

From:

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To:

**Parties interested in archival bookbinding leather**

In the early 1800's bookbinding leather which was produced after ca 1800-1830 had a shorter lifespan than leather produced in earlier years. This time period 1800-1830, coincidentally marks the beginning of the modernization of the tanning industry with the introduction of machinery and new chemicals.

The late 1800's saw the first formal survey of bookbinding throughout England in rural and urban libraries. The observations from these surveys yielded a plethora of information.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, using the observations of these previous surveys, leather tanning/processing criteria were established to be used for future bookbinding leather.

Several decades later, new library surveys were conducted to ascertain the condition of bookbindings and the leather which had been used for their manufacture. There was no significant improvement in longevity. As little of the leather produced according to the new standards stood up to the test of time, two possibilities are apparent: either the leather was not produced according to the standards or the early 20<sup>th</sup> century standards were not correct to guarantee longevity.

Additional information on this subject can be found in "Leather for Libraries".

Our vegetable tanned Red Sokoto goatskin leather is produced using historical bio-chemicals and no other substances which would question its archival properties. Our "time enduring" skins are not pickled prior to tanning and no sulfur containing products are used in any processes including the unhairing process, such as sodium sulfide or sulfuric acid. The literature indicates that leather in the processes of tanning has a great affinity for sulfur (Betty Haines) which ultimately yields another decomposition route for bookbinding leather. Our Native Tanned Natural Red Sokoto and the Native Dyed version of this item contain no sulfur bearing compounds such as syntans, sulfonated fat liquors, sulfuric acid, sodium sulfide, etc. They are tanned with a gentle pyrogallol tanning, bagaruwa. The "time enduring" version is never exposed to any metal e.g. for manipulating the grain, shaving, etc.

We have affidavits as evidence from reputable institutions in Sokoto, Nigeria that have verified the leather which we offer as Native Tanned Natural and Native Dyed Red

Sokoto to be of the same grain pattern and most likely the same formula that was used over 200 years ago. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other commercially available vegetable tanned goatskin which can claim historical/archaeological evidence of longevity.

Our Sokoto goat which is colored in Nigeria, is claimed by Bernard Middleton to be the similar leather used in the Stonyhurst gospel book which was taken from the tomb of Saint Cuthbert, is over a thousand years old. The book is the oldest known surviving intact book in Europe and was bought by the British Library in 2012 for £9 million pounds as part of a fundraising campaign.

Per Bernard Middleton p117 A History of English Craft Bookbinding techniques:

"That which covers the Stonyhurst Gospel is dark red and is similar to modern native dyed Niger"

We are the only purveyor of leather made with these sulfide free formulations.

Our Red Sokoto leather is available in four variations:

Sokoto- Natural: Uncolored, available in a variety of substances, from 0.8 mm and up, not shaved.

Sokoto- Native Dyed: Native Dyed leather of the Sokoto – Natural. Variety of colors and substances are available all UNSHAVED

Sokoto- Kano: A product which we have formerly sold under the name of “Sokoto” goat. This leather is tanned in Sokoto and shipped from Kano, the source of most Nigerian exported leather . This leather is also colored / retanned starting with our Sokoto – Natural. Choose from 20 colors.

Sokoto- Morocco: Moroccan grain which has NOT been manipulated as is common in most other “Morocco” leathers. This product starts with our Sokoto- Natural, exported to Europe, retanned and dyed. Suggested for restorations where the attractive grain pattern of Sokoto – Kano is not suited for being too “modern” Available in 4 colors, substance 1.0 mm

We would love to answer any of your questions or assist you in testing our product(s) for archival properties.

The Native Tanned Red Sokoto goat which we are offering has historical evidence of longevity, exceeding 200 years. There is no other vegetable goatskin for bookbinding which meets this qualification.

Comments/questions/discussion are welcome.

We are willing to partner & participate financially in certified testing routines for this leather.

All orders are welcome without regard to size. Distribution requests are welcome as we cannot possibly service, ourselves, the significant market potential. All leather guaranteed to meet your requirements without condition. Nigerian leather has not been available with this guarantee to large as well as individual purchasers.