



## NATIVE AMERICAN CONTAINERS

Native American women and girls from the Southwest made baskets called *Ollas*. Some baskets were made with plants. Some baskets were made of clay. They all had rounded bodies and narrow necks. The *olla*'s narrow neck design slowed evaporation, so less water would be lost in storage. Sometimes they covered the basket with pitch. Pitch is thick and sticky. When it dries it makes the basket waterproof. They used Willow branches or loops of braided horsehair to make handles for the baskets. That way they could carry water in the baskets. The baskets were very heavy.

They didn't put pitch on the basket if they wanted to use the basket for irrigation. These *ollas* were filled with water and buried next to plants. As the water leaked through the basket walls, plants received the moisture they needed to grow.

Making, repairing and filling the *ollas* was generally work for women and girls. Very quickly young girls became experts at weaving these very important items.