



Preservation in Action

Sometimes things that should never have been created, still should be preserved. And for one organization on Chicago's South Side, the process of preserving relics of American racism got a kick start by librarians in June.



In the end, hundreds of artifacts in the Williams collection were re-housed in archival quality enclosures.

PRESERVATION IN ACTION

(PiA) is an annual, one-day project that brings librarians from around the nation to local cultural institutions that have collections in need of care. Often, the librarians and institution's staff have little or no experience in preservation and conservation techniques. Providing the expert training and guidance on the day of the workshop – and organizing the event each year – are library preservation and conservation professionals representing the Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS) of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, a division of the American Library Association (ALA). PiA is a pre-conference held on the Friday of the ALA Annual Conference. PiA was created to promote understanding of the importance of preservation within the larger ALA, and to engage local institutions in the

conference host city that (by virtue of their size) do not have the luxury of in-house conservation and preservation staff.

The partner institution hosting PiA '17 was the Stony Island Arts Bank. It's the brainchild of Theaster Gates, Jr., an artist and community organizer whose Rebuild Foundation transforms abandoned neighborhood buildings like the bank into community centers, alive with art, film, archives, and libraries. Gates has a B.S. from Iowa State University in Urban Planning and Ceramics, and an M.A. from the University of Cape Town in Fine Arts and Religion. He is the Director of Arts and Public Life at the University of Chicago.

Located in an previously-abandoned bank building that was slated for demolition, the Arts Bank now houses library and archive collections that are valuable to the



The second annual Preservation in Action project took place at the Stony Island Arts Bank, on the South Side of Chicago.

neighborhood community. Two of those collections were the focus of conservation efforts at PiA '17.

The Frankie Knuckles Collection is made up of vinyl record albums owned by the late Frankie Knuckles of Chicago, who is thought of as the "Godfather of House Music." Many of these records were transferred into archival quality housings.

The majority of PiA's efforts went towards preserving the Edward J. Williams Collection. Mr. Williams is a retired banker from the Chicago area, who collected examples of racist, degrading depictions of African Americans on paper, and in object-form, which have been termed "negrobilia." His initial goal was to remove the items from circulation in the antiques market. It was an idea that grew into a collection of 4,000 items, which he eventually donated to the Arts Bank.

The day began with an orientation to the Arts Bank, and its collections. The participants were then given instruction on handling and protecting the materials in archival enclosures. The group spent the rest of the day re-housing photographs, advertisements, newspapers and clip-pings, sheet music, magazines, letters, notebooks, and pamphlets. During the lunch break, Edward Williams spoke to the group about his years of collecting the "negrobilia." "When I first walked in the door, I was grinning from ear to ear, because I realized what these ladies and gentlemen were doing and how important it is. I'm so appreciative," he said in an interview.

One of the facilitators of the day was Siobhan McKissic, a collections care graduate assistant at the University of Illinois. She has a history with the Williams collection, having previously worked for the Rebuild Foundation. It was McKissic who originally cataloged the collection while employed with Rebuild. That cataloging project

inspired her to get into library preservation.

This year Archival Products served as the corporate sponsor for Preservation in Action. The company supplied a pallet-load of supplies, including:

- Quick Bind™ Music Binders
 - Four Flap Enclosures
 - Reinforced L-Sleeves
 - Exposed Spine Four Flaps
 - Archival Document Cases
 - Century Boxes
 - Drop Front Storage Boxes
 - Crystal Clear Bags
 - Acid-Free File Folders
 - Super Heavy Duty Polypropylene Sheet and Photo Protectors
- (Visit Archival.com to learn more about the products above.)

The company's sponsorship was appreciated by Theaster Gates: "I'm super excited to be able to use your products." Rob Mauritz, LBS CEO and President said, "Programs like PiA are a good fit for our company's culture. Well before we became 100% employee-owned, our company had a long history of strong support for the ALA and the preservation community, as well as a history of helping out in our community. We feel great about being a part of the success of this year's program."

Katie Risseuw, Preservation Librarian at Northwestern University was the main organizer of this year's event. At a PARS forum, later in the conference, she emphasized that PiA is a joint effort between the librarians and the staff of the host institution. While the preservation professionals can provide expertise on collections care, and other librarians can provide the people-power, it is the host institution that has deep knowledge about their collection's content and its importance to the community.

Nevertheless, the hosts are grateful for the partnership. "Rebuild



Thiang Khattiya of Archival Products helped carefully package a pallet of supplies, destined for the Stony Island Arts Bank.



Jennifer Mullins, Interim Head of Preservation Services at Dartmouth College uses a Four Flap Enclosure.



Edward J. Williams speaks at lunch.





Theaster Gates, Founder and Executive Director of the Rebuild Foundation welcomes the PiA participants to the Stony Island Arts Bank.



Siobhan McKissic, Collections Care Graduate Assistant at the University of Illinois, discusses the use of a Four Flap Enclosure.



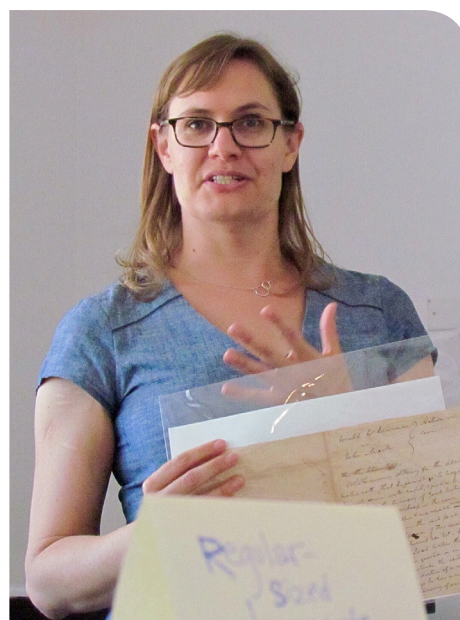
NEDCC Preservation Specialist Sean Fergusson and Brittany Poku, Circulation Desk Coordinator, Erikson Institute, place a document into the Tyvek pocket of a pamphlet binder.



Jack Neves, Preservation Program Manager at the University of California – San Diego re-houses pamphlets in pamphlet binders with Amy Gum, a software engineer from Kansas City.



Ann Marie Willer, Director of Preservation Services at the Northeast Document Conservation Center discusses photo storage in polypropylene pages with Maya Wallace of Stony Island Arts Bank.



Katie Risseuw, Preservation Librarian at Northwestern University, discusses safe enclosures with the group.

Alex Felton, E-Resource Librarian at Cochise College, writes out a label on a re-housed artifact.



Foundation is an organization that is, in part, just about trying to help everyday people recognize the value and the power of caring for the things that they have,” Gates said. “So at the Arts Bank, we’re basically trying to demonstrate what that care looks like.” Gate said PiA’s involvement “meant things that we couldn’t afford to do immediately...could be addressed much faster. I also think it’s energizing my staff around what it means to care for archives.”

Maya Wallace, Residency & Exhibitions Assistant at the Arts Bank agreed, “We at the Stony Island Arts Bank have a variety of collections that are really dense. Though we have our own trajectory in which we plan to re-house, catalog, organize and preserve the material, we were only able to move at a certain pace. Preservation in Action really means a lot in terms of kickstarting the progress with an extreme jolt.”

After the successful project, the

Rebuild Foundation staff has been inspired to investigate preservation grants, creating preservation plans and community preservation sessions.

This year’s PiA was only the second, the first being held last June in Orlando, Fl. Plans are already underway for the third annual PiA in New Orleans in June 2018. Archival Products would be honored to continue its role as sponsor.



Stony Island Arts Bank staffer Maya Wallace discusses their project with Maggie Brown, Artist in Residence.



Re-housing documents into Archival File Folders are (R to L) Janelle Peck, a graduate student in Library Science at San Jose State University, Miriam Centeno, Collections Care Coordinator at the University of Illinois and Maggie Brown, Artist in Residence at the Arts Bank.

PRESERVATION IN ACTION '17 SUBCOMMITTEE:

Katie Risseuw, Preservation Librarian, Northwestern University

Miriam Centeno, Collections Care Coordinator,
University of Illinois

Frances Harrell, Senior Preservation Specialist,
Northeast Document Conservation Center

Siobahn McKissic, Collections Care Graduate Assistant,
University of Illinois

The Preservation in Action Subcommittee is part of the Preservation Outreach Committee which “develops, facilitates, maintains and expands preservation focused outreach and service on behalf of ALCTS – PARS through the Preservation Week and Preservation in Action initiatives.”



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The screenshot displays the Archival Products website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Our products', 'How to Order & Sample', 'About us & Contact', and 'Newsletter'. The main content area features a section for 'Spine Wrap™ Pamphlet Binders', which includes a description of the product, its benefits, and a list of specifications. A table of prices is also visible, showing quantities and prices for various sizes. The bottom of the page features a banner with the text 'Preserve + Conserve + Quality' and 'Innovation combined with hand crafted perfection'.

QUANTITY	PRICE	PRICE
1-100	\$1.99	\$1.99
101-250	\$1.89	\$1.89
251-500	\$1.79	\$1.79
501-1000	\$1.69	\$1.69
1001-2500	\$1.59	\$1.59
2501-5000	\$1.49	\$1.49
5001-10000	\$1.39	\$1.39
10001-25000	\$1.29	\$1.29
25001-50000	\$1.19	\$1.19
50001-100000	\$1.09	\$1.09
100001-250000	\$0.99	\$0.99
250001-500000	\$0.89	\$0.89
500001-1000000	\$0.79	\$0.79
1000001-2500000	\$0.69	\$0.69
2500001-5000000	\$0.59	\$0.59
5000001-10000000	\$0.49	\$0.49
10000001-25000000	\$0.39	\$0.39
25000001-50000000	\$0.29	\$0.29
50000001-100000000	\$0.19	\$0.19
100000001-250000000	\$0.09	\$0.09
250000001-500000000	\$0.09	\$0.09
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