

MAKE YOUR OWN

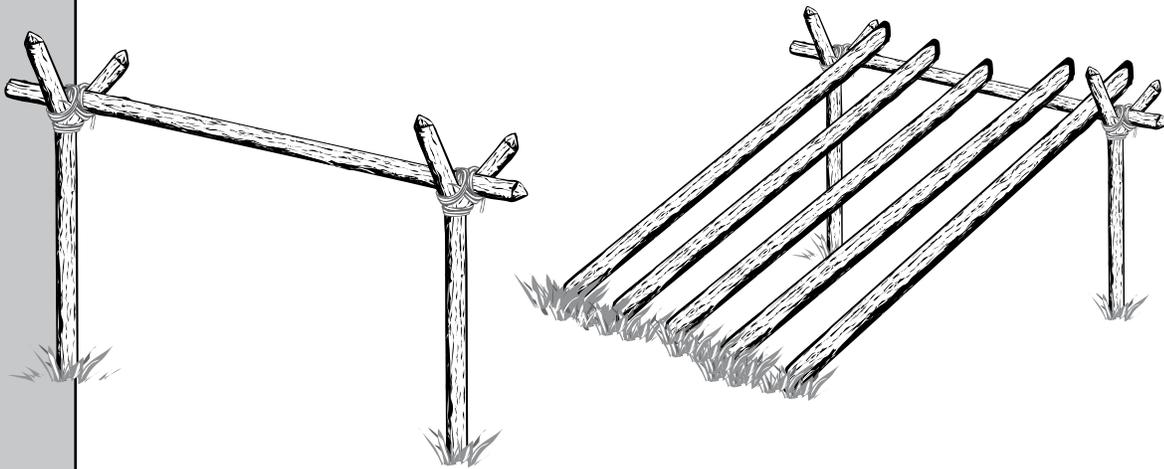
LEAN-TO SHELTER

1 Push the two branches with the Y at the ends into the ground. It will be easier if you find a part of your lawn that is fairly soft. Make sure you get permission from your parents to build the lean-to in the yard.

2 Now take one of the longer branches and place it across the Y sections. Even though it might be a snug fit, use some of the heavy cord or kite string to tie the branch into place on each end.

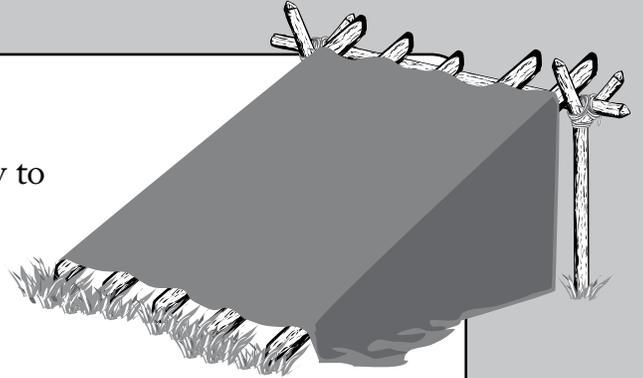
SUPPLIES

- **2 strong branches** between 3 and 4 feet in length (about 1 meter), with a Y at one end of each
- **6 branches** between 4 and 5 feet in length (1 to 1½ meters)
- **heavy cord** or kite string
- **old blanket** or large towel



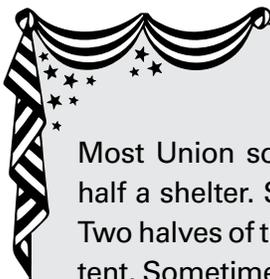
3 Now take the remaining branches and lay them against the top branch at an angle. Carefully nudge the ends into the dirt. This will help keep the branches from falling down or blowing off in the wind. Note that the longer the branches are, the more room you will have in your lean-to shelter! Drape the blanket or towel over the branches.

4 Sit inside your lean-to shelter and try to imagine what life was like for the Civil War soldiers. It's also fun to sleep out in your shelter.

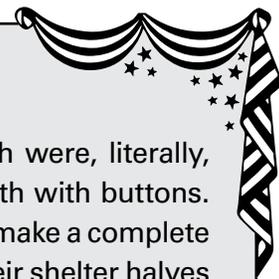


VARIATIONS TO THE OUTDOOR LEAN-TO

If you don't have access to a backyard full of branches, you can use any sort of stick or pole such as broom or rake handles, ski poles, or garden stakes. You could build your lean-to up against the wall of a building. If you decide to do this, you may want some other stabilizing sticks in order to hold it up. If you want to build your lean-to inside, build it against a bed, couch, or other object that is a good height. In both of these cases, use rope or other material to stabilize the lean-to so it won't fall on top of you.



Shelters of All Kinds



Most Union soldiers were issued shelter halves, which were, literally, half a shelter. Shelter halves were pieces of canvas cloth with buttons. Two halves of the shelter could be buttoned together to make a complete tent. Sometimes, three or four soldiers would button their shelter halves together to create a larger tent structure.

A-frame tents, also known as wedge tents, were also used during the first year or so of the Civil War. These were heavy and bulky and had to be carried by wagon. A-frame tents were discontinued early in the war, since they were just too impractical for field use.

Most of the fighting stopped during the winter months. Soldiers built log huts about 5 feet tall (2 meters), using their tents as roofs. They would build fireplaces on one end of the log hut, using sticks or bricks, with a barrel for a chimney.