

USING BEADS TO ENHANCE ERA FASHIONS

By Rosie Cassou, Cruisin A's of Hemet, CA

Early Bead History

Beads have been made by every culture and have been revealed in archaeology sites.

October 12, 1492, Columbus recorded in his logbook the natives of San Salvador Island were given glass beads. This is the earliest written record of glass beads in the Americas. His ships carried glass beads along with other European trade goods. The Spanish explorers in 1527 and in 1539 carried glass beads for trade with the native inhabitants of Florida.

Types of Beads

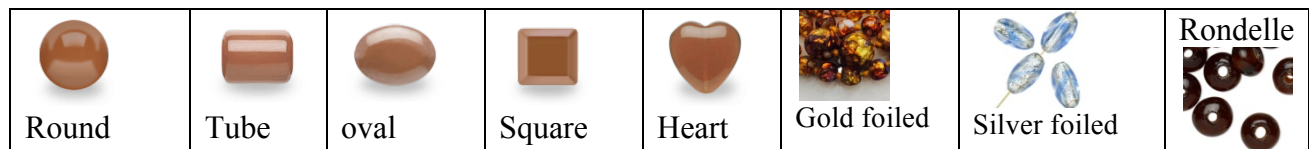
Most often, it was an old-fashioned stone drill bit pumped by hand or even an awl that created the hole in the natural bead or stone so that it could be strung.

Natural Beads are made from natural materials such as bone, teeth, stone, wood and fossilized bamboo, skeleton of sea creatures, shells, abalone, coral, mother -of-pearl, pearls, dentalium shells, horns of many animals, and ivory from tusk of elephants until it was banned.



Man Made Beads made by hand from hollow tube of blown glass or wound beads from a heated glass rod to make glass beads, crystals, bugles, Swarovski crystals, cubes and Delica and seed beads. Beads come in imitation pearls, turquoise, steel, pewter, enameled metal, silver, gold and cloisonné. The AB (aurora borealis) beads were made after the model A Era.

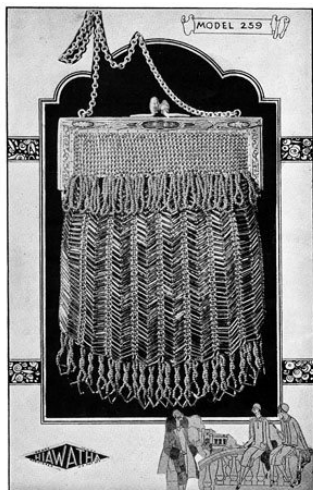
Glass beads were available with metal foil, known as silver or gold foiled lined. These were made with a thin layer of gold or silver leaf or foil sandwiched between two layers of clear glass. The first glass layer is usually drawn or wound, while the second layer of glass is folded around the metal leaf. In the early 1800s, the mercury glass beads were originally made with mercury to give them a metallic luster. By the 1900s, the mercury was replaced with a silver nitrate solution, made of silver nitrate, water and sugar, but the name stuck.



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During the Model A Era, you would find beads hand sewn on evening dresses, lace, head gear, purses and in the jewelry worn for daytime and evening. Great care should be taken with the cleaning of any dress, lace, gloves or outfit that has vintage beads attached to it, to not ruin the color or appearance of these hard to find vintage items.



Reference: The Beading Book by Julia Jones
Antiquedress.com
Indians.org/articles/beads.html
Firemountain Gems Catalog
Hiawatha Book of Bead Bags --1927