

TEXTILE CONSERVATION CENTER
AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM
491 Dutton Street
Lowell, MA 01854
Conservation (978) 441-1198
All Departments (978) 441-0400
Fax (978) 441-1412

February 28, 2001

Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc.
75 Greenmanville Avenue
Mystic, CT 06355-0990
Attn: [REDACTED]

Telephone: day: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

TCC # 2001-003

Object: Seabag, prior to 1812; accession # 2000.178

Classification: Seabag MT-PM

Size: ~ 35 inches long by ~ 17 inches wide

Fiber: ground: linen; blue embroidery: silk

Yarns: ground: S spun singles

Structure: unbalanced plain weave ground fabric embellished with a variety of embroidery stitches depicting several domestic and maritime scenes

YPI: ground: warp - 52; weft - 45

Other Materials: cord handle - an example of a variety of knotting techniques; ¼ inch thick acrylic sheet wrapped with a fabric covered batting "pillow" (adhered with double-sided tape to the acrylic); the pillow is inserted into the center of the seabag; the support is attached by adhered Velcro tabs at the center front, center back and two sides

General Condition of the Object:

The condition is fair. For examination purposes the interior support was not removed. The hook and loop Velcro tabs were released to briefly examine what could be seen of the interior. The embroidery is moderately to severely faded when comparing the exterior to the interior. The embroidery on the exterior is abraded and missing in several areas revealing needle pricks and pattern sketches. The hook Velcro is adhered to the interior at the center front, center back, and two sides under the band near the top edge.

General particulate soils, and fiber dust are found overall. Soft to moderate wrinkles are found throughout. The ground fabric is brittle and discolored. The discoloration indicates both cellulose oxidation and cellulose degradation.

Several losses ranging in size from a pinpoint to 1 inches long are scattered throughout the linen ground fabric. Approximately six of the larger losses have been stabilized with an adhered patch in the interior. This patch appears to be a sheer fabric or paper and "fills in" the area of loss as well as stabilizing the surrounding area to help prevent further loss. When the interior is accessible, further analysis will be done to determine the content of the patch and if removal is possible.

The folded edge at the opening of the embroidered band is worn, split and torn. Fourteen buttonholes are located ~ 1/8 inch from the edge. The buttonholes are reinforced with cord and stitching. Seven of the buttonholes have intact knotted cords. Seven of the buttonholes do not have knotted cords although it appears that the cord bundle that has been placed in the seabag may be the remnants of the missing cords. The buttonholes have varying degrees of loss ranging from splits, tears, worn edges, and a loose cord.

The cord handle is discolored but mostly intact. Red, white, and blue fabric is noted at the joins that separate the knotting techniques. The red and blue fabrics are also noted covering the center core of the knots.

The twill fabric covered piping at the seams shows various levels of fading, abrasion and general wear. At the seam at the bottom edge the piping is exposed and is unattached for a few inches.

Core Treatment: 66 – 77 Hours

1. Remove the interior support; assess condition of interior
2. Construct, then insert a temporary support for handling and conservation treatment
3. Surface clean the interior and exterior
4. Photograph the interior when accessible
5. Reduce the wrinkles with a humidification technique
6. Remove adhered patches and adhered Velcro
7. Stabilize the most vulnerable losses with a patching system that visually compensates for the losses
8. Stabilize losses along the piping
9. Consultation with Mystic Seaport staff regarding display
10. Design and construct an interior support system
11. Pack for return transport†
12. Project administration, photography, and documentation

† The textile will be sufficiently packed for client pickup at the TCC lab. Should the client wish to have the object shipped, additional labor and materials charges will be added to the final invoice.

Materials for Core Treatment:

photographs
fabric
interior support
batting
archival board
adhesive
misc.

Prognosis:

Removing the interior support will allow for access to assess the condition of the interior, photograph and conserve the losses. Constructing a temporary support allows for safer handling during treatment as well as beginning to ascertain the shape of the object for determining display requirements.

Surface cleaning both sides with a low suction vacuum and slight mechanical action will lessen particulate soils and fiber dust. The wrinkles will be reduced with a localized humidification technique that gradually introduces moisture to rehydrate fibers allowing for realignment.

The adhered Velcro and patches will be removed, if possible. Stabilizing the most vulnerable losses with color compensating fabric, minimal stitching and adhesive if necessary. The stabilization technique will aesthetically compensate for fabric losses, and help to maintain the structural integrity of the areas surrounding the loss. Stabilizing the losses in the piping and reattachment to the seams will help to prevent further losses to the piping.

An interior support system of archival quality materials will provide rigid, inert support and will minimize deterioration resulting from migrating impurities.

Packing the object in archival quality acid-free materials will protect it from migrating impurities, environmental dirt and harmful ultraviolet light.

Display should be at low light levels (not exceeding 50 lux), out of direct sunlight, and alternated with longer periods of protective storage.

Cost Estimate of Core Treatment:

Labor @ [redacted]/Hour 66 – 77 Hours

Materials for Core Treatment

Examination Fee

Estimated Cost of Core Treatment