Summer 1995 Vol. 3, No. 3

ARCHIVAL PRODUCTS
A Division of Library Binding Service

News

The Problem of Conservation in Small Libraries and a Practical Solution

— *by Pamela Pirio*

Is book conservation an issue addressed by small libraries?

A survey posed this question to the Saint Louis Regional Library Network in the winter of 1992 and sought to measure the awareness of the need for book conservation and some attitudes toward it. Book conservation is as important in small libraries as in large ones but small libraries often lack the knowledge, skill and budget for this function, hence, "The Problem." Workshops for librarians of small libraries can address these needs, hence "The Practical Solution."

Respondents to the survey reported awareness of situations that call for book conservation: natural aging of books; mechanical aging such as tearing, abrasion, flexing, stretching, and contracting; biochemical and microbiological aging of books; and atmospheric conditions, biological factors and acid damage of books. Misconception and uncertainty prevailed in the distinction between conservation, preservation and restoration of books. Some were familiar with methods used to conserve, preserve, and restore books such as basic paper repairs, and knowledge of correct procedures for handling, shelving and cleaning books. Few were familiar with procedures such as tip-ins, wrap-arounds, sewing single sections, and making polyester film encapsulations.

Book conservation is as important in small libraries as in large ones but small libraries often lack the knowledge, skill and budget for this function.

More than three-quarters of the respondents asserted interest in learning and saw the need for cost-effective conservation measures in their own libraries. Most importantly, the majority of respondents supported the idea of attending workshops to learn book conservation.

Thirty-six participants including a predominance of professional librarians, some library technicians and even a physician were trained in the spring of 1994. Eighty-six percent of the participants affirmed the content and method of the workshop and requested a second more advanced class. Despite efforts to be precise to clarify the nature of the workshop, some disappointed participants expected to learn book mending procedures and continued to believe that book conservation equals book mending.

Conservation in Small Libraries — cont. from page 1

Another dimension overlooked in many small libraries is awareness of conservation measures and small budget allocations. There is little or no concept that book conservation is perhaps more a matter of awareness and attitude than measures to be taken.

The best solution to the problem of book conservation in small libraries is:

1. gain an understanding of the differences between the concepts of conservation, preservation and restoration.
2. develop an awareness of how actions and handling of books and library materials affect their conservation.
3. acquire a belief that through proper training, practice of five or six basic book conservation applications can turn around the problem.
4. appropriate a willingness to build book conservation measures into small library operations.

In the "real world" of small libraries, staff numbers and staff time are small, but demands are great. In many small libraries one librarian does it all: technical services, public services, disaster plans, furniture moving — you name it! Who has time for more demands? What about the cost of materials and equipment? That's a big concern too.

Furthermore, who sees the necessity for conserving, preserving, and restoring books that circulate anyway? Ours is a disposable society. Why should we spend time and money maintaining some books at all? Another item noted was that only large libraries such as research and academic libraries have books of a quality to merit such pampering.

Book conservation is like any other kind of conservation. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines "conserve" as "to keep from decay or change or destruction." This definition provides us with a caveat upon which to build.

Many book components are made from natural resources — trees. These resources, although renewable, are disappearing not only in the tropical rain forests but also in the US, faster than they can be replaced. Great strides are being made to recycle paper and cardboard. There may be a day when books can be made entirely from recycled materials. Until then, one good reason for book conservation is the lack of availability and possibility of depletion of materials for book construction. The romance novel or the cowboy story, which seems a dime a dozen now, could actually achieve rare book status if certain conditions prevail. At the universal level conserving books by keeping them from destruction, destructive influences, decay or waste is also conserving a natural resource.

Conservation begins with an awareness that:

... books are subjected to destructive influence,
... handling or mishandling books is one of the major causes of destruction,
... environmental factors contribute to the destruction of a book, and
... conservation methods must be reversible because they are constantly improving.

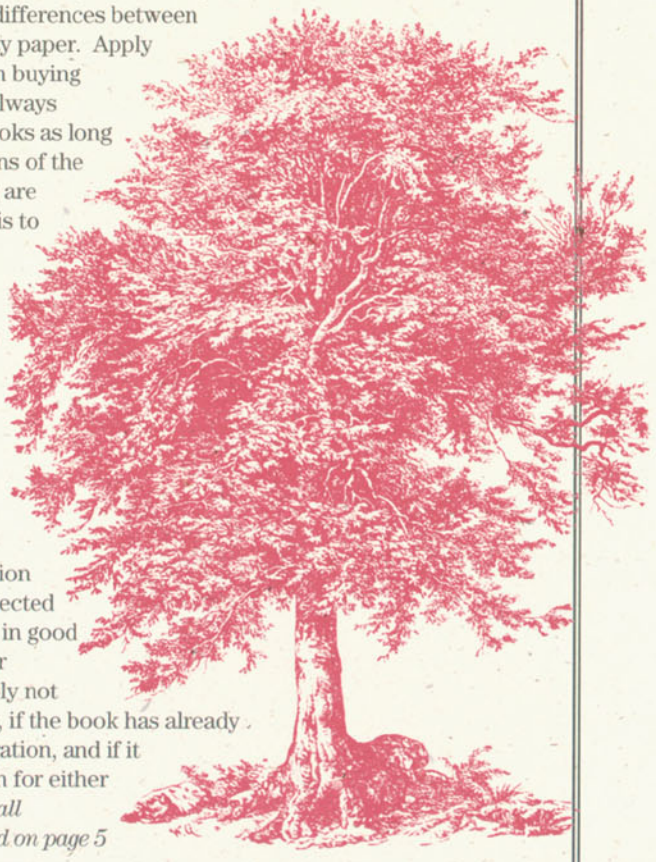
Conservation really means embracing the understanding that the resources of components in book production are finite and can disappear. Convert this understanding into action by giving books careful treatment. Conservation should occur before damage occurs.

Preservation becomes an issue when the physical condition of a book shows deterioration. This action occurs after damage has been done. One object of conservation is to avoid getting to the point where preservation becomes necessary.

Some steps can help in this awareness. Routinely examine books looking for damage at the top and bottom spine, hinge and inner margin. Observe the general condition of the leaves. Are they dog-eared, soiled or stained? Is the binding deteriorating? Is the paper yellowing and showing signs of high acid content? Learn the differences between good and poor quality paper. Apply this knowledge when buying books. It is almost always possible to repair books as long as substantial portions of the original components are present. The object is to prevent continued wear as much as possible because further deterioration is inevitable.

Restoration means to bring a book back to its former, good condition. If the librarian adopts an attitude of conservation and if attention is directed to preserving a book in good condition, then major restoration is probably not necessary. However, if the book has already experienced deterioration, and if it merits extra attention for either

Conservation in Small Libraries — continued on page 5



Post Binding as an Alternative to Leaf Attachment — *by Noel A. Carmack*

There are occasions when it is desirable to keep fragmented or looseleaf documents together, in consecutive order. What are a conservator's options in such cases? Several conventional options for affixing leaves have been outline by Paul Parisi and Jan Merrill Oldham.[1] However, considering the conservation issues involved, when library binding methods such as oversewing and sidesewing are not an option, other alternatives must be considered.

What can be done to allow a researcher access to original materials without compromising their protection? What is economical in addition to being practical and presentable?

Post binding is a viable alternative. A post binder, also called "transfer binder," is a form of loose-leaf binder that provides a way to hold together fragmented documents and clippings without altering their original state as does leaf attachment. The binding is held together with solid or sectional screw posts (see fig. 1). If materials are to be added, the posts can be extended by half inch or inch long sections. Variations of the post binding method include the flexible chain, lock post, and grip post types which can only be released by a lock mechanism or by sliding a latch. Document leaves are encapsulated in punched or slotted polyester sheets for easy removal.

Fig. 1
Screwpost

A few possible criteria for the post-binding alternative are:

- Unique documents that are relatively small in number.
- Documents that will meet with frequent use.
- Leaves that are in poor condition and subject to further damage or accelerated deterioration from direct handling.
- Weak or mutilated documents that do not have margins for manual sidestitching or overcasting.
- Leaves that are to be kept in consecutive order, such as a looseleaf journal, a series of newspaper clippings, or a group of letters.

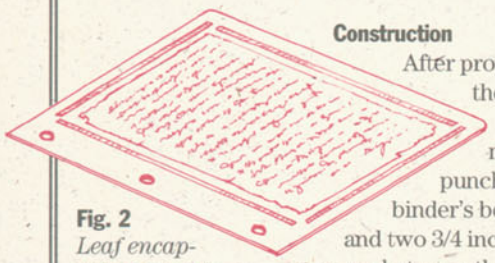


Fig. 2
Leaf encapsulation with extended margin for hole punches.

Construction

After proper paper treatment, encapsulate the leaves with polyester film (see fig. 2), allowing sufficient left margin space (approx. 1 inch) for punch holes. Next, cut acid-free binder's board with the grain for two covers and two 3/4 inch (19mm) hinge strips. The grooves between the hinge strips and the cover boards will be approximately two times the thickness of the cover board and covering material. The cover boards, including the hinge strips and groove space, will be flush with the block of encapsulated material at the back and leave 1/4 inch overhang on the remaining sides. Use thinned PVA to glue down the covering material (see fig. 3). After trimming and gluing down turn-ins, line the cover boards with kraft paper or bookcloth. After the cover and lining material has dried, use one of the punched sheets as a template to mark the hinge strips for holes. Make the holes with a 3/16 inch (4mm) industrial hole punch. The leaves can then be placed over the posts and the covers attached.

Several hinge variations to the post binding method are possible. Three examples are shown in fig. 4. One might include a spine board for greater durability, but this would limit the space for adding leaves in the future.

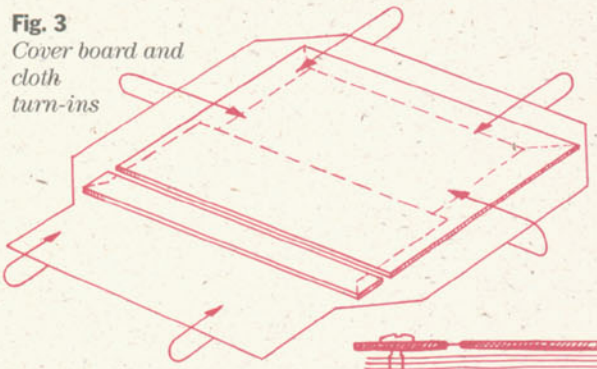


Fig. 3
Cover board and cloth turn-ins

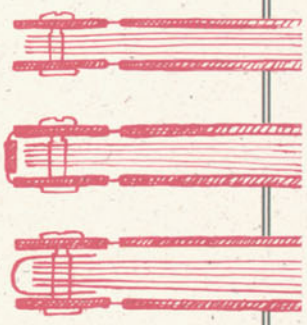


Fig. 4
Three spine variations to the post-binding method.

A Few Considerations

There are several advantages to the post binding method. Post binding protects original materials from further deterioration or damage and increases longevity; leaves can be removed without permanent disbinding; a researcher has access to original materials while keeping materials protected and in consecutive order. Although it is impractical for larger collections, post-binding is useful for a unique, modest-sized collection of documents.

The disadvantages to post binding are few but notable. Post binding variations do not generally allow the covers to open flat for easy examination. Curators and collection managers must take security measures to see that leaves are not removed by the researcher.

Post Binding — continued on page 4

Post Binding — continued from page 3

Noel Carmack is the Conservator at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Phone: 801-797-2663. e-mail: NoeCar@library.lib.usu.edu

[1] Paul Parisi, "Methods of Affixing Leaves: Options and Implications," New Library Scene 3 (October 1984): 9-12; Jan Merrill-Oldham, "Binding for Research Libraries," New Library Scene 3 (August 1984): 1, 4-6.

For further reading: "Loose-leaf and Guard Books" in Arthur W. Johnson, The Thames and Hudson Manual of Bookbinding, 2nd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 153-57; "Miscellaneous: Mechanical and Looseleaf Bindings: in Theory and Practice of Bookbinding, 2nd ed. rev. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 213-16.

Archival Products Focus: Hinged Board Covers: A Binding Solution for Bulky Materials — *by Janice Comer*

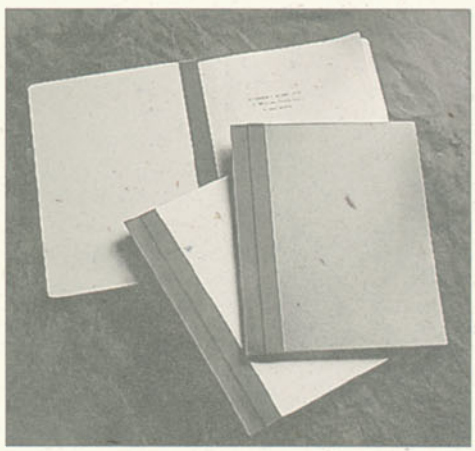
Archival Products offers **hinged board covers** for side-binding methods such as Velo Bind, Hand-Bind and Togic Bind, or for removable screw posts. We construct the hinged board covers using an acrylic-coated .058 grey/white archival board. The board is grey on the exterior with the white side on the interior. A clear cover of .020 polyester is optional to allow viewing of the original cover or title page of the material being housed.

The acrylic coated .058 grey/white archival board is manufactured from cellulose fibers that are free of groundwood. The manufacturer removes any traces of lignin during manufacturing and adds a 2% calcium carbonate reserve. pH of grey/white board is 8.5.

The dyes used to give the board its light grey color will not mix, run, or fade. No sizing is used in the milling process, but an inert, acrylic coating is applied exclusively to our finished board to guard against delamination, moisture, abrasion and soiling. Independent tests for stiffness and abrasion resistance meet the standards set forth by museums and preservation libraries.

The **hinged board covers** are cut from 40 x 50 inch sheets on a precision cutter. The hinge is then applied on our custom-made gauges that adjust for various sizes.

Hinged board covers offer an alternative to three-ring binders that do not provide a tightly constructed binding. Materials that are over ½ inch thick are too bulky to fit properly in other types of enclosures. Government documents, financial reports, hard copy data bases — anything that consists of numerous pages — would be well protected between hinged board covers. Side binding offers limited operability but is often a better solution for otherwise loose-leafed materials.



Hinged Board Covers offer a better solution for otherwise loose-leafed materials such as government documents, financial reports, hard copy data bases, and numerous page manuscripts.

Definition of Terms:

Handi-Bind *is an automated one-step side-binding method using individual grommets. It can accommodate materials up to 2" thick.*

Togic Bind *is a side-binding method using individual grommets. A hole is drilled through the materials to be bound and a grommet is placed into the drilled hole and welded. It can accommodate materials 3-5" thick.*

Velo Bind *is a three step side-binding method. First, the materials are punched. The cover is then put into place. To complete the process, the materials are side bound using a plastic strip. It can accommodate materials up to ½ inch thick.*

Please call Millie Knee, your Archival Products Customer Service Representative, at 1-800-526-5640 to request a sample of the hinged board cover with a board or clear polyester front.

Conservation in Small Libraries — cont. from page 2

its physical features or content, then it should be a candidate for restoration.

A book can be valuable for a variety of reasons. It may provide aesthetic pleasure because it is beautiful to behold. The materials from which it is made may give it value. It could be an important example of a particular book (i.e., a hand-set type version of a classic novel). It could be very old, scarce, or linked to a famous person. It could be of special interest or have "exhibit value," which means it is of interest to large numbers of people. It could offer evidence of the book's printing history. These features help the librarian to assess whether a book should be preserved. Colleagues who deal with book conservation or who work with rare books should be called upon as a resource to help evaluate whether a book merits restoration.

One of the first measures that any library can adopt to initiate book conservation measures is to handle books carefully and properly, with respect for books as physical objects. To learn the complexity of a book, find an old book to tear apart. Look at its various components, handle them, and reassemble the book. Making this a focus of a staff meeting will enable your staff to adopt a good feeling for books. Making a display will help a similar attitude trickle down to the patrons. All of these are starting points for a new attitude towards the books in your library. Just as the physician begins his studies with anatomy and physiology of the human body, the librarian should begin an attitude of book conservation with an understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the book.

One of the first measures that any library can adopt to initiate book conservation measures is to handle books carefully and properly, with respect for books as physical objects.

After examining the complex parts of books, you will want to carefully handle them by taking time to keep hands clean, dry and free of grease; making adequate space to remove books from the shelf properly; using two hands to support the book and not yanking it from the shelf by the head cap; and holding books so that they are not dropped. Some actions that culminate in destruction of books such as: running a fingernail or pencil into the book's hinge, sliding the book along the surface of a table, dangling the book by a single leaf or by the cover, bending the covers back so that the fore-edges touch, turning a page down to mark a place, inserting pens, combs, scissors or other bulky objects to mark a place; using the book as a coaster ultimately leaving a stain, leaving open books facing down; using a "Post-It" to mark a place leaving sticky residue on the book's page, or improperly photocopying from a book. Be attentive to these issues and make efforts to improve book handling by passing on your knowledge to your staff and patrons. Cultivate an attitude of respect for a book and proper handling will follow.

Paper deterioration is characterized by brittle, acidic paper and is found in most books published since 1850. Moisture combined with heat and light leads to paper deterioration. Controlling the climate will help eliminate or slow the deterioration process.

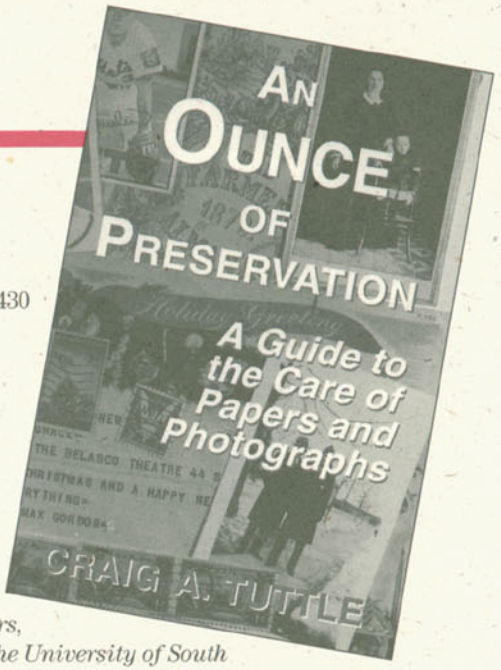
1) Decrease the building temperature.
2) Use an air-filter and air conditioner.
3) Maintain constant levels of temperature and humidity.
4) Filter ultra-violet light that causes book deterioration.
5) Prohibit food and fumigate if necessary to eliminate mold and biological pests.

When all of these considerations become a part of the daily operations of the library, the librarian can apply very fundamental book conservation techniques such as: mylar book covers, encapsulations, simple paper repairs, wrap-arounds and tip-ins. These efforts will prolong the life of a book. Acquiring a few basic bookbinder's tools such as the bone folder, a straight edge, small pointed scissors, a brush, freeze-dried wheat paste, a weight, a knife, Japanese paper, and acid-free paper and learning how to use them to prolong the life of books is well worth the effort.

There is great pleasure and satisfaction in preserving books, in repairing damage found in them and in restoring them to a better state of repair. There is also great satisfaction in conserving books so that other people can use them when they need them. Even in the small library, if there is commitment to conservation, preservation and restoration, much can be accomplished. When these measures are practiced, it shows. The message to the user is "We care about our books and we expect you, the user, to care too." As with any kind of property that is maintained carefully, it will last longer, can be used longer, and enjoyed by a greater number of people.

Pamela Pirio, Director of Education, Earth Ways, 3617 Grandel Square, St. Louis, MO 63108

Book Review



An Ounce of Preservation: A Guide to the Care of Papers and Photographs by Craig A. Tuttle provides answers of how to preserve papers and photographs. Included is a discussion of the causes of paper and photograph deterioration and suggestions for the lay person to recognize the damage caused by environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity, fungi, insects and rodents, light exposure, pollutants, water damage, framing, lamination, fasteners and adhesives, fire and theft.

An Ounce of Prevention also includes information on the care and handling of paper-based items and photographic materials and techniques for the repair and cleaning of mildly damaged items. In addition, there are four appendices which provide a reference guide to damage/cause, a descriptive list of preservation supplies, and sources to contact for additional information on paper and photograph preservation. The paperback retails for $12.95. The book may be purchased by mail, phone, fax or e-mail to:

Rainbow Books, Inc.
PO Box 430
Highland City, FL 33846-0430
Phone/Fax 813-648-4420
e-mail NAIP@aol.com.

Craig Tuttle holds a BA, MA in History and a Certificate in Archival Management from New York University. He has served as Project Archivist for Fiorello LaGuardia Mayoral Papers, University Archivist for the University of South Florida, and as an archival consultant. Appointed by the Mayor of Tampa, Florida, he served as a member of the Mayor of Tampa's Archives Advisory Committee. Mr. Tuttle frequently lectures on the preservation of papers and photographs and has been the subject of numerous newspaper and magazine articles.

Articles are needed for the fall and winter issues of Archival Products News.

We are interested in sharing your conservation and preservation projects with the library community. Please contact us to reserve space for your article.

Janice Comer
Archival Products, a Division of Library Binding Service
PO Box 1413, Des Moines, IA 50305
Phone: 800-526-5640, Fax: 515-262-6013
e-mail: 70670,2635@compuserve.com

Deadlines:
Fall Issue: August 31, 1995
Winter Issue: November 30, 1995
Spring Issue: February 26, 1996
Summer Issue: May 31, 1996

Printed on Acid-free archival Genesis Cross Pointe Birch, 80 lb. Text, Vellum Finish, made from 100% post-consumer waste.

Products List:

Music Binders
Pamphlet Binders
Manuscript Folder
Four-Flap Enclosure
Custom Four-Flap Enclosure
Hinged Board Cover
Academy Folder
Archival Folder
Archival Album
Archival Boards
Archival File Folders
Drop-Spine Box
Compact Disk Holder

If you do not have an Archival Products catalog of Quality Preservation Products & Services please call, fax, or e-mail your request to us.