



Osage Straight Dance Ribbonwork

Training Document

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Objective

Constructing one's own dance clothes, or even making items to sell or trade, is a rewarding undertaking that can expand one's skills and knowledge about the dance style.

The purpose of this training document is to supplement the Osage Ribbonwork Training Class with an outline of the steps in creating a men's Straight Dance Ribbonwork suit.

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Materials & Supplies

From the Fabric Store:

- Various colors of moiré taffeta or taffeta ribbon (approximately 2 yards bought from the bolt)
- All-Purpose thread to match colors from above
- Pellon or other non-iron-on interfacing material
- Velcro
- Fabric glue
- Fray Check
- Straight pins

From Elsewhere:

- Graph Paper (4 squares per inch)
- Scotch Tape
- Markers/colored pencils
- Strip of aluminum flashing (2" X 36")

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Tools & Equipment

- Ruler / Yardstick
- Utility Scissors
- Fabric Scissors
- Razor / Knife
- Alligator clamps (~6)
- Cutting Surface
- Iron
- Ironing board
- Pan of water, sponge
- Sewing Machine, bobbins, extra needles

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Creating Your Template

Starting out, you should have already considered what style you'd like to construct (5-7-9-11-13 ribbon, 4 ribbon, etc.)

1. Turn graph paper horizontally and draw a horizontal line approximately 8-10 inches in length.
2. Begin drawing the first part of your design on the graph paper. Follow the sample below:



3. Now, finish off the design by rotating it 180 degrees (in your mind) so that diamonds and other shapes are closed.

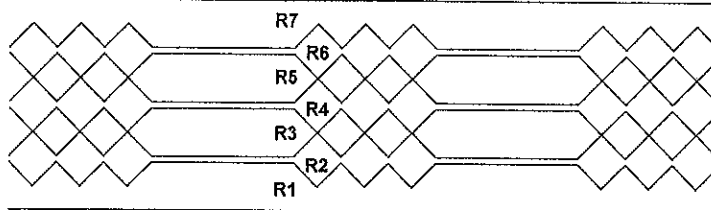


4. Repeat this several times until a balanced pattern is created. See next slide.

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Creating Your Template *(continued...)*

5. Complete your design so that a balanced design around a center ribbon (R4) is created.

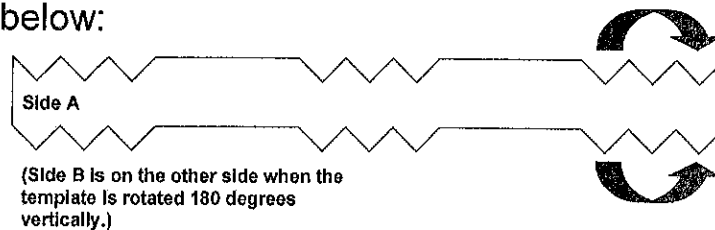


6. Once you have created a design that suits your expectations, you may want to make copies of it so that you can test various patterns by coloring in the strips with colored pencils or markers.
7. To cut out the metal template, tape strips of graph paper to the strip of flashing.

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Creating Your Template *(continued...)*

8. Transfer the bottom portion of your template design to one side of the flashing, and the accompanying part of the design right above it.
9. Cut out the template by following the lines of your design.
10. The finished product should resemble the one below:



(Side B is on the other side when the template is rotated 180 degrees vertically.)

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Cutting & Tucking Individual Ribbons

1. Cut taffeta and pellon into strips about 2" wide and of varying lengths:
 - ~20" (apron strips)
 - ~32" (legging/piping/vest strips)
 - ~10" (trailer strips)
 - ~45"+ (bottom vest strip)
 - ~60" (otter strips)
2. Following your design and color pattern, select your first ribbon (R1), and set it aside. It will not be cut to the template.
3. Select R2 and determine the "right" side of the fabric. Wet the taffeta and lay it flat onto the cutting surface with the "right" side facing down.
4. Lay the template (Side A) on top of the wet strip and apply alligator clamps to hold in place.

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Cutting & Tucking Individual Ribbons

(continued...)

5. At every "high point" in the design, make a vertical cut in the cloth strip starting at the high point and cutting to the edge of the strip. Make vertical incisions the entire length of the strip at each high point in the template.

↓ = vertical cut



← Silk/taffeta cloth

Notes:

- A. Number of ribbons of the finished product dictates how wide to cut the cloth strips. A 4 or 5 ribbon suit will require wider strips than an 11 or 13 ribbon design.
- B. You can always go back and trim the tiny pieces that are folded up after the vertical cuts made on the cloth.
- C. There needs to be a sufficient amount of cloth under the template so that it's firmly held in place when the alligator clips are applied to the template > cloth strip > cutting surface.

Cutting & Tucking Individual Ribbons

(continued...)

6. Once all cuts are made, fold the cut strips up & onto the template, following the design. With hot iron, press momentarily so that the fold will hold. Repeat for the entire length of the strip
7. Remove clamps and slip strip from template. Set cloth strip aside to dry completely.
8. Select R3 and prepare as done previously; HOWEVER, flip the template so that Side B is now the one the cloth strip is being cut to.
9. Repeat steps and alternate template accordingly.

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Assembly & Sewing

1. Allow all ribbons strips to completely dry before sewing.
2. Select R1 (whichever length) and a piece of pellon that is the same length.
3. R1 is not cut to the template design; iron a flat crease in it with the right side out, and insert pellon with fabric glue to keep in place. Iron lightly if necessary.
4. Select R2 and line up its placement on R1. Remember to allow sufficient space as a seam will be necessary when mounting the strip to the tradecloth.
5. Dab small amounts of fabric glue along the entire edge of the underside of R2.
6. Flip R2 right side up and line up its place on R1. Iron over R2 lightly if necessary to help it stay in place.
7. Note: R2 must be sewn down before gluing down and sewing any other ribbon strips!

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Assembly & Sewing *(continued...)*

8. Prepare sewing machine with thread and bobbin to match color of R2. Straight stitch with stitch length near to "0" should be selected.
9. Beginning at one end of the strip, sew along the design's edge on R2, as close to the edge as possible. Sew the entire length of the strip.
10. Repeat process for subsequent ribbons, gluing and sewing ribbons down one at a time.
11. Continue until all ribbons in design have been sewn to create a ribbonwork strip:



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Assembly & Sewing *(continued...)*

12. Once all the strips have been sewn, the top/last one (R7 in the example) will have a loose end. This is used to mount the ribbonwork to the clothes (apron, trailer, et. al.).

Mounting Ribbonwork:

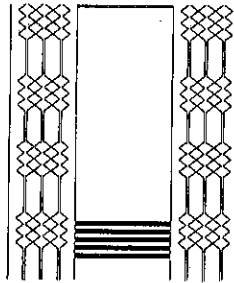
13. To mount ribbonwork strip to tradecloth, determine right and wrong sides of all materials.
14. For the aprons, lay tradecloth wrong side up. Lay ribbonwork strip wrong side up along the edge of apron, with the loose end up R7 closest to the edge.
15. Line up and pin ribbonwork in place with straight pins.
16. Sew a seam half the width in of the loose end of R7, along entire length.
17. Once sewn, remove pins and flip ribbonwork strip 360 degrees until the right side of both it and tradecloth are facing up.

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Assembly & Sewing *(continued...)*

Mounting Ribbonwork:

18. Sew straight along outer edge (what was R1) to hold ribbonwork strip in place. Iron lightly if necessary.
19. For aprons, finished product should resemble:



20. Process is similar for mounting other strips, as well as piping. Follow this process to mount remaining ribbonwork strips.

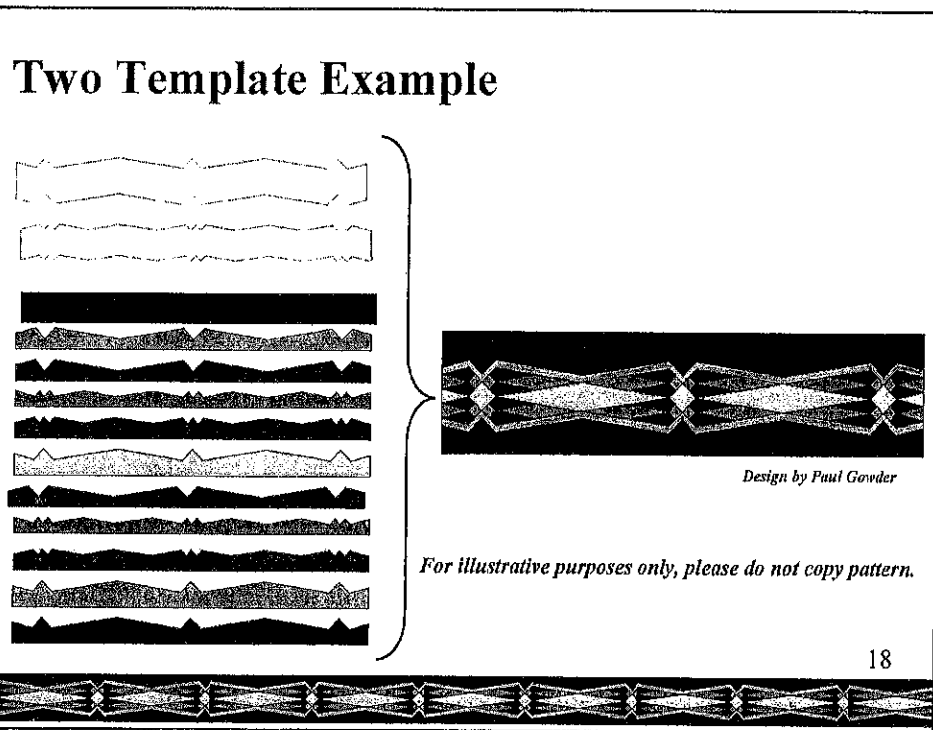
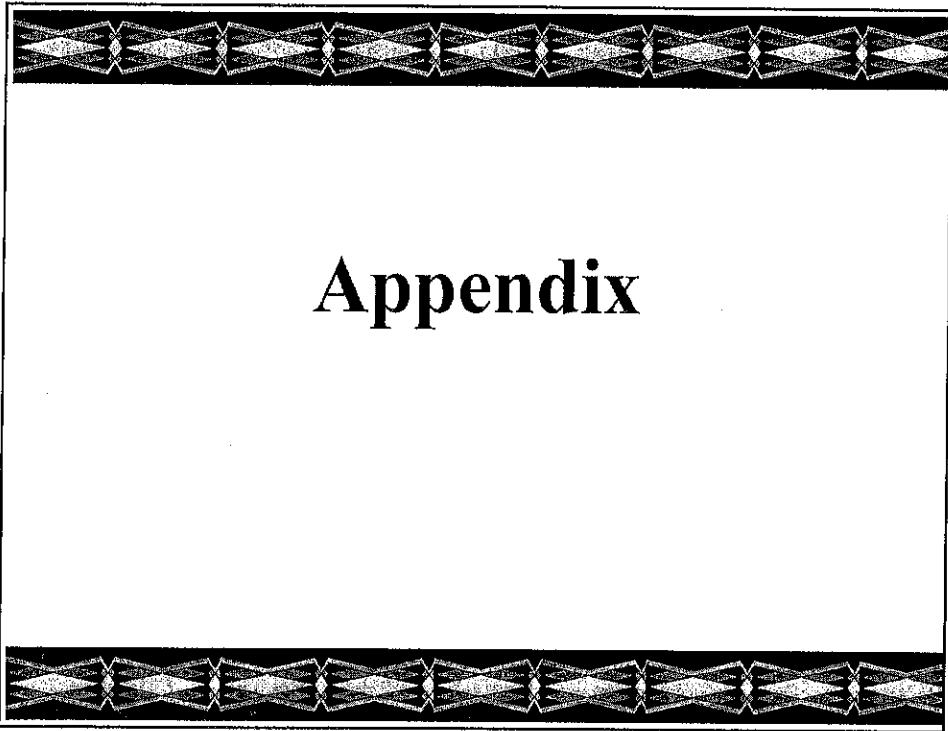
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Wrap-Up & Pointers

Below are a few pointers to consider during the ribbonwork construction process:

1. Using moiré taffeta from the bolt will allow suit to be dry-cleaned in the future. Other materials are not as durable.
2. For frays resulting after strips have been cut and tucked, use a toothpick to twist the small frayed edge under the strip; glue will hold in place.
3. Width of ribbonwork strips should be around 2 1/8" to 2 1/4" wide once mounted.
4. For an average size dancer, 2.5 yards of tradecloth is sufficient for a complete Straight Dance suit (2 aprons, 1 trailer, leggings, cloth for otter, and vest). See appendix for diagram.

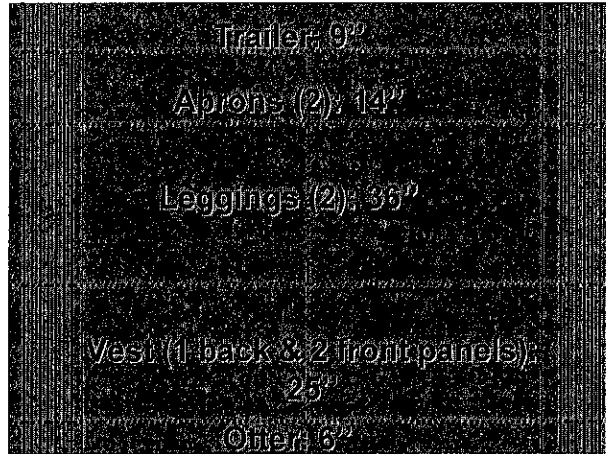
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Buying Enough Tradecloth

For an average size dancer, 2.5 yards of cloth should be sufficient**:

***Note: This is a guide illustrating the amount of material required to make each component of a man's suit – not a pattern from which to cut-out individual items.*



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Contact Information

Free free to contact us at any point during construction of your ribbonwork:

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