



# Preservation News

Emory University Libraries Preservation Office  
Volume 3 Number 2 2002



## In This Issue:

- Worth Saving
- Leather Bindings
- Digitization Project
- Rare Books
- A Day in the Life
- Storage & Special Collections

## WORTH SAVING...

By Janice Mohlhenrich

Recent issues of this column have dealt with the broadening scope of preservation concerns in academic libraries with articles about digital formats, national and international collaborations, and the need to provide access to our collections locally and globally. While we eagerly embrace the challenges presented by modern technology, preservation remains true to its roots and continues to address the fundamental challenges of preserving and protecting the rare and fragile cultural heritage represented by our book collections. This edition of *Preservation News* provides articles which address some of the interesting and exciting efforts being made to insure the longevity of Emory's special collections materials. You will learn about the work of a rare books cataloger, and the integral inter-relationship between the cataloging, handling, and storage of special collections materials and the work of the Preservation Office. Those of you who have attended one of our book repair workshops will be interested in learning about the work we are doing in mending leather bindings. This process builds on the fundamental skills you were exposed to, but requires precise and exacting attention to detail, along with the artistic ability to preserve the aesthetic look and feel of an original binding. And because new technology is now inextricably linked to the work we do, you will read about how our digital camera is being used to capture the details of fascinating architectural drawings and images from fragile originals that illustrate the history of Emory's campus development.

See, **Worth Saving**, page 2

## Repair of Leather Bindings

By Ann Frellsen, Kim Norman, and Kirsten Wehner

The Conservation unit of the Preservation Office is pleased to initiate a new repair program for treating damaged leather bindings. We will be replacing the deteriorated spines on damaged leather bound books with new leather while retaining as much of the original book as possible (covers, endpapers, etc.).

The current candidates for this type of extensive repair are pre-1900 monographs from the circulating collection. The books we have chosen have full leather bindings with elaborate blind stamping or gold tooling and covers that have become detached from the textblock. We are improving our skills by repairing circulating materials in anticipation of future use of these techniques on some of the damaged books in housed in the libraries' special collections.

While leather is not as stable as the buckram fabric we traditionally use for new spines, we feel that aesthetic concerns are important for books of this type. Many fine examples of bookbinding tradition are lost in the typical book repair program. Here at Emory we are lucky that to be able to do more elaborate techniques that allow us to preserve as much of the original item as possible.

The process of replacing a leather spine is similar to our routine spine repair technique but it requires greater manual skills, much more patience, and very sharp tools. It is a complex process. We began our training by learning how to sharpen the paring knives, as an extremely finely wrought blade is critical to leatherwork. We then cut a piece of leather out of a full goat skin and pared it down until the edges were



Stages of leather spine repair: 1. Paring the new leather, 2. Old spine removed from book, 3. Finished book with new leather spine.

See, **Leather Repair**, page 4

**Worth Saving**, *continued from page 1*

In June, Atlanta will be host to the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference, a huge and exciting gathering of the nation's librarians. For a week in June librarians will attend meetings, programs and seminars all devoted to educating a cadre of professionals, each in his or her own particular niche of librarianship. ALA is a large and complex organization, and its many divisions are difficult for even an insider to comprehend. One subset of ALA that is of great importance to preservation is the RBMS (Rare Books and Manuscripts Section). RBMS will hold a pre-conference at Emory on June 13. This gathering will attract many of our colleagues nationwide, and the Preservation Office is geared up to provide tours, answer questions, and help host our visitors. We are proud of the work we do, and are looking forward to the opportunity to showcase the many areas of preservation in which we're engaged--including working with those wonderful rare books.

*Editor's Note: This will be Janice's last column in Preservation News as she will be moving to Washington D.C. in May. We would like to thank her for her many contributions. We will miss her and we all wish her the best. ∞*

**Partners in Preservation: Rare Books and Preservation**

By David Faulds

In my position as the Special Collections Cataloger in the Woodruff Library I am primarily responsible for cataloging the books and paper materials including serials, broadsides, maps, etc. that Special Collections acquires. I am also the Special Collections' preservation liaison for printed materials. This is a natural extension of my work as the cataloger because all the printed materials that come into the department invariably pass through my hands sooner or later. As I am cataloging an item I can assess the preservation needs of the piece in hand. For example, all books with a dust jacket are given a protective Mylar jacket and small pamphlets are enclosed in an acid-free envelope. Students hired by Special Collections can perform much of this simpler work. More complicated treatments are done in the Preservation Office. A common example of this is the construction of a hard clamshell box, which is used to protect very small, very large, and unusually shaped books.

In addition to dealing with new acquisitions I deal with books transferred into

**PRESERVATION TIP****Taking Care of Your Leather Books:**

Many personal collections contain leather-bound books in various conditions. If the leather is intact (very little scuffing, no red rot, spine and corners are intact), you can "dress" the leather using a special leather dressing. Recommended dressings are available from bookbinding supply companies such as Shepherds Bookbinders in London and BookMakers in Maryland. Apply them in small amounts being careful not to get any of the dressing on the textblock or other paper surfaces. Do not apply dressings to deteriorated leather as this will just make a mess. Frequent careful handling of leather bound books in good condition is also good for them. The oil from your hands absorbs into the leather and helps to keep it from becoming dry and brittle. Be very careful when opening leather books. Opening the covers too wide will stress the leather hinge and cause the covers to split from the textblock.

It is important to keep leather-bound materials clean, free from dust, and in an environment that is not too dry as this will dry out and weaken the leather. Ideally the humidity should be 50% – 60%. Keep your collections clean and dust-free by vacuuming frequently.

If the leather is already damaged seek help from a professional conservator or bookbinder. A professionally trained bookbinder can replace leather spines and covers with new leather. However, this is quite elaborate and alters the original item, which may or may not change its value. A less invasive solution is to have a protective box custom made for the book. This creates a microenvironment for the book, keeps out dust, bugs, and light and helps to protect the book from further damage. ∞

*See Partners in Preservation, page 3*

**Partners in Preservation**, *continued from page 2*

Special Collections from the stacks of the General Libraries. There is usually a steady flow of these, although a large number of books were transferred from Candler Library in the recent shift of materials prior to renovation. The Preservation Office is an integral part of this process as all transfers pass through it for treatment or rehousing before they come up to Special Collections. In addition, the conservation staff plays an extremely important role by looking out for likely transfer candidates. They send all books that were published before 1900 up to Special Collections to be reviewed for potential transfer. There are many possible criteria for a book to be transferred to Special Collections including age, condition and value.

I am excited to have an opportunity to work with the Preservation Office as I have a longstanding interest in preservation. I took a class on preservation at library school and in my last position as Catalog Librarian at Yale's Beinecke Library I was heavily involved with the transfer of all 17<sup>th</sup> century items from the circulating collection. I hope that through my work at Emory I am able to provide a secure home for, and access to the literary, historical, and artistic treasures that are held in Special Collections.

*David Faulds is the Rare Books Cataloger in the Special Collections Department of the Woodruff Library. He is also a Preservation liaison. ∞*

## **A Day in the Life ...**

By Ann Frellsen

Just what does a collections conservator do? A typical day for Ann starts out looking like this:

### **Tuesday, April 2:**

**9:30** - meeting to discuss recent survey of an audio collection

**10:30** - train new conservation technician recasing technique (reattaching boards and replacing worn spine)

**1:00** - meeting to plan treatment of rare materials going on exhibition

**3:00** - meeting with collection management staff to evaluate an incoming gift collection

Today I also hope to spend time reviewing a cart full of items being transferred from the general circulating collection into Special Collections. Each book is evaluated and flagged for an appropriate repair treatment or custom fit protective enclosure. I also need to generate the purchase order for this year's supply of PVA adhesive (a five-gallon bucket), scalpel blades (200), new glue brushes, and a tacking iron to replace one that has worn out.

My morning usually starts by answering email and making phone calls. Typical topics are scheduling work coming in to the repair unit, assessing fines on damaged books, locating a book that is in the lab for repair so a patron can use it immediately, vendor relations (getting prices or inquiring about the specific composition of materials), talking to someone in the community about how to preserve a collection of family letters or memorabilia. I also monitor the Conservation DistList, and four Book Arts related listservs and forward pertinent information to coworkers.

**9:30:** The meeting is very productive, and we determine a work plan for processing a new collection of tapes, records and film which is going into Woodruff Library's Special Collections. The survey has identified which materials need treatment first, and we have a better idea of a budget and schedule for cleaning the items, and transferring the most fragile items onto a more stable medium.

The meeting runs late and then I must answer a student's question so she can finish up a treatment. I'm late for training the new technician.

**10:50:** Training happens almost every day—either the new technician (her first six months have her learning a new technique each week), or a student assistant (ex. how to mend a badly damaged page, or how to construct custom fit pamphlet binders for music scores that are published in unusual formats), or library staff (ex. typical recovery treatments performed on wet materials in the event of a disaster in our libraries).

During training there are two interruptions. Someone from Circulation brings down a "puppy book" so I must stop to determine  
*See, Day in the Life, page 4*

**Day in the Life**, *continued from page 3*

whether or not the damage is repairable, and how much to fine the patron whose animal chewed the covers off the book. Next, someone from Special Collections brings in a book that they suspect has mold on it. It is indeed mold, so a short conversation ensues about how to treat it, and the costs.

Just before lunch I respond to my new messages: scheduling a meeting to update the emergency procedures manual for one of the libraries, another meeting to plan the treatment of a huge collection of old maps which are about to be made available to researchers. We will discuss anticipated use of the maps (just how much is “a lot?”), marking them for identification and security purposes, and how to protect the maps (ex. putting each one in a polyester folder) without increasing the overall size of the collection by a great deal (there is only a limited amount of space available for housing the maps.) How do we repair and preserve them without making individual maps unavailable for too long?

**1:00:** A Special Collections curator has a collection of 130 items that are going on exhibit next month. Three of the books are very fragile and will need special cradles to hold them open. Another piece has a cover design with fugitive ink. We discuss how to moderate the light levels on the exhibit case for this item in order to lessen potential fading. We will need to order board so that we can cut matting for the collection’s two-dimensional items (clippings, photographs, and manuscript pages), so I generate the purchase order after the meeting.

There’s about an hour left before the next meeting, so I start reviewing the transfer books and flagging them for treatment. However, within ten minutes, Janice gets a call that some VIP’s are in the building and would like to visit our operation. “Can you give them a tour of the office?” While I wait for them to come downstairs, I return a phone message scheduling training for a group of new library staff members on the proper care and handling of materials. I never do get back to reviewing the transfer books.

**3:00:** I attend a meeting to look at a donated collection of books to determine whether or not they will need repair before they are added to the collection. It turns out that much of the material is printed on acidic paper and already in poor condition. In order to make the items available to researchers we will need to reformat them—either by microfilming or preservation photocopying each item. This brings up the question as to whether or not the library wants to go to the added expense of keeping these materials. “Gifts are never free.”

I also look at another collection of books that the library is considering purchasing. Again, if materials are in poor condition, the library must plan for the expense of treatment as an addition to the budget for the purchase.

A typical day is rarely what I expect it to be. While being interrupted all the time can be frustrating, it also keeps the day interesting. One of the true benefits of the job is that I see the treasures of the libraries on a regular basis. I know that I am making a difference by preserving them for future scholars. ∞

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

**Leather Repair**, *continued from page 1.*

paper-thin by removing a thin layer of the leather with each pass of the knife (this is very time consuming and requires patience and a light touch). Once shaped, the new leather spine is then ready to be attached to the original covers and the book re-assembled.

The skills needed for leather binding build on those we have already learned. The finished products are quite beautiful, and well worth the effort. ∞



Candidates for spine replacement.

## Architectural Drawings Digitized

By Brandon Scott and Ginger Cain

This spring the Reformatting Unit of the Preservation Office began working on a new and exciting digitization project. In this our second project, we are digitizing hand colored architectural drawings, prints, photographs and other graphic materials from the Special Collections Department of Woodruff Library using the PhaseOne digital camera, located in the DigiPres Lab.

One of the first items we digitized was the hand drawn plan of the town of Oxford, Ga. The drawing documents the earliest designs for Emory College

prepared by Georgia surveyor Edward Lloyd Thomas in 1837. It shows the location of streets and lots in Oxford, and identifies the boundaries of the property to be occupied by Emory College, which opened for classes in 1839.

We are also digitizing the Hornbostel architectural drawings. When Emory University was chartered in 1915, its organizers engaged architect Henry Hornbostel of Pittsburgh to design the new university campus in the Druid Hills section of Atlanta. While not all of Hornbostel's plans were implemented, it is possible to identify many of the buildings that now grace the campus from a close study of his drawings. In addition to a master plan for the campus, Hornbostel designed a home for Arthur Tufts, the building contractor for the new university who wanted to live on the campus. He also designed the original buildings for the Wesley Memorial Hospital (now the Emory University Hospital), which opened in 1922. Another early architectural drawing that we are digitizing is the Ivey and Crook design for the building housing Emory University's first cafeteria and dining hall, which is now completely encircled by additions and forms the Dobbs University Center.



Digitized image of one of the Hornbostel architectural drawings. Note the rust from a paper clip at the top of the image. Such flaws have not been removed from the digital image.

Accompanying the campus plans and architectural drawings for buildings are early photographs of the campus under construction, and new buildings as they were completed between 1916 and 1936. We are digitizing these accompanying resources as well.

The first step of the project is to capture an image using the digital camera, including a color bar and ruler with each image so that future researchers can determine the size and true color of the original. The next step is to burn the digitized images on to gold alloy CD-ROMs. As well as providing access to the various images electronically, we are printing out a color or black and white version of each file on acid free paper for use as a reference tool.

We have encountered various challenges throughout the course of this project. For example, some of the images are encapsulated between two sheets of Mylar, which protects and supports the fragile piece and allows it to be handled without damage. These were harder to digitize because of the glare reflecting off of the plastic. Also, several of the images are oversized so we captured them in two parts and then aligned the halves using Adobe PhotoShop. Although we can correct flaws in the original images in PhotoShop we have decided to only correct imperfections that were caused during digitization. Thus, the digitized image will be as close to the original as possible.

The digital files are being created for access purposes so researchers can view the images without handling the fragile originals. We consider this a learning project and are trying to bring our digital reproduction up to current standards and best practices established by the Digital Library Federation and the Research Libraries Group. We thank Ginger Cain, University Archivist, and Naomi Nelson, Director of Digital Archives, for their collaboration on this project. ∞

## Special Collections in the Storage Library

By Allison Shirley

The Special Collections departments of the Woodruff Library and the Pitts Theology Library have a shared bay of specialized compact shelving in the Storage Library. This shelving addresses current and future needs for maximum storage density, and many different types of shelving were chosen to meet the varied needs of the two libraries. These include standard book shelving, archival shelving (which is designed to accommodate standard archive boxes), and drawers, which are used to house oversized or three-dimensional items. The compact shelving is outfitted with a locking mechanism to further secure the irreplaceable material contained within.

The items selected for shelving in this section of the Storage Library are restricted and/or low-use materials, including books, manuscripts and archives collections. Dissertations make up a large portion of the Special Collections material shelved in the Storage Library. Special Collections is required to retain an archival copy of every dissertation written in the University, but due to space considerations have chosen to shelve all but the most current years' dissertations in their compact shelving bay at the Storage Library.

When Special Collections items are housed in the Storage Library are requested by patrons through EUCLID (the Emory libraries' on-line catalog), the Storage Library staff provides access to them by delivering the requested material to the owning library's Special Collections department, where the patron may view the materials. ∞

### Be a Partner in Preservation

If you are interested in knowing more about Preservation please call Preservation Officer Janice Mohlhenrich at 404-727-2437 or email her at: [jmohlhe@emory.edu](mailto:jmohlhe@emory.edu). We will be glad to arrange for a tour of our facilities during business hours from 9:00 - 5:30, Monday through Friday.

Please consider becoming a partner in preservation by contributing to the Emory University Libraries Preservation Endowment Fund. Your generous support will help us to continue to preserve the cultural heritage represented by the library collections of Emory University.

You may also contact the Emory Libraries Development Office at 404-727-2245 to learn about other giving opportunities. We appreciate your interest and support..

Please visit our web site at:

<http://info.library.emory.edu/preservation>

Newsletter Editor: Kirsten Wehner

### SUBMISSIONS

We welcome and encourage any of our readers who would like to submit an article to *Preservation News* to do so by sending submissions via email to Kirsten Wehner at [kwehner@emory.edu](mailto:kwehner@emory.edu) or by mail to the Preservation Office.

