THE MAKING OF A BROOM:

We purchase the majority of our broomcorn already 'processed', that means cut to size after the seeds are removed from the brush (the top of the broomcorn plant that is used in broom making). We use the natural color broomcorn for the inside of the broom, and broomcorn that we have dyed colors for the outer coat. 

Once the broom parts are ready, the broom is wound on the handle using our foot powered circa 1900 winder. Once the broom is assembled (applying seven or more layers), it is stitched by hand using a double ended needle, which must be pushed through the broom using hand cuffs with metal inserts. The brooms are stitched flat with up to five rows of stitching.

The broom is then trimmed and a hanging cord added. If you hang your broom up after use, it will last longer and sweep better.

Our brooms are hand made using antique equipment. We use 100% Broomcorn in our brooms. Natural (tan) color broomcorn is used on the inside, color broomcorn (or natural) is used for the top coat. Colors: Dark Blue, Royal Blue, Wine, Green, Red, Brown. Not all colors available in all sizes at all times.

Our line of HISTORICALLY ACCURATE brooms is available to historical sites, museums and other interested individuals. Pre 1800's to present. We have done extensive research on the time periods for the various broom styles. We deem our information to be as accurate as possible. Contact us for details.

BROOMS:

Early brooms were called BESOMS. A Besom is a bunch of twigs tied to a wood handle, making a round broom, not a very good sweeper. The Shakers added 'shoulders' to the broom, then stitched it flat to hold its shape. The Shakers sold their first 'new style' brooms in 1798.

At the Victor Trading Company & Manufacturing Works, the world's highest altitude broom shop, we make all our brooms the 'old fashioned' way. We use a foot powered broom winder, circa 1900. Then we stitch all our brooms by hand. it takes longer to make a broom this way, but the quality of broom we make is worth it.

We started our broom business by growing broomcorn as one of our ornamental field crops. With mounds of broomcorn, we decided that we should learn how to make tills into brooms. This is when the work started. After many months of looking, we located a broom winder in rural Tennessee. We bought it, sight unseen. After we returned home with the winder, we realized that it had to be completely rebuilt.
before we could make a broom. After we rebuilt the winder as close to original as possible, we felt we were ready to make a broom. Easier said than done, after much trial and error and after going to see every broom maker we could locate and after much practice, we have refined the art of broom making.

We now offer to you the styles listed in this brochure. We name all our brooms, so we can tell them apart.

**BROOM LORE:**

Benjamin Franklin introduced broomcorn to the United States in 1725. He is said to have picked a single broomcorn seed off a broom of a Philadelphia lady, planted it, and grew the first broomcorn in the United States.

1. It is bad luck to loan your broom to anyone, even a friend.
2. Welsh: A broom is placed aslant in the doorway of the cottage. It is used as a holy symbol of matrimony. The Bridegroom jumped over the broom into the house, followed by the bride. If either of them touched the broom, the doorpost or moved the broom, the marriage was void. The object of the Broom-jumping ceremony was a public setting apart of the couple for the purpose of child bearing and was interpreted as a partnership, not ownership. To get a divorce, the couple just jumps back over the broom handle, only this time they jump backwards. (1683 Curing Valley, Wales.)
3. As sure as comes your Wedding Day, A broom to you send; In sunshine, use the brushy part, In storm, the other end." (1887)
4. Italy: When a broom falls, someone will Marry. "Germany: if you drop a broom, you will get married the same day next year.
5. A broom laid in a doorway would detain a witch from entering a cottage. For a witch would not cross over objects without first numbering the parts, and counting all the fibers of a broom would slow her progress. (Wales)
6. Irish: Stand a broom upside down - Many soon.
7. Lithuania: if you step over a broom handle there will be no proposal this year.
8. The Devil told the early witches to ride the broom like a horse and they could then levitate safely, because they were afraid. *United States: If a wife sweeps a circle around her husband, it will keep him eternally true to her.
9. If a single person wishes to marry, they should never let anyone sweep a circle around them.
10. If a family changes residences, do not leave the broom behind, not even if it is old.
11. A broom laid across your threshold on New Year's Day will keep evil spirits away for the rest of the year.
12. "Brooms bought in May, Sweep the family away."
13. It is bad luck to step over a broom, but good luck to accidentally walk under
one, ) It is easy to walk under a broom at the Victor Trading Co., as we hang the extra stock from the ceiling.)

14. If you place a broom on the floor, it will indicate to your guests that they have stayed long enough.

15. It is bad luck to move a broom; a new house needs a new broom.


OLD WIVES TALES:
To toughen new broom bristles so they will last longer, dip in hot salt water before using.

"Test a new broom by pressing the edges against the floor; if the straw bristles out and bend the broom is a poor one. If the broom is good the bristles will remain in a solid firm mass. (1920).

If brooms are wet in hot soapy water when new and hung to dry, they will wear much longer. Tie strands of a new broom together and soak in boiling water for two hours to lengthen its usefulness.

OTHER BROOM ODDITIES:
In the late 1800's, Society women performed a "Broom Drill" as a fund raiser for those less fortunate. Men bought admission tickets to watch as a drill company of 8, 16 or 32 young ladies performed. Each woman carried a broom on her shoulder and performed precise steps of a drill taught to them by a soldier. Some tied a wide ribbon on the handle. Many times at the end of the drill, the young ladies sold their brooms to the bachelors in the audience for a high price ... for charity, of course.

In World War II, if they fired all their torpedoes successfully, the submarine crew would tie a broom to the conning tower when arriving in port, to signify a "clean sweep".

GOOD ADVICE: When sweeping, use alternate sides and corners of the broom, so that it may wear evenly.

And ... Always hang your brooms up after use!

Text Source:
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