

TIED TO THE PAST

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The preservation of organic material at archaeological sites in Pennsylvania is very rare. The Sheep Rock Shelter site (36HU0001) was a dry rock shelter with ideal conditions to preserve thousands of years of activity by the tribes who used it for protection from weather, often during seasonal hunting and fishing expeditions. Archaeology conducted prior to construction of a flood control project recovered this bark basket bound together with cordage. The bark strips are secured with strong 2-ply, Z-twist cords each measuring approximately .25 cm in diameter. Researchers identified corn cobs, walnuts, and acorns stored inside this vessel.



Carbon-14 ca. 1570 AD
Dimensions:
14 in. (H), 18.5 in. (L), 12 in. (W)



Analysis of the recovered cordage, defined as two or more yarns twisted together, determined that a variety of plant fibers and processing methods were employed. Two categories of cordage were identified, hard fibers such as Indian hemp and American elm were recognized as were soft, fluffy fibers similar to milkweed. The granny and overhand knots were the most commonly occurring among the ten knot varieties.

SAVE THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

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