

Archival Products

NEWS

Repairing Books and Preserving the General Collection

by Margit J. Smith

LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS MUST MAKE THE CRITICAL determination of which materials will be important in the future. Difficult decisions must be made to ensure that deteriorated library and archival materials receive the most appropriate preservation options based on the intellectual content, physical aspects, and condition of each item within the context of the mission and policies of the holding institution. (Paul N. Banks and Roberta Pilette. *Preservation issues and planning*. Chicago, ALA, 2000. p. 206)

Every book being purchased for Copley Library is personally selected by a bibliographer because of its importance to the collection; its preservation becomes our responsibility. This, plus our long-standing policy of having paperback books bound before they are added to the collection, addresses the above quote and ensures a normal shelf life for otherwise easily damaged materials. Books may be bound as part of our vendors' services, or sent to the bindery upon receipt but before processing takes place. Binding as a first step after

acquisition eliminates the need for repeatedly handling paperbacks later on and often prevents more costly repairs.

The setting

The University of San Diego is a very young institution—we just celebrated our 50th anniversary recently. Most of our general collection consists of post-1900 imprints; my remarks apply only to the circulating collection at Copley Library, and



USD Copley Library Repair Station.

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are in no way intended as a guide for treatment of intrinsically valuable materials.

The Repair Station is physically and administratively part of the Cataloging Department. One person is trained to do book repairs, but only part-time. Hours per week spent on repairs depend on the number of items awaiting treatment, the complexity of repair, and other responsibilities of the staff member.

Our Repair Station measures approximately 9 feet by 8 feet, with a large worktable, a tall bookshelf, two small side tables and a chair and is adjacent to the physical processing area on one side. A sink is just a few feet away on the other side.

What can be done depends on the quality of paper, binding, size, age, use in the collection, and physical location of the book within the collection among other considerations.

Identifying materials for repair

Student workers are instructed in identifying damaged books returned through circulation or found on the shelves but anyone who finds problem books brings them to us. At present, and for the past year, Copley Library has been in the process of reclassifying its Dewey collection into LC classification. During this undertaking every book will be relabeled and shifted—not just once, but several times, increasing the number of volumes found for treatment.

A mending slip is to be inserted into every volume needing repair; it should be initialed and dated by the person requesting repair and have the damage indicated, even if only in general terms. Not following this procedure means it often becomes time consuming to find the pages or sections that need attention if the damage is hidden such as a torn or missing page. Additional information on the mending slip, if it comes from the bibliographer, already indicates retention/withdrawal/replacement decisions in case the book cannot be repaired in-house, or rebound commercially.

Once a week I go through the books that have accumulated in the Repair Station and decide what is feasible to do with the

resources we have. Books destined to be rebound at the commercial bindery are immediately given to the bindery assistant, those to be treated in-house are placed on the book shelf at the Repair Station. Approximately 20% of the candidates for repair require commercial rebinding. If the mending slip is absent, or incompletely filled out, I consider the following:

- Does the book seem out of date—consult the bibliographer, or recommend replacement with a later edition.
- Is the book heavily marked up, dog-eared, seriously water damaged, with too many pages missing or torn, and in generally unsalvageable condition—replacement is recommended.
- Will the book be replaced shortly—repair whatever we can, go the extra step but do not send to be rebound.
- How difficult is the needed repair—if it is clearly beyond our abilities, the book is sent to be rebound.
- If it is beyond what we can do in-house, but the book is unique to our library, i.e. not available on ILL, and out of print—we send it to be rebound. On occasion even the commercial binder cannot rebind a book that is too brittle then we place it into a protective enclosure and transfer it to Special Collections.
- If the book is of sufficient value to be put into Special Collections—special or no repair or treatment may be indicated.

Deciding on proper treatment

No black and white, hard and fast rules can exist for suitable treatment to be applied across the board to all damaged books. What can be done depends on the quality of paper, binding, size, age, use in the collection, and physical location among other considerations. Guidelines only can

University of San Diego
Copley Library
Book Repair Slip

Title: _____

Date: _____

Repair requested by: _____

Repair in-house

Repair cover

Repair spine

Reinforce hinge

Reinforce spine hinges

Repair corners

Glue end papers

Laminate cover (paperbacks only)

Tip-in pages

Repair torn pages

Clean soiled pages

Open uncut pages

Other _____

Withdraw

Withdraw only if it can't be repaired or rebound

Send out for Rebind

Rebind only if it can't be repaired in-house

Replace/Reorder Book is still needed because of insufficient material in collection

Special Instructions:

be established and much of the work done is the result of using good common sense.

Here are some ideas of how we proceed:

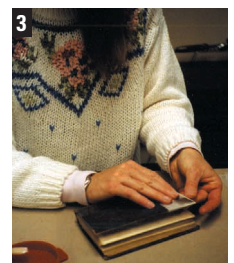
- **Reinforcing bumped and limp corners**, especially often found on children's books. Cardboard of the covers is carefully separated with a needle or knife and PVA is inserted between the cardboard layers with a brush. The corner is covered with wax paper folded to conform to the shape of the corner, then with two strips of manila stock: one strip bent over the cover from the bottom up or top down, the other from the fore edge in, which in effect wraps the corner and returns it to its original square shape. A clamp holds the strips in place and the corners are left to dry overnight. (I have described this procedure in detail since it is seldom mentioned.)
- **Tightening of loose hinges**, when the endpapers are pulling away from the covers, but only if the book is of reasonable weight. Large or oversized, heavily illustrated books, using clay coated papers that add considerably to the weight of the book block, and are held together with a thin strip of flimsy super (mull) are usually beyond our capabilities to tighten, and are sent out for rebinding. If done properly, hinge tightening can considerably extend the life of the book and ensure repeated handling and check-outs.
- **Tippling in pages**, but not more than three in the same spot. If at all possible let dry completely between insertions. If replacement pages are larger than the original, they are trimmed by using the paper cutter, or preferably a ruler and mat knife, before attaching. If a complete signature has come away from the binding it usually means that the book has to be sent for rebinding.

- **Mending torn pages**, but never with office dispenser-type tape! We use Japanese mending tissue, water-cut to give textured edges to blend in with most papers. Instead of only re-adhering the sheared edges of torn pages, we cover the complete tear with tissue paper that has been pasted with methyl cellulose. For general use this seems to be stronger than the other procedure. It is always important not to make the mend of stronger paper than the paper mended to avoid breaks in the original page.

As repairs are only made to our circulating items, we have on occasion used Neschen Filmoplast, a self-adhesive high quality paper tape designed for use by libraries for invisibly mending tears. Neschen also produces a Filmoplast roll with heat-activated adhesive.

- **Replacing/Reinforcing spines** with self-adhesive cloth tape. We keep several colors in various widths handy to cover spines with torn covering material. If the spine is lost, the covers have become totally detached and this damage has affected the book block itself, the book is sent for rebinding. If the covers are still firmly attached we use the cloth tape wide enough to go well beyond the groove on front and back to assure good adhesion. Having an assortment of colors allows at least pleasing, if not exact, color matches and combinations. If at all possible, the printed title is salvaged from the original spine and glued to the replacement spine.

If the spine is still attached, but only frayed and broken in several areas, clear plastic book tape is used after cleaning off any unsightly threads or cloth edges. This, as well as the adhesive cloth tape is cut large enough to cover both head and tail and tuck in behind them for a stronger end result and no sharp edges.



Corner Reinforcement

1 PVA is inserted between board layers of corner.

2-3 Corner is covered with wax paper

4 Two strips of manilla stock are formed around the corner.

5 A clamp holds the strips in place until dry.



Spiral Book Binder

1 Slip the spiral over the strap, **2** Attach the polypropylene lock through the spine hole and strap, **3** Apply lock nut on the inside of the binder.

- **Hinge repair** on the inside is done when the flyleaf has become detached where it was previously held against the groove of the hinge, or is torn or broken along the gutter. The loosened flyleaf is re-adhered along the original glue line with a mixture of PVA and methyl cellulose, or PVA alone. If the book is at all out of square and the flyleaf does not fit properly anymore because the super is stretched, or if the paper of the adjoining page is already brittle or very soft, the gaping area is reinforced with a strip of Japanese mending tissue.

- **Inserting errata slips, plates, maps and other loose items.** Occasionally the book needs to have a pocket pasted in, which usually is attached to the inside of the back cover. Always double check to assure the inserts are done at the correct page numbers. Large folded maps, unless bound into the book with stubs, are shelved separately in our library.

- **Using protective enclosures,** such as folders and binders. Suitable folders with pre-pasted linen hinges (up to 1/2"), or hinged board covers with clear plastic fronts enclose our pamphlet-type materials. Unless stiffened this way, insubstantial publications get lost behind shelves, have covers torn or torn off through inappropriate shelving, or slide and slip along the shelf. Lately, with the production of Archival Products' new spiral binder, even spiral bound books have become easier to handle. They are especially useful for materials that will go out of date fairly quickly, such as manuals, handbooks, various lists, etc., which nevertheless are used frequently before being superseded.

- **Endsheet replacement** is one of the less frequent repairs, but is still an important

part of the overall preservation option if the original ones were defaced or damaged. For aesthetic reasons off-white paper works best.

- **Cleaning of covers** is done when dirt can be easily removed with an eraser, plain lukewarm water on plastic or buckram covers, or occasionally Goo-Gone for stubborn spots. After using Goo-Gone any residue must be washed off with a paper towel dampened with plain water. Dry cleaning sponges which can be washed and reused have come in handy for some cleaning. We also use them to remove mold, but that is a separate operation and not carried out at the Repair Station.
- **Wrongly inserted sections** cannot be handled here and the book is returned to the vendor, or sent for rebinding.
- **Opening uncut pages.** Although not necessarily a book repair, opening of uncut pages can be tricky and is a suitable activity for the Repair Station. It helps to have the correct knife to assure a clean cut. After some practice the cut is to be carried out in one smooth move to avoid torn edges. Opening pages can be a time consuming operation since depending on how the sheet was printed, two edges may have to cut. Fortunately, not too many books are found that require opening.

Ragged edges left by sloppy opening of pages can be easily removed by using a fine sandpaper block to sand them off against a ruler exactly lined up under, and parallel to, the affected edge.
- **Replacing guard sheets over plates and prints** to protect ink migration to adjacent pages. Frequently guard sheets dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s were manufactured using highly acidic paper that has turned



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brown, and instead of protecting plates and prints, has damaged the material it is supposed to “guard”. These guards are replaced with acid-free silk tissue, which although it will not reverse the damage done, at least will not inflict more of the same.

Documentation

A very simple log is kept in which the library assistant records the date of repair, the title of the material, and the treatment provided. A quick look through this log shows that the most frequent treatment is putting pamphlets in folders, quickly followed by hinge repair, tipping in of pages, and mending of spines. The average repair rate per month is about 50 items.

Materials used

PVA, methyl cellulose, Japanese mending papers, buffered end paper stock, high quality mending tape and other products specifically produced for book repair, though not necessarily archivally sound, are the products of choice for us. Tools are stored in a closed box and a self-healing cutting mat is used. Several small pieces of equipment are needed, such as a portable book press, a heavy-duty stapler using stainless steel staples, and a larger variety of weights.

Concluding remarks

Although modest in its scope and treatment options, the Repair Station in our department serves an important function. Book repair is by its nature a reactive operation, book preservation on the other hand can be carried out by preventive means such as binding paperbacks before adding them to the collection, using protective enclosures and in general handling materials in a respectful and appropriate

manner. Preserving library collections is costly, carrying out needed repairs in a timely way stretches the budget and ensures the collection’s overall good health. In addition to improving the structure of the book, repair and care also improve the outward appearance and make using the volume a more esthetically pleasing experience.

Many excellent publications treat book repair, preservation and conservation of library collections in great detail. For practical instruction and various tips and hints, we use the following:

BonaDea, Artemis. *Conservation book repair: A training manual*. III. by Alexandra Prentiss. Distributed by the Alaska State Library, 1995.

Book preservation and repair: Quick, easy and affordable ways to increase the life of your books and magazines. Madison, WI, Demco, 1981.

Dyal, Carole and Pete Merrill-Oldham. *Three basic book repair procedures*. Prepared for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Library Association in Washington, DC.

Gaylord preservation pathfinder no. 4: An introduction to book repair. Syracuse, NY, Gaylord, 1996.

Greenfield, Jane. *Books, their care and repair*. New York, Wilson, 1983.

Lewis, A. W. *Basic bookbinding*. New York, Dover, 1957.

Thanks go to Julie Wright, our current Repair Assistant, who kindly posed for photographs, and proofread the repair descriptions.

REFERENCES:

Banks, Paul and Roberta Pilette. *Preservation issues and planning*. Chicago, ALA, 2000.

DePew, John N. *A library, media and archival preservation handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO, 1991.

Harvey, Ross. *Preservation in libraries: a reader*. London, Bowker Saur, 1993.

Promoting preservation awareness in libraries: a sourcebook for academic, public, school, and special collections. Edited by Jeanne M. Drewes and Julie A. Page. Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1997.

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In addition to improving the structure of the book, repair and care also improve the outward appearance and make using the volume a more esthetically pleasing experience.

Promoting Preservation

by Janice Mohlhenrich Lathrop

Preservation work is best accomplished when its functions are integrated with the work of the library as a whole.

Faced with a conundrum...

DONE RIGHT, PRESERVATION poses a conundrum. Disasters are averted or minimized, collections are kept clean, dry and mold-free through environmental controls, and conservation efforts, largely invisible to the untrained eye, keep collections accessible for the long term. In most libraries, preservation and conservation work occur out of sight of library users, often secreted away in the basement where even the majority of the library staff may be unaware of the goings-on. It's valuable, yet invisible; essential, yet often unnoticed. Preservation takes the long-term view, working quietly and steadily to preserve valuable collections for generations of students and scholars to come. Grants are written for things like microfilming projects and deacidification projects, or for care of specific print and non-print collections. The work is done quietly, methodically, with little apparent fuss or commotion. The conundrum poses the difficulty of insuring funding and staffing to continue preservation work when efficiency and effectiveness make the results seem effortless.

Preservation work is best accomplished when its functions are integrated with the work of the library as a whole. Preservation efforts support reference and circulation and collection management and special collections in real and tangible ways, but in fact, much of what preservation is and does is invisible to the library community as a whole. But being quiet and modest doesn't mean preservation and the people who do it are simple or expendable. How then, in an environment of ever increasing competition for scarce resources like space, funding

and staffing, can preservation staff best draw favorable attention to and recognition of their achievements and contributions?

Marketing and PR? Us?

Why promote? Few preservation specialists are given to bragging, so tangible results rather than ego gratification are desired. Promote preservation in order to: educate library staff and library users, insure recognition of the contributions made by preservation staff, attract and retain the interest of potential donors, and keep preservation in the forefront of the minds of administrators who control budgets.

Web pages, workshops, and one-on-ones.

How do libraries go about promoting preservation? Some recent publications speak to the need. In their SPEC kit, *Integrating Preservation Activities*, (ARL, SPEC Kit #269, October 2002), Brown and Holmes include documentation from a number of libraries employing a wide array of strategies for promoting preservation internally and externally. Outreach efforts can be as simple as a printed bookmark presented to library users at checkout or as sophisticated as virtual tours and online preservation tutorials. Broad categories of promotion include in-house staff and user education, development of websites to provide information, increase visibility and link users to valuable information, and one-on-one, face-to-face tours, talks and consultations with visitors to the library. The time spent encouraging the interest of visitors in the work of preservation can lead to long-range benefits for the entire library. Those visitors may later

become Friends of the Library, donate money to an endowment or general fund, or may designate the library as the recipient of collections and papers, all based on the interaction with knowledgeable preservation staff.

Many preservation departments offer popular hands-on workshops for the general public. While it's true that a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, a carefully planned and presented workshop on simple repair techniques can be both fun and fascinating for participants, and can bring needed exposure to a library's preservation efforts. In planning such a workshop it's a good idea to contact vendors who may be willing to supply catalogs or even sample materials for participants. Everyone likes getting freebies from a workshop, and this is a great opportunity to pass out plastic bags bearing the name of the library (and some preservation education about the importance of protecting books from the elements), bookmarks printed with preservation tips, catalogs, and other inexpensive materials that raise awareness of what preservation is and does.

Who is the audience for all this promotion? Looking for opportunities to increase visibility is a constant and ongoing part of the work. Every staff member—every staff member—should know where the preservation staff works what they do, and how they support the work

of other library departments like special collections, catalog, reference, collection development and circulation. All new employees should be introduced to preservation basics to be sure they are not unintentionally mishandling materials. Library users—general public, students, scholars, visitors, and friends, should know the library is engaged in preserving the collections, and that part of the good stewardship the library provides is ensuring accessibility of resources through preservation of them. Tooting the preservation horn often and everywhere may seem uncomfortable at first. Do it enough, and people will come to expect it. When they do, you'll know you're successful in your efforts.

By now, some of you are shaking your heads and thinking, "that's not MY job." There are many strategies available for promoting preservation, and the time for raising awareness of preservation has never been more critical. In a recent CLIR study conducted by Anne Kenney and Deirdre Stamm, entitled "The State of Preservation Programs in American College and Research Libraries: Building a Common Understanding and Action Agenda" (December 2002), the authors list six recommendations in response to the challenge of rethinking preservation. The number one suggestion? "Encourage a common and more inclusive understanding of

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The enthusiasm of preservation staff, coupled with knowledge, skill and dedication will go far toward ensuring the continuance and growth of preservation programs.

preservation to support program development.” The conundrum with which I began this article is echoed in Kenney and Stamm’s study in these words: “Preservation treatments are increasingly sophisticated and effective, yet preservation as a core activity of libraries remains less visible than others such as cataloging and user surveys.”

Promoting preservation promotes libraries. Seen from that perspective, it’s clearly everybody’s job. Searching the web turns up a wealth of preservation sites that can educate, inspire and connect you or your library patrons with the exciting work and developments underway in the field. A print source that provides a complete guide to preservation education for library users in all kinds of libraries is *Promoting Preservation Awareness in Libraries, A Sourcebook for Academic, Public and Special Collections*, edited by Jeanne M. Drewes and Julie A. Page, The Greenwood Library Management Collection, 1997.

Awareness of the preservation problem in American libraries has increased in recent years, thanks to such disparate influences as Nicholson Baker and his polemic

“*Double Fold*,” concerning brittle newspaper collections, and through popular recognition of the value of old books, manuscripts and photographs demonstrated by sales of such materials on E-Bay and the valuations suggested for them on the television program *Antiques Roadshow*.

Awareness of the problem and awareness of the value of the materials should lead to awareness of the importance of preservation. The preservation community has the chance to capitalize on the public’s heightened awareness. Preservation is critical to the long-term retention of our valuable, irreplaceable heritage collections. It’s up to us to make sure the work gets done, and promoting the work of preservation will help do that. The enthusiasm of preservation staff, coupled with knowledge, skill and dedication will go far toward ensuring the continuance and growth of preservation programs.

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