

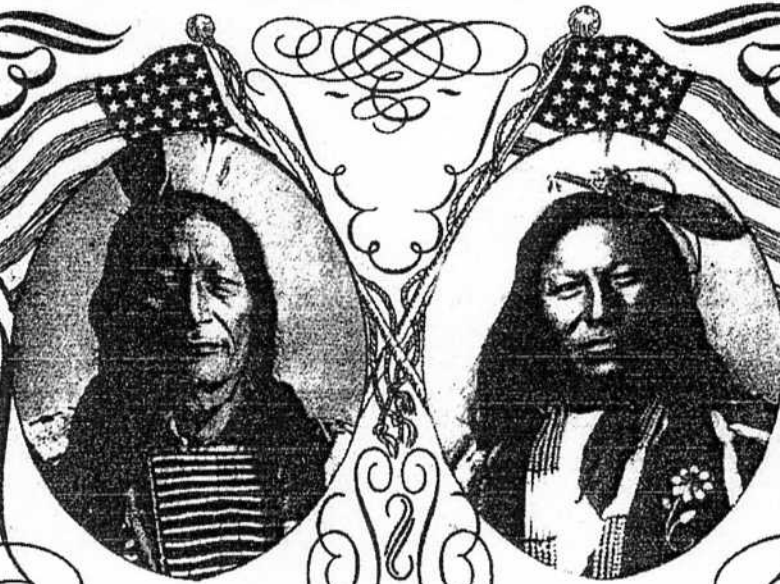
*Two 2 Dollars*

**OLD TIME SIOUX**



**DANCERS**

*by M. S. Tucker*



After many hours of straining over research material, staring into camera lenses, and laboring over vintage photographs, plus asking endless questions of harrassed authorities, this work is finally finished.

Needless to say I was not alone on this project.

Peg Stewart looked at me knife blades each time I gave her a few pages to type, but she did them anyway in her usual efficient manner, and refused to collapse until the final draft was completed.

So this last and most important of the pages is handed in to honor those who allowed me to pick their brains and photograph their craftwork.

My thanks go to Dennis Lessard who proof-read these pages and offered his helpful criticism.

It is obvious that the hobbyists in the photographs prove that good old-time Sioux outfits are possible. I thank Dave Buman who posed especially for this booklet and is in most of the pictures. Also thanks to David Mollar, Bruce Tippetts and George Kepley whom I photographed at the California Indian Hobbyist Association's Witayapi.

I also want to thank Bob Riccitelli, Larry Stokes and Richard Nimerfro for their willingness to share their costume pieces for this publication.

Most important, this booklet could not have been written without the talented help of Louie Jull, whose drawings appear throughout the book and make the research work meaningful. A picture is worth a thousand words and Louie's artwork speaks eloquently.

And finally, without help and encouragement from Ty Stewart, this booklet never would have been started or finished. *M.S.T.*

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TYRONE H. STEWART

## INTRODUCTION

The historical period that most hobbyists study when they want to dance old-time Sioux is 1920 - 1935. This period is popular because the Sioux dancers' outfits before that time consisted only of clout, bells, roach, otter and a few other simple items. In the early 1900's, the Omaha dance gathering became very popular among the Sioux and the dancer's costume grew more ornate, adding white-man's materials and clothing adapted to Indian tastes, the traditional pieces mentioned above. Also, bustles became more important and changed in style to upright spikes and the addition of the neck bustle.

We are fortunate that a few photographers (O'Neil, Graves and Ellsworth) were taking natural action shots of Sioux dancers at that time. The information in this booklet is the result of studying some sixty-five dancers in these photographs with added research done on each costume piece using references cited in the back of this booklet.

This research is basic and does not include all of the exceptions, but shows the most common articles of costuming and the combinations made from them.

It is more important for the hobbyist to study photographs and drawings of old-time outfits than to read volumes of hard-to-understand anthropological data. The words in this booklet are designed to help the hobbyist understand these photographs and drawings, and to learn more about materials, colors and designs.

Too much stress cannot be put upon the importance of the hobbyist making his outfit in the style of the tribe he is representing so that he doesn't mix tribal styles and misrepresent Indians and history. It takes just as much time and effort to make a costume incorrectly as it does to make it properly. I suggest that the hobbyist find a photo of an old-time outfit that he likes and try to reproduce the outfit using this booklet as a guideline.

## BODY COVERING

The clothing that was worn under the basic costume pieces was just as important as the pieces themselves. Very few Sioux danced without body covering of some kind in the 1920's. The most popular covering used was long Johns (loose-fitting underwear). These were of a single piece with buttons in front and were mostly dark in color; probably red, but some white and other colored sets were shown.

Store-bought whiteman long sleeve shirts were also very popular. These shirts seem to be mostly in dark colors, but some were neutral or white. Some dancers wore store shirts and store-bought pants and added their costume pieces over these.

Store shirts and trade-cloth leggings, and store shirts and long john bottoms were also good combinations. Knickers with kneesocks were also worn.

## HAIR STYLES

We don't encourage hobbyists to wear wigs to try to look "Indian". They are too hot and clumsy for dancing and do not look natural. Many of the Sioux men of this time period had whiteman haircuts anyway. Wear your hair naturally.

If you insist on wearing a wig, it should be done in the correct style: parted down the middle and braided on both sides, either over or behind the ears. No pompadors or pitched hair styles should be worn.

The braids can be wrapped with blue or red trade-cloth with a white selvege edge. Also, small silk scarves can be tied near the ears.

## ROACH

The Sioux roach or dancer's headdress was made from porcupine guard hair, deertail hair and skunk tail hair. It measured from ten to twenty inches on both sides. The photos from this period show that most roaches were worn near the back of the head about four inches from the

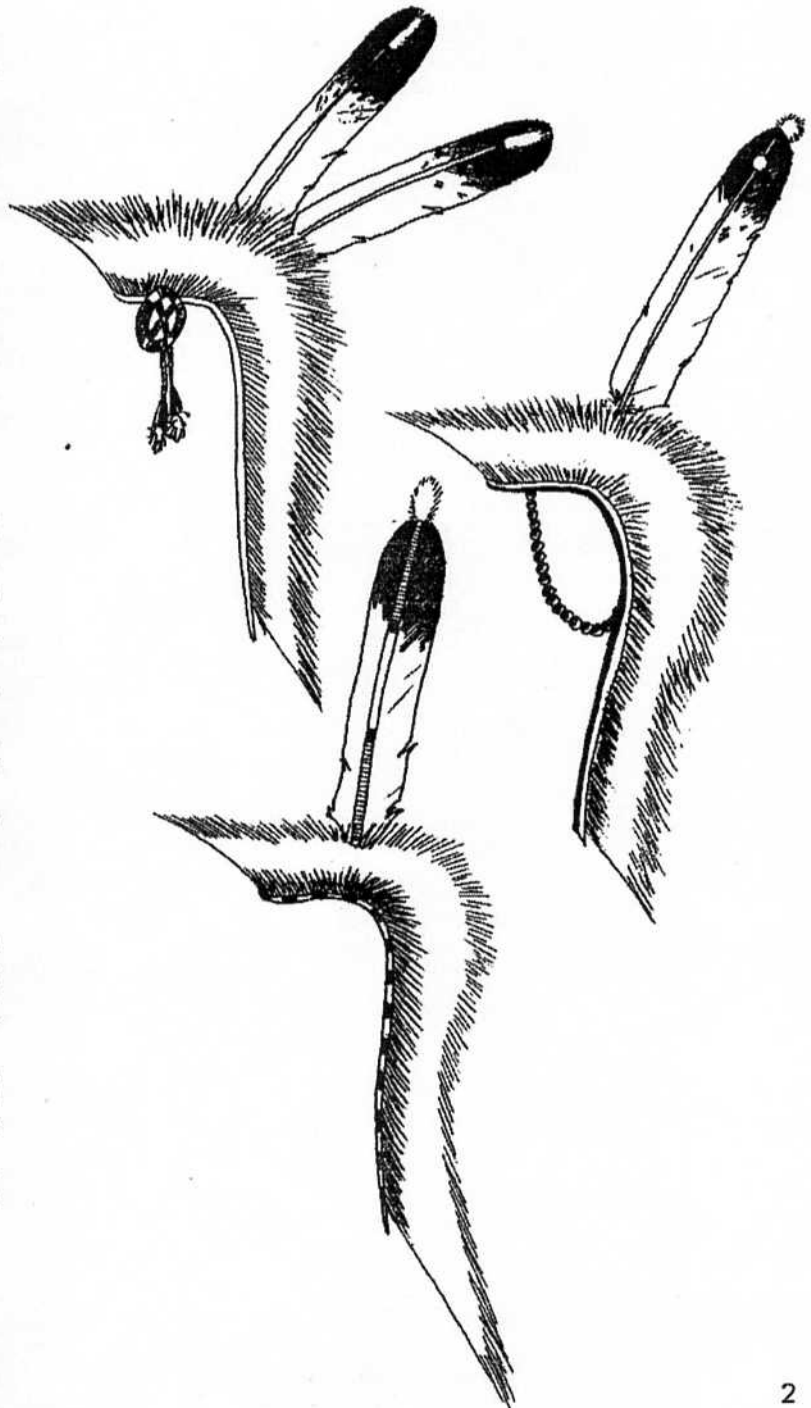
Ribbon, small silk scarves and wapegnakapi hung from the bottom down the dancer's back. Sometimes brass bead strings hung from the front of the roach to about the middle of the roach dangling on the side of the dancer's head.

## ROACH SPREADER

The roach spreader was not designed to spread the porcupine hair, but was the means of attaching the roach to the head and to hold the decorations.

Old-time spreaders were made of bone or rawhide. Two hollow bone sockets were attached to the spreader to hold the two golden eagle tail feathers that all dancers wore. These feathers can be either left in their natural state or decorated with very small tip fluff and quilled strips running the length of the feather.

The wapegnaka was also attached to the bottom of the spreader if the dancer was not wearing a neck bustle.



## HAIR ORNAMENTS

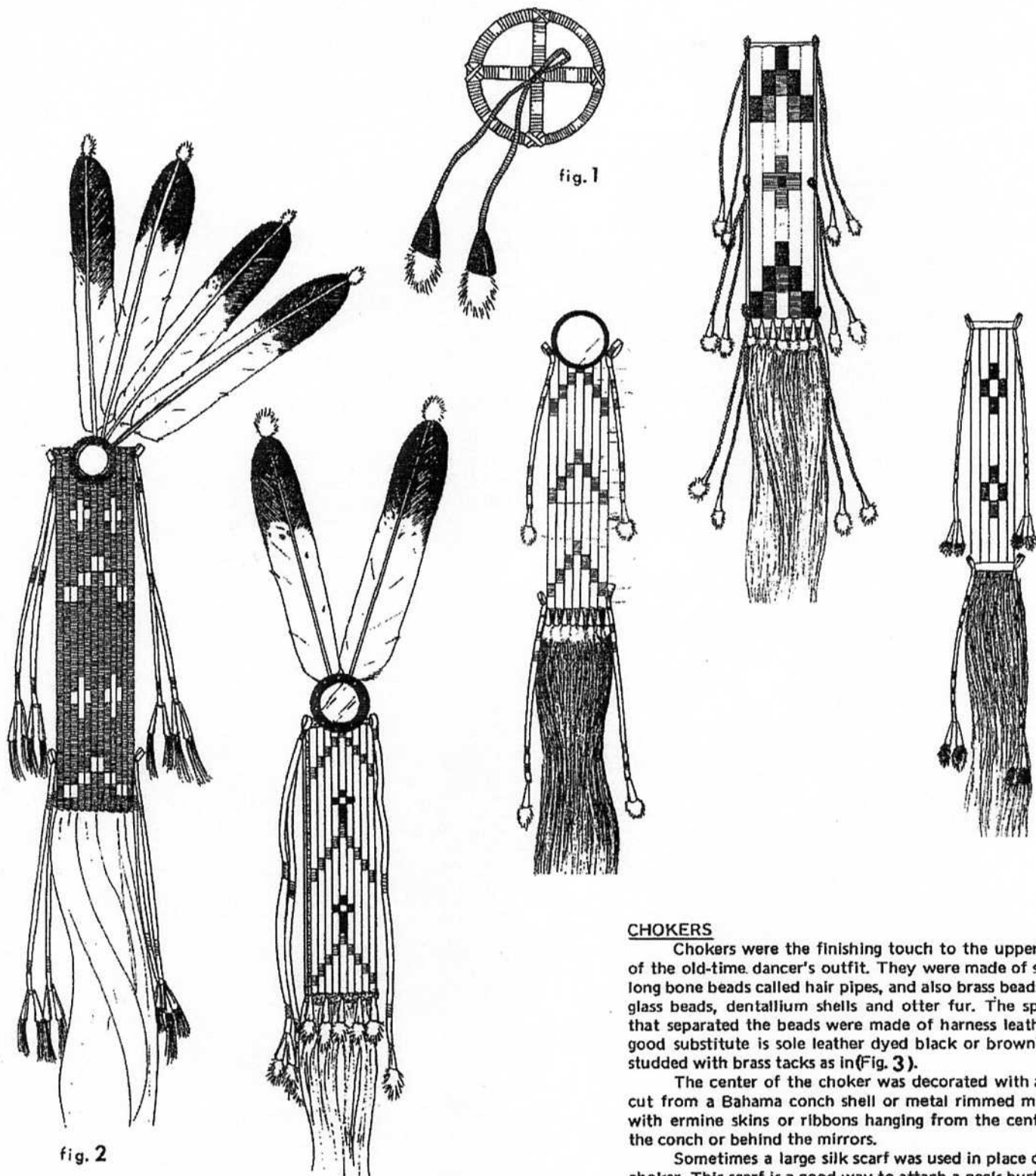
Many dancers in the old photographs are wearing various ornaments or decorations tied to their hair. Quilled wheels (Fig. 1) attached to the hair or roach strings near the roach were quite common. Sectioned hair pieces tied with a thong in front and hanging down the back of the head were sometimes seen.

The most ornate of the hair ornaments was called the Waepgnaka (bull-tail - Fig. 2). It is a quilled, or sometimes beaded, strip about 12 inches long with dyed or

natural color cowtail or horsehair attached to the bottom of the quilled section. Long dangles of quilled rawhide or soft buckskin with tin cones and small fluffs add to the total look of the piece.

The top section of the waepgnaka can be attached directly to the hair or to the bottom of the roach or spreader.

Feathers can be attached when not worn with a roach. It is then tied directly to the hair at the back of the head so that it hangs down the dancer's back.

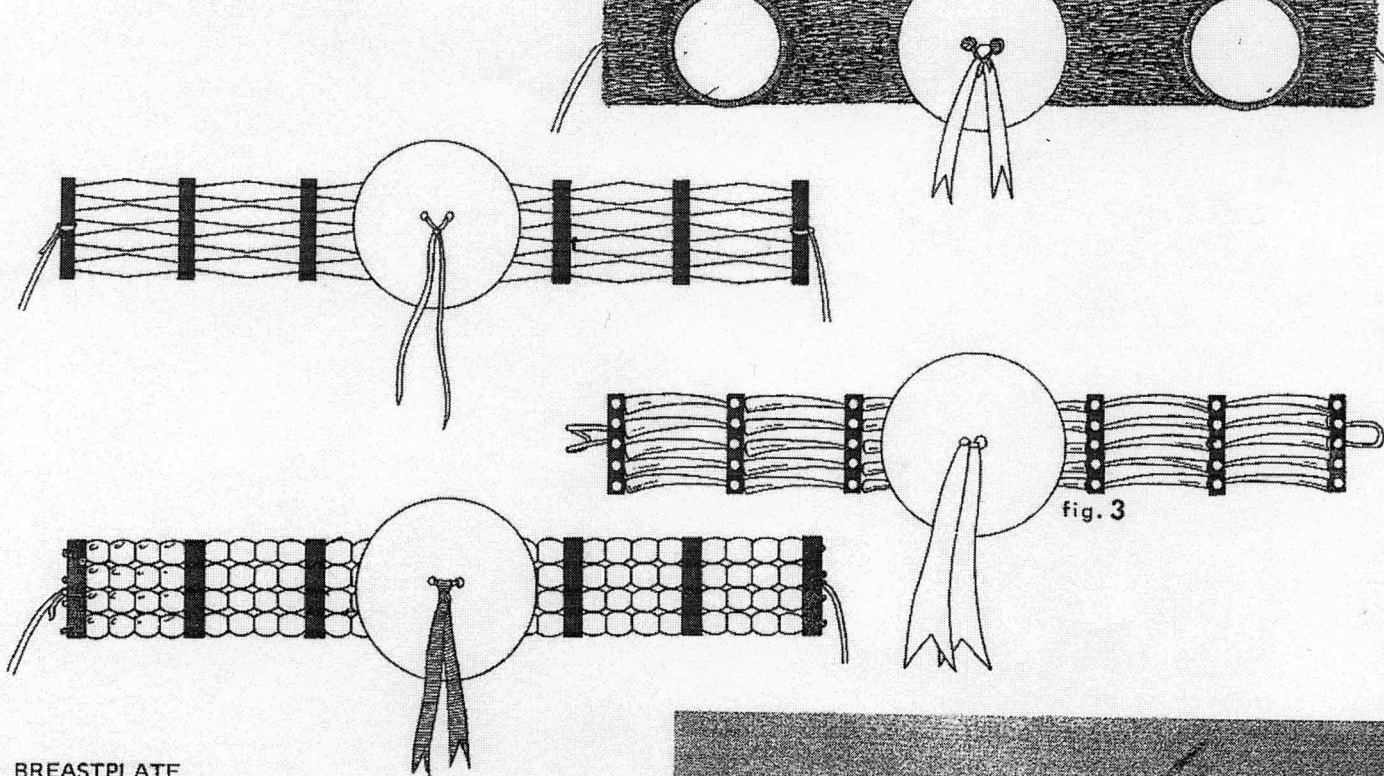


## CHOKERS

Chokers were the finishing touch to the upper part of the old-time dancer's outfit. They were made of small, long bone beads called hair pipes, and also brass beads, cut glass beads, dentallium shells and otter fur. The spacers that separated the beads were made of harness leather (a good substitute is sole leather dyed black or brown) and studded with brass tacks as in (Fig. 3).

The center of the choker was decorated with a disc cut from a Bahama conch shell or metal rimmed mirrors with ermine skins or ribbons hanging from the center of the conch or behind the mirrors.

Sometimes a large silk scarf was used in place of the choker. This scarf is a good way to attach a neck bustle.



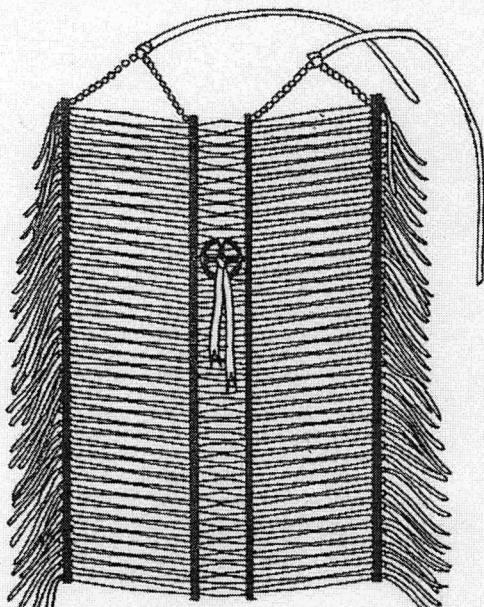
**BREASTPLATE**

The most common breastplate worn by the Sioux was the bone hair pipe with the pipes lying horizontally across the chest, and about one-fourth to one-third of the total length hanging below the belt line.

The three basic styles of bone plate are: (1) two rows of long bone and one row of short bone (Fig. 4 ), (2) three rows of long bones (Fig. 5 ), and (3) the most common type of two rows of long bones and one row of brass beads (Fig. 6 ).

The spacers holding the rows of bones apart were of harness leather. When stringing, allow four to five inches of extra fringe to hang on both sides of the completed breastplate.

Occasionally, a fully quilled breastplate was worn (Fig. 7 ). These were made using the simple quill wrapping



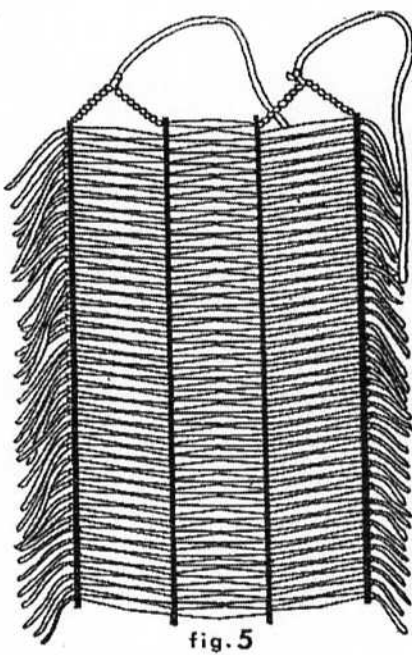


fig. 5

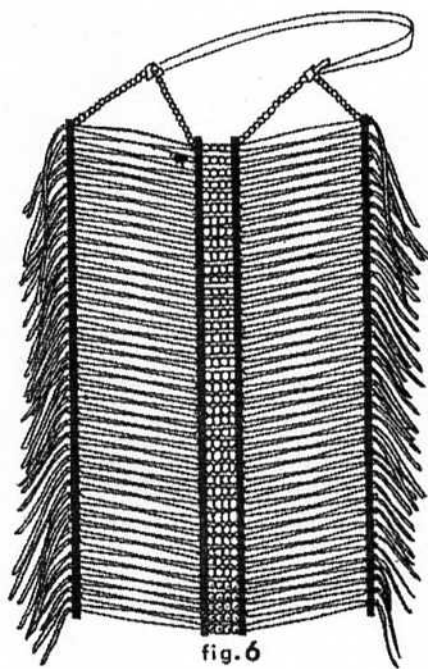


fig. 6

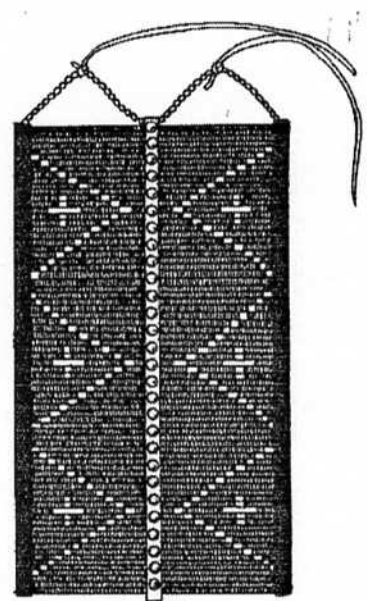
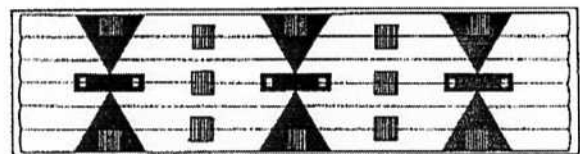
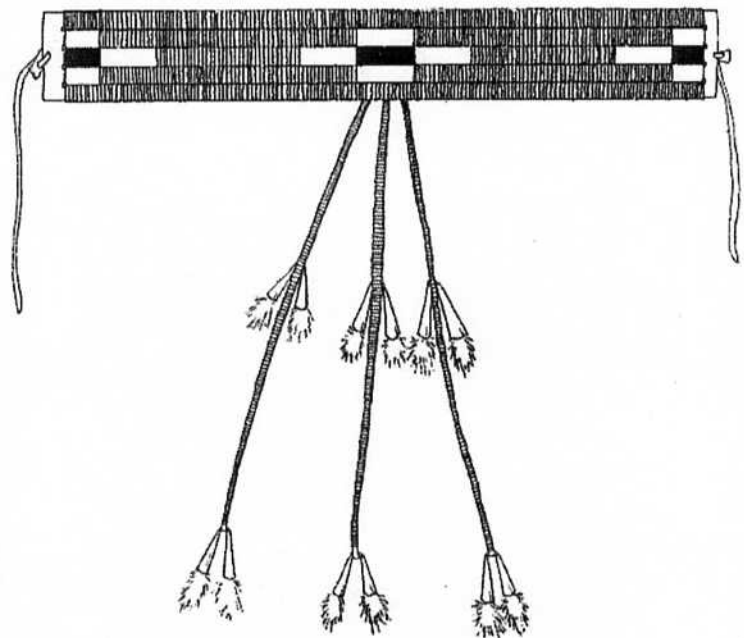
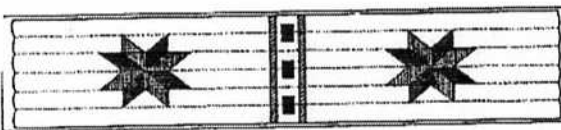
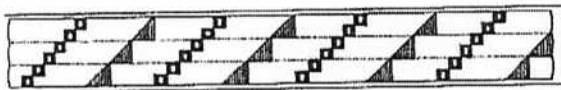
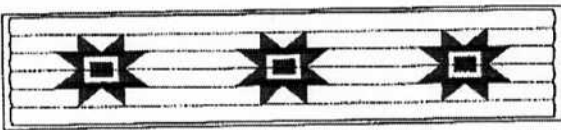
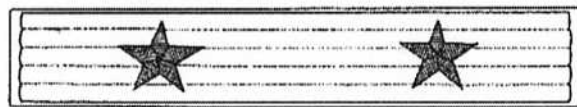


fig. 7

**ARMBANDS**

Armbands were a necessity for the old-time Sioux dancer. In many of the old photos studied, armbands were worn with and without cuffs. They were worn just above the elbow, not in the middle of the upper arm.

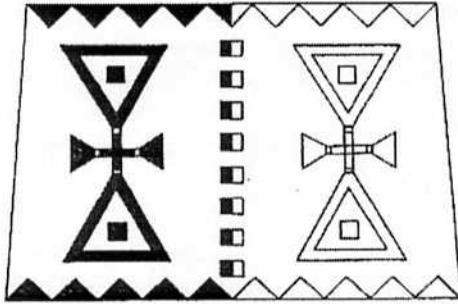
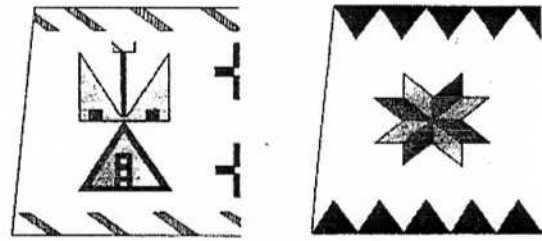
Three styles of armbands were common: (1) beaded (lazy stitched), (2) brass, and (3) quilled. Above are examples of beaded and quilled designs. Added decorations were quilled drops, scarves and ribbons dangling from the tie strings.



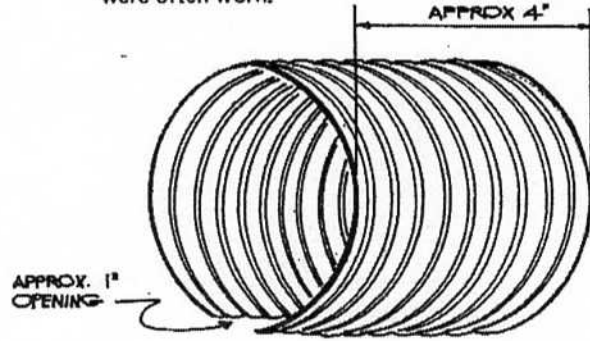
**CUFFS**

Although cuffs do not have to be worn, they add the finishing touch to the dancer's arms and hands.

Lazy stitched beaded cuffs were often made to match the armbands. The same simple design was done on both sides in three or four different colors on a white background. Triangles and wedges bordered the cuffs and ridges divided the designs.

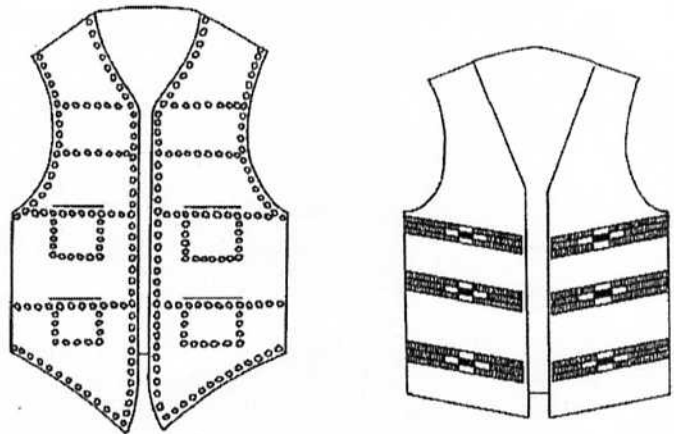
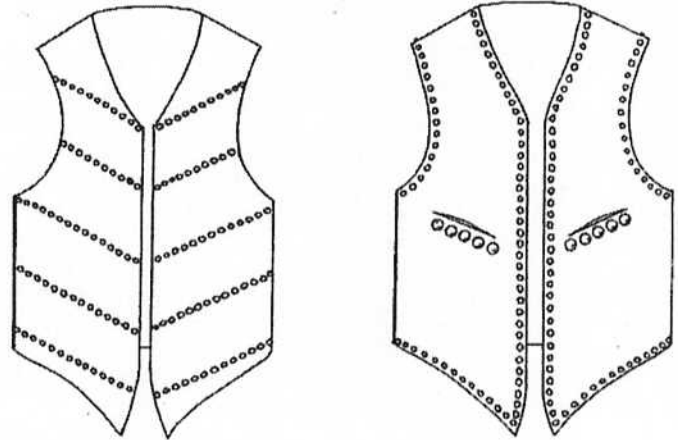
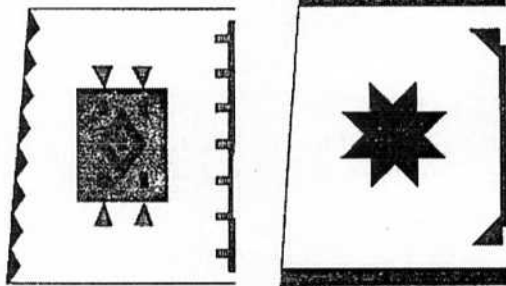
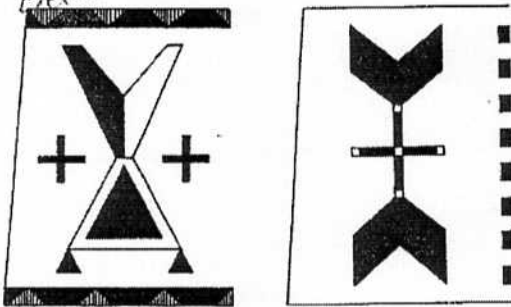
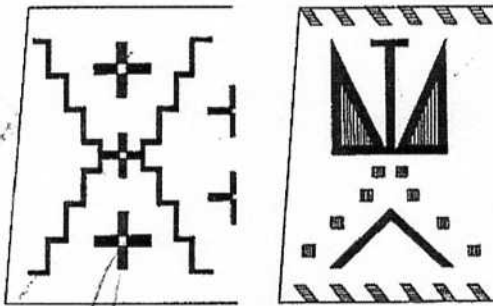


Brass cuffs, the same size or larger than armbands, were often worn.



**VESTS**

Dark cloth vests were worn with long sleeve white-man's shirts. The edges and pockets were decorated with sequins and buttons made from bone, pearl or brass. A few fully beaded vests can be seen on Ellsworth photos. Partly quilted vests were rare.



*Wine  
kresser  
red  
green  
center  
green*

## OTTERS

Otter hide breastplates known simply as "otters" were very common among the Sioux dancers in this time period. They were cut from a full hide into a rectangle about 36" long and 10 to 12 inches wide with the tail hanging in the back. They were then split down the middle leaving about four inches of the hide uncut at both ends so there was plenty of room to put the dancer's head through and position the otter in any style desired. Some dancers even wore them like bandoliers.

The average otter was decorated with about 20 metal rimmed mirrors running the length of the split hide, 10 mirrors to each side. It was common to see otters with mirrors only on them, but it was just as typical to see them with mirrors plus quillwork either on the bottom of the rectangle worn in front, or complete quillwork outlining the entire otter except in the back.

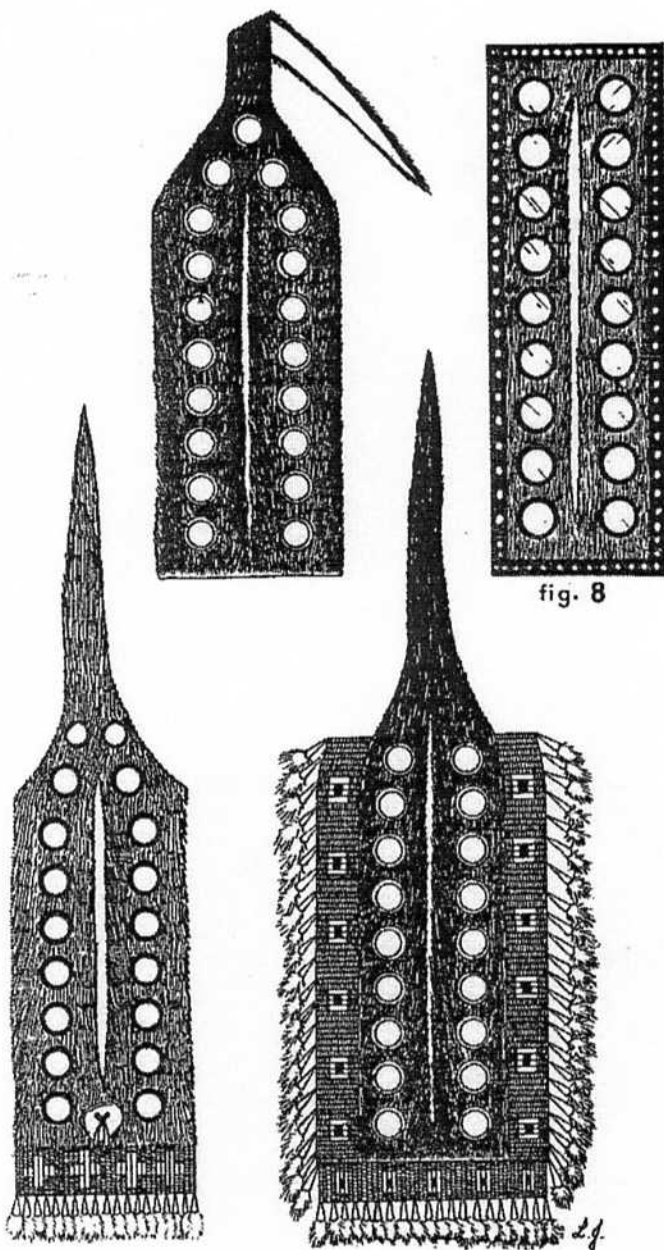
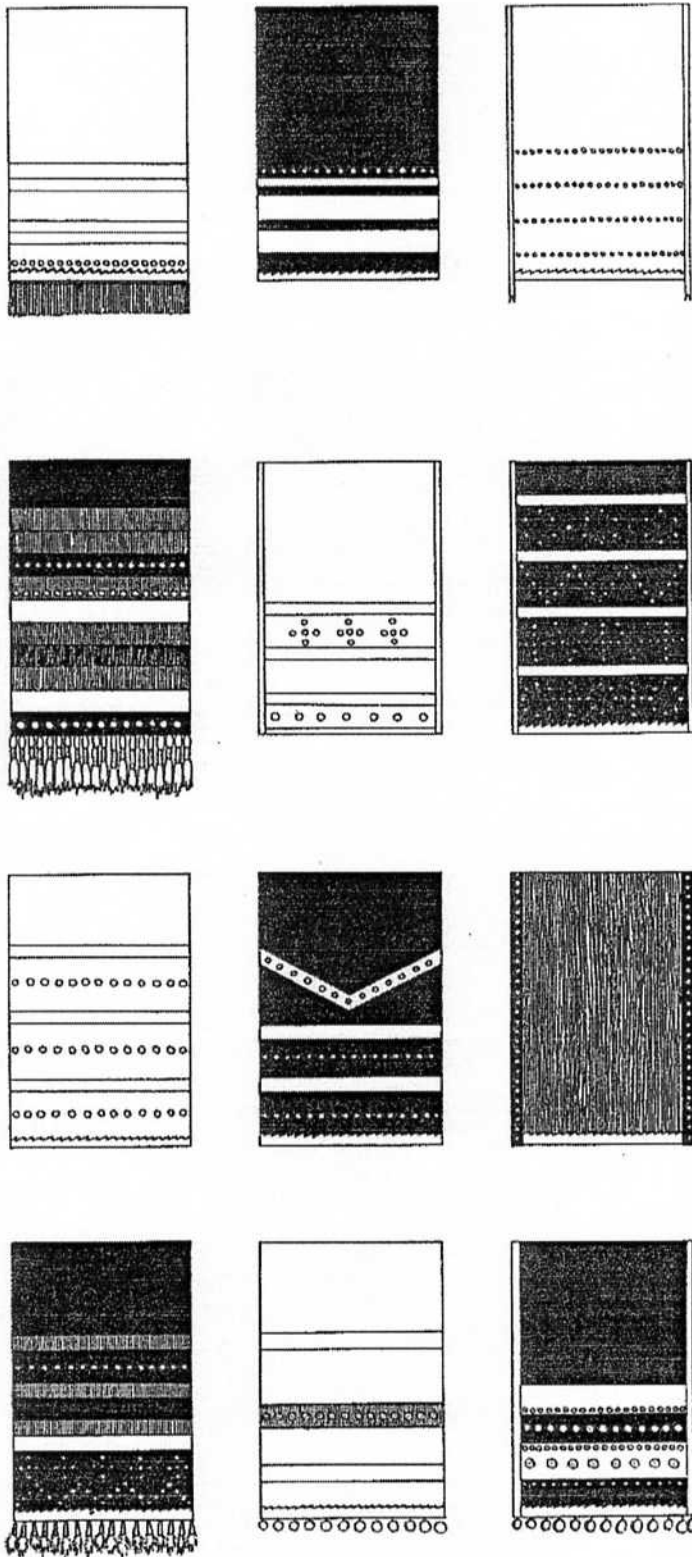
Some otters were backed with tradecloth and on the overhang a row of large sequins was sewn (Fig. 8). Many times the otter was worn over the bone breastplate.

Additional decorations on otters were bone rings (like shower curtain rings) and tin cones with small dark fluff on the edge of the quillwork.

## CLOUTS

Old-time Sioux clouts were made of blue or red tradecloth with a one or two-inch white selvege edge. These clouts had no flap in back; just a belt loop in the back after the cloth has gone under the crotch. The front flap hung down to the knees and was about 16 inches wide on an adult dancer.

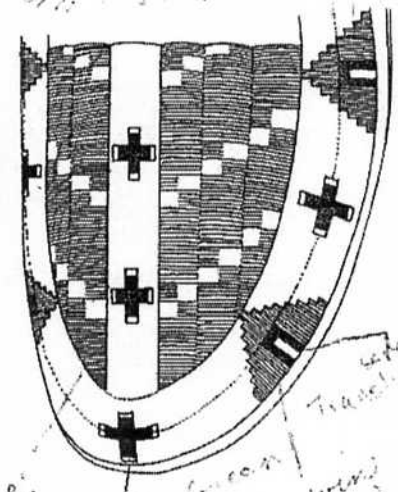
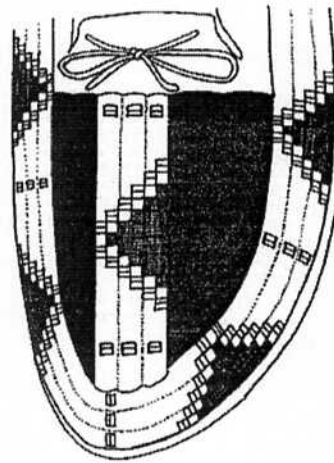
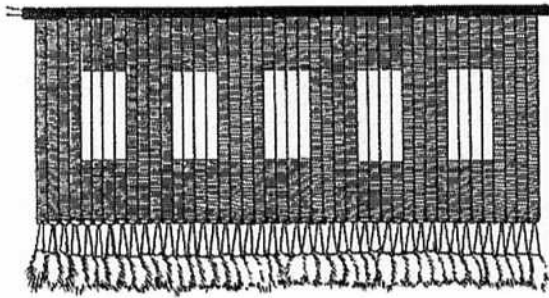
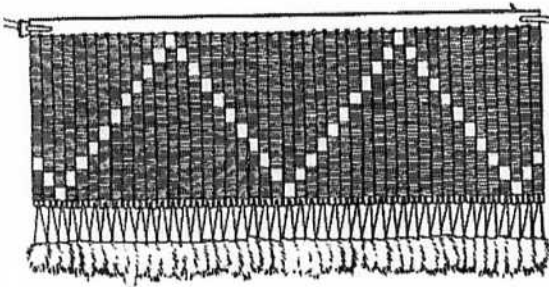
Clouts on most dancers were decorated with ribbons and the selvege edge only, but metallic fringe, sequins, tin cones with small fluffs, and ornamental coins were also added.



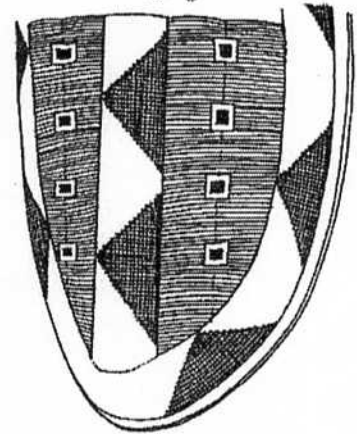
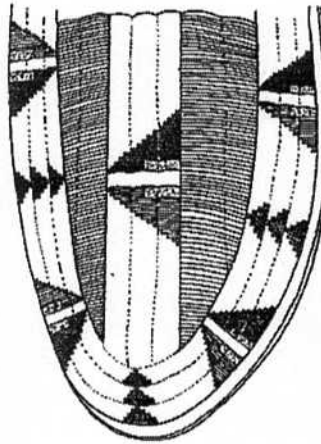


### KNEE BANDS

Although knee bands were not common, they are a good addition to the old-time dancer's outfit. They were made of quill wrapping like the bottom of a pipebag, but wrapped around the leg below the knee.



*wine Red*  
*Teens Green with 5/8 beads*  
*wine red*



### ANKLETS

No dancer's costume was complete without anklets of angora, otter, skunk, wolf, buffalo or bear. Dark fur was just as popular as white angora. Sometimes metal rimmed mirrors were added for the final touch.

### MOCCASINS

The moccasins worn were of the Plains two-piece hard sole type having a thick rawhide bottom and a soft tanned upper piece. The photos show at least one lane of beadwork extending all the way around the moccasin, but two or three were more common.

Ninety-percent of the dancers studied wore fully beaded moccasins done with a white background and some kind of a tipi design on the border lanes. Mixed bead and quill-work moccasins (Fig. 9) were more popular in an earlier time period but were still used. On the fully beaded moccasins the dark triangular sections were called "buffalo tracks" and were usually of dark blue or dark green. The top point of the tipi designs on the center lanes usually faced each other when the feet were placed together.

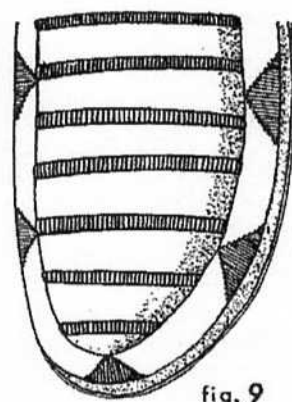
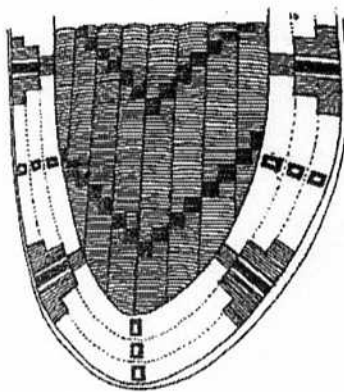
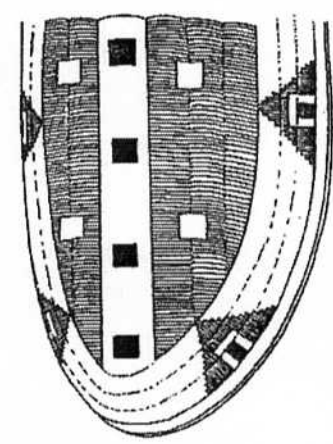
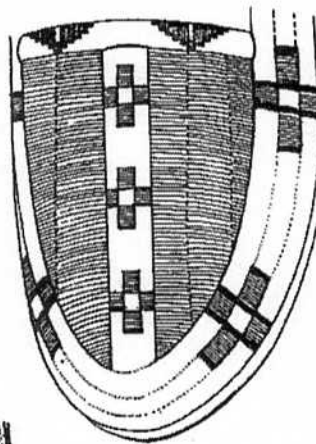
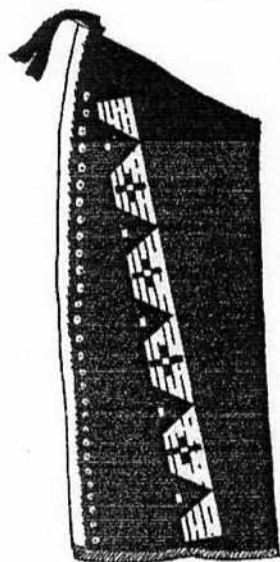


fig. 9

All of the moccasin designs above are for the left foot. When beading your own, make the design on the right foot exactly opposite from that shown, and check the beadwork section of this booklet for your designs and colors.

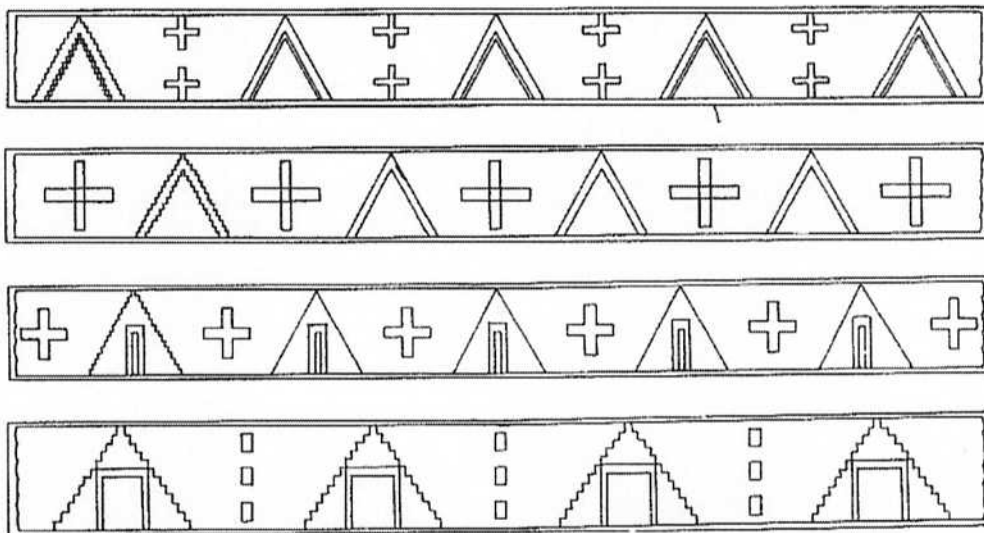
### CLOTH LEGGINGS

Blue or red cloth leggings with white selvege edges running the length of the flap were popular with many dancers. A single ribbon was sewn all the way around the cuff and on the bottom of both flaps. Sequins ran along



the selvege edges on the flaps. Beaded strips with triangle designs on a white background were the most common.

Most dancers wore a long strap of bells below the knees with the flaps of the leggings either folded at the back of the legs or bunched under the bells.

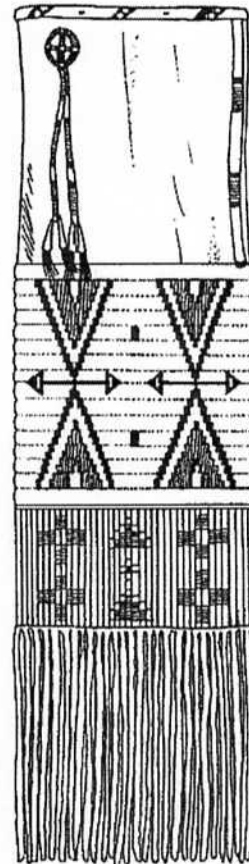
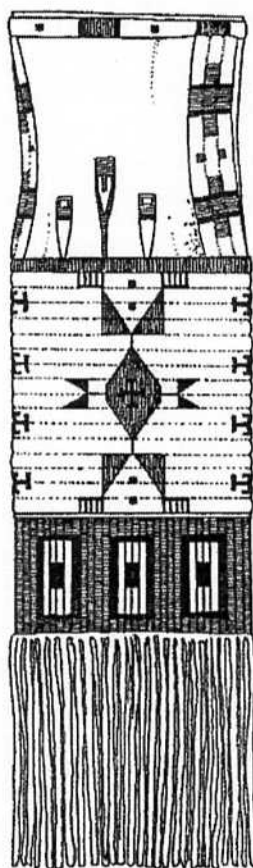
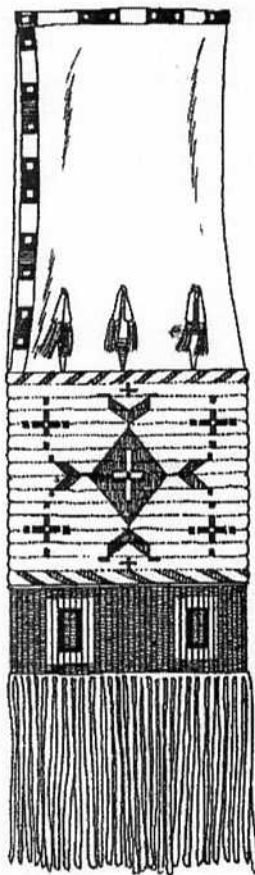
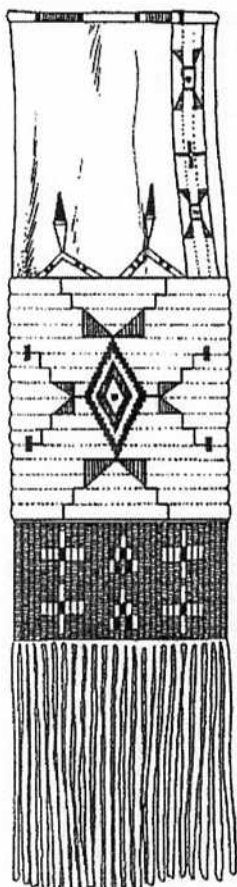


### PIPEBAGS

Photos from this period show the dancer with something in his hands. Eagle wing fans were the most common. Other items seen were rope, handkerchiefs, single feathers, sticks and, of course, pipebags.

There is no finer addition to the old-time Sioux outfit than the Sioux pipebag. They were made of soft tanned buckskin and divided into four sections: (1) the

buckskin with bead edged top, (2) the full beaded mid-section (different designs on either side), (3) the quilled section, and (4) the long fringe. Most bags measured from two-and-a-half feet to three feet in length, and about eight inches wide. The bag was carried empty by the dancer so that it could swing easily with his arm and body movements. Some dancers in the photos studied tied their bag to their belt near the bustle.

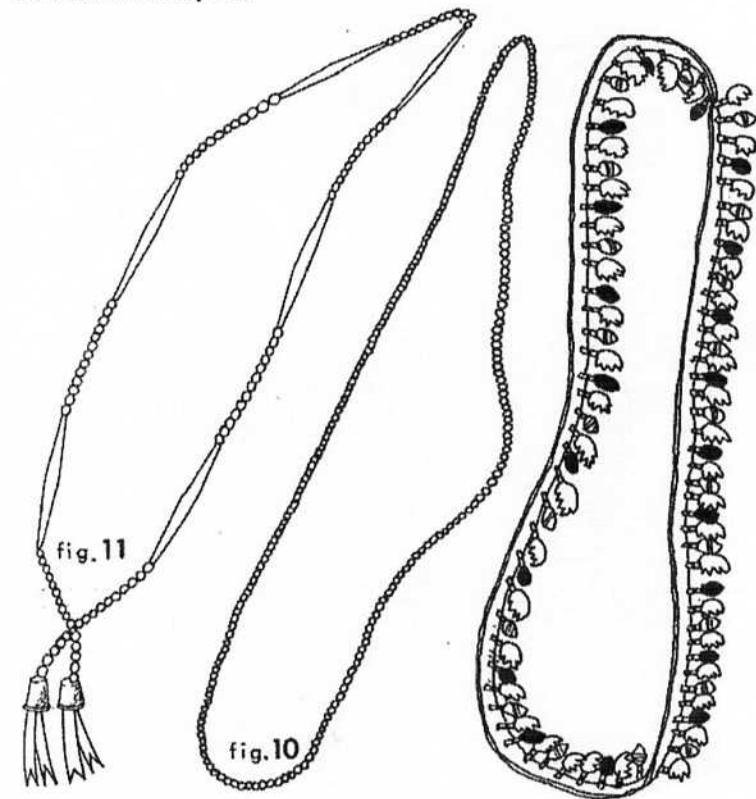


## BANDOLIERS

Bandoliers were strings of beads worn over the shoulder and across the chest, hanging down to the dancer's hip. They can be worn with any combination of old-time Sioux outfit. Usually one or two strands were worn over one shoulder only - not criss-crossed like a straight dancer's.

Common bandoliers were made of brass beads, or brass beads and hair pipes (Fig. 10 & 11).

The "dew claw" bandolier was the most ornate, being made of a long strap of harness leather with carved deer hooves (dew claws), thimbles, glass "chandelier beads" and other small objects.



## BELLS

Old-time Sioux dancers wore both chrome and brass bells in a variety of sizes. These were strung on long straps of either brown or black harness leather. Below are descriptions of the basic positions where bells were worn:

1. Leg bells: A long strap of bells worn hanging from the belt to the ankles and usually tied with a thong at the knees. Some dancers wore a double strap of bells on each leg
2. Knee bells: Worn below the knees and above the calf. These can be a single short strap, but they can be a long strap wound around the ankle several times.
3. Ankle bells: Worn on the ankle above the anklets. These are usually of a single short strap or a long strap wound around two or three times.
4. Loop bells: Some dancers wore a strap of leg bells with both ends tied at the belt so that the bells hung in a loop at their side.

The dancers liked to wear as many bells as they could, but certain definite combinations were used. Below is a list of those combinations starting with the most popular and ending with the less frequently seen:

1. Leg bells and knee bells.
2. Leg bells, knee bells and ankle bells.
3. Leg bells and ankle bells.
4. Knee bells and ankle bells.
5. Dancers wearing leggings or store pants wore only knee bells.

## BUSTLES

The following is a description of the bustles that were shown in the photos of this period.

To begin, we must stress that at least half the dancers were wearing neck bustles along with their back bustles. These did not necessarily match, either in size or content of feathers, although some did. The great majority of dancers had trailers on their back bustles, and black and white tail, and dark tail or secondary wing feathers were equally common.

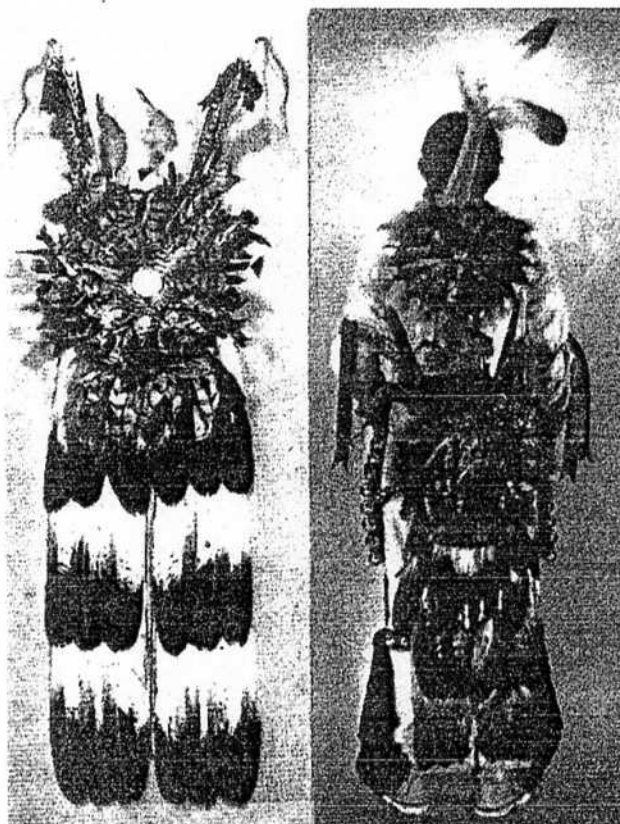
The most common feathers seen in these Sioux bustles were eagle, hawk and owl, with some smaller feathers, such as guinea hen, for variety. The feathers were often dyed red, green, purple and orange as were the small fluffs that decorate the top of some feathers in the circle and on the trailers and spikes.

The spikes or uprights on these bustles were made from eagle wing point feathers and decorated with quilled strips, hawk bells, large fluffs and ribbons.

The center decorations that held the circles of feathers together were mostly of metal rimmed mirrors with ribbons hanging from behind.

Trailers were made of blue or red tradecloth, or sometimes canvas trimmed with sequins and ribbons running their length on both sides. It added a nice touch to the trailers to have the white selvege edge at the bottom.

The tie strings that held the bustles to the dancer were usually of dark tradecloth with mirrors, quilled danglers, or black and white tail feathers at the sides. Sometimes an assumption sash was used.



## BEADWORK

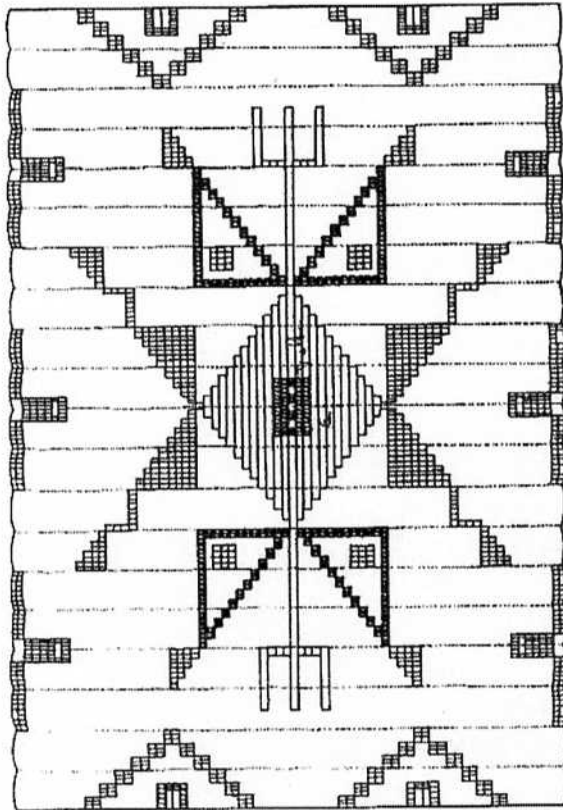
Before glass beads were introduced to the Plains by white traders, the Sioux had perfected the art of using porcupine quills to decorate their clothes and belongings. The quills were dyed red, bright yellow, weak blue, bright orange, weak green and purple. Vegetable dyes were used until about 1880 when the whites traded aniline dyes and the colors became brighter and more varied.

For the period we are studying, quill-work was done on pipebag fringe, kneebands, bustle ties and other large objects using the simple wrapping technique; the sewing and weaving methods were used for moccasins, pipes and feather decorations.

By the late 1880's - 1890's, the Sioux had a style of beading using certain colors and designs that were different than any other tribe. There are many techniques involved in making beadwork look like the style of the tribe represented. Not only colors and designs, but beading mechanics, are very important. The following are guidelines to help make the finished beadwork look Sioux.

As noted earlier the Sioux had a definite style of their own. Their designs were mostly geometric with some men's beadwork representing life around them including figures, horses and birds. After the 1890's more intricate triangles and spidery designs were introduced. If you carefully examine photographs and articles of Sioux beadwork, you will note the following:

1. Designs geometric and usually symmetrical.
2. Designs spread out to cover most of the background.
3. Many lines and geometrical figures held together by a central design.
4. Triangles and lines with three-pronged forks.
5. Large spaces of background broken up with lines and crosses.
6. Small squares added to crosses, lines and larger squares.
7. Small designs added to give a finished look to the total design.

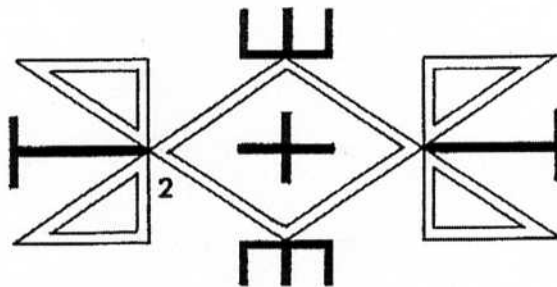


Many times a hobbyist will have a piece of beadwork and an authority on that tribe's beadwork will say, "The designs are great but the colors are all wrong." This is because the hobbyist has failed to study photographs or the real thing, and has copied diagrams of designs only. Here we will set down a few simple rules about color, then analyze each color and its proper use:

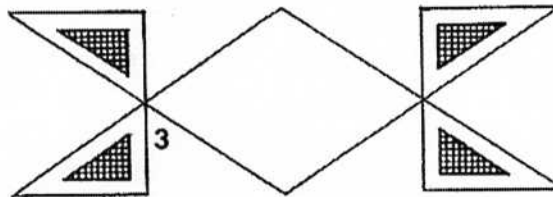
1. The Sioux beaded mostly on a white background.
2. The designs were outlined with dark color to contrast with the white.
3. Colors often used together were green and yellow (Italian "greasy yellow"), rose and yellow, and rose with blue and green.
4. Avoid using similar colors together such as a light color or pastel on a white background.
5. Several shades of blue or green are seldom seen on the same piece.
6. Most common color sequence used in the classic period is blue, yellow, red and green, in that order.

We have analyzed the most commonly used colors as follows:

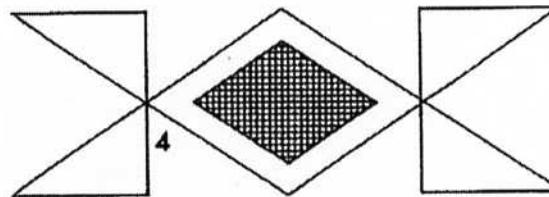
1. White: As background - covers most areas broken by lines and block designs. Sometimes a milky or "pearl" white was used. Light blue background seems to be a very modern technique. It is sometimes used for very small squares in a design. Light blue is a common background in Sioux dresses, cradleboards, tobacco bags, pouches and some legging strips.



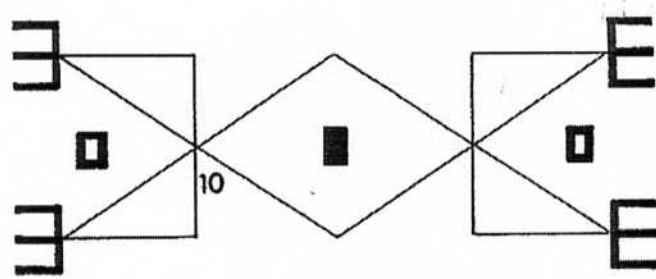
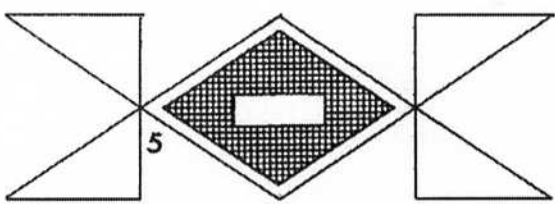
2. Dark blue: Dark or royal blue used in outlining large block designs, fine lines, crosses, borders.



3. Light blue: Almost turquoise; used for inside of designs.

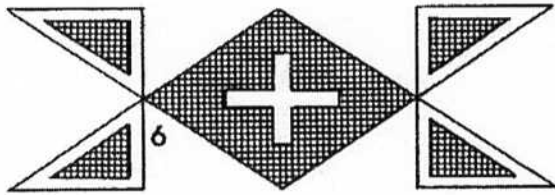


4. Periwinkle blue: Darker than light blue but not as dark as royal blue. Used for medium size blocks.



5. Green: Medium, slightly dull green. Used for inside of designs.

10. Red: White center reds; translucent red bead with white center through hole. Gives a rose or pinkish effect. Used to outline metallic beads and for thin lines, small squares and triangles.



6. Dark green: Very dark, sometimes translucent. For large block of color with or without darker border.

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"Plains Hair & Roach Ornaments", American Indian Hobbyist, Vol IV, No. 9 & 10.

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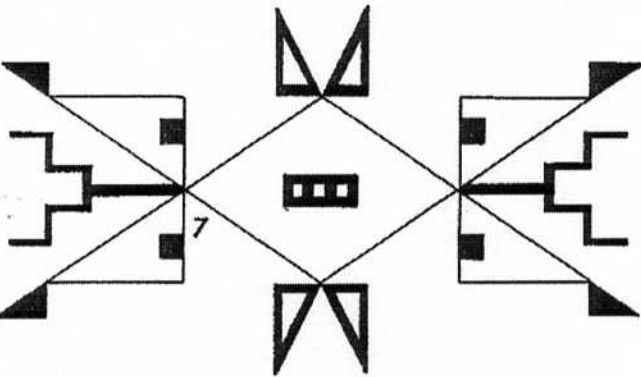
Lyford, Carrie A., Quill and Beadwork of the Western Sioux, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1940.

"Construction of a Sioux Pipebag", The Singing Wire, Vol I, No. 5.

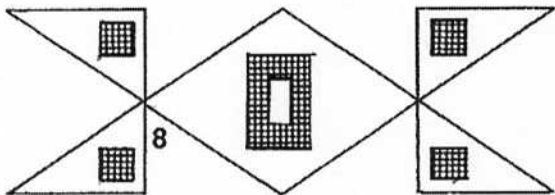
"Old-Time Bustles", The Singing Wire, Vol II, No. 8 & 9.

"Porcupine Quillwork", The Singing Wire, Vol I, No. 3.

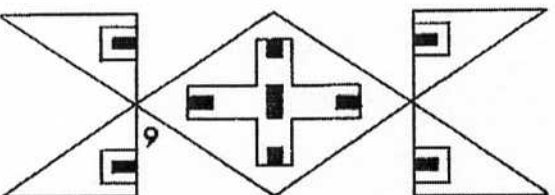
"Pheasant Feather Bustles", The Singing Wire, Vol II, No. 11.



7. Reddish brown: For borders and small squares within lighter blocks of color, and thin lines and designs extending from basic blocks. Interchangeable with dark blue.

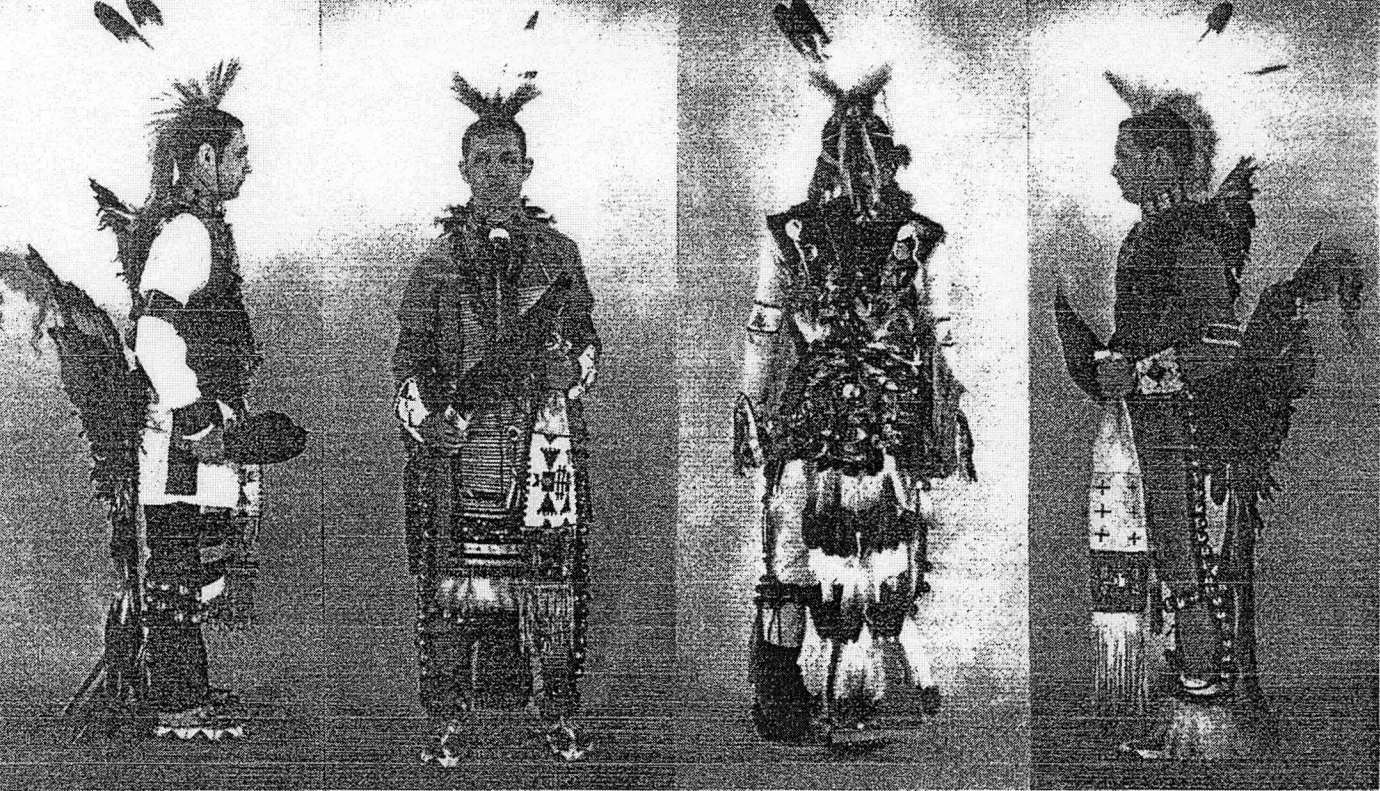


8. Yellow: Pale dull Italian "greasy yellow". For semi-large blocks of color and for center, or near centers of designs.

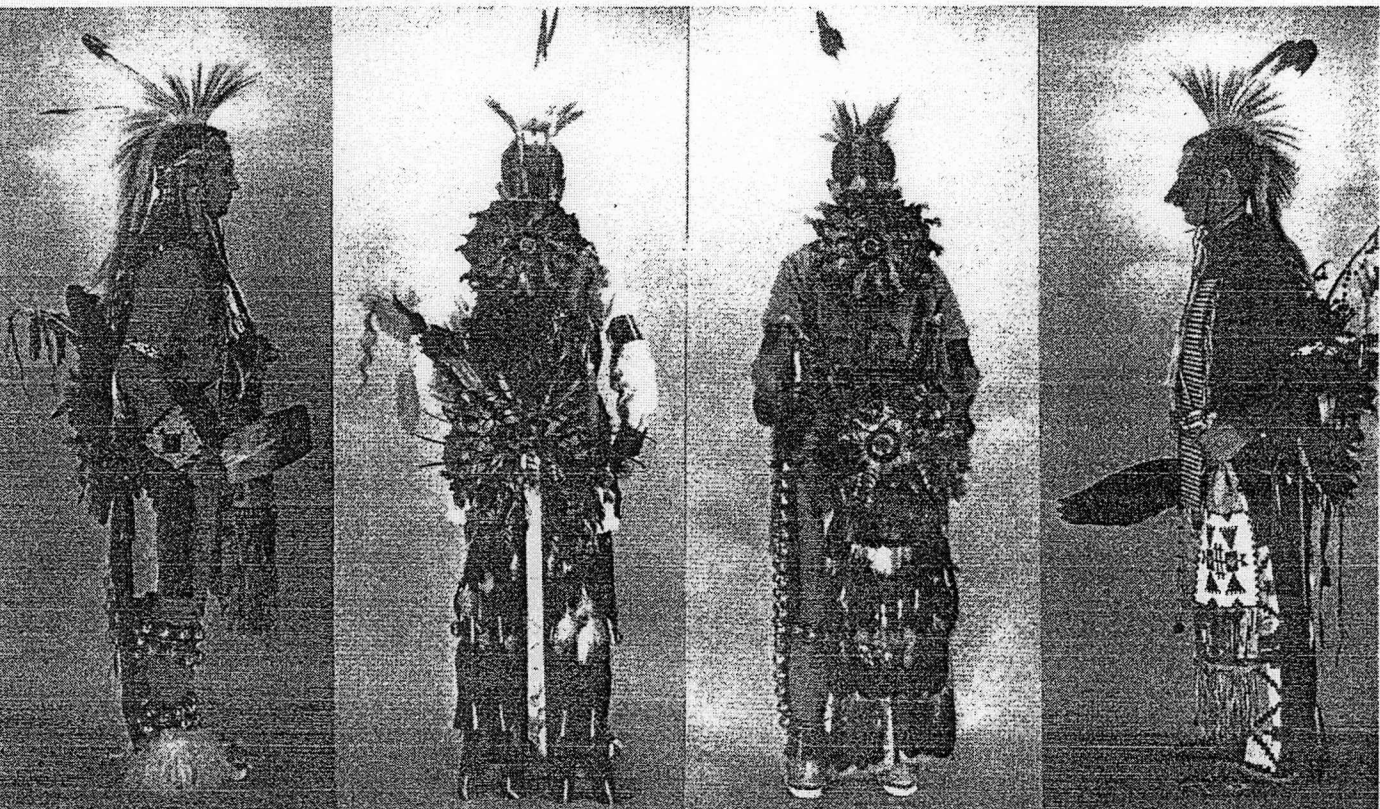


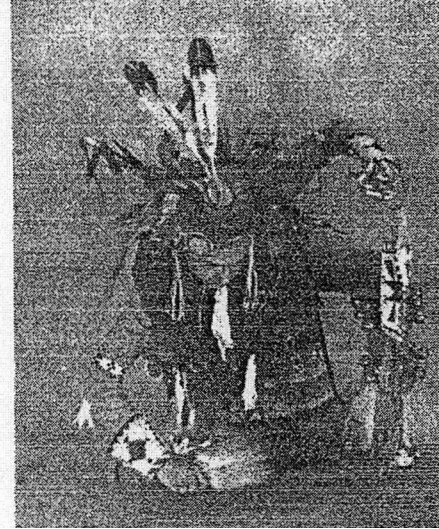
9. Metallic: Silver and gold colored faceted metallic beads for very small, intricate squares in center of designs. Only one or two rows wide; usually





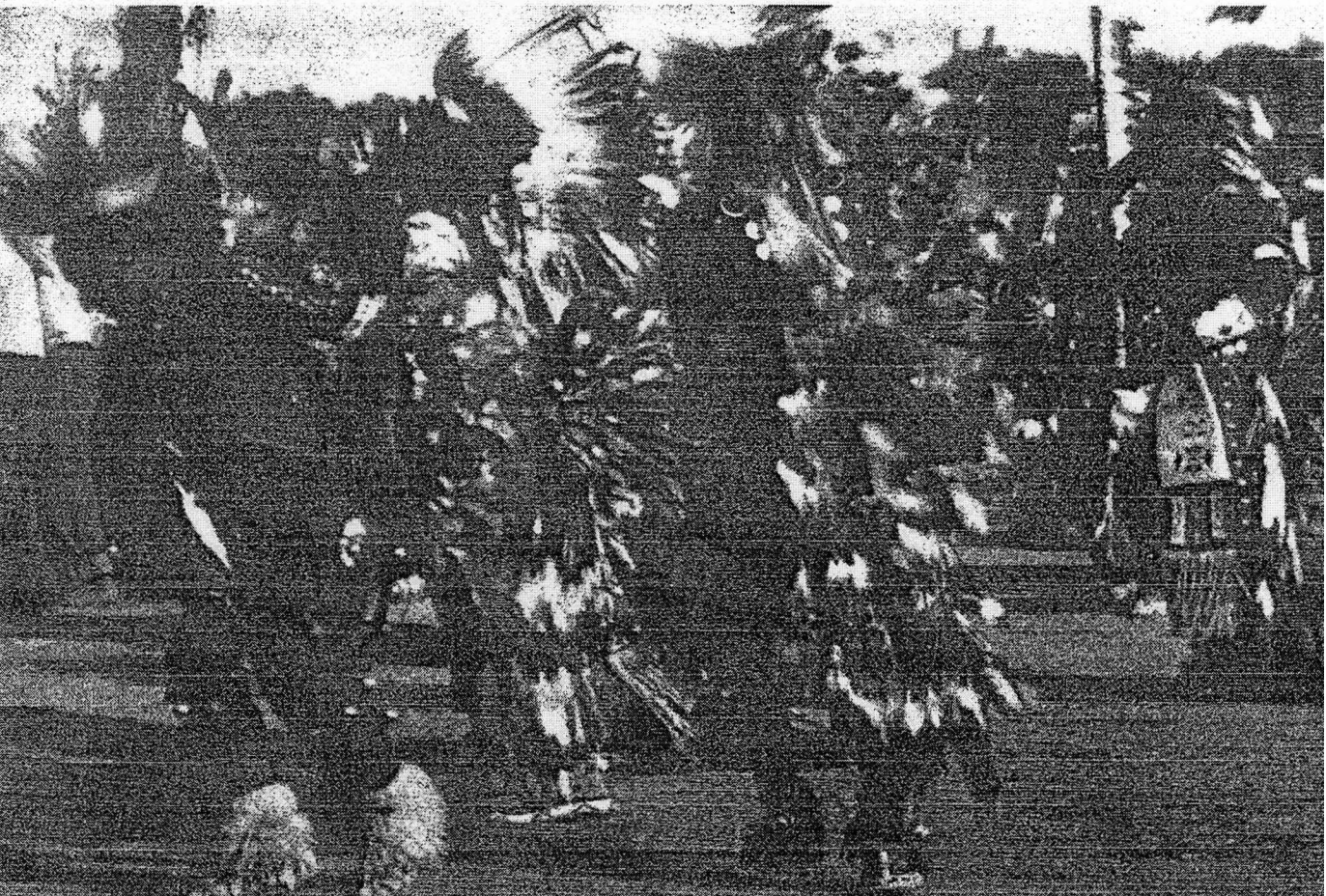
The photos on pgs. 13 & 14 show suggested outfits and a few dance positions.







O'NEIL PHOTO





# OLD TIME DANCE COSTUMES

## Boots

Made of porcupine quill hair - lined with dyed deer's  
ull.

## Moccasins

Fully or partially beaded in lazy stitch

## Body Covering

Dyed or plain kongohm; kongohm with shirt; shirt  
and trowsers; shirt and leggings; shirt and knicker.

## Chawl

Trade cloth decorated with ribbons, brass sequins,  
metallic fringe, cloth fringe, dentilium shell.

## Breast Ornament

Bone or quilled breast plate; fur breast ornament -  
worn with or without breast plate; cloth or beaded  
veil.

## Bandoliers

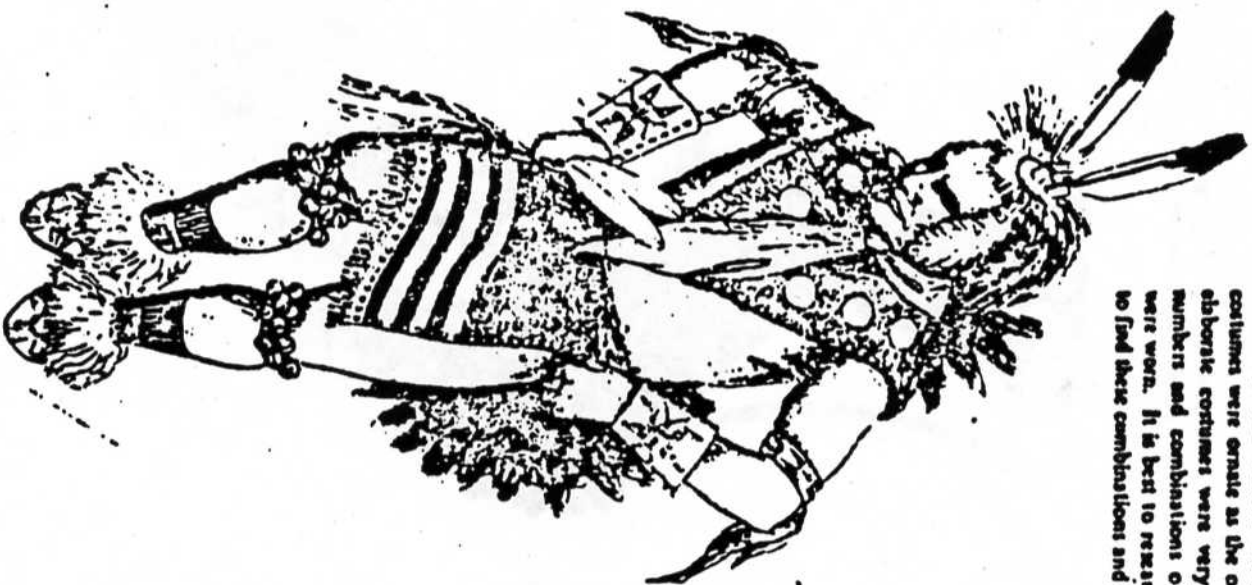
Brass beads; bead and hairpipe; deer claw; "junk".

## Anklets

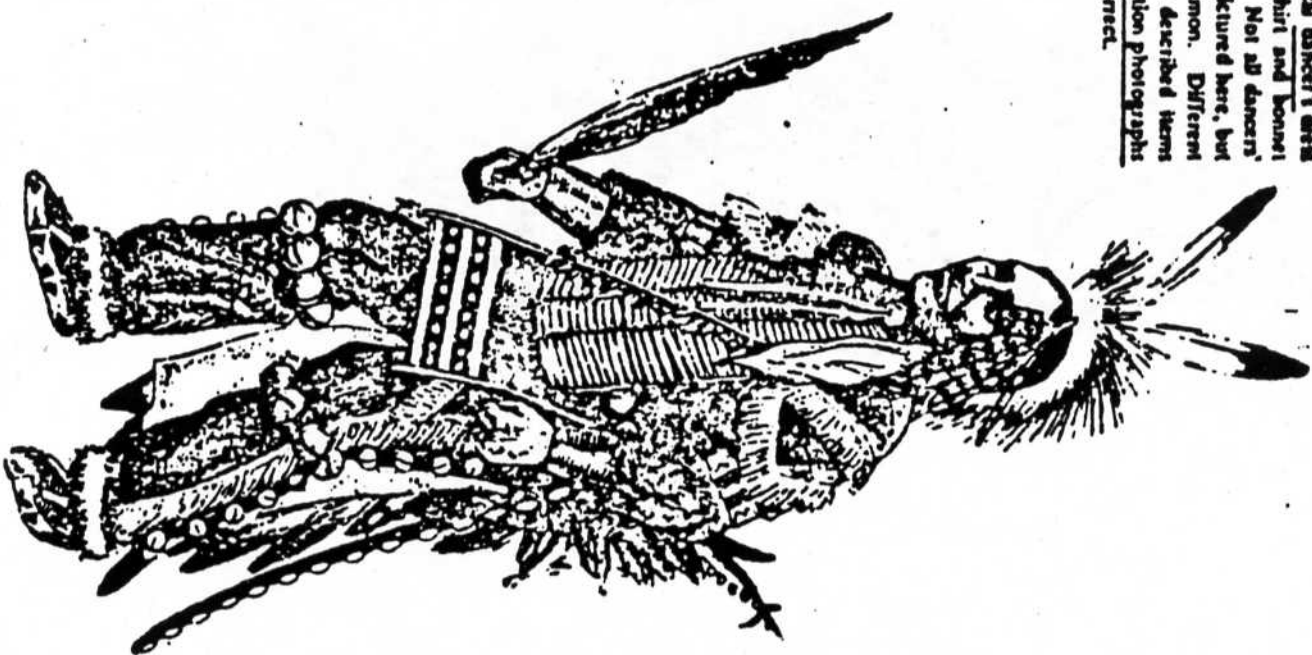
Angora goat, buffalo, otter, bear, or skunk fur  
wrapped around the ankles except when wearing  
leggings.

## Cuffs

Brass; beaded for lazy stitch; quilled with sewing  
method.



By the early 1900's the Sioux costume had become  
very ornate. Ample materials were available and  
new dance items were constantly being added. The  
costume described here is the typical dancer's dress  
rather than the "old man" skin shirt and bonnet  
which were also worn at this time. Not all dancers'  
costumes were ornate as the ones pictured here, but  
elaborate costumes were very common. Different  
numbers and combinations of the described items  
were worn. It is best to research action photographs  
to find these combinations and be correct.



### Head Issues

Wing fan; individual feather(s) scarf; whip; tail fan; stick; beaded and/or quilled pipe bag; basket; pipe; case.

### Bush

Orow belt - single or double cone with or without tassel.

### Belt

Pink leather; leather decorated with large or small conchos; suspension web.

### Balls

Brass or chrome thigh balls on leather strips.

### Roach Spreader & Feathers

Made of bone or ravenbill.  
Two or more roach feathers  
in sockets so they swing freely.

### Head Ornaments

Feathers; faffis; mirrors; loops of brass beads; quilled danglers; hair or feather forehead or side-roller; vinyepaha.

### Neck Bards

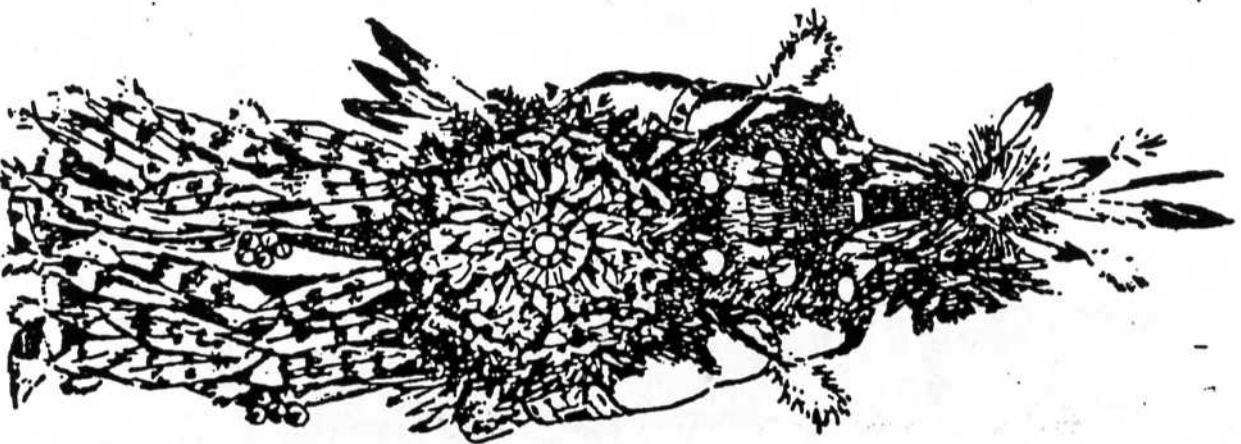
A cone of striped and dyed feathers - may or may not match back bards.

### Neck Covering

Bone, fur, or dendilium skull choker; scarf; ribbon.

### Arm Bands

Brass; beaded in lazy stick; quilled with wrapping method.



### Dancing

At the pow wow it is the dancing more than the costume which is important. Sioux dancers, particularly the young men, were very active in their dancing. They are often seen bent low, making sharp turns, or in a high, wide stance. The "basic" dancing position is with knees bent, head up, back straight and slightly forward, and arms bent and at the sides or on the hips. The dancer's head should nod slightly and his shoulders may "roll". Again, action photographs are the best source of dancers and dance positions.