Thomas Côté textile and wood carving collection

MCC-00567

Total boxes: 4 + 1 wooden vice
Linear feet: 5.88ft

Prepared by
Madeline Soucie
Acadian Archives / Archives acadiennes
University of Maine at Fort Kent
Fort Kent, Maine
July 2024

Thomas Côté textile and wood carving collection
(MCC-00567)

Shelf List Number: AX-567

Collection Overview

Creator

Thomas Côté and others

Dates

Unknown

Extent

1 catalogne (stair runner), 2 wool blankets, 2 pieces of tatting, 3 wooden laundry handles, 1 wooden vise, 1 wooden soothing bird, 1 carved black hawk head, and a basket containing approximately 10 wood carving tools.

Provenance

Loaned to the Acadian Archives by Thomas Cote for a period of 10 years in July 2024.

Language

English

Conservation Notes

The plaid catalogne came to the Archives with a stain on one side.

Conditions Governing Access and Use

Restrictions

Access: No restrictions

Physical: No restrictions

Technical: No restrictions

Rights Statement

Copyright has not been assigned to the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes.

Recommended Citation

Thomas Côté textile and wood carving collection (MCC-00567). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Collection Description

Historical and Biographical Information

Thomas (Tom) Côté (b. 1948) is a wood carver of Acadian and French-Canadian descent. He grew up in Caswell, Maine, and, learning the craft from his mother Rena, he started carving at the age of 12. He is descended from Jean-Baptiste Côté (1832-1907), a Quebec City carver who gained prominence for his prolific work and craftsmanship.

Côté served with a U.S. Army Medevac unit during the Vietnam War. He subsequently spent several summers studying wood sculpting in Saint-Jean Port-Joli, a center for Quebec folk arts that gained wider recognition thanks to the Bourgault family of sculptors. Côté's work bears the influence of traditional French-Canadian culture and includes depictions of woodsmen, lutins (gnomes or elves), the Bonhomme sept-heures (bogeyman), and canoes and snowshoes. He has also carved eagle-head canes for aging veterans. Côté uses hand tools exclusively: mallets, chisels, and knives.

Côté has taught woodshop in local classrooms for over thirty years, offered private lessons in his workshop, and shared his craft with his grandchildren. Though he has retired from the school system, he continues to give lessons. His carvings can be found on all continents but Antarctica. His body of work extends to carved roadside panels installed in St. John Valley communities to coincide with the Acadian World Congress of

2014. He has earned the designation of Master Carver from the Maine Arts Commission. Côté resides in Limestone, Maine.

Scope and Content

The wood carvings and tools were made or collected by Thomas Côté as well as one of his granddaughters, brother, and mother. Tom's mother also made the lace tattings. Tom acquired the wooden vise but couldn't give specific information.

Ned and Rhea Gendreau donated the gray wool blanket and the two cream-colored blankets with red and blue striping to Tom when they were downsizing. Beyond this, Tom knew that two of the blankets were made in St. Leonard, N.B. and St. Denis, Quebec, respectively.

All materials are on loan from Thomas Côté to the Acadian Archives for a period of ten years.

Arrangement

This collection is split into three series: textiles; wood carving tools; and wood carvings.

Separated Materials (If Applicable)

Not applicable

Subject Headings

Blankets
Catalogne
Lace making
Wood carving

Related Materials

Catalogne chemin d'escalier/stair runner, (MCC-00485). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Deb Durkin's woven wool blanket and catalogne, (MCC-00381). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Joseph Albert wooden carvings collection (MCC-00511). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Rachel Simard handwoven catalogne (MCC-00487). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Rena (Côté) Côté tatting, (MCC-00384). Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Thomas Cote wood carvings collection (MCC-00504). Acadian Archives/acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Textiles

Box	Item	Description
1	N/A	Cream-colored wool blanket with violet-blue stripes in the center
1	N/A	Cream-colored wool blanket with a red, orange, blue, and black striped pattern in the center.
2	N/A	Grey/violet-hued wool blanket with red edging and red and blue stripes at one end
2	N/A	Cream catalogne (stair runner) with a pink and light green plaid pattern
3	1	Circular cream lace tatting, medium-sized Medium sized (made by Rena Côté)
3	2	Large circular lace tatting made from different shades of pink, blue, and cream yarn with a gold
3	3	Small circular lace tatting made from green, pink, blue, purple, and yellow yarn

Series II: Wood carvings

Box	Item	Description
3	4	Wooden soothing bird made with the letter 'N' and a tree pattern carved on the bottom (Thomas Côté's brother)
3	5	Black hawk head with a yellow beak and red, green and yellow feathers (Kennedy Bencivenga)
4	1	Wooden laundry handle with a chipped prong[1]
4	2	Wooden laundry handle with asymmetrical prongs
4	3	Wooden laundry handle with a heart-shaped hole in the center of the handle and slimmer prongs

Series III: Wood carving tools

Box	Item	Description
4	4	Spoon gouge (made to hollow out spoons)
4	5	Round file
4	6	Rounded gouge with metal base produced by Charles Buck; slightly rusted
4	7	Rounded gouge with flared blade
4	8	Rounded gouge
4	9	Spiraled blade on a wooden handle, possibly a hand-operated drill
4	10	Bullock tool, possibly a hand-held vise or a hole punch
4	11	Bone-handled blade with an 'N' and a tree symbol carved into each handle, (possibly made by Mr. Côté's brother)
N/A	12	Large wooden vise with two screws

[1] One of these laundry handles was made by Tom Cote and a second by his mother. The third one was made by an Englishman and was bought by Tom Cote or his mother.

Box	Item	Description
4	13	Bow sander for rounded materials
4	14	Wood-handled flat gouge with a 1.5 inch-wide blade
4	15	Wood-handled flat gouge with a 0.75 inch-wide blade; slightly rusted