

extent, on the goods they have to offer—goods that are indigenous to their own country. The demands of the tourist must be met and the main stipulation is that the article must be distinctively Canadian—it should not have to bear the words “Souvenir of Canada”, the very design or characteristics should convey that fact.

The question naturally arises as to what is typically Canadian. There are two distinct types of Canadian art: aboriginal Indian art, which is absolutely indigenous to Canada and which is rapidly passing away, and French-Canadian work, which sprung from the early French settlers but through adoption and continual usage has become peculiar to Canada.

It is a fallacy to suppose that Canadian aboriginal Indian art is crude and undeveloped; indeed it is further advanced and of a higher culture than any other aboriginal art. Nor is it right to say that it is confined to prehistoric remains, for some of the finest examples are from the hands of craftsmen whose memory is still clear in the minds of living Indians. The Indian sense of creative design was closely linked with the traditions of his forefathers and of his race. When this race consciousness began to wane the native art rapidly disappeared or became contaminated with European ideas.

Indian native art is not the same all over Canada. The characteristics, materials, implements and designs differ widely from coast to coast; in fact, it is probable that the Pacific Coast Indians were absolutely unknown to the other tribes of Canada. Indian art may be classified into five distinct groups namely: the Pacific Coast; Interior Plateau and Mackenzie Basin; the Great Plains; Eastern Woodlands; and the Arctic Coast. The Pacific Coast Indians are the only branch solely indigenous to Canada. Their art was confined to wood and stone carvings, weaving, and basketry; they were without pottery. The other sections never reached the same stage of development and Mexican and European influences are noticeable. Birch bark was used in the Eastern Woodlands and a fair degree of skill was reached in the Iroquoian pottery—but it had no distinctive features. The Esquimau carved in bone and walrus tusk, but the finest example of this art comes from the Alaskan Esquimau. The products of each region are so distinct that they cannot be confused, nor can they be mistaken for the art of distant countries, though, except for the Pacific Coast tribes, they are similar to certain American work.

The Pacific Coast Indians reached a high degree of skill in carving, weaving and basketry. Their art was no idle pursuit but an essential in their every day life. Their clothing, house fronts, implements and weapons were decorated in the traditional designs of their family; consequently they are not a mere meaningless jumble, but a comprehensive combination of symbols, similar in significance to our ideas of heraldry. Their ability to adapt the designs to the material, size and shape of the article to be decorated is one of the outstanding characteristics of the work.

The Haidas, Tsmisyan, and Thlingit Indians to the North of the Pacific Coast were the foremost carvers and weavers. They have left examples of plastic and decorative beauty that are outstanding. There was nothing crude about their work; it possessed a high degree of realism and freedom of expression. The Southern Tribes were not so refined; their work being more crude and the facial expressions of their images grotesque to the point of caricature.

The Pacific Coast Indians have left us small images of totem poles carved in black slate, or beautiful dishes and bowls cut from the same stone. The perfection and grace of this work is unsurpassed by craftsmen of any race. Their basketry is of unique design and of strong construction. The Chilkat robes, woven from mountain goat hair over an inner core of cedar bark shreds or of wool, embody the symbols of their race and would be a tribute to any weaver. They also made large wooden chests, the sides of which were of a single strip