More Than Useable Tools: Towards an Appreciation of N+e?kepmx Fibre Technology as a Significant Expression of Culture

by

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Abstract

Prior to the general adoption of manufactured goods brought by traders and settlers to Nɬe?kepmx territory, Nɬe?kepmx women spent a great deal of time processing plant materials to make items for daily, ceremonial, and trade purposes, such as baskets, mats, clothing, cradles, rope, and nets, as well as a number of products for decorative or recreational purposes. I call this activity fibre technology. Much of the research concerning the use of plants by Nɬe?kepmx women in this type of technology was compiled almost one hundred years ago. It offers valuable information about this activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since the body of literature covering this time frame was produced predominantly under the influence of the Boasian anthropological theory of cultural relativity, it describes fibre products mainly by their form, the techniques used, and their utilitarian function. Based on more recent literature about First Nations' cultural practices, that includes a strong Native voice, and on interviews I had with Nɬe?kepmx women, I argue in this thesis that Nɬe?kepmx women not only produced useable objects through fibre technology, but that these were works of artistic beauty and also symbolic representations of Nɬe?kepmx culture. Nɬe?kepmx women made fibre products with a commitment to respect the spiritual and material worlds at all stages of the process. This is a deep part of Nɬe?kepmx cultural values, traditional knowledge, and identity. That commitment manifests in beautifully crafted pieces that are distinctly Nɬe?kepmx. At the same time, through their own ingenuity Nɬe?kepmx women, both prior to and since colonisation, have adapted fibre products to meet the changing conditions of their own lives. The practice of fibre technology has diminished considerably in the last several decades. Nevertheless, those women who continue to practise it and teach it to others do so with a strong commitment to their traditions in order that fibre technology can remain an important symbolic expression of Nɬe?kepmx culture.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

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Kʷukʷstúymn

Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the requirements towards completion of a Master of Arts degree in First Nations Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia is to complete a 140-hour Internship within a First Nations community, organisation, or workplace. My Internship brought me to the Nicola Tribal Association (NTA) in Merritt, BC, whose members are from the N̓e?kepmx,[1] or Thompson, Nation in the southern Interior of BC. I was asked to participate in a four-month long project co-sponsored by the NTA, in which six local community members were being trained to make traditional-style mats from *x̓'len'tx*ʷ, Tules (*Scirpus acutus* Muhl.) and *sp'éc'n*, Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum* L.). My contribution to the project was to write up the final report. This experience was the inspiration behind this thesis as it introduced me to the world of N̓e?kepmx fibre technology, a term I apply to the use of plant parts and bark fibres in the manufacture of housing, clothes, tools, utensils, rope, baskets, bags, cradles, and gear for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Through this experience and further research I began to realise the complexity of fibre technology. I came to appreciate that while each piece is made from particular plants using certain techniques and for a specific purpose, spiritual, social, economic, political, environmental, and historical influences contribute to its form and beauty. Moreover, the experiences of the individual women, who are the ones primarily responsible for making fibre products, also play a large part in the outcome of each piece they make. For these reasons, each piece becomes, in effect, a visual metaphor for an individual life and N̓e?kepmx culture.

As my research for this thesis progressed, I found that the bulk of the literature specifically about the products made in N̓e?kepmx plant technology does not address these influences to any degree. Much of the original literature was written by anthropologist Franz Boas or his colleagues and students between 1896 and 1930. There has been little research with specific reference to fibre technology in this region since that time. Boas's theory of Cultural Relativity, which determined that culture was the overriding influence on cultural practices, and his insistence on presenting only the

[1] Pronounced Enhla'kápmùx

data that he deemed could be generalised to the whole culture, influenced the way in which the Nɬeʔkepmx practice of fibre technology was initially documented and presented to a non-First Nations audience. This early research, initiated by a belief among non-Natives that First Nations societies were rapidly disappearing under colonial domination, is extremely valuable. Nevertheless, it tells only part of the story about this important technology. Current research indicates that First Nations people, including the Nɬeʔkepmx, indeed view the practice of fibre technology as being highly motivated by cultural principles. These cultural principles and the significance of this practice to the people have many levels.

The Boasian approach to research was to place the work within a cultural context and present its ethnographic importance to a non-Native population. My thesis is a complement to this early literature in an attempt to place the importance of fibre technology to the Nɬeʔkepmx in a contemporary context. To this end, the thesis is a journey through a history of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology, from the time of first contact in the early 1800s to the present. Through this journey I hope to explain the significance of cultural values and tradition that influence the workmanship and appreciation of the products made, how these are affected by contemporary circumstances, how each woman imparts her own creative individuality into the work that she does, and finally, to demonstrate the continued importance of fibre technology as a symbol of Nɬeʔkepmx cultural identity.

The purpose of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology was essentially utilitarian. At the same time it cannot be separated from all other aspects of Nɬeʔkepmx culture. Fibre technology serves in part to relay the shared values and beliefs that promote identity, harmony and balance within the culture (Leuthold 1998:6, 7-8). The maker of fibre products is the creative force behind her work, yet the fibre products that a woman makes and the process by which she makes them tell of her relationships with the spiritual world, her culture, herself and others, and the land from which she gathers plant materials. At the same time, fibre products reveal much about the natural and social

environment that influences the production and use of the product, as well as the cultural history that binds contemporary experience with past knowledge (S. Sterling 1997:136; also Hill 1997:xvii).

In my view, also vividly apparent within the objects made is a great sense of artistry. For this reason I wanted to understand the meaning of art, artist, and aesthetics in Nɬeʔkepmx culture, and how that applies to fibre technology. I soon learned that applying these terms to Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology is problematic as there are no words currently recorded in the Nɬeʔkepmx language that isolate and give meaning to such Western concepts that views art as a specialised and separate industry for display and sale, and artists as the uniquely gifted individuals who create art (Feest 1992:9). Using words as labels, which is common in English, is rare in Nɬeʔkepmxcín,[2] which instead uses terms that describe someone's actions rather than the person herself. Absence of a labelling word or Western concept, however, does not translate into the absence of an appreciation for beautiful work, which in Western culture could be labelled art. Each fibre product displays an appreciation for quality and beauty that begins with an intimate knowledge of the plants used and the initial selection of plant fibres, continues through the careful execution of technique and choice of design, and ends with the emotional enjoyment of using a beautifully crafted work. Driving the creation of each piece is a fundamental belief in respect for a spiritual world that in Nɬeʔkepmx cosmology permeates all things on earth. It is that respect that manifests in each piece as an expression of Nɬeʔkepmx cultural values, beliefs, history, and traditions, and an indication of individual knowledge, creativity, and initiative.

In a culture that values actions rather than labels, which the terms "art" and "artist" are, and with a language that does not have words that are comparable to these Western notions, it is not surprising that when asked to define these terms, the women interviewed for this thesis found it difficult to reconcile them with fibre technology. Cedar-coiled basket maker Mandy Brown thinks of an artist as "somebody that draws [pictures] on a piece of paper," but admits that she doesn't

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[2] Nɬeʔkepmxcín means the Thompson language. =cín is a lexical suffix referring to, in this case, the mouth or language.

"seem to understand that part of the word." She considers her work as "Indian crafts" and would rather call herself an "arts and crafts person instead of an artist." She considers the term artist to be a more modern concept and one that doesn't fit her "old fashioned" way of thinking. Yet, she grants that if you do a lot of craftwork, people call you an artist. Elder Adaline Frank considers cedar coiled baskets as a form of art when they are made for sale, and defines an artist as a "jack of all trades," or someone who is able to do a number of tasks to arrive at a final product. To Mrs. Frank, women who make baskets are artists because they must perform many different tasks in order to build a basket from scratch.

Knowing the amount of work involved in making a quality product from plant fibres, Ethel Isaac does not hesitate to call a person who can make something with plant fibres an artist and the actual product art. Maggie Shuter's definition of art is more in keeping with the European notion. She views the fibre work produced today as art because it is made primarily for display, and suggests that the ornamentation on older utilitarian pieces could be considered as art because of their decorative value. Like Mandy Brown, Mrs. Shuter considers an artist to be someone who creates ideas on paper. On the other hand, the beauty of an object derives from "the design, plus the work you've put into it" (Maggie Shuter). Finally, novice cedar-coiled basket maker Brenda Aljam considers art to be a combination of individual creativity, technical expertise and quality, which together contribute to the beauty of a finished product. An artist is someone who has enough technical mastery to be able to produce quality work. Mrs. Aljam doesn't think of herself as an artist with her basketry because she is just learning.

Clearly, the variety of responses and the difficulty some of the women have in defining the terms art and artist show that they also consider these terms by their Western meanings. Viewed in this way, these terms are too restrictive to fit the multiple meanings embedded in Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology and the many tasks required to carry it out. Their concept of artistic beauty or aesthetics, however, is more consistent with each other and with Nɬeʔkepmx beliefs. These

responses reflect the knowledge, creative skill, and work required to make an item from plant fibres, and they honour the worker for her efforts.

Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, Language and Cultural Co-ordinator of the Nicola Tribal Association, prefers to use the terms art and artist when referring to fibre products and the women who make them for the very reason that in the English language they do accord the artistry of fibre technology the highest regard it deserves (personal communication, 11 March 1998). For this same reason, a number of authors writing about First Nations technology and art also use these terms when referring to objects made primarily for utilitarian purposes (see S. Sterling 1997; Ackerman 1996; Holloman 1996; M'Closkey 1996; Teiwes 1996; D. Jensen 1992; Berlo 1989; McMaster 1989; Albers and Medicine 1983; Schneider 1983).

The Nɬeʔkepmx do have a word for exceptionally beautiful work, *qʷámqʷəmt*, meaning 'well done,' 'beautiful,' or 'outstanding'. Something that deserves praise is *y'e ʔesk'ʷén'tns*, 'something is well done,' or more commonly *y'e*, 'good,' and the person who does exceptional work is *zʷ'étmx*, which means 'someone who is good at doing things,' an 'expert' or 'master craftsperson' (Mary Coutlee and Mabel Joe, personal communication, 22 February 2000). This thesis attempts in part to explain what makes a fibre product *qʷámqʷəmt* from an Nɬeʔkepmx perspective, and who would be called *zʷ'étmx*.

In this thesis I sometimes use the term art to refer to the completed fibre product and the term artist to refer to the women who make the fibre products as expressions of my respect for this intricate technology and the multiple meanings that it has for the Nɬeʔkepmx people, and for the women who do this work. These terms also present an appreciation for the work from an artistic perspective to a non-Nɬeʔkepmx audience. I avoid the term aesthetics, and instead refer to the beauty of the products that stems from an interconnection of belief systems, symbolic imagery, and knowledge that are shared by the Nɬeʔkepmx people, and the initiative and skill of the creator of

these works. With words such as *qʷámqʷəmt* and *zʷ'étmx* in the Nɬeʔkepmx vocabulary to indicate quality and talent, it is clear that beauty is an integral part of the process of fibre technology.

To carry out this research I reviewed a large body of literature by both First Nations and non-Native authors regarding First Nations cultures and art, as well as the ethnographic literature pertaining to the Nɬeʔkepmx and neighbouring First Nations cultures. I also conducted interviews with six Nɬeʔkepmx women who are knowledgeable in the area of fibre technology.

The women interviewed are: Adaline Frank of Shackan, interviewed 18 March 1999 at the Nicola Tribal Association, Merritt; Mandy Brown of Lytton, interviewed 26 March 1999 at her home in Lytton; Maggie Shuter of Lower Nicola, interviewed 30 March 1999 at the Lower Nicola Band Office, Sulus; Ethel Isaac of Lower Nicola, interviewed 6 April 1999 at her home in Sulus; Brenda Aljam of Coldwater (formerly of Cook's Ferry), interviewed 14 April 1999 at the Nicola Tribal Association, Merritt; and Mary Coutlee of Merritt, interviewed 5 January, 27 April, and 13 May 1999 at Pine Acres Rest Home, Westbank (see Fig. 1).

In addition to these interviews, I also had informal discussions about topics relating to this thesis with three other knowledgeable women living in the Nicola Valley. Mabel Joe is an Elder from Sulus. She now resides at Coquihalla House, a seniors' care facility in Merritt. Mrs. Joe is well known in her community and by ethnographers, linguists and ethnobotanists for her extensive knowledge of Nɬeʔkepmx culture, language and traditional activities. She has provided information about some of the plants, their preparation, and uses. Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, from Shackan, is Language and Cultural Co-ordinator of the Nicola Tribal Association and a member of my thesis committee. Ms. Jimmie has helped focus my efforts as much as possible on important aspects of Nɬeʔkepmx culture and beliefs. Lynne Jorgesen, from Upper Nicola, worked with the Nicola Tribal Association on their Traditional Use Study. She shared her knowledge about Nɬeʔkepmx migration stories, and historical events in the Nicola Valley.

1a. Mary Coutlee, Merritt, b. 25 November 1915. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

1b. Adaline Frank, Shackan, b. 10 June 1924. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

1c. Mandy Brown, Lytton, b. 1924. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

1d. Ethel Isaac, Sulus, b. 20 August 1939. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

1e. Brenda Aljam, Coldwater (formerly of Cook's Ferry) b. 1961. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

1f. Maggie Shuter, Lower Nicola, photo unavailable

Figure 1: N̓e?kepmx women interviewed for the thesis.

Nɬeʔkepmx territory follows the river valleys of the Fraser, Thompson, Nicola, and Coldwater rivers, and includes a range of environments. This diversity of terrain led to certain regional differences with regard to fibre technology in the styles, techniques, and materials used, particularly between the upper and lower Nɬeʔkepmx territories. This thesis concentrates primarily on the fibre technology of the Nɬeʔkepmx people living in the Nicola Valley, the Scw'exmx.[3] All but one of the women interviewed for the thesis, Mandy Brown, live in the Nicola Valley. Mrs. Brown lives in Lytton. Her contribution to the thesis offers valuable information that shows a strong bond with the Scw'exmx with regard to fibre technology as well as Nɬeʔkepmx cultural knowledge, values and beliefs.

The Nɬeʔkepmx Nation is part of the Interior Salish language group that spans most of southern British Columbia, Washington, northern Idaho and a portion of western Montana (Turner et al. 1990:8; Teit 1900:167). Nɬeʔkepmx territory stretches from Ross Lake and Mount Baker in the Cascade Mountain range in the south to Ashcroft in the north, and from Harrison Lake and Lillooet in the west to Nicola Lake in the east. This large area is divided for the purpose of ethnographic study into lower and upper divisions based on environmental, cultural and dialectic differences. The point of separation is near Lytton, at the junction of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers (Teit 1900:168). The Scw'exmx live in the Nicola Valley, the eastern most region of the upper division. Their name, meaning 'people of the creek' or 'people of Nicola' (Mandy Jimmie, personal communication, 12 April 2000), refers to their location along the Nicola River a few miles above Spences Bridge to considerably above Nicola lake, where their territory adjoins the Okanagon (Teit 1900:170), and along the Coldwater River south of Merritt (Fig. 2).

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[3] Pronounced Shchwáxmùx.

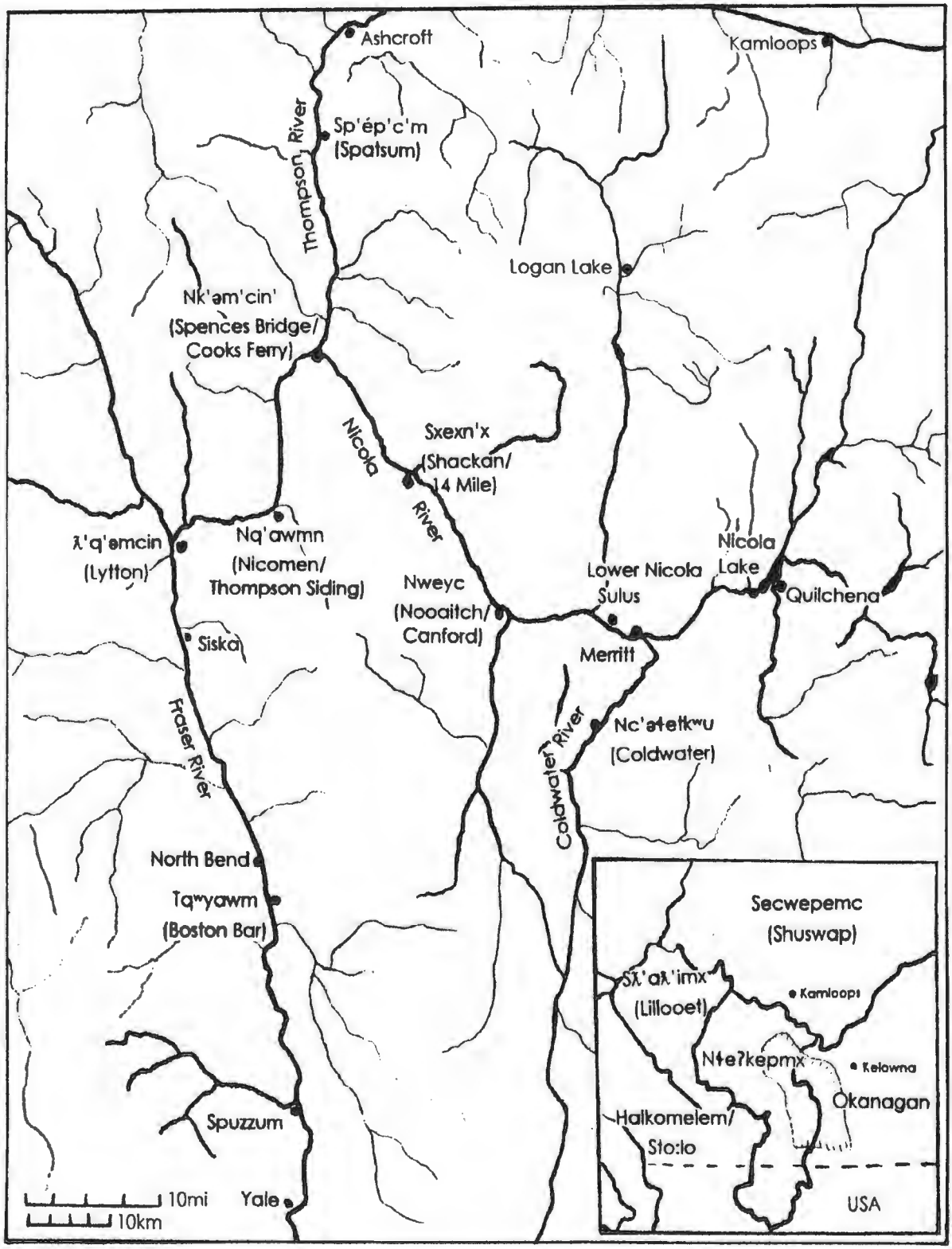

Figure 2. Map of Nłeʔkepmx territory. The bottom right inset also gives an outline of the territory once occupied by the Stuw'ix̌mx (Nicola Athapaskan). (Redrawn from Hanna and Henry 1995:4)

According to the Nɬeʔkepmx migration legends recorded by Teit (1917), the ancestors of the present day Nɬeʔkepmx have been living in this region since before the retreat of the last ice age (see Appendix 2, Stories 1a - 1c). Since that time there were numerous migrations to the Nicola Valley by way of Lytton, from as far away as Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon (Shewchuk 1981:27; Teit 1917; Lynne Jorgesen, personal communication, 27 August 1999).

> The Great Chief led us to this country, and placed us in it to occupy it, multiply in it, and be happy. He gave us a rich country with plenty in it for us to eat.... The chief gave us this part of our mother's body to live on and rest on. We know about our origin and our ancestors, and we have inhabited this country for a long time. The earth is full of the bones of our ancestors. Our traditions tell us that even in mythological times our ancestors live here. Four of them lived at Lytton, from whom we believe we are descended.... These were Indians, and not animals. (Teit 1917:49)

Archaeological excavations conducted in the Nicola Valley in 1969 and 1970 confirm that there has been continual human habitation in the Valley since 2500BP. These studies indicate that technology changed considerably, yet over time the cultural patterns of the people remained essentially the same as those Scw'exmx who greeted the first explorers to the Valley in the early 1800s (Wyatt and Wyatt 1971:11; Lynne Jorgesen, personal communication, 27 August 1999).

The Scw'exmx are perhaps the most ethnically mixed of all the Nɬeʔkepmx tribal groups (Teit 1900:179). They have close relations to the Stuw'ix̣mx Athapaskans who migrated to the Valley from the Chilcotin area as recently as 600 years ago, and settled near the western boundary of the Okanagan territorial hunting grounds. Through wars and further migration, the Stuw'ix̣mx population in the Valley dwindled. By the 1850s, those remaining Stuw'ix̣mx were completely absorbed through marriage and adoption into the Okanagan and Scw'exmx populations that were moving further into Stuw'ix̣mx territory to take advantage of the prime grazing land for their growing herds of horses (Wyatt 1971:65; Teit 1900:178).

The fertile soils of the Nicola Valley and the abundance of bunchgrass, a nutritious food for horses (Turner et al. 1990:139), attracted Nɬeʔkepmx from all parts of Nɬeʔkepmx territory to the Valley in the mid-nineteenth century (Wyatt 1971:65). A relatively recent migration brought a

large band of N̓e?kepmx from Boston Bar to the region, where they originally settled near the mouth of the Coldwater River. They were followed by a number of people from the Lytton and Nicomen (Thompson Siding) bands that eventually settled around Shackan (Teit 1900:178-179). By the end of the nineteenth century this diverse population had settled throughout the Nicola Valley. They made up thirteen reserve communities varying in size from a few families to over one hundred people (Teit 1900:174; Hill Tout 1978:42), and claimed a territory comprising approximately 2200 square miles (5632 sq. km) (Teit 1900:170).

Scw'exmx territory falls into the driest region in British Columbia known as the "Ponderosa pine-bunchgrass bio-geoclimatic zone" (Turner et al. 1990:12), an area primarily of open woods or treeless sagebrush and grasslands. At higher elevations this changes to the more heavily forested Interior Douglas fir zone (Turner et al. 1990:12; also Tepper 1994:xiii; Teit 1900:168). Within this semi-arid landscape are a variety of different habitats, with a wide range of vegetation and wildlife variously distributed throughout (Turner et al. 1990:13-14; Smith 1975:402; Wyatt 1971:60). Prior to extensive White settlement in the Nicola Valley, the Scw'exmx effectively utilised the natural resources of this territory in all aspects of their lives. The land provided a basis of education for the children, and it was filled with spiritual power that demanded an adherence to ritual and invoked ceremony. The people made their living from the land and harvested the resources for all their needs through hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. Their total dependency on the land and the wide distribution of resources demanded a seasonally nomadic existence as they continually followed the cycles of nature, and allowed for previously harvested areas to replenish naturally (Vibert 1997:133; Wickwire 1993:545-546; Ray 1939:24; Teit 1900:182).

The plants that grew in this dry environment were an essential resource in the life-way of the Scw'exmx. At one time, plants not only provided as much as fifty to seventy percent of the food resources, and the majority of medicines (Peers 1996:44; Turner et al. 1990:19), they were also the medicines, or in technology were equally important as ecological indicators for such things as the location of water, times to harvest other plants, movements of animals, or spawning seasons

(Parish et al. 1996:23). Plants were used in a myriad other ways, including as cleansers, cosmetics, insect repellents, and for their spiritual powers. Still others provided the materials with which to make drums and other musical instruments, toys, and games (Turner 1992:9).

A significant indication of the importance of plants is the large number of words in the Nɬeʔkepmx vocabulary referring to plants. Turner et al. (1990) have recorded 612 plant terms in Nɬeʔkepmxcín, of which about 315 indicate particular species of plants. The rest are alternate terms that relate to the various sub-species or different parts of or uses for the plant. Of these 612 plant terms more than 115 have been indicated in the use of plant technology, including varieties of wood, bark, resins, leaves, berries, roots, seeds and flowers. The use of plants in technology made it possible to harvest, transport and prepare almost all the food and medicine, as well as providing the materials needed for heat, shelter, clothing, implements, weapons, netting, rope, containers, ornamentation, dyes, paints, music, and recreation (Turner 1992:9).

Further evidence of the importance of these plants to the Nɬeʔkepmx is the use of plant names as place names to indicate that valuable plant species grows in that area. A location known as *sp'ép'c'm* near Spences Bridge is an example. Here large quantities of *sp'éc'n* or Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum* L.), perhaps the most important plant fibre used in almost all Nɬeʔkepmx plant technology, were harvested by the Spences Bridge people and traded to the Scw'exmx and to the lower division of the Nɬeʔkepmx (Thompson and Thompson 1996:253; Turner et al. 1990:161).

The importance of plants is also reflected in Nɬeʔkepmx cosmology that teaches that all of the natural resources available in the territory, as well as the land itself, are not mere commodities to be exploited for personal gain. The earth and all that comes from it have a spiritual element, and accordingly must be treated with great care and respect. As a gift from the Creator they are for the "collective use and benefit of all living creatures" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1993:62; also Vibert 1997:197; Teit 1900:293). Collective use

enabled everyone to access a wide range of food resources, medicines, and plant products throughout the spring, summer and fall before settling into relatively permanent villages for the winter (Vibert 1997:132; Miller 1990:137; Turner et al. 1990:8).

While neither the land nor its resources could be owned by any single person, at least as early as the 1800s the Nɬeʔkepmx were dividing tracts of land that were not "resting" into clearly defined boundaries for various purposes throughout the year, such as hunting, fishing, berry picking, or root digging. They also had a network of unmarked boundaries that where known by all the people indicating areas that could be used by certain families or tribes. These areas might be particular lakes, rivers, berry patches, or stands of technologically important plants, for example, in which priority of access was to the particular group within whose territory these areas lay, and permission was always sought by those coming from more distant places before accessing the resources of this land (R. Sterling 1979:17-18; also Vibert 1997:197; Turner 1992:34-35; Teit 1900:293). This system continues to a certain extent today.

One aspect of Nɬeʔkepmx social structure was the network of kinship relations, *nk'séytkn*, which played an important role in this system of land-use boundaries by determining where people could harvest the resources. Kinship relations were widespread. Traced along both the mother's and the father's line, without any formal lineage or clan organisations, these social ties allowed people to move in and out of any number of villages or camps where they had kin for the purpose of gathering food or plant materials, seeking a spouse, visiting, or trade (Adaline Frank; Vibert 1997:131). Kinship relations prevented the isolation of Nɬeʔkepmx communities scattered across the diverse territorial regions. Even today the Nɬeʔkepmx maintain strong family connections throughout the territory.

Another aspect of kinship relations is the Nɬeʔkepmx belief that all things are related. Therefore, both human and non-human relations are *nk'séytkn*, and are equally important in determining where, when and how a person can access a certain area. The root term *xəxáʔ-* refers to restricted activity in accordance with the observance of rules or taboos usually based

on spiritual beliefs. *χ̣əχ̣ə ʔstés*, for example, refers to a woman who is on her menstrual cycle, a time that demands a number of restrictions to her activities. If a body of water is *χ̣əχ̣ə ʔétkʷu*, this means that the people must respect the restrictions associated with that water (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 24 April 2000). Teit (1900:345) has recorded an example of restrictions that might be demanded by *χ̣əχ̣ə ʔétkʷu* noting that tules and roots growing near a haunted or mysterious lake should not be dug or gathered. Vegetation near such a lake is called its *sic'm*, blanket. Swamp-grass and reeds growing in the water of the lake are called its *sk'épqn*, hair. The lake, if robbed of its *sic'm*, will take revenge by visiting sickness, bad luck, or death upon the root gatherer, or by sending an apparition or death warning to the person, shortly after which the offender herself, or one of her near relatives, will die. Kinship relations of all types continue to provide important social and spiritual connections for the Nɬeʔkepmx.

In accordance with the informal social organisation, and fluidity of movement within the parameters laid down by social and spiritual guidelines, the Nɬeʔkepmx were an egalitarian society with an emphasis on band and village political autonomy (Ackerman 1995:78; Turner et al. 1990:11; Ray 1939:15,24). Leadership among the upper Nɬeʔkepmx in particular was somewhat variable and depended on the circumstances at any one time. There were also head chiefs who had control over certain regions. For example, Boas and Teit (1996: 226) mention three head chiefs who presided over bands in the Nicola Valley during the early part of the nineteenth century. The first mentioned is *Sk'ʷak'ʷes* ('sun'), who was chief of the central part of the valley. He was succeeded by *Nwísesqn* ("raised high head" or "able to be high head"), who at his death owned nearly 1000 horses. *Nkʷala*[4] or Nicolas, was head chief of the Upper Nicola-Douglas Lake region. *Nkʷala* died in 1865, and it is after him that the Nicola Valley, river, and lake are named. Head chiefs made decisions that affected all village communities under their jurisdiction, such as the division of territorial boundaries and inter-tribal negotiations.

[4] The name *Nkʷala* is the local Natives' pronunciation of Nicolas, the name given to this chief by the traders. His true inherited name is *Xʷistesmexe'qɐn* (Boas's orthography), meaning Walking Grizzly Bear. It is possibly of Spokan origin (Boas and Teit 1996:232).

Nevertheless, their power was not absolute, and they rarely made decisions without first consulting with a council of experienced Elders from the bands within their territory (Teit 1900:289; also Hill-Tout 1978:43).

At the band and village level individual families in the community made decisions on the timing of their own activities throughout the seasons, and chose the oldest or most experienced men and women as advisors and leaders subject to their immediate needs (Teit 1900:345; also Tepper 1994:xv; Wickwire 1993:548; R. Sterling 1979:103; Ray 1939:24). This system of leadership responded well to the hunter/gatherer economy of the Nɬeʔkepmx, as the nature and size of particular groupings of people, from the smallest kinship-based units to large gatherings involving diverse bands, varied with the seasonal activity and geographical conditions (Vibert 1997:132; Ray 1939:10). The extended kinship network was also self-policing, as having kin relations throughout Nɬeʔkepmx territory ensured that peaceful means were sought in maintaining co-operative inter-group relations (Turner et al. 1990:11; Ray 1939:15).

Kinship relations and the system of leadership based on immediate needs among the Nɬeʔkepmx reflect a principle of equal respect toward men and women that is typical of egalitarian societies, in which the division of labour allowed men and women their own rights and duties that were complementary and equal in value. Among the Nɬeʔkepmx, this strategic system prevented the subjugation of one gender group in favour of another, a condition that would jeopardise the harmony that was so essential to the survival of the group as a whole (Vibert 1997:133, 134; Ackerman 1995:98).

The egalitarian system of social organisation is also sanctioned in Nɬeʔkepmx creation stories, in which women and men are taught their primary roles in society (Teit 1912:321-327; see Appendix 2, Stories 2a – 2c). Old-One, the name given for the spiritual Creator of the earth in Teit's (1912) translation of Nɬeʔkepmx mythology,

> showed the women how to cook fish, meat, and roots. He made a mat, and spread the food on it. He himself partook from the right side of everything, and showed the people how to eat. They followed his example, but ate from the left side of everything. Now he

> told them, "You will not live by drinking water only, but will eat fish, meat, roots, and berries. You will also use the skins of animals for clothes, and no longer go naked." He showed them how to build lodges, and said, "Henceforth men will hunt, fish, and make tools, and women will dig roots, and make baskets and mats." (Teit 1912:327)

At the same time there was a great deal of overlap in activities with each gender helping the other when time permitted or out of necessity (Adaline Frank; Vibert 1997:132-133; Wickwire 1993:546).

This egalitarian division of labour extended to plant technology, with men tending to work with wood and women with plant fibres (Turner 1992:34; Turner et al. 1990:35; Haeberlin et al. 1928:453). Men made all the tools necessary for their work, such as fish weirs and hoop nets, traps, snowshoes, axe handles, and bows and arrows from a variety of woods. Much of these could be put together with minimal preparation of the wood, or were combined with other materials such as bone, sinew or stone to complete the product. On the other hand, the majority of women's work with plant fibres was extremely labour intensive, involving almost entirely processed plant materials (Turner 1992:34). From plant fibres they made clothes, mats, a large assortment of baskets and bags, cradles, rope, netting, and a variety of other tools and utensils necessary for their work. This role was so important that a woman's reputation in the community depended in part on her skill with plant fibres, and her ability to create not only useful, but also beautifully crafted products. As a result, women spent much of their time in the careful preparation of materials and manufacture of fibre products (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 25 Nov. 1997). This diligence has led to a reputation for excellent workmanship, particularly with cedar coiled baskets. This reputation continues to influence the quality of work of some basket makers today. Novice basket maker, Brenda Aljam, from Coldwater, is one example. "I had...read or heard that the women in our area made really good baskets, and that's one thing that I wanted to do.... The women made good baskets;...it was a known good quality...basket making area" (Brenda Aljam).

The introduction of a non-Native population precipitated many changes in the life-way of the Nɬeʔkepmx as it was at the turn of the nineteenth century. First came traders who brought with

them manufactured goods such as guns, metal tools, metal and glass containers, cloth and wool fabric, rope and netting, and materials that could be used for ornamentation. These products were welcomed by the Nɬeʔkepmx as a way to enhance their own technology. Next, missionaries arrived. They encouraged the people to give up their Native religion and conform to Euro-Canadian religious and social systems by establishing Christian churches in Nɬeʔkepmx communities, industrial schools, and then residential schools at central locations. When the Federal Indian Act was established, it imposed new systems of law and government on the First Nations of British Columbia, abolishing the traditional system of leadership and much of the ceremonial practices. The Federal government implemented a reserve system in the southern Interior of BC in 1879 and 1880, which relocated the Nɬeʔkepmx onto permanent village sites, leaving much of their tribal lands open to non-Native settlement and considerably restricting their seasonally nomadic pattern of subsistence. In keeping with these changes the economy gradually shifted to accommodate Euro-Canadian interests (Ackerman 1996:7-8; Tepper 1994:xvi; Wickwire 1980:13)

The imposition of Euro-Canadian systems had a great impact on the fibre technology of the Nɬeʔkepmx. With a reserve system in place, settlers were free to pre-empt traditional harvesting lands for agricultural pursuits, destroying indigenous plant resources in the process. Progressively increasing Federal legislation pertaining to First Nations peoples attempted to quash all visible signs of traditionalism by prohibiting institutions such as puberty rituals, give-aways, Native religious practices, and marriage ceremonies, further reducing activities in which fibre technology was an important part (Feest 1992:46). Furthermore, the residential school system discouraged the use of the language and interrupted the transmission of cultural knowledge from the elder generation to the younger, preventing scores of young people from learning traditional skills (Armstrong 1996:x; Tepper 1994:19; Miller 1990:141-143; Wickwire 1980:33). The population was also declining as a result of new diseases introduced by non-Native settlers.

Already depleted by a smallpox epidemic in 1863, the Nɬeʔkepmx suffered further losses over the next 70 years as measles, influenza and tuberculosis swept through different parts of the region (Teit 1900:175-177; also Wickwire 1980:32), taking with them many skilled and knowledgeable elders (Mary Coutlee).[5]

Among the Scw'exmx, their lifestyle of moving about Nɬeʔkepmx territory to harvest the natural resources of the land was severely reduced with the decrease in population and the loss of control over traditional lands as a result of non-Native settlement and imposed Euro-Canadian legislation until it was no longer feasible to sustain an economy dependent solely on this way of life. While some fishing, hunting, and gathering activities continued, as they still do today, the only way many Scw'exmx were able to remain self-supporting from the land was to turn to small-scale ranching and farming. Even then they often had to supplement this work by seasonal employment. Often entire families followed the circuit to pick fruit, hops, and vegetables, or women worked full-time as domestics and men as labourers at non-Native ranches (Wickwire 1980:25-26, 34). These circumstances left little time or energy to continue with such a time-consuming activity as fibre technology.

By the end of World War Two, further changes meant that reserve communities had almost totally lost their economic independence. Many Nɬeʔkepmx had abandoned their farming activities because of the increased difficulty of making a subsistence living from such small farms, and a changing economic system that favoured a permanent labour-force, or one that was available for seasonal activities such as logging, fishing, or other contract work (Wickwire 1980:34; Adaline Frank). Consequently, they became increasingly more reliant on the resources of non-Native communities for their needs, including jobs, food and supplies, children's education, and even community entertainment (Wickwire 1980:35-36). With more and more reliance on outside resources and a greater focus on individual needs, the strong kinship

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[5] According to Mary Coutlee, the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 killed so many people at Sulus that they were buried in a mass grave. Mrs. Coutlee says that, "They used to have a big cross at the cemetery where people died, and they just put, throw them in. Just a big hole.... The big cross is rotten now, so it's gone. And nobody fixed it."

network for decision-making and problem solving was no longer as effective. The power structure had changed to such a degree that many of the concerns of the people, including land use, social problems, health care, employment, and education, more often than not required the support and co-operation of external organisations. As a consequence, many of the traditional activities that provided roles and responsibilities to individuals and families, gradually disappeared, changed, or were undermined by current practices and thinking (R. Sterling 1979:80-81).

With so many changes to their life-way and fewer and fewer role models available to them, many young people had little incentive or interest in pursuing traditional activities like fibre technology. The Euro-Canadian economy, which brought an abundance of manufactured products, greatly reduced the need to harvest plants to make tools, utensils, and clothing, and older women skilled in this technology also ceased much of their production. Yet, even with so many factors inhibiting the continuance of traditional activities, fibre technology did not disappear entirely. Some women continued to make fibre products such as baskets, bags, mats and small articles of clothing for their own and family's use or as gifts, and men continued to fish with hand-made fishing nets and poles.

Ironically, the changes to the N‡e?kepmx lifeway as a result of Euro-Canadian influences were accompanied by a growing interest in N‡e?kepmx artifacts and craftwork (McMaster 1989:208-209, Duff 1965:80; Hawthorn et al. 1960:257). For several decades enterprising women took advantage of the changing economic market and made fibre products, particularly baskets, as well as beaded buckskin moccasins and gloves, to sell to the tourist market. In doing so, they were able to maintain the traditional skills while at the same time contribute to their family income.

Today there are five Scw'exmx bands in the Nicola Valley, including Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, and Cook's Ferry (Spences Bridge), with a number of people living off reserve in Merritt and elsewhere, bringing the total band membership to approximately 2494 (Loull 1996; also S. Sterling 1997:8; R. Sterling 1979:1). They occupy 25 tracts of reserve land,

twelve of which are continuously inhabited, covering an area of 68,000 acres (R. Sterling 1979:35, 39; also S. Sterling 1997:9). All these bands are under the umbrella of the Nicola Tribal Association, along with Siska, a Fraser River band, and Upper Nicola, an Okanagan band. They continue to exercise a considerable amount of band autonomy, and each band has its own chief. Kinship relations remain a strong and unifying presence in N̓e?kepmx community life.

There have been considerable changes to the Scw'exmx life-way in the last 150 years. Nevertheless, one thing that has endured is a strong commitment by a number of local people to N̓e?kepmx cultural values and traditional knowledge. Most of the people are now active in the local economy, working in joint co-operation with the non-Native population in logging, government and industry (R. Sterling 1979:2). At the same time, fishing, hunting and gathering continue to be important subsistence activities. Indigenous plants are harvested for food, and people continue to gather large quantities of roots, berries, and other foods when in season. On the other hand, the use of plants in technology has been difficult to maintain. Much of the natural habitat has been disturbed through overgrazing, logging, and development. In addition, introduced weeds are competing with indigenous species, and now considerable effort is needed to find suitable stands of some of the desired plants (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 11 March 1998; Parish et al. 1996:23-24; Miller 1990:141; Turner et al. 1990:17; Sanger 1969:189). Nevertheless, traditionally made plant products continue to be a source of pride and cultural identity for the Scw'exmx, and interest in reviving the traditional skills is growing (R. Sterling 1979:123-124).

Many N̓e?kepmx still hold a wealth of knowledge about plant technology. The Nicola Tribal Association, along with other local First Nations groups and the support of local Elders, sponsor research projects and workshops. Elders are invited into schools as part of a heritage curriculum where they pass on the knowledge about how these plants were used, and teach young people the traditional techniques necessary for production. Elders also share their experiences and knowledge with interested individuals, and teach the techniques to those who show a keen

commitment to learn. This training offers a way of retaining the cultural knowledge of plant properties and their uses, and maintains ties with the old ways. A handful of women in the Nicola Valley and neighbouring Nɬeʔkepmx communities continue in the traditional role of their female ancestors to make products from plant fibres for personal and family use, as gifts, or for trade and sale. While the great variety of the fibre products made prior to the introduction of manufactured materials are no longer produced, tule mats, cedar-coiled baskets and woven *sp'éc'n* bags, along with sewn and beaded powwow outfits, moccasins and gloves, and beaded jewellery are still popular. The creation of these items ensures a relationship to a life-way that honours the culture, as well as the land and the people who have shared it for thousands of years.

What follows is a story about Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology as an essential activity that reflects qualities that are both spiritual and material, personal and cultural, utilitarian and artistic, traditional and contemporary. The following chapters focus on each theme respectively in an attempt to explain that through the incorporation of these qualities Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology becomes an expression of beauty and a symbol of cultural identity.

Chapter two is a review of theories and definitions about First Nations art and cultures from both First Nations and non-Native perspectives found in literature spanning a period of over one hundred years. Emerging from this review are the changing attitudes towards and presentation of First Nations art and cultures in the literature that begins with strong Colonial perspectives of a "primitive" peoples whose cultures were always compared to the European standard, and gradually shifts to a strong Native voice that is redefining these Colonial interpretations of culture and art based on the authors' own cultural experiences and beliefs.

Chapter three discusses the significant contribution of Nɬeʔkepmx women to their families and community through their work with plant fibres, a responsibility they regard as having been given to them by the Creator of the Earth and all that lives on it. The discussion covers the important relationship between Elders and the young, and the years of training that girls must

undergo under the guidance of their Grandmothers in order to gain the knowledge and skills required to make fibre products. This chapter also explores the cultural and environmental influences on fibre technology, but emphasises that while cultural expectations, environment, and need all dictate to a certain extent the style and type of products made, a woman's personal experiences, ingenuity and creativity have had a great influence the development of fibre technology over the centuries, a fact still apparent among women who make fibre products today. Finally, chapter three conveys the importance of respect for the spiritual world that is apparent at all stages in the process of fibre technology.

Chapter four provides a descriptive account of a number of important plants used in fibre technology, including where and how they are harvested, how they can be prepared, and some of the techniques used to turn them into useable products. A significant aspect of production discussed in this chapter is the care given to each step of the process of making a fibre product, and the variety of materials and techniques used to create decorative designs. Such attention to detail and design is a clear indication that artistic beauty is a deliberate and important component of a well-made product.

Chapter five looks at the Euro-centric attitudes about the authenticity of First Nations art and the significant impact these attitudes had on how Nɬeʔkepmx fibre products were received throughout most of the twentieth century by the non-Native market, influencing the monetary value of these products, and to a certain extent contributing to the reduction in the production of fibre products among Nɬeʔkepmx women. Changes to the style, technique, and materials used in Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology once it became a sale item to the non-Native market prompted a long debate among the predominantly Euro-Canadian population as to the "authenticity" of products made for something other than tribal use. Missing from this debate is an understanding of the depth of meaning fibre technology has for the Nɬeʔkepmx, with personal and cultural significance stemming from the materials and techniques used, preferred styles and designs, and the values and beliefs underlying the creation of each item.

Chapter six examines the state of fibre technology among the Nɬeʔkepmx today, and what efforts are being made, particularly in the Nicola Valley, to revive this technology. In this chapter, the six women interviewed speak about changes to the Nɬeʔkepmx lifeway during their lifetime that have contributed to the decline in the practice of fibre technology, what it means to them to continue the knowledge of how to use plants in the same way as their ancestors, and how each is going about it. The chapter concludes with each woman expressing her thoughts and hopes for the young people in her community, and for the future of fibre technology.

What I hope will emerge from these chapters is a clear understanding of the cultural and individual importance of fibre technology among the Nɬeʔkepmx people, the significance of this responsibility in women's lives, and their continuing role as teachers, producers, and innovators of fibre technology as a creative expression reflecting both personal and cultural identity for the Nɬeʔkepmx.

Chapter 2: Theories and Perspectives of Native Art from Native and non-Native Voices

> "HEAR ME!" BEAT. "Hear me!" Beat. "Listen to me, our women are going to be honoured as artists!" Beat. "What?! About time!" That's what Coyote, the mythical trickster would say. (Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xv).

The body of literature concerning the use of plants in technology by BC First Nations spans a period of over two hundred years. Historical records from early explorers and traders provide descriptions of the land they visited and ways in which tribal people utilised its resources. They note the extensive use of plant products in clothing, housing, tools, and utensils, but provide little detail about the plants from which these items were made or how they were produced. Instead, importance was placed on the political and economic activities of men, as these were the people with whom traders and explorers had most contact. Catholic and Protestant Missionaries that followed focussed their interest on the social and religious practices of the people rather than the technology, and on their own efforts to instil a moral code among the Native peoples more in keeping with the dictates of nineteenth century Christianity. It wasn't until the advent of Victorian anthropology among BC First Nations that fibre technology, primarily a woman's domain, became of interest to academics, with fibre products being viewed first as a way of tracing the evolutionary path of technology to support the prevailing theory of unilineal social evolution. Unilineal social evolution argues that the primary technology and subsistence patterns of a society were the determining factors in a hierarchy of social development. This view placed European industrialised societies at the top of this hierarchy and hunter/gatherer societies, as were the Nɬeʔkepmx prior to the reserve system, near the bottom (Morgan 1988).

Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology became of interest to anthropologists towards the end of the nineteenth century during a time of major upheaval among First Nations peoples in BC brought about by Federal legislation concerning indigenous people and a rapid influx of non-Native settlement into the province. Rather than viewing these works as indicators of social development, anthropologists began to regard Nɬeʔkepmx fibre products as relics from a

domestic industry of a unique lifeway that was rapidly disappearing (Wickwire 1993:550; Berlo 1992:6; Feest 1992:9-10). The literature that emerged regarding the Nɬe?kepmx during this period and for several decades later was generally written by ethnographers of European ancestry for a non-Native audience. The influence of German-born anthropologist Franz Boas dominates much of this work.

As a counter to unilineal evolutionary doctrine Boas proposed the theory of Cultural Relativity, first expressed in a 1896 article titled "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," which argued that cultural development was a function of migration and the diffusion of cultural traits rather than evolution, and that the many different types of civilisations that co-exist at any one time can not be ordered on an evolutionary scale (Boas 1988[1896]). This theory emerged as one of the most pervasive and acutely persevering of anthropological theories to influence research on Nɬe?kepmx culture in general, and fibre technology specifically.

In order to support his theory of Cultural Relativity, Boas organised the Jesup North Pacific Expedition during his association with the American Museum of Natural History, from 1895 to 1905, to acquire data on North Pacific tribal peoples in an effort to disprove the blatantly racist nineteenth century theories of social evolution (Berlo 1992:7; Jonaitis 1992:28). Accordingly, Boas's main interest throughout the Jesup Expedition, as well as much of the ethnographic research that followed, was on tribal origin. Moreover, in order to present what he perceived to be authentic tribal tradition, Boas wanted all references to the contemporary values and personal insights of the people being studied eliminated in order to preserve the purity of the data (Wickwire 1993:550).

Three contemporary authors, Shirley Sterling (1997), Wendy Wickwire (1993), and Ralph Maud (1978), blame the overriding influence of Boas for the depersonalising of the works published under Boas's direction. Wickwire describes this type of research as "salvage" ethnography—an attempt to reconstruct "vanishing" cultures before they became "tarnished" by Western ways (Wickwire 1993:550). Boas's agenda was to provide a descriptive account of a pre-

acculturated life, and he considered the data gathered to be representative of a collective tribal past. The purpose of early ethnographic study was "not to focus on an individual life, but rather to use a single life to illuminate culture" (Bataille and Sands 1984:29). Any references to the lives of individuals would only contaminate the data (Maud 1978:11). Therefore, in most of these works individual Native voices are completely absent. This method of research set the tone for much of the ethnographic research in British Columbia for several decades to follow.

The majority of literature pertaining to Nłe?kepmx culture and technology found in the ethnographies from the turn of the twentieth century follow the ethnographic style established by Boas. From time immemorial Nłe?kepmx women have been the primary producers of fibre products. This was an important responsibility that occupied a great deal of their time. Nevertheless, these writings offer only glimpses of women's lives and make little attempt to understand or explain the contribution each woman made to her family and community through this activity. Instead, women are depicted as a homogeneous culture group, and judged by nineteenth-century European biases that viewed the value of women's contributions to society as secondary to that of men (Vibert 1997:135; Feest 1992:9). Within this climate that failed to appreciate the importance of women's contributions, it is not surprising that when detailed research on Nłe?kepmx fibre technology began at the turn of the century the focus was limited to descriptions of technique, form and function, with few references to the cultural, spiritual, and social significance fibre technology has for the individual and the community.

Despite the limitations of the Boasian method, research on the Nłe?kepmx conducted under Boas's influence has resulted in a body of significant documentation, based on recollections of local people living at the turn of the twentieth century, that attempt to piece together the Nłe?kepmx lifeway just prior to contact. For example, ethnographer James Teit's collection of myths, *Mythology of the Thompson Indians* (1912), his contribution of Thompson folk tales, titled *Folk Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes* (1917), and his *Thompson Indians of British Columbia* (1900) suggest a culture that was well-ordered and highly integrated, with a broad social

network and deep spiritual convictions. Teit's writings provide a broad description of women's activities in Nɬeʔkepmx society, including their training, special rituals, and the significant relationship of women to plants and plant products, which provides a sense of the importance of plants in women's lives. In particular, there is a great deal of data accompanied by numerous drawings describing the tools, utensils, and clothing used by the Nɬeʔkepmx. Teit, of Scottish descent, lived and worked with the Nɬeʔkepmx for many years. As he spoke fluent Nɬeʔkepmxcín, he was able to gather a great deal of first-hand information from individual members of the community. Nevertheless, following Boas's directive and editing, the stories have been translated to suit an English-speaking audience, personal narratives in any of the texts compiled by Teit are omitted (S. Sterling 1997:7), and women continue to be presented as a homogeneous, faceless group.

Boas and Teit, in their *Coeur d'Alêne, Flathead and Okanogan Indians* (1996), originally published in 1930 under the title *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus,* emphasise the extensive trade network throughout the Plateau nations, and the importance of trade in influencing aspects of individual cultures, including the Nɬeʔkepmx. This work is based on information gathered by Teit in 1904, 1908, and 1909, and edited by Boas. Teit's experience among the Nɬeʔkepmx is evident throughout the section on the Okanagan. He makes numerous comparisons to Nɬeʔkepmx products in his attempt to explain the regional types and styles of plant-fibre baskets, bags, mats, clothing and tools made by the Okanagan peoples, as well as differences in plant materials, and the dyes and paints used in decoration.

This text presents strong evidence of Nɬeʔkepmx women's involvement in extensive trade networks and of the variety of new materials, styles, and ideas that made their way into Nɬeʔkepmx territory, such as baskets, cradles, and clothing. Regrettably, it fails to highlight the adaptability that Nɬeʔkepmx women exhibited with regard to the adoption of new ideas,

techniques, and styles, or their own influence on the choices made (Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xv; Tepper 1994:8; McMaster 1989:207).

The research conducted under Boas's direction has left volumes of ethnographic data pertaining to a number of First Nations cultures in British Columbia. Unfortunately, neither Boas nor his researchers attempted to speculate beyond the data. Therefore, while the data serves to create a cultural context for the customs and materials presented, it does not show a connection of ideas or events that could explain change and provide greater insight into the thoughts and actions of the people that lead to change.

A notable exception to the Boasian paradigm is a detailed work specifically about Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology, titled *Coiled Basketry of British Columbia and Surrounding Region* (Haeberlin et al. 1928). Boas initiated this research because he recognised that previous research on this topic focussed on the origin, form, and function of the work, and he wanted to fill the gap by studying "the attitude of the individual artist toward [her] work" (Haeberlin et al. 1928:131). This text, published in 1928, is based on Teit's extensive research on Nɬeʔkepmx cedar coiled basketry, and was compiled and edited by two of Boas's students, Herman K. Haeberlin and Helen Roberts. Haeberlin et al. (1928) present an excellent detailed discussion of Nɬeʔkepmx cedar coiled basketry, covering such topics as the styles, decoration, and techniques used by different women, as well as the standards of quality to which they attempt to adhere. There is also a presentation of the comparative differences in style, design and technique among neighbouring nations.

Coiled Basketry is the first of the Boasian-influenced literature to credit the individual for her contribution to the research. The basket makers are mentioned by name throughout the text, with a biographical sketch of each woman presented in the appendix. This in itself offers a way in which future generations may learn from their specific ancestors. The two basket-makers interviewed for this thesis, Mandy Brown of Lytton, and Brenda Aljam of Coldwater, each have

relatives mentioned in this text, and use the book as a reference guide to their work, as well as that of others.

In addition to the biographical sketches, the authors note differences in individual creativity among the N+e?kepmx basket makers. They state that while basket makers certainly adhere to cultural standards of taste, "considerable variation occurs in the abilities of different women...and each woman is likewise free to exercise her own ingenuity in working out the adaptation of her design to its field" (Haeberlin et al. 1928:260). Unfortunately, other than pointing out the differences in individual's work, Haeberlin et al. do not examine the motivation behind these differences. The evidence of diversity and individual creativity found among the basket makers indicates clearly that these women experience their world in different ways from each other and from their grandmother's generation (Holloman 1996:55; McMaster 1989:219), and that it is the individual who initiates change. Haeberlin et al. fail to acknowledge this aspect, most likely because it does not fit with Boas's theory of Cultural Relativity. Ultimately, this remarkable text is about technique—from preparing materials, to executing the various designs—and still ties the art of coiled basket making to an uncompromising cultural tradition.

Ironically, the research for this volume was carried out at a time of great upheaval among N+e?kepmx peoples, and the individual women featured were experiencing many changes in their cultural and personal lives. Basket-making itself was undergoing a transformation as basket makers began altering styles and techniques somewhat to accommodate the tastes of the growing non-Native market. Despite this setting, the work of these basket makers is used to reify tradition by making it representative of a culture untouched by European influence, and the standard by which all future work is judged (Berlo 1992:4).

Boas's extensive analysis of indigenous art, titled *Primitive Art* (1955), first published in 1927, explains how fibre products produced in the midst of such a turbulent time for First Nations peoples can be deemed representative of the ancient traditions of a culture. According to Boas, all indigenous art, including N+e?kepmx fibre products, follows traditional models of

culture, with creative expression and artistic appreciation being limited by a fixity of style, following age-old principals of rhythm, symmetry, and an emphasis on form, principals Boas claimed to be universal among indigenous people (1955:349). In an effort to protect indigenous art from the "pre-civilised" label of the evolutionists, Boas's emphasis on tribal origin and downplay of individual innovation places indigenous art in a changeless, traditional past (Cohodas 1992:106). Boas's emphasis on culture as the main determinant of thought and behaviours still reflected a belief in stages of cultural development. Accordingly, he determined indigenous cultures to be inherently conservative, which accounted for the slow process of change he found in fibre products (Boas 1955).

Ironically, Boas argues in favour of a similar type of social hierarchy as that proposed by Morgan using as his model a form of technology which he now calls art. Boas did not ignore the artistic value of fibre products and individual contributions to the development of this technology, but judged them based on the prevailing European definitions of "true" artistic innovation and "fine art." According to European thought at the turn of the century, true artistry was the domain of uniquely gifted individuals who apply their talents in consciously creative ways. Fine art was created as a commodity for sale and display. By this definition, it was neither governed by cultural constructs, nor could it be utilitarian in function (Leuthold 1998:6). In keeping with these criteria, ethnographers at this time held the view that individual creativity was of secondary importance because "women confine their artistry to objects made for domestic use and appreciation" rather than for public display (Albers and Medicine 1983:123). By virtue of the fact that almost all Nɬeʔkepmx women made fibre products, to fairly similar standards, and for utilitarian purposes, fibre work was understood as an essential role of all women in the survival of the people. Consequently, the European-influenced ethnographers and collectors of First Nations fibre products determined that creative and innovative individuals among tribal peoples were rare and exceptional (Jacknis 1992:141), and that the work itself did not compare in innovative quality or character to the fine arts of Europe.

In his argument for cultural conservatism, Boas also disputes the possibility that indigenous women consciously apply new and individual innovations to their fibre work. According to Boas, individual creativity stems from unconscious selections and mastery of a number of design forms already existent from past experimentation rather than the creation of wholly new ideas (Boas 1955:158). This view is echoed in Boas's summary of Haeberlin et al. (1928:386), in which he concludes that while there is a great deal of individual variation in the work, "the range of individual invention is strictly limited by the traditional style. This is both true of the forms...and of their decorations." Boas's assumption that among indigenous peoples all thought and actions are governed by traditional models of culture was in complete opposition to the European criteria for art. The failure to recognise the uniqueness of each piece was predicated on this assumption, and ultimately led to the notion "that tribes, not people," make fibre products (Cohodas 1992:127-128).

Permeating the entire body of literature referring to Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology are assumptions of who defines the terms art and artist, what determines art, and when something ceases being solely utilitarian and becomes a work of art. These assumptions did not affect the work being produced by Nɬeʔkepmx women, who continued to make fibre products as before, occasionally adapting them to suit their changing needs. They did, however, affect how fibre products were documented and received by the non-Native population, the main market for fibre products for much of the twentieth century. Ultimately, to judge Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology as art based on European definitions justifies the Euro-centric, unilineal evolutionary interpretations of culture that set indigenous peoples apart from the "civilised" or "modern" world, interpretations that Boas was trying so hard to discredit. Boas fails to present a Native voice in his analysis of indigenous art or his analysis of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology. And while he calls Nɬeʔkepmx basketry "art," he neglects to consider the question of whether the concept of art in Nɬeʔkepmx culture may have an entirely different meaning, form of presentation, and value that defies comparison to a European ideal.

Early ethnographers and collectors who first started to gather and catalogue Nłe?kepmx artifacts rarely considered the idea that the quality and artistic beauty of a single product stem from the incorporation of multiple meanings (Leuthold 1998:7-8). This has had a very damaging impact on the market value of products made for sale outside of the Native community that has plagued First Nations fibre artists throughout most of the twentieth century. When fibre products became popular items for sale to the non-Native market, the distinction between indigenous and European art was made by modifying the term art with regard to indigenous works with adjectives like "'ornamental,' 'decorative,'" or 'folk.' These labels qualified its lesser position in the hierarchy of Western definitions of art (Feest 1992:11-12), and depicted items such as fibre products as mere handicrafts, and the indigenous creator as a craftsperson (Duff 1965:80). It was in this guise that Nłe?kepmx fibre products were presented to the general public.

An enduring debate resulting from the early academic literature about First Nations art is that of authenticity. Boas's theory of Cultural Relativity and assumptions about indigenous art helped to perpetuate that debate. Around the turn of the century there was an important transition among First Nations peoples from producing certain objects for tribal use to producing those same objects for a predominantly Euro-Canadian market. With this transition a newly fashioned Native "art" emerged, which Feest (1992) calls "ethnic art". Rather than viewing this transition as part of the developmental processes, and a reflection of creative adaptations of individuals who were very much a part of thriving indigenous cultures, those pieces that incorporated foreign materials or styles were often dismissed by the non-Native market, ethnographers, and collectors as contaminated and inauthentic (Ackerman 1996:64; Boas 1955:30). Archaeologist Marvin Cohodas (1992:90) traces the arguments criticising the authenticity of this "new" art to the European-based romantic idealisation, re-enforced in part by the Boasians, of a pristine and unchanging Native past. When Nłe?kepmx women began altering their fibre products as new materials and ideas came their way through Euro-Canadian influence, the work diverged somewhat from the "traditional" forms so carefully documented by Boas and his researchers

and was no longer considered traditional or authentic. The argument over authenticity has had a huge impact on the post-contact fibre-arts industry for Nłe?kepmx women in determining the direction they would take with fibre technology, how their work is received in the foreign market, as well as where it is displayed in galleries and museums world-wide (see Ackerman 1996; Cohodas 1992; Feest 1992; Jonaitis 1992; McMaster 1989; Dockstader 1966; Duff 1965; Hawthorn et al. 1960).

Upon researching the contemporary literature about First Nations cultures and art from a variety of culture groups, it became obvious that theoretical approaches to the study of indigenous cultures have taken a major turn away from the Boasian style of research. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, researchers began to reassess their methods of collecting data and the theories upon which analyses were based, in part as a response to outcries from the very subjects of these studies to correct the records and have their voices heard. Evidence of changing views on cultural interpretation that emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century can be found in contemporary studies of women's art from various First Nations cultures. These studies offer a much deeper explanation of fibre technology from that of the early ethnographic literature. Each study documents individual initiative, and the criteria for excellence, which includes artistic beauty, by placing fibre technology in the context of cultural history. In this way the authors demonstrate how women incorporate traditional knowledge and values with contemporary ideas and techniques to produce works that are at once an expression of cultural, historical, and uniquely individual signatures. This body of literature argues that fibre technology is and always has been a reflection of its time, and will change in directions that signify current judgements of beauty and technical demands among fibre artists, as well as environmental, social, and economic conditions (Teiwes 1996:168).

Art historian Janet Berlo (1989:308) applies the term "acculturated" art rather than "ethnic" art to fibre products made for sale to a foreign market to indicate that although change has always been a part of art, many of the alterations made to the work during this period were influenced by the demands of the dominant Euro-Canadian culture. At the same time,

because of the incorporation of traditional techniques, values, and methods of teaching, Berlo views acculturated art as affirming First Nations unique tribal identity, and as a way of maintaining ties with the old ways. It is that incorporation that substantiates the authenticity of each new piece (McMaster 1989:207).

Recent research presents fibre technology in this context as a culturally significant art form practised by a handful of women, with a focus on reviving the skills and preserving the knowledge of traditional practice, all the while incorporating ideas relevant to a contemporary world. For example, Lillian Ackerman's *A Song to the Creator: Traditional Arts of Native American Women of the Plateau* (1996) and Lynette Miller's *Basketry of the North-western Plateaus* (1990) offer thorough discussions of the numerous types of bags and baskets used by the various Plateau cultures throughout the ages. They provide comparative reports of the different plants used in fibre technology based on differences in terrain and climate in the Plateau, and the regional differences that developed in style and technique. An important contribution to women's fibre technology in both texts is a discussion of Euro-American influences on fibre technology and how women have adapted their work with the incorporation of new materials and styles. While Miller follows somewhat the traditional ethnographic style of discussing form, function and technique, without personal narratives, Ackerman (1996) presents a collection of interviews with Plateau fibre artists, conducted by First Nations women, which honours not only fibre technology as art, but gives a greater understanding of the meaning of this work for individual artists.

Leslie Tepper, as Curator of Plateau Ethnology at the Canadian Museum of Civilisation, compiled a review of Nɬeʔkepmx clothing, entitled *Earth Line and Morning Star* (1994). Part of this text looks at the importance of plant fibres in the making of clothes, and as items of trade. Tepper conducted much of the research for this book in Nɬeʔkepmx museum collections in the USA and Canada. As a result the book is filled with numerous archival photographs of fibre clothing, which illustrate the changing styles worn by the Nɬeʔkepmx and the gradual

introduction of manufactured products. Tepper also discusses the attention paid to detail in the finished product and the significance of decoration and design, in which colour, selection, and placement all have symbolic meaning for the wearer. Throughout the section on fibre clothing Tepper provides verbatim accounts from contemporary Nɬeʔkepmx women about harvesting, preparing various plant fibres, and the actual manufacture of certain articles of clothing. These are often accompanied by detailed drawings to better illustrate the techniques.

Sara Hill's (1997) *Weaving New Worlds: Southern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry* and Helga Teiwes's (1996) *Hopi Basketry* are relevant to the discussion of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology. They highlight the importance of basket making in women's lives in cultures very diverse from each other and from the Nɬeʔkepmx. Teiwes, a freelance photographer and independent scholar of South-western First Nations cultures, focuses mainly on the process and demands of basket making in contemporary Hopi culture. On the other hand, Hill, an independent scholar and historian of South-eastern First Nations cultures, traces the history of basketry over a three hundred year period to the present, showing how style, technique and material changes parallel the historic events affecting Cherokee culture, land, and lifeway as a result of colonial influences. Both texts present the women who do the work as influencing and being influenced by change, and highlight the personal insights of individual weavers, their struggle to maintain this traditional activity, the creative challenges each new piece brings, how each piece is an expression of personal and cultural spiritual ideals, the women's devotion to the land, and the intimate relationship between each woman and the basket she weaves. All of these aspects emerge in discussions with contemporary Nɬeʔkepmx women.

Anthropologists Patricia Albers's and Beatrice Medicine's *The Role of Sioux Women in the Production of Ceremonial Objects: The Case of the Star Quilt* (1983) demonstrates that Sioux quilters follow many of the same patterns as those women doing fibre work by tracing the emergence of Sioux star quilts from the original dew curtains found in Sioux tipis at the time of contact. Sioux women adapted their techniques to the new materials made available through

trade with Euro-Canadians. Gradually they also incorporated new sewing techniques introduced to them by government and church agencies, and the star quilt was created, which today serves as an important "marker of Sioux ethnicity, in general, and of traditional Sioux ways, in particular" (Albers and Medicine 1983:133).

All these texts present the individual women's voices in a context that addresses current concerns and ongoing issues that are also prevalent among the Nɬeʔkepmx fibre artists interviewed for this thesis. These include topics such as changing market demands, loss of land and plant resources, and the introduction of new materials that have influenced the style of products produced today; residential schools and the effects of epidemics, which have reduced the population of skilled teachers by interfering with the transference of traditional information from grandparent to grandchild; and the political concerns over land claims and aboriginal rights that First Nations peoples have been dealing with since they came under the jurisdiction of their respective federal governments. The women in these texts also talk about their adherence to cultural beliefs, such as the sacredness of plants, and the role and training of women. The discussion of these issues presents a picture of vibrant cultures that are very much alive in the hearts and minds of the women, and provides greater insight into the creative ingenuity of the individual, as well as her life, her concerns, and the meaning of her work to her as a First Nations woman.

Scw'exmx Shirley Sterling (1997), a sessional instructor at the First Nations Centre, University of British Columbia, stresses the importance of oral tradition as a way of teaching Nɬeʔkepmx cultural values and traditions to young people in her unpublished PhD. dissertation, titled *The Grandmother Stories: Oral Tradition and the Transmission of Culture*. She adds that as well as oral narratives, traditional objects also tell a story, and gives examples of how a woman's basket can reveal numerous tales by the way in which it is made, the materials used, its use and age. The basket also can say much about the artist as an individual, as well as about the time in which she lived (1997:128-129), revelations that were missed, ignored, or deliberately eliminated in the early ethnographic literature.

Contrasting this presentation of First Nations peoples in contemporary literature with the early ethnographies about the Nɬeʔkepmx, S. Sterling (1997:69, 84) questions the full value of these hundred-year old writings to the Nɬeʔkepmx themselves. Influenced as they were by Boasian anthropological theory, these early texts provide accounts by individual Nɬeʔkepmx men and women that have been paraphrased by the authors, and in many cases subject to further editing by Boas himself. Sterling cautions that the Nɬeʔkepmx voice is further weakened in these old writings since the information provided is homogenised into a cultural norm, with those providing the information rarely being identified.

Boasian anthropological thought effectively silenced the voice of Nɬeʔkepmx women at the turn of the twentieth century by promoting the viewpoint that culture, not individuals, determined change (Boas 1955; also Jacknis 1992:141). Boas's main purpose was to document a dying culture, and he along with his followers continued to research Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology in terms of its form, function, and technique with an interpretation of cultural meaning based on preconceived notions that left little room for input by individual artists. While valuable for what it does present, this body of literature provides little understanding of the significance of this work to the people who made it, other than utilitarian.

Contemporary writings regarding fibre technology and indigenous art, such as those mentioned above, include a strong Native voice that provides a range of thought and concerns that are both unique and common, and recognises the contributions of First Nations women to their respective societies. Literature that specifically deals with fibre technology honours the woman as artist, and highlights her individual creativity and respect for tradition that contribute to the satisfactory completion of her work. These authors demonstrate that women who practise this technology today and in the future rely on their own creative ingenuity to embrace new challenges, new purposes, and new markets. They emphasise that tradition is always changing, as are the women themselves, and for those reasons they will not be making the fibre products of their pre-contact ancestors. Nevertheless, they will be making fibre

products by tradition, drawing on centuries of cultural and botanical knowledge to guide them on their way.

Chapter 3: Women's Training and Their Relationship to Plants

> Sometimes when I'm alone at the house, I always say, "Thanks, Grandma, for what you have taught me to do." (Adaline Frank, Shackan)

From time immemorial, under the guidance of their grandmothers, *Yeye?*, generations of Nłe?kepmx girls embarked on a journey of education designed to help them find their place as women in Nłe?kepmx society. Part of this education was learning about their role as the primary producers of plant-based products. Training began at a very young age with girls becoming acquainted with the seasonal cycles and distribution of plants in their environment. Through years of observation and practice, they also began learning the techniques necessary to make functional and beautiful products, so essential to their life-way, from the various barks, grasses, reeds, leaves, twigs, roots, seeds and berries used in fibre technology (James 1972:80; Steedman 1930:453). This knowledge continued to evolve as skills were honed, needs changed, and ideas were exchanged.

The importance and intensity of a young girl's education is a commitment to women's association with the earth and plants found in Nłe?kepmx mythology (see Appendix 2, Stories 2a - 2c). Creation stories, *sptekʷɬ*, reveal women's responsibility for gathering, preparing and storing plant foods for their family, and obtaining plants for technological uses, as well as the importance of certain plants to the culture. They also emphasise the spiritual heritage of the earth and the responsibility of human beings to honour the spirits through recognition of that heritage—in nature, in the plants, and in our own selves (S. Sterling 1997:82, 128-129, 136, 226).

Sptekʷɬ teaches that the very land from which women gather plants was formed from the body of a woman when the Creator, Old-One, transformed Earth Woman and shaped her body into the valleys, mountains, and plains that are seen today.

> Her hair became the trees and grass; her flesh, the clay; her bones, the rocks; and her blood, the springs of water. Old-One said, "Henceforth you will be the earth, and people will live on you, and trample on your belly. You will be as their mother, for from you, bodies will spring, and to you they will go back. People will live as in your bosom, and sleep on your lap. They will derive nourishment from you, for you are fat; and they will utilize all parts of your body. (Teit 1912:321-322)

Old-One then created the first people to inhabit this new earth and gave them their roles and responsibilities. He taught the first woman the names of all the plants and said,

> "These only are edible." Thus the Indians learned the edible varieties of roots and the proper kinds of herbs to use. When the plants had all been distributed, Old-One made the birch bark into a basket. He also made a root-digger, and showed the woman how to dig roots. (Teit 1912:324-326)

Ever since, Nɬeʔkepmx women have been responsible for gathering and preparing plant foods for their family.

Old-One also showed the first woman which plants provided the most suitable materials for making the array of baskets, bags, pouches, and mats needed to gather, prepare, store, and cook these foods (Teit 1912:322; see Teit 1900:203; Miller 1990:137-138). The most important of these were the roots of *kʷétɬp*, Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata* Donn), sheets of bark from *qʷɬín'ɬp*, Western Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera* Marsh), stems from *ƛ̓lén'txʷ*, Tules (*Scirpus acutus* Muhl.), and the spun fibres of *sp'éc'n*, Indian hemp bark (*Apocynum cannibinum* L.), one of the most versatile materials used in fibre technology (Turner et al. 1990:35). *Spték*ʷ*ɬ* reveal that from these same plants women also made cradles, as well as an assortment of baskets and bags for storing personal effects and transporting goods from one location to another; that the twined bark fibres of *sp'éc'n*, as well as *q'ʷúys*, Silverwillow (*Elaeagnus argentea* Pursh), and *kéwkʷu*, Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* Nutt.), could be used for rope and netting; and that these bark fibres, along with certain lichens and grasses were suitable for making clothes that offered protection in wet weather, were cool in the hot summers, and added insulation under buckskin clothes during the winter months. *Spték*ʷ*ɬ* also show which grasses and bark could be used as decorative materials for clothing, baskets and bags, the assortment of dried berries and seeds, along with an assortment of shells, dentalia, porcupine quills, feathers, and bones, that could add wonderful decoration on clothing and for personal adornment, and which plants would provide effective dyes and paints to give more colour variation to the plant fibres (Tepper 1994:23, 87; Turner 1992:28; Miller 1990:135; Turner et al. 1990; Teit 1912:392).

Often the houses that the people inhabit in *spték*^{w}*ɬ* are identical to the ones women in the natural world helped to make. Using a thread of twined *sp'éc'n* they sewed together tule reeds to make large mats. These they wrapped over a pole framework to form a summer lodge. These mats also served as partitions in the *sʔistkn*, a type of subterranean winter house. Smaller tule mats of various sizes, along with those of sewn or woven *k*^{w}*uʔtéytx*^{w}, cattail leaves (*Typha latifolia* L.), on which the mythical beings dried food, slept, and ate, are also identical to those made by the human people (Tepper 1994:23).

The actual techniques associated with the manufacture of fibre products also have their origin in mythology (Tepper 1994:3-4). One popular story takes place during a time before the Nɬeʔkepmx had learned how to use the resources of their land effectively (Appendix 2, Story 4). In this story, a man travels to the moon in order to find out how the people there live. While there he learns how to make tools for hunting and fishing, weaving baskets and mats from plant fibres, weaving and sewing clothing from plants, animal skins and wool, and how to harvest, prepare, and twine durable *sp'éc'n* fibre into string for binding, weaving, and sewing. The techniques taught to this man originated with an ancient spider couple, *Sk'ék'iʔ* and his wife. They have remained with the Nɬeʔkepmx to this day (Thompson and Thompson 1992:200-227).

Underlying the practical information presented in *spték*^{w}*ɬ* is the message that all things in the natural world contain a spiritual quality that is capable of thought and feeling because all things, including plants, were at one time people, who voluntarily turned themselves into the resources that would help the new people survive (Teit 1900:357; also Ackerman 1996:126; Turner 1992:34-35; Wickwire 1980:7). Thus, the plants used in fibre technology that permeated every aspect of Nɬeʔkepmx daily life ultimately are available as a result of Earth Woman's sacrifice of her human form. Therefore, while the utilisation of the natural resources was essential to the survival of the people, they were accorded great respect and appreciation, never used wastefully, and prepared and used to the highest standard of one's ability (Turner 1992:34-35).

A woman's relationship to the plants and her responsibility for caring for and respecting the natural environment involves far more than knowledge of the plants and techniques used to turn them into useable products. There are also socially acceptable ways of behaving that she must be aware of and follow (Martin 1995:116; R. Sterling 1979:69). Women are reminded of these basic principles through stories that reward appropriate behaviour and warn of the consequences of deviating from what is acceptable. Children who misbehave might be taken away from their home by *Skelule?*, the owl (Appendix 2, Story 5) (Hanna and Henry 1995:85-86; Teit 1917:26-30). Others who do not listen to the wisdom of *Skelule?* or heed the advice of the Elders risk punishment or death (Appendix 2, Story 6) (Hanna and Henry 1995:88). Braggarts might find themselves turned into stone at the hands of *Sesulián* and *Sekúlia*, two transformers who travel throughout the region by river transforming those who are proud and boastful, while helping those who listen to and learn from their advice and instruction (Appendix 2, Story 7) (Teit 1917:13-14).

Modesty was and is a highly praised attribute in N*ɬ*e?kepmx society, and while women take great pride in mastering tasks, they are taught never to be boastful or hold an air of superiority (Vibert 1997:115). Instead, they should "let their actions and accomplishments speak for themselves" (Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xvi). Scw'exmx Brenda Aljam discusses this attribute in terms of language. She notes that in the N*ɬ*e?kepmx language, "we have action words, and that describes what somebody did, but it doesn't label them as being that." This is evident in the vocabulary surrounding the practice of fibre technology. There are no words for basket maker, for example. Rather a basket maker might be described as *k'ʷuxʷk'ʷuxʷmú ɬ*, always making baskets (Thompson and Thompson 1996: 137). Boasting and labelling tends to draw attention to oneself as "being" something rather than "doing" something. This sets a person apart from the others when harmony, co-operation and conformity are expected (R. Sterling 1979:2).

The lessons taught in *spték*^{w}*ɬ* are ageless. They reveal the material and spiritual elements of traditional plant usage and expected behaviour when working with plants that were as important hundreds of years ago as they are today (Tepper 1994:3-4). They underscore the sacredness of all things on earth, and emphasise the importance of respect and the need to strive for excellence in the fibre work that women do. Scw'exmx Shirley Sterling suggests (1997:225-226) that the notion of Earth Woman, as being embodied in the material world, "creates a predisposition to take care of an important human entity," because doing so ensures that she will provide all that is necessary for the welfare of the people. If a woman works with the highest regard for her role and responsibilities, her relationship with Earth Woman will be harmonious, and she and her family will be well provided for. At the same time, she acts as a role model for the next generation of young women, to preserve and transmit the values and traditions of her people through her work in fibre technology (Ackerman 1996:9). With such a significant role to fulfill, it is important that she be trained well for her duties and responsibilities in adult life.

Training began in early childhood when *Yeye?* assumed the responsibility of socialising and educating her granddaughters in preparation for adulthood. By accompanying *Yeye?* and observing her actions, whether it be harvesting the plants, preparing the raw materials, or actually constructing the fibre product, a young girl learns to recognise and work with plants (S. Sterling 1997:106, 108-110; Ackerman 1996:13; R. Sterling and Hébert 1984:295-296). The goal of this training was not simply to teach the child about plants but also to provide opportunities in which she could acquire the skills and knowledge needed to execute this work (Murphy 1999:5). Observation and listening are an important component to learning in this system of education and it was the child's responsibility to watch what *Yeye?* did and listen carefully to what she said. Mary Coutlee provides an example of this, remembering her own Mother's instruction when they went out gathering together:

> We went out as the things were ready.... [Sometimes] she'd talk about [the plants].[6] And she'd talk about, always talkin' in Indian. And talk about, tell it, tell us everything. (Mary Coutlee)

While Mrs. Coutlee's Mother gave her a verbal explanation about the different plants, when it came to actually working with them, she taught mainly by observation.

> You learn from doing it over and over and over.... Not so much talk, you know. It was always [just by watching her].... [She'd] show us, and if she wanted she will tell us. (Mary Coutlee)

The Nłeʔkepmx have a term for lengthy verbal instruction, *qʷincutúɬ* or xʷ *ƛ̓t ews qʷincút*, meaning talkative, talk all the time, or perpetual talker (Thompson and Thompson 1996: 295). It is frowned upon during instruction and only hinders the learning process (R. Sterling and Hébert 1984:295-296). When the child felt that she was ready to try something on her own, and if *Yeyeʔ* agreed, her efforts were greeted with support and enthusiasm. Again, few words are used in this instruction—the child is simply shown what to do and encouraged to try it for herself (S. Sterling 1997:97; Ackerman 1996:9; Quintasket 1990:34-35).

Scw'exmx Ethel Isaac was only eight or ten years old when she started learning from her Grandmother the techniques for twining *sp'éc'n* for dip nets, how to make cedar coiled baskets, and how to tan hides:

> I was sitting with her an' I was watchin' her when she, we used ta gather some *sp'éc'n* out the field. An' we brought it home, whole bunch.... My Grandmother [worked on] it every day, an' me and her takin' turns to [twine] it. She does some, her legs get raw, an' she ask me, "Your turn." So I did.... It takes us about one week to finish that string. (Ethel Isaac)

ƛ̓'q'əmcínmx (Lytton) basket maker Mandy Brown was only three or four years old when she started accompanying her Grandmother in the field, and watching her make cedar coiled baskets. Now she is carrying on this traditional method of teaching with her own granddaughters, Samantha and Cerisa:

> My little granddaughter [Samantha]...started [learning to make baskets] when she was four years old. That's the first one [an undecorated cedar coiled basket about 3 inches in diameter with a one-inch lip], she became five she finished it.... I make the holes for

[6] All the information in these excerpts come from the interviews I conducted with Nłeʔkepmx women. Words or phrases in square brackets clarify omissions in these excerpts of information that had been presented earlier in the interview, or was implied by an affirmative response to my question.

> her [holes in coils to thread the wrap], too, and she puts it in and she pulls it [the wrap].... She's seven now, and she's started another one. She's gettin' better. She learned from watching.... She works with me when I'm doing that [cleaning the cedar root]. She's right there, she likes helping. I have two little granddaughters. There's a four year old, too, [Cerisa] that's really interested.... She's trying, too. (Mandy Brown)

This teaching environment is informal yet highly controlled. *Yeye?* pays close attention to the child's level of ability and the safety of the task at hand. A child is always encouraged to learn and to try new things, but if a task is too difficult or dangerous for the child at that stage of her training *Yeye?* will not allow her to try it just yet. For example, when Ethel Isaac was learning how to tan hides, her Grandmother decided what was best for Ethel to learn at each stage of her development:

> When I was helping my Grandmother tanning hide, she wouldn't let me watch her soak the hide in the solution.... She said, "Oh, you're too young to learn, yet."... She only let me put the hide on the stretcher...an' then she tol' me just poked it aroun'. I was about ten, twelve years old. I was pretty young.... And then I was, tryin' a watch her to smoke it but she wouldn't let me near it. Too scared I might get smoked all up.... [Every] time I go near the smoke I start coughing. I never did watch my Grandmother how did she put her smoking...with the wood. Now, right now, I find out...how it works. (Ethel Isaac)

Under the watchful eye and guiding hand of *Yeye?*, young girls worked hard for many years to improve their knowledge and skills to be able to perform the tasks with technical perfection over and over again all their lives (S. Sterling 1997:246; Ackerman 1996:63-64). Prior to missionary influence, this training intensified at the anticipation of puberty. The now young woman assumed more responsibilities around the house, and underwent rigorous physical activity to strengthen her body and mind (Quintasket 1990:40; Teit 1900:311). During her first menses she was secluded in a small tipi away from her family and instructed by her grandmother, mother and aunts. During this period of training, which may last as long as four months, she prayed for good health and performed ritual activities that included making miniatures of every article she would need for her household as an adult, such as baskets, mats, rope, thread, clothing, and cradles, in order to gain the support of the spirits to help her make these articles properly from here on (Teit 1900:315, 317; also Ackerman 1996:9, 10; Wickwire 1993:546).

Through all these activities the child forms such a strong bond with her Grandmother that the teachings of *Yeye?* stay with her all her life (Ackerman 1996:13). Adaline Frank recalls with deep affection her relationship with her Grandmother and the special bond that developed during those years of her mentoring. She is trying to instil the values that she learned from her Grandmother in her own grandson, Craig:

> I was raised up with my Grandma, [and] I learned quite a bit from her. She teach me how to do things when I was young [like how to recognise and harvest the plants, and how to prepare them].... My Grandson now, when I talk to him...he talks back to me. So, I says "Listen, the reason why I'm talkin' to you," I says "I want you to be good." That's what my Grandmother used to tell me...when I was small. "I've learnt a lot of things from my Grandma. When I don't listen to her," I says, "I get the whipping." But, now [when] I'm just sittin' around by myself, I says, "Oh, thanks, Grandma for what you did to me." (Adaline Frank)

What Mrs. Frank is teaching her grandson is the key to all learning—respect. Respect acknowledges the integration of all things. This is one of the main objectives underlying a girl's training process, to recognise that all her relationships with all things must be based on respect, not just for the spiritual world but also for her Elders, for herself as a future wife and mother, and for her duties to her family and community (S. Sterling 1997:140; 226).

In N*ɬ*e?kepmx society the relationship between grandmother and granddaughter is based on mutual respect. By virtue of their life experience and position in the kinship system, Elders are held in considerable esteem, and receive the respect of the extended family. It is doubly important that the child respect the Elder who is the primary teacher in her young life if she is to benefit from her instruction (R. Sterling and Hébert 1984:296-298). At the same time, an Elder respects the child's level of ability as she progresses with her training. This respect is shown in positive acknowledgement of the child's development to encourage her to keep on trying (Murphy 1999:6).

The importance of respect is reinforced in the myths, *sptekʷ*ɬ that *Yeye?* told, reminding girls of their relationship to and responsibilities with plants, social values, and the ideals of behaviour towards which they should strive. *Yeye?* also told stories of daily events, *spilɐxm*, that transmitted

family and tribal history and told about Nłe?kepmx life, values and beliefs at various times in history (S. Sterling 1997:50; Ackerman 1996:13). Through her stories and teaching Yeye? instilled in her granddaughters a pride in being Nłe?kepmx through an understanding of "the philosophies and beliefs [of the people, and the] cultural knowledge essential for [their] survival" (S. Sterling 1997:50). She also helped the child along on her journey to find her personal relationship with the spiritual realm.

It is the responsibility of all Nłe?kepmx to recognise the spiritual entities in the natural world. This recognition is the foundation upon which their world-view is based. A recognition of and respect towards the spiritual world permeates every step in the process of fibre technology. When Nłe?kepmx girls are trained in the field of fibre technology they are expected to involve all dimensions of learning—spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental (S. Sterling 1997: 97, 225; Bopp et al. 1985:28-29, 32). The spiritual permeates these dimensions and is the uniting force upon which a woman's relationship to her work in all the dimensions of learning is based. The incorporation of these four dimensions into the work imparts a meaning to the products, which speaks to the philosophy of living in harmony with the physical and spiritual worlds.

It is on a spiritual level that a woman feels her deepest connection to the plants used in technology, and if the plants are treated with respect, they will grow healthy and plentiful and provide the products necessary for her use (Wickwire 1980:7). A woman's relationship with the spiritual realm is very personal, and as she gets more comfortable with that relationship she will find her own way of honouring and showing respect for the plants. It is not something that is taught, per se, but rather felt or observed (Brenda Aljam). While prayers and a show of gratitude are expected, each will say a different prayer, and take care of the earth in a different way (Mary Coutlee).

Prior to harvesting the plants, for example, women always acknowledge the spiritual dimension with certain rituals honouring the plants from which materials are taken, and express their gratitude towards the plant for providing the beautiful materials for use in fibre technology

(S. Sterling 1997:225). Both Adaline Frank and Maggie Shuter say prayers and thank the plants by leaving a gift behind. Mrs. Frank remembers her Elders leaving a gift of tobacco for the plant whenever they went out gathering:

> That's what they do [leave tobacco].... And they pray there, you know. Thank them, and all that.... You just talk to them...thank them [for] what you get from them. (Adaline Frank)

Mrs. Shuter also leaves tobacco and whatever else she might have to offer as her way of showing respect to the plants:

> You've gotta [respect the plants], when you go out there to pick something or other, do something, you do a prayer. And then, when you've finished pickin' you leave something behind, and do a prayer before you go.... I always leave a smoke. If I have lunch left over I leave that.... I say it [a prayer] in my mind. (Maggie Shuter)

Ethel Isaac tells the plants what she is going to make before she starts harvesting, and asks for their help by providing materials:

> Before start harvest that plants...you tell 'em you need a help. I wanna do somethin'. I wann make you real pretty.... And then the plants believe you, what you sayin', and they just give it to you. (Ethel Isaac)

When Mandy Brown has collected all she needs, she thanks the plants and promises to use them with care:

> When we finish diggin' roots, you have to [say] "thank you for your roots. I'm gonna try my best and make the best use of them," you know, something like that. But we say it in our own language. I tell 'em [Mrs. Brown's students] we supposed to thank them [the plants].... My aunt does that every time, too, before we leave the bush. She thanks the cedar trees for givin' her all these...beautiful roots that she can use. (Mandy Brown)

Showing respect for the spiritual world when harvesting plants also leads to a commitment to strive for excellence in all the fibre work women do, and a desire to master the knowledge and techniques required to make items from plant products (S. Sterling 1997:143, 225; Wickwire 1980:7). This attribute is especially important because plant products are not always readily available and women have to be very resourceful when harvesting and using the materials. Failure to observe the spiritual world is a violation of spiritual laws that can create discord in the physical world by incurring the disfavour or wrath of the spirits (S. Sterling 1997:143; Bopp et al. 1985:29). Drought, a low yield, or poor quality plants can all be explained as a consequence of

disrespect. Ethel Isaac adds that if proper protocol is not followed when harvesting plants, the spirits might haunt the women through their dreams:

> We do that [talk to the tree to show respect] when we go pickin' cedar roots, an' we do that even we go out pickin' berries. We talk to the bushes, we talk to the Creator.... [If we didn't do that] what'd happen [is when] you go asleep, you dream...that somethin' then talk to you. They tell you, "Took all the food," and all that.... When we start to come home after we're pickin', we had to call each other's name.... If a whole bunch of us out there, we have to call all those people's names...so that we won't have a nightmare. Your spirit will be still out there, bushes. [Calling the name] brings it [the spirit] back. So you don't do that an' you start dreamin' you be still out there. (Ethel Isaac)

Acknowledgement of the existence of these spirits acts as an equaliser in the relationship between man and object that eliminates a hierarchy based on dominance (S. Sterling 1997:143). For Brenda Aljam the power that humans have to take from the earth must be tempered with respect for the spiritual world as a way of ensuring balance among all things:

> I think it's [saying a prayer and giving thanks] part of showing respect and it's not just taking just because I can. I also believe that we're just part of the system, we're not on top or anything else. (Brenda Aljam)

The quality of work also determined the usefulness and longevity of an item. Therefore, among the N+e?kepmx, as well as most peoples who engage in such labour-intensive technologies, striving for excellence has always been also an extremely important goal (Ackerman 1996:129; Teiwes 1996:91-92; Dockstader 1966:20).

The years of training N+e?kepmx girls undergo in order to gain an intimate knowledge of the plants used in technology and to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to master the techniques led to a thorough understanding of N+e?kepmx culture, traditions, values, environment, and role expectations. During this period girls developed a work ethic that was grounded in cultural expectations about being female and N+e?kepmx, and an obligation to work towards excellence in all aspects of fibre work (S. Sterling 1997:124; Wickwire 1980:7).

Considering the importance of fibre technology in their lifeway, N+e?kepmx women spent a great deal of productive time in the manufacture of fibre products. Most items a woman made were primarily for her own or her family's use. Each woman gathered plant materials when in

season and made items as required (Mary Coutlee). For the most part, the work produced was of the highest standard of quality relative to an individual's ability. Attention to quality is an expression of a woman's personal relationship with the spiritual world, and a way of respecting the gifts she receives from Earth Woman. In turn, because this attitude of respect manifests in a finished product, each piece also tells a story of the woman who makes it.

With so many years devoted to learning about fibre technology, and almost a lifetime of making fibre products, an N‡e?kepmx woman, as with women in many First Nations cultures, was judged in part by how her weaving and coiling looked. Her reputation travelled with each piece made, and just as quality work brought respect, consistently mediocre quality work reflected badly on her (Jackson,[7] in Ackerman 1996:61). The N‡e?kepmx have a word for poor quality work, *sæxsxékst*, meaning 'unskillful,' 'inexpert,' or 'to do something poorly with the hands' (Thompson and Thompson 1996:324). It carries with it not only a criticism of the workmanship but also a judgement of the worker, which reflects how she will be received in the community as an N‡e?kepmx woman, wife, and mother. A woman's sorry reputation could even have repercussions on her family (Ackerman 1996:129, 131-132; Tepper 1994:116). In her role as mentor to her grandchildren, the quality of work a woman produces was equally important as this serves as an example from which the child will learn. This role would be considerably diminished were she to produce poor quality work all her life, and her teaching would perpetuate a cycle of slovenly work that brought little respect to her or her family (S. Sterling 1997:124). Therefore, learning to perfect their skills in order to produce quality work was a large part of the lengthy training girls underwent.

Socialising was very important to maintain positive relationships among the people as a whole, and when they could women often took this opportunity to work on their fibre products together, sharing new ideas and techniques as they worked (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal

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[7] Nettie Jackson is a Klikitat Elder and basket maker. Klikitat territory is in the eastern most region of the Plateau culture area, stretching north from the Columbia River. The Klikitat are members of the Sahaptin language group.

communication, 11 August 1999; also Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xvi). This was also a time to critique each other's work to insure that high standards of quality were met.

Exceptional quality is especially important if the piece were being made as a gift for someone, or for ceremonial use, as these must be made to the highest standards of skill and design as a statement of respect for the recipient or user of the product. This was particularly evident in the ritual trades that are a customary part of marriage, birth, and death ceremonies. Ritual trades served to establish sets of relationships between individuals and between communities, creating a framework of social obligations and reciprocal exchange (Miller 1990:137-138; also Tepper 1994:8). Presenting inferior quality work was disrespectful to the recipient and a poor reflection on the woman or family who presented the gifts.

The spiritual force is strong in objects made from plants; therefore, gifts and ceremonial objects demand not only exacting standards of quality, but also a positive frame of mind. Maggie Shuter says that being in a good frame of mind while working on a product is critical to how the piece will look when it's finished. If the work is done in anger,

> it won't look shiny, or it won't shine out to you. It'll have that dull, blah look.... You know, that's how, that's how I express 'em, how I make things. If I do it in anger, and then it's, I don't think it's right, I would take it apart and redo it.... You just, uh, well, myself, when I'm making stuff, like, I make Cowichan sweaters. Uhm, when I knit, if I'm angry when I do it, it takes me, I'd have to rip it apart.... Finally, I'd leave it. An' if I do it when I'm good, it takes me three days, four days to finish a sweater. And if I'm angry, or if I don't want to do it and I still do it, it'll take me weeks. And so for me to do that I've gotta feel good about it before I work on it, and it won't take me long, I'll have it done. (Maggie Shuter)

Respect, then, means working to the best of one's ability physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally at all stages of the process of making a fibre product. This does not mean that everyone has equal ability. There is always a considerable range of talent, and the work of some women will stand out from all the others. In separate studies of Nɬeʔkepmx (Haeberlin et al. 1928), and Yurok-Karok (O'Neale 1932) cedar-coiled basketry the greatest differences found among the baskets are individual, demonstrated in the technical skill of the weaver and artistic ingenuity in her choice of design, colour, and often creative and adaptive styles (Jacknis 1992:156). Among the Nɬeʔkepmx, a woman who had a particular talent as a weaver or coiled

basket maker, for example, would contribute the majority of woven items, such as clothing or bags, for her family, while another might make most of the coiled or birch bark baskets. While these women were not considered "specialists" or "professionals" in this field in the sense that they would do this work exclusive of other activities or for other people all the time, they would, according to Mary Coutlee, concentrate all their time on their area of expertise when the materials were available. They did not cook, or do laundry or other chores at this time, and others in the household would take up these responsibilities for them.

If a woman showed exceptional ability in a particular area of fibre technology, her work gained renown within her community, and she gained respect for her superb skills. People in her community outside of her family might ask her to make something for them, and give her a gift in return (R. Sterling 1979:80; Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Brenda Aljam). These women would be known as *zʷ'etmx*, someone who is good at doing things, a master crafts person (Mabel Joe and Mary Coutlee, personal communication, 22 February 2000).

Some women with exceptional talent consistently displayed technical excellence and routinely incorporated new ideas (S. Sterling 1997:246; Ackerman 1996:63-64), and it was the work of these exceptionally talented women that had the most influence on the styles, techniques and designs used within their community. As the great skill and artistry of their work gained renown within the community, some of these gifted women were approached through visitation by those who wished to observe their work and learn their superior techniques (Mary Coutlee, Adaline Frank; Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 19 January 1998). Their excellent craftsmanship inspired other women to strive to perfect their own skills and increase their creative expression (Ackerman 1996:57-59). Highly innovative ideas in one woman's work may be borrowed by others, and through creative adaptations over time may lose their origin to become part of the distinct style of the tribe (Jacknis 1992:150-151).

Nɬeʔkepmx women made fibre products depending on their needs and preferences (Mary Coutlee). Once they had mastered the basic techniques, styles and designs taught by their Grandmothers, young women were free to make their own creative decisions about the work

and to develop their skill and personal style throughout their life (Mandy Brown; Ethel Isaac; Ackerman 1996:137). Ethel Isaac says that women

> can do anything what they wanna do. They can copy it, or whatever.... She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] makes her own designs.... Her own Mom was always makin' baskets, an' that's how she started to learn.... When I make design I just make it. (Ethel Isaac)

The freedom of expression apparent in N̓te?kepmx fibre products, as demonstrated in Haeberlin et al. (1928), allows women to create deliberate signature characteristics in their work of themselves, and sometimes even of their families, as a way of establishing individual and family identities (S. Sterling 1997:120-121; Maggie Shuter). This is so apparent that women can recognise their own fibre products and distinguish the unique and subtle features that signal another individual's work (Ethel Isaac; Brenda Aljam; Haeberlin et al. 1928:227).

> Women...had their own styles, or their own designs they'd put on 'em [baskets].... From what I've heard people talking about...they could tell so-n-so's, or somebody else's. I think it's a combination [of design and] craftsmanship, or how big they make...each of the coils.... I don't know if would even be colours. (Brenda Aljam)

As long as the designs are not based on objects that are *x̱ax̱á?*, or restricted, such as the serpent, then women are free to apply anything they want to their work (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 26 June 2000).

The interpretation of similar designs may vary considerably among individual fibre artists, as well, but these interpretations also have significant tribal affiliations (James 1972:206). For instance, a diamond shaped pattern on a cedar coiled basket by Spences Bridge basket maker Xamal'ks is variously interpreted as a fish net (Spuzzum, Lytton, Spences Bridge), deer net (Spences Bridge, Nicola), a grave box and "twisting" (Coldwater) (Appendix 4, Fig. 4a). Another basket by Xamal'ks has a strong cross pattern that has been interpreted as a cross (Coldwater, Spuzzum), a star (Spuzzum, Spences Bridge, Coldwater, Nicola, Lytton), and the Morning Star (Spences Bridge, Nicola) (Appendix 4, Fig. 4b). These varying interpretations of design represent concepts that are important to each region (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 12 August 1999).

At the same time that individual innovation is freely expressed, and shared with others, cultural identity is equally important when making fibre products. Certain technical features, design arrangements, and choice of designs make it possible to distinguish cultural differences. For example, while all the Salishan tribes of southern British Columbia and Washington State made cedar-root coiled baskets, only the Nɬeʔkepmx and peoples influenced by them created baskets with fine, tightly woven, rounded coils (Turnbaugh and Turnbaugh 1985:164). Nɬeʔkepmx baskets also contrast in shape to other tribes, having broader bases and rounder corners, and a rim that is an even height along the entire circumference of the basket (Haeberlin et al. 1928:233). The designs on Nɬeʔkepmx baskets are also evenly distributed "over the whole side of the basket," whereas among the Lillooet and Chilcotin people, for example, they are found on the upper half only (Appendix 4, Fig. 3a) (Boas 1955:180).

Mandy Brown notes very clear differences in the basketry of her region around Lytton to that of other areas, particularly with the use of design. The designs the people use around Lytton are "way different than Lillooet designs," she says. "If you go to Mount Currie you'll see some designs over there that are different. You go to Lillooet they have animals there for designs" (Appendix 4, Fig. 3b).

Essentially an adherence to cultural identity in fibre work serves to continue Nɬeʔkepmx culture, and to reinforce social and spiritual bonds throughout the territory. This important concept is not restricted to the Nɬeʔkepmx. Teiwes (1996:141) notes that among Hopi basket makers while new or alternative technologies, materials and ideas are welcomed, to disregard the fundamental traditions of one's culture is to undermine the culture's basic values. Cultural identity reflects a holistic philosophy of working in harmony rather than discord with all things, and indicates the equality of all people. Among First Nations peoples in general exceptional talent does not place a person above or separate from society. With regard to the materials, purpose, and form of fibre work, women must follow and respect social rules (Leuthold 1998:49).

Among the Nɬeʔkepmx it is clear that individual women have always made important contributions to the development of fibre technology in their communities. The core of the work is traditional, based on proven styles and techniques, which have evolved over time with the transference from one generation to the next. Nɬeʔkepmx women work closely within a framework of cultural principles, and the limitations imposed by their environment. At the same time the individual is responsible for the stylistic developments of her technology, beginning with the choices of the women themselves that reflect the realities of each woman's lived experience. Thus, the styles, designs, and even function of fibre products have always been subject to individual inspiration, and exhibit individual signatures that are testament to the skill, imagination, and creative talent of the women who make these products.

Nɬeʔkepmx mythology tells us that when women were born to Earth Woman, spirit beings taught them which plants to use for making baskets, bags, mats, cradles, tools, and clothing. They also showed women the techniques necessary for preparing the plant materials and how to twine, weave, sew, and coil them into useful and beautiful products (Teit 1912:321-322). Correspondingly, these stories taught the importance of co-operation, sharing, and respect for the values, traditions and customs of the people, and what Murphy calls the "necessity and responsibility of developing certain skills" (Murphy 1999:1). Grandmothers told *sptekʷɬ* to their granddaughters in order to help them understand their heritage in the spiritual realm, and impress upon them the need to strive for excellence in all that they do as a way of showing respect to the spiritual world and gratitude for the gifts that have been provided in the natural world for them to use in their fibre work. They told them *spiləxm* in order that they know their family and tribal history, and the changes that have contributed to their present lives.

If a girl has learned the lessons from these *sptekʷɬ* and *spiləxm* and listened to her Grandmother, she will accept her responsibilities in adulthood and willingly strive to work to the best of her ability. She will not strive for perfection or personal gain, but for a quality that honours and gives thanks to the spirits who have offered their gifts for her to use (Bigcrane, in Ackerman

1996:132). Understanding one's culture, traditions, history, and values, treating all things with respect, and working to the best of one's ability are all part of living in harmony with the natural and spiritual worlds. It is a way of taking care of Earth Woman.

Chapter 4: Some Important Plants Used in Nɬeʔkepmx Fibre Technology

> Knowing that a phenomenon called basket weaving exists is the starting place. Watching a basket maker gives you knowledge of what techniques and materials you might use for different types of baskets. Weaving a basket yourself completes the process (S. Sterling 1997: 49)

In view of the years of training Nɬeʔkepmx women undergo to learn about fibre technology, their conscious selection of ideas and careful execution of the work, and the importance of acknowledging the spiritual in all aspects of the process of fibre technology, it is clear that fibre products were valued for more than their utilitarian function. Out of necessity, fibre products are first and foremost utilitarian, whether they are for personal or ceremonial use, a gift, a trade item, or for sale, and the function often influences the shape of an object, as well as its decoration; but they carry much more meaning than that (Feest 1992:14). Fibre products impart awareness that is a confirmation of cultural values and identity, women's roles, social, political, and religious organisation, environmental conditions, economic circumstances, and individual knowledge, skill, and creativity (Leuthold 1998:5-6). The beauty of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre work results from this confirmation, and women have always been very aware of its importance as a necessary prerequisite for the work to be functional, to meet standards that demand a very high regard for exceptional products, and to maintain a harmony between the natural and spiritual worlds. Underlying all of this is a strong spiritual component, which is manifest in the principle of respect and the commitment to strive for excellence at all stages of the process of fibre technology (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 14 April 1999).

These creations of excellent artistry and beauty were, and for some people continue to be, part of the practical implements of daily life, including plant-based items such as baskets, mats, cradles, and clothing (S. Sterling 1997: 14). A great deal of thought, time, creative ingenuity and development of skill went into not only the technical mastery of these items, but also their decorative appeal. Even when plant fibres were simply used to bind objects, such as securing the ends of a bow or wrapping the handle of a wooden tool, they were used decoratively, with

the colour of the fibre being considered as an attractive complement to the object ((Turner 1992:39-40; Steedman 1930:498).

Teiwes (1996:39) notes that among the Hopi basket makers she interviewed the artistic awareness that they bring to their fibre art starts at the point of collecting materials, and continues through the preparation of the plant fibres to the execution of the final product. This applies equally to N̓e?kepmx women. When women harvest the plant parts they look for just the right size, colour, and shape for the project they have in mind. For example, Lytton basket maker Mandy Brown looks for long straight cedar roots to make the wrapping for a baby's cradle. These she splits into wraps of even width and carefully matches them for size and colour in order to create a uniform finish all over the cradle (Mandy Brown). Even when making *sp'éc'n* twine for fishing nets or weaving it is important to make the twine even and as smooth as possible along its length (Adaline Frank; Ethel Isaac). Adaline Frank, Mandy Brown, Ethel Isaac, Maggie Shuter, and Brenda Aljam all agree that the uniformity of shape of the final product, thickness of the coils, tightness of the weave, the selection, execution and arrangement of the design, and the functionality of the product are all part of an awareness of quality and beauty that each woman brings to her work in order to create a well executed and pleasing product. The fact that fibre products have always been so carefully and respectfully made, with an eye for technical excellence, detail, and beauty, demonstrates that artistic awareness is not incidental. Rather an important part of making a fine product is in fact to make a beautiful product.

This chapter presents some of the ways in which certain important plants were used in making N̓e?kepmx fibre products, including plants used for decoration and to make dyes. This is by no means a finite discussion as each woman's style and technique will vary depending on how she was taught and what she has found works best for her. It would be impossible to include all the methods of preparing the plants and the variations in techniques used to manufacture products without speaking with every woman who has ever worked with plant fibres. The harvesting and preparation of each plant presented, along with the variety of techniques used to turn them

into beautiful and useable items, are examples of how women worked with, and in some cases continue to work with these plants. Much of this knowledge has been passed down through generations of Nɬeʔkepmx women.

The Nɬeʔkepmx obtained fibres and fibrous materials from almost all of the various parts of plants. For example, the leaves and stems of cattails, stems of Indian-hemp, tules, and stinging nettles, the bark of bitter cherry, willow, silverberry, and clematis, the roots of western red cedar, and Engelmann spruce, and the fruits and seeds of a variety of plants all were used to make the fine plant-based products used so extensively by the Nɬeʔkepmx in previous centuries. These materials were prepared and used in many different ways. Materials such as tules and cattail leaves required little preparation before using, but most other materials, such as barks and roots, had to be cleaned and split, or the fibrous part extracted from the surrounding tissue, and spun into thread or rope before being used to make the finished product. When making clothing, baskets, bags and mats, a combination of fibrous materials might be used to provide greater bulk, or to give more strength, flexibility, or softness to the product (Turner et al. 1990:35).

Sp'éc'n - Hemp dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum* L.)

Hemp dogbane, from the Dogbane family, Apocynaceae, is also called Indian hemp, and *sp'ec'nélɬp* (pronounced shp'ets'nélhp) by the Nɬeʔkepmx, but most often it is referred to as simply *sp'éc'n*. It is one of the most important species of plants used in fibre technology by the Nɬeʔkepmx, as well as the other Interior Salish Nations (Turner 1992:169; Tepper 1994:25; Turner 1988:286).

The Nɬeʔkepmx used *sp'éc'n* thread for a number of purposes. With varying thickness of thread they made fishing nets and lines, bow strings, binding for tools, and long ropes with which to string roots for drying. Most of the fibre clothing was woven using *sp'éc'n* thread as the horizontal, or weft fibre. The strength and flexibility of this spun fibre permits the pulling and twisting of the fibres that is part of the weaving process to get the fibres snug and even (Tepper

1994:25; Turner 1992:171). *Sp'éc'n* thread was also used to sew skin clothing, and for sewing and binding mats made from tules and cattails. A very fine *sp'éc'n* thread was also occasionally used in place of sinew for sewing beads and quills onto clothes as decoration (Tepper 1994:27). The N+e?kepmx also made bags of various sizes and shapes woven entirely of *sp'éc'n*.

Sp'éc'n is an erect bush perennial growing up to 1.5 metres (five feet) tall, with smooth, reddish stems and many opposite, finely pointed, lance-shaped, yellowish-green leaves 5 - 11cm (two to four inches) long. The leaves turn golden-yellow in the fall, which to the N+e?kepmx indicates the proper time for harvesting the stems. The flowers, which bloom in summer, are small, tubular, and greenish-whitish, borne on the ends of stems and in stem branches (Turner 1992:167, 169; Parish et al. 1996:190).

Sp'éc'n is common in the southern Interior and grows particularly well in dry valleys and slopes, forest openings and along roadsides. Areas with a good supply of ground water tend to produce the tallest, thickest plants (Parish et al. 1996:190; Turner 1992:169). In the Nicola Valley some of the best stands of *sp'éc'n* from which to extract the bark fibres grow around Merritt, at Coutlee, about halfway to Sulus from Merritt, and at Canford (Mary Coutlee; Ethel Isaac). Other places yielding high quality *sp'éc'n* are found near Spences Bridge (*Spatsum*) and Lytton (Nicomen) (Turner et al. 1990:161).

Sp'éc'n is best harvested in the fall after the leaves begin to turn yellow, usually in October or before the first snowfall, but certainly before Christmas. At this time the stalks are dry but the fibres are still fresh and strong (Adaline Frank; Ethel Isaac; Tepper 1994:26; Turner et al. 1990:161). Ethel Isaac says that if *sp'éc'n* is harvested too late in the season or in springtime the fibres will be too brittle to withstand the constant pulling over a piece of wood in the cleaning process. They will break into small pieces instead of staying in long, fine strands. Mrs. Isaac tried to work with some *sp'éc'n* fibres she harvested in the spring but found them very weak, "all shreddy." She says that

> "it's not s'posed to be like that when you first get 'em on the fall time.... When you cleaned it [referring to *sp'éc'n* harvested too late], it'll be nothin', just little [strands] left there. I got it too late. Wait too long" (Ethel Isaac).

When women harvest *sp'éc'n* they look for the tallest plants and select branches with the reddest bark, indicating that year's new growth, as these yield the strongest fibres. They cut these branches as close to the ground as possible (Ethel Isaac). The useable part of the *sp'éc'n* plant is the bark. This is cleaned and scraped to extract the tough fibres. The *sp'éc'n* fibres are then twined together to make a strong, yet soft and flexible thread, string, or rope that could be used for sewing, weaving, making nets, or binding.

Sp'éc'n fibre may be prepared in two ways, wet or dry, but first all the branches and leaves must be removed from the main stem. To remove the bark using the dry method, some women would split the stem in half with a sharp knife or stick, and then flatten or crush it by pulling the split stem over a pole tied to a tree or by stepping on it. The woody core of the branch is then peeled away leaving the outer bark. Annie York says that once the branches are cut and dried, they are then beaten with a stick to soften the woody core and loosen the bark fibre (Turner et al. 1990:161).

Pearl Hewitt experimented with both dry and wet methods of removing the bark when she made a *q'ʷúys* and *sp'éc'n* cape for the Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa. To prepare the *sp'éc'n* when it is dry, Mrs. Hewitt split the branch in half and crushed the woody core by stepping on it. This made it easier to peel it away from the outer bark. To separate *sp'éc'n* fibres from the branch when it is wet, first Mrs. Hewitt spray-soaked the branches or soaked them in a large container until they were wet right through, if they were very dry to begin with. She then split them down the centre with a pointed wooden stick and flattened them out. If the branch has been adequately soaked through the outer bark will come away easily in a long strip when it is pulled down and away from the inner core. These strips can now be bundled together and hung by their tops to dry. As long as the storage area is cool and dry the bark strips will not deteriorate for a long time (Hewitt 1994:203, cited in Tepper 1994:126; also Turner 1992:168-169; Teit 1900:190).

Once the bark is thoroughly dry the fibres can be separated from the outer bark. This is done by pulling the bark strips over the sharp edge of a small, narrow board or the back of a knife, applying light pressure with the thumb to the bark at the point where it contacts the board. Too much pressure or pulling too hard on the bark will cause the fibres to break in small pieces (Ethel Isaac). An alternative method to separating the fibres is to work them between the fingers until the red outer bark and other non-fibrous tissue breaks away, leaving only the soft whitish fibres. The result of a properly cleaned strip of bark is a length of soft fibre composed of many fine strands without any pieces of the woody core. As with the bark, the cleaned strands can be stored indefinitely if they are kept in a cool, dry place (Teit 1900:190; Turner et al. 1990:161, 163; Turner 1992:168-169). *Sp'éc'n* fibres must be allowed to dry thoroughly before storing, otherwise they can become discoloured and mildewy. At the same time, if the storage place is too hot, the heat will dry out the natural moisture in the material making it brittle (Ethel Isaac). A single stem of *sp'éc'n* four to five feet in length provides only about two and a half feet of one ply string, or half the branch's length, as much of the fibre is lost in the splicing process (Tepper 1994:26; Turner 1992:168-169).

When the worker is ready to use them, properly stored fibres need only be dampened slightly to help them stick together so that they may be twined more easily. To twine the fibres into rope, string for netting or binding, or thread for sewing, a bundle of fibres are held tightly at one end between the thumb and fingers to create tension on the strands. These are dampened slightly and separated into two strands of equal thickness. The strand furthest from the body is rolled with an open palm away from the body down the thigh or over the knee to twist the fibres together. This procedure is repeated with the second strand. Now these two twisted strands are placed side by side and rolled together up the thigh towards the body (Adaline Frank; Ethel Isaac). This procedure can be reversed, i.e., rolling first towards the body to create individual strands, and then twining the two together by rolling them away from the body (Appendix 4, Fig. 5). Twining is most successful when done on the bare leg, a piece of buckskin laid over the thigh, or if the person is wearing tight-fitting jeans as this helps to create more friction, allowing

the *sp'éc'n* fibres to be twined more tightly. Maintaining the proper tension on the fibres is important to produce the optimum tightness of the twine. If the twining is too loose it will be weak, but if the strands are too tightly twined the resultant string will be inflexible, and not as long-lasting.

To create a longer string, it is best to leave up to twelve inches of untwined fibres at the end of the spun twine, depending on the thickness of the twine, and splice a fresh bunch of fibres into that. It is important to splice the thicker end of the new bunch of fibres into the thin strands remaining on the twined strand. That way when these are twined together there will be no sign of the splice and the string will have an even thickness along its length. The result is an unbroken two-ply string that can be as long as a person wants (Tepper 1994:26; Turner 1992:168-169). Completed *sp'éc'n* string can be stored by wrapping it into a ball around two sticks formed in a cross.

When sewing with *sp'éc'n* a wooden, bone, or steel sewing needle is threaded with *sp'éc'n* and new fibres are spliced to the end of a strand rather than re-threading the needle. In this way there are no broken seams or knots where the ends have been tied together (Tepper 1994:27). This splicing on is also done for weaving, or making a net.

Ethel Isaac explains how she used to make *sp'éc'n* twine with her Grandmother.

> We used ta...gather some *sp'éc'n* out the field. An' we brought it home, whole bunch. An' then...at night...she [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] soaked it inna water, sprinkled it to get it damp. The whole branch. And, then she wrapped it up with...[damp] canvas after she wet it, and she said, "We're gonna leave it there all night. We'll do some work at night."... We did do that [the next] night before we go to bed.... After supper...we start breakin' up those *sp'éc'n*.... And then we do that 'til we go to bed. Then start gatherin' it up, all those barks referring to the cleaned bark before the fibres have been extracted], an' then we hang it up and dry it.... What takes about two, three days to dried it up....And then we start take the [fibres] off out of that [bark]. Then we start gatherin' it up, and then we took two strands and we roll it up an' roll it down [along the thigh] to make a string...onna bare leg. An' then my legs gets rashed. (Ethel Isaac)

The thickness of the individual strands of twine depends on how many fibres are used in each strand to be twisted (Maggie Shuter; Turner et al. 1990:161). If a strong rope is needed, it is better to twine two, four, or multiple strands of twine together rather than twining two fat strands (Turner 1992:37-38). Properly twined *sp'éc'n* thread is really strong, and it doesn't shrink (Adaline Frank).

Even very thin thread "is difficult to break with the hands" (Turner 1992:168-169). A good *sp'éc'n* rope can have a breaking point of several hundred pounds (Turner et al. 1980:73; Steedman 1930:498).

The colour of *sp'éc'n* depends on when and where it is harvested, and the age of the branch, varying from a very light tan to reddish brown and grey (Miller 1990:139; Turner 1992:168-169). The colour can also be varied with dyes. Sp'éc'n accepts a dye well simply by soaking the twine in a water-based dye solution.

Because of its strength and the fact that *sp'éc'n* twine will not shrink under water, the Nɬeʔkepmx used it extensively for making fishing lines and nets[8]. Fishing lines were sometimes dyed with red alder bark to make them less visible to the fish (Turner 1992:170-171; Turner et al. 1980:149; Steedman 1930:498). A gill net of Indian hemp was used in the lakes around Merritt (Teit 1900:249).

Ethel Isaac's Grandmother taught her how to make the large dip nets used for taking salmon from the Fraser River using *sp'éc'n* thread.

> When we start rolling the string we have four balls [about six inches across] made for one dip net....Takes four of them to make one dip net....They had to gather lots of *sp'éc'n* to make it....And it takes us about one week to finish that string. (Ethel Isaac)

This made a net about three to four feet deep. This net is then hung from a hoop-shaped frame about three feet in diameter, which is attached to a long, slim pole about six feet long, both of which are made from fir. The net is hung from this hoop by attaching it to hoops made from cow or bullhorns that are threaded over the fir hoop. The horn hoops must be loose enough to slide easily over the main hoop frame. When the net is tipped upwards it slides down the hoop and closes.

> That's what they call that...slip net. When...the fish touch that net and you let that string go, it go right down to the end of the hoops. So the fish wouldn't get away. That's what they call a *stúkʷcn*. (Ethel Isaac)

Mrs. Isaac says that a much smaller version of this same style of net is used for Kokanee fishing on the lakes.

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[8] See Teit 1900:249-250 and 252-254 for a detailed description of fishing nets and lines.

> I start to learnin' how to make a real fine, thin, thin *sp'éc'n* to make a kukanee fish [Kokanee fishing net]....We had to make a half an inch of squares, or knots. That's for the Kokanee. But for makin' that salmon [dip net] we have two...three inch thicks. [And much] smaller hoops, like those fishing hoops. (Ethel Isaac)

Adaline Frank says that the *sp'éc'n* rope used for a dip net is twined to about 2mm (1/8in.) thick. She says that the holes for a salmon dip net are about four inches and for a kokanee net about two inches (Adaline Frank). She describes the Kokanee net as being about a foot to a foot and a half wide, and about a foot and a half deep. "You don't fish right in the lake, you fish off the lake. Like...when they spawn they go up in the...creek....If it's running through there and then they go up there" (Adaline Frank).

Today manufactured nets are made using a green cotton twine, which is far inferior in strength and durability than *sp'éc'n* thread (Adaline Frank).

Sp'éc'n thread can be made so strong that it was even used to make large nets with a wide mesh to capture deer. These nets, two to three metres (6-10 feet) high and anywhere from fifteen to sixty metres (50 to 200 feet) long, were set up at night and had to be fine enough so as not to be visible to the deer, and strong enough to secure a tangled and struggling deer. They were set up in the woods in a half moon or a circle shape, or strung across an open area, by tying the net to trees and bushes. Light poles were sometimes used to prop up the centre of very large nets to prevent sagging. Deer that were caught in the nets were then clubbed, shot or speared (Boas and Teit 1996:209). *Sp'éc'n* twine was also used to make slings, snares, bridle ropes, nooses for game birds, hide stretchers, and binding for implements (Turner 1992:170-171).

Sp'éc'n bags were popular because they proved to be lightweight and very flexible, yet durable enough to withstand the daily wear and tear on them and strong enough to carry the weight of roots, dried berries, fish, or nuts (Miller 1990:140-141). This weaving tradition is unique to the Plateau tribes, and can be traced as far back as 9,000 years on the Columbia River Plateau (Ackerman 1996:110; Miller 1990:139).

Mabel Joe says that the weaver began these bags from the bottom, weaving her way to the opening. Some were made in a complete circle so that there are no side seams that needed to

be stitched up. The weaving process requires enough longitudinal or warp strands of *sp'éc'n* thread to make up the circumference of the basket. These strands are interwoven with two strands of weft threads worked over and under the longitudinal strands from opposite directions. They are continually pushed tight against the previous weave to prevent gaps in the weave and make a stronger bag (Appendix 4, Fig. 6). Care must be taken not to make the weave too tight, though, or the bag will be too stiff to be of much use (Mabel Joe, personal communication, 30 November 1999). Nɬe?kepmx women also made wallets to carry personal effects in this same manner using *sp'éc'n* twine.

Women sometimes decorated *sp'éc'n* bags using a technique called false embroidery, in which coloured grasses or bark twine are wrapped around the outer weft fibres so that they appear only on the outside of the bag (E. Jensen 1991:114; Miller 1990:140-141; Teit 1900:190). The name of this technique is derived from the fact that the end result resembles regular embroidery stitching, only it is not visible from the inside of the bag (Feest 1992:126; Miller 1990:144).

Designs are an important part of many fibre products. They add an element of artistic beauty to the finished product, as well as act as meaningful symbols of cultural, regional and personal identity. Turner et al. (1990:42) also suggest that designs also protected the underlying material helping the product last longer. The designs of flat twined bags used to be more or less a repetition of a single design of triangles, diamonds, squares, zigzags, stripes, and stepped bands to form a pattern that represented any number of things important to the Nɬe?kepmx. The pattern would then be repeated in one or more colours. Women occasionally used one or more colours in the design materials to create a dark/light contrast, with the background colour being the natural shade of the *sp'éc'n* (Feest 1992:113). A number of different materials have been used to create designs in false embroidery including plant materials such as bear grass and natural or dyed corn husks (Miller 1990:144). During the early part of the twentieth century more naturalistic designs began to be applied, such as flowers and animals. Rather than using contrasting plant fibres, women used brightly coloured yarns.

Spreading dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium* L.), also called *sp'éc'n*, and from the same family, is similar to Indian hemp only with shorter, more branching stems, drooping, oval-shaped leaves, and fragrant pink flowers. It is more widespread throughout the province than Indian hemp, and is used for the same purpose when that plant is not available. The Nɬeʔkepmx, as well as other First Nations familiar with the superior qualities of Indian hemp, considered spreading dogbane to be inferior (Ethel Isaac; Parish et al. 1996:190; Turner 1992:169; Turner et al. 1990:159).

According to Ethel Isaac and Mary Coutlee, all plants have male and female types. Indian hemp is considered the female type of *sp'éc'n* and spreading dogbane is the male. Mrs. Isaac describes the difference this way:

> The...male's got lots a bushy. [That's the shorter one]. All those sticks. Too much. This is the female, it's just straight, hardly any branches, maybe on the top. An' that's the best one for the female. The male is got too much, an' it breaks up, you know, an' hardly any left in there, ever too much.... I don't know [why it's called male and female]. That's what my Grandmother was tellin' me.... I think all kinn'a plants are like that, even the trees...the males and the females. I don't know what is the difference with them, the trees, too. Even the flowers, like flowers.... I don't know how is the man's flowers look like and the lady, woman's flowers. They do that, too. (Ethel Isaac)

The Nɬeʔkepmx occasionally used milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa* Torr.), also called *sp'éc'n*, as a poor substitute for hemp dogbane when it was not available to make a twine for binding and tying (Teit 1900:190). Milkweed stems are harvested in the fall at the same time as Indian hemp, and the fibres are extracted from the bark and prepared in the same manner. Among the Okanagan, milkweed is sometimes called "Coyote's Indian hemp" in reference to a legend in which Coyote turned some milkweed plants into Indian hemp by urinating on them in order to be accepted by an old woman whose two granddaughters Coyote wanted to attract (Turner 1992:174-175; Turner et al. 1980:74).

In addition to milkweed and spreading dogbane, bark fibres from sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* Nutt.), *kéwkʷu*, and Western white clematis (Clematis ligusticifolia Nutt.) and orange honeysuckle (*Lonicera ciliosa* [Pursh] DC.), both known as *q'æc'q'æc'usnín'us* (*lit.* 'weaving,

twining'), were sometimes used if Indian hemp was not available, but none compared to the softness and strength of twined *sp'éc'n* (Steedman 1930:498(209).

ɬ'lén'txʷ - Tules (*Scirpus acutus* Muhl. ex Bigel)

Tule stems were one of the most important mat-making materials used by the Nɬe?kepmx (Turner 1992:150; Teit 1900:188), as well as several other Interior Salish tribes (see Boas and Teit 1996:182-183; Turner et al. 1980:36-37). Tules, from the Sedge Family, Cyperaceae, are also known as round-stem bulrush and great bulrush. This perennial, which grows in dense colonies in marshes and swampy ground at the edges of alkali lakes and streams, shoots straight up from rhizomes to a height of from one to three metres (3-10 feet) tall. Tules are fairly widespread throughout British Columbia, but grow especially well in the Southern Interior (Parish et al. 1996:355; Turner 1992:127, 129).

Known to the Nɬe?kepmx as *ɬ'lén'txʷ* (*lit.* 'wading foliage'), the long round stems of tules begin with a base as thick as three cm (1¼ inch) and taper toward the top, ending in short branches with clusters of brown spikelets bearing the leaves and seeds. The stems are white at the base, turning to dark green towards the top. Their centre is a tough, pithy core (Parish et al. 1996:355; Turner 1992:129).

The Nɬe?kepmx harvested tule stems in late November after they have turned brown. They can also be harvested earlier while the stems are still green to add a contrasting colour to the mats, as they will stay green once harvested, but according to Adaline Frank they become quite brittle once they are dry when harvested green. "It's strong...when they're brown" (Adaline Frank).

Nɬe?kepmx women harvest tule stems by either pulling them up by the roots or cutting them with a knife as close to the base as possible. Once harvested, the stems are tied in large bundles and taken home where they are spread out to dry and sorted by the length and width of the tule. Once dry the tules are put in bundles based on their length and width. Each bundle

is then trimmed to equal length before being stored or used. Care must be taken not to bend the stems at any time during the process or they will be useless for mat making.

Since tule reeds taper towards the top, mats are made by laying them side-by-side, alternating top and bottom. Originally they were sewn together with a continuous length of *sp'éc'n* cord threaded through each tule using a long wooden, or deer bone needle. With the adoption of European manufactured materials, women began using steel needles and cotton thread to sew the tules together. This threading is placed at intervals of three to six inches apart, depending on the size of the mat. Once the tules are sewn together, the edges are twined tightly together with two lengths of the same tough twine alternating over and under the edges (Appendix 4, Fig. 7-c) (Adaline Frank; Ethel Isaac; Teit 1900:188; Turner 1992:129; Miller 1990:148-149).

Other fibres can be used to thread and bind tule mats as well. Ethel Isaac substituted sinew for *sp'éc'n* to bind the edges of a small mat she made. "I cheated on that...'cuz I s'posed to use the *sp'éc'n*" (Ethel Isaac).

The strands of thread are left long at each end of the mat in order that a straight branch can be tied to the ends of the mat. Teit (1900:188) says that this branch is usually from a wild rose bush, but Ethel Isaac says that women used a variety of woods for the ends of their mats.

> Red willow stick for the en' of that tules.... Red willow or...silver willow stick.... Took the barks off. It keep it shape outta that tules. Wouldn't be break up, eh. Any kind of stick...red willow, or silver willow, or red rose...as long as the stick's straight stick. (Ethel Isaac)

The outer bark of the stick is removed, leaving only the inner bark to prevent the branch from splitting.

Securing a stick to the end of the mat had the double duty of not only providing a rigid edge for the mats and holding the tules in place, but it also helped to prevent the mat from curling. If the tules used in a mat get too dry they may begin to curl, causing the mat to become misshapen. The stick will help prevent that from happening to a certain extent. According to Ethel Isaac, in the event that the mat does dry out, it can simply be dampened and rolled up to

help straighten out the tules. "You soaked it an' role it an' covered it up for one night. It'll make straight" (Ethel Isaac). To prevent tule mats from curling when in storage they are rolled up. "When...they put it away, they usually role it up. They role it up an' they tie it, an' they put it in, they covered it up with a canvas, an' they hang it up. They [tule mats] last a long time" (Ethel Isaac).

The use of a rose branch for the ends of the tule mats also underscores the spiritual significance plants have for the N̓e?kepmx, as wild rose is considered to have spiritual powers that ward off evil influences (Ethel Isaac; Steedman 1930:504; Teit 1900:332).

> Wild rose bush s'posed...be good for spirit. Keep the spirit away when, like, you gettin' ghosted. They break one, an' you putted on one each room, or put one in the bed, on the bed, underneath your mattress. But make sure you take all those prickly off.... An' put that in there...so it wouldn't bother you inna mornin'. (Ethel Isaac)

Some people also hung a rose branch above the door of their house to prevent evil influences from entering. At the time when people lived in summer lodges that were wrapped in tule mats, tying a rose branch to the ends of each mat most likely offered this same protection. Teit (1900:188) does not mention any particular species of wild rose and notes that all were used, but Steedman specifies the Bald-hip rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa* Nutt.), *kʷə'kʷm'em'qsé ɬp* or *sk'epy'é ɬp*, as the one most often used (Steedman 1930:504). Turner (1988:283) mentions the use of the Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana* Presl), *skʷəkʷew'é ɬp*, "and several other wild species" for these purposes.

Large mats, measuring up to 2 by 3 metres (6 by 10 feet), were used for roofs and walls of temporary shelters, summer lodges, and tepees. The process for making a mat this size could take several weeks, beginning with the harvesting of materials, sorting, drying and trimming the tules to size, cleaning and twining the *sp'éc'n* fibres for sewing and binding, and finally sewing the tules together and cleaning and attaching branches to the ends. Over 100 feet of *sp'éc'n* twine is needed to sew such a large mat, which alone can be a two-week labour intensive chore to prepare. In order to supply enough twine for a 10 x 6 foot tule mat, the mat-maker had

to harvest and clean over 100 stems of Indian hemp, 1.25 to 1.75 metres (4 to 5 feet) in length, to produce the necessary length of two-ply twine (Tepper 1994:26).

Round summer lodges, anywhere from 5 to 7 metres (15-20 feet) in diameter and up to 4 metres (12 feet) high, were completely covered with overlapping layers of large tule mats, requiring as many as thirty-six mats to thoroughly insulate the lodge from the elements. The mats were spread from the bottom up over a framework of poles in much the same way that Plains' tipis were covered with a hide or canvas cover (Teit 1900:195-196). This type of home offered a convenience of travel for the semi-nomadic Nɬeʔkepmx because they could be folded into a compact bundle and carried on a packhorse, lashed on top of the load. The people usually left the poles behind because they were easily acquired at each camping place (Quintasket 1990:17; Teit 1900:195-196; Turner et al. 1990:40).

The Nɬeʔkepmx made good use of the insulating qualities offered by the spongy, pithy centres of tules and lined the walls of winter houses, *sʔistkn,* with the mats. They also used the mats as room partitions in those houses, and laid them on the dirt floor to provide seating areas. A doubling up of the mats made a relatively comfortable bed (Turner 1992:130; Turner et al. 1990:116; Miller 1990:62-63; Turner et al. 1980:149; Smith 1975:423). Fishermen used small mats as insulation when kneeling on a cold surface such as when ice fishing (Tule Mat Project 1997:16). Tules have a waxy coating which is excellent for repelling rain, and their pithy centres swell in wet weather, making the mats water tight. Sometimes Nɬeʔkepmx women made capes from tules because of these properties (Boas and Teit 1996:191; Turner et al. 1990:116).

Not long after the Nɬeʔkepmx were provided with wood-frame houses on reserve settlements, the use of mat lodges for summer homes gradually faded out. Still, Nɬeʔkepmx women continued to make tule mats for use as food trays, floor mats, and drying mats (Parish et al. 1996:355; Teit 1900:199; Turner 1992:130; Turner et al. 1990:116). Today some people have even turned tule mats into decorative wall hangings and placemats, using oil paints to paint

designs directly on to the mats. It is necessary to use oil-based paints when painting tules because their waxy outer coating prevents water-based paints and dyes from adhering.

The technique for making the mats today has remained essentially the same as that used at the time of contact, either sewing or plaiting the stems together, but jute or cotton string, rather than *sp'éc'n* thread is used almost exclusively now for the edge binding (Miller 1990:139). When Mary Coutlee made tule mats as a child she sewed the tules together with cotton.

> I made those [tule] mats. My mother made me do it.... We made the tules and we used it.... We...did berries, *scéqʷm* [Saskatoon berries]. [The mat] was as big as the bed. (Mrs. Coutlee says that she put the berries on one side of the mat, and then as they dried she moved them to the other side). When it's getting dry, that's when you move it [the berries].... My mother used to say. "Don't eat...the berries [before they're dry]. The birds will see you and then they'll eat it." [She says that the animals will laugh at you and eat them too]. So, I never, never. Like when I'm moving it around [I never ate the berries]. I believed her.... Nobody dries fruit [using tule mats] now. My children, my daughters have [food] dryers. (Mary Coutlee)

Ethel Isaac says that it takes about two days to dry berries when they're laid out on a tule mat.

Apart from mats, tules were used for other purposes as well. Sometimes the Nɬeʔkepmx made bags from flattened tules. These were usually woven with some other fibre, such as *q'ʷúys* or *sp'éc'n*, and used to store dried foods, such as meat, fish, and berries (Turner et al. 1980:36-37). Nɬeʔkepmx fisherman used tule bags and creels for holding fish and fishing material (Boas and Teit 1996:183-184). According to Steedman (1930:497) tules could even be used for making nets. A small, thick piece of tule also made an excellent floater when tied to a fishing line (Tule Mat Project 1997:17)

kʷu ʔéytxʷ - Cattails (*Typha latifolia* L., Common Cattail, or Bulrush)

Another common mat-making material used by the Nɬeʔkepmx is the long, pithy, tough leaves of cattail, from the Cattail family, Typhaceae. Known as *kʷu ʔéytxʷ* (*lit.* 'immerse-foliage'), the Nɬeʔkepmx considered this to be a close relative, or even "a kind of" tule (*Scirpus acutus*) (Turner et al. 1990:144).

Cattail often grows in dense, isolated patches at low to mid elevations in wetlands with slow-moving or standing water (Parish et al. 1996:359). The long, round stems, similar to tules, can reach a height of 2 metres (6 feet), with a tube-shaped spike at the top made up of male and female densely packed flowers. The Nɬeʔkepmx made mats with the flat, slender, long and somewhat spongy leaves of this plant. Scw'exmx elders Julia Kilroy, Bernadette Antoine, and Willie Stewart of Coldwater recalled in an interview with Turner that mats made with cattail leaves were used as mattresses, wall insulators, place mats, 'trays' or plates, and in constructing temporary summer houses" (Turner et al. 1990:145). The Nɬeʔkepmx called these mats *szelt ƛúy* (*lit.* 'real/typical-plate/mat') (Parish et al. 1996:359; Turner et al. 1990:144).

Cattail leaves are harvested in the fall around the same time as *sp'éc'n* and tules. Ethel Isaac remembers her Grandmother harvesting cattail leaves to make mats. "They picked it on the fall time, when it get yellowish...just like the way that *sp'éc'n* is" [referring to when *sp'éc'n* leaves turn yellow indicating the time for harvesting] (Ethel Isaac). Women gathered as much as they needed at any one time. Gathering the stems and leaves in large quantities does not deplete the population to any measurable degree as these plants grow in large patches, and new plants will emerge from the rootstocks the following year. The same is also true for *sp'éc'n* and tules (Turner 1992:10). Harvested cattail leaves need very little preparation before using them except to wipe them clean and keep them flat.

When making cattail mats Nɬeʔkepmx women often sewed the leaves together in the same fashion as tules, laying them down in alternating directions. After they had sewn the leaves together they trimmed the ends of each leaf, folded it over and bound it with *sp'éc'n* or cotton twine to create an edge that would not tear apart (Turner 1992:39; Miller 1990:148-149). Mabel Joe says that a thread made from q'ʷúys fibres was often used instead of *sp'éc'n* to sew cattail mats (personal communication, 30 November 1999).

Ethel Isaac explains how her Grandmother made mats from cattail leaves using a different technique.

> They have it...bulrushes leaves like this [indicates laying flat, side-by-side] an' then they stitch it [with *sp'éc'n*], make it like a number eight [demonstrating how the thread is twined in and out of the cattails]. It's just like the way you make 'em like tules....An' there's the bulrush, those leaves, she [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] did that same thing with...the tules, but not needle through, but she did [the figure eight]. Over, over and under, [indicating that she would not put the needle through the leaves, she would just bind them together with the *sp'éc'n* twine]. Because it's flat, eh. Or sometimes it goes like that. These leaves [right] after like that [indicating that she would weave the leaves together rather than bind them] (Appendix 4, Fig. 7-e,f). (Ethel Isaac)

Teit (1900:188-190) gives the following description of another style of mat made with cattail leaves (Appendix 4, Fig. 7-d):

> Mats made of young reeds and bulrushes, which are used to cover the floor of the lodge and as tablemats, are woven in a different manner. The selvage [referring to the edges of the mat] consists of a two-stranded bark string, which holds the warp. The latter is of a lighter two-stranded bark string, which is passed through the selvage string.... The grasses are woven into this groundwork as indicated in the same figure. By using grass of different colours, patterns are obtained.

An appreciation of decoration was not lost on cattail mats, and decorative patterns in this style of mat could be accomplished in a number of different ways. The natural colour of the material varies considerably, and these could be sorted out and woven together to create alternating patterns of colour. As well, the materials could be dyed to create greater variations of colour contrasts, or different materials could be woven together. Occasionally a mat-maker even might add an overlay of dyed material in a straight or zigzag pattern, or twine the fibres together in a diagonal or zigzag manner to create a decorative effect (Boas and Teit 1996:182-183).

Apart from mats, the flexibility of cattail leaves allowed Nɬeʔkepmx women to weave them together in a variety of decorative patterns for bags, pouches, and clothing, such as hats and capes (Turner et al. 1990:145). Teit (1900:218) notes that occasionally some people in the Nicola Valley made cloaks and robes of woven bulrushes in the same way as they made mats.

The stems of cattails were also used to make mats. These were sewn together and the edges bound in the same manner as tule mats. These mats were also secured at the ends with a rosewood branch, although no specific type has been specified (Teit 1900:188). Cattail mats made with either the leaves or stems were not as commonly used in the Nicola Valley as were

tule mats (Adaline Frank), but Ethel Isaac says that cattail leaf mats were more suitable as plates for food, for sitting on, or for sleeping than tule mats. According to Mrs. Isaac, tule mats were made for drying berries,

> or they use it for making a house like tipi. [The bulrush mats were more common for] eating on it, sitting on it, or lay on it.... They use it [the woven type] for a mat...long time ago, they use that for the groun', put that...bulrush mat...on the groun', then they put...on top of it. That's where they sittin' down on the groun' when they eatin'. That's what they use. [Or] drying food, or lay on it so they won't get damp from the groun'. Just that bulrush. Tules, it'll [get] wrecked [crushed]...if you lay on it. (Ethel Isaac)

Q'ʷúys - Silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata* Bernh.)

Another important and versatile plant fibre is that derived from the bark of silverberry, also known as silverwillow, wolf willow, and silver buffalo berry, from the Oleaster family, Elaeagnaceae. The Nɬeʔkepmx considered silverberry, which they call *q'ʷúysɛ́ɬp* or more commonly *q'ʷúys*, to be related to the various species of true willows (*Salix* spp.[9]), because of its long, lance-shaped, pointed and smooth-edged silvery leaves, which are quite similar-looking to willows (Turner 1992:215; Turner et al. 1990:207). Despite its height of 1 to 4 metres (3 to 13 feet) tall, this plant is a shrub rather than a tree, with numerous branches growing up and outward from spreading rhizomes. It also can be distinguished from the true willows by its small, yellow, tubular flowers born in small clusters at the base of the leaf, which bloom in early summer, giving off a strong, sweet odour (Parish et al. 1996:71; Turner 1992: 215). The fruits, which give silverberry its English name, are spherical, silvery and pithy, containing a hard oblong stone, about one cm (1/4 inch) long, which the Nɬeʔkepmx used for decoration on clothing and for personal adornment (Steedman 1930:496; Turner 1992:218).

Q'ʷúys grows in sparsely scattered clusters along waterways and on open gravely slopes and benchlands in the Southern Interior and other parts of the province (Parish et al. 1996:71; Turner 1992:215). It is best harvested in the spring once the sap is running. The bark is peeled from the branches in long narrow strips. Q'ʷúys can also be harvested at other times provided there is

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[9] Spp. is the abbreviation for species, plural of specie.

enough sap under the bark to allow the bark to peel away easily (Miller 1990:141). Adaline Frank says that after the summer it is probably too late for harvesting *q'ʷúys*.

> If you're gonna do that in the fall, it's no good either. But it's during the summer, I think, spring...somewhere around there, when the sap is [running], you know, you could peel it easy. (Adaline Frank)

Newer branches, indicated by their reddish-brown bark, and those with few side stems are chosen, as the fibre from recent growth is stronger than that of older growth. If the branch is to remain on the bush, it is important to be careful not to cut through the bark all the way around the branch, as this will kill the branch instantly by preventing water and nutrients from travelling up the stem (Turner et al. 1990:207). On densely branched bushes women sometimes cut off whole branches and remove the bark completely in long narrow strips. Once enough bark is harvested the strips can then be bundled together and taken home.

To extract the useable inner bark, the greyish outer bark is first removed by scrapping it or cutting it away with a knife, and the inner bark scraped and cleaned and cut into desired widths. These strips of inner bark can be processed immediately or stored until needed (Turner et al. 1990:28). The inner bark of *q'ʷúys* is layered so that separating it into thin fibrous strips is quite easy once the bark is dry, their thickness depending on the flexibility and durability required by the product to be made. This is done by pulling the inner bark over a flat stick to separate the fibres. These strands can now be used in a number of different ways.

The Nɬeʔkepmx twined strips of *q'ʷúys* into a strong, two-ply string by soaking the *q'ʷúys* fibres and twining them on the leg using the same method as for *sp'éc'n* thread. This thread could be used for such purposes as twining mats, weaving bags and clothing, and making fishing nets, or for stringing roots and hanging them to dry. Nɬeʔkepmx women once made a large bag as big as a gunnysack with q'ʷúys thread that they used for storing dried roots (Parish et al. 1996:71; Turner 1992:218; Turner et al. 1990:207; Steedman 1930:496). This sack is woven using the same technique as for *sp'éc'n* bags.

When fibre clothing was still in fashion, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, *q'ʷúys* fibre was a particularly popular weaving material. Nɬeʔkepmx women used it to weave capes, skirts, headgear, leggings, mittens, and moccasins. Ethel Isaac remembers an outfit her Grandmother made for her husband completely from *q'ʷúys*.

> She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] makes a bag out of that [*q'ʷúys*]. Long time ago, she used to make...cape, and she made skirt an' a pants for her ol' man. An' then when her ol' man died...she must've throw it away. An' then I ask her after that, say, "What did you do with that pants, yoke and skirt you made?" She tol' me, "Grandfather passed away and I had to throw it away." An' I said, "How come you throw it away?" An' she said, "Well, we're not s'posed to keeping them." (Ethel Isaac)

The smooth, almost white *q'ʷúys* fibres were often featured as the prominent longitudinal strands of a woven garment. These were highlighted by weaving them together with a weft of *sp'éc'n*, or some other contrasting fibre, such as cedar bark, sagebrush, white clematis, or black moss. *Q'ʷúys* takes a dye well, and a tightly woven fabric provides an ideal surface for painting with contrasting colours made from dyes of Oregon grape bark, Saskatoon and other berry juices, alder bark, and "nut plant,"[10] or water-based paints and cold-water aniline dyes (Tepper 1994:27; Steedman 1930:500-501).

Women had to be very careful when weaving with *q'ʷúys* because the flat strands can tear if they are woven too tightly. Therefore, items made with *q'ʷúys* are woven somewhat looser than when weaving with *sp'éc'n* (Maggie Shuter).

Not only is the bark an important part of fibre technology. Q'ʷúys seeds have been used extensively to add a decorative accent to fibre products. When the silvery outer casing and pithy lining of the seeds are removed they reveal a 1cm (1/4 inch) long brown seed with cream-coloured longitudinal stripes. Nɬeʔkepmx women used these to make lovely necklaces and decorations on clothing (Teit 1900:223; Tepper 1994:87-88; Turner 1992:218). Women used to clean and polish *q'ʷúys* seeds by rubbing them with horsetail, *ƛ'úxʷn'* (*Equisetum hyemale* L., *E. laevigatum* A. Br., and other *Equisetum* spp.), and then drilling holes through them for stringing on a fine *sp'éc'n* or sinew thread (Tepper 1994:83; Turner et al. 1990:86, 209; Teit 1900:184).

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[10] "Nut plant" probably refers to *q'apxʷéɬp*, or hazelnut bush, in which the roots were used to make a bluish dye (Thompson and Thompson 1996:275).

Recently, as part of the Tule Project (Dec. 1996 - April 1997), during which five local adults learned to make tule mats and other fibre products, co-ordinator Louis Dick experimented with a simpler, more efficient technique for cleaning *q'ʷúys* seeds. After removing the silvery casing, he put them in a cauldron and ran water over them, swishing them in the cauldron to remove the skins. Mr. Dick also suggested that boiling the cleaned seeds for ten to fifteen minutes makes them easier to string, eliminating the need for drilling holes first (Tule Mat Project 1997:37). Maggie Shuter found that coating the seeds with clear nail polish brings out the contrasting colours of the seed and gives it a lovely shine (Appendix 4, Fig. 8) (Maggie Shuter).

Apart from its use in manufactures, *q'ʷúys* was at one time an important fibre in the ritual preparations of the Nɬeʔkepmx. At the birth of twins, the father, or a young man selected by the twins' father, wore a headband of *q'ʷúys* into which he had stuck eagle or hawk feathers. With his whole face painted red, and holding a fir branch in each hand, he would circle the new-borns four times as soon as they began to cry, singing the grizzly bear song, symbolic of the birth of twins, and striking the new-borns with the fir branches. This placed the children under the special protection of the grizzly bear and endowed them with special powers[11] (Steedman 1930:508; Teit 1900:310-311; Tepper 1994:6-7, 8). When a person's spouse died, the widow or widower wore a narrow headband of *q'ʷúys* to indicate his or her new status (Teit 1900:332; Tepper 1994:6-7, 8). While this tradition continues, by the turn of the century a narrow white handkerchief had been substituted for the *q'ʷúys* headband. When Adaline Frank's father died in the 1930s, her Grandmother wore a strip of buckskin around on her throat and wrists. She wore it "'til...it comes off itself" (Adaline Frank).

Kʷáɬp - Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata* Donn)

Western red cedar, from the Cypress family, Cupressaceae, and known as *kʷáɬp* to the Nɬeʔkepmx, is another highly important plant providing a source of materials in Nɬeʔkepmx

[11] In Nɬeʔkepmx traditional beliefs if a person is descended from a twin, he or she was considered to be part grizzly bear (Hanna and Henry 1995:162).

plant technology. This large conifer, standing as much as 40 metres (130 feet) tall, is distinguishable by its clear tapered trunk, to 3 metres (10 feet) in diameter and covered with a thin, reddish brown, fibrous bark that pulls off in long strips. The branches are long and drooping with upturned ends, and the tree is topped with a distinctive conical crown that becomes irregular with age, often with a dead or broken top. The permanent, shiny, yellowish-green leaves of Western Red Cedar are short, blunt, scale-like, and very aromatic. Small 12mm (1/2 inch) long cones, *cək'cək'ólesc e kʷátɬp*, grow in clusters at the ends of each branch (Parish et al. 1996:48; Turner et al. 1990:95).

This valuable tree is widespread in British Columbia, particularly in the wetter areas such as the Columbia Mountains, along the Coast and eastward to the Interior Transition and the wettest parts of the East Kootenays. In the dry regions of Nɬeʔkepmx territory it can be found scattered on low-elevation floodplains and seepage sites (Parish et al. 1996:48). Nɬeʔkepmx living in or near territories where Western Red Cedar grows in abundance, in particular those in the Fraser Valley south of Lytton, used to harvest all the wood and bark products for much of their technology. In contrast, those Nɬeʔkepmx living in the drier regions, such as along the Thompson River and in the Nicola Valley, who had to travel long distances to find good stands of Western Red Cedar, took mainly the small trailing roots. These they split into long, flexible strips, *kʷəm'y'éxʷ*, and used for coiling baskets, trays and baby cradles (Parish et al. 1996:48; Teit 1900:187; Turner et al. 1980:20).

Cedar trees don't grow well in the Nicola Valley and other dry regions of Nɬeʔkepmx territory. For this reason, for centuries Scw'exmx women have travelled to various locations in the Fraser River Valley to harvest the roots. Places where the soil is sandy are especially good. Adaline Frank says that

> you have to go way out in the bush....That's where most of them go, down there, [referring to the Fraser Valley]...somewhere around there [Spuzzum]. 'Cuz there's lots down there....When they go down they could see them. That's all where they are. [There's] not much [in the Valley]. And when we used to go out here and look for

> huckleberries, there's some out there. I was tryin' to dig, but I haven't got the right thing to dig it with. Stones. But it's rocky. (Adaline Frank)

Scw'exmx women also harvested cedar roots along the Coquihalla (Turner et al. 1990:95-96).

> When they were working on the Coquihalla down that way [south]...I was telling my friend, he[12] says, "I should go and follow that bulldozer and try to get some [cedar roots]." ...Instead of digging it, he says he's going to follow [the bulldozer], gather them roots. (Adaline Frank)

Maggie Shuter's Mother used to harvest cedar roots at Siska.

> She was able to get the cedar because we used to spend...spring and summers in...Siska. That's where my Dad was originally from, and so that's where she got her materials in the spring. And bring them home and work with them in the wintertime. (Maggie Shuter)

Mary Coutlee says that another good place to harvest cedar roots is around North Bend.

According to Adaline Frank, the best time to harvest cedar roots is in the fall, when the fibres are strong and flexible. "That's when...they go out and get them." If you wait too long the roots become very woody. Annie York agrees that cedar roots should not be harvested in winter because by then it is too hard to scrape off the bark. Miss. York said that the spring and early fall are the best times as "the bark is easily removed and the roots are white. Later, they become brown and stiff" (York, cited in Turner et al. 1990:95-96). Both Mary Coutlee and Mandy Brown grant that springtime is a good time to harvest cedar roots, but not too early in the season. Mrs. Brown says that

> We have to wait 'till it gets warm and when the ground melted, because...where I dig for them it must be still frozen, way back in Blue Lake.... We have to wait 'till maybe April, May before we can go out.... I got enough to last me all winter. (Mandy Brown)

The cedar roots that Nɬeʔkepmx women harvest vary from a light cream to pinkish in colour. Mandy Brown says that the colour variations result from harvesting the roots from two different types of cedar trees. She uses both types in her coiled work.

> You can see it on my [trays). See, I used all the dark ones in there and look at the difference. This [referring to a bundle of light-coloured cedar root strip] is from Blue Lake, and this is from *Nʔél'ec*.[13] *Nʔél'ec*, that's the red cedar roots. Blue Lake has nice white

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[12] In the Nɬeʔkepmx language there are no separate pronouns for male and female. It is quite common for Elders fluent in their language to mix up the English pronouns. Therefore, the use of "he" in this quote may refer to a woman. I did not realise this usage until it was too late to get clarification. Mrs. Frank may be referring to a man, as even though women do most of the harvesting of plant products, men often help.

[13] Hallecks Creek, which empties into the west side of the Fraser River at North Bend.

> ones. It's...different kind of cedar tree. There's yellow cedar, there's red cedar. Blue Lake is about...fifteen, sixteen, seventeen miles from here [referring to Lytton] going towards (?Kwoiek) way on the upper side. And we have to climb quite a ways up to dig for those roots, and N?él'ec is on the North Bend side, and we have to follow that road way back in the mountains. That's where the red cedar is. (Mandy Brown)

Brenda Aljam suggests that the varying colours of the roots also may be the result of where the cedar is harvested.

> I don't know if you'd call it two different kinds [of cedar]. It's probably from two different places.... Mandy [Brown] talks about...depending on the area you get it from...if you split it right away...it can be pink, and they're not considered as good quality as the white ones [or] they're not as desirable as the white ones. (Brenda Aljam)

Finding the best quality roots is something that Nłe?kepmx women keep in mind when they go out to harvest cedar. Quality roots are much easier to clean and split into strips. They also contribute to the strength and overall beauty of the finished product. Locating good sites from which to harvest quality cedar roots is getting more and more difficult in Nłe?kepmx territory. "Sometimes you lucky enough to find something that's straight, but they're not always straight" (Mandy Brown). Rocky soil causes the roots to grow crooked and with more offshoots, making them weak at the points where they bend or have knots. Therefore, an important part of a basket maker's training is learning to identify good places to harvest roots, as Brenda Aljam notes:

> She's [Mandy Brown] taught me about going to different places and the quality [of roots] you can find at different places.... And how far away from the tree you should be before you start taking the roots.... About five feet. And...that there's just better places...than others [to harvest the roots].... You want something with...less rocks, because the roots will be growing around the rocks and they'll be more curves in them.... The roots that have more offshoots are not as good.... When you're working with it [referring to wrapping the cedar strips to make coils], it has a chance of splitting when you don't want it to. (Brenda Aljam)

Women are always careful not to disrupt the root system when they are digging for cedar roots, and do not take so much from one tree that the tree can no longer draw enough moisture and nutrients from the ground for its survival (Turner 1992:01). In order not to damage the roots being harvested, women today still use the same kind of root digger that their ancestors used. Mary Coutlee and Mabel Joe say that this is made from the main stem of the

scéqʷm bush, Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia* Nutt.) (personal communication, 30 November 1999). With this they loosen the soil, looking for roots about an inch or so (2.5cm) in thickness, and cut them to a length of about three feet (1 metre) (Adaline Frank). Mandy Brown says that the length of the roots harvested often depends on their quality.

> Some of them are knots, they're quite short...and there'd be a knot there or something like that...and you'd cut it there. Some of them are...nice and long. Real long ones, they're real good for makin' cradles.... They're nice and long for wrapping, and you have to use, kind a, the wide pieces...for wrapping. That's what I use [referring to strips of cedar about ¼ inch wide] when I make the cradle, I use the wide pieces. But the last one I made I used a fine one like this. Ya, my granddaughter's got that cradle down there now. (Mandy Brown)

Since it is so difficult to find quality cedar roots and women have to travel such distances, N+e?kepmx women usually harvest enough to keep them going throughout the year. Mandy Brown says that "It takes...one whole day, or something like that, maybe a couple of days to dig roots." Once the roots are cut they can be tied into a large bundle, and taken home to work on later (Adaline Frank).

The preparation of cedar roots in order to extract the useable fibres is a lengthy process.

> You have to clean it and clean it and clean it [referring to scraping off all the outer bark].... My Granddaughter likes going out and diggin', and then we clean it...when we get it in. You have to clean [the roots] right away. You have to start cleanin' it right away, 'cuz they get dry. They get dry, and it's harder to clean it, so I have to soak this now [referring to the root], and scrape it off [referring to the outer bark]. (Mandy Brown)

The peeled roots may be hung up to dry and then stored until they have to be split, or they can be split right away and stored as strips until needed (Teit 1900:187-188). Again, several days are needed to complete this process.

> It takes maybe two or three days [to clean the roots], and then you have to split them for a bunch.... That will take me all day to split it [referring to a three-inch thick bundle of split cedar root about 60 to 90cm long (2 to 3 feet)]. It will take days to split the bunch what you pickin' on before.... You have to split it so many times...so it'll be wide enough to use for wrapping. (Mandy Brown)

Adaline Frank explains that the root has to be split in half, then half again, and so on until the flat edge is about 5mm (1/4 inch) wide. Now it is the proper size from which to split off thin strips for wrapping.

When Mrs. Brown splits cedar root she uses a sharp knife to first split the root a number of times towards the centre core until she ends up with a triangular piece of root, with the grain running lengthwise, in which the edges are the width that she wants her wrap to be. From these pieces she splits off the individual wrap by splitting the root down along the grain to the thickness of each wrap. When the root is wet enough the strip can be pulled away from the root by hand after it has been started with the knife. The pieces that split the desired width and thickness throughout their entire length are used for wrapping. Mandy Brown trims these further if they are a bit irregular, scraping thick spots to make them an even depth of about 1mm (1/16in.), and trimming the edges to make them a uniform width of about 5mm.

> Once you get [cut the strips of wrap, you have to look at each one carefully]...see how thick it is, too. The thickness of it. [If] it's a little bit too thick [referring to spots where the wrap is thicker than about 1mm], I'm just scrapin' some of it, 'cuz it's too thick right here. You have to scrape some of it when it's too thick. There's some places here.... And all this thing has to be scraped off [referring to the outer bark fibres]. (Mandy Brown)

Adaline Frank says that this splitting process cannot be done successfully on dry wood. "You have to keep it [the root to be split] in water, though.... You can't just leave it out there, you have to keep it in water so it'll be easier...to split." Otherwise it will break off in short lengths.

Mandy Brown explains this further.

> [If it's] too dry, it doesn't split very good. [The cedar bark strip will break off in short pieces, indicating that it is too dry for splitting).... I put it in a tub when I'm goinna split it.... See, that's the way it has to be split [demonstrating how she starts the split with a knife and then pulls the strip from the larger piece of root. Once you get it started it just generally wants to come on its own].... That's the way you have to split it. (Mandy Brown)

If possible nothing is wasted in this process, and the strips that split irregularly, break off in short pieces, or are too thin to be used for wrapping are used to make the inner core of the coil (Teit 1900:187-188). At the same time "you have to split some fine ones, like these here. This is the...fine that I have split for the inside" [referring to the coil filler material] (Mandy Brown). Thinner strips about 3mm (1/8 inch) wide are used to make the core of the coils.

In my interview with Adaline Frank she demonstrated how the smaller cedar strips are bunched up to form the core of the coil. Before each bundle is completely covered with

wrapping "you put some more in there, and then you keep on going" (Adaline Frank). Mrs. Frank explained that in order to keep the filler thickness even all the way along the coils it is important when adding new core material to lay the thicker end of the new bunch of core material over the thin end of the wrapped core.

There are a variety of ways to begin coiling a basket, tray, or cradle, but generally coiling begins at the centre or base of the object. The coils are simultaneously wrapped and stitched to the previous coil, with the wrapping being pushed through a hole made with an awl part way down the previously wrapped coil. For the base or on flat objects the coils are built so that each successive coil is on the outside of the previous one. To build the sides of an object, coils are laid on top of the previous ones once the desired size of the base is reached (Teit 1900:187). The shape of the base for each item, such as a basket, tray, or cradle, determines whether it will be round or oblong (Adaline Frank).

Adaline Frank says that the strips of cedar root have to be dampened before they are used for wrapping or they will split.

> You have to soak it in water. Then as you work on it, you know, you have...water there. You go like this, [demonstrates how to keep dampening the wrap as you go]. So it wouldn't split when you go like so [demonstrates poking holes through the wrap of the previous coil in which to push the next wrap]. Otherwise it'll split if you don't have it wet. It's got to be wet. (Adaline Frank)

When the coils are sewn together they are either round or flattened depending on the desired size of the coils and purpose of the object. Adaline Frank explains that for large, loose coils a thick bundle of filler is flattened, so that the finished coil is taller than it is wide (Adaline Frank). For a tighter coil a smaller bunch of filler is used and the coils are wrapped in a round shape (Appendix 4, Fig. 9a and 9b).

According to Adaline Frank, the wider and looser the coiling, the weaker the basket will be.

> These here [referring to baskets with large, loose coiling]...they can lose stuff like that...but these [referring to baskets with fine, tight coiling]...you can store things in there, water or something.... But not these, they will leak out. These here [tightly coiled baskets]...they're really strong, too.... These kinds, once you make it like this here [referring to small tight coils]...they don't leak. But these things here [referring to large, loose coil baskets], they leak...cus they make it [the coils] wide...like this here [coils about 1cm (3/8 inch) wide and flattened]. (Adaline Frank)

Mrs. Frank says that the wider coiled baskets are used primarily for storage. A basket that needs to carry a lot of weight, such as a burden basket, or the different sized picking baskets, or one that is used for holding water or for cooking would be the tightly coiled type.

> And when you make it like them other ones, ones similar to that...like this they make it for picking [referring to a small tightly coiled basket - 8" high, 10" wide, 6" deep].... It's stronger than these here (baskets with large, loose coils). That's why they making, uh, baby baskets, you know, for babies...a cradle. They make it out of this one, too, [with the wider coils]. (Adaline Frank)

The number of strips of cedar that you would use for the core depends on how wide you want the coils, and how big the basket is going to be. Using too few strips can lead to very fine work, but is also extremely time-consuming, as Brenda Aljam found out.

> That's the first one I started [referring to an unfinished basket with very narrow coils]. Verna [Miller] and I...went out with her [Mandy Brown] a few times and she was showing us how to split [the cedar roots]. And so I just decided on my own that I was gonna try and start [a basket].... She showed us how to start it, so I was gonna practice. Well, I decided I was gonna use only four [strips of cedar root for the core of the coil], and then I started wrapping, and I got that far because I didn't know how to do the cherry bark, yet. So...I stopped there and asked her how to...show me how to start [the design]. And I showed it to her when it was smaller, and she said, "Holy cow! You better make that a coaster. Is that ever fine work. It's gonna take you forever!" It's already got about eight coils just in that inch and a half space at the base there.... This is the second one I started.... But, when Mandy told me...that was so fine, I went up to six.... Six is still really fine [referring to six strips of cedar root for the inner coil].... I showed her this one and she said it's too round [referring to the shape of the coil and filler]...Because when it's round like that it takes less space. So it'll longer to make.... I could've flattened [the filler], and I would've gotten more with each row. [When you actually wrap it, you make sure that the coil filler is flat, and you flatten it some more once you've wrapped it]. Before you go into the next one you probably get it ready and then wrap it and make it flat. [That way you use less filler for the larger coils]. (Brenda Aljam)

An awl is an important tool for making coiled baskets. It is used to pierce a hole through the lower wrapped coil just large enough for the cedar wrap from the next coil to go through. At one time Nɬeʔkepmx women most commonly made their awls from the long bone of a deer's hind leg, using the whole bone or splitting it in half lengthwise, with the end sharpened to a point (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank). These awls last a long time if they are cured properly. Rose Skuki of Lytton said she used to bury the split bone awls in the ground for one month in order to make them strong. "That's what toughens it. If we didn't bury it, just left it that way, it would break easily when sharpened. That's how the old people did it, so that's how we do it today" (Skuki,

cited in Hanna and Henry 1995:147). Mary Coutlee remembers that once the bone is split and shaped it is left to dry. She boiled the first awl she made because she thought it would make the bone stronger. In fact, she discovered that boiling the bone takes out all the oils, and then it becomes more brittle (Mary Coutlee). The advantage of bone awls is that they can be made in a number of sizes to suit the user's hand size, and easily sharpened to match the size of the hole with the width of the cedar wrap. In the old days women used grit-stone and sand, or the stems of *Equisetum* (Horsetail) to sharpen and polish the bone awl (Teit 1900:184), but today women who use a bone awl use a metal file or sandpaper to sharpen it (Mary Coutlee).

Bone awls are still popular today but some women prefer to use a metal awl that they can buy in a hardware store. Bone awls produce a flat, wide hole while metal awls poke a round hole through the coil. Brenda Aljam uses a metal awl with a steel rod about five inches long, and a large, round wooden handle, because the wooden handle is comfortable for her to hold.

> My awl's right here. The other ones I was looking for, they didn't have as big a handle. And Harold [Aljam, Brenda's husband] said his family used to use this to punch their Pacific milk...for coffee and stuff. So this fits my hand good. And it's sharp enough. (Brenda Aljam)

Mrs. Aljam says that the point on this large awl is perfect to create the exact sized hole through which to insert the wrap. She prefers this awl because sometimes with a bone awl the hole won't be big enough to allow the wrap to go through. "What I find is...sometimes this [smaller awl] is too narrow for how wide I have these [the coil wraps]. Well, they split on me, then it's a nuisance. Too thick a wrap" (Brenda Aljam).

Ethel Isaac prefers to use a bone awl when making baskets because she says that with metal ones the metal rubs off on the fibre and leaves a black mark. She says that "If I use those steel...needles, then it gets that basket brown or grey, burned like black.... You gotta use those certain bones" (Ethel Isaac).

There are many things to think about when building an object using the cedar-coiled method, and a woman's skill is evident in how well she accomplishes the many challenges it presents (Tepper 1994:116; see also Boas 1955; Hungry Wolf 1980:230). As a novice becomes

more skilled her workmanship is refined and she begins to recognise such crucial details as how to maintain uniform-sized coils and smooth, regular stitching, how large to make the base in proportion to the side walls, the slant of the side walls, the angle of the join between the base and sides of the basket, how to maintain an even height for the walls, how to create symmetrical designs, and how to maintain symmetry and balance between the different rows of designs and get them to fit evenly on a basket (Haeberlin et al. 1928:159, 176, 178, 179, 180-181). The work is considered well done if the shape is uniform, each of the wraps is the same width, the coils are the same thickness and depth, and the basket is not too rigid or too flexible for its purpose. As well, a talented basket maker will have concealed any defects in a creative fashion (Haeberlin et al. 1928:163). With all of these considerations it is understandable why it is so important to start the project with good quality cedar roots, and to take so much time and care preparing the cedar strips used for wrapping.

Adaline Frank says that if the coils are not a uniform thickness the rim of the basket will be uneven. If that is the case it just isn't a very good job, and the Elders will tell you

> you have to work some more on it.... You ought to see my first work. All out of shape. Some big ones there, you know [referring to the size of the coils. The coiling was all] uneven.... My Grandmother and my Mother, she'd redo it.... They know how to do that. (Adaline Frank)

In my interview with Brenda Aljam she referred to the first cedar coiled basket she made, a basket about 26cm high, 40cm across, and 30cm wide (10 x 16 x 12 inches), to illustrate some of the things she is learning about making baskets and how to improve her skill.

> When I look at it, it's not straight on top [referring to the rim being uneven], so...I have to learn how to do that, because the one's I've seen are just [gestures to indicate the top rims are perfectly even in height]. I think she [Mandy Brown] said if it gets where it's not even you can change how deep you go into...the layer [of coils] below. (Brenda Aljam)

When completing the rim of the basket Mrs. Aljam learned that if you wrap the rim coil through the previous coil too close to its edge,

> then there's a chance you don't have anything to grab onto, you're just splitting your previous wrap. So, I stay lower [referring to grabbing more core material from the last coil when wrapping the rim in order to strengthen the rim]. I came deeper into the next one down. (Brenda Aljam)

Apart from the rim not being even, Mrs. Aljam pointed out a few other problems she had building this basket that she hopes to master.

> I think it's [the side] not straight...it goes in and out [referring to uneven coiling to build the walls]. I don't know how much the, the cherry bark being there has to do with that, but...I would look at that, as well.... It just takes practice. And the other thing, I guess is that...it doesn't sit level [referring to an uneven base causing the basket to rock]. Probably [this happens when you start building it up]. Depends on, this is flatter on the bottom there and then it goes out more [referring to one coil on the base that is more protruding than the others].... I really struggled with these [corners]. They go out on one side and then they come more on the top, it comes more down square, and then it goes out at a softer angle [referring to differences in the corners of the basket].... That changes how steep the side wall is. [But] you get that where it's rounded, too. So, I'm not sure...how to correct that. (Brenda Aljam)

Prior to the decline in the production of fibre products among the Nɬeʔkepmx, women used the coiled cedar root method to make a myriad of sizes and shapes of baskets, which they used for gathering roots and berries, for storage purposes, and to cook food (Miller 1990:147). The most common Nɬeʔkepmx basket was rectangular with straight sides slightly flaring outwards (Appendix 4, Fig. 10). These baskets traditionally served as storage containers for food and were made in a variety of sizes. Most of these baskets are coiled so tightly that they could hold water without leaking, but a seal of pitch was often applied to the outer surface for further insurance (Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown; Teit 1900:187-188). Another style of coiled basket that was round, basin-shaped, and watertight was often used for boiling food (Turner et al. 1990:95). Women filled these baskets with water and added hot stones. When the water began to boil they added the food to be cooked (Teit 1900:199-200).

Nɬeʔkepmx women also made large oblong or cylindrical cedar coiled baskets with lids for storing food and clothing (Teit 1900:199). This style of basket is known as *sƛ'úkʷ* or *st'úkʷ* (Adaline Frank). Picking baskets also came in a variety of sizes and shapes depending on their purpose. For harvesting berries, a woman filled a small basket about 20cm wide at the base, 15cm high, and 30cm long (8 x 6 x 12 inches), which she tied around her waist with a leather thong. This she emptied into a larger burden basket from time to time. These larger burden baskets were secured with leather thongs across the top to prevent the contents from spilling out (Adaline

Frank; Mandy Brown; Turner et al. 1990:25). The smaller picking basket is called a *qeyəqép*, and the big basket into which the berries are emptied is a *c'y'é* (Adaline Frank). Women then carried the larger baskets from the field by means of a tumpline over the forehead (Turner et al. 1990:25).

A small, "nut-shaped" coiled basket was used by Nɬe?kepmx women to hold water, or for trinkets and sewing materials (Teit 1900:199). This basket is coiled in such a way that each succeeding coil is made gradually larger to the midpoint of the basket and then gradually smaller towards the top, so that the basket "bulged out in the middle of the sides, the mouth and bottom being of about equal diameter" (Boas and Teit 1996:189). Adaline Frank says that this is a very difficult style of basket to make, and that it takes quite some skill to get the bulging sides even all the way around. Some of these baskets had lids that slid up and down on a string, which at the same time could be used as a handle (Teit 1900:199).

Ethel Isaac remembers her Grandmother using baskets of this type to store small items.

> Well, she used it [baskets] for pickin' berries, and sometimes...she put something, like storage in that...round basket with the lid. She put her necklace in there, or she has rings she puts it in there, or sometimes she had candies or apple, or anything she put in that big basket.... Like a food baskets. (Ethel Isaac)

Nɬe?kepmx women also made circular and oblong trays using the coiling technique with cedar root strips. They were used for holding berries, as food platters, and serving trays. They usually had slightly flared sides that were from 10 to 12 cm (4 to 5 inches) high. Some of the oblong ones were large enough to hold a large roasted salmon (Appendix 4, Fig. 11) (Boas and Teit 1996:188-189).

A flat-backed basket made to hang against the post or wall, similar in shape to modern fishing creels, was useful for holding tobacco and a pipe. This style of basket has a lid with a hole in the centre to allow the pipe stem to protrude. Teit (1900:199-200) says that they were called *ʔek'ʷnmín*, "used for bait," because they were also used for holding bait and fishing tackle. A basket combining the styles of the nut shape and the lid with a hole in it became a popular sale item during the curio trade for holding knitting (Appendix 4, Fig. 13). The ball of

wool sat in the basket while the strand being knitted was threaded through the hole (Adaline Frank). The Nɬeʔkepmx also used cedar roots to make coiled cradleboards, as well as large storage trunks (Miller 1990:146-148; Gray 1948). The coiling technique was also used to make hats. Mandy Brown recently made a cedar-coiled hat fashioned after an older style with straight sides and a flat top, using an openwork coiling technique (Appendix 4, Fig. 14).

As with all plants used in technology, cedar holds a spiritual element for the Nɬeʔkepmx. A cedar root formed in the shape of a doll, called *x̣iyq'íc'eʔ* or *x̣iyəq'íc'eʔ*, is considered especially valuable, and anyone who finds one is said to have good luck. Cedar boughs are sometimes put into a grave under the coffin and carry with them all that is associated with the funeral and the person's passing (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie, personal communication, 24 April 2000). Annie York also said that if a person sleeps under a cedar or a spruce tree he or she is likely to have vivid dreams (Turner et al. 1990:95, 96).

Qʷɬín - Birch Bark (*Betula papyrifera* Marsh)

The bark from Western Paper Birch, from the Birch family, Betulaceae, was another popular material used by the Nɬeʔkepmx for making baskets. It was harvested in January or February, as at this time of year the bark is tough and comes off in large sheets. If it is harvested much later it becomes papery (Turner et al. 1990:190). The bark, *qʷɬín*, was generally cut to a pattern (Appendix 4, Fig. 15) in one large piece and sewn together at the seams with split spruce, cedar, or cottonwood roots. The bark is used in reverse so that the inside of the bark is the outside of the basket. Mabel Joe says that the basket has to be made soon after the bark is stripped from the tree in order that it doesn't get too dry and brittle. Louis Phillips, from Lytton, had once told her that heating the bark over a fire helps to soften it if it does get too hard (Mabel Joe, personal communication, 30 November 1999).

The rims of birch bark baskets were reinforced by means of a hoop of split willow twigs placed on the inside over which the bark is folded, stitched with split spruce or cedar roots, and often

ornamented with stitches made of choke cherry (*Prunus demissa* Walpers). The basket itself was ornamented with designs painted in red or incised by biting a pattern into the bark once the basket is made (Mabel Joe and Mary Coutlee, personal communication, 30 November 1999; Teit 1900:187). Birch bark baskets varied in size and had multiple purposes such as storage and transportation containers, cups and buckets, and for cooking. Large baskets, 1 metre high, 1 metre long, and ¾ metre wide (3 x 3 x 2 ½ feet), were used for the storage of provisions during the winter (Teit 1900:200). Both Mary Coutlee and Mabel Joe say that even though they were useful and relatively easy to make, birch bark baskets were far less common in the Nicola Valley than cedar coiled ones (personal communication, 30 November 1999).

Kewkʷu - Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* Nutt.)

Known to the Nɬeʔkepmx as *kewkʷu* (*lit.* 'far from water'), big sagebrush, from the Aster family, Asteraceae, yields another highly versatile fibre, which was used in a similar manner to *spʼécʼn* and qʼʷúys. Big sagebrush is a large, branching shrub growing to 2 metres (6.5 feet) in height. It is distinguishable by its highly aromatic and permanent small, silvery-green, wedge-shaped leaves, 1 to 3cm (1/4 to 1 inch) long, with three points or 'teeth' at the tip. *Kewkʷu* is readily available throughout the dry regions of Nɬeʔkepmx territory, particularly in the open areas of the Nicola Valley where overgrazing has reduced the amount of competition for soil nutrients, as wildlife and stock do not eat this plant (Turner 1992:179; Parish et al. 1996).

The stringy bark of *kewkʷu* grows in shredded strips along the stems and is easily pulled off without tools. All the Interior Salish groups used the fibres from this bark to make rope and binding for tools, and to weave mats, bags, baskets, quiver cases, and saddle blankets (Turner 1992:179, 182; Smith 1975:420). The aromatic scent of *kewkʷu*, as well as its softness against the skin and its flexibility when woven may have been the reason it was also an appealing fibre for clothing (Tepper 1994:31). Nɬeʔkepmx women also used softened *kewkʷu* bark to line the bottom of their buckskin baby carriers (Teit 1900:216, 306). They occasionally used the fibrous

bark of this plant to make dresses, skirts, aprons, breechclouts, moccasins, leggings, and socks. For winter wear they wove long boots from *kewkʷu* bark that reached up to the thigh, and padded these with loose bark. The N*ɬ*e?kepmx also made ponchos and capes from *kewkʷu* bark, which offered very effective protection against wet weather (Appendix 4, Fig. 16) (Teit 1900:212).

Ethel Isaac remembers the waterproofing qualities of *kewkʷu* bark clothing.

> I've heard that the sagebrush barks they use makin' 'em slippers so they don't get wet onna winter, their feet don't get wet. An' they make a leggings here so their pant, their legs don't get wet, too. Keep 'em warm. (Ethel Isaac)

Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother also used to make clothing from *kewkʷu* for people to wear on special occasions.

> She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] makes clothing out of that [*kewkʷu* bark]...leggings, pants, skirt...a cape.... Some people they come and ask her to make them one. They use it for some kin' a important days when they have it, like a gathering, dance.... There was a big house with a upstairs, an' they used to dance there...all night, they danced all night. Then a morning they all went home, go to sleep. Nights they dance. They dance for four days.... I think they call it a winter dance.... Some of them, they stayed there all day, dance all day if they wann'ed to. Some of them they dance all night. Inna morning comes they go home sleep, come back at night, they dance again. My Mom used to always go to that winter dance.... I don't think nobody makes 'em [the sagebrush clothing today].... If I went to the winter dance in...Penticton, I don't see any of them ladies wear those traditional clothing. But they wear cloth.... Like a [...] dancing dress they wear. (Ethel Isaac)

Women used the same techniques for weaving *sp'éc'n* and *q'ʷúys* to weave clothing of *kewkʷu* bark. For items such as saddle blankets, mats, and some baskets they wove them in the same manner as floor or table mats made of cattail leaves (Teit 1900:258; Steedman 1930:500). *Kewkʷu* bark does not peel off in nice smooth strands, but rather in large thick bunches, and the twined rope is made up of short strands spliced together. Consequently, it is not as strong as some other types of twined fibres, such as *sp'éc'n* or *q'ʷúys* (Tule Mat Project 1997:39). For this reason *kewkʷu* bark fibres were often woven with other plant fibres such as *q'ʷúys*, Western Red Cedar bark, willow bark, or *sp'éc'n* to give the product the flexibility of *kewkʷu* and the durability of the other fibres. This contrast of fibres also created colour variations providing a decorative effect to the product (Tepper 1994:24; Turner 1992:179, 182).

Kewkʷu bark has been found in old graves where it was used to wrap and tie the bodies (Smith 1975:434). *Kewkʷu* may have been the preferred plant fibre for this purpose because its strong but pleasant aroma helped mask the smell of a corpse during preparations for burial. People also used to plug their nostrils with the crushed leaves when they were preparing the body (Steedman 1930:459).

Techniques and Plant Materials Used For Decoration

It is clear from the above discussion about the care that goes into the harvesting and preparation of plant parts, and their manufacture, that part of the tradition of fibre technology is to make not only useable products, but also beautiful ones. Therefore, all fibre products, regardless of their size or use, were decorated one way or another. Decoration took many forms depending on the article, its manufacture, and its use. It may be as basic as using a contrasting-coloured fibre for binding the handle on to a tool, or as complex as combining multiple plant materials using a variety of techniques to create intricate designs, and dying some of the materials to give even greater contrasts of colour. The variation and creativity of the design was subject only to the limitations imposed by the surface on which it is applied and the technique used.

False embroidery, described above, twilling, and beading overlay were commonly used on twined bags, and occasionally used on cedar coiled basketry (Miller 1990:139; Turnbaugh and Turnbough 1985:168). Imbrication is the main technique used by the Nɬeʔkepmx to apply designs to cedar-coiled baskets. Beading was a popular form of decoration for clothing, and included the use of porcupine quills, dentalium shell, berries and seeds, and later glass beads obtained through trade with Europeans. Paints made from plants and soil minerals, and later bought from non-Native traders, were also used on all types of clothing and fibre work (Ackerman 1996:108-113; Feest 1992:141-142). Designs that were painted, or created with seeds, beads or quills, were more elaborate and colourful than those created with the techniques of imbrication and false embroidery, which tend to be fairly geometrical to fit with the structure of

the basket or bag (Tepper 1994:78; Feest 1992:33). The adoption of small glass beads allowed for even greater intricacy and colourfulness in beaded designs.

Imbrication is an example of one of the most complex methods of decoration (Steedman 1930:498). Cedar coiled baskets, trays, and cradles were usually imbricated in decorative patterns with strips of natural red or dyed black bitter cherry bark, and cured white grass stems (*Phalaris arundinacea*) (Newcombe 1903 in Turner et al. 1990:96; also Turner 1992: 39). These along with a variety of other plant materials provided the typical red-brown, black, and yellow-white colour range found in N+e?kepmx coiled basketry products (Miller 1990:146).

The process of imbrication involves hooking strips of grass and bark along the coils so that they cover the latter on the outside only. The strips are cut wide enough to cover the coil, and are secured to the coils in a series of pleats, made by folding the bark over on itself as the basket is coiled, securing it with the coil wrap and then folding the bark back over the wraps (Appendix 4, Fig. 17). To do the imbrication the plant material must be dampened. "You have to keep it damp all the time.... These [strips of cherry bark] has to be soaked" (Mandy Brown). The length of the imbricated pleats can be varied depending on the number of coil wraps made prior to folding back the bark. Also colour variations are created with the different plant materials used, and dyes (E. Jensen 1991:133; Teit 1900:188).

Applying a design by imbrication is a process that takes place as the basket is being built. Therefore the basket maker must have a mental sense of where each design piece will go on the basket. One of the challenges of executing the design through imbrication, which is done as the basket is being built, is managing to fit the designs onto the basket evenly. Mandy Brown explains that

> you just have to figure out where you gonna have your next design.... You gotta have it planned ahead of time. See this is right across here, and this is right across, and the same thing [referring to black imbricated designs set exactly across from each other across the face of the tray] (see Appendix 4, Fig. 9b). I don't...draw a picture. I just do it by head.... You have to try and make it even, like...maybe four pieces [four plain wraps between designs] then you put the design in there. See the way it is. This one is about the same width as the other one [referring to the space between designs]. (Mandy Brown)

Haeberlin et al. (1928:263-265) give some examples in which the basket maker has encircled the basket with the design, but is left with too small a space at the end to have the full-sized design repeated. As it is usually too big of a space not to have something in there, in each case the basket maker solved the problem by incorporating a smaller version of the design into that space.

Another concern when applying a design to coiled baskets is to avoid the tendency of too much of a lean to one side rather than the design being straight up and down. According to Haeberlin et al. (1928:261) this is typical of designs on coiled baskets because of the circular way in which the basket is built. Too great a lean is not considered a good execution of the design (Adaline Frank). Brenda Aljam explains how she managed to get the nineteen design pieces repeated in two rows onto the basket she made for her father to come out completely evenly, with equal spaces between the designs all the way around the basket, and the top row sitting directly above the previous row (Appendix 4, Fig. 18).

> I just went straight up visually. I did some...sketches on what I wanted it to look like, and how many rows I wanted in between.... Just eyeballed it, I guess. (Brenda Aljam)

Pəkɬén – Wild Cherry Bark [*Prunus emarginata* (Dougl. Ex Hook) Walpers]

The most common plant material used by the Nɬeʔkepmx to imbricate cedar-coiled baskets is the bark from wild cherry [*Prunus emarginata* (Dougl. Ex Hook) Walpers], also known as bitter cherry. The Nɬeʔkepmx call this bark *pəkɬén*. It is either left its natural light reddish-brown colour, or dyed by a variety of methods, including burying it in damp earth for a time, to turn it dark brown or black in colour (Turner et al. 1990:263-264).

Wild cherry grows well in the lower Fraser Valley region of Nɬeʔkepmx territory but not in the Nicola Valley (Mary Coutlee). Another type of cherry, *zəlkʷuʔéɬp*, chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana* L. or *Prunus demissa* Nutt.), is more common around Lytton and in the Nicola Valley (Turner et al. 1990:264). Teit (1900:188) mentions the use of this cherry bark for imbrication rather than *P. emarginata*. Ethel Isaac also mentions chokecherry when referring to imbrication. But

both Mabel Joe and Mary Coutlee say that only the bark from *P. emarginata*, *pəkɬén*, is used for imbrication, and that the bark from *P. virginiana*, *zəlkʷuʔéɬp*, is not good for this purpose because it is not strong enough (personal communication, 30 November 1999). Rather, the hard wood of the chokecherry was used for handles, especially on root diggers, and the bark was sometimes shredded and used for decorating birchbark basket rims (Parish et al. 1996:58; Steedman 1930:500).

To harvest the wild cherry bark women look for younger branches that have few side shoots and cut this branch from the tree. The first step is to scrape off the rough outer bark, leaving only the smooth inner bark (Adaline Frank). Then, with a sharp knife, they cut this tough, waterproof bark either in a spiral along the branch the desired width and peel it off, or peel it away in long strips in the same way as *q'ʷúys* (Turner et al. 1990:263-264).

Now the peeled bark must be cleaned. Mandy Brown says that she scrapes both "the inside and the outside to make it nice and shiny," being careful not to cut right through the bark. The resultant cleaned bark strips are very smooth and flexible, with a waxy feel to them. "And they are strong, you know. They're really strong" (Mandy Brown).

Nxʷiƛ'qn – Grasses

A general term for the white grasses used in basket imbrication is *nxʷiƛ'qn*, of which common reed grass, (*Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. Ex Steud), and reed canary grass, (*Phalaris arundinacea* L.) are most commonly used. Another term for grasses of this type is *ʔespəspés peɬstuytúym'xʷ* or "swamp growth" because of the type of habitat in which they grow (Turner et al. 1990:142-143).

Reed canary grass and common reed grass are hollow-stemmed perennials that grow to 1.7 m (5 feet) tall, from long rhizomes. They are found mainly at the low to mid elevations of Nɬeʔkepmx territory in marshes, disturbed wet sites and stream-banks, and around areas where there is much agricultural activity (Parish et al. 1996:338). Rose Skuki from Lytton says that the

"white trim used for baskets doesn't grow in this area, as the soil is too dry. We go to the Coast to get the white straws for the white trim" (cited in Hanna and Henry 1995:147).

These grasses are long and very smooth, and have a glossy yellow-white colour when prepared (Teit 1900:188; Turner et al. 1990:143). They are seldom dyed for basketry ornamentation because of their natural attractive colour and appearance (Steedman 1930:497). As well, when they are died, the colours are said to fade (Teit 1900:188). Nevertheless, the stems were occasionally dyed in a variety of colours and cut into short pieces to be interspersed with seeds and made into necklaces and used as fringes on dresses. The ends of the short tubes were bound with sinew to prevent them from splitting (Turner et al. 1990:143).

Annie York says that the stalks are harvested when the plant is fruiting. Women remove the tops, "and the remaining stalks, which are hollow, [are] 'smoked' or 'smudged' over a fire to prevent them from turning brown later" (Turner et al. 1990:143). They are then split, washed, and stored for later usage (Turner et al. 1990:143).

Julia Kilroy of Sulus describes in Turner et al. (1990:143) how her Grandmother used to harvest the stems of *Phragmites* (common reed grass) for imbricating baskets "while they were still green and soft. She brought them home and warmed them over the coals of a fire, then broke them at the nodes, split them open and flattened them out." She used these strips together with dyed and un-dyed bitter cherry bark to decorate her cedar-coiled baskets, resulting in the typical red, white and black colour contrast in the design. Mabel Joe found that the stems of *Phragmites* were too hard and inflexible for imbrication, and preferred to use the stems of *Phalaris* (reed canary grass) to decorate her baskets. She harvested them anytime from spring through fall. She sometimes used the *Phragmites* stems to make food-drying mats by twining them together in a manner similar to that used to bind the edges of tule mats (Turner et al. 1990:143).

Another grass used occasionally for imbrication is *pəsn'úɬtn'*, (*Elymus cinereus* [syn. *E. triticoides*] Scribn. & Merrill), or Giant Wild Rye grass. This plant also grows in swampy areas, and can grow to over a metre (3 to 5ft) in height. There is a low, flat place on the east side of the

Thompson River, south of Spences Bridge, that used to be called *Pæspæsn'ún'ɬtn* (lit? 'lots-of-rye-grass place') because of the abundance of rye grass that used to grow there (Turner et al. 1990:140-141). The stems used for imbrication are cut to lengths of about 30cm (one foot), and steamed or boiled before use. They were not used fresh (Turner et al. 1990:143).

Mary Coutlee remembers her Mother harvesting a type of rye grass in the spring when the plants were still young. Mrs. Coutlee's Mother used to put the grass in a shallow tray and pour hot water over it, leaving it soaking until the water turned cold. This kills the grass and helps preserve the cut stems, as well as hastens the bleaching process and preserves the whitened colour. Mrs. Coutlee says that it also gets whiter with age once it is harvested. Her Mother used that to decorate baskets as well. According to Mrs. Coutlee this particular grass, which she calls straw, does not grow in the Nicola Valley.

Miɬ – To Take on a Colour, Stain, or Dye

Most of the colours found in fibre products are the natural colours of the plant material itself, such as the light brown of split cedar root, the soft, medium brown of *sp'éc'n* fibres, the near white of q'ʷúys, the rich brown of kewkʷu, the shiny, pale cream colour of the canary grass, and the brownish-red of the peeled and cleaned cherry bark. But fibres used for decoration to imbricate baskets, for false embroidery, or for other ornamentation were sometimes dyed to provide a greater colour range. According to Turner et al. (1990:42), dying not only served a decorative purpose, but it also helped preserve the materials that were dyed as the antiseptic properties of tannins from boiled tree bark inhibits decay in the underlying materials. The conifer pitch used for waterproofing baskets also acted as a preservative.

The Nɬeʔkepmx derived the majority of the natural dyes, stains, and paints they used from the roots, leaves, berries, and bark of as many as 27 different bushes, fungi, trees, flowering plants, and lichens (Steedman 1930:500-502). They dyed most of the plant fibres by boiling the dye plant in water to extract the colour and soaking the material to be died in this solution. In some

cases the plant part was simply rubbed on to the fibre, as with certain berries when the juice is used as a dye. As well, some fibres may be buried in mud which, depending on the fibre and how long it is buried, turns them a dark brown, grey or black. Plant fibres also may be smoked to deepen the natural colour (Tepper 1994:72; Turner et al. 1990:41-42). The main colours originally used were red, black, white, blue, yellow and green, with red being the most common (Boas and Teit 1996:182; Turner et al. 1980:150). Most vegetal dyes are harvested in quantity, then dried and stored until needed (Turner 1992:34).

The following is a list of common plant dyes used by the Nɬeʔkepmx for dying plant fibres found in Steedman (1930:501-502) and Turner et al. (1990), with the details of each plant taken from various sources:

- *kʷy'éɬp* - Red Alder (*Alnus rubra* Bong. [*Alnus oregona* Nutt.]). Pieces of the bark when boiled a short time produce colours ranging from bright red to orange to dark brown, depending on the treatment and fibre to be dyed. It is used to dye cedar bark and basket materials, as well as *sp'éc'n* fishing line and nets to make them less visible to the fish (Tepper 1994:73; Turner 1992:30; Turner et al. 1990:188). Julia Kilroy of Sulus dyed bitter cherry bark in a solution of alder bark to deepen its already red colour (Turner et al. 1990:188).
- *scéqʷm* - Saskatoon berries (*Amelanchier alnifolia* Nutt.). When smashed these berries produce a red stain that was used on such materials as silverberry bark (q'ʷúys) when it was used to make bags (Turner 1992:232).
- *mæcækʷ* - Blackcap Raspberry (*Rubus leucodermis* Dougl.). The dark reddish-purple to nearly black juice from these berries can be squeezed out and used as a stain (Steedman 1930:502).
- *sʔéy'icqʷ* - Wild Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus* L.). The red juice of this berry is also used to stain plant fibres (Steedman 1930:502).
- *kelule ʔéyqʷs əxʷikʷestnéɬp* ("owl wood of hemlock") - Indian Paint Fungus (*Echinodontium*

tinctorium Ell. & Everh.). This is a type of powder fungus that grows on fir and hemlock trees. Once it is treated by fire it is powdered and used as a red paint. The paint after necessary preparation is called "tcokt" (ceqʷ-) meaning "red" (Steedman 1930:501). Teit (1900:184) notes that the pigment was mixed with melted deer grease and heated before applying it to a surface.

- *kʷl'kʷál'* (*lit* 'yellow') - Wolf Lichen, Wolf "Moss," "Yellow Tree Lichen" (*Letharia vulpina* [L.] Hue),. This is the largest of the lichens found along the Pacific coast, and is bright yellow in colour (Steedman 1930:501). The Scw'exmx call it *qʷzém*, which is a general term for mosses and moss-like plants. The Nɬeʔkepmx used it to colour wood and hides, and as a body and face paint. They extracted the colour by boiling or soaking the lichen in water (Turner et al. 1990:75).
- *sc'ol's.eʔéɬp* - Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium* Pursh.). The Nɬeʔkepmx scraped the outer bark of the roots and boiled it to make a bright yellow dye, which they used for basket materials (Mabel Joe, personal communication, 30 November 1999; Turner et al. 1990:187; Steedman 1930:502). Pend d'Oreilles quill and bead artist Joanne Bigcrane says that Oregon grape root yields a deep golden yellow colour, but that it "takes a lot of plant material to create a good, strong colour" (cited in Ackerman 1996:123).
- *kʷétɬp* - Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata* Donn). The twigs and leaves can be boiled or soaked to make a green dye (Steedman 1930:501), and the bark from the roots produces a brown dye (Newcombe 1903 cited in Turner et a. 1990:95). Mandy Brown includes the root bark in the decoction she makes to dye cherry bark black.
- *q'apuxʷéɬp* - Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta* Marsh). Newcombe (1903) said that "the root was scraped and exposed to the air; when it would turn blue it could be used to colour Indian-hemp bags" (cited in Turner et al. 1990:191). It is not clear from Newcombe's description whether the root itself was rubbed on the material, or whether the material for the bag was steeped in a

decoction. The Lakes Okanagan made a blue dye, which they used for colouring basket materials, by soaking the inner bark of the hazelnut root in water (Turner et al. 1980:90).

- *sp'æq'ʷxæns* (*lit.* 'scales of raven's foot') - Larkspur or Menzies' Delphinium (*Delphinium menziesii* DC.) (Turner et al. 1990:248). Teit (1900:184) says that the dark blue flowers of this plant were used "both as a blue paint and as a dye," but Steedman (1930:502) notes that some people found it fairly ineffective. Blues and greens were also obtained "by boiling certain rotten woods" (Teit 1900:184).
- *q'ʷiʔxʷéɬp* - Pacific Dogwood, Western Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii* Aud. Ex. T. & G.). When the outer bark of this plant is boiled it makes a deep brown dye. It can also be mixed with the bark of grand fir to make a black dye, and was used for dying the bitter cherry bark for imbricating baskets (Turner et al. 1990:204).
- *q'æc'q'æc'usnín'us* or *ntəɬtúym'xʷ* (*lit.* 'trailing over the ground') - Orange Honeysuckle (*Lonicera ciliosa* [Pursh] DC.),. The boiled stems of this plant produce *a* solution that will turn the cleaned bitter cherry bark black (Turner et al. 1990:197).
- Burying plant materials, such as wild cherry bark, and in some cases the entire finished product in mud turns it a black or dark grey colour. The depth of colour depends on how long the fibre is buried (Turner et al. 1990:41-42; Seltzer 1980:109; Steedman 1930:500-501).

Ethel Isaac says that onion skins also could be used to dye plant materials. "Even the onions...that...skin, that was kinn'a brownish. An' they use that for dye, too." She also said that Indian Paint brush made a good dye for cedar, *q'ʷúys*, and *sp'éc'n*, but she did not know how it was prepared. Joanne Bigcrane says that a dye made from the flowers of this plant creates a golden yellow colour, even though the flowers are red (cited in Ackerman 1996: 123).

The colours from plant dyes are quite subtle, so when aniline dyes first became available to the Nɬeʔkepmx in the late 1800s women experimented with them quite freely. Where aniline dyes were used on the plant fibres the colours were extremely intense, almost overwhelming the naturally dyed fibres. Perhaps it is for this reason that natural dyes did not fall out of general use

after the initial introduction of commercially produced aniline dyes. Many women today, particularly cedar coiled basket-makers, prefer to continue to make their own dyes.

Mandy Brown's Grandmother taught her how to use a combination of plant materials to make a black dye for the cherry bark.

> It [the cherry bark] has to be dyed in a natural resources, and then I put it in a can and you have to leave it there for a while and keep on turning it over.... I use about four kinds of natural resources, like fir boughs and [the cherry branch] when it's green, when it's still fresh like, I can scrape that. Just here, I scrape it in there. And then I put [the cherry bark] in a can, and you have to boil it for about an hour. And...evergreens out in the hillsides, what I put in there. The leaves, and...the branches and all that...I boil them all together. I guess you could put...it in tea, too. My aunt used to put tea bags in hers, too. [As well as all the other things mentioned].... My other Grandmother, my Grandmother that used to stay with us, that's what she taught me how to do, they way I make mine. I boil these things together, and then I put it in a can, and I turn it now and then. It all depends how long it takes to get black. Maybe three weeks.... It takes quite a while. I don't add anything at all [referring to fixatives such as salt]. After you finish dying it you gotta wash it real good, rinse it, and rinse it and rinse it [until none of the colour comes off]. (Mandy Brown)

In an excerpt from Hanna and Henry (1995:147), Rose Skuki from Lytton explains how she used to harvest the wild cherry bark when the blossoms where in bloom and immerse it in a solution with rose bush leaves to turn the bark black. "We put the cherry bark in cold water and boil it until nightfall or until it looks really black."

Some women also incorporate a number of introduced materials along with a combination of plant materials to dye the cherry bark black. Ethel Isaac's Grandmother took advantage of rusting metal to help attain a deep black colour for the cherry bark used to imbricate her cedar coiled baskets black.

> My Grandmother never used to buy her dye. She used to make 'em outta plant, her dyes. I watched her when she looks for the rusty steel, an' she put water in it, let it get brown. I don't know how long she had it get browned, or blacked up. An' then she put her choke cherries bark, puts it in there make it black....I don't know how long she had it in that water with that steel. An' then when she take it out an' the plant turned out like reddish or black.... They dying it themselves.... That's all I know. (Ethel Isaac)

Mary Coutlee remembers her Mother creating a dye solution for the cherry bark by filling a large plastic pail with iron nails or horseshoes and adding water. The cherry bark is placed on top of this solution and weighted down so that none of it is exposed. It is left until the desired colour is reached (Mary Coutlee).

Adaline Frank's Mother simply made up a strong black tea in which to steep the cherry bark until it turned black.

> Red is the natural colour [of the cleaned cherry bark used for imbrication of cedar coiled baskets]. My mother, a long time ago, she uses [a strong brew of regular black] tea [to dye the bark black].... She puts it all in a can...and puts the tea in there.... They turn like that [referring to the black colour].... She keeps checking on it [and leaves it in] 'till it gets the right colour.... About a week, or something like that. (Adaline Frank)

Mrs. Frank says that you have to keep adding tea, but the solution doesn't have to stay hot for it to be effective.

Dyes, decoration, an intense attention to technique, along with the careful selection when harvesting materials, and the care taken in preparing them all point to an industry that is demanding of time, skill, knowledge, and creative ability. It is an industry that takes years of training to learn the basics, and a lifetime of practice to become a master. It is an industry that bridges generations and, with the incorporation of foreign materials, it also bridges cultures. Yet at the same time it is an industry that remains uniquely Nɬeʔkepmx, not only through the materials, designs, colours, styles and techniques, but also the understanding that quality and beauty are as important as the usefulness of each product, and the awareness of and respect for the spiritual presence in the land and plants that drives so much of Nɬeʔkepmx values and practices. It is all of these things that make Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology so culturally and individually significant, and why so much time and effort was taken in the training of young girls for this important responsibility in their lives.

Chapter 5: Continuing Traditions and Embracing Change in N̓e?kepmx Fibre Technology

> People talk about, "Well, we're gonna use these colours." And now some of the artists are going beyond that.... They're looking at one point in time when they saw stuff, how when the first white people came here they saw this. Well, it doesn't mean that two hundred years before that they weren't doing something different.... They're basing some of it on that one point in time, and I can see we're not just gonna stay in one spot. (Brenda Aljam, Coldwater)

The N̓e?kepmx have been a relatively receptive Nation of people, readily exchanging goods, and adopting foreign modes of life and thought (Teit 1900:390). Their technology is most typical of Plateau culture. However, there is archaeological evidence in the Thompson and Fraser Valley regions of N̓e?kepmx territory of stone points and tools dating to as early as 7000BP showing influences from as far east as the plains (Smith 1975:433; Sanger 1969:198). There is further evidence extending into the Nicola Valley that as early as 2000 years ago the N̓e?kepmx imported from the coast materials such as shells, dentalium, and whalebones, from which utensils and implements were made and decorated (Smith 1975:433). The coiled basketry techniques found in many places along the Pacific Coast of British Columbia to as far south as California are also evident in N̓e?kepmx fibre technology (Smith 1975:402). More recently, since the advent of the horse, the N̓e?kepmx began showing a close affinity with the Interior tribes from Oregon and California (Teit 1900:390).

Individual women played a role in the cross-cultural influences on fibre technology that come about through trade, an economic activity in which they were active participants. N̓e?kepmx women were involved in trade because many of the items they produced were highly desired by neighbouring peoples. Everything in fibre technology was subject to trade, from raw and processed plant fibres to finished products, including clothing, baskets and bags of all kinds, mats, twine, vegetal and mineral dye products, shells, beads, and seeds. Women engaged in direct exchanges of these products "at all levels—within family and village groups, between villages in the same language group," and among diverse peoples from as far away as the Coast and the more remote Plateau tribes (Turner 1992:41). Centuries of women's involvement

in this intra- and inter-tribal exchange contributed to the development of Nłe?kepmx fibre technology.

Everything that women traded had more or less a set value, which varied somewhat according to the supply and demand of products in the different trading areas (Boas and Teit 1996:218-219; see Ackerman 1995:84). *Sp'éc'n* was one of the most popular and in-demand trade items and women could buy much of what they needed with a comparative amount of *sp'éc'n* (Boas and Teit 1996:219. For example, five packages of *sp'éc'n*, each package consisting of six bundles of cleaned fibres about two feet long and two inches in diameter, tied at both ends make up one bundle, could be traded for one large dressed buckskin, two salmon-skins full of salmon-oil, a lengthy process that requires several salmon, one canoe, three sticks of salmon or three to three and one quarter fathoms of dentalia. When European trade goods became available, this quantity of sp'éc'n garnered one Hudson's Bay tomahawk, one copper kettle, one old musket, or one steel trap (Teit 1900:260-261).

Prior to the introduction of the horse in the 1790s, trade routes primarily followed water routes, and goods from the south and east filtered into Nłe?kepmx territory through Shuswap and Okanagan territories via the Thompson River from Kamloops, and from the coast following the Fraser River route (Boas and Teit 1996:216; Wyatt 1971:64-65). With the introduction of the horse trade goods from the southern Plateau and points further east came directly over the mountain passes reaching Nłe?kepmx territory through the Nicola Valley, subjecting the Nłe?kepmx to more direct influences from these regions (Boas and Teit 1996:216-217). Not only did trade routes change, so did the intensity of trade, spanning greater distances, and offering more variety of trade items and subsequently ideas from which Nłe?kepmx women could choose. South-eastern influence on the Nłe?kepmx was heightened as a result of the annual migration of the more easterly Plateau tribes to the buffalo hunting grounds on the plains (Boas and Teit 1996:217). With horses, traders were able to transport heavier materials more quickly over long

distances giving the Nɬeʔkepmx people easier access to dressed buffalo hides and moose skins, painted buffalo hide bags, parfleches, and woven bags (Tepper 1994:12-13).

Among the Nɬeʔkepmx items that were sold or acquired in trade belonged to the individual (Teit 1900:293; also Ackerman 1995:83-84; Ray 1939:26), further affirming a woman's independence in the selection of trade items. Women made a conscious selection of ideas, designs and products in trade, and the choices they made were based on their needs and personal taste guided by environmental limitations and cultural principles. The Nɬeʔkepmx of the Nicola Valley, the Scw'exmx, for example, not only accepted material goods, they selected designs and techniques that gradually made their way into the styles of the region (Turner 1992:41,42; Turner et al. 1990:5). In addition to an increased access to and greater variety of animal hides, the Scw'exmx adopted the Plains style of clothing. Consequently, plant fibre clothing, which was highly influenced by the cedar bark garments of the Coast, became far less popular. The Scw'exmx around Lower Nicola also incorporated the use of feathers in their ornamentation, and modelled their cradleboards after those used on the Plains (Teit 1900:389).

Women's decisions as to what to acquire in trade were often governed by the environmental limitations of their own area. This was certainly the case for the Lower and Upper Nɬeʔkepmx peoples, who depended on each other for a number of important commodities because of the contrasting ecological zones in their territories (Turner et al. 1990:32-33). For example, *sp'éc'n* (Indian hemp), one of the most important plant fibres used in Nɬeʔkepmx plant technology, was used in quantity by both divisions in the manufacture of tools, bags, mats, and clothing. *Sp'éc'n* grows abundantly in the Nicola Valley and around Spences Bridge, but only a poor subspecies, hemp dogbane, is plentiful in the south. Therefore, the cleaned fibres were a highly desired item of trade, and Scw'exmx women could purchase most of what they needed with a comparative amount of *sp'éc'n* (Teit 1900:260-261; Boas and Teit 1996:218-219). Along with *sp'éc'n*, the Scw'exmx also traded *q'ʷúys* and *sp'éc'n* bags, buckskins, a variety of roots and berries, and buffalo hides acquired from the Plains tribes in exchange for salmon, cedar roots, and cedar

root baskets, which were more abundant in the lower region (Turner et al. 1990:42). The distinct similarities in the style and design of plant-based products between these two groups attests to the strong trade network that developed (Teit 1900:389-390).

The introduction of Euro-Canadian interests in the southern Interior had a far-reaching effect on trade commodities and trade relations of the N̓e?kepmx (Hawthorn et al. 1960:264). Fur traders first entered the Thompson River-Nicola Valley region in the early 1800s, bringing with them manufactured tools and materials to exchange for local resources. As in pre-contact trade, N̓e?kepmx women willingly adopted new materials, tools, styles, and techniques from these traders. These new products did not in any way diminish the value of the older ones, and women selectively chose only those items that would profit their work, or that were compatible with traditional styles (Feest 1992:42-43; Dockstader 1966:22-23; Boas 1955:176). Initially, trade with these foreign products may have actually increased the production of fibre products, as raw materials could be harvested and prepared more quickly and easily with the use of metal tools.

Ornamentation was particularly enhanced with the many new decorative materials, such as brightly coloured yarn and glass beads. Beads were especially popular as they allowed for designs that were far more intricate and colourful than was ever possible with natural products, and more and more they were used instead of shells, fruit, seeds and porcupine quills for decoration (Ackerman 1996:108; Dockstader 1966:28). By virtue of the shape, size, and colour of these natural products designs tended to be monochromatic and linear (Bigcrane, in Ackerman 1996:128; Hungry Wolf 1980:245), with women creating variations in the patterns by inserting seeds and berries. Glass beads, however, opened up entirely new possibilities for design. Altering their technique only somewhat to accommodate the smaller size of glass beads, women created intricate, colourful and unique patterns on buckskin clothing, and plant fibre bags, and fashioned a wide range of jewellery (Feest 1992:141-142; see Ackerman 1996:128).

Within fifty years of the traders' first visits to the region there was a noticeable reduction in the amount of fibre products made by Nłeʔkepmx women, as well as an increase in the use of products of European origin. Metal pots, glass and wooden containers, and cloth bags replaced baskets and bags for gathering, storage and cooking. A readily available cotton thread and rope, similar to butcher twine, took the place of the once valuable *sp'éc'n*. Nłeʔkepmx women willingly adopted cloth fabric to make clothing, and by the 1870s most Nłeʔkepmx wore European-style dress (Tepper 1994:15; Miller 1990:141-143; Wickwire 1980:25).

In spite of these convenient new products and a rapidly changing environment, fibre technology did not disappear. Some women continued to make fibre clothing for themselves and their families, for ceremonial occasions such as births, funerals, and weddings, and as gifts to maintain alliances between families (Tepper 1994:xii, 18; Wickwire 1993:551; Ethel Isaac). Tule mats were no longer needed for housing, but women still made them for the purpose of drying food (Mary Coutlee). Basketry also remained an important industry for personal use and for trade. Many of the neighbouring tribes had ceased to make them and relied on the Nłeʔkepmx for their supply of baskets. By the turn of the century the majority of baskets found among the Okanagon, Colville, Sanpoil, and Lake peoples were of Nłeʔkepmx origin (Boas and Teit 1996:187-188).

Women adapted fibre products that they no longer used for their original purpose, incorporating new materials and designs, and even altering the style as they learned new skills and adopted new ideas to meet their needs (Miller 1990:141-143; Duff 1965:80-81; Hawthorn et al. 1960:264). This is particularly evident in the changes made to flat twined bags of *sp'éc'n*, which were formerly used to store roots and personal belongings. This large, rectangular style of bag, often measuring up to two by three feet in size, altered in size, shape, design, weaving materials, and function to meet the changing way of life (Miller 1990:140). The new style of bag, not much larger than 12 by 12 inches (Appendix 4, Fig. 19), was used as a handbag for carrying personal possessions. A number of women also incorporated commercially dyed yarns into the

manufacture of these bags to create more elaborate designs in a variety of colours (Miller 1990:142-143; Feest 1992:126-127). Some women who continued to make twined bags eventually replaced the *sp'éc'n* twine with cotton cord, all the while retaining the same weaving technique used in the making of *sp'éc'n* bags (Miller 1990:142-143). This same cotton cord replaced *sp'éc'n* in the manufacture of fishing nets as well (Adaline Frank).

N̓e?kepmx women did not make any major changes to their coiled basketry as a result of Euro-Canadian influence, and weavers continued to use virtually the same techniques and materials as before (Miller 1990:146-148). Access to new tools and certain materials, however, made their manufacture easier, and women began to experiment, especially with designs. Many old designs quickly went out of style as new ones were invented, or borrowed and adapted to take their place (Haeberlin et al. 1928:236). Familiar, geometric-style designs became more complex, and naturalistic representations in design, such as human figures, animals, plants, flowers, flags, and letters came into use (Miller 1990:142-143; also Haeberlin et al. 1928:235).

Naturalistic designs, called *ƛ'ey'qe?*,[14] allowed for an even greater degree of individual expression for women making fibre products (Appendix 4, Fig. 12). There were no rules for composition with this style of design, aside from avoiding the use of images that were *x̌ʷəx̌ʷa?*, except to strive to create the most realistic representation as possible of the chosen object (Haeberlin et al. 1928:254). In some instances, these designs also had an element of regional distinction. Ethel Isaac notes that certain animals used in designs indicate in which area the product was made. For example, designs using deer, bear, salmon, or birds, such as the eagle, would be from the Nicola Valley, while at "Spences Bridge they have [designs with] snakes an'...goats, [animals which are] from that area" (Ethel Isaac).

Some cedar coiled basket makers also began using aniline dyes when they first became available, particularly when the plants used to make the vegetal dyes were out of season.

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[14] *ƛ'ey'qe?*, pronounced "tl'áy-ee'-qə," is an N̓e?kepmxcín term that means to 'mimic, copy, or imitate what someone is doing' (Thompson and Thompson 1996:171).

Aniline dyes were readily acquired from traders. They were also quick to prepare, and offered a variety of colours with which to experiment, which for some women was a welcome addition to the rather muted shades of blue, yellow, green, red, tan, brown, and black obtained from vegetal dyes (Tepper 1994:74-75; Steedman 1930:500-501). Aniline dyes were more frequently used to dye buckskin, cloth fabrics, and yarn, however, and manufactured dyes were seldom used to any great extent to dye plant fibres, particularly in coiled basketry. Ethel Isaac says that when dying plant fibres for her baskets her Grandmother "never used to buy her dye. She used to make 'em outta plants." Mandy Brown contends that aniline dyes, along with other manufactured materials are "not Indian," and that neither her Grandmother nor her Mother used them in their basket making.

By the 1880s, when ethnographers began recording Nɬe?kepmx life, all the First Nations of the southern Interior of British Columbia had been placed under the jurisdiction and control of the Federal Government, and forced onto reserve communities. Colonial authority and foreign settlement had curtailed the hunter/gatherer economy by encroaching onto tribal land holdings, and proceeded to dictate the economic and political structure by which First Nations people were to live. Most of the people now had to support themselves on the reserves partly by small-scale farming, growing vegetables, and raising cows, hogs, and chickens. Women continued to harvest berries and roots, but only as a supplement to the cultivated foods (Wickwire 1993:551). Many of the local men and women also found work as labourers for non-Native industrial and agricultural interests in the region. In addition to these changes to the lifeway, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches persistently lobbied for European-style education for the children in order to advance the process of assimilation, effectively usurping the role of grandparents as the child's mentor (Wickwire 1980:13).

These rapid changes arising under the increasing pressures of Euro-Canadian colonial dominance prompted ethnographers to record as much about pre-contact First Nations cultures as possible before that way of life vanished completely. The nostalgia that developed in this rush to document a "pristine" and "noble" past fuelled an intense interest in First Nations

artifacts (Cohodas 1992:89). It was during this period of ethnographic interest in tribal objects that Nłe?kepmx women changed their focus from making fibre products for personal use and inter-tribal trade to making products strictly for sale to a foreign market. This market was to provide a regular source of income for many of these women for at least the next forty years.

With ethnographers popularising First Nations cultures and artifacts through public displays in museums, photographs and written documentation, interest in First Nations products spread rapidly, drawing the attention of tourists and curio seekers (Feest 1992:46). As the demand for artifacts grew, the women who made these products recognised the opportunity to expand their trading circles, and help supplement their family with a cash income (Duff 1965:86).

Adaline Frank says that her Mother and Grandmother started making baskets for sale because it was difficult for women at that time to find wage-earning employment:

> None of them went to school...cus' there's no new schools them days. Just gardening...and they have to go and fish and hunt for their food.... She [Mrs. Frank's Mother] makes all kinds, too [referring to tightly coiled cedar root baskets]...to sell. And it helps. Just like when you work for something, that's olden days. You sell it to a second hand store and they buy this and that there.... [She was doing that] when she was strong, [60 -70 years earlier], because there's no jobs them days. (Adaline Frank)

Ethel Isaac's Grandmother worked full time at her craft in order to make a living right up to her death thirty years ago:

> She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] sell lots [of baskets].... Every day excep' Sunday [she would be working on her baskets]. She even do that to the sp'éc'n.... She makes [fishing] nets she trades sometimes. She traded a big [berry picking] basket [about a foot and a half high and wide] for a cow one time.... An' it take her two months to finish one big basket.... She used to traded for fish [Kokanee], too. [She did quite well with her trading].... An' she's makin' buckskin gloves. She would sell it for 2 dollars, or 5 dollars.... She made a pickin' basket and she made some of those round ones like this [nut-shaped with a lid].... She made about three or four big ones. It's long time ago [fifty years]...back when I was 'bout eight or nine years old.... And she was sellin' it for twenty five dollars, or twenty dollars.... It was really big [about a foot high].... People from Kelowna, they buy, and some people from Kamloops. (Ethel Isaac)

With a new trade market, a changing lifestyle, and subsequent demands for traditional products, fibre technology, particularly basketry, along with beadwork and buckskin garments, continued to evolve under the creative influences of Nłe?kepmx women (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown; Steedman 1930:448). Some of the most profound changes came

about as a consequence of the degree to which this activity became specialised and dependent on the tourist market (Albers 1989:140). For the individual, this meant the possibility of even greater freedom of expression. Products now had to be directed toward a non-Native market, and by adapting styles and certain techniques, and in some cases incorporating new materials, N+e?kepmx women were able to explore their own creativity as well as meet their own needs and the demands of a foreign market (Miller 1990:139; Dockstader 1966:29-30).

By the end of World War One N+e?kepmx women sold fibre products almost exclusively to the non-Native market. As always, women continued the tradition of adopting new tools to simplify the work, and applying their skills to incorporate new materials, styles, and designs to create products which demonstrated both cultural and individual identity, as well as being sufficiently altered to be acceptable to the foreign buyer (Feest 1992:14-15).

By now even coiled basketry was subject to creative innovations (Cohodas 1992:90). As among all the Interior Salish tribes, baskets of the N+e?kepmx had been made in a limited number of shapes and sizes for specific uses, such as large, wedge-shaped burden baskets, oblong cradles, round or nut-shaped baskets for holding water or cooking, small pot-shaped baskets for food storage, and large rectangular forms for other types of storage. However, as basketry grew in importance in the new trade market, women began to experiment with the production of completely new forms introduced by the non-Native population. Some women continued to make smaller versions of the traditional baskets and sold them to tourists as souvenirs or as knitting baskets (Gray 1948), but the materials and techniques used in this type of basketry lent themselves to such artistic innovation that women applied their creative talents to recreate as many of the introduced items that could possibly be copied in basketry, regardless of how complicated the task (Haeberlin et al. 1928:210). As a result, basketry items such as fishing creels, picnic hampers, woven tea trays, baskets with handles, lids, and looped rims, place-mats, rattles, table mats, and even tables, large travelling trunks, cups and saucers, open-

weave hats, hat bands, and belts all found their way into both Native and non-Native households (Appendix 4, Fig. 20) (Hawthorn et al. 1960:261; Gray 1948).

Adaline Frank's mother challenged her own basketry skills to make a cup and saucer, which she sold to tourists. The saucer was similar in style to a flat, round tray, and the cup, made with small, tight coiling, could actually be used for liquids. She also made a nut-shaped style of coiled basket about eight inches tall and six inches in diameter, with a lid with a hole in the middle. Mrs. Frank explains that this basket was used for knitting, and the lid was fashioned in this style to allow the strand of wool being knitted to come out the hole (Appendix 4, Fig. 13) (Adaline Frank). Ethel Isaac's Grandmother experimented with the smaller style *sp'éc'n* bags using coloured yarn for the patterns. She also made belts, hatbands and headbands with *sp'éc'n* to sell to the tourists (Ethel Isaac).

Miniature replicas of traditional fibre work were very popular in the tourist trade (Brenda Aljam). Cedar coiled basketry work, spoons, and woven shoes were all reproduced in miniature, two to four inches in size. Women challenged themselves to see how small and fine they could make the coils, or how intricate the weave, and how much detail they could retain of the larger items (Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown)

Women continued, as they had in inter-tribal trade, to be responsible for their own trading interests. When they had enough baskets or other products ready they went to different centres in the area where they either sold or traded them to second hand stores, or directly to tourists and collectors who would come to the region in search of artifacts (Hawthorn et al. 1960:261). The Lytton Reserve was a popular trading place for fibre products and other hand made goods because of its location on the Trans-Canada Highway. Adaline Frank's Mother and Grandmother often took their products, cedar coiled baskets and buckskin moccasins and gloves, to a second-hand store in Lytton run by two local women, Rosie Skuki and Emily Cisco. "There's a big building there, used to be filled, filled up with that...clothes and things like that" (Adaline Frank). In return for their baskets they would be able to choose from "everything you see in the second hand store" (Adaline Frank). For several decades up until the 1950s Mrs. Skuki

and Mrs. Cisco collected a variety of handcrafted items from reserves all along the Fraser River, as well as from the Nicola Valley to sell to the tourists who passed through the area (Hawthorn et al. 1960:261-262).

Adaline Frank also remembers her Mother taking things to Merritt to trade:

> My Mother, when gets a hide she makes gloves, sews gloves, and she trades it, too. Puts up for trade [along with her baskets].... Armstrong's used to do that, years ago.... That's a store over here [downtown Merritt].... It's still there, but George Armstrong sold that place. It's a cowboy outfit in there now. (Adaline Frank)

Sometimes women would open their homes to buyers who wanted particular products. Ethel Isaac's Grandmother sold some of her fibre products that way to people from Kelowna, Douglas Lake, and Kamloops. Women also continued to trade among themselves and with other tribes (Ethel Isaac). By continuing to make fibre products, and trading them to the non-Native population, women used traditional skills to contribute to the changing economic base of their community in order to provide the necessary commodities for themselves and their family (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown).

Stereotypical representations of indigenous cultures that dominated Colonial thinking and attitudes towards First Nations peoples at the turn of the twentieth century created nostalgia among non-Native buyers for a pristine, exotic, and idyllic past. Thus fibre products were evaluated by totally foreign standards and concepts of tradition that wanted "artifacts" which satisfied this nostalgia (Leuthold 1998:25; McMaster 1989:207). Ironically, once fibre products became popular, much of the contemporary work was no longer considered by foreign buyers to be "traditional" or "authentic." These were the products made almost exclusively for sale to the non-Native market. Rather than honour the innovations of the more recent pieces and their maker, non-Native patrons viewed, and in some cases continue to view, these products as non-traditional and inauthentic by the fact that many of the materials, styles and designs are not those used prior to contact. These stereotypical assumptions about tradition were based on products made within the last one hundred and fifty years, and ignore the influences that European contact may already have had on this technology.

Based on the constant and changing contact with outside culture groups over many centuries, it is certain that there were multiple and in some cases indeterminate influences on Nłe?kepmx fibre technology (Feest 1992:14-15; Turner et al. 1990; McMaster 1989:207; Turner et al. 1980; Dockstader 1966:22). The designs, decorations, forms, and techniques that were adopted by Nłe?kepmx women from often distant places and applied to their own work were incorporated into their own traditional fibre technology, and in time "became part of the style of the people" (Dockstader 1966:22), its origin eventually forgotten (Jacknis 1992:150-151; Turner 1992:42). In fact, in many cases, aspects of fibre technology that European collectors considered traditionally Nłe?kepmx may well have originated with the Coastal peoples or been adopted from the Plains. Interestingly, beadwork, which was highly sought after by foreign buyers as typically "Native," actually came about only with the introduction of glass beads by European traders (Ackerman 1996:108; Holloman 1996:56). The very concept of tradition is problematic under these circumstances, as tradition, like culture, changes over time.

As ethnographers, collectors and buyers knew very little about prehistoric influences on Nłe?kepmx fibre technology, they instead adopted the products found among the people that they deemed to be of good quality and taste "as the standard of tradition against which all [future] products were judged" (Cohodas 1992:90-91). Consequently, respectful attention has been paid primarily to older fibre products made for tribal use (Luce 1946). The common criterion of authenticity among collectors in general, particularly for baskets and bags, was how much wear these had from use, and items of exceptional beauty, technical perfection and especially age were sought (Schevill 1992:170). With this distinction, it is not surprising that the majority of examples of Nłe?kepmx fibre products in museums and private collections judged to be representative of the culture are dated prior to 1900 (Luce 1946).

Even with such a narrow concept of authenticity, when there were not enough older products available collectors would accept newly made items if they fit their image of tradition, and many of the products purchased by ethnographers were made exclusively for their

collections rather than for tribal use. This is evident in the selection of artifacts collected among the Nłeʔkepmx by ethnographer James Teit. In the fall of 1894, Boas commissioned Teit to purchase artifacts for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Initially, Teit met with some difficulty as there were few excess items that could be spared, and many Nłeʔkepmx resisted selling their traditional belongings. By the spring of 1895 Teit had managed to assemble a collection of just over thirty articles, very few of which were fibre products. However, Teit had received ample funding from Boas with which to pay for the artifacts, and as news spread that they could be paid quite well for their belongings, many Nłeʔkepmx began making whatever products Teit wished to have for his collection, "creating a surplus by 1897" (Wickwire 1993:542-543). Even with their insistence on cultural conservatism, both Teit and Boas accepted those newly made products that they deemed to be authentic representations of styles used in pre-contact times.

Several contemporary First Nations artists (see for example Hill 1997; Ackerman 1996; Holloman 1996; Teiwes 1996; Albers and Medicine 1983) agree that the buying public still views the First Nations artists' work as less valuable and less authentic if it incorporates European products such as aniline dyes, yarn, and cotton thread, or non-traditional designs and styles. Yet, these artists also agree that for them tradition is not restricted to a place or time, and that fresh traditions emerge as they experiment with new materials, designs and styles relevant to their time. They point out that First Nations people have always been willing to adopt new ideas and techniques if they will improve or simplify their work.

An example of changing traditions is the transition from using sinew and *sp'éc'n* as the main materials for sewing to using silk, linen, and then cotton thread. Nłeʔkepmx women sewed tule mats with *sp'éc'n* thread, but switched to a far less labour-intensive jute cord, and then cotton thread when they became available (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank). Pend d'Oreilles quill and bead worker Joanne Bigcrane noticed this same type of shift while examining quillwork under a hand-lens. One hundred and fifty years ago quills were sewn with sinew; seventy years later they

were sewn with cotton thread. Bigcrane does not have a problem accepting this transition because for her tradition is relative to time, and it is "exciting, to see something that was made the traditional way, and to see the transition from using an old, traditional material, like sinew, to a more modern material, which now in our point of time is considered traditional material" (Bigcrane, in Ackerman 1996: 124-125).

Styles, designs, and materials will change because the experiences of the women who make fibre products are different, even if the techniques remain basically the same. Each artist is a product of her period, and those women who make fibre products in the twentieth century will see their environment differently from the way their grandmothers saw it (McMaster 1989:219). The incorporation of new ideas and materials, based on historic and contemporary influences and individual innovation, indicates that "tradition may be no more than a few years old, [and may even originate] from alien sources" (Dockstader 1966:21). Thus, incorporating manufactured yarn and string, processed fibres, aniline dyes, and glass beads acquired from non-Native markets, as well as altering the style of an item to meet foreign market demands, is really no different than using shells from the coast, incorporating Plains beading techniques, or copying the style of bag acquired from neighbouring tribes because of its superiority or usefulness (Miller 1990). The authenticity of these products is never lost because Nɬeʔkepmx women continue to incorporate in their work culturally grounded attitudes about beauty, form, and technique "to the maximum possible degree" (McMaster 1989:207).

The fact that women applied the knowledge, skills and techniques that have been passed on through the generations to products made for sale did not impress non-Native buyers, who rigidly adhered to a romantic idealisation of the Native past and a concept of "authenticity" as representing a pristine culture, uncontaminated by non-Native influences. What they wanted were representations of ancient culture rather than the creative works of modern individuals (McMaster 1989:207-208). Therefore, fibre products made for sale to the non-Native market were assumed to be inferior to the products made for tribal use (Cohodas 1992:90-91). As a consequence, tourists and curio seekers paid very little for the fibre work they purchased. Curio

dealers considerably cheapened the work, buying it from the makers with old clothes and selling it cheaply to tourists in order to make a profit (Gray 1993:142). Consequently, tourists who came directly to the region to buy also had the expectation that old clothes were enough payment for the hand-crafted products, and even the finest craftswomen had little choice but to accept these goods that were considered of minimal value by the purchaser of her products (Adaline Frank; Hawthorn et al. 1960:261-262). This payment was not at all comparable to that which Nɬeʔkepmx women had received from museums and private collectors, nor from inter-tribal trade, and it showed little regard for the time and effort that went into making each item.

Mandy Brown remembers her Grandmother trading her beautifully made and imbricated cedar-coiled baskets for old clothes:

> It takes a long time to make one like that [a cedar coiled basket measuring about eight inches high, twelve inches long and six inches wide, with an imbricated design]. The old people long ago they used to almost get nothin' for them. Maybe half a cent an hour, or something like that, the way the white people buys it from them and trades them these used clothing that they don't use anymore.... They never used to get any money.... My Grandmother used to get a whole bunch a second hand clothing [for her baskets]. There's nothin' new in it, too. All used to be used clothing. (Mandy Brown)

The women generally were happy to get the old clothes because they never had enough money with which to buy anything new (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown). Mrs. Brown explains that

> at that time...the livin' conditions was kind of tough.... Everybody was so poor, havin' a difficult time tryin' to make your life. And they have to make something to get some clothing, you know.... So, she [Mrs. Brown's Grandmother] always be happy to get them, you know, and use it. (Mandy Brown)

Foreign buyers also associated the incorporation of foreign materials with shoddy workmanship, further lessening the value of the products in their eyes. In a 1950s study on the economic role of arts and crafts among First Nations peoples, requested by the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, Superintendents from around British Columbia reported that poorer quality workmanship may have been the case with some younger women who chose to learn this art, as they were interested mainly in the money that could be made from the sale of their fibre products. Their concern for

craftsmanship was secondary. Unfortunately, the reputation and apparent value of the products in general suffered as a result (Hawthorn et al. 1960:257, 264).

In reality, the older, most experienced women who continued to make fibre products for trade to the foreign market put great care into their work, and produced items often far superior in quality and beauty than those introduced competitive articles (Hawthorn et al. 1960:264; also Mary Coutlee). The principle of respect that permeates Nɬeʔkepmx worldview continued to extend to the recipient of the product during this time. Fibre products were especially well made and decorated in part to honour the recipient of the gift, and also to ensure that the maker's reputation is not damaged by having her work criticised for whatever reason, or that it falls apart soon afterwards because of flawed or sloppy workmanship. Therefore, it has always been the practice that only the highest quality work be presented as a trade item, whether it be "for trade to members of [one's] own tribe, to other tribes," or to non-Native buyers (Ackerman 1996:41-43). In her PhD. Thesis, Scw'exmx Shirley Stirling (1997:119) tells about her great grandmother Quaslametko who, as a master basket maker, made beautiful cedar root baskets for trade. The baskets that were not good enough for trade she kept for household use. When Nɬeʔkepmx women traded their fibre products at second hand stores, they did not know where their work was going, who would buy it, or how it would be used (Adaline Frank). Nevertheless, the importance of quality in these products remained. As Mandy Brown explains, "We always have to try and do our best to make them, you know, so they can be bought. We can't just make it any old way. We just have to be real careful how we make it."

At the same time, the fibre products that Nɬeʔkepmx women made for sale no longer had the same significance as when they were made for tribal use. Rather, they were made for an alternative market with alternative demands "as curios and mementoes of past adventures" (Feest 1992:12). In that context, many of the traditional and ceremonial constraints of tribal arts could be loosened (Feest 1992:45-46). For example, baskets originally made by Nɬeʔkepmx women were very tightly coiled and smeared with pitch, *c'iɬ'*, in order that they could hold

water for cooking and other purposes (Adaline Frank). For the tourist trade, it was neither necessary to make such tightly coiled baskets nor to seal them with pitch as they would not be used for that purpose. Mandy Brown notes this difference between the baskets she makes for sale and the ones her predecessors made:

> They [buyers today] just use it to show around. They just put it on their cupboards for a souvenir or something nowadays. But long time ago, I know they used to use it for cooking, you know, the bowls.... They put pitch around the outside, and then they soak it.... If you make it tight [the coils] and soak it, it can be waterproof. But, these here are not waterproof. (Mandy Brown)

Nevertheless, while the work may no longer carry the original utilitarian purpose, and therefore does not have to be prepared for that purpose, the quality was always an important consideration. Quality results as much from a woman's attitude of respect when working on a piece, as it does from her level of skill. Maggie Shuter explains that having a good attitude when making something brings a shine to the work that is apparent to all who look at it.

> You've...gotta have that feeling for it...so that you know you did a good job, and there's a good feeling in it. So when people look at it, they don't say, "Oh, that's so-and-so's job," and then they ignore it. But if you put your feeling into it...people will look at it and then they'll have a good feeling back. (Maggie Shuter)

Fibre products are still made using traditional technology, with the same care and respect as if they were for tribal use. As such, they continue to maintain the fundamental attributes of Nɬe?kepmx values, even if the techniques are simplified somewhat for easier production (Feest 1992:46).

To honour their culture, their teachings, and the spirits of the plants, as well as to avoid criticism of their work and ultimately of themselves, most Nɬe?kepmx women continue to strive for excellence in their work. This is no less important when making fibre products for the non-Native market than it was for the generations of women who made these products for tribal use.

The attitudes about First Nations peoples and their art held by the dominant society right through the tourist trade period are based on ethnocentric ideas of cultural development and artistic excellence, and tend to stereotype First Nations peoples as homogenous societies rigidly adhering to cultural dictates of behaviour (Geertz 1973:315). These stereotypes have

contributed "to the formation of popular misconceptions of [First Nations peoples], their art, and their culture" (Cohodas 1992:88), which have limited how the individual and her work were received, categorised, and appraised by Euro-Canadian society. To judge Nɬeʔkepmx fibre products by the criteria of authenticity and tradition, which looks only at the material aspects of the work, is to fail to recognise the integration of all aspects of culture that permeates each piece, whether it be for tribal use or for sale to the foreign market. Each woman is a product of her time. Through her work her experiences of culture and life will emerge, and that will always mean change. To assume that contemporary work is less traditional or less authentic than that made for tribal use because it is not exactly the same negates the prospect of change in the culture, developing knowledge, and the myriad of influences over thousands of generations that promote change (Holloman 1996:56).

Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology has developed over the centuries within a framework of cultural principles and age-old techniques largely because of individual women's creative responses to cultural values, environmental circumstances, and historical influences. Nɬeʔkepmx women continually experimented with styles and designs, and willingly adopted foreign tools, materials, and creative ideas that would simplify the work and enhance the beauty of the final product. This was the case prior to European contact as well as after. As trade patterns changed, women were able to incorporate a greater variety of trade goods and ideas from further afield into their own technology. Choices were not made arbitrarily. Rather, women's decisions as to what to incorporate reflected an adherence to and respect for cultural standards of taste, and served to maintain a sense of cultural identity in the products they made. As the demand for fibre products shifted from an exchange among First Nations people who habitually used the product themselves to private collectors, museums, craft shops, and tourists, Nɬeʔkepmx women responded by applying their traditional skills and techniques to create new styles and designs of fibre products to suit the tastes of a foreign market.

Fibre technology is rooted in such well-established customs; therefore, change has been selective and deliberate, with women incorporating only that which appeals to their sense of beauty and compliments cultural identity. This respectful observation of ethnic identity through fibre products "is often a [deliberate] strategy for practical survival," that symbolises communal differences with the other as a way of reinforcing unity within the group (Leuthold 1998:59-60).

Leuthold (1998:45) correctly states that the absence of the term art in First Nations languages is an indication of "the qualitatively different experience of the aesthetic between indigenous and [European-centred] cultures." Among the Nɬeʔkepmx this is no exception. The making of fibre products in contemporary Nɬeʔkepmx society is more than just re-creating the past. It is the interrelationship of technical skill and knowledge, a person's heritage, their knowledge of cultural values and traditions, personal and shared experiences, and a respect for and honouring of the spiritual world (Leuthold 1998:45; S. Sterling 1997:128-129, 134-134, 136; Nettie Jackson, in Ackerman 1996:61). Fibre technology is understood in the context of a work ethic founded on traditional values that say you have to pay attention to what you are doing, and strive to do it meticulously, "not for personal worthiness, but for an honouring statement to the Creator for what He has given—to give respect to everything He has provided" (Joanne Bigcrane, in Ackerman 1996:132). This has not changed regardless of the incorporation of European materials and styles, or the changed function of the objects. For this reason, contemporary fibre technology continues to affirm the uniqueness and interconnectedness of Nɬeʔkepmx culture.

Chapter 6. Contemporary Perspectives of Six Nłeʔkepmx Women

> Our...grandmothers and forefathers are so...intelligent. They learned all about this and now we're...working with it. I don't know how they found out that the cedar roots can make good baskets, and how they found out that these cherry bark...make good designs, you know. And they are strong. (Mandy Brown, Lytton)

In the previous chapters I presented the importance of plants in Nłeʔkepmx technology, women's roles and responsibilities with regard to fibre technology, their considerable contribution to the development of this practice, both for tribal use and for sale to a foreign market, and the significance of this work beyond its functionality, as an important aesthetic expression. In this chapter the six women interviewed for this thesis speak about some of the changes that have occurred within their communities during their lifetime as a result of Euro-Canadian influences, and how these changes have affected the practice of fibre technology. The women also talk about what is being done today to continue this practice, their attitudes towards changes to the technology, and the reasons why some of them are pursuing this work today. They conclude with wishes and hopes for the young people in their community, and for the future of traditional activities such as fibre technology.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, changes to the Nłeʔkepmx life-way that came about as a result of imposed Colonial legislation and missionary influence, successfully discouraged the production of fibre products, so much so that while many knowledgeable women were still living, relatively few were active in this trade (Dockstader 1966:29). Those who continued now had to make products that met the demands of a totally foreign market, and by the 1940s most fibre work being produced was some sort of basketry made almost exclusively for a commercial enterprise rather than tribal use (Luce 1946).

Some of the women interviewed consider the most pervasive and destructive of the Euro-Canadian imposed systems contributing to the recession of fibre technology to be the residential school, which by its structure usurped the fundamental rights of parents to "determine their own children's culture and heritage, and what their children will learn" (Armstrong 1996:x;

also Mary Coutlee; Brenda Aljam). N̓e?kepmx children from the Nicola Valley and around Lytton were removed from their homes and sent to St. George's Residential School in Lytton, or Kamloops Residential School at about the age they would traditionally come under the tutorship of their grandparents (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown). Here they often stayed until they were sixteen, in an environment that degraded N̓e?kepmx culture, forbade the language, and displaced traditional skills by ones of European origin (Armstrong 1996:x; Mitchell and Franklin 1984:24). Young girls were trained for new roles, and instead of learning about plant technology, they were given a basic education, with the main emphasis on skills that would prepare them for domestic trades, such as cooking, sewing, cleaning, and laundry (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank). This focus on domestic skills, with little classroom time devoted to academic studies gradually gave way to a more rounded education for students. Nevertheless, the residential school system, which isolated children from their culture, community, and family, continued for many N̓e?kepmx girls for over three generations until the Kamloops and Lytton schools closed in 1978 and 1979 respectively.

Brenda Aljam believes that by removing children from the home, the residential school system was very effective in cutting off the transmission of traditional knowledge from the elder generation to the younger. As well, with only two short months allotted for summer holidays, children were not expected to spend their free time working on such demanding pursuits as fibre technology.

> I think it [interest in making the traditional things with plant fibres] was cut off. There's a lot of people, like my Aunts, who don't have that knowledge 'cuz they were gone to [residential] schools. And...they would have two months in the summer, there's lots to do.... You're not gonna finish a basket in two months in the summer. So, a lot of the different things went because of that.... It's a lot of work [to make a basket]. I think...kids coming home and they're parents are so glad to see them, they don't want...to be fighting with them, and this is work and it's probably easier just to say, "We'll do something, I'm sure there's enough to do."... My Grandmother died when I was a baby [and] I don't remember hearing that my Aunts ever made them [baskets].... It's like some of the other stuff, any of the plants that information, or the knowledge that my Grandmother had, that even Verna [Miller, Mrs. Aljam's cousin] remembers a little bit about, but there's...not much that has remained because she [Verna] got taken to residential school.... They were very effective in cutting that off...I think that's probably

> one of the things for...why it [the traditional knowledge] wasn't continued. (Brenda Aljam)

The numbers of children sent to residential school and the length of time they stayed there had an impact on family relationships that is still felt today. Prior to the residential school system, Nɬeʔkepmx children were raised in an "extended family atmosphere in which grandmothers were the principal child rearers" (R. Sterling 1979:53), with parents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives also playing a major role in the upbringing of children. Today, few grandparents have the main responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Instead, grandparents, and other elder relatives fill the role of baby sitters, giving plenty of love and affection, but very few have more than a minimal influence on a child's growth and development of knowledge (R. Sterling 1979:53).

According to Mary Coutlee, respect for Elders diminished somewhat as a consequence of the residential school experience.

> They talk about it [respect for the Elders] now. They didn't before. I guess they [the young people] just didn't [respect the Elders].... You got of age and you were put in a residential school.... There's always three generations in a household. The grandparents, the parents, and the young ones. [That isn't the way] not anymore. [When they took the children out of the home, the Elders] didn't have to look after them. The *séme ʔ*[15] is looking after the kids. The Government, it was always the Government. Government isn't good. (Mary Coutlee)

Adaline Frank blames this lack of respect and breakdown in the relationship between Elders and young people for contributing to what she regards as a spoiled generation of young adults today.

> I stayed with my Gramma...for a long time myself. I don't think [it's very common anymore].... My Grandmother used to tell me, "Do this and do that." She never [spoiled Mrs. Frank]. "You have to get a box to stand on to reach the stove." [Mrs. Frank's Grandmother had her learning very early, and Mrs. Frank did the same with her own kids]. I do that to my Grandson, too. That's why he knows how to cook.... Sometimes I sit down and I used to think about her.... They're spoiled, kids now.... They don't want to do house clean, or cook, even cooking. (Adaline Frank)

A telling consequence of this weakened relationship between Elders and the young, brought on by the pressures of assimilation, both within the residential school system and through

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[15] *Seme ʔ* (pronounced "shema") is a commonly used Nɬeʔkepmx term for person of European descent.

changing economic and social patterns, has been a loss of cultural identity. While many Elders continued with their traditional practices, they did not encourage the young people to learn (Green 1992:94). Consequently, for much of this century few young women have been taught about fibre technology in the traditional ways of their ancestors.

Mary Coutlee says that she was not taught or expected to learn the traditional ways as a young woman because her parents knew that it was a changing world and women would need new skills to get by.

> I think my Mother knew it was a changing world. She knew. So she didn't force it [the old ways] on us. (Mary Coutlee)

Mrs. Coutlee says that this was fairly common for women of her generation not so much because the adults didn't want to teach their children, but rather, "they just didn't. They know it's a changing world. So, [they] didn't force it on us" (Mary Coutlee).

This concern for their children's future was common among First Nations. Blackfoot writer Beverly Hungry Wolf (1980:109) explains that, "even though [the Elders] belief in these traditions was very strong, they had been made to feel that there was no future in this world for their children and grandchildren if they did not put these old ways aside." In some instances when a child or young woman approached her Elders to learn some of the traditional ways, she might even be met initially with rebuff and resistance (Green 1992:94; Dockstader 1966:30). When Scw'exmx Ethel Isaac was around twelve years old she wanted to watch her Grandmother prepare the natural dyes for her basketry materials. Whether her Grandmother thought she was still too young or that she just didn't see the point of teaching her Granddaughter is not clear, but Mrs. Isaac was never allowed to watch this process.

> I never did watch her [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] how she did them [dyed the plant fibres]. I should'a watched her but she was always pushin' me away.... She so different. When sometimes I wann'ed to learn, I sat there cryin'. One of her friend came asked, "What happen', what's matter? Your Granma get mad at you?" Said, "Oh, I wann'ed to learn how to do it what she's doin', but she won't let me watch it. She tells me, 'You get out, go play.'" An' then her friend get mad at her, told her, "One of these days she's gonna learn, too." Said, "She's cried for age, just teach her." (Ethel Isaac)

Through persistence on Mrs. Isaac's part, her Grandmother finally let her watch how she made the cedar coiled baskets, and once her Grandmother saw that she was sincere in learning this technique, she was very happy and encouraging.

> That's how I start makin' the baskets, when I was watchin' her. Then when I start to know how to do things, then she was happy.... Before she was always pushin' me away. (Ethel Isaac)

Finding the time to teach the younger generation in a lifestyle that had little room for many of the old ways was also a problem for a number of women. Adaline Frank notes that she wanted to teach her children some of the things she'd learned from her Grandmother, but with household concerns and a small farm to run she had little time to pursue them herself let alone teach her children.

> I was trying to [teach her children], but...we had to go out and dig those roots.... I got no time for much for these things. (Adaline Frank)

Maggie Shuter, who is of the same generation as Mrs. Frank's children, also found that farm work took precedence over her learning the old ways. As a child she was taught skills that were still being practised, such as how to tan hides, dry fish, and harvest, dry and process berries, but she wasn't taught anything about fibre technology.

> I never learnt the baskets, which...I wished I did. She [Mrs. Shuter's Mother] didn't force me to do it because I always went with my Dad to do, like, feeding of the cows and the outside chores. I wasn't forced to stay inside.... The only thing I learnt when I was eleven was...how to knit sweaters, which I still do...My Mum [taught me]. She had a sweater made for me and somebody stole it, and she told me if I wanted another one I hadda make it myself. So, I did. (Maggie Shuter)

Both Mrs. Frank and Mrs. Shuter agree that today it is even more difficult to pass on the skills and knowledge of fibre technology because there are very few young women with the kind of determination and devotion to learning this old tradition that, for example, Mrs. Isaac had as a child, and there are few people with the time to teach it. Over the decades the demands of full-time employment and other contemporary considerations, as well as the increasing difficulty in finding suitable plants, has left little time or incentive for women who are skilled in the these techniques to pursue their work, and many simply stopped their production (Tepper 1994:19). Maggie Shuter says that today, "people are so busy doing their own thing. They would have to

make time to be able to teach or go out and get [plant materials] to be able to teach the people that wanted to learn." Mrs. Shuter also stresses that there has to be a strong commitment on the part of the learner in order for her to benefit from the teaching. "Yer gonna want to have to do it before you can even do it. But if you don't want to then it's not going to work" (Maggie Shuter).

Adaline Frank suggests that much of the activity around fibre technology stopped with the passing of the older generation, and that young people today have expressed little interest in pursuing this activity because they are not willing to do the amount of work required to make fibre products.

> Well, the old people seem to be gone, eh. That's why they don't seem to make any more of these [baskets]. [And the young people just aren't interested], "Cus you have to go out and dig it, and do it like this [twine sp'éc'n fibres on the thigh to make rope].... I guess that's what they figured [it's too much work]. And you know, I used to tan hides long time ago, too, but not anymore. (Adaline Frank)

Mandy Brown agrees:

> It is a lot of work here [referring to scraping the cherry bark strips to get them even and smooth]. I think that's why some people just doesn't want to do it. And, I continue to do it. I don't mind doing it. Well, I been doin' it since I was a little girl, and why should I give it up now. (Mandy Brown)

Without role models, proper training, or a demand for fibre products, plus a changing way of life filled with an abundance of new interests, young women do not have as much opportunity to learn about the plants and techniques used in this technology (Tepper 1994:19; Wickwire 1980:34). Ethel Isaac suggests that this lack of knowledge is another reason why young people don't seem to be interested in practising fibre technology.

> Well, I think I could teach 'em if they can come over an' if they ask me. [But there just aren't too many people out there asking], no.... I don't think anybody knows about the plants too much.... It's all nothin' but young people right now....I don't think they know all those kin' a plants.... If they go out to get some cedar root...they don't know...where to get 'em. They know the trees, but they don't know the groun', eh. How are they gonna get them? An' these here, sp'éc'n, too...there was another one that, like...tules, an' all these kinds plants.... Some of them they ask me, an' I have to tell 'em. I just hope they do [learn about the plants]. (Ethel Isaac)

Brenda Aljam notes as well that few people take up fibre technology, particularly as a commercial enterprise, because the time it takes to make one basket, for example, means that

either the price of the basket will be far beyond the range of most prospective buyers, or they will have to sell the basket at such a low price that it wouldn't be worth their efforts.

> I think part of it is...the time it takes and [the] unwillingness [of] people to pay when they can go down to...a wicker store and grab a basket for next to nothing.... With the bigger rounds [on the basket Mrs. Aljam made] it took me more than four hours to go around.... If somebody wanted to sell them [even]at a minimum wage price on the number of rounds plus preparing all the roots, plus getting the roots, and gas to get there, and all that...you're not going to find a lot of people that are willing to pay that kind of money. [It took Mrs. Aljam over 120 hours to finish her basket]. Even at ten bucks an hour...that's twelve hundred bucks. If you were looking at a big burden basket, which is probably [at least twice the size of Mrs. Aljam's basket], it's even more [because of the extra work and time involved]. (Brenda Aljam)

Once students begin taking classes many find the demands of the work too much to fit in with their daily routines. Ethel Isaac cancelled a class she began teaching at the Conayt Friendship Centre in Merritt because of the decline in attendance each week.

> I used to work in there [teach basketry classes at the Friendship Centre in Merritt] two years ago.... The first people, they came about twelve. [Each] week I go over there an' it'd start gettin' lesser and lesser. An' it come in to two, an' sometimes nobody showed up.... I finally told Roger Porter, "I don't think I wanna come, 'cuz people don't even showed up." I said, "I don't think I'll go up again for nothing. Nobody come around." I took some out to gather the cedar.... We went up to the mountain get that cedar, when] we come back and we start cleanin' 'em, an I teach 'em how to takes the barks off, [and how to split it].... An' then when we finish cleaning an' we just start to make those baskets, coiled in the middle. Some of them they made about that bit [a base of about two inches] an' they stop coming.... They...have the kids to pick [up], they ladies have kids, they have to stay home, an' can't fin' a baby sitter, or, that's what they were excuse.... Prob'ly it's too late for them, eh. It's seven o'clock 'till nine, eh. That's nighttime. (Ethel Isaac)

For these reasons, over the years it has been mainly the Elder women who have continued to pursue this work, but with fading eyesight and aging bodies, many of them have found it too difficult to continue. Consequently, for the past three decades in the Nicola Valley, Spences Bridge, and Lytton areas only a handful of dedicated women have continued to make any form of fibre technology, which for the most part has been cedar coiled basketry (R. Sterling 1979:124).

In spite of the many drawbacks curtailing a thriving industry in fibre technology, N̓e?kepmx women still have good knowledge of this practice. They continue to observe those who do this work, and there are many products available for them to examine. Fibre technology, like so

many other traditional activities, is very much a part of Nɬeʔkepmx culture. Fibre products of all sorts continue to serve as strong symbols of cultural identity, and families take pride in maintaining and displaying their traditional possessions, such as cradles, picking baskets, dip-nets, snowshoes, and various bone tools (R. Sterling 1979:123). The practice of giving traditional items as gifts and prizes at ceremonies, conferences, and competitions continues, and as recently as 1980 Scw'exmx Elder Mabel Joe made baskets of coiled split cedar root, and birch bark to be given away as prizes at an Elder's Day story-telling contest (Hébert 1980:9). Today, however, Pendleton blankets, hand-made drums, beadwork, and dream catchers are a less expensive and labour intensive alternative as prizes and gifts.

In the face of all these contemporary considerations that limit the transfer of cultural knowledge and skills to the younger generation of Nɬeʔkepmx, concern to revive the traditions is growing among the local people. Concern is greatest among the Elder generation, those who work with the Elders, and those who, having left their communities for such reasons as employment opportunities or to meet education goals, upon returning could see how quickly the cultural traditions are fading (R. Sterling 1979:118, 124). In order to revive these traditions Elders are called upon more and more to share their knowledge and expertise in various aspects of Nɬeʔkepmx tradition (R. Sterling 1979:53).

Schools and other institutions may have displaced the Elders in their traditional role of raising and educating their grandchildren, but Elders have by no means been silenced or made redundant. The Nicola Tribal Association, for example, has solicited the advice of local Elders in its support of "advisory services in the [Nɬeʔkepmx] language and culture since the mid-eighties at the band controlled schools at the Coldwater, Lower Nicola, and Upper Nicola reserves" (S. Sterling 1997:29). The Cultural Committee of the Nicola Tribal Association, which helps develop the language curriculum in the local band schools, is made up of an advisory committee of local Elders and Language and Cultural Co-ordinator, Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie. Ms. Jimmie also hires local Elders to assist with her first and second year university transfer courses in the

Nłe?kepmx language at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT). Apart from their advisory capacity, Elders are also invited into schools to teach the language and share their knowledge about traditional activities (Tepper 1994:24). Ethel Isaac teaches weekly classes in the language at the Lower Nicola Band School. She also shows the children some of the traditional techniques for tanning hides and working with the plants (Ethel Isaac). At the local band school in Lytton Mandy Brown teaches the language, as well as basket weaving, beadwork, sewing with sinew, and working with hide (Mandy Brown).

Passing on this knowledge to other people is an important priority for some Elders. Mandy Brown, for example, has been teaching basketry ever since she was a student at St. George's residential school in Lytton.

> When I went to St. George's School I started teachin' down there. The Matron wanted me to teach the girls, so I started teaching when I was twelve [in 1936].... I was nine years old when I went in school. (Mandy Brown)

Even when she worked full-time as a social worker during the 1970s and 1980s, Mrs. Brown found time to teach the basketry.

> During that time I was doing social work, I used to try and give myself time about...two hours every week to teach ladies how to do craft work. I was teachin' 'em how to do craft work and doing social work at the same time.... I was teachin' four ladies.... They used to come up here [to Mrs. Brown's home]. I taught them. Took them out in the bush right from the beginning to dig roots. (Mandy Brown)

Since retiring from social work, Mrs. Brown continues to share her knowledge and skills in numerous workshops, both locally and in other localities.

> I taught some ladies in Spences Bridge...beading, makin' moccasins, gloves, and basket weavin'.... I taught [local ladies] for three months on the crafts, arts and crafts.... I teach them [another group of 5 or 6 ladies in Lytton] how to dig the roots and, they have to start right from the beginning if they want to learn how to make baskets.... About a year ago, April...Mary Jane Campbell asked me to teach them down UBC [at the Native Studies Centre].... There must be about fifteen of them [students].... We has it [the workshop] for about four days.... They came...a week before [to dig the roots] and then a week after that I was down there, to continue the instructions.... Last November, I think it was, I was asked to go to [Skeechesen] so I was up there, too.... When they [young people] want to learn, I teach them. [People know that Mrs. Brown is available for that]. (Mandy Brown)

To her delight, at least one of her students is carrying on the process of basket making and teaching it to others.

> I know one [student] that has carried on at the schools, Freda [Maureen ?]. She's teachin' the kids up there [at the high school in Lytton] what I taught her.... I took her out cedar root digging, and I taught her how to weave it. (Mandy Brown)

Of all the techniques used and the products made in N̓e?kepmx fibre technology, cedar-coiled basketry is the only one that has enjoyed a continual practice. In order that the other skills are not forgotten, the Nicola Tribal Association has been actively supporting programmes to revive those skills that employ some of the plants and techniques with which the majority of people are less familiar. In 1996, with Federal funding from Job Development (Human Resources Development Program), the Nicola Tribal Association hired a crew of six local Scw'exmx men and women to work from December 1996 to March 1997 on the Tule Mat Project. Tule mats, which were used extensively by most of the Interior Salish peoples for summer shelters prior to reserve settlement, and as surfaces on which to dry foods, have not been made by anyone in the Nicola Valley for several decades. Over the months of this project the crew learned the complete process of making these versatile mats. The Tule Mat Project was followed in 1998 by the Q'ʷúys Project, which hired five local Scw'exmx women to learn to harvest and prepare *q'ʷúys* (silver willow) and *sp'éc'n* (Indian hemp), and weave them together to make clothes in the styles used before fibre clothing went out of fashion over 100 years ago.

The ultimate goal of these two projects is to ensure that the knowledge and skills for making these products survives so that they can be passed on to future generations. The activities of both projects helped stimulate discussions about the traditional skills between the project participants and Elders, relatives and friends, and visitors to the projects. The primary source of information and support, however, came from the Elders who shared their knowledge about various plants and showed the project participants how to use them correctly.

According to Brenda Aljam people are also teaching members of their own family who are interested in learning the traditional skills, or are training students on a one-on-one basis.

> I think people are teaching people in their family that are interested. 'Cuz, I know Mandy [Brown] said she's working with one of her daughters, and when she has her Granddaughter over there she's...making ones.... I met a woman about eight years ago, she was teaching people over in the Lillooet area, or Mount Currie maybe, [how to make

> cedar-coiled baskets]. She took four students in over a year, and went through the whole process.... So, I think people are [teaching], it's just one on one. (Brenda Aljam)

Approaching a knowledgeable person to ask her to teach on a one-to-one basis is an individual responsibility. When Mrs. Aljam decided to learn cedar-coiled basketry she was unaware of anyone in the Nicola Valley who taught this skill. She approached Mandy Brown because of a personal connection, even through Mrs. Brown lives in Lytton, a good hour's drive from Mrs. Aljam's home in Coldwater.

> I know other people still make the baskets, but I don't know them personally.... Mandy Brown's daughter's married to my brother, so, that's how I got connected. I knew she was doing it, but I didn't know her. I met her daughter and then I met her. (Brenda Aljam)

Maggie Shuter recently started to teach her own daughters about some of the traditional ways that she learned from her Mother when she herself was a child. And while her daughters are finding it harder to learn now that they are adults, the sense of pride that they express in having this knowledge speaks to the importance of learning regardless of one's age.

> I'm teaching my kids now, but...it's harder for them to learn because they're older. They're getting the hang of it.... My daughter...was saying one day last summer...they were in a restaurant, and...an older man was sittin' in the next booth. And some lady come up and asked him how to process *sx̌ʷusm* juice. And then he looks at her and he says "I don't know," he says, "ask her," and pointed at my daughter. And she looked at him and she says "You're older, you should know." He goes, "no," he says, "you're Mum does it, you should know more than I do." And I just showed her two years before that, so she told him...how to go about it.... And then she was asked another question.... She got home anyway, and she was so proud that she knew.... She said "Mum, I was shocked that he didn't know. And he's older than me." And then she said...he told her "Well, yer Mum knows all this stuff, you should know it all."... And she was glad that I had forced them to listen and watch what I was doing, and to know how to do it.... She was glad...that I did [force them to learn] because she was able to teach somebody older than her that didn't know. (Maggie Shuter)

Interest in Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology has also grown beyond the community, and three women have been approached to make traditional-style clothing from plant fibres for the Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa. Mandy Brown made a silver maple cape and cedar bark head-dress; Cooks Ferry Elder Mary Anderson wove a model willow bark (*qʼʷúys*) and Indian hemp (*spʼécʼn*) cape decorated with fur and seeds; and Pearl Hewitt from Spences Bridge

created an adult-size *q'ʷúys* and *sp'éc'n* cape. She recorded the process with photographs and written documentation[16] (Tepper 1994:45).

All of these efforts and interest have been an inspiration for some community members to continue to learn how to prepare and work with the traditional plants to make mats, clothing, baskets, and bags. Maggie Shuter, whose main training in the use of plant fibres for technology has been as an employee in both the Tule Mat and Q'ʷúys Projects, credits these two opportunities with helping her appreciate what her ancestors did with plant fibres.

> I worked with the Tribal Council for two years with the *q'ʷúys* and the *sp'éc'n*, and the tules. And...I learned quite a bit from it.... I never really thought too much [about how much knowledge there was out there and who had it] until I started working with it again.... "Oh, this is what everybody did." (Maggie Shuter)

She hopes to continue learning more so that one day she can make a sp'éc'n cape for her Granddaughter, as well as to pass on this knowledge to others.

> I would like to make one of my Granddaughters a cape with...the woven sp'éc'n. I want to be able to use it...when she dances at powwows and stuff. So hopefully one day soon I'll be able to make something, and say well this is done.... That way it'll keep going instead of dying.... It's there for people to see and say, well, this is what is handed down from generation to generation. (Maggie Shuter)

Ethel Isaac acted as a consultant on the Tule Project, showing the participants how to prepare and twine *sp'éc'n* fibres. Remembering the way her Grandmother made clothes from sagebrush, cedar and *sp'éc'n*, she is now inspired to make an outfit for herself combining a similar pattern as her Grandmother used with her own creative technique.

> She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] makes clothing out of it [sagebrush].... And she makes bags out of that, leggings, pants, skirt...a cape.... Some people they come and ask her to make them one.... They use it for some kin' a important days when they have it, like a gathering, dance.... I like to make one like that way I seen my Grandmother was makin' 'em.... I still remember how she made 'em.... I ask her lots of questions, then she was tellin' me about that.... She used to wear that when they go on, like a gathering, like a powwow dancing...just for ceremon', ya.... I wann'ed to make a vest like that with the sp'éc'n....if I can find some more *sp'éc'n*.... An' some for a skirt.... I can make it like the way I'm makin' the [Kokanee] dip nets knots. An' then I'll get some kin' of material inside an' it'll be outside...like a laces. (Ethel Isaac)

The opportunity to teach and learn fibre technology today is quite different from the mentoring relationship women had with their grandmothers only a few generations earlier.

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[16] This process is recorded in an unpublished report titled "The Making of a Traditional NLaka'pamux Silverwillow Cape." Pearl Hewitt. Canadian Museum of Civilisation Project Report, 1994.

Nevertheless, the methods used to teach this technology have changed very little. Observation, trial and error, and sharing of ideas and techniques continue as important ways of teaching. These have been used by N+e?kepmx women to teach fibre technology for many centuries, and they are key to the development and continuation of this technology. Ethel Isaac is one who continues to expand her knowledge and develop her skills in this manner. When her Grandmother could no longer see well enough to do the beadwork on her buckskin gloves, she passed on this responsibility to her Granddaughter. As her Grandmother could no longer bead, a fourteen-year old Mrs. Isaac learned the techniques by watching other skilled bead-workers.

> She [Mrs. Isaac's Grandmother] started to can't see the beads [for her buckskin gloves], and she asked me to do bead for her. An' I bead for her, an' then I finish it to sew it all up.... I was watchin' Mabel Joe doing that [beading], Mabel Joe and Patricia Harry. I must be 'round thirteen or fourteen years old when I start learning how to do bead.... I never did make any jewellery, like necklace and earrings 'till I watch Mabel Joe how to make 'em. (Ethel Isaac)

When Mrs. Isaac first saw some porcupine quill jewellery at a powwow she began to appreciate the creative potential of these quills, but she didn't know how to work with them. By watching Mabel Joe, Mrs. Isaac learned the basic techniques for working with porcupine quills.

> My Uncle used to kill a porcupine.... I never thought of that quills. We're s'posed to make a beads out of that.... Until I went to the powwow one time, an' I was lookin' at [some] porcupine earrings. "Oh, that's how you make it, those porcupine earrings."... An' I said, "here my Uncle always...clean those porcupine, an' we just throw those quills away." Some of them are big ones an' that quills are really big an' really good for chokers. I never thought of that. Then I started to find that out how did they make those quills. (Ethel Isaac)

In time, through her own experimentation, she was also able to help Mrs. Joe with some of the problems she was having with the quills. This relationship of sharing ideas has extended to other traditional activities as well.

> I was watching Mabel [Joe]. An' she soaks hers for the quills, and she cut it, then she puts [the needle] right...through that quills. An' when it gets dried up it cracks. An' I said, "I'm gonna try mines own way," I tol' Mabel. Said, "I'm gonna soak mines an' cut it, then leave it an' dried, then use the needle and thread to it." It wouldn't cracked. An' sometimes it gets soft, it got squashed that quills. Didn't look good for earrings. So I tried it own way, an' it works. An' we learn each other, me an' her, eh. (Ethel Isaac)

Mrs. Isaac shares ideas about other traditional activities that she practises as well.

> Even I do that to my hide. Usually tell you [to] get the neck soft...it just little bit stiff on

> there. An' I start thinkin' about it. What if I just scrape it with a bone? So I scraped that thing off and got it real soft, an' then I put it in a frame an' punch it aroun' little bit, an' it was soft, just like a cloth. An' I went aroun' an' show it to Mabel. "Look what I did, Mabel." She ask me, "What did you do that?" An' I said, "I don't wring mines out when I put it in a frame. I just scraped...all the water out, an' then I just about half dry, an' I just frame it up an' do a little bit of work an' made it soft." She said, "Oh, you have to come an' show me how to do that." An' I said, "Oh, okay." So I went an' help her doing it for her hide, too....Me an' her always learn each other. (Ethel Isaac)

Mrs. Isaac also looked to another Elder to help her learn more about preparing hides.

> Shuli Kilroy...Julia...started to teach for Friendship Centre, and...I heard it about it and I went an' asked, "Julia, I could come and learn." An' I told her, "I know how to scrape the hide, I know how...to stretch it. But I wanted to learn how to make those solution with the brain, an' then I wanted to learn how to smoke the hide." And she said, "Oh, you come on over. Come over, you can learn." So I went. We took that course for three months. [This was] 'bout maybe twenty years ago.... She died quite a few years already. (Ethel Isaac)

Today books are also an important resource to which people can turn for help. The number of books that have been written describing various traditional techniques, such as different types of basket-making, bead work, and weaving are an outcome of the surge of interest in First Nations art during the twentieth century. When there is no one in the community available to call upon for help, or the novice is not aware of knowledgeable community members, she can refer to books to help her understand the basic principles and techniques. Participants of the Q'ʷúys Project turned to books to help them with design ideas for the clothing they made (Appendix 4, Fig. 21a and 21b).

> We wanted to be able to make outfits but we didn't know how, and how much time we had to make the adult outfits. So we asked to buy dolls, and so that's what we used, to be able to dress dolls, and so we could say, "well, we did it." We got [the designs and styles for the clothing] from the James Teit books.[17] (Maggie Shuter)

Gordon Antoine visited the Q'ʷúys Project and showed the women how to weave the plant fibres into a neat, tight weave. After that, the women experimented with a number of design patterns taken from the Teit books along with their own ideas, sometimes combining them, in order to arrive at a style that they could master and that would give them the desired result.

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[17] For examples of clothing styles see The Thompson Indians of British Columbia. James Teit. Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. 1, Part IV. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1900; also The Interior Salish Tribes of British Columbia: A Photographic Collection. Leslie H. Tepper, ed. Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 111. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilisation, 1987.

> We just kin' of went on what we could do in the short length of time [four months]. We went out and got the *sp'éc'n* and the *q'ʷúys*. An' then we had a work with that to get it where we wanted it, and then dyed it. And then we tried to make outfits....[The crew made] copies of fibre [clothing], plus I guess some of the leather clothing is involved in that also. But we kind of combined it and just used the fibres.... Shoes were very hard. [Because we were] beginners, we didn't know what we were doing or how we were going to go about it. And so, it's more like learning.... We used two...three different ways of makin' them [the sp'éc'n shoes on Beverly Bob's doll], and we finally come up with one [that] is more sturdy, and then if we just put 'em together fast. I guess [the style came from] a combination [of patterns from a book and ones the crew made up]....We used the pattern...on the shoe like you would do on a cape, but we brought it into a smaller category where we hadda shape it into a shoe.... We closed the top [of the cape to become the toe of the shoe], and then we kinna...left the top open [for the foot to go in], and then we worked aroun' it where we hadda sew it in the back to look like a shoe. [It's completely one piece] (Appendix 4, Fig. 22). (Maggie Shuter)

Obviously today books have become an important tool in learning about the traditional techniques, but books cannot take the place of human knowledge or observation of a skilled craftsperson. Often the techniques and styles presented in books are not specific to one's culture, nor do they provide information about regional differences. Books also cannot impart the values and spiritual beliefs of the people, nor create the experience of listening to an Elder and carrying on the great respect they hold for their art. They therefore miss important cultural aspects of the beauty of fibre products. Nevertheless, books offer a good start and can make hands-on learning easier to understand (Ackerman 1996:124, 126). They are also an excellent alternative when a lack of funds, or other considerations makes it difficult to access the help of knowledgeable people.

Elders do want to share their knowledge, but when they are brought in as a consultant, to conduct a workshop, or teach a series of classes it is accepted practice now that they be paid for their assistance, and there isn't always enough money to afford their services (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie; R. Sterling 1979:124). The location of the workshop may also be a problem for some of the more elderly or for those who lack transportation. Maggie Shuter suggests that location may have been the reason why there were a number of Elders dropping by to the Tule Project held at Sulus, which is centrally located and on a main road in the Nicola Valley, but few visiting the Q'ʷúys Project, which was held at Coldwater, situated on a back road a fair distance south of the other Scw'exmx reserve communities.

> I guess since we worked up at Coldwater Reserve they [Elders] really didn't want to make that travel. (Maggie Shuter)

Even when funds and skilled people are available to teach classes, maintaining the continuity of student participation in order that they gain a thorough grounding in the activity is often difficult. Finding the time to make fibre products in a contemporary lifestyle where traditional practices like fibre technology are no longer a priority takes a tremendous amount of discipline and great commitment on the part of the student. Brenda Aljam, who has been training with Mandy Brown since 1997, understands full well the amount of time required to make a cedar-coiled basket. She herself nearly gave up on her first basket until speaking with a quilt-maker who explained the importance of strategically using her time in order to fit the task into her daily routine.

> I had plans to go [to Lytton] once a week, but it...hasn't worked out that way, so far, because I work part time, and then she [Mandy Brown] works at the school, or she's gone somewhere.... So just scheduling, it hasn't worked out.... I left it [Mrs. Aljam's basket] a long time before I went back to it.... I talked to a woman one time about her doing quilts, and she was saying the same thing. If you think about, "Oh, this quilt in itself is gonna take this much time. I don't have that much time, so I just won't bother."... But if you break it down into small time frames then you get it done.... I was...partly blocked.... I knew how long it took me to go around one round. It was...four hours. And...that's when everything's ready...all the roots are split and that. So, I knew I don't have four hours to sit down at once, so I just left it. I left it and left it. But because I gave it as a gift to my Dad at my wedding, I wanted to get it finished.... I talked to...that woman about her quilts, [and] what she said was, "Well, I'll just do ten minutes." And, ten minutes would sometimes go longer, and she would get her stuff done, and it would be manageable. And so, I got it finished anyway. (Brenda Aljam)

Unlike with the more organised workshops, Elders or other people knowledgeable in the traditional skills who are willing to teach on a one-to-one basis are not necessarily expecting a fee for their time, but some form of gift is always appreciated. Sometimes it is wise to find out what this person might want, such as a particular item, a form of service, or a sum of money, in order that the gift is appropriate.

> I don't pay her [Mandy Brown] money, no. I give her gifts, just because I want to.... When I asked Pearl [Hewitt] to help us [make Mrs. Aljam's buckskin wedding dress]...she works full time and it was her days off that I was taking up, so I paid her in...cash and gifts.... I think it depends on the person.... With Pearl she...taught me how [to prepare the hide], then she also helped make...my wedding dress.... I don't think she expected what I gave her, but I wanted to make sure...that for the dress that it was what it would

> take somebody else that I would compensate her. [It's a very individual thing]. (Brenda Aljam)

Perhaps one of the most important purposes of contemporary teaching is the cultural significance it has for the students, as well as for those who share their knowledge and for those who will learn from it in the future. Those who really want to learn will comb through books, listen to Elders, participate in workshops, and share ideas with each other to learn as much as possible about the plants used and the techniques required to make traditional products. For many there is a strong desire to learn traditional skills that were part of a culture that had been denied them because as children they or their parents and grandparents had been sent away to residential schools. N+e?kepmx women who practise fibre technology and teach it to others, as well as those who support workshops and other training programmes, want to bridge that gap to enable N+e?kepmx culture and heritage to live on (Mary Coutlee; Adaline Frank; Mandy Brown; Ethel Isaac; Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie; Maggie Shuter; Brenda Aljam; Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xvi).

Mandy Brown continues to teach this practice because she doesn't want to see it die out.

> Well, I know they goin' to see it die out.... That's why I want to continue it. That's why...when somebody asks me to go and teach them, I'm willing to go and teach them. (Mandy Brown)

For Maggie Shuter, learning about the traditional techniques is a way of connecting with her ancestors, and of acquiring a skill that she hopes to master in order to pass it on to the next generation.

> The purpose of doing this [participating in the Tule Project and the Q'ʷúys Project] at the beginning was to learn how to do it first, and then hopefully be able to teach the younger generation. I want to learn [to make fibre clothing because] I...wanted to know what the ancestors wore, and so that it don't die. That's how I feel, anyway....I wished I didn't play when I was s'possed to...listen and learn.... I [also] helped my Dad a lot [with the cattle].... It's been with me quite a while.... I've been thinkin' of it and stuff like this [learning about working with the plants].... My Mum talked about it before she died. And I guess that's still in my mind...that I gotta do this so that it don't die. (Maggie Shuter)

Brenda Aljam plans to turn her basket-making skills into a business, but she is also learning them because these are skills that her Grandmother, Xamal'ks, had mastered, and that Mrs. Aljam never had an opportunity to learn when she was growing up.

> My Grandmother made baskets. I never saw any of them.... She died when I was six months old, I think. So...I wanted to learn how to do it. I think it's important...to keep it alive. [Also] I wanted to look at...having it as part of my own business [selling baskets]. I wanted to look at different things I could do and be self employed.... I set up a goal: "To make twenty thousand dollars a year what would...I want to spend my time doing?"... Making baskets is one of them.... I look at it as I'm helping to continue the art form so that...doesn't die out completely...least not while I'm around, and to give gifts to my friends and relatives with this, and...just to make some income from it.... All the things that I chose to be self-employed with are all labour intensive. So, it doesn't [matter] what I want to continue with.... Besides doing the cedar roots...I started learning how to do...buckskin, and did some of...the hides for my wedding dress. Pearl Hewitt [taught Mrs. Aljam]. And then...I also went to Nancy Beckam, she's from Upper Nicola.... The cedar root is more portable than doing...buckskin. I can take it somewhere and do it. And, I can do it in smaller amounts. With the buckskin I'd have to thaw it out, and have to set aside so much time to do it.... It takes more planning.... I'm leaning more towards that [working with cedar root] than the buckskin. (Brenda Aljam)

At the same time, it is important for Mrs. Aljam to be learning these skills in order to help continue a part of her culture, and give younger people the opportunity to see the work and learn how to do it.

> I'm doing my part in trying to keep that part of my culture alive.... I don't look at it as preserving it. I'm continuing it, and giving...somebody else younger the opportunity to learn it, because I've chosen to keep continuing it, or to learn it myself.... I don't know that many people...that do them, not here [in the Nicola Valley]. (Brenda Aljam)

Mrs. Aljam's choice of the word "continuing" rather than "preserving" is a clear indication that the practice of fibre technology is not a thing of the past, rather it is very much a part of Nɬeʔkepmx life and culture.

The Nɬeʔkepmx population has diversified considerably over the last one hundred years, which accounts for a number of changes in the approach to fibre technology today. Whereas fibre technology used to reflect individual and family identities, today interest and expertise tend to be individualised without any representation of family or kin groups (S. Sterling 1997:91). Anyone who wishes to learn fibre technology can access a number of avenues to help them, such as Elders for one-to-one training, workshops, or books. A few people also continue to pass on this knowledge within the family, but in some kin groups the practice of fibre technology has

been abandoned completely. As a consequence to these changes, contemporary fibre technology is less governed by cultural norms and expectations than in the past. Restrictions arising from spiritual connections, such as applying designs of images that are *x̣əx̣á?*, are still observed. Nevertheless, it is more open to individual experimentation as those who continue this practice seek to maintain the traditional look of the fibre products, while at the same time accommodating the work to their busy schedules, available materials, and contemporary tastes in art and beauty (S. Sterling 1997:91).

Adopting new products, styles, and techniques because they simplify or enhance the work is not uncommon among N*ɬ*e?kepmx fibre artists, and has been an accepted practice for centuries. Today's N*ɬ*e?kepmx women generally create the old styles using age-old techniques, and try to avoid the use of manufactured materials. There is, however, a noticeable difference in attitudes among these women towards using manufactured products, which may determine their place in contemporary fibre technology.

Mandy Brown, who has been making baskets all her life, does not agree with the use of manufactured materials such as yarn in contemporary fibre work.

> I wouldn't use yarn or anything, I don't think. I notice...on a basket...in [the Museum of Civilisation] in Ottawa they have some yarn in 'em, but I don't know why they put it in there. Just in one basket, but I seen that [yarn] all over.... I wouldn't put it in mine. Why should I put yarn in, eh? I'd rather stick with this, the cedar roots and...cherry bark on my designs. I wouldn't use anythin' else.... Using yarn, that's not Indian. That's made by white people. I'd rather use my own Indian material, things that I make myself.... I don't think that everybody does that. My Grandmother doesn't use that; my Mother doesn't use that. She makes baskets just the way I'm makin' it [The way Mrs. Brown has been taught]. (Mandy Brown)

Brenda Aljam, who has been learning to make cedar-coiled baskets for the past three years, says that it is important to learn the traditional techniques and use only the natural plant materials, because these are what make the products truly representative of N*ɬ*e?kepmx culture. Mrs. Aljam plans to use only cedar bark, cherry root, and vegetal dyes for her baskets because for her manufactured products would only cheapen the product.

> I wouldn't put nothing else...because...I think it devalues it. I've seen...different kinds of baskets, whether they're pine needle, or juniper, maybe spruce root, or whatever...and

> they've got...the handle for the lid glued on. You can see the glue. And they've got...plastic beads on it.... It's...not something I would buy. I think it makes it [the basket] cheaper.... I don't know if it wouldn't be as [well made as those using plant fibres]. I just think this it's what we use and that's what I'm trying to...continue. 'Cuz...you can go do crafty things that don't have anything to do with our area, and my Grandmother would've had those kind of things available, different yarns. No, I would just stay with what we used. (Brenda Aljam)

Maggie Shuter, who has been learning the techniques through workshops, books and training from the Elders, also prefers the use of all plant materials in fibre work, but says that using yarn is okay if it is not in combination with plant materials.

> If you use coloured yarn, I guess you have to use yarn on the whole outfit.... Instead of any plant fibre. I would think that because it won't look good.... It'll have an off beat.... Seem like if...you're gonna use something then use something that's goin' to match instead of something that's gonna be off balance. (Maggie Shuter)

Even though the preference is toward natural plant materials, sometimes their use is just not practical. Time constraints, environmental conditions, and lack of knowledge often mean that it is difficult to access natural materials. For example, in the interests of time, the participants of the Tule Project only made one large mat using entirely plant-based materials, and used string or sinew instead of sp'éc'n with the other mats to sew the tules together (Ethel Isaac; Maggie Shuter).

Environmental conditions have also made it very difficult to access the natural plant products. Over the last 100 years land development, agriculture, forestry, mining, wildlife control, industry and industrial pollution, hydroelectric developments, road construction, and urbanisation have effectively destroyed many traditional harvesting sites. This has meant that fibre artists have to travel great distances to find suitable stands of plants from which to harvest the needed materials (Turner et al. 1980:5; Hawthorn et al. 1960:258). Adaline Frank remembers when she was young taking her Mother and Grandmother by horse-drawn buggy far up into the hills behind Lytton to gather cedar roots for their baskets. They would camp up there for a few days in order to dig as many quality roots as they could find (Adaline Frank).

Today, because of this scarcity, Nɬe?kepmx fibre artists are reluctant to make the prime harvesting locations of valuable plants general knowledge (Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie 25

November 1997). Therefore, out of necessity manufactured materials make their way into fibre products despite attempts by Nɬeʔkepmx women to use all natural materials. This is particularly the case with the use of vegetal dyes. For the most part, natural dyes continue to be used to dye the plant fibres used in plant technology (Mandy Brown). Nɬeʔkepmx women tend to use aniline dyes sparingly, and mainly to dye wool, cloth, and for painting designs on skin clothing (Adaline Frank). Nevertheless, aniline dyes are used from time to time to dye plant materials. Maggie Shuter remembers her Mother resorting to the use of aniline dyes for her baskets when the lack of available plant materials and limited time made it too difficult to get the plants needed for vegetal dyes:

> She used a lot of buckskin, and then she made [cedar coiled] baskets and she used to use the dyes on the baskets.... I remember her buying the dyes, too, when she wasn't able to go out to get traditional dyes.... They didn't have no transportation, or if they hadda go they'd have to leave for about two, three, four days or whatever [to get the traditional dyes]. (Maggie Shuter)

Readily available commercial dyes also afford a convenience and independence, especially for novice fibre workers, and for workshop situations. Using natural dyes to get the desired colour takes a lot of knowledge and often trial and error. Beginners are given information based on what the teacher feels they are ready to learn or what the teacher might remember at a particular time. This means that often students are not given the full information, and have to wait for successive visits with a knowledgeable person in order to learn all that is needed. Therefore, a lot of time may be lost experimenting with the different plants, or simply waiting for more information, and it is just simpler to use commercial dyes (Ackerman 1996:64, 123).

Ethel Isaac says that buying dyes or paint is an option that she would consider because she never learned how to use plant dyes from her Grandmother. Otherwise, if she wanted to dye plant material, she would "have to just practise it [on her] own, try all those plants an' make a dye" (Ethel Isaac).

In a short-term workshop situation, using commercial dyes could become the norm if the time to harvest the required plants does not coincide with the dates of the workshop. Harvesting dye

materials, like other plant products, depends on the season. Therefore, workshop leaders and students either have to plan in advance to get the materials or settle for the use of aniline dyes. Aniline dyes and commercial paints were used by the students participating in both the Tule and Q'ʷúys projects mainly because the projects were held in winter when dye plants were unavailable (Maggie Shuter).

Personal taste also means that in some cases manufactured materials are the most suitable to get the desired effect. For example, Maggie Shuter used clear nail polish to give a shine to the silver berry seeds she used to decorate the *sp'éc'n* dress she made for her doll in the Q'ʷúys Project (Maggie Shuter). This is a much simpler method than the traditional technique of scouring and polishing the seeds with sand or branchless horsetail stems (*Equisetum hyemale* L.), *ƛ'úxʷn'* (Teit 1900:184; also Turner et al. 1990:86, 209), and gives them a much shinier finish. The nail polish is also more effective in bringing out the subtle cream-coloured lines on the seeds, enhancing their natural beauty.

Using the traditional products in new ways also allows for new design ideas in which natural products may not work. For example, in the Tule Project everybody decorated small mats to be used as a wall hanging (Appendix 4, Fig. 23). They used oil-based paints for the design as water-based dyes and paints would not adhere to the waxy surface of the tules. There is no tradition of painting designs on tule mats so the crew did not have any past information upon which to draw about which natural dyes or paints might work on tules. This innovative experiment was so successful that the crew occupied much of their time in the last weeks of the project making and decorating small mats, two of which were presented as a gift to the Minister of the Church for letting them use the Church hall to conduct the project.

The age of the women is also a factor in whether or not they will continue using the natural materials. Adaline Frank, for example, has resorted to using store-bought, machine-embroidered badges to decorate the buckskin moccasins she makes because her eyes are not good enough to do beadwork anymore (Adaline Frank). The diminishing availability of suitable

stands of plants from which to harvest the materials also makes it more difficult for elder women to get the natural materials.

Glass beads are another excellent example of how a manufactured product has been favoured over plant or animal products because of its practicality and decorative quality. Among the Nłe?kepmx beadwork has flourished since European traders first introduced glass beads, gradually taking the place of seeds, berries, and porcupine quills as a decorative material. Over time it has become an art form of its own. Ethel Isaac uses beads to make both modern and traditional styles of jewellery. Other women design beautiful beadwork patterns for both traditional and modern clothing styles, from buckskin moccasins and gloves to baseball caps. Beadwork designs are also found on tools and implements where seeds and contrasting colours of bark might once have been used.

New materials, such as glass beads, aniline dyes, yarn and cotton string offer alternatives to natural plant materials that can be convenient under certain circumstances. Even though their use is frowned upon by those who prefer to maintain the traditional look of the fibre product, their application is ultimately an extension of traditions that were "firmly established long before [these] new [materials were] introduced" (Ackerman 1996:115).

Applying new pattern elements to fibre products is also something that has always been accepted among Nłe?kepmx fibre artists over the centuries as long as they are in keeping with Nłe?kepmx aesthetic tastes. This tradition continues to this day. Ways of arriving at the large diversity of designs on the different products being made today are as unique and varied now as they were hundreds of years ago. Observation, sharing ideas, looking through books and newspapers, one's imagination, and even dreams all contribute to the selection of designs used today.

Ethel Isaac looks to nature to help her with design ideas.

> I make my own designs. Even I do that to my beadwork. I don't hardly copied it from the book, I always make my own design. [Mrs. Isaac gets designs by] going out and just looking at things [and] from dreaming, too, sometimes. (Ethel Isaac)

Finding design ideas through dreams is common for artistic pursuits that are not considered traditional as well. Maggie Shuter often relies on dreams to help her finalise a pattern for the Cowichan sweaters she knits.

> I'd look at different books, and stuff [for design ideas], and then I'd dream about some and then they'd stick in my mind if it wants to come out. But if it don't want to come out then it just leaves.... And if it [a pattern that Mrs. Shuter makes up] doesn't look right I leave it, I go to bed thinking about it. Then if I dream of it, I get up and draw it before it...leaves my mind, one, two o'clock in the morning, whatever. I'm sittin' up there tryin'a get this design down before it leaves my head. (Maggie Shuter)

Mrs. Shuter also uses photographs and books to help her with design ideas for her sweaters.

> I took a picture of one of our family dogs and used that on a pattern. I've got so many of them [patterns] now.... I take some out of different pattern books and stuff, and put them on graph paper. [Mrs. Shuter always]used different ones.... I never make the same pattern twice. (Maggie Shuter)

Adaline Frank's Grandmother and Mother favoured geometric designs such as "V" shapes or diamond shapes for their cedar coiled baskets. At the same time, Mrs. Frank's Mother would get new pattern ideas from looking at the crossword puzzles in the newspaper.

> Sometimes my Mother, she used to look at them papers, and she gets them [cross word] puzzles.... And then she starts making them, like, when you see them inna papers. (Adaline Frank)

Mrs. Frank relies on her own observations of nature to get designs for her beadwork.

> That's what I do, go out and look at them flowers, see how they are. Then I start doing that [beading], you know. (Adaline Frank)

As a novice basket maker, Brenda Aljam says she chose her basket style and the diamond shape design for her Father's basket because it is a style with which she is familiar, having seen it on some of the older baskets. However, the actual execution of the basket and purpose for using the diamond design are uniquely personal (Appendix 4, Fig. 18).

> I wanted my Dad to have the first basket I made. And, this is his because...from start to finish...you count all the way up [from the starting coil] there's thirty rounds. And...on the bottom there's eight [rounds]. And, there's nineteen of these [diamond-shaped designs] all the way around.... In the design of the cherry bark diamond there's thirteen pieces of cherry bark. And there's two rows of those cherry bark [diamonds]. So, what it represents is...the thirty [rounds] is the year my Dad was born, the nineteen [diamonds] is the century, the eight [rounds on the bottom] is the month, the two [rows of design] is the day [2 August 1930]. And the thirteen [imbricated pieces of cherry bark] within the design is how many kids are in his family, for his generation.... I did some sketches on what I wanted it to look like, and how many rows I wanted in between. Like from the

> edge there should be four here, four here, four here [four rounds from the base, four in between the designs, and then four from the rim].... And that was part of it, too. I wanted it, I guess, for part of the four directions, I really wanted to have that much space. (Brenda Aljam)

The purpose of fibre products changed once they became commercial objects for sale to a tourist market. Today, they are rarely used for utilitarian purposes. More often they are made and sold as ornaments, or used to hold knitting, jewellery or other small items. In some instances, especially for the purpose of trade, women will make miniatures of the larger items, still using all the natural plant materials. These are very popular sale items, are quick to make, and offer an affordable alternative to the full-sized products.

Mandy Brown makes a variety of miniature products that sell very well. She has made a miniature cedar coiled spoon which can be worn as a pendant, as well as a number of miniature cedar coiled bowls with lids on them, and picking baskets. The baskets in particular sell almost as fast as she can make them (Mandy Brown).

Brenda Aljam also plans to make miniature baskets along with the full-sized ones.

> It takes so long to make the traditional baskets.... I can't see that many people being able to afford them. So I was looking at...collectors, and that would only be a few.... Then, I was looking at smaller versions of the bigger baskets [miniatures] for tourists. (Brenda Aljam)

In view of the different materials and styles used today, and people's attitudes toward them, it is inevitable that over the coming years fibre technology will undergo more changes as the people who are currently learning it begin teaching the next generation. Maggie Shuter says that there are fewer and fewer people knowledgeable in the old ways who can help any more, and suggests that people today are learning and experimenting with the materials, styles, and techniques in new ways. She sees this use of the old materials in new ways as the kind of transition that takes place from one generation to the next.

> I think that'll be all right [to use old materials but create new things with them].... I don't see why not. And then maybe a generation down the road...their grandkids would now say "Oh, this is what my Grandmother or Grandfather learnt, or did." (Maggie Shuter)

Nevertheless, Mrs. Shuter still prefers to try and create the more traditional items.

> Everybody will have their own way of makin' things.... We did what, eight dolls [made clothes for the dolls in the Q'wúys Project], and every one of them are did different.... Everybody's got a different way of makin' things. But, hopefully, the end that they'll make look like the ancestors did it. That's the goal...hopefully keeping it in the process. (Maggie Shuter)

Despite these adaptations to modern fibre technology, the influence of the traditional values and the old ways once taught by the grandmothers remains constant (S. Sterling 1997:103). Women who are carrying on traditional practices today are carrying on the ones that were practised or taught to them by their Mother or Grandmother. Brenda Aljam has chosen to follow in the basket-making tradition of her Grandmother, Xamal'ks, in part to keep this practice alive in her family. Ethel Isaac remembers much of what her Grandmother and other older women in her community taught her about working with the plants, hides, porcupine quills and beads. She still works with these materials and wants to pass her knowledge on to others. Maggie Shuter is beginning to learn some of the techniques with plants that she remembers her Mother practising. At the same time she continues to knit Cowichan sweaters, a non-traditional skill her Mother taught her as a child. Since her Grandmother's death in 1937, Mandy Brown has respected the teachings of those early years, and continues to practise and teach the art of basketry in the same manner that her Grandmother taught her.

> My Grandmother passed 1937, and I have to be doin' it myself [since then].... What she taught me is what I learned already, and I continue to do it. I continue to make baskets ever since that time. I never stopped makin' baskets. (Mandy Brown)

The work that these women do acts as a cultural bridge from one generation to the next, both personally and for their community, and serves to validate Nłe?kepmx culture and heritage. Contemporary fibre technology continues to carry the traditions of the people, their history, knowledge, beliefs, and practices because it incorporates centuries-old techniques, which have been adapted only for the purpose of meeting "the changing needs and conditions of [the women's] lives" (Watters and McCormack, in Ackerman 1996:xv).

The items made today also continue to say as much about the individual who makes them as they do about the culture and traditions from which these items emerge. Patience, careful execution and attention to detail continue to characterise the work. S. Sterling (1997:100)

attributes this to a recognition of responsibilities. If the fibre artist carries in her heart her cultural teachings about what it means to be Nɬeʔkepmx, she will want her work to be of excellent quality and beauty, a responsibility she has to herself and to those who might choose to learn from her example. In this way she will provide leadership and demonstrate master craftsmanship through her example, and teach the value of working hard, developing one's inner talents, and combining beauty with practical endeavours (S. Sterling 1997:124, 135, 136).

Quality remains as important a cultural value today as it did when fibre technology was a thriving industry. The pride Nɬeʔkepmx people hold for their traditional possessions and the care that contemporary fibre artists take in producing this work attests to their commitment to cultural responsibility. For Brenda Aljam producing the best quality product possible is about membership in a culture. As a member of the Nɬeʔkepmx Nation, which has a reputation for high quality baskets, she wants her work to be the best it can be in respect for that reputation. She does not want to dishonour her culture or that reputation by producing poor quality work.

> I had also read or heard that the women in our area made really good baskets, and that's one thing that I wanted to do. I guess because there's a status with that...that the women made good baskets, it was a known good quality...basket making area.... I wanted to have that continued, I guess.... Making the baskets, it takes a long time, and it shows patience and detail.... I think because there's a reputation for our baskets I would say that I would try and make, whether it's for my Dad or for somebody I don't even know, I would try and make the best quality I could because I'm representing a group, or an area. (Brenda Aljam)

Mrs. Aljam says that when people identify her work as an Nɬeʔkepmx basket, she wants it to be the best it can be.

Maggie Shuter applies these values to the non-traditional practice of knitting Cowichan sweaters. She says that she puts a lot of herself into each sweater she makes, and strives for quality because her presence will always stay with that sweater. She noticed the presence of Nɬeʔkepmx weavers while visiting the Nɬeʔkepmx display at the Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa in March 1999.

> There's a presence there besides yourself [of the women who made the products now on display at the Museum of Civilisation, Ottawa]. You know they're there but you can't

> see them. That's a feeling I got when I got in there...In a way they are [referring to the feeling that the women are in their work].... I don't think that they'll ever leave what they done.... I know when...you pass on you've gotta give them certain things that they want to take with them, and if they're not given that, and then they're...here and they'll always protect it.... You feel a presence there. They're lookin' after what they made. (Maggie Shuter)

Another change in the production of fibre technology in the last few decades is one that reflects the way in which the products and their makers are received by the non-Native population, who continue to be the main purchasers of Nɬeʔkepmx fibre products. The days of buying nameless pieces at second-hand stores, or craft stores on reserves are long past. Individual women who produce fibre products are known and sought after for their work, and people often come directly to the woman's home if they want to buy her products (Mandy Brown; Ethel Isaac). Women also sell their smaller products locally at public gatherings such as powwows, bingo, or craft sales on the reserves (Ethel Isaac). The monetary value of fibre products has also been recognised by the women who make them and accepted by the buying market, and today Nɬeʔkepmx women command a very high price suitable to the skill and craftsmanship that go into each piece they make.

> Well, long time ago I used to get way less [money] than what I have now. Until somebody told me that, "you just get five cents an hour, and why don't you jack up your price, like, pay yourself about fifteen dollars an hour, right from the time you're doing this, and then diggin' splittin' and all that." I tried that but it would be higher than that [referring to a $850.00 price tag on a picking basket], way higher than that.... It took me a long time to make that, maybe over two months.... So I just cut it down.... One of my cousins, he came [and bought a picking basket about a foot high, sixteen inches long].... He paid me $1300.00 for it.... They...pay me because they know how long it takes me to make it. They realise how hard it is diggin' roots and splittin' it and all that. (Mandy Brown)

The dedication, persistence, commitment, and hard work of fibre artists and those who support continued training in this field attest to the importance of fibre technology in Nɬeʔkepmx culture as a link to cultural identity and tradition. I asked some of the women interviewed for this thesis what was important to them for the future of this tradition, and if they had any wishes for future generations regarding the continuance of such practices.

Adaline Frank recognises that working with plants is very much tied to culture and identity, and would like to see more young people taking up this practice.

> I would like to see it [people making traditional products again].... Like, the generations, new instead of the old, you know. They are gone already. Some. But young ones...it's good if I see them doing it [making things].... It's really good.... They keep the old cultures goin'....It's better...for them...when...they learn that language.... Still better, yet, but if they're making these kinds here [cedar coiled baskets], you still good.... They don't wanna learn the language, so...why not teach them how to do things like these [making baskets, mats, etc.]. (Adaline Frank)

Maggie Shuter recognises the difficulty in getting people's interest in such a demanding task as fibre technology. She suggests that being able to see the work that was produced in previous workshops might be a way of inspiring interest so that more people will want to learn about the traditional ways.

> All the stuff that was done, made in the previous years, it should be put in a building where it can be displayed and people can see it, instead of in a storage area where maybe it's damp...no circulation, or people can't see what is already made and what is there...work that's done before, and all the stuff that's been done in the last how many years.... I was workin' with the programme for two years, and I know it gotted a lot done then. And I know there's programmes before that.... [Whatever was made is] somewhere, but nobody knows where. (Mrs. Shuter would like to see it out there so that the people in the community can see it). Even if they have to make a building and put a display in. And there should be funding out there where you can be able to hire a person to sit in there and watch it.... I know there's a museum in town, but...that's different...from what all the N+e?kepmx people have. They have a lot at the Tribal Council, and that should be displayed where people can see it, instead of stuck in an office and all muddle together, or in a storage area where it's not seen. (Maggie Shuter)

Mrs. Shuter herself is learning these techniques in order that one day she will be able to make herself available to teach others.

> First of all I wanted to see what was in the museums, what was out there.... And then...come back and be able to do what is there and show them [local people] what I'd seen and this is what I learned how to do. And then... be able to show them on what I learned in the process.... I guess it would be up to the individual if they want to learn.... They can't force people to learn, they've gotta do it on their own. I'm hoping that more people will step forward and say, well "I'm willing to learn how to do this, and how to do that stuff." Even with their jobs...you can't force people to work. They...wanna have to do it for them[selves] to be able to succeed in what they want to do. You can't force them to work if they...live on SA [Social Assistance]. You can't force 'em and say "I'm gonna cut your SA off. You better go find a job." You can't do that.... They're trying [in the band schools]. I guess down the road...they'll do a little more, but...everybody's still learning yet...what programme to put where, and that. (Maggie Shuter)

For Ethel Isaac it is important that young people learn the ways that their ancestors used to survive, and the way that they gathered the plants and turned them into useable products. She herself has such a love for this work and respect for the teachings of her Grandmother that she wants to keep it alive, and is willing to teach anyone who wants to learn to make cedar coiled baskets, items from sp'éc'n, or beadwork.

> Oh, prob'ly I'll teach 'em if they can come aroun'...anybody wants to learn, eh. Some of the people...they don't even seen this clothing before.... But I seen that when my Grandmother has that...when I was little.... [If people wanted to learn Mrs. Isaac would teach them]. It's 'portant for the grandkids wann'ed to learn for that how they survived those all way back people.... How did they...get it from the scratch. (Ethel Isaac)

Brenda Aljam says that it is important for young people to find a connection with the territory in which they live in order to strengthen their identity with their community and as Nɬeʔkepmx, and develop a greater respect for their environment.

> I'd like to see the kids get out more often and learn where they are.... A lot of the kids in the communities...they don't know where they are, so then they don't know who they are. They don't know where their community is, the extent of their community.... Like the kids at Coldwater, if they went out into the bush...they'd know more about the plants and the animals, they would know more their home and they would...be based, I think. So they would have more strength to go do whatever they want to do, because they already have their home base and they know someplace.... Plus, they would have more respect for the plants and animals in the environment whereabouts.... It's the same thing as gardening for me. A lot of people don't garden. And, that's where I see it coming back, is with the kids when they're young, because then they're still excited about seeing a plant come up. You get to teenagers it's work and they'd rather do something else, watch TV or play a game or.... I could see that...with myself, there's a big gap. If my Grandmother was around when I was...growing up I would know a lot more with the relationships and with...what the plants are for, and all that. And I think we need it.... I've always felt a gap for me because I know my Grandmother knew a lot of stuff that I didn't. So, it's just something I learned.... I look at the kids and...they're not attached to the land, really, a lot of them that I can see.... I think there's strength in having...an attachment to the land where they live. (Brenda Aljam)

Mrs. Aljam also feels that men have an equally important role in carrying on the cultural traditions.

> Men have their part in the culture, as well. They may not with making baskets, but they're doing their part.... I would say that they [women] would...be passing it on to ...the young women, but I would say the men are passing on their part in the culture to the young men. (Brenda Aljam)

With such a strong commitment to continuing the practice of fibre technology from this handful of women, and with the work being done to promote this technology by the Nicola

Tribal Association, local band schools, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, the Conayt Friendship Centre, and concerned Elders and other community members, it is likely that fibre technology will not become a thing of the past, and that future generations of Nɬeʔkepmx will continue to enjoy this tradition as an activity, as a means of making an income, as a significant gift, and as a crucial part of their identity.

Contemporary fibre artists put what they think and how they feel into their work. Despite inevitable changes, the tradition of manufacturing, decorating and dyeing products from plant materials continues to be transmitted. As Language and Cultural Co-ordinator of the Nicola Tribal Association, Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie hopes to see more programmes like the Tule Mat and Q'ʷúys Projects that will continue to increase the knowledge of the people, and revive and develop as many traditional skills as possible in order that they are not lost forever. There are many obstacles that must be dealt with in this process of teaching traditional ways. Nevertheless, teaching progresses and Nɬeʔkepmx people are finding out more about their traditional cultural practices. Through workshops, classroom programmes, one-on-one tutoring, and by actively pursuing these techniques, Nɬeʔkepmx women are continuing their role as teachers in their communities. As a result, the ancient cultural practice of fibre technology continues to evolve.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Art in the Western sense carries with it the meaning of creativity, uniqueness, and mastery of technique. Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology is all that and more. The women who do this work incorporate more than just creativity, technique, and uniqueness. They bring to their work a depth of cultural knowledge, understanding and respect that is essential to the successful completion and appreciation of the pieces made.

Maintaining tradition is extremely important in fibre technology, both as a way of continuing Nɬeʔkepmx regional identity and as a means of affirming Nɬeʔkepmx culture. Boas's theory of cultural relativity, however, which has had a strong influence on how Nɬeʔkepmx fibre technology has been viewed by the non-Native population for much of the twentieth century, confines women's creativity within rigid cultural and environmental constructs that ignore their involvement in the development of this technology over time, and deny the vibrance of women's individual creativity, ingenuity, and artistry.

Culture and environment, along with history, and the creative abilities and life experiences of the individual women all play a role in the value of a fibre product to the Nɬeʔkepmx. The Nɬeʔkepmx do not have a single word that encompasses all that the product means to define it as an artistic expression in their culture. Nɬeʔkepmx men and women look at each type of activity, such as coiled basketry, mat-making, or weaving as individual activities that involve many things, and the individual who performs them as someone who makes a basket, or someone who weaves. This terminology has more meaning to the Nɬeʔkepmx than the terms art or artist, because they are grounded in their own cultural ideology. The incorporation of new materials or ideas throughout history into these traditional activities has not lessened their value or meaning. The making and use of traditional-style products today continues to demonstrate a commitment to that ideology.

Today women who practice and teach fibre technology continue, as Nłe?kepmx women have in the past, to share a part of themselves and their heritage with their students. If the teacher has learned her skills well, she will offer a good representation of these activities, and an opportunity for her students to learn the values, traditions, and beliefs of Nłe?kepmx culture, and to have a better understanding of their own cultural identity, all of which are embodied in quality work. She will also encourage her students to explore their own creativity and to continue to develop their skills and talent.

Viewed in this way, the terms art and artist in the Western sense are too limited to appreciate all that fibre work means to the Nłe?kepmx, and the important responsibility that women who produce this work hold as teachers in their community. If the terms art and artist are redefined to include the integration of all aspects of Nłe?kepmx culture, as a means of affirming cultural values, cultural identity, and cultural unity, then the works produced with plant fibres are art, and the women who produce them are artists. This is certainly the way these terms are used by the contemporary authors and some of the First Nations women cited in the thesis. It is how I now understand this work, as well. I have come to appreciate the holistic manner in which Nłe?kepmx women approach the entire process of making items with plant products—that each step always expresses something important about Nłe?kepmx culture and values.

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Appendix 1: Nɬeʔkepmxcín Alphabet and Glossary of Nɬeʔkepmx Terms Used in the Thesis

Nɬeʔkepmxcín Alphabet: In total there are 52 letters in the Nɬeʔkepmxcín alphabet. Listed below are only those letters found in the words presented in the thesis. The pronunciation guide is from Thompson and Thompson 1996:xii-xvii)

ʔ – glottal stop (Pronounced as a catch in the throat, as in the unwritten sound in English *oh oh*)
a – (Pronounced like the 'a' in *father*, with considerable dialectal variation)
c – (Pronounced like *ch* in English *church*)
c' – glottal-c (Pronounced like the *ts* in English *its*, but with a glottal catch)
e – (Pronounced like *é* in French *été*, or like *a* in English *man*; not like *ay* in English *may*)
ə - schwa (Pronounced like vowels of English *rut, should, middle*, with considerable dialectal variation)
ə. – schwa-dot (Pronounced like vowels of English *luck, sun*. Not common)
ɣ – gamma (Pronounced like *g*, but with friction instead of closure; rare)
h – (Pronounced like *h* in English)
i – (Pronounced like *i* in English *machine*, or like *é* in French *été*, with considerable dialectal variation)
k – (Pronounced like *k* in English *kick*)
k' – glottal-k (Like *k* with a glottal catch)
k^w – rounded-k (Pronounced like the *qu* in English *quit, quick*)
k'^w – glottal rounded-k (Like k^w with a glottal catch)
l – (Pronounced like *l* in English *call, luck*)
l' – glottal-l (Like *l* with a glottal catch)
ɬ – barred-l (Pronounced like *ll* in Welsh *Llewellyn*; something like voiceless *hl*)
ƛ' – glottal-lambda (Pronounced like *tl* with a glottal catch)
m – (Pronounced like *m* in English *meat, come*)
m' – glottal-m (Like *m* with a glottal stop)
n – (Pronounced like *n* in English *neck, can*)
n' – glottal-n (Like *n* with a glottal catch)
o – (Pronounced like o in French *mot* or German *Gott*; not like o in English *go*)
P – (Pronounced like *p* in English *pleat, puppy*)
p' – glottal-p (Like *p* with a glottal catch)
q – (Pronounced like English *k* but further back in the mouth)
q' – glottal-q (Like *q* with a glottal catch)
q^w – rounded-q – (Pronounced like *q* with lips rounded; further back in the mouth than k^w)
q'^w – glottal rounded-q^w (Like q^w with glottal catch)
s – (Pronounced like *sh* in English *shy, wish*)
s. – s-dot (Pronounced like s in English *sauce*; rare)
t – (Pronounced like *t* in English *time, hit*)
t' – glottal-t (Like *t* with a glottal catch)
u – (Pronounced like oo in English *boot, shoot*, or like o in French *mot*)
w – (Pronounced like *w* in English *way, saw*)
w' – glottal-w (Like *w* with a glottal catch)
x – (Pronounced like *ch* in German *ich*)
x^w – rounded-x (Like x with lips rounded)
$\underset{\cdot}{x}$ – x-dot (Pronounced like x but very far back in the throat, with friction)
$\underset{\cdot}{x}^w$ – rounded x-dot (Like x with lips rounded)
y – (Pronounced like *y* in English *yes, boy*)
y' – (Like *y* with a glottal catch)
z – (Pronounced like z in English *zone, ooze*)

General Terms:

ʔek'ʷmíns – used for bait; name of a basket with a hole in the lid

Cexpe'ntlæm (Teit orthography) – name of leading Nɬeʔkepmx chief

c'eq- – root term meaning 'red'

c'y'é – burden basket; general term for a coiled basket

Kwona'ə'ka (Teit orthography) – name of an old canoe-maker, a mythical human ancestor from Lytton

Kʷəskapi'nek (Teit orthography) – name of mythical queen, mother of the Lytton people; *kʷəs-* Is a root word meaning 'darken' or 'dim' (light), and *=inek* is a lexical suffix meaning 'star.' In his notes, Teit defines this suffix as meaning 'bow.' *=in'ek* is the lexical suffix for 'bow' or 'weapon' (Thompson and Thompson 1996:540).

k'ʷuxʷk'ʷuxʷmúɬ – always making baskets

ɬaha'hoa (Teit orthography) – name of old Nɬeʔkepmx settlement at LaFontaine

ƛ'ey'qeʔ - imitate or copy

ƛ'q'əmcín (lit. 'crossing place') – Lytton

ƛ'q'əmcínmx – Nɬeʔkepmx people from Lytton

ncəmkeʔ (Ntcəmi'kən or *.ntcə'mka)* – name of a mountain near Lytton that always has smoke; name of a man of very large stature, and a great hunter and warrior in Nɬeʔkepmx mythology, considered to be one of the first human ancestors of the Nɬeʔkepmx

Nkʷala – name of head chief of the Upper Nicola-Douglas Lake region during the nineteenth century. He died in 1865.

nk'séytkn – term referring to both human and non-human kinship relations

Nɬeʔkepmx – Thompson people

Nƛ'ik'smtm (Ntlikcumtum or *Nɬikəsentem)* (lit. 'someone squinted or winked at him') – name of one of Coyote's sons in Nɬeʔkepmx mythology

Nq'awmn (Nəqa'umən) – Nɬeʔkepmx name for Nicomen or Thompson Siding

Nwísesqn (Boas's orthography) ('raised high head' or 'able to be high head') – succeeded *Sk'ʷak'ʷes* as head chief of the central Nicola Valley during the early nineteenth century

qʷámqʷəmt – 'well done,' 'beautiful,' or 'outstanding'; term used to describe exceptionally beautiful work

qʷincutúɬ or *xʷiʔtews qʷincút* – talkative, talk all the time, perpetual talker

sʔstkn – subterranean house used by the Nɬeʔkepmx during the winter months

Scw'exmx – "People of the creek" referring to Nɬeʔkepmx people from the Nicola Valley

semeʔ - term used for 'white person'

sæxsxékst – 'unskillful, inexpert, do something poorly with hands, careless'

sic'm – (woven) blanket

Sk'ék'iʔɬ – 'spider'; name of an old man who twines *sp'éc'n* in an Nɬeʔkepmx myth

sk'epqn – hair

Sk'ʷak'ʷes – 'sun'; name of head chief of the central part of the Nicola Valley during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

sɬ'ukʷ or *stukʷ* – large oblong basket with lid; general term for 'an Indian basket'

snk'y'ép (*Snikiap*) – coyote

spilexm – narrative based on historic events

sptekʷɬ - legend or myth

Sqʷanéy'qʷaʔ (*Kwona'ə'ka*) – name of an old canoe-maker in mythology, considered to be one of the first human ancestors of the Nɬeʔkepmx

Stlə.z (Teit orthography) – name of place near Cornwall, Ashcroft

stúkʷcn – dip net

Stuw'ixmx – Name for Nicola Athapaskan people

Tcutcuwi'xa (Teit orthography) – name of place on Quilchena Creek, the most eastern Nɬeʔkepmx settlement in the Nicola Valley

Xʷistesmexe'qən (Boas's orthography) – meaning 'Walking Grizzly Bear'; possibly of Spokan origin

y'e ʔesk'ʷén'tns – 'something is well done,'

Yeyeʔ – term of address meaning 'Grandmother'

xəxáʔ- – root term meaning 'restrict activity'

xəxa ʔétkʷu – refers to restricted activity around a body of water

xəxa ʔstés – refers to a woman who is on her menstrual cycle, a period that demands a number of restrictions to her activities

xəxa ʔúymx – refers to restricted activity around certain tracts of land

zʷ'etmx – someone who is good at doing things; master craftsperson

Terms Used for Plants and Plant Parts:

ʔespəspés pe ɬ stuytúymxʷ – 'swamp growth' or general term for types of grasses used for imbrication

cək'cək'ólexc e kʷat ɬp – cones of Western Red Cedar

c'iƛ' – general term for pitch used to waterproof baskets

kelule ʔéyqʷ əxʷikʷestné ɬp (lit. 'owl wood of hemlock')– Indian Paint Brush

kéwkʷu – Big sagebrush

kʷét ɬp – Western Red Cedar

kʷəm'y'éxʷ - prepared strips of cedar root

kʷl'kʷál – Wolf Lichen, Wolf Moss, 'yellow tree lichen'; (lit. 'yellow')

kʷu ʔéytxʷ (lit. 'immerse foliage') and ɬeq'ɬq'éytxʷ (lit. 'wide leaves') – Cattail

kʷy'é ɬp – Red Alder

ƛ'len'txʷ – Tule

ƛ'uxʷn – Horsetail

məcekʷ – Blackcap Raspberry

miʔt – take on colour, stain, or dye

ntəɬt ɬúym'xʷ (lit. 'trailing over the ground') – Orange Honeysuckle

nxʷiƛ'qn – Reed Canary Grass, and other tall marsh grasses used for imbrication; also called 'Chilliwack Grass'

pək ɬén – Wild or Bitter Cherry bark

pəsn'ú ɬtn – Giant Wild Rye grass

pəspesn'ún ɬtn – lit. 'lots-of-rye-grass place'

qʷ ɬín - bark from the Paper Birch tree

qʷ ɬín' ɬp – Paper Birch tree

q'apuxʷe ɬp – Hazelnut

q'əc'q'əc'usnín'us – Western White Clematis and Orange Honeysuckle

q'ʷiʔxʷé ɬp – Pacific Dogwood, Western Flowering Dogwood

q'ʷúys – Silverwillow

sʔéy'icqʷ – Wild Raspberry

scéqʷm – Saskatoon berries

sc'ol's.eʔé ɬp – Oregon Grape

sp'éc'n – Indian hemp bark and twine made from the bark fibres

sp'ec'nəɬp – Indian hemp plant

sp'əq'ʷéɬp – Pacific Dogwood; Western Flowering Dogwood

sp'əq'ʷxəns (lit. 'scales of raven's foot') – Larkspur or Menzies' Delphinium

sx̣ʷúsm – soapberries

sx̣ʷusméɬp – soapberry plant

szeltʔúy (lit. 'real/typical plate/mat') – woven mat of cattail leaves

x̣iyq'íc'eʔ or *x̣iyəq'íc'eʔ* - cedar root growing in the shape of a doll

zəlkʷaʔéɬp – Choke Cherry tree

Appendix 2: Time Line of Events

Retreat of Ice Age – The Nɬeʔkepmx believe that there were a number of migrations to Nɬeʔkepmx territory shortly after the retreat of the ice age. According to legend, the Nɬeʔkepmx originally settled around Lytton and branched out from there.

7000BP – Archaeological evidence indicates that there were foreign influences on the technology of the Nɬeʔkepmx from the Fraser and Thompson River valleys, with stone points and tools resembling those from as far east as the Plains.

2000BP – Archaeological evidence indicates that shells, dentalium, and whalebones were brought from the Coast to the Nicola Valley.

1200 – Stuw'ixmx Athapaskans migrate to the Nicola Valley.

Pre-horse era – trade routes follow major water routes. Trade goods from the Plains come into Nɬeʔkepmx territory via the Okanagan and Shuswap.

1790 – Use of the horse for transportation altered trade routes, which led to an expansion of trade, and more direct trade into the Nicola Valley from the East, intensifying influences from the Plains and the interior tribes of Oregon and California.

Early-1800s – First fur traders arrive in the Thompson River and Nicola River valleys. This led to an increase in manufactured tools and materials, which for a time helped to simplify the production of fibre products. New tools, coloured yarn, and glass beads also led to the creation of more complex and colourful designs on the fibre products.

Mid-1800s – A period of increased Nɬeʔkepmx migrations into the Nicola Valley.
– Last of the Stuw'ixmx Athapascans absorbed into Nɬeʔkepmx and Okanagan tribes.
– Noticeable reduction in the manufacture of plant fibre products. Metal pots, glass containers, cloth bags, cotton and wool clothing, cotton thread, rope, and netting, and aniline dyes are rapidly replacing fibre products.
– Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries vie for converts among the Interior First Nations.

1861 – St. Mary's Mission Roman Catholic Residential School in Mission opens. First residential school in BC. It closed in 1984.

1863 – Smallpox epidemic, marking the beginning of a rapid decline in the Nɬeʔkepmx population. Successive epidemics of measles, influenza, and tuberculosis in various parts of the region contributed to the population decline over the next seventy years.

1867 – British North America Act places all First Nations people of Canada under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

1871 – British Columbia becomes a province in the Dominion of Canada. All BC First Nations now fall under Federal jurisdiction and control.

1870s – Most Nɬeʔkepmx are wearing European style clothing made from cotton and wool. Cedar-coiled baskets and cradles, sp'éc'n bags, dip nets, and tule mats continue to be made. With new tools and materials, *ƛ'ey'qeʔ* designs begin appearing on baskets

and bags; the size and purpose of sp'éc'n bags changes to accommodate contemporary needs, cotton thread replaces sp'éc'n, aniline dyes and coloured yarns come into greater use. Tule mats are rarely used for housing but continue to be used for drying food.

1879-1880 – A Reserve System is implemented in the Southern Interior by the Federal Government. Nɬeʔkepmx territory is mapped for reserves. An increase of non-Native settlers onto the land leads to the loss of tribal lands making it difficult for the Nɬeʔkepmx to continue a hunter/gatherer lifeway. Many turn to small-scale farming, seasonal labour, or work as labourers for non-Native farmers.

1890 – Kamloops Roman Catholic Residential School opens. It closes in 1978.

1890s – As the old way of life disappears among the Nɬeʔkepmx, anthropological interest in the region increases. This marks the beginning of extensive research on Nɬeʔkepmx culture. Large collections of artifacts are sent to museums or go to private collectors. There is a shift by Nɬeʔkepmx women from making fibre products for personal use and inter-tribal trade, to making products for sale to a non-Native market. The market grows as craft- shops and tourists begin to take an interest in these works.

1901 – St. George's Anglican Residential School opens in Lytton. It closes in 1979.

1910 – Boas notes that most of the cedar-coiled baskets still in use by southern Interior First Nations are of Nɬeʔkepmx origin.

Post WWI – Nɬeʔkepmx women who are making fibre products sell them almost exclusively to the non-Native market. Cedar-coiled baskets, beadwork and buckskin moccasins and gloves are the most popular items. Women begin experimenting with cedar-coiled basket styles. While traditional styles continue to be made, women apply this technique to making items more familiar to their non-Native buyers, such as large trunks, tea trays, cup and saucer, knitting baskets, fishing creels, and picnic hampers. Miniatures are also popular. Some of the traditional constructs are not applied to the made-for-sale products. For example, making cedar-coiled baskets waterproof is not necessary. Therefore, baskets tend to be made with wider and looser coils. Women continue to take charge of their trading interests, and exchange their products at stores in Lytton and Merritt. Tourists also come directly to their homes to buy. Usually women receive second-hand clothes in payment for their work.

Post WW2 – Further changes and government legislation lead to an increased dependence on the resources of non-Native communities, including jobs, food, supplies, education, social concerns, and health care. More Nɬeʔkepmx leave the area to find work. With greater reliance on outside services and fewer people left in the community the responsibilities of the kinship based social system are diminished.
– Logging, large-scale cattle and horse ranching, development, and the introduction of weeds lead to further loss of tribal lands. It is becoming more and more difficult to find suitable stands of plants for fibre technology.
–There is a marked decrease in the number of women who continue to make fibre products. With fewer role models, and the pressing demands of modern society fewer young women choose to learn the skills.

1970s to present – Several steps are being taken at the local level to help continue some of the traditional skills and knowledge.

– A heritage curriculum has been introduced into School District 58 (Nicola-Similkameen), with local Elders being invited into schools to share their knowledge of the language and traditions.
– Elders are making themselves available to teach individuals and groups at various locations throughout the region.
– In Merritt classes have been held at various times at the Conayt Friendship Centre in traditional skills, including cedar-coiled basket making, beadwork, drum making, and tanning hides.
– There is a renewed interest in fibre products among collectors and some local people. Women are demanding higher prices for their work, receiving as much as $850.00 for a small picking basket. Still, the reward is small, and few people can afford to devote time to such labour-intensive work.

1996 – The Nicola Tribal Association, with the support of local Elders, co-sponsored the Tule Project, in which six local people learned how to harvest and use sp'éc'n and tules to make tule mats.

1998 – The Nicola Tribal Association, with the support of local Elders, co-sponsored the Q'ʷúys Project, in which five local people learned how to harvest and use sp'éc'n and q'ʷúys to make fibre clothing.

Appendix 3: Selected Mythology of the Nɬeʔkepmx

1. Migration Legends[18]

(a) Migration Legend

A long time ago the people were living in another country,[19] near a large lake, where they were attacked by enemies. Since they could not cross the water,[20] they were hemmed in by their enemies, and were in danger of being destroyed. Their two chiefs called the men together for a council and dance. One after another the shamans and the other men danced and sang, calling up their manitous and soliciting aid. Each man showed his powers, and some were able to accomplish wonderful deeds. Some could swim in the water like beavers and otters, and might have crossed the lake; but they could not convey the whole tribe across the lake. On the following day they expected the attack of their enemies. Some people went into the sweat-houses to purify themselves, and prayed; and others joined in a war-dance, preparing themselves for battle. Only the two chiefs had not yet shown their powers. They contended with each other. One had power over heat, and the other over cold. When one chief[21] called up his powers, it became so hot that the people took to the water to cool themselves. Still they saw no way of escape. Then the other chief[22] danced and sang, and a cold wind began to blow. The people fled to their lodges, and lighted fires to warm themselves. That night ice covered the lake, and at daybreak the tribe crossed to the other side.[23] The people wondered, for they had never seen the lake covered by ice before. Then the chief, whose guardian-spirit was heat, caused a hot wind to blow, and the ice disappeared, so that their enemies could not follow them.

Yet the people thought, "Even here our enemies may follow us." Therefore they travelled still farther away. They camped for a time, but the location was unsuitable. Four times they moved, for they were dissatisfied with their camps. One place has an insufficiency of wood, another of fish, another of game.[24] At last they came to a country where wood, bark, fish, and game were plentiful, and there they remained. This place, it is said, was the Thompson country at Lytton. They became the ancestors of the Thompson Indians. On their journey they crossed a great lake, a great plain, a great forest, and a great mountain. Some informants claim that they left at each camp some people who did not care to move on. Therefore, people speaking the Thompson language may be found at these places now.[25]

(b) Migration Legend

The country of the Thompson Indians was rich before the whites came. There was an abundance of all kinds of food. Salmon were very plentiful in the rivers, and great numbers were caught at many places. Deer were everywhere; and bear, elk, and mountain sheep abounded. Dressed skin was cheap and plentiful and nearly everyone wore skin clothes. The people were numerous, healthy, strong, and happy. Now the people are few, sick, poor, and dejected. Game and salmon are now also scarce.

We are as in prison, and our lands and nearly everything we had have been spoiled or stolen from us. The Great Chief led us to this country, and placed us in it to occupy it, multiply in it, and be happy. He gave us a rich country with plenty in it for us to eat. He did not give this country to the whites, or any one else. The chief gave us this part of our mother's body to live on and rest on. We know about our origin

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18 All the Migration Legends are from James Teit, Folk Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, 1917, pp. 48-52.

19 Some say this country was to the south or east and a long way off. Some add that all people originally came out from underneath the sun (to the east or south-east), and the Thompson came from there also. This belief may have some connection with tile supposed union or intercourse of Sun and Earth, and consequent reproduction of people, the Sun being male or father, and the Earth female or mother.

20 Some say there were no canoes in those days, or that the people did not know how to make them.

21 This name has been forgotten, but some informants think he was the Fox.

22 Some say Coyote, others Wolf.

23 Some informants claim that all crossed; while others say that a few remained, who were afraid to walk on the ice. What became of these is not known. They were probably killed or made slaves.

24 Some say in one camp there was no bark.

25 It's not known exactly where these places were. This story is not well remembered and the narrator said he did not know all the details.

and our ancestors, and we have inhabited this country for a long time. The earth is full of the bones of our ancestors. Our traditions tell us that even in mythological times our ancestors live here. Four of them lived at Lytton, from whom we believe we are descended, — *Ntcæmi'kən* or *.ntcə'mka*[26] (*ncæmkeʔ*), a man of very large stature, and a great hunter and warrior; *Kwona'ə'ka* (*Sqʷanéy'qʷaʔ*),[27] who made canoes; *Skwia'xənəmux̲*,[28] who could move around like a bird, and was a hunter and warrior and *Kʷəskapi'nek*[29] was a queen, and mother of the people. These were Indians, and not animals. Some people claim that the Lytton people sprang from these original inhabitants. At the close of the mythological period there were four lodges at Lytton, each representing a family, or family group. These families intermarried, and from them have sprung all the Thompson people. Cexpe'ntləm, Tsô'sietən, and other leading chiefs, all claimed descent from one or more of these families. In course of time these four lodges increased, and some families broke away and settled in other places where there were good hunting and fishing. Thus from Lytton the people spread up and down the Fraser River, and up the Thompson River. Some families migrated from Lytton, and settled at Nəqa'umən, or Thompson [Siding], which was a great salmon fishing place, and was annually visited by the Okanagon. The people of many of these places sent forth offshoots, a family or two breaking away and making their headquarters at a certain place, which in time became the centre of a band. Thus our country was settled, until at last our people spread down the Fraser to Spuzzum, and up the Fraser to La Fontaine, also up the Thompson River to Spences Bridge, and over to Nicola and Similkameen. At these points they came in contact with other tribes, with whom they intermarried. This is why our chief *Cexpe'ntlæm*, in talking to the whites (in 1858), told them they had entered his house and were now his guests. He asked them to treat his children as brothers, and they would share the same fire. He did not know that they would afterwards treat his people as strangers and inferiors, and steal their land and food from them. Had he known it, there would probably have been war, and the land would have been red with blood. They asked him where his house was. He said, "You are in it. The centre of my house is here at Lytton. The fireplace is right here, and you are sitting by it. The doors of my house are at Spuzzum, at *ɬaha'hoa*,[30] at *Stlə.z*,[31] at *.stce'kus*,[32] and at *Tcutcuwi'xa*.[33] Between these places is our tribal territory, from which we gather our food." This is why Lytton was considered the chief and central place of the tribe, and our head chief was there. This is also the reason why the Lytton people had the right to hunt anywhere in the country of the tribe. They were called the "real Nɬeʔkepmux." Other Nɬeʔkepmx were considered their offspring or children, but they were not real Nɬeʔkepmx. They were all more or less mixed with alien blood, and they do not speak the language so purely as the Lytton division. Not long ago nearly all the families along the Thompson River could trace their descent from a few families at Lytton, who were considered the original families. Therefore, we believe that it is not so very long since the time of the four lodges at Lytton, but still the time is too great for us to count it.

Perhaps the people two or three generations ago could count the time. Stories used to be told of a migration of Thompson people from the Columbia River to Lytton, and also later from Lytton to the Columbia River. Lately at Lytton I heard an old man called *Hwîkwal* tell one of these stories. There are still some Thompson-speaking Indians on the Columbia River. They speak our language, but some of their words are a little different from ours. They also speak the Wenatchie dialect (*Pəskwáus*), which is like

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[26] Means "burned or dark-coloured bark." [In Thompson and Thompson (1996:25) this word is written *ncəmkeʔ*, which is the name of a mountain near Lytton that always has smoke.]

[27] Seems to mean "ferryman," or to have some connection with crossing or transporting over water; probably an archaic word, mentioned in tales. [In Thompson and Thompson (1996:677) this word is written *Sqʷanéy'qʷaʔ* and described as the name of an old canoe-maker in legend.]

[28] Means "arrow arm man," mentioned in tales.

[29] A woman's name; meaning not quite clear; seems to have some connection with the word for "scorched"; *-inək* means "bow" [or weapon]. [see story of *Kwəskapínək*, p. 129.]

[30] Name of an old Indian settlement at La Fontaine, nine miles above Lillooet, on the east side of the Fraser River.

[31] Indian name of a place near Cornwall, Ashcroft, where the most eastern village of the Thompson, on the Thompson River, is situated.

[32] On Quilchena Creek, Nicola Valley, where is situated the farthest settlement of Thompson Indians in that direction.

[33] In the Similkameen Valley on the north side of the river, near Hedley.

Okanagon. I have never seen any of them, but have often heard of them, and seen men who have seen them, and one or two men who claimed to have been at the place where their remnants now live. Some say that long ago they lived at two or more places near the Columbia River. It is said that now only a few are left, who live at one place, a little distance form the Columbia River, I think in some part of the *Pɛskwáus* country.[34]

(c) Migration Legend[35]

The old people used to tell us that we had not always lived in the Thompson River country. At one time very long ago our ancestors lived in a very distant country, and reached our present country after a series of migrations extending over a great many years. In the beginning, our ancestors lived at some place inland, south, or southeast from here, on the far side of a great body of fresh water. This was our original home. After a time a strange and powerful people came to their country and attacked them. There was much war, and our people were vanquished by the enemy. Many were killed, and at last our ancestors were surrounded on all sides. They had to cross the lake, or be exterminated. In those days the Indians had no canoes, and I do not know how they crossed, —whether they used rafts, or logs, or magic blankets, or a magic belt, or whether they crossed on the ice. I think the old people had somewhat different accounts. I do not know who their chief was. It may have been Coyote, or *Spɛtlɛmúlôx*, or some noted man. Their enemies could not follow them. For a long time they lived on this side of the lake; but at last their enemies reached them, and the war was resumed. They left at once, and travelled a long distance until they reached the banks of a large river. Some people think this was the Columbia River, but they are not certain of this. Here they remained a long time. I think they were attacked at this place by enemies, but I am not sure. They crossed the river, and lived on this side. Here they staid a long time; but eventually they quarrelled and separated, one half of the people moving north, and the other half remaining or moving in the opposite direction, I do not remember which. As some relate it, there were four stops and four migrations. The fourth one must have been the moving of the northern division to the Thompson River. They probably continued travelling until they reached Lytton, and settled there, for it seems that in later days the tribe spread from there until all the settlements belonging to our people were occupied. Recently I asked some of the oldest people of my band regarding the story, but none of them knew it. Some of them said they had heard it. Probably some of the old people at Lytton may know the full version.

An Indian from Spences Bridge, who had heard the story when young and had often heard mention of it, thought that the people had crossed the lake on a log which Coyote caused to grow across the water, in the same way as he made the tree grow on which his son ascended to the sky, and the people walked along on it as on a bridge.

In a letter written to me a few years ago by a *Stɬaxaíux* chief, since deceased, he stated that his ancestors had been driven away from the shores of a large lake, and had been harassed by enemies, who followed their migrations. Every now and then the enemies caught up with them, drove them from their villages, and harassed them as before. He said this had continued up to the present day, and he called the whites the enemies of his race. It was not clear whether he meant that the whites were also the enemies who had attacked his remote ancestors, but that might be inferred.

2. Creation Stories[36]

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[34] Compare preceding stories.

[35] From Chief *Tedlɛnítsa*. This story is probably of Indian origin, but it bears some resemblance to the wanderings of the children of Israel in the Wilderness, and their crossing of the Red Sea. It also has a resemblance to the harassing of Indian tribes farther east by the whites, and by each other, and the gradual pushing of tribes towards the west or northwest. The belief is general in the tribes that part of the Thompson-speaking people live to the south, somewhere near the Columbia River. The tradition may refer to early Salish migrations.

[36] All the creation stories are from James A.Teit, Mythology of the Thompson Indians. Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. 8, Part II, 1912. (Reprint 1975,New York: AMS Press, Inc.). Pp. 321-327. Text and footnotes are copied from the original.

a. "Old-One and the Earth, Sun, and People"

A long time ago, before the world was formed, there lived a number of people together. They were the Stars, Moon, Sun, and Earth. The latter was a woman, and her husband was the Sun. The Earth-woman always found fault with her husband, and was disagreeable with him, saying he was nasty, ugly, and too hot. They had several children. At last the Sun felt annoyed at her grumbling, and deserted her. The Moon and Stars, who were relatives of the Sun, also left her, and moved over to where the Sun had taken up his abode. When the Earth-woman saw that her husband and his friends had all deserted her, she became very sorrowful, and wept much. Now Old-One appeared, and transformed Sun, Moon, and Stars into those we see in the sky at the present day, and placed them all so that they should look on the Earth-woman, and she could look at them. He said, "Henceforth you shall not desert people, nor hide yourselves, but shall remain where you can always be seen at night or by day. Henceforth you will look down on the Earth." Then he transformed the woman into the present earth. Her hair became the trees and grass; her flesh, the clay; her bones, the rocks; and her blood, the springs of water. Old-One said, "Henceforth you will be the earth, and people will live on you, and trample on your belly. You will be as their mother, for from you, bodies will spring, and to you they will go back. People will live as in your bosom, and sleep on your lap. They will derive nourishment from you, for you are fat; and they will utilize all parts of your body. You will no more weep when you see your children." After this the earth gave birth to people, who were very similar in form to ourselves: but they knew nothing, and required neither food nor drink. They had no appetites, desires, knowledge, or thoughts. Then Old One travelled over the world and among the people, giving them appetites and desires, and causing all kinds of birds and fish to appear, to which he gave names, and ascribed to them certain positions and functions. He said to the people, "Where you see fish jump, there you will find water to drink. It will quench your thirst, and keep you alive." He taught the women how to make birch baskets, mats, and lodges, and how to dig roots, gather berries and cure them. He taught the men how to make fire, catch fish, shoot, snare, trap, and spear game. He taught them how to make nets, beaver-spears, and snares. He showed them the *spa'tsan*-tree (*sp'éc'n*), telling them the bark from it was the best for making thread and rope.

He taught them how to make dead-falls for marten, and showed them the white and the black arrow-stone, telling them it was best for making, knives, spear-points, and arrowheads. He taught them how to snare grouse, and use the feathers on arrows so that they might go straight. He also told the people how to cook and eat salmon and other food, and showed them tobacco and pipe-stone, and how to smoke. He also taught the people the relationship of the sexes, how to have sexual intercourse, and how to give birth to children. When he had finished teaching them, he bade them good-by, saying "I now leave you; but if you forget any of the arts I have taught you, or if you are in distress and require my aid, I will come again to you. The sun is as your father, and the earth as your mother. When you die, you will return to your mother's body. You will be covered with her flesh as a blanket, under which your bones will rest in peace."

b. "The Creation of the Earth by Old-One"[37]

Old-One or Chief came down from the upper world on a cloud, which, when it approached the surface of the great lake, became a bank of fog. He was tired looking at the endless and monotonous expanse of water underneath the sky, and thus had descended to create some kind of a world in the midst of the watery waste, which was where the earth is now. The cloud descended until it rested on the surface of the lake. Then Old-One pulled five hairs from his head,[38] and, throwing, them down on the clouds, they became endowed with life, and sprang up in the form of young women. They were all perfect women endowed with speech, sight, and hearing. He asked the first one to speak and state what she preferred to be. She answered, "I wish to be a woman and to bear children. I shall be bad

[37] Tcawa'xatmux (Scw'exmx) version.

[38] The narrator said he was not quite sure whether the hairs were from the, head or pubes. He also said he thought they might have been five ribs taken by the chief from his right side.

and foolish, and shall seek after my own pleasure. My descendants will fight, lie, steal, murder, and commit adultery. The will be wicked."' The Chief answered her, saying, "I am sorry you have spoken thus, for in this way death and much sorrow will arise."

Now he asked the second woman to state what she wished to be. She answered "I wish to be a woman and bear children. I shall be good and virtuous. My descendants will be wise, peaceful, honest, truthful, and chaste." The Chief was glad when he heard her speak thus, and said, "You have spoken well. Wisdom and virtue will eventually triumph over foolishness and evil. The process will be very long, however, and there will be much sorrow and misery meanwhile."

Now the third woman was asked to choose her lot, and she answered, "I wish to be the earth, upon which my sisters will live. They will love me and draw life from me. I will make everything fat and happy." The Chief answered, "It is good. From you everything will grow. You will produce, nourish, and give rest. When people die, you will receive them on your breast and will cover them. Trees, plants, grass, flowers, gold, silver, and all that is good and beautiful, will spring from you. You will make your sister's children glad."

Now he asked the choice of the fourth woman, and she answered, "I wish to be fire, and will be in the grass, trees, and in all wood. I shall make people happy by giving them heat and comfort. When they are cold and miserable, they will seek me and obtain warmth and happiness. With my aid they will eat." The Chief answered, "It is good. You will render assistance, and make your sisters' children rejoice."

Then he asked the fifth woman to speak, and she replied, "I wish to be water, and from me people will draw life and wisdom. Coming to me, they will be cleansed of filth and disease; and by seeking me constantly, they will become wise, and obtain knowledge, dentalia, and riches. I will assist all things on earth to maintain life." The Chief answered, "Good. You will assist, and make glad your sisters' children."

Then he transformed them. The Earth fell backwards, spread out her legs, and rolled off from the cloud into the lake, where she took the form of the earth we live on. The Chief said, "My daughter, you will be as you have asked. Henceforth you will be the earth in the midst of the great lake, and people will live on you. They will call you mother." Water he transformed into the present water we see in the shape of lakes, pools, springs, and streams, and it began to run over the top of the earth. Fire he transformed into the present fire, or the heat of fire we see and feel when wood burns. He put the spirit of fire in all woods and plants. The remaining two women he placed on the earth and, after endowing them with the power to bear offspring he impregnated them. He told them, "You will be sisters, and from you all people will spring. Your children will be male and female, and your descendants will cover the earth. The offspring of Evil will be most numerous at first, but at last the children of Good will outnumber them. Good will prevail, and Evil will finally disappear. Then I will collect all people, both dead and alive. Earth and her sisters will assume their original forms, and all together will become changed and new."[39] In this manner will come the end of the world, and this is why both bad and good people are found in the world at the present day. The children of the two women were male and female. They married one another, and from them all people are descended. None of them could live without the earth, fire, and water: therefore these are part of us, and are related to people as if by blood.

(The narrator of this story was a shaman called *NkamtcinéLx*, belonging to Sulus, and probably somewhat over seventy years of age. He stated that he never heard this tale except from his grandfather, the first time when he was about eight or ten years of age. Other old men who had particular tales were *Tcuie'ska* of Nicola, who had a story of a man who watched the women bathing from the top of a tree; and *Ye'luska* of Spences Bridge, who had a long tale of women who hung their babies up in trees or bushes. He did not remember the details of these stories, but had heard them narrated only by these men. *Tcuie'ska* died a few years ago in Nicola, aged over eighty; and *Ye'luska* was killed in the Spences Bridge land-slide).

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[39] My informant was vague when questioned as to the nature of this change. He thought people might be conducted to the upper world, or placed on some new earth created for them. He was sure there would be a reunion of the dead and the living, who afterwards would live together under the same conditions. Both would have human form; and there would be no more sickness, death, misery, and evil. All would be good and happy. Conditions would be an improvement over both the spirit world and this world.

c. "Old-One and the Creation of the Nicola Country"

Old-One was travelling about, and came upon a woman sitting in an attitude of grief. She was bent forward, and her hands covered her face. He asked her why she was sorrowful, and she answered, "Because I am alone and deserted." He said to her, "Do not be sorry, for I will make you great and the mother of many. All things will grow from you." He transformed her into the earth, which he made expand, and shape itself into valleys, mountains, and plains. Her bones became the rocks; the largest ones, the mountain ranges and ridges. Her blood dried up, and assumed the form of gold, copper, and other metals. Much of it ran to one place and congealed in the form of a large mass of gold among the mountains. (The whites know this, and therefore always search for gold in the mountains, and not on the plains. They value the woman's blood very much, and are anxious to find the large deposit. They will never be able to find it, however, for Old-One made the mountains all so much alike, that it will be impossible for them to find the spot).

Now, Old-One commenced to make the Nicola country. He flattened, lowered, and heightened it here and there, until it became similar to what it is at the present day. Then he formed lakes, and made water flow in the form of rivers and creeks, and created fish, animals, and birds to inhabit it. He also made grass, trees, and bushes to grow where required. He said, "Water will be the life of the earth and everything on it." Now he created four men and a woman,[40] who became the first human inhabitants of the Nicola valley. They knew not how either to eat or work. He said to them, "Drink water: you need nothing else to sustain you. It is the life of the earth, and from it you will draw life also. I will leave you now, but will visit you ere long." These people had the desire to eat and to work, but knew not how to do either. The woman often gazed at the ground and grass, and felt she had some connection with them, or required to do something to them, or receive something from them, but knew not what. Likewise the men. One went to the trees and would gaze at them. He had the same feeling as the woman. Another went to the water and gazed at the fish swimming; another, at the deer running through the bushes; and another, at the beaver working in the lake. Sometimes they threw stones at the fish and animals; but these took no effect. At last Old-One returned to the country, and, saw the man gazing into the water. He asked him what he was looking at. The man answered, "I am looking at the fish swimming and I feel I need them, but do not know for what purpose, nor yet do I know how to procure them. Perhaps you are the chief; you may help me."' Old-One took a magic knife from his right side and gave it to the man, saying, "Go to that service-berry-tree, and say to it, 'My friend, I require you,' then make the motion of cutting it down with the knife, and at once it will fall down as if it had been cut. Then bring it here to me." The man did as directed, and, when he had brought the tree, Old-One told him to squat down and shut his eyes. Now Old-One made motions at the tree with his knife, and it soon formed itself into a fish-spear. The man was asked to open his eyes, and was astonished, when he did so, to see the spear in front of him. Old-One said, "Take it in your hand, and come with me. I will show you how to use it." They went to the edge of the stream, and saw a large fish swimming; and Old-One told the man to make the motion of spearing it. When he did this, the fish transfixed[41] itself on the spearhead, and was thrown on the land dead. Old-One said, "Henceforth men will spear fish in this fashion."

Now he came to the man who was watching deer on a trail, and asked him what he was looking at. The man answered, "I am watching the deer, and feel as if I had need of them, but know not why. I spend my time doing this."' Giving him his magic knife, Old-One told him to go up the mountains to the yew-tree, and, after praying or talking nicely to it, to make pretence of cutting it down, and, when it fell, to bring a piece of the timber to him. The man did as directed, and brought back some of the wood. Now, Old-One told him to close his eyes, formed a bow and arrow, and then asked the man to look. He said, "Take these things in your hand, and I will show you how to use them." Just then a deer trotted alone, the trail, and Old-One told the man to make the motion of shooting it. When he did so, the deer fell down dead. Old-One said, "Henceforth men will kill deer with bows and arrows."

Now he came to the man who was at the lake watching the beavers building a dam, and asked him what he was looking at. He answered in terms similar to those of the others, and Old-One made a

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[40] Some say, four women.

[41] Some say jumped ashore and died.

beaver-spear for him, and showed him how to use it. He said, "Henceforth men will kill beavers in this manner."

Now Old-One came to the man who was sitting looking at a tree, and asked him what he was gazing at. The man answered in the same way as the other men had done; so Old-One made tools, and showed him how to chop down trees. He also made a fire-drill, and taught him how to use it, and make fire of wood. He said, "Henceforth men will fell trees, and make fire. They will make tools and weapons, and will be workers, trappers, hunters, and fishermen." He also taught the men how to make nets, and set snares.

At last Old-One came to the woman, who was sitting looking at the ground, and asked her what she was gazing at. She, also, answered in the same manner as the men had done. He told her to shut her eyes, and, when she opened them again, a large plant had grown up before her. He asked her to go to the birch-tree, and, after saying to it, "O friend! I require you," to strip off its bark. This she did, brought the bark to him, and he rolled the plant in it. Now he told her to travel along that hillside, and throw away pieces of the plant. She did as directed, and, each time she put her hand in the roll, she pulled out a different kind of bulb or seed. Thus she sowed all the different kinds of plants used by the Indians for food or medicine; and from these sprang up many, and they spread over the whole country. They grew as soon as they touched the ground. Old-One told her their names, and said, "These only are edible." Thus the Indians learned the edible varieties of roots and the proper kinds of herbs to use. When the plants had all been distributed, Old-One made the birch bark into a basket. He also made a root-digger, and showed the woman how to dig roots.

Now Old-One asked the men to bring their fish, deer, and beaver, and the fourth man to bring wood and make fire. Then he showed them how to cook fish, meat, and roots. He made a mat, and spread the food on it. He himself partook from the right side of everything, and showed the people how to eat. They followed his example, but ate from the left side of everything. Now he told them, "You will not live by drinking water only, but will eat fish, meat, roots, and berries. You will also use the skins of animals for clothes, and no longer go naked." He showed them how to build lodges, and said, "Henceforth men will hunt, fish, and make tools, and women will dig roots, and make baskets and mats. You people will henceforth live thus as I have taught you, and inhabit this country until such time as you will join the dead, and then your mother, the Earth from whom all things grow, will again assume her original and natural form." [42]

3. The following story, "*Kwəskapínek*," is about a woman from Lytton who provides all the edible plants in the Botani Valley for the Nɬeʔkepmx[43]

Kwəskapínek was a woman who lived at Lytton. She was considered a chieftainess and Mother of the people. Some Thompson and Okanagon people are believed to be descended from her. A chief came from the south or east and took her away or married her. Some say he was the Sun. She wept much, because she said she was about to leave her children and live in a strange country. She wanted to make provision for her children, and leave them a token whereby they would remember her. Therefore, she filled her basket with edible roots. She repaired to Bətáni (or Botáni), and emptied her basket, saying, "Henceforth roots will grow in abundance in this place; and my children shall repair here to dig them." Therefore, almost all kinds of edible roots now grow there. If she had had camas and bitter-root in her basket, these plants also would now be abundant there. (There was a long story about this woman formerly, but it has been forgotten.)

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[42] She will become a woman again. This will be the end of the world; and all people, living and dead, will join the Old One and Coyote, and return with them to live in the upper world, where life will be similar to what it is at present in the land of shades.

[43] From Teit, Folk Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, 1917. P. 21.

4. The following is close translation of the story "The Man Who Went to the Moon," originally told in Nɬeʔkepmxcín by Annie York of Spuzzum and translated by Laurence Thompson and Steven Egesdal. It is one tale of how the Nɬeʔkepmx learned to make and use tools and utensils from the resources of their land. The square brackets and parentheses are in the original to clarify meanings that are only implied in the Nɬeʔkepmxcín text (Thompson and Thompson 1992:200-227).

(It is said) there was a person there, who was going to take a trip up to heaven. They didn't have anything—it is said the Indian people didn't have anything at all. They didn't know anything. The people didn't know anything at all about how to do things. So the fellow was there and he made his "space-canoe" in which he was going to go to the moon. It is said this fellow was there and it was his desire to find out how they did things [up] there. So there he said [to himself]: "I'm going to find out what their way of doing things [up] there is—those people in the world [up] there."

It was there that he made it [the canoe] near Canford—that's where he built it first, Canford. That's where he built it and it exploded on him. And it burned there for quite a distance around. And so he didn't make it until spring again. Then he made it again at Thompson Siding [Nq'áwmn]—that's where he made it and once more, at Thompson Siding—what he was going to travel in to go up to heaven—his intended means of travelling to heaven. Well, he was there and so he made it. (It was) one day [that] he made it—that thing which was going to take him up to heaven. He ran [around] with it [to start it] and he got inside, and it went up until it reached the moon.

He arrived there and he parked his craft and he walked around (there) and he looked [around] there and he saw there houses—winter houses—built here and there. But he didn't see any people. So he packed his lunch on his back and he went into one of the winter houses, and he saw many, many baskets. But he didn't see any people. They say many baskets were placed there, of all sorts of patterns. They say there were cedar roots there piled up all about. It is said that awls were lying there, all sorts of things (are said to have been) lying there. They say all kinds of things were lying around (there), which were basket patterns. And he heard them talking—Indian women, that is—that he couldn't see. And he said [to himself]: "Oh, I'm going to take one of the baskets. I'm going to take one of these." When he took it from there, then they [the baskets] all fell—(and) they fell on top of him from there—from [where] the baskets [were]—from the shelves. So he couldn't stand up, and the people said to him: "Stop taking this that you'd be stealing! Put that back here where it belongs!" So he returned it there, they say. As soon as he laid it there then everything went up—the shelves there—returning. It was all of the shelves returning to [their places in] the house.

And then he went out of the house and he went away from this place and he got to another house. They say that there was everything there—they say skins were lying there. All sorts of things were there—old-fashioned shoes were lying there. It is said things were lying and hanging (on hooks) there. Men's shoes are what they say hung there—[men's] clothes, [men's] carrying cases, all sorts of things. So he took one thing from those [hanging there], and then those things fell on top of him again and he wasn't able to stand up. The owners of the house said to him: "Don't take that. Put it back here!" And so he put it back there—(and) having put it there, everything that was there went back there. Then the shelves went up—everything returned the way it had been.

He arrived at another house. They say he saw all kinds of things there—there were stone hammers there, there were arrowheads there, bows and arrows and other such things. There were fish spears laid there. There were all sorts of things that he was there, and he took one. They fell on top of him again there, then he fell there to the floor of the house. They said to him: "Don't take that. Put it back there!" He took it and put it there. They say he put it there and everything went up there, and everything returned to the way things were. He went away from this place.

He got to another house. They say he saw all kinds of things there—There were blankets of all kinds, they say mats were lying there, and there were Indian goat-hair blankets—they say everything hung on hooks there at the place he went into. Then he saw those things there and he admired them. "Oh, these here would be good blankets for me." He took one from among those (blankets). They fell on top of him—lots of things, they say—[and] he wasn't able to get out of there. There he was and they said to him, those whose house it was: "Don't you take that. Don't you steal again. Don't you take that, don't

steal that. Put that back there!" And he put it back. As soon as he put it back, then it [everything else] went up there where it had been. It went back where it had been. He went away from there.

He got to a very small winter house—he went away from there and then he saw a teeny-weeny winter house. So he went to it. He went in there. He got there they say, and he went in. Some elderly people welcomed him. Two very, very old people were there—a married couple, [spider, *Sk'ék'iʔt*, and his wife] who said to him: "You're one of the poorest that has come to this world. You couldn't see them, those people of those houses." It is said that they were kind to him, those old people. Then they cooked for him food that they gave him [to eat]. And they made a bed for him—and those old people fixed a bed for him, and he went to sleep there.

Dawn broke and it was morning. They gave him his bow and arrow. They said to him: "This here is to use for hunting. This here is going to be yours." The old people have him what were going to be his artifacts—all those things they would give him. And he used them there [so he would know how later]—they say that he made something there. He made the old people something outside. They say he did some hunting. They say he did some hunting there.

He was doing that there and then he got lonely. So he went to weeping as night fell. He remembered his little brothers and sisters and his parents. And the old people said to him: "Say, you're probably lonely—that's why you're acting that way. We're gong to finish our work and you can go home." They said that the old people there were twisting fibres until the middle of the night for their piece of equipment [a rope]. And they say he said [to himself]: "That must be for something the old people are going to use."

They made him his lunch [for the journey home]—all kinds of things— *Sk'ék'iʔt* and his wife. It is said they gave him all kinds of things that were going to be his patterns. They made him some food for lunch. There were all kinds of things that they gave him. They put him aboard where he was to go aboard. The old woman tied to her waist her (woman's) pack-strap. Her husband did this also, and they said to each other: "All right, now this morning our grandson is going to go home." Then they opened the hatch of what was going to be his craft, and they loaded his lunch—everything. Then they gave him the patterns—the way all the things are going to be—how to make what they're going to use when he arrived [back] in his world. Then they stuck in his hand a stone hammer for him to knock with [on the hatch]. And they told him that this was the thing "that's gong to tell you when that's it—the land from which you came." Then they took his hands and they wept, those old people. They said to him: "Goodbye now. You won't see us any more." They knelt down and prayed, those old people.

Then they put the cover (over him) on his craft. And they lowered it by rope. The old people said to each other: "All right then you're going to take care of the craft's equipment." Then they let it fall down and they sang, those old people. What they sang said was: "Lower away! Lower away!" Then they shook the rope and the extremely large quantity [of cord] that they had wound up, until it was about used up. Then it bumped [against something] in the sky. Then the old people said to each other: "He has made it, our grandson, to the [lower] world."

They say he knocked on the entrance hatch with his stone hammer until the sound [of the knocking] was different. Then he took hold and pushed on the craft, so it would open up. Then he saw that it was the land from which he had come. They say he got out there and wept. He knelt and prayed and he removed all of his things. Then he looked at his craft and they say he wept. His tears dripped into it. Then he covered it. Then he ran [around] there and he pulled on it and ran around with it and he whirled it and he finished by letting go. His craft went up. Then the old people shook it [the rope] again when they noticed a difference in the feel of the rope. They said to each other: "Now it is the land of our grandson."

They sensed when he let go of it and it went up. Then it [the rope] wound up once again, the craft returned from where it had [just] come. Then they pulled on the rope until the craft reached the top and arrived at the height from where it had come. Now they opened [the hatch of] the craft, it having reached the top, prayed, and then they cried.

Then he went over to his (own) parents. He had been on a very long trip and now he saw [again] the people of Thompson Siding [Nq'áwmn]. They saw him with a pack. They said to him: "Where have you been?" He said: "I've come from another world." He untied his pack and the people saw what he had.

They saw all of those things and he showed the people—everyone—how things are going to be done in this world.

5. The following excerpt is from "Sore Man," as told by Mabel Joe and translated by Dorothy Ursaki, in Hanna and Henry 1995:85-86.

Once there was a story, long ago, about a boy who cried and cried and his parents could not stop him. He would not go to sleep, so one of the boy's parents said, 'We'll call Owl so he can take you away! Owl will take you away!'

The people all went to sleep except the grandmother, who called Owl. During the night the grandmother heard someone come – it must have been Owl. The boy was crying, and Owl put him into a large basket and took him away. The people woke up and did not hear the boy crying anymore. They noticed the boy was taken away by Owl.

Owl kept the boy for quite a while. He fed the boy food, including snakes, mice, groundhogs, and squirrels. The boy ate the food he was given, as he was very hungry.

6. Man and Owl (Told by Mabel Joe and translated by Dorothy Ursaki, in Hanna and Henry 1995:88).

This story is about a man and Owl. This man is in camp doing things. The fire beside him was just about out, and he was busy keeping the fire going and fixing the shells for his gun. The Elders were all asleep as they lay by the fireside. One of the Elders said to the man, 'You go to sleep. Why sit on a chair?'

The man did not heed the order. He just remained in the chair by the fire, thinking. While sitting in his chair, the man heard Owl whooing. Owl said, 'Whoo! Whoo! Dead! Dead!' Owl kept saying, 'Whoo! Whoo! Dead! Dead!'

The man said to Owl, 'Why wasn't it me that died? Let me be the next to die!' The Elders said to him, 'Why did you say that to Owl? That Owl has powers! I guess he was telling you that someone has died or will die now. Because you said that to him, *you* are going to die!' The man just laughed at what the Elders said to him – he didn't believe them.

Owl again repeated his talk, saying, 'Whoo! Whoo! Dead! Dead!'

The man answered him, saying, 'Oh! Let me be the one to die!' Then the man must have gone to sleep. And he never woke up the next day – he died that day. He never took heed of the Elders' scolding. He shouldn't have said what he said to Owl – now he's dead.

Owls have powers. Whenever you hear them talking, take notice! They are serious – no fooling! So take their talking seriously!

7. The following excerpt from "*Sesulián* and *Sekúlia*," a story from Spences Bridge, helps teach the consequences of positive and negative character traits.[44]

Two Transformers, *Sesulián* and *Sekúlia*, came down the Fraser River from the Shuswap country. They were good men, and taught the people many arts. They transformed those who were proud, while they helped those who were grateful for advice and instruction. They reached Styne Creek (on the west side of Fraser River, a little above Lytton) at dusk. A number of people were living in an underground lodge just north of the creek, and their dogs began to howl (the old breed of Indian dogs did not bark) when the Transformers approached. A man went out to see who was coming. When he saw the Transformers, he made fun of them. Therefore they transformed him, the house, and the people into stone.

When leaving this place, *Sesulián* left the mark of his right foot on a stone, and a little farther down the river *Sekúlia* left the mark of his left foot. Both these impressions of human feet may still be seen in the woods near Styne.

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[44] Ibid. Pp. 13-15.

The Transformers taught people how to make tools and implements. They carried patterns drawn on hide of every object that people use. They taught people how to make fire-drills, how to cook, how to work stone, flake arrow-heads and spears, how to make knives and harpoon.

When they reached the Fraser Canyon, near Spuzzum, they saw that the river was full of salmon, which were ascending the stream. Across the river they saw a man trying to catch salmon. He had a long rope of cedar-bark fastened around the waist of a boy whom he lowered down over the cliff to the river, where the boy tried to catch the salmon with his hands. They watched, and saw that he was unable to catch any. After a while the man pulled the boy up, and the two sat down on the ground to rest. The man thought, "If only somebody would teach us how to catch these fish! Then we should have plenty to eat." The Transformers held up their hands above their heads, the palms turned towards the man, and at once he saw them and understood them. One of the Transformers held up a pattern, and at once the man understood it and copied it. It represented bark twine, and he at once made some twine. Then the Transformer held up another pattern, and the man understood it. He made a bag-net. The Transformer held up another patter, and the man knew at once how to make the hoop for his dip-net. When the net was finished, he wondered what he was to do with it. The Transformer showed him how to catch salmon and how to cook and cure it.

The Transformers went on to the boundary of the Lower Fraser tribe, and returned up the river to the Thompson tribe. Later on they left the country and disappeared. It is said that they travelled through other countries to the east, teaching the people their arts. It is believed they will accompany Coyote when he returns. Then there will be great changes on the earth, and many people will die. Everything that is evil will be destroyed (Teit 1917:13-15).

8. The following excerpts are taken from six stories referring to the importance of decoration to the Nɬeʔkepmx, and value of dentalium shells, porcupine quills, beads, and other items used for decorating clothing.[45]

a. "Owl and *Ntsaâ'z*" (synopsis)

Ntsaâ'z is taken by Owl who raises him as her own, but treats him very badly, giving him little food and calling him "slave". He grows up fast. Crow-Woman advises that he go back to his Grandmother, who will feed him properly. He threw Owl's heart into the fire while she was out hunting, killing her as a result. Crow-Woman goes to boy's home to alert this Grandmother, Mother, elder and younger Sisters that *Ntsaâ'z* is alive and to come and get him. But she flies so far away, it takes several visits, during which she eats the boy's toy food, for someone (*Skákuk*) to be able to see just where she returned to so they could follow and retrieve *Ntsaâ'z*.

"Then the lad's Mother and Sister set out to find him, and at last reached the place where he was. He returned with them; and when passing a lake on the way home, he said he would bathe in the lake, because he felt hot. They tried to dissuade him, but he persisted. He bathed and dived. When he came up again, he had become a loon. He said to his sister, "Do not worry. I am going to stay here. If you long for me, come here and call me." The women went home. After some time his sister went to see him, and called him from the lakeshore. He was glad to see her. He came out of the water and sat beside her. When she was about to return, he gave her a present of many fine shells, and also his neck-ring of dentalia, which he took from his own neck and put around hers. He told her not to show the shells to anyone. A woman in the camp saw the necklace and the shells, and surmised where they had come from.

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[45] "Owl and *Ntsaâs*" and "The Girl Who Married a Crow" are from Teit, Folk Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, 1917. Pp. 26-30. "*Nɬikæsentem*," "Coyote and *Swáwon*," "Old-One Teaches the People the Use of Ornaments," and "Ant and the Beads" are from Teit, Mythology of the Thompson Indians. Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. 8, Part II, 1912. (Reprint 1975, New York: AMS Press, Inc.). Pp. 299-300, 306-307, 328, 392 respectively.

b. "The Girl Who Married the Crow" (synopsis)

A girl belonging to a village of four underground lodges near Lytton refused all suitors who had come from Spences Bridge, Nicola, Kamloops, and Lillooet, although they brought as marriage gifts robes, dentalia, and other valuables. Her parents and the chief of the village were very angry with her for refusing so many good suitors. Therefore she became sad, and would have committed suicide had not her brothers talked kindly with her.

c. The following excerpt is from "*Nɬikæsentem*," a story about Coyote's fourth son who was made from wood and who eventually turned into a true man. This excerpt is about Coyote's wanderings in Upper Nɬeʔkepmx territory.

When Coyote reached Lytton, he was dressed all over with dentalia, and the people wondered at his fine rich clothes. They tried to talk to him in several languages, but he pretended to talk a different language and not to understand them. They sent for Short-Tailed Mouse who had been married to men of all tribes and could talk all languages but she could not make him understand. Then they had recourse to sign language. They asked him if he was a shaman, and he said "Yes." They told him that they had a sick girl; and he made signs to them to erect a sweat-house and put her in it, and he would cure her.

When Coyote had entered the sweat-house and pulled down the door-flap, a man who was suspicious crept up and sat down near the entrance. Presently Coyote stopped singing, and the door-flap began to move in and out. The man lifted it up, and discovered Coyote copulating with the girl. He called out to the people, and they ran to capture him. Coyote rushed out of the sweat-house and ran away naked. They could not catch him; and as they returned, they said, "Well, we have his rich clothes." They searched for them where he had left them at the sweat-house, but found nothing but a heap of alkali-grass (Teit 1912:299-300).

d. "Coyote and *Swáwon*"

Coyote was travelling over the country, and came near to old man *Swáwon's* house. His clothes were so torn that he was almost naked, and he had no ornaments. Knowing that *Swáwon* had a very fine robe of feathers, he though he would try and gain possession of it. Plucking some alcali-grass (*pesénuɬten*), he cut the stems in small pieces and transformed them into dentalia. Gathering lots of rose berries, he changed them to beads, and then going to a *moqmóqaseɬp* bush, he plucked the leaves therefrom, and, placing them in water with mud and stones, he stirred them up, and they became shells (*sɬaq*). Now he threaded all on a long string, and went to *Swáwon's* house, wearing them on his body. The old man admired Coyote's ornaments very much, and declared he had never seen such beautiful necklaces. Coyote said to him, "If you give me your feather robe, I will give you all my ornaments." *Swáwon* agreed, and they exchanged, Coyote keeping only a very few real dentalia, which he had in his hair. Before Coyote had gone very far, he wished to see the feathers of his robe fly, in order to admire them. As it was very calm, he asked the Wind to blow, and it blew gently. This did not satisfy him, so he asked for more wind, and a breeze came. Now Coyote admired himself very much, but he thought (306) he would look still finer if there were more wind: so he asked again, and a strong breeze blew. Still he was not satisfied, and said, "I want more wind." Then a whirlwind came and seized him, turning him round and round, and over and over. It carried him to the top of a mountain, where it threw him repeatedly on the ground, and rolled him every nearer to the edge of a high cliff. Now Coyote cried for help, and, seeing no one near, he addressed the Horse-Tail (*Lúxen* or *λ'uxʷn*) which grew a the edge of the precipice, saying, "Oh, help me, Horse-Tail! I will pay you dentalia." The Horse-Tail stopped the wind, and Coyote paid him the dentalia which he had in his hair. The Horse-Tail stuck them on his body at regular distances, and this is why it is white at every joint now. The whirl-wind took away the feather robe, and Coyote saw it no more. Meanwhile, *Swáwon* went to bed highly pleased

with the bargain he had made. On the next morning when he woke up, the dentalia had changed back to alcali-grass, the shells to *moqmóqale ɬp* leaves, and the beads to roseberries.

e. "Old-One Teaches the People the Use of Ornaments" (from Lytton))

*Ntcémk*a was travelling through the Shuswap country in search of his wife, who had been stolen from Lytton by a cannibal. Old-One was also travelling in the Shuswap country at this time, and one night wandered into *Ntcémk*a's camp, which was in a hidden place. *Ntcémk*a did not know him; but, seeing that the old man had a very dignified and wise appearance, he treated him very kindly. He gave him food and made up a soft bed for him. *Ntcémka* was surprised when the stranger recognised him, and told him all about himself and where he would find his wife. When about to depart in the morning, Old-One pulled out four small bundles and gave them to *Ntcémka*. They consisted of porcupine-quills, scalps of the red-headed woodpecker, eagle tail-feathers, and dentalium shells. He said, "hitherto the value of these things has not been known, and people have not used them. Henceforth they will be much used and highly prized by all peoples for decorative purposes." In this way people first learned the use of these things, and afterwards became accustomed to decorate their persons and clothes with them. In later days eagle tail-feathers and woodpecker scalps became valuable and costly. Dentalia and quills were also much prized, and very much used by all the people.

f. "Ant and the Beads" (from Lytton)

Ant was a very clever young man who wished to marry the daughter of a great chief. The latter told Ant that he could not marry his daughter until he performed a difficult task. At that time, beads were scattered all over the earth, and the chief asked Ant to gather them all up, heaping each colour in a pile by itself. This seemed impossible to Ant, and he went to his grandmother, Short-tailed Mouse, for advice. She told him how to do it: so he accomplished his task, and won the girl. He heaped the beads in seven piles—red ones in the first, then blue, white, black, yellow, green, and bone beads in the seventh. After this, his father-in-law used beads on his clothes, and other people began to do the same. Since that time the ant has always been noted for gathering things together in heaps; for instance sand, sticks and its eggs.

Appendix 4

Fig. 3a. Lillooet cedar-coiled baskets showing main design on upper portion of basket (Haeberlin et al. 1928:plate 30 l-n).

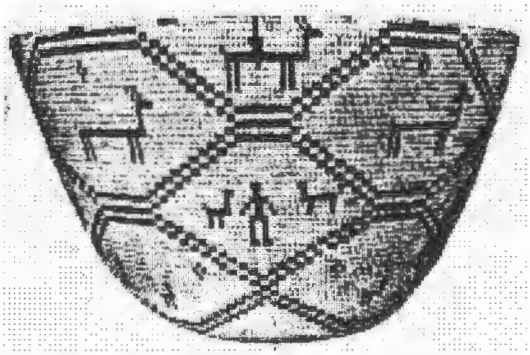

Fig. 3b. Lillooet basket showing animal designs (Haeberlin et al. 1928:plate 46h).

Fig. 4a. Diamond shaped pattern on cedar-coiled basket by Xamal'ks, Spences Bridge (Haeberlin et al. 1928: plate 22d).

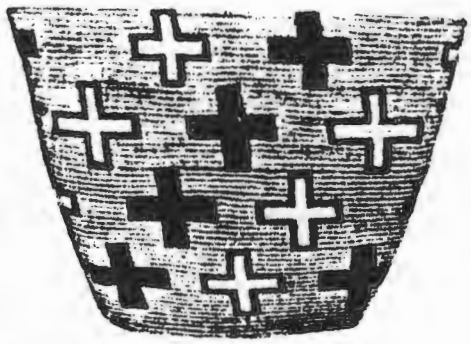

Fig. 4b. Cross pattern on cedar-coiled basket by Xamal'ks, Spences Bridge (Haeberlin et al. 1928:plate 25a).

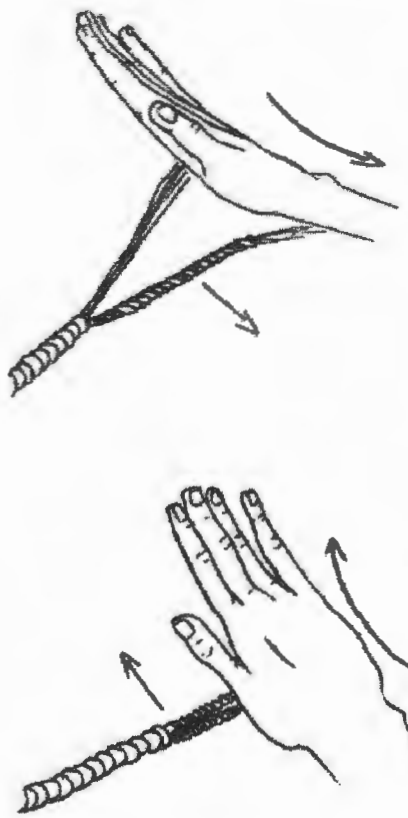

Fig. 5. Illustration of twining method used for *sp'éc'n*. (Drawn by B. Amaron, based on demonstration during the Tule Project, 1997)

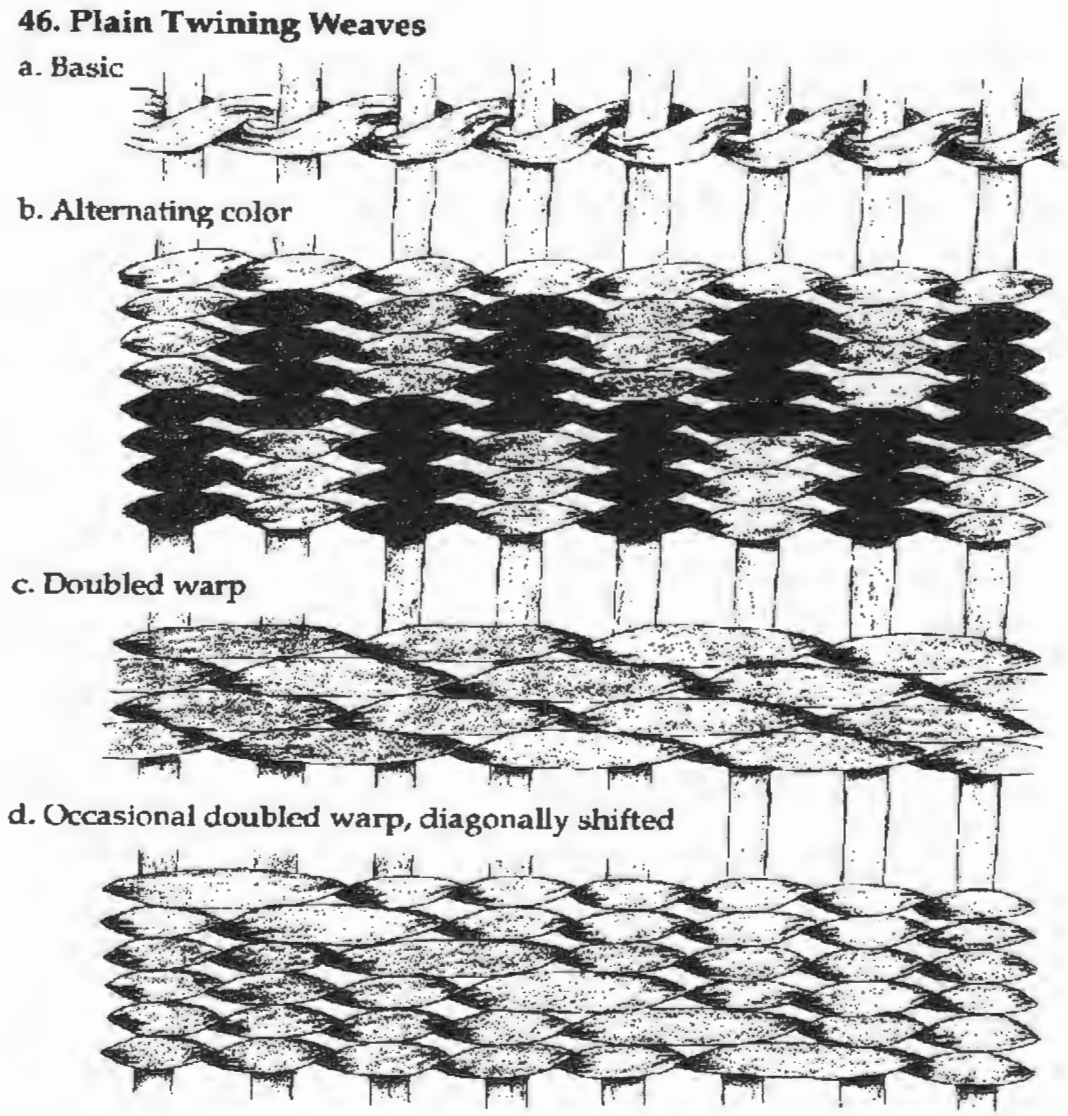

Fig. 6. Detail of plain twining weaves (E. Jensen 1991).

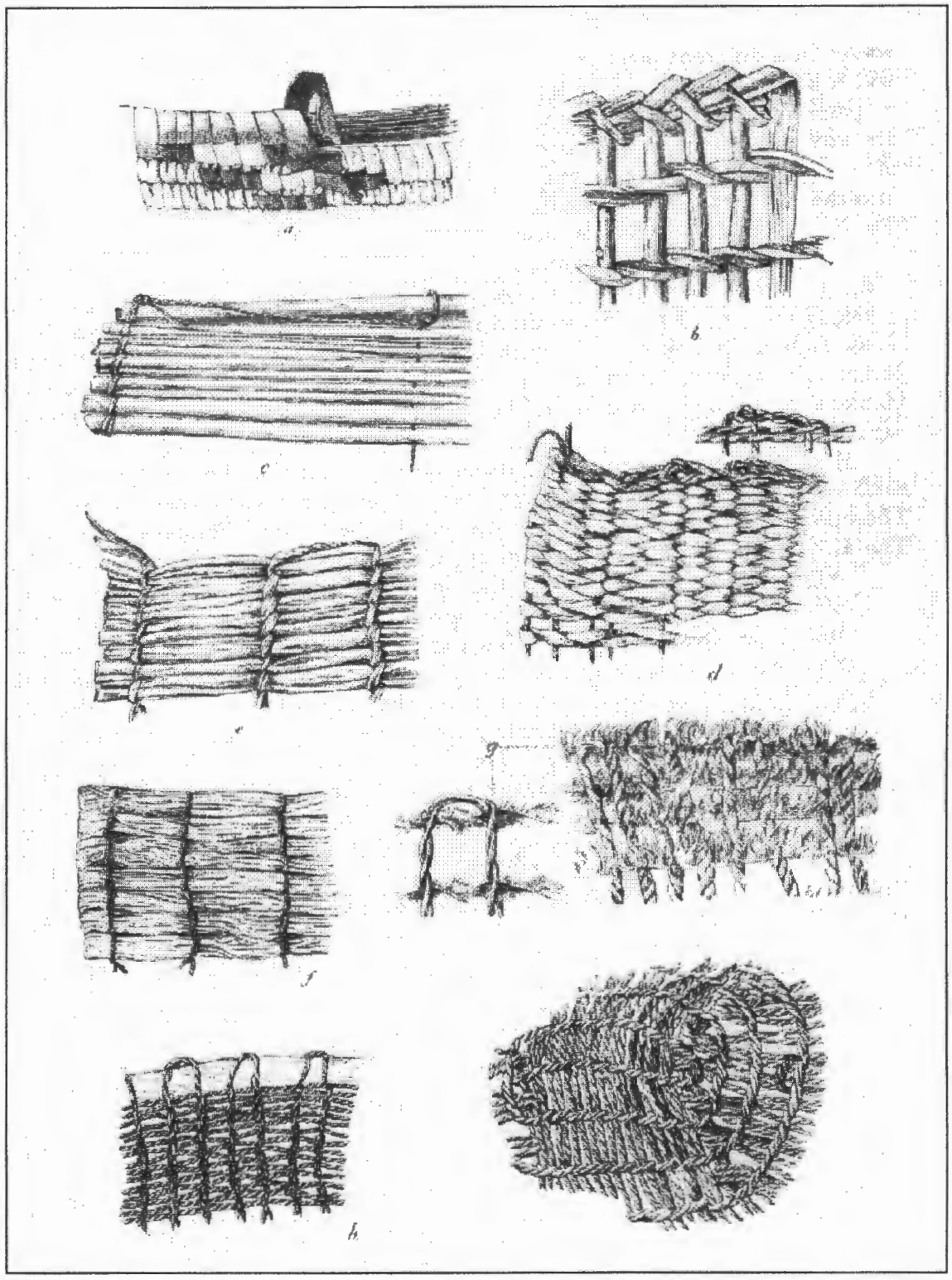

Fig. 7. Details of weaving patterns. a) coiled basket; b) open-work basket; c) tule mat; d) grass mat; e) small rush mat; f) cattail mat; g) skin blanket; h) square bag; i) round bag (Teit 1900:189).

Fig. 8. Detail of Fig. 21a showing polished *q'ʷúys* seeds made into jewellery.

Fig. 9a. Small basket made with wide, flat coils. (Private collection, NTA. Photograph by B. Amaron)

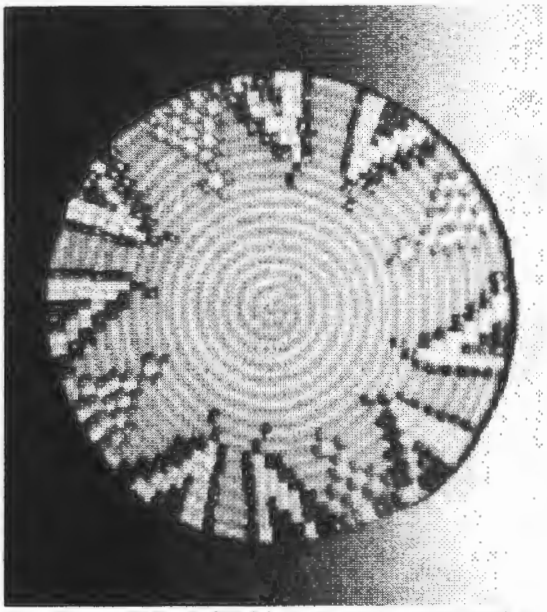

Fig. 9b. Imbricated tray made with tight, round coils. (Private collection, Nicola Tribal Association [NTA]. Photograph by B. Amaron)

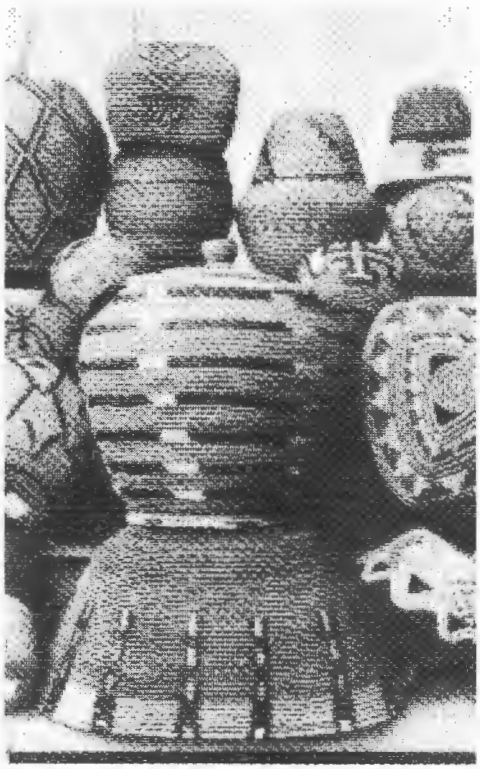

Fig. 10. Examples of sizes and shapes of Nɬeʔkepmx cedar-coiled baskets. (Tepper 1987:41 – plate 397640).

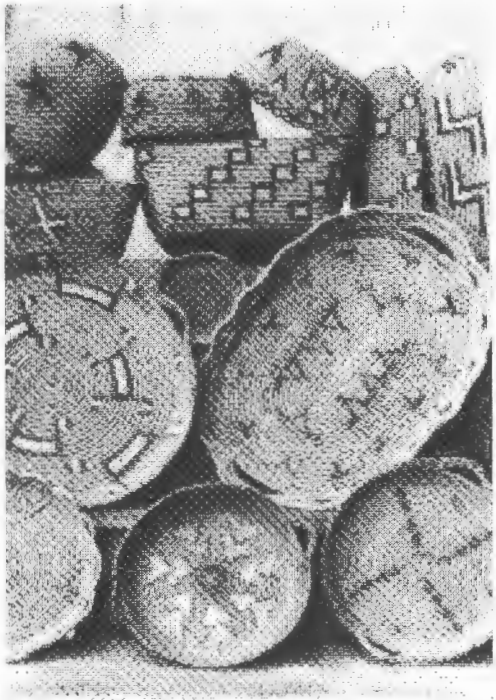

Fig. 11. Examples of N+e?kepmx cedar-coiled trays. (Tepper 1987:41 – plate 39763)

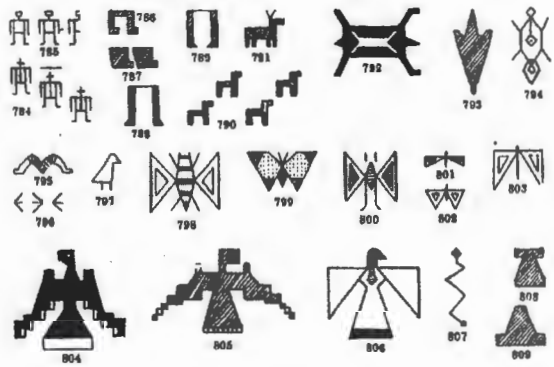

Fig. 12. Examples of *λ'ey'qe?* designs including human, deer, beaver, butterfly, eagle, and snake. (Haeberlin et al. 1928 – plate 93).

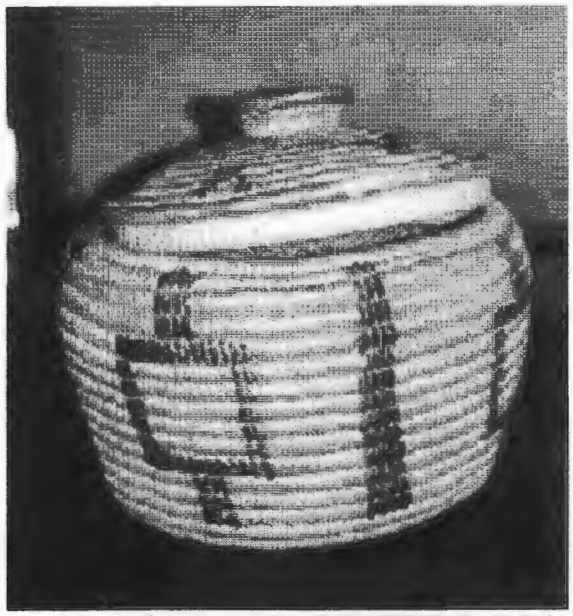

Fig. 13. Nut-shaped basket with hole in lid. (Private collection, NTA. Photograph by B. Amaron)

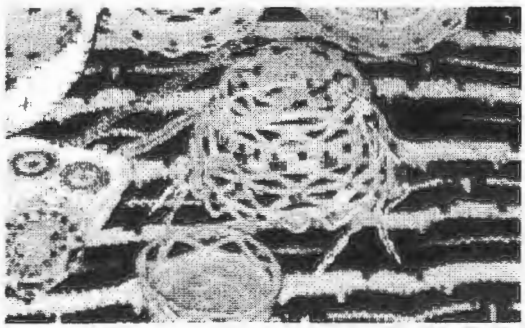

Fig. 14. Open-work cedar-coiled hat by Mandy Brown. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

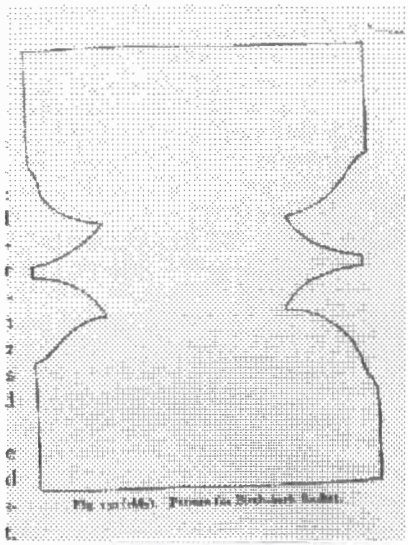

Fig. 15. Pattern for birch bark basket (Teit 1900:187).

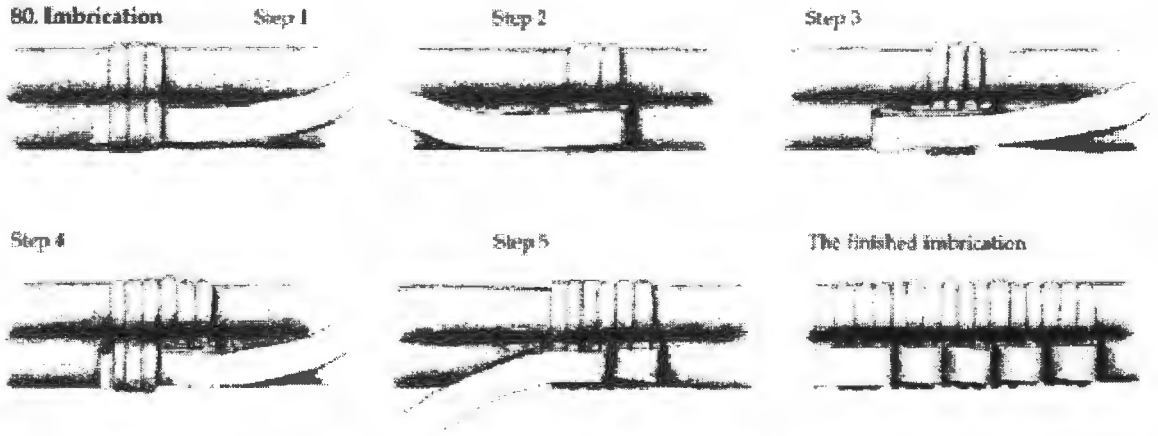

Fig. 16. Steps illustrating method of imbrication (Jensen 1991:134).

Fig. 17. Cape woven from twined sagebrush bark (Teit 1900:219, Fig. 194).

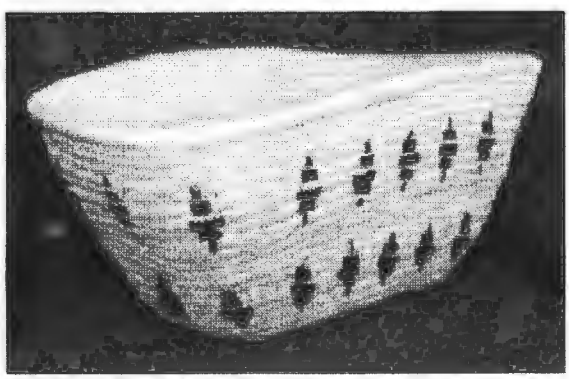

Fig. 18. Cedar-coiled basket made by Brenda Aljam as a gift for her father. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

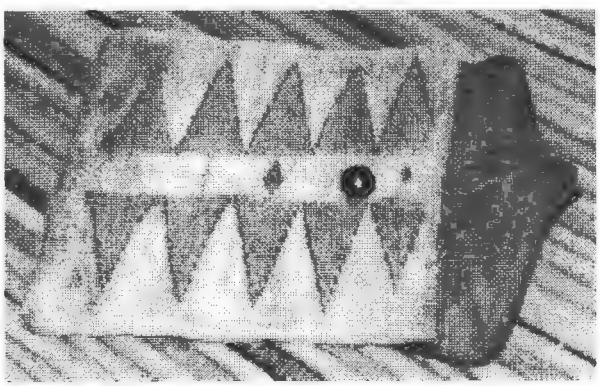

Fig. 19. 20 x 30cm (8 x 12 inches) *sp'éc'n* woven bag, with cloth flap, plastic button, and coloured yarn and aniline dyes for the design (Photograph from NTA collection).

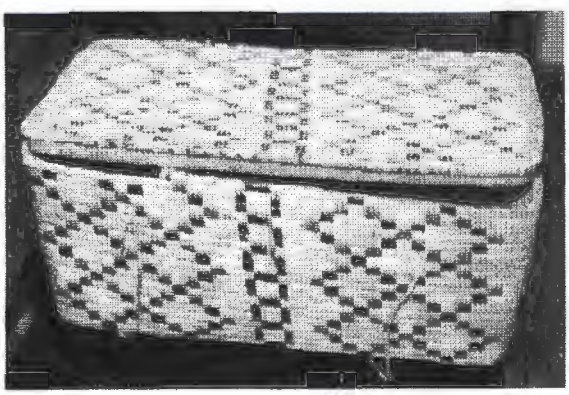

Fig. 20. Picnic hamper with imbricated design. (Private collection, NTA. Photograph by B. Amaron)

Fig. 21a. *Sp'éc'n* and *q'wúys* clothes made by Maggie Shuter, Marianne John, and Ruth Major, *Q'wúys* Project, 1998. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

Fig. 21b. *Sp'éc'n* and *q'wúys* clothes made by Beverly Bob, *Q'wúys* Project, 1998. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

Fig. 22. *Sp'éc'n* shoes designed by participants of the *Q'wúys* Project, 1998. (Photograph by B. Amaron)

Fig. 23. Painted tule mat by Jerry Mansfield, Tule Project, 1997. (Photograph by B. Amaron)