

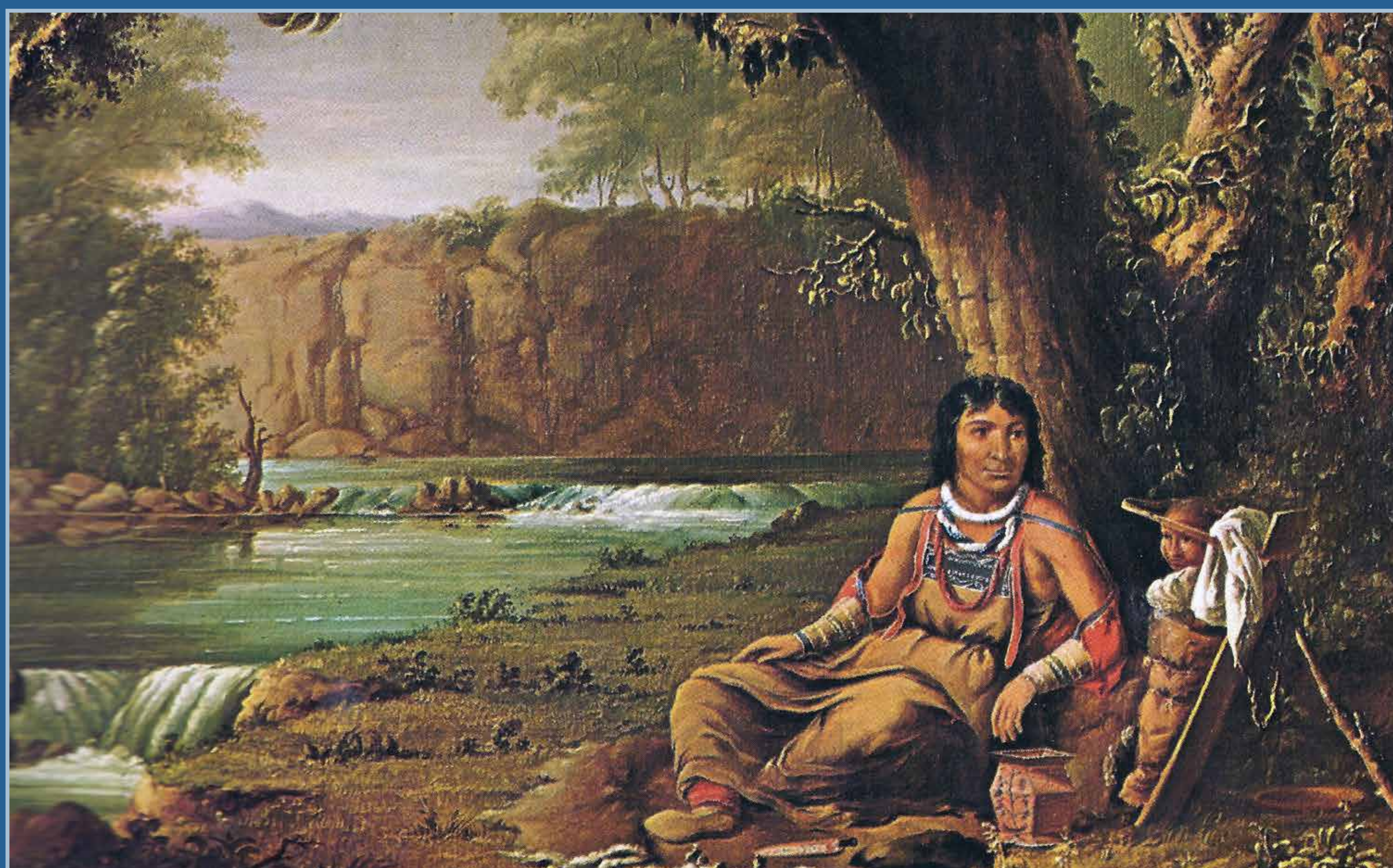
ABORIGINAL TRANSPORTATION

THE PAPOOSE

The role of Native American women was not an easy one. In addition to looking after their children they were responsible for the cooking and took an active part in the preparation of clothing and tools. When the men went off to hunt or fight, the women had the added responsibility of looking after the old and infirm, gathering food and dealing alone with the harsh realities of their life. The development of the baby papoose was one way in which that life was made easier.

The word "*papoose*" is an American English loanword from the Algonquian papoos, meaning "child". The papoose, sometimes known as a cradle board, gave the mother an easier way to do her daily tasks, while still taking care of the child. The carrier attached to the woman's back or slipped over her shoulders, with the child fitting directly inside. Different tribes used different types of materials to create these carriers, but the same basic ideas were used.

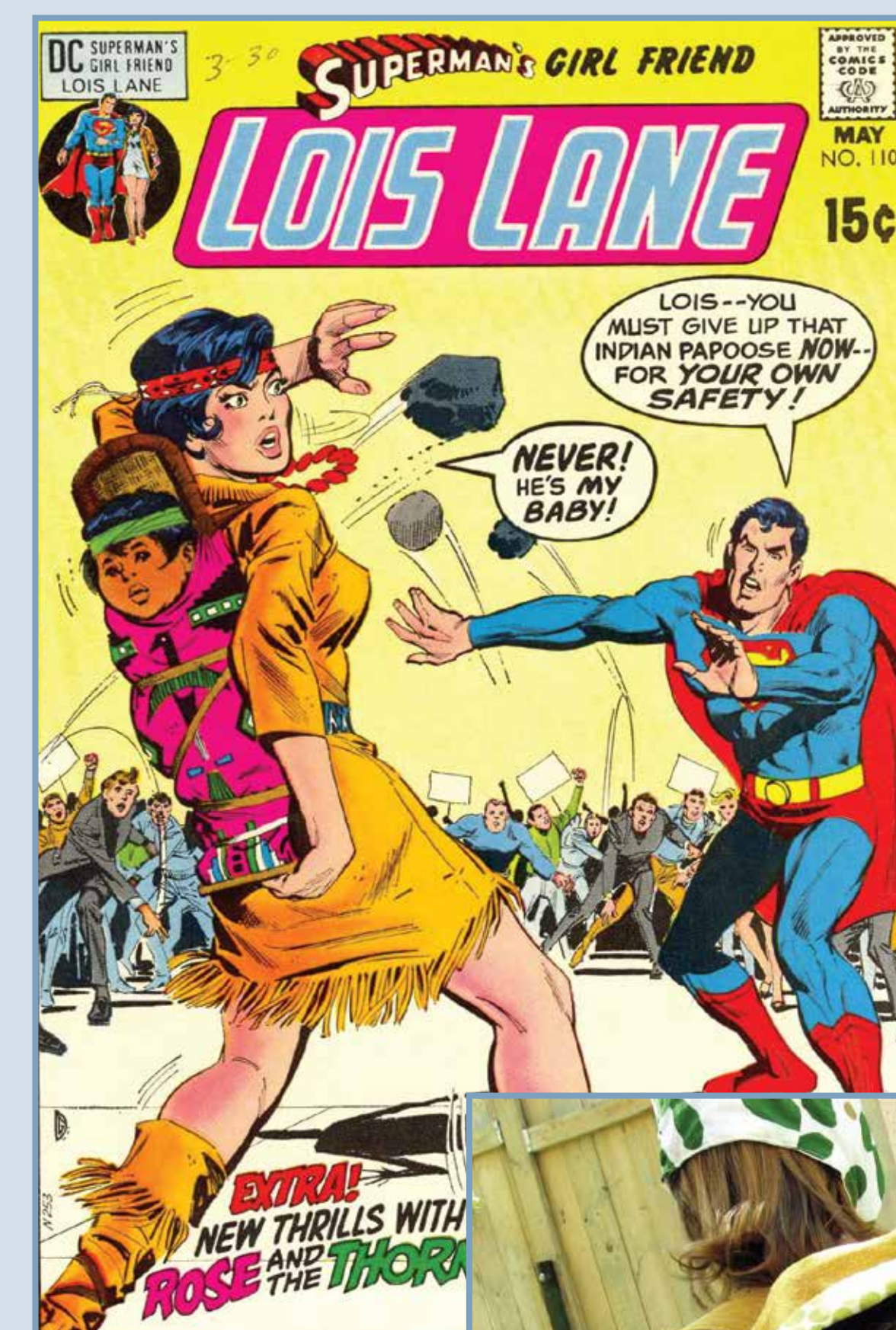
The papoose was oval shaped, made from young tree branches that were bent into shape. Small wooden slats were then attached to this basic frame and covered with a fabric or soft material, perhaps rabbit skin. Often the papoose was topped off with a shade that kept sun off the baby. Tribes that had access to animal skins or leather wrapped pieces of those skins around the carrier to keep the baby safe. The child was strapped into the carrier before it was placed on the mother, usually back to back.



From a painting by Paul Kane



Micmac Indian Family with sleigh and snowshoes. 1840, Millicent Maryca Chaplin



Some modern examples from literature and children's toys

