

# Covering with Leather

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head and tail, near the joint and the headbands. This process, called back cornering, provided the  
headbands with a place to lodge, without protruding from the sides of the book once it was removed from the

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quarters of an inch or so around all sides. Z o šZ Œ }v o o (}μŒ }Œv Œ• }μo  
of 45 degrees at this point or, if the corners were  
and its edges turned in.

The paring knife is made of high carbon steel and is specially designed to thin leather for  
bookbinding. It needs to be kept razor sharp. This can be achieved with a sharpening  
stone. The paring knife is a style paring knife μŒ Zer  
which has an angled blade. French paring knives have a rigid steel blade with rounded edges, whilst  
Swiss knives have a similar shape but a much longer steel handle. All require skill and a great  
deal of practice.

The margins of the cover which were to be turned over when the book was bound would not be obvious once the endpapers were pasted down upon them. Paring required a great deal  
of skill. Today šZ šÇ‰ }  
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use, each shared a common feature. šZ Ç v š} Œ ì}Œ •Z Œ‰ X

drawn downwards or pushed upwards, depending on choice, towards the edge of the leather so that its bulk was removed. This process was repeated on all four sides.

The next step was to paste the leather cover. This was placed on a piece of waste or newspaper, so that the binder's gluing would not be hampered by concern of going over its edges. The paste was applied from the centre of the cover out towards the fore-edge, thus ensuring any stretching of the leather would occur across the width and not the book height. The binder was liberal with the paste; leather pores were thirsty and soaked up most of it. The binder, meanwhile, nipped up the raised bands, if the book to be covered had them, with band nippers in order that they appeared 'sharp' once covered. The leather cover was then

Before covering, the binder always inspected the grain of the leather, choosing the more perfect side for the front of the book. With the covers of the book held closed, her or she then placed the back of the book in the centre of the leather, where pencil marks had previously been drawn to indicate turned over with its fore-board. It should be noted that some binders preferred to place the whole cover onto the pasted

method

boards, a waste sheet between the cover and text to prevent damage from the glued leather.

Folded strips of paper were placed next to the book's joints and a thread was then taken under the boards again and wound around the other side. A similar method of tying up could also be achieved by using the lying press, the string or cord simply wrapped around the book's bands and the brass pins of the press, as pictured here.

The thread was then taken under the boards again and wound around the other side. A similar method of tying up could also be achieved by using the lying press, the string or cord simply wrapped around the book's bands and the brass pins of the press, as pictured here. This prevented any depression or board defects from showing through the endpaper once it had been pasted down. The endpapers were trimmed so that they came just over the leather turn-in. A piece of card equivalent to the thickness of the leather was added along the joint, before the endpaper was pasted down. The book was then turned over, the process repeated on the other side, and the endpapers so as to dry regularly, so the endpapers dried evenly for about half an hour, then placed between two boards and very lightly pressed.

### Did you know...?

Knowing when, exactly, to close a book once its endpapers had been pasted took quite some experience. If the binder closed the book too early, its endpaper would wrinkle at the joint. The hinge was allowed to dry too much before the book was closed, swelling would occur on the outside of the book. The binder knew it was any small swelling easily smoothed out during pressing.

### More on leather...

#### Paring Leather

In order that books may open freely and not look too clumsy their leather covering should be very thin around the edge that turn over the boards. so that it blends smoothly when glued to the book boards.

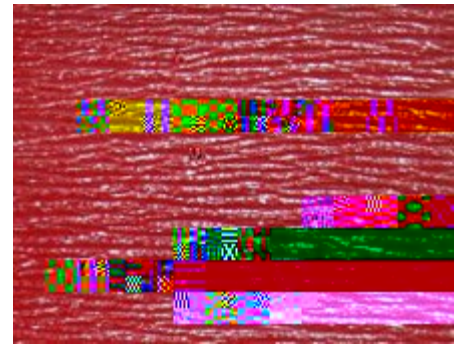
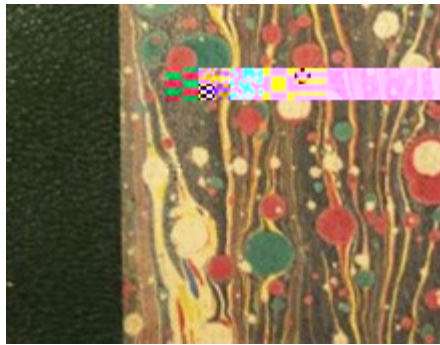


pared well, the edge of the leather will barely be visible on the endpapers are pasted over it. A smooth surface is required for paring; most binders prefer to use lithographer's stone. The leather is taken in the right hand and held at a very slight angle. The paring knife is then raised and must be held at a very slight angle. The paring knife is then raised and must be held at a very slight angle.

#### The Faux Raised Band

The faux raised band is made by pasting a strip of paper over the joint, then pasting a strip of leather over the paper. The leather is then pressed down and the paper is removed, leaving a raised band of leather.

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 Yapp Binding



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 Pictured here is a vellum Yapp binding. d Z}μ P Z •]u]o Œ ]v %%% Œ v U ]š ]• v}š  
 binding. d Z }Œ]P]v o z %%% ]v ]vP š • (Œ}u íòòì v ]• v u L Œ šZ  
 invented it. The edges (leather or vellum) fall about half the edges of the textblock to protect  
 it. They also hang over all three edges, not just the fore-edge as in this example. This is more likely a  
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Lee Hayes