

Bye-Bye Buckstitching

Once the rage in western tack, flashy white lacing is a thing of the past.

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If you ever rummage through vintage western tack, circa 1960-1980, you'll probably come across headstalls, reins and halters sporting flashy white lacing that looks like icing atop the underlying leather. Commonly called buckstitching, the handcrafted embellishment was once the rage in western tack. Now? Not so much.

However, it still has fashion appeal in the mainstream. "Buckstitching is very, very popular in women's leather accessories like boots, belts and purses," explains John Meyers, the manager of Internet sales for Vickers Western Stores based in Idaho. In business for over two decades, Vickers caters to western riders of all disciplines. "But today's tack styles really make use of engraved silver," Meyers continues. "I can't really say why buckstitching has pretty much disappeared from tack, other than to say it simply isn't in style."

Instead of the in-and-out lacing of the white stitching, Meyers says that intricately woven rawhide, which often wraps around romal reins or the cheekpieces of headstalls, has become the adornment of choice. "In fact, I'd say that rawhide is a must-have for bit of ornamentation for working cowboy tack."

So does that mean that buckstitching isn't coming back? Meyers says confidently, "Probably not anytime soon."