

Beadwork

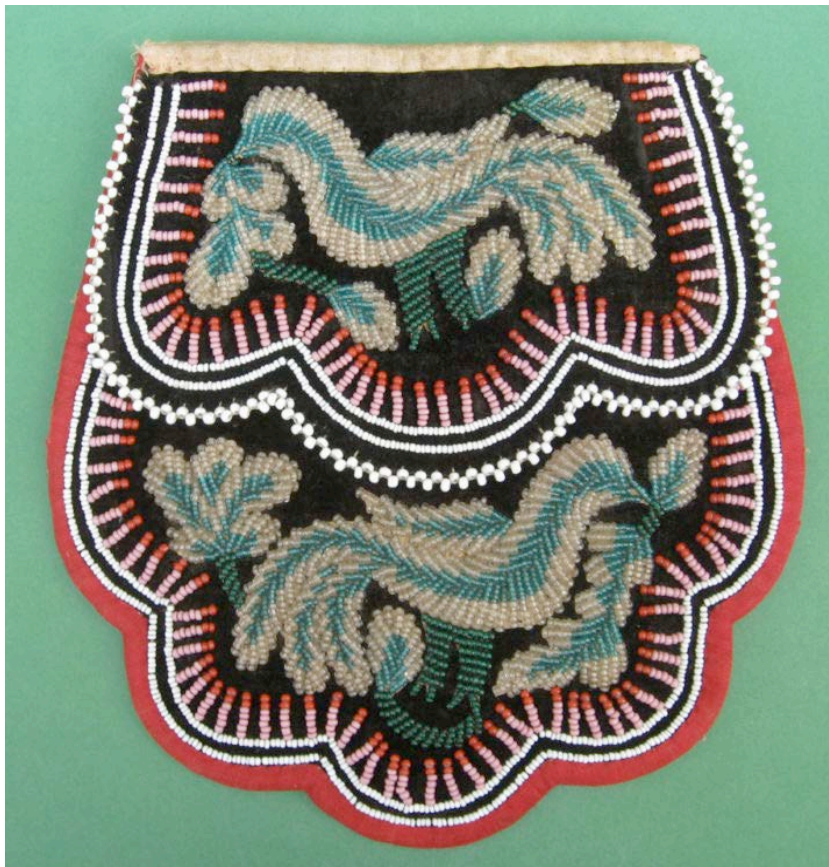


Why Bead a Crown?

This beaded crown is an excellent example of creativity using glass beads on “new” object, while keeping within the boundaries of a “traditional style”.

“If this beadwork is critically examined it will be found that these general rules are called a systematic art. The art of flowering, as they term it, is the most difficult part of beadwork, as it requires an accurate knowledge of the appearance of the flower, and the structure and condition of the plant at the stage in which it is represented. These imitations are frequently made with great delicacy, of which a very favorable exhibition may be seen in the plate, in the flower introduced at the angle of the skirt.”

Lewis Henry Morgan, 1851



BEADWORK oo?teeksteh (Tuscarora Language)

This beautiful beaded bag was made by the Hodinohso:ni on the Grand River Reserve, Ontario in Canada in about 1890. It is very finely beaded with coloured glass beads (including layered red on white beads) on a dark chocolate / black velvet ground. Each side is beaded in an unusual pattern of birds picking leafy sprigs.

As fringes are made up of simple loops of beads this would not be at all difficult to replace if you wished. Unusually, this bag has a small pocket under one of the faux opening flaps. The interior of the bag and the underside of the flaps are lined with glazed cotton and the interior of the bag still retains its salmon pink colour. The red binding cotton from around the outside edge of the bag has two small areas of wear. It measures 20 cm (7 7/8 inch) long by 19 cm (7 1/2 inches) wide. Formerly in private collection in Essex, United Kingdom.

http://cgi.ebay.ca/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=130500053524&clk_rvr_id=246491695085

The bird image is interesting. Some have suggested that the Tuscarora continued to depict a parrot that lived in their former home lands in North Carolina. However, this bird appears to be more like a mourning dove.



This is one of the few pieces of beadwork that has an actual date assigned to it. It was acquired by Dennis Doyle in the Albany, New York region in 1807. Doyle was visiting while on the maiden voyage of the Robert Fulton steamboat Clarenton, making it way up the Hudson River.

New York State Museum E 50500 A-1964-2

Worldview in Beads

We believe this world was created as a place of perpetual re-creation. From death comes new life.



Beadwork Reflects Nature







In the Haudenosaunee mind, there exist certain universal and eternal designs, pattern and symbols that contain deeply held meanings. Natural phenomena reveal these universals are celebrated in our art.

This design is based upon the cultural symbol of the Tree of Peace – a tall white pine, from which four roots of peace grow. The weapons of war – war clubs – are buried under these roots.

Tree of Life



There are three main trees of life:

Celestial Tree in Sky World;

Tree of Peace;

Maple Tree.

The beadwork on this woman's skirt reflects the Celestial Tree with blossoms that give off sunlight.

Witness to Change



Horses became a part of our lives since the colonists introduced them to our ancestors. At one time, nearly every Hodinohson:ni homestead had a horse for work or transportation. So, it is only natural that horse images would appear in beadwork, such as this. The 1842 painting from Albany show how rocking horses and merry-go-rounds may have influenced the way horse were depicted.

TUSCARORA RAISED BEADWORK ~ “FROM NIAGARA FALLS”

By Grant Jonathan (Tuscarora)

The Tuscarora Nation is a sovereign Indian nation in the Niagara region of upstate New York and is one of the “Six Nations” of the Iroquois Confederacy or Haudenosaunee. Beadworkers from the Tuscarora Nation are internationally known for their “raised” or “embossed” beadwork, a technique used to create raised three-dimensional shapes by sewing beads in raised arches, or sewing beads over beads to give it height and dimension. The technique is also called by Tuscarora families as the “hump stitch” or “rope stitch.”

The close proximity of the Tuscarora Nation to Niagara Falls, NY afforded Tuscarora beadworkers to pursue a vital economic activity during the nineteenth century with the growing Victorian tourist trade. Tuscarora beadworkers produced a wealth of beautifully crafted souvenirs and sold them to Victorian tourists from around the world who traveled to Niagara Falls to see its beauty. It was at the 'Brink of the Falls' or 'Along the Rapids' where Tuscarora beadworkers sold their beaded souvenirs, or "whimsies" as called by Europeans, to tourists on the lands adjacent to Niagara Falls. Combining traditional Native designs with popular, Victorian-era fashions, Tuscarora beadworkers sold richly beaded purses, picture frames, needle cases, pin cushions, jewelry holders, and a variety of wall hangings that were adorned with beaded flowers, animals, dates, sentiments, and place names such as "From Niagara Falls."



Little is known by the public or published regarding the rich history associated with Tuscarora raised beadwork and how the right to sell beadwork at Niagara Falls, came to the Tuscarora Nation in the first place. According to Tuscarora oral tradition, the right to sell beadwork came to the Tuscarora after the War of 1812, where Tuscarora men served and protected U.S. General Peter B. Porter. Our history tells us that General Porter was captured by the British and taken to Fort George in present day Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. General Porter was rescued by Tuscarora scouts that traveled into Canada to save and return him to New York. As a reward for Porter's rescue, the Porter family, which owned all land adjacent to Niagara Falls, provided to Tuscarora women the right to sell their beadwork in perpetuity on the Porter lands along the Niagara rapids.



Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, Tuscarora women continued to sell their beadwork to tourists, even when the privately owned lands of the Porter family were established into the Niagara State Reservation in 1885. In May 1936, the Niagara State Reservation Police were instructed to bar Tuscarora women from selling beadwork and leather goods at Prospect Park. A month later in June 1936, after the women complained to Albany, their privileges were restored but permits were now required which were issued to sellers, with no new comers given permits.

Both Tuscarora women and men continue to produce Tuscarora raised beadwork and sell their goods at Niagara Falls. But times have changed with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation granting only five permits via lottery system to five Native individuals, who do not necessarily belong to the Tuscarora Nation. The number of restrictions and rules associated with the permits make it hard to enjoy the tradition for Tuscarora people that had been in place for more than 175 years. Regardless of these frustrations, Tuscarora beadworkers still produce the beautiful raised beadwork they are well known for, which we are happy to exhibit for you and share with you today.





Indigenous Knowledge Centre - Hodinohso:ni Art Lessons

This project was made possible by support from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. These materials are for educational purposes only, and not meant for commercial use, and teachers are free to copy the lesson plans and share them with their students.

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Compiled by Rick Hill, Research Projects Coordinator, and Roxanne Sky, Program Assistant, Deyohahá:ge: - Indigenous Knowledge Centre, Six Nations Polytechnic, P.O. Box 700, Grand River Territory, Ohsweken, ON, N0A 1M0

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