

CONTACT

Please contact the Stockbridge–Munsee Tribal Historic Preservation Office in Williamstown, Mass with inquiries regarding the potential return of object(s) or ancestral remains in your possession.

Stockbridge–Munsee Mohican Tribal
Historic Preservation Office
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Williamstown, MA 01267



We thank you for your consideration of the immense meaning to the Stockbridge–Munsee Community in reuniting with our cultural heritage items.

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THE BEAUTY OF MOHICAN BASKETRY:

Revealing Faded Designs with Digital Technology



Mohican Splint Basket Donations

**STOCKBRIDGE–MUNSEE
COMMUNITY WINTER
WEBINAR**

Background

This booklet is a supplementary resource to the Stockbridge–Munsee Community 2024 Winter Webinar Series. At this presentation, Dr. Jeffrey Bendremer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, shared his use of D–Stretch. It is a program that digitally manipulates the light waves in photos, to bring out the designs and digitally reconstruct their original appearance. Coral Cook, a member of the Stockbridge–Munsee Community, also detailed the research she undertook during a Historic Preservation Internship learning about the intricacies of basket making.



Sources:

SMC Cultural Affairs YouTube Webinar Video (2024)

Coral Cook, *Mohican Basket Guide* (2023)

Lucianne Lavin, *Stockbridge Mohicans Past & Present* (2011)

Frank G. Speck, *Eastern Algonkian Block Stamp Decoration* (1947)

About this Booklet



The information shared in this booklet is enhanced by studying 17 baskets that have been repatriated from private collections through the Stockbridge–Munsee Tribal Preservation Office. There is very little provenance information on the baskets and it is not certain all are made by Mohican ancestors. This booklet is meant for public education and a community resource. The Stockbridge–Munsee Tribal Historic Preservation Office is continuously working on preserving ancestral items and hopes that this research will preserve our traditions.

History of Baskets

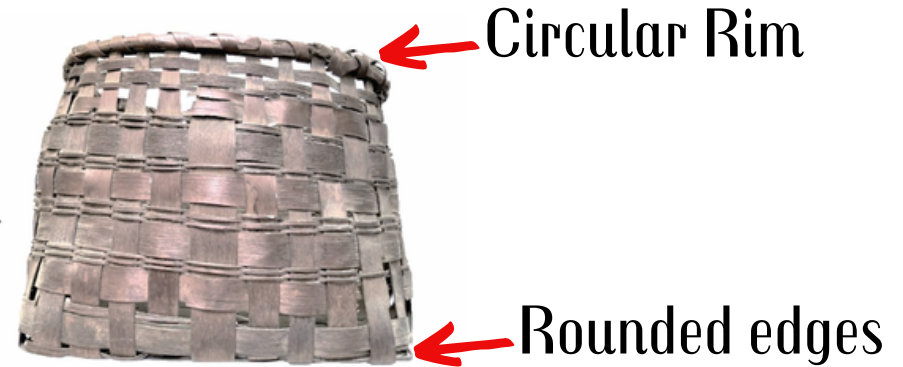
Baskets hold a cultural significance to the Mohicans and traditionally held many uses. Most baskets were used for domestic and communal use such as storage space. Women were commonly known to be the weavers and designers of basket creations and this was seen as a relation to pottery. Additionally, baskets were also used for trade to attain cash income to maintain daily life like farming and logging.



We are continuing to learn more about basketry and hope to expand our knowledge of weaving patterns, stamp/symbol designs, and their cultural meaning. We hope this work helps to revitalize basketry crafts.

Common and Uncommon Baskets

Common Basket



Uncommon Basket

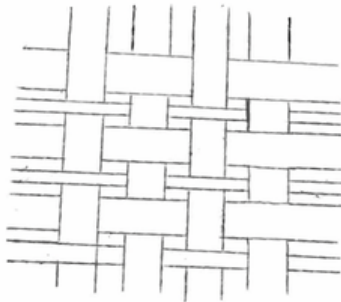
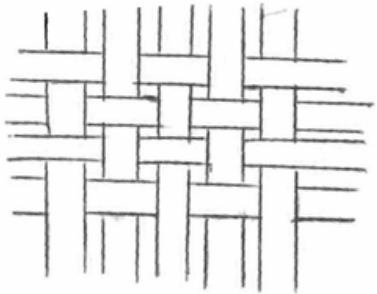
Bigger top area



Smaller area in the bottom

Weaving Patterns

Revealing Stamp Designs



With Reinforcement



Used for everyday life



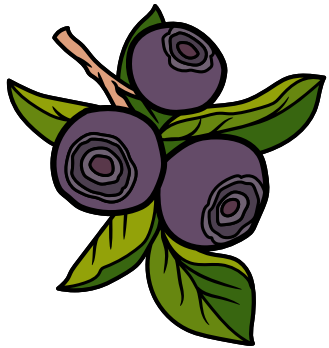
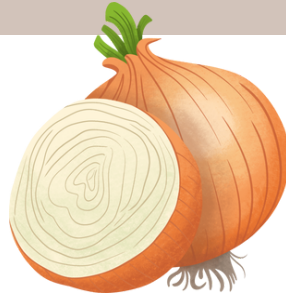
These are stamp designs that have been revealed from recently repatriated baskets.



Dyes

Documenting the Collection

Onion Skin - Yellow Dye



Huckleberry - Black Dye

Cranberries - Red Dye



Stinging Nettle- Green Dye



To document the 17 baskets, pictures were taken of all 4 sides (faces) plus the lid to digitally cut them out to range the baskets to all around the whole basket.



Basket with lid



Top



Bottom

Where the lid covered the top bit of the color it was preserved and the bottom had less oxygen so the color tended to stay the same. The top of the lid oftentimes has weather damage so it's hard to see the designs.

Digital Innovation

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Jeffrey Bendremer innovatively used D-Stretch to see the designs on baskets to work with the contrast, brightness, and intensity to replicate the new basket to get close to the original look.



Basket Design Reconstruction

We can see something that was very close to when they were made.



These reconstructions are meant to get close to the original idea as when Mohican ancestors were making the baskets.



Basket #1

Basket #2

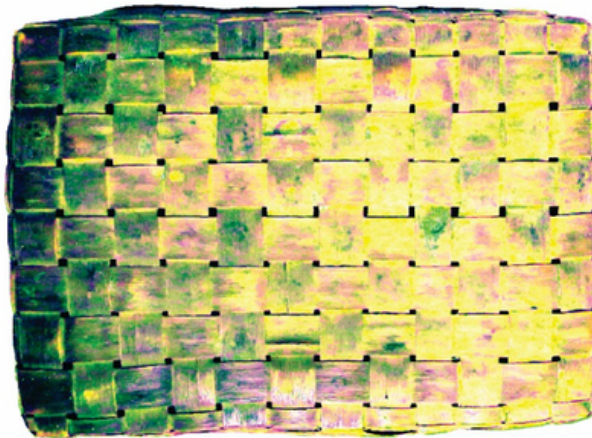


Original Basket

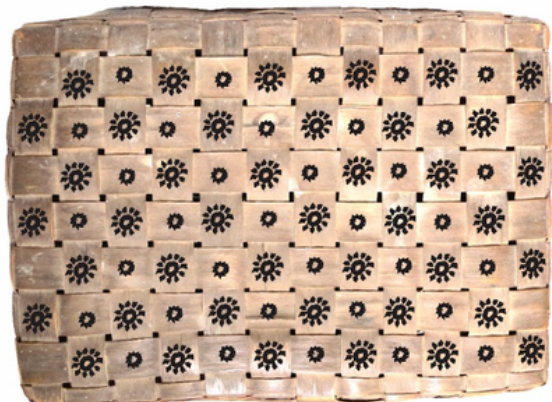


Original Basket

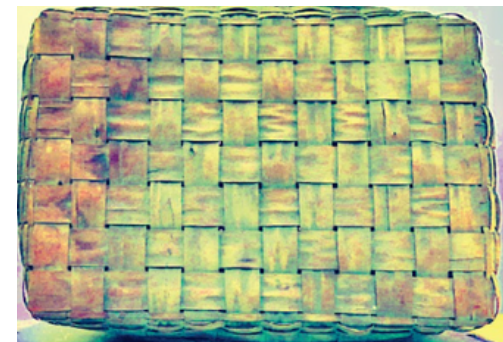
Basket using
D-Stretch



Basket using
D-Stretch

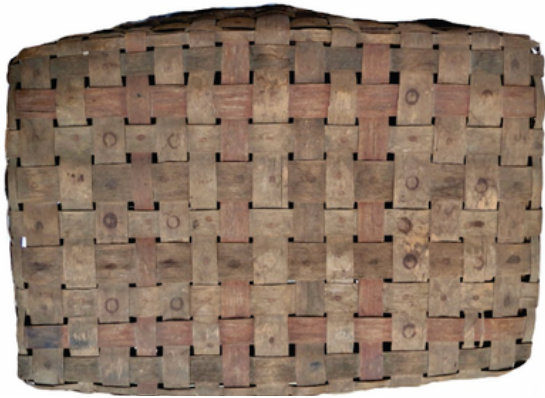


Reconstructed
Basket



Basket #3

Bead in Basket



Original Basket

Basket using
D-Stretch



Reconstructed
Basket



Glass seed bead found in basket which can show that the basket was used for sewing/ beading.

