

Imagine having to make your own pens and ink to use for writing in school. Children, with the help of their school master and family, used to have to make both. Give it a try and see how you do. Here is how.

HOMEMADE BROWN INK

You Will Need:

- Butternuts or black walnuts in their hulls
- Hammer
- Enamel saucepan
- Water
- Strainer or cheesecloth

In the late summer or early fall collect a couple of handfulls of butternuts or black walnuts. The hulls will be green. Do not try to remove the hull, but crush them, nut and all, with a hammer. You may need to have someone lend you a hand with the crushing as it can be hard work. Place the nuts in an enamel pot. Cover the nuts with water and soak them for at least twenty-four hours. The longer they soak the better. Now place your pot of nuts and water on medium heat and let them simmer for several hours. When the liquid is a dark brown color strain it through a sieve or a piece of cheesecloth. Sometimes a little sugar was added to give the ink a glossy appearance when dry.



FROM FEATHER TO PEN

Making a quill pen that writes well takes practice, just as learning to use one does. All you need are some long and sturdy goose or turkey feathers and a sharp penknife.

With your knife in hand, make a diagonal cut through the bottom end of the quill (see figure 1). Now carefully curve the tip with your next cut (see figure 2). With care, make a slit, not more than a quarter of an inch long, through the center of the tip (see figure 3). You are now ready to try out the ink you have made.

