

HENRICUS AT HOME

CORN HUSK DOLLS

For the Powhatan Indians living four centuries ago, October was a time of harvest. Corn was one of the three staple crops in Powhatan culture. Corn not only provided nourishment, but it also yielded materials for other projects as well.

Corn husks have been used for centuries by many Native American tribes to make simple dolls for children. Traditionally, corn husk dolls were made without faces. According to some legends, the Creator made a corn husk doll with a beautiful face to watch and entertain the children. She saw her reflection in a pool of water and began neglecting her childcare duties so that she could contemplate her beauty. To punish the doll for her vanity, the Creator had her beautiful face removed.

MATERIALS

5 Corn Husks*

String

*Note: Corn husks can be purchased at your local grocery store. Soak corn husks for a few hours in water until they become flexible. Pat dry with a towel before starting your project.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Lay four corn husks in a stack.

Step 2: Tie the husks together, about one inch from the top.



Step 3: Working with the long pieces of husk, not the one-inch segment you just tied: gently separate the husks into two equal sections (two husks per section). Fold each section up and over the one-inch segment. The inch-long segment should now be sandwiched *inside* the long husks.



The husks are folded over the inch-long segment here. The inch long segment is now on the inside.

Step 4: Use a piece of string to tie the husks together around the inch-long segment that is sandwiched inside. This forms the head of the doll.



Step 5: Tightly roll a single husk. Tie at the ends. This will be the doll's arms.



Step 6: Working with the long husks underneath the “neck” of the doll: gently separate the husks into two equal sections (two husks per section). Insert the arms between the two sections. Use a piece of string to tie the husks together just under the arms. This forms the doll’s torso. Your doll is now complete!



Optional: If you would like to have a doll with legs, rather than a dress, separate (or cut) the husks into two equal sections. Tie each section at the ankles.

