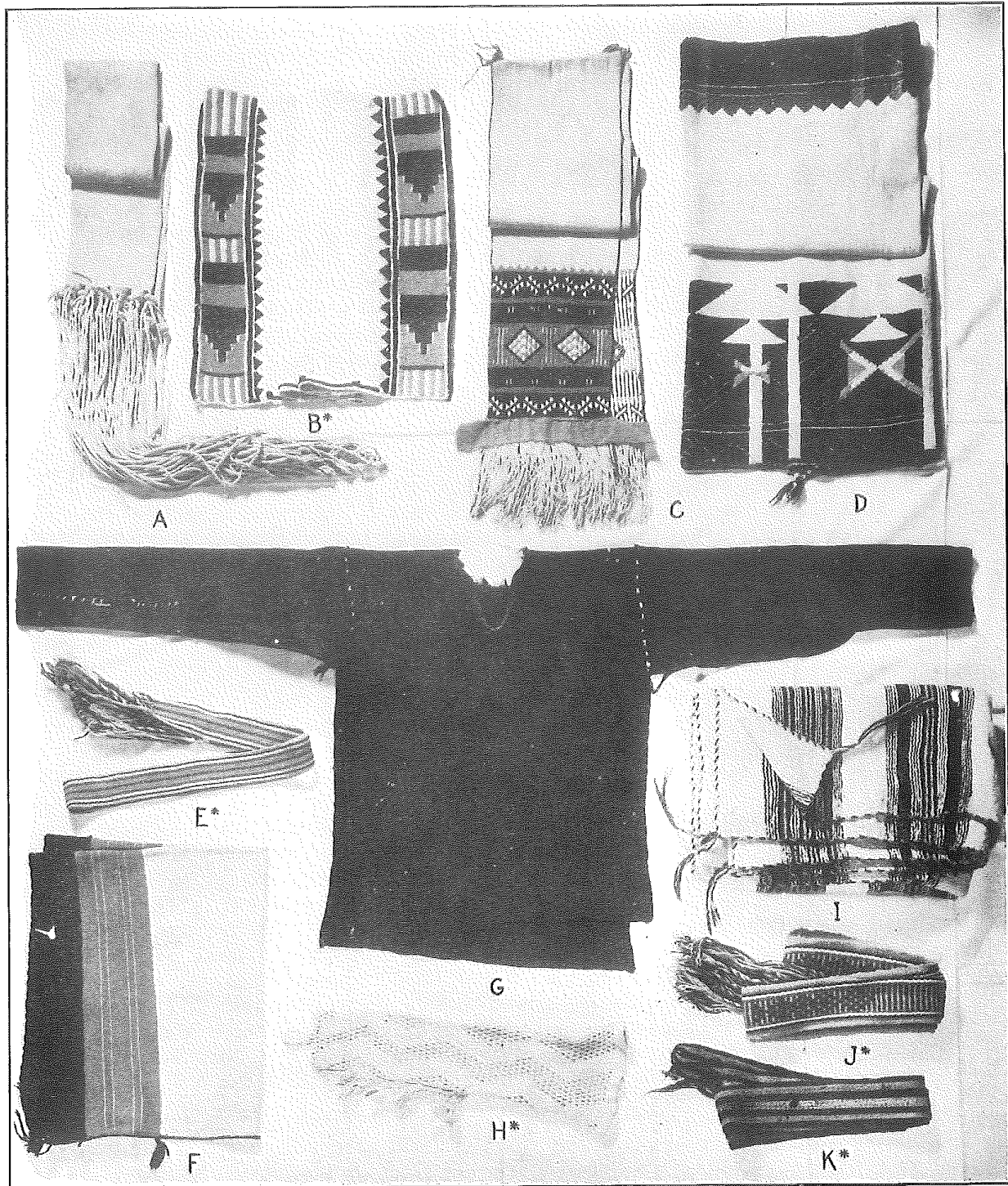


DENVER ART MUSEUM

1300 LOGAN STREET, DENVER, COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN ART

FREDERIC H. DOUGLAS, CURATOR



Tewa specimens have starred letters (B*). The other specimens, all of Pueblo make, are shown here to help make the text clear.

WEAVING IN THE TEWA PUEBLOS

Tesuque, Nambe, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, San Juan

DECEMBER, 1939

LEAFLET 90

1. **THE TEWA PUEBLOS** (Táy-wah) are located north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the valley of the Rio Grande. Tesuque (Teh-sóo-kee) is about 12 miles from town and has a population of 135 persons. The other villages are 30 or 35 miles north of town and within a few miles of each other. San Juan (Sahn Hwáhn) has a population of 569; Santa Clara (Sáhn-ta Kláh-rah), 450; San Ildefonso (Sahn Ill-de-fón-so), 134; and Nambe (Nahm-báy), 139. Tewa is the name of the tribe to which these villages belong. The language falls in the Tanoan family. The villages have been in their present sites since about 1700; but they are located on or near the sites of much older villages of the same tribe.

2. **PUEBLO WEAVING** began in the 8th century A. D. The oldest piece of cloth, made of cotton, comes from Arizona and is dated 758 A. D. Weaving on the true loom appears rather suddenly among the Pueblos. Whether the loom was invented by these people or imported from Mexico is not known. Since its first appearance weaving has been carried on continuously in the Pueblo villages. To the weaving of cotton was added that in wool after the introduction of sheep by the Spanish in the 17th century. But for several generations weaving has been dying out, now surviving as a major craft only among the Hopi and Zuni, with occasional occurrences elsewhere. See Leaflets 18, 89 and 91-97.

3. **TEWA WEAVING HISTORY** is almost unknown. The ancient ruins in their region are in the open so that moisture has rotted any textiles which may have been left long ago. That there was weaving in early Spanish times is certain because of references in Spanish documents. It was carried down into the 19th century to a slight extent on the evidence of the aged men and women who supplied the following notes. The coming of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad from southern Colorado to Santa Fé in the early 1880's hastened the end of an already dying art by bringing commercial cloth within easy reach of the Indians.

Today there is still a little weaving among the Tewa, almost entirely belt weaving, which is in the unbroken line from the past. Besides there is a considerable amount of production on the part of young women who have been taught weaving and embroidery in the Indian Service schools in the last decade or so.

4. **THE INFORMATION GIVEN HERE** was obtained from a number of aged men and women who either had been weavers or were the children of weavers and had heard about or seen the work of their parents. All were shown good examples of old Pueblo textiles so as to make clear to them exactly what was being investigated. The information given by them is remarkably consistent, though there is some disagreement. The picture which is built up by these statements is that of an art which, for a long time previously at least, had never been very highly developed among these Pueblos. The relative nearness of these villages to the skin-wearing Plains tribes tended to make the Tewa use skin clothing and robes, with a resulting lack of need for woven things. As indicated above, this always rather slim production was brought to an end by the coming of the railroad.

In this leaflet the available information from each village will be summarized only, the opinion of the majority being taken in cases of disagreement. Full descriptions of the types of textiles mentioned in this leaflet are given in leaflets 92-93 and 94-95. See page 160 for references to illustrations in other leaflets in this series.

5. **SEX OF WORKERS.** Weaving and embroidery were done by men, with an occasional woman doing some embroidery. 3 or 4 men weavers in each village was the customary state of affairs.

6. **LOOMS AND TECHNICS.** Though no looms remain today it was said that they were just like those used by the Navaho and modern Pueblos to the West. This is an upright loom, with the warp controlled by stick heddles. It is fully described in Leaflet 3. In the Pueblo world looms are usually set up inside the houses, or in the kivas or ceremonial rooms. Plain, diamond and diagonal weaves were produced.

7. **EMBROIDERY** was done with wood or turkey bone needles, followed later by steel ones. The section to be embroidered was stretched on some sort of frame to keep it tight. The work was done on both wool and cotton garments.

8. **TESUQUE.** Only one person was interviewed at this village, and she could only remember the weaving of her grandfather. She did not remember if there were other weavers. Her grandfather stopped weaving about 1880. He both wove and embroidered in wool and cotton. From wool he made the standard woman's black dress, coarse striped blankets (I) and the black shawls with colored embroidery, using red and green as the color scheme. Reference 1 also speaks of these as being made at Tesuque, but refers to red and blue as the colors. From cotton were made shawls (D), kilts (B) and shirts, all embroidered with wool; maiden shawls, with red and blue woven wool edges (F); and heavy braided sashes (A). This last type is still made at Tesuque, as it is in the other Tewa towns. It is the only type which has survived from the old days without a break. Brocaded dance sashes were made (C), but whether of wool or cotton was not discovered. Nothing was known about the knitting of wool leggings, but openwork crocheted cotton leggings were made (H).

9. **NAMBE.** 4 people were seen, 2 very old and 2 middle-aged. 4 men weavers were remembered. Weaving stopped about 1870. Woolen articles remembered as being made included the woman's dress, the man's shirt, of which very few were made (G), and knit leggings. Blankets (I) and embroidered wool shawls were not mentioned. There is an old photo showing a Nambé girl wearing one of the latter, but it lacks information as to whether the garment was made at Nambé. From cotton were made the maiden shawl with red and blue wool edges (F), the shawl (D), the kilt (B) and the braided sash (A). Kilts and shawls were embroidered. The kilts and sashes are still made as part of the old tradition. Shirts and openwork leggings (H) were not mentioned. Cotton was raised long ago. Brocade wool sashes (C) were not made but obtained from the Hopi or Keres. Between 1932 and 1936 a Mrs. Thomas, an Indian Service teacher, revived weaving and taught several people how to spin, weave and braid cotton, and how to embroider it.

10. **SAN ILDEFONSO.** Two men were seen, one an old man, the other the son of the last weaver. Weaving stopped with the death of the latter in 1887. Women's black dresses, men's shirts (G), blankets (I), and shawls embroidered with red and yellow were made from wool. The knitting of leggings was denied. There was a disagreement about the making of brocade wool sashes (C), but the evidence favors a positive answer to the question. Cotton was grown long ago and from it were made embroidered shawls (D) and kilts (B), and maiden shawls (F). Openwork cotton leggings (H) were made. The braided cotton sash (A) still survives. The son of the last weaver stated that his father used to make very fine white wool shawls and embroider them. Embroidered cotton shirts were not mentioned.

11. **SANTA CLARA.** One very old man and one of middle age were interviewed. Weaving stopped about 1890. This is confirmed by reference 2. This reference says that cotton was grown as late as 1909, but the old men denied this. Working in wool the weavers made women's black dresses, men's shirts (G), brocaded sashes (C), and blankets (I). With cotton imported from Chihuahua—according to the old men—the weavers made embroidered shawls (D) and kilts (B), maiden shawls (F) and braided sashes (A). The last still survives. Openwork cotton leggings (H) were also made. Embroidered cotton shirts and wool shawls were not mentioned. One man recalled that in his father's house the loom was set up in a separate room so that the children would not tangle the threads. Both men and women knitted wool leggings.

12. **SAN JUAN.** One very old man and two very old women were interviewed. They recalled three weavers, and that the craft came to an end about 1885. One of the old women had been an embroiderer since she was 16 and still did a little work. But normally men did all such work. Women's dresses of the usual type, some all black and some with the standard blue edges, were made. But not enough were woven so a few had to be got from the Hopi. Today all the Pueblos get their black dresses from the Hopi. A few wool blankets (I) were made, as well as embroidered black shawls. Red and green were the colors used in the latter. Work in cotton was restricted to embroidered shawls (D) and kilts (B), openwork leggings (H) and shirts, and braided sashes (A). Cotton was not grown, being imported from the South. The making of wool shirts (G), brocaded sashes (C) and knit leggings; and cotton maiden shawls (F) was denied.

13. **NARROW RED WOOL BELTS** were not referred to specifically. But as they are made today in nearly every Pueblo it seems reasonable that they were woven. They are produced today in at least Santa Clara and San Juan. Plain striped belts (E, K) were once made in addition to those with geometric designs (94-95; B, C). This striped type seems to have been a specialty of the Tewa towns. J is a very new San Juan belt of the cross barred type made in several Rio Grande Pueblos.

Compiled by F. H. Douglas from his field notes and from the following sources:

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY

1. Pueblo Indian Clothing—Matilda E. Stevenson. A manuscript prepared in 1910.
2. Ethnobotany of the Tewa Indians—W. W. Robbins, J. P. Harrington and Barbara Freire-Marreco. Bulletin 55, 1916.

For additional illustrations of Pueblo textile types referred to in this leaflet see the following pictures in other leaflets: Woman's black dress, 89; C, 94-95; K, 96-97; N: embroidered wool shawls, 89; A, 94-95; A, D: embroidered cotton shirts, 89; G, 92-93; I: knit wool leggings, 94-95; I, 96-97; C.

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