

# Arrow belt

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L'Assomption" style arrow belt with lightning bolt motif, made of 12 corridors. The belt is made of red, white, black, green and yellow wool, whose colors seem to come from natural dyes. Its bangs are composed of unique braids and twists.

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Date 1925 an

Materials fiber, wool

Technique braided

## Historical context

This arrow belt has been kept in the same family for many years. In good condition, it is nevertheless old: the past colors reflect ancient and natural dyes. For example, the light blue probably comes from indigo, while the red may be from madder or cochineal. Wool from England is imported into Quebec directly dyed.

The fléché technique was developed by French Canadians in the second half of the 18th century, probably to embellish belts already used to protect themselves from the cold or to support their backs. Initially symbols of social prestige, they became identity markers, and were associated with French-Canadian nationalism in the early 20th century. The L'Assomption model took shape in the early 19th century, establishing a distinct standard for arrow belts like this one. The village of L'Assomption, in the Lanaudière region, prospered as the main production center for these belts, supplying the North West Company for its trading posts. Between 1830 and 1880, these pieces served as objects of exchange and agreement with certain aboriginal nations, who adopted them as symbols of their identity.

Long debated, the attribution of arrow belts should not obscure their multicultural dimension: their use by different social groups gives them a rich cultural identity and historical importance. Although difficult to date, they provide us with information on the cultural history of several territories and the socio-economic relationships that bind them together.



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