CONSERVATION IN THE LIBRARY

A HANDBOOK OF USE AND CARE OF TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL MATERIALS

Edited by Susan Garretson Swartzburg

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Preface

This volume has been compiled to assist the librarian, archivist, and curator in all aspects of the care of materials to be found within a library. While chapters are devoted to books and documents, we have tried to move beyond the "traditional" library materials to discuss the care and handling of the nonprint materials that are found in today's library. A list of suggested reading is appended to each chapter as a guide to further research. Sources mentioned in the text without full citations may be found in these bibliographies. Appendix 1 provides a list of suppliers and supplies and Appendix 2 provides a list of sources of advice and assistance. These are helpful points of departure in seeking items mentioned in the text.

The editor's contribution has been to assemble a group of talented and dedicated conservators and preservation specialists. The contributors worked closely together, despite geographic distance, to provide complete and up-to-date coverage in their fields.

The Rutgers University Research Council and the Rutgers University Libraries provided the support to make this book possible. We are grateful for their help.

The editor and the contributors owe a debt of gratitude to the readers and technical reviewers who read sections of the manuscript and took the time to add a considerable amount of information. They are: Hubbard Ballou, Dennis Benson, Ilona Caparros, Barbara Cerny, Randall Couch, Benjamin DeWhitt, Marianne Gaunt, Mary Todd Glaser, Thomas T. Hill, David Ignat, David Kolody, Nancy and Duncan MacArthur, Ellen McCrady, Melissa Menthe, Lynn Miller, Martha Morales, Thomas H. Mott, Jr., Sherelyn Ogden, Jill and Robert Parliament, Judith Soncrant, William Storm, Marilyn Kemp Weidner, and Henry Wilhelm.

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We hope that the reader will find this volume a continually helpful addition to the library.

About the Contributors

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Angela Fitzgerald, Binder/Conservator, served her apprenticeship with Kasper Reder at the Library Company of Philadelphia, and has also studied at the French National Library, Paris, and at the State Institute of Book Pathology, Rome. She is a member of the Guild of Book Workers and an Associate Member of the American Institute for Conservation.

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General Care

SUSAN G. SWARTZBURG

The 1980s is a decade of consolidation rather than expansion for libraries. Librarians are turning their attention to the collections that they have rather than to collections that they would like to have. As budgets shrink and the cost of books and other library materials escalates, librarians are obliged to see that their existing collections last as long as possible. Thus the conservation and preservation of library materials have become primary concerns of the library administrator and should be a part of the job of every staff member.

Libraries contain books, but they also contain many other materials, such as maps, prints, photographs, microforms, slides, films, sound recordings, and videotapes. They frequently contain other objects of value, such as paintings, furniture, or sculpture. Many libraries now have videodiscs and computers. Each of these library materials is subject to a number of hazards and each requires special care if it is to last as long as possible in the environment of the circulating library, open to the public. The authors of the chapters that follow offer much practical advice for librarians who are responsible for the care and management of their collections. Each chapter discusses the causes of deterioration and how the library can provide the conditions that will retard that deterioration.

HISTORY OF THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT

While over the centuries astute bibliophiles have observed that paper and books are subject to deterioration, it was only a little over a hundred years ago, as the public library movement was gaining impetus and the manufacture of both paper and books became mechanized, that book collectors and librarians became seriously concerned at the rate of decay. William Blades's *The Enemies of Books* appeared first in 1880 and went through several editions.

The enemies that Blades cites—dirt, climate, air pollution, fungi, and people—are the same that we must cope with today. By the beginning of the

Figure 1.1. The Death of a Book. Peter Waters, Chief of the Restoration Department, Library of Congress. Photograph courtesy of Yoichi Okamoto.

twentieth century library associations in Great Britain and America turned their attention to book construction and library binding, but the impetus of the effort to produce sturdy and well-designed books was curtailed by the Great Depression and the Second World War.

It took a disaster with international impact, the Florence flood of 1966, which damaged some of the greatest monuments of Western culture, to direct the librarian's attention once again to the book, its significance in our cultural history, and its impermanence. This impact is well documented in an article by Sherelyn Ogden, "The Impact of the Florence Flood on Library Conservation in the United States of America," (*Restaurator*, 3:1-2 (1979), pp. 1-36). Prior to the flood, librarians and conservators such as Verner Clapp of the Council on Library Resources; William Barrow of the Virginia Historical Society and later of the Barrow Laboratory; Frazer Poole of the Library of Congress; and George Cunha of the Boston Athenaeum, who founded the Northeast Document Conservation Center, the first publicly funded and supported conservation facility for library and archival materials, were concerned about the preservation of library materials. These men did the ground work in investigation and analysis that has led to the activity of the preservation movement today. In his chapter on paper, conservator Karl Buchberg details the causes of the problems we face in preserving our printed heritage. Once worldwide attention focused upon the massive operation in Florence to restore that city's patrimony, more attention was paid to the preservation of our American cultural heritage. Peter Waters, a young English bookbinder and conservator who directed the salvage operation at the National Library in Florence, came to the United States to join the staff of the Preservation Office at the Library of Congress, working with its chief, Frazer Poole. He brought his assistant, Christopher Clarkson, with him to establish a restoration center at the library.

Within a few years, preservation or conservation programs and departments were established at Harvard, Yale, and New York Public Library. Under the direction of the capable American conservator Paul Banks, the Conservation Section at the Newberry Library, a rare book repository in Chicago, expanded to encompass the entire gamut of preservation problems facing that library, which has resulted in a major program of construction as well as scientific investigation which will benefit the entire library community.

The first graduate program to train American conservators began in 1960 at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. Its first graduate, Mary Todd Glaser, is now the Senior Conservator at the Northeast Document Conservation Center. In the early 1970s graduate programs were also established at the State University of New York—Oneonta (the Cooperstown Program) and the University of Delaware (the Winterthur Program). While these programs do not specifically train book conservators, a number of capable people, including Glaser, Gary Albright, and Karl Buchberg, have

emerged from them. In the fall of 1981 a program to train book conservstors was established at the New York University Institute of Fine Arts in conjunction with Columbia University. Its first students will complete the program in 1984 and will be trained to work with library materials. Columbia's School of Library Service has also begun a two year postgraduate program to train librarians to become preservation specialists. Paul Banks left the Newberry Library to become the director of the program.

Prior to 1981, librarians had gravitated toward the specialty of preservation from the art or the rare book world, and were self-educated. For this reason, many of the basic principles that guide the library preservationist are the same as, or similar to, those of the museum curator. Until recently a great deal of attention has been paid to saving the old and the rare—the objects that document our cultural heritage. Banks, at the Newberry, was the first conservator to pay attention to the building and the environment where rare materials are housed.

Although the library profession at large has been slow to recognize the problems inherent in the custodial aspects of librarianship, by 1970 the American Library Association's Resources and Technical Services Division's Bookbinding Committee became a division-level Committee on Preservation of Library Materials. Largely due to the effort of Esther Percy award-winner Pamela W. Darling, the committee expanded and sub-committees were formed. By 1980 the Preservation of Library Materials Section (PLMS) was established with over one thousand three hundred members and a number of active committees investigating preservation issues ranging from library binding to education. Thirteen western states, working together to analyze their preservation needs, established the Western Conservation Congress in 1980. On a smaller regional level, the Book Conservation Center at the New York (City) Botanical Garden, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities serves as a regional center for the New York metropolitan area, meeting a need for education and training. The Research Libraries Group (RLG), a corporation of the larger research libraries, began the decade with an active preservation committee, concerned with the long-term preservation of basic library materials. Courses on the preservation of library materials are now given in a number of library schools.[1] Today's preservation specialists are concerned with the library building, its environment, and its contents. This volume reflects that professional concern.

HOUSEKEEPING

In a pamphlet, *Caring for Books and Documents*, the conservator A. D. Baynes-Cope of the British Museum writes in his acknowledgment, "From my mother I learned the importance of proper ventilation and building maintenance."[2] Baynes-Cope has hit upon the essential ingredient of good library management: housekeeping. In America, librarians and conserva-

tors such as Paul Banks and Pamela W. Darling have repeatedly stressed this aspect of preservation in the library literature. If the physical plant housing library materials is not cared for, the materials within it will wither and die.

Dirt and air pollutants hasten deterioration. Insects and mold will feed and breed if they are not quickly discovered. The library building requires periodic cleaning, which should be undertaken in a systematic way. While cleaning is a function of the maintenance staff, the librarian is responsible for seeing that the staff performs its job correctly. The maintenance staff should consist of careful, responsible individuals who are thoroughly trained in cleaning procedures and who are made to feel responsible for the building and the objects in their care.

In the *Manual for Museums* by Ralph H. Lewis, an excellent and inexpensive publication prepared for the museums in the National Park Service, it is suggested that the director should survey the building and record each task that is to be done. Then a lengthy list can be grouped and consolidated to assure maximum efficiency. The librarian can estimate the amount of time it should take to perform each task, and then multiply the labor-hours for each by the number of times that it will be done each year. This will indicate the hours needed for proper housekeeping and will allow tasks to be scheduled on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis.

Each chapter in this volume will discuss the effects of dirt and air pollution on a given medium and will provide careful instructions for storage and care. Overzealous and unthinking cleaning of library materials can cause far more damage than dirt and grime, and instructions for cleaning should be carefully followed. Some objects, like old photographs or film, should probably not be cleaned in-house, but rather given to a conservator or laboratory for treatment. Even surface cleaning of books and prints should be undertaken with great care, for this simple task can easily go awry in unskilled hands.

In addition to preserving library collections by curtailing their exposure to dirt and air pollutants, a neat and tidy library tells the public that the staff cares about its collections, and the public will be more inclined to care for them as well. A neat and tidy library where good housekeeping is scrupulously practiced suffers less from theft and mutilation of materials than does an untidy library. The library administrator should reflect upon this fact very carefully, for good housekeeping does pay for itself. An additional custodian may well cost less than the replacement of mutilated or stolen library materials.

ENEMIES OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

There are a number of enemies of library materials that, working alone or in conjunction with one another, will hasten the deterioration of a library's collections. In the chapters that follow, each author will discuss how these