



Artwork by George Gingras. Bead design by Amy Briley

B is for Beadwork

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The Métis developed beautiful **beadwork** patterns that combined **First Nations** beadwork with the floral embroidered patterns introduced by French-Canadian nuns working in the Roman Catholic missions. The nuns based their designs on traditional European embroidery. The First Nations initially used geometrical shapes to bead clothing such as **moccasins** and bags. The Métis generally used the floral pattern in their artwork. Soon many Plains First Nations referred to the Métis as the “**Flower Beadwork People**.” Most Métis beadwork pieces were wrongly labelled as “Plains **Cree**” (**Nêhiyawak**) or “Plains **Ojibwa**” (**Nakawē**). This mislabelling happened because First Nations women also made beaded pieces in the flower beadwork style. These beaded pieces were very popular among non-Aboriginal art collectors. Today, the Métis are buying and showing their ancestors’ beaded artwork. They are putting them in their own museum collections such as that held by the **Gabriel Dumont Institute**. Many Métis continue to bead clothing such as moccasins, coats, and mittens.

Other Resources:

Racette, Sherry Farrell. *The Flower Beadwork People*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2009.

Troupe, Cheryl. *Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs*. Study Prints and Teachers’ Manual. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

Troupe, Cheryl. (Narrator). *Our Shared Inheritance: Traditional Métis Beadwork*. Video. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture (www.metismuseum.ca).

