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PRESERVING SCRAPBOOKS

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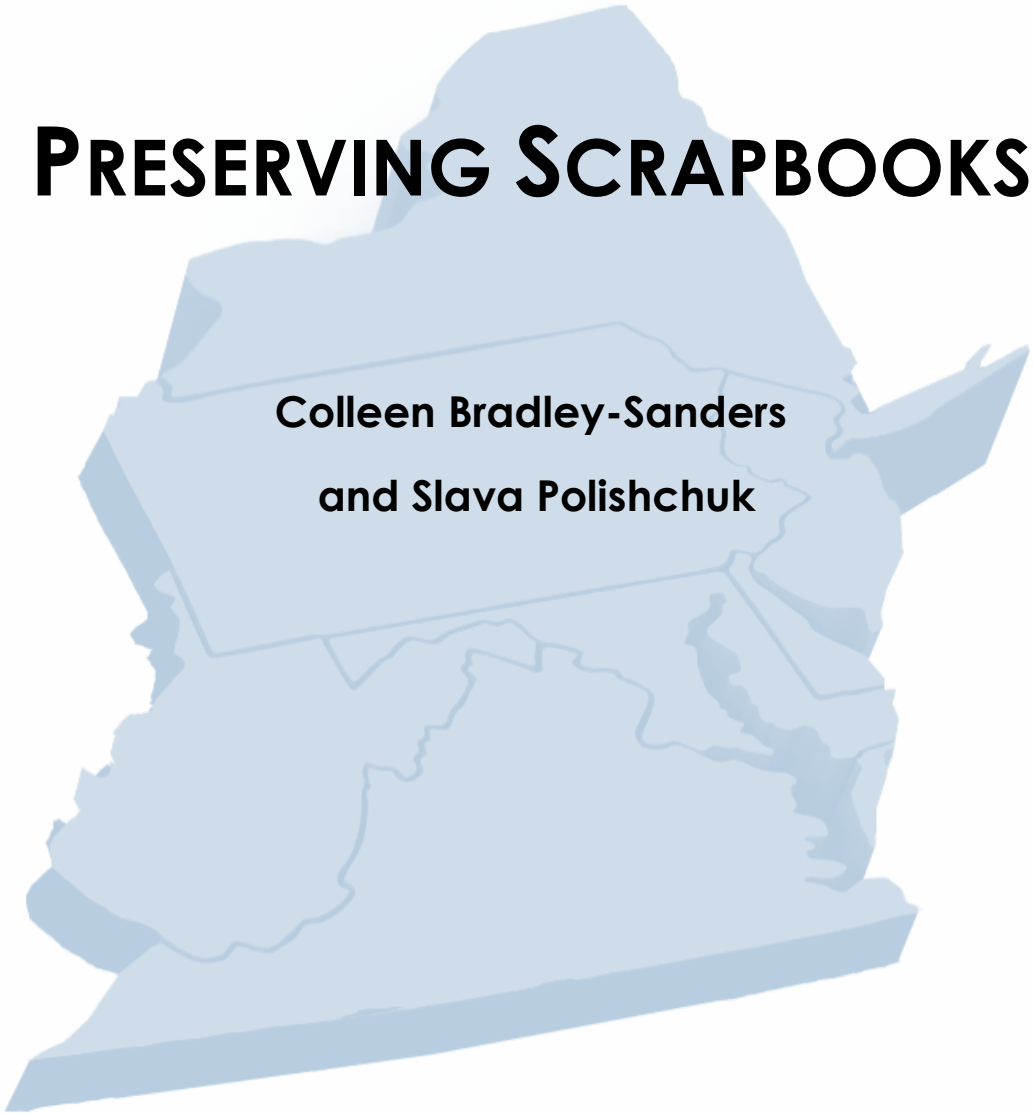

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ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

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Contents

Note from the Authors

This technical leaflet provides basic guidance for the care and preservation of scrapbooks, and suggests treatments for specific issues, such as a mold infestation, that can be handled in-house with the proper equipment and tools. For those interested in constructing custom archival boxes for fragile items, there are links to a series of video tutorials. Digitization as a means of preservation is briefly discussed, and there are references to more extensive resources on digitization. Selected sources of grant funding are identified, as are vendors of conservation supplies.

Introduction

Scrapbooks present a preservation challenge due to their physical format and the wide variety of materials found within their pages. Frequently constructed of inexpensive materials, including acidic paper, they may arrive at an archive in a state of deterioration after years of storage in less-than-ideal conditions. The many methods of adhering items to a page (glue, tape, pins, ribbons, etc.) can complicate the preservation process further, as do the varying methods of construction for these books. Despite these challenges, scrapbooks can be a valuable archival resource, well worth the effort to preserve for future generations of researchers, if they fit into an institution's collection development policy. Evaluating scrapbooks for their informational and artifactual value has been well-covered in articles by Sally Childs-Helton, Juliana M. Kuipers, and Sherelyn Ogden.[1]

While it is generally not feasible to provide comprehensive preservation treatment to every volume, there are ways to stabilize less valuable or less frequently used scrapbooks so that they can still be made accessible.[2] This can save scarce resources for those items with greater informational and intrinsic value that are more frequently used and fall more directly within the archive's collecting scope. If possible, more suitable repositories should be found for those scrapbooks that no longer meet collecting guidelines.

This leaflet addresses preservation issues for scrapbooks that an institution has already determined to be valuable for preservation and in terms of cost-benefit. It provides an overview of the preservation issues that arise when working with scrapbooks, and includes recommended stabilization methods. This technical leaflet also includes a discussion of digitization as a preservation measure and a selected list of sources of grant funding for preservation projects.

Scrapbook Construction

A scrapbook often contains a unique collection of different paper-based materials, such as newspaper clippings, letters, photographs, postcards, magazine pages, and other paper items. In addition, many scrapbooks contain artifacts. An almost limitless variety of artifacts appear in scrapbooks, including coins, sand, locks of hair, ribbons, badges, pressed flowers, buttons, pins, and other three-dimensional objects. Despite all their variety, scrapbooks, as a group, exhibit a number of common characteristics that make them vulnerable to damage (Figures 1-3).

Figures 1 and 2. Scrapbook with attached documents.

Figure 3. Water-damaged newspaper clipping glued onto page and folded to fit.

Pages

Scrapbook pages are almost always made of the poorest quality paper, including recycled paper. Highly acidic wood-pulp paper came into common use in the second half of the 19th century and remains in extensive use to this day. It contains two substances that cause pages to discolor and become brittle: 1) lignin, an organic material in wood that binds cellulose fibers together; and 2) sizing, a treatment applied during paper manufacture that reduces dry paper's absorption of liquid and helps determine the finished "feel" of the paper. This type of paper deteriorates rapidly and may eventually crumble into paper dust. Exposure to light (both natural and artificial), high temperatures, and other pollutants can accelerate the decomposition process (Figures 4-7).

Figures 4 and 5. Deteriorated scrapbook pages.

Figures 6 and 7. Deteriorated scrapbook pages.

Adhesives

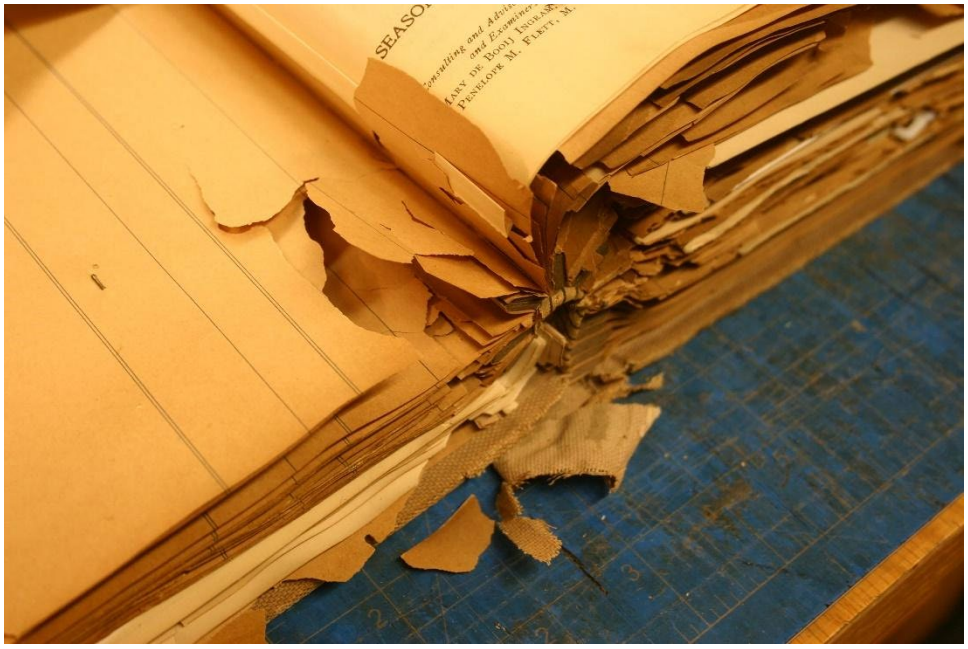
Another concern are the various adhesives used to connect different materials to the page. Items are frequently attached to the pages of scrapbooks with harmful tapes or adhesives. Tape will dry out over time, and glue will likely lose its adhesive property, leaving stains on the pages and the attached paper-based items, and potentially damaging or destroying them (Figures 8-9). In addition, some of the chemicals contained in adhesives can cause further damage to the fragile paper.

Figure 8. Paper-based materials attached with tape and other adhesives.

Figure 9. Paper-based materials attached with tape and other adhesives.

Bindings

The binding structure of scrapbooks is often stressed by the pressure of an overly thick volume, caused by an excess of attached materials within. It is important to pay attention to the thickness of the items inside a bound volume by balancing the binding edge (the spine) thickness with the fore-edge (the side opposite the spine) thickness to avoid causing the binding to crack, split, or even fully separate (Figures 10-12). If necessary to reduce stress on a binding, loose items should be placed in protective enclosures, and marked as to their original location in the scrapbook.



Figures 10 and 11. Broken bindings.

Figure 12. Broken binding.

Plastics

By the 1960s, different types of plastic came into use as page overlays or pocket sleeves. Plastic spiral binders, sheet protectors, photo enclosures, and even photo corners are unstable and will damage paper-based materials over time. These plastic products contain extremely damaging polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or the similar polyvinyl acetate (PVA). These products can release chemical gases, turn yellow, and become somewhat oily or sticky, signaling the breakdown of the material. In extreme cases, PVC sleeves can exude plasticizers that are visible as small, sticky globules on the plastic sleeve and can leave a tacky, harmful residue on artifacts.[3]

The safest type of plastic to use with archival collections is chemically stable polyester film (polyethylene terephthalate, or PET). One widely available product is manufactured and sold under the brand name Mylar. Although PVC and polyester film products can be similar in appearance, PVC often has a strong plastic odor and sometimes feels slightly sticky to the touch. Polyester enclosures will protect and preserve paper-based materials without damaging them; but, due to the inherent static electricity of the film, "they should not come in contact with charcoal, pastels or other loose media."[4] In general, when selecting products to use in contact with archival materials, it is important to determine the exact contents of the selected supplies. Look for specific terminology and, when dealing with photographic materials, for statements like "passed the PAT test." The Photographic Activity Test (PAT) is a predictive test of reaction between an enclosure material and photographic material. Many suppliers of archival products provide content information about their materials (see list of suppliers in Resources section).

Attached Items

Multi-page letters, pamphlets, folded documents, and envelopes with folded letters inside may be attached to pages by metal pins, pressure sensitive tape (such as Scotch brand), or glue. All these features make scrapbooks vulnerable to damage. Brittle paper that has been stored folded for an extended period of time becomes even more fragile along the folds, risking breakage if it is unfolded or even jostled. Also, the means of attachment (pins, tape, glue, etc.) can harm the paper by causing discoloration or creases, and in a humid environment, rust. (Figures 13-16).

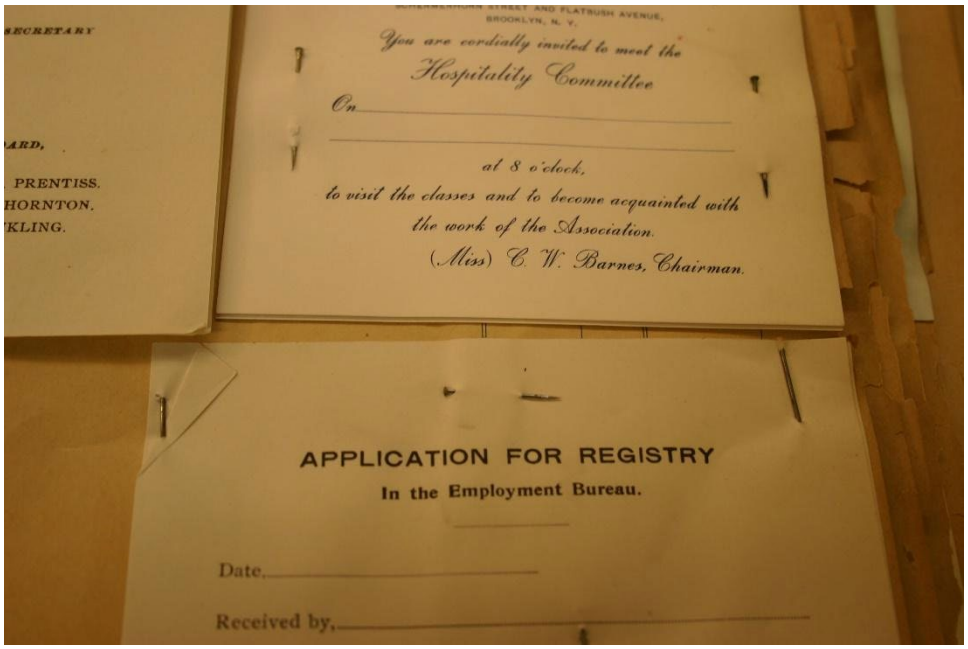


Figure 13. Documents attached with straight pins.

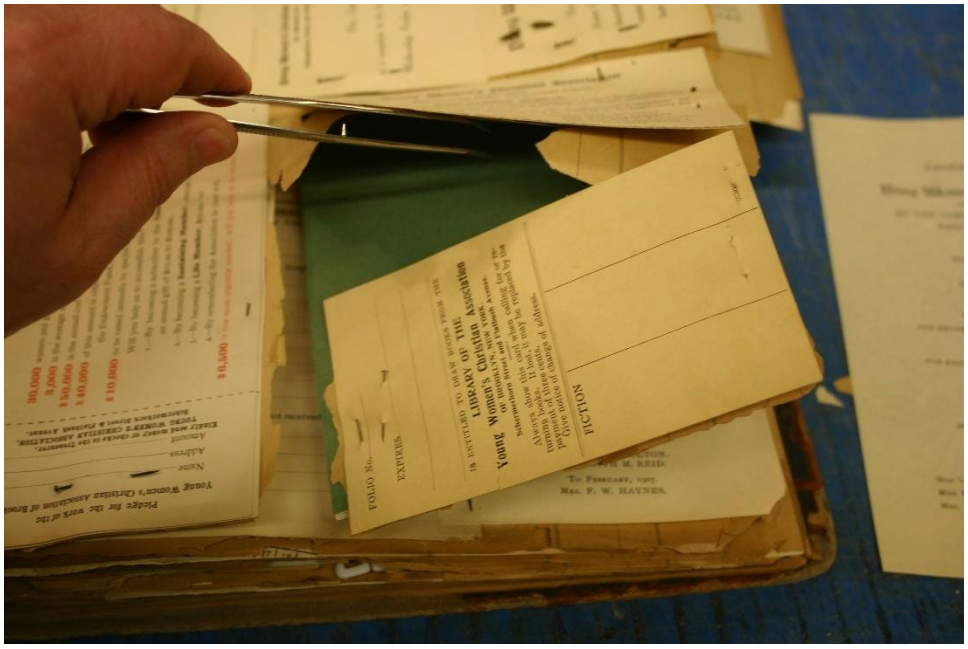


Figure 14. Pages damaged by attached items.

Figure 15. Removed paper clips.


Figure 16. Removed tape.

Treatments

Archivists are strongly advised to carefully record the order of pages by collation and photo documentation prior to any preservation treatment. This will provide a record of the original order of the pages and attached items, which is particularly important for disbound albums.

Assessment and Treatment of Bindings

Materials and Equipment

Archival acid-free paper envelopes of different sizes
Archival acid-free folders
Archival boxes of different sizes
Polyester film (such as Mylar) in rolls
Pre-cut polyester envelopes of different sizes
Custom made polyester envelopes
Archival double-sided tape
Acid-free archival tissue (buffered or unbuffered)
Acid-free archival paper
Spatula
Pencil
Scissors
Neutral pH adhesive
Cutting mat
Camera

The first step in preserving a scrapbook is to carefully assess the degree of damage and determine what method(s) to follow for stabilizing, preserving, and storing the scrapbook. Some scrapbooks may be kept intact, while others may require dismantling. There are justifications both against and in support of taking apart, or disbinding, a volume. Both options retain the content of the scrapbook. Any treatment or preservation method must be non-damaging, and must not promote further deterioration. Many conservators go a step further and state that any intervention they make must be fully reversible, in case standards and recommendations ever change in the future.

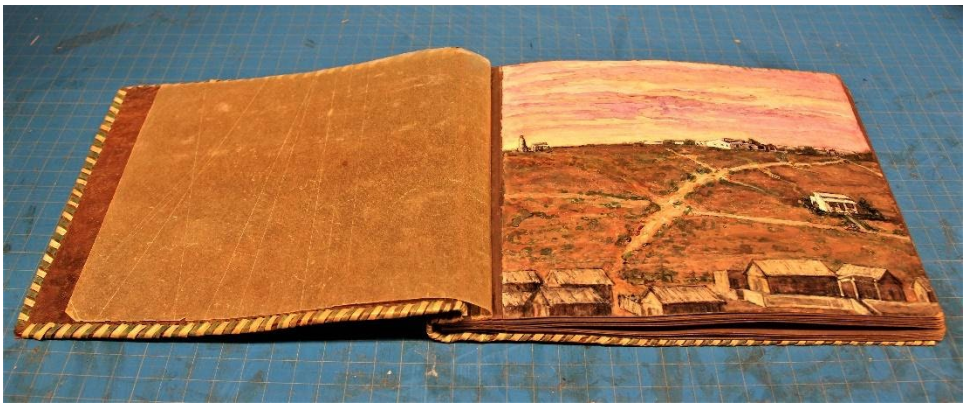
Reasons to Keep a Volume Intact:

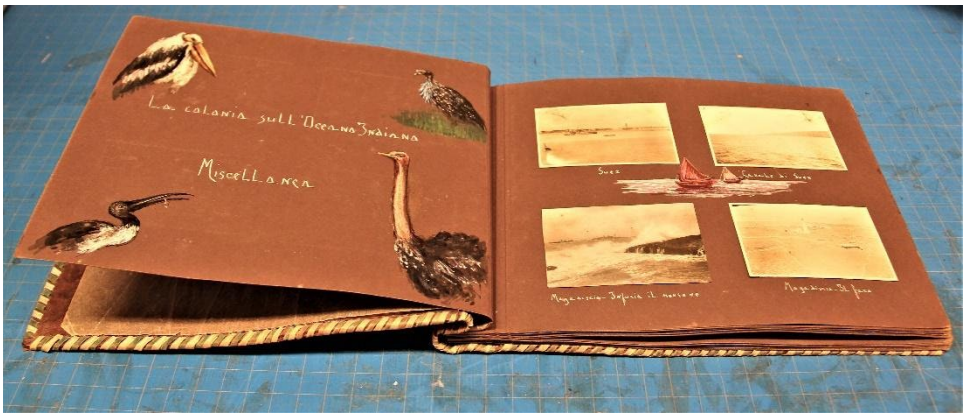
- The pages are strong and stable, and pose no threat to the contents (Figures 17-19).
- Removal of photographs or other attached items may cause damage; that is, intervention might do more harm than good. This is particularly important to consider for fragile newspaper clippings, photographic materials, items made from acidic paper, or ephemera that has become dry and brittle.
- Detached items rehoused in separate envelopes or sleeves may be misplaced, lost, or stolen, even if stored with the dismantled volume.
- Scrapbooks in their original form and organization are historical objects with artifactual value, and to the extent possible, should be kept intact.[5]

In the past, it was common practice to dismantle some scrapbooks, out of a concern for chemical damage to photographs from other items within or from the scrapbook itself. "Magnetic" albums, introduced in the 1960s, are one source of potential damage to contents. Not truly magnetic, these albums featured pages coated with a sticky, acidic adhesive for holding photos and other materials, with a plastic overlay to keep the pages from sticking together. The plastic can deteriorate over time and, along with the chemicals from the pages, can cause photos and other items to turn yellow. This does not happen in all scrapbooks; in fact, "the most current research has found that many photographs survive quite well within scrapbooks and albums, despite the threatening appearance of their surroundings."[6] Non-magnetic albums may also have plastic overlays on the pages. Plastic overlays should be removed from non-magnetic albums when possible, and pages interleaved with acid-free tissue paper. Tissue is sold as buffered or unbuffered, with the difference being its pH level. Buffered tissue is more alkaline, which helps offset or neutralize the more acidic material with which it comes into contact. Unbuffered tissue is pH neutral and is recommended for some types of photographic prints. (See Frellsen et al. for more details.)

Scrapbooks with leather or other protein-based bindings can deteriorate. This phenomenon is commonly known as "red rot" and is irreversible. The residue caused by this deterioration can permanently stain scrapbook material and the surrounding environment. Red rot is caused by storage in areas of high relative humidity and can be mitigated with unbuffered tissue.

An example of a scrapbook that should be kept intact can be seen in Figures 17-19. The album shown contains hand-painted scenes and images that are drawn from the photographs attached to the pages, and has significant artifactual value. Intact scrapbooks should be wrapped in archival tissue and stored in archival boxes. Please see the sections on Storage and Housing for more detailed information.





Figures 17-19. Scrapbooks in relatively stable condition with attached photographs and hand-painted images should be kept intact.

Reasons for Disbinding a Volume:

- The scrapbook has weak or over-stressed bindings that may break. Despite the best efforts to protect the scrapbook and keep it intact, page separation and rehousing may be the best choice to preserve the contents. If necessary to reduce stress on a binding, loose items should be placed in protective enclosures, and marked as to their original location in the scrapbook.
- Fragile and brittle pages may break, and would be best preserved in protective enclosures.
- Photographs or other memorabilia show evidence of chemical damage from the scrapbook page or surrounding materials.
- The scrapbook has developed mold. In this case, it is best to take it apart, treat the affected pages and rehouse them so they do not come into contact with the unaffected pages.
- The scrapbook is a "magnetic" album with sticky pages and a plastic overlay. It may be a candidate for dismantling, as both the sticky adhesive and the plastic can damage the scrapbook contents. If the contents can be safely removed, they should be placed in protective enclosures. If the contents cannot be safely removed, the volume should remain intact and the plastic overlay retained, as it prevents anything from coming into contact with the sticky pages.

  NOTE: The individual value of a photograph or a document may require its removal and placement in a more protective enclosure, even if the entire scrapbook is not disbound.

Disbinding Procedure:

- Use the photographs taken before disbinding to arrange the pages and related attachments in their original order. Document this process carefully and consistently so there is a reliable record (Figure 20).

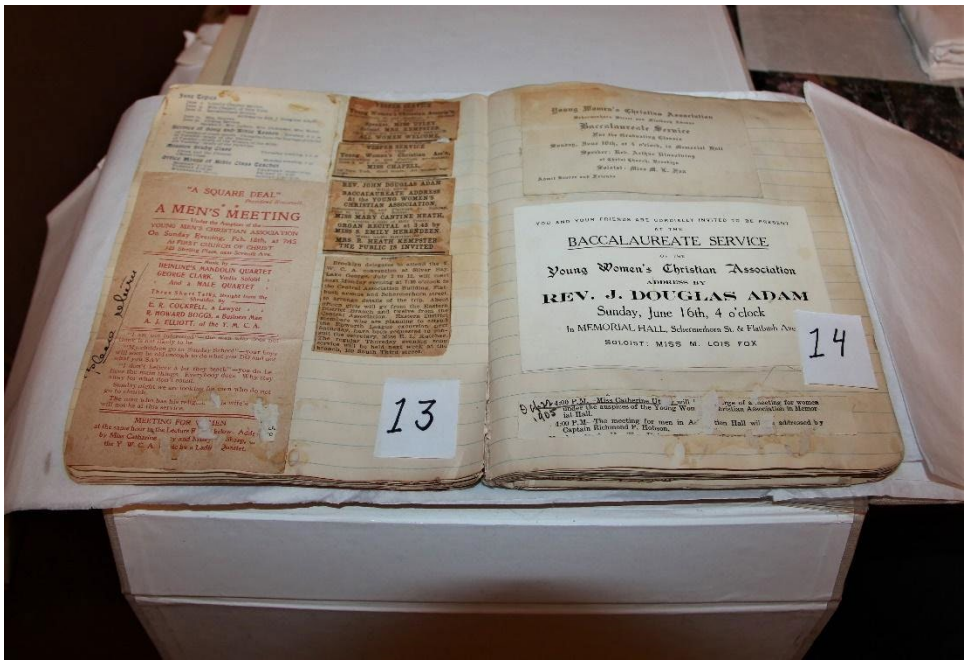
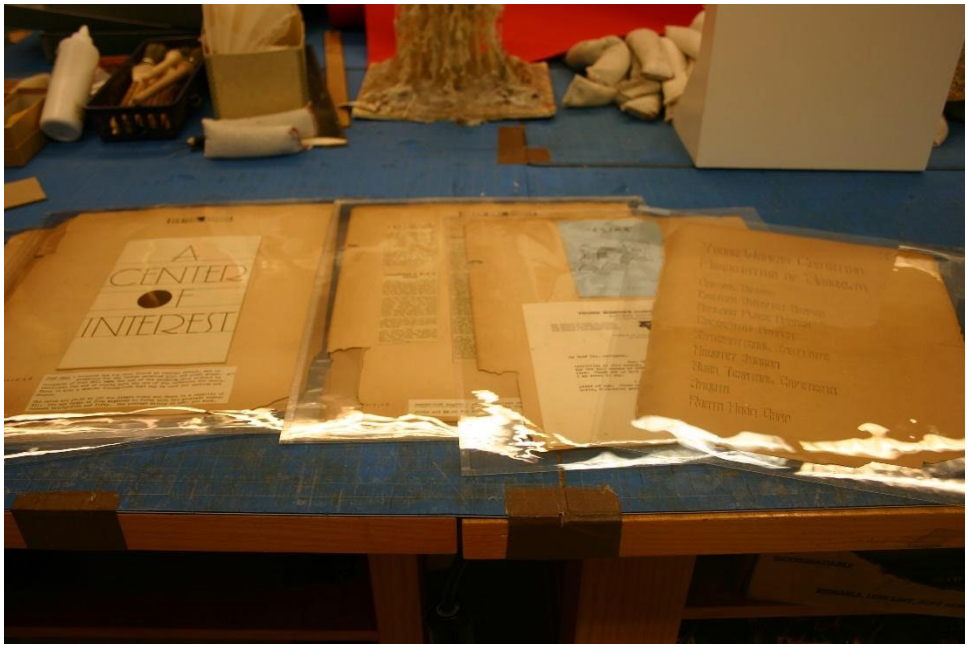


Figure 20. Recording original order during disbinding process.

- Enclose detached materials separately in archival quality folders, paper or polyester sleeves. Some heavily damaged, brittle, and fragile items should be encapsulated in polyester film (Figures 21-22). Items that should be placed in paper envelopes include photographs with a gelatin emulsion, items that include plastic (such as an ID badge), and particularly artworks (paintings or drawings in watercolors, pastels, charcoal, and pencil, and engravings).

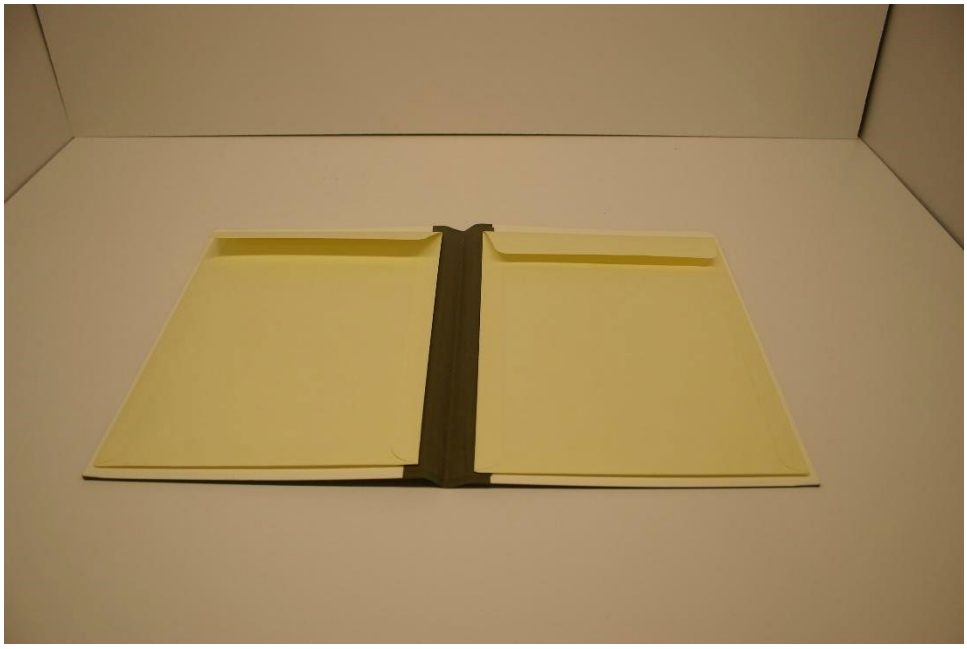
  Encapsulation is simply the process of placing an item between sheets of polyester film and sealing the film layers on each side with clear archival double-sided tape. The film sheets should be larger than the item itself (1-inch margin on each side between the item and the taped edges is sufficient). The tape should be placed between the film layers, close to each edge. Be sure to leave small gaps between the strips of tape at each corner, to allow the document to "breathe." Be careful that the document does not touch the tape. If you are not comfortable making your own enclosures, archival suppliers sell polyester pockets in various sizes (see list of suppliers in Resources section).

- Store all detached items with the scrapbook from which they came.

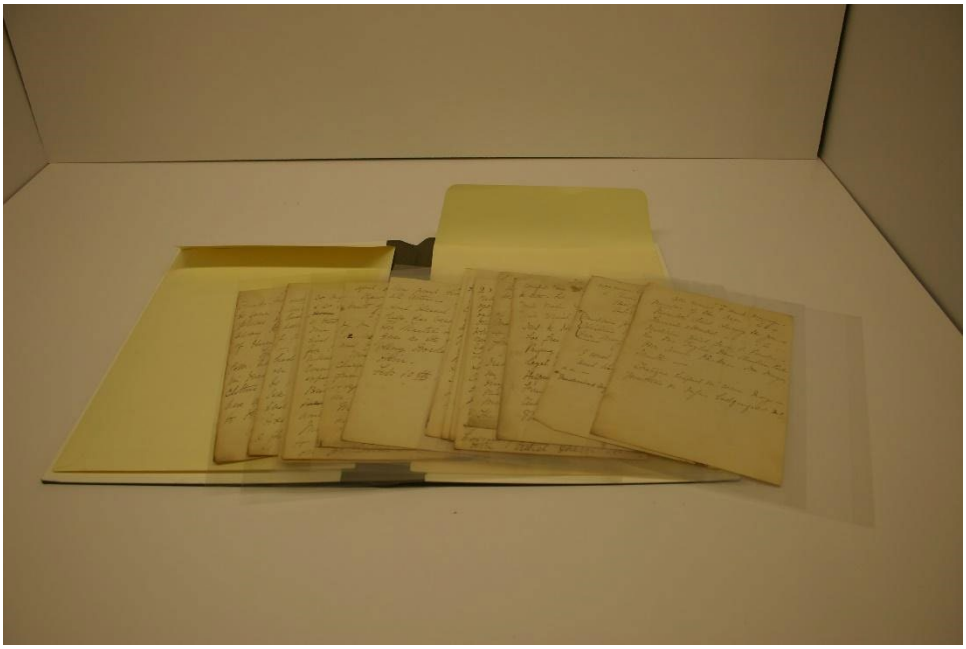


Figures 21 and 22. Encapsulated documents and pages.

- Use appropriate enclosures for the different types of artifacts that may be found attached to the scrapbook pages, such as programs, photographs, pamphlets, postcards, and so on. These items can be put in archival paper envelopes or small archival boxes, wrapped in acid-free archival tissue or acid-free paper, and then boxed with the scrapbook from which they came (Figures 23-26).



Figures 23 and 24. Acid-free archival folder, containing paper archival envelopes to hold encapsulated materials.



Figures 25 and 26. Acid-free archival folder, containing paper archival envelopes to hold encapsulated materials.

Treatment of Wet Volumes and Mold Infestation

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Soft brushes
Soft cloth
Protective nitrile gloves
Protective masks (N-95)
Protective goggles
Archival boxes
Soft tissue paper
Fume hood
Soap – liquid hand or dish
Camera

A common, and most unwelcome, preservation issue with paper-based materials is mold (Figure 27). If the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for stacks and archival storage areas are maintained and regularly monitored for temperature and humidity, the risk of mold growth is lower. But environmental problems, such as a water leak, flood, or dramatically fluctuating temperature and humidity, can create the conditions for mold.[7]

Figure 27. Mold on a scrapbook cover.

Archives usually receive collections that are dry. If there is mold on dry collection material, it is likely to be inactive. If a scrapbook is for any reason wet or damp when entering the archive (Figures 28-29), it needs to be dried and isolated before there is any attempt to remove mold. If the spine will support it, scrapbooks should be dried in a vertical position with all the pages wide open (Figure 30). To the extent possible, do not allow the pages to touch each other. Set up the drying books as far away from other archival materials as is practical. If possible, use archival blotting paper or boards underneath the volumes to help absorb any dampness. Paper towels will also work, if there is no other blotting material, or if there is not enough blotting paper available. Fans can help circulate the air and speed the drying process, but make sure they are not blowing directly on the volumes. The following are some considerations when planning treatment of wet or moldy volumes:

- If the spine is broken, split, or simply appears fragile, the volume should be disbound and the pages dried separately.
- If the volume is extremely wet, and there is not a trained conservator available, the volume should be placed in a plastic bag, and then in a freezer until it can be sent to a conservation service (see Resources section).

Figures 28 and 29. A scrapbook arrives at the archives in damp condition.

Figure 30. Dry the scrapbook in a vertical position with the pages fanned open.

- Volumes that become water-damaged while in storage must also be dried before there is any attempt to remove mold. Even if there does not appear to be any mold growth, scrapbooks that have been wet and then dried should be regularly checked for any evidence of mold.
- If the mold outbreak is severe, you may want to consider sending the volume(s) to a professional conservation service. If wet, try to dry the item, then wrap it with parchment paper, butcher paper, or wax paper, put it in a plastic bag and ship to the conservation service as soon as possible (Figure 31).

Figure 31. Moldy scrapbooks stored in plastic while awaiting treatment.

Cleaning and Inspection

Protective Gear: Always wear protective nitrile gloves and masks (N-95 respirators) and long-sleeved shirts when working with moldy materials (Figure 32). You can also wear goggles to protect your eyes and an apron to shield your clothing from mold spores. Make sure to dispose of the gloves in a garbage bag that is taken promptly outside the building, and place the apron in a plastic bag for washing as soon as possible. In addition, wash all of your clothes thoroughly as soon as you are able.

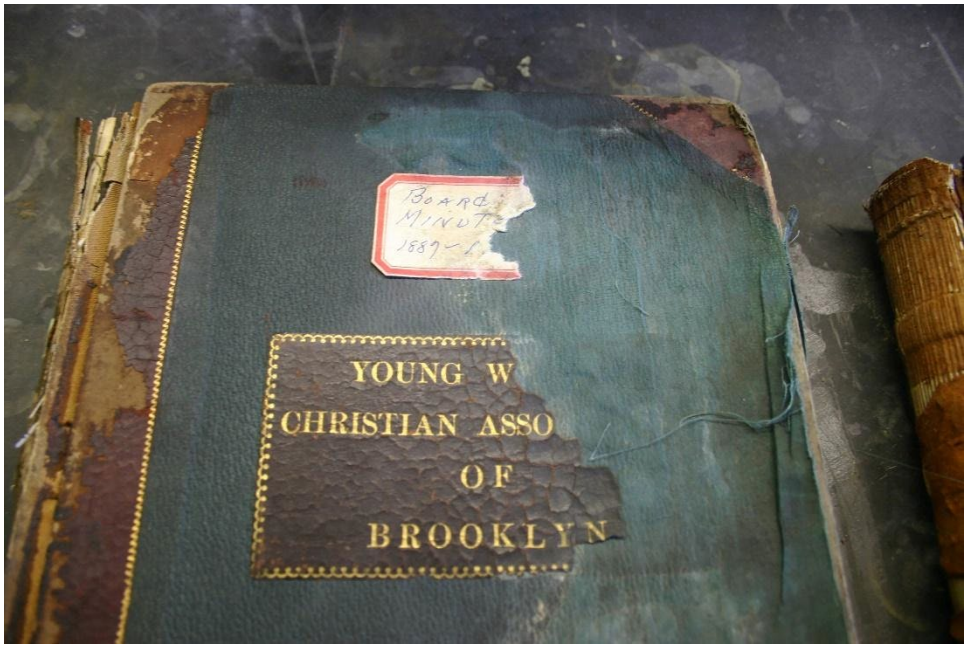
Figure 32. Conservator at a laboratory fume hood in appropriate protective gear.

Fume Hood: It is strongly recommended to conduct the cleaning process in a fume hood (Figure 33) to reduce the possibility of spores getting into your work space. If your space is not equipped with a fume hood, and you are at a college or university with a chemistry department, ask them for help. They may allow you to use one of their laboratories.

Figure 33. Chemistry Department fume hood.

Inspection: First, examine the scrapbook carefully. Check whether the mold affects only the covers or has spread to the pages and affects the attached materials (Figures 34-36). Paper-based materials affected by mold should be dry before any cleaning is attempted. For items that are still damp, photographic materials, or instances when the mold outbreak seems to be particularly severe, always contact a conservator. For a list of conservators in your area, see the American Institute for Conservation's Find A Conservator Database.

It is also important to determine whether the mold is active or inactive. Test a small area with a soft brush. If the mold appears powdery and easily flakes off the surface of the paper, it is likely inactive. If the mold appears "smeary" and brushing it seems to drive the substance into the surface of the paper, it may be active. A conservator should always be consulted before cleaning active mold as well.



Figures 34 and 35. Mold on the cover of this scrapbook has spread to the interior pages.

Figure 36. Mold on the cover of this scrapbook has spread to the interior pages.

Cleaning: To clean mold from a scrapbook, start with the cover, using a soft, dry cloth or soft brush. Once you begin cleaning the pages, their weak and fragile nature requires the use of the softest brushes (Figure 37). Take your time and clean each page as gently as possible. Use soft brushes to gently brush or wipe away mold spores or debris from the pages of a volume or loose paper documents. The brittle interior pages require the softest brushes.[8] The following are procedures recommended for cleaning moldy material:

- If you have access to one, use a vacuum equipped with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to pick up the mold spores after they are brushed off the surface. Use the small, soft brush to loosen the mold from the artifact's surface, and then direct it into the nozzle of the vacuum.

Figure 37. Different types of brushes.

- Be careful when brushing mold from different types of paper and artifacts, and proceed with extreme caution when dealing with photographic materials. In general, consulting a conservator is recommended, but if the mold seems relatively minimal, and the photograph itself is not among the most significant items in the repository, confident and careful practitioners can attempt some basic cleaning in-house. First, test a small area with a brush, to see if you can remove the mold without further damaging the photograph (Figures 38-39). In some cases, usually as the result of heavy water damage, the emulsion on a photograph[9] may be very brittle and damaged beyond any treatment's ability to preserve it. If this is the case, do not use a brush on it. The album should be dismantled, digitized, and the individual items or pages stored in paper archival envelopes. If you want to pursue full cleaning and treatment, consult a trained conservator.
- When finished, clean your tools (brushes) with soap and water, clean the fume hood, and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and hot water.

Figures 38 and 39. Mold-damaged photographs.

- The newly cleaned volume should be wrapped in tissue paper and stored in an archival box. The box should be labeled to alert archival staff members and patrons that the materials were moldy. Although in most cases clean hands are best for staff and patrons when handling a scrapbook, it is important to wear nitrile gloves with previously moldy volumes.
- To prevent new mold growth, the scrapbook collection should be stored in a cool and dry environment. Carefully monitor temperature, humidity, and air circulation in your storage spaces. Inspect your collection regularly. While checking for mold, pay attention for signs of insects or rodents, as they become active with the same conditions that contribute to mold growth. Keep in mind that there is no safe way to fully eradicate mold from collection items, so once an item has experienced one mold outbreak, a recurrence is far more likely if environmental conditions favor mold growth.
- Shelves that have held moldy materials should be cleaned with bleach before returning the cleaned items to the shelves. However, bleach should never be used on collections material itself.

Cleaning of Non-Moldy Volumes

Scrapbooks that are dirty but not moldy can be cleaned in the same way as moldy volumes, although the gloves, aprons, masks, and fume hood are not required.

- As noted for the cleaning of a moldy volume, cleaning a scrapbook should start with the cover, using a soft, dry cloth or soft brush. Different brushes are used for dirt removal from the cover versus the interior pages. The brittle interior pages require the softest brushes. Take your time and clean each page as gently as possible, brushing or wiping away debris from the pages of a volume or loose paper documents.
- Be careful when brushing dirt or debris from different types of paper and artifacts, and proceed with extreme caution when dealing with photographic materials. If the emulsion of a photograph would be damaged by even the softest sweep of a brush, it should be digitized and stored in a protective sleeve. If the entire album consists of heavily damaged photographs, it should be disbound and digitized, and the pages stored in protective enclosures. Full conservation treatment for the images may be considered, depending on the value of the album and the repository's resources for the cost of professional conservation.
- When finished, clean your tools (brushes) with soap and water, and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and hot water.

Reattachment of Loose Items

The artifacts attached to scrapbook pages can become detached for a variety of reasons—adhesive failure, the crumbling of a brittle page, or other factors. As noted previously, the original locations of loose items should be documented when possible, preferably with photographs.

If a volume is to remain intact, and it has undergone any necessary preservation treatments, detached materials can be placed back into position. Previously glued items that have detached can be re-glued with an adhesive such as wheat paste, if their original location is known, and they can be reattached without causing more damage. If the item is too heavy, bulky, or would damage nearby artifacts, it is better to consider encapsulating and storing it separately from the scrapbook. Do not tape any item to the page. Any kind of tape, but particularly pressure sensitive tape (such as Scotch brand), is harmful for weak and brittle paper-based materials.[10] Make sure reattached items do not extend beyond the page edge.

Storage and Shelving

Materials and Equipment

Acid-free document boxes of different sizes
Archival unbleached cotton tying tape
Archival tissue paper
Archival metal shelving unit
Environmental data recorder

Proper storage and shelving are essential for preservation of fragile archival objects such as scrapbooks. The mixture of materials that make up a scrapbook can contribute to the deterioration of a volume. Although size and condition of a scrapbook will determine its storage needs, not all volumes will have the same requirements. It is not usually possible to change the existing characteristics of a scrapbook. But it is possible to extend its life by controlling the environment in which it is stored and preserved.

Archives are strongly encouraged to establish storage spaces in rooms with no windows, fully equipped with an HVAC system, and reduced lighting (Figure 40). Since this may not be possible for all repositories, prioritize archival storage in rooms that have the best environmental conditions relative to the rest of your space.

Figure 40. Windowless storage with low lighting.

Scrapbooks should be stored on metal shelves, preferably in a clean, secure storage facility with a controlled climate, ideally used only for the storage of collections materials (Figure 41). If there are windows in the storage area, shades, curtains, and filters will significantly reduce light damage and protect archival materials. Natural light is the most dangerous source of harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation, but fluorescent lights also produce UV rays. Acid-free archival boxes eliminate or reduce exposure to UV and visible light, dust, and pests, and create a barrier against abrupt climate changes that may occur in the storage room. The best storage enclosure for a scrapbook is an acid-free box, just slightly larger than the volume. If the box is more than slightly larger than the volume itself, the extra space can be padded with acid-free tissue paper or acid-free cardstock spacers; it is important that a volume, especially a fragile one, does not have much room to shift within its enclosure.

Figure 41. Metal shelving for archives.

Figure 42. A PEM2 data recorder from the Image Permanence Institute.

The environmental conditions (temperature and relative humidity, or RH) of the storage space must be carefully monitored on a regular schedule (Figure 42). The ideal temperature range is from 65° to 70°F, with a relative humidity of 45 to 50 percent.[11] These conditions are tolerable for a wide variety of paper-based materials. A daily fluctuation of +/- 3 percent is acceptable. This range will prevent mold growth. Overly hot and dry conditions are not as dangerous as overly wet conditions, but are still problematic. Ideally, there should be an environmental data logger monitoring and recording conditions in every space where collections are stored, exhibited, or otherwise used (see Figure 42).

Good air circulation is also an important factor in maintaining appropriate environmental conditions in the space where scrapbooks are stored. Fans or air purifiers can be used to reduce pockets of stagnant air.

Archives staff should pay attention to signs of pest infestation and to contact the person in their organization responsible for environmental management and safety if any pests or indications of pests are discovered.

Food and drink should be prohibited in all spaces where collections are frequently present, including storage, processing, exhibition, and research areas. Keep food and drink away from scrapbooks and other archival materials, especially paper-based materials.

NOTE: If a patron asks about how to store a scrapbook at home, advise them to store the volume flat, and in a cool room, if possible. The storage environment should be clean, with a stable temperature. Avoid damp garages and basements, hot attics, and locations with a high risk of water damage or extreme hot or cold temperature fluctuations, i.e., rapid cycling. Avoid storing near radiators and vents. Damp conditions can trigger the growth of mold. Hot conditions can cause paper and adhesives to become extremely brittle. Also, damp and hot conditions may attract insects. If a windowless room is not available for storage, curtains or shades should be used, and/or scrapbooks should be kept in enclosures, such as archival boxes. These boxes will significantly reduce light damage. Regular inspection of the volume is recommended, along with the use of a moisture absorbing product (such as Damp Rid) as needed.

HOUSING

Scrapbooks should be stored flat whenever possible, and placed on shelves that fully support the volumes (Figure 43). This is important, especially for oversized scrapbooks. Flat storage is more supportive of a scrapbook's binding, especially if it is already brittle and fragile. In addition, flat positioning is crucial to prevent loose and detached items from slipping from their pages and becoming lost or bent.

Figure 43. Shelves should fully support the volumes.

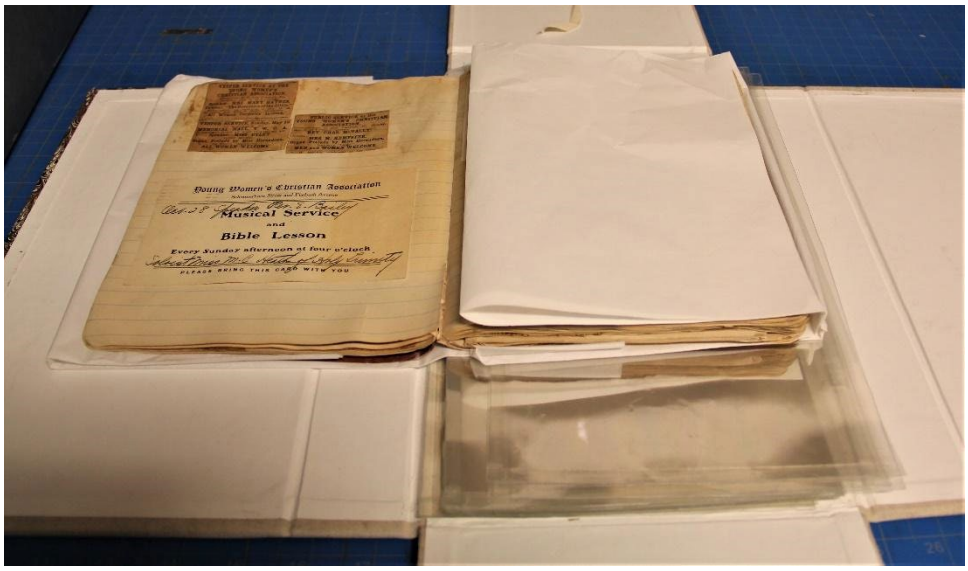
If necessary, scrapbooks may be shelved with archival materials in archival acid-free document boxes. However, scrapbooks should be separated from direct contact with unprotected archival materials (Figure 44).

Figure 44. A scrapbook near, but separate from, other archival materials.

If they cannot be stored flat, scrapbooks in archival boxes should be placed with their spines facing down. If placed in archival document boxes, the boxes should, to the extent possible, hold materials of a similar size to one another (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Scrapbook placed spine facing down in a standard archival document box.

When volumes contain hand-made drawings, paintings, and photographic materials, it is strongly advised to interleave scrapbook pages with archival-quality paper or buffered tissue, if the binding can tolerate interleaving (Figures 46-47).



Figures 46 and 47. Pages interleaved with tissue paper.

If not boxed individually, scrapbooks with weak, damaged covers should be tied with archival unbleached cotton tying tape. The bow knot should be positioned at the fore-edge of the volume, as seen in Figure 48, to prevent problems with adjacent materials on the shelf or the development of marks on the cover from the pressure of the knot.

Figure 48. Scrapbook tied with a bow knot using archival, unbleached cotton tape.

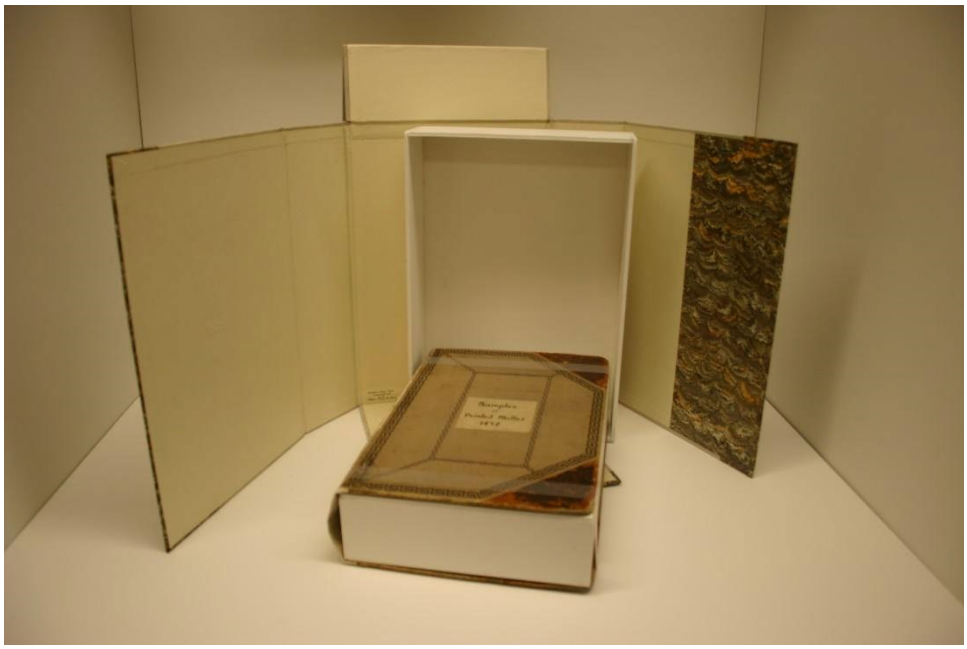
The best protection for scrapbooks may be achieved by wrapping them with acid-free tissue paper and storing them in protective, acid-free archival boxes (Figure 49). Archival boxes may be purchased in standard sizes or can be custom made. Boxes protect scrapbooks from deterioration caused by light and airborne pollution, and provide physical support.

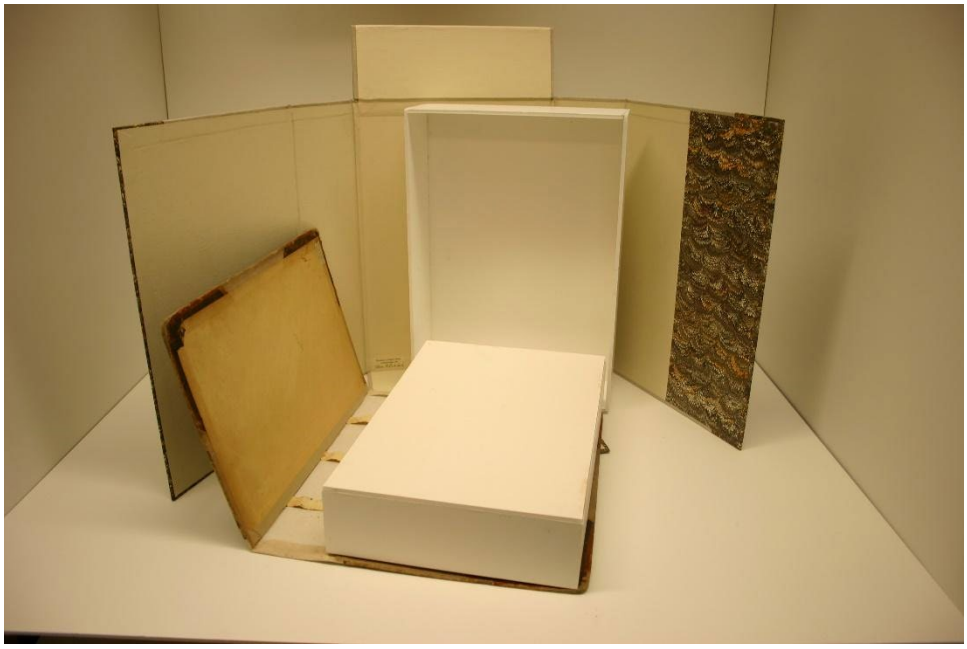
Figure 49. Scrapbook wrapped in acid-free buffered tissue paper.

For organizations with the necessary expertise, creating a custom archival box is an option, particularly if an appropriately-sized box cannot be found from an archival product supplier (Figures 50-55). The Library of Congress has published a book about how to create custom boxes.[12] See the Resources section for links to a series of videos demonstrating the technique used by Conservator Slava Polishchuk.

Figures 50 and 51. Custom-built archival box for a dismantled scrapbook.

Figures 52 and 53. Custom-built archival box for a dismantled scrapbook. Note that these images show the contents in new protective enclosures.





Figures 54 and 55. Custom-built archival box for a dismantled scrapbook.

Due to the importance of proper archival housing, it bears repeating that archival acid-free boxes should be used for individual items. Boxes must be sized to fit the scrapbook with as little extra room as possible. The empty space may be filled with archival boards or acid-free buffered tissue paper (Figure 56).

Figure 56. Tissue paper used to fill empty space in the storage box.

Handling

Archives and libraries collect and preserve scrapbooks not only for their informational and artifactual value, but also to provide researchers and readers with access to their content. The best method for preventing damage and deterioration from use is to limit handling as much as possible. When handling becomes necessary, it is advisable for users to follow the recommended measures described below to help protect these fragile resources.

- Turn pages extremely carefully to avoid causing breaks and tears. At the discretion of archival staff, users may carefully unfold any folded documents, especially newspaper clippings. Newsprint is the most fragile and brittle paper-based material and is frequently the most damaged item in a scrapbook.

- Nitrile gloves should be worn when handling scrapbooks that contain photographs, hand-made drawings or paintings. Photographs and films are easily marked by fingerprints. Archival staff and patrons should be aware that gloves can affect dexterity, such as when trying to turn a fragile page. In the event gloves cannot or should not be worn, anyone viewing a scrapbook should make sure their hands are clean and dry. Avoid using any lotions or hand sanitizers that could leave stains before handling collections.
- When handling a scrapbook, carefully support the binding, especially the spine, and the pages. Patrons and staff viewing scrapbooks should use adjustable archival book cradles (Figures 57-58), or one of the following types of support: foam book snakes, bolsters, tilt-back open book stands or “fat” open book stands made to handle large volumes. This will significantly reduce stress and pressure on the scrapbook.

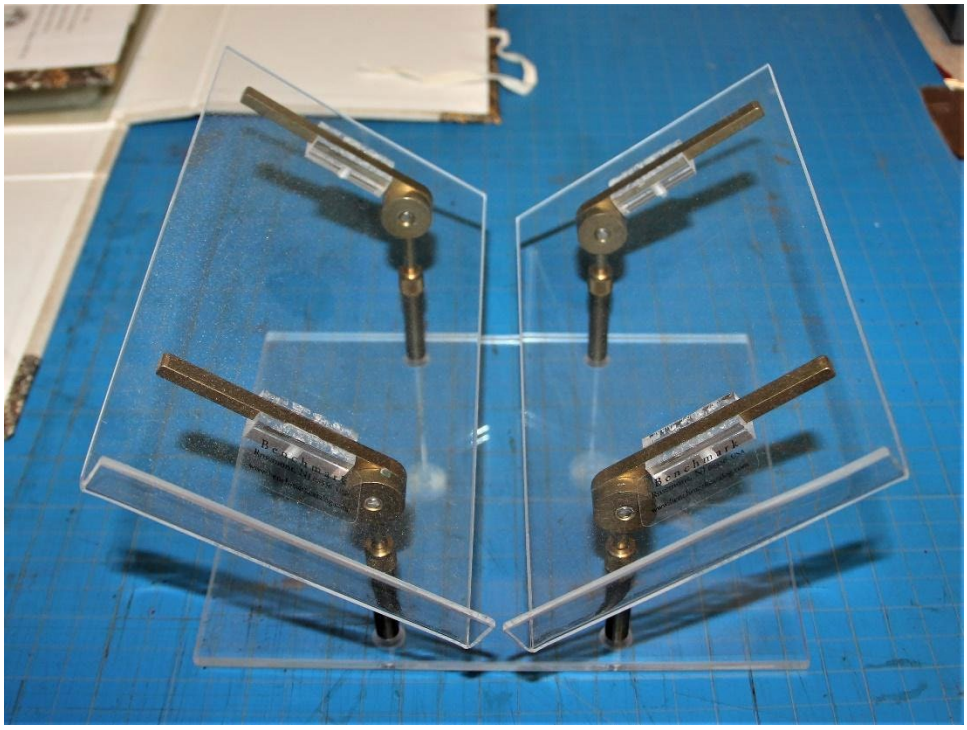


Figure 57. Adjustable book cradle.

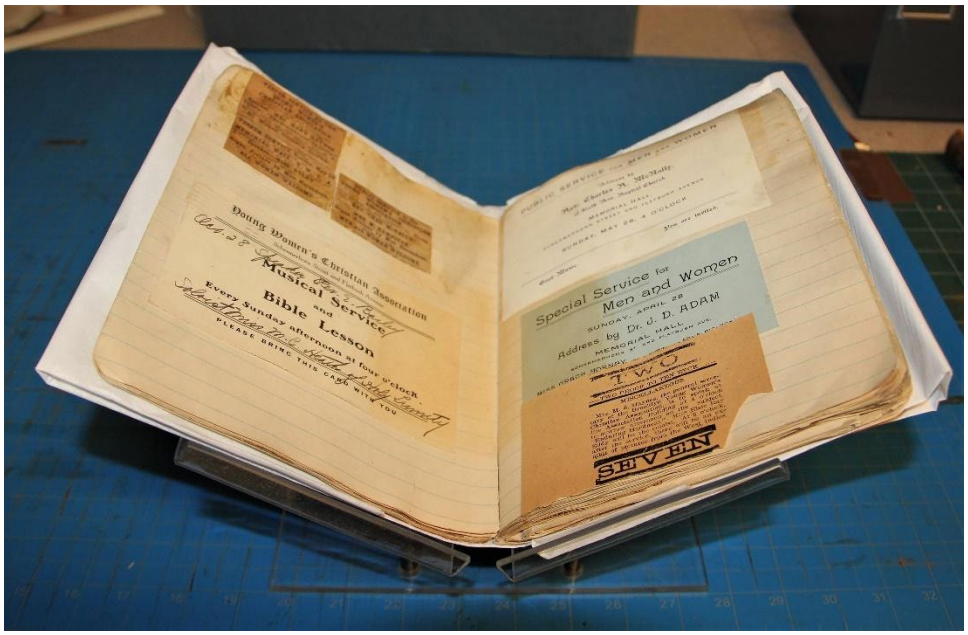


Figure 58. Adjustable book cradle.

Digitization

Digitization is an accepted method of preserving the content of scrapbooks, particularly those that are very popular and thus most vulnerable to damage from heavy use. Digitizing a scrapbook and attempting to recreate the viewing experience is challenging. Items inside envelopes, folded papers, notes on the back of a photo or card – all need to be captured in separate scans and put into an approximation of the original order of the items. Although this reformatting cannot generally duplicate the experience of seeing the original item, it does permit an archive to limit use of the original while continuing to provide access to the resource. It also allows the archive to share the resource with an audience beyond onsite patrons if it has a digital repository for its materials.

There are many factors to consider when deciding to digitize a scrapbook or collection of scrapbooks. The wiki for the American Institute for Conservation's Book and Paper Group[13] provides an excellent overview of these issues, which are summarized below:

- Make sure the scrapbook is in a condition that will permit digitization. It may need conservation treatment first, or even in stages during the digitization process. Be aware that some scrapbooks may be in such poor condition that scanning is not at all recommended, and digitizing would require overhead photography.
- Ensure that you have the proper equipment and experienced staff to do the digitizing, or sufficient funds to outsource the work.
- Ensure ongoing communication and cooperation between conservation staff and the digitization team.
- Plan for the use of the images.
- Determine your file naming schema (the wiki has an example from an Emory University project).
- Plan for migrating the digital files as technology changes, as well as other digital preservation considerations.

A scrapbook digitization project at Emory University, completed with funding from the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures grant program, is described in a 2014 article[14] in the *Book and Paper Group Annual*, and is a worthwhile reference for any institution planning a similar initiative. The publication addresses all aspects of a digitization project, including:

1) selection of items
2) calculating costs and time needed
3) establishing a workflow
4) conservation issues
5) equipment and other materials needed
6) procedures
7) challenges

In discussing the question of conservation treatments, the authors noted, "A decision tree, originally developed to guide us, proved to be too complicated. No two items were alike, and though a decision tree can be a very useful tool, we abandoned it quickly."[15] This illustrates the importance of testing out new procedures and processes before fully embarking on a project.

Figure 59. Digitized scrapbook on CD-ROM.

Funding

Few small institutions have conservators on staff, but even if an institution is fortunate enough to have a conservator and a lab space, some projects may require the assistance of external funding or temporary staff. If an institution is located near a university with a conservation program, it may be possible to identify some skilled interns to help with scrapbook preservation projects that can be done under the supervision of a conservator.

Some states in the MARAC region have agencies that administer grant programs for preservation work, and there are also federal agencies with money for this type of project. See the Resources section for a listing of selected grant programs.

Case Study

The Brooklyn College Archives is home to the only conservation lab within the City University of New York (CUNY) system, with a full-time conservator who joined the Archives staff in 2002. The Archives received the YWCA of Brooklyn records in 2011. Part of the collection of 35 scrapbooks included mold and water damage as well as deterioration due to age and materials. The Archives raised limited funds to support treatment, but the amount was insufficient to complete necessary conservation work. In 2016, the Archives applied for a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), https://www.archives.gov/nhprc, processing grant for the collection, and included in the proposal a request for a part-time conservator for eighteen months and a supply budget of $6,000.[16] As conservation and preservation treatments can be time-consuming, the Archives planned in advance so that the conservator would have sufficient time available to work on other projects in addition to the YWCA project.

A pre-submission review of the NHPRC grant application was received by the Archives with the advice to omit the request for a conservator, as there was already a full-time conservator on staff. One reviewer suggested that if the Archives did not already ave a conservator and lab there would be a strong argument to be made for grant funds to preserve the scrapbooks, which would have been sent to an external vendor for treatment. The request for a part-time conservator was omitted from the final submission in June 2016. The Archives was awarded the NHPRC grant in December 2016, and it provided the requested $6,000 to purchase supplies, some of which was used to buy conservation materials.

The Archivist decided to proceed with treating the scrapbooks in house, albeit at a slower pace.

Fortuitously, around the time the request for the part-time conservator was omitted from the grant application, Pratt Institute's School of Information contacted the Archives about the possibility of hosting a Conservation Fellow, funded by Pratt. Over a period of three academic years (2016-2017 through 2018-2019), the Archives hosted three Conservation Fellows, each working two days per week during the semester. In total, the Fellows worked approximately 500 hours on the scrapbooks, under the supervision of the conservator, who spent about one-third of his time working on the scrapbooks during the same period.

Conclusion

When an institution has determined that scrapbooks have informational and/or artifactual value, preserving these volumes is a worthwhile investment of staff time and resources. Careful housing, storage and handling, in addition to conservation treatment, can extend the life of a volume. Digitization, when properly done, can facilitate access and limit use of the original object, thereby helping to further protect the contents of the scrapbook. In-depth planning is highly recommended for any digitization project.

Resources

Box Construction Videos by Slava Polishchuk, Brooklyn College Archives and Special Collections

1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTAqglkpdeM

2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9TErOO-BFo

3) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnXznx7g2xk

4) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euTn1UuOAyY

5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaI41oVKCpA

6) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qeq3O9mYKYY

7) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpEvcjKx544

8) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LrdIhSCRpg

9) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gu8wT3UTnI

10) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GJ9qekAIEE&feature=youtu.be

Conservation, Archival & Bookbinding Supplies

GAYLORD ARCHIVAL
https://www.gaylord.com

HOLLINGER METAL EDGE
http://www.hollingermetaledge.com

TALAS ARCHIVAL PRODUCTS
https://www.talasonline.com/

Conservation Services

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)

100 Brickstone Square

Andover, MA 01810

Tel: 978-470-1010

https://www.nedcc.org/

Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA)

264 South 23rd Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Tel: (215) 545-0613

https://ccaha.org/

Grant Programs

State Agencies

New Jersey: New Jersey Historical Commission, Project Grants

https://nj.gov/state/historical/assets/pdf/grants/fy2021-project-guidelines.pdf

(NOTE: This link is for an already closed grant cycle, but will provide valuable information for potential applicants in a future round.)

New York: The New York State Discretionary Grant Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/cp/

Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Historical and Archival Records Care (HARC) Grants

https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Records-Care-Grants.aspx

West Virginia: Records Management and Preservation Board

http://www.wvculture.org/history/rmpb/rmpb.html

(NOTE: This granting program is for county records.)

Federal and Non-Profit Agencies

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) - Access to Historical Records: Archival Projects – This program supports the digitization of collections to make them freely available online. https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/announcement/archival.html

Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) – Digitizing Hidden Collections

This program is currently funded through 2020; future funding is unknown at this time.

https://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/

National Park Service, Save America's Treasures Grants – In addition to funding preservation of historic properties, this program also funds preservation of collections of national significance.

https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/sat/

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

Preservation Grants for Smaller Institutions – "Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions—such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities—improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections."
https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections – The focus of this program is on preventive conservation activities.
https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/sustaining-cultural-heritage-collections

Preservation and Access Education and Training – Although this program does not directly support the preservation of archival materials, it focuses on supporting the education and training of conservation professionals, including fellowship positions in conservation.
https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-and-access-education-and-training

Humanities Collections and Reference Resources – This program supports the digitization of collections to extend their lifespan.
https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/humanities-collections-and-reference-resources

Notes

[1]See Childs-Helton, "Evaluating Scrapbooks," 30-35, as well as Kuipers, "Scrapbooks," 83-91, and Ogden, "Preservation Options," 149-163. Although written nearly 30 years ago, Ogden's explanation of the types of scrapbooks and what makes each valuable still holds true today. The four categories include: 1) those with informational value only–such as books with primarily newspaper clippings; 2) books with enclosures of artifactual value; 3) a book that is itself of value (such as a record book) but the enclosures are not; and 4) both the book and the enclosures have artifactual value.

[2]Frellsen et al., "BPG Scrapbooks."

[3]Teper, "An Introduction to Preservation Challenges," 55-56.

[4]"Understanding Plastics for Preservation," Gaylord, accessed July 31, 2020, https://www.gaylord.com/resources/understanding-plastics-for-preservation.

[5]Mary L. Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor, with Helena Zinkham, Brett Carnell, and Kit Peterson, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 247-8.

[6]Ann Frellsen et al., "BPG Scrapbooks."

[7]There are many sources of information on mold. Two articles that may be helpful to consult include the following: Holmes, "Health and Safety Concerns," 26; and O'Neill, "What You Should Know," 32-34. See also the website for the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) that published guidelines for dealing with a mold infestation: https://ccaha.org/resources/managing-mold-infestation-guidelines-disaster-response.

[8]Soft brushes are made of fibers such as Siberian squirrel hair, soft white sheep hair, or goat hair. Stiffer brushes, such as those made from black hog hair, can be used for simple gluing.

[9]Nineteenth century scrapbooks may contain *cartes de visite* or cabinet cards, both of which are albumen prints mounted on a thicker backing. In 1900, Kodak introduced the first Brownie camera, which used film and greatly expanded the use of photography among the middle class. There were various papers and methods for creating a print from the negative film. More information on photographs can be found in Mary L. Ritzenthaler's book, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, published in 2006 by the Society of American Archivists.

[10]Truly archival pressure-sensitive tape does not exist. However, acid-free materials such as filmoplast are used to repair tears in paper-based material.

[11]Image Permanence Institute. https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/support/

[12]"Boxes for the Protection of Books: Their Design and Construction," https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015038606649&view=1up&seq=5

[13]Frellsen et al., "BPG Scrapbooks."

[14]Frellsen, Norman, and Methot, "Scraps of Memories," 26-34.

[15]Frellsen, Norman, and Methot, "Scraps of Memories," 29.

[16]The NHPRC awarded Brooklyn College Archives a two-year processing grant in December 2016. Work began in May 2017, and was completed in April 2019. Although the grant application is not online, those interested in seeing the application narrative may send an email inquiry to C.Bradley-Sanders17@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

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O’Neill, Marta. “What You Should Know About Mold.” *MAC Newsletter* 35, no. 1 (July 2007): 32-34.

Ritzenthaler, Mary L. et al. *Photographs: Archival Care and Management.* Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006.

Teper, Jennifer Hain. “An Introduction to Preservation Challenges and Potential Solutions for Scrapbooks in Archival Collections.” *Journal of Archival Organization* 5, no.3 (2007): 47-64.

About the Authors

Colleen Bradley-Sanders received her MA in Archives Administration and MLIS from the University of South Carolina, and is currently the College Archivist and head of Archives and Special Collections at Brooklyn College. She previously held positions at Southern Methodist University, the New York University Grossman School of Medicine, and the Colorado Historical Society. Colleen's experience includes arrangement and description, grant writing, teaching, and management. Her focus at Brooklyn College is the expansion of access to the collections through engagement with faculty and digitization of records, as well as ensuring their preservation by working with the conservator to establish priorities and obtaining funding and staffing for projects.

Slava Polishchuk received his BA and MFA from Brooklyn College, and graduated from the Moscow Academic Art School as well as Moscow State Stroganov Academy of Design and Applied Arts. Slava is the Preservation Officer in Brooklyn College's Archives and Special Collections. He oversees the care and treatment of the rare books and archival materials, supervises interns, and assists with exhibits. He also teaches a conservation and preservation class for the Pratt Institute School of Information. Slava is an accomplished artist with numerous awards and exhibitions to his credit.