

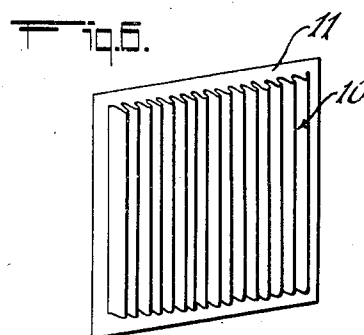
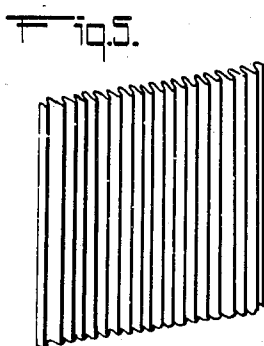
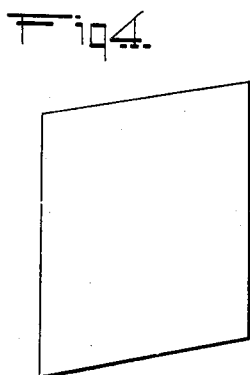
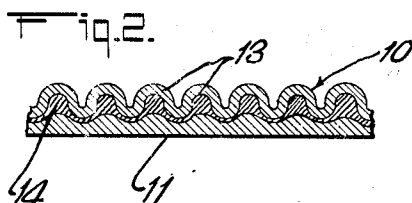
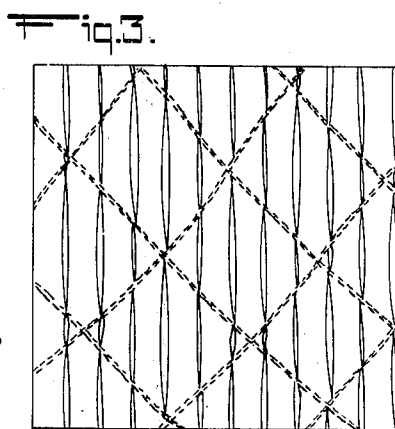
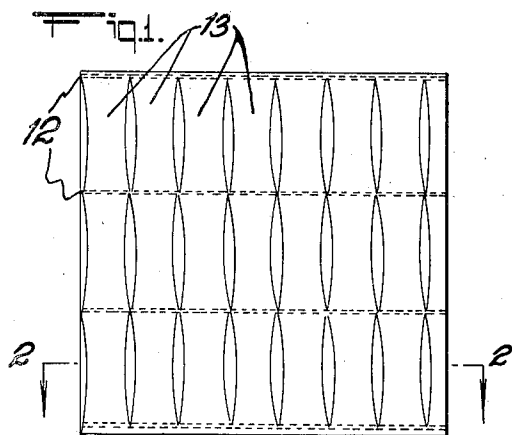
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LEATHER ARTICLE AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME

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LEATHER ARTICLE AND METHOD OF
MAKING SAME

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9 Claims. (Cl. 69—21)

This invention relates to new and improved articles of leather, and more particularly to a method of making leather articles simulating in appearance the skin of reptiles and to the product of such a method.

An object of the invention is to produce an article of the desired character which is easily manufactured, strong, readily worked, and which possesses the appearance both as to grain and luster of reptile skin.

A further object of the invention is to provide a method for pleating, backing and stitching sheets of leather so as to produce a backed leather fabric having the appearance of reptile skin.

Other objects of the invention will in part be obvious and will in part appear hereinafter.

The invention accordingly comprises the several steps and the relation and order of one or more of such steps with respect to each of the others, and the article possessing the features, properties, and the relation of elements, which are exemplified in the following detailed disclosure, and the scope of the application of which will be indicated in the claims.

For a fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the invention reference should be had to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view, greatly enlarged, of a portion of an article embodying one form of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a cross sectional view of Fig. 1 along the lines 2—2;

Fig. 3 is a plan view, greatly enlarged, of a portion of another article embodying the invention and illustrating a different use of the elements of the invention to procure a distinct and different design; and

Figs. 4, 5 and 6 are respectively views in perspective of steps in the process of the invention, Fig. 4 being a view of a sheet of leather before treatment, Fig. 5 a view of the same sheet after having been subjected to the first step in the process, and Fig. 6 a view of the same sheet after having been affixed to a backing as hereinafter described.

It has been customary to use ornamental leathers and more especially reptile skins, such as alligator skins and snake skins, in the manufacture of various articles,—for example, women's shoes, handbags, etc. Where strain is to be placed upon the leather, it has been found that the reptile skin, and particularly snake skin,

has frequently failed, as its tensile strength is not great. Furthermore, much of the snake skin employed has been imported at high cost, so that its use has been practically prohibited on articles made to sell at cheap or moderate prices.

This invention contemplates the preparation of a leather coated fabric which simulates in appearance and texture the reptile skins heretofore used, and yet which can be produced at relatively small cost, and which is sturdy, pliable and easily worked.

In the production of an article of the character described, a suitable block or sheet of leather is first selected for the facing material, such as is illustrated, for example, in Fig. 4. Leather such as has ordinarily been used in the manufacture of shoe uppers may be suitable. Preferably its outer face should be adapted to receive and retain a relatively high gloss or polish. This sheet of leather is then subjected to a pleating operation such as has heretofore been customary in connection with cloth fabrics of all kinds, and which comprises briefly a folding and pressing of the sheet under suitable temperature conditions so as to impart to it a multiplicity of small parallel pleats such as are shown, for example, in Fig. 5. While it is intended that pleats of any desired size may be employed, the sheet should be so treated preferably that the pleats are of such size and proximity as to impart to the finished article when stitched, as hereinafter described, the appearance of the grain and luster of the skin being imitated.

After the sheet of leather has been pleated it is preferably treated with an adhesive and then dried, so that the pleats may be retained during the further handling of the sheet. A suitable adhesive for the purpose described is the cement ordinarily employed in shoe manufacture for uniting the upper to the lining of the shoe. The cement is applied to the rough or unpolished surface of the pleated sheet and may preferably be applied in such quantity as to substantially fill the corrugations made by the pleating operation. It has been found that a sheet of pleated material which is not treated with the cement or with a similar adhesive has a tendency to pull,—that is, the pleats, particularly along the edges of the material, are very readily pulled and flattened out and the sheet is rather hard to handle where a uniform result is desired. The treatment with the cement as described results in imparting to the pleated material a resilient property which it does not otherwise possess, and insures that the pleats will be retained intact during subse-

quent handling. Furthermore, it is highly desirable that in the finished article the corrugations formed by the pleating should be provided with a filler of some kind to insure that the pleated surface will not flatten out in use. The cement treatment which has just been described admirably performs that function.

After the cement has been applied to the pleated sheet and has been allowed to thoroughly soak into the sheet, a backing sheet or strip is applied by means of any suitable adhesive. In Fig. 6, the pleated leather sheet is shown at 10, and the backing sheet at 11. This backing may comprise either a soft, thin sheet of leather or any suitable fabric. It should have such body preferably as to resist stretching in the subsequent operations of the process. The backing need not be so firmly fixed to the pleated outer sheet as to be permanently attached thereto. It is only essential that the two sheets be sufficiently united so as to prevent relative movement, one with respect to the other, during the stitching steps which are hereinafter described.

The pleated facing sheet, with its backing affixed thereto, may then be marked or scored to simulate the creases and folds which are found in the skins of reptiles. This is preferably accomplished by stitching the pleated outer sheet to the backing with a plurality of rows of stitching, which may take any desired design. For example, in Fig. 1, a design simulating snake skin is shown in which the rows of stitches 12 joining the outer pleated sheet with the backing, run at right angles to the pleats 13, and at regular intervals across the sheet. Such a treatment imparts to the sheet the appearance of a grained skin, the surface of which is made up of a mass of small rectangular elevations. The appearance of snake skin may be heightened if the threads employed are colored to simulate the color in the creases of the skin which is being copied. A cross section of the finished article is shown at Fig. 2, in which 11 represents the backing sheet, 10 the pleated surface sheet, 13 the pleats, and 14 the adhesive material employed.

In Fig. 3 is shown another design simulating alligator skin. As shown, the pleats are again relatively small, parallel and closely proximate. The stitching in this case comprises a plurality of rows running roughly diagonally across the pleats in each direction. As a result, a plurality of roughly diamond-shaped areas are produced, each of which comprises sections of several adjacent pleats. The effect is to reproduce in appearance alligator skin.

It will be obvious that any design may be employed in stitching the fabric. Preferably, where a natural skin is copied, the stitches follow as closely as possible the seams and creases in the skin. Where stitches are employed to mark the creases, it will be obvious that they serve as a means for permanently uniting the pleated sheet and the backing sheet. Under these circumstances the cement used in the earlier steps of the process may act only as a temporary bond.

The finished stitched article may be satisfactorily used in any of a number of ways. It may be employed in shoe construction where either the entire shoe or small inserts may comprise the material of the invention. It may also be employed in the manufacture of handbags, satchels, light luggage, belts, etc.

Since certain changes in carrying out the above process, and certain modifications in the article which embodies the invention may be made with-

out departing from its scope, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawing shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all the generic and specific features of the invention herein described, and all statements of the scope of the invention which, as a matter of language, might be said to fall therebetween.

Having described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. In combination, a facing sheet of leather and a backing sheet, pleats in said facing sheet, and a plurality of lines of visible stitching joining said facing sheet to said backing and crossing said pleats and adapted to hold said pleated sheet against extension.

2. In combination, a facing sheet of leather and an inelastic backing sheet, pleats in said facing sheet, and a plurality of substantially parallel lines of visible stitching joining said facing sheet to said backing and crossing said pleats and adapted to hold said facing sheet against extension.

3. In combination, a facing sheet of leather and a backing sheet, pleats in said facing sheet, and a plurality of substantially parallel lines of visible stitching joining said facing sheet and said backing and running at an angle of substantially 90° to said pleats and adapted to prevent extension of said facing sheet.

4. In combination, a pleated facing sheet of leather, a backing sheet, adhesive means for joining said sheets, and means comprising stitching for scoring said facing sheet at an angle to said pleats.

5. In combination, a facing sheet of pleated leather having a surface adapted to receive and retain a relatively high polish, a backing of leather, adhesive means for holding said sheet and said backing together and adapted to substantially fill the interstices between said pleats and said backing, and score lines on said facing sheet crossing said pleats.

6. In combination, a facing sheet of leather and a backing sheet, a plurality of small, parallel, closely proximate pleats in said facing sheet, adhesive means for holding said sheets together and adapted to substantially fill the interstices between said facing sheet and said backing sheet, and means comprising a plurality of rows of stitching uniting said sheets and scoring said facing sheet at an angle to said pleats.

7. The method which comprises pleating a sheet of leather, coating said sheet with an adhesive and drying, applying a backing to said sheet and scoring said sheet at an angle to said pleats.

8. The method which comprises pleating a sheet of leather, coating said sheet with a cement and drying, adhesively affixing to the coated surface of said sheet a backing, and stitching said backing to said sheet along lines which cross said pleats.

9. In the process of manufacturing a leather imitation of reptile skin comprising a pleated facing sheet of leather stitched to a backing sheet, the step which comprises applying an adhesive to the under-surface of said facing sheet and drying before joining said facing and backing sheets.