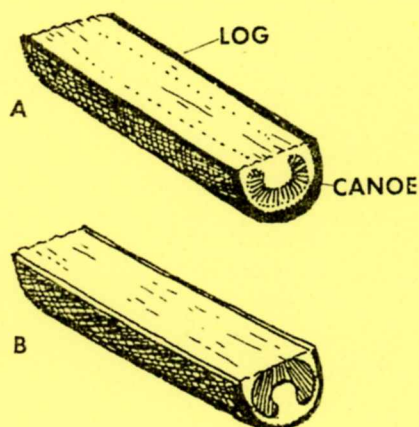


NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS

Basketry and canoe carving demonstrations presented at Redwood National Park

Several Indian tribes lived in this area; the Tolowa centered on the Smith River, the Yurok on the Klamath and the Chilula on Redwood Creek. Although their languages differed, features of culture were similar. They depended for food primarily upon the annual runs of salmon and steelhead and other fishes in the rivers and streams but also engaged in hunting deer and elk. In common with many other California Indians, these people used acorns as a food staple. They lived in permanent villages made up of 3 to 17 small wooden houses and communal sweathouses.

Their modern descendents do not follow the old way, just as you no longer live as your grandparents did. Some traditions have been preserved in books and in the memories of elders. Much has been lost in the mists of time and change.

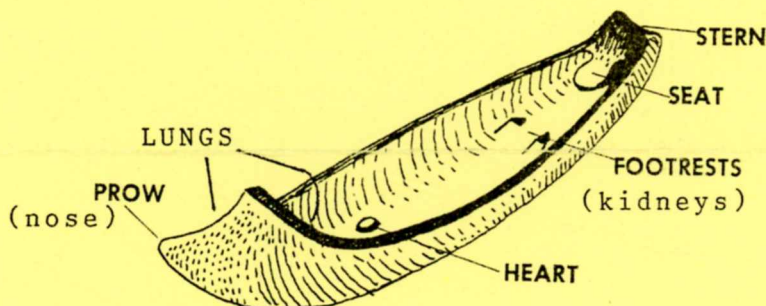


CANOE CARVING Redwood windfalls or driftwood supplied the material for plank houses and for boats. The carvers are creating one of these dugout canoes from a fallen redwood.

Which way would you make the canoe? (Illustration A or B)

The heart of the tree formed the boat bottom for better balance (B). Redwood is soft, even-grained and can be worked with simple tools, such as stone mauls, elkhorn wedges, and adzes with shell blades and stone handles. The inside of the canoe was burned to make carving easier.

Although designed for river travel, larger seaworthy canoes were used in hunting sea lions.



BASKETRY Can soup be cooked in a basket?

Surprisingly, the answer is yes. Acorn soup or mush cooked well in the tightly woven baskets. Stirring the hot rocks dropped into the mush insured even cooking and prevented burning the basket. Baskets were also designed for storage, sifting trays, hats and other uses. When a mother carried a baby on her back in a cradle basket, a hat basket protected her forehead from the strap. Large burden baskets were carried the same way.

Materials, gathered in season, included sticks from hazel and willow trees, beargrass, woodwardia and five-fingered ferns, redwood and spruce roots, and sometimes porcupine quills. Alder bark supplied the red-brown dye for the woodwardia stems. Burning hazel and beargrass the previous year insured pliable new growth. Redwood roots were debarked, split and dried. These roots were chosen for cooking baskets because they have no "pitch" and will not flavor food.

The basket pattern appears only on one side because of facing material which is woven opposite it.