

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
AFO 234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO. 126
(Obtain from G-2)

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE 24 October 45

Division of Origin: Civilian Supplies

Subject: LEATHER PROD & DIST

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Tanaka, Sec., Hide & Leather Control Assoc.

Mr. Nakagawa, Vice-Pres., Hide & Leather Control Assoc.

Where interviewed: Meiji Building

Interrogator: Lts. Schmidt, Fassberg, Forrest

Interpreter: Lt. Deane

Allied Officers Present: Above.

Summary: TOPICAL

1. Early history of leather industry.
2. Development of leather industry.
3. Control of leather production.
4. Production.
5. Wartime import sources.
6. Tanning materials.
7. Control association activities.
8. Destruction of plants by bombing.
9. Present productive capacity and output.
10. Indirect effects of bombing.
11. Leather substitutes.

APPENDIX A - Production Figures

APPENDIX B - Data requested from Leather Control Assoc.

INTERROGATION

Interrogation of Mr. TANAKA, Chief Secretary of Hide and Leather Association and Mr. NAKAGAWA, Vice President of the Hide and Leather Association, 1000 24 October, 1945, in room 351, Meiji Building.

1. Early History of Leather Industry in the homes. Between 1910 and 1920 the industry underwent considerable expansion; continued to import better quality leather goods from England, United States, etc.

2. Development of Leather Industry: By 1930 demand had increased considerably, also domestic tanning and finishing processes. By 1932 chief imports were hides and tanning materials from North and South America, China and India. Some imports of luxury goods continued.

3. Control of Leather Production: In 1937 with China incident military demand increased very sharply; difficulties were encountered in meeting raw material and plant facilities requirements. In 1938 the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued control regulations, banned production of luxury items, and established allocation of leather supplies. Shortage of material forced utilization of hides of every type of animal, including cats and dogs.

4. Production: For the period 1935 - 45, the domestic production of hides was approximately 10,000 tons per year, on the average, while the total consumption of hides varied from 55,000 tons in 1940 to 20,000 tons in 1945. No attempt was made by civilian government to stockpile leather but the Army and Navy made heavy purchases in anticipation of their own needs from 1937 on.

5. Wartime Import Sources: French-Indo-China, Thailand and Burma furnished a part of the imports of hides and tanning materials that formerly came from the United States and South America from 1941 on; civilian consumption was very sharply curtailed, averaging about 16% of the total hide consumption during the war years (The industrial uses of leather are included in the

16% -- about 5% of the total hides consumed went into civilian shoes). By the end of the war, there were no leather supplies whatever available for civilian consumption.

6. Tanning Materials: Imports of tanning materials from southern areas were inadequate. Domestic production of tanning materials yielded only a small output and greatly increased the cost of finished leather products. Some research on tanning materials was carried on, but not much accomplished in the development of substitute tanning materials.

7. Control Association Activities: Control Association for leather goods was established in 1942 for the purpose of handling raw material and finished goods allocation, preparation of production schedules, etc. The number of tanning plants decreased from 800 in 1941 to 52 in 1942, largely as a result of amalgamations and consolidations -- productive capacity increased an estimated 40 percent as a result of the consolidation and increased mechanization. At the present time there are 23 factories producing shoes by machine methods.

8. Destruction of Plants by Bombing: About 23 of the 52 leather tanneries were 50% or more destroyed by bombing attacks -- of the 41 producers of industrial leather goods, 17 were 50% or more destroyed -- of the 23 shoe factories, 11 were 50% or more destroyed.

9. Present Productive Capacity and Output: Present production, 20,000 tons; present productive capacity 35,000 tons; peak productive capacity, 60,000 tons -- drop in productive capacity due to bombing. There were no cases of conversion of productive capacity to munitions production.

10. Indirect Effects of Bombing: Main indirect effects of bombing were on transportation and labor. Mr. NAKAGAWA will endeavor to furnish the Survey with statistical material on this problem.

11. Leather Substitutes: Fish skins and reclaimed leather scrap were used in the manufacture of substitute leather materials. In the latter stages of the war the military was obliged to use more and more substitute materials.

APPENDIX A.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL PRODUCTION</u>	<u>PART OF TOTAL FOR CIVILIANS</u>
1937	45,000	40%
1938	50,000	32%
1939	60,000	20%
1940	55,000	20%
1941	50,000	20%
1942	30,000	18%
1943	25,000	16%
1944	20,000	15%
1945	20,000	(-)

YEARLY SUPPLY AT END OF WAR

3,000 tons of tanning material

2,200 tons of synthetic material

1941 -- 800 plants

1942 -- 39 companies

41 plants, producers

52 plants, tanning

APPENDIX B

DATA REQUESTED FROM LEATHER CONTROL ASSOCIATION

1. The planned and actual production, annually from 1930 - 39, monthly from 1940 - 45. in physical and value terms of the major items of leather goods.

2. Imports annually from 1930 - 39, monthly 1940 - 45 of the principal leather items as well as hides which are processed in Japan.

3. Exports annually from 1930 - 39, monthly 1940 - 45 in physical and value terms of principal leather items.

4. A statistical series showing the allocation and distribution of leather goods between the civilian and military sectors of the economy, beginning from the China Incident in 1937.

5. A statistical series showing annual inventory from 1930 - 1945.

6. An estimate of the loss of capacity as well as stocks after the onset of the air attacks. These figures should include the number of machines.

7. A statistical series showing employment annually from 1930 to 1945 including a series for wages.

8. An estimate of normal effective demand of leather goods in both physical and value terms. It is suggested that 1935 - 1937 be taken as normal, making adjustments for increase in population.

9. Any special reports prepared by the Leather Association on the economic effects of the war on the Leather Goods Industry.