

CONSERVATION ITEM RECORD/BOUND MATERIALS
NARRATIVE TREATMENT REPORT

PCS#: 08-109

Accession or Call #: Tarleton Law Library, UT Austin

Author: published by order of the Legislature

Title: Journal of the Convention for Framing a Constitution of Government for the State of Massachusetts Bay....(Sept. 1, 1779 - June 16, 1780)

Imprint: Dutton and Wentworth, printers to the State, Boston, 1832

Examination date: October 7, 2008

Treatment date: November 4, 2008 - April 3, 2009

FOR CONDITION/DESCRIPTION REPORT, PLEASE SEE SEPARATE FORM

The book records all actions taken during a nine month legislative session in the years 1779 and 1780 regarding establishing a constitution for the new state of Massachusetts, including member lists, roll calls and proceedings and five appendices. As mentioned on its title page, it was published due to a resolution passed in March, 1832 to print the journals of the "convention of 1780," specifically 1,000 copies to be delivered to "each Town in the Commonwealth, and the City of Boston." I would therefore take this volume to be one of the original edition of 1,000. On the front flyleaf, there is a handwritten ink (iron gall?) inscription of a person's name, Samuel Adams Wells, possibly a prior owner.

The binding is a full leather, tight joint, tight back structure in boards with a maroon colored leather gold tooled onlay spine title piece. The front board is tenuously attached by a single fraying sewing support, and the back board shows significant leather splitting along half of the joint which undermines its connection to the text block. The front endsheet is completely detached from the text block and in significant danger of splitting in two along the torn center crease.

The overall binding dimensions are 23 cm H x 14.6 cm W x 2.2 cm T. The contemporary leather covering is caramel in color, with variations due to handling and wear over time. There are several areas of abrasion, scarring and staining on both covers; all four board corners have worn through to the rigid binder's board below, resulting in softened corners that will need to be consolidated. Along the spine head and tail are areas of leather loss, as well as along the joints where the grain layer has completely worn away leaving just the suede.

The vegetable tanned leather surface (possibly smooth calf) has been blind tooled with a single patterned roll line along the perimeter of both front and back boards, with the roll overlapping at the corners. There is an additional single blind fillet line along the spine edge roughly 2mm out from the joints that shows evidence of having “escaped” from its creator on the front board. The board edges have been blind tooled with a different patterned roll than the front cover; there is no turn-in decoration. The spine has been divided into five roughly equal panels by a series of six double fillet blind tooled lines, which show some losses. The maroon leather title piece only is located in the second panel from the head, and its framing double fillet lines appear to have been gold tooled instead of blind tooled.

The boards are 2mm thick binder’s board with shaped back corners, visible on the front board where the leather has split at the joint. There are no missing closures or ties. The boards are attached by the paste downs, with overhanging cord supports adhered under the paste downs. There are machine made, stuck on endbands of red textile wrapped around cord at both head and tail; the tail endband shows the most wear where the cloth has split and the core is beginning to unravel.

The text block (dimensions 22.3 cm H x 13.6 cm W x 1.2 cm T) is intact, with a smooth spine and a slightly round shape – there is no raised profile, leading me to believe the sewing supports may be recessed into the text block. I am unable to address the condition of the spine linings or possible adhesives used to adhere the spine, other than to say that the adhesive has not failed and the text block opens stiffly with no preferential openings. The text block edges are trimmed, in good condition with no extending pages, and slightly soiled from use. The sewing is deeply recessed into the gutters of the sections and difficult to view, given the tight text block opening. Based upon the exposed sewing at the endsheets, there appears to be two single twisted cord sewing supports and six single stations. The positioning of the sewing supports are slightly bottom weighted, with the top cord located 45 mm from the head and the bottom cord located 55mm from the tail. The sewing thread feels like silk given its smooth, even appearance.

The endleaves are made of a different type of paper than the text block: a machine made wove, medium thick paper with a rougher texture and aged darkened color. There is substantial burn through staining along all the leather turn-ins, acidic offset from the adjacent printing (especially the title page), and a darker overall color and staining pattern due to age and possible humidity cycling. The front endleaves are a single folio sewn through the fold, one half used as the pastedown, and a second single leaf sewn through at the same time with a small stub adhered under the pastedown. The back endsheet is a single folio sewn through the fold and pasted down, with no stub.

The text block appears to be machine made wove paper of medium weight, antique cream in color, smooth surface, and in very good condition, with no tears, losses, or creases. The sheets retain their flexibility and rattle from sizing, though they are not of a substantial enough dimension to have significant drape which might have overcome the tight back binding for a gentler text block opening. There is the beginning of foxing

evident on several sheets, as well as a gentle undulation, suggesting humidity cycling during the book's storage. There is one oversized page corner that was incorrectly folded when the text block was trimmed, leaving an unusual folded bit behind. The media overall is black printer's ink, in two different font sizes (the appendices were printed smaller), with noticeable type impression. It appears to be in stable condition, with no friability or fading, though it has offset onto the endsheets, as indicated above. In the appendices, there are several instances of words underlined in graphite, although there is no way for me to ascertain at what point in time those annotations were made, nor by whom.

Proposed Treatment:

- Remove front board completely.
- Mend torn front endsheet in situ with long fiber paper outer guard.
- Hinge on separate torn single leaf to outer side of mended endsheet fold.
- Slightly lift front spine edge and front board pastedown; insert and adhere medium weight long fiber paper as new board attachment, sequentially under spine edge and then front board pastedown.
- Narrow toned long fiber paper adhered along front board joint as visual infill to hide board attachment.
- Toned long fiber paper adhered as visual infill over inner joint between title page and hinged on single leaf endsheet.
- Reinforce back board attachment with toned long fiber paper as visual infill along the inner hinge, and adhere narrow piece of toned long fiber paper along the bottom half of the outer joint, to consolidate the split leather.

Materials Used:

- Korean handmade mulberry paper #1101 (HDES International)
- Korean handmade mulberry paper #1308 (HDES International)
- Korean handmade mulberry paper #1506 (HDES International)
- Precipitated wheat starch paste (Colophon) mixed 1:4 with distilled water, cooked 20 minutes
- Lascaux Acrylic Adhesive 498HV (Conservation Resources International)
- Liquitex soft body acrylic paints
- Stabilo CarbOthello pastel crayons
- Klucel G (Conservation Resources International, item SY26G-A)

Treatment Performed:

1. Cut through remaining sewing thread to detach front board completely. Partially torn front flyleaf mended in situ with HDES 1101 long fiber paper and precipitated wheat starch paste (WSP). (0.25 hour)
2. Separate torn single leaf tipped into place with WSP, beneath the exposed sewing threads of the text block. (0.1 hour)

3. Front board spine edge lifted; leather beneath spine label slightly lifted to accommodate long fiber paper to be used for board attachment. (0.75 hour)
4. Medium weight HDES 1506 long fiber paper toned with acrylic paints to match leather (burnt sienna, raw umber and yellow oxide). (1 hour)
5. Used sharp needle to tear edges of toned long fiber paper for board attachment to match areas of loss in the spine leather. Resulting irregular edge that will overlay existing spine was lightly sanded to smooth transition. (1 hour)
6. Adhered toned and sanded long fiber paper in sections onto detached front board under lifter leather with Lascaux 498 1:1 WSP. Board put into place on text block and toned tissue adhered with Lascaux 498 1:1 WSP over spine, but underneath the red leather spine label edge. (2.5 hours)
7. Corners of toned long fiber paper board attachment torn with needle back to the back corner area, as won't be rebuilding the endcaps. Lifted leather readhered with straight Lascaux 498. (0.25 hour)
8. Adhered front inner hinge visual infill of HDES 1308 long fiber paper with Lascaux 498 1:1 WSP. (0.25 hour)
9. Adhered strip of HDES 1308 long fiber paper with Lascaux 498 1:1 WSP into rear inner hinge to reinforce case to text block attachment. (0.25 hour)
10. Toned various long fiber papers with Liquitex acrylic paint (burnt sienna, raw umber, yellow ochre) for rear board exterior joint visual infill at tail edge. (0.5 hour)
11. Adhered toned HDES 1308 long fiber paper with Lascaux 498 1:1 WSP to rear board joint at tail. (0.25 hour)
12. Touched up color on toned long fiber paper board attachments with Stabilo CarbOthello pastel crayons (1400/625). Set pastel with 1% solution Klucel G. (0.25 hour)
13. Tipped front flyleaf along slightly rounded spine edge with WSP and dried open. (0.25 hour)

Total treatment hours: 7.6 hours