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Conservation Re-casing (Binding)

Department of Preservation and Conservation
Syracuse University

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Conservation Recase

Conservation recasing is a way to preserve our 19th and 20th century materials in which the bindings have failed and, in many cases, been lost over time. It is not intended to be used on valuable bindings or volumes printed before 1800.

As a working rule have all of the needed tools collected and on hand for each step.

Time: 30-45 min. per book when batched.

ξ Tools needed: scalpel, scissors, paper knife, straight edge, PVA mix, glue brush, bone folder, triangle, pencil, press boards.

**** Make sure to check for any provenance or signatures before removing or discarding any materials. ****

<u>Textblock Preparation</u>

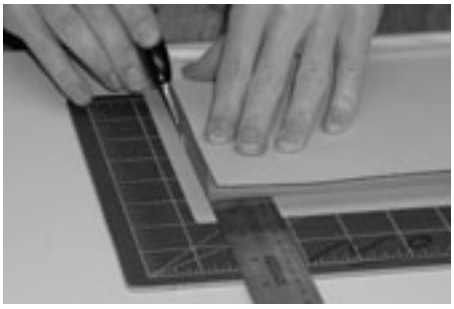
- Remove the old boards with a scalpel, if necessary, making sure not to slice through the shoulder of the text block. Remove the old endsheets if they are tipped on.

- Lightly scrape the spine with the back side of your paper knife to remove any old linings that may be loose.

- When the original spine linings are gone or when the textblock is broken, clean spine with methylcellulose or paste.
    - Consolidate cleaned spine with paste.
    - Line spine with Japanese tissue and paste.
- Attach endsheets and trim.

  Use the pre-made endsheets, crease to the height of the shoulder, and attach the tissue hinge to the spine of the textblock.

- Trim endsheets.



- Attach cloth hinge.
  Cut the cloth approximately 1-1/2" wider than the spine and slightly shorter. Apply PVA mix to spine and streach cloth over spine.

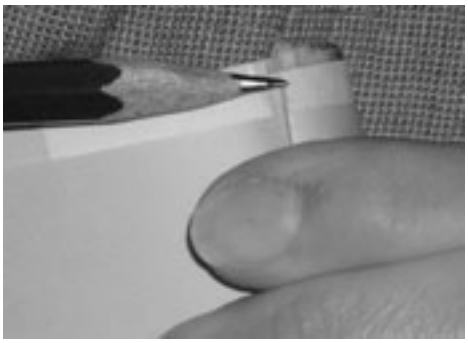
Making the Case

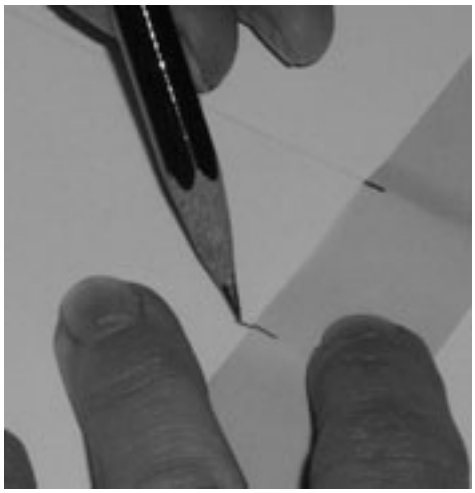
THE GRAIN OF ALL MATERIALS MUST RUN PARALLEL TO THE SPINE OF THE BOOK.

- Select Board
  The thickness of the board should be equal to the height of the shoulder. Use either the grey binder's board or the grey-white board.

- Cut Boards to Size
  The height of the boards should be equal to the height of the textblock plus the endbands. If there are no endbands, cut the boards to the height of the textblock plus two board thicknesses. The width of the boards should be the width of the textblock plus a bit, say 1/2cm. This may seem very large now, but once the case has been put together and rounded, but before covering, we will trim it to the proper width so that we have even squares all around.

- Measure the Spine
  Measure the width with a strip of paper pulled across the spine at one of the tapes or endbands. We measure here because this tends to be the widest place. Double check at the other end to make sure the spine is not uneven. If there is a difference choose the larger of the two. Cut a strip of card stock (Stonehenge, 10-point folder stock or Bristol board) to that width and slightly longer than the **boards**, grain running parallel to the spine.





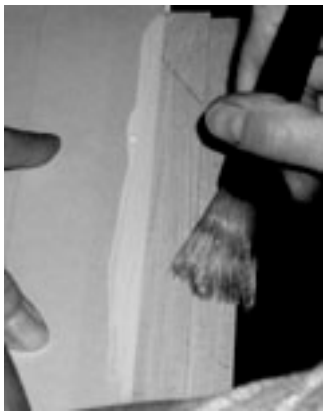
- Cut a strip of an 80 pound text weight paper (Dove's Grey, Mohawk Superfine or Permalife) slightly higher than the spine strip and about 3-4cm wider on each side.

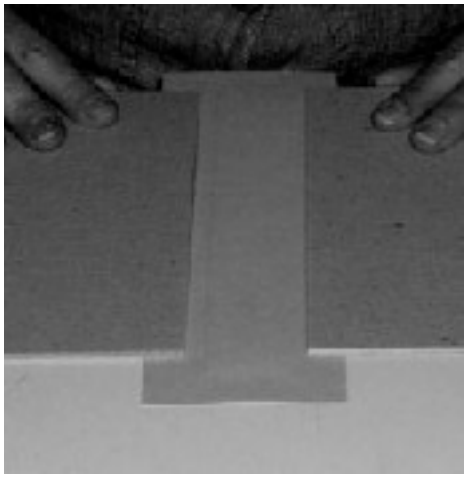
- Glue out the piece of card stock, center and square it on the paper strip and rub down. It is also important to gently rub along the edges of the spine strip so that these become visible and clear.

- Assemble The Case

  The groove between the board and spine strip will be about 7mm in width depending on the thickness of the covering material and the size of the shoulders. If you use paper it can be slightly narrower, if you use thick cloth it will need to be wider. Initially, it is a good idea to mark this distance with dividers, but within a short time you will be able to measure this distance by eye.

  Glue up your spine piece and boards with the PVA mix. Align the first board with the marks on the spine piece, then using the edge of the table as a level guide, put down the other board and rub the paper down.





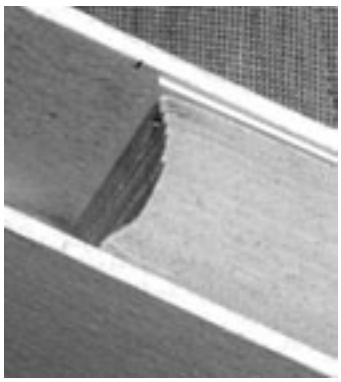
THE BOARDS MUST BE PARALLEL TO THE SPINE STRIP AND LEVEL

Fitting The Case

- Shape and round the spine.

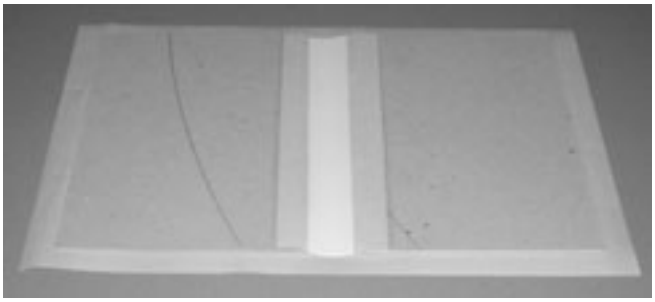
  Trim the excess at head and tail. Crispen the joints of the raw case by creasing along the spine lining. Round by rolling the case gently, but firmly, in the ball of your hand over the edge of the bench. Make sure to round it evenly. If you over round the spine, you can always flatten it a bit by rubbing down with your folder.

- Fit the cover to the book.
  Mark the top of the case and book. Using a knife or sharp pencil mark the fore-edge to square. This will help give you an even square on all three sides even if the book is not quite square. However, the top and bottom edges are always parallel. Cut off the excess on the fore-edge.

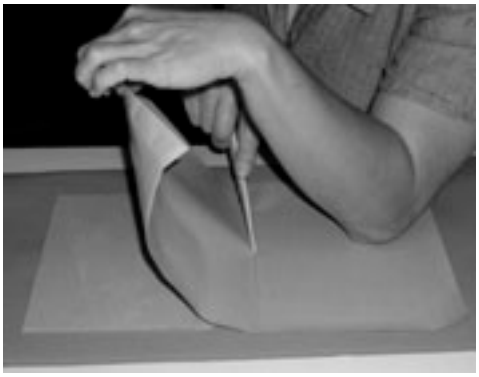


Covering The Case

- Select the covering material and cut top size allowing for 2cm turn-in all around.
  For covering the case, use a 50/50 mixture of pva and "thicker" methylcellulose.



Glue out the entire piece of material.



Lay down the first board, making sure that the spine strip faces up, and that there is an even border on three sides. Flip over the cover. Using your arm to support the glued out material, rub the material into the joint, across the spine (rubbing down along the edges), and smooth out across the other board. Smooth out the material with your folder, but put a piece of CLEAN paper on top of the cover first to prevent marking it with the folder.

Pick up the cover and discard the wastepaper. Lay it on the CLEAN bench, covered side down. Cut the corners, leaving 1.5-board thicknesses.

Turn-in the top and bottom edges first, beginning at the spine, pinch the corners and turn in the fore-edges.

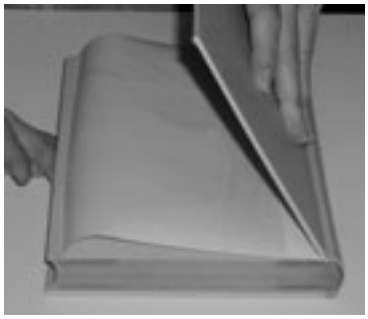
- When dry, trim out the inside of your case so that the turn-ins are even. **Do not** cut through at the spine. Re-round and shape the case.

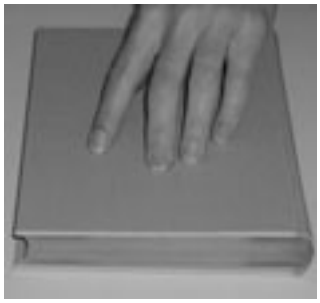
Casing-In

- Center the book in the case and carefully lay on the table without distrubing the placement.

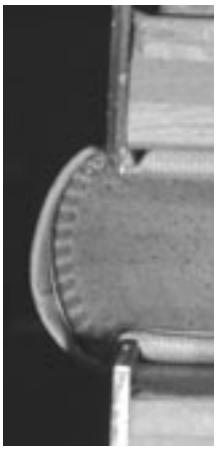
- Glue up endsheets

  Make sure to get glue under the cloth hinge as well as on top. When glued up, keep fingers at the fore edge of the text block and close the cover. Flip the book over and repeat. Bone down the joint carefully.





- Case in using the edged boards.
  Before placing the book in the press, insert a piece of card between the pastedown and your flyleaf. This will help absorb some of the moisture, and prevent the turn-ins from impressing themselves in your flyleaves. Place the book in the press, giving a good hard nip while you glue up the next book, then take out, remove the cards and let dry under weight.

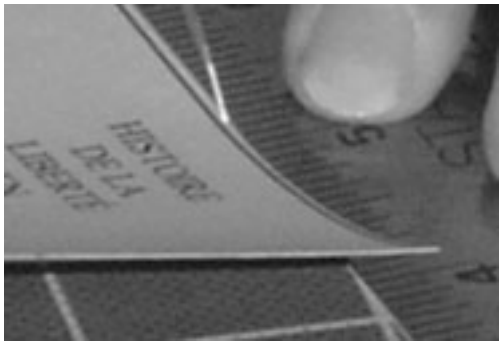


- When dry, set the joints.
  Open the book cover to 90 degrees and, supporting it with your hand, push the board downward to set the joint. This will help the book open nicely.

<u>Shelf Preparation</u>

- In Word Perfect, type up labels.
  Format to two columns. Ctrl F11 gives you the header and footer lines. Titles centered in ALL CAPS. Format the font size to fit spine. Call numbers are left justified, no lines.

- Consolidate with Klucel G, trim and center labels on the spine and adhere with PVA mix according to layout below.

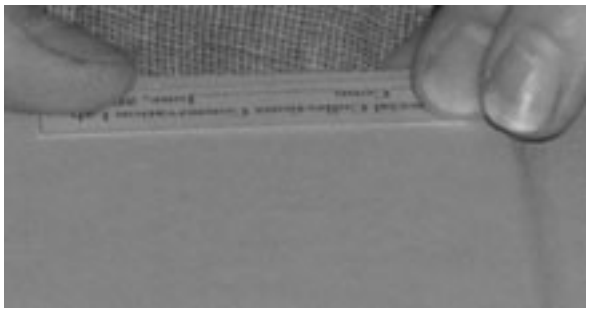


TITLE

CALL
NUMBER

- Adhere appropriate bookplate on center front board.

- Adhere Conservation Lab tag with your last name and month/year on the lower left corner of back board.



- When completed, put books on the reshelve shelf for quality control and reshelving.