Musqueam Weavers

Musqueam Weaving Through the Personal Stories of Weavers

MUSEUM of Anthropology
at the University of British Columbia

Picture Key for Cover

Robyn Sparrow
Lynn Dan
Linda Gabriel
Debra Sparrow

Janice Paul
Wendy John
Janna Becker
Debbie Campbell

Joan Point
Yvonne Peters
Roberta Louis
McGary Point

Vivian Campbell
Krista Point
Leila Vivian Stogan
Joan Peters

Wanda Stogan
Cecelia Grant
Cynthia Louie

Touching blankets that are over a hundred years old creates such a spiritual feeling, an understanding that the skill you're reacquiring is the same that our ancestors had.

Wendy John, Musqueam weaver and political leader

One of the high points in my museum career was the day in 1984 when the Musqueam weavers first came to the Museum of Anthropology to see the old Salish blankets in our collections. On the day they came, the blankets began to take on life again.

Elizabeth Lominska Johnson, Curator of Textiles

Musqueam weavers continue to show me there is still much for all of us to learn at the loom.

Jill Rachel Baird, Curator of Education

Top: View of the mouth of the Fraser River from the community of Musqueam, photo 1992.

The community of Musqueam is located on the north arm at the mouth of the Fraser River.

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Top Left: Digital Research Station in 'Gathering Strength Exhibit', photo 2001.

Bottom Left: Menu Screen from 'Weaving Worlds Together' at the UBC Museum of Anthropology (MOA), photo 1998.

Right: Musqueam Weavers module in 'Gathering Strength Exhibit' at MOA, photo 2002.

Introduction

The UBC Museum of Anthropology is built on Musqueam traditional territory, so we have a special relationship with the Musqueam people. Our ongoing work with the weavers at Musqueam is part of that relationship.

Many Musqueam people are accomplished weavers, making a great variety of weavings for use in ceremonies, at home, and as a source of income. The art of making large weavings was nearly lost at the turn of the century, although people continued to make small items of regalia needed for ceremonies. Since 1983, the weavers' learning paths have brought them to the Museum many times to look at old and new weavings, to share and gather information and, more recently, to offer education programmes to local schools and community groups.

Our learning path has taken us the short distance down the road to their community, to the homes and workshops of the weavers, to see their recent work and to enjoy coffee and conversation.

This source book has grown out of the "Weavers at Musqueam" digital module in the exhibit *Gathering Strength: New Generations in Northwest Coast Art* at the Museum of Anthropology at U.B.C. We continue our work with Musqueam weavers and have renewed old friendships with the women and men who create weavings at Musqueam. This sourcebook celebrates their work.

Musqueam weavers eloquently share with us why weaving is important to them, their families and their community. Sharing their words in the form of this sourcebook also speaks to the importance of these personal histories to all of us.

Detail of Lynn Dan weaving. Weaving in UBC MOA collection, #Nbz856, photo 2001.

We will continue to work with the weavers at Musqueam and add more of their personal stories to this sourcebook. Each year, changes will be made and components added to the "Weavers at Musqueam" module of *Gathering Strength: New Generations in Northwest Coast Art.*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the weavers who participated. We would also like to thank the Museum staff and interns without whose energy and skill this sourcebook, the exhibit and accompanying multi-media programme would not have been possible; and to the Musqueam Indian Band for pursing opportunities at MOA. Special thanks to Dena Klashinsky, Maria Roth, Lisa Wolff, Alexa Fairchild, Cliff Lauson, and Katherine Fairchild.

Jill Rachel Baird & Elizabeth Lominska Johnson, 2002

View of the Musqueam display at the UBC Museum of Anthropology.

Left: Weaving by Debra Sparrow and Robyn Sparrow, 1999, #Nbz842.

Right: Tsimalano House Post, Musqueam circa 1890s, #A5004, photo 2001.

SALISH WEAVING: AN ART NEARLY LOST

Salish weaving is an ancient art. Woven objects from 4,500 years ago have been excavated by archaeologists at Musqueam. Weaving tools have been found at several more recent sites in the area.

The eighteenth and the nineteenth-century journals of European explorers and traders report a well established weaving tradition in the region. They record that native people often wore wool blankets, some of which were patterned, and that such blankets were highly valued by them, in part because they were made from scarce materials, the wool of mountain goats and the hair of dogs. Some examples of these blankets were collected and eventually found their way into museum collections in North America and Europe. Museums also hold collections of other forms of Coast Salish weavings: leggings, tumplines (burden straps), belts, mats, and baskets.

Regrettably, little information was recorded on the production and use of these weavings. Most of those in collections have little identifying information, so that it is difficult to establish clear patterns of regional variation in styles and materials, or of changes over time. The names of the women who created these objects are rarely known. The Coast Salish had no written language, so the only record these earlier people have left is the weavings themselves and their related tools. It was only in the twentieth century that anthropologists began to systematically record information from native makers and users of weavings. By that time Coast Salish culture had been profoundly affected by European influence.

Salish leaders in 1906 wearing traditional blankets and coats made from Salish weavings, Vancouver City Archives.

Musqueam Delegation entering UBC Museum of Anthropology Great Hall, at the 'Indigenous Peoples Education Conference', 1987.

Left to Right: Dominic Point, Vincent Stogan, Wendy John, Dave Joe, Margaret Dan Robinson, Edna Stogan, Debra Sparrow, Mary Charles, Virginia Joe, Wesley Grant, Adline Point, Charlene Grant, Johnna Sparrow, photo 1987.

It was not until the 1960s that Salish blanket weaving began to be revived, first at Sardis and more recently at Musqueam. By then the tradition was almost entirely gone. The people responsible for the revival taught themselves, by studying examples of old weavings and questioning elders to learn whatever they remembered of the art.

Wendy Grant John, Founder of the Musqueam Weavers

(Text adapted from Johnson & Bernick, *Hands of our Ancestors: the Revival of Salish Weaving at Musqueam*, UBC Museum of Anthropology Museum Note No. 16, 1986:2)

Janna Becker

"There are days when you just want to weave. That's when I could weave from daybreak to dusk."

I have lived at Musqueam all my life. I have been weaving since 1997. I have always been interested in the weavings, but weaving was something that I never had time to do, or I never thought that I would have the opportunity to learn.

Before I started in the weaving school, Leila Stogan showed me how to split, rove, shock and spin wool. When it was my turn to spin, I couldn't get the thing to go. I had never used a spinner in my life, and I had no rhythm whatsoever! After a good couple of days, I finally got going with a spinning rhythm. To strengthen the wool, we shocked it, dipping the skeins of wool in boiling water and immersing them in cold water. The wool was then hung to dry. After that, Leila warped up her loom and started to weave. I watched Leila weave for some time, and then I tried weaving myself. Eventually, I got the hang of it! I was so proud of my first little piece, a little white diamond that I had done. I had never imagined there was so much work to weaving. I didn't know what I was in for! It was a lot of work, but I didn't regret it.

I asked Leila to show me how to do some patterns. She showed me the basics, like diamonds and triangles. Then I started going up to the weaving school every once in a while. I would just hang around and visit, just to let them know that I was interested if any spots came available. Then I got a call saying I could start the next week. So, I joined the weaving school in 1997. Of course, they were all advanced compared to me, because I had only been learning to weave for a few weeks at that point. I was still ready and raring to go.

Janna Becker's pillow, photo 1997.

I really enjoyed the weaving school. I would weave all day at the school, come home, and do my own projects in the evening. Then, I would get up the next day and start weaving all over again! There are days when you just want to weave. I am a morning person. There were many times that I would be up at seven in the morning on a Saturday and by eight o'clock I was weaving. I would still be weaving at eleven o'clock at night, not because I had to, just because I wanted to. That's when I would weave from daybreak to dusk. There's something about the idea that I am doing the same thing that our ancestors had done years ago, using almost the very same methods. I may have a couple more tools than they had available to them, but I am basically doing the same thing. That makes me feel really good.

Even if I can't do it all the time, weaving is something that I always enjoy doing in the winter and in the evenings. I'll always weave. One reason is that it makes me feel good, and I really enjoy it. It's almost like a good book, where you can't get away. I can do it for hours upon hours, but I've got to have that feeling. Sometimes it's hard to create things all the time, but I really enjoy it. Sometimes when I start to run out of ideas, I go down to the museum and just take a walk around. I get ideas from the older blankets. It makes me feel good that I know something that is a part of my heritage.

Right: Top: Janna Becker weaving her first large-scale blanket, photo 1997. Bottom: "In this photo, you can also see how thick my early spinning was", photo 1999.

Left: Janna Becker preparing wool for roving and then spinning, photo 1997.

Janna Becker's sitting mats woven as gifts for dancers in the longhouse, photo 1998.

Janna Becker's early diamond weaving, photo 1997.

Just after finishing the weaving course, I wove over thirteen woolen mats for use in the longhouse, so they didn't have a lot of detail in them. I wove them for mask dancers to put in their buckets, to be given out as gifts as payment at the end of the dance. We thought it would be really nice if they had some real wool mats like they used to make in the old days, instead of the little nylon mats you usually get today. The mats were about eighteen by twenty-four inches. I made them in the fall and winter months.

When I was working on these sitting mats, I would get home from work and just start weaving. Then I would go back to work again the next day and weave all that night. This continued until they were all finished, and I was tired and all weaved out! So, I put my loom away for a while.

I love to weave in winter! It's a great time to be inside. I made pillows at Christmas. They were all gifts. Everybody got weavings for Christmas

Detail of Janna Becker's handwoven pillow, photo 1998.

the year I finished the weaving school. When I was still in the weaving school, I started telling everybody, "You're all getting weavings for Christmas!" I made this pillow for my mom [weaving above]. I didn't want to have anything too different because it had to fit with her couch. I wove it with the wool that I had dyed in class. That was pretty neat. The other pillows that I have made are quite plain, compared to that.

You were always working with other people in the weaving school, and I really enjoyed the company. Although you knew everybody in the class, there were a lot of people you just hadn't spent time with. My partner was Joan Peters. We had a lot of fun together.

Our instructors Debbie and Robyn Sparrow are just so knowledgeable. Both of them have their own way of going about things, so there were always two different approaches to follow. If you got stuck with one, you went to the other. To have that available was great.

Top: Janna Becker pointing at the hooking details of her weaving, photo 1999.

Bottom: Janna Becker at home, photo 1999.

Debbie Campbell

"Now it's just like I'm on fire. It makes me feel really proud."

Left: Debbie Campbell and her daughter Leslie proudly holding up her weaving, now in the MOA collection, #Nbz851, photo 1999.

Right: Debbie Campbell wrapped in her first large scale weaving, photo 1997.

I have two kids, a boy and girl. My daughter Leslie is eleven. My son just turned thirteen. I'm a single mom. I have been back to Musqueam for nine years now. I was in the weaving school just about two and a half to three years ago.

Because I have a bad back, I felt that I wanted to stay home. I wanted to work, but I found my education wasn't very good. I have only a grade eight education, but I have done some courses, and I did great in computers and stuff like that. I wasn't willing to go back to school because I've been away from it so long. So I thought, there is something else I could do. Getting into weaving is great because I can do it on my own time.

There were quite a few of us, at least half of us, that didn't know anything about weaving or spinning. When we first started in 1997, we all took the time to help each other out. It was great. What I didn't know, someone else helped me with. What I knew, I helped another person with. It was great.

Debra and Robyn Sparrow were our instructors. Debra and Robyn are my really close friends now. They helped me a lot and they have said, "Whenever you want to talk, just come over." I feel that I can trust them.

I have always been independent. I just had to do things on my own. At the weaving school, we had to learn to ask, and everyone has different ideas. I had trouble, and I still have trouble, with warping. There was always one of the girls willing to help you along. It was just like a big family, all together. I really enjoyed it, because the women were a lot of fun. We had a lot of laughs. Those were really good times. Girls willing to help you along.

Now it's just like I'm on fire. It makes me feel really proud. I mean, I'm proud of myself because I never knew anything about weaving and spinning. I never thought I would be able to spin and do what I'm doing today. I feel really proud of myself. I've come a long way. It's really inspiring for me. It's the same for my daughter.

Right now, I feel I don't have the patience to teach her. I find it's easier for someone else to teach my daughter. When I try to teach her, sometimes I end up saying, "No, no, you're doing it wrong," but we are not all perfect. Everybody makes mistakes.

There are some of the school kids that are really anxious to learn, and there are some that feel that just because they're boys, they shouldn't be doing this. They don't realize that we have some male weavers at Musqueam who do beautiful work.

I want to give back to the kids that don't know, or that are willing to learn. I want to teach them because I've had a lot of help. I feel that I want to give back to people that need my help, to people that are willing to learn.

I am making a weaving for my son. I decided to do some arrowheads. When I got to the green, I didn't know what to do. I wanted to do something that represents my feelings towards him, so I thought I'd do a big piece for the centre. I look at it as a rope, like a connection between us. The design represents that bond. So, it's actually my son, myself and my daughter. Everything turned out beautifully.

I love this colour [weaving opposite page]. This wine colour, this deep, deep red is my favorite colour. I wasn't really sure what to do, and I kept saying, "Well, I don't know what I want to do and I don't know if I can do it." It's such a big piece and it was my first. It's kind of scary because you have this big large piece and you have to figure out what you are going to do.

So, I was quite pleased and happy. Robyn shook my hand and said "Oh, Debbie, it's beautiful." You know, that's a really nice compliment. At one time she even asked, "When are you going to make me one?" That was a really nice compliment, because Robyn is very fussy. I thought, "Oh, wow!" You know, my ego was really going.

Working on my weaving has helped me a lot. It's helped me to calm down, it's helped me to connect with the women again. The weaving has helped out a lot because my self esteem was really low before I got into this. It's been great for me.

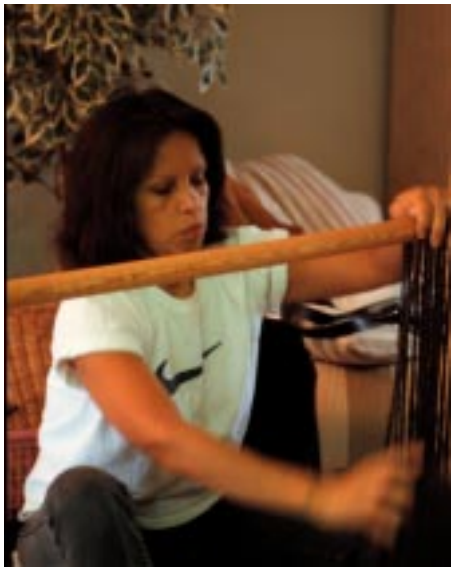
Top: Robyn Sparrow (left) and Debbie Campbell (right) preparing to warp up the loom, photo 1999.

Bottom: Debbie Campbell counts warps as she designs directly on the loom, photo 1997.

Debbie Campbell and daughter Leslie, photo 1999.

Left: Debbie Campbell making a skein of wool after spinning, photo 1997.

Right: Debbie Campbell warping up a loom, photo 1999.



Vivian Campbell

"When you make a weaving, a lot of who you are goes into it."

Left: Vivian Campbell roving wool in classroom, photo 1997.

Right: Vivian Campbell with weaving, photo 1997.

I'm Vivian Campbell from the Musqueam First Nation. My husband Richard Campbell is an artist, a carver of wood. We have five children together. Christina is the oldest and she's fourteen. Vanessa is twelve, and Rebecca is eleven. Sylvester is just nine, and Richard (Jr.) is eight. Richard also has a son Dean who's twenty now. That's who we are.

I was lucky enough to join the Native Youth Project at the Museum of Anthropology many years ago when I was in high school. That's how I initially started my weaving career with cedar bark and basketry. Many years later, the opportunity arose to join the 1997 weaving school at Musqueam. I thought it would be great. In the beginning, it was difficult to manipulate the wool, but after you get used to it, it comes more naturally. It's almost easy! It was fun to learn how to spin and process the wool. It was also great when we started dyeing and came up with different colours.

In the 1997 weaving school, Debra and Robyn Sparrow were our instructors. I think the weaving school was very important because it gave me an opportunity to learn about Salish weaving. Most of us didn't know much about Salish weaving when we started. I grew up here in Musqueam, but the weaving was something that we were never exposed to.

I really enjoy weaving. It's very relaxing. Recently, I saw some pieces that I had given my mom a few years ago. I was totally blown away by myself thinking, "Wow, I can't believe I did that!"

I gave my mom this weaving for a retirement present [weaving above]. I made sure that all the kids did a little piece of it because it was for their grandma. When you make a weaving, a lot of who you are goes into it, because you're the one making it.

An array of Vivian Campbell's weavings, photo 1999.

My mom really loves the weavings that I have given her. It's not something that she did herself as a young woman or a child, so it's something that she really appreciates. It's funny because she would always say, "You've got to go back to school. You've got to go and get a good job. I'll baby-sit!" Then I said, "Well, I am going to school, to learn how to weave." She kind of thought, "Oh, wow." Then when I brought her one, she was just totally blown away and she cried. She was so proud, and said, "Oh, that's so beautiful."

We were lucky that Debbie and Robyn were able to get the weaving school together in 1997. I thank them for having the courage to go looking for the funding. They put their minds to it and got ten women together for that year. There was a really good camaraderie. We all got together and had a good time.

Sometimes, we would sit and laugh and joke all morning, or there were times when we'd just sit weaving and say nothing.

It was nice to be able to join the school in 1997, to actually get hands-on experience. I realized just how much time and effort went into producing pieces like the ones that we've seen at the Museum of Anthropology.

It was great to be able to go as a group to the Museum and see something that was so old but preserved so well. The blankets didn't look like they were hundreds of years old! I didn't know the women that made those old pieces, but it was good to have something to fall back on, to be able to go and see the texture of their spinning, of their wool, and the materials they used. I was totally blown away by the goat hair blankets. I think that would be a real challenge to try and manipulate something like goat's wool.

One day, maybe thirty years from now, it would be nice to find something that I've done in the Museum. It would be nice to be able to say, " Look at how well they've looked after them, it's almost as nice as when I did it." The blankets may not be on display forever, but at least they are in the collection where people can appreciate them.

I think it's great the way that the Museum will take pieces like that and look after them. It's great for Musqueam people, and all First Nations people to be able to come back and find a piece that belonged to their people, something that they may not have even known about. Those pieces are still there to tell their story, which is really important. It's a great legacy for my kids, for all kinds of Musqueam people, for all of us. That's what Salish weaving is all about.

Vivian Campbell beside her nearly completed weaving now in MOA collection, #Nbz854, photo 2001.

It's nice to be able to create the basics like Salish "V"s, twining, and designing, but to also add your own artistic interpretation through use of colour, a different combination of design elements, or something you come up with all on your own. It's great to be able to have that little bit of contemporary flare to it. I really love this coloured one [weaving below right]. It's just beautiful. It took a lot of time and effort to just process the wool itself, but it was a lot of fun dyeing the wool. They're both commercial dyes. The yellow has been dyed on white wool, on white warping. The red was dyed on light gray wool. The light gray is also in that diamond pattern in the centre. I had taken a big long skein of that light gray and dyed it using the red. It came out that burgundy colour. It was a nice contrast, with a bit of yellow to spice and brighten it up red [weaving following page].

When we were dyeing wool, I made this salmon-coloured two-ply weaving. I did brown through this one, and you can see the orange-salmon colour. You can see the warping through the twill, which is kind of neat. I worked diagonally a good portion of the way through it, creating a zig-zag back and forth.

The twill is woven with wool that's two-ply, like warping. That's why you get the extra thickness. With the tabby, you use only one piece of single ply and just go back and forth.

In the school, we learned how to spin wool, beginning with splitting the wool and roving it together. After all that, we'd start to spin using the spinner.

Left: Vivian Campbell beside her blanket at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, #Nbz854, photo 2002.

Detail of weaving by Vivian Campbell, Private collection, photo 1999.

Spinning was fun, but it was also a really big challenge. All of a sudden, your wool can become too thin. If you don't pay attention for just a second, the wheel can start spinning out of control. Then, you've got to stop what you are doing, back it up, reconnect and try again. It was fun learning how to get your speed right. To keep your tension, you need to get your foot going at just the right speed. You can't let your wool become too thin or loose. If it's too loose, then you end up with big chunky lumps in your wool. If your wool is too thin, then it just becomes really tight and stringy. It felt good to finally master spinning. I lucked out with my first piece. My edges were perfectly straight and my tension was really good, but I found some of my wool was uneven. As a weaver you notice these things!

A combination of twill, twining and Salish "V"s. Weaving by Vivian Campbell, photo 1997.

For me, the biggest weaving challenge was learning the Salish "V"s. While I was learning, I'd just stand back and watch. After watching for a long time, I'd finally decide, "Okay, I can do this!" The triangle part in the beginning is made using a tabby stitch. Then you twine with two pieces of wool to create the Salish "V"s. At first I wasn't finishing at the right warp, so my "V"s were going kind of funny. Debbie and Robyn told me to make sure I stopped or turned on the same warp I started on. Then, I found that my Salish "V"s became more even. That really helped.

Another thing I found difficult was learning how to do twill, because you have to make sure the tension is even. With two-ply wool, you wind up weaving with a thicker piece. It seems like you can go quickly because you're just going two over and two under, but you've got to realize that if you're not careful your weaving is going to pull in. I learned to pay more attention to the tension, not to pull so hard, and not to rush to finish.

I think the revival of the weaving is important because it really opens up a whole new door to what our people are all about. It is great that Salish weaving has come back because it is something that enriches our entire community. My children have had a lot of exposure to our culture because their dad is a carver of First Nations art and I weave baskets as well as blankets. It's important for them to feel a connection to their culture and their past. When I came home and started to weave, it sparked a whole new interest for the children. I hope that their interest will continue and that it won't just stop with me.

Lynn Dan

"If I am not satisfied with what I have done, I'll take it right down and do it all over again, instead of trying to patch it up.

Patience is one thing that I'll always have, the patience to take it down and do it all over again."

Left: Lynn Dan at loom. Weaving in MOA collection, #Nbz856, photo 1999.

Right: Lynn Dan with Stephanie Stogan, photo 1999.

I was born in Chemainus, B.C. We moved to Musqueam in 1964. I got married quite young. I was only seventeen. I have three children, Lorraine is fifteen, and she's the baby, Jeffrey is twenty-two, Alec is twenty-four. I also have two of my nieces with me, Heather and Stephanie Stogan, one for six years, and one going on two years.

In 1984, I was going over to the first weaving school to visit my late friend Margaret Louis and a lot of the other ladies that I knew. They were supposed to graph their weavings after they were done with them, but none of the weavers wanted to do it. So, the instructor Wendy John asked me if I wanted to graph the weavings. After a while, they hired me on a regular basis to sit and weave with them.

I started late with the first weaving school, in 1984. It was towards the end when I joined that one. So, I didn't really have time to learn all the stitches. When Debbie started this last one in 1997, she let me know and I later joined that group as well.

When I first started the class, I was scared to start something, because it all looked so complicated. When they showed me it was just so easy, and I wondered why I didn't want to start at the beginning! I picked up on just about everything right away.

For me, spinning was the most satisfying part in the learning process. If I didn't get it the way I wanted it, then I wasn't happy. Once I got my spinning down just the way I wanted it, then I easily got through the whole weaving itself. Before starting the class, I had known a little bit about spinning the wool, but what I learned in the class was different from the way my mom taught me. When I was younger I just did the pedalling for my mom.

Left: Lynn Dan at loom weaving a large-scale blanket, now in MOA collection, #Nbz856, photo 1999.

Top right: Lynn Dan's mother's electric spinner and carder, photo 1999.

Bottom right: Detail of large-scale blanket, MOA collection, #Nbz856, photo 2001.

She taught me to just pedal it and then she would be standing way back, spinning the wool. I've still got the old spinner that we used to pedal with [top right]. My mom taught us to split the wool and spin it just like that. You have to do a lot of pulling if you don't rove, or half-spin the wool before you go to the spinning wheel. Wendy taught us to rove before spinning, which is a lot easier than the old-fashioned way.

While in the weaving school in 1997, I mostly did wall hangings. I also made about four or five shawls for a family up on Vancouver Island. I have made sitting blankets for the men, and leggings for mask dancers in the longhouse. It's totally different when you know the person who you are making a weaving for. I put my best into all my weavings, but I put really special feelings into the leggings, because I really know the person that I made them for.

When you know the person, I think the weavings are lighter. Recently, I showed this man from Chehalis some leggings I made for him last year, comparing them to leggings that someone else had done. Mine were really light compared to the other ones. I made him feel the difference in the warping, from somebody else's to mine.

Top: Close-up of Lynn Dan's eagle design shawl, Collection of the artist, photo 1999.

My work is really light. If I am moody I won't touch my weavings, otherwise, my mood makes the weaving heavier. It's the same thing if you are cooking and you're mad. The people that are going to eat it are going to be mad. So, if you are moody and you are working on your weaving, it will be really heavy.

If I am not satisfied with what I have done, I'll take it right down and do it all over again, instead of trying to patch it up. Patience is one thing that I'll always have, the patience to take it down and do it all over again.

Two young ones that I had offered to teach got tired of waiting for me, so they got the loom out on their own. I realized that they really wanted to do it. It took them two days to make a little weaving, but they made it right from what they had seen in their own minds. That's what they wanted to weave. I couldn't say, "Well, that's a little bit too hard for you to start this way." They wanted to do what they wanted to do, right away. That's just how I was with the first shawl that I made in 1986. No one had ever done an eagle on a shawl before. That's what I wanted to do, because that was my family pattern. It was hard.

I used my grandma's eagle design on my very first shawl. I gave the shawl to my sister, who lives at Capilano. My grandma made an eagle design herself. She graphed it out. That's the design I use for my weavings. It's mostly for my side of the family. My son got a wool vest with an eagle on it, and he can only wear that in the bighouse.

Linda Gabriel

"When many young kids would think of other things, I was thinking of weaving!"

I have three children. Elizabeth is my oldest. My middle child, Theresa Joe, is six years old, and Norma Lee is six months.

I was raised with wool. I used to help my mom and my late dad wash the sheep wool, and hang it out to dry. Then we used to card it using just the hand carders. Mom used to spin and we used to just sit there and watch her. I learned how to knit as a young girl. It was hard to learn because I was left-handed, so it took me until age eleven when I first knitted. Then, we knitted for our allowance. When I first started, it was a toque, and then the sleeves for the sweater. Then I was about thirteen when I started my first vest. I used Cowichan designs and patterns.

When I first tried to weave it was hard, because I am a lefty, and they were showing me how to weave right-handed, until I could catch it on my own. When I am going right, I go over instead of under. When I first learned, I kept on telling my parents, "I don't think I can do it!" because I was really young then. That was in 1986. I wanted to try something different. It was quite a challenge. When many young kids would think of other things, I was thinking of weaving! I wish I had photographs of my work when I first started weaving and spinning and much later, when I had practiced. For the longest time I got frustrated. Everybody else's spinning was just perfect and at first my spinning was really inconsistent. Until I got the hang of spinning, my wool would be thick, then thin, then thick again. The exciting part was when I saw the before and after, and realized that I had improved a lot.

Left: Elizabeth Gabriel learning on her mother's weaving, now in MOA collection, #Nbz855, photo 1999.

Right: Weaving detail, photo 1999.

In 1986, Wendy John got hold of me and told me about the weaving school. That was the second group, I guess. That's when we used to go on our own basis, those who got the feel of it. We'd go up to Debbie Sparrow's house. I enjoyed it.

When the next school came up with Debra and Robyn in '97, I was interested in joining them because I wanted to learn the Salish "V"s. That was the only one that I didn't know how to do.

That's the exciting part! I remember my very first weaving was just terrible, and to look at the shawl I am doing, what's on the loom right now, I am really proud of that. It's like a mourning shawl. Right now, I am trying to finish it, but I have a new baby to take care of. I weave because some of my grandparents used to weave, and it is something different besides knitting. It was a challenge for me to get out there and try it. I told my late dad and my mom, "Well, I should just try and give it a shot. Just try it, and if I can make it, I can make it. If I can't, I can't." I succeeded, and I enjoy it. Some of my work goes as far as La Conner, Duncan, and Nanaimo, and it's got my little mark on there. If I don't do a certain pattern, I will put an "L" on the left side of my weaving. That way they know it's mine.

I have continued to weave off and on since 1986. I plan to weave some, and stock it up for when my little ones get named. I bought the wool, but it is just sitting downstairs. That's what they used to do in the smokehouse a long time ago. My dad used to tell me that they never used to have blankets and

Left: Linda Gabriel's children from left to right; Elizabeth, Theresa Joe, Norma Lee and their cousin Cassandra Louis, photo 1999.

Right: Linda Gabriel with her baby Norma Lee, photo 1999.

Bottom: Detail of weaving by Linda Gabriel, photo 1999.

dishes and stuff. They used to always give away weavings. It used to be weavings up on the wall. One thing that my dad wanted to do was hold a naming, and bring out the old ways, instead of the modern ways where you buy the blankets.

My late father tried to learn how to weave, but he got too sick. He was a knitter, and he wanted to be a weaver too. He has passed away now. At first, my father was ashamed of knitting. Everytime somebody would come, he would drop his knitting. After a while, he didn't care. It brought in the money. Then, the next thing, he said, "Well, if I can do knitting, then I can do weaving." So, late at night, I used to be downstairs weaving on that big shawl. One night my father said, "Well, show me how to weave. It must be a lot easier than one purl, two knit, one purl, two knit!" So, I told him, "Well, it's like you are braiding a hair, three strands, but the third one is staying still. So, he got two or three rows in that great big shawl I did. He enjoyed it.

I often transfer knitting designs into the weavings. I have a weaving in Lummi, Washington. I thought it was going to be for a great big tall man, really big. So, I got my late dad to make a great big loom and then I was weaving night and day. Then I went to give it to him. I was waiting for the guy to come out. He was my uncle and he is about two or three inches shorter than me! I was totally upset because the blanket was dragging, and I wanted to go behind him and lift up the shawl. All that hard work! I used Cowichan sweater patterns on that shawl. There was a snowflake, a bird, and a whale. It was white with a bit of orange, black and a bit of gray. That was the first big weaving I did.

When I weave, I am always thinking of Musqueam or Cowichan patterns because I was brought up a knitter. So, every pattern of mine is recognizable. People always say, "Oh, that one's Linda. It's got a knitted pattern on there! You can tell!"

Left: Detail of weaving with Linda Gabriel's signature "L,", photo 1999.

Right: Linda Gabriel proudly displaying a finished weaving,. Private Collection, photo 1997.

Cecelia Grant

"I had fun learning in the weaving school. It was a challenge, but I liked it."

Left: Cecelia Grant showing her woven pine-needle basket, photo 1999.

Right: Cecelia Grant holding up a completed work. Private collection, photo 1997.

My name is Cecelia Grant. I am from the Musqueam Reserve. I have a spouse, whose name is Loren August. I have six children, three girls, three boys, and a grandson. My eldest is Jessica, who will be 21 this year, then there is Jasmin and Lenora. The boys next, their names are Jerome, Patrick and Joseph in order of age. I have a grandson Kyle who is two.

I used to knit with my grandmother, but I never learned spinning from her, because she didn't let anyone touch her wool before it was done. As children, we would knit easier parts for her, like the arms of a sweater, a hat, or the leg part of a sock, just not the heel. We also used to watch Lynn Dan's mom, Auntie Emily Stogan. She was knitting all her life, too. I was raised around them.

I learned to bead when I was in boarding school in Mission, and I have been learning a new kind of beading for the past few years. I have always beaded headbands for the Band, and chokers, and belt buckles. I gave them away at the giveaway at my dad's dance.

I have been making pine needle baskets for about ten years now. I make my baskets with sweetgrass and pine needles. This one is made with pine needles and sinew. To make a basket like this, you start at the bottom of the circle, and then go up. To make sides, I put three together and then weave it upwards, start it up.

When I spoke to Auntie Edna Grant I was asking about pine needle basket making. I showed her one of the pine needle baskets I had made. Her mouth dropped open. We were sitting outside at the time. She asked, "Did you know where we got your name Cecelia from? The lady who had it was a great pine needle basket maker."

So I told her that the lady who had shown me how to make them was surprised by how I took to it. She said that somehow I knew how to weave already. I think maybe there's a connection.

I knew how to knit, bead and make pine needle baskets and I wanted to learn weaving, because it was different. It's harder to do weaving designs. I heard about the 1997 weaving school with Debra and Robyn Sparrow when I moved back to Musqueam, and it was on the community notice. I didn't know what to expect. At first, I just went to watch, and then I started playing with the wool and learning how to spin it. In the beginning, I did about two or three months of just spinning. Both spinning and dyeing of the wool were challenging processes to learn. My first spinning was really rough and thick. My spinning became finer and more even after about the third month. By then, I wasn't so scared of the machine. At first, it was as if the machine was going to eat me! In the end I actually liked it!

This is the first bag I wove [weaving below]. I think it was my third weaving. Linda Gabriel (Joe) and Lynn Dan taught me how to do the Salish "V"s. You should have seen the first one. It was really loose and bulky.

The bottom of the bag is about three inches and it is really stiff. It is actually pretty sturdy, because I had my spouse Lauren help me pull all the excess white wool through the bottom, and then we added some more. It was about fifteen times that we pulled. It shouldn't break at all.

Left: Detail of woven bag by Cecelia Grant, photo 1999.

On this woven bag, I was just learning my Salish Vs. So, it was just the beginning of the patterns. Robyn was getting me to try it out. I've always liked the hourglass. It was the first thing that I wanted to try. I wanted to try with the sand in there, but Debra and Robyn said to get more experience with the design before I tried. These are Salish "V"s.

I had fun learning in the weaving school. It was a challenge but I liked it. Our instructors Robyn and Debra Sparrow showed me parts of it, but I learned more through Linda Gabriel (Joe) and Lynn Dan. They came over and explained how I should be holding the wool and how not to hold it. When I got real tense, they could see it. They came and told me how to relax when I was spinning and weaving. When I first started, the top of my weaving was really tight, then it went to really loose. They showed me how to pull it in and let it out, so it could go straight, because that part I didn't understand either. After a while you can see it. They told me, "Just come sit here and watch." So I'd go sit there and just watch them, how they were doing it, and how loose they were doing it. Then Lynn would get me to check the tension, to see how hers was.

It was pretty good when they sat me down, instead of just me trying to ask a bunch of questions, getting me to just sit down and watch. That's what my grandparents did too, when I learned how to knit.

Linda Gabriel (left) and Lynn Dan (right) working on opposite sides of a two bar loom. Linda's daughter Theresa Joe, sits to the left. Both weavings are now in MOA collection, (left unseen) #Nb2855, (right) #Nb856, photo 2001.

Wendy John

"It is such a spiritual feeling, to feel those blankets that are a hundred and fifty years old, and to know that the skill you're acquiring is the same that your ancestors had."

Left: Wendy John at MOA 50th Anniversary Gala, photo 1999.

Right: Wendy John in front of Barbara Marks-McCoy's weaving, Private Collection, photo 1986.

I haven't done any weaving in a long, long time. I was at a longhouse last winter, and I had a young man come up and ask me to do some leggings for him. I just about started crying then because I thought, "This is what it is all about, it's about what young people see." Now, weaving is looked at as beautiful.

It's exciting to see some of the really young girls now start to take an interest in the weaving, too. I was at my brother's house about a month ago. I didn't know this, but his daughter, his youngest daughter, had actually made a small little weaving. I don't know who taught her. It must have been one of his sisters. He was so proud of it he had it hanging on his wall.

I remember feeling emotional going out to Richmond when my sisters had been working with the Vancouver Airport on a weaving project. I like knowing that the weaving is there. Even when I think about it now, I get emotional because I just think about all of the people who went before me, all of the women, and of course the men, who helped with carving all the different tools. I wish we could bring back some of the women so that they could see the respect that people are giving Salish weaving.

I was talking to a friend of mine from the Burrard community. She had never seen our weavings before. She said that she came to the top of the stairs

One of the older weavings in MOA collection, #A17200. Woven by Spa!aq!elthinoth c.1910.

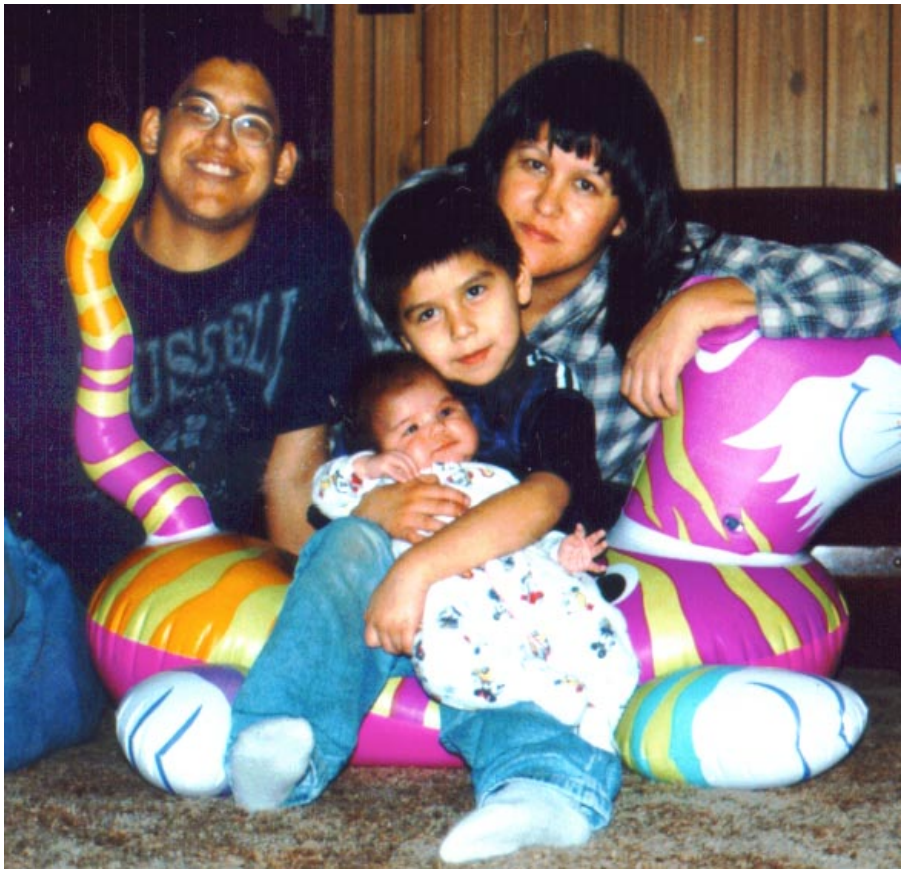
where all these weavings were and she just started crying, because of the beauty of what was hanging there, and the feeling of the people that just jumps right out at you. In fifteen years, it's gone from no one in the community weaving to having so many of the women do it. It has become part of a business for people, and it is recognized in the longhouse.

It is such a spiritual feeling, to feel those blankets that are a hundred and fifty years old, and to know that the skill you're reacquiring is the same that your ancestors had. It is about having a connection with the past, being able to have pride in who you are today, and having that connection acknowledged. In the first school, we sure spent a lot of time out at the Museum of Anthropology, just looking. I am really appreciative of the museum. I have been criticized sometimes for talking about the need for museums, but if we didn't have museums those blankets wouldn't have been protected and saved. We couldn't come back a hundred years later to look at them and try and replicate them.

It is kind of special to me to see the picture of Selisya, because she was my grandfather's great-aunt, and because my cousin carries her name. That ancestral knowledge is there. There is a very strong spiritual side to it. You get messages and directions, and you don't always know why. I am sure that Selisya had a hand in ensuring that her descendants became a part of something that must have been very special to her. To know that her great grand-nieces are now so instrumental is really a very special gift from the Creator. It's not about me, or Debbie, or Robyn. It is the Creator that has given us this great gift, and we have to acknowledge it, and protect it, and ensure that other people do that as well.

Selisya, a Musqueam weaver, spinning with a traditional Salish spindle. Photo by C.F. Newcombe, courtesy of Royal British Columbia Museum #PN1165, photo 1915.

Cynthia Louie



"When you make something for the first time, you're not supposed to keep it, you're supposed to give it away."

I have three children. Kaitlyn is my youngest, and she is seven months old. Andy is five years old. I am really glad that he's going to the community school in Chehalis, because he's learning his language and his culture. I don't even know any Musqueam language. Dean is twenty years old. He's going to college right now, to become a chef.

I was in one of the early weaving schools. Rita Louis and Barb Marks-McCoy were two of the originals. The two of them basically taught me how to weave. Barb, Rita and Wendy John would show me what to do. Leila Stogan and I also had a really good relationship in the weaving school. She's the one that helped me do designs. Barb is the one that helped me with the spinning.

In 1991, I went to school for Early Childhood Education. When I graduated, I went to work. I haven't done any weaving because I've been busy since I had my daughter Kaitlyn. I haven't been doing anything in the last year. I just bought some wool and I hope to start weaving again.

My sister-in-law weaves. She lives in Chehalis. I found out that my cousin Kim Charlie knows how to weave. He was teaching students how to weave. He does it the old way where you go from bottom to top, while we do it from top to bottom. I said, "Wow! How do you do that?" I can't imagine doing it that way.

Left: Cynthia Louie with her weaving in the Chehalis Church, photo 1999.

Right: Cynthia Louie's weaving, photo 1999.

I did this with the weaving program and we were allowed to keep one weaving each, and I chose this one. My Auntie Wanda was teasing me and thanking me for it. At Christmas time I gave it to her, because it was my first twill weaving I made. When you make something for the first time, you're not supposed to keep it, you're supposed to give it away. I felt there was no better person to give it to than my auntie because she was almost like my mother.

I have done about three or four big projects in all. I did one for the Chehalis Church podium. I put a diamond on it and a cross in the middle, symbolizing the Trinity. The background is all white, the diamond is dark brown, and the cross is gray. It's beautiful. That was one of my big projects. Then my auntie asked for a weaving for her son, for a Christmas gift. I used twill and herringbone with blue, light blue and white for colours. That also turned out really nice. My auntie also asked me to do a weaving for one of her nephews who was getting married. I did diamonds in that one too, because according to my old weaving book they stand for eternity. I did the symbol for friendship and I also did a deer on there. Those three symbols were for love, friendship and eternity.

Left: Detail of weaving by Cynthia Louie - trees and flying birds motif, photo 1999.

Left: Weaving of the four directions by Cynthia Louie, photo 1999.

Right Top: Cynthia Louie with her children (left to right) Kaitlyn and Andy, and friend, photo 1999.

Right Bottom: Cynthia Louie's weaving in the Chehalis Church, photo 1999.

A lot of the time I wove as a pastime. I would just try different colours, see how they would work, and see how well I could do the traditional design, if I could still remember how to do it. I also did a weaving for my father-in-law. He's into traditional ways of healing, so I used white with four medicinal colours in a circular design. He uses that to place his shell, feather, sage and everything on. I made that for him for Father's Day. He really appreciated it. I wanted to do something handmade and meaningful, seeing how for Father's Day you usually get your basics and that year I was still weaving.

Janice Paul

"It is really satisfying to look back at some of my earlier efforts and compare them to what I can do now."

Left: Janice Paul, photo 1999.

Right top: Detail of pillow woven by Janice Paul, photo 1997.

Right bottom: Detail of weaving by Janice Paul, photo 1997.

I am from Musqueam, and I've lived here all my life. My mom is from Musqueam, while my dad is from Tsart'lip. He does war dancing. I learned my dad's culture when I was really young. By learning Salish weaving, I now know something from my mom's side.

I first found out about the weaving school from Vivian Campbell. At the time, she told me that there were a few openings left, so I thought I'd just try it. That was in 1997 when Debra and Robyn Sparrow taught the weaving class for almost a year. When I first came, I must have sat there for about two weeks before I even tried anything! We had to start right from the beginning, preparing our own wool and spinning it. I watched Robyn for about a week and a half, and then there was no way of getting around it. I had to do it!

I made twelve weavings while I was in the weaving school in 1997, and I have made some more since. I like working on really big looms and really, really small ones. The medium size looms are where I get stuck. I think my best designs are on big looms. This photo is a detail of a large weaving that I'm working on. It is about five feet by four feet [weaving right bottom].

Janice Paul holding one of her pillow weavings, photo 1997.

Since the school finished, I have continued to weave. I have some dyed wool left, and some solid colours, but I have run out of warping right now. My mom has black wool from years ago, because she does knitting. She just found it while she was cleaning up her basement. She gave it to me, and it's still in good condition. Maybe I'll use it soon.

I graph images out before I start weaving. Just little details change from what I had imagined in the beginning. Spinning was the hardest to master. Designing and weaving come really easily to me. So, preparing the wool and spinning would have to be the hardest for me.

It is really satisfying to look back at some of my earlier efforts and compare them to what I can do now. For example, I was working on a weaving at home recently. I was using wool that I had spun towards the end of the year and I ran out of it. All I had left was the first skein of wool that I had ever spun, which I hadn't used yet. There was no other gray left, so I had to use it! It took me quite a while to pull at it and find a good thin strand, passing up all the bulky ones. So, most of the wool was from the beginning of the year while part of it was from near the end of the year. I managed to make it fit well together. Once it was all woven in, you couldn't tell.

There are some stitches that won't let you go on if you have made mistakes, and you have to go back, fix it, and do the one stitch over. I do hooking and twining, that's what I like to do. Hooking is when your designs are hooked over the warp. I was just working one evening and came across this stitch, the herringbone stitch. I reversed it, and kept reversing it. I did a few rows of that, and I don't know how to explain it, but it came out as perfect diamonds all the way across. To make the herringbone stitch you use a twining stitch with the two pieces of wool crossing over each warp, over top. Then you

change directions and go the other way. So if you were going from left to right, your left hand would go over top and in behind your next warp. You cross left over right. Then you get to a certain point where you stop, and instead of turning left over right you go right underneath, going in the opposite direction.

I did a demonstration at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for Vivian Campbell. She couldn't make it, so I went. I demonstrated how to weave. It was fun. People asked a whole bunch of questions. At the time I was doing a pillow, a bright pink one. People really liked it. They wanted to buy it, but it wasn't done at the time. They asked many questions about when I started, and about my choice of colours and designs. It's great that people are so interested, and I like to share the knowledge that I have gained.

(from right to left): Weavers, Janice Paul, Joan Point, and Vivian Campbell at Musqueam, photo 1999.

Joan Peters

"I love weaving. It's relaxing and peaceful. It's something that I have always wanted to do."

I am from the Baker family on the Squamish reserve, where I was born. I am the third oldest of thirteen children. I lived in North Vancouver when I went to St. Paul's Residential School for eight years. After that, I went to St. Edmund's High School. My first jobs were in hospitals. That's where I met my husband Roddy, in 1952. We got married in 1954. After our wedding, I moved to Musqueam. I worked at Canadian Fish Co. for thirty-three years. It was very hard work, and I was glad to retire.

So, now we are pensioners, Roddy and I. We just celebrated our forty-sixth wedding anniversary, and we are just enjoying life. We have five children, three girls and two boys. We also have four grandchildren, all girls.

At residential school, they taught us how to knit, crochet, and do beautiful embroidery work. I continued to knit on my own, bobby socks and stuff, and when I arrived in Musqueam, Roddy's mother taught me how to make Indian sweaters and toques.

I found out about the new weaving school when the instructors Debra and Robyn Sparrow sent out a notice in 1996. I was always interested in weaving, but I was working in the cannery at the time when Wendy John started the first class. The class was in the daytime, so I couldn't get away. As soon as the new school came up and I was available, I jumped at the chance. I was the first one who signed up.

Left: Gail Sparrow and Joan Peters wrapped in blankets. Joan's weaving, on the right, is now in the MOA collection, #Nbz850, photo 1999.

Right: Joan Peters roving wool and preparing to spin, photo 1997.

I love weaving. It's relaxing and peaceful. It's something that I have always wanted to do. It's so much easier than knitting because when I am knitting, I have to work backwards when doing the design. Some people who joined the weaving class thought they were just going to come in and start weaving, but I knew what we were in for. First we had to learn how to prepare the wool, which involved spinning and dyeing.

From my knitting, I knew all about spinning already. I needed to learn the weaving stitches. I also learned how to shock the wool. I thought shocking would shrink the wool and destroy it. To shock, first we spun up our wool, and then we plunged it into boiling water for maybe three to five minutes. Next, we plunged it into ice cold water. That makes the fibres strong.

Debra and Robyn were good teachers. I got to know a lot of young women that I didn't know before. They were younger than I, but we got along great.

We had students visit us at the weaving school, as part of the Musqueam Museum School. This one little girl was so interested! She really got me talking. So, I showed her a few stitches. I never realized just how interested they would be, so I was glad to answer their questions. I think many people should learn about weaving. The other night, even my grown son said, "Gee, I should learn how to weave too, Ma." I know my grandchildren are interested. They came here with their wool and the little five year-old even tried to twine with some crochet needles.

Joan Peters and her husband Roddy with their wedding picture, photo 1999.

This weaving took about a month to complete. The preparation took just one day. That included spinning, shocking, dyeing and drying time.

In this weaving, I've used a tabby and a twining technique and some hooking [weaving below right]. I made some waves in this design. I like working with waves, diamonds, and the Salish "V"s. I love the colours.

I wanted to work in the two blues, the gold and the gray. Of course, I had to also include the black. That black design element is like my signature. There is sunshine, the colour of the sun here, the yellow. I thought the blue would be the sky, the water, the mountains, and the waves.

Left: Joan Peters at loom, demonstrating to a class, photo 1997.

Right: Joan Peters knitting, photo 1999 (note weaving beneath).

Yvonne Peters

"In the weaving school, we kind of stuck together. If we'd get stuck, one of the girls would help. We tried to help each other."

My name is Yvonne Peters. I am forty this year and was born and raised at Musqueam. My grandparents were Josephine Grant and Sam Grant. I met my husband Ray Peters here on the reserve, so we just sort of stuck together and got married in '88 or '89. I have a little boy, Ray Peters Jr., who is four years old. I also have two older children, Wendy and Gilbert, who are in their twenties. My daughter goes by Wendy Grant. I named her after Wendy Grant-John.

I think my little boy will follow in his dad's footsteps, so I'm trying to teach him a bit. He sits down and helps me with wool on my spinner. He says, "I'll help you, Mom!" If we're downstairs teasing wool he'll help too. He's trying to knit now. There are other men that knit, but they just sort of keep it quiet. As soon as someone comes they'll throw it down.

I first started spinning when my grandmother Josephine Grant was alive. I always called her mom because she raised me, and taught me to spin and knit. She would have her spinner out, the old fashioned spinner. When she'd go to bingo I'd go and sit there and I'd try to spin. She'd come back and it was really thick. She knew who was into her spinning. I would say, "I just wanted to learn!" "Get your own wool," she would answer, "If you want to learn, you buy your own wool." My aunt, who is my grandmother's daughter, continues to teach me – beginning where my grandma left off. Now I have two of my own spinners. One is a foot with a treadmill on it, and the other is an electric spinner. My husband knew how to knit when we met. He and I started knitting when we first got together in 1980. It's kind of how we used to get by. People would ask us for toques or something so we'd start up again. We just couldn't stop. So I said, "Well, I have to keep going; I have to keep spinning. If my husband wants to knit, I have to keep spinning."

Left: Yvonne Peters' late husband Ray Sr. and son Ray Jr., wearing Cowichan sweaters and toques, photo 1999.

Right: Yvonne Peters at her home business, YNR Native Arts & Crafts, photo 1999.

I started weaving in Wendy John's first program in 1984. I just put my name in for that job and then I said, "Well, what if I get hired? I don't know how to weave!" So I was told, "Well, if you know how to knit, you can weave." So I said, "Well okay, I'll put my name in." So, I applied for the job, and then the next thing you know, I got it. Soon, we started weaving. I had already done all the spinning. I learned how to do the natural dyeing, that was quite interesting, using a lot of plants and things, like stinging nettles, dandelions, and coffee grounds.

In the weaving school, we kind of stuck together. If we'd get stuck, one of the girls would help. We tried to help each other. They talked about work, and how the old people used to use dog hair and goat hair. I've never used that. I've never tried it. I just stuck to wool.

Weaving is pretty similar to knitting. I was watching Gary a couple of weeks ago. He was weaving an eagle, and it's just like an eagle design on a knitted sweater. It was really nice. That got me thinking, "I'm going to get back into weaving." I hope it continues. I don't want it to die. We've got to keep it going.

Left: Ray Peters Jr. holding one of Debbie Sparrow's weavings, photo 1999.

Right: The late Ray Peters Sr. and son Ray Peters Jr., photo 1999.

Detail of McGary Point's eagle weaving in progress, photo 1999.

Joan Point

"Weaving has been a challenge for me because I am recovering from a stroke. In the school, the girls would kind of help me out."

Left: Weaving by Joan Point, photo 1999.

Right: Detail of weaving by Joan Point, photo 1999.

I am Joan Point from Musqueam. I have four children, two boys and two girls. I also have nine grandchildren, who I am very proud of.

I started with weaving two years ago. I had seen the weavings before, but I didn't know anything about Salish weaving before I started in the weaving school. I began by just going in to look and see what the other women were doing. I would watch and learn along with them, because they had already started. My young granddaughter Lindsay McLean came and visited me while I was in the weaving school in 1997. Sometimes when I babysat her, she would stay with me in the weaving classroom. She would talk and visit with the other ladies while I was weaving. She even tried to do some weaving. When Robyn Sparrow, one of the instructors, offered to help Lindsay, she insisted that she was going to try it all by herself. I continued to work on weavings until we finished the school in December, 1997.

Before the school, I had some experience with wool because I used to knit with my mother. She is the one who taught me to start making sweaters and toques. There were a lot of nephews that were staying with us at that time. A lot of them would clean the wool or tease it as they called it then. Then I had to card up that wool, and hand it over to my mother. We would use a hand carder, which I still have. Recently, I tried to start another sweater or even a toque, but I can't remember the designs since I had a stroke.

Weaving has been a challenge for me because I am recovering from a stroke. In the school, the girls would kind of help me out. They would tell me how to go about things. Janice Paul helped me quite a bit too. Sometimes it was hard for me to concentrate, to do one weave and come back with another weave. The problem I had was trying to concentrate, to do the counting and stuff like that. I'm really glad the girls helped me.

Working with students at the Musqueam Museum School was good. They're all interested, all of them. They had even tried making a few colours. I don't know what they used for the dyes, but I think they made some of them from berries, coffee, and other stuff too.

I made this pillow [weaving on following page] in 1997 using all natural colours of wool. The other women's weavings are all great. Sometimes I think mine aren't exactly as I had hoped they would be. I always find it difficult to keep the weaving in straight lines. I think it was just because of my handicap from the stroke, but I didn't mind it. I actually think this pillow looks really good. Many people have told me they think it's great. I am proud of what I was able to do, considering the challenges I faced.

Joan Point demonstrating roving to students at Trafalgar Elementary, photo 1997.

Now my youngest daughter and her boyfriend want me to make pillows for them. Even Barb, my youngest sister, has been asking for a pillow too. I remember giving my first weaving to Auntie Selena. We took a picture of her holding it. She liked it. She's got it hanging in her room now.

Left: One of Joan Point's pillow weavings, photo 1997.

Right: Joan Point at loom, photo 1997.

Krista Point

"I think the revival of Salish weaving is important, because I know it was very important to our people way back.... I'm sure our ancestors are looking down at us right now and feeling very proud, proud of us for learning how to do the weaving that they did a long time ago."

My name is Krista Point. I am a Coast Salish weaver and a member of the Musqueam Nation. My husband Craig Antoine is a carver. I have three daughters, Sherry, Deanna and Angela.

When I was nineteen, I was accepted into the first Salish Weaving School at Musqueam in 1983. Wendy John was our instructor. She took a weaving course herself, and then shared the knowledge she had gained with eight of us ladies. I am very grateful to her for teaching me to weave. I wouldn't be where I am today if she didn't start the weaving school.

I still weave shawls and blankets for people who use them for ceremonial purposes. In 1995, I made one for my cousin to wear when she got married the traditional way. In 1996, I completed a major five by sixteen-foot weaving for the Vancouver International Airport, in the International Arrivals terminal [weaving left]. My weavings have been included in several art shows, along with the work of my aunt Susan Point, who is also a Coast Salish artist. She kept me going, actually. She was very happy that I was doing our Salish weaving.

I think the revival of Salish weaving is important, because I know it was very important to our people way back. Before I started in the school, I didn't know that Musqueam had a tradition of weaving. The only art that I knew of was basketry because my great-grandma, my grandma, and my mom used to do baskets. Our culture has been lost for so many years and it's good for us to learn about our past, to teach younger generations to carry it on. I'm sure our ancestors are looking down at us right now and feeling very proud, proud of us for learning how to do the weaving that they did a long time ago. I'm still learning, but it makes me very proud to be able to do this. I love it.

Top: Krista Point's weaving on temporary display at the Museum of Anthropology, photo 1996. The weaving was mistakenly hung upside-down at MOA and now hangs permanently at the Vancouver International Airport, photo 1996.

Right: Krista Point weaving on a small table-top loom, photo 1996.

For a lot of the work I do, I go from the old blankets. I combine and personalize the designs to make them different than the old ones. The designs that I use represent Musqueam people. These designs are an accumulation of various weavings that I have done over the years. The weavings that I have done are with traditional designs, which come from old blankets and baskets. I like the zig-zag design. It has several interpretations, including a trail or snake, and lightning. The design has a lot of strength and power. I use the Salish butterflies on most of my weavings, as well as the double arrowhead, the checkerboard pattern and the herringbone pattern.

When we were in the weaving school, we learned how to dye using natural plants like lichen, stinging nettles, dandelions, horsetail, and onion skins. That was fun because we did a lot of experimenting. Some of the colors we'd come out with were just gorgeous. We recorded them on paper. I have kept a record of all the colors that I have used, right from when I first started. The first dye I did was on November 14, 1983. I used onion skins to make a yellow colour.

Today, I use a combination of natural and chemical dyes for my weavings. Yellow can be achieved using onion skins, dandelions, and goldenrod flowers. Green is dyed with stinging nettles, horsetail, and red onion skins. Red alder bark makes a nice red dye. The goldish beige colour is from lichens.

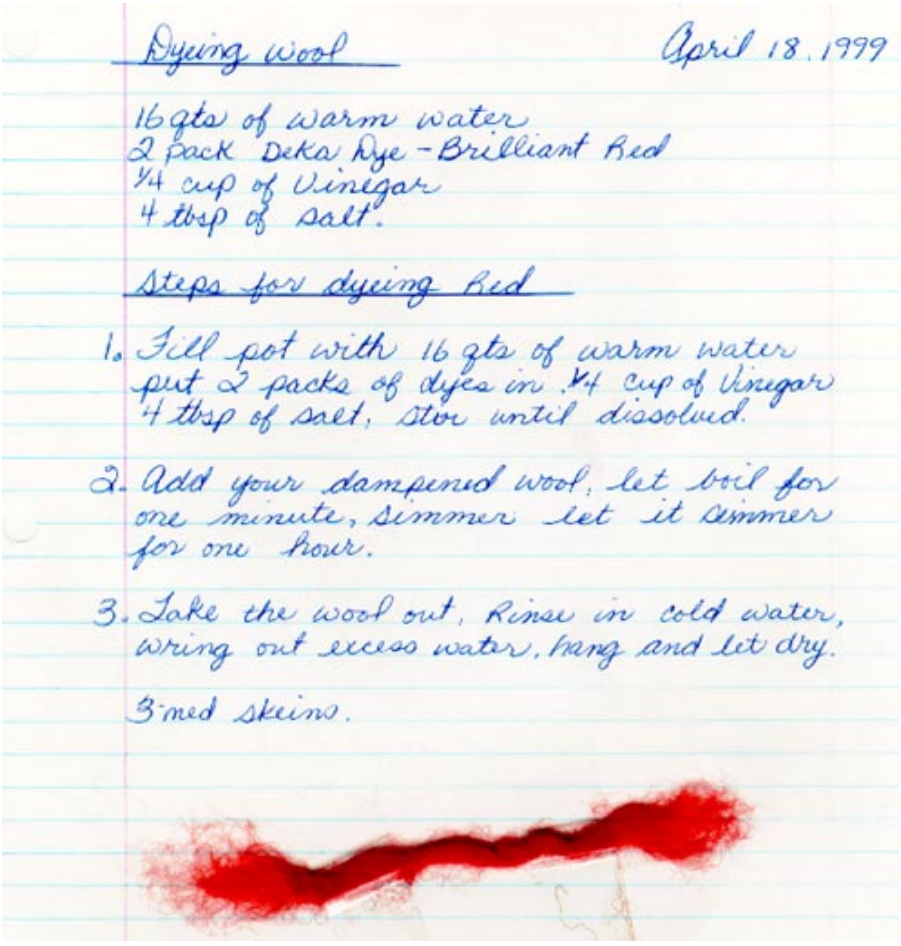
I'm still experimenting with dyes. I know that to achieve some colours, you have to go right to the root of the plant. For example, when you dye with dandelions you've got to take the whole root and the flower out. If I can't get a colour naturally, like if it's out of season because you have to pick certain plants in spring, then I just use a commercial dye from the store.

Left: Krista Point's original butterfly design weaving, photo 1986.

Right: Krista Point's first weaving with designs, photo 1984.

In the spring, you can collect things like horse's tail, stinging nettles, and dandelions. With the stinging nettles, I pick them and then I put them in the freezer, and just take them out when I need them. I go into schools and do presentations. I show pictures of the way they used to spin the wool with spindle whorls. I show them how today I use my pedal spinner. They say I make it look so easy. I told them that it comes with many years of practice, that it wasn't like this to start, and I'm actually still working on getting it perfect.

This is the first weaving that I did with a design in it [weaving on previous page]. We had to give our first weaving away that we made; it's a tradition. So after the weaving school ended, we decided to give our weavings away to Musqueam Chief and Council at a ceremonial dance down at the longhouse. We put all their names in a hat, and then we all picked names of who we were going to give to. My dad was on council at the time, and I got his name, so he got my first weaving and we still have it. I love weaving; it relaxes me. I know that when I weave I have to be by myself, and I listen to music. When someone comes and interrupts me, I can't just sit down and continue to weave, because I lose my concentration. With new ideas in my head, I get excited enough to sit down and get busy again.



Dying Wool April 18, 1999

16 qts of warm water
2 pack Deka Dye - Brilliant Red
¼ cup of Vinegar
4 tbsp of salt.

Steps for dying Red

1. Fill pot with 16 qts of warm water put 2 packs of dyes in ¼ cup of Vinegar 4 tbsp of salt, stir until dissolved.
2. Add your dampened wool, let boil for one minute, simmer let it simmer for one hour.
3. Take the wool out, Rinse in cold water, wring out excess water, hang and let dry.

3 med skeins.

One of Krista Point's dye recipes, April 18, 1999. Krista has kept her dye recipes since she began weaving in 1983.

McGary Point

"I could sit there all day and weave, and that takes a lot of patience. I find that it relaxes me."

I have lived on the Musqueam Reserve most of my life. I enjoy living down here when it is peaceful. I have lived off and on reserve, but I always come back. Now I have my own home so I do not have to go anywhere.

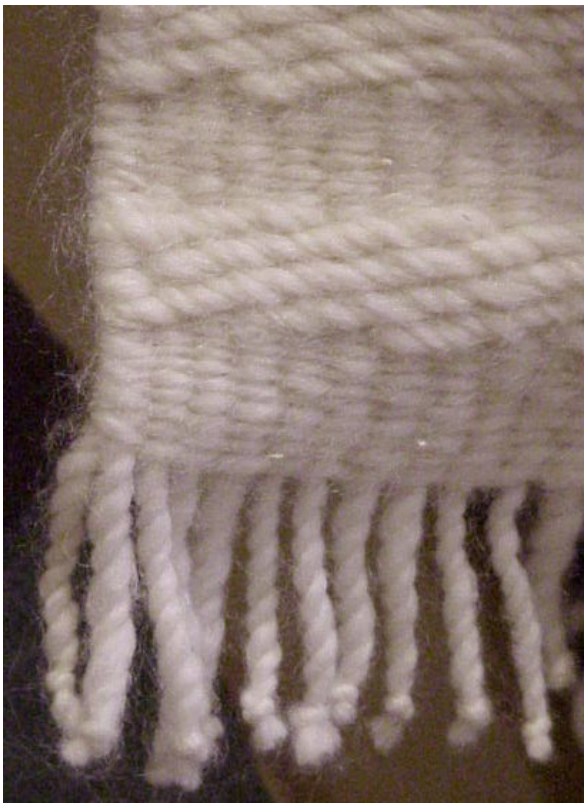
I have been weaving and spinning since 1986. I started out knitting, and then I caught on to weaving and carried on. I knit slippers, sweaters, and toques. I wove a queen-sized blanket on a big giant loom and I am going to do another one. I hope to get a good price for it. That took me a year and a half to make in between all the little functions.

I could sit there all day and weave, and that takes a lot of patience. I find that it relaxes me. When I get down, it will pick me up, and I just say, "Carry on." It's the only thing you can do.

When Wendy John started her first class, they tried to get me involved, and I just kind of said, "I'll just wait for the next class." During the following class, I would just go up and sit with them and have coffee, look at their work, and their different types of spinning. Every person had his or her own texture, which was something to see. Wendy asked if I'd like to try to spin so I said, "Why not give it a whirl?" So, I sat down, took some wool, and prepared it

Left: McGary Point working on his loom at home, photo 1999.

Right: A close-up of McGary Point's white weaving. Private Collection, photo 1999.



for spinning. I just got on that spinner and away I went. I had no complications at all. I must be a natural! From there I kept on. I bought my own wool and spun it. Then I just watched them weave, and from there I started on my own.

For little things like the hooking and tabby, I asked Debra Sparrow for a little help, and my sister-in-law Margaret Louis. We all lived together, so she helped me out quite a bit with my weaving. My first challenge was at a big weaving. I said to myself, "Why not do the whole thing, and just let's see how it works."

I want to [start dyeing] my own wool. I also learned that from Wendy and the other weavers. We tried natural colors. I like the natural colors, because they're soft.

I do not have any graphed patterns. Designs just come to me, and I remember them. It is a challenge. If I like it, I'll finish it. If I don't, I'll take it down and start something else. I remember when my sister and I planned to thank some friends for what they did for her. We put up a big dinner and we presented a weaving to them for what they had done for us. We made them cover their eyes, and then we just placed it on their lap. I told my sister, "You watch, they're both going to cry." Sure enough, we thanked them and they just cried. I said, "Don't get any tears on it, it'll shrink!" I was happy with it.

I just feel if I want to give it away, I'll just give it away. Just to make myself feel good that somebody else can have something from me. Knowing that they know, that I know how to weave.

Musqueam weaving is important because it's getting back the culture from the ancestors. It's interesting to see it come back to everybody. I'm proud of what I do. I'm proud that I can do all this.

McGary Point with his loom, photo 1999.

Top: Weaving by McGary Point hanging over a loom, photo 1999.

Bottom left: McGary Point with his wool, photo 1999.

Bottom right: Detail of weaving above, photo 1999.

Debra Sparrow

"My experiences as a weaver have confirmed what I always believed, that there is a rich tradition of education in my community. It is still relevant today to learn the ways of my ancestors. It is like somebody guides me. I feel that I'm only the hands through which my ancestors work."

Debra Sparrow in front of a loom, wrapped in one of the two weavings which are now on permanent display at the Vancouver International Airport, photo 1996.

After fifteen years, I understand that people recognize the status and the success of the weaving, but it is more than just the success of the weaving. What is truly important is the knowledge and the integrity of the people from which the weavings come. What I want as a Musqueam woman is to stand equally with the people of Vancouver and the people of the world. I hope that by sharing my ideas about education, people will see the importance of traditional education through our eyes. In order to learn how to weave you have to understand math, you have to understand science, you have to create and play with certain dyes, you have to be a philosopher, you have to understand the intentions of your people – that is education.

To me, education is very complex. It is not about being educated in a system. Education always steps way out of any set boundaries. That's how I feel about learning to weave. It is amazing what I have learned by sitting at the loom. My experiences as a weaver have confirmed what I always believed, that there is a rich tradition of education in my community. It is still relevant today to learn the ways of my ancestors. It is like somebody guides me. I feel that I'm only the hands through which my ancestors work.

I am the mother of three children, Sasheen, Ali and Josh. I have been weaving now for over fourteen years and coming to understand it is an ongoing learning process. I am also one of six sisters, three of whom are weavers. My sister Wendy John started the weaving school in 1983, and my sister Robyn

This blanket was woven by Debra and Robyn Sparrow. It is a "sister" blanket to an older blanket in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, MOA collection #Nbz841, photo 1991.

was in the first school. Weaving has become a part of the community again, and it hadn't been for over eighty years.

The thing I remember the most from learning how to weave was watching the women spin their wool. I would watch Barb Cayou, now Barb Marks-McCoy, because she was so gentle at what she was doing. It didn't look complicated, but I knew it was. She made it look so natural that I became interested in spinning. I was mesmerized watching the whole spinning process, just the way she would sit there and hold her wool as she spun. I watched her and realized all of the mechanical things that she had to do to make it all work. Barb made it look really easy. If I was going to be a spinner, that's what I wanted to do. Now, I realize that spinning is one of the most important things, because if you can't spin consistently, it will show up in your design and your entire piece.

Spinning two hundred years ago was even more complicated, because they took dog hair, and mountain goat hair and clay, and they took all kinds of fibres, whatever they had available to them, and they spun it with a spindle whorl.

I used to feel very inadequate in public school. I came into the weaving school knowing that the other women had been weaving for much longer,

and I doubted my own abilities. I would always just do the simplest thing. I watched how they worked over the year. I didn't ask them any questions. I would just watch.

When my sister Robyn and I started working together, I would watch her and she would teach me. Sometimes she would get frustrated with me, because I'd have to ask many questions to be sure, but I would get it eventually.

Weaving is really part of a larger whole that can't be extracted. If you extract it you take it out of its context, and you lose some of its power, and its meaning. More and more people are thinking that way. Whether it's art, science, math or geography, people are recognizing that they are all intertwined.

When you really look at a weaver and her/his abilities, you start to see the academic components involved. When we say the academics of art, we are referring to the mathematical and scientific knowledge, the social sciences, and all of the other components that are present in First Nations societies. Too often, society thinks that they brought those disciplines with them from elsewhere. They have always been here. It's only because of historic language barriers and subsequent misunderstandings that as First Nations people, we believe that we aren't worthy, or that our people are somehow less educated. I think we're now moving in another direction and building a better understanding of what all of this means to us, even within our own community here at Musqueam.

Learning to weave is like going to school or university. It's a whole learning experience. With each step you take, you are anxious to move on and discover the next step. Yet, by the time you get to the end result, you realize that all the steps building towards that moment are what's really important. I think that's why I don't get all excited about the weavings that I finish. I've been so involved in it that every step is important, not just the outcome.

Debra Sparrow and Robyn Sparrow in front of loom, weaving now in MOA Collection, #Nbz842, photo 1999.

I feel that we have come to a place in our community, in our village, where we need to figure out how we can become successful again, based on our own foundation. I know that weaving could be part of our economy, as it was in the days gone by. It wasn't just women doing this beautiful work. The whole community was connected to the work. Weaving was a family project, and the weavings might have been used for a potlatch or ceremony, heightening the success of that family or that community. If you made a hundred weavings and gave them away at your potlatch, you were held in high esteem in your community. You were looked up to. If the weavings were really incredible, then you would be held in even greater esteem.

We hear time and time again that if you don't know who you are, or you don't know where you come from, then you're nobody. You're nobody if you don't have a history, if you can't relate to it, talk about it, or communicate it. So, the weaving is our gift back to us, and to our community. It's amazing to be involved in the time that we are, to be bringing back the values and a sense of success, through our own creative process.

Debra Sparrow warping up a loom, photo 1997.

The BC Teacher's Federation commissioned a piece from us. It felt like finally we were in a place where we could feel that we were equals, and we were being treated as equals. The education system in Vancouver is slow to recognize aboriginal or indigenous ways of educating and our systems of knowledge. In my statement, I wrote, "When you look at this piece, I hope you look beyond the beauty and you see the mathematical, scientific, and social aspects of who we are, instead of just looking at it as art. The mathematical components are in there. The scientific components are there. A deep understanding of our natural environment is there, as well as our social histories. We don't always want to be seen in only one place, under the category of art."

Left: Debra Sparrow roving, photo 1996.

Right: Debra Sparrow weaving a blanket now on permanent display at MOA, #Nbz842, photo 1999.

Robyn Sparrow

"I think weaving is really important. For one reason, it's part of a larger acknowledgement of Salish people as a whole. It is a source of pride for our people."

Weaving is so much a part of me that it's hard to separate it from my everyday existence. Learning to weave was, and continues to be a very important part of my life. I've been at it for over fifteen years and I am always learning.

I often work with my sister Debbie. We have a lot in common. We're both single parents. Debbie and I have always had our kids beside the loom as we were working, so they were brought up with it. So, weaving is a normal part of life for my two kids. My daughter Tara is fifteen. Peter is thirteen.

I'm one of ten spiritually, physically, mentally, and intellectually strong individuals in my family. It gives me a lot of pride to be one of them. Through weaving, I feel that I've grown stronger spiritually and emotionally. My piece of the puzzle of life seems to fit better. Going through the whole process with weaving and having it in my life has given me the strength and guidance that I need.

Debbie says it's the hands of our ancestors, and that's exactly what it is. Weaving has guided me along so many paths in my life. If I hadn't learned to weave, I don't know what I would be doing at this point. It's put everything in perspective. Sometimes I think I want to go away from it, but something always pulls me back. I keep thinking that I have to fit into society somehow, and go back to university, work in an office, or start up other businesses here and there, but it's not me. While I never consciously chose to be a weaver, it now feels like this is what I was meant to do.

I think weaving is really important. For one reason, it's part of a larger acknowledgement of Salish people as a whole. It is a source of pride for our people. A lot of people think Salish art is really simple.

Nearly completed weaving by Robyn Sparrow, created with the support of The Canada Council. Collection of artist, photo 1989.

We'd like people to acknowledge that Salish art has its own power and dignity. Salish weaving has its own beauty, and it doesn't need to be any more than what it is. I was part of the first group that learned to weave with my sister Wendy Grant-John in 1983. I wasn't interested in weaving to begin with. Wendy explained the whole school that she wanted to get started. She said, "If you are not interested, you can just quit, but just try it out." I guess I am still interested, because it is almost sixteen years later!

Some First Nations people believe that we are somehow inferior to other people, especially because our ways of looking at the world are often not recognized by mainstream society. It's so easy to do, and I talk to my kids about it often. I tell them to refuse to accept that feeling of inferiority. How can a person be inferior if they can create these kinds of blankets? In the weaving school in 1997, I realized that some of our own women needed to build that confidence within themselves.

Learning to spin was horrible, because I'm a perfectionist. If the wool didn't come out even, I would just totally beat myself up, because I really didn't have very high self-esteem. I used to always look at it as failing, and not learning by experience. That's why when I'm helping other women I try to put myself in their shoes. I know what it is like to feel inadequate, and to feel like you can't do something.

I started doing different things, like making a pillow. Then, I started making a dress and shawl for a doll, because I was pregnant with my daughter Tara. Then I made one my size, exactly the same. It's got leggings, too. The funny thing was, I just had this picture in my mind. I just thought of doing a tunic style dress. After I attached the shoulder parts together, the front and back, I thought, "Oh, how am I going to do this so it looks attractive, so there aren't

Left: Debra Sparrow (left) and sister Robyn Sparrow (right) in front of weaving now in MOA collection, #Nbz842, photo 1998.

Right: Robyn Sparrow's children, Tara and Peter, and friend Sherry Point, photo 1989.

knots and stuff?" I just tied the warps together, double knotted it, and just let them hang so they became like a fringe and tassels. One day Wendy came to me and said, "Look at this," as she showed me the Salish weaving book. While my dress wasn't exactly the same, I had made my dress the same way as some of the ceremonial dresses. It was really thick and full of tassels. You could tell they used a lot of warping.

After seeing that picture, I thought, "Well, maybe I can do different things." I went on to make a coat, and we got special spindle whorl buttons made for it. I also made bags, little pouches, table covers or place mats, diaper bags, and all kinds of things. One time, I even wove a pair of earrings. I used a little wooden picture frame and just wrapped the warping around it. So, it was like a little two bar loom. I used a darning needle, because it was so fine. I made arrow designs with different colours.

Top: Debra and Robyn Sparrow with Joan Peters and her weaving. The Sparrow sisters taught Joan Peters how to weave, photo 1997.

Bottom: Close-up of Robyn Sparrow weaving, photo 1989.

In the weaving school, all the women were so anxious and eager to learn. That made it fun and exciting for us to go everyday, because they were so excited about it. Some days we couldn't get them out of there! They didn't want to leave. They wanted to come on weekends. On some weekends, I would go and open up the school for them.

It was the same with the dyeing. They never left me alone until I finally said, "Okay, that's it! The whole week is just going to be dyeing wool. We're just going to fool around." They loved experimenting and mixing all different colours together. They wanted to move away from the natural colours because they wanted to get into these vibrant, brilliant, beautiful colours. We started just fooling around, and we had a lot of fun. That's what I enjoyed about the ladies we were working with; they really liked to experiment.

So often when people came into the school to visit, they would comment that they wanted to stay! The environment was very nice to work in. Everyone got along really well.

In the beginning of the weaving school, we told them, "You guys are going to start off on the small looms, but by the end of the program you're all going to do a large piece." They all were thinking, "Oh, forget it. We can't do that." We told them, "You watch. You'll be able to." Sure enough, at the end of the school, the big weavings were just coming off the looms all the time.

Robyn Sparrow peering out from behind the loom. Weaving now at Vancouver International Airport, photo 1996.

Top: Robyn Sparrow at loom, photo 1999

Bottom: Robyn Sparrow putting finishing touches on weaving now on permanent display at MOA, #Nbz842, photo 1999.

Leila Vivian Stogan

"It's important that people know that we do have an artistic tradition... It seems to be growing and growing, so it looks like it's going to be with us for a long time. It's something for us to be proud of."

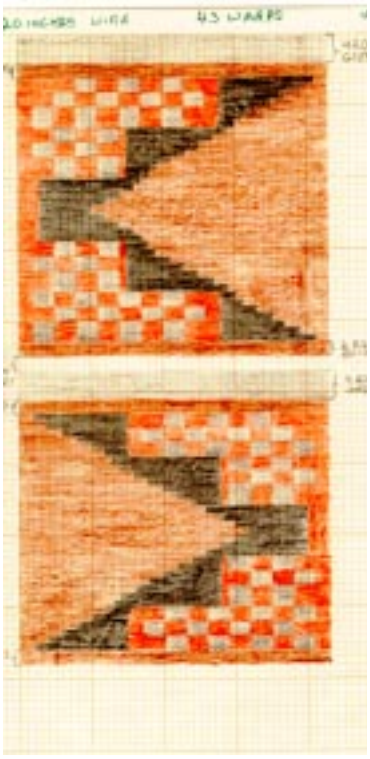
Leila Stogan with her husband Wally and their children, Samantha and Cody, and her niece Delores, photo 1999.

This is my husband Wally, and [my children] Samantha and Cody. The girl with the headband on is my grand-niece, Delores. We showed the kids the *Proud to be Musqueam* sourcebook at the museum. They saw themselves in a book for the first time. It was pretty exciting. It is good for our kids to learn about Musqueam, just as it is good for others to learn about us.

Mainly, I just weave for myself or for family. Not too often I get orders for leggings or shawls, mainly for the longhouse. Weaving is how I get my income sometimes. We needed money for ceremonial purposes last year, so I wove a shawl and sold it. What Wendy taught us comes in handy in so many ways!

Even the kids, Cody and Samantha, try to weave. They made little weavings. Everybody that comes into the house, they always want me to teach them how to weave. My brother-in-law was just saying that the other day: "Teach me how to weave." I said, "Yeah, it's so easy!" I even taught my sister's mother-in-law when she was visiting for a while.

I think I was in the first weaving school when it first started in 1983. A lot of us didn't know what we were getting ourselves into when we joined. When we started in the school, I thought I would be getting into basketry, because my grandmother did the basketry. I didn't know it was blanket weaving. At that time, I didn't even know what weaving was. It was a real learning experience. I guess it must have been lost for many years because a lot of us



Left: Cody, Leila Stogan's son, sitting on one of her weavings, photo 1996.

Right: A graphed design of one of Leila Stogan's weavings, photo 1999.

didn't know about it. The old ladies down at Musqueam, they were the only ones that were kind of familiar with weaving. We had a lot of fun in the weaving school. There were so many good times!

I've got a big blanket on my loom right now. I haven't finished it yet. It's probably big enough for a double or queen bed. A couple of times I didn't know where to go. I was stuck. I had it mapped out in my mind, and I should have graphed it out on paper right away. But now it's gone. I'll wait to see what comes now. I would like to get the checkered pattern back into the middle.

I've also got some leggings on the loom. I even made a coat about a year or two ago, a really nice coat. That was my first coat, so it wasn't easy. The arm part was really hard, trying to get it so the shoulder wouldn't stand up and be uncomfortable to wear. I used one of the family's coats to measure the one I had on the loom.

I like spinning and weaving. It takes me a little bit, but I like sitting there and trying to dream up a pattern. When I was with the weavers I'd be weaving away there and then, one of the women would say, "Why don't you do this, or that?" I had a lot of help. Once I was on my own, I got a little spacey trying to get those patterns. I try to map out patterns in advance but then, once I get going on the weaving, sometimes it comes out different. I try and kind of picture it and quickly get it done before it disappears from my mind. I have a graph record of most of my weavings.

I ended up making my own loom, my big loom, which is the one I use to make my blankets. I can't remember why, but one day I just said to my husband, "We should build a loom so I could start making blankets." My husband and I were planning to make it. He was working night shifts, so he slept all day and went to work every night. I waited and I waited. Finally I couldn't wait any longer to do this blanket, so I just made the loom on my own. I used great big old plywood, really thick plywood. I just cut it up and made a loom. I took the old electric screwdriver and some great big, long screws and just put it together. We used pipes for the top and bottom. It took a whole day. I started in the morning and I didn't finish until late that night. Once I got it finished, it was so big we couldn't get it upstairs to the living room!

It's a good thing to know, because more and more people are becoming aware about what weaving is. Before when you used to go to the store, they didn't know anything about it but it seems like people everywhere are becoming more aware. Many Northwest Coast artists make silver carvings and carve totem poles, but weaving comes from Musqueam. It's important that people know that we do have an artistic tradition. Well, actually, a long time ago it wasn't art, it was clothing. We do have something that has been revived, and we are able to keep it. It seems to be growing and growing, so it looks like it's going to be with us for a long time. It's something for us to be proud of.

A lot of the ladies on the reserve should be really thankful to Wendy John for getting our weaving tradition going again. She travelled back and forth from Chilliwack to get to the weaving courses up there. She's the one who introduced us to the weaving project. She put a lot of time and effort into it. If it wasn't for Wendy, we all still wouldn't know about Musqueam weaving.

My daughter Samantha did a weaving. I tried to talk her out of doing any fancy design. I said, "Stick with the basics because it's tricky just going back and forth." "Nope!" she said. She wanted to try a pattern, the hooking part, and she did it.

Left: Leila Stogan at the loom, photo c.1990s.

Right: Leila Stogan with her "howling wolf" weaving, photo 1996.

Wanda Stogan

"It's a big honour to have the elders wearing our shawls and blankets on ceremonial occasions."

I am originally from Chehalis. My husband, Vince Stogan, Jr., is from Musqueam, so I live here now. I have three daughters. Reneé is my oldest; she's 29. Ronette is 22; and Nora is my youngest. She just turned 16 in March.

I was in the second group of the first weaving school, in 1985. Wendy John was our instructor. When we were in the weaving school, they needed shawls for the elders to meet Princess Diana and other dignitaries. So we made some. It's a big honour to have the elders wearing our shawls and blankets on ceremonial occasions. It must have made the elders feel good to wear a Musqueam blanket when they met dignitaries and represented Musqueam at such important events. I thought it was a real honour for them to wear our blankets.

When we were in the weaving school, Krista Point and I would set out to dye just two bundles of wool, and we would end up dyeing all day, just because it was so fun! We would start out doing a madder root dye and then, we'd think, "Oh, I wonder what it would do if we put copper in there?" We'd turn around and come out with these colours. I remember one time when we did a big batch. I think we must have done about 10 bundles of white wool. We dyed mainly with madder root. But we were putting in a little bit of this and a little bit of that. In the end, where it was spun kind of tight, it stayed whiter and the looser part grabbed more of the colour. We hung the skeins up to dry and I know some of the girls were a little bit disappointed because the colour was uneven. But when we put it in weavings, they were the most gorgeous pieces we had done.

Left: Weaving by Wanda Stogan. Private collection, photo 2002.

Right: Weaving by Wanda Stogan. Private collection, photo 2002.

At first I was really nervous. I never spoke, because I was kind of a quiet type. Everyone else had already been in the weaving school for two or three weeks when I came in. After I got to know all of the girls that were there, I became more comfortable. They started to say, "Oh, yeah, you've got to spin now." So, then I tried to spin, and it just twirled up, and the girls were just laughing. They reassured me, saying, "But this is part of it, Wanda. We all went through it." All the girls bonded pretty well. You could tell how someone was feeling by their weaving for that day. Some girls would feel really well and have a lot of energy, and they did gorgeous work.

We started trying the different stitches, like herringbone and stuff. When we finished a weaving, it was nowhere near the size of the weaving in the Salish weaving book we used for inspiration and reference. Ours would come out just huge. We thought, "Okay, we'll start off with the small loom." Then, we started doing a design, and just a quarter of the design was completed, but we were out of space on the loom!

When I was doing my shawl, there was a design that I wanted to use because I like it so much. I said, "I'm going to put a poinsettia on there, because that's my favorite." Our instructor Wendy John came by and said, "Wanda, I don't know if you can do it. There's another girl that tried to do it, and it's a really hard design to do." I replied, "But I love that flower, I'm going to try." She said, "Okay, if you get so far and get disappointed, we're going to have to find another design." I actually did it. It was all right. I mean, it looked like a poinsettia! [weaving below, far right]

From top left to bottom left: Wendy John, Barb Marks-McCoy, Joan Peters, Leila Vivian Stogan, Wanda Stogan, Robyn Sparrow, Krista Point and Cynthia Louie, photo 1986.

When we visited the Museum, we really looked at a lot of the weavings and how they were made.. We had been using Paula Gustafson's book *Salish Weaving* all that time and our weavings weren't coming out right. We were wondering, "Okay, we're Native, we're *supposed* to know how to do this! Why aren't they coming out the same?" So, when we got to the Museum, we really dug into the weavings as much as we could.

At the Museum, I had a really good feeling, like, "Oh wow, we're doing this, and it's been in the Museum for so long." It was exciting for me.

At home, I've got weavings by Wendy John, Cynthia Louie, Barb Marks-McCoy, and Leila Stogan, too. Leila gave one to me because I'm her aunt, and she wanted to give her first one away. After we finished the weaving school, we had a big ceremonial dance in the smokehouse and we gave away all the weavings that we had made.

Left Bottom: Detail of a pillow weaving by Wanda Stogan, photo c.1986.

Right: Baskets from Wanda Stogan's collection, photo 1999.

Glossary

Carding: A process similar to combing, in which the wool fibres are aligned. Wool can be both hand carded or machine carded.

Hooking: Weavers at Musqueam use the hooking technique to bridge between two colour sections and to thread loose yarn ends into the weaving.

Graphing designs: Many weavers begin their designs on graph paper as a way to both visualize the design and create a pattern which can easily be transferred onto the loom. Some weavers graph their design after the weaving is completed, thereby leaving a record for future reference.

Loom: A frame around which the warp yarns are stretched so that the weft threads can be interlaced through them at right angles. Salish weaving uses a two-bar loom which can be set up using a third "floating" bar, or warped up using just the top and bottom bar.

Mordant: A chemical, usually a metallic salt, which when combined with a dye fixes the colour in the yarn.

Ply: The twisting together of two or more strands of yarn; e.g., two threads plied or twisted together constitute two-ply. Warping on Salish weavings is often two- or three-ply wool.

Roving: A loose rope of parallel fibres, slightly twisted to hold them together before spinning. Weavers at Musqueam often rove by rolling the rope of loose wool along their thighs; sometimes this is called thigh spining. However, wool still requires spinning on a wheel.

Tension: The weaver must constantly be attentive to the tension of the weft on the loom. If it is too tight, the design will start to lose its shape and the edges of the weaving begin to pull in. If it is too loose, the weaving can stretch and distort the design.

Shocking wool: Wool once spun is placed first into boiling water and then quickly into cold water to shock the fibres of the wool. This process makes the fibres hold together more firmly.

Spin: The direction in which a fibre is spun resulting in an "S" or "Z", according to whether it is twisted in right-hand or left-hand direction. The act of spinning the wool holds the fibres together creating thread or yarn.

Spindle whorl: A device for twisting fibres together into one continuous strand or thread. The Salish spindle consist of two parts: a slender shaft of oceanspray (Holodiscus discolor) wood about a meter long, and a disc-shaped weight or whorl of wood, bone, or stone with a central hole through which the shaft is inserted. Most of the weavers at Musqueam now use a spinning wheel to spin. They control the spinning through their hands and a foot pedal.

Tabby: Sometimes called plain weave, the weft is threaded over the warp and under the next.

Twining: A type of finger weaving using two weft threads which are not only successively placed over and under the warps, but also twisted over and under each other as the weaving progresses.

Twill: A weave where the weft is threaded over two warps and under one, creating a diagonal pattern.

Warp: The webbing of yarn placed on the loom before weaving.

Weft: The yarn woven at right angles over and under the warp threads.

Glossary Adapted from *Salish Weaving* by Paula Gustafson, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 1980.

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