

ARABIAN COSTUMES



Lois Ann Kroll



Arabian Costumes

by

Lois Ann Kroll

This is a limited edition

Number 3459

Photography by Myron Shobe

Drawings by the Author

Table of Contents

	Introduction	6
I	In the Beginning	7
II	The Aba	11
III	The Headdress	17
IV	The Shirt	21
V	The Trousers	23
VI	Accessories	25
VII	The Bridle and Breastcollar	29
VIII	The Saddle	35
IX	Tassels and Pompons	39
X	In Conclusion	43

Introduction

The Arabian horse has been pictured over the centuries charging across the sand dunes in various and colorful regalia. What could be more fitting than to exhibit him to the public in the manner in which they have been indoctrinated to expect by the artists, historians and Hollywood cinema? No class in the shows is so highly accepted by the general public than the Arabian costume class — provided it is well performed and the costumes are basically authentic and colorfully elegant. Since the Arabian horse is the only breed that can rightfully be exhibited in Arab costume, we have a class that is strictly Arabian and natural to the breed.

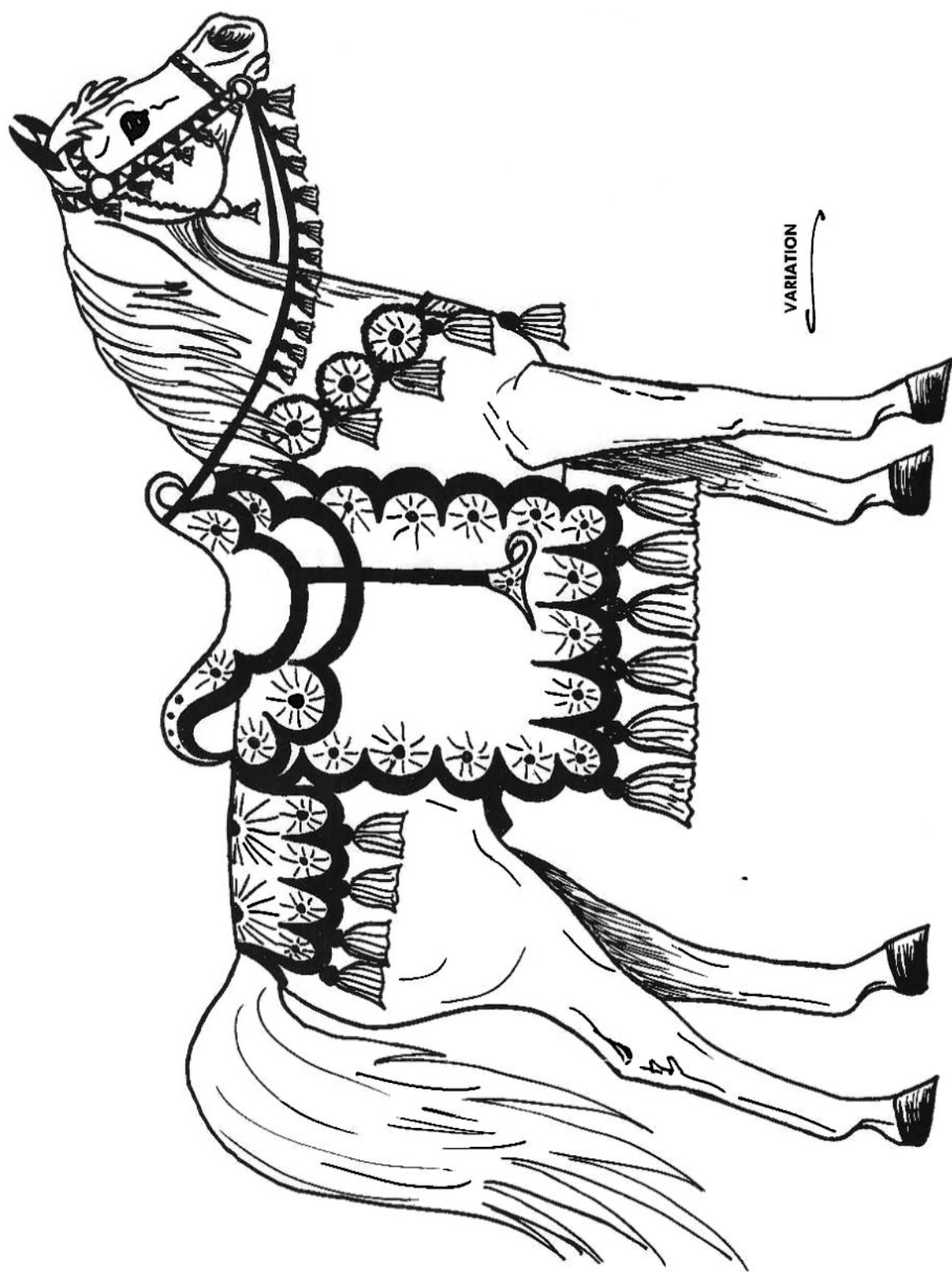
In the following pages, I will attempt to give you the fundamentals of design and construction. The rest is up to you.

Good Luck!

LOIS ANN KROLL

I

In the Beginning



In the Beginning

It is the intent of this booklet to aid you in making an Arabian costume for you and your horse. Naturally, it is intended to be used only as a guide for the basic costume. The original design and ornamentation will be left to the discretion and individual talents of each creator.

First, let me say that this is not intended to be an authoritative treatise on the absolutely authentic costumes as seen in Arabia, but rather to be a description and instruction in creating the colorful and elegant, basically authentic, costumes as seen in our classes today; where designs are dictated not only by the Sheiks of Arabia, but also by the glamour and imagination of Hollywood. The drab costumes of the impoverished Bedouin Arab has no place in our classes, therefore, to catch the fancy of the American public we must enrich our costumes with jewels, luxurious materials, and imagination. We must, however, base these designs on the authentic, or we will lose the essence of the class.

The first point to take into consideration is color and selection of materials. The choice of color is divided into three important considerations: hue, contrast, and quantity.

HUE: The colors you choose are largely a matter of personal taste, governed only by the color of horse for which the costume is intended. The grey horses will look well in almost any color, depending somewhat on what shade of grey they are. Certain shades of brown will not be effective on the black greys, whereas on the rose greys they sometimes may be used. However, the dark bright colors (i.e. green, red, blue and purple, etc.) are generally better. The bays, chestnuts, blacks and very dark greys will do better in the lighter bright colors (i.e. orange, yellow, light blue, light green, cerise, chartreuse and turquoise, etc.).

CONTRAST: Contrast is of the utmost importance — don't minimize it. It can make or break the overall effect. Remember, something may look absolutely beautiful and correct at five feet away, but at a great distance it may look completely blank and uninteresting. Take into consideration that the average distance that the costume will be viewed will be about fifty to seventy feet. Contrast between materials is important but contrast between horse and costume must also be considered. Sometimes, the costume may be made monochromatically — that is, to use different shades and tints of the same color using the horse's color as a basic (i.e. a chestnut horse with a chocolate brown aba and completing the costume in various shades of browns, beiges and golds or a similar use of

various shades from black to white on a grey horse). However, the contrasting colors are easier to use and more of a variety is available.

QUANTITY: The quantities of the different colors used are a factor also. Usually, two major colors are best, coupled with several accent colors if desired. Equally effective color combinations may consist of only two colors or the aforementioned monochromatic color variations.

One must keep in mind that color balance, in most cases, requires one predominate color, a secondary color and small amounts of accent colors. You should usually have one basic color which is carried throughout the costume — usually the darkest color on a light colored horse, or the lightest or brightest color on a dark horse. Gold and silver metallics may also be used in conjunction with the colors very effectively.



The choice of materials presents no major problem. Velvets, brocades, silks, taffetas, tapes, satins, chiffons, and metallics all are adaptable for the costume. The materials may be adorned with glass jewels and gold and silver braids, fringes and tassels. The heavy upholstery materials may be used very effectively for the saddle and saddle blanket. Colored leathers may be used in conjunction with the other materials on the saddle, bridle and the breastcollar. The colored felts may also be used to advantage.

Detailed instructions on each piece of the costume will be found in the following pages under individual chapter headings.



THE ABA
(back)

II

The Aba



THE ABA
(front)

The Aba

The "aba" (cloak or robe) is the traditional garb of the Bedouin Arab and is of a very simple design. The best description of it is that it approximates a square shape with an opening down the front and armholes at each end of the upper extremity. It will require approximately three yards of either forty-five or fifty-four inch material. The choice of width is dependent on the height of the person who is to wear it as the width of the material is used as the length of the aba. The material is folded in three with the leading edges about six inches apart (after hemming) with the opening down the center front and sewn across the top. This top seam is the only seam in the aba. The edges may be trimmed as elaborately as desired with braids and jewels. Jewels are very effective and may be used on any part of the costume. It is advisable not to use sequins to any extent as they tend to give a circus-like appearance to the costume and detract from the classical effect.

The edges down the front will stand up to four inches of trim without being overdone. The bottom edges will take up to twelve inches of a combination of jewels and various braids. The edges of the armholes will usually handle about two to four inches of trim. The size of the armholes is optional. You can either have a slot just large enough for the hand to go through easily, or you may have them up to ten inches wide. The object of the latter is so that a false sleeve can be inserted and sewn directly onto the aba rather than have a cumbersome long-sleeved shirt underneath. This is for a practical purpose rather than a lazy one, for when the time comes for you to become a quick change artist between classes, the less you have to put together, the better. There should be some kind of fastener across the front of the aba to hold it on at speed. Either tie strings or a length of metallic cord may be used effectively with some kind of fastener on one side. The aba may have an opening all the way down the front and show about six inches of the shirt and sash. This will allow any ornamentation of the undergarments to show if it is desired. If you don't want to invest time in the decoration of the shirt you can have the aba close completely with two or three fasteners of some sort and have the decorated front of the aba suffice for the front trim.

It is also very effective to have the center back of the aba decorated with some design suitable for the location such as a sunburst of jewels or an abstract design of braids and jewels. Some suggestions of center design may be seen on Plate I.

An alternative for the aba is the cape. Al-

though the cape style is not really authentic it does serve as a relief from the severe aba shape, especially for the women's costume which really has no dictates for style that are suitable for our classes anyway.

Any material that drapes well will be suitable for the aba or cape. It should be neither too heavy nor too light and should not have any properties of stiffness. The aba should be of the predominate color chosen from your pre-selected color scheme. The velvets, velveteens, certain wools, certain of the novelty materials or any material that has enough body and flexibility to drape may be used. The striped materials are very effective if you do not want to go into a great deal of jewelry as the stripes themselves will serve as decoration and braid on the borders will suffice as trim. Some of the brocades may be used also providing they are of an Arabian motif. The brocades of Oriental, French or Italian motif are not suitable for an Arab costume.

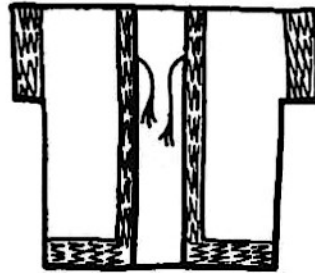
The aba is strictly a piece of masculine apparel as far as the Arab is concerned. The women generally do not ride horses, and their garb could hardly be called glamorous. Since there is really no absolutely authentic usable women's costumes to work from there are two paths you may take in creating one. You may use the basic patterns of the man's costume and feminize it by making the design light and dainty rather than massive and powerful. A few ideas are shown on Plate IA. There is, of course, another alternative. You braver souls can get a secret potion called "instant beard" and ride as a Sheik.

Endeavoring too far toward the so-called harem girl costume should be avoided as if this is carried beyond the point of good taste it causes nothing but unfavorable comment from the public which does nothing for the furtherment of the Arabian horse.

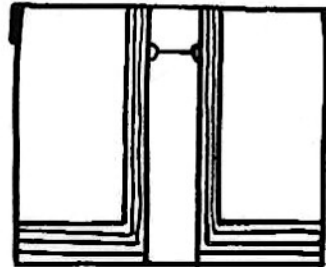
Various modifications of the basic aba pattern may be designed if desired without losing authentic quality. (See Plate I and IA.) It is best not to have the aba any longer than necessary for at the hand gallop it will blow back over the tail. This seems to bother some horses and cause them to buck or tuck their tail thus destroying the effect of the beautiful natural tail carriage of the Arabian horse. Keep in mind that the voluminous clothing of the Arab is predominately for protection from sand and sun while our costumes are for decoration and show. Therefore, we can take some liberties with the design and eliminate some of the many layers of outer and undergarments necessary on the desert and still be in keeping with the authentic.

PLATE I

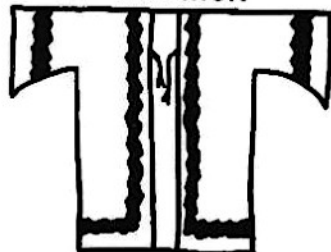
VARIATION



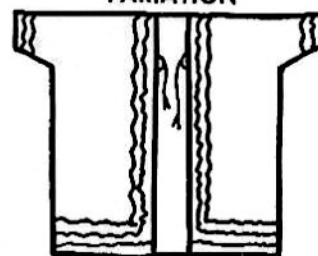
BASIC DESIGN



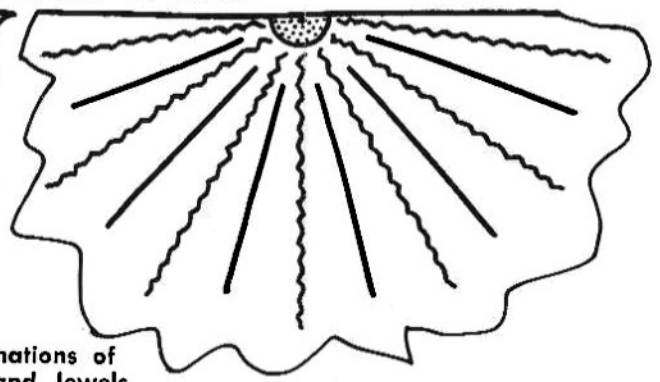
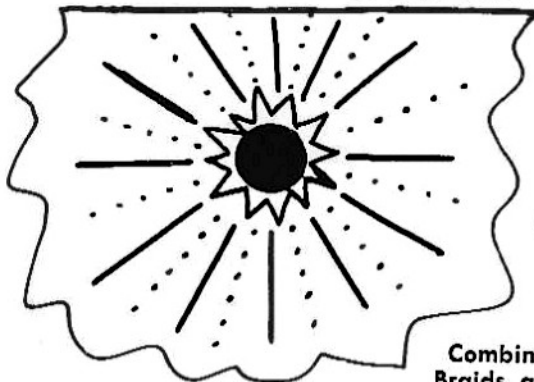
VARIATION



VARIATION



DESIGNS FOR BACK OF ABA



Combinations of
Braids and Jewels

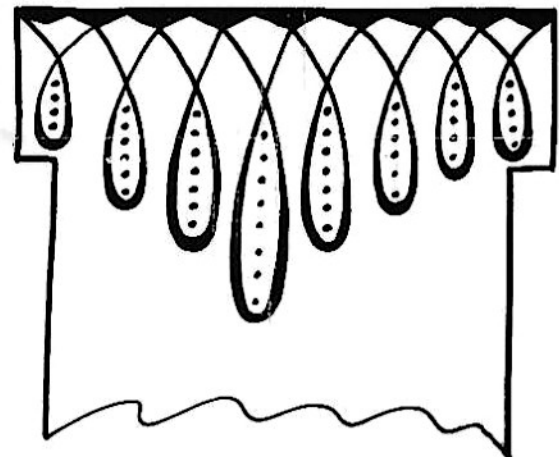
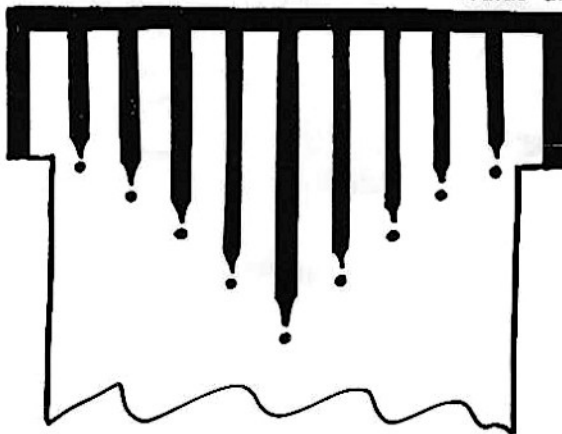
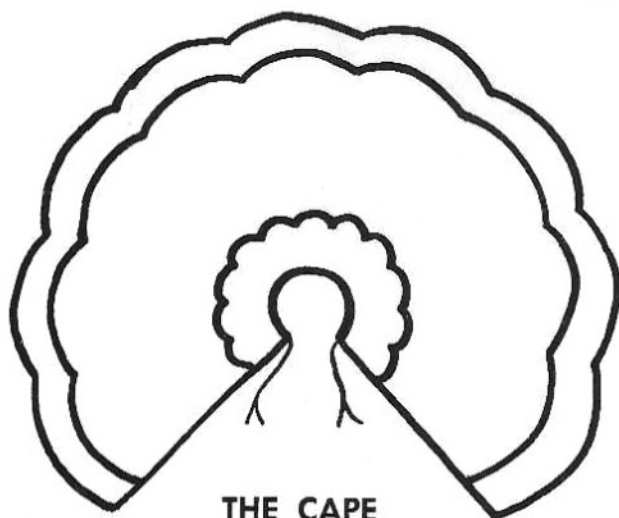
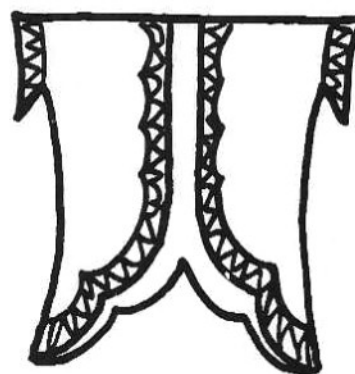


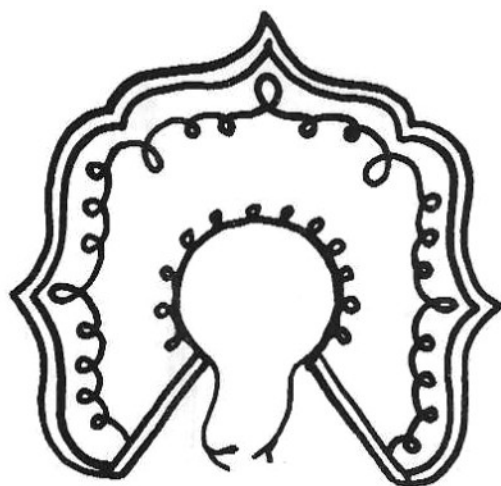
PLATE IA



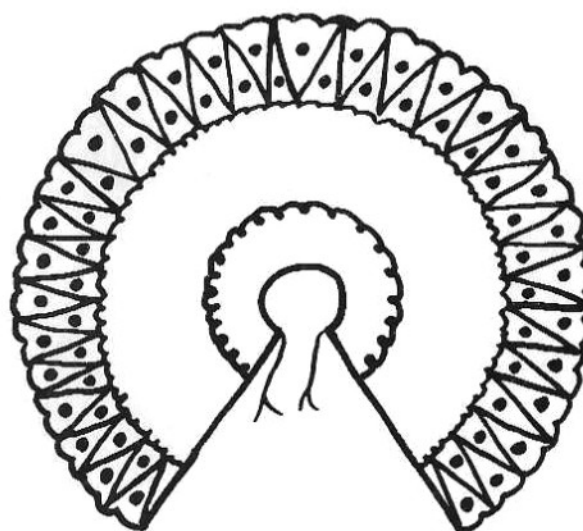
THE CAPE



ABA VARIATIONS



YOLK DETAIL



CAPE VARIATION



JACKET — ABA
VARIATION



III

The Headdress

THE HEADDRESS



The Headdress

The headdress for the man consists of a square cloth folded diagonally and placed over the head with the fold to the front like a scarf. This part is called the kuffeyah. The head cord or ighal, as it is called, is placed over the head like a crown to hold the kuffeyah in place (see Plate II).

The kuffeyah may be made from almost any lightweight material with extreme draping characteristics. Rayon, silk, crepe, jersey or the like will be quite suitable. The kuffeyah is approximately a yard square. The borders may be self-fringed, if the material is suitable, or trimmed with an edging of some type of fine braid.

The choice of color will depend on the rest of the costume. Either contrasting or blending colors may be used depending on what effect is needed. It is better to wait until the costume is near completion before selecting the color as at this time you can evaluate the whole costume and see what color is needed.

There are many types of ighals. The type of ighal worn seems to be a sign of status in Arabia. The poor Bedouin wears a single cord of rope while the upper classes wear an ighal of variations of many tiers (usually four) wrapped in silver or gold threads.

There are many ways one may make the ighal and still be in keeping with the basic design. Regardless of the procedure a head measurement is the first thing necessary. Take the measurement loosely over the bare head at the greatest diameter at a point across the forehead and just above the ears. After the head size has been ascertained, the procedure should be as follows:

Take a piece of wood four inches wide by one inch thick and approximately six inches longer than the distance around the head. Put a large nail at each end with the distance between them equal to the distance around the head plus two inches. Now take a skein of fine silken cord or wool yarn and make a loop around the two nails and attach the loose end to the edge of the board with tape so when you reach the end of wrapping you can tie the two loose ends together. Start winding the yarn or cord around the nails pulling the yarn quite tightly. Make a total of seventy-five complete wraps and tie off the ends. The amount of wraps will depend upon the weight of cord used. Now take a ruler and measure off one inch in from each end and mark the measurement on the board. Divide the remaining length into four sections with each section separated by a smaller section two inches wide always marking the measurements on the board. Then take either silver, gold or a colored

thread and wind it very tightly and closely around one-half of the skein starting at the one inch mark and continuing to the end of the first long section. Leave the two inch section unwrapped and resume winding again on the next long section continuing alternately to the opposite end. When you are finished you will have two unwound one inch sections, three unwound two inch sections and four wound long sections. A piece of cord should be placed through the loops of yarn made by the nails for tying the ighal into a circle at completion. Now you have a two tier ighal. Remove it from the forming board and repeat the aforementioned procedure for the other two tiers using the same measurements that you marked on the board for the first one. After completion of the second two tiers tie the four tiers together at a point before and after each tuft in such a manner that the result will have each similar section perfectly matched and complete a four tier ighal. After the ighal is tied to the proper head size there is no need to untie it unless it is to be worn by persons with vastly different head sizes.

The alternate method is to use a center cord surrounded by a thin layer of yarn or cord and then wrap in a similar fashion to the first one mentioned. This center core can be made from a piece of clothesline rope. (See Plate II.)

The color used is optional but should match the rest of the costume and usually be a contrast to the color of the kuffeyah.

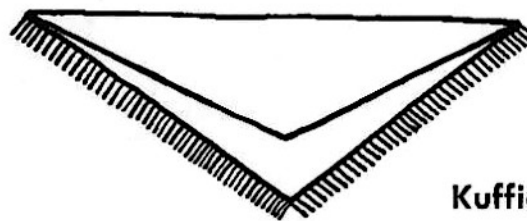
The headgear for the lady, like most of the female attire, is either too drab or vague to give us something to work from in designing our headdress. However, one of the most popular methods is to use a pillbox hat form and cover it with suitable material that matches the costume. A drape of material should be attached to the back two-thirds of the pillbox similar to the kuffeyah and a veil of soft chiffon across the front that can be disconnected on one side for ease in dressing. The borders may be either self-fringed or edged in gold braid. Jewels may be sewn on the pillbox in a suitable pattern to match the rest of the outfit.



PLATE II



Kuffieyah
and Ighal

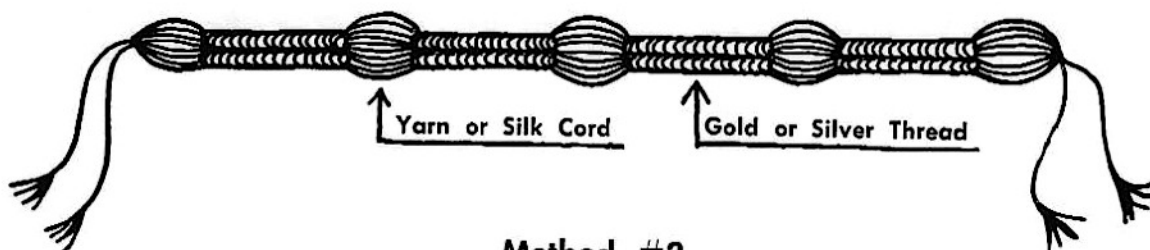


Kuffieyah

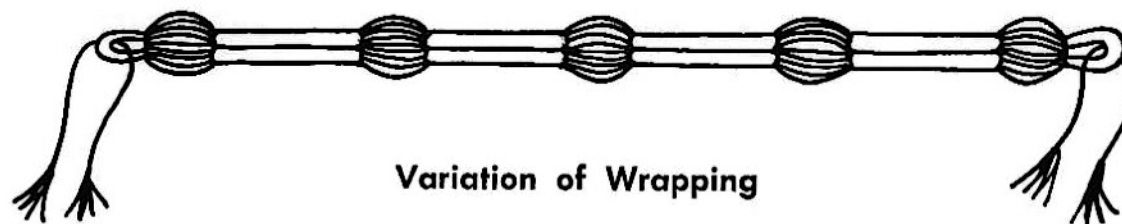


Board for Making Ighal

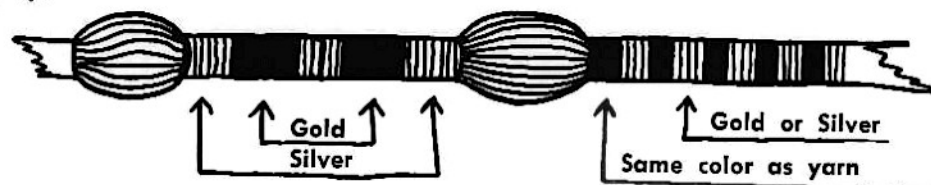
THE IGHAL



Method #2



Variation of Wrapping



Gold
Silver

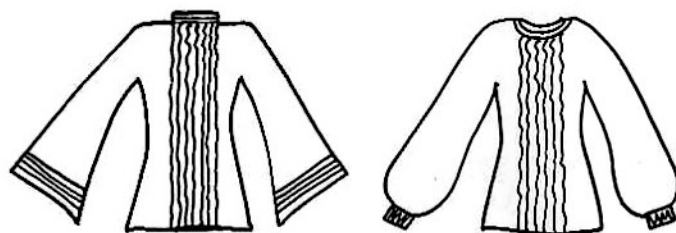
Gold or Silver
Same color as yarn

IV

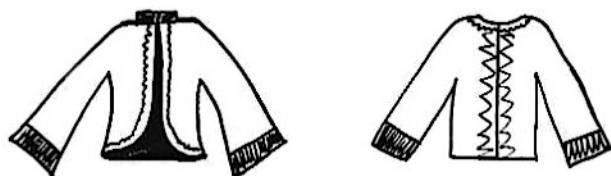
The Shirt

PLATE III ✓

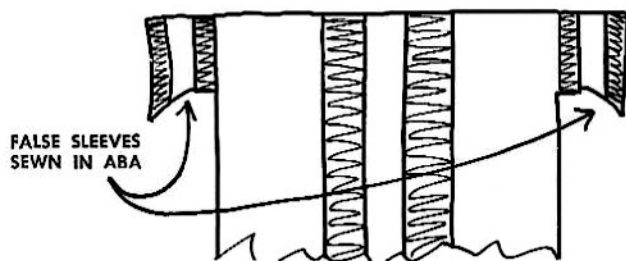
THE FULL SHIRT WITH VARIATIONS



THE JACKET WITH VARIATIONS



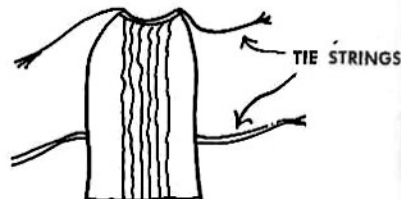
FALSE SLEEVES ATTACHED TO ABA



THE VEST



THE DICKEY



The Shirt

The design of the shirt is somewhat optional. The main thing is to have the chest and collar area decorated and the cuffs, if they show. There are many ways this can be accomplished.

The most logical way is to make a full shirt with the front and collar and cuffs decorated with braid and jewels. Another way is to have merely a dickey affair that attaches around the neck and waist with tie strings. Separate decorated cuffs can then be attached directly in the armholes of the aba, if desired.

The front of the shirt may be profusely decorated with jewels and braids. A vest may also be incorporated, if desired. This should be decorated quite extensively with various embroidery, braids and/or jewels.

The authentic undergarments of the Arab costume include several layers of various types of clothing including a sash, jacket, vest, a full length long-sleeved garment called a kaftan, shirt and trousers. Since none but the outer layer shows and all this clothing would only get in the way and hamper a quick change between

classes, it would seem wise to omit all but the shirt and trousers and possibly the jacket or vest and sash. These pieces will suffice unless you have a craving for absolute authenticity. Variations of design may be seen on Plate III.

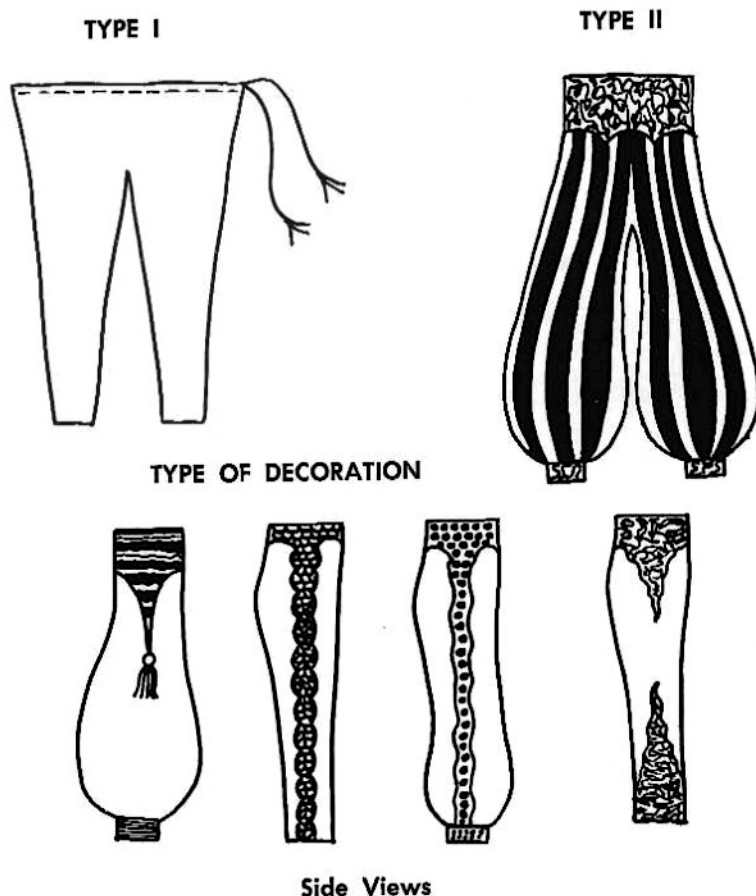
Suitable materials for the shirt are satin, silk, cotton, jersey and various lightweight novelty materials. The vest may be made of a metallic material or a brocade. The jacket should be made out of material with some body so as not to look sloppy. The choice of color should be in keeping with the rest of the costume. It should be recessive to the rest of the costume so as not to detract.

Since all of the garments are loose fitting patterns are really no problem. If, however, you would like to have something for a guide, rather than cut out your own patterns, some pajama patterns can be modified. Select a very plain pattern and modify it to meet your needs. This also will help you in determining the amount of material needed as all purchased patterns include this information.

V

The Trousers

PLATE IV THE TROUSERS



The Trousers

There are really only two basic designs for the trousers. One is a moderately loose-fitting trouser of a tapered leg design. The alternative is the pantaloon style of a more Turkish origin. Although not authentic Bedouin this style is more easily made and very conducive to the use of more luxurious fabrics due to the looser fit. This style also is useful in that they may be worn over either English or Western pants in case of a quick change between classes.

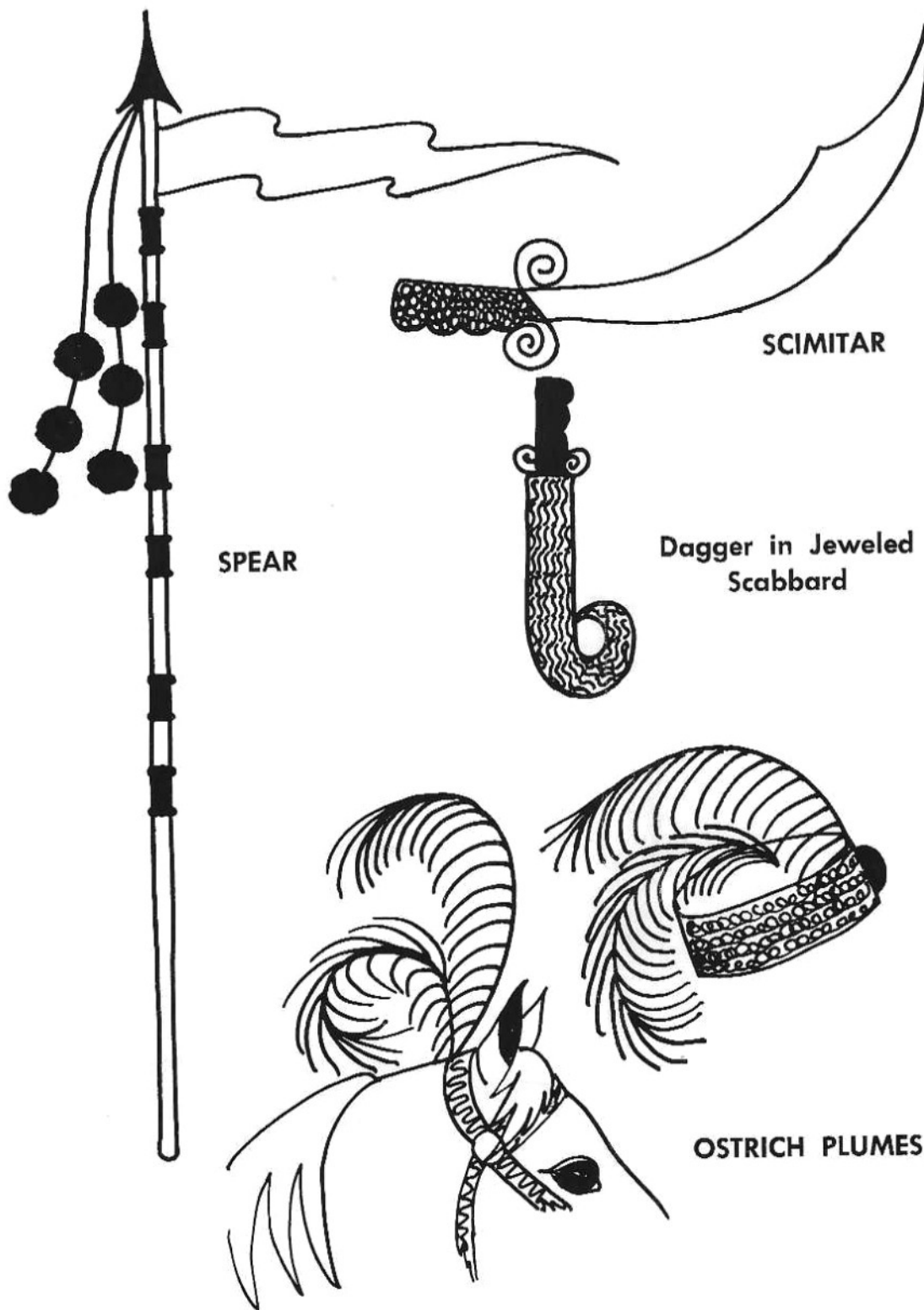
Either style may be used and the choice of materials should be governed by the following: It should have extreme durability, draping characteristics, and a certain amount of softness so as not to chaff the skin. Another factor to be considered is the cleaning problem. The material chosen should be able to stand either washing or dry cleaning without losing the quality of the fabric as this garment will have to be cleaned much more often than the rest of the costume.

The color chosen should be somewhat recessive as was mentioned in Chapter IV regarding the shirt. In fact, the shirt and pants look very well if the material is identical. Some authorities maintain that in Arabia this garment is always white, but it must be considered that the pants for the most part are an undergarment and are covered with various overgarments. However, as we usually use the pants as an outer garment it would seem that it would be better to have them more decorative so they would be an asset to the rest of the costume. Either plain colors or stripes may be used very effectively. Metallics or some brocades may also be used if they will stand the wear and tear. The waistband and cuffs may be of a contrasting material and may be decorated with braids and jewels as desired. Variations of design may be seen on Plate IV.

VI

Accessories

PLATE V



Accessories

In this chapter various accessories for both the horse and rider will be described. Although these accessories are optional you will find that the addition of one or more of them will add to the overall effect of the costume.

Among the accessories that may be added are a spear, an antique Arab rifle, a dagger or scimitar in the weapon line; ostrich plumes in various colors, a breeching, a croup cover, a crown piece for the bridle, fancy sandals and jewelry in the decorative line.

Illustrated on Plate V are the weapons, most of which are self-explanatory as far as creation and decoration. The antique rifle is not illustrated for this must be purchased from a dealer or collector. One thought that must be kept in mind in making any of these weapons is the safety factor. They should be made of material and in such a manner that should a fall or collision occur any danger of injury is minimized.

Ostrich plumes in various colors are quite effective. They may be used on the bridle and on the rider's headdress. Although they are fragile they will usually last for enough classes to make the expense of replacement non-prohibitive.

Suggestions on the design and decoration of the breeching, croup cover and crown piece may be seen on Plate VI. The construction of these parts is much the same as will be described later in the chapter on the bridle and breastcollar.

The footwear is rather simple to decorate. The easiest way is to buy an inexpensive sandal at a regular shoe store. These may then be sprayed with a metallic paint and then decorated with braid or jewels. Although somewhat more difficult to make, an alternate design is the curled toe type reminiscent of the Turkish sandals.

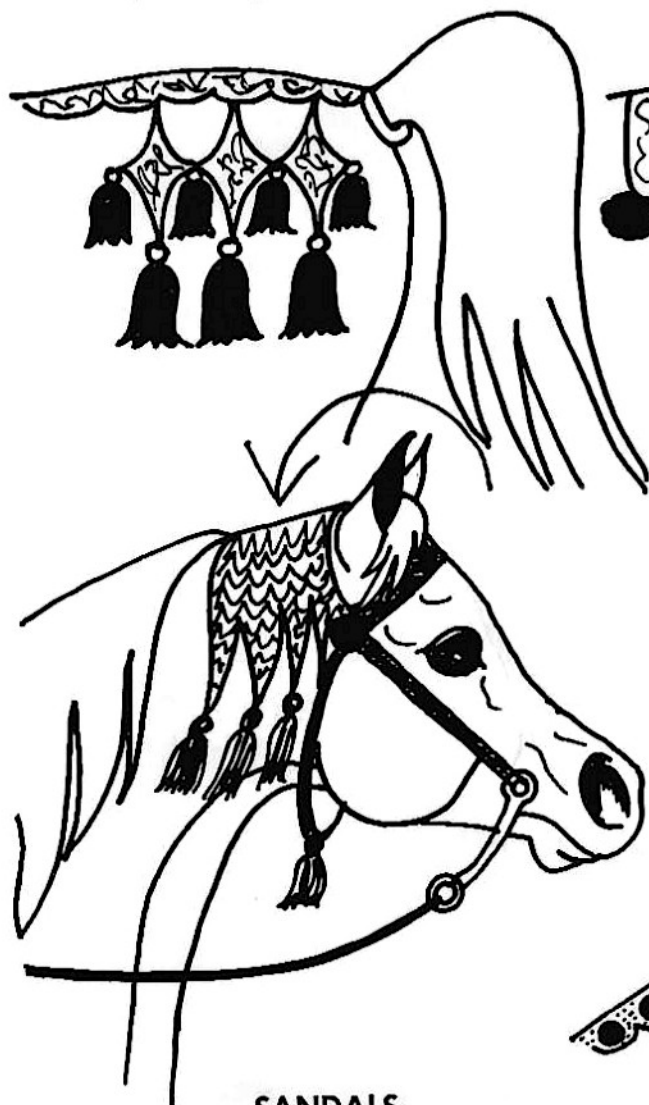
Jewelry in the fashion of necklaces and bracelets may be used to good advantage with the woman's costume but should be kept in good taste.

Extreme care must be taken not to overdo the accessories or decoration. Cheap gaudiness should be avoided but showiness and eye appeal through the use of color, texture, braids and jewels is absolutely necessary. There is a very thin line dividing gaudiness and showiness. The former will look cheap and harsh while the latter will look rich, colorful and show good taste.

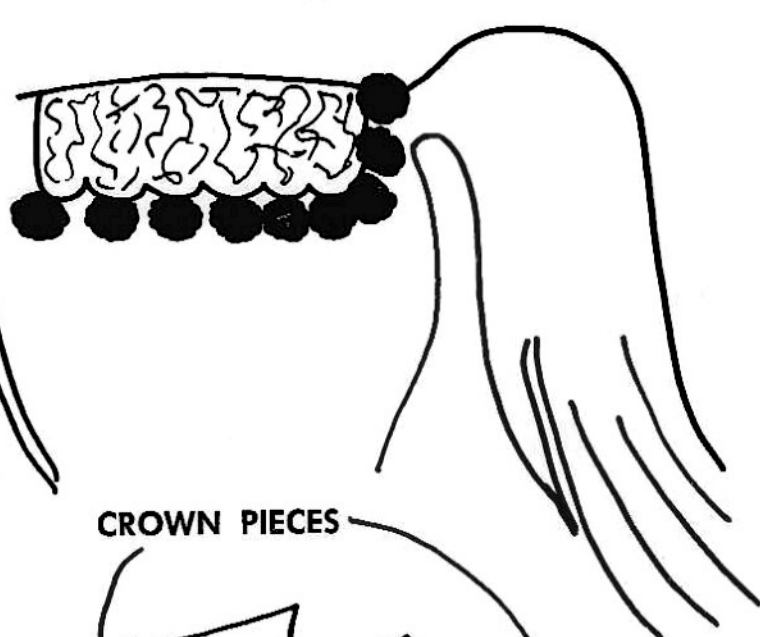


PLATE VI

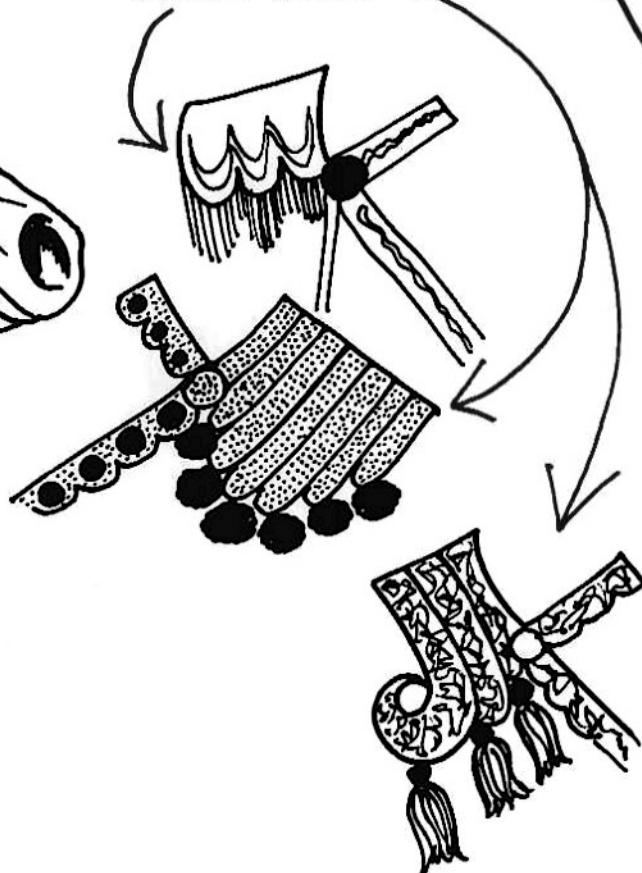
BREECHING
(with Crupper)



CROUP COVER
(without Crupper)



CROWN PIECES



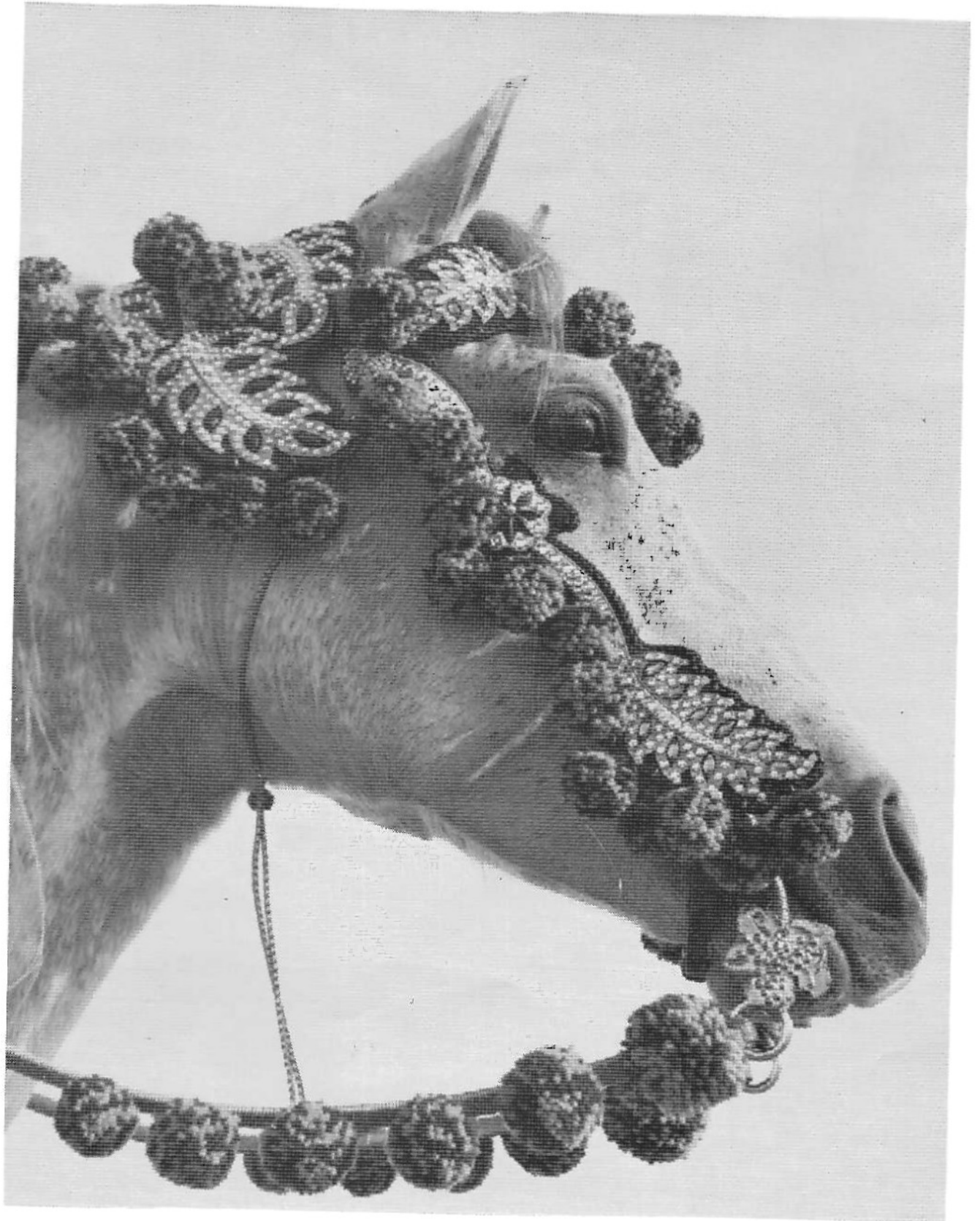
SANDALS



VII

*The Bridle and
Breastcollar*

THE BRIDLE



The Bridle and Breastcollar

The making of the horse's portion of the costume is perhaps the most demanding for the inexperienced craftsman. However, there are many methods to use in making the horse tack, some of which are quite simple, yet effective. The main thing is not to go in over your head. Don't attempt something too complex for your talents for the end result will show any inadequateness.

Illustrated on Plate VII are several different types of bridles with Figure I being the simplest and each succeeding figure becoming more complex. Following are the descriptions of each illustration.

FIGURE I

This bridle is made by covering a commercially made western headstall. This basic headstall is three-quarters of an inch wide, double and stitched, or single cowhide leather, and to consist of a browband, noseband, throatlatch, and cheekpieces preferably with the size adjustment located at the poll. This then may be covered with a suitable material or colored leather with or without braids and jewels attached. Either fringe, tassels or yarn pompons may be attached to the lower edges. The reins may be similarly decorated.

FIGURE II

This bridle is also made with the basic western headstall as the base. The variation here is the alteration of the shape. This is accomplished by cutting a piece of lightweight leather of sufficient stiffness to the desired shape and either gluing or sewing it to the basic headstall. A covering of material or very lightweight colored leather should be applied over the shape and attached firmly to the basic headstall. If jewels or braids are desired they should be attached prior to applying the decorative portion to the basic shape. The reins may be decorated to match. Tassels or fringe may also be added.

FIGURE III

Figure III shows three bridles with several innovations including a crown piece, peaked browband with noseband attached and ornate side pieces. These bridles are considerably more difficult to make than any of those previously described.

The first step is to make a paper pattern. Take your measurements from your horse's regular bridle. Design an original pattern to your own liking and cut it out of heavy wrap-

ping paper. Fit this pattern directly to your horse's head making sure that all the dimensions are workable.

Lay the pattern out on a piece of approximately eight ounce leather (either cowhide or latigo) and cut it out with a sharp leather cutting knife.

Provisions must be made for the style of bit attachments and size adjustments before cutting. Buckles, hook and stud (such as used on English bridles), tie strings or Chicago screws may be used for this purpose.

This is now the basic headstall. It may be covered with an ornate fabric or a lightweight leather decorated as desired. The decorated part should be glued securely to the basic headstall with a waterproof, flexible glue with a very tight bond.

The edges may be stitched with thread or laced with leather or plastic colored lace. The tassels or fringe should be firmly attached so as to withstand the strain of the faster gaits. The reins may be metallic cord or leather covered to match the headstall.

The same procedure may be used in making the breastcollar or martingale. The selection of style is up to you. About the only thing to be considered in making your choice is the angle of your horse's shoulder. If your horse has a more or less straight shoulder the martingale will usually look and fit better. The breastcollar style will not fit a straight shouldered horse as well as the martingale but will fit a horse with a more sloping shoulder very well. The breastcollar-martingale combination will fit only on a horse with an extremely sloping shoulder. Examples of these three styles may be seen on Plate VIII.

Many original shapes may be designed. The bridle and breastcollar should be a matching set so care should be taken when designing them so the resultant design will be effective both on the smaller area of the headstall and the larger area of the breastcollar or martingale.

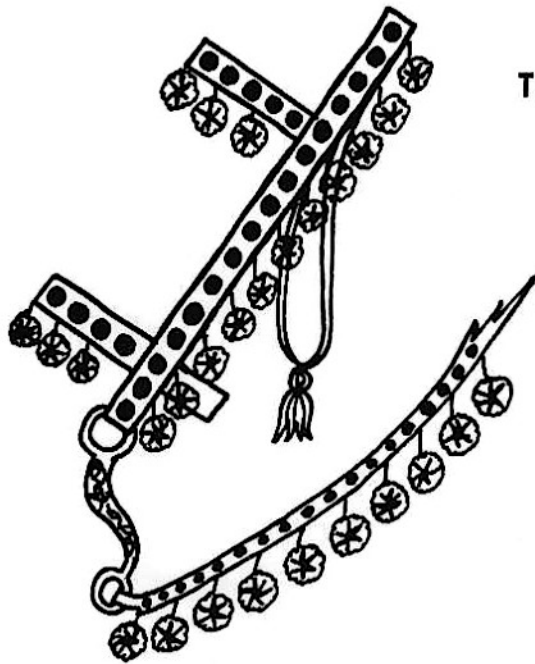
The bridle and breastcollar or martingale may be decorated with many variations of trim. These variations might include some combinations of the following:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. braid | 5. fringe |
| 2. embroidery | 6. filigreed colored leather |
| 3. jewels | 7. applique (leather or material) |
| 4. tassels | 8. pompon |

Some ideas of trim designs may be seen on Plate VIII.

PLATE VII

Figure I



THE BRIDLE

Figure II

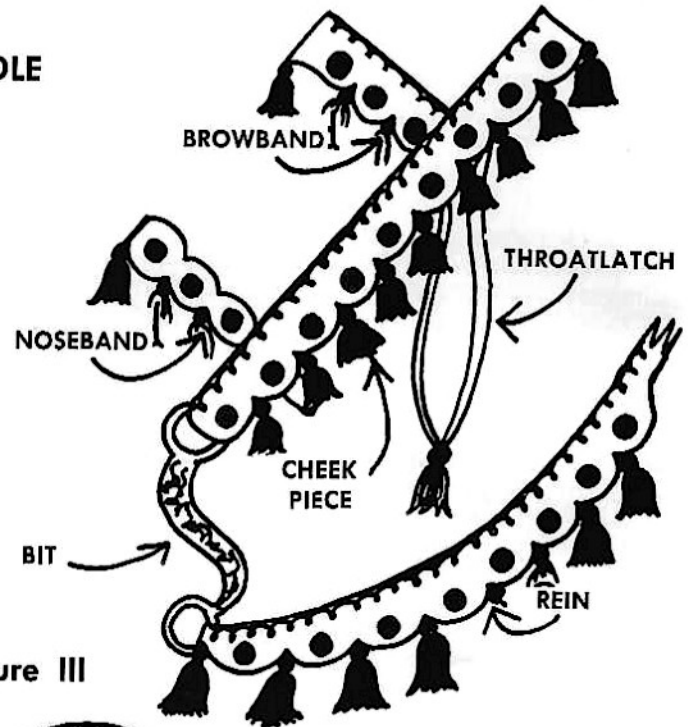
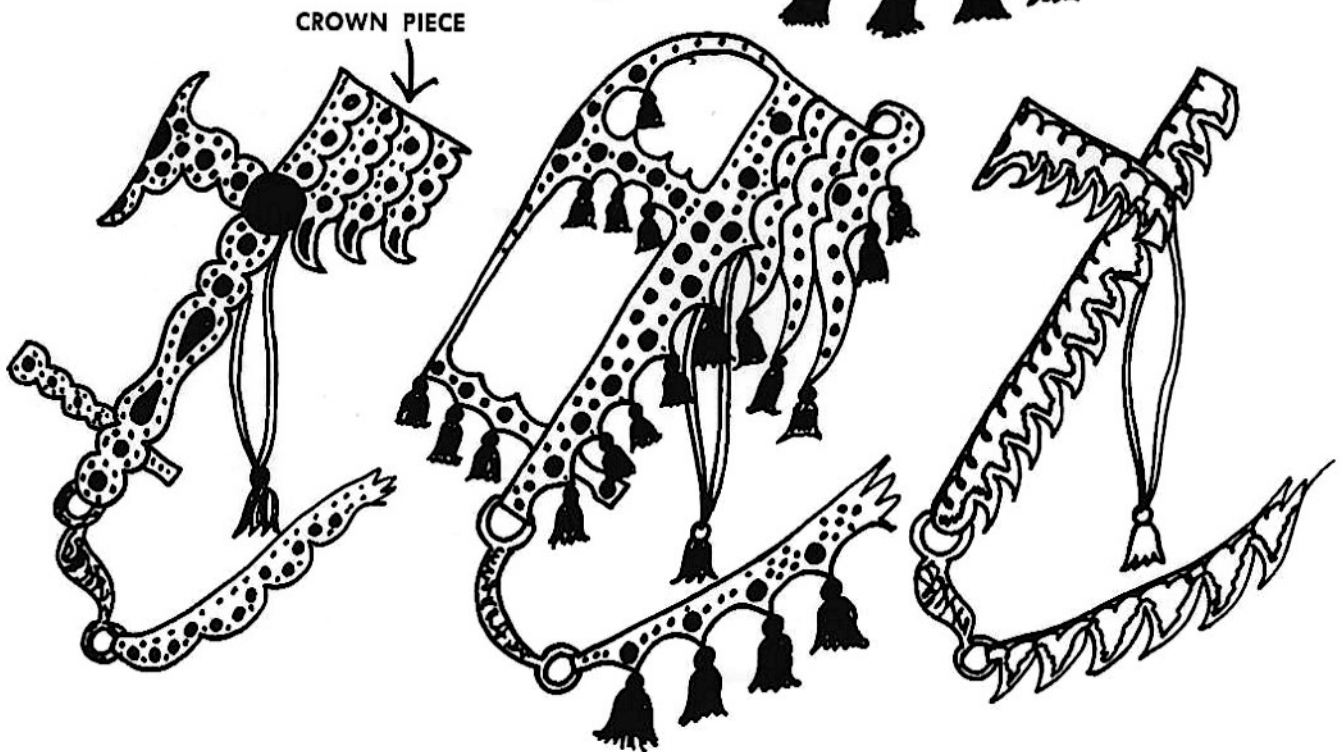
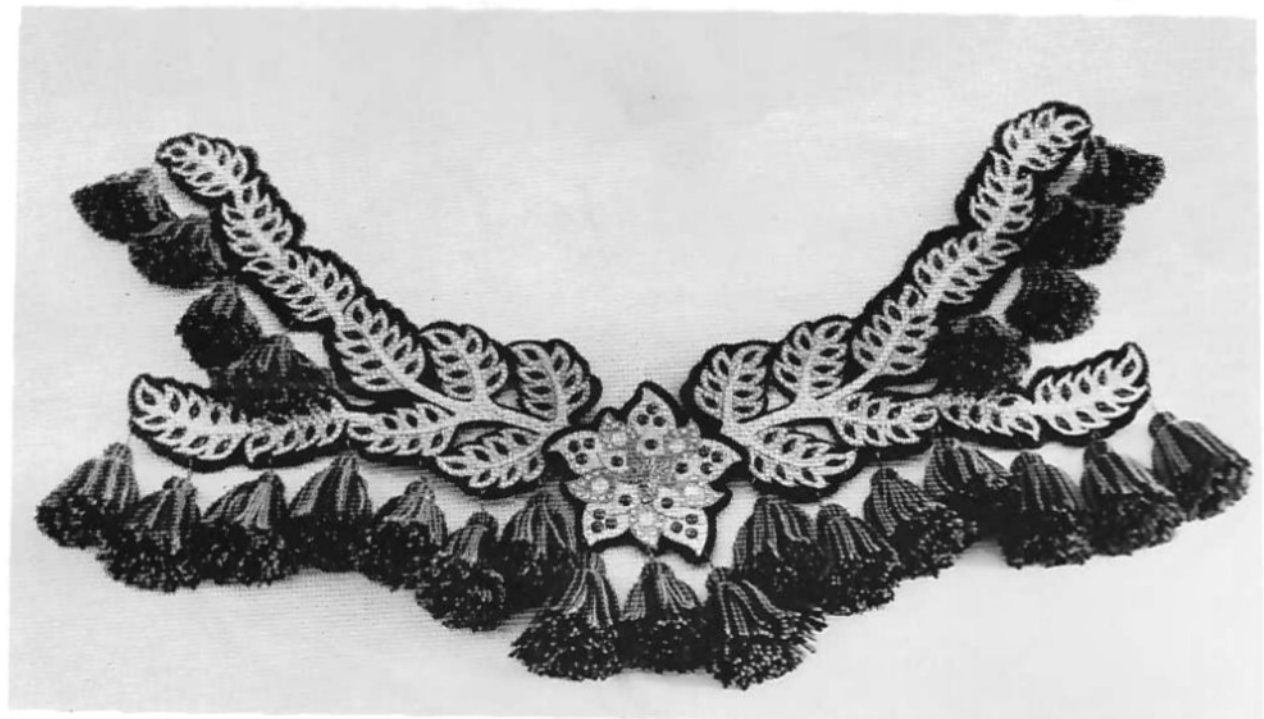


Figure III





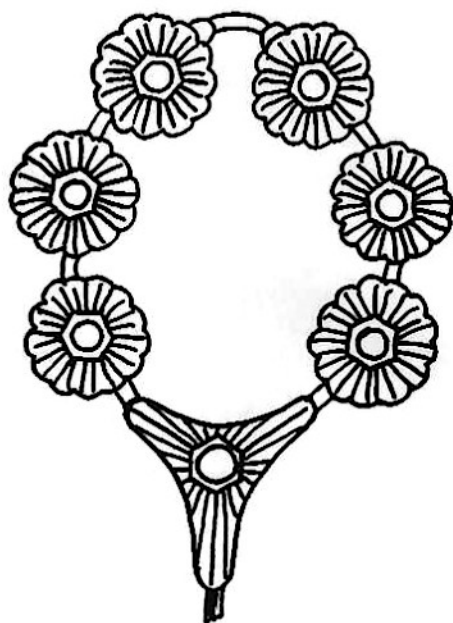
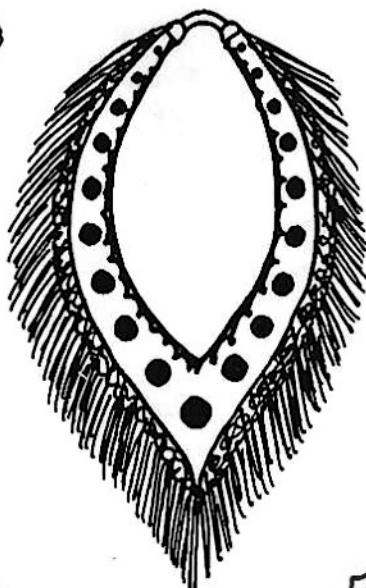
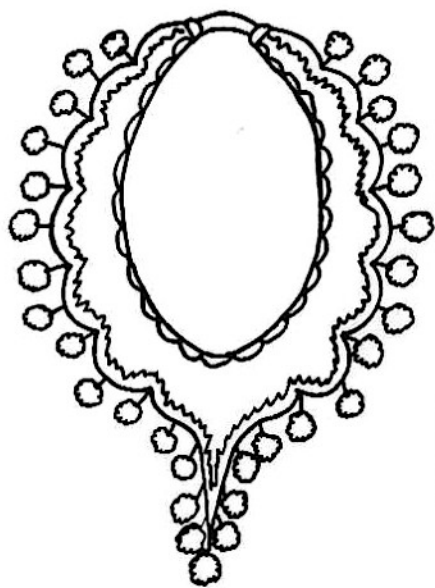
BRIDLE — Top View Showing Crown Piece



MARTINGALE - BREASTCOLLAR COMBINATION

PLATE VIII

THE BREASTCOLLAR
AND MARTINGALE



BREASTCOLLAR — MARTINGALE
COMBINATION

Two Variations of Design



VIII

The Saddle



SADDLE AND BLANKET

The Saddle

The saddle is by far the most challenging item to make. There are really only two alternatives in making the saddle that are practical.

The first way that will be discussed is by far the easiest. It will present the least problems to the amateur craftsman and still be very effective. The first step is to find an old saddle. It should be in very good condition and sound in construction. The looks of the saddle need not be very good as it will all be covered. The choice of type is up to you. If an old western saddle is used the horn should be cut off. In the case of an English saddle usually nothing need be done to modify the basic shape. However, the most adaptable saddle for this purpose is the Army McClellan saddle. These are quite easy to come by and are easily modified and covered. The most important thing to be considered regardless of which type you choose is to make absolutely certain that the rigging, tree, girth and stirrup hangers and straps are strong and sound for your safety may depend on them. Most of the older saddles should be completely re-rigged and checked by an experienced saddlemaker.

Heavy upholstery material or colored leather may be used to cover the saddle. You will probably find the cloth easier to work with for it can be stretched and shaped easier and also errors in cutting are not so costly. In order to cover your saddle most easily take a few hints from the way the saddle leather is cut and assembled to fit a western saddle. This basic concept can be modified for use on any type of saddle. The pieces of material or leather should be tacked or sewn, where applicable, to the saddle tree much in the same manner as on a western saddle.

Almost any kind of trim may be used on the saddle including those listed in the preceding chapter and also suitable gold and silver ornaments. Ornamental upholstery tacks may be used to attach the material to the saddle tree. At some points of stress wood screws may be necessary. Extreme care should be taken to insure that all parts and methods of attaching will withstand the severe wear and tear of the costume class.



The alternate method possible should not be attempted by anyone that is not experienced to some degree in saddlemaking. If you have made saddles before or are quite familiar with the do's and don'ts of saddlemaking you could attempt this method. This method involves starting with a bare tree. A regular western saddle tree may be modified for this purpose or if money is no object you can have a tree maker construct a special tree in any shape you may desire. This will give you a frame and depending on your experience you might have the tree rigged by a professional saddlemaker and then finish it yourself. The saddle tree should then be covered with saddle weight cowhide decorated to your liking either with colored leathers or fabric. The elements of design and decoration are much the same as discussed in the first method.

There is one other possibility that will suffice in the small shows or in areas where the competition is not so keen. There is no modification of a saddle involved. It merely consists of a slipcover made of a heavy material that slips over your regular riding saddle. It should be contoured and well-fitted and may be decorated as much as desired. Usually no decorative saddle blanket is used with this idea as the slipcover usually is about the same size and shape as a saddle blanket and serves as both saddle cover and blanket. The material selected may be a heavy brocaded upholstery material either in solid color or multi-color.

The color of the saddle usually is the same as the bridle and martingale in the case of a leather outfit. If fabric is used it may or may not be the same but in any case it should blend well with the rest of the outfit and not be too outstanding.

The design of the basic shape is largely up to the individual governed only by the contour of the horse and rider. On Plate X are some examples of the possible shapes and types of saddles that can be created.

The saddle blanket may be of the same material as the saddle or of a contrasting material. Tassels or fringe may be added to the edges if desired. Braids and jewels or other types of ornamentation may be used to decorate it. The basic shape may be augmented with scallops, curves, points or squares as desired.

The stirrups are a fairly simple item to make. The easiest way is to use an English stirrup for the framework and cover it with a piece of heavy leather cut to an ornamental shape and decorated. An alternate method is to drill a small hole in the wide part of the side of the

stirrup and attach a large round or otherwise shaped decorative ornament with a bolt and locknut.

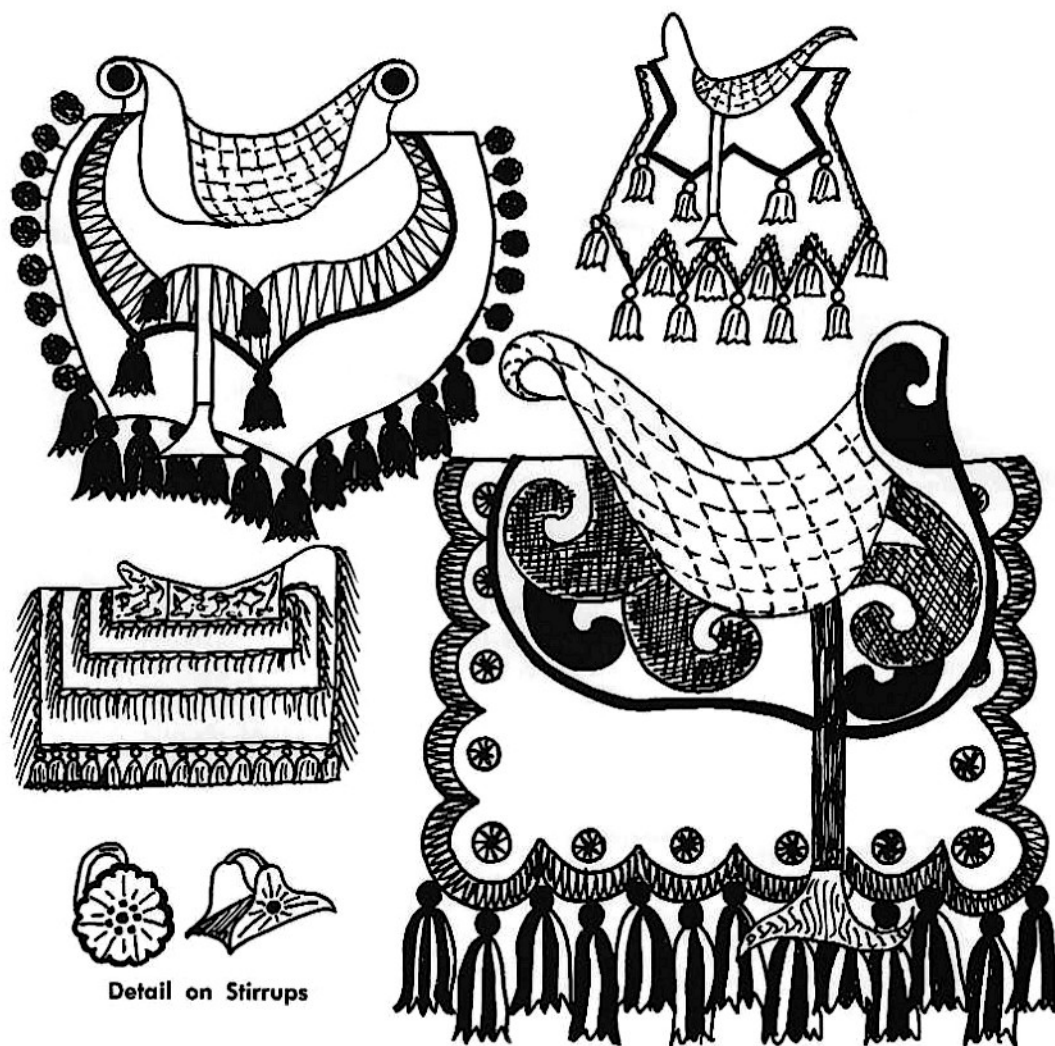
A regular western mohair cinch will work rather well for your saddle as it can be decorated easily with colored yarn and tassels. However, a leather English girth may be used if the rigging of your saddle is of that type.

The first thing to keep in mind while designing the saddle (and the bridle and martingale or breastcollar as well) is strength, balance and comfort for both horse and rider first with color, decoration and originality second. Remember design without functionalism is poor

design. Don't let a zest for the oblique and odd shapes enter into the designing of the saddle to any extent for the result might end up in a grotesque, ill-fitting saddle. The design should fit the shape and the shape should fit the part of the horse on which it is to go. Make your saddle compatible to basic saddle shapes. Remember that centuries of time and thought have gone into the designing of properly fitted, practical saddles by the greatest horsemen of the times culminating in our present day saddles for different purposes. So to deviate too far from this basic construction would be to reject this result.

PLATE IX

THE SADDLE AND BLANKET



Detail on Stirrups

IX

Tassels and Pompons



SADDLE AND BLANKET
Bridle and Breastcollar with Tassels and Pompons

Tassels and Pompons

The making of the tassels is a simple process but there are a few hints I can give you that will facilitate matters. Usually a great many tassels are used so repetition and conformity are important factors.

The procedure that I find the most practical makes use of a forming board. This board should be approximately three feet long by eight inches wide and two inches thick. Decide upon the length of tassels you will need. Normally there are about three or four different lengths used on one costume due to the different locations they are used. Take some thirty penny-weight common nails and pound them in the board in the following manner: Place two in the board in a straight line at a distance apart equal to twice the length of the finished tassels plus two inches. This extra two inches will compensate for the stretch of the yarn. By staggering the layout on the board you can get many different sizes on the same board. Pound your nails in deep because there will be quite a strain on them when you pull your yarn tightly. Cut off the heads of the nails. This will make it easier to remove the yarn.

Wool yarn is by far the best material to use but rayon cord, string or anything that will hang properly may be used if desired. The wool yarn has the advantage of being highly compressible and being available in almost any color. Regardless of material the procedure is the same.

Take a skein of approximately four-ply wool yarn and start wrapping around the nails as you did for the ighals. The amount of wraps is optional depending on the desired thickness of

the tassels. Take into consideration that the thickness you are wrapping will be doubled when it is folded over into a tassel. Naturally, the smaller tassels will take less wraps than the larger ones. When the desired number of wraps are completed tie off the ends. Take some very strong, fine twine and tie a non-slip knot exactly in the center of the length. Leave the strings long as they will be used to attach the finished tassel to the costume. Plate X shows an effective non-slip knot that may be used. Slip the yarn off the nails and cut the loops open at the bottom. Hold the yarn by the tie strings and gently comb the yarn down smooth with your fingers. A helper comes in handy about now that can hold the tassels while you tie them. The helper should hold the tie strings in one hand and grasp the tassel at the top firmly. Maintaining this firm grip the helper should slide the hand down the tassel almost to the bottom, holding the yarn in a stretched position. Then another non-slip knot should be executed with a strong fine twine at a point about one inch from the top. This distance will vary with the size of the tassel. By pulling this knot as tightly as possible it will contour your tassel properly. Trim the bottom off straight and to the desired length. You may wrap the neck of the tassel with either metallic or colored thread. This will give it a finished look.

Pompon tassels are made quite similarly but are not made individually. Place your nails about twenty inches apart. Wrap the yarn around the nails as before. The pompons will require many more wraps than the comparable size tassels. Pompons may vary from one inch to four inches in diameter. The thicker the yarn the better the pompons. The smaller ones will require about seventy-five wraps. After you have completed the wraps tie a series of non-slip knots along the length at appropriate intervals according to the desired size of pompons. These ties should encase only one-half of the yarn as this one set of wraps makes two rows of pompons. Cut open one end at the nail and stretch it out full length. This should measure about forty inches. Stretch it out tightly and cut them apart midway between each knot. Take each cut section and roll it gently between your hands until it resembles a fluffy ball. Take a sharp scissors and trim it into a completely round ball of the desired diameter. Use the tie strings to secure it to the costume.

Many variations in the shapes of tassels can be created to suit your individual taste and requirements. Plate X shows how to construct the forming board and other hints.

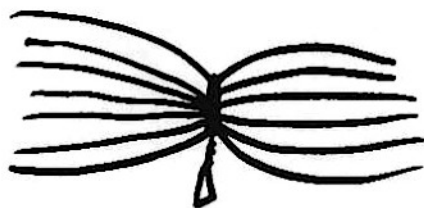


PLATE X

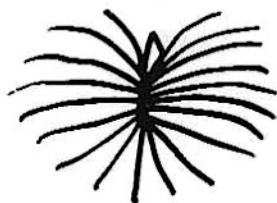
Forming Board



Pompons



STEP ONE

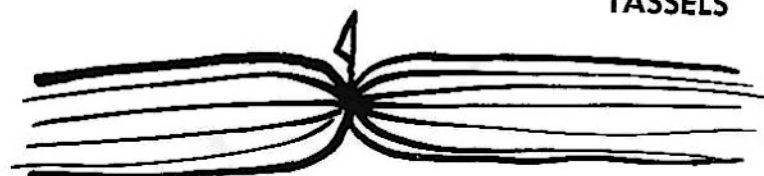


AFTER ROLLING



AFTER TRIMMING

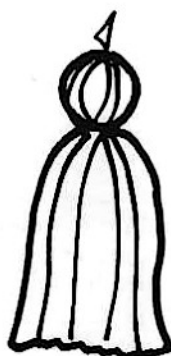
TASSELS



STEP ONE

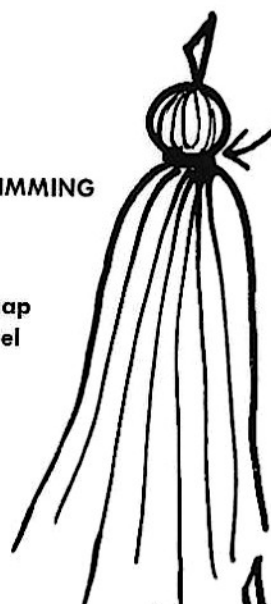
BEFORE TRIMMING

AFTER TRIMMING



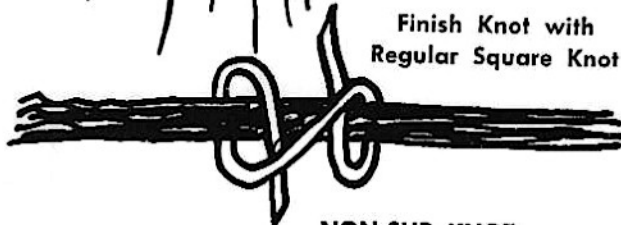
Several Styles

Fishing Snap and Swivel



NON-SLIP KNOT

Finish Knot with Regular Square Knot



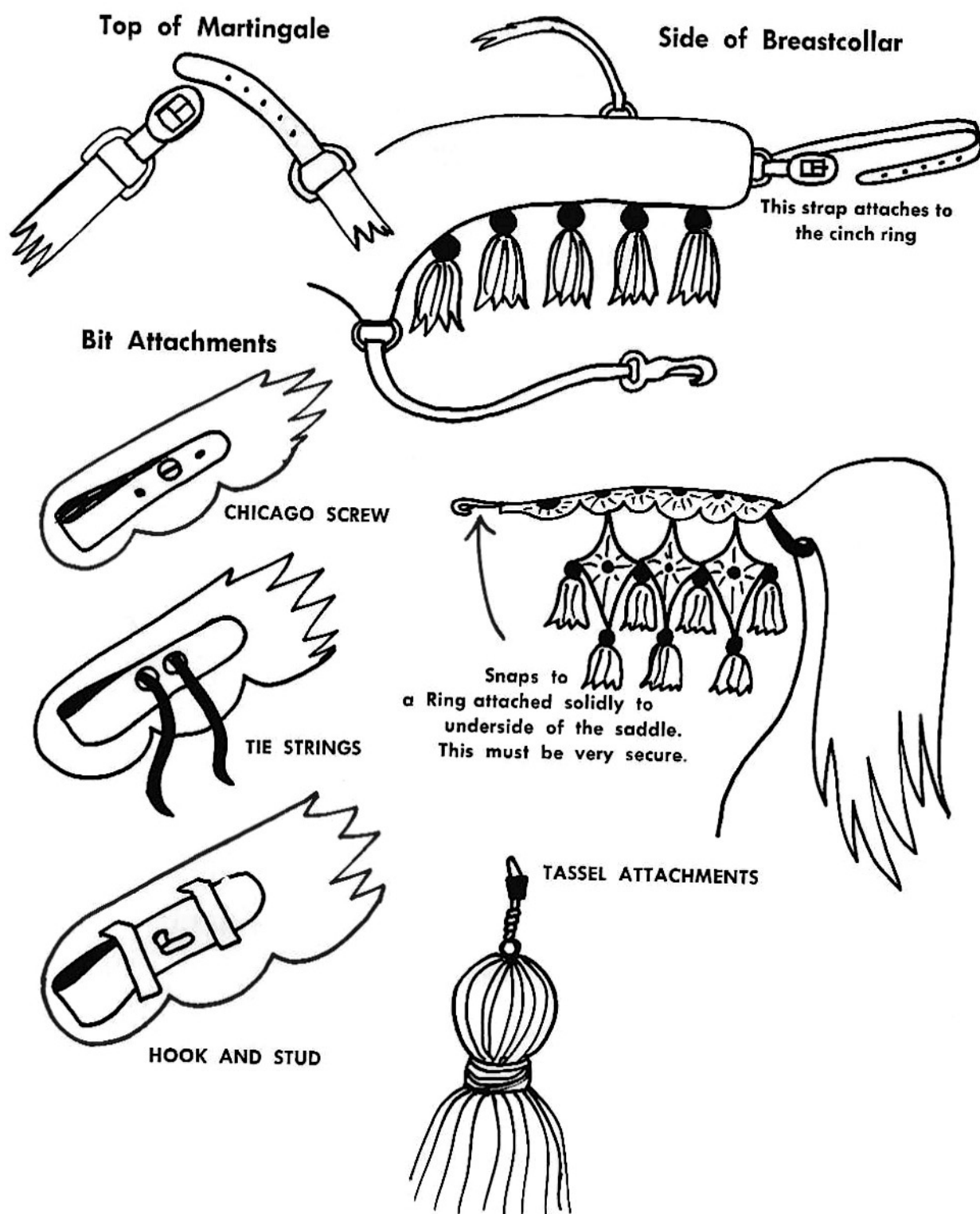
NON-SLIP KNOT

X

In Conclusion

PLATE XI

METHODS OF ATTACHMENT



In Conclusion

This chapter is aimed primarily at the newcomer to the Arabian Costume class. By now your costume is done and you are undoubtedly very pleased with yourself, but don't make the mistake of putting it on your horse without preparing him for it in advance. Don't forget, his ancestors may have been used to flowing robes and dangling tassels but he may think that it is a bit ridiculous and, unless he is a nice quiet horse that nothing bothers, he may have a conniption fit the first time a tassel hits him in the belly or the aba flies over his tail. So it is best to practice a few times with an old sheet for the aba, something to simulate the blanket and tassels and some tassels on the headstall of an old bridle. Care should be taken as to where and how many tassels are used. For instance, if your horse just can't get used to the tassels hitting him in the flanks or the ears or face omit them. It won't bother the overall effect and at least the horse will perform well.

After you have gotten your horse to accept the practice outfit you can put the entire costume on him and step back and take a final look at the overall picture. Look for a complete balance of color, substance, texture, quality, contrast, design, construction and fit. If you are satisfied with all of these factors you can consider your endeavor finished and start looking for a class in which to exhibit your creation.

There are a few factors to be considered before showing your horse in your first class. First, let me say that, contrary to the opinion of some of the fence rail sitters, the costume class is not an easy class in which to show a horse properly. It takes as much training as almost any class in the shows. For even though our Arabians have for many generations been far removed from the picture of charging Arabs in their native land, it all seems to come to them like a vision out of the past the minute they go through the gate for the first time and dash merrily around the ring with other costumed horses, completely oblivious to the essence of good behavior and the little man in the center of the ring with the judging card in his hand. I have seen some of the best behaved and ring-wise horses, caught up in the thrill and excitement of the hand gallop, misbehave in these classes. So the best thing to do is to train your horse at home to expect these eventualities.

It is best not to start a green horse off in this class first as he can learn bad habits very quickly, some of which may be practically impossible to correct. Therefore, it is advisable that the horse first be made ringwise by showing him in either English or western pleasure classes. This

will get him used to the ring and audiences without exposing him to the added thrill of the hand gallop.

One of the most difficult features of the class is the entrance into the ring. The rules specify to enter the ring at the hand gallop. Well, this is fine and it looks beautiful, but this presents a problem since it is necessary to enter the ring to the left and due to the location of most entrance gates, a right turn must be made just after you get inside in order to be on the rail. This can be solved in only two ways. You can either put your horse on the left lead and make the right turn at the false gallop (if he is sufficiently trained so he won't switch leads naturally) or you can wait and make your gallop depart off the rail right after you enter the ring. The latter method seems to be more dependable and prevalent.

The gaits at which the costume horse is judged are the walk, canter and hand gallop. Let us consider the walk first. It should be a square, true, four-beat flat-footed walk performed preferably with a slightly set head and an alert attitude. The canter should be square, slow, straight, balanced, correct on both leads and collected to a degree with the head set properly. It should be a true three-beat gait for the rules specify a canter not a lope. The degree of collection is up to the discretion of the rider and the capabilities of the horse and his previous training. The third gait that our rules call for is the controversial "hand gallop."

The hand gallop is as the term implies — a gallop in "hand" or completely under control. The class is a performance class not a horse race and the rules specifically state that "extreme speed is to be penalized." The gallop should be a true, square, straight, four-beat gait and looks best when the head is moderately high, and slightly set, breaking well at the poll. It should be fast enough so there is a definite difference between it and the canter yet not so fast that the horse loses the form and essence of a true gallop in hand. The idea that all you have to do is to just turn your horse loose and let him run as fast as he wants to is not only against the A.H.S.A. rules but downright dangerous.

If you are just beginning in this class it would be better to work toward the hand gallop gradually. Don't extend the horse to full speed the first few times you practice. There is nothing more thrilling to the equine species than to run and some horses get the idea that it is more fun to run than it is to canter. Each time you work him out alternate your gaits. First canter,

then a slow gallop and then bring him back to relaxed canter then a gallop, etc. As the days go on increase the speed of the gallop until you reach a good hand gallop always bringing him back to a slow canter alternately. This will give your horse the idea that there are two distinct gaits and he will learn to do each calmly and at the behest of the rider.

The rule book does not specify what type of rein is required and rightly so, for most of the horses are shown in other classes also have either been trained to the loose western rein, the moderately loose English pleasure rein or even may have the highly collected three-gaited type of head set and rein. One style should not be considered more preferable over any of the others.

The costume alone will not win the class. The

rules specify seventy-five per cent performance and manners, twenty-five per cent appointments. We must spend as much time on training our horse as we did making the costume if we are to be successful. Aside from the proper executing of the gaits, the other factors of performance that need to be considered are the basic ideas of good training, i.e. proper leads, closed mouth, no extreme head tossing or fussing with the bit, good gait transitions and all-around good manners.

If we train our horses before we go to the shows we can be confident that we will not make fools of our gallant steeds. We can ride into the show ring before an indifferent audience and leave it knowing that we have made many new friends for the purebred Arabian horse and, after all, that is the prime goal of the I.A.H.A.



Helpful Hints

1. Since ordinary thread is easily cut or broken by the jewels and braid and a twine of suitable strength is too cumbersome for the tassels, I found that nylon fishing line works extremely well for both purposes. It is available in various colors and weights. Use the transparent monofilament for sewing on the jewels. The transparency of the thread makes it possible to use it on any color jewels without having the thread show. Use about four- or six-pound weight. The tassels will require about thirty-pound test braided nylon fishing line. The braided line is better for this purpose in that it doesn't slip as easily and holds the knots better.
2. Glue knots with the popular white all-purpose glue to prevent them from untying due to friction. In fact, the white glue may be used satisfactorily in all cases where a good flexible bond is needed.
3. Before you make your final selections of material or leather look extensively through many fabrics and handicraft stores for ideas. There may be many modes of decoration you are unaware of.
4. Do some research at your local library to familiarize yourself with Arabian art and design and incorporate some of it in your design. This will help give your costume an authentic look.
5. Other fishing equipment may be used to advantage also — swivels and snaps in various weights may be used to attach tassels especially if they are removed each time. The swivel action will prevent twisting and tangling.
6. The front portion of the aba may be lined with a contrasting color if desired. This will show when you are at the hand gallop.
7. You may use many different colors of yarn all in the same tassel if desired.
8. Use rein snaps (such as used on some of our modern rawhide reins) to attach your reins. This will make disassembly possible if you want to change bits.
9. If you choose to make a breeching the method of attachment should be made directly to the tree of the saddle. A strong dee ring attached to the tree by a strong leather strap is the most practical. Then the breeching can be hooked onto the dee ring with a strong snap and the back of it can be attached to a crupper. It is wise to get your horse used to riding with a crupper before putting the costume on him.
10. The decorative saddle blanket may be mounted on a regular double western saddle blanket. The double blanket should be opened to single thickness. This is usually very close to the finished size of the costume blanket and will serve as an excellent lining. Used with a regular single saddle blanket it will be sufficient protection for your horse's back and will help keep the costume blanket clean.
11. If you travel a great deal you will find a trunk adapted for the purpose will help a great deal. The trunk makes it possible to carry your entire costume in one container. It will conserve precious space when you are traveling and will protect your costume from moisture, dirt and dust. Army surplus is an excellent place to secure a large lightweight trunk. The best size is approximately thirty-six by twenty-two by twenty-two inches. The first thing to do is to make a small saddle rack. This should not be made any larger than is necessary to support the saddle. It should be as low as possible so the top of the saddle will not protrude too high in the trunk. This should be solidly attached to the bottom of the trunk at one end. Leave an opening at the top of the rack as the smaller parts can be stored inside the rack. The breast-collar may be attached around the inside of the walls of the trunk. Tie strings attached to the walls may be used to hold the collar in position. Utilize the remaining space for your bridle, stirrups, blanket and accessories. Usually these trunks come with a tray that fits near the top. This tray is ideal for carrying the aba and anything else which wrinkles easily. If you pack paper between the folds it will be wrinkle-free when you get to the show.
12. Tools: Very few special tools are needed for any of the work involved. An adjustable leather punch, a rawhide mallet, heavy upholstery sewing needles, fine sewing needles for the jewels, an awl, small pointed pliers for pulling the needle through heavy leathers, and various screw drivers, etc. are really all that are needed. Many types of hardware that are available at a saddlery may be used as needed throughout the costume.