

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, flourescents). 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; resealed; recovered.



Treatment Types

■ Deacidification

- Can be done aqueously or non-aqueously.
 - Aqueous involves disbinding and washing...
 - Non-aqueously generally applied by spraying or brushing.
 - Wei T'O - Original commercial product. Effective, but spray cans clog easily resulting in wasted solution. Noxious fumes.
 - Bookkeeper - Effective. Applied with pump bottles, non-toxic.



Treatment and Value

- Treating 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**

- <http://www.philobiblon.com/preservation/referral.htm>

- 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