

## PREPARING THE WAR-BONNET FEATHERS

It is the white and black tail feathers of the golden eagle that are the war bonnet feathers, the coup feathers of the Plains Redmen. The more white on them the more highly they are regarded. As second choice, use dark eagle quills, mottled if possible but all dark if necessary. Imitation white eagle feathers are on the market for the purpose. Get the best you can find, but make a headdress, even though it be of turkey feathers.

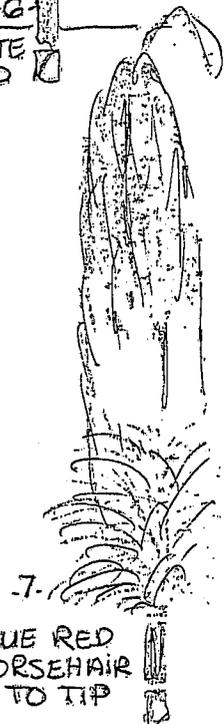
Thirty-two feathers are needed, half curving to the right and half to the left. Two should be larger and nearly straight for the center feathers. And all should match, which is to say they should be uniform and look well together. In addition the following are needed, best obtained from an Indian craft supply company.

96 white base fluffies  
 32 smaller tip fluffies  
 32 leather strips  $\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches

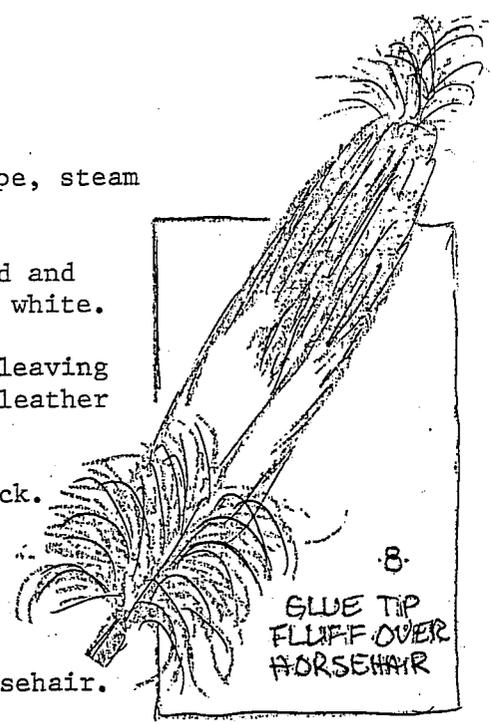
32 pieces red felt,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches  
 red or white horsehair  
 leather thong  
 airplane glue

Following the numbers on the drawings, proceed as follows:

1. Smooth up the feathers by fingering it. If in bad shape, steam it flat.
2. Tie a cluster of three fluffies at the base with thread and then add glue. Good Indian taste demands that base fluffies be white.
3. Fold a feather strip over the base and wrap securely, leaving just enough space at the bottom to slip a thong through. This leather should lie in the same place as the web of the feather.
4. Wrap the felt around the quill, and (5) sew up the back.
5. Wrap with white thread as shown for ornamentation.
6. Glue about a dozen strands of horsehair to the tip.
7. Glue a tip fluffy (white, yellow, or red) over the horsehair.



GLUE RED HORSEHAIR TO TIP



GLUE TIP FLUFFY OVER HORSEHAIR

## FEATHER PREPARATION

You will first need to determine which feathers are "lefts" and which are rights. Spread out all the feathers and you will see that, with all the feathers in the same orientation with the shiny, brighter side up, each feather either naturally curves to the left or the right. Separate the feathers accordingly into the two groups.

Now, straighten the feathers. For the nicest look, run the quill over an exposed light bulb (protect your eyes with sunglasses). (Sketch A) Gently apply a steady pressure on the quill until it stretches to the desired shape. Do not force it to bend or it will crimp. Occasionally turn the feather over so as to heat both sides evenly. For a fast straightening job, simply crimp the quill every 2" or so with your thumbnail (this will leave a mark, however).

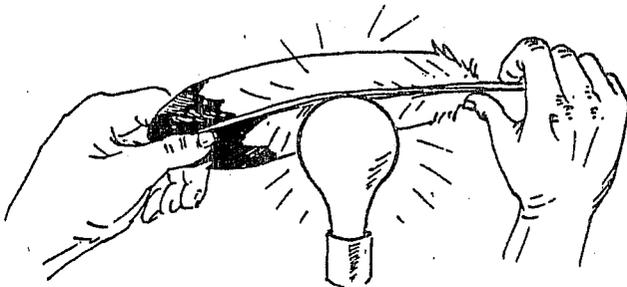
For a more realistic look, carefully trim the black ends of your feathers with a sharp pair of scissors. The desired shape is more like the tip of a table knife than the more extreme point of the natural turkey feathers. Look at photos of warbonnets for reference. (Sketch B)

Lay out your "lefts" in a graduation according to size from longest to shortest. Repeat with your "rights". Decide which side has the most uniform graduation and cut the other side to match for length. Cut feathers off at the quill base, not the tip. If neither side has an even graduation, cut the quills accordingly. You will need  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " of quill extending below the webbing. Extend feathers by glueing a small wooden dowel into the quill. (Sketch C)

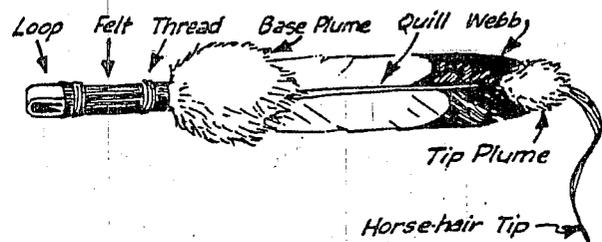
Cut a leather strip for each feather approximately  $4\frac{1}{4}$  X  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Glue or tape the strip to the quill so as to form a small loop (just enough for your leather lace to pass through). (Sketch D) Now, glue 1 or 2 base plumes at the end of the leather strip (number of plumes depends on type of kit).

Next, cut your red wool/felt into  $2\frac{1}{2}$  X  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " patches. Wrap a piece of felt around the base of each feather so that it meets in the back and does not cover the leather loop at the bottom (Sketch A). Now, wrap 2 bands of white thread around the felt about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from each end; bands are  $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. If horsehair is to be used, glue a small bunch (about 15 hairs) to the very tip of the feather. Keep the bunch small and neat. Now, press a small tip plume on top of the hair. Your feather is now complete.

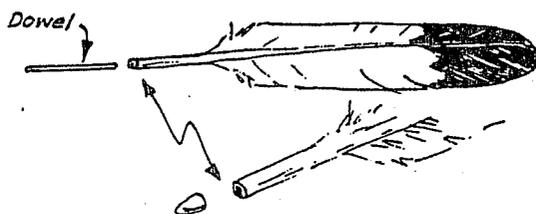
SKETCH "A"



SKETCH "B"



SKETCH "C"



SKETCH "D"

