



DALE CROES

GENERATIONALLY LINKED ARCHAEOLOGY

THE STUDY OF ANCIENT SALISH SEA BASKETRY

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COSTA BOUTSIKAKIS

More than a hundred canoes of Nations from along the Northwest Coast approach the shores of Lummi Nation Territory in Washington State every summer for Canoe Journeys. This year, in this geographical area known as the Salish Sea, an intricate network of coastal waterways that includes the southwestern portion of the Canadian province of British Columbia and the northwestern portion of the U.S. state of Washington, more than 1,300 paddlers and observers were present for the annual event. There, Ed Carriere, steering the 26-foot Wes-i-dult Carriere family canoe named for his great-great-grandmother, called out to ask for permission to come ashore. Leaders of the Lummi Nation welcomed him, as they have for many years, and amidst this ancient protocol of respect, and coming to gather in peace, the leaders on shore called out for everyone to stop and sing “Happy Birthday” to the renowned master basket weaver and canoe carver, who turned 85 that day.

Carriere, a member of the Suquamish Tribe, was raised by his great-grandmother Julia Jacobs, who taught him weaving at a young age.

“In those days, you didn’t dare ask questions, you just had to watch and learn,” Carriere explained. He would gather weaving material for his grandmother—cedar limbs, bark, and roots. “If they weren’t good enough, I would find them thrown in the backyard and that’s how I learned what to look for.”

Carriere was 14 years old in 1948 when he wove his first basket, a large Suquamish-style clam basket. He used the vessel for three years, digging clams to sell, before it started to wear out.



Twenty years passed before Carriere wove another basket. He noticed a lack of weavers creating the old-style baskets that he remembered his great-grandmother weaving. He realized if he didn't start weaving the old baskets, that knowledge could be lost. Carriere collected materials on his land—cedar roots, limbs, maple bark, cherry bark, bear grass, horsetail root, etc.—to weave the Suquamish-style baskets.

After mastering the techniques his grandmother had taught him, Carriere went on to learn from weavers in neighboring communities. One was his grandmother's lifelong friend, Isabell Ides, of the Makah Tribe, who taught him to weave with spruce roots. Through Ides he met and started working with archaeologist Dr. Dale Croes.

"Meeting Dale and getting to work with Dale, I almost feel like an archaeologist," Carriere said. "I always had an urge to weave like my ancestors. Working with Dale brought that into my life. When I saw baskets come out of the wet sites, it did something to me. I had to weave, to honor those people who wove back then."

From the beginning of his career in the early 1970s, Croes has worked in equal partnership with tribes at archaeological wet sites throughout the Northwest Coast. Through his work leading research at the Hoko River site, located in the traditional territory of the Makah Tribe on the northwest corner of Washington state's Olympic Peninsula, Croes met Ides, who taught him basket weaving. He recalls that the tribal leadership required him to learn to weave baskets if he was going to study them. He took classes at the school with sisters Ides and Lena McGee Claplanhoo. "I didn't think I needed to know how to weave to be able to study the ancient baskets and do the science. But I learned more with them than any grad school class could ever teach me," Croes said.

Croes describes his type of archaeology as "generationally-linked." His collaboration with Carriere brings tools of Western science together with Indigenous knowledge and research approaches to gain a deep understanding of the weavings they have recovered. They are able to see that ancient knowledge has been handed down through hundreds of generations over thousands of years by comparing the ancient baskets to the techniques used by weavers today. They are also able to learn ancient weaving techniques that have been lost over time through the changes in our environment and our societies, as well as colonization and attempted assimilation. There was a time in our recent history when Indigenous cultural practices, including weaving and speaking traditional languages, were outlawed.

After his retirement in 2013, Croes revisited baskets that were recovered from the Biderbost and Ozette Village site in the 1970s where he did his dissertation research. More than a thousand pieces of basketry had been recovered at those sites. "I had an enlightened thought to call Ed and ask if he would like to replicate the baskets." Croes recalled.

Through his studies and work with Croes, Carriere has been able to replicate weaving techniques from 500 years old up to 4,500 years old, and as far as 225 generations back. He has replicated several styles of baskets, including giant pack baskets,

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: Ed Carriere with his shrimp basket, Dale Croes holding Ed Carriere's archaeology basket in progress, and Josh Mason holding the shrimp basket made with cedar limbs and roots with an open wrapped twining that Ed taught him to make.

BOTTOM: Ed Carriere, Suquamish Elder and master basket maker, skipping his cedar dugout canoe, Wes-i-dult, to the Lummi Nation landing. Ed made this cedar bark, checker-work, conical shade hat for the annual Journeys event.

THIS PAGE TOP: Isabell Ides, Makah Elder and master basket maker, analyzing a 3,000 year old basket from the Hoko River wet site. She determined that it was made of spruce root in a fine twine and is likely a berry basket. She could make one just like it today. Isabell taught Ed Carriere and Dale Croes.

BOTTOM: Close-up of 4,500 year old Glen Rose Cannery pack basket weave called dual-warp wrapped weave, and Ed Carriere examining it so he can replicate it for the bottom of his archaeology basket.





TOP: Ed Carriere's replica of a small 2,000 year old open-twined, cedar root basket compared to the ancient example.

AT RIGHT: *Re-Awakening Ancient Salish Sea Basketry* book cover with replicated 2,000 year old Biderbost style baskets (available on Amazon.com).

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Carrie Anne
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She holds a Master
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from Harvard
University Graduate
School of Education
and is a weaver
of cedar and
textile garments.

he has ever seen. He feels a strong connection to all of the baskets he has studied from the Northwest region because of the way Indigenous people traveled, the relationships between tribes, and the exchange of cultural knowledge over thousands of years. "We are all interconnected," Carriere says.

The project of replicating the ancient baskets gained the attention and support of tribes and institutions in the region, such as the University of Washington Burke Museum's Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Native Art, which provided a teaching grant that enabled a handful of young students to take classes with Carriere. One of those students, Josh Mason of the Squaxin Island Tribe, became Carriere's apprentice and continues to work with him. Mason is now also teaching weaving classes and passing on the knowledge.

In 2018, Croes and Carriere published the book *Re-Awakening Ancient Salish Sea Basketry*, with the generous support of the Northwest Native American Basketweaver's Association and many of the local tribes that Croes has worked with, including Squaxin Island, Tulalip, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, and Siletz Tribe of Oregon.

"The ultimate goal of the book and the project is to make sure the old teachings continue on to future generations." Croes explained.

With all the ancient weaving knowledge Carriere has gained, he created what he calls an "archaeology basket" that uses the techniques of the different eras from when they were woven, showing an evolution of weaving. Most recently, he has been commissioned to make one by the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The finished basket will be displayed in their updated and restored historic Northwest Coast Hall, which is scheduled for completion in 2020 during the museum's 150th anniversary.

Other replicated baskets of Carriere's can be seen in museums throughout the Northwest, including the Suquamish Museum, the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, the Burke Museum, and the Hallie Ford Museum.

Croes's updated dissertation research has been republished and will be released during Makah Days at the Makah Museum's 40th anniversary. The original recovered baskets of the Ozette Village dig will be on display, along with the new Ozette Basketry publication, *Basketry from the Ozette Village Archaeological Site: A Technical, Functional and Comparative Study*.

burden baskets, fish-gathering baskets, and shrimp trap baskets, using techniques such as open-weave twining, plaiting, and twill weaving.

Carriere has a few favorite replicated baskets, one being a small, very finely woven basket, as old as 4,500 years, that was recovered from the Glenrose Cannery wet site between North Delta and New Westminster, British Columbia. Carriere describes it as being one of the most beautiful weavings that

