Cover photograph: Marilyn Buskyhead. Kindsvater of Wichita is of Cherokee and Sac and Fox ancestry. She is actively involved with the preservation of Native American folk arts.

Back photograph: Betty Nixie of Wichita is a member of the Kiowa tribe. Betty grew up speaking Kiowa as her first language.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN KANSAS

The land we now call Kansas has been home to many Native American peoples. The Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kansa, Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, and Wichita are tribes that are considered native to present-day Kansas. The area has also been inhabited by many emigrant tribes. Emigrant Indians are those peoples who have been moved to a new geographic region after being displaced from their original homelands. As non-native peoples became more numerous in the eastern part of the United States, plans were developed to move Indian tribes farther west.

As early as 1803, Pres. Thomas Jefferson proposed a plan that offered eastern tribes land west of the Mississippi River. This offer was extended to volunteers but did not prove successful. In 1825 and 1830, however, Congress passed specific acts that forced removal of the Native American peoples. These acts were based on the belief that Indians could be moved west to make room for European American settlement. Many of the lands in the West, including present-day Kansas, were determined to be unsuitable for white settlement.

In 1829, the Delawares were the first Indians to sign a treaty giving them land in what was to become Kansas. After 1830, nearly thirty tribes were given land in the area. Among these tribes were the Cherokee, Chippewa, Delaware, Iroquois, Kickapoo, Munsee, Ottawa, Peoria, Piankashaw, Potawatomi, Quapaw, Sac and Fox, Shawnee, Stockbridge, Wea, and Wyandot. Although these emigrant tribes were assured by the federal government that they would not be moved again, Kansas Territory opened for settlement in 1854 and once again forced the removal of native peoples. Many settlers moved into Kansas Territory after the Civil War, accelerating the movement of Indians off the land.

Today, Kansas is home to four Indian reservations—the Iowa, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Sac and Fox. Native Americans of various tribal affiliations also reside in the cities and towns of the state. At one time, each tribe maintained its own language, religion, and customs. Although cultural distinctions still exist, the traditional way of life has changed over time. When many tribes live close to each other there often occurs a blending of traditions.

HISTORY OF BEADWORK

One of the best known art forms practiced by American Indians is beadwork. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, native populations of North America created their own beads. As none had metal tools, the construction of beads was a long process. Using little but tools made of stone or wood and abrasives such as sand, prehistoric Indians would fashion beads
from native materials. Most of the beads made by Native Americans were relatively large and were constructed to be worn strung on necklaces or thongs. It was not until the arrival of trade beads from Europe that the Indians could obtain small beads in sufficient quantities to make the beaded designs we know today.

This is not to say that beadwork emerged on the scene without a precedent. The people of the northeastern United States and the Midwest already were decorating their leather clothing and accessories with dyed porcupine quills. Compared with beadwork, quill work is very time consuming and tedious. Each quill must be attached to the background with a small stitch. Despite these constraints Native American artists invested many hours to create intricate and beautiful quill work pieces.

The art of making glass beads probably originated in Venice, Italy. In any case, we know that this area had a flourishing industry in the production of beads by the early fourteenth century. From there the production of beads moved to other parts of Europe, the most notable being Bohemia, France, England, and Holland. There also was a small bead industry within the United States.

Beads were one of the earliest goods that the Europeans traded with the Native Americans. Spaniards were already trading beads into New Mexico by the middle of the sixteenth century. Ultimately all beads came from trading posts, but the Indians soon spread trade beads far and wide through their own exchange networks until they could be found in the most remote parts of the United States.

At first, beads were entirely of the large variety intended for necklaces. Native Americans, however, soon realized the possibilities created by the availability of small, brightly colored beads. Suddenly they could create new designs with a broader palette. The comparative ease by which beads could be used for decoration created a veritable explosion of beadwork in North America. Traders soon moved to satisfy the market for smaller beads.

**USES OF BEADWORK**

Native American beadwork, like quill work before it, is a decorative art form. Utilitarian goods such as clothing, dwellings, horse gear, and utensils were at one time ornamented with quill work and beadwork. Over time, the older ways of life have disappeared. Even though clothing and dwelling styles have changed, and the original needs for horse gear and certain utensils have vanished, decorative beadwork continues to flourish.
As Indians came in contact with white settlers, clothing styles changed. For example, articles of clothing previously made from buffalo skins began to be made out of wool or cotton. Although the basic materials changed, Native Americans continued to decorate their clothing with beadwork. During the mid-1800s, trade goods, such as beads, were readily available. Due to forced relocation and life on the reservation, many Indians had time on their hands. These factors led to a proliferation of beadwork during the mid-nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century there has been a growing interest in the renewal of Indian customs and practices among Native American peoples. With this renewal has come a blending of some tribal distinctions. Historically, tribal distinctions were evident in the design elements found in ornamental beadwork. In the twentieth century, particularly after World War I, styles of clothing emerged that began to cross tribal lines. During the same period, tribal distinctions in headwork began to blur.

Today, beadwork has come to symbolize the Native American heritage. Beaded headbands are often worn on hats. Some Indian men wear beaded bolo ties and belts, and some Indian women wear beaded jewelry. However, beadwork is most often found on costumes worn at powwows or dance contests. A powwow is a celebration of Indian culture, through dance, music, food, and other traditional activities. Dance costumes make extensive use of beadwork. Dancers often wear beaded moccasins, cuffs, chokers, arm bands, belts, and suspenders.

**BEADWORKING TECHNIQUES**

In the United States, designs have been made with beads either by sewing them to a background material or by weaving them into a fabric. Although there are a number of techniques for attaching beads to a surface, most are variations of the overlaid stitch or the lazy stitch.

The overlaid stitch, often referred to as the spot stitch, is a technique found throughout the United States. With this method the artist can perform finely detailed work as well as fill in large sections of background. First the beads are strung on a thread or sinew. If a design is to be made with contrasting colors of beads, they must be placed in order. Then a second thread is used to fix the beaded strand to the material. The second strand is passed over every two or three beads. In most cases the outlines for a design are made with a single strand of beads and the remainder is filled in afterwards with beadwork. This method is essential for producing the curvilinear, floral designs favored by the tribes of the eastern woodlands.

The second major beading technique is known as the lazy stitch. In this method a row of beads is strung on a thread that is simply passed into the background material. No second thread is used to bind the beads to the surface. The thread is then strung once again with beads and passed back in the opposite direction. In this way a series of small rows are laid next to each other to create a design. This technique tends to result in a distinctive ribbed appearance. In general, it was used by tribes west of the Mississippi River. It is most suitable for the geometric designs favored by the Plains Indians.
There is a variation of the lazy stitch which has been practiced by the residents of the northeastern United States. This is often called the raised or couched stitch. With this technique more beads are strung on a thread than can be sewn flat on the material. When the thread is drawn tight, the beads form a small arc. A series of these arcs are sewn side by side so that they support each other. Since the arcs do not lie flat, there is a three-dimensional effect. This is used most often in designs based on flowers and plants.

Applique techniques, or sewing beads to a background surface, by no means encompasses the full range of beadwork techniques employed by Native Americans. Rather, American Indians also have used weaving to create beadwork. Weaving can be done with or without a loom.

Although a great number of weaving techniques have been documented, there are several primary types under which most can be grouped. The first of these involve techniques for weaving on the loom. Looms for beadwork have been constructed in a number of different ways. Some Indians have used full looms. These consist of two vertical pieces across which are tied crosspieces on the top and the bottom. The horizontal, or weft, threads are then passed through the warps. Others have employed backstrap looms. A backstrap loom has no rigid pieces that run the length of the warp threads. Rather, the cross piece at the end of the loom is tied to something like a post or tree, while the other is tied to a belt that goes around the waist of the weaver. The weight of the weaver's body is used to keep the warps taut. Today, such work is often done on a commercial loom or a so-called box loom, constructed from the four sides of a wooden box. This is especially convenient in contemporary urban environments where the loom can simply be placed on a table.

Among the major techniques of weaving beads on a loom has been the square weave. In this weave the warp and weft threads cross each other at right angles as is the case in the most basic woven fabrics. The beads are secured on the weft thread between the warps. Another technique requires the use of a heddle loom. This technique was used largely by the Sac and Fox, Winnebago, Micmac, Menomini, and Chippewa tribes. The heddle is made of wood or bark and is employed to hold the threads of the warp. Every other thread of the warp is fixed in place, while the others can be moved up and down to provide a space for the weft threads, which are strung with beads, to be passed through. Between each pass of the weft, the warp threads are raised or lowered to fix the beads in place.

A number of techniques for weaving without a loom have been recorded from locations throughout the Americas. In general, these are very time consuming approaches. For this reason, they are not practiced as frequently as they had been in the past. Beads can be woven
into pieces of cloth for ornamentation. One example can be found in a type of sash in which single strands of beads are incorporated into the fabric as it is woven. These sashes are woven without the benefit of a loom. This technique has a wide distribution, and has been found among such tribes as the Kickapoo, Chippewa, Sac and Fox, Osage, Micmac, and Menomini.

Another technique involves the weaving of beads into a net-like web. In this method a sort of web would be created in which beads would be used in the place of a knot to hold the individual strands together. This has been employed to make decorative items such as necklaces and headbands, as well as bags and pouches.

CHANGES

Traditional arts are always in a state of change and transformation. This is particularly true with technology and materials. The existence of beadwork is just one illustration of this fact as the native inhabitants of North America adapted the new material to the existing art of quill work. With the passage of time, other innovations in materials have taken place. At first beadworkers would punch holes in buckskin with bone awls and then push the sinews through to string the beads. As contact with European Americans increased, they began to use iron awls made of discarded nails. Eventually this gave way to the use of needles. Sinew was replaced with cotton or silk thread. Recently, single-ply nylon has become a favored material because of its great strength and resistance to rot. The backing material for bead applique has changed as well. Although buckskin is still used in a great many cases, it is time-consuming to prepare and is often less readily available than skins tanned with vegetable or chemical processes. For this reason, some beadworkers have turned to commercially prepared leather or even to canvas.

The weaving of beadwork also is an innovation based upon an introduced technology. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Pueblo tribes of the Southwest were the only native inhabitants of the United States to weave cloth on a loom. The concept of the loom, therefore, was introduced to many of the tribes from the Europeans. In the weaving of beadwork, however, they took this concept and made it their own as they created a novel use for the loom.

The forms and designs of beadwork also have changed over time, as each artist has made her own unique contribution to the art. In recent years, however, there have been several major developments in beadwork that have accelerated this process of change. One of these is the role of the market in beadwork. As non-Indians have come to appreciate Native American art forms, there has been an incentive to introduce traditional beadwork forms to new items. Now beadwork has started to find its way onto such things as seed caps, watchbands, and tennis shoes.

Probably the greatest change to have come about in the form of beadwork, however, has been the blurring of tribal distinctions in design. At one time the designs used by a group were unique to that group alone. Often permission had to be granted before a person could wear the patterns of another tribe. Once this permission was granted, the design could only be worn in the presence of the tribe in which it had originated. This sort of division is no longer always the case. Today many Native Americans feel free to employ whatever designs appeal to them. This tendency seems especially prevalent among Indians who live in urban areas. This is probably due to several factors. For one, the rate of intermarriage between tribes has increased, blurring the lines of tribal membership. The proximity in which the members of the groups now live to each other has had the same effect. In many cases young urban Indians also may learn the art from a member of another tribe. Along with the instruction comes the design influence and aesthetics of the teacher.

CONCLUSION

The art of beadwork serves as a powerful symbol of Native American ethnicity. Prior to the loss of their freedom, Native Americans often wore extensive beadwork as a part of their everyday clothing. Now this is rarely the case. It has, however, continued to be a highly visible component of Native American festivals and powwows. In the art of competitive dancing, which has emerged as a major component of powwows since the 1920s, the costume has achieved a level of significance which almost rivals the dance itself. In this context, the costume with its beadwork, sends a strong signal of group membership that is hard to ignore.
FURTHER READINGS


APPLIQUE ROSETTE INSTRUCTIONS

Materials Needed: Craft Felt (2-4 inches larger than finished rosette)
2 Beading Needles
12/0 Nymo Nylon Thread
12/0 Beads
Leather Scrap for Backing (size of finished rosette)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Thread 2 needles using approximately 36 to 48 inches of waxed Nymo thread. Put a knot at the end of each thread.

2. Trim felt to approximately 2 - 3 inches larger than your finished rosette.

3. Find the center of the felt. Insert the needle from the bottom to the top of the felt at the center. Pick up a bead with the needle and stitch it down approximately 1/2 bead width from the thread. Insert the needle
back up through the felt approximately 1/2 bead width from the center bead (See Fig. 1.).

4. Pick up 6 to 8 beads with the needle. Pass the needle through the first bead again to form a loop (See Fig. 2.).

5. Using the second thread, insert the needle from the bottom up through the felt between the center bead and the loop of beads. The thread will be used to tack the loop to the felt from the center outwards. (See Fig. 3.). Bead threads should be tacked every second or third bead.

6. The bead thread is then inserted through the felt to the bottom of the piece. The bead thread is then brought back through the felt approximately 1/2 bead width from the first row.

7. Additional rows are done in the same manner until the finished size is reached. Designs are made by changing bead color when necessary. When the finished size has been reached, the felt is trimmed approximately 1/8 inch away from the last row of beads.

8. Leather should be cut the same size as the beaded rosette.

9. You are now ready to finish the rosette by sewing the leather to the back of the rosette with a decorative edge stitch (See Fig. 4.). Thread a needle using about 36 to 48 inches of Nymo thread. Place a small knot at the end of the thread. Place the beaded rosette on top of the leather. Insert the needle between the felt and the leather so that the knot will be hidden between the two layers. A whip stitch will be used to attach the leather to the beaded felt. Begin with 1 or 2 stitches to secure the back.

10. Pick up 3 beads on the needle. Working from the back to the front, take a stitch and pull the thread tight. Pass the needle back up through the last bead that was put on the thread. Pick up two more beads and continue in this way until the entire rosette is attached to the leather (See Fig. 4.). The last bead should match with the first three beads that were used to begin edging. Your rosette is now complete.
HINTS

1. A general rule of thumb is that the needle should be one size smaller than the beads with which you are working.
2. Bee's wax will help to strengthen your thread and also keep it from tangling.
3. Some variation in beads is normal due to the manufacturing process.
4. An embroidery hoop can be used to hold the felt if you feel comfortable using one.
5. A piece of plastic, such as a coffee can lid, can be placed between the beaded felt and the leather to stiffen the rosette.
6. The most common problem for beginners is that they pull the thread too tight. This can result in a misshapen rosette.
TRADITIONS

Kansas has a rich and diverse folk art heritage. Within the state, artists continue to practice art forms that are passed on from parent to child, worker to worker, and neighbor to neighbor. Knowledge is taught by word of mouth or by example. Our folk arts are traditional in that they are part of an unbroken thread that can be traced back through time. No set time period is necessary, however, for a particular behavior to become part of our folklore. Instead, an art form must have existed long enough to enable variations to develop. Once something is “in tradition” it no longer exists in a standardized form. Instead local variants can be found.

Folk art is community bound. We all belong to many groups or communities throughout our lifetimes. Ethnic, religious, occupational, and familial are but a few of the communities in which we maintain memberships. To provide continuity in our lives, some communities extend over time and distance thereby creating a traditional culture. The folk arts of a group have been selected and supported by a number of people within the community. A folk art is the product of a series of choices made by individuals which in turn have been accepted by the group. Folk culture therefore represents the sum total of a community’s choices, linking the present to the past.

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