

Margaret Harrison: Metis Artist



Brenda Hrycuik (Friends of Batoche) and Margaret Harrison, with an example of Margaret's hooked rugs. Batoche Historic Site 2012
Photo by Lawrence Barkwell

Margaret Harrison is the daughter of Adeline Pelletier dit Racette. Adeline made hooked rugs and is renowned for her floral designs. Adeline's daughter Margaret Harrison is also known for her seamstress work. Margaret learned the skill of rug hooking from her mother as part of her history, and is choosing to revive this artwork and teach it to young Métis women. She remembered her grand parents trading rugs with farmers for food, eggs, butter, and pork, and that family members would go to different areas to sell their rugs of all different sizes. Adeline's work "Awaken My People", 2003 was featured in RESILIENCE / RESISTANCE: MÉTIS ART 1880-2011. Funded by the Government of Canada, this was one of eighteen projects designed to help Métis communities preserve and celebrate their history and culture as well as present their rich heritage to all Canadians.

Adeline and Margaret are descendants of Louis Charles Pelletier (Peletier) Racette born May 15, 1871 in St. Francois Xavier.¹ He married Mathilde Marguerite Brabant born July 7, 1877 in Missouri River district, Montana.



Faith Fayant-Mills stirs berries under the watchful eye of Margaret Harrison.
Photo by Health Canada

The Gabriel Dumont Institute has produced two videos featuring Margaret Harrison and her artistic skills:

Aen Kroshay aen tapee avec mi gineey: Métis Hooked Rugs. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

This video is Part One of the Métis Women’s Traditional Arts Series. This video, features Margaret Harrison, and her mother, Adeline Pelletier dit Racette, from the Qu’Appelle Valley; it provides the viewer with in-depth demonstrations and step-by-step instructions on how to make a hooked rug. As well, Margaret and Adeline share their stories about living on a road allowance in the Qu’Appelle Valley in southern Saskatchewan.

Mashnikwawchikun avec la sway di fil: Métis Silk Embroidery

Using predominately floral designs, Métis women have long practiced the vibrant art of silk embroidery. Decorating their personal and household items, these women experimented with embroidery designs and colours, creating a unique artistic tradition. *Mashnikwawchikun avec la sway di fil: Métis Silk Embroidery*, is Part Two of the Métis Women's Traditional Art Series. With instruction from Margaret Harrison, who is originally from a Métis road allowance community in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, viewers learn basic embroidery stitches and receive direction in working

¹ He died after 1930 in File Hills District, his father was Louis Pelletier-Primeau Racette and his mother was Josephte “Josette” Desnomme.

with patterns, designs, needles and fabrics. Margaret shares her experiences, her embroidery and her thoughts on the importance of preserving and promoting this traditional Métis art form.



Edited and Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute