



# Jim Hamm's 'Wooden Bows' Reviewed

By Steven Bridges  
The Goldthwaite Eagle

Like most boys growing up in the 1980's, I grew up playing 'Cowboys and Indians' in the back yard with my brother and my friends. My poor little sister Bethany was usually literally roped into playing the part of the captured cowboy's girlfriend about to be burned at the stake.

As the younger brother, I usually got assigned the role of an Indian brave complete with little white bow and sucker-tipped arrows. My older brother Stuart assigned himself the role of the heroic cowboy wielding double six-shooters. Each pistol was filled to the brim with rolls of red caps that popped every time he pulled one of the triggers.

In the face of double six-shooters, my little bow seemed very inadequate for our pretend fights. So, my brother always prevailed at rescuing Bethany from our little (nowadays very non politically correct) games.

As we grew older, my brother and I continued to read Westerns and Native American history. Stuart went the Louis L'Amour route. For years, Stuart was in the Louis L'Amour book club that mailed him a new, leather bound title each month. He now proudly owns every book L'Amour ever wrote.

I went the native American history route. As I read more into Native American History, I came to view not the cowboys, but the Native Americans as the real heroes of the West. Protecting their way of life with sticks and stones in the wake of the cowboys' repeating rifles was truly heroic in my humble opinion.

As I became an avid hunter later in life, I came to appreciate the hunting abilities of the Native Americans. Surviving and thriving in the wild with handmade bows and arrows is truly humbling. I hunted off and on for two seasons with my homemade longbow before I finally harvested my first deer with it. I would have long since starved to death had I not had Schwartz Food Store as my local backup hunting grounds.

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I had the luxury of building my first longbow nearly ten years ago with the help of local bowyer and author Jim Hamm. Over two days I cut,



shaped and finished a piece of wood into a working longbow. Hamm adeptly answered my hundreds of questions during the process with endless patience and his signature dry wit.

**Wooden Bows - What I Wish I'd Known Before I Started** is the culmination of Hamm's many years of experience in building and teaching others to build their own bows by hand.

If Hamm put down on paper all the many lessons his years of experience have taught him in the art and science of bowmaking, this book would be well over a 1,000 pages. But instead, Hamm distilled his vast knowledge down into what he calls the 'bedrock' of bowmaking.

At just 60 pages, **Wooden Bows** covers these bedrock themes in plain English allowing the prospective bowmaker a vital head start in the craft.

Hamm packs a lot of information and tips into this bowmaking primer. He covers bowyer terminology and the tools needed to build your own bow. Also covered in detail is the selecting of wood and the all important shaping and finishing of your bow. All along the way, Hamm imparts his hard-learned lessons in bowmaking.

**Wooden Bows** is the perfect book for anyone looking to get into the art and craft of bowmaking. **Wooden Bows** also makes the perfect gift for any archer in your family or circle of

hunting buddies. Search for **Wooden Bows** (\$11.99) in the book section of amazon.com to purchase the paperback or Kindle edition.

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*Jim and Donna Hamm established Bois d'Arc Press in 1988 to publish Jim's first book, Bows and Arrows of the Native Americans. In 1992, Bois d'Arc Press published the first of the groundbreaking Traditional Bowyer's Bibles series, quickly followed by Bowyer's Bibles, Volumes 2 and 3. The Traditional Bowyer's Bible, Volume 4, was released in the spring of 2008.*

*Their English titles are perennial bestsellers among bowyers worldwide, having also been translated into Italian, French, and German. Jim Hamm has conducted bow making clinics at his home in Mills County and around the U.S. for the past two decades, having personally instructed hundreds in the ancient art.*