The Care of Leather & Fur: C2C Leather Webinar

with
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STRUCTURE
Collagen/protein fibers = organic material
Grain vs. Flesh sides
Fur

MANUFACTURE
Raw hide & parchment
Semi-tanned
Vegetable tanned
Modern tanning agents
Others: gilt & painted, japanned/lacquered, cuir bouilli, archaeological

LEATHER IDENTIFICATION BASICS

MANUFACTURE
Differences in deterioration

LEATHER PRESERVATION BASICS
ENVIRONMENT
Reduce Light Exposure
Keep a stable temperature and relative humidity
Reduce risk of water damage
Avoid pest activity

T Around 70
RH Around 50%

ENVIRONMENT
Reduce exposure to pollutants
Solids
Dust
Soot
Alkalis

ENVIRONMENT
Reduce exposure to pollutants
Liquids
Water
Beverages
Spray cleaners

ENVIRONMENT
Reduce exposure to pollutants
Gases
Ammonia
Sulfur compounds
 Peroxides

REDUCE HANDLING

EXHIBITION AND STORAGE MOUNTS
White Bloom on Leather
Looks like mold
Use magnifying glasses
Lightly Touch with
a small brush
Dust? Dry mold
Smear? Active mold
Nothing? Bloom

TOP 13 REASONS WHY WE DON'T USE LEATHER DRESSINGS AT THE ASM
By Ellen Carrlee, Conservator
1. FATTY SPEW (or “spue”) is the name given to white bloom or haze on the surface of the leather. When analyzed, this moldy-looking white or yellow substance is usually made of saturated fatty acids like stearates and oleates that come from the chemical breakdown of animal products like Neatsfoot oil. This is illustrated in Tlingit hide armor that was dressed by professionals at the National Parks Service in the late 1960s. The appearance was fine until the 1990s, when snowflake-like white spew appeared all over the surface. This occurred in spite of appropriate environmental conditions.

LEATHER CONSERVATION CLEANING BASICS

DRY CLEANING
Vacuuming
Sponging
Brushing
Picking out pest evidence

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Heritage Preservation - Connecting to Collections Online Community
www.connectingtocollections.org
DRY CLEANING

Vacuuming
Sponging
Brushing
Picking out pest evidence

"Soot" Sponges
Cosmetic Sponges

DRY CLEANING

Vacuuming
Sponging
Brushing
Brushing & Swabbing
Picking out pest evidence

PASSIVE INTERVENTIONS

Take advantage of proper mounting to stabilize tears/splits without using adhesives

Use soft archival foams and papers, plus cotton twill or Teflon (plumbing "tape"), as splints

LEATHER CLEANING DON’ T’s

• Don’t proceed with cleaning (or any handling) without inspecting condition of the leather
• Don’t brush with metal wire brushes
• Don’t immerse in water
• Don’t use dressings
• Don’t do anything you feel uncomfortable doing
• Don’t forget to document what you’ve done

INTERVENTIVE TREATMENTS

CONSULT A CONSERVATOR
AIC

http://www.conservation-us.org/

Has tips on hiring a conservator and a database to locate a conservator in your area or with a specific expertise.