

THE LEARNING CIRCLE

by Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

GOOSE WING FAN

Today, wing fans are carried by both men and women, usually traditional dancers or Jingle dress and Grass dancers. They are easiest to make when the feathers are from the same wing, but we have found a way to make them look good even when sorted from domestic goose pointers.

Arrange the set of 6 feathers as in Figure 1. All of the feathers will be either right or left facing feathers from the same side of the wing. The longest needs to be on the top, then lay the next longest to cover the first but below it, and so forth to the shortest on the bottom. As these feathers may not be perfectly graduated in size from large to small, adjust the tips as they lay in front of you.

Draw a line about 1 1/2 inch below the feather blades on the quills as they lay in this position. Cut the quills on this line. The hardwood dowels are glued and inserted into the quills of each feather as far as they will go and let dry. The feathers are now adjusted for size.

The wood block handle is drilled with six holes at the top end and a single hole at the base of the handle. The edges of this block needs to be whittled down with a pocket knife or other carving tool and sanded smooth.

Next, starting with the top, longest feather, insert it's dowel into hole 1 and estimate how much to cut off so that the quill fits snug to the handle. Pull out and measure up from the bottom of the dowel and cut off. Repeat with the rest of the feathers in order.

Now test all of the feathers, putting them all in position starting with the longest, lapping the next over the first, until they are all in place. Check for proper fit and lengths. Make any adjustments necessary. The holes in the handle are larger than the dowels to allow for adjusting the spacing when gluing.

Some scotch tape and a pile of old rags are useful in the gluing operation. On a table top, lay the rags in a neat pile and bunch them up into a form so they will support the curved shape of your fan. The handle needs to be lower than the feathers so the glue won't run out of the holes.

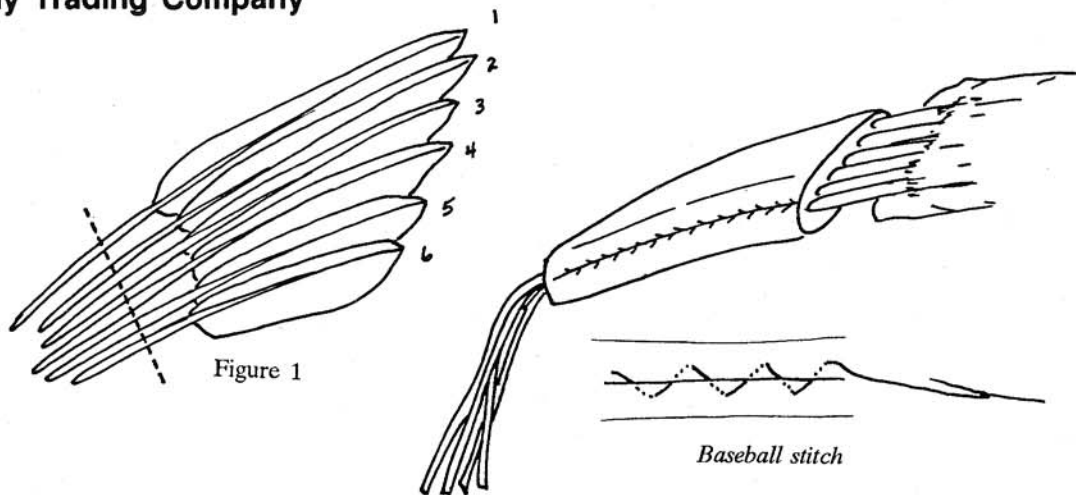
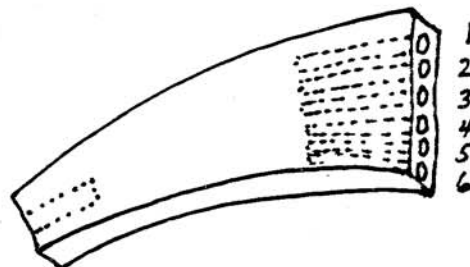
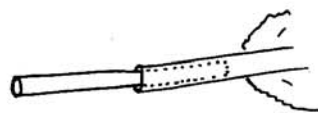


Figure 1

Baseball stitch



An alternative for decorating the handle is to darken the wood finish by burning it with a propane torch or a candle flame. Wipe the surface with a cloth and polish with a furniture wax or melted bees wax. Decorations can now be cut into the handle as well.

With the feathers out of the holes again, fill them about half with wood glue. Holding the handle with holes upright, insert the feather's dowel into each hole as before. Starting with the largest, lap the next one on top of the first as you proceed to the shortest. Patiently adjust the spacings until you have the right look.

Using a piece of scotch tape, lightly stick the tape across the feathers to hold them in place. Carefully lay on your bed of rags and again adjust the feathers. Another rag over the feathers will hold them in place until dry. Let dry 4-6 hours.

The handle can now be covered with leather. Cut two half patterns of leather to fit your handle. Lightly glue them to the wood handle. With a glovers needle and thread, sew the seams.

A bundle of fringe can be cut and inserted with glue into the single hole in the base of the handle.

Finally, custom decorating can consist of beading the handle, and adding decorative feathers or fluffs to the base of the feathers near the handle.

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Noc Bay Trading Company
PO Box 295
Escanaba, Michigan 49829