



Charles Christian Nahl (1818–1878)
Peter Quivey and the Mountain Lion, 1857
 Oil on canvas, 26 x 34 in. (66 x 86 cm)
 Museum purchase, James E. Harrold Jr. Bequest Fund
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 1998.32


 Fine Arts
 Museums of
 San Francisco
 de Young
 Legion of Honor

I notice. . .



I wonder. . .



Peter Quivey and the Mountain Lion

CALIFORNIA

Your Historic Compass:

“Mr. Quivey survives the Donner Party to earn a fortune in San Jose!”

When:
1857, seven years after California became a state

Where:
The foothills of San Jose

Who:
Mr. Peter Quivey, hotel owner, pioneer, and outdoorsman

What:
Portrait painting—shows how a person looks or how they want to appear



Looking closely

How would you describe this man? Look at his clothes and his surroundings. Do you notice anything strange about the mountain lion? What is on the man's knife and under the mountain lion's shoulder?

The artist has painted Mr. Quivey with sunburned cheeks and wearing a deerskin coat and pants. These details may suggest that Mr. Quivey lived a rugged, outdoor lifestyle. His clothing is similar to the standard dress worn by American frontiersmen like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. These men are famous for their adventures exploring new American territories, yet something about Mr. Quivey's clothing tells us a different story. Look closely. Do you notice his clean white shirt and crisp black tie? These nice clothes tell us Mr. Quivey is actually out hunting for the day only. He will probably return home to clean up, enjoy a warm meal, and share the day's adventures with his family.



This is a photograph of downtown San Jose. It was taken in 1860, just three years after Mr. Quivey had his portrait painted. The windmill in the background pumped water from underground. The fire station used this water to put out fires. Do you see the raised wood sidewalks? The dirt roads made walking downtown a messy business. Can you read any of the store signs? If you were to walk down Market Street in San Jose with Mr. Quivey, you would find a grocery store, a photography gallery, a bookstore, a tailor shop, a Levi's clothing store, a jewelry store, a candy factory, and a shoe repair shop, just to name a few.

History connection

Mr. Quivey was born in the state of New York. When he was eighteen, he was inspired by the idea of **manifest destiny**. From New York he traveled to Kentucky and then Missouri. In 1841, he decided to move his family to California. On their way west, they briefly joined the Donner Party. When the Donner Party tried to cross the Sierra Nevada, they were trapped by a snowstorm. Luckily, Quivey decided to travel on ahead. If he and his family had stayed with the Donner Party, they probably would have frozen to death. Twenty-six of the eighty-seven members of the Donner Party died while trapped in the snow. Once in California, Quivey learned of the Mexican-American War (1846–1848). He joined the U.S. army under the command of Colonel John C. Fremont. After the war, Quivey settled in San Jose and opened the city's first hotel.

manifest destiny: the idea that the United States should occupy the territory between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans

About the artist

Charles Christian Nahl was known as the Gold Rush Painter. In 1849, he came to the United States from Germany and lived in New York City for a short time. Two years later, with hopes of striking it rich as a miner, Nahl sailed for California. He quickly realized he could make a better living as an artist than as a miner. Many miners were eager to have their portraits or their property painted. These images were often sent back to family members living on the East Coast who knew nothing of California. In 1852, Nahl moved to San Francisco after a fire destroyed his home and studio in Sacramento. In just three years (1849–1852), San Francisco had grown from a small village of 1,000 to a city of 40,000 people. The members of the growing upper class were eager to document their triumphs, and their need for portraits kept Mr. Nahl very busy. Many like Mr. Quivey paid for paintings to show their success. If you had just struck it rich in the gold mines, how would you like your portrait painted?



Peter Quivey had this photograph taken around 1860. Judging from this photograph, do you think the artist changed Mr. Quivey's appearance in his painted portrait? What are some of the advantages of hiring a painter to create your portrait rather than hiring a photographer?



Cradle basket with beads
 Achomawi, ca. 1870–1900
 Buckskin, glass beads, hazel shoots, willow, and cotton,
 9½ x 9½ x 29 (24.1 x 24.1 x 73.7 cm)
 Gift of Mrs. A.G. Boggs
 46896



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Cradle Basket

CALIFORNIA

Your Historic Compass:

“Cradle baskets are not simply baby carriers.”

When:
1870–1900, time of increased transportation and farming, sparking growth in California

Where:
Hot Springs Valley, California

Who:
The Achomawi people

What:
A cradle basket



Looking closely

When you were little, how did your parents carry you about town? Did they use a

stroller or a baby backpack? Parents constantly try to keep their children safe and out of trouble. Yet, they also need to move around to perform different tasks. In Native American culture, cradle baskets helped parents care for their children and work at the same time. With a basket, like the one you see here, a mother could both carry her child and gather food.

The materials used to make a cradle basket had to be both strong and flexible.

We can tell this basket was made for a baby girl by the zigzag design on the cradle's hood. If the basket had been made for a little boy, diagonal lines would appear on the hood. This basket is also heavily decorated with European glass beads. If you look closely at the edge of the hood, you might find a small sack. After a baby's umbilical cord had dried and dropped off, it was kept in a small buckskin bag, like this one.



ZIGZAG DETAIL



UMBILICAL SACK DETAIL

Not all cradle baskets are the same shape. In fact, this basket is not made in the typical Achomawi form. Normally, Achomawi weavers made baskets that the baby would sit in. The shape of the basket in the de Young's collection is typical of the Northern Paiute people who lived east of the Achomawi.

History connection

Making cradle baskets is one of the longest lasting traditions in Native American culture. In fact, some people still use cradle baskets

today. However, these baskets are more than just baby carriers. They play a very important part in a baby's life. A cradle basket was typically made by the child's grandmother. The basket held hopes, prayers, and thoughts for the child.

The use of cradle baskets also helped include infants in family activities. When a child was not being carried, the cradle basket could be tied to a tree or propped against a rock. In an upright position, the child could watch what was going on. Laverna Jenkins, a member of the **Atsuge** tribe, explained the importance of cradle baskets as follows:

In the hot sun, the hood of the basket would help make shade. The baby would cry if it's lying down. But if it's standing up, they think they're being held, because they're strapped in there, and they can look and see what's going on. It's safer, keeping them away from snakes, lizards, and ants.

When a child outgrew the cradle, the basket would then be tied to a tree. In the **Wintu** culture, if the basket lasted for a long time in the tree, it was a sign that the child would also have a long life. Cradle baskets were rarely used for more than one child.

People

The Achomawi live in the northern part of California. Their territory is close to the Oregon and Nevada borders. The western part of Achomawi territory is full of mountains, lakes, streams, and rivers. In fact, the word Achomawi means, “flowing river.” However, this basket was made in the drier climate of Hot Springs Valley. There are few mountains in this area. Juniper, sagebrush, marshes, and lakes dot this open country. This environment supplied the Achomawi with many different types of food. Roots, bulbs, and **waterfowl** were three important sources of nutrition. Obsidian was common in this area. This black volcanic glass was chipped to form tools such as knife blades and arrowheads. Rare in other parts of California, obsidian was a very important trade item for the Achomawi.



This photograph shows five Western Mono girls walking with small cradle baskets. By playing with these baskets, young girls learned a variety of skills. They learned how a child should be placed in a basket and how to tie the lacings around a child. Playing with model baskets, girls also practiced how to carry a cradle basket properly. Notice how the girls carry the baskets using a strap that goes across the top of the head. Mothers carried their cradle baskets in the same way.

Atsuge: The Atsuge live to the south of the Achomawi.

Wintu: The Wintu live to the southwest of the Achomawi.

waterfowl: a bird that lives on or around water