



Artwork by George Gingras

## W is for Women Weavers

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Since the late 1700s, the sash has been very important to Métis **identity**. The Métis adopted the sash from their French-Canadian ancestors. Métis fingerweaving is based on both **First Nations** and European **traditions**. Fingerweaving techniques were mostly of First Nations origin, while the wool used to make the sashes was European. In the past, Métis women wove sashes using a great deal of skill and creativity. They made them not only for their male relatives, but also for other people in the community. Métis women often used complex patterns and designs to create unique sashes. Over time, many different patterns were developed resulting in sashes of all kinds of colours and designs. These hand-woven sashes often took days to manufacture. They are stronger and are of a much better quality than today's machine-made sashes. Fingerweaving almost became a lost art. Dedicated Métis women and men are reviving this art form, passing it on to future generations.

### Other Resources:

Barkwell, Lawrence J., "The Sash of the Métis." *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* ([www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/14654](http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/14654)).

Condon, Penny. (Narrator). *En saenchur flechey: Métis Fingerweaving*. Video. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2003.

"How to Fingerweave" (Instructional website with video). *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* ([www.metismuseum.ca/fingerweaving](http://www.metismuseum.ca/fingerweaving)).

Préfontaine, Darren R. and K. Shmon. "The Sash." *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* (<http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/00741>).

Taanishi Books Emergent Reader Series (*The Sash, Time to Dance, All About the Sash*). Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2014.

Troupe, Cheryl. *Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs*. Study Prints and Teachers' Manual. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

*The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* ([www.metismuseum.ca](http://www.metismuseum.ca)).

