

Cultural *Métissage* – Clothing
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Very few accurate illustrations survive from the 17th and 18th centuries. For example, the illustrations in **Champlain's** books were drawn by a lithographer based on his descriptions and may not be accurate. **Louis Nicolas, S.J.**, drew numerous figures of Native Americans that were based on his missionary work in the Great Lakes during the latter part of the 17th centuries. Therefore, I have used a number of **George Catlin's** 19th century illustrations. George Catlin was an American artist who travelled to the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley during the 1830s. He lived among the Plains' Indians. Although French Canadian and Americans had begun to trade with these tribes, many of these tribes continued to use skins from animals for their clothing and animal parts for their accessories.

Samuel de Champlain's Descriptions of Clothing Worn by Native Americans in New France¹

In Vol. I which covers 1599 – 1607, **Champlain** noted the following regarding the **Algonquin** who visited the French at Tadoussac:²

All these people are well proportioned in body, without any deformity; they are agile, and the women are well shapen, filled out and plump, of a swarthy color on account of the profusion of a certain pigment with which they rub themselves, and which gives them an olive hue. They are **clad in skins**, one part of their bodies is covered, and the other part uncovered. But in **winter they provide for the whole body; for they are clad with good furs, such as the skins of moose, otter, beavers, bears, seals, stags, and deer, which they have in abundance.** In the winter when the snows are heavy they make a kind of racket twice or thrice as big as ours in France, which they fasten to their feet, and so walk on the snow without sinking; for otherwise, they could not hunt nor make their way in many places.

In Vol. III, which covers 1615 – 1618, **Champlain** describes the **Huron**, the **Algonquin**, and the **Montagnais**:³

As to their [**Huron**] clothing they have several kinds and styles, and varieties of wild beasts' skins, both of those they catch and others they exchange for their Indian corn, meal, wampum, and fish nets, with the **Algonquins**, Piserenis [**Nipissing**], and other tribes who are hunters and have no fixed abodes. All their clothes are of the same make, without variety of new designs. They dress and prepare the skins very well, making their **breeches** of a moderately large deer-skin, and of another their **leggings** which reach as high as the waist; with many folds; their **moccasins** are made of the skins on deer, bear, and beaver, of which they use great numbers. Further, they have a **robe** of the same fur, shaped like a cloak, which they wear in the Irish or Egyptian fashion, and sleeves which are tied behind by a cord. That is how they are dressed during the winter. . . When they go into the fields they gird their robe about their body, but when in their village they leave off their sleeves and do not gird themselves. The Milan trimmings to adorn their clothing are made of glue and of scrapings of the said skins, with which they make bands in many ways, as they fancy, in places putting bands of red or brown paint amidst those of the glue which are always pale, and do not lose their markings however dirty they may get. Among these tribes are some more skillful than others in preparing skins and clever in inventing patterns to put on their clothes. Above all our **Montagnais** and **Algonquins** as those that take most trouble with it; for they put on their robes **strips of porcupine-quill** which they dye a very

¹ Samuel de Champlain and H.P. Biggar, editor, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, Vol. I – 1922; Vol. III – 1929; Vol. IV – 1932)

² Champlain, Vol. I, pp. 118-119.

³ Champlain, Vol. III, pp. 131-134.

beautiful scarlet colour; they value these strips very highly and take them off to make them serve for other robes when they wish to make a change.



Champlain's Illustration of Warriors⁴

As to the **women and girls**, they wear it always in the same manner; they are clad like the men except that they always gird up their robes, which hang down to the knee. In this way they differ from the men; they are not ashamed to show their body, that is from the waist up and from mid-thigh down, always keeping the rest covered, and they are laden with **quantities of wampum**, both necklaces and chains, which they allow to hang in front of their robes and attached to their belts, and also with bracelets and ear-rings.



Champlain's Illustrations of Three Female Native Americans⁵

⁴ Samuel Champlain, Early Images of Canada, Illustrations from Rare Books, courtesy of Library and Archives Canada: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/earlyimages/026017-119.01-e.php?&image_id_nbr=20&&PHPSESSID=4ptpib7pl97bkiaopf9c2t5bu7

In Vol. IV, which covers 1608 – 1620, Champlain discussed the Nipissing, the *Chevioux relevés* [Mississauga branch of the Chippewa or Ojibwa] [or High Hairs], and the Huron [contains the same description as that found in Vol. III]:⁶

In describing the **Nipissing**, he stated

. . . the dress of the women is “no way different from that of the Montagnais and Algonquins. . . .

In describing the **Chippewa or Ojibwa**, he stated:

They wear no breeches. . . . The women have their body covered, but the men uncovered, with **nothing on but a fur robe** which they cast about their bodies, made like a cloak, and this they usually lay aside, especially in summer. The women and girls are no more disturbed at seeing them thus than if they were seeing nothing that would seem unusual.

Gabriel Sagard’s Description of the Clothing Worn by the Native Americans in 1623-1624

Gabriel Sagard was a Récollet Friar and missionary to the Huron in 1623-1624. In his book, Sagard described the clothing worn by the Native Americans.⁷

He described the *Nation des Bois*, or Forest Tribe, that was a sub-tribe of the **Ojibwa / Chippewa**:⁸

They wear no covering of their nakedness at all except during the extreme cold and on long journeys, when they are obliged to use coverings of skins. They wear round the neck little collars made of feathers and they have the same ornament in their hair.



Louis Nicolas, S.J.’s Illustration of an Ottawa⁹

⁵ Samuel Champlain, *Early Images of Canada, Illustrations from Rare Books*, courtesy of Library and Archives Canada: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/earlyimages/026017-119.01-e.php?&image_id_nbr=23&&PHPSESSID=4ptpib7p197bkiaopf9c2t5bu7

⁶ Champlain, Vol. IV, pp. 232, 235-236, 280-281, 309-315.

⁷ Gabriel Sagard and H.H. Langton (translator), *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society, 1939).

⁸ Sagard, pp. 64-65.

Sagard described the dress worn by the **Mississauga**, a sub-tribe of the **Ojibwa / Chippewa** as follows:¹⁰
Yet the men do not cover their private parts, but keep them exposed like all the rest of their body without modesty or shame. As for the women they have a small piece of leather almost as large as a table-napkin girded round their loins, which hangs down to mid-thigh, in the same manner as the **Huron** women have it.

Paul Lejeune, S.J.,’s 1634 Description of the Clothing Worn by the Montagnais

In the Jesuit Relations for 1634, **Paul Lejeune, S.J.**, described the clothing worn by the **Montagnais**:¹¹
The headings are not part of the text in the *JR*.

Winter clothing: During the Winter all kinds of garments are appropriate to them, and all are common to both women and men, there being no difference at all in their clothes; anything is good provided that it is warm. They are dressed properly when they are dressed comfortably. Give them a hood, and a man will wear it as well as a woman; for there is no article of dress, however foolish, which they will not wear in all seriousness if it helps to keep them warm.

The **women** have for dress a long shirt, or a hooded cloak, or a greatcoat, or a blanket, or some skins tied in as many places as may be necessary to keep out the wind. A **man** will wear one stocking [legging] of leather, an another of cloth; just now they are cutting up their old coverings or blankets, with which to make sleeves or stockings. . . . to them propriety is convenience; and, as they only clothe themselves according to the exigencies of the weather, as soon as the air becomes warm or when they enter their Cabins, they throw off their garments and the men remain entirely naked, except a strip of cloth [breechcloth] which conceals what cannot be seen without shame. As to the women, they take off their bonnets, sleeves and stockings, the rest of the body remained covered.

These people always go bareheaded, except in the most severe cold, and even then some of them go uncovered, which makes me think that very few of them used hats before their intercourse with our Europeans; nor do they know how to make them, buying them already made, or at least cut, from our French people.

Robes: Their clothes are made of the skin of Elk, Bears, and other animals. The ones that they value the most are made of the skins of a kind of little black animal found in the Huron country; it is about the size of a Rabbit, the skin is soft and shiny, and it takes about sixty of them to make a robe. The tails of the animal are fastened to the bottom, to serve as fringe; and the heads above, to make a sort of border. These robes are nearly square in shape; the **women** paint colored stripes on them from top to bottom, which are about as wide as two thumbs, and are equally distant from each other, giving the effect of a kind of lace-work.

⁹ *Library and Archives Canada*: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/codex/026014-1100-e.html>.

¹⁰ Sagard, p. 66.

¹¹ *JR*, Vol. 7, pp. 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19; Kent, p. 544 – quotes portions of the material from the *JR*.



George Catlin, 1832, *Tsee-moúnt, Great Wonder, Carrying Her Baby in Her Robe*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian: <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4077>

Great Wonder is wearing a painted and trimmed skin dress, a painted skin robe, leggings, and moccasins.

The **men** wear their robes in two ways. When it is a little warm they do not put these around them, but carry them over one arm and under the other; or else stretched across the back, and held in place by two little leather strings which they tie over the chest. This does not prevent them from appearing almost naked. When it is cold they all, men and women, wear the robe under one arm and over the shoulder of the other, then crossed; and thus they wrap themselves up comfortably, though awkwardly, against the cold; for when this garment is tied below the chest, they turn it up, fasten and tie it down near the belt of middle of the body, these folds, these folds forming a big belly or large flap in which they carry their little belongings.

Now as these robes do not cover their arms, **they make themselves sleeves** of the same skin, and draw upon them the stripes of which I have spoken, sometimes lengthwise, sometimes around. These sleeves are quite broad at the top, covering the shoulders and almost uniting at the back, – two little strings fastening them in front and behind . . .

Their **stockings** [*mitasses*] are made of Moose skin, from which the hair has been removed, nature and not art setting the fashion for them; they are considered well made if the feet and legs go into them, no ingenuity being used in making corners; they are made like boots, and are

fastened under the foot with a little string. The seam, which is scarcely more than basted, is not at the back of the leg, but on the inside. When they sew them, they leave an edge of the skin itself, which they cut into **fringe**, occasionally fastening to this a few *matachias* [ornaments made of shell or beads]. These stockings are quite long, especially in front, for they leave a piece which reaches quite high, and covers a great part of the thigh; to the upper edge of this piece are fastened small cords, tied to a leather belt which they all wear next to their skin.

Their **shoes [moccasins]** are not hard like ours, for they do not know enough to tan the leather. Our deerskin gloves are made of skin which is firmer, or at least as firm, as their Moose skins of which they make their shoes. Also they have to wait until these hides are well oiled, otherwise their shoes would shrink at the first approach to the fire, which they do anyhow, well oiled as they are, if they are brought too near the heat. Besides, they absorb water like a sponge, so that the Savages cannot use them in this Element, but they are very serviceable against snow and cold. It is the **women who are the seamstresses and shoemakers**; it costs them nothing to learn this trade, and much less to procure diplomas as master workmen; a child that could sew a little could make the shoes at the first attempt, so ingeniously are they contrived.

They make them large and capacious, especially in the **Winter**. In order to furnish them against the cold, they generally use a Rabbit skin, or a piece of an old blanket, folded two or three times; with this they put some Moose hair; and then, having wrapped their feet in these rags, they put on their shoes, occasionally wearing two pairs, the one over the other. They tie them over the instep with a little string which is wound around the corners of the Shoe.

During the snows we all, French and Savages, have made use of this kind of footgear, in order to walk upon our Snowshoes; when the Winter had passed, we resumed our French shoes, and the Savages went barefooted.

. . . I forgot to say that **those who can have or buy our French shirts wear them in the new fashion**; for, instead of wearing them under, as we do, they put them on over all their clothes, – and, as they never wash them there are in no time greasy as dish-cloths; but that is just as wish them to e, for the water, they say, runs over them and does not penetrate into their clothes.

In 1637, **Jean de Brébeuf, S.J.**, provided the following advice to the missionaries who were assigned to the mission at Huronia:¹²

You must be prompt in embarking and disembarking: and tuck up your gowns so that they will not get wet, and so that you will not carry either water or sand into the canoe. **To be properly dressed, you must have your feet and legs bare: while crossing the rapids, you can wear your shoes, and, in the long portages, even your leggings.**

¹² *JR*, Vol. 12, p. 119.



Seth Eastman's Illustration of Different Types of Moccasins¹³

Practicality of Using Cloth versus Leather for Native-American Clothing

Timothy J. Kent commented on the practicality of woolen breechcloths and leggings, but noted the strength of leather breechcloths.¹⁴

For the **most part, leather breechcloths were replaced during the 1600s by versions fashioned of woolen fabric.** However, both leather and woolen leggings were retained, and were utilized on different occasions by French and native wearers. Compared to leather, **woolen cloth was typically lighter, it dried more quickly, it remained very soft even after having been repeatedly saturated and dried, and it was warm even when wet; yet leather was much more durable under heavily abrasive conditions.** Therefore, each of the two varieties served very well in different situations.

Another practical aspect of leggings and a breechclout was the **great ease with which they could be replaced,** either using cloth or leather, by an individual with virtually no tailoring skills or equipment.

¹³ Henry Schoolcraft and Seth Eastman, illustrator, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Collected and Prepared under the Directions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 185, Parts I-VI), Part III, Plate 7.

¹⁴ Kent, p. 543.



Unknown Artist – Ottawa Indian – LAC, Mikan 2953413

Timothy J. Kent noted that the French supplied Breechcloths or Fabric to the Native Americans as trade items, diplomatic gifts, or as gifts from the Missionaries. Following are a few of the examples he noted.

The 1669 inventory of **Étienne Bauchaud** included “seven small [breech clouts for children] and three breech clouts for women.”¹⁵

In 1674, **Governor Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac**, presented a complete set of French clothing to an Onondaga leader who had met with Frontenac. The official account of the meeting recorded the following: “A **breechcloth of stroud fabric trimmed with gold [braid]** and a **chemise** were given to Niregouentaron for his daughter, for whom he evinces great love.”

The History and Practicality of French Canadians using Native-American Clothing

Timothy J. Kent notes that the use of Native-American clothing by French-Canadian men started when Champlain sent a series of young men to live with the Native Americans and to learn their culture and languages. In addition to showing respect and acceptance of Native ways and cultures,¹⁶

it was also a very practical matter, since these garments had been adapted over many centuries to meet the needs of outdoor life there.

Moccasins, separate leggings with knee garters, and a breechclout . . . were much more practical than shoes, stockings, and a pair of breeches when travelling on foot through the forests or in canoes on the waterways. This set of native garments offered much greater freedom and sureness of movement, while on foot and when entering, traveling in, and exiting

¹⁵ Kent, pp. 546-547.

¹⁶ Kent, p. 541.

canoes. In addition, these separate and light-weight garments could be very easily removed, and stored away as needed. This was particularly important when travelling by canoe. While paddling in shallows or against strong winds, or when ascending very strong currents and rapids, paddles and poles sometimes did not provide sufficient power and control. Then, the travelers had to pull the canoe forward, either by hand while in the water or with a towing line from the shoreline or in the water. If the travelers were wearing moccasins and leggings, these could very easily doffed and kept dry in the craft, while leaving on the breechclout.

In the section on shoes, Kent discussed the use of moccasins by *voyageurs* and residents of the Great Lakes:¹⁷

There, in a region dominated by canoe travel in the unfrozen seasons and **snowshoe** travel in winter, **moccasins** were the most common type of footwear. The usefulness of these articles for travelling by canoe was discussed earlier, in relation to wearing leggings and a breechclout. In winter, they allowed the foot to flex more than in shoes, creating better circulation and thus greater warmth; in addition, this flexing of the feet provided greater control of snowshoes while travelling. In all seasons, moccasins provided surer footing and a quieter gait than shoes, and they were easily dried at a fire. Since moccasins could be readily and cheaply fashioned and repaired by nearly anyone, they were very practical articles which did not require the services of a cobbler, for either repairs or production. However, it must be noted that shoes were also worn in a great many instances in the interior, particularly by soldiers and priests.

Kent noted that in 1660 and 1661, wool breechclouts were listed in the inventories of men who died in Montréal.¹⁸



George Catlin, 1835, *Ah-móu-a, The Whale, One of Kee-o-kúk's Principal Braves*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian: <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4452>
The Whale is wearing a breech clout, leggings, garters, and moccasins

¹⁷ Kent, pp. 602, 606.

¹⁸ Kent, p. 544.

Jacques Marquette, S.J.'s, 1673 Description of the Clothing Worn by Native Americans Living on the Mississippi River

In 1673, when the **Marquette – Jolliet party** visited the Native Villages, Jacques Marquette, S.J., described dress. The headings are not part of the original text.¹⁹

Peoria:²⁰ The captains [chiefs] are distinguished from the warriors by wearing red scarfs. These are made, with considerable skill, from the hair of bears and wild cattle.

Their garments consist only of skins; the women are always clad very modestly and very becomingly, while the men do not take that trouble to cover themselves.

Tuscarora or Cherokee:²¹ The women wear head-dresses and garments like those of the Huron women. . . They assured us that they bought cloth and all other goods from the Europeans. . . .

Michigamea:²² The men go naked The women are clad in wretched skins

Illinois: Marquette noted that they were “**clad in cloth, for I judged thereby that they were our allies.**”²³

When **Louis Hennepin** was in North America between 1675 and 1681, he described the **breechcloths** used by the Native Americans:²⁴

The Savages of *North America* on the North side, according to the report of their antient [sic] Men, have always gone cover'd, even before they had any Commerce with the Europeans: The Mend and Women cloth'd themselves with dress'd Skins; they are now cloth'd after the same manner, but **those that have any Commerce with the Europeans have commonly a shirt, a great Coat**, such as the Mariners watch in at Sea, with a Cowl to it, and a **Piece of Cloth made fast before and behind, with a Girdle** which comes down to their Knees; besides they have Stockings without Feet, and Shoes made of dress'd Skins.

. . . when they are in their Cabins, they often go quite naked, having nothing but a Piece of Cloth [**breech cloth**], which they gird about them in Winter; 'tis fasten'd about their Loins, and hangs down between their Thighs as low as their Knees.

The Northern **Women** are clothed like the Men, except that they wear a **piece of Stuff made like a Petticoat, which reaches down almost to their Knees.** . . .

¹⁹ Jacques Marquette, S.J., quoted in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), pp. 244, 252, 253, 255.

²⁰ The Peoria were part of the Illinois Confederacy.

²¹ Although Marquette and Jolliet were in the area occupied by the Chickasaw, Kellogg noted that because Marquette was able to speak to them in Huron that the Indians he encountered were probably Tuscarora or Cherokee because both tribes were of Iroquoian origin.

²² The Michigamea were part of the Illinois Confederacy, but in 1673, they were at war with them.

²³ Jacques Marquette, S.J., quoted in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), pp. 239, 244.

²⁴ Father Louis Hennepin and Reuben Gold Thwaites, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & CO., 1903), Vol. 2, p. 492.

Examples of *voyageurs* wearing Native clothing – 1680s

In 1680, when a *voyageur* departed from his assigned post without permission, he left behind two sets of leggings [*mitasses*], a woolen pair, and a leather pair.²⁵



Leggings or *mitasses*, Courtesy of *La Milice de Fort St-Frederic*:
http://www.firstulstermilitia.org/milice/Pages/5_0_clothing.html

In 1682, **Tonty** noted that *voyageurs* “easily adopt native fashions. **They run the woods with leggings and moccasins and instead of breeches they only wear a breechclout.**”²⁶



Breechclout or brayet, Courtesy of *La Milice de Fort St-Frederic*:
http://www.firstulstermilitia.org/milice/Pages/5_0_clothing.html

French-Manufactured Clothing items supplied to Native Americans during a 1683 Military Campaign

On 4 November 1683, **Olivier Morel, sieur de LaDurantaye**, submitted his expenses for items given to the Native Americans following the Iroquois’ kidnapping and plundering of French Traders. Following are the clothing items and other manufactured items that were given to Native Americans:²⁷

On 5 August 1683, LaDurantaye gave three *justacorps* (a waistcoat worn by the French), three shirts, and three pairs of stockings to Potawatomi chiefs.

On 26 August 1683, LaDurantaye gave eight shirts to Potawatomi who guided him to the Fox (Outagamie) Village.

On 26 August 1683, LaDurantaye gave the following items to the Fox to keep them in their villages: one gun, a *justacorps*, a shirt, a pair of stockings, and two Iroquois blankets.

²⁵ Kent, p. 543.

²⁶ Kent, p. 543.

²⁷ Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner (editors), *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, The French Foundations 1680-1693 (Volume 23 of the series)* (Springfield, Illinois: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), hereafter *ILHC*, Vol. 23, pp. 60-67.

In August 1683, LaDurantaye gave the Kickapoo the following items to keep them in their village: one gun, a *justacorps*, a shirt, a pair of stockings, and two Iroquois blankets.

In September or October 1683, LaDurantaye have three Sokoki or Abenaki guides who led him to the Illinois country a blanket, a *capot*, powder, and lead. He also paid for the repair of a gun, and for food for the guides.

On 5 October 1683, LaDurantaye gave another Sokoki guide bullets, powder, and a blanket.

Marie Madeleine Morisseau's August 1688 Trade Goods Purchased for her son's voyage to the Illinois

In August 1688, Marguerite Madeline Morisseau, widow of François Pelletier *dit* Antaya, purchased the following clothing related items for the voyage that her sons and *engagés* were going to make to the Illinois:²⁸

Clothing items and blankets category

10 pairs of stockings from Poitou, at 3 *l.* 10 *s.* per pair

12 pairs of trade stockings, at 45 *s.* per pair

7 trade shirts, at 3 *l.* apiece

6 shirts made of Meslis linen [hempen sailcloth], at 3 *l.* apiece

4 camisoles [rather tight-fitting overshirts or sleeping shirts with long sleeves], at 50 *s.* apiece

10 blue hooded coats at 8 *l.* 10 *s.* apiece

3 hooded coats, at 3 *l.* apiece

5 large lined dress coats, at 15 *l.* apiece

1 large dress coat, for 10 *l.*

1 dress coat, for 3 *l.*

9 pairs of sleeves, at 50 *s.* per pair

2 large blankets, at 16 *l.* apiece

2 blankets, at 10 *l.* apiece

3 blankets, from Normandy, at 8 *l.* apiece

[No mention of shoes, breeches, waistcoats, kerchiefs, caps, hats, gloves, or mittens]

Bulk fabrics category

15 yards of woolen stroud fabric, at 9 *l.* 10 *s.* per yard

1 ¼ yards of red woken limbourg fabric, 7 *l.* 10 *s.* per yard

19 ½ yards of woolen serge fabric for making hooded coats, at 4 *l.* 5 *s.* per yard

18 ½ yards of red [woolen] fabric for making hooded coats, at 4 *l.* 5 *s.* per yard

1 ½ yards of woolen Iroquoise fabric, at 4 *l.* per yard

10 yards of linen fabric, at 35 *s.* per yard

5 yards of linen fabric from the shop of *Monsieur* Arnaud, at 28 *s.* per yard

10 yards of linen fabric from the shop on *Monsieur* Arnaud, at 22 *s.* per yard

[Used by native customers to produce their own moccasin liners, leggings, knee garters, breechclouts, belts, sleeves, mantles, hoods, mittens, scarves, and turbans. No mention of silk or cotton fabrics, ribbons, binding tapes, or gartering material]

²⁸ Kent, *Phantoms of the French Fur Trade*, pp. 938-942 – reprinted with his permission; Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner (editors), *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, The French Foundations 1680-1693 (Volume 23 of the series)* (Springfield, Illinois: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), hereafter *ILHC*, Vol. 23, pp. 162-176 – the goods are not categorized.

Sewing and leather-working category

30 awls, at 10 *s.* per dozen

200 needles, at 16 *s.* per hundred

8 pounds of sewing thread, at 3 *l.* per pound

[No mention of straight pins, thimbles, scissors, or hide scrapers]

Ornaments category

5 pounds of glass beads, at 2 *l.* per pound

[No mention of copper, brass, or iron wire, or bells. Native metalworkers fashioned finger rings, wrist bands, arm bands, ear bobs, nose rings, gorgets, pendants, head bands, hair pipes, tubular beads, and tinkling cones from copper and brass salvaged from pots and kettles]

Cadillac - *Voyageurs* and Native Clothing

Between 1694-1696, when **Antoine de Lamothe, *sieur de Cadillac***, was commandant of the French at Michilimackinac, he commented on the use of a breechclout by *voyageurs*:²⁹

There are many rapids on the way. . . The Canadians . . . are generally bare-footed and bare-legged, **wearing only their shirts [and breechclouts]**; when their canoes cannot make headway against the rapids, they boldly jump into the water and by sheer strength, all helping one another, they manage to get them along, but not without frequently skinning their feet and legs, for the rocks are so cold that their skin sticks to them and the men do not get free without leaving a piece behind them. If this happened only once a day it would be a small matter; but, on the contrary, it happens constantly throughout their entire voyage.

As noted in **Suzanne Boivin Sommerville's** translation of the May 1701 engagement contract to Détroit: **“It will be permitted for them to take the skins of the animals they kill to make Indian shoes only for their own use.”**³⁰

Antoine Denis Raudot's 1709 Description of Native Clothing and Ornaments

Antoine Denis Raudot was co-Intendant of New France, serving with Jacques Raudot, his father. While he was in New France, he wrote a series of letters about the Native Americans. According to his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, his letters were probably based on memoirs of Louis Laporte, *sieur de Louvigny*, and Charles de Liette. Raudot would have also gained information from missionaries, military officers, and others who travelled to the Great Lakes. There is no evidence that he ever visited the Great Lakes.

Following is Raudot's 1709 letter (#24) which describes Native Clothing:³¹

The **men** are almost always nude and show their bodies exposed; the only clothing is a blanket of dressed furred skin of beaver or of some other animal with which they envelop themselves, a breech cloth, leggings [*mitasses*], which are two pieces of leather with which they cover the lower legs and a part of the thighs, and moccasins. Nudity makes no impression among these people.

The ordinary costumes of the **women** are two skins of moose, or deer, attached together at the shoulders and with an opening at the sides down to the armpits, and from there they are sewed to

²⁹ Kent, p. 541, quoting Cadillac.

³⁰ http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian_resources/the_fur_trade

³¹ W. Vernon Kinitz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes 1615-1760* (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1972), translation of Letter 24, pp. 343-344.

the knees, they are double from the belt to this place, painted very neatly with black, red, and yellow, and ornamented with porcupine quills, claws of eagles and hawks, moose feet, and small pieces of copper. Some among them, as well as the men, wear a sort of skin shirt; **they prefer both our shirts of Lyon linen and our materials and covers to those of skin, so much so that they are almost all dressed with these when they have the means to be.**

Following is Raudot's 1709 letter (#29) which describes **ornaments**:³²

They [the young men] grease their hair and also apply some red with the down of swans on top. They pierce the **nose** and hang from it a glass bead or a drop of blue stone, which extends over the mouth.

Their **ears** are all slashed. They insert in them thongs of swan skin, which make two big white tufts, and hang wire and porcelain in them. This porcelain [wampum] is made of shells found on the seashore near Virginia, and it is the thing that is most esteemed, and sought after by all the savages. There are shells of two colors, the white is the more common and the black more rare and more esteemed. The savages who live in the country where it is found work it into small pieces, which they pierce and make round. They hang single shells in the ears or even several of white and black together. They make **necklaces** of shells, which they carry around their necks, and **bracelets**, which they put on their wrists. It is considered a great ornament by them to wear large shells hung over their stomachs.



George Catlin, 1832, *Shó-me-kós-see, The Wolf, a Chief*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian:
<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4471>
The Wolf is wearing earrings and necklaces made of wampum shells

³² Kinietz, pp. 350-351.

The **young girls and the young women**, as well as the **young men**, like to adorn themselves. They pain themselves like the young men, but they use only red and blue; they use much porcelain.

. . . . The **women** work at painting their dresses and at sewing, which they do with the sinews of moose or with nettle thread spun on their thighs very delicately.

**French-Manufactured Clothing Supplied to Native Americans during the 1712 Fox Attack on
Déroit**

On 14 October 1712, **Charles Renaud, Sieur Dubuisson**, submitted expenses for the following clothing items that were given to New France’s Allies who helped fight the Fox during the attack on Fort Pontchartrain:³³

Eight coverlets that were given to cover certain important Native Americans who were killed during the siege

Eight *mitasses* [leggings] to “cover” the dead

Eight shirts to “cover” the dead

10 September 1715 – Jean Alexis Lemoine dit Monière’s Ledger entries:³⁴

Jean Alexis Lemoine dit Monière’s Ledger Entries for merchandise sent to **Jean Louis Bourgerly** in Detroit under a 26 June 1715 power of attorney which Bourgerly granted to Gédéon de Catalogne.

Timothy J. Kent notes that he rearranged the order of the entries in the ledger.

September 10, 1715

Debit: *Sieur* Jean Louis Bourgerly for merchandise sent to him following his power of attorney to *Monsieur* Décatalogne, dated June 26, 1715:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| | <i>livres</i> |
| 17 ½ yds. blue fabric and 17 ½ yards red fabric @ 16.1 <i>l.</i> [<i>livres</i>]..... | 360.00 |
| 8 yds. white revesche fabric and 8 yds. blue revesche fabric @ 9 <i>l.</i> | 144.00 |
| 3 yds, fabric from Mazamet @ 8 <i>l.</i> | 24.00 |
| 1 piece binding tape or gartering..... | 5.00 |
| 100 needles..... | 1.50 |
| 1 lb. thread from Poitou | 6.00 |
| 12 shirts for men @ 6 <i>l.</i> | 72.00 |
| 12 chemises for women @ 5 <i>l.</i> | 60.00 |
| 6 shirts for boys @ 4 <i>l.</i> | 24.00 |
| 6 shirts, medium size @ 3 <i>l.</i> | 18.00 |
| 3 hooded coats for men @ 29.5 <i>l.</i> | 88.50 |
| 3 hooded coats for women @ 25.5 <i>l.</i> | 76.50 |
| 4 2-point blankets @ 18 <i>l.</i> | 72.00 |

**Jacques Charles de Sabrevois 1718 Memoir on the Savages of Canada
as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade**

³³ *MPHSC*, Vol. 33, p. 568

³⁴ Kent, *Detroit*, Appendix 20, pp. 1059-1060. Reprinted with his permission.

In 1718, **Jacques Charles de Sabrevois** described the clothing worn by the Native Americans living in the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley. Some of the tribes had adapted the use of French-Manufactured clothing items; others continued to use skins for their clothing.³⁵

The Senontouans [**Seneca**] are of service to the French, and thus earn Money – that is to say, they transport the effects of the French who go into the upper country; some do this for *mitasses*, others for shirts, others for powder and shot

The poutouatamis [**Potawatomi**] . . . This nation is well clothed, like our savage residents of Montreal. . . . They use many buffalo-Robes, highly ornamented, to cover themselves in winter; and in summer they wear Red or blue cloth. When they Play [lacrosse], they are entirely naked; they have only a breach-clout, and Shoes of deer-skin. Their bodies are painted all over with all Kinds of colors. There are some who paint their bodies with white clay, applying it to resemble silver lace sewed on all the seams of a coat; and, at a distance, one would take it for silver lace. . . . The French frequently take part in those games. . . . The women . . . put on white chemises



George Catlin, *We-chúsh-ta-dóo-ta, Red Man, a Distinguished Ball Player*, courtesy of the Smithsonian: <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4332>

The **hurons** . . . many of them wear jerkins and cloaks.

The Renards [**Fox / Mesquakie**] . . . men wear scarcely any garments made of cloth, and the majority wear no waist-cloths. As for the women, also the girls, they all wear them. They are made of deer-skins, black or brown, and are adorned around the edge, in some cases, with little bells, and in others with ornaments of iron or copper or tin; over these are also worn blankets.

³⁵ Jacques Charles Sabrevois and Reuben Gold Thwaites (editor), “Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade” *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1902), Vol. XVI (16), pp. 363-376

The jlinois [**Illinois**] . . . They Are all dressed in deer-skin, or in Robes of buffalo, wild-cat, wolf, pole-cat, beaver, or otter skins. . . These Nations fasten exceedingly well everything that they make – garters, Belts, and cords for powder-horns. They make these to perfection and with great ingenuity, and work figures on them. Their women . . . spin the Wool of the buffalo, and make with it all these articles.

The **miamis** . . . These people dress is deer-skins. . . The women are well covered, but the men wear very little covering, and have their bodies tattooed all over.



George Catlin, *Seet-sé-be-a, Midday Sun, a Pretty Girl*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian:
<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4274>

The ouyatanons [**Wea**; a subtribe of the Miami] . . . The women cover themselves, but The men wear very few clothes.

Jean François Lafitau, S.J.,’s 1722 Description of Native Clothing

In 1722, **Jean François Lafitau, S.J.**, described the clothing worn by Native Americans:³⁶

The women are more modestly covered. Those of the **Algonquin** tribe wear a stole of sleeveless robe, knotted on the shoulders and hanging to the middle of their legs, like those which one sees on the shoulders of Egyptian women. The **Iroquois** and **Huron** women . . . have only a sort of skirt girded over their thighs and ending above the knee. They do not hang any lower so as not to be hindered when they work on the land.

³⁶ Lafitau, Vol. 2, pp. 28-30.

The tunic is a sort of **sleeveless shirt** made of two deerskins, thin and light, with most of the hair taken off and fringed on the bottom and on the shoulders in exactly the same way as the Roman cuirasses. This shirt which is **peculiar to the Iroquois and Huron** tribes is the garment which seems least necessary to them of all their clothing and many of them, especially the men, go essentially without it daily.

While they are travelling and during the rigours of the winter, they have extra **sleeves** which are not attached to their clothing or shirt but are not attached to their clothing or shirt buy are knotted together by two thongs which pass back of the shoulders.

The **robe** is a kind of covering, cut in a square a fathom long one way, by a fathom and a half the other. The hair is left on some of them. Others are made of whole moose skins, or whole deer or doe or bison skins. Others are made of pieces of beaver or black squirrel skins sewn together. These robes are fringed above and below by pieces cut out of the same skin . . . The **fringe** at the neck is very short, a little longer toward the feet. The tails of black squirrels are tied to the lower edge of robes made of these animals. These tails or fringes give the same effect as those on the canons' amices.

The Indians wrap themselves in these robes which they wear negligently. They adjust them only with their hands and do not fasten them except on their travels. Then, being laden, with their bundles, **they fasten them around the middle of their bodies with belts** so as not to be hampered by them. In bad weather, they put them over their heads

The **breech clout** is the only necessary piece of clothing and the only one which they never take off. They easily slip off all the others, without fear of offending modesty, when they are in their cabins or, when they are hampered by them.

This breech clout which the Iroquois call *gaccaré* is, for the men, a skin one foot wide and three or four feet long. They put it between the thighs and fold it into a little piece of gut which girds them on the buttocks from which it falls in front and in the back to the length of a foot or thereabout.



George Catlin, 1834, *Shin-ga-wás-sa, Handsome Bird*, courtesy of the Smithsonian:
<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4084>

The **stockings, or leggings** [*mitasses*], as the French call them, are made from a skin folded [in half] and sewn, and tailored to fit the leg, to which there is left, on the outside, a **fringe** or border four fingers wide. The **women** wear them on their legs up to their knees and fasten them with **garters** prettily fashioned of moose hair [embroidery] or porcupine quills. The **men** wear them up to their mid thighs, and tie them at the waist to the belt which holds their breech cloth.

These **leggings** [*mitasses*] have no feet and are **tucked into moccasins** of a single skin with no heel and no strong leather sole. It is puckered over the toes of the foot, where it is sewn with cords of gut into a little leather tongue. Then it is taken up with ties of the same skin, passed through holes cut at regular intervals and tied above the heel after being crossed on the instep of the foot. **Some of them wear these shoes up to the middle of their legs to protect them from the snow.**

At present, most of the Indians who are in contact with the Europeans have changed only the material of their clothing, keeping their former style of dressing. They wear linen shirts instead of cloth tunics, breech clouts and leggings [*mitasses*]. In place of their fur robes, they use blankets of wool, doghair, or fine blue and red cloth. Some of them also wear a sort of French doublet called, by the Canadians, *capote*, but, as I have already said, before the arrival of the Europeans all their clothing was of leather. Woolens and lines were entirely unknown to them and are not yet in use among the distant tribes which cannot easily enjoy trade with us.



George Catlin, *North American Indians No 1*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian:

<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4293>

Note: this lithograph is a composite of three individual portraits

In August 1725, an inventory was taken of the possessions of **Marie Rouensa**, an Illinois, who married two French Canadians, Michel Acau, and Michel Étienne *dit* Philippe. Included in the inventory were the following fabric items:³⁷

- Three and three-quarters ells of green serge
- Two ells of red fabric for leggings
- Five ells of white serge
- Fourteen and a half ells of cloth

Kent notes that in 1735, the **Missionary at Kahnawake** described the heavily decorated **leggings** worn by the male **Native Americans**:³⁸

Their *mitasse*, that is their leggings, are adorned with ribbons and a variety of flowers embroidered with moose hair, dyed red or yellow. They are made to fit closely, the better to show of the elaborate finish of the work.



George Catlin, 1835, *Kee-o-kúk, The Watchful Fox, Chief of the Tribe*, courtesy of the Smithsonian:
<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4189>

June 1732 – Trade Invoice for Antoine Cuillerier³⁹

Timothy J. Kent noted that in 1729 **Antoine Cuillerier** wrote to his wife **Angelique Girard**. He urged his wife to visit him in Detroit, or instead to send via a friend of theirs certain articles which he needed as supplemental trade goods. The items he specifically requested included the following:

³⁷ Carl J. Ekberg and Anton J. Pregaldin, “Marie Rouensa-8cate8a and the Foundations of French Illinois.” *Illinois Historical Journal*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 146-160.

³⁸ Kent, p. 545.

³⁹ Kent, *Detroit*, Appendices 24 and 26, pp. 1067, 1069-1071.

woolen fabric from Mazamet
 woolen fabrics, but no capote fabric
 trade linen in large quantities
 cotton fabric
 stockings
 white blankets

Kent notes that **Jean Alexis Lemoine dit Monière** supplied **Antoine Cuillerier** with the items listed below. On 13 September 1734 he also supplied Antoine Cuillerier with 1,273.75 *livres* worth of merchandise for another voyage that Cuillerier made to Detroit.

June 9, 1732

| | <i>livres</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| | |
| 2 pieces of melton fabric containing together 63 yds. @ 4.25 l..... | 267.75 |
| 32 yds. violet melton fabric @ 4.25 l..... | 136.00 |
| 2 pieces of violet fabric from Dorgne containing together 52 ¾ yds. @ 3 l..... | 158.25 |
| 5 ½ yds. Cadis fabric @ 5 l..... | 27.50 |
| 2 yds. flannel @ 3.5 l..... | 7.00 |
| 2 pieces blue woolen fabric containing together 63 yds. @ 9 l..... | 324.00 |
| 20 yds. linen from Morlaix @ 2 l..... | 40.00 |
| 23 ½ yds. from Lyon in 2 ft. 7 in. width @ 1.5 l..... | 35.25 |
| 8 yds. brin [hempen] linen @ 1.75 l..... | 14.00 |
| 21 ½ yds. cotton fabric in 4 ft. 10 in. width @ 4.5 l..... | 95.63 |
| 1 1/3 yds. cotton fabric in 4 ft. 10 in. width @ 5.1..... | 6.67 |
| 1 piece binding tape or gartering [with 1 lb. of pepper]..... | 17.50 |
| 1 piece of silk braid @ 10 l..... | 10.00 |
| 1 mark [weight] of false silver braid @ 9 l. per mark..... | 9.00 |
| ½ mark [weight] of fine narrow false silver braid @ 9 l. per mark..... | 4.50 |
| 500 large needles @ 1.25 per hundred..... | 6.25 |
| 2 dozen large packing needles @ 4 l..... | 8.00 |
| 2 lbs. thread from Poitou @ 3 l..... | 6.00 |
| 1 lb. thread from Rennes..... | 4.00 |
| 24 chemises for women @ 3.25 l..... | 78.00 |
| 12 shirts for the first age @ 1.5 l..... | 18.00 |
| 4 hooded coats of 3 ½ yd. size @ 12.5 l..... | 50.00 |
| 3 hooded coats of 3 yd. size @ 10.5 l..... | 31.50 |
| 4 hooded coats of 1 yds. size @ 3.75 l..... | 15.00 |
| 4 pairs of pump-style shoes @ 4.5 l..... | 18.00 |
| 40 2-point blankets @ 8.5 l..... | 340.00 |
| 10 cradle blankets @ 5 l..... | 50.00 |

**Clothing, Skins, or Furs that were supplied by the
 Residents of Detroit to / or for the benefit of Native Americans during the
 Period from 1739 – 1750 – *Métissage***

From 1738 to 1750, residents of Détroit were asked to supply goods or services “for the benefit of the King” to the Native American Allies who participated in military campaigns against the Chickasaw as well as for other purposes. See the Military Page on the FCHSM website for a timeline for this period as

well as a list of all of the residents who supplied good or services during this period:
http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian_resources/military.

The following list is limited to those who provided clothing, skins, or furs to the Native Americans. In addition to the name, dates, and items provided, the list also includes the Mikan # that can be used at the Library and Archives Canada website [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch_adv] to retrieve a copy of the request for reimbursement for these items.

Jean Baptiste Bénard dit Carignan

- 16 August 1747 – Carignan supplied 32 pounds of dry beaver to purchase porcelain for La Cigne, war chief of the Miami, for a conference in Détroit – Mikan # 3074851
- 29 October 1747 – *Sieur* Carignan supplied deer skins to the Shawnee who passed through Détroit and paid an Onondaga who was going to Niagara with furs – Mikan # 3074874

Joseph Bénard dit Carignan

- 4 August 1739 – Joseph Carignan’s contributions included 202 pounds of deerskins for the voyage the Shawnee made the previous winter, 88 cats skins worth 22 beavers that was paid to an Onondaga who was sent to Niagara the previous winter, and 25 ells of canvas that was used to make the flag for the fort – Mikan # 3074874

Louis Bienvenu dit Delisle

- 2 September 1750 – Louis Bienvenu *dit* Delisle supplied deerskins to Louis Coulon de Villiers who was going to Fort Miami – Mikan # 3075281

Jean Louis Campeau

- 31 July 1745 – Louis Campeau supplied 52 pounds of tobacco, one pound of vermillion, and one woman’s shirt – Mikan # 3074675

François Chevalier

- 26 July 1745 – François Chevalier supplied one two-point blanket and one pound of vermillion – Mikan # 3069394

Zacharie Cicot/Sicot

- 7 August 1744 – Zacharie Cicot supplied two two-point blankets – Mikan # 3069306

Charles Courtois

- 6 July 1750 – Charles Courtois’ contributions included 20 pairs of moccasins, grease, four pounds of deer meat, and 68 bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3075244

Antoine Cuillerier

- 2 October 1747 – *Sieur* Cuillerier as *commis* for the deceased Jacques Charly supplied the following for the Miami – two canoes, 30 *livres* pay for an interpreter, 50 pounds of tobacco, *eau-de-vie*, one pair of *mitasses* [leggings] for a chief, one two-point blanket, and a shirt – Mikan # 3074592

Douaire dit Bondy

- 28 July 1747 – Bondy’s contributions included eight white blankets, 80 pounds of tobacco, eight pounds of vermillion, 43 pots of *eau de vie*, one musket, 70 pounds of grease, molton fabric, ten men’s shirts, six women’s shirts, 200 pounds of flour, 24 pounds of flour for the Miami who were in Détroit – Mikan # 3074872

Jean Baptiste Douaire dit Bondy

- 7 August 1744 – Jean Baptiste Douaire *dit* Bondy supplied three trade shirts, three pairs of *mitasses* [leggings], and fabric – Mikan # 3074669

Laurent Eustache Gamelin

- 25 July 1747 – Eustache Gamelin’s contribution included fabric, one pound of powder, one bull, two pairs of *mitasses* [leggings], two men’s shirts, one pound of vermilion, and two bushels of wheat – Mikan # 3074595
- 26 August 1750 – Eustache Gamelin’s contributions included 60 pounds of grease, 30 bushels of Indian corn, two calumets, one pair of culottes, one cotton shirts, and six pairs of moccasins – Mikan # 3075260

Jacques Godé / Gaudet

- 7 August 1744 – Jacques Godé’s contributions included 100 pounds of tobacco, four pounds of vermilion, 12 white blankets, 14 trade shirts, and 1,500 grains of porcelain – Mikan # 3069305

Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont

- 10 June 1748 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont’s contributions included, tobacco, powder, *capots*, shirts, fabric, vermilion, powder, lead, porcelain, blankets, and hatchets – Mikan # 3074858

Claude Gouin – Claude Gouin was a merchant

- 1739 – Claude Gouin’s contributions included Indian corn, powder, tobacco, Siamese knives, blankets, *mitasses*, and grease that was given to the Huron, Iroquois, Ottawa, and Potawatomi who were going to war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068762

Pierre Jorian

- 25 July 1745 – The contributions of Pierre Jorian and Company included a two-point blanket, three pounds of tobacco, three pounds of vermilion, a toile shirt, and 50 pounds of powder – Mikan # 3069391 – Pierre Jorian and Company

Jacques Lacelle / Laselle

- 7 August 1744 – Jacques Lacelle / Laselle supplied 33 pounds of tobacco and a two point blanket – Mikan # 3074676

Marsac, fils

- 26 July 1745 Marsac, *fils*, provided a pair of bulls that were used for a feast, four pounds of vermilion, three pairs of *mitasses* [leggings], six men’s trade shirts, 500 grains of porcelain, 50 pounds of bread, 25 pounds of lard, a half bushel of peas, and three bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3069395

Porlier de la Grossardière

- 26 July 1745 – Porlier de la Grossardière furnished six blankets, three pairs of *mitasses* [leggings], three pounds of vermilion, 101 pounds of tobacco, six hatchets, and six travelling cases – Mikan # 3069393

Marie Anne Sauvage

- 12 June 1749 – Marie Anne Sauvage (*Madame Barrois*) made a number of clothing items for specific Indians, including *capotes*, *mitasses* [leggings], shirts, and pouches – Mikan # 3075033

Pierre Vallée

- 24 July 1745 – Pierre Vallée’s contributions included *eau-de-vie*, powder, balls, tobacco, porcelain, vermillion, trade shirts and a blanket – Mikan # 3069383

Clothing that Appears in the Huron Mission Records

The following clothing items that French Canadians adopted from the Native Americans appear in the Huron Mission Records in the *JR*:⁴⁰

In 1741, **Prisque** agreed to serve the mission for an additional year. Part of his payment included one pair of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 69, p. 245].

In 1744, the Mission paid *Madame* Goyau [**Marie Anne Daragon**] three pairs of *mitasses* [leggings] as partial payment of her wages for acting as a laundress and baker for the Mission [*JR*, Vol. 69, p. 257].

In January 1745, the Mission paid **Lespérance** two pairs of *mitasses* [leggings] as partial payment of his wages [*JR*, Vol. 69, p. 259].

In 1745, the Mission gave **Gambille’s wife** a number of items to sell for the Mission. Eight pairs of *mitasses* [leggings] were included in the group of items that she agreed to sell for the Mission [*JR*, Vol. 69, p. 263].

In February 1748, the mission gave [**Nicolas dit**] **Niagara Campeau** a pair of *mitasses* and Charlot [Casse dit] St. Aubin a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] as partial payment of their wages [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 23].

In 1747, the Mission sold *Monsieur* [**Antoine**] **Cuillierier** a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 23].

In 1749, **Barthe** owed the Mission three pairs of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 41].

In 1749, the Mission owed **Gambille’s wife** four *livres* for deerskins to make shoes for Régis [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 43].

In 1749, the Mission lent **Niagara** [**Campeau**] a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 45].

In 1750, the Mission owed a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] to *Monsieur* [**Dagneau dit Dequindre dit**] **Lamothe** for tallow that Lamothe sold to the mission [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 47].

In 1750, **Madame St-Martin** made trade shirts for the Mission [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 51].

In 1750, the Mission gave an ell of white molleton to **Rapin** to make a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 57].

In 1751, the Mission lent **Niagara** [**Campeau**] a pair of *mitasses* [leggings] [*JR*, Vol. 70, p. 59].

Peter Kalm’s Description of French Clothing worn by the Indians

In 1749, Peter Kalm described how the **Indians of Lorette dressed**:⁴¹

⁴⁰ *JR*, Vol. 69 and *JR*, Vol. 70.

The Indians dress chiefly like the other adjacent Indian nations; the men, however, like to wear waistcoats, or jackets like the French. The women keep exactly to the Indian dress.

Peter Kalm's description of the **Huron** who had come to visit the Governor:⁴²

They wear a shirt which is either white or blue striped and a shaggy piece of cloth, which is either blue or white, with a blue or red stripe below. This they always carry over their shoulders, or let it hang down, in which case they wrap it around their middle. Round their neck they have a string of violet wampum, with some white wampum between them. These wampum are small, of the figure of oblong pearls, and made of the shells which the English call clams. . . . At the end of the wampum strings, many of the Indians wear a large French silver coin with the king's effigy on their breasts. Others have a large shell on the breast, of a fine white color, which they value very highly; others again have no ornament at all around the neck. They all have their breasts uncovered. In front hangs their tobacco pouch made of skin of an animal with the hairy side turned outwards. Their shoes are made of skins, and bear a great resemblance to the heel-less shoes which the women in Finland use. Instead of stockings they wrap the legs in pieces of blue cloth, as I have seen the Russian peasants do.

Peter Kalm's 1749 description of cultural *métissage* as manifested in clothing:⁴³

Indians. A great number of the natives, i.e. the confederates of the French, had already begun to dress like the French: the same kind of jacket and vest, while on journeys that wore the same red cap or hat. But one could not persuade them to use trousers, for they thought that these were a great hindrance in walking. The women were not so quick to give up the customs of their forefathers and clothe themselves according to the new styles, but stuck to the old fashions in everything. But wait! Some had . . . caps of homespun or of coarse blue broad-cloth. When the French are travelling about in this country, they are generally dressed like the natives; they wear then no trousers, but do not carry Indian weapons.

The natives are tremendously rugged. I saw them going about these days with only a shirt on and a weapon hanging over it, often without shoes [moccasins], though they has on their . . . or stockings. The men wear no trousers, the women a short, thin skirt; neither of the sexes had anything on their heads. Thus they travelled at this time through the forests on their hunting trips, both in good and bad weather. They lay in this manner during cold and rainy nights in the damp and wet forests without having any other clothes to put under or on top of themselves at night than those they wore during the day. Consequently they carried their beds with them whenever they went. When they came to Montréal to but anything and when they left, the women had to carry heavy loads on their backs, but the men went as gentlemen without carrying anything except their guns, their pipes, and their tobacco pouches.

Three native women also came in their canoe and took shelter for the night near us. They had no man with them, yet each of them had a gun, for they had set out to shoot ducks. One was married, the other two were said to be single. They were Abenakis Indians. The native who accompanied us during the whole journey was an Iroquois Indian. It is singular that an Abenakis and an Iroquois rarely take lodgings together, yet they now and then intermarry. The women who had come thither had their funnel-shaped caps, trimmed on the outside with white glass beads. They also had on the French women's waists and jackets which I had never seen natives wearing.

⁴¹ Peter Kalm and Adolph B. Benson, editor and translator, *The America of 1750 – Peter Kalm's Travels in North America – the English Version of 1770* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., unknown date, two volumes), p. 462.

⁴² Peter Kalm, pp. 471-472.

⁴³ Peter Kalm, pp. 560-561, 563.

The French called the linden “bois blanc” (white wood). The Indian women used its bark in place of hemp for laces with which they sew up their shoes. They were busy during the evening sewing up their footwear with this material and I could have sworn it was a fine hemp cord they used. They take the bark, boil it in water for a long time, pound it with a wooden club until it becomes soft, fibrous and like swingled hemp. They sat twisting them on their thighs.

Peter Kalm’s Description of the French-Manufactured Items the Indians Used for Clothing or Accessories

In 1749, Peter Kalm described the French-manufactured items that the Indians used for clothing or accessories:⁴⁴

Indian Trade. The French in Canada carry on a great trade with the Indians; and though it was formerly the only trade of this extensive country, its inhabitants were considerably enriched by it. At present they have besides the Indian goods, several other articles which are exported. The Indians in this neighborhood who go hunting in winter like the other Indian nations, commonly bring their furs and skins to sell in the neighboring French towns; however, this is not sufficient. The Red Men who live at a greater distance never come to Canada at all; and lest they should bring their goods to the English, or the English go to them, the French are obliged to undertake journeys and purchase the Indian goods in the country of the natives. This trade is carried on chiefly at Montreal and a great number of young and old men every year undertake long and troublesome voyages for that purpose, carrying with them such goods as they know the Indians like and want. It is not necessary to take money on such a journey, as the Indians do not value it; and indeed I think the French, who go on these journeys scarcely ever take a sol or penny with them.

Pieces of white cloth, or of a coarse uncut material. The Indians constantly wear such cloth, wrapping it round their bodies. Sometimes they hand it over their shoulders; in warm weather they fasten the pieces round the middle; and in cold weather they put them over the head. Both their men and women wear these pieces of cloth, which have commonly several blue or red stripes on the edge.

Blue or red cloth. Of this the Indian women make their skirts, which reach only to their knees. They generally choose the blue color.

Shirts and shifts of linen. As soon as an Indian, either man or woman, had put on a shirt, he (or she) never washes it or strips it off till it is entirely worn out.

Pieces of cloth, which they wrap around their legs instead of stockings, like the Russians.

Earrings of different sizes, commonly of brass, and sometimes of tin. They are worn by both men and women, though the use of them is not general.

Wampum, or as it is called here, *porcelaine.* It is made of a particular kind of shell and turned into little short cylindrical beads, and serves the Indians for money and ornament.

Glass beads, of a small size, white or other colors. The Indian women know how to fasten them in their ribbons, bags, and clothes.

⁴⁴ Peter Kalm, pp. 519-521.

Pierre Pouchot's Description of Native-American Clothing

Pierre Pouchot was a French Officer who lived in New France between **1755 and 1761** during the French and Indian War. Pierre Pouchot's descriptions of **moccasins** follow:⁴⁵

Their shoes are a sort of slipper made of deer or caribou skin, tanned like kid gloves & as soft. The top part of the shoe is laced & decorated with a tuck two fingers wide, at ankle height, also **embroidered with porcupine skin dyed different colors & with little copper laces decorated with dyed hair and with little bells that tinkle when they walk**. This custom may have been conceived to ward off serpents & snakes which are numerous. There are **special winter shoes**, in the form of ankle books which are very well adapted to the season. Some of them cost as much as a *louis* and the least well made sell for from 40 *sous* to 3 *livres*.

In their travels, the Indians take **precautions against the cold**. Their shoes, although of simple tanned leather, are very warm because the snow is so dry that it does not give off any humidity. They **wrap pieces of blanket around their feet and the sides of the shoe form a tight fit with the ankle that prevents the snow from entering**. Their feet would freeze in European shoes, an experience some of them unfortunately suffered.

The men, instead of a *machicoté* [petticoat], wear a **breechcloth** which consists of a quarter of a yard of cloth that passes under the thighs and is doubled behind and in front over a tape tied around their waist. Sometimes the breechcloth is embroidered. When they travel and are afraid that the wool will make them too hot, they simply arrange the breechcloth in front of them like an apron.

Their footwear consists of a kind of gaiter [**legging or mitasse**] made of crimped flannel and colored red, white, or blue. The gaiter is sewn lengthwise to follow the contour of the leg & has four fingers of cloth overlapping beyond the seam. These four fingers of cloth are embroidered with ribbons of different colors mingled with a wide variety of designs. All this looks very pretty, especially when the leg is not too short or too fleshy. Apart from these they wear embroidered garters of velvet or porcupine skin [quills], four fingers wide & tied into a knot at the side of the leg. The ties of the gaiters fall loosely in front of the leg in order to protect their shins from the undergrowth. . . . There are pairs of gaiters that cost up to 30 *livres*.

. . . their garments of **shirts** which are cut as for men. The women wear them too. They like to have them trimmed; the affected young fold & women are quite happy to wear them with embroidered or lace cuffs. They keep them on until they are either worn out or rotten. When they first acquire them, they wear them white, after which they rub them with vermillion. They are then red for some time until they become black from use. One can judge from that they go through considerable quantities of them, since they never wash them. They normally take off their shirts to go to bed.

The **women** wear a **petticoat, called a machicoté**, made from a yard of blue or red cloth, of the same quality as material from Berri or Carcassonne. The hem is decorated with different rows of ribbons, yellow, blue & red, or with English lace. This garment resembles a woodsman's skirt. It is held up by nothing more than a strap around the waist.

⁴⁵ Pierre Pouchot and Brian Leigh Dunnigan, editor, and Michael Cardy, translator, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (Youngstown, New York: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), pp. 442-446, 458.

The **chemise** goes over the petticoat & covers it entirely. The women are laden with **necklaces**, like maidens in special finery. They are strings of porcelain beads at the ends of which are Calatavra crosses, thimbles, silver coins, falling to below the boom, which is almost entirely covered with them.

The *Outaouais* [**Ottawa**] women often wear, instead of a chemise, **a kind of brassiere** of blue or red cloth, cut into two pieces in such a way that with four or six tapes they cover half their bodies & arms.

Around their neck they [the men] wear a **pendant collar**, like our knights who belong to an order. At the end of it is a silver plaque as big as a saucer, or a shell of the same size, or a porcelain hoop. On the forearm they wear silver bracelets of three to four fingers in width and on the upper arm a kind of muff made of wampum or porcupine skin colored with leather laces which form a fringe covering the whole arm.



George Catlin, 1832, *Shón-ka-ki-he-ga, Horse Chief, Grand Pawnee Head Chief*, Courtesy of the Smithsonian: <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=4108>

The Indians gladly wear **rings** on all of their fingers.

Men & women wear over their shoulders a **blanket**, either of wool, which they buy from the Europeans, or of cloth or of tanned skins. It is almost exclusively those from the interior of the country who use the latter. The woolen blankets are made in Normandy of fairly fine wool, better than those supplied by the English, which are coarser. For the children, they are in one point or a point & a half. For men, in two or three points. After wearing them white for two or three days,

they smear them with vermilion in the first place with a red cross. Some days after that, they cover themselves with the dye, which makes their skin even redder. When the girls intent to seduce a young man, they paint their blankets again. Those of cloth are red or blue and made of a yard & a quarter of material of the same quality as their *machicotés* [petticoats]. They sew onto the lower part of the garment a dozen strips of yellow, red & blue ribbon & English lace, leaving a space the width of the ribbon between each strip. At the end of each strip they leave five or six fingers length of ribbon dangling. They cover the top part with round silver plaques of an inch in diameter.

The men gladly wear **greatcoats** or a kind of dress-coat trimmed with braid, hats with false brims, turned up on the button side and the remainder turned down and trimmed with blue, red or yellow plumes.



E. Chatfield, 1825, *Three Chiefs of the Huron Indians, Residing at La Jeune Lorette, Near Quebec, in Their National Costume*, LAC Mikan # 2884369

Michel Tsioui (Teacheandalé, Chief of the Warriors), Stanislas Coska (Aharathaha, second Chief of the Council) André Romain (Tsouhahissen, Chief of the Council)

[In winter] The Indians put their belt around the lower part of their blanket and adjust it to go over their head in a form of a **hood**. They arrange it so well that one can only see their noses & hands. They have **mittens** of leather or flannel hanging by a string around their neck. They are better than gloves because fingers that are separated are more likely to freeze. They make **bonnets** out of a square piece of material, sewing one side in such a way as to cover the neck & ears. **We have gone into this matter in detail because similar clothing would be very good for troops that one might want to lead on a winter campaign & would spare the soldiers**

much discomfort. If they notice that any part of the neck or body has frozen, which is immediately obvious from its whiteness, they pick up some snow & rub the place in question until the blood has started to circulate again. They take care not to get too near the fire because if that part of the body was thawed out by the heat, it would become gangrenous. [See below for a description of clothing supplied in 1757 to French soldiers serving in North America].

A chemise that is almost black and daubed with red, a braided or glossy jacket, an unbuttoned suit trimmed with braid, an untucked hat, sometimes a wig put on the wrong way round; add to that a face more bizarre than a Venetian mask. Such is an idea of the general appearance of an Indian.

The men wear a woolen belt about six inches wide in different colors, which the women make very skillfully with a flame-shaped design on it.⁴⁶ They hang from this belt their mirrors and their tobacco pouches, which is made of the flayed and tanned skin of an otter, a beaver, a wildcat, or a bird. In this they keep their pipe, their tobacco & their tinderbox. They also have an ammunition bag, which is made like a small scrip, where they keep their ball & shot for war or hunting. They carry their mirror and their tomahawk against their backside. They also wear slung across their shoulders a bull's horn in which they keep their powder. Their knife, in a sheath suspended around their neck, falls over their chest. They also have a hooded knife, which is a knife or a sword blade that has been bent into a curve. They put this implement to many uses.



Arrowhead sash – courtesy of the Canadian Encyclopedia
<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/arrowhead-sash/>

⁴⁶ *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/arrowhead-sash/>) discusses the possible origins of the sashes, but based on a dissertation dates their earliest use to the 1770s and states that they were first documented as being used by French Canadians. Also see Monique Leblanc, *Assomption Sash* (Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America: http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/article-477/Assomption_Sash.html)



Edward Chatfield, 1825, *Nicholas Vincent Tsawanhonhi, Principal Christian Chief and Captain of the Huron Indians established at La Jeune Lorette near Quebec*, LAC Mikan # 2837382
He is wearing an Arrowhead Sash and is holding a Wampum Belt

When they travel overland, each person carries his own little parcel on his shoulders suspended from his forehead by a belt [**tumpline**]. Their belongings are all in a blanket folded at each end and tied up with the straps of the belt in a very artistic way. This closes off the two ends like a pouch.

Pierre Pouchot described the **French-Manufactured clothing items that the French traded with the Native Americans.**⁴⁷

. . . men's shirts, & material trimmed with blue & red cloth for blankets and covers, green and red ribbons, English lace, blue, red, white, and red ratteen for gaiters, woolen blankets, Léon cloth, flat hats with embroidered & false brims, plumed headdresses in red, yellow, blue, & green, hooded greatcoats from men & children, crimped ratteen, both cheap & finely worked braids. . . .

Clothing and Equipment Supplied to the Canadians and the French Soldiers for a Winter Campaign during the French and Indian War

In his journal for 17 – 28 February 1757, **Louis Antoine de Bougainville**, Montcalm's aide-de-camp, recorded the equipment and clothing that was issued to Canadians and the French soldiers during the

⁴⁷ Pierre Pouchot, pp. 323, 324.

French and Indian War.⁴⁸ **Not only had the clothing been adopted from Native Americans, but merchants also supplied French-manufactured weapons that were adopted from Native-American weapons.**

One overcoat [*capot*], one blanket, one wool cap, two cotton shirts, one pair of **leggings or mitasses**, one **breechclout** (Bougainville noted that the French soldiers were issued breeches and drawers instead of a breechclout), two hanks of thread, six needles, one awl, one tinderbox, one butcher's knife, one comb, one [gun] worm, one tomahawk, two pairs of stockings, two Siamese knives, one pair of mittens, one waistcoat, two pairs of deerskin shoes [**moccasins**], one dressed deer skin, two portage collars, one drag rope, one pair of snowshoes, one bearskin, one tarpaulin per officer, one large one to every four men.

Alexander Henry's 1761 description of the clothing worn by voyageurs and Indians in the Great Lakes

Alexander Henry was a trader who travelled to the Great Lakes starting in 1761. Prior to reaching Michilimackinac, he was advised by groups of Indians that the Indians at Michilimackinac would kill him if they knew that he was English.⁴⁹

The hostility of the Indians was exclusively against the English. Between them and my Canadian attendants there appeared the most cordial good-will. This circumstance suggested one means of escape, of which by the advice of my friend [Étienne] Campion I resolved to attempt availing myself; and which was that of **putting on the dress usually worn by such of the Canadians** as pursue the trade into which I had entered and assimilating myself as much as I was able to their appearance and manners. To this end I laid aside my English clothes and covered myself only with a cloth passed about the middle, a shirt hanging loose, a molton, or blanket coat, and a large, red, milled worsted cap. The next thing was to smear my face and hands with dirt and grease and this done, I took the place of one of my men, and when Indians approached, used the paddle with as much skill as I possessed.

Alexander Henry's description of the **Ojibwa/Chippewa** who came to his house at Michilimackinac:⁵⁰

They walked in single file, each with his tomahawk in one hand and scalping knife in the other. Their bodies were naked from the waist upward, except in a few examples where blankets were thrown loosely over the shoulders. Their faces were painted with charcoal, worked up with grease; their bodies with white clay in patterns of various fancies. Some had feathers thrust through their noses, and their heads decorated with the same.

After Alexander Henry **was saved from death when Michilimackinac was captured by the Indians**, he was disguised as an Indian in order to deceive the Indians from Detroit who may have lost friends or relatives when the fort:⁵¹

My hair was cut off, and my head shaved with the exception of a spot on the crown about twice the diameter of a crown-piece. My face was painted with three or four different colors, some parts of it red, and others black. A shirt was provided for me, painted with vermilion mixed with grease. A large collar of wampum was put round my neck, and another suspended on my breast.

⁴⁸ Louis Antoine de Bougainville and Edward P. Hamilton, editor, *Adventure in the Wilderness – The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760* (Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 87.

⁴⁹ Alexander Henry and Milo Milton Quaife, editor, *Alexander Henry's Travels and adventures in the years 1760-1776* (Chicago, R. R. Donnelley & sons company, 1921), pp. 34-35. You can read his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_alexander_1739_1824_6E.html.

⁵⁰ Alexander Henry, p. 42.

⁵¹ Alexander Henry, p. 113.

Both my arms were decorated with large bands of silver above the elbows, besides several smaller ones on the wrists; and my legs were covered with *mitasses*, a kind of hose made, as is the favorite fashion, of scarlet cloth. Over all I was to wear a scarlet blanket or mantle, and on my head a large bunch of feathers.

Jonathan Carver's 1766 Description of Native Dress in the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley

Jonathan Carver's discussion of the culture of Native Americans in the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley are included in *Of the Origin, Manners, Customs, Religion, and Language of the Indians*. Following is his discussion of Native Dress:⁵²

The men of every nation differ in their dress very little from each other, except those who trade with the Europeans. These exchange their furs for blankets, shirts and other apparel which they wear as much for ornament as necessity. The latter fasten by a girdle around their waists about a half a yard of broadcloth which covers the middle parts of their bodies. Those who wear shirts never make them fast either at the wrist or collar; this would be a most insufficient confinement to them. They throw their blanket loose upon their shoulders and, holding the upper side of it by the two corners, with a knife in one hand and a tobacco pouch, pipe &c. in the other, thus accoutered they walk about in their villages or camps. But in their dances they seldom wear this covering.

. . . They go without any covering for the thigh except that before spoken of round the middle, which reaches down half way the thighs. But they make for their legs a sort of stocking either of skins or cloth. These are sewed as near the shape of the leg as possible, so as to admit of being drawn on and off. The edges of the stuff of which they are composed are left annexed to the seam and hang loose for about the breadth of a hand, and this part, which is placed on the outside of the leg is generally ornamented by those who have any communication with Europeans, if of cloth, with ribands or lace, if of leather, with embroidery and porcupine quills curiously colored. Strangers who hunt among the Indians in the parts where there was a great deal of snow find these stockings much more convenient than any others.

Their shoes are made of the skin of the deer, elk, or buffalo. These, after being sometimes dressed according to the European manner, at others with the hair remaining on them, are cut into shoes, and fashioned so as to be easy to the feet and convenient for walking. The edges round ankle are decorated with pieces of brass or tin fixed around leather strings, about an inch long, which being placed very thick make a cheerful tinkling noise either when they walk or dance.

The women wear a covering of some kind or other from the neck to the knees. Those who trade with the Europeans wear a linen garment the same as that uses by the men, the flaps of which hang over the petticoat. Such as dress after their ancient manner makes a kind of shift with leather which covers the body but not the arms. Their petticoats are made either of leather or cloth, and reach from the waist to the knee. On their legs they wear stockings and shoes, made and ornamented as those of the men.

1766 Description of clothing worn by French-Canadian Men in Detroit

Jonathan Carver was a resident of Massachusetts who visited Detroit on 27 June 1766. Following are excerpts from his Journal regarding Detroit.⁵³

⁵² Jonathan Carver and Norman Gibb, editor, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1956, third edition), pp. 113-118. This chapter also discusses they ways that the Indians wore their hair, as well as the way they constructed their teepees.

The French have several plantations scattered along the shore of these straits for about ten miles below the fort and about twelve miles above as far as Lake St. Clare.

The land is very good, producing all the necessaries of life in abundance, but by reason of the inactivity and idleness of the French inhabitants provisions are very dear, they themselves living but a little better than the Indians and even here seem fully to possess that spirit of gaiety so natural to that nation, **for it is not uncommon to see a Frenchman with Indian shoes and stockings, without breaches, wearing a strip of woolen cloth to cover what decency requires him to conceal.** Yet at the same time he wears a fine ruffled shirt, a laced waistcoat with a fine handkerchief on his head. But since the English have frequented these parts the French have laid by many of their savage customs.

Henry Schoolcraft's 1820 Description of Native Clothing

In 1820, Henry Schoolcraft described the clothing and ornaments worn by Northern Indians:⁵⁴

There are no bands of the northern Indians who go entirely without clothes, even in the hottest summer weather; and like all other savages, they possess a great fondness for grotesque ornaments of feathers, skins, bones, and claws of animals. They have also an unconquerable passion for silver bands, beads, rings, and all light, showy, and fantastic articles of European manufacture. When silver cannot be procured they use copper, which is a native product of the region, and is beaten out by them in a rude way with a hatchet upon a stone, and afterwards rubbed smooth.



Unknown Artist, 1813-1820, *Two Ottawa Chiefs Who with Others Lately Came Down from Michillimackinac Lake Huron to Have a Talk with Their Great Father The King or His Representative*, LAC Mikan # 2836441

(the description of this painting notes that the portraits may have been painted at Amherstburg; this makes sense considering that a portion of the British Indian Department was located in Amherstburg)

⁵³ Jonathan Carver, p. 66.

⁵⁴ Henry Schoolcraft and Mentor L. Williams, editor, *Schoolcraft's Narrative Journals of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States extending from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River in the Year 1820* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1992), p. 155; see Wikipedia.org for Schoolcraft's biography.

The women being compelled to do the work and drudgery of savage life, have less opportunity and time for dress, but their taste, in this respect, remains the same, and whenever they can pressure them, dress themselves with the most gaudy articles. They do not, however, use feathers, an ornament which appears exclusively appropriated to the men and warriors.

Alexis de Tocqueville's 1831 Descriptions of *Métissage* in the Great Lakes

In August 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville described the **Indians that he saw near Buffalo** who had come to Buffalo looking for the money owed them in exchange of land surrendered to the United States:⁵⁵

Their features spoke of that deep depravity that can come only from long abuse of the boons of civilization. . . . They wore European clothing but did not use it as we do. Clearly not yet accustomed to these garments, they seemed imprisoned in their folds. In addition to European trinkets, they decorated themselves with items of barbaric luxury: feathers, enormous earrings, and necklaces of shells.

Tocqueville's description of the **Indian who acted as their guide** when Tocqueville and Beaumont made their trip to Saginaw, Michigan:⁵⁶

He was a man of about thirty, tall and admirably proportioned, as nearly all of them are. His shiny black hair hung down to his shoulders, except for two braids fastened atop his head. His face was painted black and red, and a very short blue tunic covered his upper body. He wore red *mittas* [mitasses or leggings], a kind of trouser that ends above the knee, and moccasins on his feet. A knife hung at his side. In his right hand he held a long carbine, and in his left two birds he had just killed.

Tocqueville's description of a *métis* who Tocqueville thought was an Indian:⁵⁷

The man who was crouching in the bottom of this frail bark [canoe] wore Indian dress and in every respect appeared to be an Indian. He spoke to our guides, who at his command hastened to remove our horses' saddles and deposit them in the canoe. As I made ready to step into the canoe myself, the supposed Indian came toward me, placed two fingers on my shoulder, and, in a perfect Norman accent that gave me a start, said, "Watch you don't be too quick settin' your feet, times are people been known to drown right about this spot." Had my horse spoken to me I don't think I could have been more surprised. I stared at the speaker, whose face, illuminated by the first glimmer of moonlight shone like a copper pot. "Who are you?" I asked. "French seems to be your language, but you look like an Indian." He answered that he was a *Bois-Brûlé*, that is, the child of a Canadian father and an Indian mother. I shall have occasion to speak often of this singular race of half-breeds, who are numerous throughout the Canadian and much of the American frontier.

On the other bank of the Saginaw, near the Europeans' clearing and on the border, as it were, between the Old World and the New, stands a rustic cabin more comfortable than the savage's wigwam yet coarser than the home of the civilized man. This is where the half-breed lives. The first time we called at the door of this semicivilized hut, we were surprised to hear a soft voice inside singing psalms of repentance to an Indian tune. We stood there for a moment. The modulations of the music were slow and deeply melancholy. We recognized at once the plaintive harmony that is so characteristic of songs of the wilderness. We went inside. The master was

⁵⁵ Oliver Zunz, editor, and Arthur Goldhammer, translator, *Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America – Their Friendship and Their Travels* (University of Virginia Press, 2010), *Two Weeks in the Wilderness*, pp. 402-403.

⁵⁶ Zunz, p. 417.

⁵⁷ Zunz, p. 429, 433.

absent. Seated in the middle of the room, rocked the cradle of a child whose bronze complexion and features signaled its dual parentage. The woman was dressed like one of our peasants, except that her feet were bare and her hair hung loosely over her shoulders. At the sight of us, she fell silent with a sort of respectful alarm. We asked if she was French. “No,” she answered with a smile. “English?” “Not English either,” she said. Then lowering her eyes, she added, “I am only a savage.”

Alexis de Tocqueville’s 1831 Description of *Métissage*

Tocqueville’s description of a French-Canadian who lived like an Indian:⁵⁸

Enter this cabin of leaves and will find a man whose cordial welcome, frank features, and smiling lips immediately signal a taste for the pleasures of society and a carefree attitude toward life. You may at first take him to be an Indian. Exposed to the savage life, he has voluntarily adopted the dress, customs, and one almost say the mores of the savage. He wears moccasins, an otter-skin cap, and a wool cloak. A tireless hunter, he remain alert even when asleep and lives on wild honey and buffalo meat. Yet he is still a Frenchman: cheerful, confident, proud of his origins, eager for military glory, more vain than self-interested, moved by instinct and impulse more than reason, and preferring reputation to money.

⁵⁸ Zunz, p. 432.