

Fieldcraft Skill Series

Dovetailing



With the bow saw and a pocket knife, you can make excellent joints for log structures with dovetailing. This is done by making a triangular notch in the “receiving” log and a tapered triangular end on the other log or stick. When done correctly, it provides a tight, rigid joint that is neat and strong.



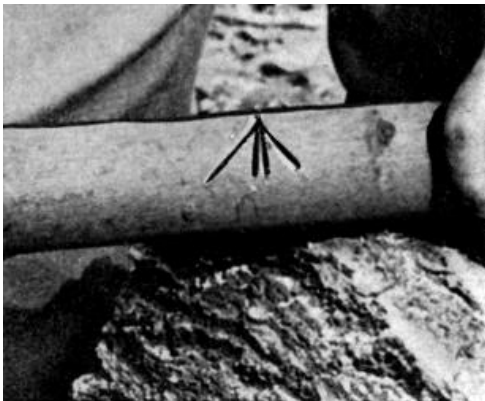
To form the Dovetail Notch make cut that slants to your right, not quite halfway through and in from the end. Avoid any area containing knots.



Make an equal cut to the left. Note that cuts are almost at right angles. The angle can be sharper on thick pieces.



Cut strait down to the depth of side cuts and make a second vertical cut to one side of the first cut.



The side cuts outline the dovetail and the center cuts break up the fiber so your knife can pry them out.



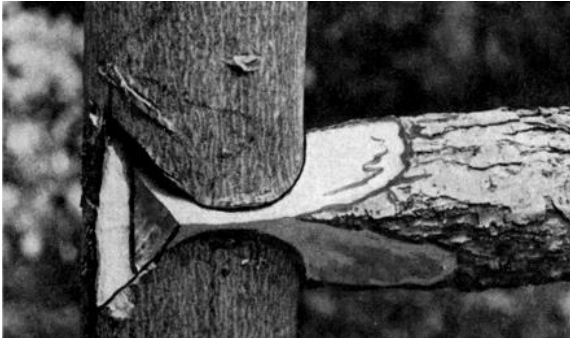
Pry out wood in the notch, first on one side and then the other. It chips out easily.



The cleaned out notch is ready for a fitting of a tapered triangular stick or dovetail.



With the piece to be fitted held over the notch, shape the base and sides. Make the end a little smaller than the notch.



Drive dovetail into notch until it is wedged tightly. If you want a very rigid joint, shape or taper the dovetail more until it fits tightly.