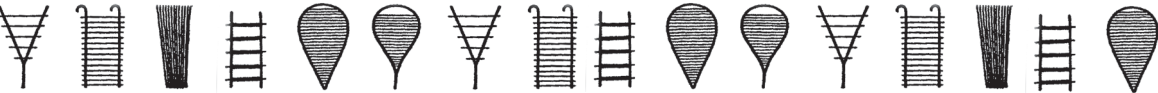




MY NOTES & SKETCHES



NAME: _____

DATE: _____

STUDENT WORKBOOK TO ACCOMPANY THE EXHIBITION

PRECIOUS CARGO
CALIFORNIA INDIAN CRADLE BASKETS
AND CHILDBIRTH TRADITIONS



Susie McGowan with daughter, Sadie (Mono Lake Paiute), Yosemite Valley, Photograph by J.T. Boyesen, c. 1901. The Yosemite Museum, Yosemite National Park, No. 18895

Living in Accord

Even before a baby is born, the mother and father prepare by doing things they believe will make their child healthy and successful. Mothers stop eating meat and salt, and refrain from drinking cold water. Fathers may decide not to hunt, fish or gamble for a period of time. The cradle basket might be decorated with a small item to show what the parents hope for their new child.

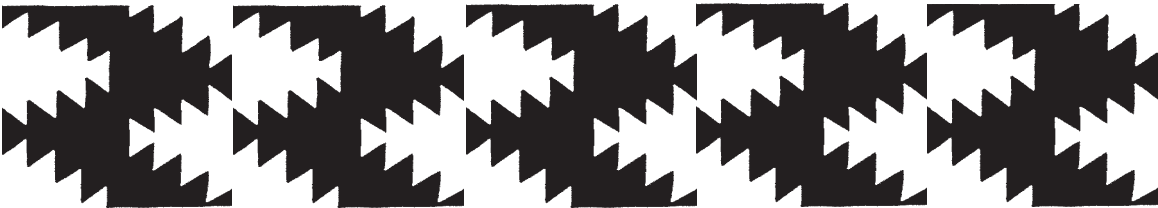
Can you discover a miniature basket hanging from a cradle? Why do you think the family placed the tiny basket on the cradle?

Form and Function

California Indian people invented the cradle basket as a way to safely carry their babies as they traveled and collected foods. Indians in various areas of California make different styles of cradle baskets and use different materials in the construction of their cradles.

How many differences can you discover in the two cradle baskets in this display?

Western Mono Cradle Basket	Chumash Cradle Basket
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____



palala bo

boye bo

hanpai bo

pulba bo

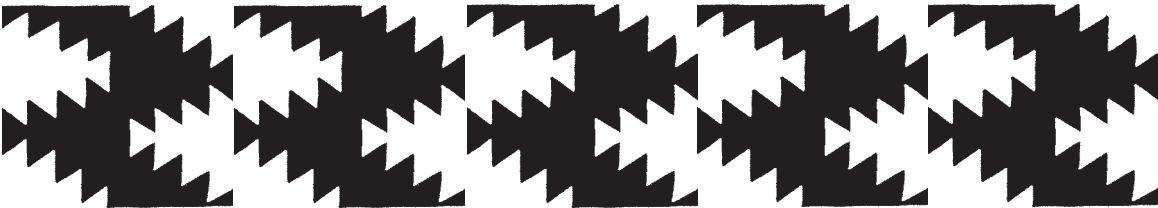
(cottontail road

jackrabbit road

quail road

dove road)

A lullaby recalled by Betty Murray Castro (Nisenan)



The Precious Cargo Documentary Video

In the Precious Cargo video, California Indian people talk about their lives and how their families use cradle baskets.

What ideas were completely new to you?

What surprised you most about the California Indian people in the video?

Why did Lorena Cheepo learn to make cradle baskets?

Touchstones

Sometimes couples were unsuccessful in conceiving a child.To help her have a baby, a woman might visit a certain place, carve a groove in the rock, and paint a design on herself from the rock’s dust. Or, she might carry a special clay doll around with her, sleeping with it at night.

Sketch the clay doll and body paint design shown in the display.

Taking Precautions

Indian mothers and fathers are very careful to protect the health of their baby.The mother was not allowed to use her fingernails for scratching herself, and instead used a “scratching stick” which was suspended around her neck. Most Indian people felt that the fingernails could cause a cut and the expectant mother to bleed, and this would be unhealthy for her and her baby.



List three different materials used to make scratching sticks:

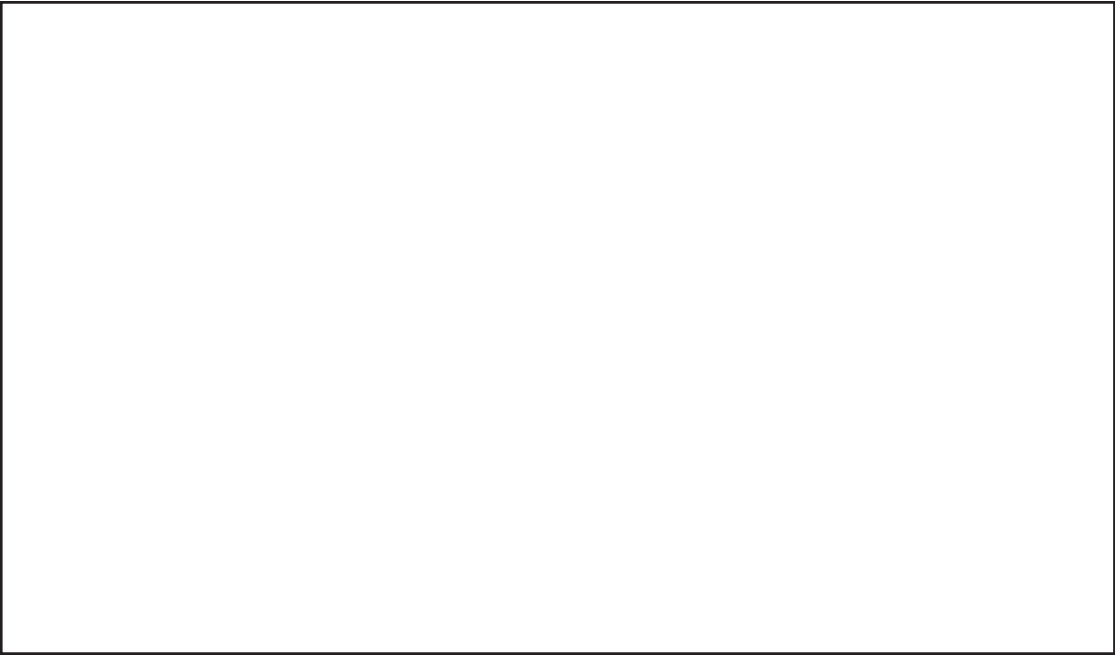
1.
2.
3.

Look closely to discover designs on some of the scratching sticks. Sketch the design you admire the most.

Sketch a Cradle Basket

Choose your favorite cradle basket in the exhibition, make a detailed sketch of it, and answer the questions below.

KEY: Design on cradle basket
Boy (shooting straight) 
Girl (beautiful design) 



Can you discover if your favorite cradle basket was made for a boy baby or a girl baby? Which is it?

Circle your answer: Boy Girl

Do you know the name of the weaver? _____

Do you know the tribe of the weaver? _____

Record the name of two plants used in the construction of your favorite cradle basket:

1. _____ 2. _____

If you were able to speak with the weaver, what question would you ask about the cradle?

Harvesting Nature’s Gifts

Cradle baskets are made from materials found growing in nature. Basket weavers tended to the plants by caring for the soils and burning or pruning them during certain seasons. Some of the same natural areas have been tended for hundreds of years by Native people.

How are the long sticks, seen in this display, connected together to form a cradle?

Which plant provided the sticks to make this basket? _____

Sign of the Times

Over many years, the people and the environment in California have gradually changed. For example, in 1849 the discovery of gold brought new people and new materials to California. Cradle baskets changed over time as well, when weavers discovered new materials to construct their baskets.

Look closely at the cradle basket in this display.

What is unusual about the materials used to construct the cradle compared to other cradles you see in the exhibition?

Identity

The shape of the cradle basket, and the designs on the hood, show important things about the baby. The shape symbolizes the baby's tribe and the designs symbolize the baby's gender. Even from a distance it is often possible to know the tribal identity of the baby.

What symbols do you use to tell people who you are or to what groups you belong?

Who were you named after?

Ossatti: Little Women

Weavers made small-sized cradles for young girls to play with. Girls would learn how to swaddle and secure a baby into a cradle basket by practicing with their dolls.

What materials are used to make the dolls?

Cutting the Cord (audio)

After a baby is born the umbilical cord, or navel, is cut.To make sure the baby grows healthy and good-natured, a special person was selected to cut the cord.There were different ways to treat the cord to give the child a good life.

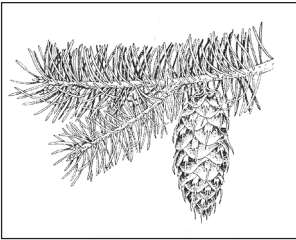
Listen to the audio recording (press the red button). Describe one way mothers made sure the baby stayed healthy.

Steaming the Baby

Newborn Hupa babies were placed in a large tray and periodically steamed over a cooking basket. A special plant was added to the water to purify the new baby and help insure it's survival.

How do you think the mother heated the water in the basket?

What plant material did she use as a soothing vaporizer? (Hint: it's in the image below)



Discovering Information in Photographs

Look closely at the following photographs. Each photo contains important information that can help you learn more about California Indian people. Be prepared to discuss your observations with your classmates. (Write your notes for this exercise on the back of the booklet or on a separate sheet of paper.)

Carly Tex is just thirteen years old. She has made several doll-sized cradles, including one for this exhibition.

How do you think Carly learned basketweaving skills?

Where do you think Carly lives?

Find her tribal region on the map of California.



Carly Tex (Western Mono/Chukchansi)
Photo by Duncan Aguilar



Two Washoe women with babies in cradles.
Photographer unknown, ca. 1900, California State
Department of Parks & Recreation. No. H-82

These two Washoe mothers are each using a cradle basket to hold their babies.

- How are the cradles carried?
- Can you see if the babies are boys or girls?
- How does the clothing worn by these two mothers compare to the clothing worn by Phoebe Maddux?
- What do you think the mothers are discussing as they stand at the fence?
- What year was this photograph taken?

Native People Use Native Plants

California Indians used the plants from their environment to make beautiful baskets, including cradlebaskets. The baskets were lightweight, strong and sturdy.

Color in the leaves of the four plants seen here. Draw a line from the name in the list to the correct native plant.



willow
sourberry
redbud
hazel

Ties that Bind

When a child is born, the families of the mother and father become more connected with each other. To show their new ties, the families give each other gifts. It is a Chukchansi custom for the father's mother to make the cradle and to select the baby's name.

What items in this display were gifts between the families of the child's parents?

Person Molding

Ideas about what kind of person the parents would like the child to become are shown in the details of the cradle basket.

Listen to the audio recording (press the red button).

What designs are used on cradle baskets for boy babies?

Which designs are used on cradle baskets for girls?

What do you think the designs mean?



Western Mono baby girl in a tree.
Photographer unknown.

☞ This Western Mono girl baby has been placed snug in her cradle. Then her cradle was hung up on a tree trunk.

From the photograph, can you tell if the baby is happy?

Why do you think the mother placed the baby on the tree?

This Karuk mother, Phoebe Maddux, is working on her basketry. ☞

What materials are surrounding her?

Can you describe the special clothing she is wearing?

Where has she chosen to work?

What year was this photograph taken?

How is the mother keeping her baby safe?



Phoebe Maddux & child (Karuk) ca. 1896
Photographer unknown.
Courtesey, the National Anthropological Archives,
Smithsonian No. 75-16219

The Other California

Use a map of California to locate following geographic features, then draw and label them on this map:



9

