

Mountmellick Embroidery

Mountmellick embroidery is a floral whitework embroidery originating from the town of Mountmellick in county Laois in Ireland in the early nineteenth century. It was originally intended to help poor Irish women and girls survive the austere living of the industrial age in Ireland. Supplies were inexpensive and the goods were sold, often to visiting Americans, from whence the technique spread in popularity.

Traditionally it was worked on cotton sateen fabric which has a sheen with matte cotton threads (no sheen.) The fabric is durable and stands up to laundering, tending to become shinier the more it is laundered. The designs are generally bold and cutwork and openwork are never involved. Common motifs are taken from nature.

This type of embroidery uses various stitches to create a highly textured surface. Typically the stitches used were padded satin stitch, stem or outline stitch, Mountmellick stitch, knots, feather stitch, buttonhole stitch and variations on all of these. Today the materials are more difficult to find and much more expensive.

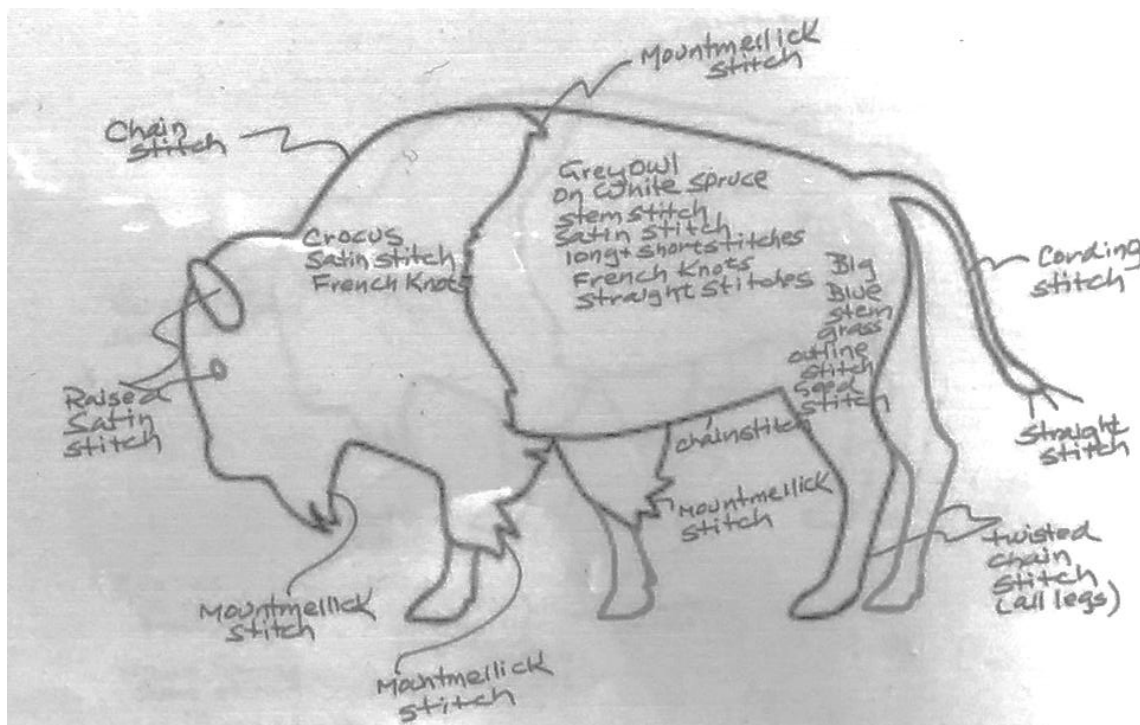
--Information from Mary Corbet and Wikipedia

Mountmellick Bison

Stitched by Sharon Gray, 2019

Sharon states: I am not going to quit my day job!

For the last 2 years or so I have been embroidering with one strand of DMC cotton or silk. To move to Mountmellick from that venue was a feeling of stitching with rope. It was a struggle most of the time. As the bison is the Manitoba official animal, I decided that other official entities could be added: gray owl, white spruce, blue stem grass.



Stitches used in this bison:

Chain stitch for outline; **Mountmellick stitch** to separate the cape from body, to outline cape/'feathers' on upper front legs, and beard; **cording stitch** for tail, and **straight stitches** at tip; **twisted chain stitch** to outline all the legs; **raised satin stitch** for eye and ear; **satin stitch** and **French knots** for the crocus in the cape; **stem stitch, satin stitch, long and short stitches, French knots**, and **straight stitches** for the grey owl and white spruce in body; **outline stitch** and **seed stitches** for tall blue stem grass on hind leg