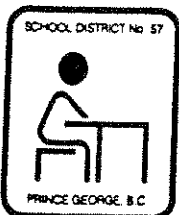

The Carrier of Long Ago

written by: **Laurel Bond**
Sandra Russell

illustrated by: **Anne Erwin**



School District No. 57 (Prince George)

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The writers and illustrator carefully considered the grade level and age of students for which this text was written. It is important to view the project in this context. The depth of detail that would be appropriate for adult readers has therefore been limited by this perspective. This limitation results in some generalizations of the overall Carrier culture that will not fully reflect regional differences. Nevertheless, we have taken every opportunity to ensure authenticity and accuracy of detail in an effort to represent the Carrier of long ago.

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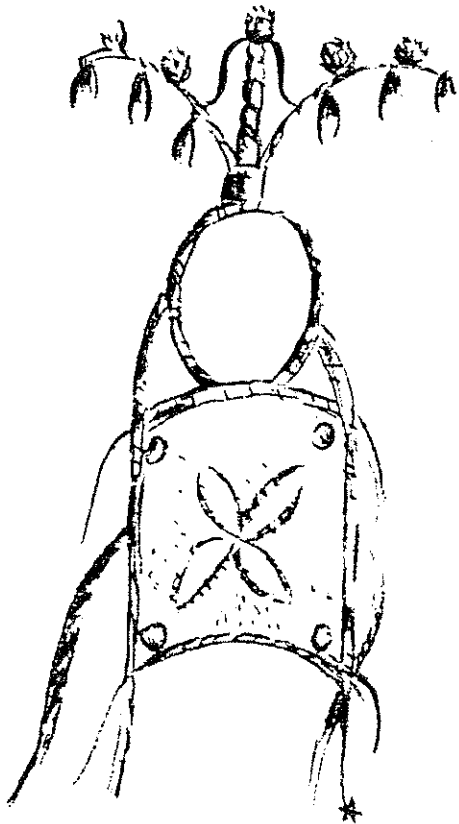
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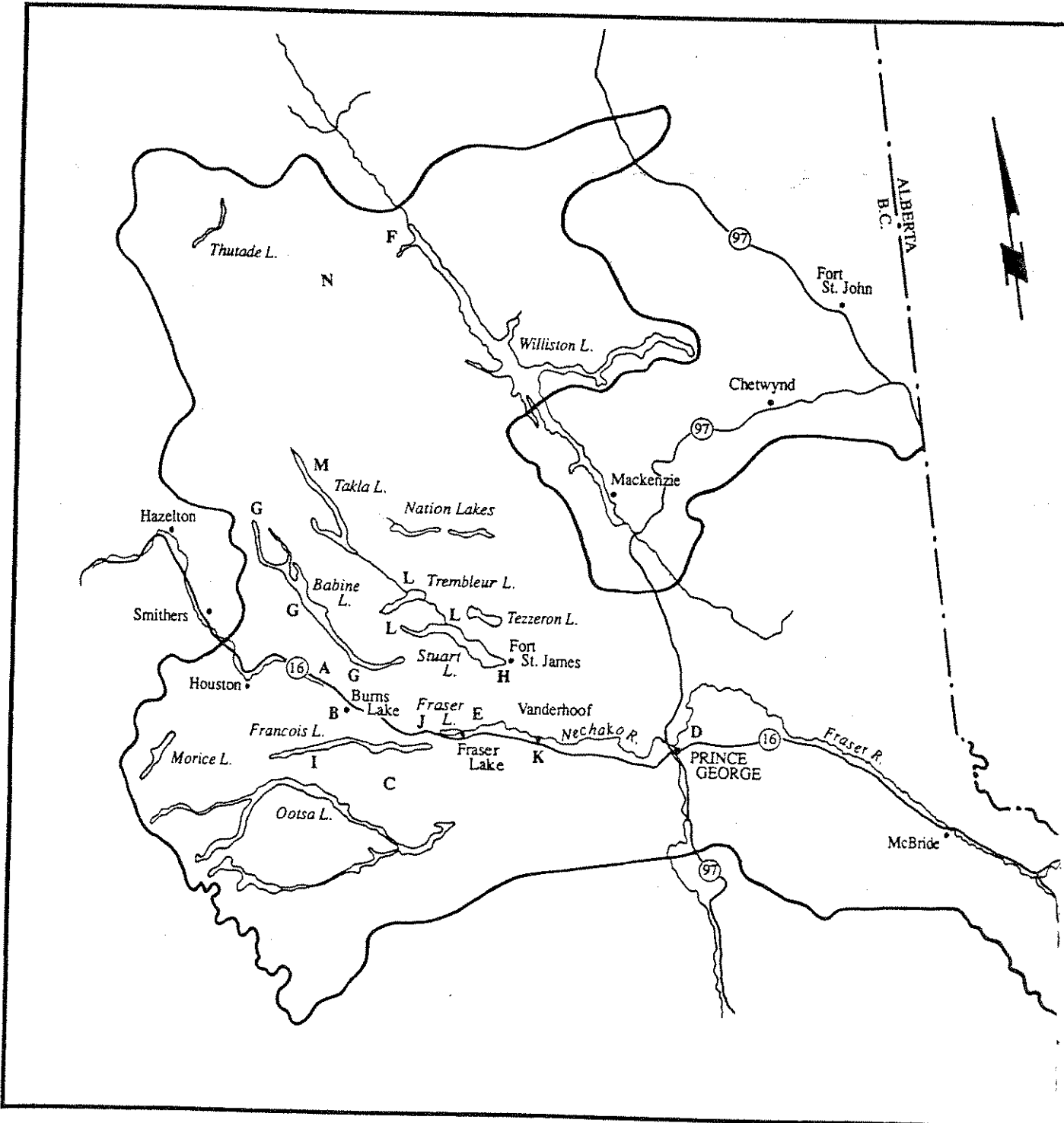
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This dog harness has a copper head dress. The dog's head fits through the hole and the flat patterned section is tied to its back.

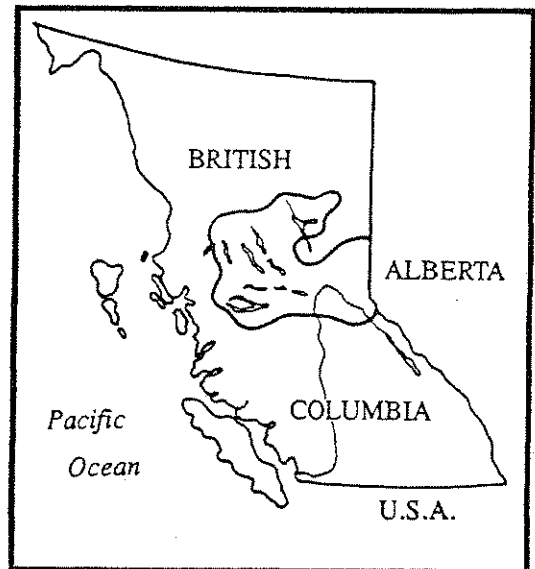
1

Introduction to the Carrier Indians



YINKA DENE TERRITORY

- A Broman Lake Band
- B Burns Lake Band
- C Cheslatta Band
- D Fort George Band
- E Fraser Lake Band
- F Ingenika Band
- G Lake Babine Band
- H Necoslie Band
- I Nee Tahi Buhn Band
- J Stellaquo Band
- K Stoney Creek Band
- L Stuart Trembleur Band
- M Takla Band
- N Mesilinka Band



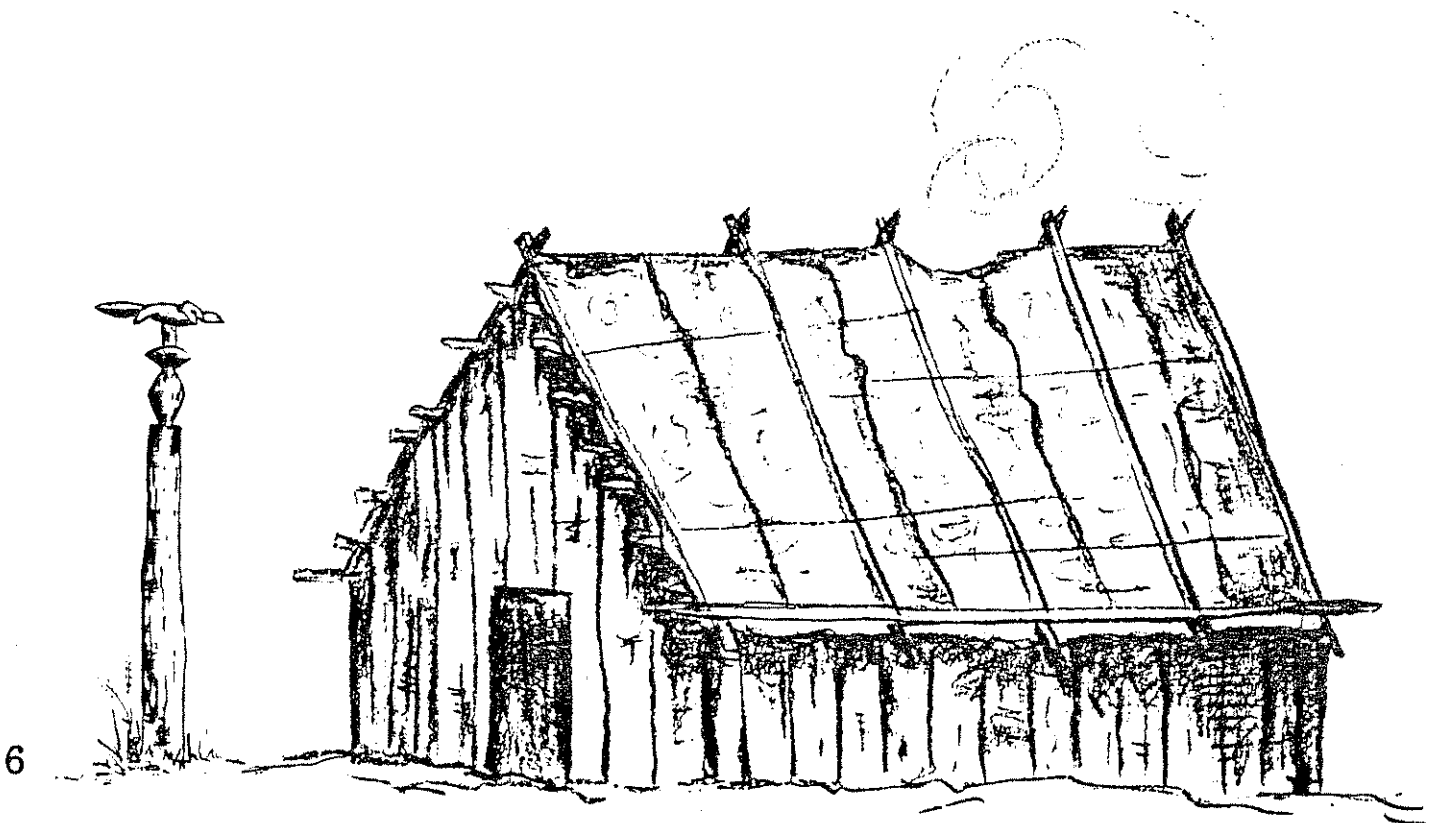
The Carrier Indians of British Columbia were part of a larger group of people called the Athapaskan or Dene. These people were all grouped together because they had the same type of language.

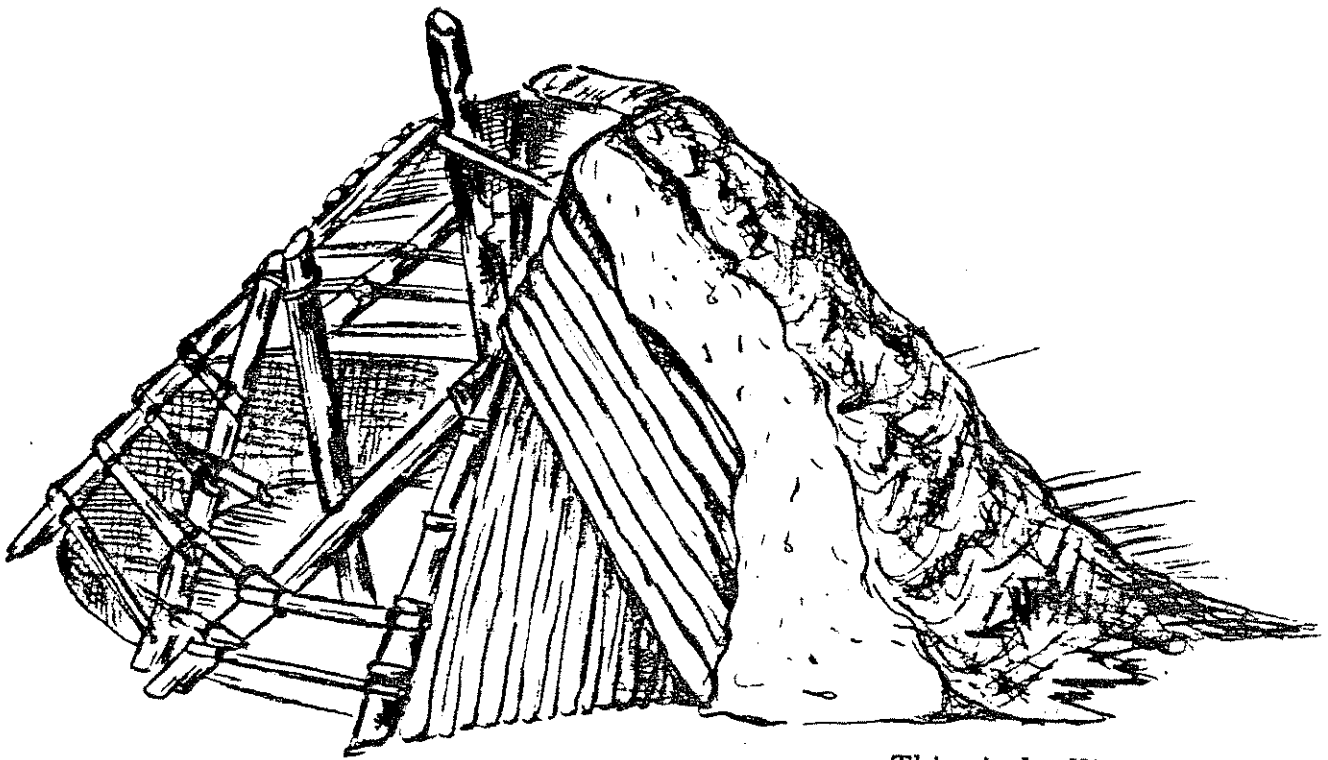
The Carrier lived in the interior of British Columbia in an area stretching from the Rocky Mountains in the east, across to the Upper Skeena River in the west and south to Anaheim Lake. This land is called the Interior Plateau, but it isn't really a plateau at all. It is a mountainous region that has many lakes, rivers and valleys. Long ago, the Carrier lived mainly in the western part of this land because hunting and fishing were very good there. The Carrier who lived in what is now Prince George were few in number and didn't follow all of the customs and traditions of their fellow Carrier to the west. It is believed that the Carrier adopted some of their traditions from neighbouring Indian peoples if they thought they were of value. That is why different Carrier clans had varying traditions and language. Even today the Northern and Central Carrier use different vocabulary and often have difficulty understanding each other.

Favorite places for the Carrier to live were along the Upper Fraser, Blackwater, Nechako and Bulkley River Valleys, and also along the shores of Stuart Lake and Babine Lake.

Because of the differences in the dialects spoken by the various Carrier groups, today's Carrier people were divided into five major language groups. The northern Carrier lived in the Babine Lake area, the central Carrier lived near Stuart Lake and Prince George, and the southern Carrier lived as far south as Anaheim Lake. The Carrier people did not really think of themselves as Carrier. They called themselves *Yinka Dene*. It is believed that the **Sekani** people who were neighbours to the Carrier, called them Arene which means "carriers" or "packers". In many books written by white men it says that the women of the Carrier carried the cremated (burnt) bones of their deceased husbands on their backs in a special bag. One man, Father Morice, who wrote many books about the Carrier, said that when he first met these people over a hundred years ago, the tradition of carrying bones had already disappeared.

*A Carrier plank lodge, with
the chief's clan totem outside.*



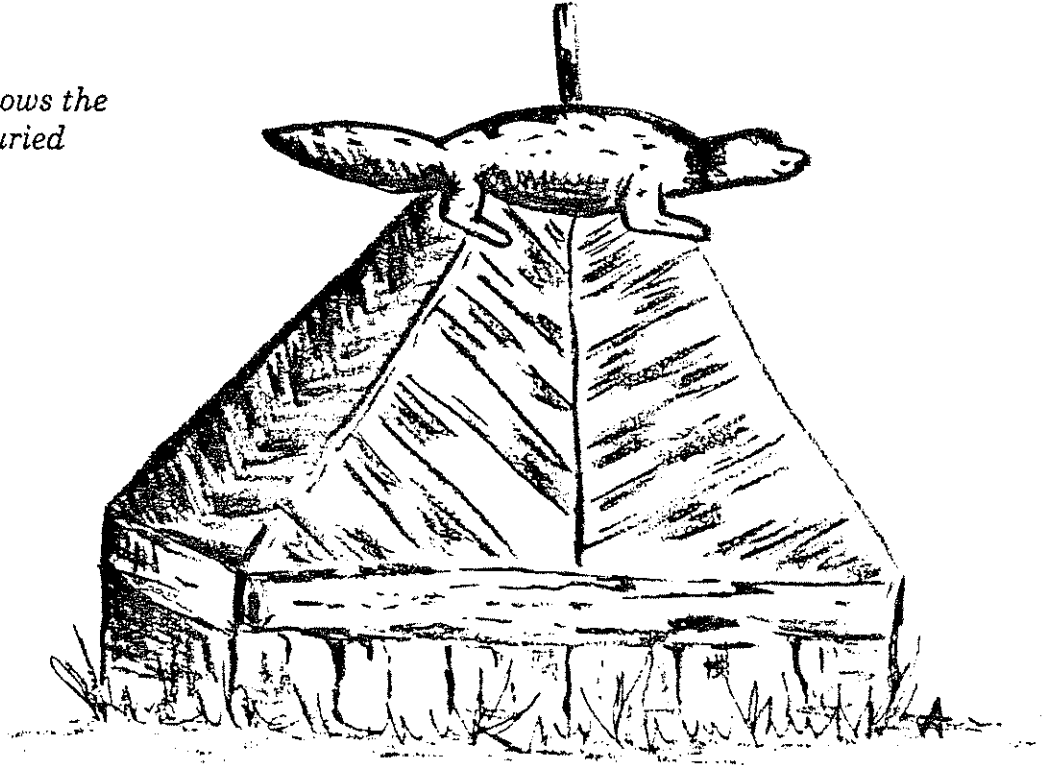


This pit dwelling is entered at the top. The pole going down the centre is like a stairway.

The Carrier liked to trade and learn from their neighbours. The northern Carrier lived next to a group of people called the Tsimshian who lived along the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The Tsimshian traded shells, oolichan oil and sea otter skins to the Carrier. In return, the Carrier traded skins from animals like the caribou and deer. The Carrier used the shells and skins for some of their clothing and body decorations. The southern Carrier learned how to make sweat lodges from their neighbors, the Shuswap. When the white man arrived, the Carrier traded for tools such as axes and knives, blankets and glass beads. The beads were used to decorate clothing. The Carrier had used copper before the white man came to make bracelets, decorative dog harnesses and other pieces of jewellery. After the white man came, the Carrier also used copper to make rings because they liked the white man's rings.

The Carrier lived mainly in plank lodges and pit dwellings depending upon the area in which they lived. The plank lodges weren't built as well as those of their neighbours, the Tsimshian, because they didn't have the

This grave marker shows the totem of the person buried here.



same kinds of building tools. Constructing homes was very difficult for the Carrier. However, after the white man came, the Carrier traded with them to get European tools. Their new tools were used to build log cabins which they had seen built by the whites. With the new tools, the Carrier became excellent builders.

The Carrier survived mainly by fishing and hunting. Each clan had its own territory that was honored by all other clans. Salmon was their most important food, but they also hunted both large and small animals. Some meat they ate fresh, and some they dried to eat in the winter. Wild berries and vegetables were also gathered and much of this was also dried and cured for winter. Many other kinds of fish, such as trout, were also caught.

The Carrier were **semi-nomadic** people. This means they regularly travelled about their own territory. Their rivers and lakes were full of fish so they could stay in one area. They travelled to special places to pick berries, to hunt, or to catch special kinds of fish, but they also had permanent summer and winter lodges. The Carrier lived in family groupings with two or more families sharing the

same summer lodges. When the family got too large, a new house was built. In winter the larger family broke up into smaller units and moved into their smaller winter homes. These were more tightly built so the cold and snow could be kept outside.

The Carrier were a practical people. They didn't spend a lot of time making elaborate carvings or decorations. Baskets were made from birch and spruce bark, spoons were carved from the roots of birch trees, and ladles were made from the horns of mountain sheep. Later, when better tools were available, they also made dugout canoes using axes. Much of their time was spent making clothes and blankets from animal hides, both large and small. Many of their blankets were made by weaving strips of animal fur together.

Carrier women were noted for the use of porcupine quill weaving. These quills were woven into their clothing to make them more attractive and the designs were usually geometric. Young girls made garters decorated with quills. If a girl wanted to marry a certain man, she would give him a garter. It was easy to see which young man was the most popular. He had the most garters. Later, porcupine quills were replaced by glass beads and buttons. There are many beautiful examples of the new artwork in Carrier homes today.

This dugout canoe is shaped more like the Carrier's coastal neighbours, but was made by Carrier craftsmen.



2 Spring



The First Fish of Spring

Chilh' hurriedly pulled on his outdoor clothing and ran outside. His family was still asleep as the first rays of the morning sun peeked over the horizon and fell upon *Chilh'*'s upturned face. It was the month of 'When Snow Is Gone' and the boy looked forward eagerly to the day's adventures. The winter time had seemed so long, especially *Chuzcho'ooza* or 'The Time Of Large Snowflakes' (March).

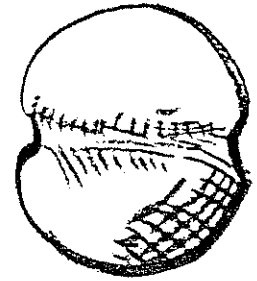
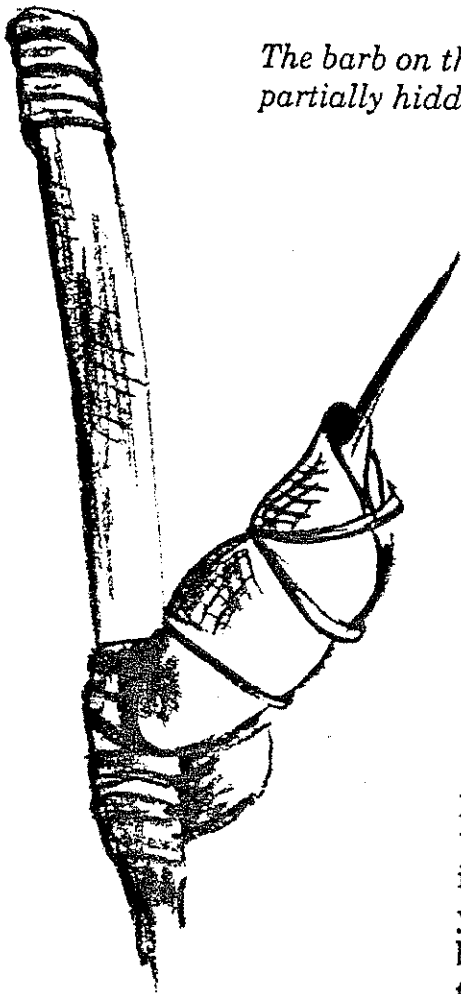
The snow still lay in patches in the shady areas where the sun could not penetrate. *Chilh'* looked around him with pleasure. Tiny green shoots were pushing their way into the sunlight from the damp brown earth and the thought of these tender plants made his mouth water. His sister had planned to collect some delicious shoots today--the first fresh vegetables the village would taste since 'The Time of the Lake Trout' (September).

Chilh' had special plans for himself today, too. He wanted to catch some fresh fish so that Mother could make one of her wonderful stews. With the plants his sister was going to collect supper tonight would become a feast. *Chilh'* had not told the family of his plans. He wanted to surprise them. He looked anxiously at the creek which ran close to his village. He could see small jagged sections of open water. His heart began to race as he ran to gather his *sinew* fishing line and hooks. He had watched *'Uba* (Father) very carefully as he baited his hooks with deer fat or a piece of previously caught fish. *Chilh'* took with him a piece of fat that had been frozen during the winter.

He ran lightly over the exposed rocks beside the creek, avoiding the wet snow patches in order to keep his moccasins dry. *Chilh'* headed for a particular deep hole in the creek bed which he'd discovered the previous fall. In this deeper water he was sure *'tsabai* (dolly varden) swam. His father and grandfather had taught him well about the ways of all the fish in their lands. They, in turn, had learned from their fathers. As *Chilh'* neared his fishing hole, he thought about his wise ancestors who had studied the animals so carefully and then passed their knowledge to their sons. It pleased *Chilh'* to imagine his ancestors fishing at the very same place where he now stood.



The barb on this hook is partially hidden.

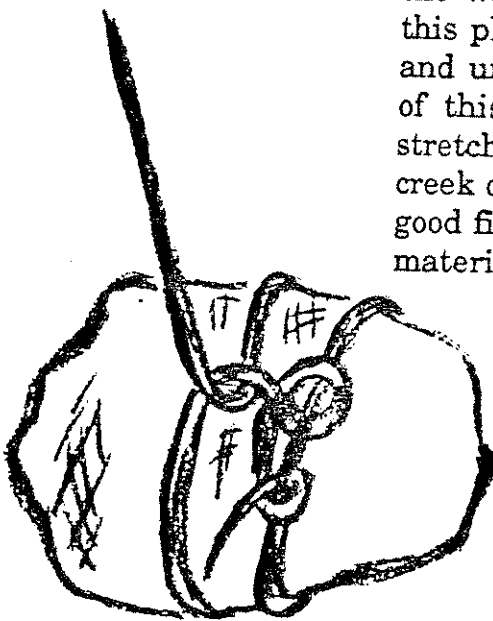


A stone will pull the hook deep into the water.

Chilh' unrolled the scrap of deer hide in which he had wrapped the fat and carefully baited the bone fish hook. He checked to make sure the sinew line was tied securely to the hook and small stone sinker before lowering it into the swirling water below him.

The boy gazed about him to find the very best position to fish. He noticed that the snow and ice around the open water were thick and should hold his weight, an inspiration sent him scurrying up the bank to a stand of young spruce trees. He tore off some of the smaller branches and he ran back to the ice which stretched along the edge of the creek. He lay the branches on the ice where he intended to stand. This would help keep his feet warm and dry. He knew that his deer hide moccasins took a long time to dry when wet.

As the hook and sinker were lowered deeper into the water, Chilh' thought about the first time he'd seen this place. He had been salmon fishing with his father and uncle and they had returned to their village by way of this creek. His uncle had pointed out the darker stretch of deeper water where a small stream entered the creek on the opposite bank. His uncle had said this was a good fishing spot because the small stream brought down material for the larger fish to eat.



The sinew is tied on to the stone to keep the hook in the water.

Chilh' gently jigged the line up and down keeping his body and shadow away from the water's edge. He did not want *tsabai* to become suspicious. He continued to jig patiently. Patience had been hard for a boy of ten summers to learn. He remembered with **humiliation** the previous season. His father had told him he was old enough to do some serious fishing with the men. He had been unable to keep perfectly still and had frightened away the fish when he fumbled with his line and dropped it into the water. He had also lost a hook that day, and hooks took time to make.

His thoughts scattered to the winds as he felt a firm tug on his line. Chilh' now used all his concentration to ensure the line developed no slack. It would not do to lose *tsabai* through carelessness and *tsabai* was clever and strong. The fish used its powerful tail to thrash the water in an attempt to free its mouth of Chilh's bone hook. Little by little, Chilh' brought the struggling fish to the surface and dragged it onto the ice.

It was a large and noble *tsabai*, a fish a young boy would be proud to present to his family. Chilh' carefully wrapped the dolly varden in the skin he had brought for that purpose and after gathering his sinew line and hooks, he began his journey home.

As he walked, he allowed himself to imagine the surprised looks on the faces of his family. The thought of the praise he would receive made him smile with pleasure and he increased his speed along the edge of the river bank.



THE CARRIER YEAR

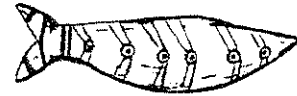
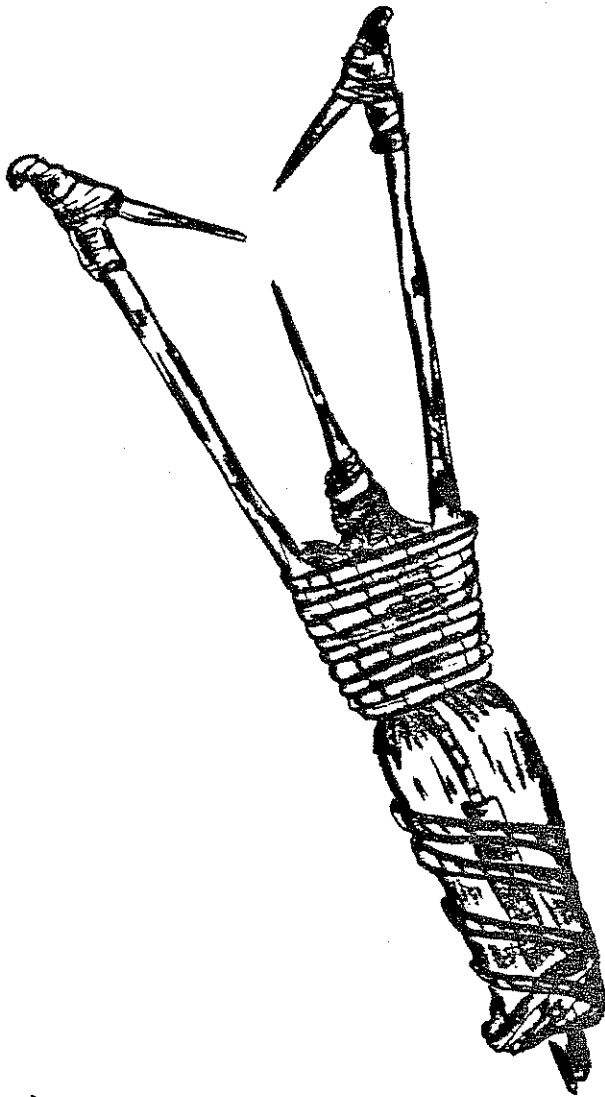
The Carrier followed the custom of having a special time to do everything. They lived according to this custom.

They hunted large animals in the early winter or fall. In spring, they fished for dolly varden and suckers. In the summer they went in to the mountains to hunt for marmots and caribou. They also fished for sockeye salmon and spring salmon at their summer spawning grounds. In late summer, they picked berries and hunted small animals. They also fished. In the winter, they usually stayed in their winter lodges eating the food they had stored, and telling stories or playing games. This was the time for the women to make new clothes and blankets, and for the men to make new tools and weapons.

If the Carrier wanted to trade, it was in the late summer or early fall when most of the food gathering was done and they were waiting for the berries to ripen and the second run of the salmon (Kokanee) to take place.

FISHING TOOLS

The Carrier used many different methods to catch fish. One method used a fish harpoon. A harpoon is a special kind of spear with **barbs** on the end. When the harpoon hit a fish, the barbs on the end would stop the fish coming off as the fisherman pulled it in. The spear handle was usually four to five metres long so that it could be used on river banks or from the top of high rocks at the edges of rivers.



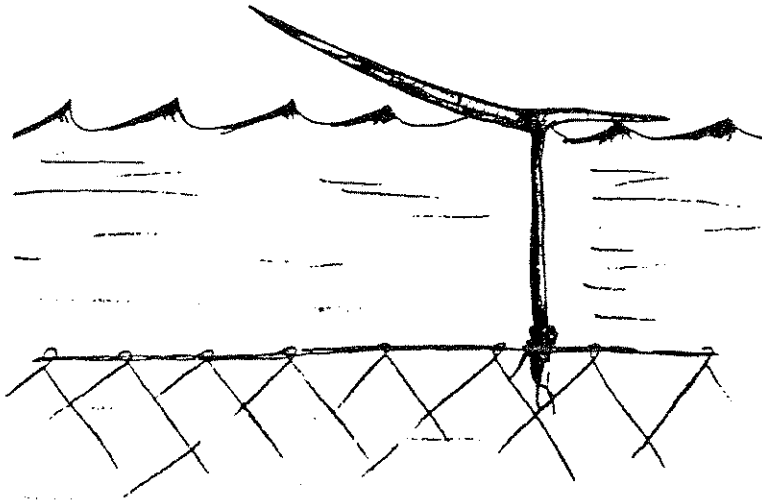
In winter, the Carrier used a bone implement that was like a fishing lure. First, a hole was cut in the ice. The hole had to be big enough to see the trout in the water underneath. Then the bone lure was lowered just below the surface. The lure had a string or sinew line attached to it so that it could be moved by the fisherman to look like small fish swimming in the water. When the trout came to the top to inspect the lure, he was quickly speared using a fish harpoon.

Another type of fishing tool was made with a piece of straight stick that had a bone "hook" tied to its end using sinew string or **babiche**. Another string was attached to the top of the stick. This was the fisherman's fish line. The fisherman lowered the line into the water by tying a piece of rock to the line. Every once in a while, he raised and lowered the "hook" to attract the fish. When a fish investigated this strange thing it perhaps tried to swallow it. Then the fisherman pulled on his line and set the bone hook into the fish's gills. That way, the fish could not get away.

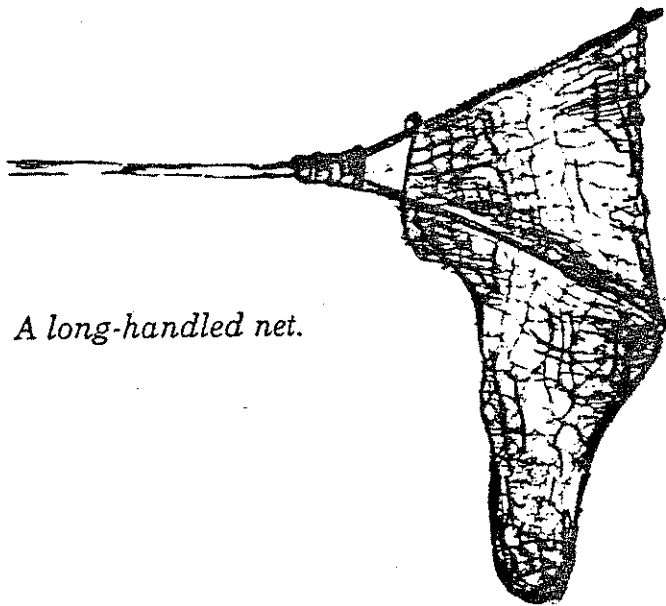


FISH NETS

Many different kinds of nets were made by the Carrier. Some nets were spread across rivers and lakes. They had rocks tied to the bottom of them so that they stayed down in the water. They also needed floats attached to the tops of the nets so that the men could see where they were and also to keep them upright. These floats were made of wood and were tied to the net.



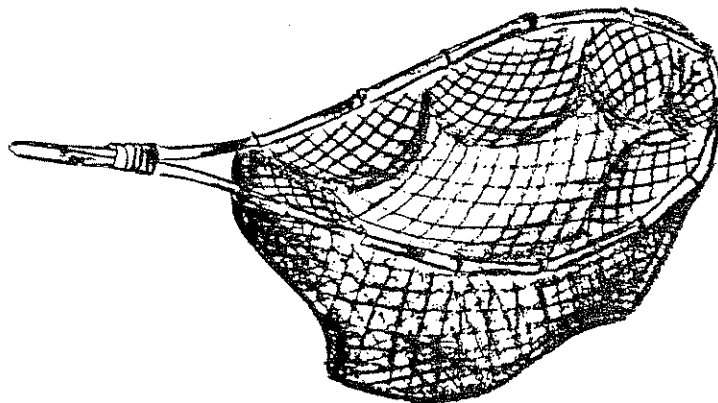
The float is attached to the net.



A long-handled net.

The Carrier also used two main kinds of fish nets that were attached to handles. These were called dip-nets. Men or women used these to scoop fish out of the water. The net shown here had a very long handle and the net itself was about two metres deep. If this net was to be used to catch salmon, it was left in the water until a salmon swam in. Then the net was raised out of the water. If smaller fish were to be caught, the net was used as a scoop.

The size of the holes in the net depended upon the kind of fish being caught. All nets were made in basically the same manner. Fibres from plants such as the nettle, willow or wild hemp were used. First the plants were thoroughly dried and then they were crushed with a rock. The fibres were separated. Then they were tied together using special knots so they couldn't come apart. Nets were treated with great care because they took a long time to make.



CARRIER CALENDAR

The Carrier people had names for the times of year just as we do. However, they named the months after predictable happenings in their daily lives.

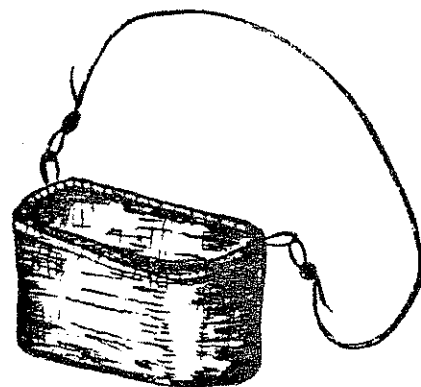
MONTH	CARRIER MONTH	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
January	<i>Sacho' ooza'</i>	The Time Of the Big Moon
February	<i>Chuzsul' ooza'</i>	The Time Of the Small Snowflakes
March	<i>Chuzcho' ooza'</i> <i>Ts'intel ooz'</i>	The Time Of Large Snowflakes The Time Of the Ling Fish Run
April	<i>Shin' ooza'</i>	The Time Of Spring (or The Time When Snow Is Gone)
May	<i>Dugoos' ooza'</i> <i>Utan-ilht's-ai</i>	The Time Of the Big Sucker Fish Appearance Of Budding
June	<i>Dang' ooza'</i>	The Time Of the Summer
July	<i>Gesul' ooza'</i> <i>Shen Whuniz</i>	The Time Of the Kokanee Fish Middle Of the Summer
August	<i>Talo' ooza'</i> <i>Nan Le-yaz-nun</i>	The Time Of the Salmon The Time Of the Salmon
September	<i>Bit' ooza'</i> <i>Nanle-cho-nun</i>	The Time Of the Lake Trout The Time Of the Big Salmon Run
October	<i>Lhoh' ooza'</i> <i>Det choo natjaz</i>	The Time Of the Whitefish First Fall Of Snow
November	<i>Banghan</i> <i>nuts'ukih</i>	The Time Of the Half Of This Time We Travel By Boat
December	<i>Sacho din'ai</i>	The Time Of the Eve Of the Big Moon.

Doh' and the Stew

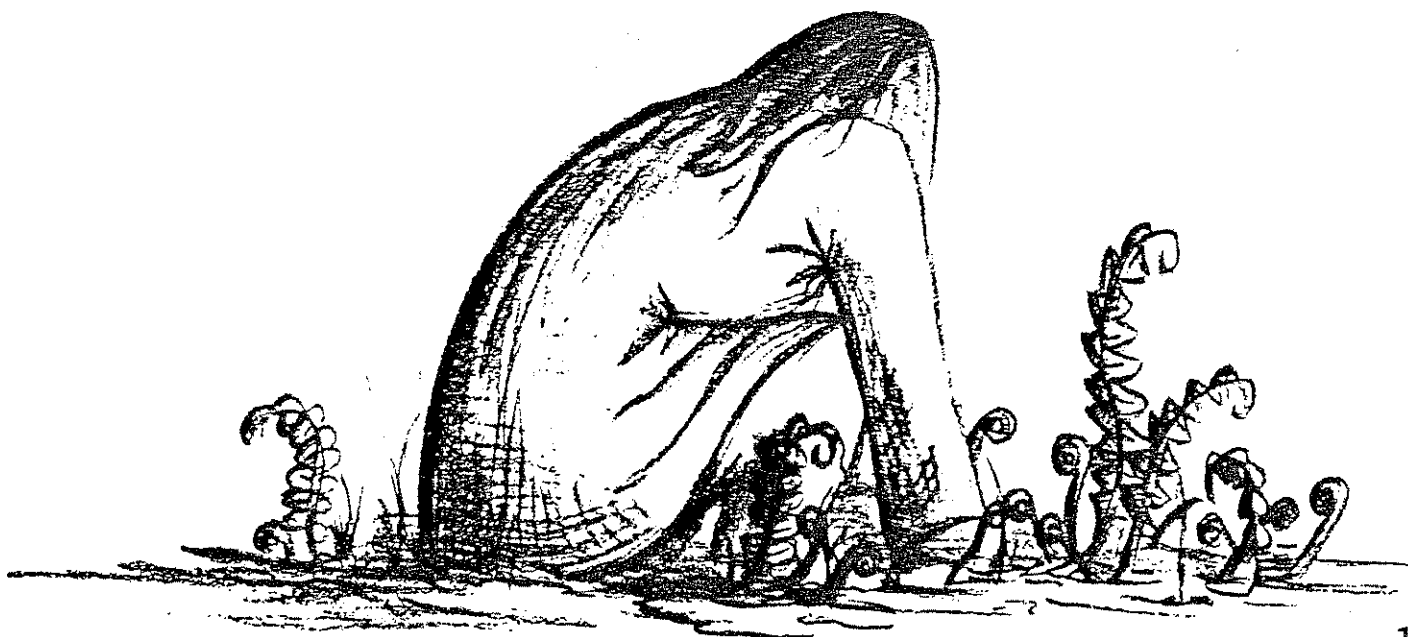
Doh' also woke early. In the air was the fresh smell of spring that lightened the heart and brought forth thoughts of children laughing and playing in the sunshine. *Doh'* knew, however, that her time for childish games was over. Recently her aunt had given her the veil which she would wear for the next year. She would be a woman soon and she still had a lot to learn. Her mother and grandmother had taught her well and they were proud of her efforts.

Doh' always listened carefully to her elders because they were wise and knowledgeable. They had lived through hard winters, sometimes with little food when the salmon run had failed, and they knew how to survive even under those difficult conditions. *Doh'* knew she had a lot more to learn before she had a family of her own.

She sat up quickly and looked around at the sleeping forms of her family. *Chilh'* was not on his spruce bough bed. She remembered their talk yesterday about surprising their family with the first fresh food of the season. She hurriedly dressed in her skin tunic and leggings, for the air was still sharp with cold. She quietly collected her berry basket which she had carefully made herself out of birch bark. It was sturdy and strong with a **thong** attached at each end. This served to suspend the vessel around her neck.

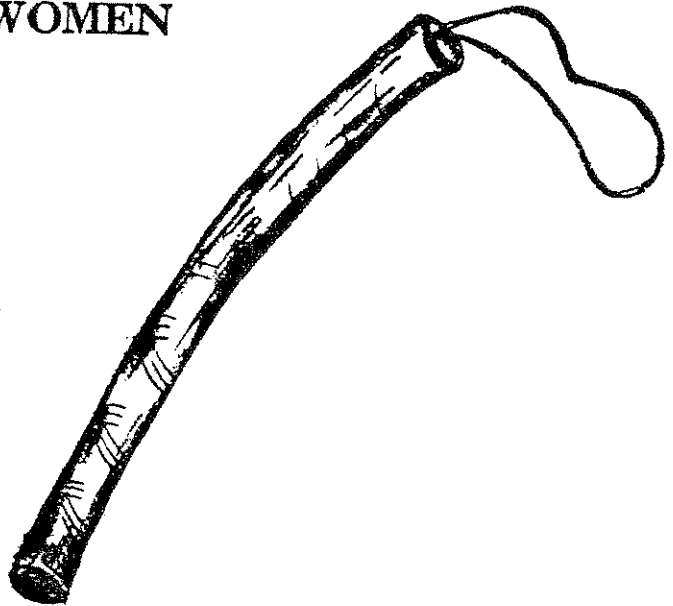


This was called a berry basket, but it was used for gathering all kinds of plant life. It left both hands free for picking as it hung around the wearer's neck.

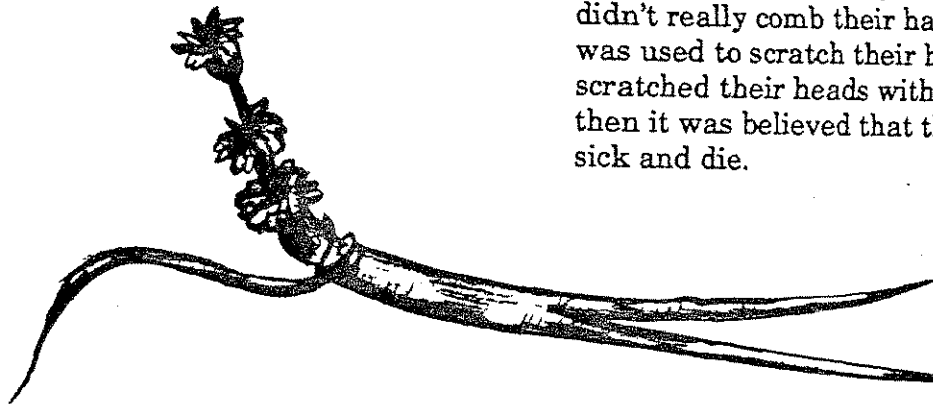


TREATMENT OF YOUNG WOMEN

Young women were treated in special ways before they could become adults. They drank through a bone drinking straw. This was worn around their necks like a necklace. It was attached to a string made of sinew and decorated with **down**. It was thought that if they drank water using the regular **ladle**, they would get horrible throat diseases.



This was a hair comb that was also used by young women. It was made from wood and decorated with **dentalium** shells or whatever else might have made it look beautiful. The young women didn't really comb their hair with it. It was used to scratch their heads. If they scratched their heads with their hands, then it was believed that they would get sick and die.



At certain times of each month, all women had to live in separate huts. They could not leave even to get food or water. Another female relative looked after them. Two strings ran from this hut to the main family house. The woman pulled the white string if she wanted water and a string that had been dyed red if she needed food.

Every young woman had to wear a head covering that was placed on her by an aunt. This was worn for up to three years and could only be removed by the same aunt. A special feast was given when the covering was taken off to show that the young woman was now an adult and old enough to marry.

She pulled aside the hide curtain covering the doorway and stepped into the sunshine. The air was crisp and clear as she headed towards the edge of the clearing where the village was situated.

Doh' had been watching the rapid growth of some tender young ferns for some days. She knew that today they would be just right for picking. As she gathered the young shoots her thoughts turned towards her brother, Chilh', and she hoped that he would be as successful with his fishing.

When her basket was very full, she carried it carefully to a sandy area on the other side of the clearing near a stand of jackpine trees. Doh' had learned from her mother that jackpine produced a sap which was good to chew. She could see small droplets forming on the rough bark. The sap was beginning to run now that the long winter months were over. She took some of the sticky substance in her mouth and chewed it as she walked home carrying her precious green fern shoots.

She decided to come back this way later to collect more of the sweet tasting pitch. It was only sweet in the early spring and later it became bitter. Doh' had been taught how to dry the pitch to preserve it. It could be eaten dry if you had good teeth or it could be soaked in water for a while to soften it.

Doh's mother came to greet her as she arrived back at the village. Her mother smiled when she saw the overloaded basket. She beckoned her daughter to follow her. Chilh' was standing proudly holding his catch. Tonight there would be a meal to remember. On a flattened sheet of birch bark, Mother quickly cleaned and cut up the fish, and set both fish and vegetables aside for the evening meal.

Later that day, when the sun was lower in the sky, the women of the family made preparations to cook the food. Mother chose to use the seamless cooking pot of birch bark in which to boil the fish and greens. At other times, when they had many to feed, they used the wooden box which they had obtained from 'The People From the West Who Lived By the Large Water'. With the box boiler, hot rocks were continually added to make the water boil.

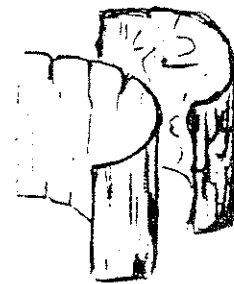
Mother's birch bark pot had a long handle which was placed on a frame erected over a fire. It was Doh's job to watch carefully to make sure that the upper wooden rim of the basket did not burn. The moisture of



The sap can be seen in this illustration.



A section of bark has been removed and then separated into inner bark and outer bark.



Sap from the jackpine (*chundoo*), the Spruce (*tsoo*) and the poplar (*t'ughus*) was collected from the middle to the end of May. The sap made a drink that was sweet and juicy. You could also eat the bark from these trees at that time of year.

Sometimes it was dried and eaten like dried fruit. If the sap and bark were collected at other times of the year, it tasted bitter.

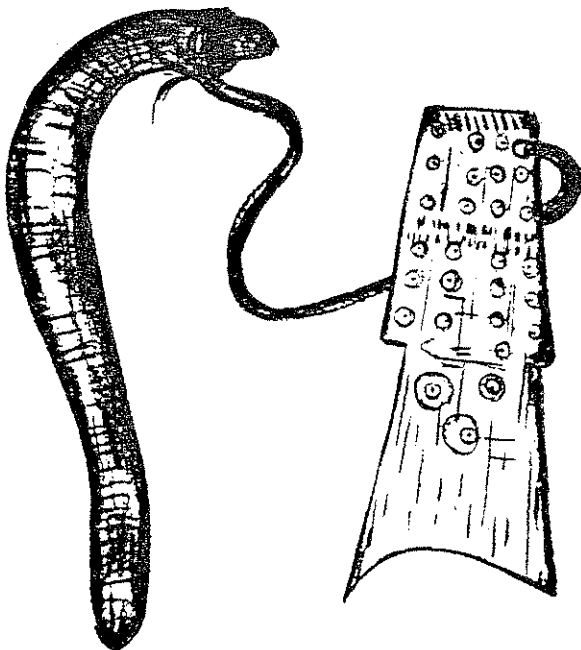
the stew kept the birch bark on the bottom safe from the flames.

Soon the smell of rich fish stew filled the air and mouths began to water. This meal would be very welcome after their diet of dried salmon and berries. Doh's mother had some dried berries left over from winter storage and she added these to give more flavor to the dish.

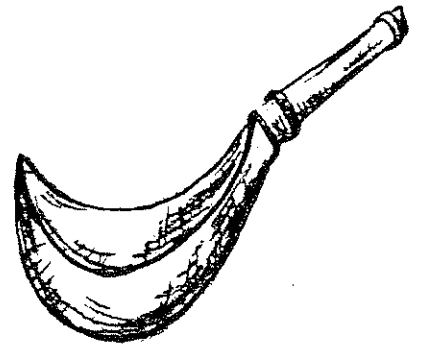
From one of the large storage baskets, Doh' took some spoons. Some of the spoons were made from bark and some from wood. The men sat on their hide mats and dipped the spoons into the rich broth. Expressions of appreciation were heard throughout the room and both Doh' and her brother looked pleased. Soon the men had finished their meal and the women began to eat. Chilh' was asked many times to tell how he had caught his fish. Father and Grandfather looked on approvingly. Both children were beginning to grow up.



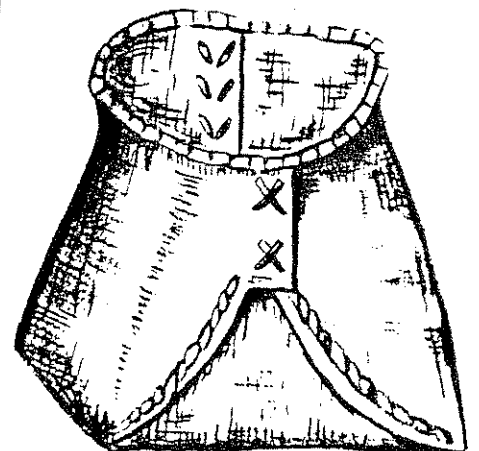
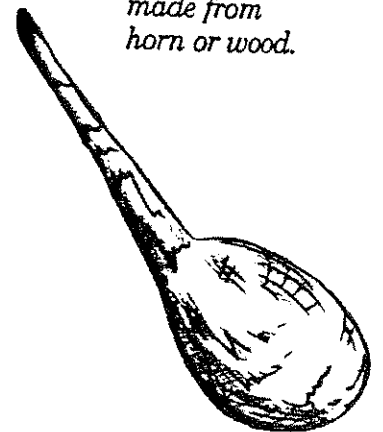
An awl is used for making holes in bark or hide.



Bark peeler



Ladles could be made from horn or wood.



COOKING AND EATING IMPLEMENTS

The Carrier used bone to make a variety of tools. One of these was the spoon, or ladle. The horn of a mountain sheep was split in half. It was then opened out by putting a heated rock on it. The rock had pitch spread over it and the pitch covered the horn. The pitch helped the horn to keep its shape after it cooled.

Bark peelers were very useful items because bark was used to make baskets, mats and boiling pots. The fancy part of this peeler or scraper (pictured on page 20) was made from caribou horn and was used to take the bark from pine trees.

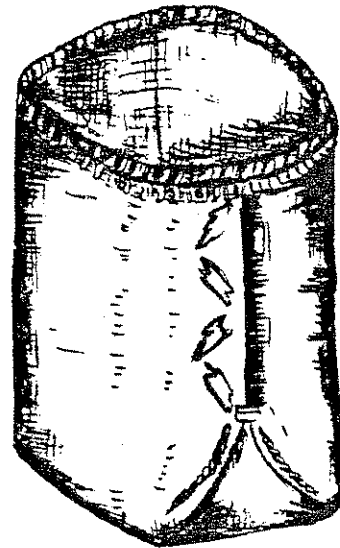
The Carrier made baskets from two main kinds of bark. These were spruce bark and birch bark. When baskets were made from spruce, they weren't intended to last very long because spruce soon became brittle and cracked. Most baskets that were used to store food and household articles were made from birch bark.

Baskets were made from one single piece of bark. They were cut in a special pattern and then sewn together using an awl to first punch holes into the bark. Then a fibre was woven through the holes to tie the sides of the basket together. Most of the Carrier baskets were waterproof so they could keep whatever was in them dry.

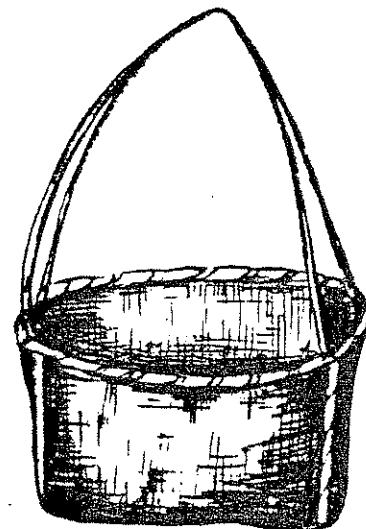
These baskets were the most popular. They could be made in many sizes. A small one might hold 13 litres. A large one could hold 45 litres. They could be used in a variety of ways. They could be clothes baskets, or hold the women's sewing, the children's special toys, or the family heirlooms. They could even be used to bring home berries preserved at the berry picking grounds. None of these baskets had lids, so they were often covered with a piece of bark and hung in a tree to keep mice out of them.

The basket pictured on the left looked fancier than any of the others. It had a very special purpose. This was a water container. After it was sewn with spruce and willow fibre, the threads were sealed with the sap of the spruce. It had a fancy lip that bent outward to make pouring water easier.

The basket on the right was probably the most important because it was the cooking pot. It didn't have any seams because the corners were folded over instead of being cut. The long hoops made a handle.



Household baskets were used to store most things and were made in many different sizes.



This pot could hold heated stones used for cooking meat, fish and vegetables.

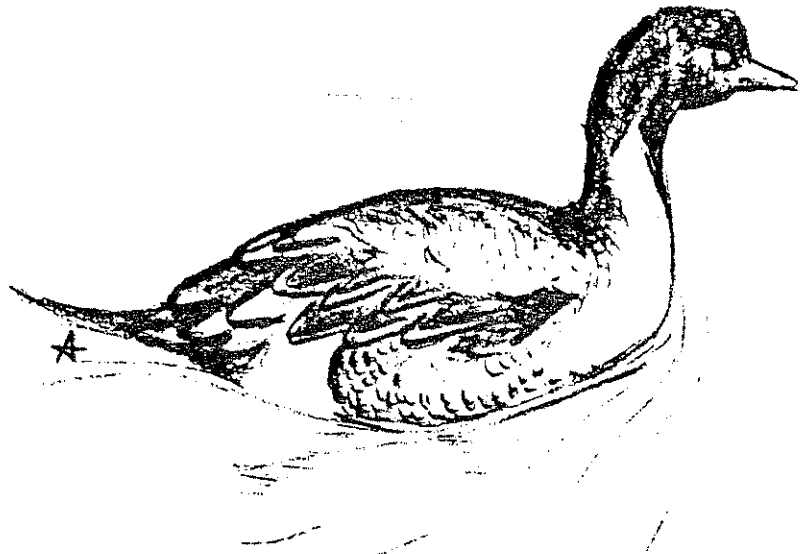
HUNTING FOR BIRDS

The Carrier hunted many kinds of birds. Most of these were snared, caught in nets or hit with a stone using a slingshot. These were the Carrier names for the birds most regularly hunted:

Mallard Duck	<i>T'acho</i>
Goose	<i>khoh</i>
Swan	<i>ts'uncho</i>
Ruffed Grouse	<i>'utsut</i>
Blue Grouse	<i>dihcho</i>
Spruce Hen	<i>nat'oh</i>
Ptarmigan	<i>K'azba</i>

The Carrier would dry and smoke these birds for winter use. The birds could be roasted over the fire or put in the stew pot and boiled along with some vegetables.

To add variety to their diets, the Carrier would also eat eggs from ducks, loons and grouse.



Duck Hunting

The earth became warmer under the sunshine and the trees began to grow soft yellow-green leaves. The migration of birds to their northern summer nesting grounds began. Chilh"s and Doh"s people were well aware of these yearly events and these first signs of spring were noted with pleasure. Even the young children were keen watchers of the sky during the spring migration.

As the large flocks of ducks began to arrive and settle on the lake near Chilh"s and Doh"s village, the men began their preparations to catch some. Everyone knew they were very good eating. Chilh' was trying to conceal his excitement because he was going to be allowed to go on one of these hunts for the very first time. The men had cleverly made a large net of babiche. The net was fine and not easily seen when held in the air. When all was in readiness, the duck hunters moved quietly towards the lake.

Chilh' watched eagerly as the men moved to their positions and placed the nets on the ice patches which had not yet melted. He and several other young men had been given the special job of driving the ducks toward the men hiding near the nets. The net carriers had concealed themselves on each side of a small marshy bay with the net lying harmlessly on the top of the ice.

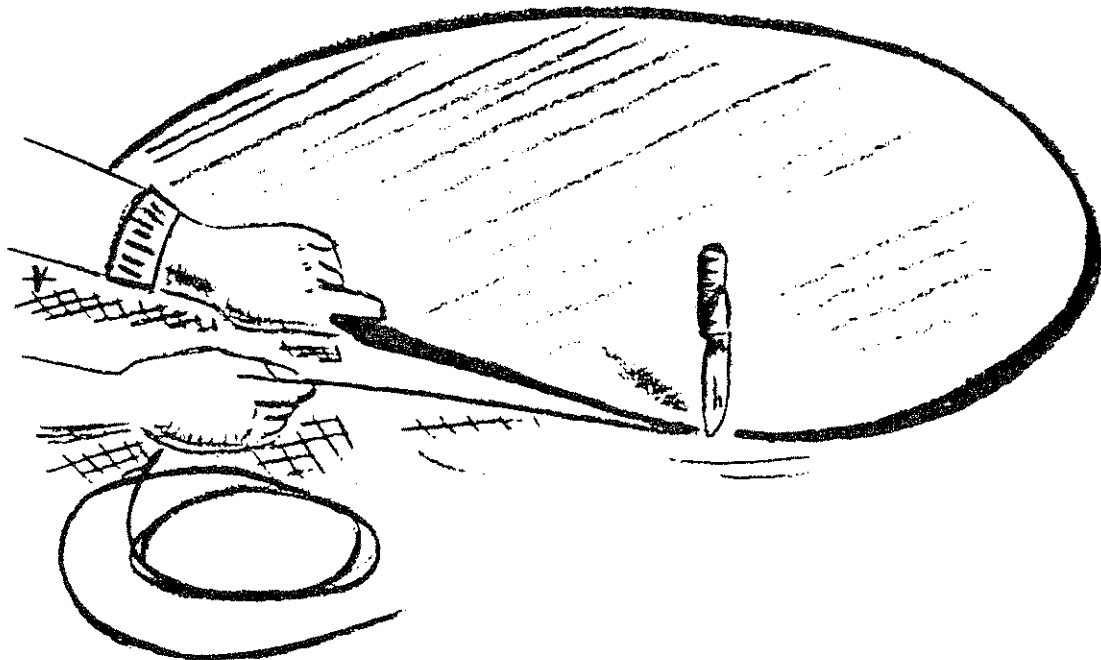
The young men took up their positions at the opposite end of the lake. They began to slowly move forward, on foot at the edge of the lake and in canoes, quietly driving the mass of birds before them. Chilh' knew that any hasty movement could cause the ducks to fly off too soon. Step by step they moved forward. The ducks were becoming anxious. At any moment the men would receive the signal to set the birds in flight.

A paddler in one of the canoes raised a paddle. Chilh' and his friends began to run as fast as they could, yelling and waving their arms wildly, startling the ducks into flight.

BABICHE

Babiche was leather that had been cut into strips. It was used wherever something had to be tied together. The Carrier made two kinds of babiche. One was called big babiche. The only difference between the two was the width.

Babiche was cut from a circle of leather. A blade was stuck into something solid so that it could not move. Then the leather was pulled against the blade in a circular movement so that the 'string' was formed. The Carrier women were very skillful at keeping it all one width.



At the far end of the lake the men in hiding raised the net into the path of the fleeing ducks. The whole operation had been carefully timed. As Chilh' had been taught, ducks need a lot of room to take off from the surface of a lake and many of the birds found themselves entangled in the net before they had time to avoid it.

Many ducks escaped. Chilh' knew this was important as it ensured that there would be plenty of ducks for future catches. Chilh' rushed toward the men struggling with the net. Together they helped drag ashore their catch. The cooking pots of many lodges would boil the fresh meat of these ducks tonight and the delicious smell would not easily be forgotten.

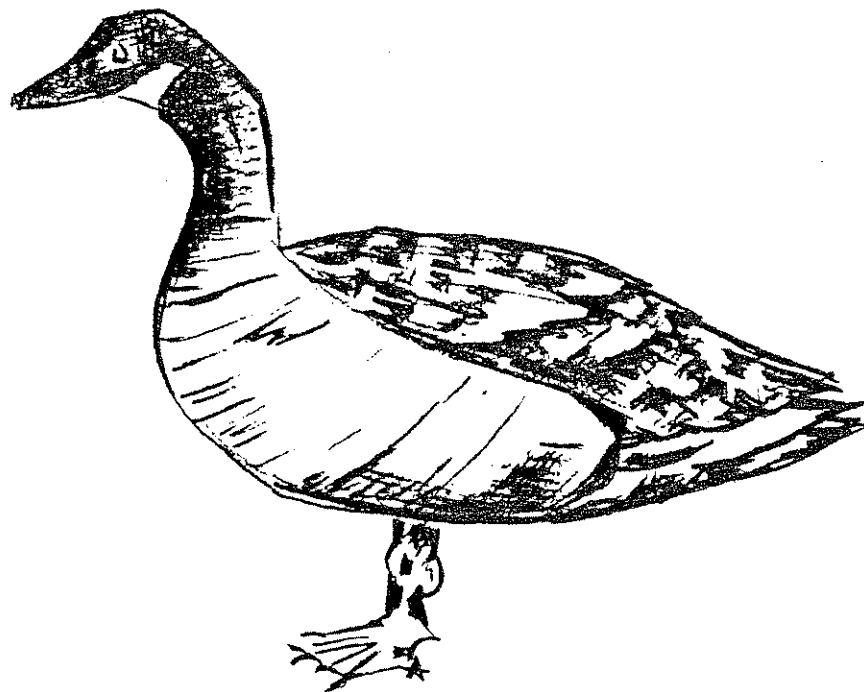
BIRD NETS

The Carrier studied the ways of the animals so they could hunt them easily.

They discovered that ducks flew very close to the surface of the water or ice when they took off. If the men were very quiet, they could lay a net across the ice and have another man drive the birds toward them. As

the birds began to fly, the hunters raised the net and the ducks flew into it. The ducks got caught in the net and then the men could kill them to use for food.

These nets had to be strong in order to hold the birds. The nets used for fishing would break so the hunters made bird nets from babiche.



A New Arrival

Towards the time when the leaves were becoming a darker green, the mother of Chilh' and Doh' had another baby. It was a new sister. Doh' was excited and curious about this new arrival in their family.

A young baby meant a great deal of work. Doh' had watched with great interest as her mother had stitched deer hide to the front of a birch bark cradle. She had first formed the cradle by turning up the sides and the bottom of a good piece of bark.

The top section had been flattened out to form a large circle around the baby's head. This gave the baby plenty of breathing room, especially if she needed to be covered up to protect her from the rain and the weather. Mother would not be separated from her baby for long. The baby would be carried around on her mother's back most of the time. Mother even let Doh' make some of the stitches herself.

Before the snows came, the men had caught a porcupine and the quills had been carefully wrapped and saved to decorate their ordinary clothing and baskets. Doh' knew that very few people had time to decorate their clothing or to carve wonderful figures in wood as did the people to the west of them by the great waters. Doh's people had to spend almost every waking hour gathering food because the winters were cold and harsh and lasted a long time. Much food had to be stored for these hard times to last them the entire winter. There was little time to carve and decorate their belongings.

Mother was very proud of her baby, and with Doh's help, she had carefully stitched the porcupine quills they had saved onto the piece of deer hide used in the cradle. She used a bone awl and sinew thread. The awl had been made from the fine fibula, or shin bone, of the caribou.

It was Doh's job to collect *ts'al* for the baby. This sphagnum moss was also called diaper moss. Collecting it became one of Doh's daily chores. This particular moss grew in swamps. Doh' always searched for the whitish kind of moss because she knew that the red kind could cause bad sores. After each successful hunt, she spread the moss out to dry and then stored it in the large birch baskets for later use.

On one of Doh's expeditions to gather moss she came across an old poplar tree which had fallen many years

QUILL EMBROIDERY

The Carrier women were noted for their fine quill work. Quills from porcupines were used to decorate their clothing.

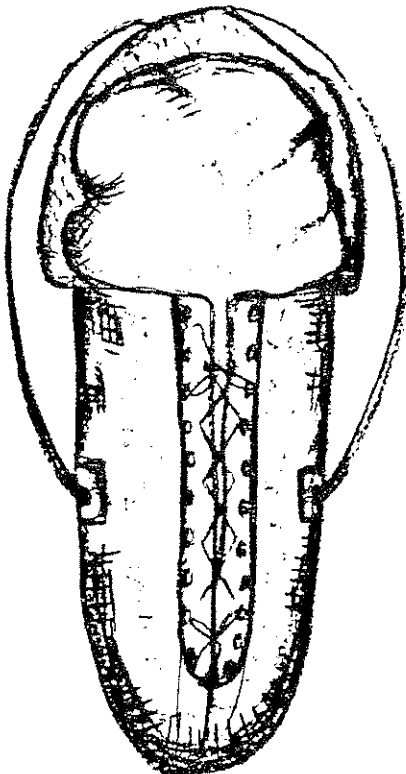
The women dyed the quills different colours. They soaked them in the juice from fruits and vegetables to get soft colors.

Most designs were geometric figures, such as repeated triangles or squares. They were very beautiful and well made.

before. The tree was twisted and broken from spending so many winters on the ground and the centre was rotten. The soft, white, pulpy wood was spongy like the diaper moss. Doh' filled her basket with the sponge-like *sohjut* and carried it home. Grandmother had taught her that the soft centre of the poplar is also good to wrap babies in. Doh' looked around carefully because she wanted to remember this spot. The *sohjut* was also used to put on fires to make them smoke for drying fish and berries.

Doh' made another wonderful find as she continued home that day. Nestled in tufts of grass was a grouse nest with six eggs. She thought how much Chilh' enjoyed these eggs. She gently lifted the eggs and placed them in her basket among the ferns. Tonight's meal would surely be one of the best in a very long time.

Doh' helped her mother with the care of the baby in other ways too. The baby was washed daily in a bark tray made for that purpose. She was wrapped in soft rabbit fur and then placed back in her cradle. Doh' enjoyed these times with her sister. She knew she was learning how to be a good mother so she would be ready when her time came to have her own children.



Babies were kept warm and dry in these cradles hung on their mothers' backs.

CARE OF BABIES AND CHILDREN

The care of a baby began even before its birth. The Carrier believed that if the woman was constantly busy, both she and the baby would have great strength.

As the time approached for the birth, the father made a hut in which the child would be born. Only he, the mother and special women helpers called midwives were allowed to enter.

The mother had to make a bed for her baby. It looked like a flat tray that was open at one end. The mother would lace the baby into this cradle using pieces of babiche.

The mother would wash the baby every day until it was old enough to walk. She had a special tray that she used for that purpose.

Moss was gathered in large quantities. It was needed as diapers. It was soft and would absorb lots of water. Sometimes the moss contained bugs and frogs. Mothers preferred *sohjut* as it was cleaner.

Baby clothes were usually not made because the baby was wrapped in soft blankets before it was put in its cradle.

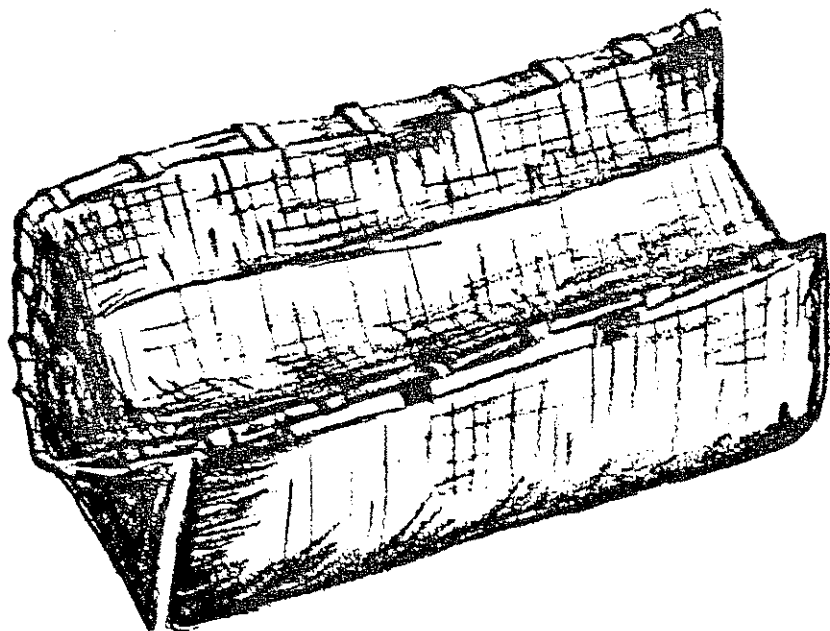
Sometimes a baby was not given a name right away. A name could be given that was

suggested by the family crest or it could be taken from a dream of the father or mother.

If a child was of high rank, a title might be given at a *balhach* when the child was a teenager.

As soon as children could walk, they began to learn how to do jobs that would make them useful members of the family. Girls learned how to gather wood and carry water. As they became older, they would learn how to cure and catch fish. They learned how to process meat and berries and sew clothing for the whole family. They learned to tan the hides from different animals and make such things as babiche, baskets and fibre threads. Boys learned how to build houses and to make tools and weapons. They learned all about hunting and fishing.

A child's education was the responsibility of the parents and the grandparents. Children learned the correct Carrier way to behave by being told stories or legends. Sometimes, though, they were naughty, too. Carrier children were not spanked. They were told a story about someone who did wrong and it made them feel so bad that they often didn't do it again.



A Carrier baby bath.

3 Summer



Getting Ready

As the Time of the Salmon neared, the people of Chilh's village began preparations well ahead of time. Salmon was their chief source of food and enough must be gathered to last all the families the entire winter. The People of the Mountains, the Sekani, called the Carrier people "Fish Eaters". The Sekani traded furs for the dried salmon and Chilh's father hoped to catch enough this year so that more trading could be done. This meant that vast quantities must be caught and prepared for the Season of the Ice. Everyone must help if this was to be accomplished in the short time the salmon travelled upriver to spawn.

Soon, it was time to move to the fish camp to be near the salmon river which belonged to Chilh's people by hereditary right. No one else could use their food gathering grounds, including their berry patches, unless permission was granted.

There was an excitement in the air as the families began to pack. Only those things which were necessary were taken with them because many hands would be needed to carry the salmon back to the summer lodge and stored for the winter. The children carried small loads and even the dogs had packs to carry. Enough food would have to be carried for use until *talo* (salmon) arrived. All food which was to be left behind had to be secured by hanging it inside the lodge or inside food caches so that animals could not reach the bundles.

HUNTING AND FISHING TERRITORIES

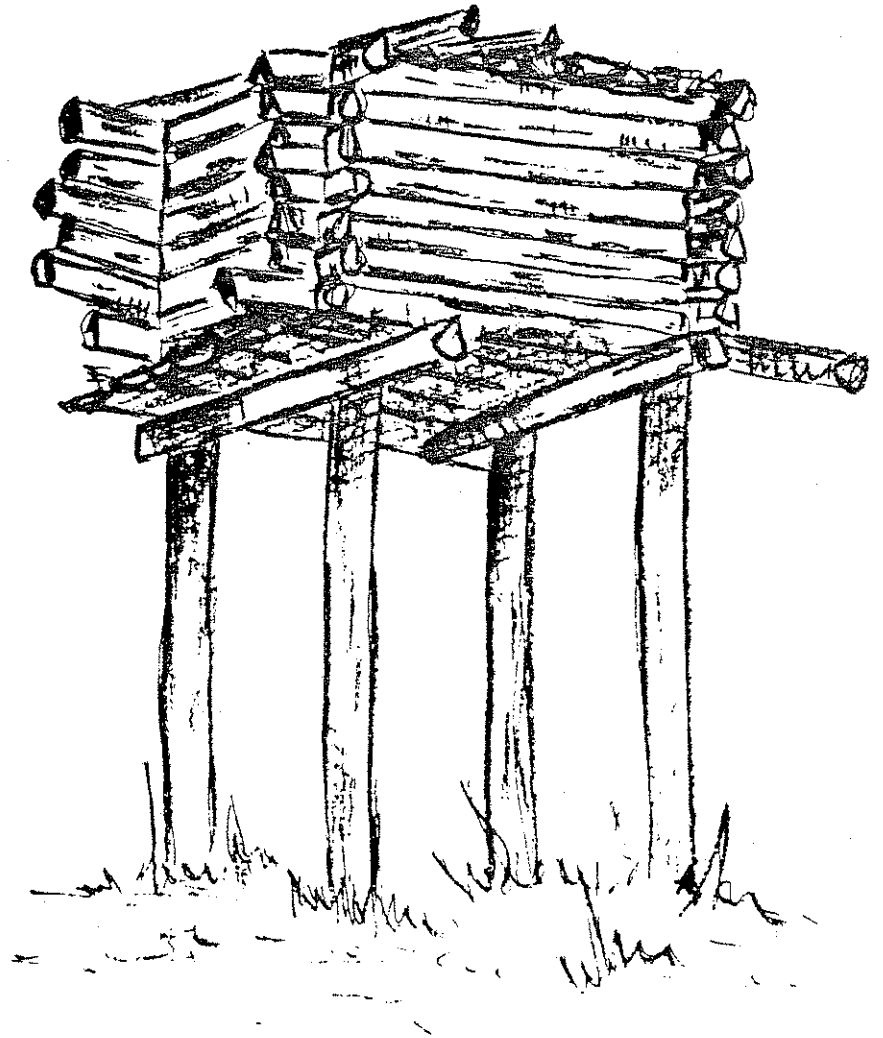
The Carrier population had many different places where they hunted and fished. Each group was divided into several smaller groups or clans.

By Carrier law, each clan had its own hunting and fishing territories that it used to get food for its members. These territories were inherited. That meant that when an elder died, the hunting and fishing territories that were in his name were passed along to members of his family. No one else was allowed to use that area without permission.

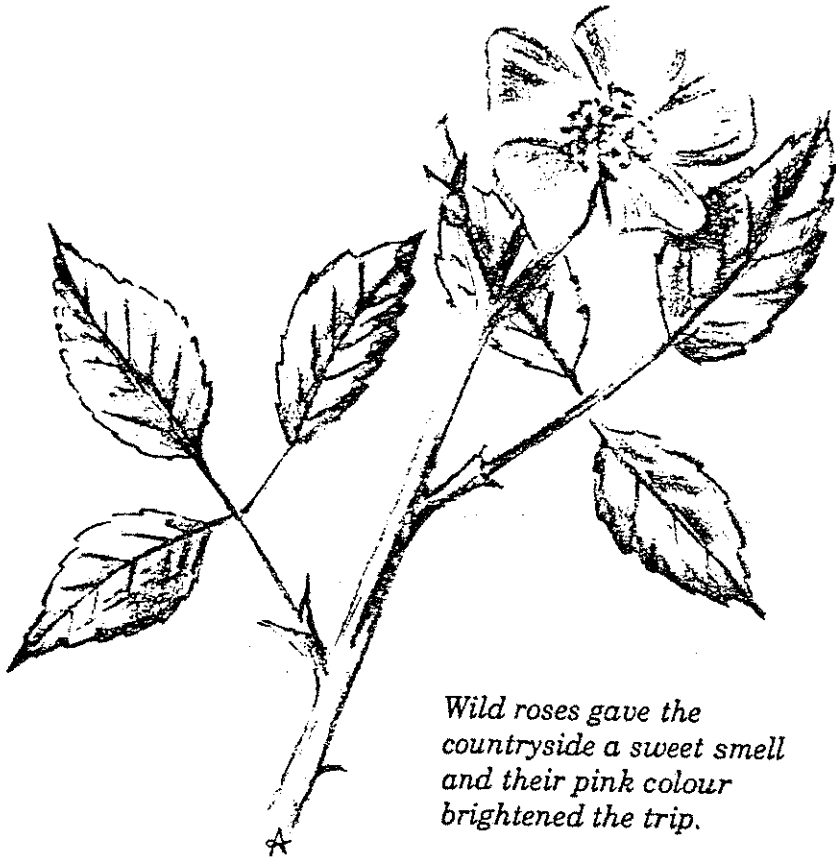
In this way, the Carrier people made sure that all members of each clan had enough territory to feed themselves.

Before the families began their long journey, Father visited the Shaman or Medicine Man and paid him three beaver skins so that the catch would go well.

The men did not carry packs as they would be hunting on the way. The children and the women stood and shouted their goodbyes as the men left first. Chilh' walked proudly with the men for the first time and he turned and waved to Doh'. Chilh' would learn a great deal about hunting on this trip and Grandfather had promised to show him how to set snares and traps while they waited for *talo*. Grandfather showed him how to bend some twigs towards the direction they were travelling so that those who followed would know which way they had gone and would not get lost.



Food was kept in this cache so that animals could not get at it.



Wild roses gave the countryside a sweet smell and their pink colour brightened the trip.

The women made last minute checks to see that nothing had been forgotten, while the children ran about excitedly. To them, it was a great adventure to be travelling to the salmon camp. Mother securely laced the baby into her cradle and strapped the infant to her back. At the fish camp the baby would spend most of her time safely on Mother's back even when she was working. The older girls and women would take turns carrying some of the younger children too small to walk the entire distance.

Doh' would be expected to do the work of a woman this year. She was very happy to help and very proud to think that she was now considered a woman. She quickly packed her sharp stone knife which was wrapped in hide to protect it, and looked around to see that nothing had been forgotten. They had taken cooking pots, clothing, tools, nets and a large assortment of other necessary things. Finally all was in readiness and the women and older children left their summer lodge.

CLOTHING

MEN

Men wore a loose tunic made from tanned caribou. It went down to the thigh. Poorer people made this tunic from any animal that had fur. Carrier men who were richer had a fringe added to the tunic to hide the seams. They may even have had it decorated with porcupine quill embroidery. The quills were usually dyed yellow or green.

Men also wore leggings made from caribou. These covered their entire legs and were tied together at the top with strings attached to a belt made from soft leather. The leggings were also held up below the knees with fancy garters. The breech cloth was also worn to cover the lower part of the body.

Moccasins of the rich Carrier were made from dressed elk skin. Poorer Carrier used marmot fur. If there was nothing else, and they were very poor, moccasins could be made from the dried skin of salmon.

WOMEN

The dress of women was very similar to that of the men. The tunic was longer and was frequently decorated around the shoulders and back with caribou or beaver claws or teeth. The women also wore aprons over their tunics. These could be made from tanned hides. In very poor families, the apron was also made from dried salmon skin.

SALMON TRAPS

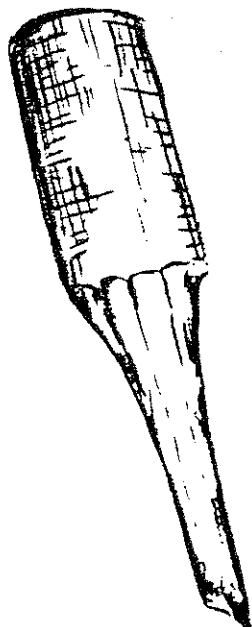
Salmon was the main food of the Carrier. They had to be good fishermen to catch salmon for the whole year.

One method of catching salmon was to build a weir across a river to stop the salmon from continuing up the river. The salmon couldn't pass the wooden barricade. The salmon were caught in traps built into the weir. Some were thrown over the fence so they could continue upstream to spawn and provide more salmon for future Carrier generations.

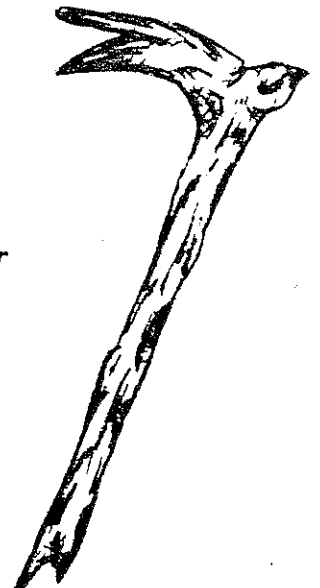
The journey began happily with the children talking excitedly together. The dogs had been trained to walk behind so there was less likelihood of them chasing animals and losing their packs. On the way, there were several stops to rest and take drinks from the many streams in the area. When they reached the camp where they would stop the first night, Father and the other men were there before them and a fire was already lit. The women took off their packs thankfully and rested before they began to prepare the evening meal.

It was three days walk before they reached the fish camp.

There was no time to rest when they arrived though, because the fishing lodges must be inspected for damage after the long winter so that there was a place to sleep that night. The main structures were still intact but the roofs needed repairing. Grandfather took rolls of spruce bark and began to soak them so they would be soft enough to use to make the roof repairs. The children took out the old balsam boughs while the women cut fresh ones for the beds. Others began to unpack their belongings and food supplies. It was a busy time for everyone. The men checked their nets and canoes that were left and cached the year before. They found that one cottonwood dugout had cracked. Jackpine pitch was melted with grease. The grease kept the pitch from cracking and successfully sealed the crack.



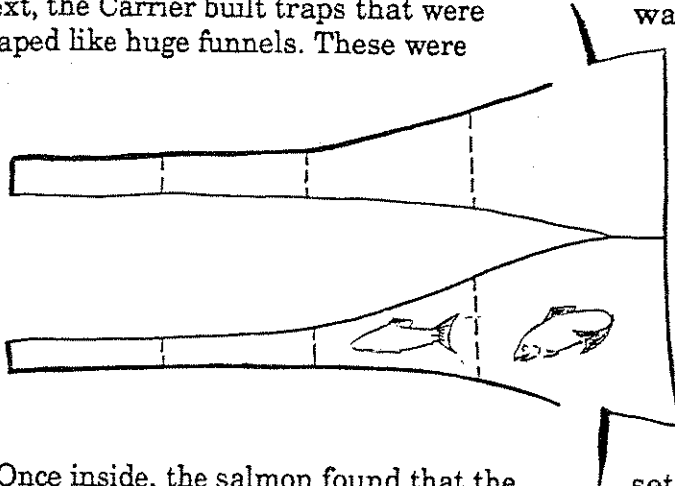
A wooden maul.



A wooden hook used for opening fish baskets.

FISH WEIRS

Fish weirs were built across rivers or streams where the current wasn't strong enough to wash them away. A wooden fence was constructed so that the salmon couldn't continue up the river. The sticks or poles were pounded into the river using wooden **mauls**. Next, the Carrier built traps that were shaped like huge funnels. These were



Once inside, the salmon found that the wide part of the basket was also blocked. They would turn and head into the long funnel end of the a basket. They would swim along this thinking that it was a way out. Once in the funnel, they could not turn around as it was too narrow Therefore they had to keep going along the funnel until they swam into another basket. This was a trap and was called the end basket. This trap was

bottle-like baskets which were used depending on how deep the river was. Usually, only two or three were needed but sometimes more were used. The salmon couldn't go past the wooden barricade so they entered the basket thinking that was the new way to go upstream.

Salmon would swim along until they came to the "fence", then they would swim down the funnel and be trapped.

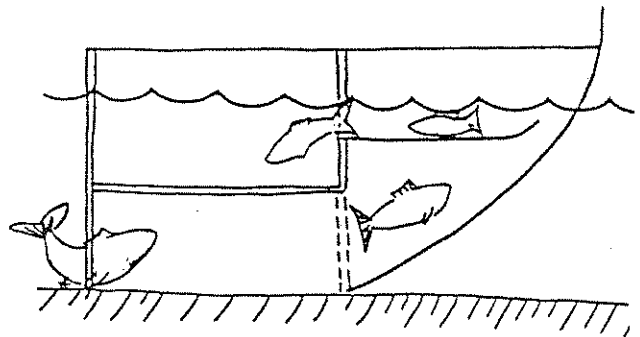
set at night as the salmon could not see ahead.

Each morning, the men would go out in canoes and lift the lids of the end baskets. They used a wooden hook and then lifted the salmon into their canoes. Not all of the salmon were kept. Some were thrown over the "fence" so that they could continue their trip upstream in order to spawn and provide more salmon for future Carrier generations.

The Carrier also built another kind of trap. This was used where the current was too swift for the first kind of weir.

This trap was attached to poles that stood in the water not too far from shore. The trap had a toboggan-shaped end that the current pulled down to the bottom of the river. It was made out of fir strips that were woven together to look like lattice work. The salmon would swim between the poles until it came to the lattice work. Then it would swim up the trap as far as it could go and pass through a small opening into the top part of the trap. The only way it could go now was back along the top part of the trap. That way

it ended up in the large fish basket at the end of the trap.

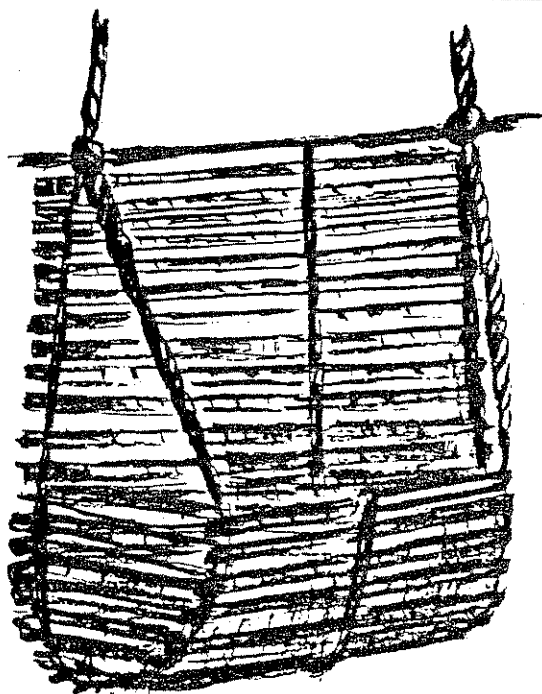


Salmon swimming into a weir and getting trapped in a fish basket.

In the days that followed, Chilh' helped the men carry the poles they had cut to form a fish weir. They planned to make a fence right across the stream.

The men began by pounding the poles into the bottom of the stream bed. Sections in the weir were left open where long baskets shaped like cylinders would be placed to trap the salmon. Chilh' helped by handing the poles to the men as they were needed. Chilh' wished he was tall enough to swing the mallets of stone and wood to force the poles into the river bed. Where the river was fast and deep in the middle of the stream, the men added other poles to act as braces so the fence would not be carried away by the current.

On top of the fence they placed split poles to form a walkway. Grandfather and others skilfully wove willow limbs together to make the structure more solid. When the weir was in place the men took great care in placing the fish baskets. They were very large and it took four men to move them into position. Over the bottom of the trap they spread gravel and sand. *Talo* was clever and the men had to disguise the trap. Soon all was in readiness and there was little to do but wait the arrival of *talo*. The nets had been readied and the canoe had been repaired.



The Carrier also used a type of wooden basket that was hung over a narrow waterfall. They made a bridge over the fall and suspended this basket above the water by lowering it on ropes that were made from bark. The basket was about two and a half to three metres wide. The salmon would try to jump over the falls, hit the back of the basket and fall into the trap. The basket was raised by pulling on the ropes and then the salmon were removed to be prepared for eating.

Waiting for the Salmon

While the families waited for the salmon to arrive, the boys had time to play some of their favorite games. The boys' favourite game was the Encircling Willow game. A hoop of willow sticks bound in place with willow bark strips was needed to play the game. The boys formed teams and aimed at the rolling hoop with pointless arrows and tried to hit it. The team who was the most successful kept the opposing team's arrows which had missed the hoop. Grandfather had helped Chilh' make his own bow which was strong and just the right size for his height. Chilh' was proud of his skill in this game and he soon had many more arrows to add to his possessions. Grandfather watched and smiled for he knew that Chilh' would be a fine hunter some day. Already his aim was accurate.

After several days had passed there was still no sign of the salmon, and food supplies had begun to run low. Grandfather suggested that now would be a good time for Chilh' to learn more about trapping and snaring small animals. Grandfather gathered the necessary tools and strings he would use to set the snares and traps. Chilh' eagerly collected his bow and arrows, hoping he would have the opportunity to use them too. It was a warm summer morning when they set out on their expedition.

Grandfather was very wise about the habits of all the animals and soon he pointed to a narrow track that ran through the forest. He told Chilh' that this was a

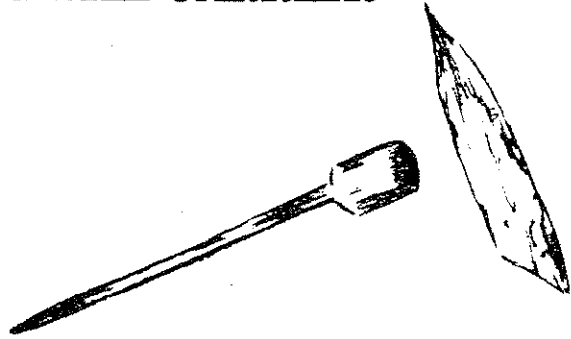


The beaver's name has been adopted as a clan name.

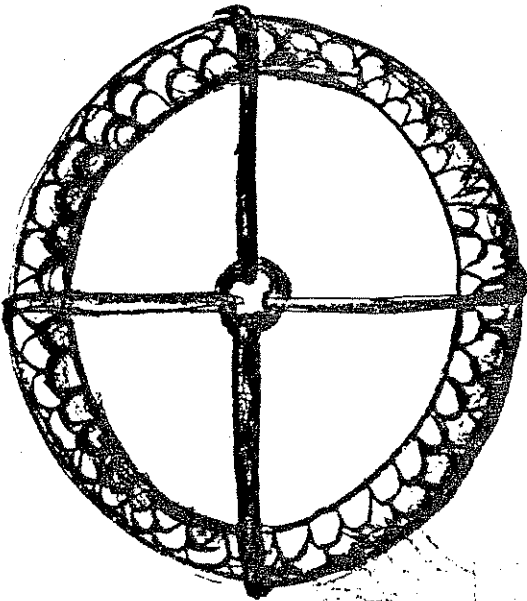
GAMES PLAYED BY THE CARRIER

The Carrier played many games. Most of them involved skills that were required in hunting and fishing. They were also a way to teach young children things they needed to know as adults. Speed, accuracy and skill were needed to win.

Te'ko is a game that was played in winter near the warmth of the fire. The players had a thin, springy board placed in the earthen floor beside themselves. Each player sat facing an opponent. The first player threw the stick, or *te'ko*, at his opponent's board. If the *te'ko* hit the board, it would spring back into the thrower's lap. He would keep throwing the *te'ko* until he missed. Then the other player would have his turn. The player with the most hits was the winner.



This was a game that was played to improve a person's throwing skills.



A Kei Pes wheel was hard to hit. Try it yourself with a hula hoop and bean bags.

Kei pes was a game that required skill in arrow shooting. Some say this was the national Carrier game. *Kei pes* meant "encircling willow" and was named after the wheel that was used in the game. The wheel was made of willow bark strings and three or four willow switches which were laced together and kept in place with strips of bark. The inside of the wheel was also made of strips of bark to form a cross.

A team might have five or six players, with each man having the same number of arrows. Team One rolled the wheel. Team Two tried to hit the wheel before it stopped rolling. If they didn't hit it, then they rolled it for Team One. If Team Two did hit the wheel, then it was hung on a short stick. Now, each member of Team One could shoot at the wheel. If a player from Team One hit the wheel with his first arrow, he kept the arrows that Team Two shot while the wheel was moving. If the wheel was hit by a second or succeeding arrow, then the wheel was hung in front of Team Two and Team One tried to hit it and win back their arrows. If they succeeded, then the game was even and they started again. If they didn't hit the wheel, then Team Two was the winner.

game trail used by animals when they travelled to water. It was here that they would set their snares. Grandfather showed Chilh' how to cut a stick and push one end into the ground. He bent it over the trail and secured it to a short stick which had also been bent to form a half circle. A loop of babiche was attached in which Chilh' hoped a rabbit would be caught. They set many more snares on the trail while Grandfather explained other methods of snaring and trapping animals.

Grandfather told him of the time when he was a young man and how he trapped his first bear. It was exciting to hear these tales and Chilh' wished that he too could one day capture a bear. Mother and Doh' were very fond of bear fat which they added to dried berries to make them moist and delicious.

As they continued to set their snares, Grandfather taught Chilh' the correct ways of the hunter. A woman must never be allowed to walk on or step over a trail where a man was hunting. All his work would come to nothing and he would not catch anything that day. When a hunter decided to trap a bear, he must not drink from the same cup as his wife for a month before he goes hunting. He must drink from a special birch bark cup. He must also spend much of the month preparing his snares. If he failed to follow these rules the animal would surely escape after it had been snared. To ensure his success, the hunter would chew a certain plant which the bear was very fond of eating and spit it into the air and cry, "May I snare you" or "May I trap you." This showed respect for the animal so that it might allow itself to be caught. After an animal was trapped, a paw or leg would be cut off and left to pacify its fellow creatures. Otherwise they might be annoyed that the animal was killed.

Chilh' listened carefully to his grandfather. He wanted to remember everything so that he too would be a great hunter like his father and grandfather. The old man continued with his lessons. When a **marten** was to be hunted, a dead-fall trap was often used. A good hunter would sleep with a stick across his neck so that his trap would be successful and fall across the marten's neck. The hunter then must be careful not to let a dog near the catch. If this were to happen, all other martens would consider it disrespectful and not allow that particular hunter to trap them. His traps would always remain empty.



Grandfather may have given Chilh' a ceremonial comb such as this. It was placed next to the hunter as he slept and helped him dream of hunting and understanding his dreams so that he would catch his prey.

SPIRITUALITY

The Carrier believed that everything was sacred.

The earth, water, sun and air were the four elements of the earth and were the givers of life. The year was broken into four seasons (our spring, summer, fall and winter) and the world had four major directions (our north, east, south and west)

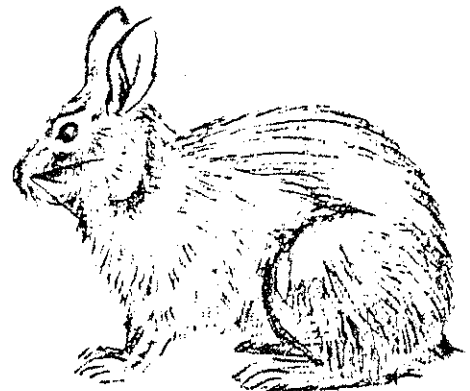
Only what was needed in order to survive was taken from the land. If roots or plants were taken from the earth, something of value was left in their place. The Carrier always told the earth why these things were being used and asked the Earth Spirit to help them.

The Carrier believed that the world was made up of real things such as the plants, animals and humans, as well as invisible spirits. These spirits were both good and bad and controlled the plants, animals and humans. The Carrier used mystery charms to help them hunt and fish as well as their skills in shooting arrows and making traps. They also made special preparations and performed ceremonies which helped them gain the goodwill of the animal spirits. The Carriers always cleansed their bodies and fasted before they went hunting or fishing.

After the traps had been set, Chilh' and Grandfather returned to the village. They would check the traps later that evening. When they arrived Doh' called out a greeting. She was pleased they had returned safely. The women were making adjustments to the drying racks which had been built in the open to take full advantage of the sun. The smoke house was ready and firewood had been gathered. Much *sohjut* had been collected to create the smoke needed to cure the fish properly so it would keep during the winter months without spoiling. Baskets had been made to hold the fresh fish. Stone knives had been sharpened and large, bark boiling pots were made ready. Stones had been collected to be heated in the fires. These would be used to heat the water and boil the salmon. The fishing camp was ready.

Chilh' ran to tell Father all he had learned that day. His father smiled at the eagerness of the boy. "You have listened well my son. Your grandfather has much to teach you because he has lived a long time and is very wise in the ways of animals and men," said Father.

That evening the boy and his grandfather returned to their traps and found that they had caught four rabbits. "These will be good eating," said Grandfather. Chilh' proudly carried home their catch.



Collecting the First Salmon, and the Feast

The next morning a cry was heard across the camp. "The salmon are here. *Moodih* (the leader) has been captured." There was now great excitement in the camp as everyone rushed to the water's edge to greet *Moodih*. The first fish was very important and it would be roasted or boiled at a special feast to celebrate the arrival once more of the salmon. This would be a time of thanksgiving and happiness but first a piece of salmon was taken to the river and thrown back into the water. Grandfather explained that this was the correct way to express their thanks to *talo* for allowing himself to be caught and would ensure that the salmon would arrive again the following year. Grandfather also explained to Chilh' that many salmon would be scooped up in nets and placed over the weir so that they would continue their journey upstream and lay their eggs. This also ensured that there would always be fish for them to catch.

Father and the other men climbed into the canoes to check the other traps. There were several more fish already. They emptied them into the canoe and paddled to shore. They knew that this was just the beginning and in the following days the number of fish would be much greater. The early fish would be eaten fresh at a feast for everyone. The girls took the fish from the men and carried them to where the women were waiting to clean them. Some took the large fish and squeezed the eggs directly into their mouths. Fresh salmon eggs tasted delicious!

HOW TO PREPARE SALMON

The Carrier people were very good at preparing salmon. They needed to save the salmon for winter when fresh food was scarce. It was hard work to get the salmon ready for winter. This work was usually done by the women while the men were fishing for more salmon, or hunting other animals.

The first thing the women had to do was clean, or **gut**, the salmon. They did this by twisting off the head, and then cutting open the belly. The insides were removed. The Carrier did not waste any of this precious meat, so whatever parts they did not eat were fed to the dogs.

The next step was to wash the salmon. Any pieces of the insides that were still there would be rinsed out.

Then the salmon were hung up by their tails on special poles. These were called drying poles.

The poles were placed on the drying racks. They were either placed outside where the wind would pass over them, or else they were put in a special building called a **smokehouse**. All of this work was done in the morning, as soon as the fish traps were emptied.

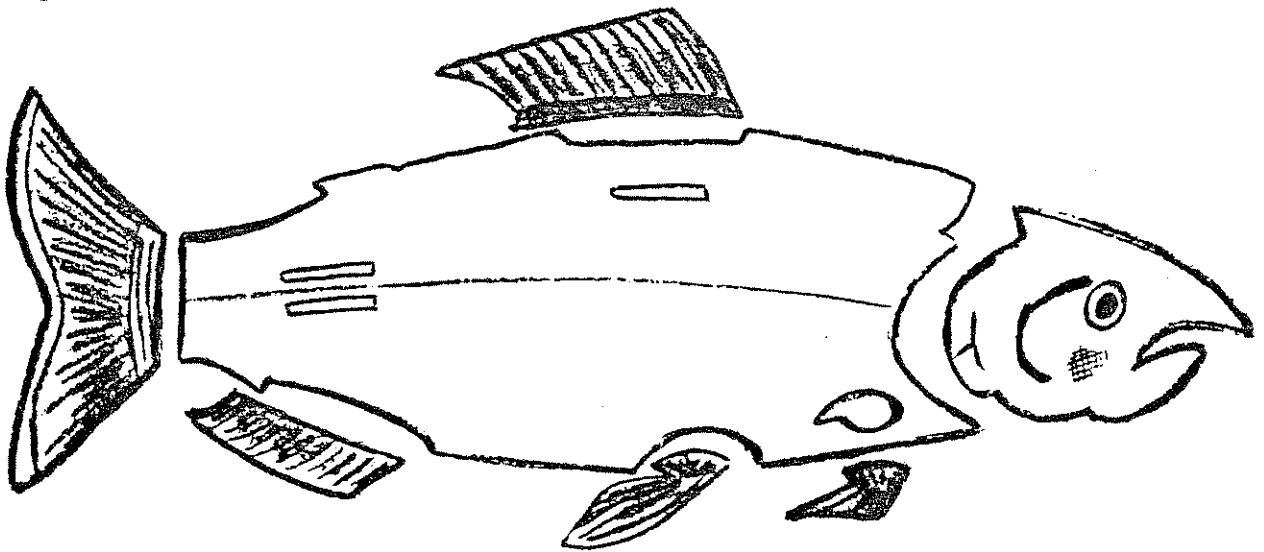
By evening, the fish were dried a little bit and all of the blood had run out of them. They were carefully removed from the drying poles and prepared for further drying. This would take at least two days and even longer in wet weather.

The salmon were carefully cut open. This was called **filleting**.

The salmon fillets were hung over drying poles in the smokehouse for another two days. A fire was kept going all the time in the smokehouse. It had to be from wood that would make smoke because this is what **cured** the fish. Curing kept the fish from going bad, and kept flies and hornets away.

When the salmon fillets were dry enough, they were taken from the poles and placed in birch bark containers for storing.

Some of the salmon was cut into very thin strips before it was hung to dry for the last time. These strips were dried out completely so there was no moisture in them, and stored for winter. They didn't have to be cooked. When a person was hungry, he could eat them just the way they were.



Salmon heads and all fins were removed and then the salmon was cleaned and filleted.

Doh' busily helped clean the fish and twist off the heads. The heads were also kept and dried as they contained a lot of fat and were very tasty. Doh's mouth was watering as she placed the cut up salmon into the cooking pots. Other girls kept placing hot rocks into the water to make it boil. As the rocks cooled they removed them and placed them back in the fire. Soon, there was a delicious smell of boiling fish in the air which made everyone hungry. Some small boys took some of the fish tails and roasted them on the end of sticks over the fire. There was very little flesh left on the tails but the boys thoroughly enjoyed their early meal.

OTHER USES OF THE SALMON

Fresh salmon was often roasted. After it had been gutted and cleaned it was cut into pieces about five centimetres long. Now a roasting pole was put through the meat and it was roasted over the fire. Finally, it was put on a drying rack above the fire to get the flavor of the smoke.

Fishheads were put on drying poles and dried much like the filleted salmon. They were stored in the meat cache for winter use also. When they were boiled for eating, a ladle was used to skim off the grease because it was added to other foods to make them taste good.

Salmon heads were also allowed to rot in order to get the oil or grease from them. The heads were placed in piles and then left in the water along the shore of a lake or stream until they rotted. Then they were taken out of the water and left in the sun to dry out a little. Next, they were put into a large bark basket and boiled until the oil came out of them and floated to the top of the water.

Salmon skins were used to store the oil. The salmon was cut around the head. The salmon meat was scraped out of the skin. Next, the skin was blown up like a balloon and the end was tied shut. It was left to dry in the wind. When it was totally dry, it could be used to store the oil that was collected from the heads.

Female salmon have eggs inside of them. These are about the size of a small pea. Salmon eggs could be dried and stored in birch baskets to be eaten in the winter. Sometimes, as soon as the fish came out of the water, the eggs were eaten by squeezing directly into their mouths. The Carrier thought they were a very special treat.

Salmon pemmican was also made by the Carrier. Dried salmon was pounded into a powder and then mixed with grease and pressed into little cakes. These were taken on hunting trips or eaten at other times when the Carrier were not able to cook proper meals.

taking the place of her mother, who would stay behind with the baby. Doh' was only too happy to help, and she looked forward to the journey eagerly. The thought of seeing strange new sights was always exciting. Mother advised her about what would be needed on the journey and cooking pots were chosen carefully. The men would hunt on the way, so there would be a steady supply of fresh meat.

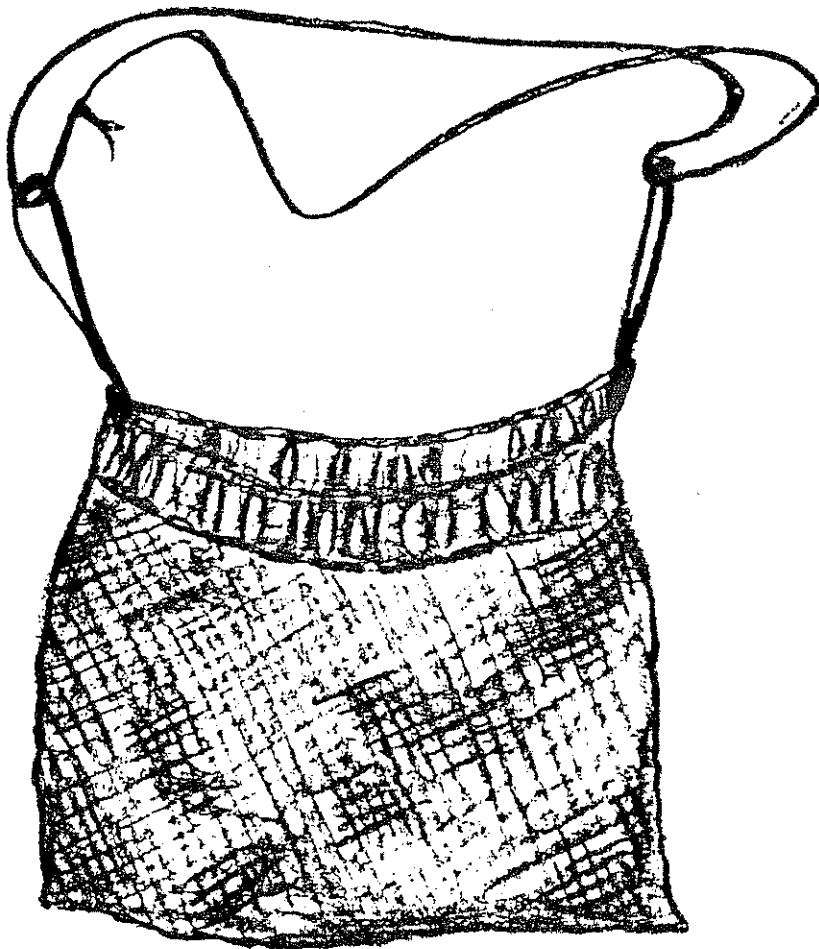
There was a feeling of excitement in the air the day before the departure. Chilh' kept close to the men as they talked about the best ways to bargain. It was not wise to appear too anxious when bartering for an item even if you wanted it very badly. If The People Who Lived By The Great Waters realized that you were anxious to have something, the price would be higher. Chilh' listened wide-eyed and the more he listened the more he wanted to make the trip the next day. He knew better than to ask his father because that would show he did not have patience. Patience was something a boy, soon to be a great hunter, must have.

After the evening meal, when everyone was visiting together and discussing how best to approach The People From The West, Father walked over to where Chilh' was sitting beside his grandfather. "It is time for a boy who can set traps and fish well to make his first trading trip. Chilh', you will be travelling with us tomorrow!" said Father.

Chilh' at first looked surprised and he glanced at his grandfather. The old man nodded and Chilh' beamed with pleasure. He quickly stood up and ran to tell Doh' the news and to pack the hooks and fishing lines that he and Grandfather had made.

The next day the whole village was out to see them off on their long trip. Amid cheerful waving and last minute instructions, the party moved down the trail towards the west. Chilh' walked proudly between his father and grandfather, while Doh' walked with the women at the back of the group.

The first stage of the journey was made by spruce bark canoes. Chilh' found that they must always paddle upstream because the rivers flow from the mountains in the west. They must cross the mountains to reach the meeting place where they traded with The People Of The Great Waters. There were times when everyone had to climb out of the canoes to travel past rapids or log jams. Everyone helped pack the heavy loads and the canoes around these obstacles. When the rivers and streams became impassable, the canoes were cached and covered with spruce bows to camouflage them. They would need the canoes later, on the return journey.



Grandfather and Chilh' carried bags like these to hold their belongings. They were lightly made so they could hunt as they travelled.

The trail became very steep as it wound into the mountains. Chilh' and Doh' were awed by the enormous height of these mountains. In the distance they had not appeared so great but as they drew nearer they watched them rise higher and higher. Both brother and sister felt very small in comparison to these mighty coastal mountains and they wondered about the people who lived protected behind them.

The way became even more difficult as they neared the high passes. There were many more calls for rest stops. The air was cooler and Chilh' was surprised that there was so much snow on the peaks, even in the middle of summer. As they began to descend into the valleys on the other side, the days once again become warmer. The snow-covered peaks faded into the distance as they neared the meeting place where Doh' and Chilh's people had always traded with the coastal people.

Father called a halt late one afternoon. He selected a messenger to go forward with news that they had arrived. This was the proper thing to do, Grandfather explained, because a large party could be misunderstood. The others might think that they were on a raid, rather than just trading. The old man went on to tell about a time when the neighbouring tribes were not as friendly as they were now and war had broken out between them.

The messenger moved quickly and was soon back with the news that The People Who Live By The Great Water had not yet arrived. Father led his group to the meeting place where they set up camp and lit cooking fires. Doh' was kept busy collecting firewood and helping the older women prepare the evening meal.

Chilh' and Grandfather went to a nearby stream and set some lines in the hope of catching some fish. Chilh' enjoyed these times alone with his grandfather. The old man knew so much and he always made his stories very interesting and exciting. He showed Chilh' some tracks on the bank.



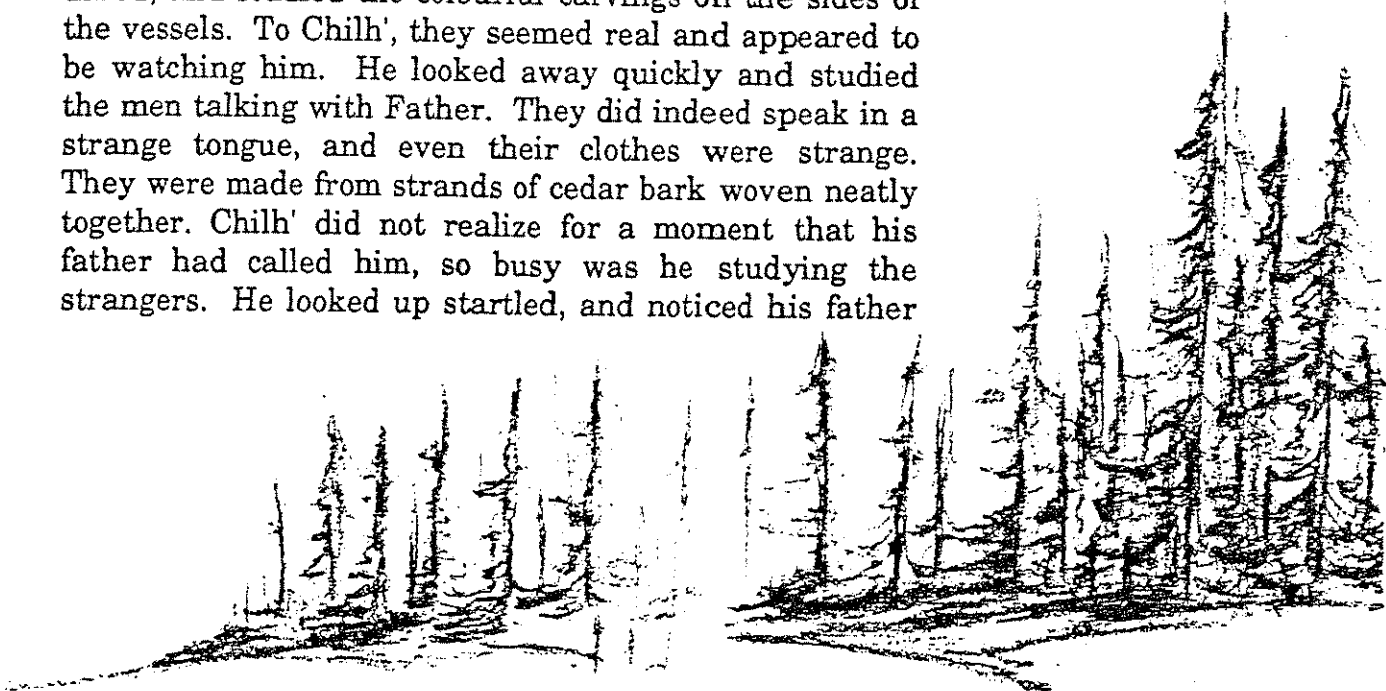
"All tracks tell a story, Chilh'," said Grandfather. "This is the track of a *wasi* which has come to the stream to drink. Do you see how one of the front paws has been pressed firmly into the mud, but the other left only a slight print?" Chilh' looked very carefully and he could see what his grandfather meant, although he had noticed nothing when he first saw the tracks.

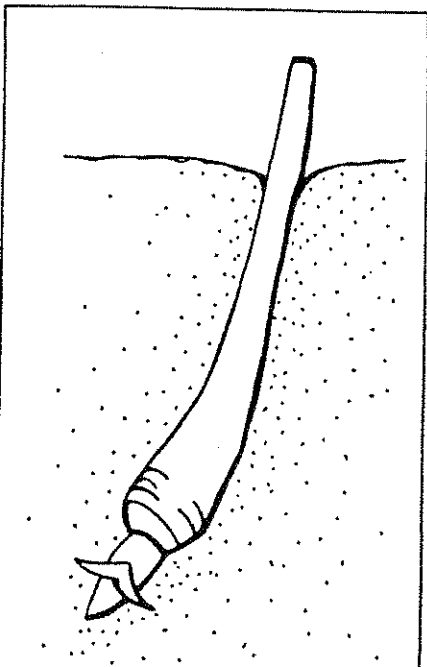
"This lynx must have a hurt or cut paw," explained Grandfather. "We will set a trap here tomorrow. The lynx may be hungry if he is unable to move around easily to catch his food."

With the lines set, Chilh' and his grandfather returned to camp in time to join the other men for the evening meal.

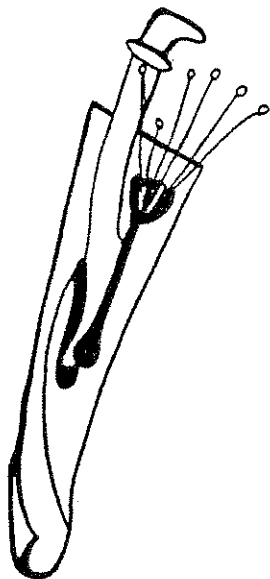
The following day there was a cry from the river. Canoes could be seen moving upstream. The women and the young people were ordered by Father to hide in the bush until he judged it safe to return. This was in case the visitors were not the people they expected. There was nothing to worry about, however, because as the great canoes drew near, they recognized the people they had traded with in previous years. Greetings were called out on both sides in Carrier, "*Hadih!*" The women and children came out of hiding to watch the huge canoes being pulled ashore.

These dugout boats were made from mighty cedars. Huge cedars grew all around them in these lands of the coastal people. Chilh' and Doh' moved as close as they dared, and studied the colourful carvings on the sides of the vessels. To Chilh', they seemed real and appeared to be watching him. He looked away quickly and studied the men talking with Father. They did indeed speak in a strange tongue, and even their clothes were strange. They were made from strands of cedar bark woven neatly together. Chilh' did not realize for a moment that his father had called him, so busy was he studying the strangers. He looked up startled, and noticed his father





This is a dentalium shell buried in the sandy bottom of the ocean. The shells were used to decorate clothing and personal belongings and were traded to the Carrier.



The animal that lives in the shell has feelers to gather food. The black part is his digestive system.

beckoning to him. Very shyly Chilh' moved forward as his father began to talk to the strangers in their own tongue. Chilh' knew his father had learned the language of the people of the west but he had never heard him speak it. From the way his father pointed to him he realized that he was being introduced. Chilh' looked down at the ground and waited.

Father and the others who understood the language of the visitors, told the others what had been said. Much news was passed back and forth. One piece of news was very puzzling. The people from the great water told of huge canoes like floating villages which had visited them. The people who lived on these giant canoes had very pale and sickly skin and hair covered their faces. These people dressed and spoke very strangely. It was feared that they might attack but it was soon discovered that they only wanted to trade. The strangers had many wonderful things to trade for furs. After trading, the huge canoes would float away and disappear. Chilh' spent many days and nights thinking about these stories and he wondered if they were really true.

Father invited the visitors to play a game of Throwing The Spear. The young men eagerly gathered around to test their skill while the women and children watched and cheered their favorites. It was a time of fun before the serious business of trading began.

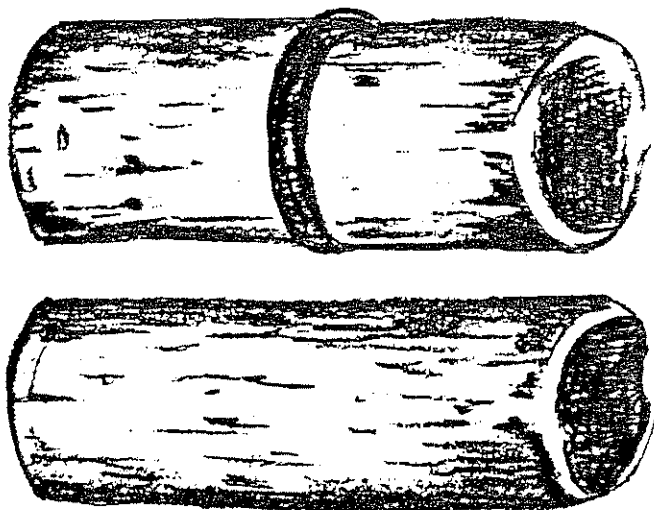
Finally, the men gathered their trade goods and the bargaining began. Not all the goods were brought forward at once. Some were kept aside to be brought out later to make a final, difficult deal. Father wanted a particularly fine stone axe which had been made with great skill. It was sharp and well balanced. Father offered five beaver pelts for the axe but it was refused. He added two caribou hides which he had received from the Sekani people but this too was refused. Chilh' knew his father wanted the axe very badly and he held his breath as his father offered three prized marmot skins. The skins were picked up and studied carefully. Chilh' watched anxiously. The man finally looked up and nodded. Chilh' breathed a sigh of relief as the men exchanged their goods.

Later, when the last items were stored away by their new owners, the dancing and singing began. Each tribe danced their clan dances and sang their clan songs to entertain all who had gathered. A great feast was prepared and many stories were told. It was a time of enjoyment and visiting now that the business of trading had finished.

The men began to play gambling games. Grandfather had warned his grandson about the dangers of such games. Chilh' listened attentively as the old man spoke.

"Gambling should only be played with what a person is willing to lose. If a person is foolish or is a poor loser he should not play the gambling games. He is a disgrace to his people," said Grandfather.

The games continued into the night. Some people lost all they had gained in their trading, while others won much more. Gradually groups began to move off to their beds. Morning came quickly when you had a great distance to travel and they were anxious to begin their return journey early the next morning. Chilh' lay on his bed with jumbled thoughts in his head about all he had seen at this trading camp. He had so much to tell his mother, he thought as he drifted into a deep sleep.



These are gambling sticks. They are moved quickly from one hand to the other and the gambler tries to guess which hand has the marked 'stick' in it.

A Busy Time

Toward the end of the summer, the days became busy. Everyone was anxious to have enough food stored for the coming winter months, and a balhach was planned for early fall. They needed great quantities of food for the balhach feast and to use as gifts for guests.

Chilh' and Doh' were kept busy gathering the materials needed to take to their berry picking grounds. These were rich areas belonging to their family. The area was near the base and slopes of the mountains to the east. It was a four day journey and many people were needed to pack the gear and to pick the berries. Father and the men also planned to hunt caribou (*whudzih*) and marmot in the mountains while the women picked the berries.

When all was ready, everyone set out early in the morning. They were in high spirits, with the men once again in the lead so they could hunt on the way. It was a happy time for all and there was singing and telling of stories as they walked along. There was also a great deal of talk about the balhach to be held in the near future.

When they reached their berry picking grounds, they first prepared their lodges which were still in good condition. Doh' checked her baskets carefully to make sure the straps were strong. She had made them herself with Grandmother's help. She had a small one with a strap attached which she wore around her neck. This allowed her to keep her hands free to pick the berries more efficiently. They also made larger baskets into which the smaller ones would be emptied as they became full.



The next morning the women cheerfully gathered their baskets and walked the short distance to the blueberries which stretched out in a carpet as far as they could see between the jackpines and poplars. The baskets full of delicious dark-blue berries were emptied into the larger baskets which were placed close by. The work went well and they soon had many baskets full of plump berries.

It was decided that some of the women should carry the berries back to the camp and begin the processing. Others had remained at the lodges to build and tend the fires. Doh' was one of those who returned with the large baskets of berries. The women tending the fires greeted them cheerfully and helped pour the berries into the special cooking pots made of spruce bark. The children eagerly ate some of the fresh berries, and soon their faces were stained blue. Earlier, they had helped collect the rocks which were heating in the fires. The hot rocks were then placed in the pots to crush and boil the berries. Soon the delectable smell of cooking blueberries filled the air. With hungry eyes, the children peered into the bubbling mass of berry pulp until they were chased away by the women.

The drying racks had also been prepared and large leaves had been gathered and placed on them. The thick berry mass would be spread to dry on the leaves. Doh' wondered if the men were having any success with the hunt for caribou. She knew that they would be away for many days because the caribou at that time of year moved up the mountainside to feed and to avoid the flies and mosquitoes in the valleys.





CARRIER NAMES FOR BERRIES

Soapberry
ningwus

Soapberries were the first ones picked each year in June. These were never smoked. They were sun dried and formed into cakes. Then they were stored in birch bark baskets. The Carrier made Indian ice cream with the juice of this berry. When the juice was whipped very quickly, it became very light and frothy. Soapberry roots could be dried and then boiled in water. The liquid was used as a medicine. It was a good laxative.

Strawberry
'indzi

Strawberries ripened around the end of June and early July. These were eaten fresh and also made into fruit cakes or fruit leather. The vines were dried, and then boiled. The liquid was drunk to cure diarrhea.

Raspberry
'ut'ankal

Raspberries were ready around early July. These had to be picked carefully because they got squashed easily. If they could be picked without any leaves or dirt getting in the basket, they didn't have to be cleaned a second time and could go directly into the boiling pot. Raspberry roots and branches were dried and then boiled to be used as a blood purifier. The Carrier used this as a good medicine for anyone who needed to have more iron in their blood.

Gooseberry
dangwuz

Gooseberries, and red and black currants were also ready to be picked in early July. These berries were used mainly for food.

Huckleberry
(High bush)
duje

Saskatoon
K'enmai
or *mai dunulhgus*

Blueberry
yalhtsul

Huckleberries, blueberries, rosehips and Saskatoon berries ripened between the end of July and early September.



Rosehips had to have the seed taken out. Then they were mashed and made into cakes. Rosehip roots were dried and then boiled. This medicine was used for sore eyes.

Saskatoon berries mixed with bear grease were a real delicacy. Sometimes they were mixed with salmon eggs and boiled together for a special treat.

Cranberry
Tsalhtsetsun

Cranberries were the last to ripen. They were picked in late September or early October.

Huckleberries and blueberries grew near the mountains. Strawberries grew in open areas. The other berries grew almost anywhere.

Berries were usually stored in pits in the ground. If they were put in the meat cache, they tended to dry out.



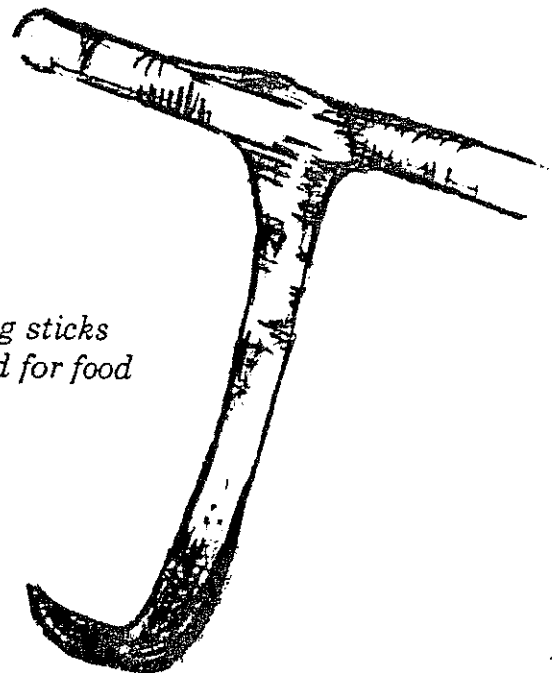
The day before, Grandmother and several girls had collected bracken fern roots and wild onions which had been dug from the hard earth with their digging sticks.

Grandmother supervised the digging of the pit in which the vegetables would be cooked. The pit was lined with pine branches. The onions and ferns were lowered on sheets of bark onto the branches. The children were instructed to gather as much wood as they could to make the fire which burned on top. The pit was left covered all night.

The next day, while the salmon was cooking in the pots, Grandmother indicated that it was time to uncover the pit and remove the contents. The children stood around quietly as the top layers were removed. They knew that delicious smells would soon fill the air. The children were delighted with this sight and could hardly wait to begin the feast. As the women and the girls hurried with the last minute preparations, many youngsters had to be told kindly but firmly to move from underfoot.

At last all was ready and the men sat on their bark mats to eat. Doh' was kept busy offering plates of fish and vegetables to the hungry men who had worked so hard to build the weir and catch the salmon. Chilh' loved the first fish of the season and he liked the rich broth filled with fat in which the fish were cooked. Soon the men were finished and the women and children sat down to eat. There was plenty for all and they ate their fill.

*Women used digging sticks
to pull up roots used for food
and medicine.*



After the meal, when everyone was feeling good and filled with thankfulness that the salmon had once again allowed themselves to be caught in their nets, there came a time of singing, dancing and telling of stories. Clan songs were sung by everyone and those who owned personal songs sang them too while the people sat around the lodge wall and listened appreciatively. Father, who was a clan chief or *dune za'*, danced his personal dance and Grandfather told funny stories of *Es'tace*.

Chilh' loved the stories of *Es'tace* and he loved the way Grandfather told them. *Es'tace* was a man older than Chilh's great grandfather and he always did strange things. The children sat wide-eyed as Grandfather told the story of *Es'tace* and a fishing trip he made all by himself. The children laughed with glee as Grandfather told how the birds in his story teased and laughed at *Es'tace*. Grandfather also told the story about how Chilh' and he caught the rabbits. He made the story exciting and made imitations of the animals which helped everyone to picture what was going on.

Chilh' looked down modestly as Grandfather explained how quickly Chilh' learned to make the traps. Chilh' was pleased that his grandfather thought well of him. He looked up to see his father and mother smile and he knew that they were also proud of him.

The children tried very hard to stay awake to hear all the stories but gradually the weariness of the day overcame them and they fell asleep dreaming of all the things they had heard. The adults too, moved to their beds because everyone must sleep well before the hard work began again in the morning. They must prepare enough salmon to last all the families all winter.

Trading With the Coast

It was not long after the first visit to the salmon camp that Father and the elders began to discuss another trip. It was the annual trip to the west to trade with The People Of The Great Waters.

Chilh' was secretly hoping that this season, he would be allowed to travel with the company that went on the trading trip. He had listened eagerly to the stories of those who had returned from trips in past seasons and he longed to see the people who spoke strangely and wore different clothing. He had heard of their great canoes with the figures of animals carved upon them and of the many wonderful things they had to trade. Mother wanted a new **cooking box** and some more rich and delicious **oolichan** grease which tasted so good with their dried food. Doh' especially admired the dentalia shells that could be worn as jewellery.

Father and the other families had gathered together all the goods they wished to use for trade. They had many furs of marmot, rabbit, beaver, lynx and muskrat which had been caught in their traps. Some of the furs had been made into warm robes by the women. Doh' had made one of the robes herself under Mother's careful direction. She hoped that it would be well received by the traders from the west.

Musk rats were hunted for their fur which was used to make some types of clothing.



Last fall, trading had taken place when the Sekani, The People From The North, visited their village. Father, Grandfather and some of the other families had traded dried salmon for hides. Some of these hides, which they did not need, were now packed into bundles ready for the coming trip.

Chilh' made himself as helpful as possible running errands, helping to tie the fur bundles with spruce roots and waiting attentively for any instructions. Grandfather and Father smiled at each other as Chilh' ran willingly on another errand. Neither said a word to Chilh' but they had already agreed that he should join them this year. Grandfather had been impressed by Chilh's eagerness to learn when they set the traps for the rabbits. The old man felt that his grandson was ready for such a journey.

The women busied themselves with their preparations. They must carry all their cooking equipment and enough food to last them the journey. Mother had asked Doh' to go on the trip to help with the cooking and the backpacking. On this trip, Doh' would be

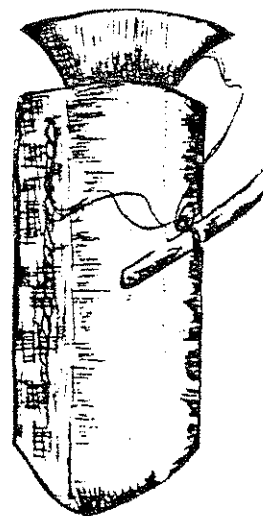
OOLICHAN OIL

Oil or fat was a major part of the Carrier diet. They used their own resources for bear fat, salmon oil and deer tallow, but the Carrier traded with the Coastal Indians for the precious oolichan oil.

The coastal women made this oil from fermented fish. Many fish were allowed to go bad. These were put in a canoe or a large wooden box. The container was then filled with water. The women placed rocks that had

been heated in the fire into the water and waited for the mixture to boil. The oil from the rotten fish rose to the top of the water. When the water was cool, the women skimmed the oil off the top. Then the women took the fish and pressed them against their bodies to remove any oil that was left in them.

The oil was kept in wooden boxes, containers made from kelp or cleaned salmon skins.



Oolichan oil was very precious. It could be kept in a wooden container. The plug is like a cork.

BERRY PREPARATION

Berries were also important in the Carrier diet. Most berries were turned into cakes or a type of fruit leather.

Racks were made from willow branches. Mats were woven together from willow bark. These were placed on top of the frame and then large **thimbleberry** leaves were put on top of the mats. The frames were called *tchus'tloo*.

Then the women were ready to pick the berries. They used baskets that hung around their necks. Then the berries were carefully placed in the larger baskets. Some berries such as raspberries were easily crushed, so a layer of leaves was placed between them.

The women built a berry cooking pot and tray. They dug a shallow hole in the ground so that the tray was on a small slope. In this way, the juice would collect at the end of the tray and could be ladled out easily. Next they would make the pot. This was usually made from spruce bark. It had no bottom so the juice would run into the tray. The tray and basket were held in place by three sticks that were driven into the ground.

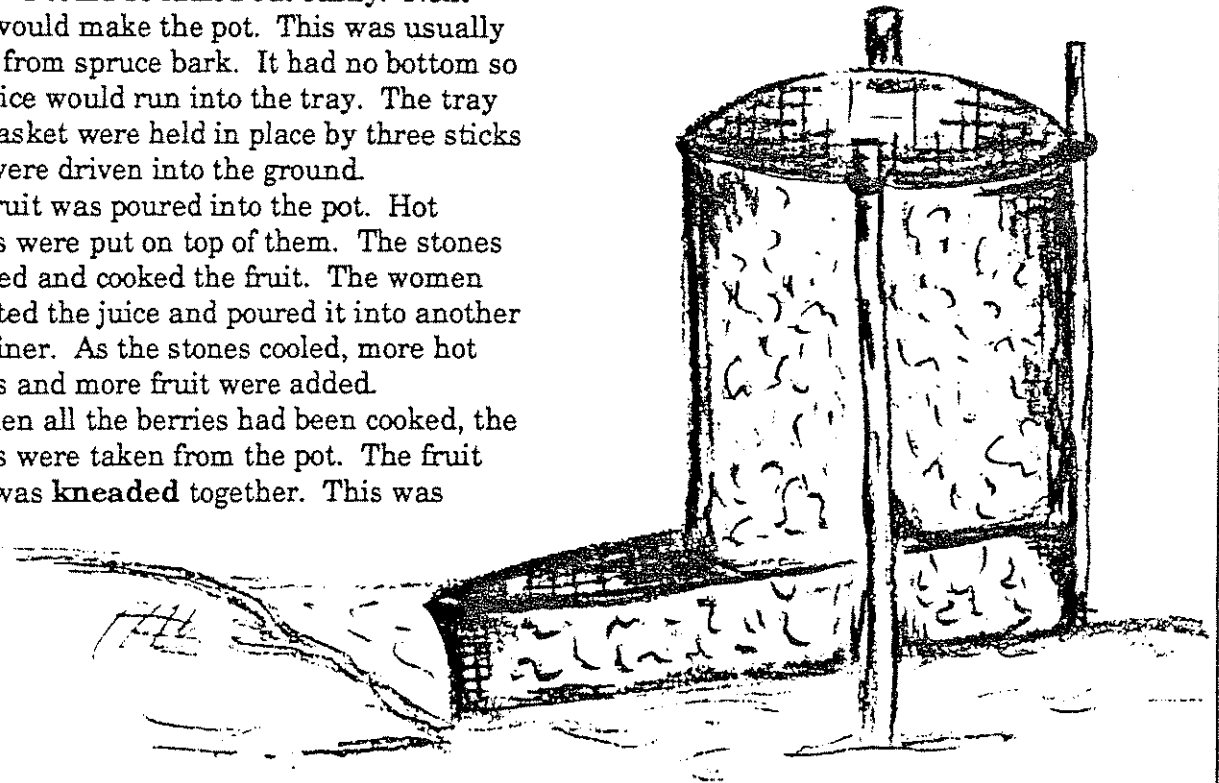
The fruit was poured into the pot. Hot stones were put on top of them. The stones crushed and cooked the fruit. The women collected the juice and poured it into another container. As the stones cooled, more hot stones and more fruit were added.

When all the berries had been cooked, the stones were taken from the pot. The fruit pulp was **kneaded** together. This was

spread over the leaves on the frame. A fire was kept going under the frame so the fruit would dry. The sun also helped. The juice was poured over the pulp little by little as the berries dried. Another mat was placed on top of the berries and then two women would flip the berries over so they dried evenly. When the berries had just the right amount of juice in them and had dried enough, they were stored for winter.

Some berries were smoked in the smokehouse because it gave them a different flavor.

Berry cakes could last for two or three years without going bad. The Carrier would eat these with fish oil or bear grease because they liked the taste of the two foods mixed together.



Berries were put in the boiler and then the juice ran into the tray at the bottom.

SWEAT LODGES

Sweat lodges were built by the Carrier people and used before a man went hunting. The hunter didn't eat or drink for two or three days. This was called "fasting". Then he went into the sweat lodge. There he prayed to the spirits to make them happy. If all this was done properly, then the man would have a successful hunt.

A sweat lodge looked like an igloo made with branches and covered with mats and more branches. Willow branches were bent and both ends were stuck into the ground to form the dome. These were tied together with willow fibres. The frame was covered with pine branches, woven mats and earth. An opening was left as a door. Stones were heated and then placed in the sweat lodge. Water was poured over these to make steam. Skins covered the doorway so the steam stayed inside the lodge.

The men, too, had carefully prepared for their hunting trip. Before Father left their summer lodge, he had once again visited the medicine man and had given him some fine furs. In return the medicine man would use his powers to help the hunters kill many caribou and other game. Later, at the berry picking camp, a sweat lodge was built. The men used the lodge to purify themselves. This was a way of showing respect for the animals, so the caribou would allow themselves to be caught. It was important to show all hunted animals respect or the hunters would not have any success. Chilh' also used the sweat lodge because he was going on the hunt with the men. The men had also fasted for many days before the hunt.

Chilh', Father, and the other men climbed high up in the mountains and moved quietly along a small valley covered with **alpine** grasses. They set up their camp in the valley because they had seen signs of caribou and other smaller game in the area. The valley had steep sides but was wide and flat in the centre. As they walked along, Chilh's sharp eyes scanned ahead. Abruptly he stopped. In the far distance he was sure he had seen some movement. He stood motionless and the others, sensing that something was about to happen, also stopped and looked ahead.

"Father, I see a caribou at the end of the valley!" Chilh' whispered excitedly.

His father followed his son's gaze but he could not see the animals. Everyone knew that Chilh' had very good eyesight and they respected his judgement. He had proven this on many occasions during their trips to the salmon camp. Father motioned for the men to move quietly back down the valley out of sight and hearing of the caribou. Fortunately, the wind was in the right direction and not carrying their scent to the animals.

The men talked quietly as they made their plans. The head of the valley ended abruptly against the sheer sides of the mountain so the caribou could not escape that way. The men set to work cutting trees from the sides of the mountain slopes to make a fence across the valley. It was very hard work pounding the poles into the soil to form the fence. There were gaps between the poles, and snares were attached to the poles. It took two days for the fence to be completed.

On the third day the men were ready, and they discussed the plan of action for the next day. It was the boys' job to move to either side of the valley to prevent escape that way. The men would move through the trees to the head of the valley behind the caribou. It was important not to startle the animals into flight too soon.

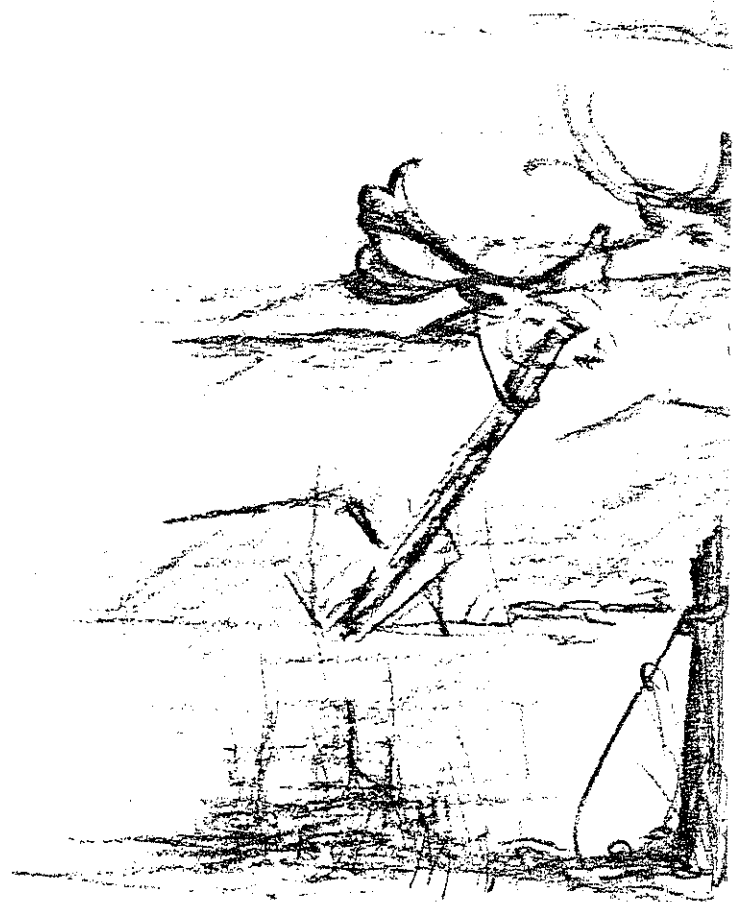
When everyone was in position, the men quietly began to walk towards the grazing animals. The nearest caribou looked up, alert and flaring their nostrils as they sniffed the air for danger. The men stood still as the herd of about thirty animals began to move nervously away from the strange new scent. With heads held high, they began to trot down the valley. An eager young man quickly set out at a run to follow them. This was a mistake, as the frightened animals began a headlong rush and veered towards the hillside to escape the danger from behind.

Chilh' signalled to the boys with him. They all stood, and shouted and waved their arms to scare the caribou away. The frightened beasts turned quickly from the new danger. They continued their flight down the valley. With the boys on the hillside and the hunters behind, the animals were kept moving towards the fence. As they got closer to the snares, the hunters moved the herd in a headlong rush of panic. The animals, seeing the gaps between the poles, raced to escape. Many were caught as their heads slipped through the snare loops. But many also escaped. Those that were caught, jerked the poles from the ground. The terrified animals continued their frantic rush towards the trees. The poles they continued to drag became entangled in fallen logs and underbrush.

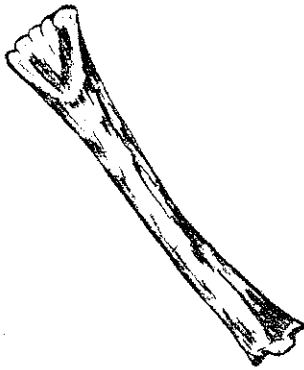


Chilh' and the others rushed forward to help those who were following the caribou. Everyone used their weapons to kill the struggling animals. They had caught fifteen caribou! There would be plenty of meat for all the families and many hides to make clothing, moccasins, mitts, rugs and babiche. Caribou hide was greatly prized as it wore better and lasted longer than any other hide. The men were well pleased with their work, and they praised the boys for their part in the capture of so many caribou.

The animals were skinned and the meat cut into portions for easy carrying. The tongue, heart and liver were especially good to eat and the men built fires to roast some of this meat on sticks. The fat dripped from the sizzling meat as it cooked. The delicious smell made them realize how hungry they all were. Soon the food was ready, and in no time everyone felt comfortably full and happy. The large leg bones were placed by the fire and, when they were hot, cracked open to eat the marrow. Chilh' was content and a little sleepy after hunting and eating so much food.







*This is a hide scraper
made from a bone.*

The next day, many trips were needed to carry the meat down the mountain to where the women cut much of it into strips for drying. The hides were prepared and softened.

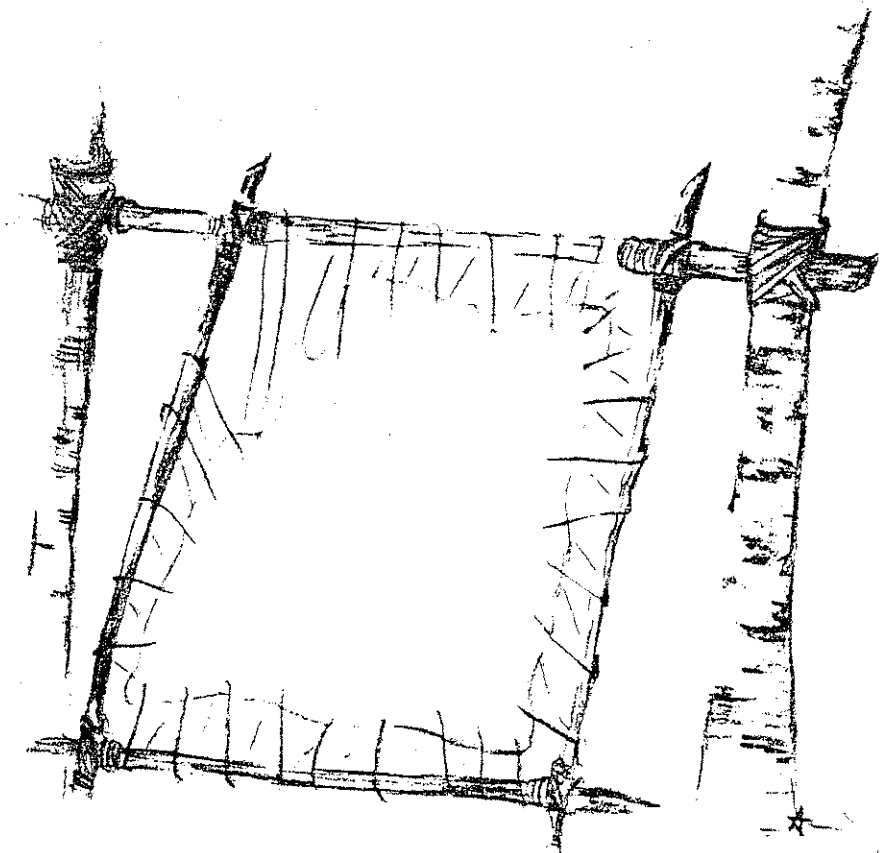
Many bones were also carried down to be used as scrapers and tools. The sinew from along the backbone would be used as thread. Nothing was wasted from the caribou.

Before they departed, Father left a portion of meat. This was to give thanks for the successful hunt. Giving back a part of what had been taken, and showing respect to the animals which had allowed themselves to be caught, was very important.

On the way down the mountain Chilh' heard a high pitched whistling sound and he looked questioningly at his father. His father smiled. "That is *dutni* (marmot) and he lives in burrows under the rocks high in the mountains."

PREPARING HIDES

Preparing hides was mainly done by the women. The flesh and fat were scraped off with a bone scraper. The hide was soaked and the hair was removed. Poplar ashes and bear grease were rubbed into the hide to begin the curing process. The hide was soaked again and wrung out in a special way. It was then stretched and hung up to dry. It was placed over a smoking fire to complete the curing process.



Chilh' remembered the warm blankets that his mother had made from the fur of this animal. First, she had cut the hides into strips and then had woven them together. The blankets were excellent for cold winter nights.

"We will set some snares after we have carried all the meat down to the camp," said Father. "Perhaps we can get some *dutni*."

As the women worked on the hides and caribou meat, Father, Chilh' and some of the other men and boys travelled back up the mountain to snare *dutni*. They moved quietly and listened for the whistling sounds among the rocks. Soon many dens were discovered and loop snares were set over the openings. When they returned later, the snares were full of fat marmot. There would be plenty of fur for Mother to make blankets and Chilh' was anxious to try the rich, fat meat which Father said was delicious.

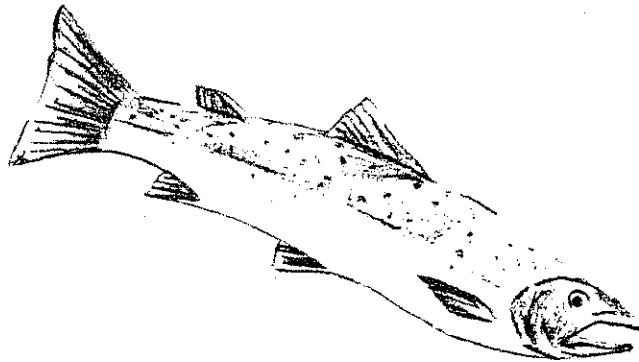
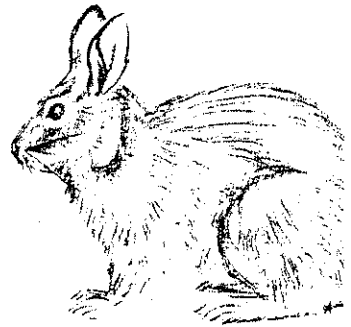
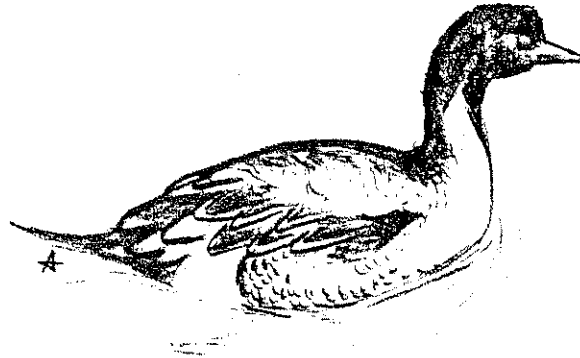
Back at the camp a feast was being prepared. Everyone was busy with the preparations. That night there were many re-enactments of the hunt, and other stories were told. The meal would include caribou and marmot meat, plants picked by the girls, and fresh blueberries and huckleberries. All agreed that the Earth Spirits had been generous and had looked after the people well.



THE SEASONS' CY

Spring

trout
dolly varden
porcupine
otter
beaver
muskrat
squirrel
grebe



Summer

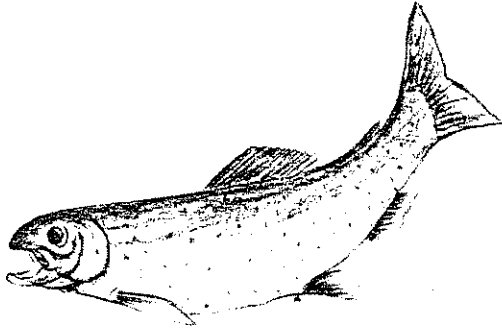
sockeye salmon
spring salmon
sturgeon
humpback salmon



blueberries
soapberries
strawberries
raspberries
gooseberries
currants
huckleberries
saskatoons



FOR FOOD GATHERING



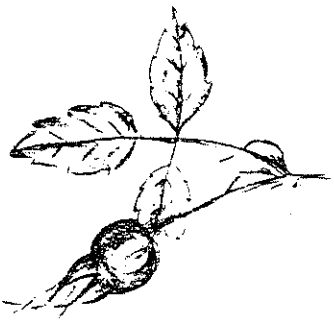
Winter

beaver
muskrat

All Year 'Round

suckers
squawfish
*rabbits
steelhead salmon
ling cod

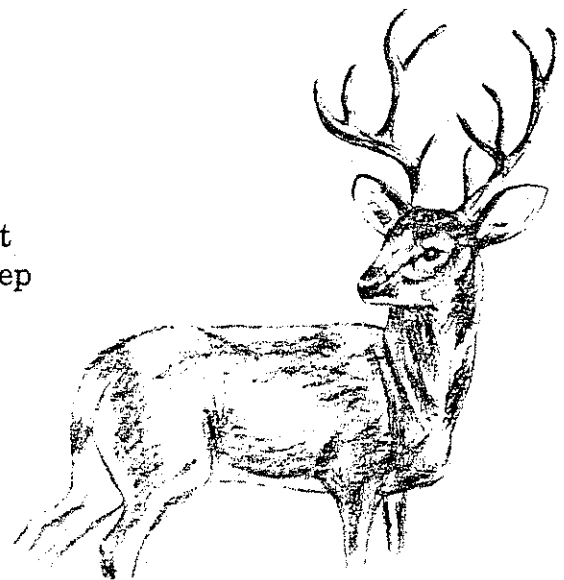
** except in March when
they were breeding*



Fall

kokanee
char
whitefish
weasel
otter
bear
deer

mountain goat
mountain sheep
caribou
lynx
fox
rosehips
cranberries



The Balhach

When Chilh' awoke one bright crisp morning he sensed the excitement in the air. He lay sleepily on his spruce bows and wondered what it was about this particular day that made him feel nervous. Then he remembered. Today was the day of the balhach, a balhach where his father would take Chilh' into his own clan.

In Chilh's village, all children became part of their mother's clan when they were born. So, when Chilh' was born, he automatically became a member of his mother's Frog Clan. Today, though, Chilh' was going to be adopted into his Father's clan. Father was of the Beaver Clan.

It was very important to his Father that Chilh' become a member of his clan. Chilh's father had a noble name that was very valuable. The owner of a name had many rights and privileges, as well as duties. But Father could only pass it on to a member of his own Beaver Clan.

All this puzzled Chilh', and his Grandfather had explained how names were really important to the people. Grandfather said that a name could only be passed on to a member of the same clan. Father's only sister had died before she was able to have children so unless something was done, Father had no-one to whom he could pass on his noble name when he died.

There had been long discussions between Chilh's mother and father before Mother gave permission for Chilh' to leave the Frog Clan. Once mother agreed, father began work planning the balhach to mark the occasion. He had approached his own clan members two summers ago. Everyone had to agree because it was too difficult for one person alone to put on a balhach. All the clan members would have to help for it to be successful. Father was pleased when everyone approved.

So, preparations for the balhach had gone on for more than two years. Father was chief of their village and a nobleman. He knew that he must prove himself worthy of this position by having many gifts to give to his guests. All of his clan members had helped by providing furs and food. Many furs had been carefully stored away. Dried salmon had been put aside in a special cache. Articles of jewellery, which had been purchased from the People Who Live By The Great Waters, were kept in birch bark baskets for the balhach.

How could Chilh' forget all that work? He stirred in his bed and prepared to rise. He could hear the sounds of the women as they began the final preparations for the feast which would be held at the balhach. Pits had been dug for cooking, and vegetables had been gathered already. Cooking pots and fires were being lit and stocks of fresh salmon from the latest catch were being inspected. Several of the wooden boxes which had been purchased from the coastal people were being readied to boil the meat. The older children gathered rocks to heat in the fires so they would be ready for the cooking pots. Everywhere, people of Father's clan were busy with the last minute preparations.

Chilh' looked on anxiously as the work progressed. Grandmother took pity on the boy and came to talk to him.

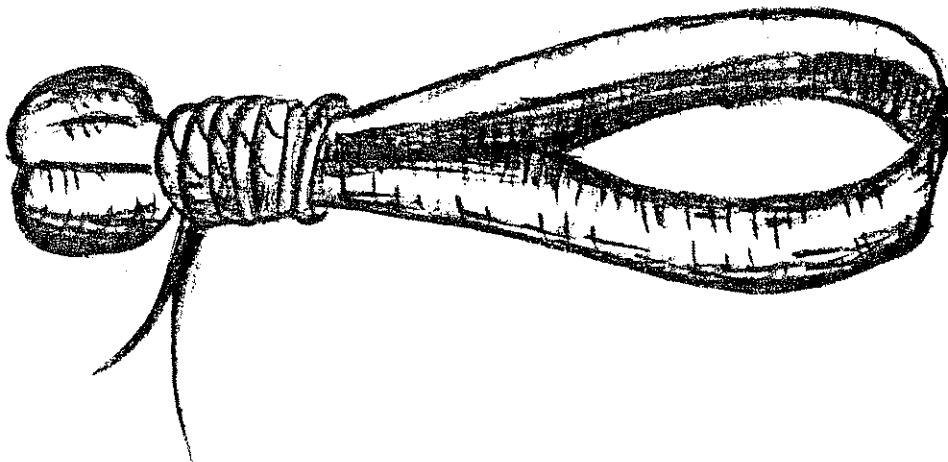
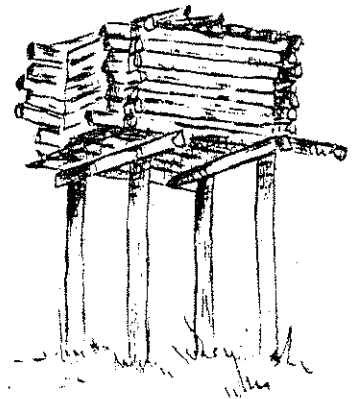
"This is an important day in your life, Chilh'," said Grandmother. "You have been taught the ways of the Beaver Clan and you will make us all proud. You have shown that you will be a great hunter and will provide well for your people. You have learned the ways of the animals and know how to show them respect."

Chilh' smiled at his grandmother. "I have had a great teacher," said Chilh' softly.

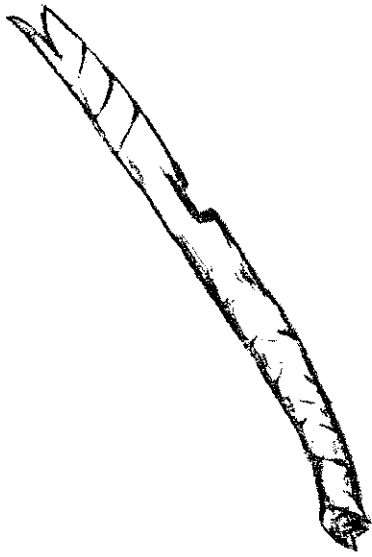
To help pass the time Grandfather showed Chilh' how to make an arrow head, *noonda'* from a piece of augite, a dark greenish rock. By hitting the rock at just the right angle, small pieces were chipped away forming a very sharp cutting edge. Chilh' watched intently and the time passed quickly.

STORING MEAT

Salmon and other fish and meat were stored in a special building called a meat cache. This building was made of poles put together like a log cabin. It was built up off the ground so wild animals could not get into it. When a woman wanted to get meat for supper, she climbed into the meat cache and took what she needed.



The Carrier men pulled the hair from their faces with tweezers like these. This was a part of grooming and everyone wanted to look their best for the Balhach.



Noblemen often played a bone whistle when they danced in ceremonies like the Balhach. This one was made from the wing bone of a swan.

Cries were suddenly heard about the village announcing the beginning of the balhach. People began to move towards the chief's lodge, the largest building in the whole village. As the people arrived, their seats were indicated by an usher tapping the floor with his talking stick. The seating was very important and the ushers were wise and important men of the village who knew the correct seating arrangement. People were seated according to rank or importance in the clans. The Beaver Clan was giving the balhach and its members were seated in the best seats at the front.

Chilh' sat quietly beside his father as the feasting began. For hours the women passed around bark dishes of delicious-smelling food. Although Chilh' was nervous, and felt he could not eat, he took small portions and found them as wonderful as they smelled. There were dried fish eggs in oolichan oil and fresh cooked salmon. There were stews of caribou meat and numerous varieties of edible plants. There were dried berries with bear grease too. It was a wonderful feast and it seemed like there was no end to it! Everyone was content and full as the last of the dishes were taken away.

There was quiet and an air of anticipation in the lodge as Father stood before the people. It was now time for the gift giving! The food, furs and other articles were brought into the lodge and given to the people one by one. Each received an amount suited to his or her position in the tribe. Chilh' watched as each person received gifts.

They made no comment but he could tell that they were pleased.

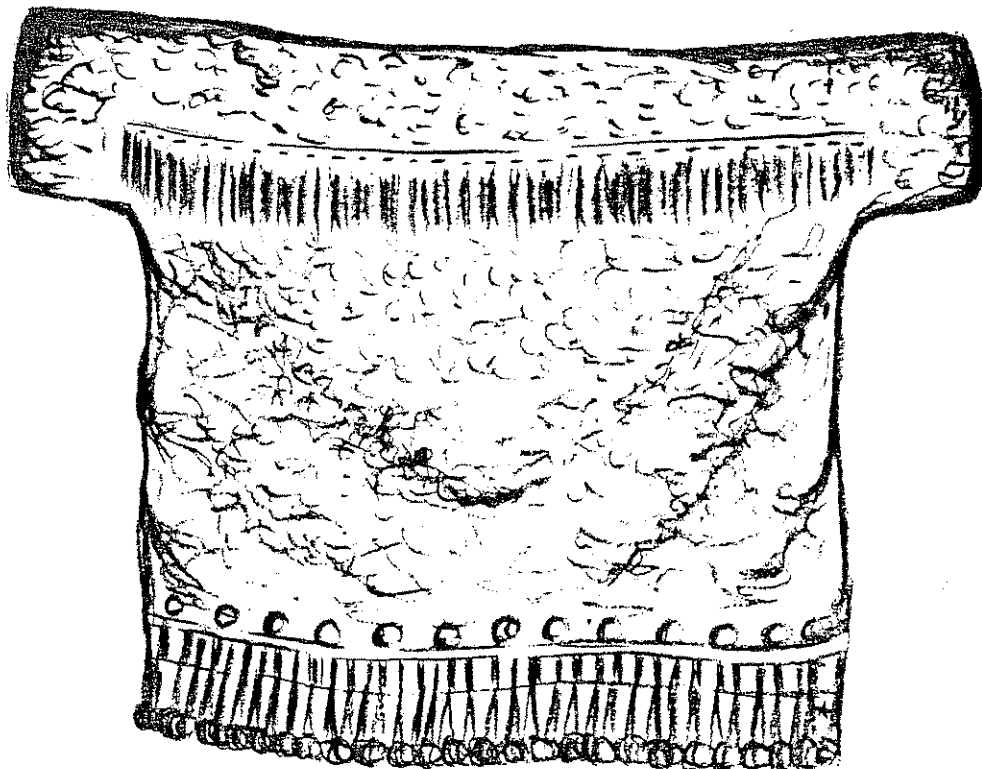
When the gift giving was complete, many speeches were made. Father explained to the people gathered that he wished his son to join his clan and he explained the reasons. Grandmother also gave a speech and told everyone that Chilh' had been taught the ways of the Beaver Clan and had learned his lessons well. Other important members of the village also made speeches and there was much discussion.

Finally, Chilh' was told to stand and Father announced in a loud clear voice that Chilh' was now a member of the Beaver Clan.

The balhach ended with the singing of clan songs and some people sang their own personal ones. Chilh' had made up his own song which he now sang to the gathering.

*I am a young hunter.
I learn the ways of a good hunter.
I know the laws to be obeyed.
The Great Spirit will guide me in the hunt
If I obey the laws.
I learn the ways of my clan.
I am proud to belong to the Beaver Clan.
I am a young hunter of the Beaver Clan.
My name is Chilh' of the Beaver Clan.*

Chilh' finished his song and sat down. His mother and father looked pleased. It was a good song, one which belonged to Chilh' and no-one else. Only he could sing this song. Perhaps one day he would give the song to one of his own children.



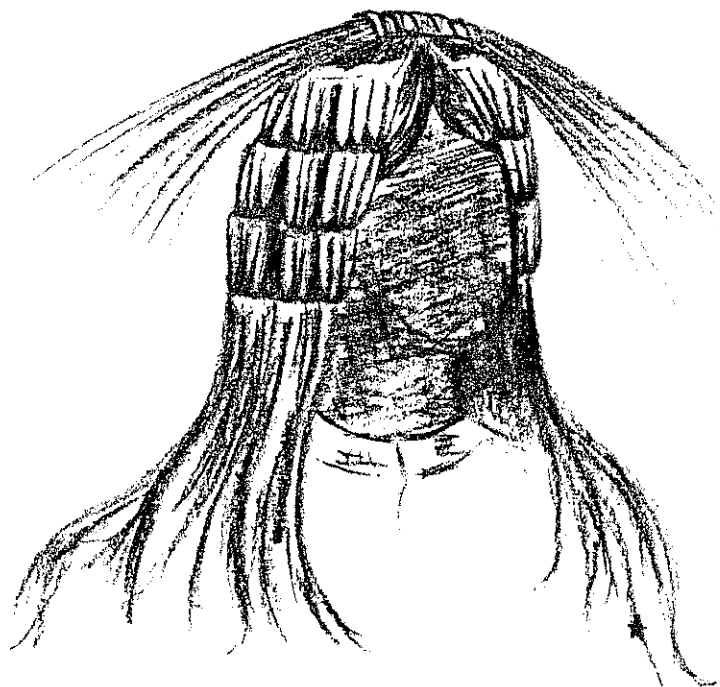
Carrier noblemen may have worn a ceremonial robe, or Raz, such as this for the Balhach.

CEREMONIAL CLOTHING

For ceremonies, tunics, leggings and moccasins were very beautifully decorated with porcupine quills and shells. Fish scales from whitefish were dyed and sewn on clothing. They looked like the sequins we use today.

There were three special pieces of clothing worn during ceremonies. They were the headdress, the breastplate and the Raz.

One kind of ceremonial headdress or wig had three parts, the top, the cap and the train. The top looked like horns and was made from the whiskers of a sea-lion. The cap was made from three rows of dentalium shells. The train went past the waist and was made of human hair. It was knotted together to make it long. At the very bottom, strands of about fifty human hairs were tied together to make a fringe.



Another kind of headdress had fine strips of ermine skin along the sides and over the top of the head. The back of the head was covered with three rows of dentalium shells. Strands of human hair went through each row of shells and fell below the shell rows. The train section was made from rows of three strands of human hair that had dentalium shells knotted into them all the way down. To keep the shells where they belonged, little pieces of wood were knotted under every two shells.

Headdresses were worn at ballhaches and in ceremonial dances. During these dances, the headdresses were covered with swan down. When the dancer moved, the down floated to the ground and added to the movement.

The hair that was in the headdress came from women of nobility. It was cut off only after they died. These headdresses were very expensive to make and when the owner of a headdress died, it was inherited by another person of nobility.

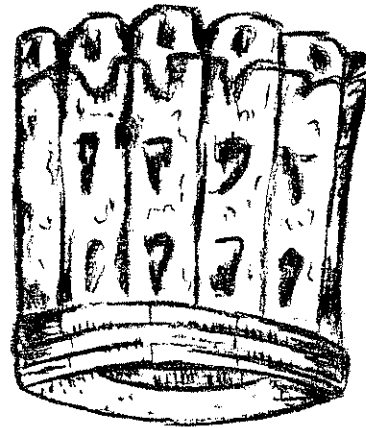


Women of nobility did not wear headdresses as elaborate as the men's, but they were also very beautiful. One type looked like a crown made from furs. The band was made from dentalium shells sewn to a piece of **buckskin**. Large strips of weasel fur stood up on top of this band. These were kept upright with feathers that had strong quills or else with pieces of wood. Scalps of the red-headed woodpecker were tied to the hat. Tail feathers of another kind of woodpecker were sewn between each piece of weasel fur.

The hats worn by these women were filled with down so that when they danced, it could escape as the woman turned her head.

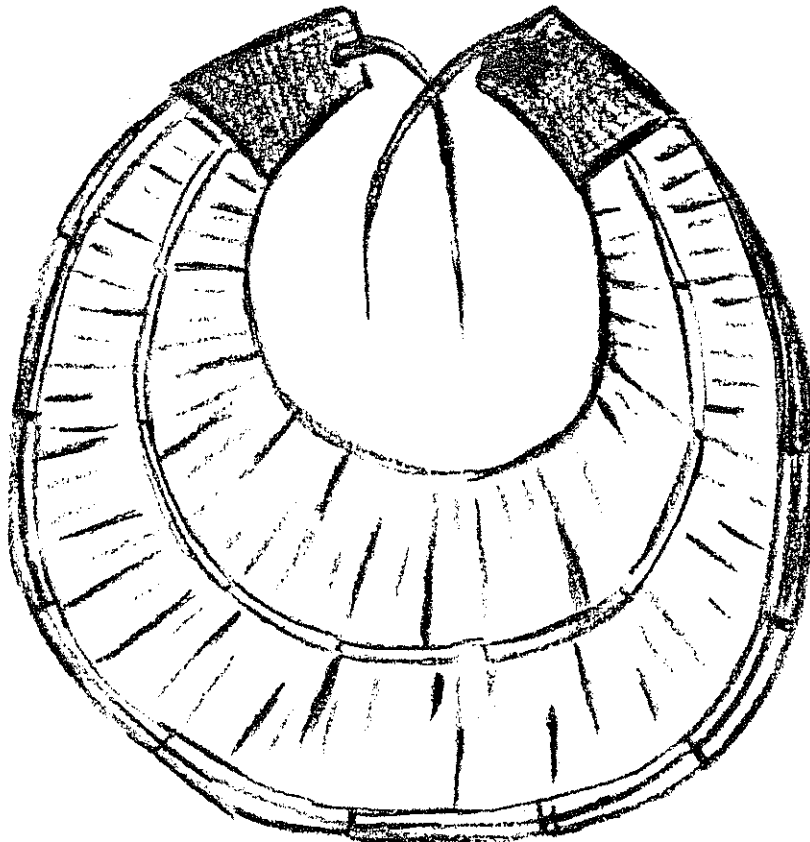
The breastplate could be very costly as well. One kind was made from dentalium shells. A piece of buckskin was cut into the right shape and then the shells were sewn on top. A breastplate could cost as much as forty beaver skins.

The last piece of ceremonial clothing was the **Raz**. This was a ceremonial robe. It was

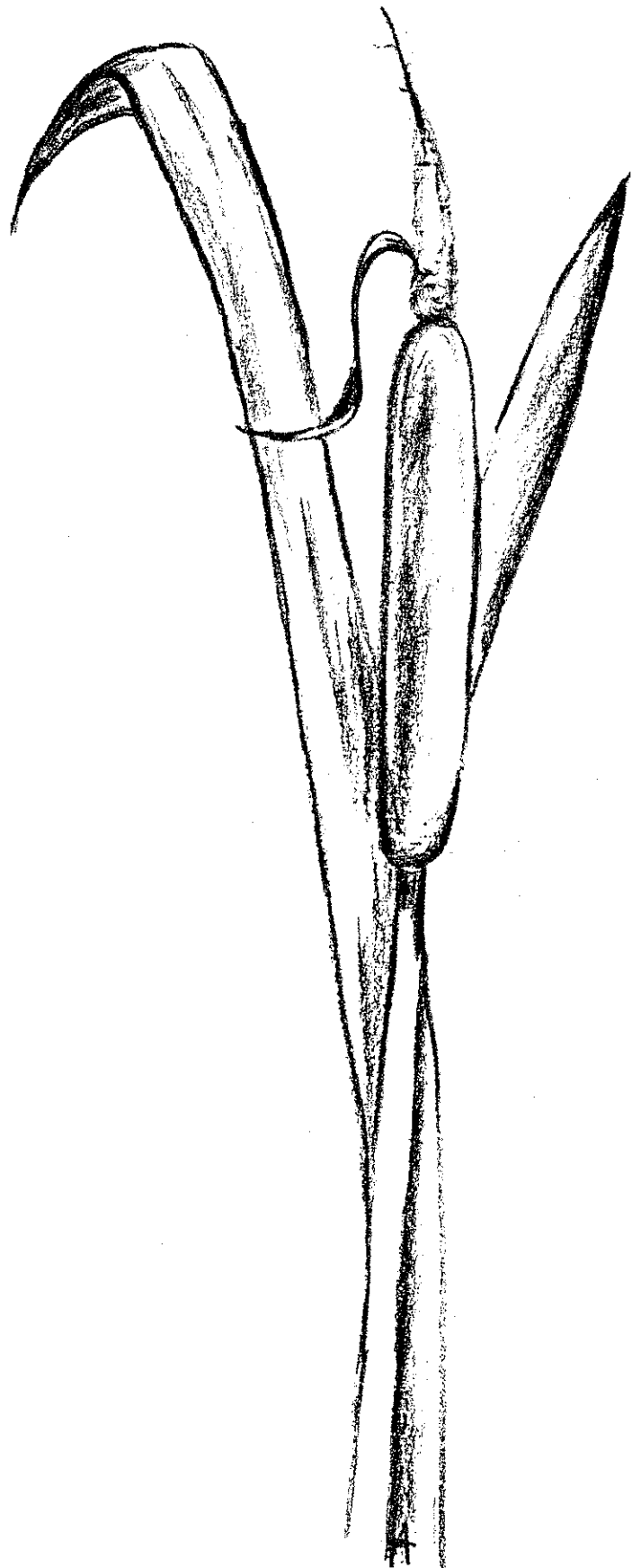


usually made of buckskin and was adorned with porcupine quill embroidery. A fringe could have the hooves of **yearling** caribou tied to it. Not all robes were made like this, as each person decorated his own robe with whatever he valued.

Noblewomen did not wear a robe. Instead, they wore a girdle, or belt, made from dentalium shells.



4 Fall



Fall Preparations

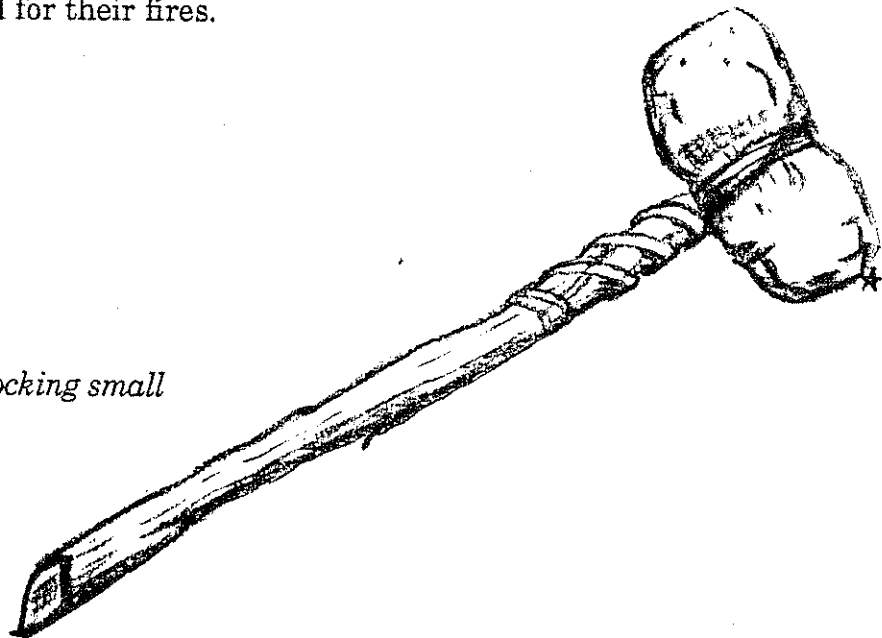
Daily life returned to normal after the ballhach. Final preparations for winter had to be made. There must be **sufficient** firewood collected to keep the lodges warm. A new winter lodge must be built. In Chilh"s village the winter lodges were built partly underground which made them easier to keep warm.

Winter lodges were circular and about a metre deep. The section above ground was dome-shaped and covered with earth. It was very snug and warm in winter. Chilh' had heard that other villages had winter lodges built of planks above ground. Grandfather, who had once lived in one of these houses, said it was hard to keep the cold wind from coming through the cracks and much more firewood was needed to keep them warm.

Father supervised the building. Each fall, the people of Chilh"s and Doh"s village built winter lodges in a new area. The site was always near a stream, and was chosen the year before. Perhaps they chose an area where there was a plentiful supply of willows which could be used for net making, or perhaps an area near a good berry patch. During the berry season, trees in the area of their next village would be **ring-barked**. The trees would die and the wood would dry. By the time the next winter had arrived and the new village was established, there would be plenty of dry wood for their fires.

FIREWOOD

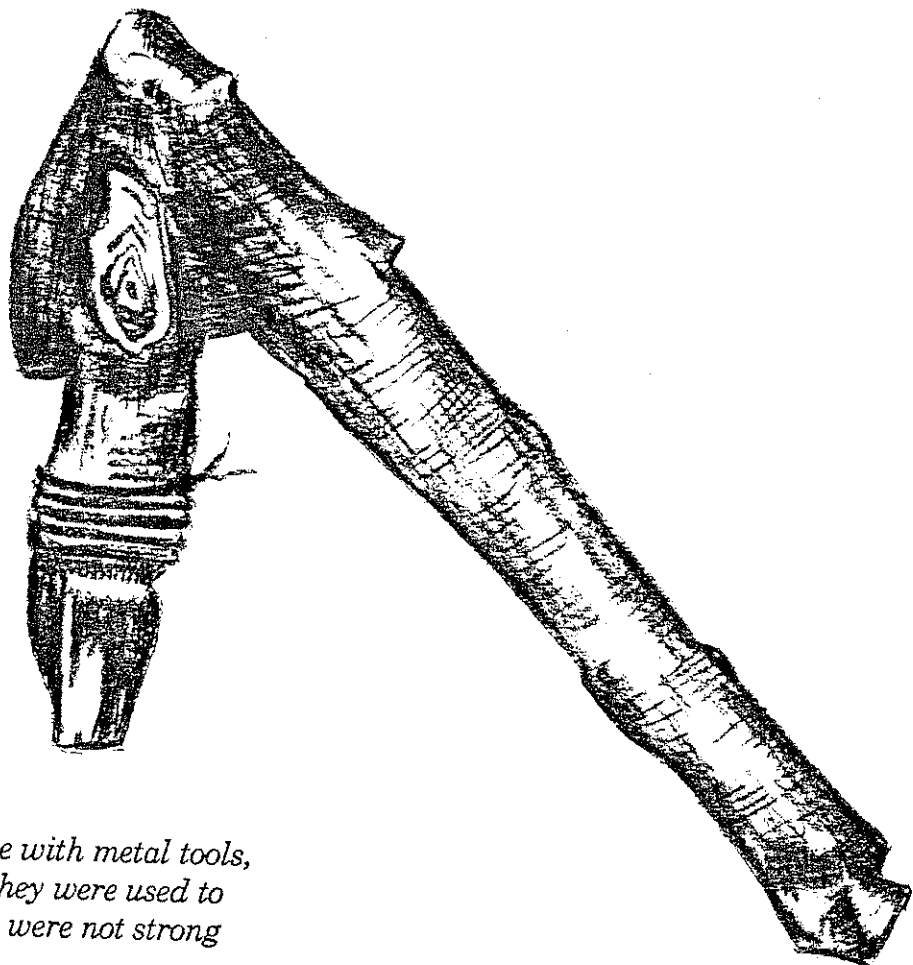
When the Carrier needed firewood, they dug around a tree to expose the roots. A fire was built under the bare roots. The roots burned and the tree fell over. Next, the small branches were knocked off with a stone club. Big trees then needed to be cut down to the right size for the fires. Smaller trees were placed over the large trees where the Carrier wanted them cut. A fire was started. It was kept burning until both the small and large trunks were burned through. If the wood was still too large around for the fireplace, it was split using wedges made of stone. They were driven into the wood by hitting them with a wooden maul.



A stone club was used for knocking small branches off trees.

While the men worked on the houses, the children who were old enough to help were sent to gather firewood. Grandfather and some of the men had set fires at the base of the dead trees. Grandfather showed Chilh' how to carefully control the fire to make the tree fall. It was then cut into lengths so that it could be used for firewood.

Doh' was also kept busy checking the food caches. New moss was gathered to push between the logs to prevent any dampness from spoiling the food. There were large quantities of salmon stored in huge baskets. Dried meat from caribou and other smaller animals, such as beaver, was also packed away carefully. The dried berry cakes and leathers had been stored in earthen pits so they would not become too dry. Doh' also checked her bag of medicinal herbs. Mother had helped her make the bag and taught her about the plants her people used as medicines. Everytime Doh' found a plant which could be used to cure sickness she left behind something of value to repay the earth for this gift. She always explained to the Earth's Spirit the reason for taking the plant.



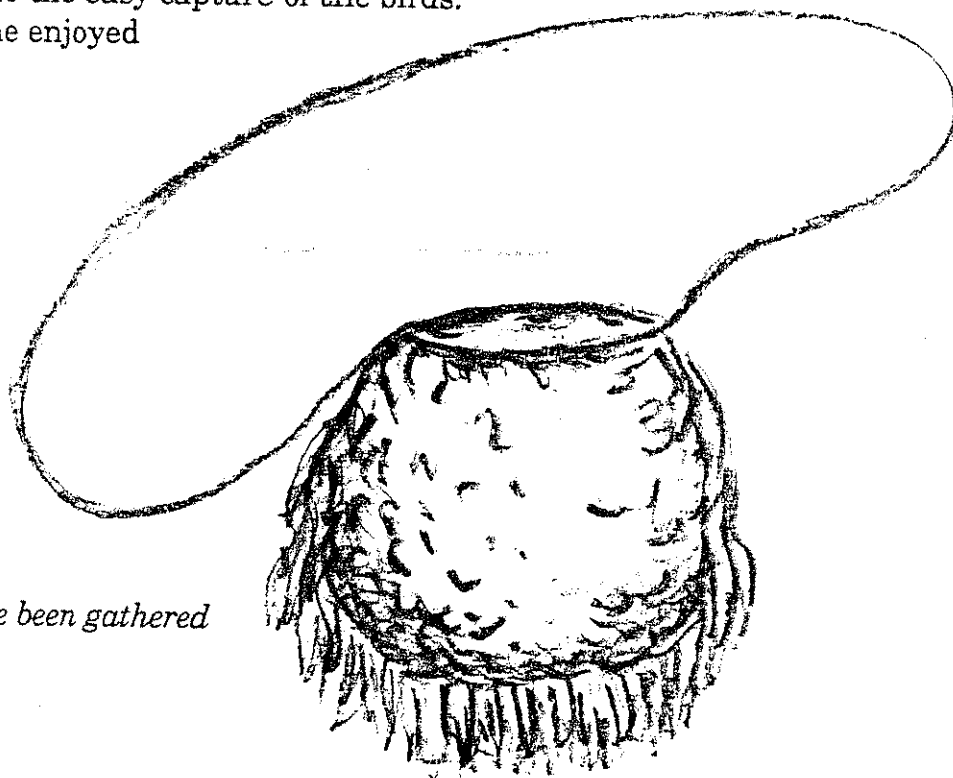
Before the white man came with metal tools, axes like this were used. They were used to chip away at the wood but were not strong enough to chop down trees.

When her work was finished, Doh' collected her trapping tools. With some of the older girls, she went along one of the trails near the lodges. She had noticed the previous day the signs of *nat'oh*, or fool hens which other people called spruce grouse. Walking absolutely quietly, the girls gazed upwards with their sharp eyes at the branches above.

The girl ahead of Doh' suddenly stopped short and pointed upwards. Sitting on a branch were two fool hens. The girls quickly took their long sticks with nooses attached at the ends. The birds sat quietly on the branch, not seeming to notice the girls. The sticks were carefully raised and, with a swift movement, the noose was looped over the **unsuspecting** head of the grouse. They were quickly jerked to the ground. The girls soon had many *nat'oh* attached to their belts. One of the girls began to laugh at the stupidity of the birds allowing themselves to be so easily caught. Doh' told her to be quiet. "No animal must be laughed at," said Doh'. "The Great Spirit allows us to trap these creatures. If we laugh at his creatures, we will find our traps and nets empty." Doh' had been taught well by her mother and grandmother!

The girl immediately stopped her laughter. Doh' took her sharp stone knife and cut off the wing of one of the birds and placed it on the ground as a peace offering, a giving back of part that was taken. In this way, they showed their **gratitude** for the easy capture of the birds.

That night, everyone enjoyed delicious roasted grouse!



Medicinal plants might have been gathered in a bag such as this.

Bear Hunt

The days gradually became colder. Mittens were taken out of storage and caps of woven rabbit fur were now being used. The first snow lay thickly on the ground and the air was crisp and clear. For some time now some of the young men had been watching a small cave with a narrow opening which had been used as a den for a young black bear the year before. Now that the first snow had come the bear was expected to begin his long winter's sleep at any time. The men had begun to fast so the animals could not catch their scent in a hunt. They were using the sweat lodge to cleanse themselves in preparation for the hunt.

Chilh' also took turns to watch the den for any activity. He was careful to keep out of sight and stay downwind of the den. *Sus* the Bear had a very strong sense of smell and would not come near the den if he sensed danger.

One evening as Chilh' was on watch, a large black bear walked cautiously towards the den. A light snow was falling as the great animal raised his nostrils and sniffed the air. Chilh' pressed himself against the earth and remained perfectly still, his heart thumping in his chest. He felt sure *Sus* could hear it, but the huge animal, sensing no danger on the wind, proceeded to crawl into his den to spend the remainder of the winter in peaceful sleep.

Chilh' waited a long time before he ventured to move. His hands and feet were cold as he crept quietly down the slope and back to his parents' lodge. He reported what he had seen and after the evening meal the men gathered together their spears and strongest ropes. Plans were made to take the bear the next day.

Chilh' woke early and quickly dressed in his warmest clothing. Father had told him that he could go with the men but he must stay well out of the way. It was early as they set out for the den. The men carried a variety of spears of different lengths.

As they neared the den, the men moved more cautiously. They did not want to alert the bear until they were ready and he would not yet be in a deep sleep. The men positioned themselves outside the den with spears at the ready. Chilh' moved up a small slope where he could watch.

Father walked up to the den and using a long pole with a sharp spear point attached, he pushed it deep into the cave opening. With sharp jabs he aroused the bear and soon loud growling sounds could be heard coming from underground. Father was poised to run if the bear made a sudden appearance. He continued to thrust at the bear, forcing him to attack. Suddenly the growling became louder and the enraged animal burst from the opening in a whirl of fury. The men who had positioned themselves near the opening leapt forward as Father sprang aside to avoid the snarling bear. Spears were thrown at the animal but he appeared not to feel them. His one thought was to escape. He charged through the men, scattering them aside, and lumbered up the nearby slope.

Chilh' looked on in dismay as the animal ran towards him. *Sus* was escaping and Chilh' was in danger! The men were running frantically after the bear and it appeared that the spears were beginning to take effect as *Sus* slowed his headlong rush. Without a great deal of thought, Chilh' stood up from his hiding place and faced the oncoming animal. For an instant *Sus* stopped short to study this new danger. That was all the time the hunters needed. They reached the bear as he veered to one side to avoid Chilh'. They used their spears skillfully and the bear soon lay at their feet.

Father walked to where Chilh' stood and nodded to him. "That was a brave move my son," he said quietly, "but a dangerous one." He turned and walked back to the men to help skin and cut the bear into manageable portions for carrying. A paw was left behind as a sign of respect.

The village now had some bear grease to eat with their dried food. Bear grease was a favorite food and everyone was very thankful. The story was told and retold about how *Sus* nearly got away and Chilh's part in the hunt was told in its correct place. Chilh' could tell that Father was proud of his son.

THE BEAR

The bear was hunted during October or November, just after he had settled in his den for a long winter's sleep.

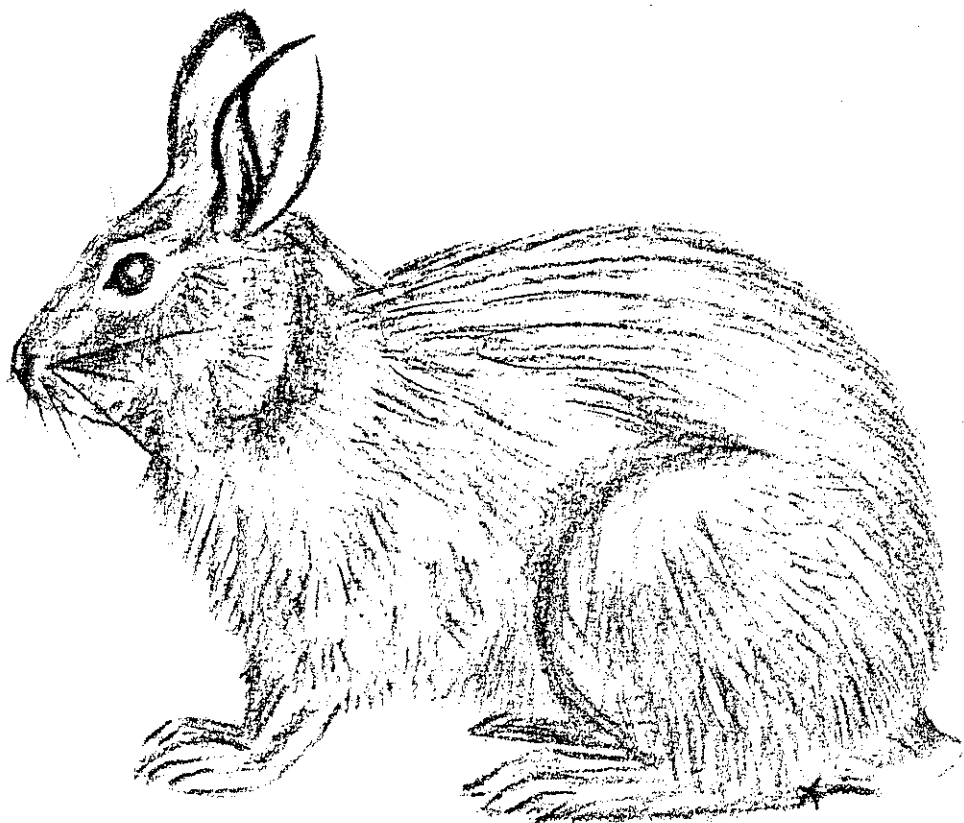
The hide was used for rugs, bedding and clothing. The meat was dried and stored for winter. The fat was a real delicacy along with the intestines which were thoroughly cleaned, turned inside out, dried and later boiled and eaten. The fat was also used for hair grooming. It kept the hair soft and shiny and prevented dandruff.

The oil was used as a medicine for colds or as a laxative and as a cream for chapped lips or dry skin. The stomach was used as a container to store the grease, or it was boiled and eaten.

Kinnikinnick, or "bear berries"



5 Winter



A Changing Landscape

The bitter north wind howled about the lodge, driving the snow into strangely shaped drifts. The first real storm of the winter season had been raging for the past two days. It was the month of *Bunghan nuts'ukih*. Chilh' and his family huddled in warm furs waiting for the relentless roar of the wind above and about them to wear itself out. The only time anyone ventured outside was to bring in more firewood.

On the third day the wind and driving snow gradually slowed and finally quieted to a soft whisper.

Pulling on warm mittens and soft hide moccasins, Chilh' climbed the ladder and stepped into a very different world, a world where everything was white, where even the trees were great white monstrous statues.

The snow drifts had built up around the lodge to form small hills. Some of the smaller children appeared and began to track up the snow banks and slide to the bottom. Happy children's voices rang out as they continued their game. Chilh' watched and thought about joining them. He continued to watch and thought perhaps he was too old for such childish games. He had now passed his eleventh season and would soon be a hunter like his grandfather and father.

In the lodge Doh' was busy making a **garter** of soft deer hide and decorating it with porcupine quills. She was taking particular care with the design. It was the best work she had done. She had watched other girls make such garters to give to young men they admired.

Some of the young men wore many garters which showed how popular they were. Doh' was particularly interested in a young hunter called *K'azba* (ptarmigan) who was not much older than she was. She had heard Grandfather praise his skill with a bow and arrow and he had provided his family with many deer and smaller game. Doh' also thought him very handsome.

She would soon be able to remove the **fringe** which she had worn to cover part of her face for nearly a year. This was a sign that she would soon be of an age to marry.

WINTER CLOTHES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Both men and women wore mittens when they were doing any work outside. These were usually attached to a cord worn around the neck so they couldn't be left behind if they were taken off.

They also wore a kind of hat that was made from woven rabbit skin strips. It was shaped like a bowl and kept their heads very warm.

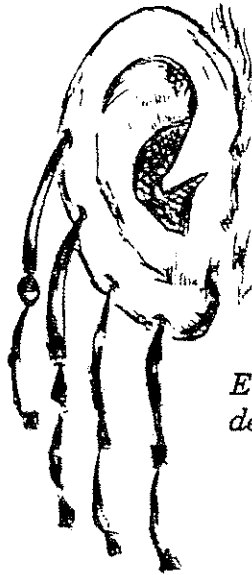
DECORATIVE CLOTHING

Men and women wore similar hats during the summer. One type was made from marmot skin and formed into a band that went around the head. The band was about 8 centimetres wide and had another semi-circle of skin sewn to it. This piece was cut into a fringe and covered the band.

A teenage girl wore a headdress that was a hat, a veil and a cloak. It covered her head and chest. It was made from tanned hides with a front part made into a fringe that hung over her face and chest. The top fitted like a cap on top of her head and the back fell all the way to her feet. If the young girl was of nobility, the headdress could be removed in one year at a special ceremony and a new one placed on her head. This looked like a crown made from dentalium shells. It was lined with fur. The girl's aunt inherited the old headdress.

Both boys and girls had special bracelets made of sinew and down.

The Carrier also had several kinds of jewellery. Ears were pierced to hold earrings made from dentalium shells. Some Carrier pierced their noses to hold a nose ring or a special nose decoration that was crescent-shaped. Among the Babine Carrier, the women could be found wearing a special

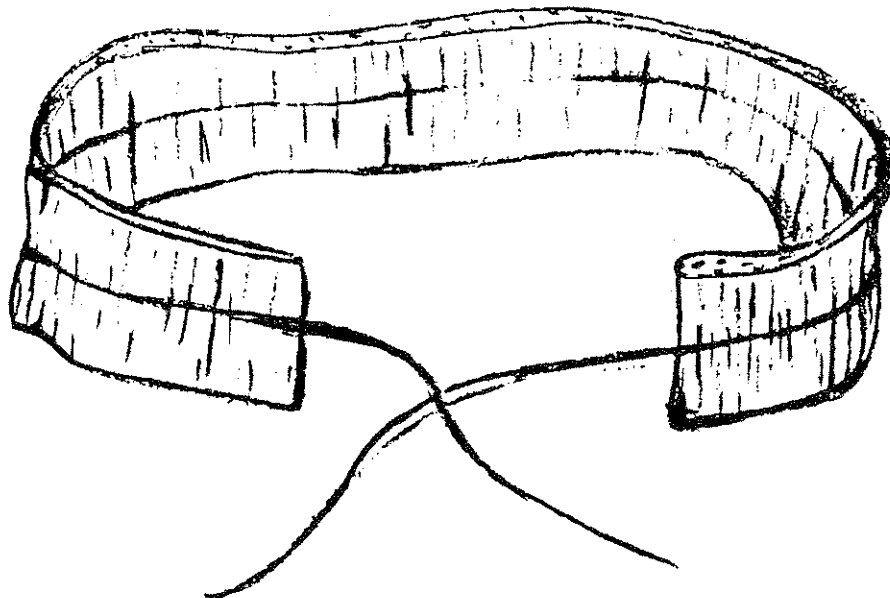


Ears were pierced to hold dentalium shell ornaments.

mouth decoration called a labret. A hole was cut below the bottom lip and a piece of wood was forced into the opening. This custom was thought to have been adopted from the Tsimshian.

Necklaces were made from dentalium and haliotis shells. The men wore the dentalium and the women wore the haliotis.

Hair ornaments were worn by both men and women. These could be made from dyed porcupine quills and beaver teeth. They were attached to strings of sinew and sewn to a band. Two more pieces of sinew were sewn to the band so the ornament could be tied into the hair.



A necklace of dentalium shells.

Chilh' had noticed his sister gazing at *K'azba* and he thought it was quite funny. However when he had laughed about it his mother had sharply told him to be quiet. Chilh' began to think that his mother would be happy if *K'azba* married Doh' and joined their family. Doh' was of the Frog Clan while *K'azba* was of the Caribou Clan. It was good that he was of a different clan.

During the long winter nights, Chilh' loved to sit near Grandfather as he told legends of long ago about their ancestors and of great battles that were fought against other tribes who tried to move onto their **inherited** hunting grounds.

"Wars were mostly fought over land," explained Grandfather, "but sometimes arguments occurred over gambling games which could develop into a fight unless a strong chief put a stop to it."

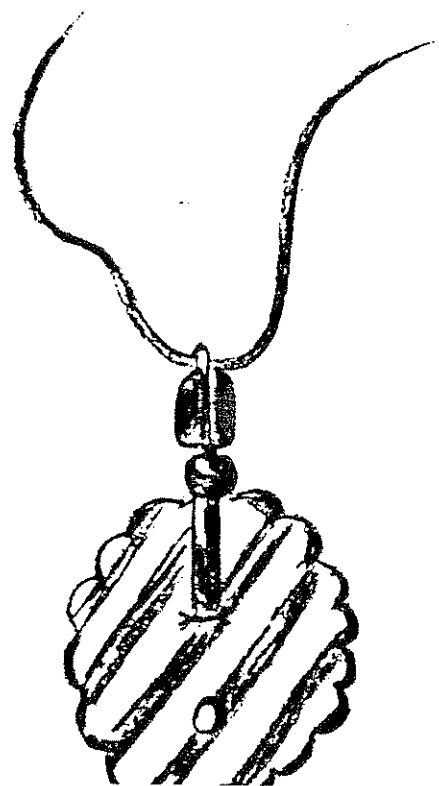
"We have had no fighting in our village, have we, Grandfather?" asked Chilh'.

"No. We have a strong chief and wise elders in our village," Grandfather smiled.

Chilh' especially liked to hear stories of a famous Carrier hero called *E'stace*.

"Please tell me more about *E'stace*, Grandfather," said Chilh'. As Grandfather began to speak, other children came forward to sit at his feet. Grandfather was well known for his story-telling and they never grew tired of listening to him. Grandfather began his story and soon the children were **mesmerized**.

Doh' may have worn a necklace like this one carved from horn as a decoration.



HOW THE CARRIER USED PLANTS

The Carrier used many plants for food, for shelters, and also for medicine.

They also used plants to make baskets, nets and canoes.

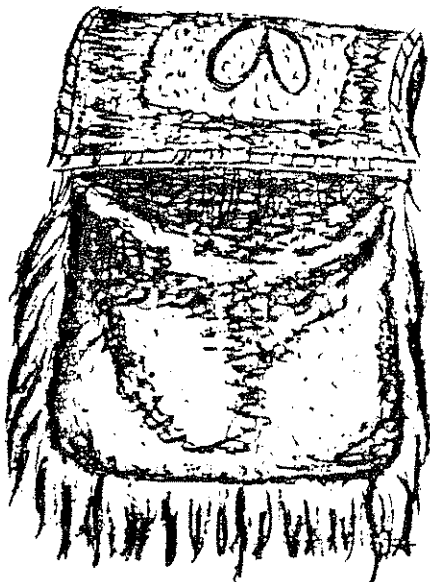
The Long Nights Begin

The days gradually became shorter and the nights longer. More time was spent indoors. The people kept themselves busy making tools and mending nets. New arrow heads were created and attached to long poles. These spears would be ready for use in the spring. New arrows for their bows were also made.

The women spent much of their time making clothing and blankets. Porcupine quills had been saved to decorate the robes. The women were very proud of their work and indeed, their village was well known for its wonderful designs in quillwork. Grandmother was busy making a beautiful blanket. She was using rabbit and marmot fur which had been cut into strips of about five centimetres. She then carefully wove them together to create a very warm blanket.

The women also had to prepare the meals. Water from the lake had to be carried to the lodge for cooking. Water holes were kept open by cutting through the ice which had formed the night before.

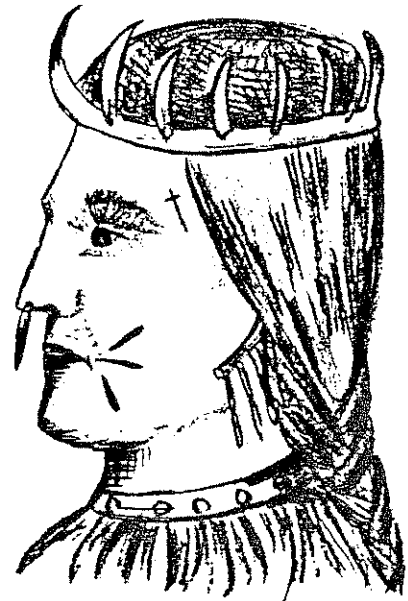
While the families worked there was much time to visit and talk. The men would talk of particular hunts and of brave deeds they had seen while trapping and hunting the larger game. The women would discuss their children, particularly the boys, who would be great hunters like their fathers and provide for their families. It was a happy time for everyone because there was time to talk and tell stories. There was time for visiting other families in the village and a time for singing and dancing. Doh' spent hours minding and playing with her baby sister who was beginning to crawl all over the lodge. During the summer and the fall people were busy gathering food so that they would survive the winter months. But now their caches were full so everyone felt happy and safe.



A bag for holding household goods has a quill embroidery design on the flap.

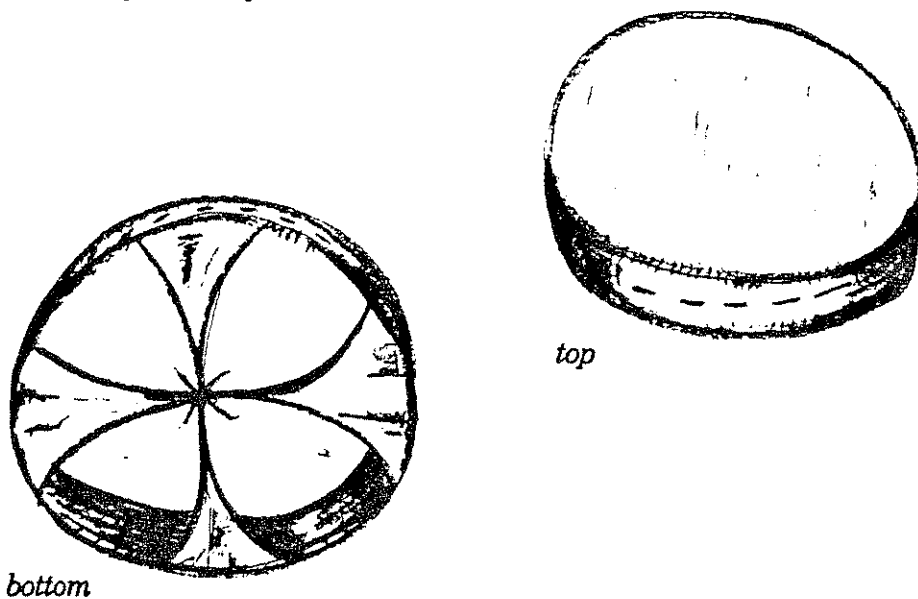
It was during the "Time Of The Big Moon", *Sacho'ooza*, when Chilh' became ill. He felt very hot and his skin was damp. He lay on his spruce bough bed covered with soft hides. He drifted in and out of sleep, sometimes feeling uncomfortably hot and at other times freezing cold. He also had some bad dreams in which *E'stace* asked him to come fishing with him. Father became very worried about his son and he paid a visit to the medicine man. Father paid the shaman for Chilh's recovery with a marmot skin. The shaman promised to speak to the Great Spirit and ask for help.

While Father was visiting the *dayun-un* (medicine man), Doh' took some of the inner bark of the spruce tree which she had collected during the summer, and placed it in hot water to make a tea. She stirred the liquid in the bark container and replaced the cooled rocks with hot ones from the fire.

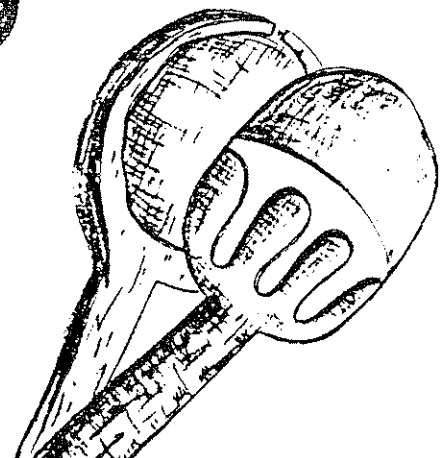


The Shaman helped to heal the sick.

He often used drums like these to call upon the spirits.

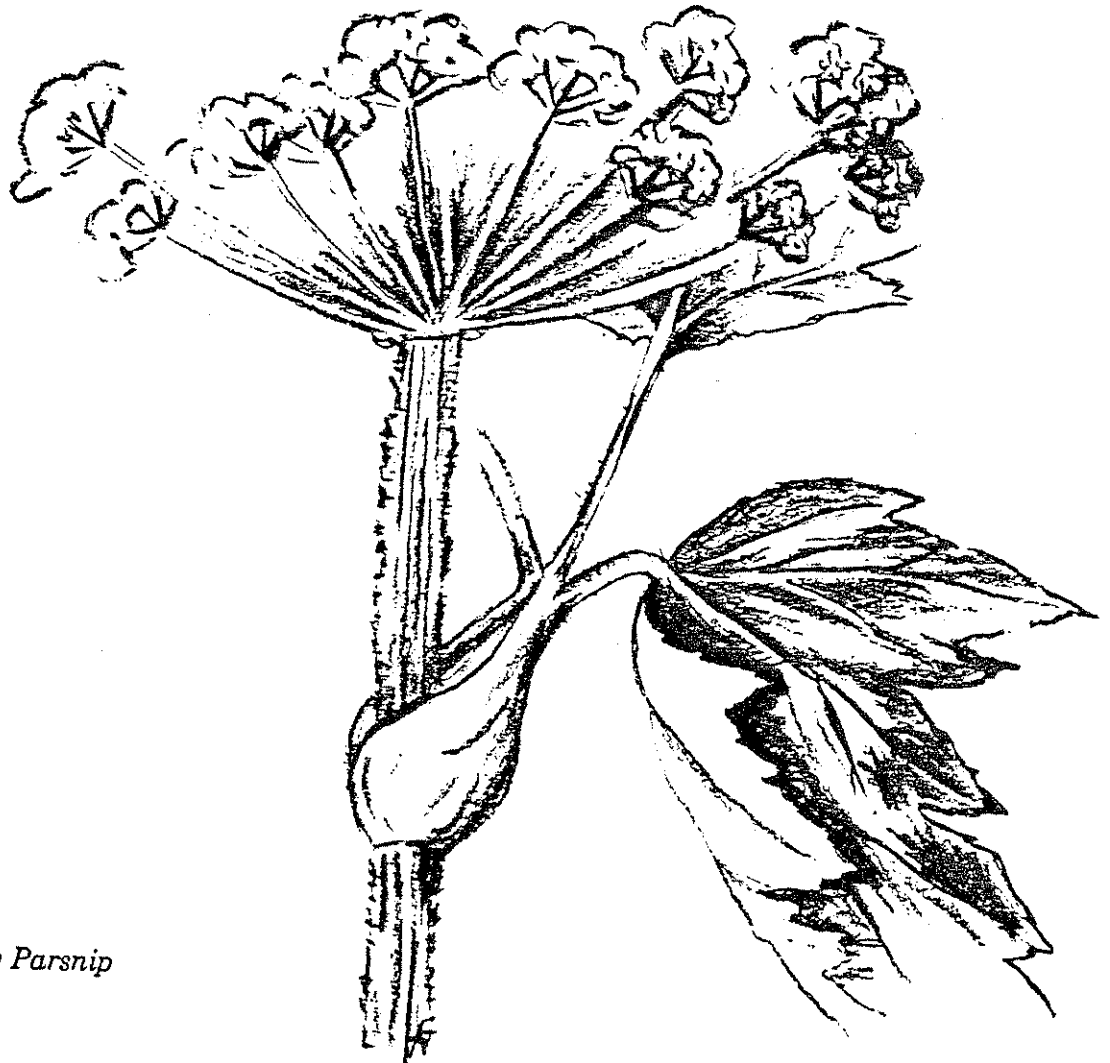


Rattles were used too.



The rocks sizzled as she dropped them into the pot. She continued to stir for some time as she watched the smoke slowly curl upwards through the hole in the roof in the centre of the lodge. Doh' then allowed the tea to cool before giving some to Chilh'. Grandmother looked on and was pleased that Doh' had remembered what she had taught her.

For several days Doh' and Grandmother gave Chilh' this medicine and gradually the boy began to get better. The cough that he had developed went away and soon he was healthy again. Father made another visit to the *dayun'un* and gave him another marmot skin for the return of his son's health.



Cow Parsnip

SOME PLANTS USED BY THE CARRIER

Wild rice grew in fields mainly in the Lake Babine area. It was very good to eat.

Wild rhubarb was called *goos*. It was similar to modern day rhubarb. It ripened in May and June.

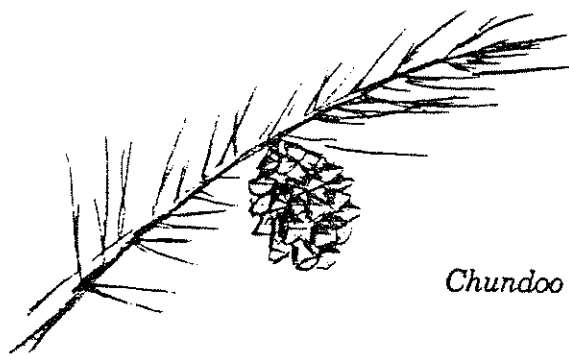
Fireweed was called *khas*. The center of this plant was eaten. The leaves were put in Indian ice cream (soapberries) to kill the bitter taste.

Tiger lilies were called *teh'ghih'*. Only the bulbs of this plant were eaten.

Cowparsnip, or *gwas*, was eaten when it was very young. The roots were washed, ground into a powder and placed on painful joints. The Carrier used it as a good medicine for **rheumatism**.

Most kinds of mushrooms were eaten. Some kinds were poisonous so the Carrier had to know which ones were safe to eat.

Wild mint leaves were picked and then dried. A tea was made from them. This was a good medicine if you had cramps or a cold.



Chundoo

The inner bark of the *chundoo* was good for colds. The pitch was boiled with bear grease and placed on sores. It could also be swallowed to help cure a sore throat.

Paperbirch (*k'i*) was used to make dishes, containers for storing things, and canoes.

The inner bark of the *t'ughus* could be boiled and placed over cuts or sores. This would make them heal well. When this tree was rotten, it was called *sohjut*. The rotten wood could be used as a diaper. It was also used for smoking salmon and meat. Freshly

grown bark was scraped every morning and fed to the children who had worms.

The inner bark of the *tsoo* was chewed. It was call *musdzo* and was a good medicine for colds.

When the black spruce, or *ts'oobiz* was young it made good drying poles (*ujooh*) for smoking and drying meat. The pitch was chewed like gum.

Balsam fir was called *ts'ootsun*. This tree had a growth that looked like a wart. It was boiled along with the pitch and was a good medicine for lung problems.

Queen Ann's Lace had flowers that went all the way up the stem. The flowers were cut off, dried and used for tea. The roots were dried, pounded into powder and used as a **poultice**. This medicine was an excellent toothache remedy.

Yarrow or *ya tul ha*, looks almost like Queen Anne's Lace. The flowers were dried and made into tea. This was good for colds or **pneumonia** and rheumatism. The roots were dried and pounded into a powder and used for a toothache. The leaves and stems were boiled. You could use the liquid to soak sore feet or for whatever other part of your body may have aching muscles.

The needles of the balsam were dried and pounded into a powder. This was a good remedy for serious burns. The powder was placed on the burn and then it was bound loosely and left for a week.

When stinging nettles were dried and then boiled, the liquid was good for rheumatism.

Kinnikinnick leaves and stems were ground up and used for sores. The powder was sprinkled over the sore to promote healing.



Kinnikinnick leaves and berries



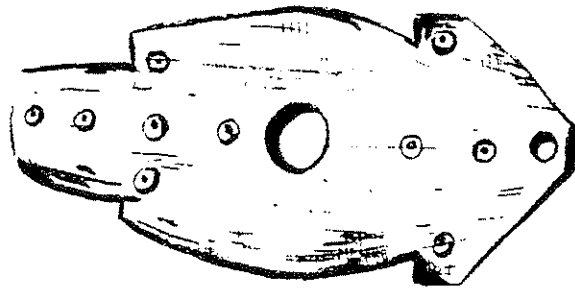
A bone tool is used to cut holes in the ice.

During the Time Of The Small Snowflakes, *Chuzsul'ooza*, it was decided to hunt some beaver (*tso*) under the ice. In the summer it had been carefully noted which way the beavers travelled to and from their lodges. The ice on the beaver dam was now very thick and would hold the weight of many men. On either side of the beaver path, holes were cut in the ice with sharpened caribou bone. A net was passed under the ice with the aid of long poles. It was pulled up and secured at each end. The net would be left until the next day.

While the men set nets to catch beaver, the women took other nets to the lake to try to catch white fish in much the same manner. This time the net was much longer and several holes were cut in the ice in a straight line. The first and last holes were bigger than the rest to allow the net to pass through. The net was once again passed under the ice with the aid of poles. Each time the net was pushed to the next hole, the pole was used to continue its journey from hole to hole. In this way the net stretched for a great distance under the ice. Both ends were made secure and left for the day.

Their winter food up until this point had all been dried. The women took quantities from the caches to last them several days. Often the dried salmon was placed in water and allowed to soak for some time before it was eaten. At other times it was eaten dry with oolichan oil or bear grease to make it easier to swallow and to add flavour. Everyone was looking forward to fresh meat and fish after eating dried food for so long.

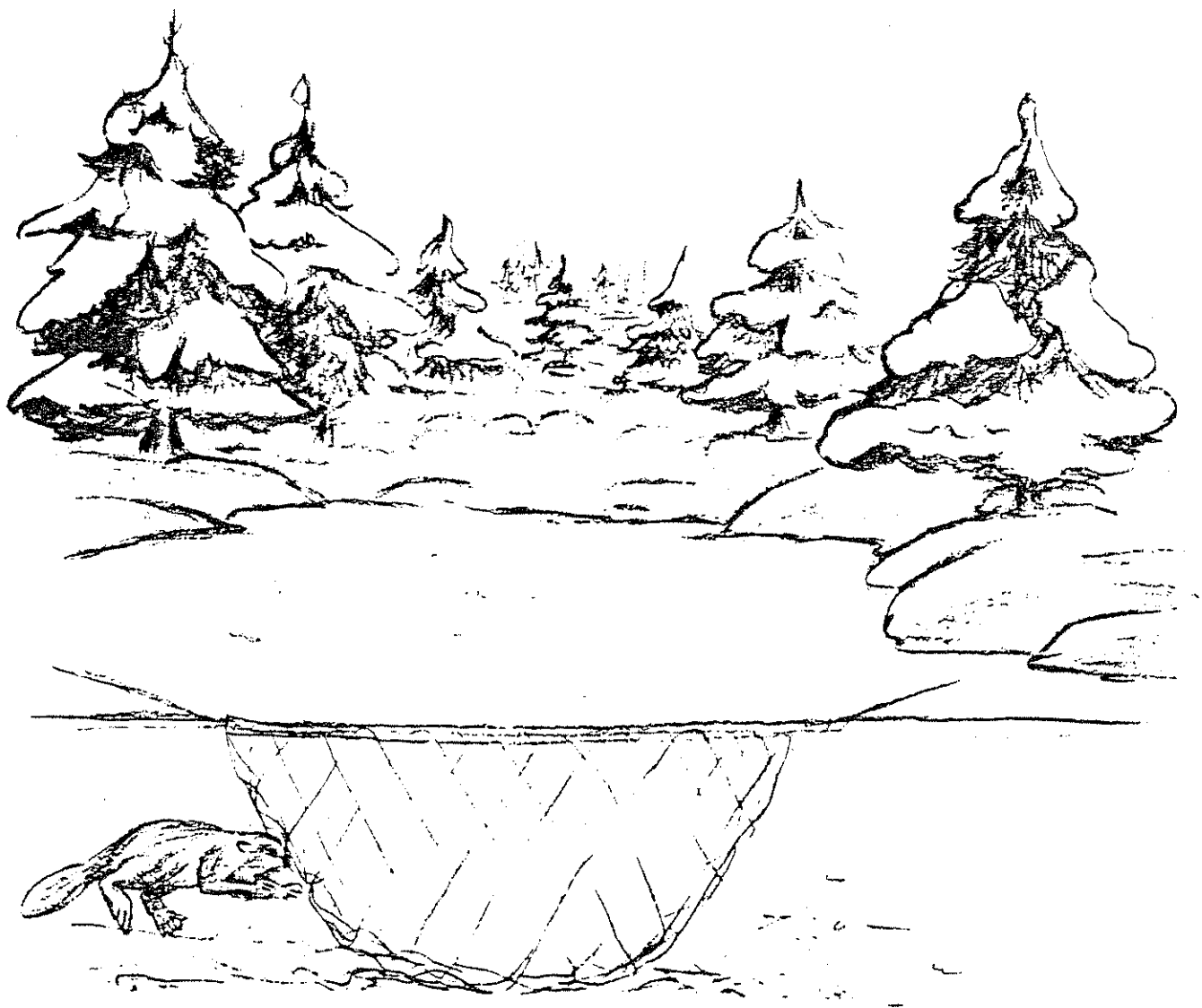
The next day was bright and clear and quite mild for that time of year. Everyone, including the children, walked to the beaver pond and then to the lake to see the



This carved float with "bells" attached to it would hold up the net. It was placed over the hole in the ice. Sinew was tied through the holes to secure the net under the ice. The float was shaped like a beaver so the hunt might be successful.

nets being dragged through the holes in the ice. Some holes had frozen over again and had to be cut open with the caribou bone picks. The children cried out in delight as many beaver and white fish were brought to the surface. The families would enjoy fresh food that evening.

It was a happy group of people that returned to their village and began to prepare the fish and meat. Chilh' thought about his people and realized how lucky they were to live in a land that gave them so much. Each season had its own animals to hunt and trap, and berries and plants to pick and to dig. It was with a glad heart that he sat down to his meal that night and he thought of the warmer days to come as the seasons repeated themselves. He would hunt with the men again and this thought gave him a warm feeling. He would be the great hunter his grandfather said he would be.



Glossary

Use the glossary to find the meanings of the **boldfaced** words in this book. Not all of the meanings for each word are given. You will need to use a dictionary to find other meanings. The page on which each word is first found is listed after the meaning.

By using the marks given below, you will be able to pronounce these new words correctly.

ä = car
a = ran
ā = hay
e = bed
ē = she

i = hit
ī = hide
o = log
ō = home

u = cup
ū = book
ü = tool

ə = jacket
zh = measure
yū = cute

The accented syllable is marked with an ' and tells you to stress this part of the word. These examples show you how a word is divided into syllables with the accented syllable marked.

hit' ting
to ward'

alpine (al' pīn) an area high in the mountains usually above the tree line; description of plants in this region. (p. 56)

awl (ol) small pointed tool for punching a hole through hide so that it may be laced together. (p. 21)

babiche (ba bēsh') a thin strip of hide used for all tying purposes. (p. 14)

balhach (bal' hach) potlatch; ceremonies given by the Carrier to celebrate important events such as deaths, or giving of a name. Gifts are given to each guest. (p. 27)

balsam (bol' sēm) a type of evergreen tree. (p. 32)

barbs (bārbs) a jagged edge on a narrow point or spear. (p. 14)

bargain (bār' gen) a discussion on what will be traded for certain goods. (p. 46)

barricade (bār ə kād') a blockage in a river, or a walkway. (p. 32)

bartering (bār' tər' ing) the exchanging of goods for other articles. (p. 46)

box boiler (boks boi' lər) a box shaped container used for cooking. The box boilers were obtained from coastal tribes (p. 19)

- breech cloth** (brēch cloth) an item of clothing that falls from the waist to the knees. (p. 31)
- buckskin** (buk' skin) soft prepared deer hide. (p. 69)
- cache** (kash) a place for storing something for later use. (p. 29)
- cached** (kasht) hidden (p. 46)
- ceremonial** (ser ə mō' nē əl) description of special acts or set of acts performed on important occasions. (p. 68)
- ceremonies** (ser ə mō' nēs) special acts or set of acts performed on important occasions. (p. 38)
- clans** (klanz) a group of people who are all related to the same ancestor. (p. 29)
- cooking box** (kuk' ing boks) a box shaped container used for cooking. The cooking box was obtained from the coastal tribes. (p. 44)
- copper** (kop' per) a reddish metal which is easily shaped and bent. (p. 7)
- cradle** (krā' dəl) a bed for a baby. The Carrier used a special birch bark cradle which could be strapped to the mother's back. (p. 25)
- cured** (kyürd) preparing meat or fish for winter storage, such as smoking and drying. (p. 40)
- delicacy** (del' ə kə sē) a delicious food (p. 75)
- dentalium** (den ta' lê ə m) shells used in trade. They were obtained from the coastal tribes in exchange for hides and other goods. (p. 18)
- dialects** (dī' ə lekts) variations or differences of speech from district to district. The Carrier had many dialects. (p. 6)
- down** very fine fluffy feathers. The down is found against the bird's skin beneath the larger flight feathers. (p. 18)
- elder** an older member of a tribe who is looked up to because of his or her wisdom and experience. (p. 29)
- ermine** (er' mən) a small animal hunted for its pelt. It is known as an ermine in winter when its coat is white. (p. 68)
- fast** to go without food for a period of time. (p. 74)
- filleting** (fil' ə ting) cutting the meat away from the backbone of a fish. (p. 40)
- fringe** decoration. (p. 68)
- garter** (gär' tər) a band worn on the leg above the knee to hold up leggings and often decorated. (p. 77)
- good-will** wishing a person well; kindness (p. 38)

- to gut** to cut and remove the insides of an animal or fish. (p. 40)
- haliotis** (hal' ē ō t ə s) shells obtained from coastal tribes in trade. (p. 78)
- hereditary** (hə red' ə ter ē) passed down from one generation to the next. (p. 29)
- humiliation** (hyü mil ē ā' shən) great embarrassment. (p. 13)
- inherited** (in hār' ə tid) the act of having received the position or belongings of a person who has died, passing down from generation to generation. (p. 79)
- intestines** (in tes' t ə ns) part of the digestive system. The intestine in an animal or human is a long winding tube, thin but strong. (p. 75)
- kelp** a large brown seaweed. (p. 45)
- kinnikinnick** (kin i kə nik') a plant which can be used as medicine. (p. 83)
- kneaded** (nēd' ə d) shaped by applying pressure such as kneading bread dough with one's hands. (p. 55)
- labret** (la bret') an ornament worn by a woman in a hole cut just below the lip. (p. 78)
- ladle** (lā' d ə l) large spoon. The Carrier used sheep's horn to make their ladles. (p. 18)
- lattice** (lat' is) a structure of wood or sticks which are woven together or
- laxative** (lak' sə tiv) a medicine given when one is constipated. (p. 54)
- legends** stories from the past. Legends pass on people's beliefs or history. They often have a lesson or moral. (p. 27)
- lure** a type of bait made of bone often in the shape of a small fish. (p. 14)
- mallets** wooden or stone hammers. (p. 34)
- marrow** a soft fatty substance found in the hollow centre of bones. (p. 58)
- marten** a weasel-like animal with valuable fur. (p. 37)
- maul** (mol) a large wooden hammer. (p. 33)
- mesmerized** (mes' mə rī zed) fascinated, awed. (p. 79)
- migration** the movement of animals from one area to another on a seasonal basis. Ducks migrate south for the winter. (p. 22)
- nettle** a plant which, when touched, stings the skin. The fibres of this plant are used for making fish nets, etc. (p. 15)
- nobility** those of high rank or position in a community. (p. 78)
- obstacle** a barrier, something which is

- oolichan** (ü' lə kən) a small oily fish.
This oil was eaten with dried food.
The Carrier traded with the
Tsimshian for oolichan oil. (p. 44)
- to pacify** (pas' ə fī) to calm. (p. 37)
- pemmican** (pem' i kən) a food made
from dried meat or fish, fat and
berries. (p. 41)
- penetrate** (pen' ə trāt) to pass
through; to enter. (p. 11)
- pit dwellings** houses built partly
underground. (p. 7)
- pitch** a sticky substance or resin found
oozing through the bark of some trees.
(p. 19)
- pneumonia** (nū mōn' yə) a sickness
which affects the lungs. (p. 83)
- poultice** (pōl' tis) a soft mass, like
wet bread, which is applied to a sore
area. (p. 83)
- predictable** (prē dik' tə bəl) an event
or behaviour that you can be sure will
happen - the seasons are *predictable*.
(p. 16)
- to process** to prepare. (p. 27)
- purifier** (pyür' ə fī ə) a medicine to
make the blood pure or clean. (p. 54)
- Raz** a ceremonial cape. (p. 69)
- re-enactment** to act out an event or
happening. (p. 61)
- rheumatism** (rü' mə tiz əm) a
disease which often affects a person's
joints. (p. 83)
- ring-barked** a cut through the bark of
a tree which completely encircles the
tree. The tree dies if it is ring-barked.
(p. 71)
- sacred** (sā' crəd) something which is
very important because it has to do
with God or spirits; holy. (p. 38)
- Sekani** the name of the Indian tribe
which lives to the northeast of the
Carrier. (p. 6)
- semi-nomadic** having to do with
people moving from place to place.
The Carrier moved to different areas
for gathering food according to the
seasons. (p. 8)
- shaman** (shā' mən) a medicine man
and spiritual leader. (p. 30)
- sinew** (sin' yū) a type of tough cord,
used for all tying purposes. It was
taken from the animals the Carrier
hunted. (p. 11)
- smokehouse** a building with fires built
inside to smoke food which hangs on
racks. (p. 40)
- snare** a trap usually made with
branches and rope used to capture
small animals. (p. 35)
- spawn** (spon) to lay eggs. (p. 29)
- spirits** (spēr' əts) supernatural beings
who are invisible. (p. 38)

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- spirituality** (spēr ə chü al' ə tē) a state of believing in spirits. (p. 38)
- sufficient** (sə fish' ənt) enough. (p. 71)
- survive** to live through a difficult time or event. (p. 38)
- sweat lodge** a small building much like a sauna, used for ceremonial purposes. (p. 7)
- tallow** (tal' ō) animal fat heated to liquid and then allowed to cool and harden. (p. 45)
- thimbleberry** a plant with large leaves. (p. 55)
- thong** narrow strips of hide used for tying articles together. (p. 17)
- title** rank or special position in the tribe; a special name. (p. 27)
- Tsimshian** (Tsim shan) one of the many groups of native people living on the B.C. coast: Present day Tsimshian live around Terrace. (p. 7)
- tunic** (tü' nik) an item of clothing which hangs straight down from the shoulder to the thigh. (p. 17)
- unsuspecting** (un səs pek' ting) trusting; does not suspect. (p. 73)
- usher** someone who shows people to their seat at a performance or ceremony. (p. 66)
- weir** (wēr) a trap built in a river for catching fish. (p. 32)
- wild hemp** a plant that has fibres which can be used to make rope. (p. 15)
- yearling** (yēr' ling) a young animal approximately one year old. (p. 69)

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The Carrier Language

Some sounds in Carrier are the same as English sounds, but several are different. The ' mark means a stoppage or catch in the throat. There are many regional variations in pronunciation. One village may say a word one way while another village may say the word slightly differently.

Carrier Words

balhach	potlatch
dayun-un	medicine man
dune za'	hereditary chief
dutni	marmot
Es'tace	a legendary figure
hadih	a greeting
kaltai	cured willow fibre
k'azba	ptarmigan
kei pes	encircling willow - a game
moodih	the leader, boss
musdzo	inner bark of spruce
nat'oh	fool hens, spruce grouse
noonda	arrowhead
sohjut	rotted wood
sus	black or brown bear
talo	salmon
te'ko	a stick used for playing a game
tsa	beaver
tsabai	dolly varden
tsachun	meat cache
ts'al	swamp moss
'uba	father
wasi	lynx
whudzih	caribou

Names

Chilh'	one who always tries to do the right thing
Doh'	dearest one

Index

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