



## At The Bench: Making A Fence Tool Case

by Pete Gorrell

Fencing pliers are a common and essential tool for the rancher or the working cowboy. It is not unusual to see a plier case on a saddle so the tool will be available whenever needed. Usually this case will be tied with the saddle strings or secured under a concho. This article will describe how to make a case that is held securely to the saddle yet can be easily attached or removed. This design allows the case to be attached to the flank billet by running the top part of the case through the flank ring and then running the flank billet under the strap on the back of the case to secure it firmly.

The parts for this case are shown in photo #1. The patterns shown here are made to actual size but the parts will be cut oversize to allow for stitching and trimming for the final shape. The shape of the flap can be cut to any size desired depending on the size and shape of the tool.

A leather block can be made to the size of the tool for forming the leather for the body of case as is seen in photo #2.

Wet the leather for the body of the case and mold it to the leather form as shown in photo #2. Note that the leather has been cut considerably oversize to allow for this shaping. This piece is cut from about 8 oz. veg leather and from a pliable part of the side such as the belly. Do not use flank as it will not wear. Tack the leather to a board and allow it to dry. Saddle soap can be used to help in forming the leather.

While this leather dries the other parts can be made ready. The back is again oversized as seen in photos #3 and #4. Use the pattern to be sure there are adequate margins. The outline of the pattern and tool can be traced for reference.

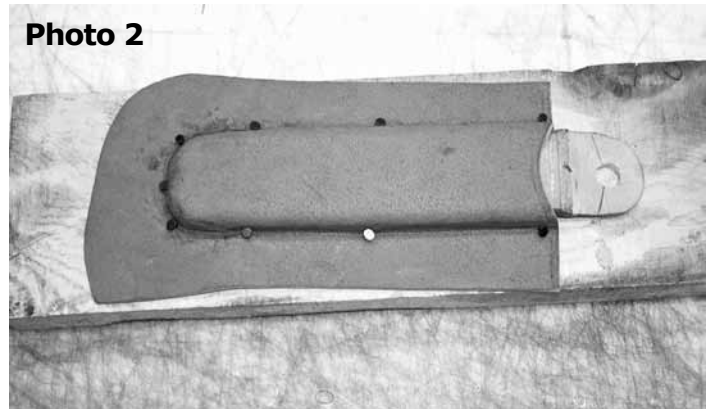
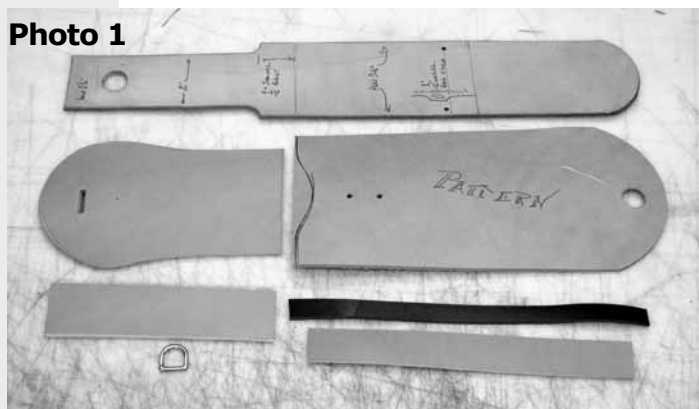
The pattern can be used to trim the flap to fit as in photo #5. The flap needs to reach under the pliers an adequate distance so as to allow the tool to slide in and out without interference as shown in photo #6. The flap can be carved if desired and the edges finished at this time. Also a slot can be punched for the ring that will close the flap.

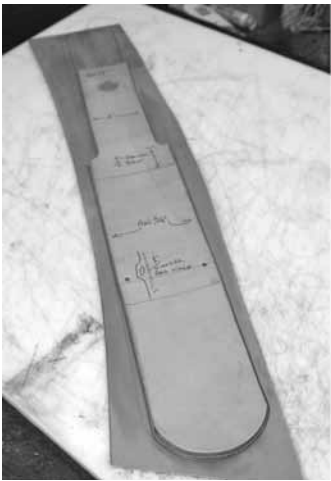
Remove the formed body from the board to which it is tacked. Place it against the back piece and, using the block or the tool and with the flap in place (as shown in photo #7), mark the location for the locking ring. The ring can now be attached to the body, photo #8. The ring used for this is a 1/2" dee ring. The block can be used to punch the rivet holes to secure the ring, photo #8.

Next, the flap will be glued in place with contact cement. Using the fence tool in place, locate and mark the position for the flap as in photo #9.

The body is then glued to the backing, using the fence tool for positioning (photo #10).

A strap 1" wide and skived on the ends is inserted at a point about halfway down the tool case. This is the strap that will secure the case to the flank billet. This strap is inserted enough to be secured by the stitching but not so far as to interfere with inserting

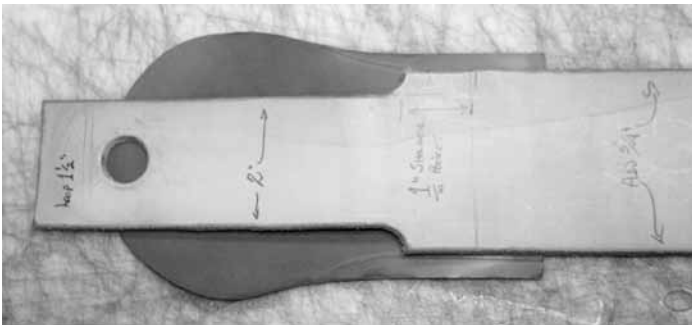




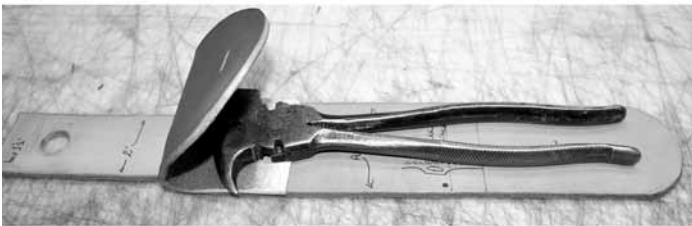
**Photo 3**



**Photo 4**



**Photo 5**



**Photo 6**



**Photo 7**

the tool. It is positioned on one side and machine sewn. It will then be folded behind the case and be sewn on the opposite side. This will require hand sewing on the second side. Tickle [widen the stitching groove] the sewing line for a clean stitching job, photo #11.

Photo # 12 shows the back side after sewing.

An alternate method for installing this strap is shown in the very first photo at the beginning of



**Photo 8**



**Photo 9**

the article and in photos #13 & #14. This method will allow the face to be machine sewn without the need for hand stitching. This method will require that the backing material be cut somewhat wider than shown in previous photos. A 3/4" strap can be used. This is threaded through a slot on either side of the case and then folded to the outside and sewn as shown.

A 1/2" latigo strap is used for a closing strap. This strap is inserted between the flap and the back piece and secured with a rivet or by sewing. This strap needs to be long enough to extend below the flap as shown in photo #15.

Next the case is fitted to the saddle. Thread the long part of the back piece at the top of the case through the rear rigging ring of the saddle. Mark a point below the folded end of the flank billet (photo #16). This will be the location for the loop that goes around the billet. The loop should be 1" in width. A narrower loop will tend to pull out of shape.

Form this loop around a loop iron or spacer (photo # 17) and rivet it as seen in photo #18.

Edge and finish all edges that have not already been done. Apply oil or the finish of your choice to the entire case.

Now the case is ready to install on the saddle. The top leg of the case fits through the flank rigging ring. Now slide the billet down through the loop and also the lower keeper on the back of the case (photo #19). The case should fit snugly to the billet



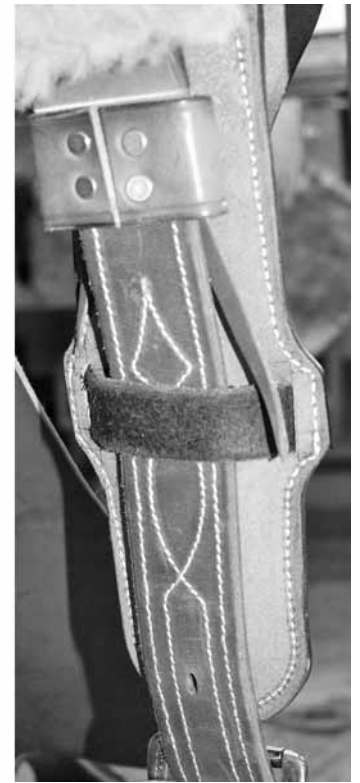
**Photo 10**



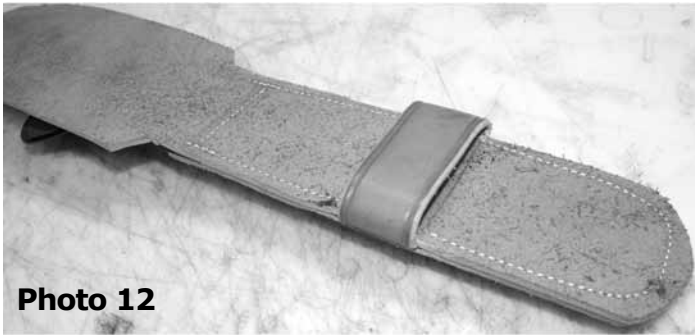
**Photo 11**



**Photo 13**



**Photo 14**



**Photo 12**



**Photo 15**

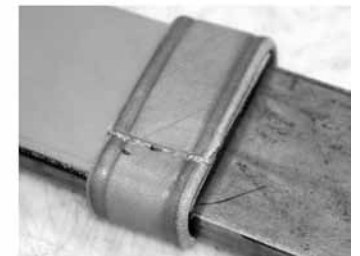
and there will be no flopping or bouncing when your horse breaks into a trot.



*[Many thanks to Pete for this fine article! Pete divides his time between Colorado in the summer and beautiful Hawaii in the winter. He is an award winning saddle maker of many years, businessman, and author of numerous books and articles.]*



**Photo 16**



**Photo 17**



**Photo 18**