

HORWEEN LEATHER COMPANY

TANNERS AND CURRIERS

TELEX 280047
HORWEEN CGO

2015 ELSTON AVENUE

CABLE ADDRESS
"HORWEEN"

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60614

312/772-2026

Subject - Cordovan Butts

It is presumed that the name originally came from the city of Cordoba, Spain, which was noted for its fine leather manufacturers during the Arab civilization, and for a long period all leather made of Horse Hide had been called "Cordovan". In about the middle of the 19th century, however, this term "Cordovan" has been generally applied to leather made from the shell of Horse Butts only (the rear portion, beginning about 24" from the tail and extending about 24" to 28" on each side).

In the latter part of the last century Germany had developed a comparatively fine process of tanning Shell Cordovan Butts. It has been and still is known in Germany as "Spiegelwahr", which, translated, means "mirror goods". It has been named so on account of the mirror-like appearance which this leather shows in the shoe after it is once polished.

The leather, however, was a little too stout, and on occasion or for specially tender feet a little too firm. However, in the beginning of this century Shell Cordovan has been so perfected as to make it a most desirable leather for a fine high class shoe, and it further stands to the credit of the United States' tanners to have made the greatest progress so far in the perfection of this article.

Shell Cordovan may be had in any desired weight, from heavy or medium weight for men's shoes to an L weight for women's shoes. Its wearing qualities cannot be excelled by any other leather known so far; its place for high class shoes, so far as durability and appearance are concerned, has now been definitely established by good judges of leather and shoes.

The process of tanning Cordovan Leather had been brought over to this country approximately the middle of the last century by German and Dutch tanners. This is what brought on the designation of "Cordwainers" to all engaged in the manufacture of Cordovan Leather.

The tanning and currying of Shell Cordovan Leather might be designated as a "trade within a trade". It requires particular attention in the tanning, and takes especially skillful labor to curry and finish it. It requires more time for tanning and currying than any other leather, except perhaps bark tanned sole.

It has been generally presumed that this leather was non-porous, which theory has since been exploded. Shell Cordovan Leather is porous, but its pores are not visible to the naked eye.

August 13, 1934

