

Belts

By Gene Hickman

Illustrated by Susan Hickman

You'll need a belt. When it comes to defining your persona & choosing the correct clothing, a leather belt or a woven sash needs to be considered. Heavy leather belts & sashes were not used to hold up the pants or breeches as they are today. They were worn around the outside primarily for gathering or cinching loosely worn clothes like the large over-shirts, hunting frocks, capotes or coats to hold them shut & to hold equipment (knives, axes, pouches, bullet bags, cartridge boxes, etc.). In period literature, journals, & pictures, belts or sashes are seen on the outside of garments, usually with at least a knife attached or tucked in it.



Pants do not have belt loops until many years later. Belts are usually from a 1½" to 3" wide with predominately brass or more rarely forged steel buckles. Brass is cheaper than steel & most buckles are brass during this period. The 15 belts procured by Lewis for issue to the recruits were plain black belts approximately 1½" wide with a square or rectangular brass buckle. This is the standard military belt for many years, black with brass buckle. If you make your own belt, you will probably want to buy a black leather belt blank or dye the belt black. Buckles can be ordered from most of rendezvous traders or leather goods companies. Many of these same traders also carry belt blanks and finished belts. Belt blanks are also available at most companies that carry leather goods, such as the leather factory.

One source for belt blanks and buckles is Bison Saddlery. Contact him at www.bisonsaddlery.com. You won't find the blanks listed here, but if you contact Steve Stefley the owner, he knows which buckle and width black belt blank you'll need. He can also supply the leather for the military knife sheath too.