Conservation Treatments
Leather Bound Volumes

One typical area of damage seen in 19th century leather bound volumes is broken hinges. The result is loose or detached covers. The leather the binders used was very thin so it was easy to work with, but as a result the leather had lost much of its strength.

Although leather can be used to repair these books, the same problem could occur one hundred years from now. An alternative, which is both less costly and faster, is using a thin, but strong, Japanese paper instead of leather. These paper can be dyed to match the original colors and can even look like leather after special waxes are applied.

**Japanese Paper Hinge Repair**

The damaged books are lying down. The completed book is standing up. The repair is almost invisible.
Replacing a Missing Leather Spine

If the spine has gone missing, it too can be replaced using Japanese papers.

The book standing on the left is in its damaged state. The book standing on the right has been treated. The books lying down show some of the steps along the way: leather on the boards (covers) has been lifted and the spine lined with Japanese paper (left); the new spine has been adhered in place, but the head and tail (top and bottom) edges of the new spine have to be turned in around the edges of the boards.

Before

The spine is completely missing on this volume. The corners are in poor condition, too.

After

The new spine is complete. It has been dyed to match the original leather, which has been left on the boards. The title is stamped in gold; since the original spine was missing, I deliberately left the spine very plain. The corners have also been reinforced with dyed Japanese paper.