The lichen releases a strong yellow colour when immersed in water and brought to a boil. The wool was then entered and allowed to remain in the dye bath until the desired colour was attained. The colour thus obtained was of a very permanent nature. The root of the Oregon Grape was used to produce a greenish yellow.

**Red** - \*sh'kwaym - or light red was produced from the bark of the alder. Twigs and bark selected from the appropriate trees at the right time were boiled in a wooden vessel. The yarn was steeped in this.

In the production of the above colours, urine was often used to act as a mordant to fix the colour. The wool was boiled in the urine previous to, or in conjunction with the dye materials being used. The yellow lichen did not require a mordant to fix the colour.

**Brown** - \*ts'KWEHM - was produced by some of the Coast Salish by boiling the husks of hazelnuts until colour was released. Thus, a reddish brown was obtained.

Brown was also obtained from Hemlock bark boiled in urine.

### (B) MODERN

In recent years, those Salish who have again taken up the old art of weaving are now producing many attractive colours from native plants and trees. Modern conveniences and increased knowledge and a demand for colour are encouraging the greater use of natural dyes.

For this reason, an extended list of colours is given here, with brief notes on the production of each colour.

The primitive mordants used by the Salish to fix colour were: urine, iron, copper.

The use of alum, chrome, salt and tin have been added to the above.

These mordants, whether obtained from the use of iron or copper vessels, or the elements added in granular form are either combined with the dye materials, or are used separately as a bath into which the wool is entered and brought to boiling temperature prior to being placed in a dye bath solution.

Various colours are obtained from a given dye plant when different mordants are used.

To the list of Primitive colours can be added the following derived from the use of native plants.

**Pale Yellow** - twigs and flower buds of wild crabapple - alum mordant

**Yellow** - Barberry or Cascara tree - leaves and bark in berry season-boiled ten hours, wool entered after mordanting with alum.

**Orange Yellow** - Onion skins- boiled- alum mordant

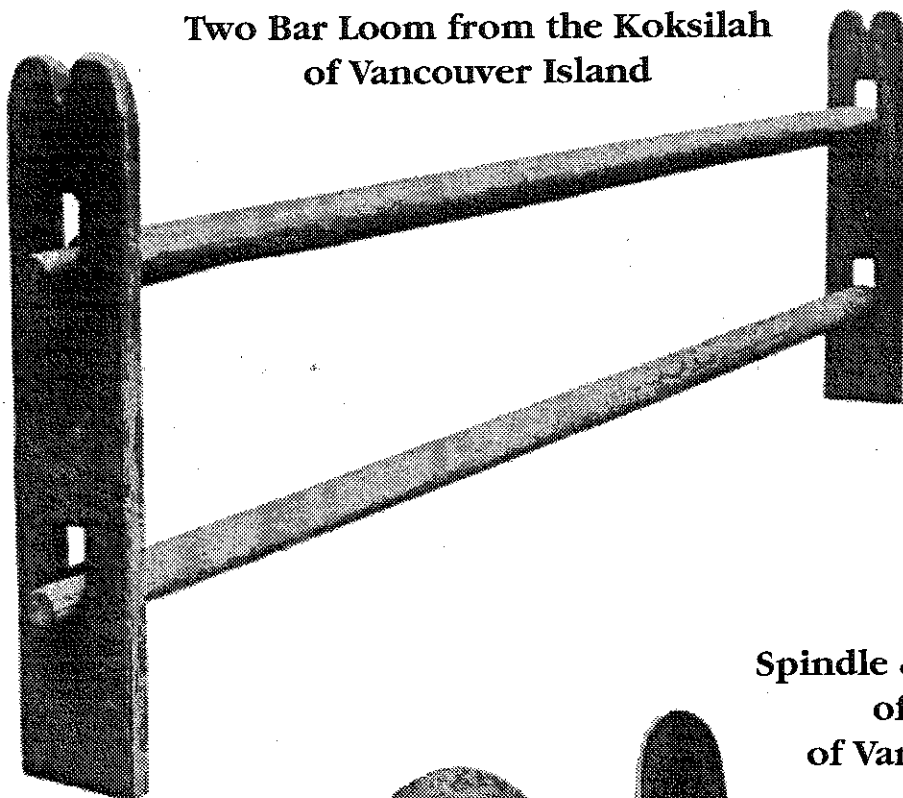
**Golden Yellow** - Goldenrod - flower heads in bloom, boiled two hours. Mordant alum. Wool entered between layers of goldenrod.

- Green** - Obtained from Barberry (Cascara) bark as in yellow, but with mordant of Copper Sulphate.
- Green 2** - Obtained from Goldenrod as in yellow, but with mordant of Copper Sulphate.
- Blue Green** - Bearberry or Kinnikinick leaves and stems boiled four hours - mordant Copper.
- Green** - Wool soaked in urine and Copper for ten days, then boiled, then allowed to oxidize in air.
- Golden Rust** - Red Stemmed Dock - harvested in June. Dried stems, soaked and boiled four hours: Mordant chrome.
- Golden Rust** - Golden Rod - as in yellow, but wool mordanted first in mordant bath made up from boiled onion skins and chrome combined.
- Brown** - Balsam bark - no mordant.
- Brown (dark)** - Roots of water Iris boiled in iron pot.
- Brown (dark)** - Wild Boxwood, eight hours' boiling. Copper-sulphate mordant.
- Coppery Brown** - Red stemmed Dock as in Golden Rust, but with Copper sulphate mordant.
- Brown** - Hemlock bark boiled in enamel pot. Alum mordant.
- Brown** - Dogwood bark - Alum mordant
- Brown** - Walnut shells, or husks of green walnuts or walnut bark, boiled, no mordant.
- Browns** - Lichens growing on alder trees, rocks, fence rails - boiled.
- Peach** - Lichens growing on Plum trees.
- Cream Colour** - Lichens growing on Maple and Birch trees .
- Pink** - Wild cherry - leaves and twigs and blowers, boiled in enamel dish Alum mordant.
- Red** - Young Cedar bark harvested in January. Long boiling. No mordant.
- Red (dark)** - Roots of round-stemmed Bull rushes, boiled eight hours in iron pot. Mordant, the down of Cat-tails with Chrome boiled together, the wool is mordanted in this solution, prior to entering the dye bath.

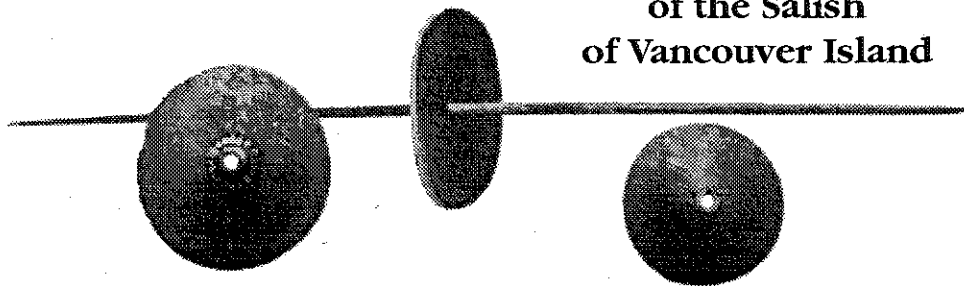
Colours are included here which can now be produced from plant material not native to the Salish Area.

- Dahalia** - A flower used by the Indian tribes of the southern states. Flower heads, boiled half to one hour with Alum Mordant. Yellow Gold with Tin Mordant. Yellow with Chrome Mordant. Coppery Gold
- Log Wood** - Chips available from supply houses. Originally used by the Aztecs to obtain Blue and Purple. Boil chips: Half hour for Purple. Alum Mordant.  
One hour for Blue, Alum Mordant.  
One hour iron pot, Dark Blue.
- Madder Roots** - Ground Roots obtained from supply houses. Soak madder overnight. Bring to boil. Add mordanted wool, simmer half an hour.  
1 lb. wool - 2 oz. madder - Colour Red - 1 oz. Alum.

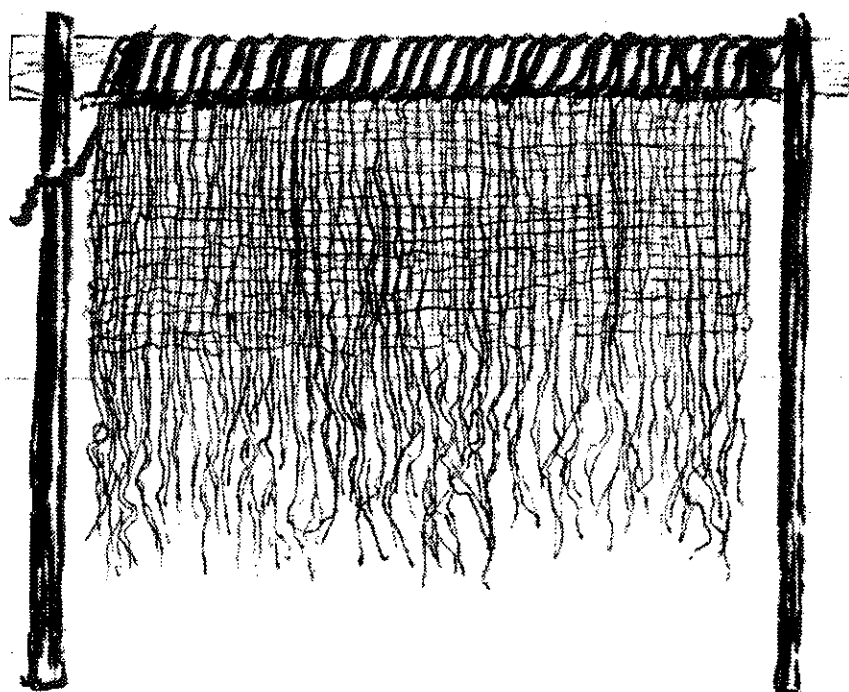
Two Bar Loom from the Koksilah  
of Vancouver Island



Spindle & spindle Whorls  
of the Salish  
of Vancouver Island



Sketch  
of  
One Bar  
Loom



# Weaving

## (A) The Loom - \* THASS-eh-tuh-tel

Two basic types of loom were used by the early Salish Weavers and are still in use.

The two-roller loom - as illustrated by Paul Kane in the well-known picture, and the single bar loom, commonly referred to as a three piece loom.

Each of the types have had variations noted in their construction, both in the past and as used today.

The two-bar loom was developed by the Pueblo Indians between 1100 and 1300 (P.47. Pueblo Crafts). Whether the Salish tribes were using the loom at that time is not known.

Some believe the single bar loom was in use prior to the two bar loom, which developed from it.

It is known, however, that both types were in use among the Salish and other North West tribes when the Europeans first came to the north west.

(1) **Two-Bar** - The Two Bar loom consists of two vertical posts, in which slots are made at various distances to receive the ends of two rollers, of which sets of different lengths are kept for use according to need. These rollers are fixed in place by wedges.

The loom can be used to accommodate the weaving of a blanket which has a continuous warp, which is cut to remove the blanket from the loom; or it can be used to accommodate the weaving of a blanket, whose warp is terminated at each end at a rod, or heavy string which is held horizontally across the loom between the rollers. The twilled blanket of the Salish was usually woven on this loom, as was also the twined ceremonial blanket.

Removal of the wedges allows the tension to be lessened as the fabric is woven and also allows the weaver to turn the rollers so that the weaving may be continued at a convenient location in front of the weaver, who sits in front.

### (2) **Single Bar or Three piece Loom.**

This loom consists of two uprights, which hold a cross bar, which supports the warp. The warp material is passed over a fine rod, which in turn is laced tightly to the cross bar.

The warp strands are held taut by weights which are tied to a small group of the strands at their lower extremities.

This type of loom was used for mat-making, for the making of cloak blankets and dancing aprons, for the making of rugs, sashes, tump lines etc. The loom's size and features being made to be convenient to work with for the purpose intended.

## (B) The Warp - st'MAY-wuhlth - the vertical threads of the web.

(1) Materials used for warp varied widely even in primitive weaving. The native weaver was obliged by necessity to create a strong lasting article. She also was as desirous as her modern counterparts to create something of beauty and distinction. She therefore selected a wide variety of warp materials.

Wool in various thickness in relation to the weft created various effects in the appearance of a blanket.

A thick warp in an article of twined weaving automatically created a ridged appearance. Comparative fine warp material and heavier weft material created a smooth effect on the general appearance of an article.

Dancing aprons and cloaks required a firm warp and often cedar bark fibre, or other bark fibre was used as warp over which wool was woven.

In the twilled blankets, colour bars in the warp appeared as pattern on the surface of the blanket.

In the twined weaves, the warp was generally completely covered, exposing the same design on both sides of the article. The weaving of open work basketry being an exception, in which case the warp strands may be a part of the ornamentation of the article.

In primitive weaving, the finest of warp-twine to be woven was made from nettle fibre, or milkweed fibre and the heaviest material was split cedar splints, or cedar cordage.

## (2) Stringing the Warp.

### 2 Bar Loom

For the weaving of blankets etc. which were intended to have a fringe of loose ends, the warp strand was tied to one roller and then wound continuously around the rollers at evenly spaced intervals until the desired width was obtained.

Weaving on this type of warp was terminated several inches from where the warp was to be cut.

If it was desirous of having the weaving come to the ends of a blanket or rug a rod, or heavy string, was placed across the loom between the rollers, horizontally. One end of the warp was attached to this rod, then as it passed up and down, it went alternately over a roller, over the loom rod and back over the same roller. When the weaving is completed and the rod is pulled out,

the warp and completed article fall apart in an oblong shape with no cutting.

Among the modern weavers, some simply stretch the warp on two set bars, or rollers with all the warp on the face of the loom. The rollers are both withdrawn to release the blanket. This method leaves loops of any desired size at the ends of a blanket.

The weaver has the advantage of seeing the full scope of the weave develop in front of her.

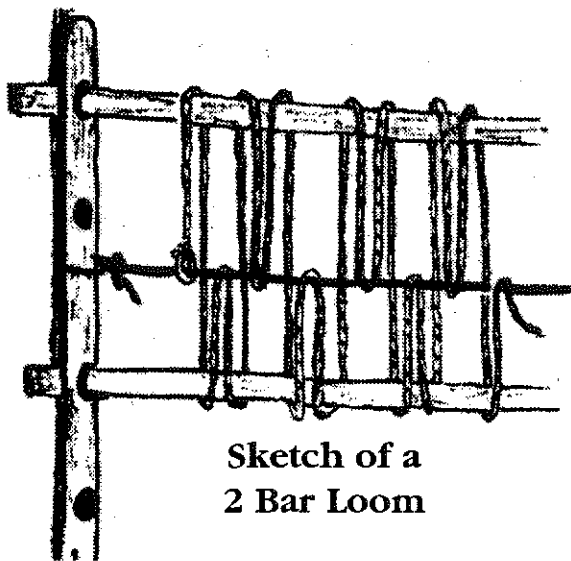
The disadvantage is the inconvenience in weaving which cannot as in a loose roller loom be turned to keep the place of work in a convenient location. Stringing the Single - bar Loom.

The warp is laid on this loom by simply draping the twine yarn over the rod, or stick which is to be laced into a rigid position under the cross-bar, both ends extending the length of the intended web.

The warp strands may be used singly or, as at the edge of a rug by grouping two together. One at least of the early weavers spun a warp from burlap fibre, which she used as a two strand soft cord. The rod holding the warp was inserted in the loop end of the two strand warp.

Weights were hung at the lower end of the warp by tying same to several of the warp strands grouped together.

These looms were frequently hung from the ceiling towards which they were raised as the weaving proceeded from top down.



Sketch of a  
2 Bar Loom

## (C) The Weaves - to weave: \*KIY-siht-sel

### (1) Plain, checkerboard weave, or diagonal weave.

This weave was a simple plaiting of one weft strand in and out over one warp strand and under the next. Sometimes the weave was varied in basket making by passing the weft over two, under two, or over one, under two.

This weave was used in the construction of cedar bark and rush mats, and in making baskets from coarse materials.

In Mat making, the warp strands are draped over the loom so they hang evenly on either side. In order to secure them in position, two strands of bark are first twined once across. If the weaving is to be plain checkerboard, a woof strand of the same width as the warp is then carried across horizontally, passing alternately over and under the warp strands.

While weaving, the material is kept sufficiently damp to be pliable.

(The weft or woof yarn is that which is woven across the warp).

**Diagonal weaving** was used extensively in the making of mats, baskets and pack straps.

In diagonal weaving, the warp and woof strands which are identical, are interlaced at right angles to each other. At the edges, they are bent over and continue at right angles to their previous course.

When baskets and bags are being woven of similar material, a square bottom is plaited and then suspended in a horizontal position by strings from the four corners and the ends of the warp strands hang down. The weaving then proceeds around the basket until walls are of required height.

### (2) Twilled Weave - \*SWOH-kwah-'tl

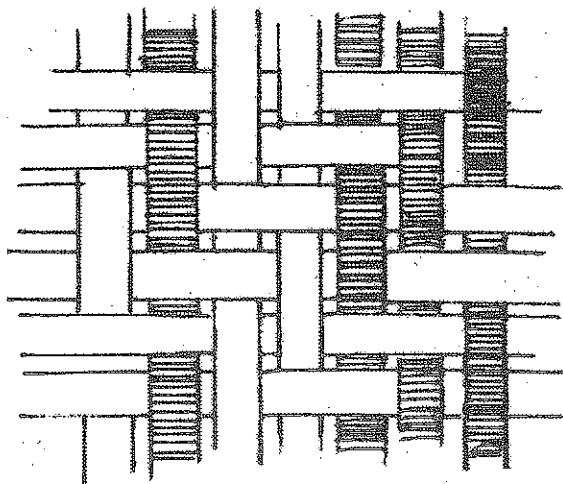
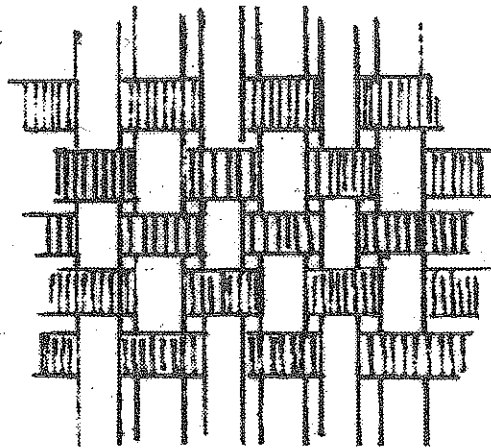
The twilled weave was the weave used in the production of the large Salish Goat hair blankets.

It was used also for decorative purposes and in the weaving of such articles as ceremonial blankets.

In twilled weaving, the warp and weft are usually of the same material. The weft crosses the warp over two, under two, or over two, under one. At the edge the the weft is turned back and woven across in the opposite direction.

The order of crossing the warp is changed as each line is woven - that is, it is stepped along one warp, but the system of over two, under one is continued throughout the weave.

*Fig. 1 - Plain, Checkerboard Weave, or Diagonal Weave*



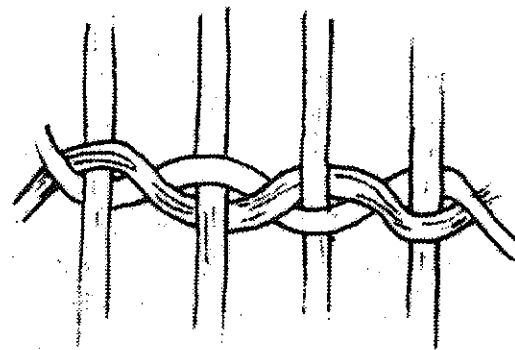
*Fig. 2 - Twilled Weave*



### (3) Twined Weave - \*s'AH-uhl-'LOHq

The twined weave and its modification double twined and two and three strand twining are used in many of the finest pieces of weaving both primitive and modern.

With the twined weave, design is produced which is similar on both sides of the web. With twining, the warp is completely covered and can therefore be of a different material.

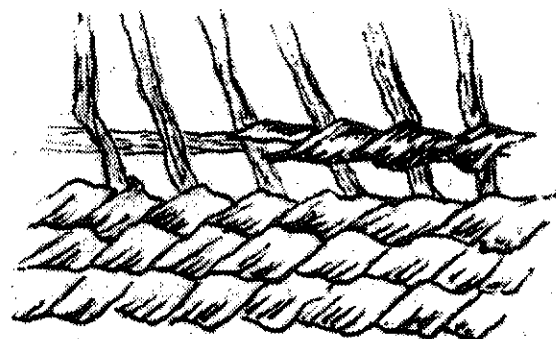


*Fig. 3 - Twined Weave*

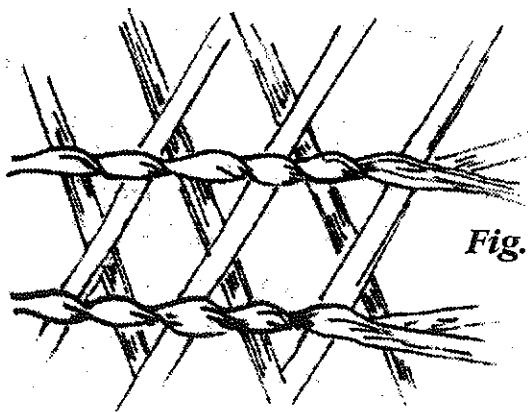
### Other Weaves

Primarily used in the construction of open-work baskets which were made of coarse materials. These baskets were often made of cedar-bark - cat-tails - or willow limbs and were twined with finer materials.

(4) **Wrapped twining** was used to cover a coarse foundation material with bright colour. In this weave one of the elements is rigid and is laid across the verticle warp strands; the other weft element is wrapped around as it proceeds across tying the stiff weft to the warp.



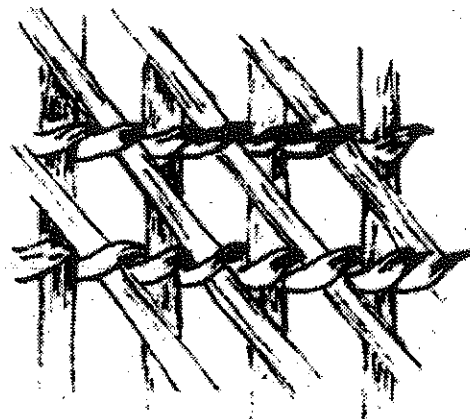
*Fig. 4 - Wrapped Twining*



(5) **Diagonal Openwork** in which the warp is of stiff material held together where they cross each other diagonally by a row of twining weft elements.

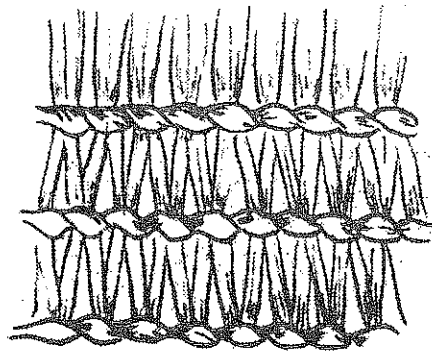
*Fig. 5 - Diagonal Openwork*

(6) **Verticle and Slanting Openwork** in which the warp elements are held together by simple twining.

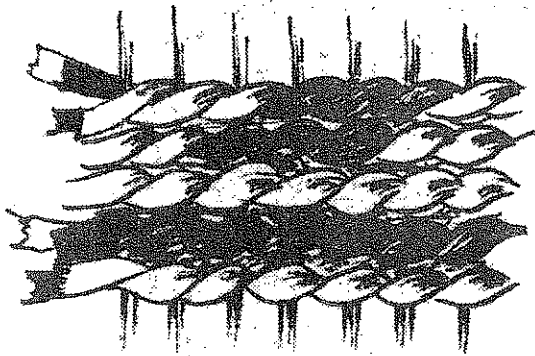


*Fig. 6 - Vertical & Slanting Openwork*

(7) Openwork in which pairs of the warp strands are first held together and then separated by the succeeding weft elements as they twine across the web.



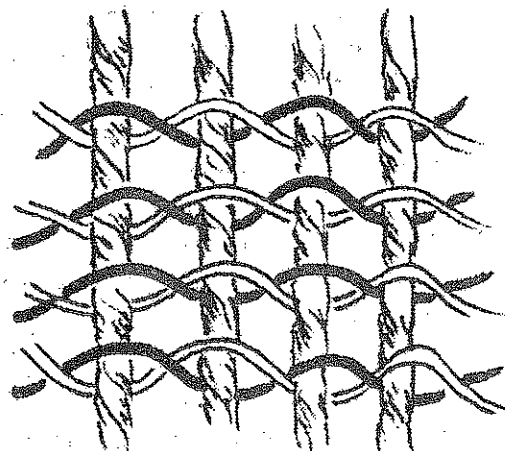
*Fig. 7 – Openwork*



*Fig. 8 – Overlay*

(8) Overlay in which 4 weft strands were used instead of two. Two strong and two decorative. Used in pairs of one of each, the weaver always turned them so as to have color on the outside when it was required there for design.

9) In Simple Twining, two strands of weft are woven across, in and out through the warp strands, one passing in front of a warp strand as the other passes behind it, then twining half way around themselves before passing the next warp. In some work, two warp strands are grasped each time.

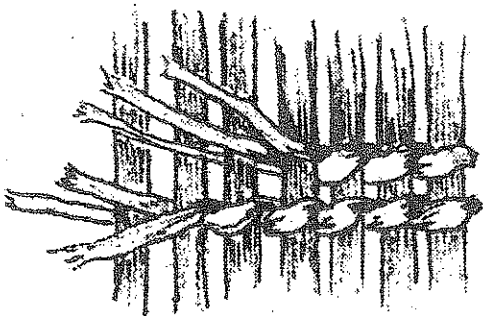


*Fig. 9 – Simple Twining*

(10) Three Strand Twining is used for ornamentation and to cover lines where colour contact is made. This consists of two elements being twined in the usual manner and a third is twisted only around the outside weft, never passing behind a warp. In this manner, if the third weft is of colour it gives an embroidery effect.

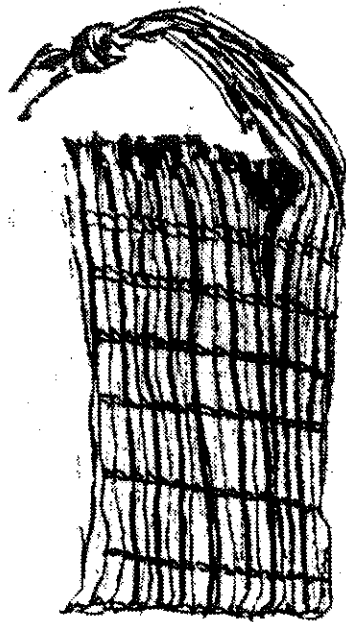
The famous "Rare Salish Blanket" and the Nobility Blankets worn by Salish Chiefs were woven in the twined weave.

It is now being used in modern weaving to produce rugs, tapestries and wall hangings, tump lines, belts, sashes and many other items of rare quality and beautiful design.

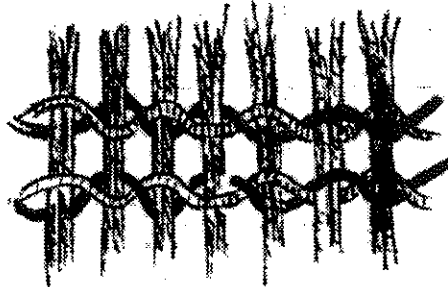


*Fig. 10 – Three Strand Twining*

*Fig. 11- Plain Openwork*



(11) **Plain Openwork** in which the weft elements are twined across the warp some distance apart.



(12) **In Double Twining**, the weft elements are twined around one another, which action, when two colours are used, will carry a design colour on one side only, as desired .

*Fig. 12- Double Twining*

## Design

### (D) Design

Weaving, especially that done on the Salish loom, has been a dominant factor in the establishment of Salish design. The two roller loom, with stretched warp, tends to require designs which embody straight lines and allows for a combination of weaves on the same warp.

Thus, plain twilled weave blankets are often ornamented with design worked in twined weave in bands across the ends.

Twilled weaves are capable in themselves, by use of colour in the warp, of producing attractive herringbone designs and plaid effects.

Blankets made in the area of Yale have, in earlier and present times, carried design which had a centre point feature and narrow surrounding borders.

Originally, design motifs of the Coast Salish were considered more slender and elongated than those of the interior Salish. At times, both appeared on the same web.

The lower Fraser area was considered by early research to be the seat of the best organized of Salish design.

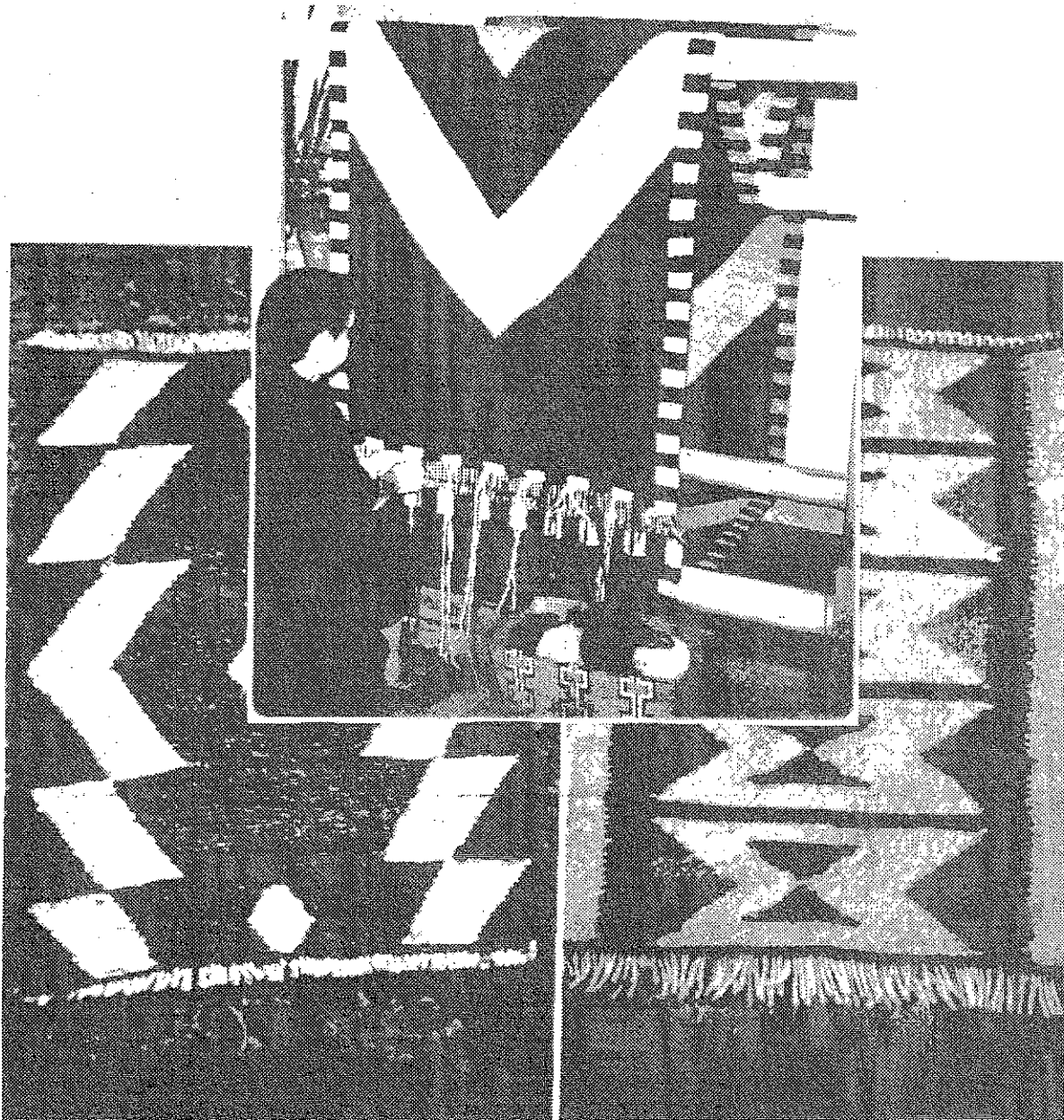
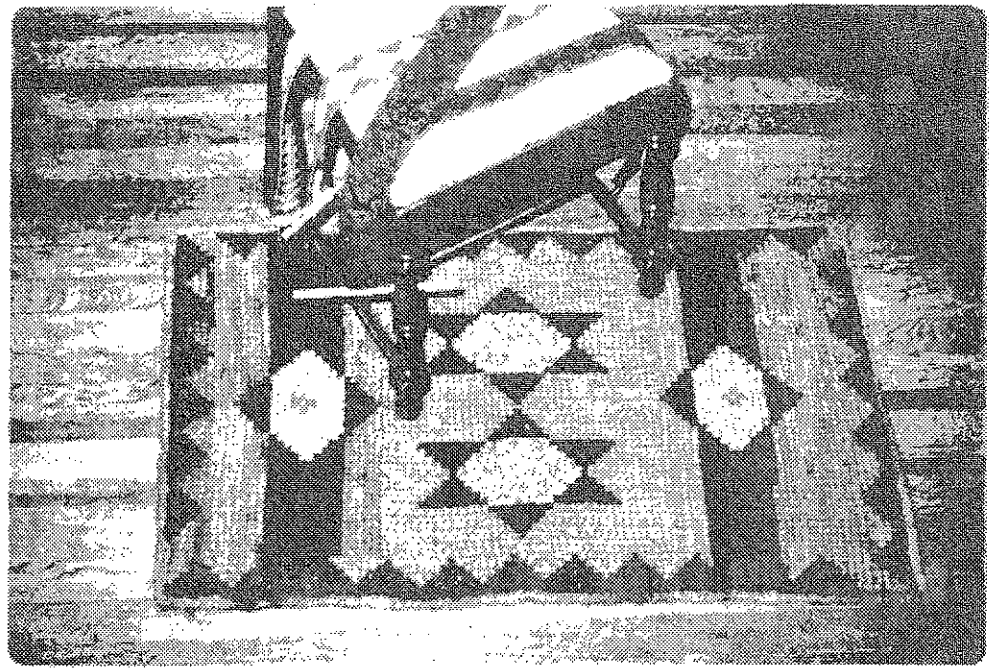
In many of the old Salish blankets, a persistent feature was the three rhythm arrangement, which appeared both in design and colour combination. Practically all Salish basketry design was worked in a three-colour combination.

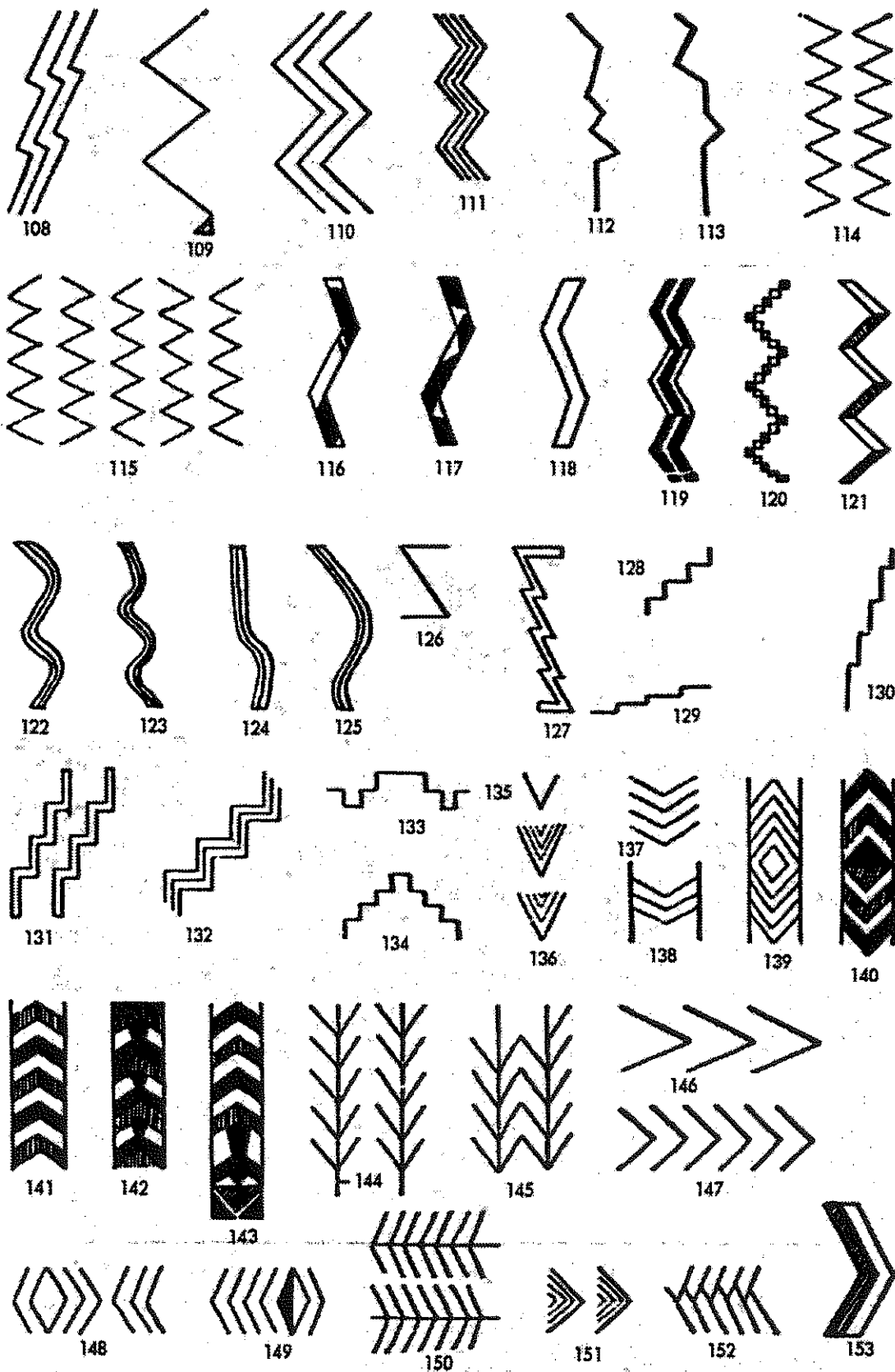
Design elements are symbolic of diamond shapes, zig-zag, squares, rectangles, V shapes of a wide variety of combinations.

Many designs were geometric representations of birds, on flight or at rest; of mountains and lightning.

The Salish, both primitive and modern, are blessed with a marked ability to combine colour and design in a simple and pleasing manner which is most effective.

# Salish Designs





SKETCHES OF DESIGNS

## Plate 81

### DIAGONAL ZIGZAG, VERTICAL

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 108. Wave (short turn), Zigzag, Grasshopper.<br>109. Wave (three turns), Zigzag, Lightning (rarely), Snake or Snake track.<br>110. Wave (four turns), Zigzag, Snake or Snake track.<br>111. Blanket, Zigzag (up and down), Snake or Snake track.<br>112. 113. Caterpillar, Lightning (rarely), Grasshopper, Woodworm borings. | 114, 115. Trail, Parfleche (rarely), Ascending zigzag, Snake, Snake track, Contracted middles, Pack strap (rarely).<br>116, 117. Snake, Bullsnake, Caterpillar, Gartersnake.<br>118. Snake, Bullsnake, Caterpillar, Striped snake.<br>119. Snake, Caterpillar, Gartersnake, Striped snake.<br>120. Snake, Bead necklace, Caterpillar.<br>121. Snake, Woodworm, Caterpillar.<br>122, 125. Striped Snake.<br>126, 127. (?) |
|---|--|

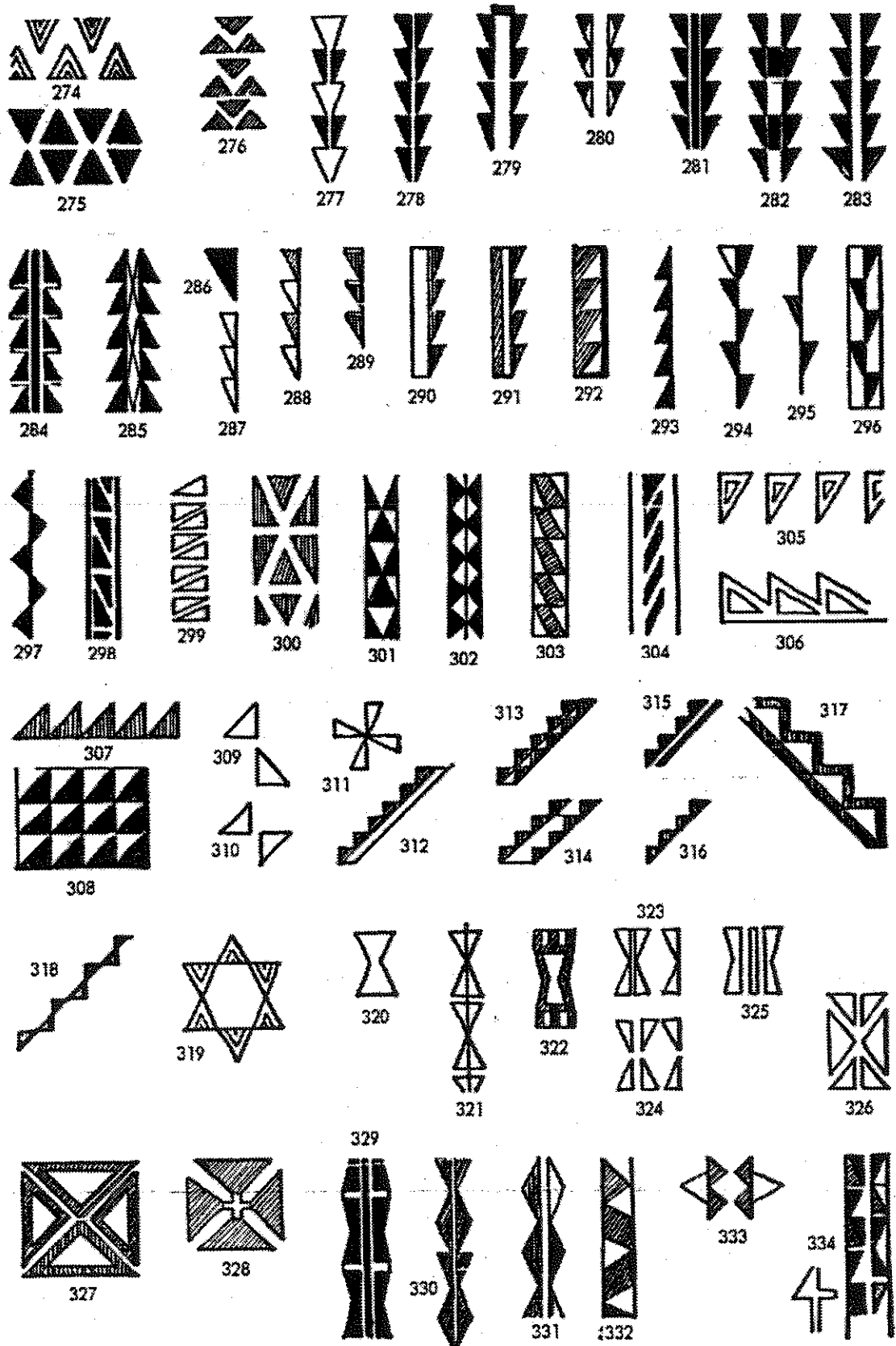
### THE ZIGZAG COMPOSED OF VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL SECTIONS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 128, 129. Snake and snake track (rarely), Caterpillar, Grasshopper.<br>130. Snake and snake track (rarely), Caterpillar, Grasshopper, Lightning. | 131. Snake and snake track (rarely) Caterpillar.<br>132. Snake track.<br>133. Mountain, Zigzag, Necklace.<br>134. Mountain, Zigzag, Necklace, Caterpillar. |
|--|--|

### THE CHEVRON

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 135. Butterfly, Wing, Arrow point, Angle.<br>136. Butterfly wing, Butterfly.<br>137. Necklace, Butterfly (rarely), Broken or bent middle.<br>138. Angle, Arrow point.<br>139, 140. Arrow point.<br>141. Arrowhead (heaped up or overlapping).<br>142. Arrowhead.<br>143. Arrowhead.<br>144. Tree, Fir branch, Branch.<br>145. Tree, Fir branch.<br>146. Waves (one turn), Angle, Arrowhead, Part of zigzag (Uta'mqt), Grasshopper. | 147. Bent leg, Broken back, Broken rib, Rib, Grasshopper.<br>148. Bent leg, Broken back, Grasshopper, Rib.<br>149. Angle, Arrow point.<br>150. Fish backbone (Spuzzum).<br>151. Butterfly, Butterfly wing.<br>152. Broken back, Bent leg, Fishhook, Hook, Crook, Hooked end, Cross, Head, Root digger.<br>153. Rainbow (half or stumps) (rare), Bent middle, Bent back, Bent leg, Striped snake (rare). |
|--|---|





SKETCHES OF DESIGNS

## Plate 84

### TRIANGLES

- 274, 275. Arrowhead, Butterfly, Butterfly wing.  
276. Arrowhead.  
277. Arrowhead, Half arrowhead, Ladder(var.)  
278. Ladder, Arrowhead.  
279. (?)  
280. Ladder, Arrowhead.  
281. Ladder, Arrowhead.  
282, 283. (?)  
284. Arrowheads touching bases, Ladder.  
285. Arrowheads, Ladder.  
286. Arrowheads, Half arrowheads.  
287. Ladder, Notched bark.  
288. Ladder, Half arrowhead.  
289. Ladder, Tooth, Cloud (rarely), Half arrowhead.  
290, 291. Ladder.  
292. Ladder, Arrowhead.  
293. Ladder, Half arrowhead.  
294. Tree Ladder, Arrowhead.  
295. \* Arrowhead, Ladder for climbing trees.  
296. Arrowhead, Ladder.  
297. Bead, Beaded edge, Caterpillar.  
298. Half arrowhead, Dentalia, Connected,  
Hair ribbon, Xanaxa'in.  
299. Swallow, Wing.  
300, 301. Arrowhead.  
302. Arrowhead, Snake, Snake skin.  
303. Half arrowhead, Xanaxa'in, Ladder, Embroidery (cf. 571).  
\* On a new basket.

304. Half arrowhead, Xanaxa'in, Hair  
ribbon, Dentalia, Connected.  
305. Butterfly, Butterfly wing.  
306. Single leaf.  
307. Half arrowhead horizontal, Ladder horizontal.  
308. Half arrowheads joined all over.  
309, 310. Swallow, Wing.  
311. Star Arrowhead (occasionally).  
312. Ladder.  
313, 314. Ladder, Caterpillar.  
315, 316. Ladder, Arrowhead.  
317. Ladder, Caterpillar.  
318. Tree ladder, Arrowhead, Mountain, Caterpillar.  
319. Star, Arrowhead (occasionally).  
320. Parfleche.  
321. Ladder (var.), Contracted middle Butterfly (rarely)  
322. Comb, Double comb, Parfleche (?)  
323, 325. Arrowhead, Parfleche.  
326. Arrowhead, Star, Cross.  
327. Arrowhead, Arrowhead star, White man's  
design (?).  
328. Star, Arrowhead star, Arrowhead cross.  
329, 330. Arrowheads touching bases, Ladder(?)  
331. Arrowhead, Variation of notched ladder, Bead.  
332. Arrowhead.  
333. Star Arrowhead star (occasionally).  
334. Arrowhead.

## Plate 80

### DIAGONAL ZIGZAG, HORIZONTAL

82. Pack strap (connected points or open middles). Rainbow  
connected. Necklace (rarely). Zigzag, Meandering, Snake.  
83. Snake, Bullsnake.  
84. Necklace, Bead.  
85. Rainbow, Necklace, Part of grave box (rare), Grasshopper.  
86. Zigzag (flat or wide points). Half circles connected. Going  
back and forth in half circles Mountains (rarely).  
Snake tracks (very rare). Deer knee.  
87. Grave box.  
88. Rainbow, Necklace, Part of grave box (rarely), Grasshopper.  
89, 90. Mountains.  
91, 92. Rainbow and cloud. Cloud over mountain.  
Embroidery, Necklace and pendants, Beads.

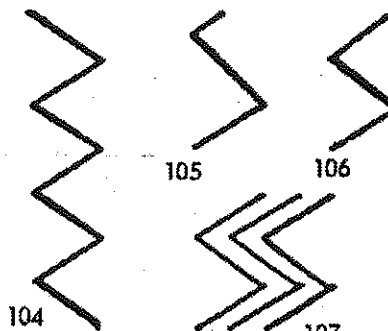
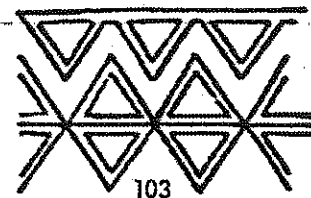
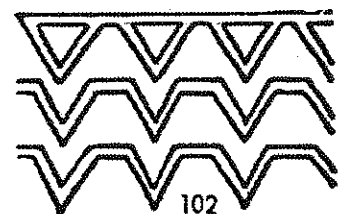
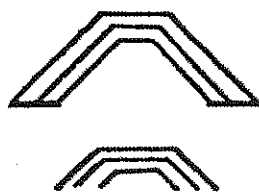
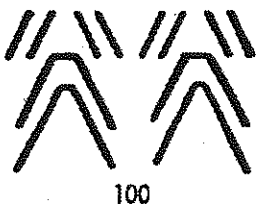
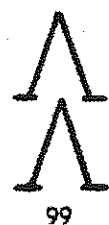
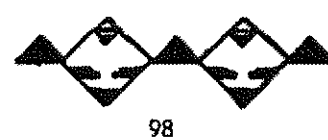
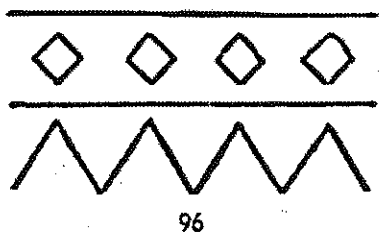
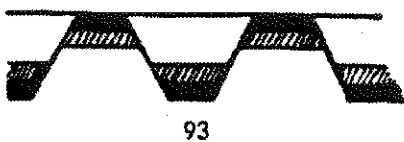
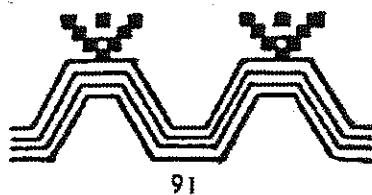
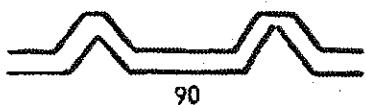
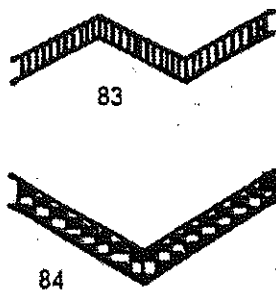
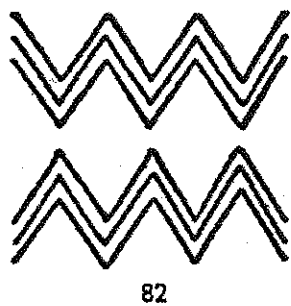
- 93, 94. Cloud (Nicola).  
95. Deer fence with snares.  
96. Indian fortress on top of a rock. \*  
97. Head band, Embroidery on the fronts  
and backs of dresses, Net, Necklace.  
98. Necklace, Variety of net, Embroidery, Dress design.  
99. Dress design.  
100. Necklacc, Rainbow, Part of earth lodge  
(rarely), Dress design.  
101. Necklacc, Rainbow (Iyton), Half circle  
Embroidery, Half of a design, Part of a  
grave box (rare), Dress design, Grasshopper.  
102, 103. Arrow points, Necklacc.

### DIAGONAL ZIGZAG, VERTICAL

104. Trail, Snake tracks, Snake, Contorting. Ascending zigzag.  
105. Grasshopper, Grasshopper leg.

106. Wave (two turns), Zigzag, Grasshopper.  
107. Wave (two turns), Zigzag, Grasshopper.

\* *This is supposed to have been in the Stlaxa'ix country. It is surrounded by a wall of logs and stones. The diamonds represent gun holes.*



SKETCHES OF DESIGNS

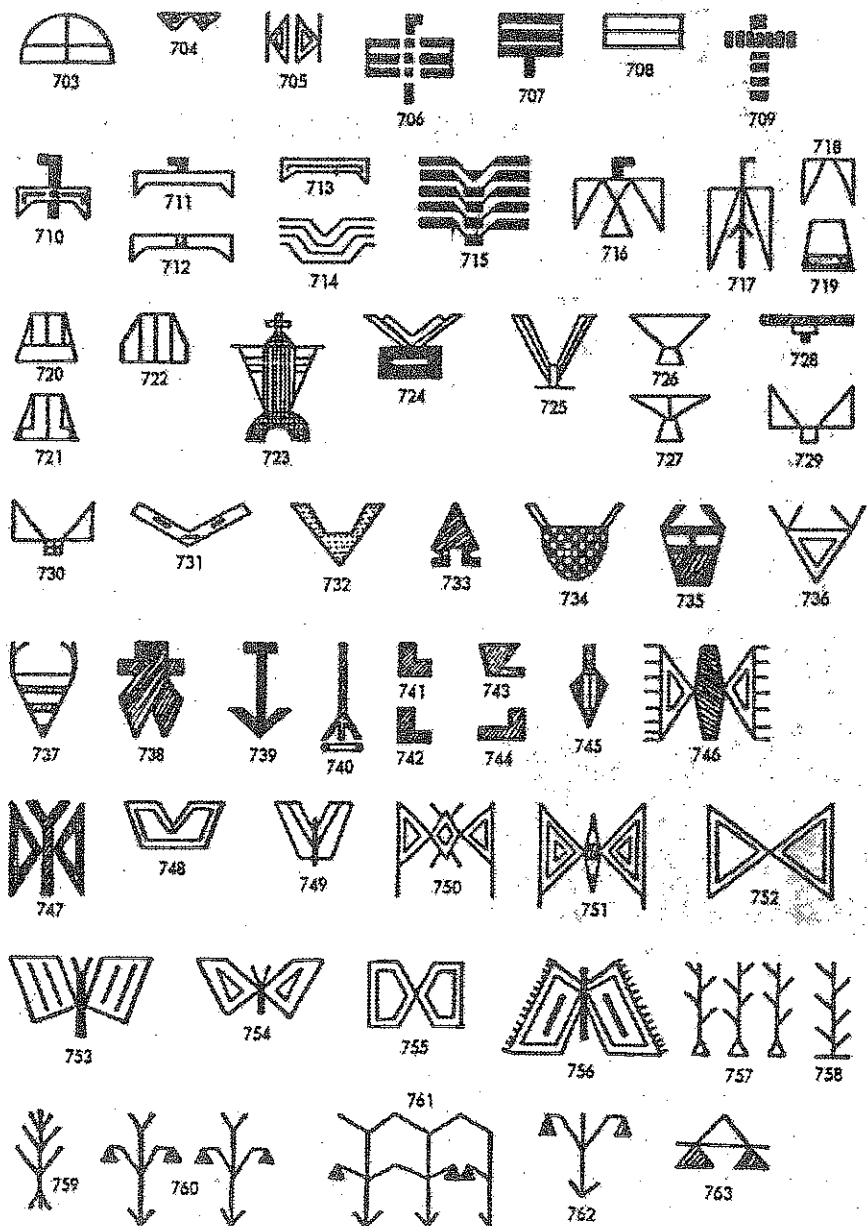


PLATE 92

STRONGLY CONVENTIONALIZED

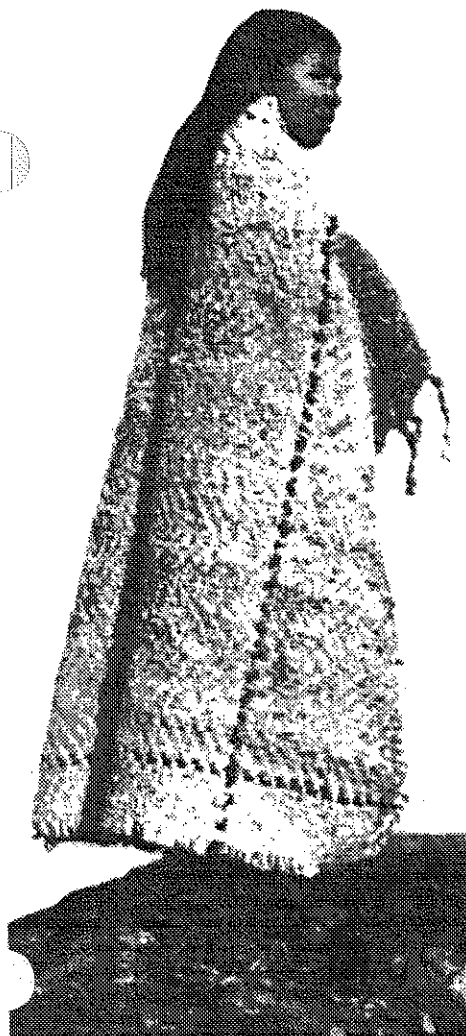
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 703. Sweat house.                             | 724, 730. Flying birds, Swallow.               |
| 704, 705. Butterfly, Butterfly wing.          | 731, 732. Flying birds, Swallow, Swallow wing. |
| 706. Eagle, Bird.                             | 733. Shaman wearing mask.                      |
| 707. Eagle, Flying bird.                      | 734, 736. Panther, Deer's head.                |
| 708. Eagle, Flying bird, Dentalia.            | 737. Deer's head.                              |
| 709. Eagle, Flying bird.                      | 738. Deer's hoof.                              |
| 710, 711. Eagle bird.                         | 739. Arrowhead.                                |
| 712, 713. Eagle, Flying bird, Eagle wing.     | 740. Fish spear and fish.                      |
| 714, 715. Fly,ng Goose, bird.                 | 741, 744. Pipe, Foot.                          |
| 716, 717. Eagle, Bird.                        | 745. Arrowhead (ornamented)                    |
| 718. Eagle, Flying bird.                      | 746, 756. Butterfly.                           |
| 719, 722. Eagle, Bird, Eagle's or bird's tail | 757, 759. Tree.                                |
| 723. Eagle, Bird.                             | 760, 763 Pine cones (yellow).                  |

# Return of the Salish Loom

Published in "The Beaver", Spring 1966

By **OLIVER N. WELLS**

*During a lifetime spent among the Salish, Oliver Wells has become keenly interested in preserving their language and skills.*



**(1) MEMBERS OF THE STALO TRIBES** of the Coast Salish Indians have again taken up the ancient art of loom weaving. They are weaving blankets, a craft almost completely abandoned last century, and rugs, which have not been made for some forty years. Instrumental in this revival were Mrs. Adeline Lorenzetto of the Ohamil Reserve and Mrs. Mary Peters of the Seabird Island Reserve on the banks of the Fraser, the river known to their people for generations as Stalo (river). To them, the Fraser had no other name, and from the River the tribes from Yale to the Coast took their name; they like to be known as "the Stalo people".

Early writings about the Coast Salish by such authorities as anthropologists Franz Boas and Charles Hill-Tout, naturalist J.K. Lord, and naval officer and explorer R.C. Mayne give detailed accounts that indicate these tribes made great numbers of blankets. They used them not only for their own comfort, but also as gifts to establish friendly relations, and as potlatch items in a display of wealth, at what were known as "blanket feasts". One of these blanket feasts, held on the banks of the Chilliwack River near the Boundary Commission supply depot established in 1858, illustrates the extent to which the blanket, regarded as an emblem of wealth, was used. According to Captain C.W. Wilson's journal: "We had a grand festival among the Indians, several tribes coming to a feast here; these festivals are annual, held at different places, and the Chiefs give away between 300 and 400 blankets. . ."

One writer referred to the social use of the blanket as the mainstay of a thriving industry which kept the women almost continuously employed. In ceremonies of marriage union many blankets were involved as gifts between the families and in the case of a girl of high rank the path from her home to her husband's canoe might be covered with blankets for her to walk on. At other ceremonies also, including burials, blankets figured largely among the gifts distributed.

The original native blankets were woven in a twilled or twined weave using principally wool from the wild mountain goats of the Cascade Mountains which bordered the tribal grounds, or the hair of native dogs, which were bred for the purpose. Spinning the yarn was accomplished by use of the spindle and whorl. In the homes of the Upper Stalo Indians three of these original type blankets have been proudly retained by their owners. One owned by Mrs. David Charles of Seabird Reserve is a large heavy blanket, plain white in colour, with a twilled weave. Another, belonging to Mrs. Hope of Seabird Reserve, is a blanket about 60 by 72 inches; it is made of a finer spun yarn and is ornamented

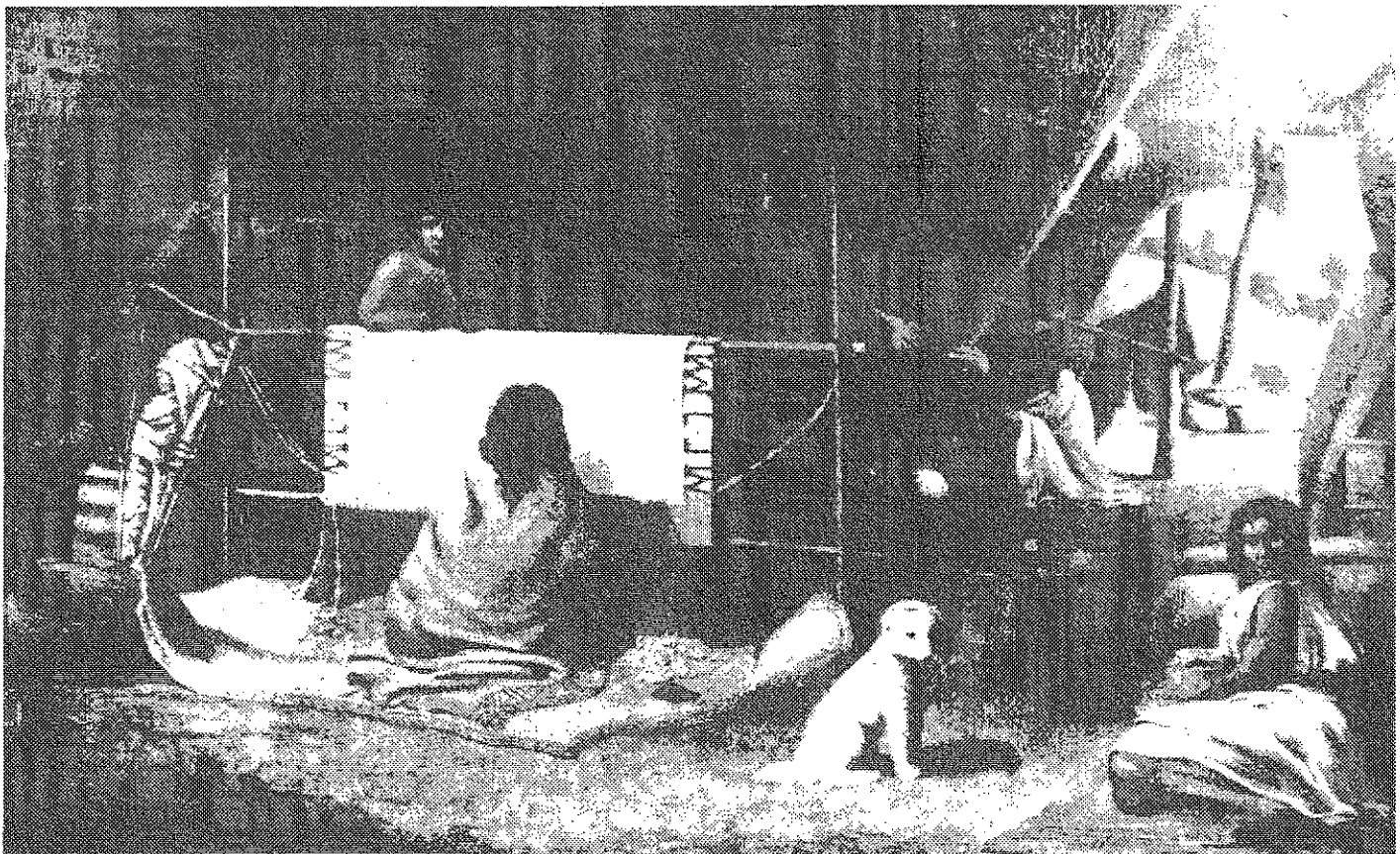
with five stripes of red and brown colour, woven into it lengthwise at regular intervals. It is principally of a twilled weave.

The third blanket, owned by Mrs. August Jim, has been given by her to the Chilliwack Museum. It was woven in a twilled weave, all white, except for interwoven half-inch strips of a red commercial blanket material, which were introduced for ornamentation. The ends of this blanket have been finished with a three inch wide strip of plain checkerboard weave, with loop ends of the warp extending about two inches beyond this. These blankets were probably made close to 100 years ago. Their owners are among the older of the present generation and do not remember having seen such blankets made.

Mrs. Lorenzetto, who had an elementary school education, had not seen goatwool blankets made so she studied the weaves of old Salish blankets and read the published accounts. One was "Organized Salish Blanket Pattern" in the American Anthropologist by Mary Lois Kissell who spoke of the textile industry of the Salish tribes in the lower Fraser River area as "one of the most novel in North America". She wrote about the Salish "nobility blanket" (usually about 30 by 36 inches), and of at least four distinct types, one of which was made at Yale and one in the Fraser Delta. Another account in the same publication was by Charles C. Willoughby in which he described the technique of the Salish Blanket. There was also a leaflet "Woven Blankets of the Salish" put out by the Heye Foundation.

It was on such descriptions that Mrs. Lorenzetto based her experiment and she was successful in weaving two small blankets, one using mountain goat wool, the other using sheep's wool.

Mrs. Mary Peters, who does not speak English, has been affectionately referred to as "one who knows everything, because she never went to school". She is one of the few who retained the art of making the fine coiled basketry of the Fraser Canyon and Thompson tribes (her mother's people were from the Thompson). In her mind are clearly imposed the beautiful designs, traditionally those of her family, which she has taken from basketry to rug-making, an art she herself undertook to recreate in the



*In 1846 Paul Kane painted this Coast Salish woman wearing a blanket of dog hair and mountain-goat wool. A shorn wool-dog sits by the loom and a woman in the background spins wool.*



fall of 1963. In a matter of months she became proficient and completed three beautiful rugs.

Reference to the type of loom used and the manner of weaving was made by Professor Hill-Tout in *The Native Races of the British Empire, British North America, 1907*: "... they are woven upon a very simple loom which consists of an upper and lower cross-or yarn-bar. These yarn-bars are variously held in place. Sometimes they are tied . . . Sometimes, as among the Vancouver Island Salish, they are set in vertical posts which have slits or holes at intervals in them to permit of extending or reducing the length of the web".

Weaving is done with a shuttle or by fingers alone, working from the top down, and rolling the web over the bars or rollers as the web in front of the worker is completed.

The blankets which came under Hill-Tout's observation were made entirely of the twined weave in which the weft thread was tied "to the outermost warp filament in such a way that it is doubled, each end being wound upon a separate shuttle. One of these is passed over the warp filament and the other under, the threads are then twisted round each other and passed in the same manner over and under each successive filament till the last one is reached, when they are brought back again in the same way."

Hill-Tout then points out that "sometimes among the Salish more than one of the warp filaments is woven in at a time". He adds that, "The blankets of the notables of the tribes often had patterns worked in them in black and red, similar to those in the old basketry of this region".

When the Hudson's Bay Company established trading posts at Fort Langley in 1827 and a few years later at Fort Yale and Fort Hope, the fur and salmon trade brought a new way of life to the



*The loom on which Mrs. Lorenxetto (left above) wove her goat wool blanket, with some of the unspun wool.*

Coast Salish. Salmon which they could take in unlimited numbers, could be exchanged for trade blankets. In 1051, sixty fresh salmon would buy a blanket. In the great potlatches and blanket feasts the trade blanket soon replaced the native woven ones. The coming of the white man in the gold rush, and the missionaries' determination that the native must discard his old customs and dress were the final blows which stilled the fingers of the native women. Their ancient craft of loom weaving was gradually forgotten by succeeding generations.

In an effort to re-establish the craft among the Stalo people the writer prevailed upon Mrs. Lorenzetto to make a goat-hair blanket. The loom she used is similar in construction to that described by Hill-Tout. It is four feet wide, with slots in the uprights to allow for rollers to be either two feet or four feet apart. Using the closer slots, Mrs. Lorenzetto wound her warp strands around the two rollers in a continuous manner. This method required careful finishing of both ends of the blanket before the warp threads were cut. Mrs. Lorenzetto practiced the various Salish weaves on a small loom about 12 inches square.

Each end of the blanket was finished with a 4-inch width of close-twined weaving, which was bordered by a decorative design woven into the web of the blanket with black wool. Between these weaves, the central portion of the blanket was in the old twilled weave, a somewhat looser weave. Both types of weaving were cleverly worked into a smooth web on the same warp threads.

The overall size of the blanket is 36 by 40 inches. Work was started with five pounds of washed goat wool plus a little naturally black wool for decorative use. On each panel of twined weave an arrow-head design in black and purple was worked into the web as weft material, making it visible from both sides.

Mrs. Peters' loom is of a slightly more rigid construction, in that the lower roller is fixed in a solid position, and only the upper roller can be wedged to tighten the warp when necessary. This



*Mrs. Mary Peters working at her loom on which she is finger-weaving a diamond patterned rug.*

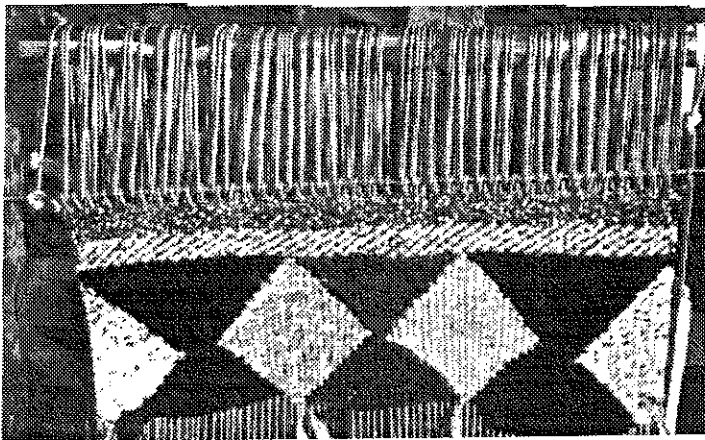
loom also has a fixed cross-bar between the rollers. It was designed and made by Mrs. Peters from memory of looms previously used by her family for rug-making. She undertook rug-making on her own initiative, and the writer obtained her first rug for exhibition in Montreal. Her weaving is done entirely with the fingers on the face of the web, working downward across the full width of the warp.

The warp cords were placed on the loom with the use of an additional loom rod. The warp cord at its beginning and end was tied to this rod; then, as it was passed up and down, it alternately went over a roller, over the loom rod and back over the same roller. When the rug was finished, the loom rod was pulled out and the rug lay full length without having to cut the warp.

Mrs. Peters used a twined weave at each end of her rug. In between is a twined weave in which each diamond of the pattern is worked separately, with two weft elements. In her first rug, the weave was left somewhat open between each row of diamond patterns. A second rug was made with a more complex pattern, in which the various diamond blocks were bound uniformly together. The material used was commercial twine for the warp, and strips of cotton material for the weft. Rugs measure about 20-by 42 inches. Her third rug, made with commercially spun wool with the pattern in squares, is a uniform twined weave throughout.

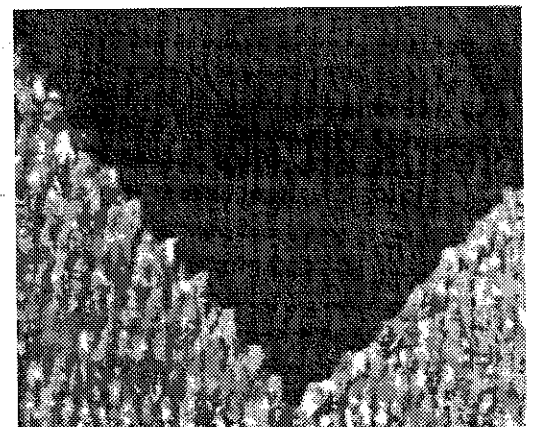
The last rug made by the Chilwheyuk band of the Chilliwack River known to the writer was made by Mrs. David, an old-time rug maker, about 1920. It was made on a one-bar loom, the warp cords being held taut by the weights tied to the lower ends. The warp of this rug had been made from threads of sacking material which had been unravelled and then spun, with the use of a spindle and whorl, into cord as thick as a pencil. The weft was made from strips of cotton dress material. Considerable pattern in colour was worked in wide or narrow bars across the web. The weave was twined throughout, and bound at the ends to prevent unravelling, by a special weave.

The fine woven work completed by Mrs. Lorenzetto and Mrs. Peters was featured in an exhibit of Salish Arts and Crafts sponsored by the Chilliwack Community Arts Council. The two weavers were presented with engraved copper bracelets in recognition of their work in re-establishing this native art. Further recognition came to them when each received a first prize, for goat-wool blanket and cotton rug respectively, at a handicraft exhibition in Montreal, at which Mrs. Peters was also awarded a prize for the finest basket.

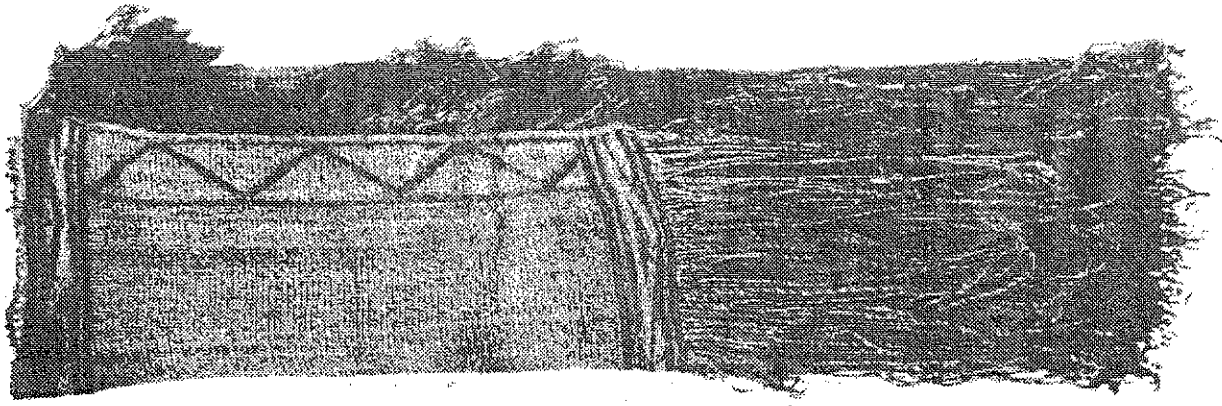


*The top bar of the loom shows the method of stringing the warp with the use of a loom rod, following the plan of the traditional Salish loom string. When the work is completed and the rod withdrawn the warp falls apart without cutting. Note the two weft elements to each colour.*

*In this rug, of which a detail of the weave is shown, the warp is commercial twine and the weft or crossways weaving thread is compressed of strips of cotton fabric.*



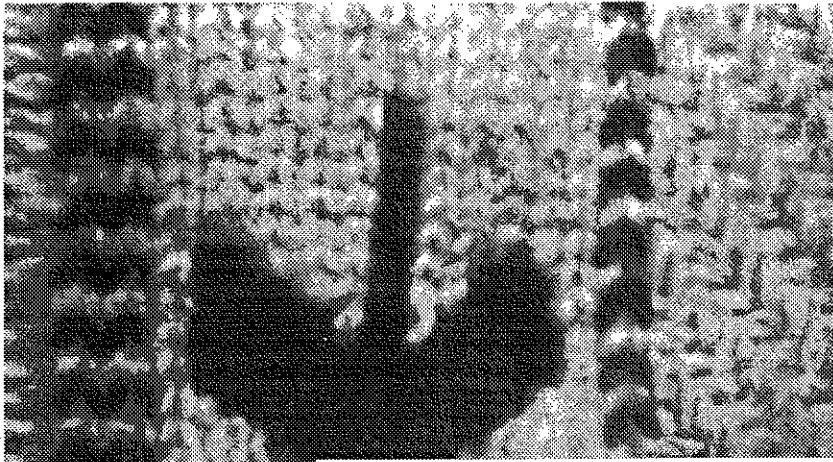




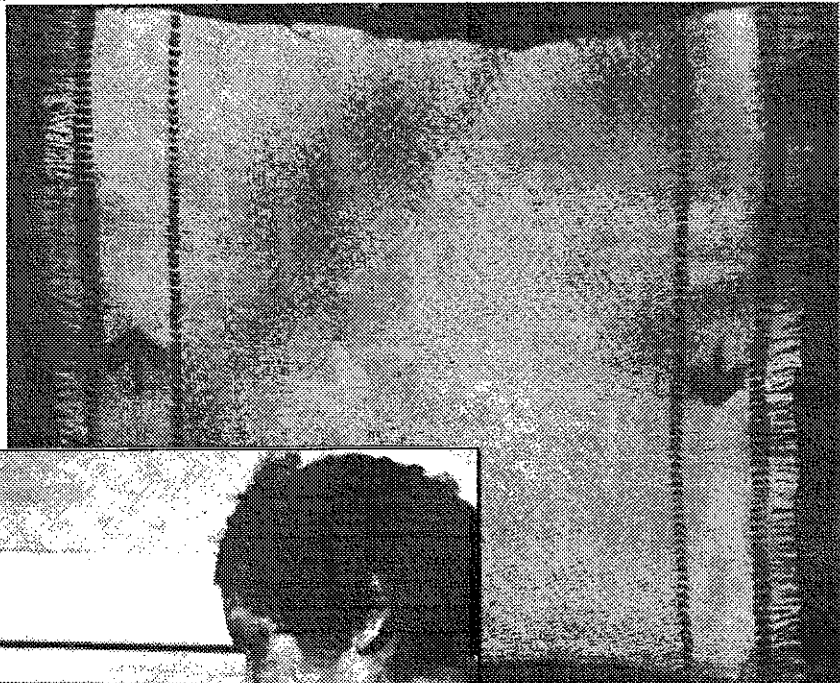
*Cedar Bark Blanket*  
(British Museum)



*Mrs. George Johnnie of the Squamish tribe photographed in 1928 spinning  
mountain-goat wool which she is weaving into a blanket (National Museum)*



The goat wool blanket made by Mrs. Lorenzetto, who used a home made shuttle, and above, detail of the weave.



Mrs. Adeline Lorenzetto shows the small loom on which she did her experimental weaving.

## The Return of the Salish Loom

(2) **Mary Peters and Adeline Lorenzetto** continued to weave- with time out for berrypicking and fishing season on the Fraser River. No other native women, with the exception of Mrs. D. Thomas (who is mentioned later) showed any special interest in trying to do likewise until the fall of 1967.

Mrs. Lorenzetto had in the beginning prepared and spun her own wool. However, with her full time being required for weaving, Mrs. Wm. Kelly, of Sooahile, became the master spinner and spun wool for the weavers. Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Lorenzetto dyed some wool, but in this they were assisted by the writer, who, by the use of native plants and bark nature-dyed the wool used.

During 1967, Adeline Lorenzetto produced ten blankets each measuring 3'x4 1/2', of beautiful colour and original design. She modified her loom to facilitate her work. With short ends she created beautiful chair covers, which found a ready market.

Early in 1967, Mary Peters received an order to weave tapestry for the newly constructed Hotel Bonaventure in Montreal, Canada. The order had come as a result of the article, "Return of the Salish Loom" which was published in The Beaver Magazine in Spring, 1966 issue. It was a large order - 225 square feet of tapestry, carrying Salish design in colours of Gold and Black, Brown, Buff, Orange, Blue and Red. The tapestries were completed in three months and hung for the opening of the new hotel. This project, with the prestige and publicity which accompanied it, was undoubtedly the spark which ignited special interest in Salish Weaving.

(3) **In 1965, Mrs. D. Thomas of Seabird Island Reserve**, one of the older generation of weavers and basket makers, again began the weaving of tump-lines, an art that she executed so capably in the twined weave with the use of the single bar loom. She was persuaded to try weaving on the two-bar loom and completed a fine wall hanging. She then turned to rug making, which craft she had followed in years past. Using a burlap sack as a base, she applied a beautifully laid out design with the use of a needle. This art she had learned from "a Coast woman" (native) who was following the old native custom of applying design on to the finely woven cedar- bark mats and dancing aprons of the Coast people. The craft, while not of the true weaving type of rug making, is much appreciated by those interested in Indian design and special native craft work.

Late in 1967, Mrs. Gordon James (Martha) and Mrs. Stewart (Anabel), of Skwah Reserve began weaving in the twined weave. They were soon producing beautiful items, useful as rugs, Saddle blankets and wall hangings. At the time of writing Martha, (who has won Canada wide Handicraft competitions in sweater making), had produced no less than fifteen items. Anabel, one of the capable young weavers, is a grand-daughter of Mrs. David, who was mentioned earlier as the last weaver among the Chilliwack tribe. Anabel has completed twelve pieces, some of which have been made on order.

Mrs. Irene James, daughter-in-law of Mrs. Gordon James, learned the art from Martha and has woven two rugs.

Mrs. Mabel Peters, of Seabird Island Reserve, who could remember her grand- mother weaving, decided to try her hand at weaving. Mabel Peters has been totally blind for some ten years, during which time she continued her sweater making at which she was most capable. She has woven two rugs and is ambitious to continue. The youngest of the weavers to set her hand to the task is Miss Monica Philips, a fourteen year old grand-daughter of the "Mother of modern weaving", Mary Peters. Monica is already capable of basket making and is, at the time of writing, weaving her first wall hanging.

These weavers are already recognized as those who have rebuilt an industry that had vanished and thus re-established the ancient art of weaving of the Salish people .



(4) In 1968, the Chilliwack Arts Council, who have taken a special interest in the native crafts, purchased ten pieces woven by these native weavers. The fine collection is assembled and has already been on display to publicize Salish Weaving.

Items have been purchased that have gone as far afield as Eastern Canada, California, New York and across the Atlantic to Europe.

As this publication goes to press an order for several articles of Salish weaving has been received from "The World Handicraft Foundation" This non-profit organization with headquarters in Toronto, and whose representative personally inspected the items, has as its objective, "the promotion, distribution, exhibition and sale of artistic and ethnographic handicrafts.

Through them and others of like mind, Salish weaving is obtaining World Recognition .

(5) **Authentic native weaving** produced by the Salish is now officially identified by the Department of Indian Affairs official label. Inscribed on the symbol, the likeness of a Beaver pelt, are the words Authentic Canadian Indian fine Craft.

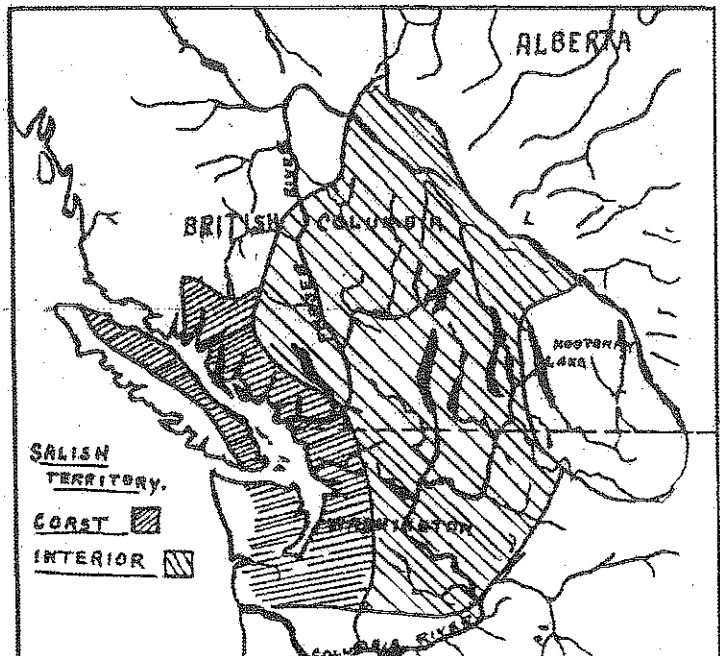


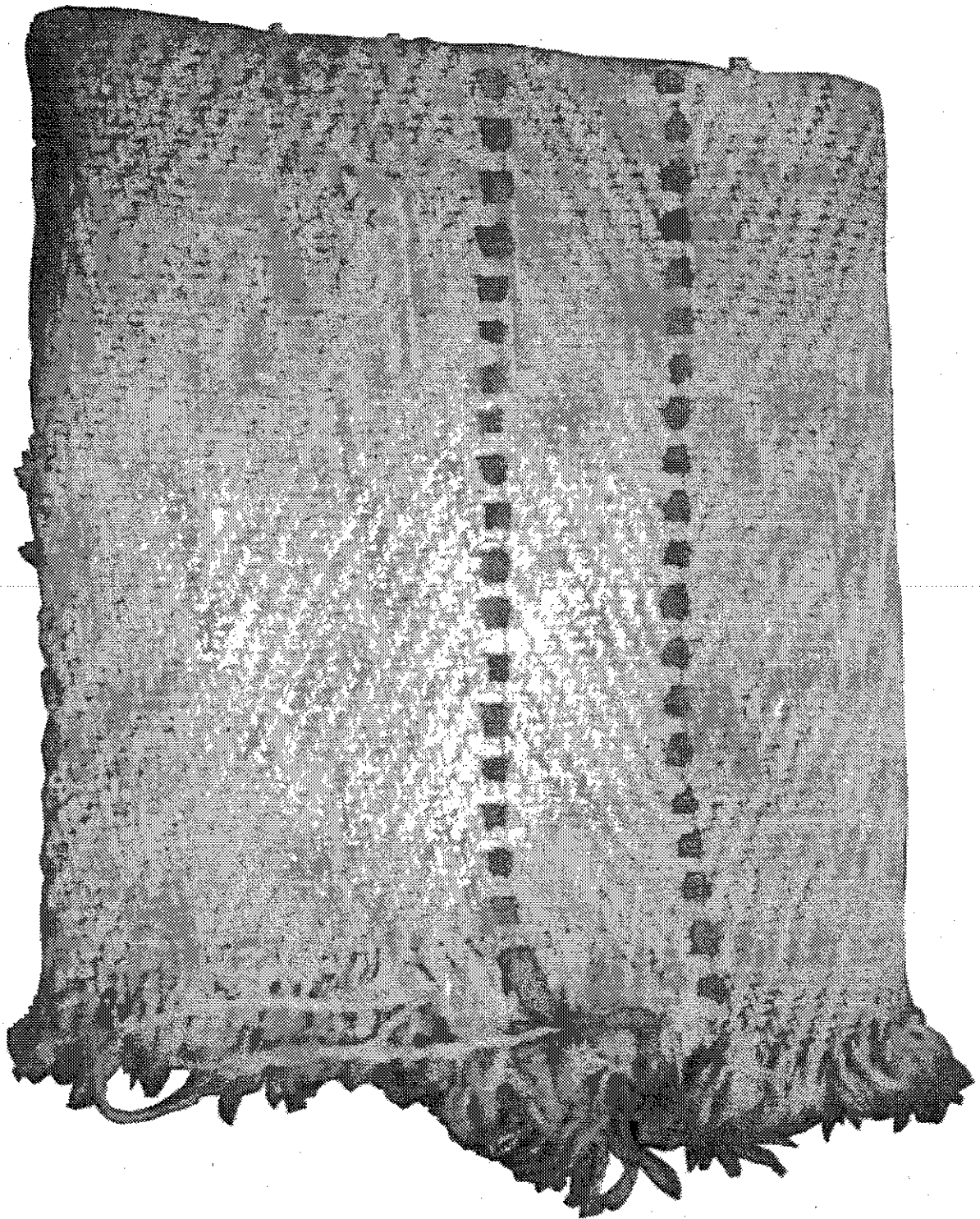
*Anabel Stewart and Martha James at their Looms*

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Map illustrates general area occupied by Salish Indians. Revival in weaving occurred on Fraser River where Interior and Coast intermingle.





**Native Goat Hair Blanket - 1830**

Donated by Mrs. August Jim, O'hamil reserve, near Hope, B.C. to Chilliwack Museum

Front Cover - Ceremonial Blanket - Made by Mary Peters

Back Cover - Salish Blanket - Woven by Mrs. Adaline Lorenzetto,  
O'hamil Reserve



