

# Beadwork and Quillwork

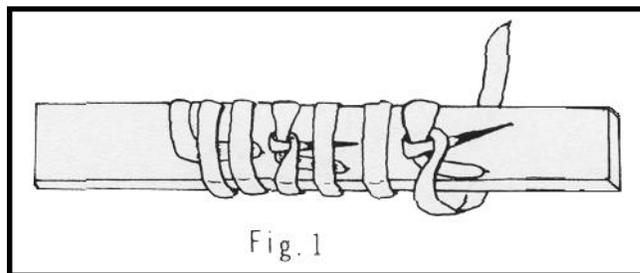
All the major types of dance clothes use some form of beadwork or quillwork for decoration and color accent. Indian craftsmen use beads and quills to create ornate as well as simple patterns and designs to cover many craft articles. The colors vary from the simple, more earth inspired colors of the traditional Sioux dance clothes to the bright and flashy, opaque and transparent colors of contemporary dance clothes. Sizes vary from the 4/0 Italian beads used on traditional clothes to the 10/0, 11/0, 12/0, and 13/0 Czechoslovakian beads preferred by the contemporary craftsman.

## QUILLWORK

Porcupine quillwork was a forerunner of beadwork and had been developed to a high degree of artistic perfection before the first European beads were brought to this country. The quill of the porcupine is a round, hollow tube which terminates in a barbed point at one end. The white quills vary in size and are usually dyed before application. Colors commonly used were those of local vegetable dyes: red, yellow, and black.

Before the quills can be used they must be moistened. A common but tricky procedure is placing a few in your mouth with the points protruding from your lips. This takes practice, but after a while you can provide yourself with a constant supply of moistened quills.

Wrapping is the simplest method of applying quills and is used on long, slender objects. The procedure is to bend the moistened quills around the object to be deco-



rated, beginning with several overlapping rounds to cover the end of the quill (Fig. 1). As new quills are added, their ends are twisted around the old ones with a half turn that is concealed by the next wrapping.

Narrow bands are the main units for Sioux quillwork designs. The narrow band is made necessary by the shortness of the quills and does not permit the making of wide areas of embroidery. Many bands of varying colors can be placed together to create designs of stripes, bars, squares, or triangles. The quills can also be worked into circular disks or pinwheel patterns.

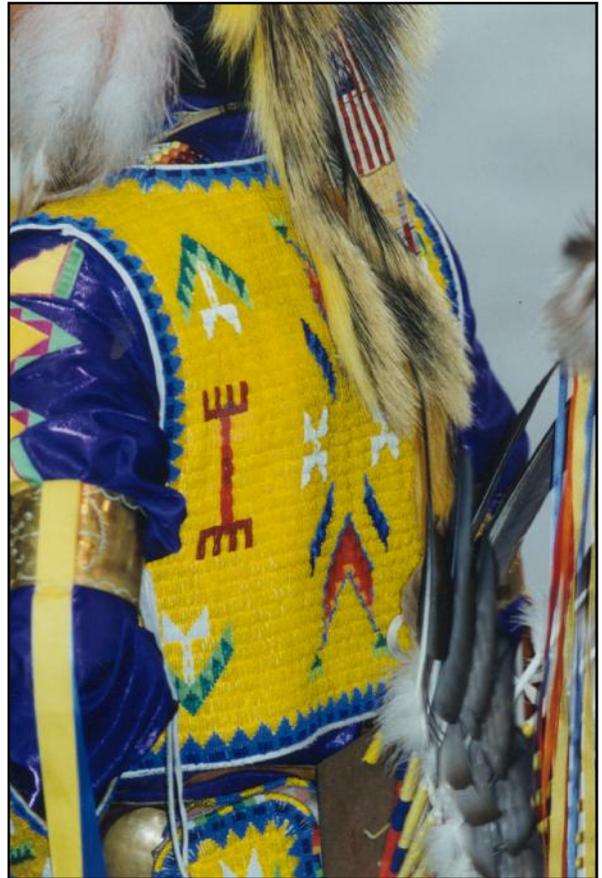
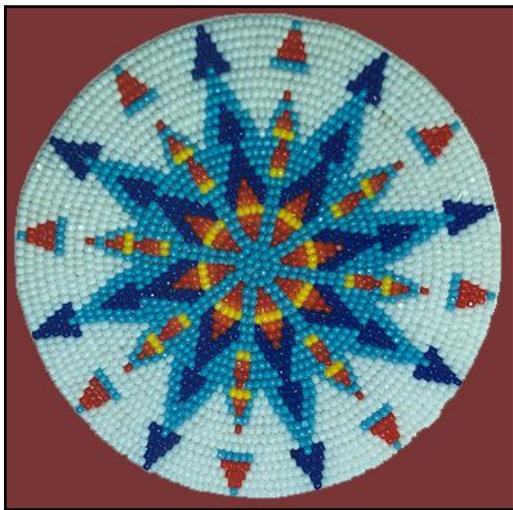
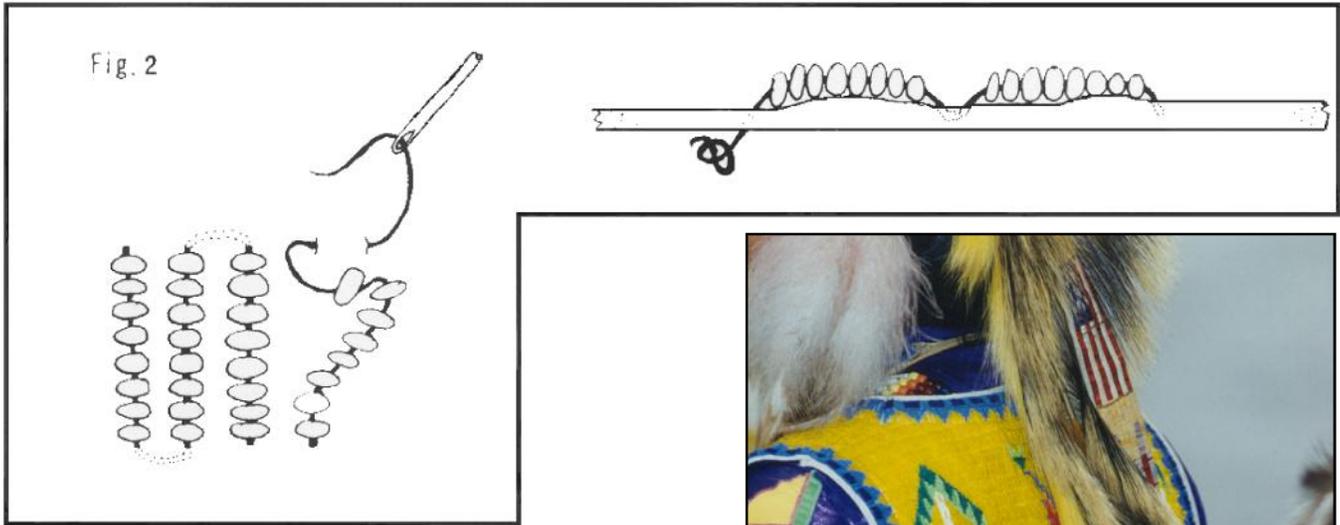
## LAZY STITCH BEADWORK

The lazy stitch style of beadwork is used almost exclusively for moccasin uppers, but it is also used to decorate cuffs, armbands, belts and dance aprons. It was developed so as to cover large areas easily and quickly. A consistent number of beads from six to twelve are strung on a waxed strand of thread or sinew which has been fastened to the buckskin by inserting the needle from the underside (Fig. 2). The beads are then sewn down by putting the needle into the hide and out again, without passing all the way through, and pulling the thread taut. This is then repeated, laying the next row of beads back parallel to the original row. Thus, the pattern is made up of beads in a long lane sewed down at the ends of each row. The parallel rows tend to arch and a ribbed effect results.



*The knife sheath and wapegnaka (hair decoration) above have been decorated with quillwork. (Owner: James Russell) The Cheyenne-style moccasins at right are fully beaded using the lazy-stitch technique. (Craftsman: Scott Sutton.)*





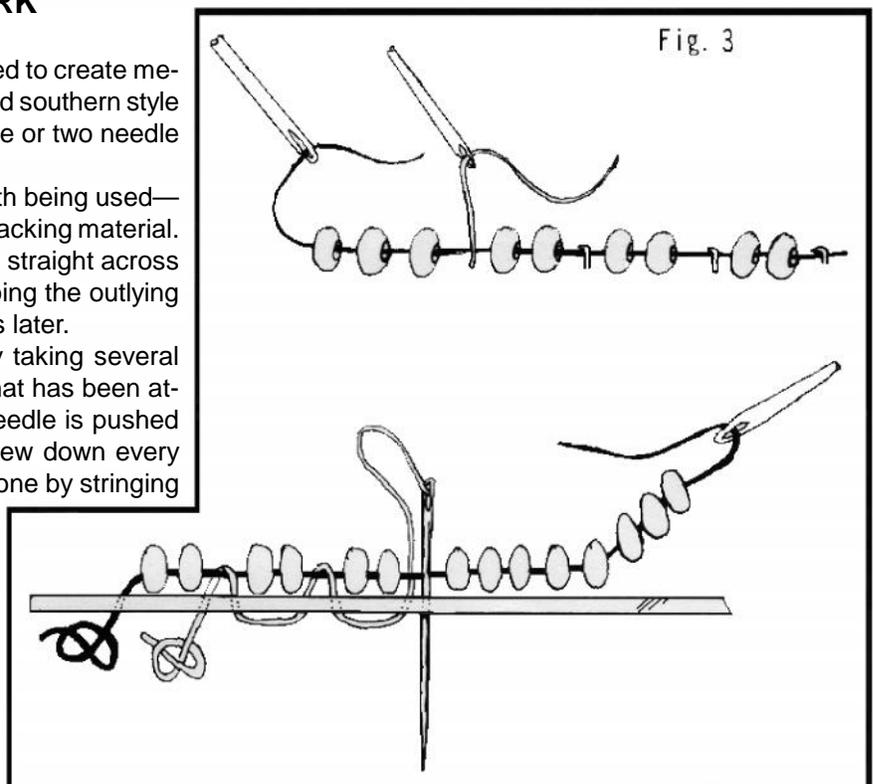
## APPLIQUE BEADWORK

Applique beadwork is commonly used to create medallions, cuffs, belts and both northern and southern style dance aprons. It is done with either a one or two needle method.

First, the design is drawn on the cloth being used—generally light weight canvas or muslin backing material. Then the beading is done, either in rows straight across making the entire pattern even, or by doing the outlying designs first and filling in the other areas later.

The two-needle method is done by taking several beads and stringing them on a thread that has been attached to the cloth (Fig. 3). A second needle is pushed through the underside and is used to sew down every two beads. The one needle method is done by stringing two beads on an attached thread, then pushing the needle into the cloth, back, up and through the second bead. Two more beads are added and the process is repeated.

On some applique pieces, an embroidery hoop may be used to keep the backing fabric taut while the beading is done.



## PEYOTE BEADWORK

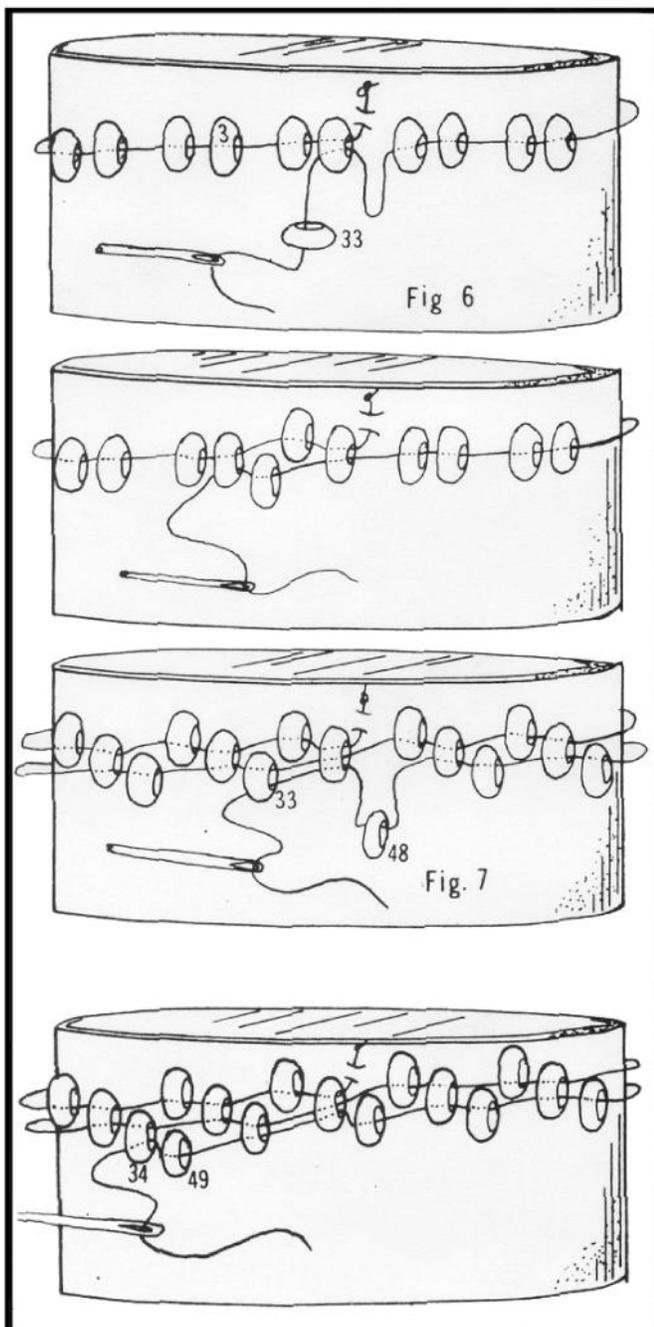
Peyote beadwork is used to cover a cylindrical object such as a whistle, fan handle, or whip stick. It is a style of beadwork used by nearly all types of contemporary dancers. Designs are made up of combinations of zigzags, boxes, and spirals using contrasting colors and rainbows. The background color usually matches that of the dancer's other beadwork.

The first step is to find out how many beads will fit around the object. This number must be divisible by three,



or preferably, by six. Tie a knot in a thread and push the needle through thin leather that has been used to cover the object.

Put some beads on to determine the distance around. Then, for example, if the number is 48, take one third of the beads off, in this case 16, and go through the first bead on the thread, thus completing one loop of string around the object. Spread the beads evenly around the object, and do not pull the string too tight. Put on the 33rd bead (Fig. 6), and go through the third bead letting the bead fall in place between the second and third beads. Finish the first row in this manner, putting a bead on and going through every other bead. When you put on the 48th bead you will go through the first bead for the third time, and the pattern will have established itself (Fig. 7). You then go through the second bead (33) over. This must be done each time a row is finished to set up the start of the next row. Then put on bead 49, and go through the lowest bead down, which is number 34. Continue in this manner to the end.



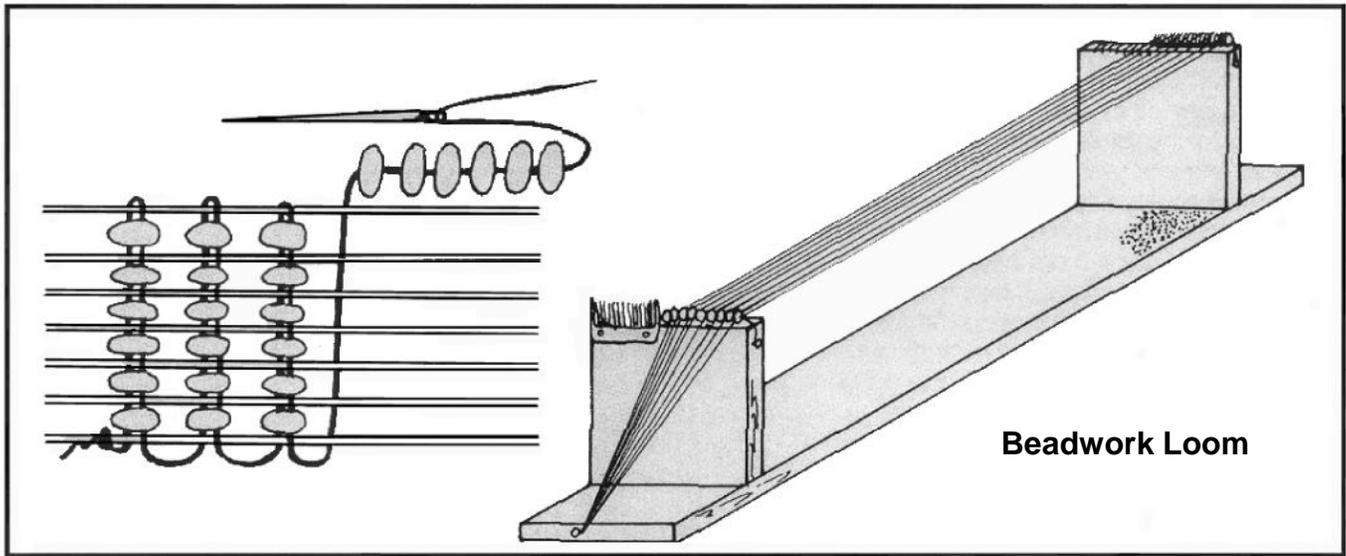
## LOOM BEADWORK

Loom beadwork, the most common type of modern beadwork, is done on a loom and forms a flat design of almost any dimension. Used by nearly all modern dancers, the most common background colors of loom beadwork are white or light shades of blue. The designs consist of rainbow zigzags, diamonds, rainbow or black and white "feather" designs, or geometric patterns.

The loom can be made out of scrap wood with a base long enough to accommodate the beadwork item and an upright on either end. The loom is strung with "warp" threads running lengthwise, and the beads are strung on "weft" threads that run crosswise. Across the upper edge of the uprights, beads are strung to space

and separate the warp threads.

The beads are strung on the weft thread which is attached to the outside warp thread in the center of the loom. The beads on the attached thread are slung under the warp threads. The beads are then pushed up so that one bead is between each pair of warp threads. The needle on the end of the weft thread is then run back through the beads above the warp threads to secure the beads in place. When it comes out the end, the row is finished and the thread is pulled taut. The thread is brought under the warp threads and the next row is done in the same way. A certain amount of trial and error is involved in loom beadwork. Because there are so many pieces that must be made in this style, a very small item would be the best to begin with.



## EDGE BEADING

Edge beading is used as a decorative two- or three-bead edging on the ribbonwork set of the Oklahoma Straight Dancer. In addition, it is a style often used to finish applique-beaded medallions. The beading is most often done with white seed beads, and each bead is put on individually.

One bead is put on a thread attached to the material, and the thread is pushed through the material. The bead lays horizontally next to the edge of the material, and the needle is drawn back up through this same bead. Another bead is strung on the thread, but remains vertical to the material (Fig. 5). The thread goes through a third horizontal bead, drawn taut, and the process is repeated. When pulled tight, the pattern finishes off the article with a neat, ribbed edging.

