



A Division of Library Binding Service

News

Moving and Storing Special Collections Books

—by Margit Smith

As in most libraries, the Special Collections Department of Copley Library at the University of San Diego has accumulated diverse sixteenth to twentieth century books, some rare, some beautiful and some that would be more properly housed in open stacks. Among the items are some very early Books of Hours, Bibles and other beautifully illustrated volumes. Handsomely bound multi-volume sets from workshops such as Sutcliffe & Sangorsky, Zaehnsdorf and other fine binderies share space with first editions, autographed volumes and presentation copies.

This collection is not being added to presently and there are no special routines for its care. The current administration realized years ago that the books need to be housed under proper conditions. The collection is used infrequently because, although cataloged at one time with catalog cards representing the titles, the holdings were never transferred to the on-line system. Servicing the collection falls to the reference librarians, who must leave their work area to retrieve books requested from Special Collections rooms. However, one part of Special Collections, the Californiana Collection, is used more often. This includes material of local interest, local history, early printed pamphlets, and books and items of special interest to the University.

When the decision was made to install a new Heating Venting and Air Conditioning [HVAC] system in the Special Collections rooms, the

library director asked my department, cataloging, to organize and carry out packing, removing, and eventual re-shelving of all books and materials in the three rooms. Since we had less than one week to accomplish this task, extensive planning was not possible, nor did we have time to do a current inventory.

KEEPING TRACK

I began by making a sketch of the three rooms, indicating east, west, north and south walls. I marked the ranges on this sketch with Roman numerals, and the shelves with Arabic numerals. I also numbered the ranges in the rooms with corresponding numbers to help with re-shelving. After measuring and counting the shelves and multiplying by ten books per linear foot of shelving, I arrived at approximately 6,000 volumes.

Several months before this project, we had received a shipment of supplies of acid-free wrapping paper, interleaving paper, gummed and ungummed linen tape, brushes, a small vacuum cleaner, aprons and gloves. These items now became very handy as we prepared for packing the books for storage. Administration estimated the books would be in storage for approximately 3-5 months. In the end the books did not get back on the shelves for almost a year.

We had a good supply of boxes in which our books are received from the bindery and what we lacked

—continues on page 2

Moving and Storing Special Collections *cont. from page 1*

job was to assemble the boxes which came folded and stacked in bundles of twenty.

PREPARING THE BOOKS FOR STORAGE

We decided to rotate shifts of four working two to three hours at a time. People using the vacuum cleaner and the brushes wore dust masks and everyone wore white cotton gloves and aprons or smocks. We used the vacuum cleaner to remove dust from the top and foreedges. Setting the vacuum cleaner on low minimized damage to the books through the suction created. I stressed the importance of gripping the book firmly, keeping it shut to prevent dust from getting between the pages and moving the brush away from the gutter toward the front of the book block to avoid brushing dust in the area next to the headbands. We used very soft, non-linting cloths to gently wipe the covers and spines.

Many nineteenth century books, deteriorated to the point of red-rot, left reddish-brown spots and powder on our hands and clothes. These books were wrapped carefully in acid-free paper to prevent transferring red-rot to other volumes. We taped the wrapping with gummed tape to prevent the red-rot from escaping. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to write titles on all wrapped books but all oversized books and those deemed of special value were identified by title on the paper cover.

If covers had come away from the book block, we tied them with ungummed linen tape. We made sure that the tape ends met at the fore-edge where the concave area, created by rounding the book during the binding process, could hold the knot without indenting the covers. We tied oversized books across the width, as well as the height, to secure the covers and keep them from shifting during handling. Any inclusions in the books such as letters, postcards or newspaper clippings were placed in acid-free folders or envelopes, labeled accordingly and kept with the book. Paper clips and post-it notes were removed.

As we handled the books, we found various other non-book items such as works of art on paper, paintings, photographs, postcards, and letters stored between the volumes and in drawers and cabinets. These items were placed in acid-free envelopes, manila folders, or document boxes. Large items were wrapped in acid-free paper. I realized the importance of making an inventory of these pieces, having them described and accessing their quality and value at the right time. This became another project I took on during the

following year and will be the subject of another article.

It is absolutely essential that work areas be kept very clean during this project. We spread paper from a large roll on the worktables, cutting off the roll when it became soiled and rolling out more. Large trash cans were kept handy for the wastepaper. I took the gloves and aprons home at night to wash and dry them.

PACKING AND STORING THE BOXES

Of course, we were dealing with books of all sizes and had to make sure they would not shift in the boxes during transport to the storage room. I showed the teams how to fit books into the boxes either flat or on their spines but never on their foreedges since the weight of the sagging book block would pull it out of its binding. Empty spaces around the books were filled in with crumpled acid-free wrapping paper. Many oversized books were very heavy and only one or two were put in a box. Some were so large that no box was big enough to hold them so we wrapped and stored them individually. This of course took these books out of the sequence of packed materials. We were careful not to overload the boxes and made sure books did not protrude over any edge that would have prevented closing the box flaps securely. Boxes were then taped with furniture movers' tape and marked on the outside with the location from which they had come. This is what the markings looked like: Rm1 W. II/6/2, which translates into room 1, west wall, range II, shelf 6, box 2.

As one person was taping the boxes, the next person marked locations on top and all four sides, and the third teammate identified each box by location and material it contained on a master list. We hoped that the boxes would be stored sequentially in the storage room making it at least not too difficult to retrieve needed materials by consulting the master list.

Boxes containing the Californiana Collection needed to be taken to storage last to ease access if needed. It was thought most likely that materials from them might have to be retrieved sometime during the storage period.

This scheme worked quite well and we encountered only a few snags during the year the books were stored. Several of the boxes with a lot

—continues on page 5

of fill-in packing paper ended up at the bottom of a

Formation of the Northeast Florida Library Information Network or Neflin —by Marty Sugden

In the early 1980s the organization of Florida libraries began to change, with efforts to reduce expenses, share resources, and improve services throughout the state. The starting impetus for this movement was originally inspired by Florida State Representative Steve Pajcic who wanted to promote cooperative efforts among academic libraries. After study by the state legislative Post Secondary Education Planning Committee these efforts resulted in cooperative attempts in several regions in Florida.

In Northeast Florida, a Council of Interinstitutional Planning was established which consisted of the library directors of Jacksonville University, University of North Florida, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Edward Waters College, and the Borland Health Sciences Library. This diverse group of public and private institutions originally examined the topics of retrospective cataloging, online services, and Solinet membership. With no encouragement such as financial assistance from government agencies, the committee achieved very little, except for persuading one institution to join Solinet, and eventually fell apart. The one positive development was that the library directors enjoyed meeting socially and discussing problems. They decided to continue these informal meetings and agreed to meet four times a year at different locations for lunch discussions. As word of these meetings spread throughout the region some puzzlement developed among the area non-academic library directors as to why they were not invited. Equally the academic directors wondered why the others did not attend. Over a passing conversation this snafu was discovered by one of the academic library directors and the Jacksonville Public Library, Duval County Public Schools, and many special libraries began taking part in the meetings.

Things continued in this manner for several years until the State Library of Florida began several new incentives. Professor John Depew of Florida State University was given a grant to survey disaster and preservation programs throughout Florida. This comprehensive report documented a critical lack of resources and preparation in both disaster planning and preservation. In an effort to alleviate part of this problem, Dr. Depew and Lisa Fox of Solinet were given another grant to conduct disaster planning and recovery programs throughout the state. One of these programs was

held in Northeast Florida and involved participants from many organizations: Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville University, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, University of North Florida, Edward Waters College, and the St. John's County Public Library.

One of the objectives of the workshop was to gather information on local resources and write a disaster plan. After the workshop, many of the participants continued to meet irregularly on an informal basis to share information and encourage each other. Eventually, this informal group adopted the name of Disaster Preparedness Consortium of Northeast Florida [DPC] and undertook several successful projects. They composed a letter of intent to pledge mutual emergency assistance to members which was submitted to and approved by all area library directors. Essentially, they would furnish people to assist in recovery and, if possible, also equipment, such as fans, plastic sheeting and transportation.

In 1990 the DPC of Northeast Florida, unaware of the comprehensive and detailed study by Dr. Depew, conducted a survey of 58 major public and academic libraries in Florida. Both surveys discovered disaster planning and preservation programs were severely lacking. At that time there were hardly any trained conservators or facilities with proper equipment available. Under the auspices of the University of North Florida a grant proposal for a book repair workshop was written and submitted to the State Library and approved. In 1991, an all-day book repair workshop was conducted with participants from several counties and a wide range of institutions attending. Requests to take part in the workshop exceeded the available positions and applications had to be limited.

Other activities of the DPC of Northeast Florida involved presentations by the Jacksonville Fire Department on fire extinguisher use and building evacuation. In addition, several insurance and disaster recovery companies made interesting presentations. One field trip was devoted to visiting the preservation office of a private archeological recovery project which had the only vacuum drying equipment in northeast Florida.

During this time, the State Library began informing libraries that appropriations for

—continues on page 4

Northeast Florida Library Information *cont. from page 3*

customary services such as interlibrary loan would only be forthcoming to consortiums and not individual libraries. They appointed Dr. Marvin Mounce, a consultant, to monitor and encourage cooperative efforts in northeast Florida. Consultants were also assigned to several other regional cooperatives. Neflin proved fortunate in being assigned Dr. Mounce from the state because he also acted as an ombudsman. Other regions reportedly had confrontations with their consultants who acted in a more aggressive take-charge manner. Spurred into action, the Neflin members formed a committee headed by Library Director Thomas Gunn of Jacksonville University which wrote and received a \$25,000 planning grant from the State Library. Neflin then hired the well-known King Research organization to do a study.

One determination of the study was that there was a significant need for continuing education programs in the region. The geographic area of the Neflin consortium was limited by the more rapid formation of consortiums in central, southern and western Florida. These areas already had forms of consortiums in various stages of development because of cooperative efforts at library automation. Jacksonville Public Library Assistant Director Sylvia Cornell surveyed all the libraries in 18 counties to find institutions interested in joining a consortium. All types of libraries would be welcome in the organization and would have only two requirements: to promise to share resources and to pay a very modest graduated annual fee. This fee is typically less than the cost of a handful of reference books.

In 1993 members voted by secret ballot and elected a nine member board. Positions on the board are designated to represent all types of libraries, e.g., large and small public, large and small academic, special and at-large. After their election, the nine board members elect a president, vice-president, and a secretary-treasurer. By agreement of the board all terms are staggered and limited to two consecutive three-year terms. This board then adopted the name Northeast Florida Library Information Network or Neflin. Philosophically the board determined they wanted Neflin to be fiscally conservative and non-bureaucratic in organization. One of the first achievements was the receipt of an \$80,000 state grant to hire a director and secretary to run the day-to-day affairs.

For the first several years the Neflin organization was housed at Jacksonville University until a permanent headquarters was obtained in Orange Park, Florida. This private university was also the recipient and caretaker of the organization's funds because of

accounting problems presented in the disbursement of funds by state agencies to private agencies. According to the 1997 Florida Library Directory Neflin covers 18 counties with 14 academic, 14 public and 4 school members. The service area is from the northeast Atlantic coast of Florida to the opposite side of the state in the Gulf Coast area. It serves a population area of approximately 1,745,715 persons and has a budget of about \$400,000.¹ Shortly after Neflin came into existence, the DPC of northeast Florida became one of four standing committees; the other three being Interlibrary Loan, Continuing Education, and Serials. They quickly arranged the purchase of \$4,000 of equipment including UV monitors, hydrothermographs, and sling psychrometers. All of this equipment has been loaned out to member libraries to document preservation problems in buildings. Neflin also conducts numerous workshops throughout the state on disaster planning, book repair, internet training, on-line services, cataloging, inter-library loan and reference services. Thousands of materials have been loaned between Neflin members and smaller members have been assisted in joining and listing their holdings in OCLC. A union list of periodicals has been created for the use of all members.²

We can draw a few conclusions from this history of the formation of Neflin. The informal nature of the embryo organizations was helpful in getting people to know and work together. Massive amounts of work were involved in going from an informal to a formal structure. This included many lengthy meetings, surveys, and grant writing. Many people interviewed for this paper said they declined offices with Neflin because they were so exhausted from taking part in the start-up of the organization. The state legislature and state library were critical in providing ombudsman assistance, financial support, and the incentives to make changes.

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¹1997 Florida Library Directory with Statistics, Florida Department of State, Secretary of State, Division of Library and Information Services, Tallahassee, FL 1997 pages 13-19.

²Information taken from telephone and in-person interviews with Mr. Thomas Gunn, Library Director, Jacksonville University, Mrs. Vickie Stanton, Periodicals Head, University of North Florida, Ms. Kathy Cohen, Assistant Library Director, University of North Florida, Mrs. Sylvia Cornell, Assistant Library Director, Jacksonville Public Library, and Mr. Brad Ward, Director, Neflin.

Moving and Storing Special Collections *cont. from page 2*

row and caved in from the weight of others stacked on top. We tried to store them only three rows high but space limitations dictated some deviation from this good intention.

As it turned out, no books were damaged but it was quite disconcerting to walk into the storage room and see a leaning row of boxes. Since the packed collection was moved by several persons, some of the boxes were taken out of their strictly numbered sequence and were not placed in the storage room in the intended order.

UNPACKING AND RESHELVING

Approximately one year after packing up the collection, it was time to unpack. This proved to be slightly more difficult than expected.

During the HVAC system installation, a whole range of shelves that had run down the center of one room had been removed. This was a wooden shelving unit that had contained large cabinets on the bottom. It was decided that it took up too much space. Unfortunately, the replacement shelves had not been installed by the time we had to re-shelve the collection which meant that quite a large number of books was left on tables, trucks and other surfaces.

Before re-shelving, all shelves were vacuumed clean and wiped with Lysol spray. Since we stored the first books to be packed first, they were the last to be unpacked as they were farthest from the door. We had to begin to reshelve from the end of the collection and work our way to the beginning. This procedure proved cumbersome because we did not have call numbers on all books.

All shelves in the Special Collections rooms are custom-built into the walls, but on one wall they are of widely varying heights and depths. One area had been built to accommodate maps or other flat items. The shelving is adjustable but the main problem is that it is still not deep enough to accept very large books. At this point, I decided that it would be helpful to separate oversized items and only put them into the deeper shelves. Most wrapped books were left wrapped until we could initiate a project during the next year to make boxes for them.

Throughout the storage period, we were asked several times to find materials for teaching and research. If the materials were in easily accessible boxes, we retrieved them. There was only one instance when we could not find the requested

item. The master list did its job!

A STRATEGY FOR SIMILAR PROJECTS

Nothing in my career as librarian had prepared me for this project except the fact that as a hand bookbinder, I am naturally very interested in the book as a physical object and I know how to handle rare books. Also, my family has moved many times and we have a fair number of books but that was the extent to which I was familiar with moving them. If I had to do this project again or give advise to anyone who is contemplating such a move this is what I would do the next time around.

Make time **SOMEHOW** to plan each step of the project beforehand—it is absolutely necessary. If there is not enough space to keep all packed boxes together to collectively move them to storage after everything is packed, start by packing the end of the collection, filling the storage place with last things first. It will be easier to begin re-shelving at the beginning of the collection which by this plan will be the closest to the door of your storage room.

When lacking call numbers on books, make a separate list of contents for each individual box. Transfer that information to the master list and tape the individual list to the box. If books have call numbers, make an exact list of the range of call numbers in each box. Do not fill in boxes with books outside that range just because they fit or use up space in the boxes.

Do not get too many people involved in the project unless you have an explicit master plan and plenty of space to work. Books and boxes can get out of sequence when too many people handle them.

Ensure that there is adequate space available. Initially thinking that two large worktables would suffice for this project, I found that more space was needed to clean, wrap, pack and label the

—continues on page 6

books than anticipated, especially when we had very large items.

ARCHIVAL PRODUCT NEWS COPY DEADLINES

Fall issue: August 31, 1998
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Summer issue: May 31, 1999

Moving and Storing Special Collections *cont. from page 5*

Thanks to the friendly cooperation of my department and support from the administration, this project was carried out with a minimum of disruption. It was a daunting task but we managed

to finish it without a major mishap.

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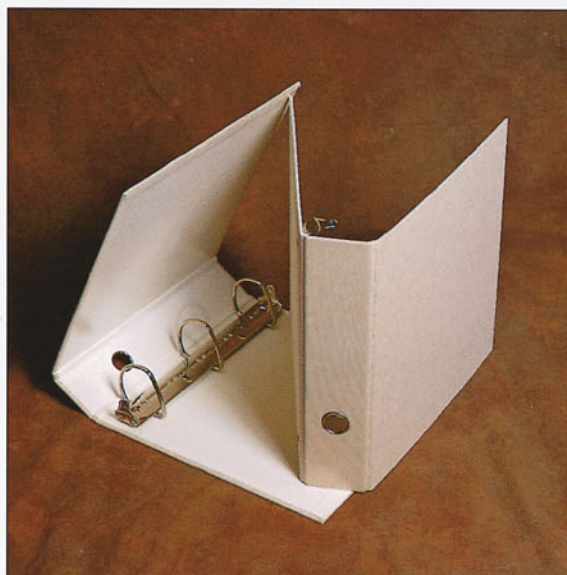
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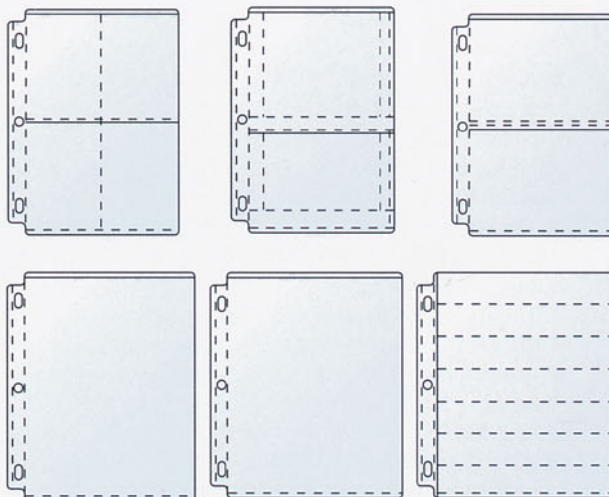
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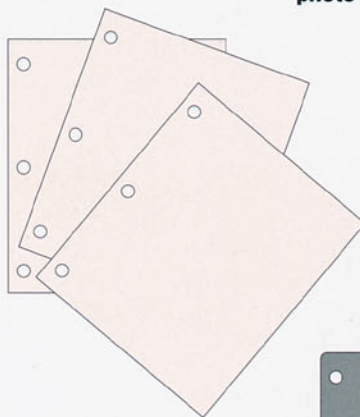
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