

Archival Products

NEWS

The Book Doctor: Community Service, Public Relations and Preservation Education

by Mary Ellen Starmer

EVERY PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT gets those calls—the ones from lost-sounding but hopeful people looking for help in handling a family heirloom, such as a bible, diploma, or photograph. One has to wonder how long they have been looking for answers in all the wrong places. When they finally track down a trained professional in a preservation department, they often sound like they cannot believe their luck. At the Preservation Office of the University of Tennessee Libraries, we get our fair share of questions from people in the community who want some help in saving a priceless personal treasure. It is often as simple as airing the volume out and then putting it in a bin with kitty litter for a couple of days, but to them, it is advice beyond value.

While some people manage to locate the Preservation Office on their own, it is safe to say that most people do not know the university has such expertise. Some of the



Helping a patron at the clinic.

library's own staff are at times unaware of the Preservation Office's capabilities and they have sentimental items at home they want to preserve as well. In an effort to combine a user and staff education activity with public relations and community outreach, we began an annual "Book Doctor Clinic" in the fall of 2000 at the University's Hodges Library. The clinic has gained in popularity and visibility over the last four years and each year people from the community, university and library

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bring in their deteriorating volumes from home for “diagnosis,” “treatment” or “referral to a specialist.”

The Beginnings

The idea for the Book Doctor Clinic sprang from a University of Tennessee Libraries Friends event held several years ago. The reinvention of that event began as a way to introduce the growing preservation program to the campus community. In the mid 1990’s, Don Etherington of the Etherington Conservation Center spoke at an evening program held by the University Libraries Friends Committee. As part of the program, Etherington offered to examine attendees’ books from home and make recommendations for their treatment. The program was very popular and many of the library staff were still discussing it when the first preservation librarian came on-board in early 2000. Inspired by Don Etherington’s program, the Preservation staff decided to adapt the idea to a new use in the fall of 2000.

For three hours on two days in the middle of the fall semester, library staff, patrons, university personnel, students and the public were welcomed to bring in their personal treasures. The clinic was staffed with the preservation librarian and a student assistant. We used a large folding table and a book truck for supplies and work space. If a book could be repaired in less than 20 minutes, we invited patrons to stay and watch the repair or return for their book later. If the repair was more complicated or was outside of our capabilities, we gave the client a list of commercial binderies and conservation centers. Although the patrons we helped were grateful, traffic was relatively light that first year. The event was not widely publicized and the clinic was set up in a poor location inside the library.



Repairing books at the clinic.

Improvements

We learned important lessons that first year and the event has grown in popularity since then. The improvements began with a change in location. From 2001 forward, we established a heavily traveled corridor outside of Current Periodicals as the venue for the event. Crowds of students and faculty pass by this location every day, especially between classes and it is within sight of the library’s Starbucks store and a branch of the University Book Store. While very visible, this location avoids creating a traffic jam.

Publication of the event has also

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improved since that first year. The library's Outreach Department advertises the Book Doctor Clinic through the university's National Public Radio station, the daily campus announcement email and posters, as well as internal library announcements. In 2003 and 2004, the press release written by Outreach resulted in an article in *The Beacon*, the University of Tennessee's student-run newspaper. In 2004, the press release attracted the attention of the local NBC affiliate, and both the preservation program and the upcoming Book Doctor Clinic were featured on the five o'clock news program.

All of these publication efforts and the change in location led to increased interest in the event. Not only have there been more customers in the last two years, but also people from outside of Knoxville who could not attend the clinic called in with questions. The statistics for the 2004 Book Doctor Clinic were:

General or specific questions about preservation.....	20
Repaired materials.....	8
Referrals/Consultations	18

The number of staff needed for the clinic has also grown from two to four. In 2004 the staff consisted of the preservation librarian, two preservation staff trained in book repair and one Information Sciences graduate student trained in book repair. Two other student assistants also helped with the set up and clean up and were "on call" to bring down extra supplies from the conservation lab. The clinic has grown from one large folding table to two tables and two book trucks. Typically, the clinic receives more passing questions the first

day and more in-depth business the second day. In spite of all the efforts to advertise, the event seems to register more with people when they see it with their own eyes.

Materials and Services

The Book Doctor Clinic attracts people with all types of books needing repair.

Every year a couple of students will bring their worn out text books for repair in order to sell them back to the bookstore. These are not the type of books we prefer to attract with the event, but helping a student with a text book still informs him or her about preservation and is a public service. Family Bibles



Logos used in advertisements and fliers for the Book Doctor Clinic.

and Nineteenth Century bindings are very popular items at the Book Doctor Clinic and professors often bring in texts that are no longer in print yet valuable to their field. We have also seen a hand-written journal much treasured by the author's descendent, a Nineteenth Century medical volume written by the current owner's grandfather, beloved childhood books and a dissertation written by a woman's late husband over 60 years ago.

The services we offer patrons attending the Book Doctor Clinic range from repair on-the-spot to passing out informational handouts. It is still the rule that if an item can be repaired in 20 minutes or less, we will do the repair and return the item to the patron that day. When

Archival Products Expands Board Selection

Archival Products has added new light gray archival quality barrier boards including E-flute, B-flute, 20 point and 40 point archival board made specifically for new phase box production systems. These barrier boards have a pH of 8.5 and contain a 3% calcium carbonate reserve. The boards pass the Photo Activity Test (PAT) per ISO 14523:1999 and pass stiffness, abrasion and colorfast tests.

Contact us today at 800-526-5640 or info@archival.com to request a sample of the new light gray archival boards.

Book it Now!

Iowa City, Iowa—July 22-25, 2005

Complete information about the *Preservation of the Changing Book: An Exposition of the Field of Book Conservation* conference, program, tours, events, registration, travel and lodging is available at <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/book2005/index.htm>. LBS Archival Products, Preservation Technologies, University of Iowa Center for the Book and University of Iowa Libraries sponsors this exposition which celebrates the legacy and future of book conservation. We look forward to seeing you there as well as on the conference tour of LBS/Archival Products/Corporate Image!

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business is light, we can even invite the patron to watch us repair the book, but when the clinic is busy, we usually ask the patron to return in an hour or two for the repaired book. Types of repairs we perform include hinge tightenings, tip-ins, page mends and hinge mends with wheat paste and Japanese tissue or Filmoplast® and we have even replaced a couple of spines on otherwise stable volumes. We refer a few people every year to commercial binderies when the book is not brittle and has a broken text block or is otherwise beyond our 20 minute repair limit. We usually refer people with books that are brittle to conservators and if someone wants to keep the book in its original condition, we recommend they either have an enclosure made for it at a bindery or conservation lab or send it to a conservator for restoration.

One type of expertise we have not offered is rare book appraisal. While the university has a Special Collections Library that includes a Rare Book Collection, we have not incorporated Special Collections staff into the event. Each year we do get a couple of questions about the rarity of a volume and while the Preservation staff cannot provide an appraisal, we do give these patrons contact information for an appraiser used by the Special Collections Library. In the future, we may invite a rare book appraiser or the Head of Special Collections to come to part of the Book Doctor Clinic event and offer advice to patrons.

A Successful Program

In most cases, people attending the Book Doctor Clinic event are interested in preservation and very appreciative of whatever repairs, tips, advice or other information we can offer them. They are usually delighted that they have found help for their books and it makes the clinic a very rewarding event every year. There are those, of course, who expect a magical wave of the wand to clean up stains from coffee spilled on their book or who cannot understand why we cannot fix the brittle, leather-bound book on the spot. We provide these patrons as much explanation as possible about the intricacies of conservation and refer them to websites for more information. The happy customers always far outnumber the frustrated ones and the Dean of Libraries even hears from a few of those who are thrilled with the help they receive.

The Book Doctor Clinic at the University of Tennessee Libraries has become a popular annual event. While it is certainly not the only event of its kind held at university libraries, it is an example of a program that a new or developing preservation department can host. This type of event not only provides a useful community service, but also serves the purpose of staff and user preservation education. People who wondered for years what to do with their great-grandmother's books receive expert advice about their heirlooms and often learn something about how to handle their newer books in the process.

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Preserving *and* Conserving Pamphlets

by Norma Linton

WHILE SOME PEOPLE MAY think of pamphlets as the prosaic members of a collection community, others have discovered the poetry lurking within their unpretentious covers. How can we not be intrigued by titles like those stacked on my workbench: *Beekeepers: Don't Transport Imported Fire Ants*; *'Sakakawea' Silver Buffaloberry*; *Look Out for the Pink Hibiscus Mealybug*; *Marine Recreation... Euphoria-Tension Management* and *Not all Alien Invaders Are From Outer Space?* This article describes how pamphlets, like all other library materials, benefit when brought under the twin umbrellas of preservation *and* conservation.¹

I Generalities: The Way We Are Volume & Workflow

Among the more than ten million items owned by the Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, it is hard to say how many pamphlets there are. I estimate, using the technical term: a *lot*. In the Pamphlet Binding/Book Repair section of the Library's Conservation Department, since 1990, we have handled an average of more than 11,000 pamphlets a year. Special projects aside, though, we typically treat about 5-6,000 pamphlets per year.² Our 42 Departmental Libraries each have their own historical criteria by which they send their pamphlet materials to our department for treatment and we do not impose workflow quotas. Thus, we regularly face an exhilarating 'feast or famine' scenario. In times of pamphlet famine, our staff simply shifts its focus to more book repairs.³ Although it takes about five minutes to staple-bind a trouble-free pamphlet, about 50% of incoming pamphlets need

repairs that increase handling time. Nearly one quarter of the pamphlets we processed in FY 03/04 required multiple treatments that took more than 15 minutes. In eleven instances, more than two hours were required. Our turn around time for processing pamphlets is one to two weeks.

Definition & Treatment

At one time, a *classic* pamphlet was a volume of 49 or fewer pages, folded into a single signature. Our unit does not have format or size requirements for identifying a "pamphlet." All damaged materials are filtered through the Conservation Department and we do not need to make rigid distinctions between 'pamphlets' and 'books.' Soft-sided materials, which for some practitioners spells "pamphlet," can range from one, to hundreds of pages. On the other hand, hard cover items, typically called "books," may be thinner than most pamphlets. It may even be possible for these two entities to trade identities while in our department. We might decide to construct a hard cover around a thick, soft-sided tome.

Contrariwise, an aging, slim volume might shed its deteriorating hard shell and become a proud pamphlet.

My point is that we treat books *and* pamphlets with a wide range of conservation treatments, such as: dis-binding, repairs, flattening, humidification, sewing, restoration, photocopying and rebinding.

In the Pamphlet Binding/Book Repair section of the Library's Conservation Department, since 1990, we have handled an average of more than 11,000 pamphlets a year.



This 47 page, hard-covered item is really a pamphlet disguised as a book.

II Specifics: Format Foibles

Types

Practitioners often separate pamphlets into **two types** based on their binding formats and challenges:

Type 1.) center attachments: those with pages arranged in a single signature. It takes slightly longer to bind them than Type 2 pamphlets because we reinforce their center pages before stapling or sewing them.



Type 2.) side attachments: those with *loose* pages that are held together in some fashion (glue, tape, staples) along their left (or “gutter,”) sides. These pamphlets are easy to bind; just put them in a binder and staple through their sides.

In addition to these two types, I identify a third type of pamphlet, which has a hybrid format, halfway between a book and a pamphlet:

Type 3.) multi-signature pamphlets: those items that have more than one signature (like a book) but are soft-sided (like a pamphlet). Their *original* binding is either

- side-stapled through all signatures or
- the signatures are sewn to each other through their center folds; the aggregate is typically glued into a paper cover.

Multi-signature pamphlets present an interesting challenge for an in-house binding process, as I shall describe.

Functionality

1.) The classic, single-signature pamphlet (Type 1) is relatively thin and has a



Type 1 format above Yellowstone.

spine shaped like a “V” when opened. Thus, it fits easily into a binder and over the platen of our wire stitcher,

where it is stapled through its center. This allows its pages to lie flat when opened, which provides optimal readability and use.

2.) By contrast, the side-attachment type of pamphlet (Type 2) with loose or glued pages, has a flattened, squarish shape to its spine and is often much thicker than a Type 1 pamphlet. When stapled at the side, it can never lie flat when opened and therefore, often compromises readability/usability. When it is stapled yet *again*, into a binder, its page margins, along with its readability, may be further decreased.

3.) The multiple signature (Type 3) pamphlet has, like the side-attachment type, a squarish-shaped spine that is thicker than the classic pamphlet format.

Because of its wider spine, greater bulk and lack of a single signature/center, many practitioners treat it like a Type 2 pamphlet and staple it into a binder through its side. This is a quick and easy solution and seemingly justifiable for those pamphlets that were *originally stapled* together. But, doing this to those pamphlets whose signatures were *originally sewn* together through their folds *creates* the problems inherent in the side-attachment type: reduced margins and impaired readability.



Square spines of Type 2 & 3 formats.

Format Conversion & Resolution

I suggest that in *both* instances just described, treating multi-signature pamphlets like side-attachment formats constitutes an opportunity lost. A pamphlet that is comprised of several signatures offers the reader the best of all worlds—a lightweight yet

A pamphlet that is comprised of several signatures offers the reader the best of all worlds: a lightweight yet substantial information vehicle that is easily laid open, read or photocopied.



One bird's bill would be pinched in the gutter with side stapling.

substantial information vehicle that is easily laid open, read or photocopied. Why not retain and enhance these features? If we

were to side staple the multi-signature booklet, *Yellowstone*, visual information from the many color plates that cover its pages would be lost. We can prevent this loss by *sewing* this volume into a binder through its signature folds.⁴

Multi-signature pamphlets that were originally stapled together can also be sewn into a binder, through a process of *format conversion* illustrated, to the left. We remove the staples and sew each of the signatures into a binder; the external threads are protected with a coat of glue. The pamphlet then swings freely inside its binder and its pages will lie flat when opened, dramatically increasing readability.

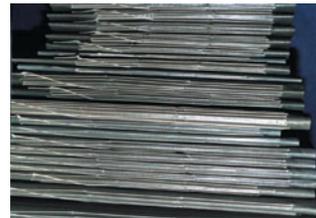
Format Creation & Restoration

There are thousands of old pamphlets in our library with Type 1 and Type 3 formats. Many of them were hastily side-stapled into binders. Not only was readability thereby reduced, but also considerable damage was caused by side attachment methods such as stapling and glued binder tapes, when aging paper cracked over the



Converted & restored pamphlets.

tape edges. Whenever paper conditions allow, we restore these pamphlets to their original formats.



In addition to restoring formats, we create new format identities—a multi-signature volume constituted from a group of individual pamphlets. This occurs when a library asks us to bind together a short pamphlet series or the final issues of a serial title. We create this multi-signature volume either by sewing or by stapling the pamphlets into a single binder through their center folds.

Solutions & Compromises

The issue of paper reinforcement is troublesome. If not protected, paper is easily scarred and torn up by staples. If pages are not reinforced under the staples or threads with which they are bound, the paper can tear out around them, as happened to the center page in the pamphlet on Mr. Van Pelt's cows. We reinforce the pages where we intend to pierce the paper by applying tabs of Tyvek® or Filmoplast® tape.

Although we occasionally reinforce very fragile paper with loose guards (lengths of Japanese

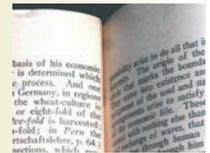


Tape tabs over sewing holes.

Format Conversion



multiple signatures stapled through the side



reduced readability due to side stapling



1st step in conversion: remove staples



sew each signature into binder



outside threads encased in coat of glue



sewn pages swing freely in binding



pages lie flat for optimal readability

Whether we are treating pamphlets or books, we strive to incorporate into the care of our collection, the concepts of best practice, flexibility and continuing research on methods and materials.

tissue laid into a page's center fold), we find guards problematic due to their added bulk for multiple signatures, labor and materials' intensity and quality of extra-neousness. Like poking holes with needles and staples, we wish we could avoid applying adhesives to paper. It is only today's best solution while we search for more felicitous methods.

III Ruminations

Our unit's title proclaims that we bind pamphlets, which, to be sure, is an act of preservation. In the course of this preserving, we perform many vital acts of conservation as well. Whether we are treating pamphlets or books, we strive to incorporate into the care of our collection, the concepts of best practice, flexibility and continuing research on methods and mate-

rials. Our reality is one of a perpetual negotiation between the ideal and the feasible.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stated briefly, preservation is accomplished through binding/protecting items for eventual shelving. Conservation entails treating/improving the condition of individual items.
2. In addition to the work of the Pamphlet Binding section *per se*, other Library staff and sections process pamphlets for microfilming and remote storage, for example. I do not include any of these projects in my discussion.
3. There are other sections/staff of the Conservation Department who do book repairs and other conservation treatments. For more information on the structure of our Department, please see:
<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/prescons/index.htm>
4. For more detailed illustrations, see this section at our web site at: <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/preserve/multisew1.html>

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