



HAND-SEWINGby Don MacKinnon
Part II

1. Mark your sewing lines, back far enough from the edges so the holes will not tear through the leather. Proper space between edges and sewing line can add greatly to the decorative effect.
 2. On heavy leather articles which will have hard usage, to save wear and tear on the thread, cut a groove on the sewing line with a very fine groover or race, to sink the stitch level with the surface of the leather.
 3. Mark your stitching holes.
 4. Punch the holes with your awl. These may be punched in two ways:
 - (a) Make the long points of the diamond lie straight on the stitching line.
 - (b) Make the long points of the diamond lie at about a 45-degree angle from the stitching line. This angular punch makes a stronger and more decorative stitch if done evenly.
- To make these stitches the same width back as front the awl must go through absolutely perpendicular to the leather. This takes some practice.
5. Use a length of thread consistent with ease of sewing, and not too long to be awkward. However when possible complete a unit of sewing with a single thread to avoid joining.
 6. Thread a needle on each end of the length of thread. Put one needle through the first awl hole, draw it up and get the two lengths of thread even.
 7. Sew towards yourself, with the grain side of the leather to your right hand.
 8. Clear the awl hole with your right hand needle, withdraw that
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needle and follow up with your left hand needle. This is to ensure that there is plenty of room for your left hand needle to go through from the flesh side. Pull the left hand needle and thread through to its full length.

9. Go through now with the right hand needle. Decide now which thread you are going to have high. It does not matter so long as you have each stitch exactly the same as the previous one. If your right hand needle is going to be below the left hand needle, when you tighten the stitch, pull your left hand thread up with the right hand, and the right hand thread down with the left hand. An experienced harness maker would put the two needles through at the same time, crossing them properly in the hole, one above the other, but this takes a good deal of practice. Failure to observe the above rule gives you an uneven, unattractive type of stitch.

10. Tighten the stitches snugly, not too tight, not too loose. Keep the tension exactly the same on each stitch. Watch that the leather does not pucker.

With machine stitching, you get exactly the same tension for every stitch, irrespective of the denseness of the leather, and there is a tendency to strain the thread. In hand sewing, each stitch has the right tension required by the particular point in the leather density, and there will be no great strain on the thread, making the whole much longer wearing.

11. If you need to re-thread your needles, back stitch one or two stitches and continue on, cutting the hanging ends of the previous thread close to the material, after they have been brought up to tension.

12. When you reach the last awl hole in your stitching, whip the thread over the end of the sewing line, and back stitch two holes.

13. If desired, when sewing is completed, the stitches may be over-run with the overstitch wheel to set up absolute uniformity, but this must be done with exceedingly great care, otherwise you may run off the stitching line or fray the thread. The tool must be held absolutely perpendicular to the sewing in this operation, which presses the thread down into the stitching holes.

LOCK STITCH: To make your sewing more secure, a lock stitch may be used. To do this, take a turn of the right thread over the left needle after it is through the awl hole, clockwise, and a turn of the left thread over the right needle to the left or contra-clockwise. This will make a knot between the layers of leather.

EDGES: Particular attention must be given to finishing the edges of handsewn articles. There is no lacing to cover up the flaws. The cut edges of the leather must be clear and sharp, and cemented exactly to-

gether before sewing. When sewing is completed, dye the raw edges the appropriate color, if the project is dyed, otherwise leave natural. Apply edge dressing or beeswax, and rub rapidly to create heat, until all the loose fibres are tied down and the edges are smooth and burnished. If there are spaces between the cemented edges (which there should not be if they are properly sewn) dampen the leather and mold together with your finishing tool, or they may be filled with beeswax. Fine sandpaper will remove any surplus cement which will prevent the dye from penetrating, or leaves a variation in color on natural edges. Use coarse duck, a smooth wooden handle, a bone folder, or other polishing instrument for burnishing. Excellent sewing may lose its effect if raw edges mar the finished product.

If you have not yet explored the field of hand sewing, and have been content with lacing, you have a new experience awaiting you. Bear in mind that sewing is much more durable than lacing, since there is not the wear and friction on it, that there is on laced edges. Men particularly like the smooth feel and operation of hand sewn articles. Wallets and pocket secretaries, for example, slip easily in and out of pockets without catching, and have a more masculine appearance. Try a little experimenting with this technique, and I am sure you will be delighted with the results.

(The above article is reprinted from a previous issue)

CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF THE ARTS

The Canadian Conference of the Arts (formerly the Canadian Art Council) is planning a "Conference of the Arts" to be held in Toronto in the Spring of 1961. Planning and organization are under the capable Directorship of Alan Jarvis, former head of the National Gallery, Ottawa. Mr. Jarvis's ability and background are admirably suited to this task. The Conference will be attended by delegates from the twenty-seven member societies of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, C.S.C.L. being one of these, but its scope will be broad enough to interest anyone vitally concerned with the arts for either personal or professional reasons. Considerable interest has been shown by international bodies and it may be that the Conference will be extended to include international representation. More details of this Conference will be published as soon as they are available.

WORKSHOP TIP

To make your tracings last through more usings, place a piece of Saran wrap between the wet leather and the tracing paper when transferring a design. -- H. Wilson.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1960

C.S.C.L. Annual Meeting for 1960 will be held at Woodgreen Community Centre, 835 Queen Street East, Toronto, on Saturday, April 9th. A full day's activities has been planned, with registration and setting up of displays beginning at 9 a.m. The business meeting will follow registration, but will be kept to a minimum through the use of mimeographed reports. Awards will be made at this time to the new Associates and Fellows and to the Branch winning the Weston Guild Trophy. One feature of the meeting will be a Question Box, for which members are invited to bring in their problems. During the luncheon break, there will be a meeting of Branch representatives, followed by two hours of varied demonstrations. A day full of leathercraft is promised and you may be sure there will be lots to see at the 1960 Annual Meeting, April 9th.

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ASSOCIATE & FELLOWSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

Articles from members wishing to qualify for the higher membership awards must be in by March 28th this year. For further information about number and type of articles, etc., write to Mrs. Reta Larmour, Apt. 307, 2649 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario.

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SIXTH INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Plans are well underway for the Sixth International Assembly to be held May 28th and 29th at the Hotel Statler, Buffalo, N.Y. Under the capable sponsorship of the Frontier LeatherArts Guild this promises to be a truly outstanding event. Further information will be forthcoming at a later date, but plan now to reserve May 28th and 29th for the International at Buffalo.

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IN APPRECIATION

This issue of "Canadian Leathercraft" marks the end of my present term of office. I would like at this time to express my appreciation to all members of C.S.C.L. who have been so helpful during the five years I have served as Editor. The Editorial Board has been of particular assistance in guiding Editorial policies and making suggestions. I would like to say an extra "thank-you" to our President, Fred Brown, for his patience and his efforts as Advertising manager. I sincerely trust that all members will support and encourage the new Editor, for without that support and encouragement, the publication of "Canadian Leathercraft" is not possible.

DOROTHY MUMA

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CRAFT MARKET

by Dr. R. K. Larmour

It goes without argument that encouragement of arts and handicrafts is important in any scheme of adult education and in all attempts to promote creative activity amongst those who have leisure time to spend. The production of objects, whether for beauty or utility, seems to satisfy a basic need in many people and indeed some would affirm that such activity has distinct therapeutic value.

Within any craft there is a limit to the number and variety of things a person can make for his own use, and when this limit is reached it becomes necessary to expend further products as gifts, or alternatively, offer them for sale, because it is obvious that a craftsman cannot produce indefinitely and continue storing up the results of his labors. Furthermore, unless some type of market is available, the craftsman has no means for learning the real value of his work. Consequently the marketing side needs serious study if the crafts are to flourish and continue to improve in quality of products.

Corollary to this consideration is the need to educate the general public in appreciation of the crafts in relation to qualities of materials, design and utility. This produces discriminating buyers which in turn encourages craftsmen to strive for better techniques, finer quality of materials and originality of design and decoration. The judgment of the market is essential to a healthy progress in the crafts just as it is in almost every phase of factory production. Let us look briefly at the market conditions in Canada in respect to handcrafted products.

For residents of Canada there are various shops of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in a few cities, but it is safe to say that in any city such as Toronto or Montreal only a very few of the inhabitants know of the existence of such shops and of these many are themselves interested actively in one or more of the crafts. For the general public the shops are non-existent. Occasionally some of the hotels or galleries, or one of the large stores, arrange special showings of handcrafted articles, but since they tend to seek out the best pieces of a few established craftsmen who place rather prohibitive prices on their articles, these exhibitions attract only a few buyers of means and discrimination, and the general public remains unaffected.

The visitors to Canada, the tourists, who might be expected to buy one or more objects of merit if they were available, encounter on all sides cheap and tawdry trinkets made in Japan or Germany or Italy, or turned out by mass-production machines in the United States. Even in the elite "Gateway to Canada," the Niagara Parkway, one finds only a nauseating display of inappropriate souvenirs,

over-priced and not worth the trouble of transporting out of the country. Their only souvenir value is to remind the luckless buyer that in Canada he was thoroughly swindled. It is not difficult to imagine the surprise of our American visitors to find only Mexican or Guatemalan leather handbags for sale in the summer resort areas of Northern Canada. What relation do the Aztec designs used on this work bear to the "culture" of Canada?

This situation must be corrected if the crafts are to expand and flourish in Canada: a proper market must be established in order to develop discriminating buyers and thus create true evaluations of handcrafted products. How can this be done without running headlong into competition with articles made in countries with much lower standards of living? Obviously there is no simple answer to this question.

If all the objectives, namely promotion of the crafts per se, development of distinctive styles and qualities, publicizing the products, and creation of an active market, were to be considered essential parts of the broad problem, it might be possible to make plans and policies that could bear fruit in time. But any scheme of this sort would of necessity be a long-term one and therefore, to succeed, it would need to be relieved of the too heavy burden of having to pay its way from the start. This would therefore involve some sort of subsidy. It is unlikely that any of the crafts, or the joint organization, the Handicrafts Guild, could manage this financially. A more affluent sponsor would have to be introduced. Such a sponsor might well be found among some of the provincial agencies that are responsible for Parks and Recreation and for the promotion of tourist travel within provincial regions. If the problem in all of its ramifications could be clearly delineated, it would be found that a great many objectives mesh together and hence might be expected to call forth rather powerful and effective support. The immediate need is to define the whole problem clearly enough to justify a definite plan that could be submitted to all agencies that might be interested in its promotion.

A number of schemes within this broad area of activity are known to be operating. In at least one provincial park in Nova Scotia, campers have the opportunity of taking various craft courses; in the state of New Hampshire several attractive craft shops are located at popular spots near or on the main highways; Alberta conducts the Banff School of Fine Arts at one of the great resorts of Canada. Undoubtedly there are many other approaches to this problem of interesting the public in the various crafts. Unfortunately no one in our Society can provide any significant detail about these schemes.

Obviously some individual or a small committee ought to be authorized and be appropriately financed to survey this whole subject

and create a plan, for use in Ontario first because of its great resort area and its high population.

This survey should include a study of various schemes that are now in effect in Canada and the United States. It should delineate clearly what common interest exists in various provincial, local and national organizations. It should attempt to assess the productive capacity of the various crafts. And finally, it should develop a comprehensive, long-term plan of action leading to the establishment of readily accessible, easily publicized marketplaces on the tourist routes or in the resort areas; market-places that could be publicly sponsored as part of our whole tourist publicity.

It is this first step - the initial survey and plan - that would require outside financial support. The various guilds themselves could never manage it. If the view of the problem is kept broad enough to embrace all the various interests that might be served, much good could come of it. For the various crafts, the establishment of an open convenient market would undoubtedly provide a great stimulus to all of them.

C.S.C.L. BRANCHES

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Meetings are held the 3rd Friday of each month at Woodgreen Community Centre, 835 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario.

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HANDICRAFTS AT THE C.N.E.

Canadian Handicrafts Guild has announced that preliminary arrangements have been made for the Guild's Display and Demonstrations to be transferred this year to the enclosed section of the Queen Elizabeth building formerly known as the Kitchen Theatre. This has been an aim of the Guild - a display area and demonstration stage entirely separate from other exhibits.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Members are reminded that all membership fees are due and payable at the Annual Meeting, April 9th. Only paid-up members will receive news and notices of special meetings, etc.

BACK ISSUES OF BULLETIN

There are extra copies of most of the back issues of "Canadian Leathercraft". Complete sets are available up to the end of Volume V, and except for one issue in Volume VI which was sold out, complete sets to date are available. Enquire at the Annual Meeting or write to the Editor.

DESIGNING FOR RANK AMATEURS

By Dorothy Muma

If you are one of the few artistic leathercraftsmen who can turn out original designs for every project, this article is not for you, so don't read any farther. This is for people who say, "I can't even draw, let alone create an original design", of which I have been one. However, I now feel I have progressed about a half step along the road towards original design and so I want to share this vast knowledge with those of like mind. In doing so, I realise that I might lay myself open to criticism from the artistic craftsmen, but they are not supposed to be reading this anyway. So here goes.

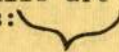
First of all, remember that no line you draw is permanent. Use your eraser very freely, it is your best friend in this job. And it is a job. If you don't want to draw and erase, draw and erase ad infinitum, put this booklet down now. Now, if there are still some readers with me, I will expound further.

The easiest kind of design to draw is one of those labelled "non-objective". This means you are not supposed to know what it is, which makes it easy for us beginners. You can easily do one of these designs merely by making any kind of wiggle on a piece of paper. The more wiggly the wiggle, the better. Hold a small mirror on edge on your wiggle and you will probably see all kinds of little designs appearing. By turning the mirror, you can vary these and might come up with something really interesting. If you don't, try another wiggle. Maybe you didn't wiggle enough the first time. When you get something with some possibility, draw a line along the edge of the mirror, and you have one half of your design. Then grab it quickly and transfer it to your project before you lose sight of it. You can play for hours with a mirror and piece of paper in this way, and you might even end up with a truly original design. All your wiggles at least will be original, anyway. Don't despair if they don't look like anything on earth. They aren't supposed to. Remember, they are non-objective designs.

Now even this method may at first seem like a stupendous effort for some of us. If so, there are several ways out. You can concentrate on straight copying, using something other than the usual leathercraft designs, or you can adapt, which is only slightly harder, as you can adapt by changing only one line even. For slightly humorous or childish designs, first steal one of the children's coloring books, and away you go, with your tracing paper and pencil in hand. So maybe they aren't original, but we have to start somewhere and swiping part of a design seems to be a good place. This kind of animal is a great deal easier to draw and interpret on leather than the ones usually used for figure carving. I have tried many times to

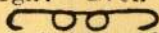
draw realistic animals but they usually end up looking like something out of kindergarten, so why not descend to that level right at the start. Cats and dogs are fairly easy to draw if you draw them in back view in a sitting position. Unfortunately, cows and horses do not usually assume this sitting position, so we cannot use this method for just any animal. If you insist on having realistic cows and horses in your designs, you may go now, because I am hopeless at that particular subject.

If you want to have people as decoration on your leathercraft projects, try using the characters from the funnies or even the Editorial Page cartoons. They are already drawn, all you have to do is enlarge them, which is comparatively easy. Use the square method in which you rule small uniform squares on the small picture and large uniform squares on the large space, and transfer the contents of each small square to each large square. This method of enlarging or in reverse, reducing, a design can be used on any subject. By changing lines here and there as you go, you can make the design somewhat original. Greeting cards of all kinds are good source material and afford good practice in adapting designs as they usually must be changed in shape as well as area.

Now take a look at Mother Nature. No one expects you to put in every single leaf on a tree when you draw that tree. Take its general shape. In bare outline, for instance, an elm tree looks like this:  What could be simpler? and it is probably somewhat original, too. Most trees and bushes, as well as flowers, even, can be done this way, by using a minimum of lines to express its shape. Birds, too are relatively easy. Don't try to draw them sitting on a limb, though. You will probably end up wondering what to do for feet, as the ones you get down on paper will look like sticks. Birds are easiest in flight. Gulls are very easy if you can curve a line at all. They go like this:  Of course, you can elaborate as much as you like, but for goodness' sakes, leave out the feathers. Leave those to the artists. They know what to do with them. And there you are, off on an original design without even damaging your brain the least little bit trying to think one up. You just picked one out of the sky. I imagine even vegetables such as asparagus, carrots, etc., could be used as a design source if one fooled around with them some. However, in the case of such edible materials, be sure to work quickly in order to get the design before you finish eating them. Potatoes would make a very good subject for the use of shading in the dye job to make the eyes look interesting. The arrangement of such objects in your design space will help to create a design also. Use different sizes and throw them around until they look interesting. If you still can't find an interesting arrangement after working all afternoon on them, you had better try a different vegetable.

Another way of getting a design, which may or may not be original (as who knows what original really is, anyway?) is to write a line of any letter of the alphabet, then hold it up to a mirror and write it backwards. Backwards writing has some sort of fascination about it and it might easily fascinate you into a truly astounding border design. Try it, at least.

Another easy method is the ink blot method. For this, you merely drop blobs of ink on paper and fold the paper through them. When you unfold it, lo and behold, you have a design (also a mess, but you are designing, which is what counts). This method may not be possible in some households of course, due to the universal use of ballpoint pens. In fact, some may not even know what ink is. If so, just ignore this paragraph and go on.

There is an endless variety of objects in the world which could be adapted, copied, or changed to make some sort of design. Even a pair of spectacles can be used as a border design thus:  Try drawing around some of them. Take your wife's or your husband's and use them (but don't drop them or you may not have a chance to finish your leathercraft at all).

The easiest way of all to get a design, is to make the project for someone else and have them draw it, but then you don't have the project.

I think the foregoing is as far as most of us can go until we can reach a little higher into the more rarified atmosphere of true creative design and find greater ease in turning out original work. Just how long one has to stay in this first stage to reach the second one is still something I have to discover, but I shall of course be very willing to share my further knowledge with all and sundry when, if ever, the time arrives when I feel I can call myself an original craftsman.

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WORKSHOP TIPS

When cutting circles or curves in leather, use the ball of the thumb as a pivot, turning the leather as you go. -- Hamilton Guild

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To keep natural or light-colored purses the same all-over color, unfasten clasp whenever purse is not in use. Better air circulation will help under-flap leather change color at same rate as exposed parts.

-- Reta Larmour

For cutting rounded corners or trimming belt tongue tips, get a set of inexpensive gasket punches from your auto accessories supply store, 2 straight and 2 curved.

-- Don MacKinnon



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