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: predominantly 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, fluorescents). 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)
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.
    - Bookkeeper - Effective. Applied with pump bottles, non-toxic.
Treatment and Value

T reating 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