

# Arrow belt

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L'Assomption" style arrow belt with lightning motif, made of 12 corridors. The belt is made of red, blue, green and yellow wool, whose colors seem to be derived from synthetic dyes. The wool is relatively thick.

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Accession Number 2021.07.24

Period 1st half of the 20th century

Materials fiber, wool

Technique braided

Measurements 22 x 188 cm

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## Historical context

This belt, with its thick wool and synthetic dyes, was probably made after the 1930s. In fact, although synthetic dyes have been in use since the mid-19th century, it wasn't until the early 20th century that they were truly mastered and replaced natural dyes.

Before 1930, arrow belts were made with "Worsted" wool from England. This high-quality wool is worsted, very fine and resistant. The first half of the 20th century saw innovations in the manufacture of synthetic textiles. The growing demand for cheaper materials gradually relegated Worsted wool to a more restricted use. During this period, the most affordable wools were less twisted: as the yarns were thinner, the belts were thicker, like the piece shown here.

Arrow belts, created by French Canadians in the 2nd half of the 18th century, became a cultural symbol in Quebec. After 1880, artisanal production of arrow belts declined. The fur trade, which used handmade belts as an object of exchange with aboriginals, declined. By the early 20th century, they had become essentially folkloric. Folklore researchers and a handful of dart makers gradually set up initiatives to preserve and promote the belts.

Arrow belts reflect a multicultural identity. 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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Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore