

PRIORITIZING SCRAPBOOKS FOR PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION: A CASE STUDY

AIC Book & Paper Group, Archival Conservation Discussion Group
Thursday, May 21, 10:30-12

Jennifer Hain Teper
Conservation Librarian
University of Illinois Libraries
217-244-5689 jhain@illinois.edu

ABSTRACT:

The University Archives holds almost 500 scrapbooks and photo albums that document student life and culture at the University of Illinois from the early twentieth century through 2005. These memory books contain minutes, diaries and letters, notes and captions from and about contemporaries, official university documents, photographs, program booklets, art work, sheet music, news clippings, artifacts (such as homecoming pins, buttons, freshman beanies, etc.), and animal and plant based substances (tobacco, cake, locks of hair). Compiled by individual students, student organizations, student administration and sports officials, student offices, and alumni, scrapbooks provide a unique snapshot of student culture and experience for a particular time period. Many of the items in these scrapbooks are not found in any other collection in the Archives. These scrapbooks offer a unique resource for many different types of researchers. Scholars consult these books to gather information about student culture for a specified time period while current students, who are fascinated by the early books, write papers about a scrapbook's creator. Student organization leaders consult their groups' scrapbooks for past history and administrative information, and genealogists use the Archives' scrapbooks to learn about their ancestors.

In 2005-2006, a conservation needs assessment, funded by an internal NEH Challenge Grant, was performed on the entire collection of 494 items. This assessment and the resulting report, completed in September 2006, provide the Student Life and Culture Archives and the Conservation Unit with the information to strategically approach the conservation treatment of these endangered and irreplaceable artifacts. Starting in January of 2007, the Conservation Unit, in collaboration with the Student Life and Culture Archives and again with internal funding through an NEH Challenge grant, undertook a 560+ hour project to perform simple repairs such as paper mending and re-attaching loose artifacts for the 112 scrapbooks that have been noted in the survey as exhibiting "poor" levels of attachment, as well as to construct custom protective enclosures or modify existing enclosures for the 148 scrapbooks noted as being "severely damaged" with either extremely embrittled/fragile support pages or severely damaged bindings. The project was completed in May of 2008.

SOURCES FOR SUPPLIES USED:

Material	Used For	Vendor
3 mil polyester sheets/sleeves	Encapsulation, Sleeves	Conservation Resources
Reeves Lightweight (scrap)	Paper for Reinforcing Holes	Talas
Cooked Wheat Starch Paste	Reattaching loose documents/photos	Talas
Moriki Tissue	Reinforcing bindings	Aiko's Art Materials
Book Cloth	Reinforcing/repairing bindings	Talas/Archival Products
E-Flute Corrugated Board	Constructing spacers in boxes	Archival Products
PVA	Adhering binding repairs and box making	Talas
.20 pt Bristol Board	Creating custom enclosures and folders	Hollinger

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF COLLECTED DATA FROM THE CONDITION SURVEY:

Condition - Overall	1 (good)	2	3 (fair)	4	5 (poor)
Scrapbooks	6.5%	26.5%	35.0%	24.3%	7.7%

Condition - Bindings	1	2	3	Total
Adhesive	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.4%
Post	7.5%	3.4%	1.8%	12.8%
Ring Binder	2.6%	1.8%	0.0%	4.5%
Sewn	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%
Side-Laced	5.5%	12.3%	7.5%	25.3%
Spiral	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Staple and Strap	1.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.8%
Other	1.8%	1.4%	0.4%	3.6%
Disbound	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.0%

Condition - Supports	1	2	3	Total
Laminated Pages	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%	1.0%
Magnetic Pages	1.8%	2.2%	0.2%	4.3%
Paper	18.0%	32.2%	27.1%	77.3%
Paper w/ Plastic Sleeves	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%	1.6%
Repurposed Paper	0.6%	1.2%	0.2%	2.0%
Other	1.2%	0.2%	0.0%	1.4%

Condition - Adhesives	1	2	3	Total
Glue	16.0%	37.7%	21.9%	75.5%
Magnetic	0.6%	3.2%	0.8%	4.7%
Paper Clip	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Pin	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Plastic Sleeves	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%	1.0%
Sewn	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Stickers	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%
Staples	1.0%	1.8%	0.8%	3.6%
Straps/Mounting Corners	2.0%	6.1%	1.8%	9.9%
Tape	4.5%	10.3%	9.3%	24.1%

Condition - Paper-Based Materials	1	2	3	Total
Manuscript	9.5%	17.8%	2.2%	29.6%
Printed	19.4%	40.5%	28.9%	88.9%

Condition - Photographic Materials	1	2	3	Total
Albumen	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.6%
Color	17.0%	13.8%	2.6%	33.4%
Cyanotype	0.4%	2.8%	0.2%	3.4%
Silver Gelatin	22.9%	19.4%	5.3%	47.6%
Other	2.0%	0.4%	0.8%	3.2%

Condition - Non-Paper Based Memorabilia	1	2	3	Total
Cloth	5.3%	16.6%	12.3%	34.2%
Plastic (incl. glitter)	9.5%	4.9%	0.8%	15.2%
Rubber	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Metal	8.3%	5.3%	2.8%	16.4%
Skin/Feathers	2.2%	12.3%	3.8%	18.4%
Plant Materials	5.5%	4.9%	11.1%	21.5%
Food	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%

SAMPLE ENTRY FROM THE SCRAPBOOK ASSESSMENT TOOL

Microsoft Access - [Assessment Form]

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help Adobe PDF

Student Life and Culture Archives Scrapbook Assessment

Series: 41 20 115
 Title: Gladys May Brown Scrapbook (Box 1)
 Creator:
 Year(s) Produced: 1921-22 Years Included (if different):
 Binding Format: disbound/foldered other (describe)
 Binding Material: Leather and Paper other (describe)
 Support Type: Paper other (describe)
 Method of Attachment: glue tape pins straps sewn magnetic other (describe)
 Binding Condition: 3 Support Condition: 3 Attachment Condition: 2
 Album Type: Scrapbook other (describe)
 Overall Condition of Scrapbook: 4 Notes: Lots of non-paper based items, also colored paper and crepe paper. Pictures fading. Large stain in one part of scrapbook. Photos beginning to fade, discolor, mirror
 PHOTOGRAPHS >50 (condition)
 albumen, cabinet cards 0 digital print 0
 daguerreotypes 0 albumen, other 0 other (describe)
 ambrotypes 0 carbon 0 (condition) 0
 tin types 0 platinum 0
 cyanotype 0 silver gelatin 2
 albumen, cartes de visite 0 color (condition) (#)
 PAPERS, MANUSCRIPT (notes) 2 11-25
 PAPERS, PRINTED (notes) 2 >50
 COMPUTER PRINTED IMAGES (notes) 0
 METALS (notes) 1 bell 3 <10
 PLASTICS (notes) 0
 RUBBERS (notes) 2 balloons 0
 CLOTH (notes) 4 fabric samples 2 <10
 ANIMAL SKINS/FEATHERS (notes) 1 leather notebook, 1 suede item 2 <10
 FOOD (notes) 0
 PLANT MATERIALS (notes) 5 sets dried flowers, 5 birthday candles, 2 pencil 0 11-25
 Record: 11 of 494
 Form View