

The Knowledge keepers Diary

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA REGION 1

YOU GOT TO BE BRAVE AND HAVE COURAGE, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, BECAUSE THAT IS THE FIRST THING TO SUCCESS IS BELIEVING IN YOURSELF... LOUIS RIEL

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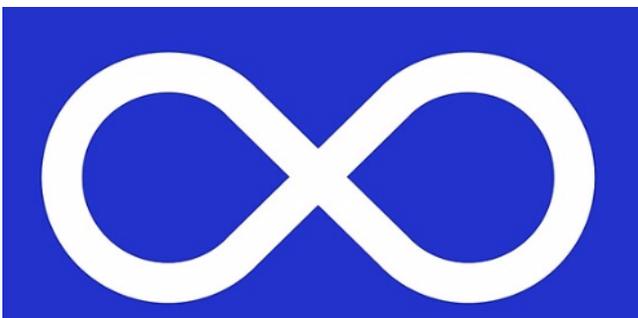
THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE



PHOTO TAKEN IN FORT CHIPEWYAN

Living with the Land

Her Nikâwi and Nôhtâwi taught her how to live with the land. They taught her that when she was thirsty, she had water and when she was hungry, she had food. Marina had been taught to respect the land and be grateful. To use only what was needed while giving back with prayer, thanking mother earth for her sacrifices. Land to Marina, represents the creative genius of the creator and she is thankful to be immersed in all of nature's proud glory. Her Nikâwi was a very wise woman and seemed to know everything about plants and the medicinal gifts they had to offer. Marina immersed herself in the wonders of nature, and was taught the art of picking berries, drying fish, how to preserve moose meat for the winter and to use the hide to make slippers. Her Nôhtâwi taught her how to set traps, hunt and skin animals as well as how to haul water from the lake when it was frozen. Now she passes these teachings on to her own grandchildren and in doing so, her culture stays alive.



The Métis flag

The Métis flag or flag of the Métis Nation features a white infinity sign on a blue background. The infinity symbol represents the mixing of two distinct cultures, European and First Nations, to create a unique and distinct culture, that of the Métis (which means "to mix" in Latin). The infinity symbol refers to a quantity without end and symbolizes the faith that the Métis nation will exist forever.

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE

THE MÉTIS ARE REFERRED TO AS THE 'FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE' BECAUSE OF THE USE OF FLOWER DESIGNS IN THEIR BEADWORK.

Floral beadwork has become one of the most distinctive decorations found on Métis clothing. The beadwork add so much color and decoration that the craftsmanship is now considered an art form.

The origin of Métis beadwork designs came from experimenting and the addition of several art traditions that influenced the Métis style. It began to gain popularity in the mid – nineteenth century when First Nations and Métis women moved from the traditional painted quill and birchbark and replaced it with floral embroidery. Several First Nations used shapes and patterns on their tipi covers and clothing and, up until the 1840s Métis decoration was dominated by geometric designs.

Beadwork is now found on almost every item of clothing and functional hide and cloth work produced by the Métis. The glass beads they used were procured from the trading companies. Beaded clothes included moccasins, coats, vests, belts, bags and mittens. Beadwork was done even on tablecloths, wall pockets and cloth frames for religious pictures.

It is also said to be influenced by the Ojibway principle of always representing four different parts of the plant, or four stages of vegetation. For example, the bead work will often include seed, leaves, buds and fruits or flowers. Or stems, leaves, buds and flowers. A lot of principles within the Native culture come in 4. The four quadrants of the medicine wheel, representing our four sides, the four stages of life, the four directions.

