is no proof as to where the Indians themselves had previously learned the process: possibly from other Indians, Hurons near Quebec or Iroquois, or from the French Canadians of an earlier period or of other localities. This most complex type of woollen sash certainly was not part of the equipment of the early natives of the St. Lawrence watershed.

ANCIENT INDIAN SASHES IN THE DAUPHIN DE FRANCE COLLECTION

The evidence that matters most in the study of early finger weaving in Canada so far is lacking, but should we find information about the French colonial period, we might proceed a step farther in unravelling the obscure origins of braided sashes and garters among the French Canadians or the Indians. This is what we shall do now with the help of a number of specimens that the writer recently observed and studied in the Musée du Trocadéro, Paris, and the Musée municipal of Versailles, France.

These specimens form part of what is known as the Palais de Versailles collection of Indian curios made for the Dauphin de France sometime between 1740 and 1780. The Versailles collection was removed, after the Revolution, in 1790, from Versailles and placed in the keeping of the Bibliothèque nationale, in Paris. About 1880, this collection, to which were added some other materials, was split up into two parts, one of which (the smaller) was given to the Musée municipal of Versailles, and the other, to the Trocadéro museum. The bulk of these materials throws a new light on the early aspects of North American ethnography and crafts, one of which concerns weaving, sash and garter making and decoration (Figures 4, 5).

A few pack sashes, more or less authentically listed as Huron, are of the same type—even the design and perhaps the materials—as the "Mohawk burden-straps" studied by Orchard,[1] which consist partly of simple finger braiding and of coloured moose-hair decoration. The design in one of these is in the form of triangles or half-arrows of two contrasted colours; another, of the saw-tooth or triangular pattern; a third has a dented stair-like design; a fourth has small stair-like designs in two rows; a fifth (this and the last two are made of cord) also has a stair-like design; and a sixth, made of bark, is decorated with coloured porcupine quills disposed in the shape of diamonds, stripes, and hour-glasses.

Two other sashes are made of cord and sinew, one of which was probably woven on a hand loom, and the other braided, decorated with porcupine quills in the form of repeated diamonds with serrated edges, and of elongated saw-teeth. So far the designs and type of finger weaving are Indian-like and presumably authentic. They are certainly old—antedating 1750.

[1] "Indian Notes", Oct. 1929; Quart., Mus. of the Am. Indian, N.Y.

Yet, even during this early period, the natives for many years had been under the influence of the French, particularly the Ursuline nuns teaching their children at Quebec.

The following seven sashes of the same collection stand nearer the varieties later evolved by, or under the influence of, the French Canadians; yet they remain apart—being archaic forms. And in this they are historically significant. They are woven out of sheep's wool; three of them are of black wool like the "vieille cinture de lenne noire" mentioned in an inventory of the Beaupré coast dated 1744; several are decorated with French beads; some of their fringes are tinselled with metal pendants and adorned with beads, dyed porcupine quills, and tufts of horsehair; most of them are finger-braided, one of them in the diagonal basket-weave of the Iroquois; and their designs are akin to those of later Indian and French-Canadian sashes—diamonds, zigzags, hour-glass, and saw-tooth. A sash is made of the "filet" stitch; and to a pair of flannel leggings are attached two pairs of flannel garters, one for the knee and the other for the thigh.

Three old sashes of the transitional type were observed at the British Museum and described as from the Prairies and woven "of the hair of the American buffalo and embroidered with beads . . ." One, of dark wool, is decorated with two rows of saw-teeth in white beads; another, of reddish and black wool, is also decorated with a row of teeth; and the third, seemingly of sheep's wool, is reddish, and decorated with a row of diamonds.

ORIGIN OF FINGER WEAVING

The sashes and garters that we have under observation are of both French-Canadian and Indian make; the technique of finger weaving as exemplified in them, within the historic period, was known to both people; the materials—wool, dyes, beads, tinsels, horsehair—were, in all but a few cases, those of the white man; and the designs were of mixed extraction, and in many cases, especially during the French regime, yielded to the technique and the materials.

The Indians, when they actually wove belts—this seems to have been very exceptlonal before 1800—were strongly under the influence of the French, and, lacking suitable materials, readily borrowed whatever the trade placed at their disposal, but as soon as they experienced a stimulus from outside they gave free rein to their taste for ornaments and natural ability in craftsmanship. During the colonial period, they made largely out of imported goods such belts or bands as we find in the Trocadéro and Versailles collections—the earliest on record.

We might still be inclined, because of Indian imitativeness and wholesale acceptance of the French attire and personal ornaments by the

TROCADERO

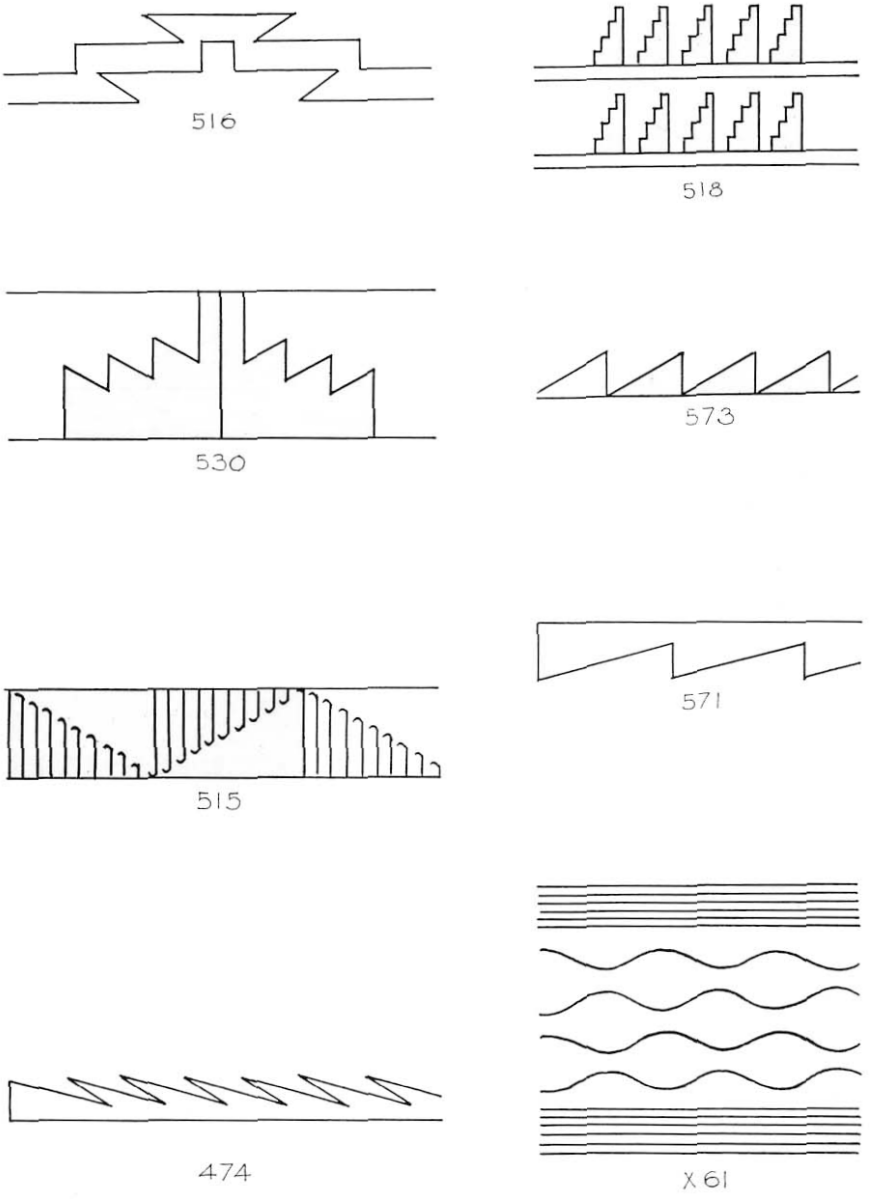
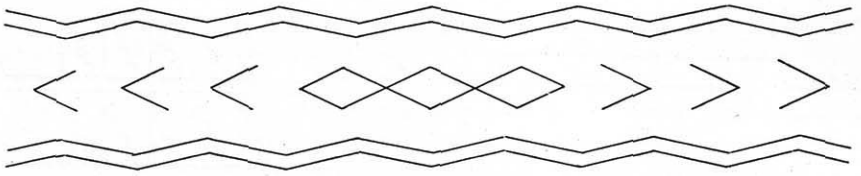
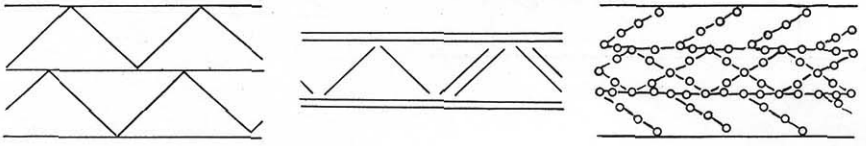


Figure 4. Designs in the sashes and belts of the old Dauphin de France collection at the Trocadéro—French colonial period

PITT-RIVERS, OXFORD



BRITISH MUSEUM



VERSAILLES

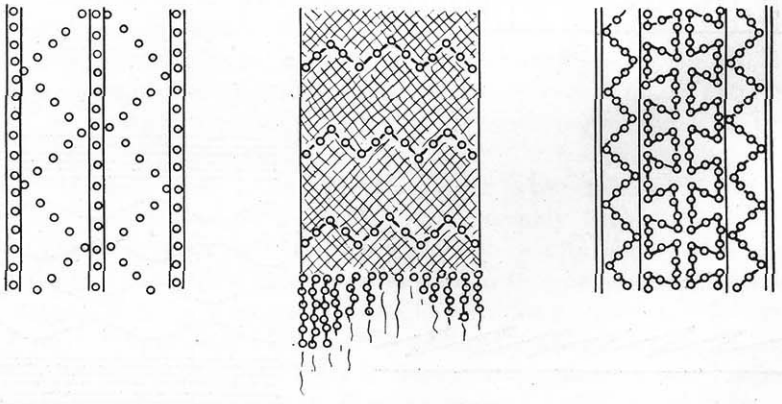


Figure 5. Sashes at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, at the British Museum, and at the Musée municipal de Versailles (the last being from the Dauphin de Francec ollection—French colonial period).

natives, to presume that the woven sash was a European article, even in its initial stages of development on this continent. But here we come to the parting of the ways, in so far as sources are concerned, and cannot further defer the fundamental question: is finger weaving as manifested in the sashes and garters European or native American? One or the other? Or perhaps both?

Is it European?

Probably not French, as we can find no evidence of it whatsoever, either in French museums or in consultations with French folklorists. So that the early colonists may not have had any knowledge of it when they landed in America, and to this day finger-woven sashes and garters are seemingly unknown in France and other continental countries. The only exception in Europe is northern Scandinavia, as disclosed by finger-woven garters made in Norway and possibly Lapland. An Albanian specimen at the Trocadéro may be finger woven, but of this there is no certainty.

Between Norwegians and early French emigrants to North America we know of no immediate connection. Yet if finger weaving was a traditional handicraft in Scandinavia, it may also have existed in other parts of Europe, and then have been forgotten, or it may not yet have been recorded by folklorists.

Was it native American?

It was. Ethnologists and technicians, like Wissler and Amsden, show how widespread was the diffusion of this type of weaving in prehistoric and historic America, North and South. Miss Densmore and Miss Ataloa have seen garters and sashes being made among the present-day Indians, just as they are among French Canadians, and Mr. Roy H. Robinson, of Chicago, is emphatically of the opinion that they go back to prehistory in America.

Is it then possible that the French Canadians at first borrowed from their Indian neighbours the simple process of finger braiding as exemplified in the Iroquois belts and then elaborated upon the process to the point of making it their own; then, through the use of flexible and abundant materials, transformed the craft almost beyond recognition and gave it a new diffusion among the Indians, who were glad to accept it in its renovated style?

For the present at least, it seems sound to accept this theory. For it is probable that the French colonists and woodsmen of early Canada, adaptable as they were and in pressing need of resources, may have learned from the Indians finger weaving, just as they had learned the use of corn, tobacco, the snow-shoe, moccasins, the bark canoe, the practice of maple

sugar making, and other native devices. Of this, Peter D. Kalm, the Norwegian naturalist, visiting Canada in 1749, was quite aware, as he made the following observations (translated from the French):

"Whereas many nations imitate the French customs, I notice that here, it is the French who, in various respects, imitate the customs of the Indians with whom they are in daily contacts. They smoke, in Indian pipes, tobacco prepared in the native way; they wear shoes in the Indian fashion, and *garters* and *sashes* like the Indians. . . They borrow the bark canoes of the Indians and use them just as the Indians do" (*Voyage de Kalm en Amérique*).

Should finger weaving and its ramifications be accepted as having existed in prehistoric times both in Scandinavia and in parts of North America, the next step in the study of this highly interesting technique is to explore fully the respective areas of diffusion of each, and find out whether—with more data possibly still available— it is possible to bridge the gap between them; for this earliest stage of weaving may go back to a single origin, then for ages may have covered vast expanses which have now fallen far apart, and may have become isolated, in the form of mere survivals.

ARROW SASHES

When the Assomption or Achigan sashes were no longer made for the Montreal fur traders and bourgeois, and after the Hudson's Bay Company had begun, over 50 years ago, to purchase imitation sashes made on looms, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild of Montreal exhibited a dozen old sashes at the Art Gallery, in March 1907, to draw attention to the disappearance of the interesting Canadian handicraft that they represent. And the Guild, on that occasion, brought over from St. Jacques de L'Achigan old Mme. Françoise Venne, who was photographed when working at a sash (Plate III). Nothing more at the time seems to have been done in recording the facts or trying to preserve the ancient technique of sash weaving.

But Dr. E.-Z. Massicotte, who at the time saw the sashes on exhibition at the Art Gallery and consulted Mme. Venne, was so deeply impressed that he eventually took the initiative for their preservation. As early as 1885 he had joined the L'Etoile snow-shoe club whose members wore woollen sashes, and he owned, like many others in the club, a sash which presumably had been manufactured for the Hudson's Bay Company in England. In a verbal account of the circumstances, which the writer has recently taken in shorthand, Dr. Massicotte said (translated from the French):

"It was fashionable (*chic*) to wear an arrow sash (*ceinture fléchée*), as the merchants, the lawyers and the *bourgeois*, wearing sashes on short