

TAXIDERMIC LABORATORY

by
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the
ATELIER

of
BUCKSKIN
TANNING

THIS PDF BELONGS TO THE TAXIDERMIC
LABORATORY BY AMBER VEEL. IT IS A
SUPPLEMENT TO THE ATELIER ITEM: 'TANNING'.

THE ARTICLE SHOWS A SHORT INSIGHT IN THE
TRADITIONAL BUCKSKIN TANNING METHOD.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, REMARKS OR WANT
MORE INFO? PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO:
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0. Buckskin

A type a leather made by a specific, traditional treatment. The tanning agents are fat and woodsmoke. And the quality of this soft, warm and washable leather depends on the labor put into it. Traditionally buckskin is made from deer hide, but the skin of any (hoofed) mammal can be made into buckskin.





1. Bucking

The tanning process starts with 'bucking'; soaking the skin in an alkaline solution. The alkaline solution loosens the grain layer of the skin and makes the skin receptive to the tanning agents which will be added to it in a later stage.



2. Fleshing and Graining

When the skin comes out of the bucking solution the grain layer (the hair side of the skin) and the excess flesh and fat (from the flesh side) are removed -scraped- with a blunt knife.



3. Rinse

Hanging the skin in a fresh water stream to rinse out all the alkaline solution and loosened skin matter (collagen's) that is left in the skin.



4. Membrane

Scraping of the leftover membrane pieces and pushing out the moisture from the skin.
In this picture you can see the difference between the flesh side and the 'grain side' after the scraping.



5. Wring

By soaking in the stream, the skin soaked up water. This is wring-ed out by using a special folding and twisting technique.



6. Dress

After the first wringing the skin is put into the tanning solution. Traditionally this solution is made from the animals brain. But nowadays also eggs, oil or soap are used. The solution is massaged into the skin until it is fully soaked. Then the skin is wring-ed again. This pushes the tanning solution deep into the skin. After this wringing the skin feels dry and needs to be worked to open up the structure again. Then the skin goes back into the tanning solution and this cycle is repeated for at least 3 times.





7. Soften

After the last wringing the skin needs to be softened. This is done by working it through your hands, across a steel cable or wooden stake and by stretching it in all directions. This is kept doing this until the skin is completely dry en soft.



8. Smoke

If the buckskin becomes wet again after it is being softened, the skin will dry out hard and ridged. To prevent this from happening, the buckskins are being smoked using a wood-fire. This finishing leaves the skins soft and washable.
