Conserving and Preserving Your Books

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Why Do Books Break Down?

- Structure
  - Paper
  - Bindings
- Environment
  - Climate
  - Storage
Structural Issues

- Paper
  - Pre 1830s: predominately rag, thus stronger and long lived.
  - Post 1830s: Introduction of alternative materials such as ground wood pulp.
Structural Issues

- Bindings
  - Over time, binding structures have been simplified. This process was accelerated by the industrial revolution when machines began to be employed.
  - Changes in how materials were processed (tanning, paper, ... )
Care and Handling

- Store books and paper based objects in a cool, dry environment. Avoid dank basements or torrid attics.
  - Mold, embrittlement, increased aging

- Reduce exposure to direct light (sunlight, flourescents). High UV will cause the degradation of paper, cloth, leather.
  - Effects are fading, decrease in strength
Types of Book Structures

- Sewn
  - Leather thongs
  - Raised Cords
  - Recessed Cords
  - Tapes
  - Unsupported (link stitch, smyth sewn, oversewn)
Types of Book Structures

- **Adhesive Bound**
  - Perfect
  - Double-fan
  - Burst

- **Boards**
  - Laced on
  - Cased
  - Pamphlet (wrapper / paperback)

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Treatment Types

- **Rehousing**
  - **Phase box (commercially available and custom)**
    - Provide basic, cost-effective, protection for average sized books. Folder weight card-stock folded around book.
  - **Drop-spine (commercially available and custom)**
    - Commercially available boxes generally not designed for books (Wasted space/loose fit, but protect from light and dust). Custom covered in cloth..., made to book, durable.
  - **Encapsulation vs lamination**
Treatment Types

- Conservation
  - Minor: hinge tightening, tissue repairs to joints, hinges, and corners
  - Reback and Recase: repair/replacement of spine or recovering of book in new cover. Old materials can often be retained.
  - Full: Book will be taken apart; washed/deacidified; mended; resewn; recovered.
Treatment Types

- **Deacidification**
  - Can be done aqueously or non-aqueously.
    - **Aqueous** involves disbinding and washing...
    - **Non-aqueously** generally applied by spraying or brushing.
      - **Wei T’O** - Original commercial product. Effective, but spray cans clog easily resulting in wasted solution. Noxious fumes.
      - **Bookkeeper** - Effective. Applied with pump bottles, non-toxic.
Treatment and Value

- Treating an item can increase, maintain, or decrease the value of an item.
  - Dependent on:
    • Condition
    • Rarity
    • Intended use (artifact vs information), and location
    • Other sundry factors
Who Should Treat

- Depends
  - Rehousing
    - Can often be done by individual. Will need to be aware of issues associated with different materials.
  - Treatment
    - Best left to professionals who have in-depth knowledge of structure and materials.
    - Avoid “commercial binderies”
      - Lack sensitivity to non-standard/older/valuable materials
      - (Don Eddy Story)
“Home Repair”

- A little knowledge and do a lot of damage
  - Tapes (self-adhesive for paper, gummed hinge repair tapes...)
  - Glues (wrong kind, applied in wrong place)
  - Cleaners (especially things like Lysol, Citrisolve,...)
  - Leather Dressings
“Home Repair”

- Instead pay to have conserved (ask for options) or rehouse
- Avoid things like Book Lovers Repair Kit
- Avoid “tradition” library book repair products such as tapes (gummed or otherwise)
- Avoid most commercial pamphlet binders (exceptions are sew-in binders)
“Home Repair”

- OK to do.
  - Rehouse
    - Many vendors offer kits which contain a wide variety of sound materials and supplies for rehousing (mylar sleeves, acid-free folders, boxes...)
    - Deacidify - Not all materials safe. NEVER on photographs, colored prints, leather. Can darken some materials such as newsprint/pulp paper. Does not strengthen brittle paper.
      - Expensive
Dealer Condition Descriptions

- **Wide variations in descriptive quality**
  - Interpretation of terms
  - Antiquarian dealers vs eBay
  - Images can often help get a better impression
  - Ask questions

- **About dealers**
  - Recommend Bookfinder. Searches other dealer sites.
  - Avoid Alibris. Prices very high.
Finding A Conservator

- AIC Referral List
  - <http://aic.stanford.edu>
- Guild of Book Workers
  - <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/gbw>
- CLRC Preservation Referral List
  - CLRC Preservation Main Page
    <http://clrc.org/progs/preserv.shtml>
Preservation Supplies

- Gaylord Brothers
  - http://www.gaylord.com
    - Preservation Pathfinders in print also available at no cost. Otherwise download via direct link from CLRC Preservation Page.

- Metal Edge West
  - http://www.metaledgeinc.com

- University Products
  - http://www.universityproducts.com

- Light Impressions
  - http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com
Other Resources

- The Book Arts Web
  - <http://www.philobiblon.com>
  - Links to a wide variety of book arts, collecting, and conservation/preservation resources
Genealogistâ€™s reference shelf. Conserving, Preserving, and Restoring. Your Heritage. This book will guide you through some basic preservation techniques and preventative conservation practices for artifacts commonly found in family collections. Many new terms are introduced through the text to help give you a better understanding of preservation, conservation, and restoration of your family heirlooms. All of the terms in bold can be found in the glossary. There are many resources to help with the initial sorting and evaluation of historic documents and artifacts, including Help! Be they documents, photographs, books, or clothing, as custodians of our history, we're faced with how to maintain these items. Professional conservator Kennis Kim tells us how. Topics discussed include: creating an accession list; the nature of conservation, restoration, and preservation; deciding on display, storage, or using the artifact; common threats such as light, humidity, insects, and rodents; and when to call a professional. Here is all that's needed to determine what can be done to preserve precious articles for future generations. Impression. Add to shelf. Books related to Conserving, Preserving, and Restoring Your Heritage. Skip this list. Share your thoughts. Complete your review. Tell readers what you thought by rating and reviewing this book. Rate it *. You Rated it *.