

NC 0003
Costanoan Basket

I have examined this basket and believe it to be a very rare basket produced by the Southern Costanoan, possibly in the vicinity of Mission San Juan Bautista, probably during the first half of the 19th century.

It is constructed in non-interlocking stitching, in a rightward coil direction, using a grass bundle foundation of deer grass stalks (Muehlenbergia rigens), and sewing strands of split sedge root (Carex sp. or Caladium sp.). The opaque white beads are of a type manufactured in Murano, Italy, and distributed widely in California prior to the 1870s.

This basket closely resembles three known acorn flour-sifting baskets produced by Costanoan women. One, in the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, was woven in 1875 by a female Costanoan resident on Mission San Antonio named Coleta (cat. No. LMA 1-14987). The other two were woven by Ascension (aka Barbara) Solarenso, at Mission San Juan Bautista, and are in the C. Hart Merriam collection in the Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Davis (CHM 334 and 335).

The basket exhibits certain features which are common to both these Southern Costanoan and Salinan baskets, although I have not found any documented Salinan baskets just like this particular basket. The sharing of such features as materials and construction techniques is to be expected in border area, such as that between the Southern Costanoan and Salinan.

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