

NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS

Programme theme exploring the culture, craft and traditions of tribe life



NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS

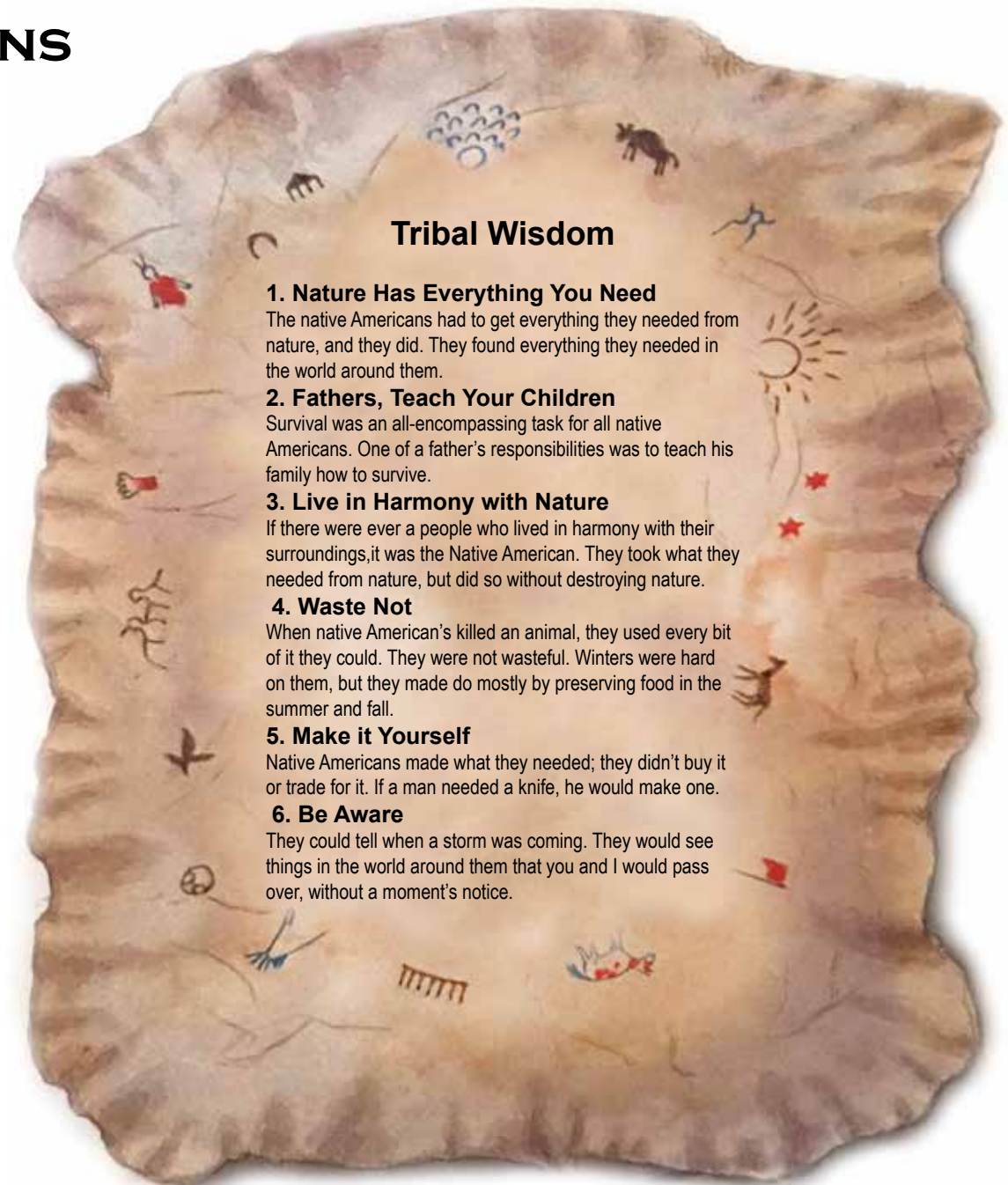


Native Americans are the indigenous people of the lands of present day USA and Canada. These people are probably the best known tribal people of the world as a result of Hollywood movies.

The people are comprised of over 500 tribes each with its own features and lifestyle. Romantically, we think of the tribes of middle America - with teepee tents and buffalo hunts but other tribes had different traditions, hunting methods, shelter types and built homes.

All of the tribal people were expert survivalist and lived off what nature and their environment provided. There are similarities between tribal people and bronze age tribal life in Ireland. Because of their close connection with nature they are considered to be the first environmentalist. They understood nature and lived in harmony with it, taking just the things that they required to survive.

As a programme theme we can provide our Scouts with an opportunity to experience the skills and life of these people. It is not easy to survive from nature alone. There were no modern inventions available to them until Europeans invaded their lands - so to survive had to adapt to your surroundings. In undertaking this theme Scouts can learn a lot about tribal people, their environment and their attitude to conservation and protection. Also, by spending time in nature Scouts become attuned and open their senses to sound, smells, fresh air and the weather that surrounds them.



Tribal Wisdom

1. Nature Has Everything You Need

The native Americans had to get everything they needed from nature, and they did. They found everything they needed in the world around them.

2. Fathers, Teach Your Children

Survival was an all-encompassing task for all native Americans. One of a father's responsibilities was to teach his family how to survive.

3. Live in Harmony with Nature

If there were ever a people who lived in harmony with their surroundings, it was the Native American. They took what they needed from nature, but did so without destroying nature.

4. Waste Not

When native American's killed an animal, they used every bit of it they could. They were not wasteful. Winters were hard on them, but they made do mostly by preserving food in the summer and fall.

5. Make it Yourself

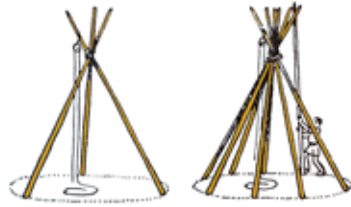
Native Americans made what they needed; they didn't buy it or trade for it. If a man needed a knife, he would make one.

6. Be Aware

They could tell when a storm was coming. They would see things in the world around them that you and I would pass over, without a moment's notice.

TEEPEE

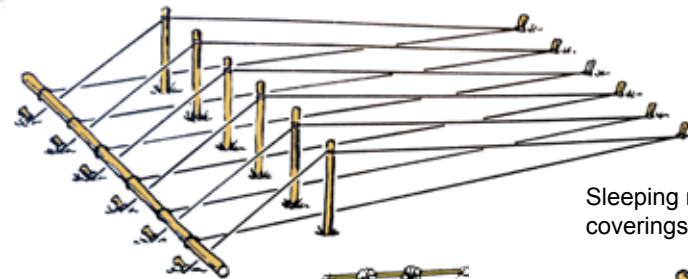
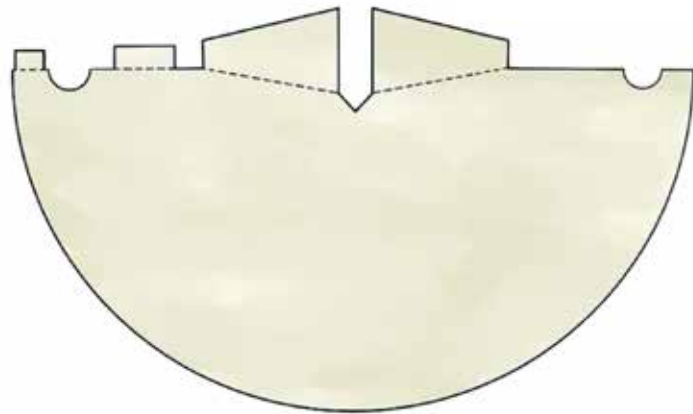
Teepees were temporary dwellings used by nomadic tribes and hunting parties of the Great Plains Native Americans. Unlike wigwams, teepees were not meant to be used for extended periods of time. Instead, they were easy and simple to construct, since they were intended to be portable. Different nations favoured different types of shelters depending on local conditions and if the nation was nomadic or stationary.



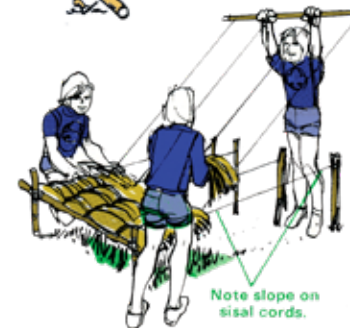
Wigwam shelter



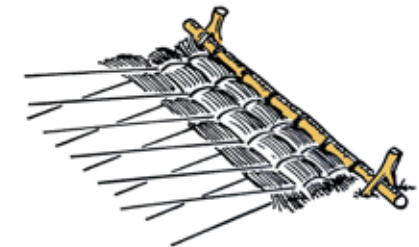
Adobe house built by nations in Arizona and new Mexico



Sleeping mat and shelter coverings making



Note slope on sisal cords.



Straw (newspaper can be used as alternative)

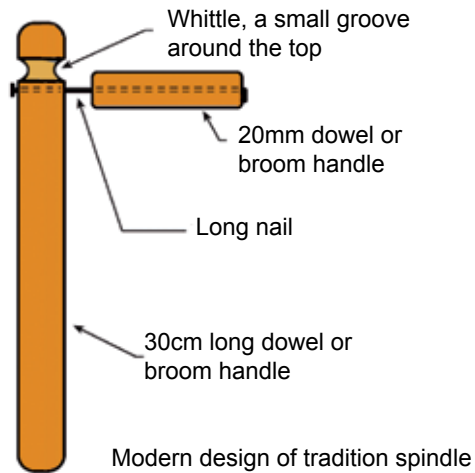
ROPE MAKING

Traditionally, braidings and light lines were made by twisting root fibres and animal hairs. With the arrival of the 'white man' and the horse native tribes people found that they needed rope to catch them and create bridles. An ingenious tribes man invented the rope spindle to make ropes.

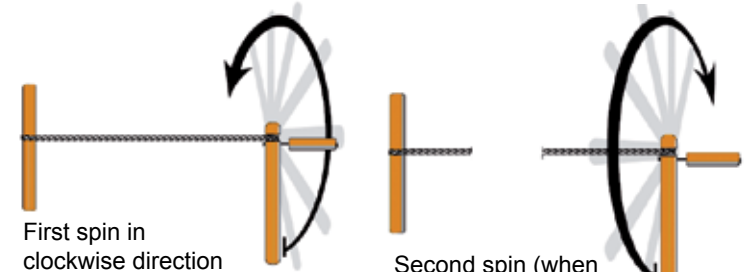
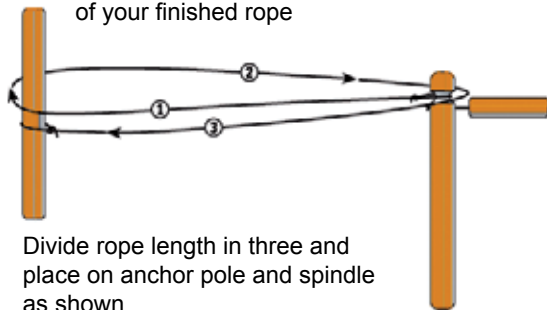


Ball of sisal

Use sisal rather than fibres to start making your rope.

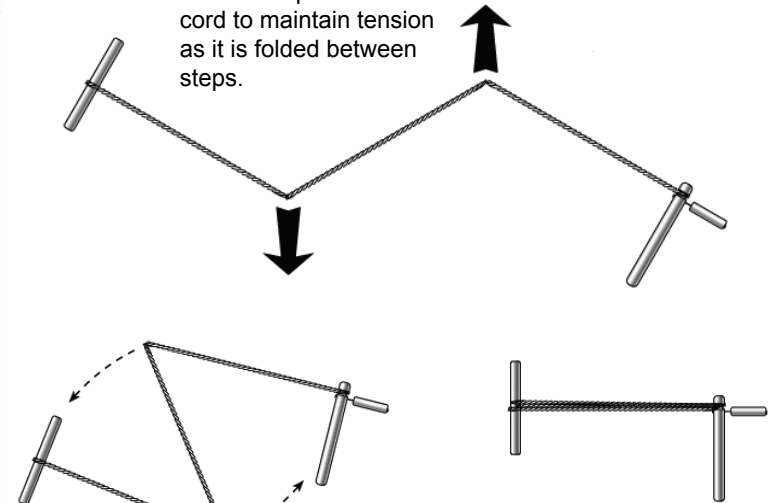


Setup for first spin - tie off one end of sisal to spindle, loop as shown and tie off to anchor. Allow 3 times the length of your finished rope



Second spin (when rope is folded) in anti-clockwise direction

Assistants pulls the cord to maintain tension as it is folded between steps.



When rope is 'tripled' it is a third of its original length

Finish off your rope by rolling in your hands to ensure lay of rope is correct. Place a piece of insulating tape or whipping around the end to prevent fraying

SIGN LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS

Teepee



Indian



Saddle



Sign Language



Fire



Water



Work



Yes



Dog



Drink



Together



How Many?



Horse



Short



See



Done



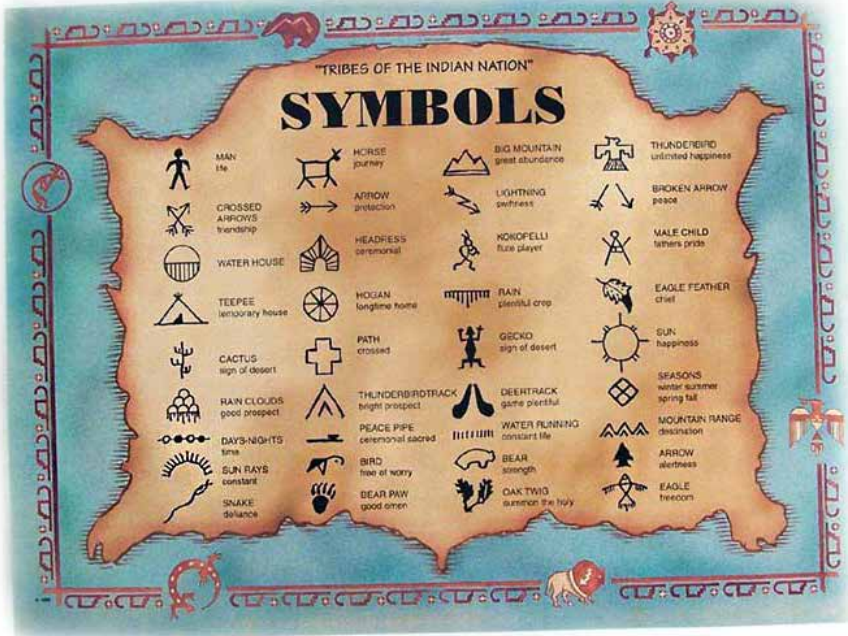
Die



Challenge



Leave

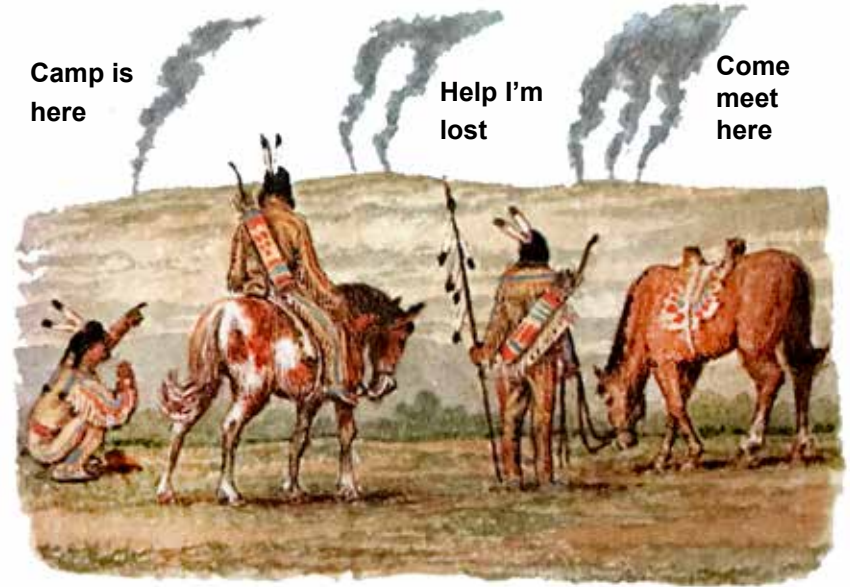


SMOKE SIGNALS

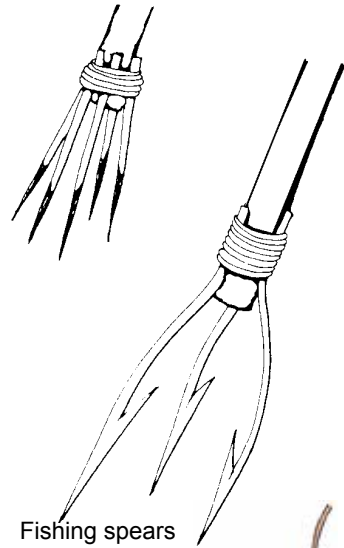
Camp is here

Help I'm lost

Come meet here



HUNTING AND FISHING



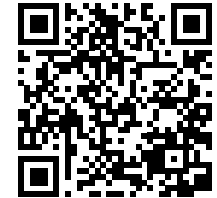
Fishing spears



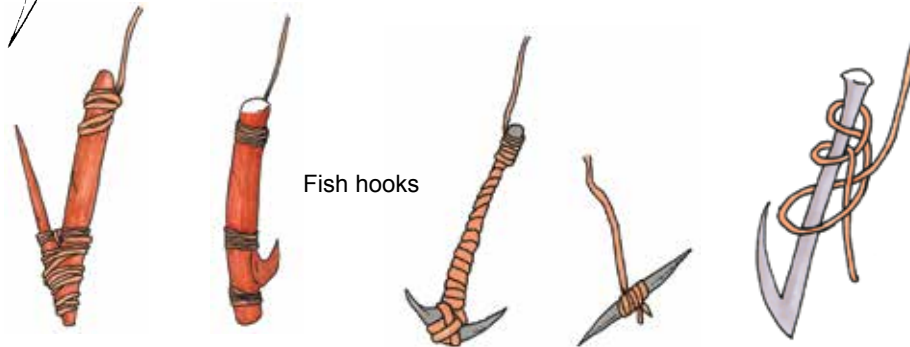
The Canadian Canoe made from birch bark and the kayak made of bone and animal skin are the invention of Native American and Inuit tribes. Canoes were used for travel and hunting.



Check out simple kayak building here



Hunting for game



Fish hooks

Make some primitive fish hooks using thorns, bone or rock flints

Cooking fish in a simple way



Making bread (twists)



FACE PAINTING



Face Painting is an important part of the Native American Culture. It's a sacred social act of distinction and a cultural heritage. On special occasions such as Sun Dance Ceremonies, Naming Ceremonies, Society Ceremonies, Healing Ceremonies faces of the tribe members are painted, Each tribe has its own and unique way of face painting and have different face painting ideas and face painting patterns for different occasion.

Some designs and color patterns may be "owned" by individuals, families, clans or societies. In some tribes

the rite to wear a design and color pattern may be handed down from one individual to a younger relative.

Face Painting has also been used for many other reasons- for hunting, as a part of a ritual, and military reasons (mainly as a method of camouflaging). It can also be used as a mark of status.

The Pawnee Tribe scouts would paint their faces white to symbolize the wolf, whose spiritual power was considered to be of great help for a scout.

Roots, berries and tree barks were commonly used to make the dyes for face painting. These natural raw materials are ground and made to a paste to make the dye. Clay of different hues is also used.

Colors in Native American culture have special significance. Red is a violent color; it is the color of war. Strangely enough black, is considered the color of 'living', worn on the face during war preparations. White is the color of peace. The color green when worn under the eyes is believed to empower the wearer with a night vision. Green paint was obtained from copper ores.

Powdered charred wood and black earth were used in making black paint. The base for red paints, probably the most commonly used color, were crimson-colored clay. A brownish-red paint could be obtained by baking yellow clay over ashes until it turned red.



GAMES

Almost every Native nation across North America has a version of Ring and Pin that children traditionally played, and sometimes still play. Some of the games have different names, and most of them use different materials. But what they have in common is that every Ring and Pin game is played basically the same way, and all of the games are designed to help children develop eye-hand coordination (and have fun!).

Ring and pin Game



Stick Dice

Create a collection of six dice sticks - lollipop sticks are ideal for this. On one side place native symbols on the other side the remain blank.

To play the game the sticks are held in your hand and tossed into the air so that they land on a flat surface.

Points awarded for coloured faces upwards
6, 5,4,3,2,1

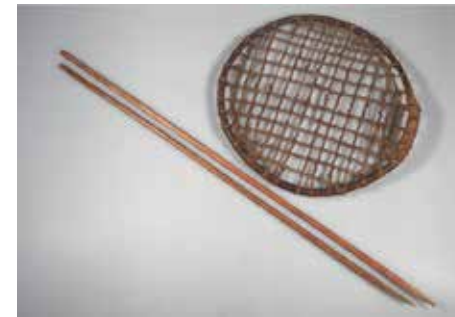
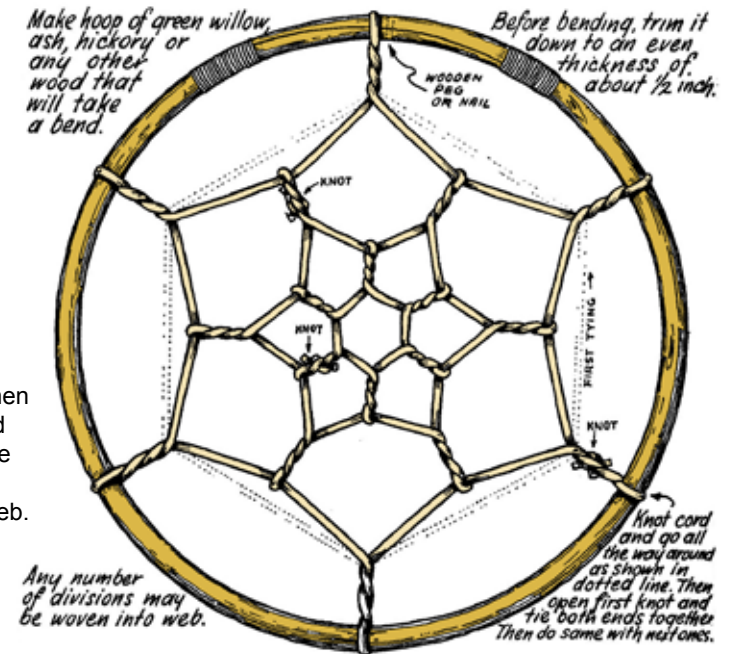


Memory game

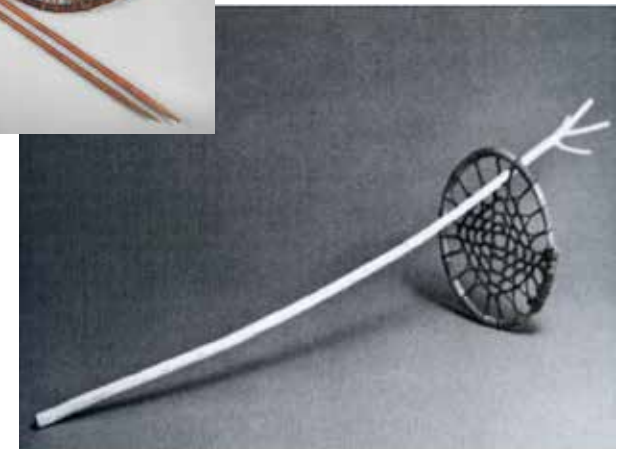
Observation skills were very important for native people. To play this game a collection of coloured stones or beads are placed in a row or pattern. The next player has 30 seconds to study the pattern and arrangement and recreate it.

Hoop Game

Hoops and throwing sticks are created as shown. The hoop is then thrown into the air and player try to 'spear' the hoop by getting their spear caught in the web.



Examples of hoop game pieces on display in Native American museum in New York



FEATHERS



In Native American culture it is believed that all things possess an inherent virtue, power, and wisdom. The feather, for example, is a powerful symbol that signifies honor and a connection between the owner, the Creator, and the bird from which the feather came. It symbolizes trust, honor, strength, wisdom, power, and freedom. It is an object that is deeply revered and a sign of high honor.

Native American warriors were awarded a feather when they won a battle or were particularly brave in war. When a feather falls to the earth, it is believed to carry all of the bird's energy, and it is perceived as a gift from the sky, the sea, and the trees.

Each type of feather represents something different. The eagle's feather, however, is one of the most esteemed. In Native culture, the eagle is considered the strongest and bravest of all birds. For this reason, its feathers symbolize what is highest, bravest, strongest, and holiest. It has strong medicine.

An eagle's feathers are given to another in honor, and the feathers are displayed with dignity and pride. To wave it over everyone present means everyone is wished peace, prosperity, and happiness.



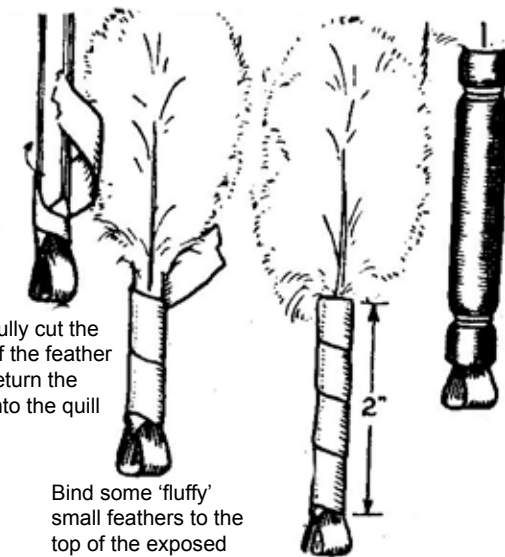
White feathers can be bought in craft shops or online craft supply centers . These can be coloured to create 'eagle' feathers.



Woodland Indian roach with one or two eagle feathers. It can be tied on as shown or fastened to a skull cap.



Carefully cut the end of the feather and return the end into the quill



Bind the bottom of the feather with some red cloth or leather thong

Bind some 'fluffy' small feathers to the top of the exposed shaft



Two methods of wearing a single feather. Above - fastened to hank of hair, and at right, fastened to beaded headband. Two feather may also be used.

White feathers can be dyed at the tips with liquid shoe polish and a small brush



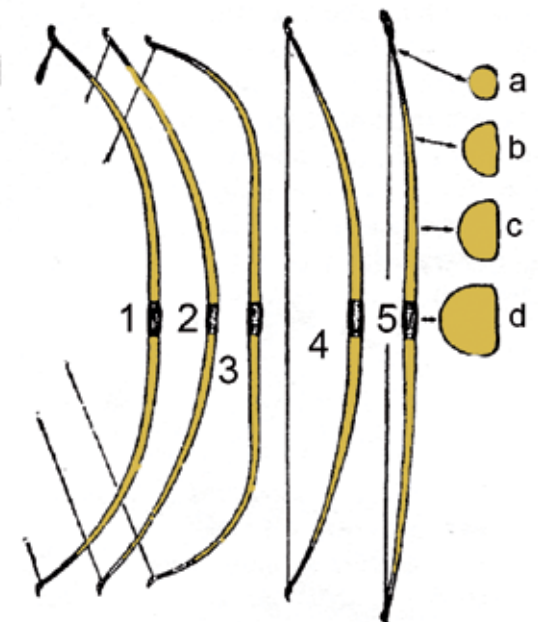
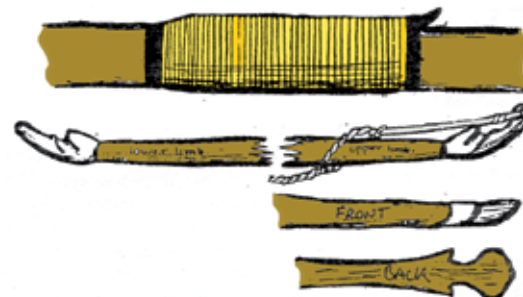
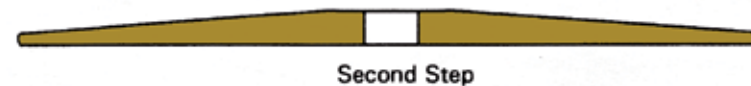
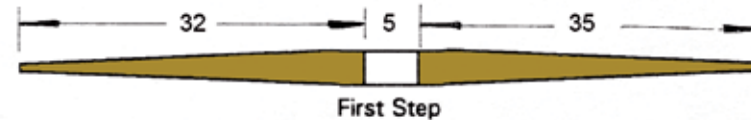
BOWS AND ARROWS

The bow and arrow is a basic hunting weapon of some tribal people. You could try making these implements in Ireland for an archery competition, for example. For the bow well seasoned wood is best but unseasoned will do if that is all that is available. Yew is the best wood. elm, birch, willow and hazel are alternatives.

For your bow stave select a supple stave. It should be about 120cm long, but match its size to the individual. To determine the correct stave length for you, hold one end of the stave at the hip with the right hand, reach out sideways with the left hand and mark the extent of your reach as the length of the bow. This will give you a standard type of bow. Fashion the stave so that it is 5cm wide at the centre, tapering to 1.5cm at the ends. Notch the ends to take the bowstring about 1.25cm from the ends. Remove the bark if you chose. When the bow has been whittled into shape rub it all over with oil.

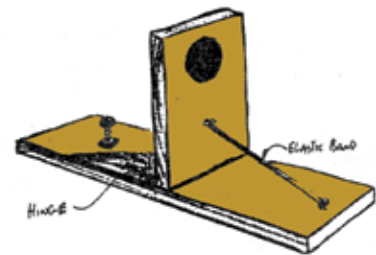
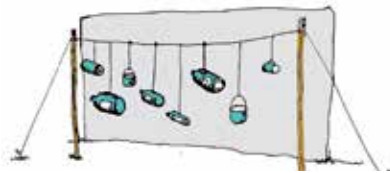
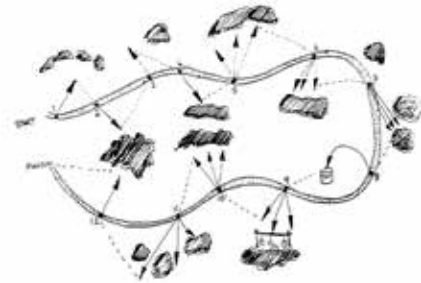
Any straight wood will do for arrows but birch is one of the best. Keep them straight and as smooth as possible. A piece of string tied between two points will give you a straight edge to check them against. At one end make a notch 6mm deep to fit the bow string. Check that the notch in the end of each arrow is wide enough to fit over your bowstring. To increase flight accuracy attach three feathers to the end of the arrow.

A 'ball' of duct tape placed the end will provide a safety point. A bow and arrow should always be used in a safe manner in a marked off target space. Never point an arrow at a person or animal.



ARCHERY COURSE

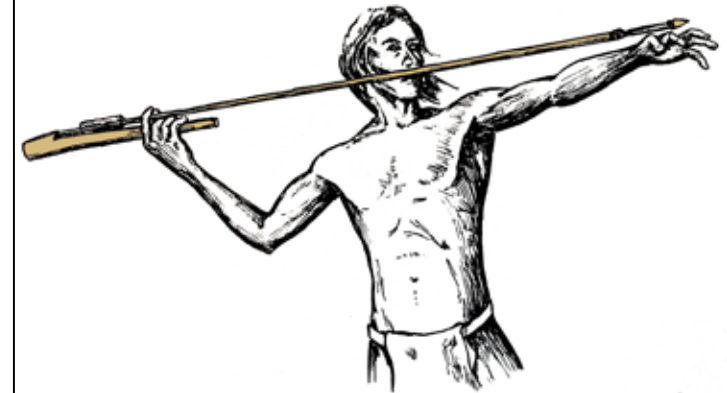
Set up an action based archery course. The course follows a trail and would be used in the same way as a golf course. Make sure that there is clear ground behind each target and that no stops overlap each other.



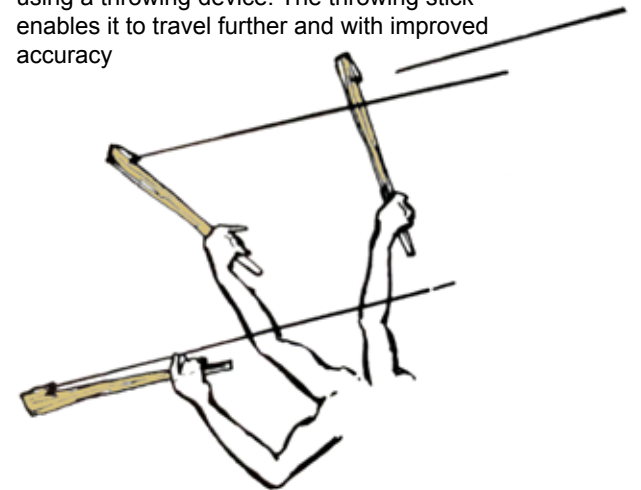
Pop up and down targets are easily made with some pieces of plywood, hinges and elastic bands



ALTAN SPEARS



Altan spears are long arrows. They are fired using a throwing device. The throwing stick enables it to travel further and with improved accuracy

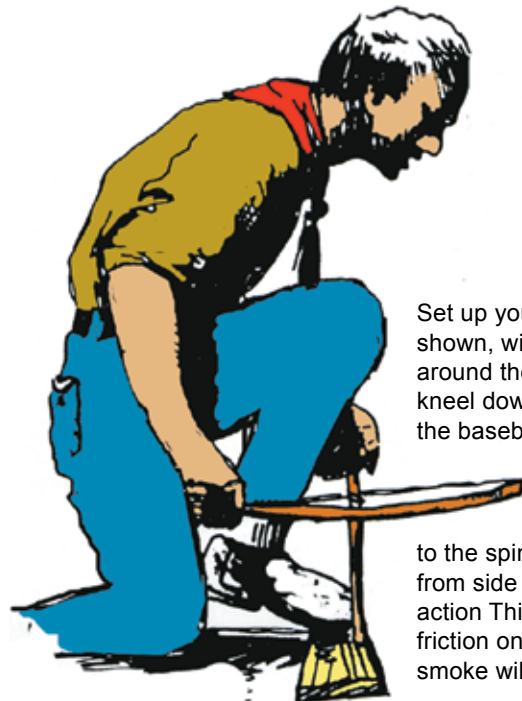
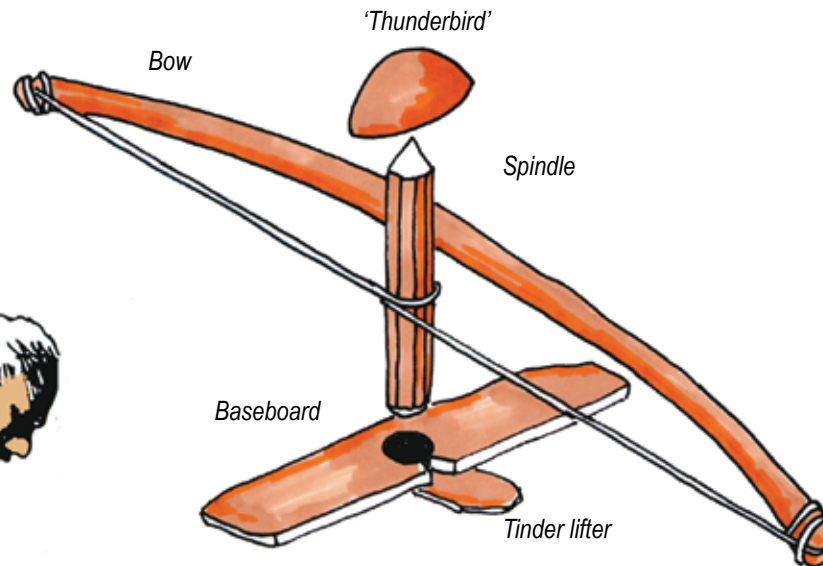
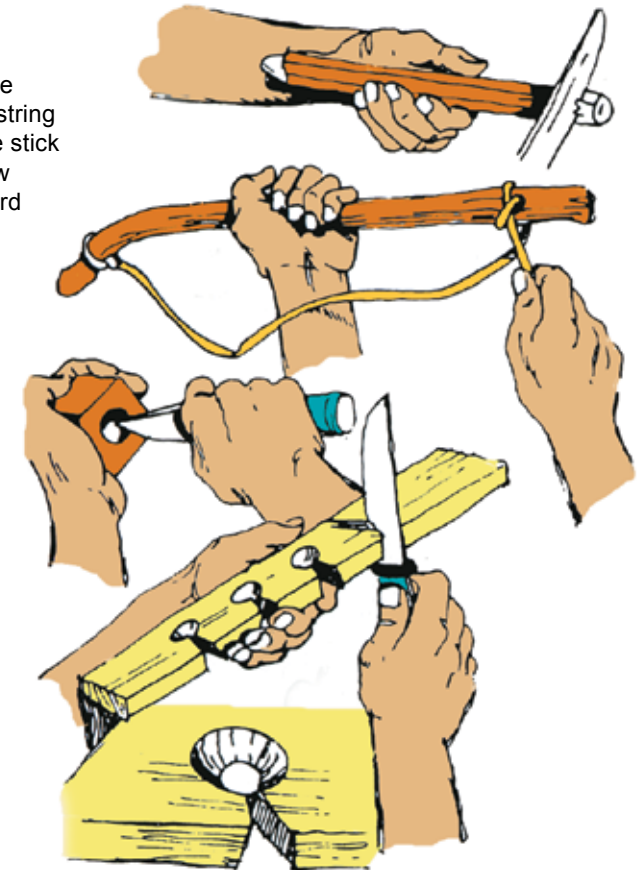


FIRE LIGHTING

The ability to create fire is an essential survival skill. Native Americans used the bow and spindle technique to light fire.

To create fire by friction - you first need to make the elements - a bow, a spindle, a 'thunderbird' and a base board. The timber used needs to be dry deadwood - hazel, ash, lime and elm are good woods to use for this purpose.

The spindle is a piece of wood that is pointed at one end and rounded at the other. To get a good grip on the bow string it is best to flatten out the sides of the stick so it has a hexagonal shape. The bow is a bow shaped stick with a loose cord attached as shown.



Set up your apparatus as shown, with one turn of the bow around the spindle. It is best to kneel down, placing your foot on the baseboard. Apply pressure

to the spindle and push the bow from side to side in a sawing action. This action will cause friction on the baseboard and smoke will rise into the air.



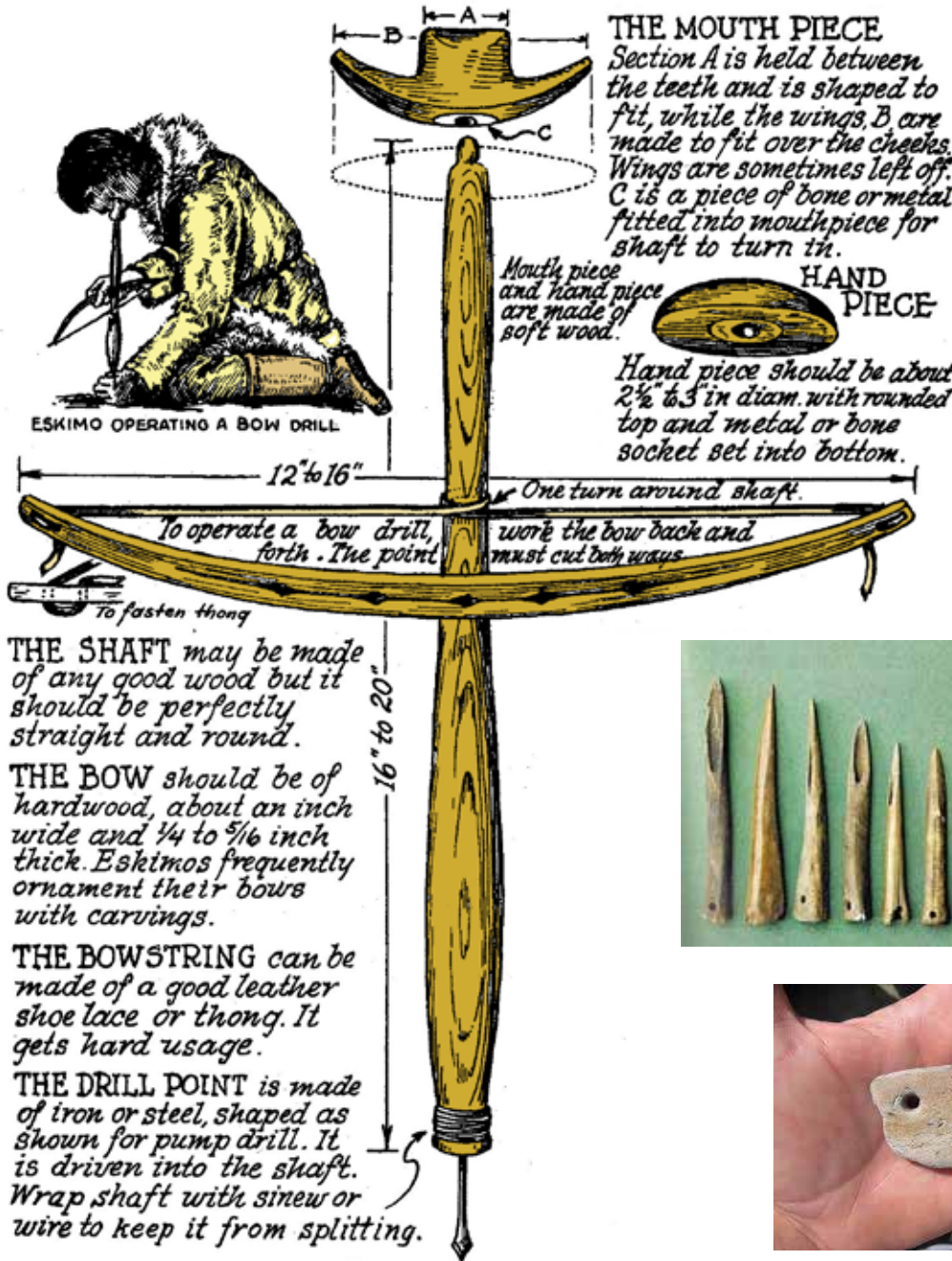
Create a baseboard using a flat piece of wood not more than 10 - 15 mm thick. A number of burn holes are created using the spindle then a slot is cut so as to create a channel into which you place your tinder.

The idea is to create enough hot timber ash that will fall on the tinder in the slot and allow it to smoulder. Continue with the sawing action until the smoke thickens and you think it is about to take flame.

Then stop quickly and blow very lightly onto the tinder. If you are lucky it will catch flame.

CRAFT WORK

The bow drill and fire by friction bow are similar tools. Holes can be drilled by friction but with the arrival of steel and iron the bow drill became a tool in itself. This tool provided the means to drill holes for the creation of tools, and craft items. The bow drill illustrated can be easily made today and some projects attempted. The bow uses a mouth piece in the Eskimo tradition to apply pressure and allow both hands to be used one for the bow and the other to hold the piece but you can also use a hand piece as shown to apply pressure to the drill shaft.

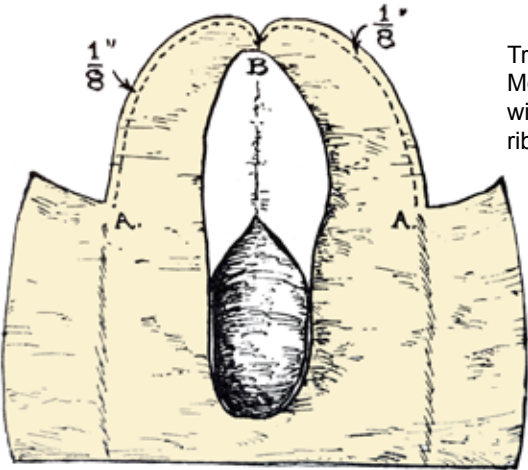


MOCCASINS

Moccasins are the traditional footwear of native American nations. There are a simple design and are created out of one piece of leather.

In a modern context the design is favoured for slippers and house shoes. The house shoe designs can be made for felt as well as soft leather.

It is a good idea to make a sample version out of cardboard to get the size right then use this sample as a template to use to cut out the pattern of your shoes in felt or leather.



Traditional Moccasin design. Moccasins were also decorated with beadwork and embodied ribbons.



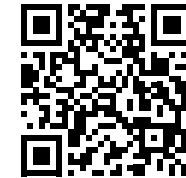
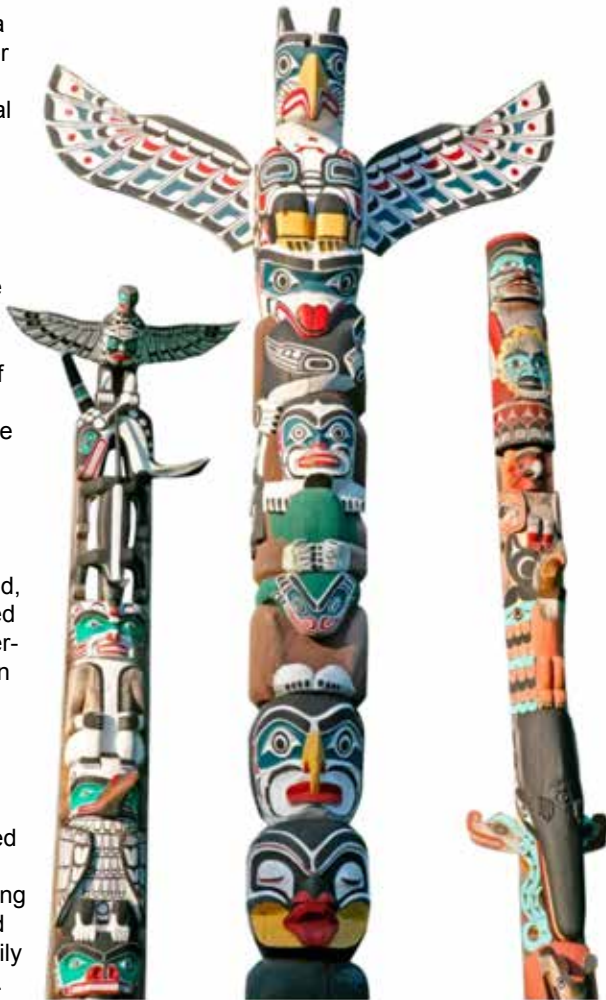
TOTEM POLES

A totem pole is a specific reminder of a particular story or ancestral legend or event within a tribe.

Each nation has its own distinctive Totem Style. Totem Poles on the east coast of Vancouver tend to have elaborate designs

When a totem pole is first raised, guests are invited to a 'Potlatch' ceremony and given small gifts

Totem poles are always positioned facing water, so that people visiting the village would be aware of family and tribe history.



There are three types of totem poles. Crest poles displaying ancestral stories, Mortuary Poles to show the locations of a chief and hose posts which form part of structures and carry family symbols and crests.

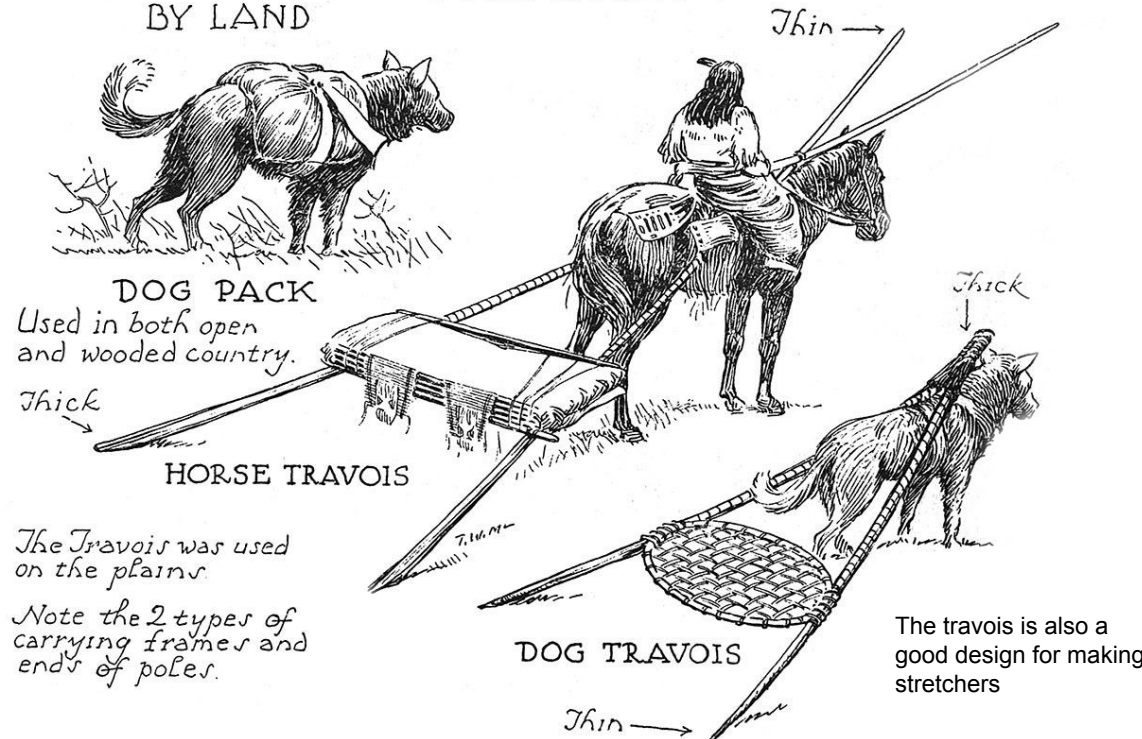
NOMADS

The nomadic tribes survived on hunting all types of game, such as elk and antelope, but, the buffalo was their main source of food. At this time, the Plains Indians travelled on foot, not yet having obtained horses. Every part of the buffalo was used. In addition to providing food, the skins were used for tipis and clothing, shields, and ropes; they used dried buffalo dung for fuel; sinew or muscle was used to make bowstrings. Following the seasonal migration of the buffalo, the tipis that the Plains Indians lived in were ideal for their nomadic lifestyle, as they were easily put up and disassembled.

By the early 18th century, some tribes had fully adopted a horse culture. The Comanche were among the first to adopt a mounted nomadic lifestyle, and before long, all the Plains tribes integrated them into their daily lives. Horses enabled the Indians to travel faster and further in search of buffalo and to transport more goods, making their lives much easier.

In the northern parts of Canada other Inuit tribes followed the herds of wildlife of that region including, deer, moose, seals and whales.

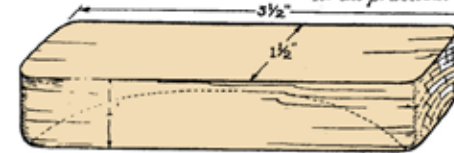
INDIAN TRANSPORTATION BY LAND



SNOW GOGGLES

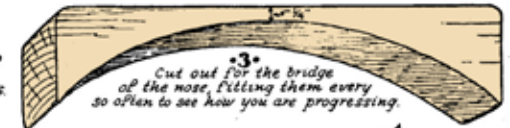


These goggles do your squinting for you. They are used by Eskimos, Indians & Trappers in the far north as a protection against snowblindness. The narrow slits and the blackened inner side keep out most of the intense glare of the sun on ice and snow and still enable the wearer to see well enough for all practical purposes.



1. Any soft wood (or better still, walnut, of which the ones described are made) may be used. It should be straight grained. Round off the corners. Then with a piece of cardboard and shears make a template of the curve of the forehead at the line of the eyebrows.

2. Mark the line on the edge of the block and cut out as shown at right. Goggles should not fit too close or steam will form on the inside on cold days.

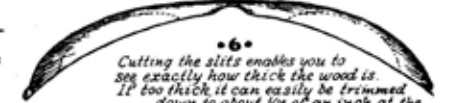


3. Cut out for the bridge of the nose, fitting them every so often to see how you are progressing.



4. Clamp in vise and cut out the depressions with a gouge or kni. The depressions or hollows should be from 7/8 to 1/2 inch deep at the deepest point.

5. Then cut away the surplus wood to about the shape shown here. Care must be taken not to cut away too much at first. The slits are then cut out with the point of a knife and a keyhole saw if one is handy.



6. Cutting the slits enables you to see exactly how thick the wood is. If too thick it can easily be trimmed down to about 1/8 of an inch at the thinnest part which is right at the slit. Cut small slots at the ends for buckskin thongs with which the goggles are tied on.



Inner side of completed goggles.

Paint the inside and the edges of the slits with a dull black paint. The outer side may be painted, shalaked or finished with a coat of linseed oil.



CHIEF SEATHL

Chief Seathl was a Susquamish chief who lived on the islands of the Puget Sound. As a young warrior, Chief Seathl was known for his courage, daring and leadership. He gained control of six of the local tribes and continued the friendly relations with the local whites that had been established by his father. His now famous speech was believed to have been given in December, 1854.

In his letter (full text in the Scouting Trail) he outlines the relationship that mankind should have with the world around them.

His words echo to today and our concern for the environment, mans impact and the saving of our planet.

The Better World Programme (www.betterworld.ie) is a reflection of his words and provides many projects under the Sustainable Development Goals that sections can undertake.

The Native American tribes and many other tribal nations have much to teach us about how we can live in harmony with our world.

Baden- Powell, the founder of Scouting, spent some time studying the ways and culture of the American Native nations and other tribal nations in Africa. Many of the scout skills we practice today can be traced back to the survival and living skills of tribal people.



DREAM CATCHERS



Dream Catchers are a Native American spiritual tool used to help assure good dreams to those that sleep under them. A dream catcher is usually placed where the morning light can hit it. As you sleep all dreams from the spirit world have to pass through the dream catcher. Only good dreams can pass through to the dreamer while the bad dreams are caught in the webbing and are destroyed by the first rays of the morning light.

Traditionally mothers and grandmothers weaved webs for babies, these are the "spiderwebs" hung on the hoop of a cradle board. In old times this netting was made of nettle fiber. Spiderwebs caught any harm that might be in the air as a spider's web catches and holds whatever comes in contact with it.