

NC 0005  
Salinan Basket

This basket, 7 7/8" dia. x 3 5/8" ht., woven of sedge grass root on a grass bundle foundation with an inside work face and rightward coil direction, ornamented with tufts of green and red wool yarn, faceted black glass beads and quail topknots, and with two stitches of flicker quill in the rim, is doubtlessly a Salinan basket. It is identical to two other baskets made by Perfecta Encinales and her daughters in all details, including the use of faceted black glass beads.

Perfecta Encinales was the oldest member of the San Miguel Salinan in 1910 when J. Alden Mason did his fieldwork among the Salinan. She and several of her daughters wove baskets like this basket; several are in the collection of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (formerly the Lowie Museum of Anthropology), and two baskets of this type were collected from Encinales in 1902 by C. Hart Merriam and are in the collection of the University of California, Davis.

There has been some discussion that this basket may have been a hat. Mason reports in his Ethnology of the Salinan Indians "Basket hats, ts!waketE", were made in coiled weave, the exact shape being unknown." (p. 145) While this basket could be a hat, a similar basket collected by Merriam (measuring 7 1/8" x 4 1/4") was described to him as a bowl. While this basket could have been made in the style of a woman's cap, I believe that it is more prudent to call it a decorated gift basket.

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References:

Mason, J. Alden  
1912            The Ethnology of the Salinan Indians. University of California  
                  Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology. 10(4): 97-240.  
                  University of California Press, Berkeley.

Merriam, C. Hart  
n.d.            Catalog card for baskets 107a and 107b. On file, University of California,  
                  Davis, department of Anthropology, Merriam collection.