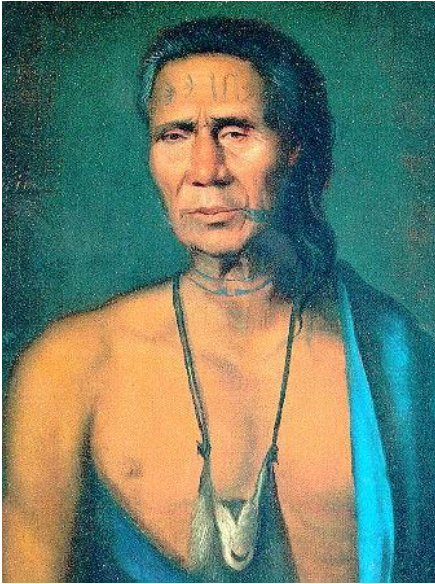


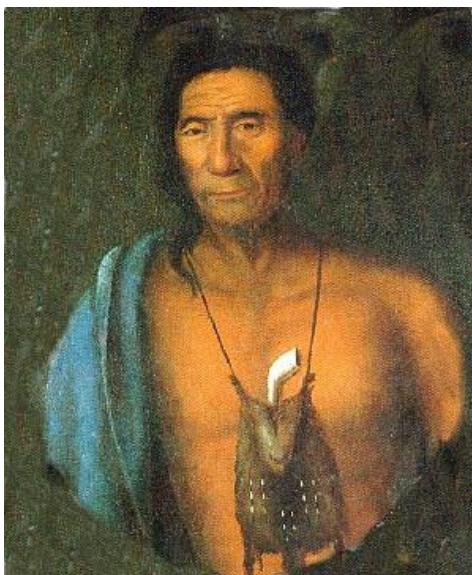
Lenape Bags and Pouches

This is a two panel list about Lenape bags and pouches. Since not all styles of bags had special Lenape names the names will be given only if known.

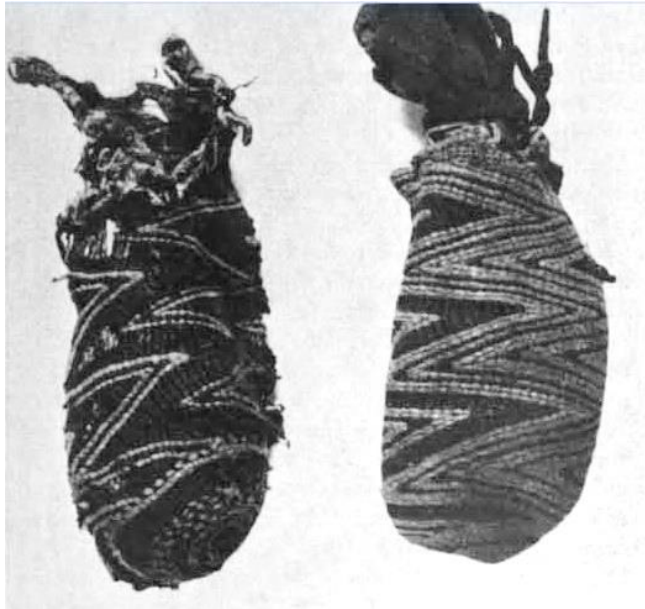
Small Bags



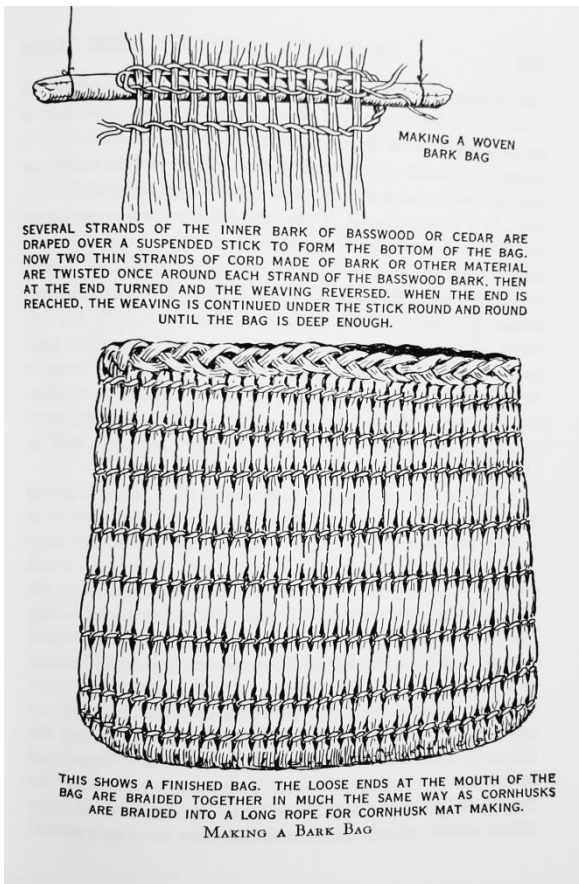
A portrait of Delaware Indian Lappawinsoe. He is shown wearing a tobacco pouch made from the skin of an animal. This portrait was done by Gustavus Hesselius in 1735.



A portrait of Delaware Indian Tishcohan where he is shown wearing a tobacco pouch made from the skin of an animal. A white clay trade pipe is shown sticking out of the pouch. The pouch also appears to be decorated with some wampum beads. This portrait was done by Gustavus Hesselius in 1735.



The Indians say these two medicine bags have been in use since the Lenape lived by the ocean, and were carried by them on their migrations. They bear a mark of antiquity, and seem to be unique. An example of aboriginal textile art, the material seems to be Indian hemp, the lining deerskin. Both are decorated with zigzag lines worked out in dark brown and white. They contain, in smaller deerskin bags, a finely divided shining substance resembling mica, which was, according to Indian belief, taken from the scales of the great mythical horned serpent and is a very powerful "rain medicine." - M. R. Harrington



There was a coarse woven kind of bag made from strips of basswood inner bark. These strips were suspended on a horizontal stick and woven together with a pair of bark strings which were twisted one half turn between each strip of bark as in the illustration. When completed the edge of the bag was finished by twisting together the ends of the work strips. Other fine bags were made with Indian hemp dyed black and yellow and red. They too were woven upside down but the up-and-down strands were cords instead of work strips and the crossed white strands were pressed so close together as to make a fabric like coarse canvas.

- M. R. Harrington



Bag of black dyed buckskin with quillwork decoration. It is stated it came from the Philadelphia area about 1780.

National Museum of the American Indian



Bag of black dyed buckskin with quillwork decoration. It has fringes of tin cones with red dyed deer hair inserted in them.

It is stated it came from the Philadelphia area about 1780.

National Museum of the American Indian



Fringed deerskin bag with beadwork decoration.



This little bag is called a puzzle pouch. The name comes from the fact that when you look at the bag it is a puzzle to figure out how to open it. These were mainly used to carry some loose change.



Another puzzle pouch.



Still more puzzle pouches. These were usually made of deerskin. When larger items were cut from the deerskin there would be little scraps left over and they used these to make these little pouches.



Here is another puzzle pouch. In the same image is a beaded zippered bag of more recent manufacture.



This is the reverse side of the beaded zippered bag shown above.



Cloth bag

dated 1832, about 8 inches.

National Museum of the American Indian 24/4153



Cloth bag, other side

dated 1832, about 8 inches.

National Museum of the American Indian 24/4153



Deerskin Bag, NMAI

National Museum of the American Indian



Deerskin bag decorated with beadwork. Made by Loyce Brown about 1970.



Drawstring deerskin bag with wampum bead fringe. Made by Nora Dean about 1975.



Tulip purse made of deerskin and decorated with beadwork. The long fringes have larger beads on them

It was made by Pom-mah-pun-aqua about 1920.

Bandolier Bag

Pëntahsënakàn



One popular thing for collectors was the Delaware bandolier bag. They were elaborately decorated with beadwork. The strap usually went over the left shoulder with the pouch hanging on the right side.

made about 1860, private collection



One feature of the Delaware bandolier bags was that one half of the strap had one design while the other half had a completely different design. Another feature was the strap had three tabs usually square at the ends.



As stated above one side of the strap had a different pattern from the other side or the other half. If you look at this bag it seems to be the same pattern through the whole strap.



However, a closer inspection of the middle of the strap shows that the maker did something clever. One half of the strap has one color of red beads while the other half has a different color of red beads and so the two halves are different.



Bandolier bag made by
Pom-mah-pun-aqua about 1890:



Bandolier bag

National Museum of the American Indian



This is a paper pattern made by Minnie Fouts for beadwork on the shoulder strap of a bandolier bag. It was cut from a grocery bag probably about 1920.

Within the last twenty years there has been a renewed interest in making traditional items like bandolier bags. The next three examples show the results.



Bag made by Delaware artist Joe Baker



Bag made by Annette Ketchum for her husband Dee Ketchum when he was tribal chief.



Bandolier bag made by tribal member
Levi Randoll.

Compiled by
Jim Rementer, Secretary
Culture Preservation Committee