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MISSOURI RIVER PATTERNS

4799-500-033

Straight Dance Suit

with Ribbonwork Instructions

Front & Back Views



FRONT VIEW



BACK VIEW

THE RIBBONWORK SUIT

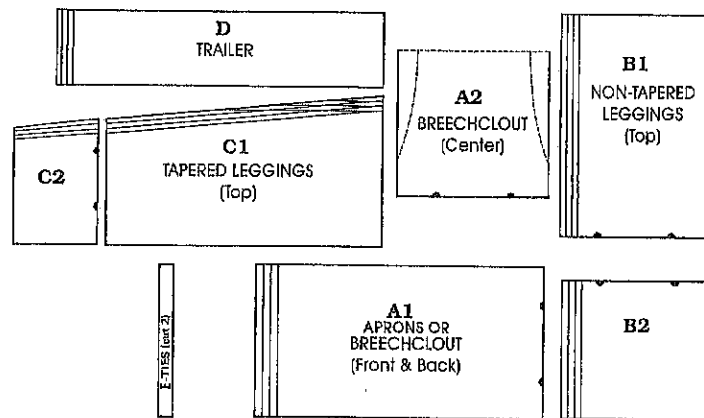
Often referred to simply as the "ribbon suit", this is the foundation of the Straight Dancer's regalia. It normally consists of a pair of aprons (although a full breechcloth can be used instead), a pair of leggings, and a dance trailer, all decorated with multiple rows of different colored ribbons that are cut, folded and sewn into the ribbonwork design. The ribbonwork is mounted on a high quality wool material in navy blue, black, or occasionally red color, with a unique rainbow selvedge edge, known as broadcloth or tradecloth. This multi-colored edge has several stripes of contrasting colors running lengthwise down both edges of the cloth. These stripes are strategically placed so as to lend additional decoration to the ribbon suit. To protect the ribbonwork, a two-bead edging of 11/0 white seed beads is added to the outside ribbon bindings on each piece of the ribbon suit, including the aprons, leggings, dance trailer, and otter drop.

Over the years, numerous variations of broadcloth have been produced, with many different combinations of numbers of stripes and colors used in its edge. Probably the most common style contains 7 stripes in red, yellow, navy blue, and cream white or grey. The body of the cloth itself was traditionally produced in dark navy blue, bright red, and occasionally black, although red suits are not nearly as common as navy or black. Over the last 10 to 15 years, several new colors have been introduced, including purple, green, and yellow. Another broadcloth style (particularly popular among the Osages) is commonly called "Three Band", which refers to the 3 wide stripes of yellow, royal blue, and red colors in the selvedge. Another very similar style is called "Four Band", for its 4 stripes consisting of red, yellow, blue and yellow.

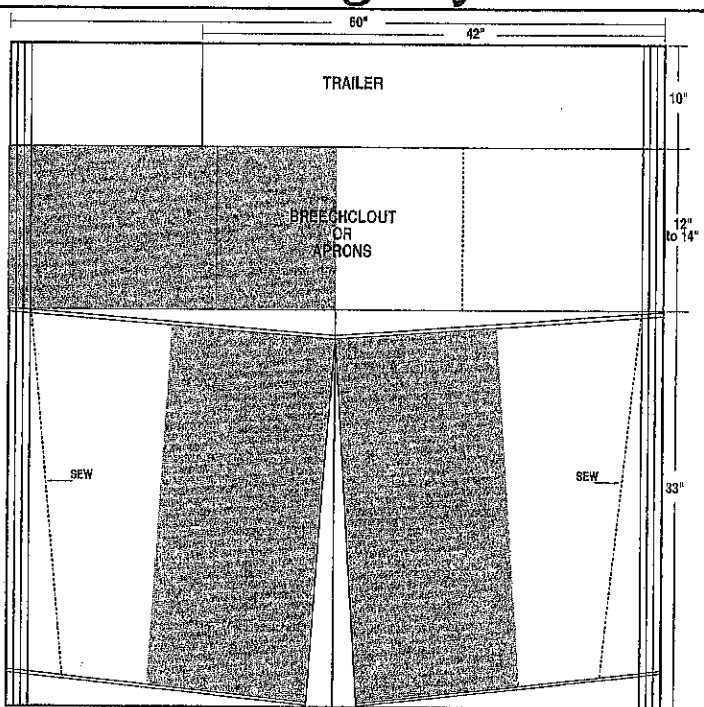
Beaded Suits

Occasionally, one may see a Straight Dance suit that is decorated with applique or loom beadwork instead of the more traditional ribbonwork strips. These are usually beautifully made using small seed beads in sizes from 11/0 to as small as 13/0. The designs and colors are quite similar to those used in the ribbonwork patterns, and the positioning and style of the decoration is the same as that on a ribbon suit.

Pattern Pieces



Cutting Layout



Sewing Guide

Several good types of selvedge wool broadcloth are available today, and this is the material that is almost universally used. By far the most popular color is navy blue; however, red is used occasionally. NOTE: when laying out the pattern on this type of material, keep in mind that it has a face side and a reverse side. This is most noticeable in the colored selvedge edge, which is somewhat brighter on the right side and has a slight grey or dull cast on the reverse side. The face side of the cloth oftentimes has a nap as well. Wool cloth without the rainbow selvedge can be used; however, it is not nearly as desirable nor as authentic.

Straight Dancer's leggings are almost always tapered and, due to the unique nature of their design, worn backwards. This method of wear evolved with the adoption of dance bells worn at the knee. The bells cause the flaps to be folded around the leg and in order for the elaborate ribbonwork to show, the leggings are simply put on so that the flaps with the ribbonwork fold to the front, and are held in place by the yarn garters and bells. The tapered-cut leggings also evolved because of the bells, since the taper allows less bulky cloth at the knees.

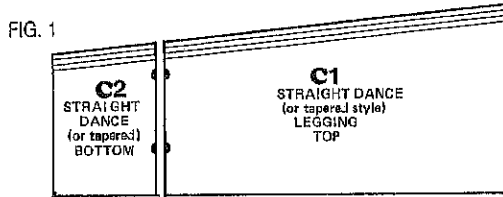
CUTTING & SEWING THE STRAIGHT DANCE SUIT

STEP 1. READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

Read all instructions carefully before beginning so you are familiar with all the necessary steps. *The ribbonwork strips should be completed before the aprons, leggings and trailer are begun. See Ribbonwork Instructions beginning on page 3.*

STEP 2. DETERMINING SIZE

The tapered legging pattern marked "C" will produce a piece of cloth with the dimensions shown in the cutting layout. This size legging will fit most dancers that are 5'2" to 6' tall and with a measurement around the thighs of less than 27". The width may need to be cut down a bit if you have extremely slender legs. Before cutting an expensive piece of rainbow selvedge broadcloth, you may wish to make a "test" legging from an old bed sheet, muslin, or canvas in order to assure proper fit.

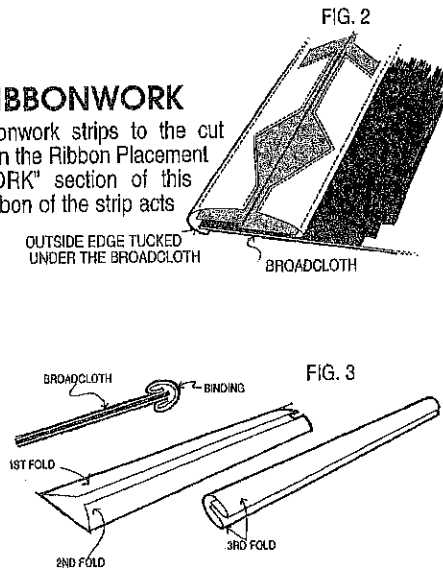


STEP 3. PATTERN PREPARATION & LAYOUT

Tap the two pieces (C-1 & C-2) of the legging pattern together and after if required. Trace the proper size pattern onto your material, marking the side seam and the cut line if desired. Take a look at the cutting layout at left for proper positioning of all pieces, being certain to cut 1 right & 1 left legging.

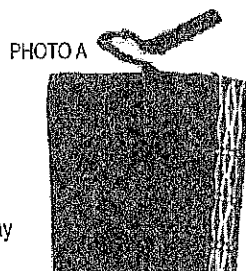
STEP 4. APPLYING RIBBONWORK

Apply the completed ribbonwork strips to the cut edges of the leggings as shown in the Ribbon Placement Layout under the "RIBBONWORK" section of this instruction sheet. The outside ribbon of the strip acts as the binding for the cut edge of the broadcloth. Fold under the outside ribbons as shown in this illustration. NOTE: it may be helpful to iron the folds before pinning. Pin the strip in place on the broadcloth and sew in place using a straight stitch.



STEP 5. BINDING RAW EDGES

After the ribbonwork strips have been sewn to the leggings, bind the bottom edge of the legging with a piece of 1" wide ribbon as shown above in Fig. 3. This binding can also be made of a piece of taffeta by folding and sewing. If a fancier border is desired, add a one or two-ribbon binding to the bottom. This covers the raw ends of the ribbonwork strips as well as binding the edges of the broadcloth. Remember that the ends of the ribbonwork strips on the breechcloth or aprons are left hanging loose & the ends "pinked".



STEP 6. UPPER LEGGING EDGES

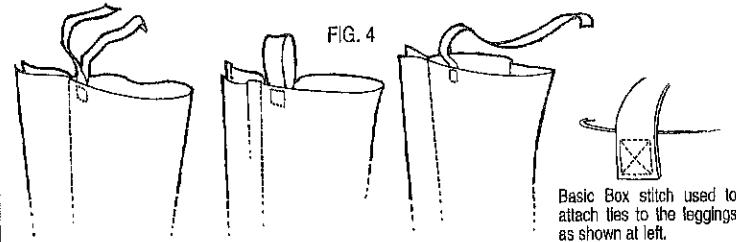
These are normally left plain; however, they may be hemmed, or bound with ribbon if you prefer.

STEP 7. PINNING AND SEWING

Pin the leggings along the diagonal side seam. The bottom opening should be just large enough for the foot to slip through and the top portion should be comfortable & not too snug.

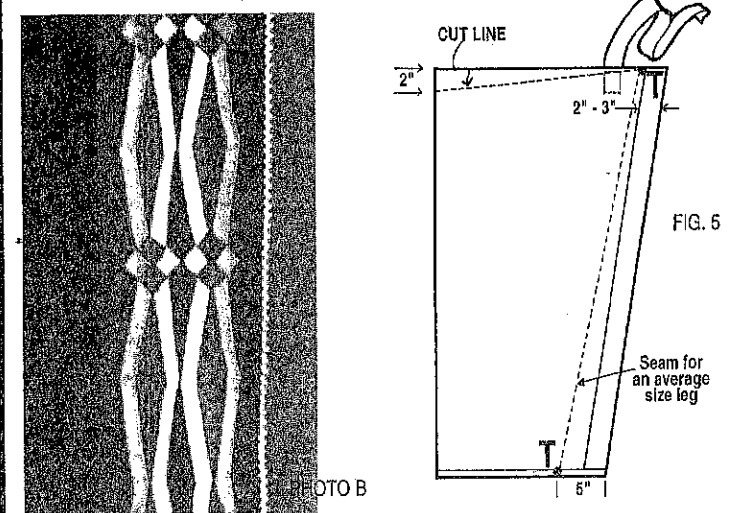
STEP 8. SEWING THE TIES

Sew each tie on the back side of the legging using a box-type seam as shown in Figure 4.

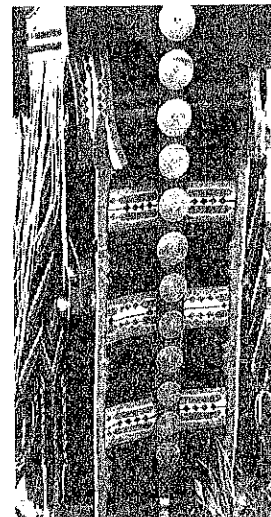


STEP 9. COMPLETION

Seam lines for an average size leg are marked on the pattern at point "T" and shown here in Fig. 5. To complete the leggings, edgebead the entire ribbonwork edge in 11/0 or 10/0 white seed bead as shown in Photo "B". This not only sets off the ribbonwork, but also protects the edge from wear, adding to the life of the suit.



DANCE TRAILER



The dance trailer is an essential part of the ribbon suit, and is worn along with the back apron. It can be worn either over it or under it, depending on individual preference and, among the Osages, this is said to be determined by which district the dancer is from. The trailer hangs from the waist to between 1" and 4" above the ground when standing erect, and is approximately equal in width to the distance between the two ribbonwork strips on the aprons. For example, if the clouts are 14" wide, with 2 1/2" wide ribbonwork strips on each side, then the dance trailer would be 9" - 10" in width, which allows the ribbonwork to show if the trailer is worn over the apron.

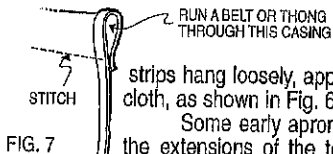
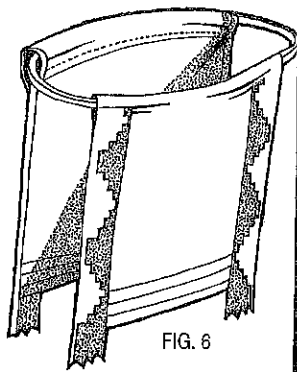
See step 10 for examples of ribbon binding mentioned here and as shown in the photo at left.

APRONS OR BREECHCLOUT

STEP 1

1. APRONS

Although a breechclout is the traditional style, aprons (commonly referred to as "clouts") are easier to put on and much more comfortable. Thus, they are used almost exclusively today. Extending from the waist to just above the knee, they are not quite wide enough to meet at the sides. Generally, this is 13" to 14" wide for the average size dancer, and about 15" long, in both front and back. Each apron is decorated with ribbonwork strips down both sides.



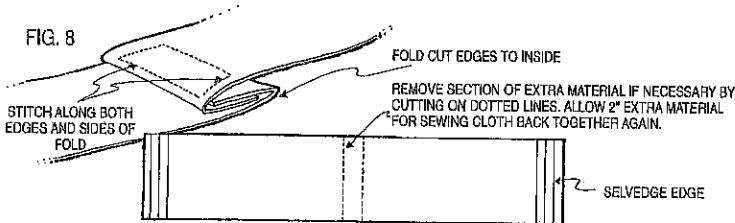
The ends of these ribbonwork strips hang loosely, approximately 2" below the bottom edge of the cloth, as shown in Fig. 6 and Photo "C".

Some early aprons were bound on three sides and tied with the extensions of the top binding, with elaborate floral beadwork designs often added (See accompanying photos). These are still seen occasionally today; however, most dancers use ribbon strips and fold over the top edge of the cloth, sew it in place, and run a belt of leather thong through this casing. See Figure 7.

STEP 2

2. THE BREECHCLOUT

After determining the proper width for your breechclout, cut out the pattern and tape the two pieces (A-1 & A-2) together. Using this pattern, proceed with cutting out the broadcloth as shown in the "Cutting Layout".



STEP 3

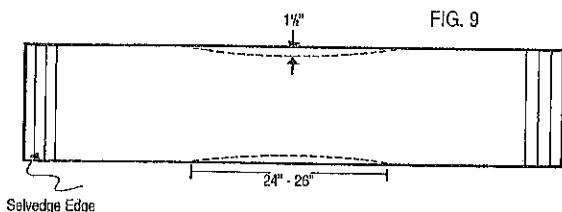
3. THE RIGHT FIT

Now trying it on, adjust it to the proper length. The selvedge edge should be approximately 2" above the knees in the front and the same length in the back. Shortening is accomplished by cutting a section out of the middle of the clout as shown above and then sewing the two pieces together again.

STEP 4

4. ADDITIONAL CUTTING OPTIONS

An optional method of cutting your breechclout that will make it a bit more comfortable to wear is shown in the illustration below as well as on the pattern itself. However, most old-style breechclouts were straight cut



RIBBONWORK

The style of ribbonwork used on Straight Dance Suits and presented here is most often referred to as "Osage Style", even though it is common to many of the other Prairie Tribes in Oklahoma, such as the Oto, Iowa, Ponca, Pawnee, Kaw, Omaha, Quapaw, Caddo, Wichita & Delaware. This art form was influenced in Oklahoma by various Great Lakes Tribes through way of Kansas and Nebraska during the Indian removals of the mid to late 19th century. Tribes from those regions with a rich history of ribbonwork were the Winnebago, Sauk & Fox, Potawatomi, Menomini, Kickapoo, Miami and Eastern Sioux who began practicing the techniques at least as early as 1810. For example, a pair of leggings was collected on the upper Missouri River between 1822 and 1824 and are believed to be Eastern Sioux. They are decorated with cut and folded ribbonwork & are made of navy blue broadcloth in the same style of the hide front seam leggings from this period.

Early ribbonwork was always done using silk ribbon; however, after about 1930, synthetics (especially moire) began to be used almost exclusively. Although expensive and difficult to find, 100% rayon Swiss taffeta ribbon is highly preferred today due to its ability to hold a fingernail crease; thereby making it the easiest with which to create the necessary folds. The next most desirable material is moire taffeta yard goods, which has good body, can be cut into any desired width strips and makes a beautiful finished product with its "watermark" texture. Regular taffeta yard goods can be used, but are normally lighter in weight and somewhat harder to crease. With either type of yardage, using an iron makes creasing considerably easier since it will make the folds semi-permanent and easier to handle while sewing.

CHOOSING A COLOR SCHEME

An important consideration in planning your ribbonwork is that of choosing an appropriate color scheme. In order for the pattern to stand out, bright contrasting colors between adjacent ribbons are a must. Some of the more popular shades are white, medium, light and royal blue, red, purple, pink, old rose (a dark or dusty pink color), yellow, turquoise, green & light green. Other colors and hues are used to a lesser extent and many times limited availability dictates color usage.

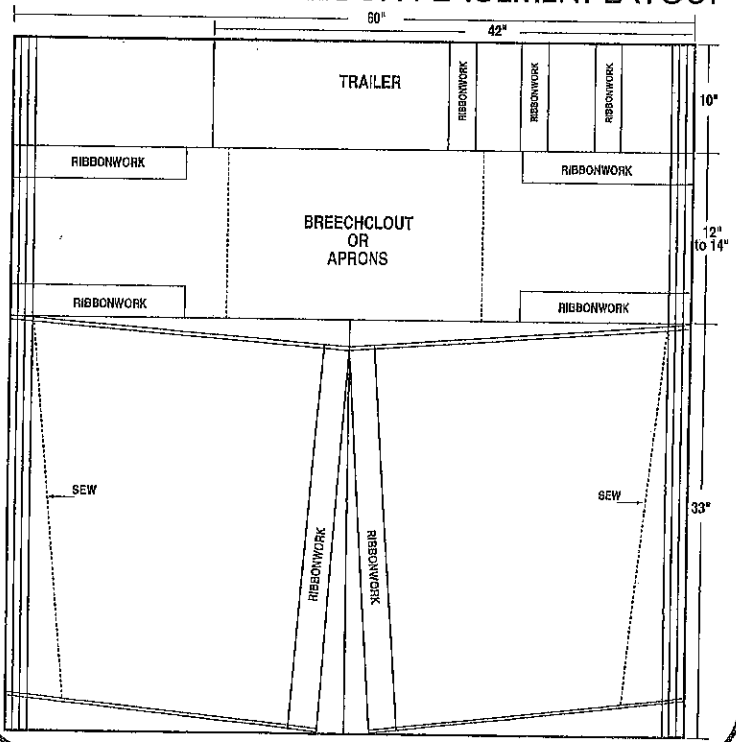
We have listed several appropriate color schemes on the sample patterns and it is suggested that you either use these or research authentic combinations before developing your own. Coloring the pattern with colored pencils will give you a good idea of how the finished product will look. Keep in mind that there are definite, traditional patterns that are used, so do not try to invent your own.

PATTERN

A full size pattern of the design you have chosen will be needed and it should be about 15" long for convenience. After this pattern is drawn, cut templates for each ribbon out of stiff plastic such as old X-ray film or a sheet of heavy acetate from an office supply or graphics arts dealer. These will be used to trace the pattern onto the ribbon for a guide when cutting and folding. The sample patterns in Figures 14 through 19 should be used to draw this master pattern.

For a bi-laterally symmetrical design (one that is the same on both sides of the center ribbon, or a mirror image), you will need to make templates for only one side and possibly the center ribbon. For example, a 9-ribbon pattern may require 5 templates, a 4-ribbon pattern requires only 1. For some designs, you will need to make templates for several ribbons. In many patterns the same type of cut is repeated on one or both sides and in some cases, as few as 1 or 2 templates will be required, as in Figures 1, 17 & 19.

RIBBON PLACEMENT LAYOUT



CONSTRUCTION

The following dimensions and techniques apply primarily to multiple ribbon patterns (7-13). For 4-ribbon patterns, each ribbon strip must be approximately 1 1/2" wide and the actual assembly of the ribbons is somewhat different. See Figure 1 for a detailed view of this style. As shown on the cutting layout, 9 strips of ribbonwork are required. 3 for the dance trailer, 4 for the clout and two for the leggings. It is recommended that a practice piece be constructed prior to making the actual ribbonwork strips. This will allow you to become familiar with the materials and refine the required techniques. Then move on to the 3 trailer strips before doing the longer clout and legging pieces.

STEP 1.

1. RIBBON STRIPS

Cut the ribbon or yard goods into 1" strips for each of the interior ribbons. Cut 1 1/2" wide strips for each outside ribbon as these are folded under on the inside, and around & under on the outside to bind the edge of the broadcloth as seen in Figure 11. (Note: patterns 17-19 will require wider ribbon strips.) When using ribbon rather than yard goods, the bound edges must be trimmed off all except the first & last ribbons in each strip. Otherwise it will create too much bulk in the finished strip. The lengths of these ribbon strips should be 2"-3" longer than the finished strip length for the trailer & legging pieces. The strips for the clout should be long enough to allow for a loose overhand about 2" below the selvage edge of the broadcloth. See the cutting layout and photo "C" for details.

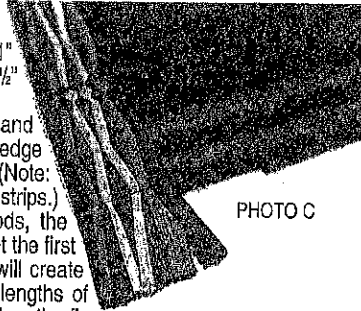


PHOTO C

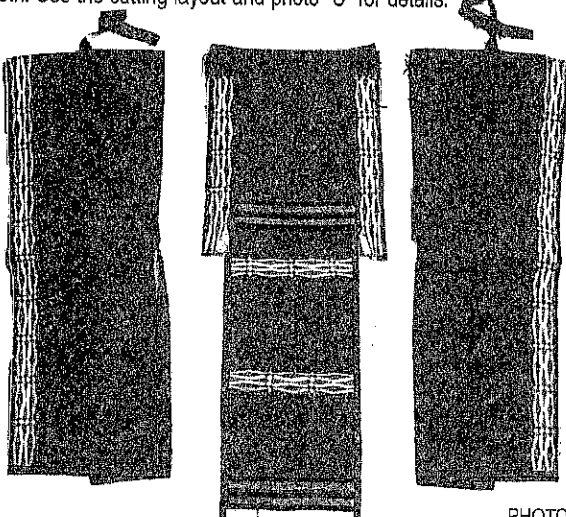
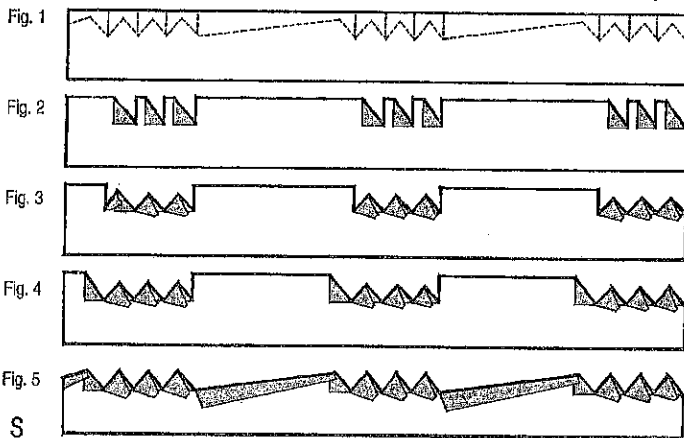


PHOTO D

STEP 2.

2. HELPFUL HINT

Since some ribbon and material will shrink at a different rate than others when ironed, we suggest lightly pre-ironing (on rayon setting) all strips before marking. If you do not use an iron to crease your folds, this step will not be necessary.



STEP 3.

3. MARK, CUT & FOLD

Figures 1-5 show the proper way to mark, cut and fold the ribbon. Crease each fold with your fingernail or an iron so it will stay while sewing in place.

STEP 4.

4. RIBBON BACKING

If your material is lightweight like regular rayon taffeta yard goods, you will probably want to use a backing to add body to your ribbonwork strips. A lightweight pellon or piece of cotton sheeling cut to the width of your finished strip works well. Sew the first ribbon 1 1/2" wide to this strip, allowing enough overhang width for binding the edge of the broadcloth. See Figure 6.

STEP 5.

5. BEGINNING THE STRIP

Using the template for the No. 2 ribbon, draw the design on the back side of a 1" wide ribbon strip (use a pencil, do not use ink). Using very sharp scissors, carefully cut from the outside edge down to each point and "V" in the design as shown in Figure 1. It is extremely important to mark and cut precisely since this is the most crucial step in determining the quality of the finished work. Fold carefully as shown in Figures 2 to 5, using your fingernail or an iron to crease the folds.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

STEP 6.

6. BASTING IN PLACE

Baste the cut and folded ribbon No. 2 in place, overlapping ribbon No. 1 as shown in Figure 7. Use a contrasting thread for basting to make it easier to see at time of removal, and do not baste where the sewing machine will cross over the basting stitches. Repeat this procedure for each successive ribbon in the pattern, until the design is complete. Be extremely careful to line up the points of each ribbon strip with the previous one, making certain that the design follows the original pattern.

STEP 7.

7. PERMANENT STITCHING

When the last ribbon in the design is basted in place, use a sewing machine and matching color of thread to stitch them all down permanently. Use a very straight stitch and, with the machine set at 22 stitches per inch, sew very close to the edge of the ribbon. You may wish to remove your basting stitches before sewing down each strip.

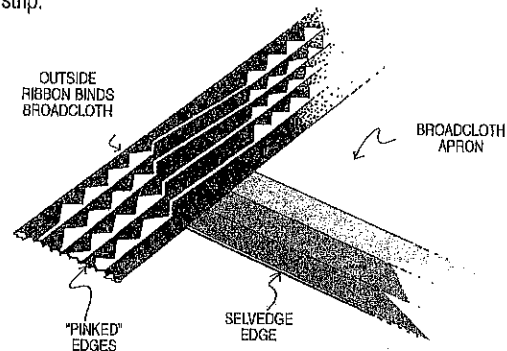


FIG. 10

STEP 8. ATTACHING THE STRIP

Make sure all the sewing is done and the basting stitches have been removed. The strip is now ready to attach to the broadcloth. Fold under the outside ribbons as shown in Fig. 10 on previous page. NOTE: It may be helpful to iron the folds before pinning. Pin the strip in place on the broadcloth and sew in place using a straight stitch.

STEP 9. FINISHING TOUCHES

Make sure all the sewing is done and the basting stitches have been removed. The strip is now ready to attach to the broadcloth. Fold under the outside ribbons as shown in Fig. 11. NOTE: It may be helpful to iron the folds before pinning. Pin the strip in place on the broadcloth and sew in place using a straight stitch.

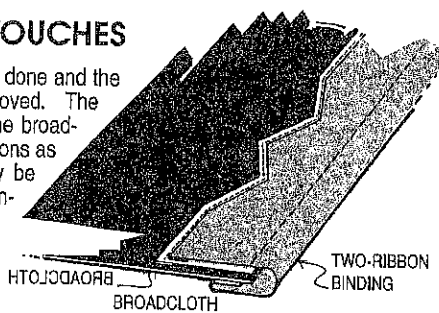


FIG. 11

STEP 10. HINTS

You may find that it's not necessary to baste all ribbons in place before sewing them on the sewing machine. Sometimes, pinning is sufficient and it is possible that each strip can be sewn in place immediately after folding is completed, without pinning or basting. However, basting is recommended for the beginning ribbonworker.

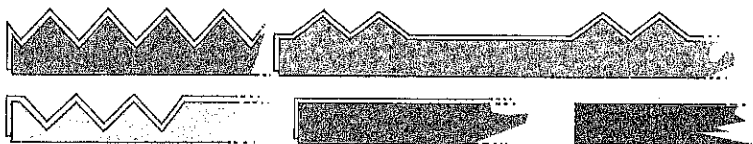


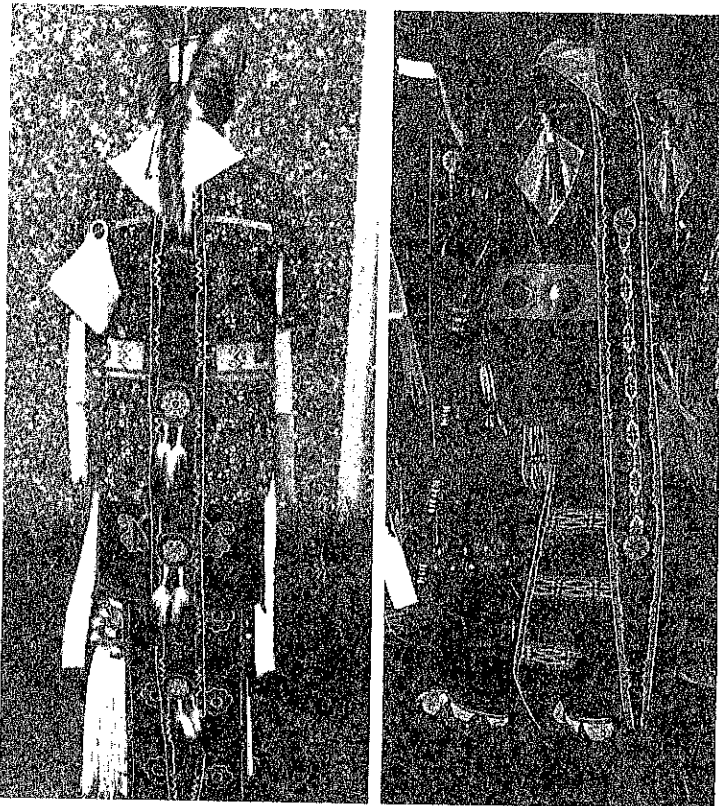
FIG. 12

Shown above in Fig. 12, are several ideas for ribbon trim as used on the sides of the trailer (see "Dance Trailer" section for photo) and also as trim on most Otter Dragers as shown in the two photos at top right.

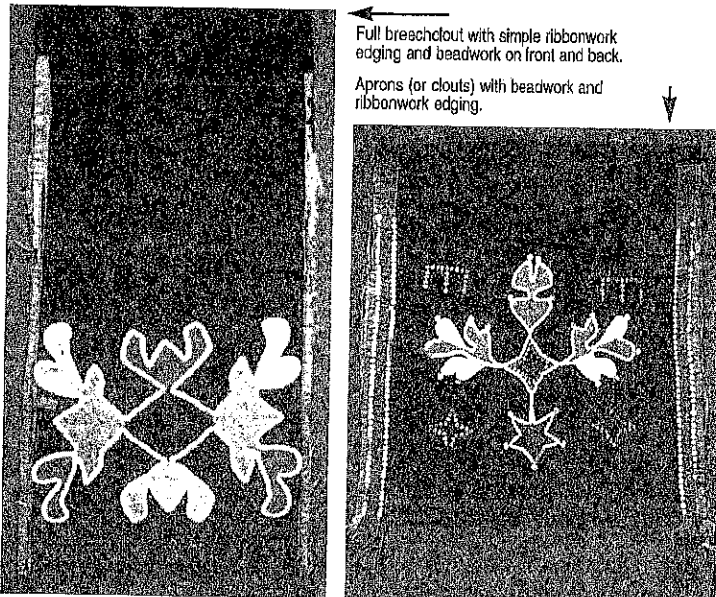
EXAMPLES (Ribbonwork & Trim)



From left to right, Benjamin Kahrahh, Randy Moore, Melvin Kerchee, Sr. and Abe Conklin again show off their finery and give us some nice examples of how the Dance Suit comes together. Notice the ribbonwork on these suits extends below the apron edges as mentioned in the instructions. Also, you can see how the ribbonwork on the leggings is wrapped to the front and held in place with the bells. All fine examples of the Straight Dance Suit.

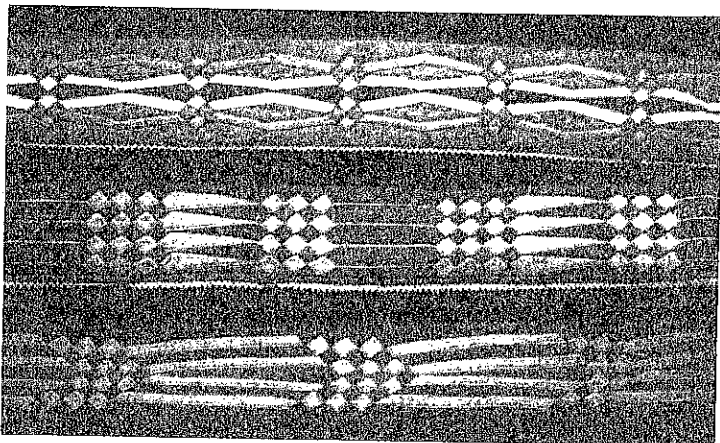


A couple of nice Dance Outfits showing the trim treatments used on the aprons and Otter Drags as mentioned in Step 10 as well as the ribbonwork on the photo at right.



Full breechclout with simple ribbonwork edging and beadwork on front and back.

Aprons (or clouts) with beadwork and ribbonwork edging.





GENERAL PATTERN INFO & GARMENT MAKING TIPS

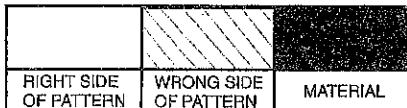
Pattern Marks & Symbols

- CUTTING LINE
- SEAM LINE
- FOLD LINE: PLACE ON FOLD OF FABRIC. DO NOT CUT ON THIS LINE
- GRAIN MARK: MARK PATTERN ON STRAIGHT GRAIN OF MATERIAL. KEEP ARROW PARALLEL TO GRAIN.
- SEAM ALLOWANCE: DISTANCE BETWEEN CUT EDGES & SEAM LINE.
- POINTS & CIRCLES: USED FOR MATCHING PATTERN PIECES.

★ INDICATES ONLY ONE PIECE IS TO BE CUT. CUT OTHER PIECES FIRST AND LEAVE ENOUGH MATERIAL TO UNFOLD AND CUT PIECE ON SINGLE THICKNESS.



NOTE: The above key is for use with instructions that deal with sewing steps and techniques.



NOTE: The above key is for use with the Layout and Cutting Section.

Due to the large sizes of several frontier garments, some patterns require taping 2 or 3 sections of a pattern together prior to cutting the material. These areas are noted on the pattern & in the instructions, and must be carefully followed.

Adjusting Patterns

Almost all patterns require slight adjustments in order to fit properly. Since leather and tradecloth is relatively expensive, we suggest making a cloth mock-up of muslin or an old bedsheet before cutting. Make adjustments to this for length, shoulders, bust, hips, etc. To shorten the pattern, fold and tape as shown in Figure 1. To lengthen, cut the pattern apart, spread the amount needed and tape over a piece of paper as shown in Figure 2.

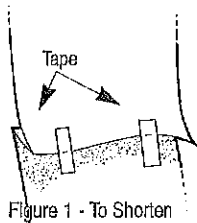


Figure 1 - To Shorten

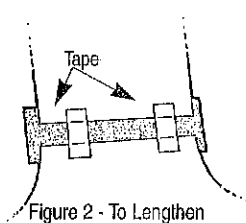


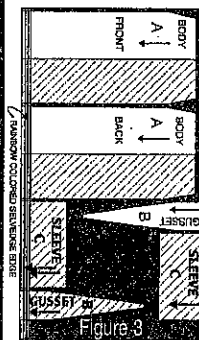
Figure 2 - To Lengthen

A general size guideline that should be followed when using Missouri River Brand Patterns is shown below and allows the use of most patterns for both men and women, from extra-small to extra-large. Some patterns may require either lengthening or shortening somewhat depending upon your height.

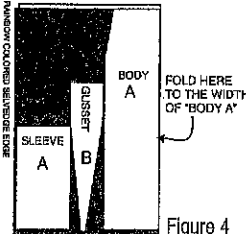
- SMALL: Women's 6-8, Men's Small
- MEDIUM: Women's 10-12, Men's Medium
- LARGE: Women's 14-16, Men's Large
- EXTRA-LARGE: Women's 18-20, Men's Extra-Large

Layout & Cutting

Fabric should be pre-shrunk if necessary by washing and drying, and then pressing if required. NOTE: Do not wash wool broadcloth or trade cloth. Straighten grain of fabric and make certain grain lines on pattern are parallel with the selvage edge.



SINGLE THICKNESS: Place fabric right-side-up as in Figure 3.



DOUBLE THICKNESS: Fold material with right sides together as in Figure 4. Pattern pieces that are shaded in the cutting layouts must be placed on the right side of the material with their printed side down. This ensures cutting one right piece and one left

Marking Fabric

Use tailors chalk, a tracing wheel (available at any fabric store) or soft lead pencil for transferring patterns to material. Do not use a pen, as ink cannot be removed and smears easily. Use straight pins to hold pattern piece in place while marking.

All pattern markings should be transferred to the material prior to removing the pattern. Any marks needed on the right side of the material should be made with tailors chalk, straight pins or thread basting, which can later be removed; or markings can be transferred to the wrong side of the material.

Fitting the Garment

When making cloth garments, we suggest that seams be pinned or basted, right sides together, matching points and circles. Check fit before stitching major seams.

Stitching & Hemming

Use a 1/2" seam allowance on cloth garments unless otherwise specified. If you are using a sewing machine, the throat plate should be marked for a 1/2" seam. If it is not, you can mark it yourself with a strip of adhesive tape. When hemming cloth garments, turn edges under and fold again so that no raw edges are exposed. See Figure 5.

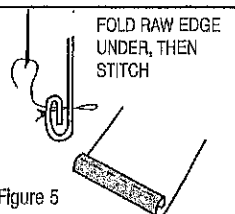
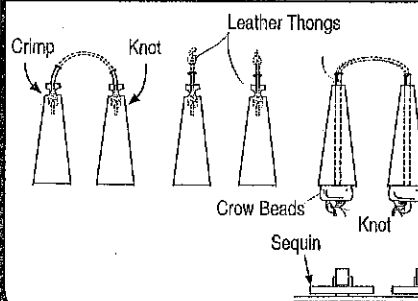


Figure 5

Attaching Cones & Sequins



There are many different methods of attaching these decorations to a garment. Here we have illustrated only the most popular.

