

Grassing Needle Object Card

The Wichita Indians lived in dome-shaped, grass-covered houses. Long slender saplings, held in place by rawhide cords, formed the house frame. Working in pairs, builders covered the frame by sewing overlapped bundles of long prairie grass to it. For this task Wichita women used a needle made of animal bone — often a bison rib — tapered to a blunt point at one end and drilled at the other. The drilled hole was threaded with strong cordage, usually of twisted plant fiber. One woman stood outside the frame and forced the needle through the grass to her partner inside the frame. The needle's surface became polished as it passed repeatedly back and forth through the grass.

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