

Title: How to resew a book in situ using beading wire, floss threaders, and alligator forceps
Author: Adrienne Bell

The tools used in this unique resewing in situ of an entire textblock were 7 strand beading wire, GUM Eez-Thru Floss Threaders, and a pair of alligator forceps (figure 1). Short lengths of the beading wire were bent in half to create a “V” shape and the sewing thread was looped around the bend to assist it in staying put during the sewing process. The straight end of the floss threader was cut at an angle to assist it in passing through sewing holes; as the straight end became bent through use, damaged parts could be cut off to extend usage. The sewing thread was passed through the open loop in the floss threader allowing it to carry the thread to the desired destination (figure 2).

The sewing thread was introduced into the center of the signature to be sewn through a kettle stitch and each support was then sewn successively. The thread was moved from the outside of the textblock to the inside of the signature using the bead wire while the floss threader was used to move the thread from the interior of the signature to the exterior of the textblock as well as to navigate around the sewing supports in between the exterior of the spine of the textblock and the interior of the spine of the binding. This division of labor was established due to the ability of the beading wire to withstand the inaccuracy of attempting to find the sewing hole from the “hidden” exterior of the textblock and the ability of the floss threader to carry the sewing thread through the sewing hole via the loop and then bend around the sewing supports in very close quarters.

(figure 3) (figure 4) (figure 5) (figure 6)

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Ms. Renate Mesmer, Head of Conservation, and Dr. Heather Wolfe, Curator of Manuscripts, at the Folger Shakespeare Library for their input in devising and executing this treatment. All photo credits belong to Mr. Austin Plann Curley, Digitization/Exhibitions Project Conservator, Folger Shakespeare Library.

Author Information

Adrienne Bell
Book Conservator
Folger Shakespeare Library
Washington, DC
abell@folger.edu

Fig. 1 Resewing Tools

Fig. 2 Sewing thread passed through loop in floss threader

Fig. 3 Pulling floss threader through sewing hole from the exterior of signature in preparation for maneuvering it around sewing support

Fig. 4 Pulling floss threader behind sewing support back to exterior of signature before transitioning to bead wire

Fig. 5 Using alligator forceps to find floss threader in space between exterior of textblock and interior of spine of binding

Fig. 6 Pulling thread taut inside signature using bead wire