

SUPPORT FOR LONG HEADDRESSES

Purpose

The headdress supports were designed to provide adequate internal and external support for the headdress found in the Native American collection at the Nebraska History Museum. The headdresses were stored in inert storage drawers in a mobile shelving unit and piled atop each other. The storage system led to bead loss, damage feathers, torn textiles, and creases.

Description

An internal support for the cap is formed using tri-rod, blotter strips, and a Tyvek cover. The feathers attached to the cap are supported within a Tyvek wrap. The mount is secured to a custom-made box.

Materials, Tools, and Supplies

- Variable heat hot glue gun
- Glue sticks
- Flexible ruler
- Metal straight edge
- Medium tri-rod
- Soft-structure Tyvek
- Blotter
- 1/4in twill tape
- pH neutral blueboard, 1/4in
- Utility knife

Directions

Internal Cap Support

- 1) Determine the outer dimensions of the headdress (length, width, height) to determine the size of the box.
- 2) Cut a tray from 1/8in corrugated blueboard to fit the interior dimensions of the box. Make a double or triple tray depending on the weight of the headdress.
- 3) To determine the placement of the cap mount, place the headdress on the tray so that all elements are properly supported. Mark the area around the cap with a pencil.
- 4) Using the flexible ruler, measure the interior circumference of the cap.
- 5) To create the base support, cut a piece of medium tri-rod at the length of the circumference.

- 6) Using the utility knife, notch the tri-rod at even spaces to make it easier to bend.
- 7) Using the hot glue gun on low setting, adhere the two ends of the tri-rod together.
- 8) Check the size of the base support of the cap. Make appropriate changes where necessary.
- 9) Adhere the base support to the pencils marks on the blueboard tray using the hot glue gun on low setting.



Fig. 1 Housing for long headdress.

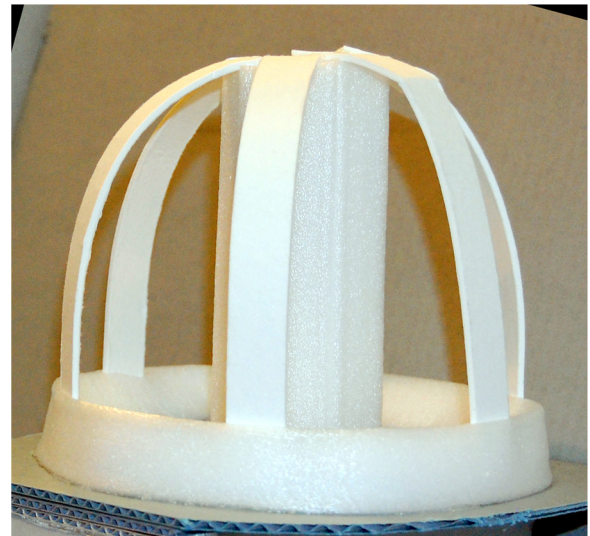


Fig. 2 Internal support for cap of headdress.

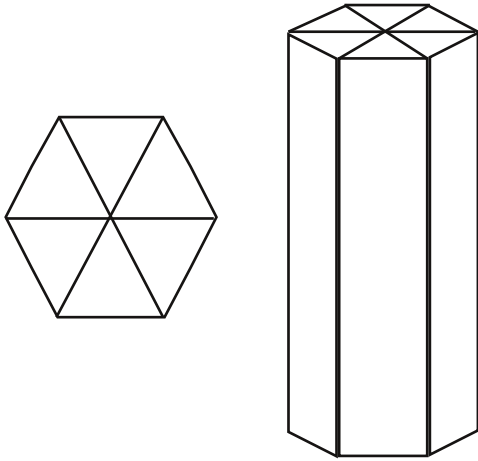


Fig. 3 (Left) top view of tri-rod tube; (Right) side view of tri-rod tube.

10) Measure the height of the cap from the center of the rim of the headdress to the apex with a metal straight edge.

11) Using the height of the cap, cut six medium tri-rod pieces. On low setting, glue the six pieces of tri-rod together to form a solid tube (Fig. 3).

12) Glue the tri-rod tube vertically at the center of the circle created by the base support (see Fig. 2).

13) Measure the arc of the headdress cap from the apex of the cap to the base of the rim.

14) Using the measurement of the arc for the length, cut six 1in wide strips of blotter.

15) Using a sharp utility knife, cut 1in slits at the top of the tri-rod base that corresponds with each side of the tri-rod tube at the center (see Fig. 4).

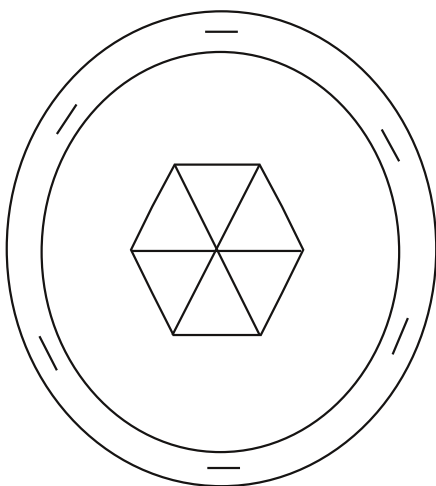


Fig. 4 Site of slits made in the tri-rod base support.

16) Insert one end of the blotter strip into the slits made in the base support. Using the hot glue gun on low setting, glue the other end of the blotter strip to the top of the tri-rod tube. The internal support should look like Fig. 2.

17) Cover the internal cap support with soft-structure Tyvek. Adhere the Tyvek to the blueboard tray using the hot glue gun on low setting. Be sure to leave approximately 1/2in Tyvek ring to protect any decorative materials on the rim of the cap, such as beadwork.



Fig. 5 Tyvek cap covering

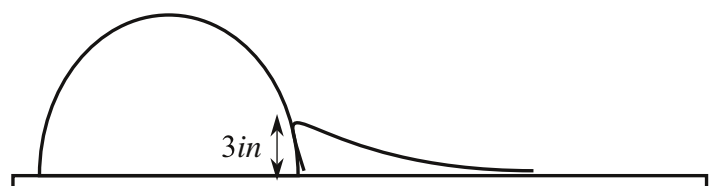


Fig. 6 Tyvek sling attached to cap and tray.

External Tail Support

1) The tails of long headdresses may be made of a variety of materials such as felt or leather and decorated with ribbons or feathers. Most often the tails are attached to the cap at the base of the neck. This creates an area of stress that may lead to significant deterioration. It is important to also provide adequate support for this part of the headdress.

- 2) If necessary, cover the area of the tray where the tail will be supported with soft-structure Tyvek to prevent movement or abrasion.
- 3) Cut an 18in long strip of Tyvek wide enough to support the material at the base of the cap.
- 4) Attach one end of the Tyvek strip to the back of the internal cap mount at 3in from the base. Attach the other end further down the tray to create a sling (see Fig. 5).
- 5) Place the headdress on the mount.
- 6) Using two people, wrap the feather bonnet with soft-structure Tyvek. One person carefully gathers the feathers of the bonnet into a compact shape, ensuring the feathers are not tangled. The second person wraps a strip of Tyvek in a cylinder around the feathers maintaining the compact shape. Tie the Tyvek with cotton twill tape at the base of the headdress and at top using extreme care not to damage the feathers.
- 7) Place the headdress and tray in a custom made storage box.

COMMENTS

The NSHS long headdresses were placed in custom-made boxes to fit onto the shelves. Short headdresses were also rehoused using the same internal cap support and wrapped with soft-structure Tyvek. The short headdresses were placed in either custom-made boxes or adapted standardized storage boxes.