



Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry (And Government; 5)

Sarah H. Hill

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In this innovative study, Sarah Hill illuminates the history of Southeastern Cherokee women by examining changes in their basketry. Based in tradition and made from locally gathered materials, baskets evoke the lives and landscapes of their makers. Indeed, as *Weaving New Worlds* reveals, the stories of Cherokee baskets and the women who weave them are intertwined and inseparable. Incorporating written, woven, and spoken records, Hill demonstrates that changes in Cherokee basketry signal important transformations in Cherokee culture. Over the course of three centuries, Cherokees developed four major basketry traditions, each based on a different material--rivercane, white oak, honeysuckle, and maple. Hill explores how the addition of each new material occurred in the context of lived experience, ecological processes, social conditions, economic circumstances, and historical eras. Incorporating insights from written sources, interviews with contemporary Cherokee weavers, and a close examination of the baskets themselves, she presents Cherokee women as shapers and subjects of change. Even in the face of cultural assault and environmental loss, she argues, Cherokee women have continued to take what they have to make what they need, literally and metaphorically weaving new worlds from old.

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