

**Rachel Simard handwoven catalogue
MCC-00487**

Finding Aid

**Prepared by
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Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes
University of Maine at Fort Kent
Fort Kent, Maine**

Title: Rachel Simard handwoven catalogue

Creator/Collector: Rachel Simard

Collection number: MCC-00487

Shelf list number: AX-487

Dates: late 20th century

Extent: 1 large box (.82 cubic feet)

Provenance: Item was bought to be part of the Acadian Archives permanent exhibit.

Language: NA

Conservation notes: The catalogue was wrapped in tissue paper and placed in an archival box.

Access restrictions: No restrictions on access.

Physical restrictions: None.

Technical restrictions: None.

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Separated materials: Not applicable.

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Location of originals: Not applicable.

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Historical information: Weaving on a loom was one of the daily chores of the Madawaska pioneers in the first part of the 19th century and of their descendants in the hundred years that followed. Only in the last half-century has what was formerly a common household task become perceived as a craft; looms are now found in only a very few homes.

The making of woven pieces on the loom still has the same requirements today as then, and it is still women, who excel at this craft. These woven pieces were flax fabrics, textile cloth and rugs

or blankets made from rags (known as “catalognes”). All weaving requires placing a filling thread (the weft) at right angles to parallel foundation threads (called warp) which are strung the length of the loom. The basic operation is to string the warp thread first and then weave the weft thread over and under (with a shuttle) across the loom. The resulting fabric is used to make shirts, sheets, tablecloths and towels.

A French-Canadian blanket called a “catalogne”, an article produced on a loom, was made with strips of old clothes. These catalognes are still made in Madawaska and can be admired in craft fairs. It is a kind of weaving made of cotton and strips of rags. It was used as a rug to decorate the floor or as a blanket for warmth. To understand the importance of the loom for Madawaska inhabitants, especially between 1785 and 1850 or so, it is necessary to know that these courageous pioneers made almost everything by hand, being too poor or having too far to go to buy clothes and other woolen goods.¹

Scope and content: This collection consists of one machine woven French-Canadian catalogne blanket made by Rachel Simard of Edmundston, N. B. The catalogne/blanket is of white and light gray cotton and measures 90 inches long by 58 inches wide.

Inventory:

Box 1/1: One catalogne/blanket

¹ <http://www.demelerlespinceaux.umce.ca/fresque/craft-industry-weaving/catalogne-en>