



A COLLABORATION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI &  
HAMILTON COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI LIBRARIES

## WELCOME TO PRESERVATION PROGRAM BASICS

Holly Prochaska, Preservation Librarian

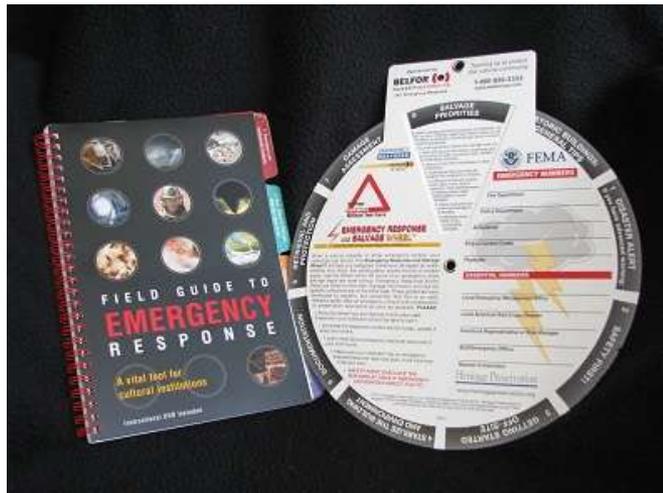
Kathy Lechuga, Conservator

In our presentation today:

1. Preservation
2. Conservation principles and ethics
3. Setting up a basic book and paper lab
4. Alternatives to going it alone

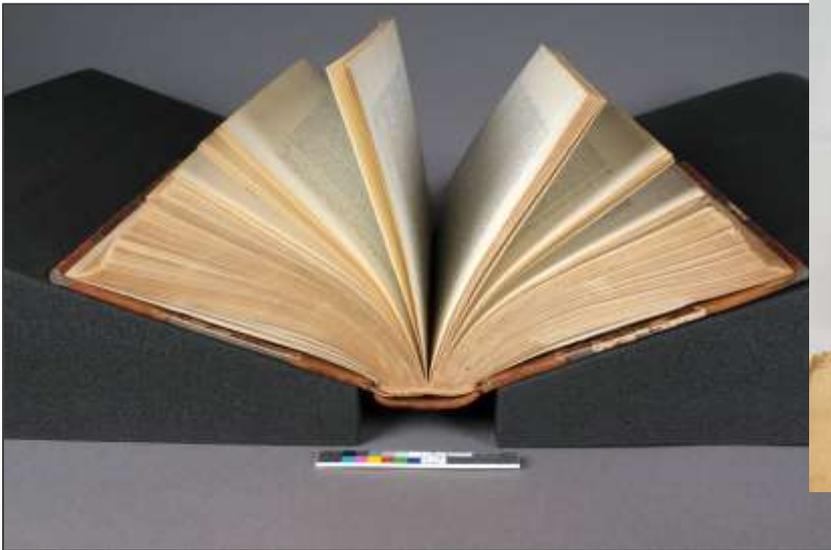
**PRESERVATION FIRST** - Take steps to increase the longevity of the collections by reviewing the following:

- Temperature
- Relative humidity
- Lighting
- Pest management
- Storage and Handling
- Disaster preparedness
- Exhibition policies & procedures
- Security



## CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS:

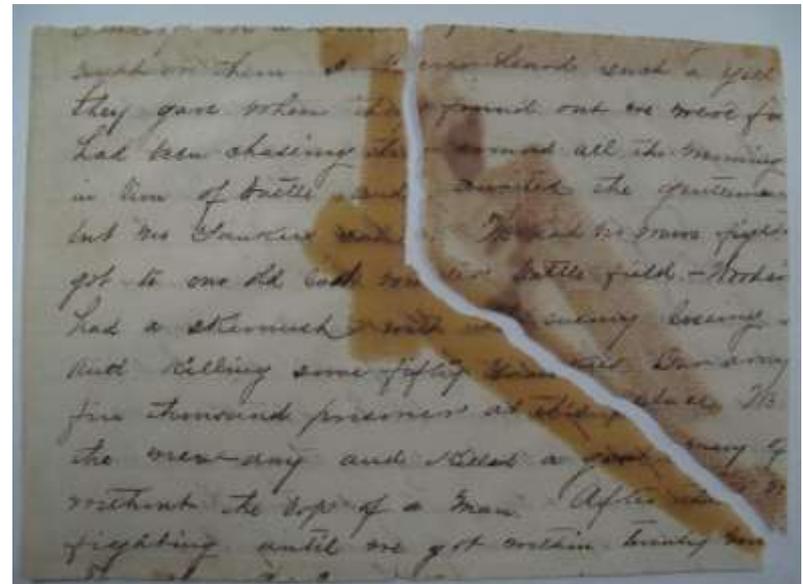
- There are subtle differences between preservation and conservation.
- DO NO HARM.
- Usability and functionality, exhibition needs, and historical significance are some of the concerns that need to be taken into account when making treatment decisions.



## CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS:

### REVERSIBILITY

- Mechanical means of stabilization instead of using adhesives.
- Reversible adhesives and barrier layers.
- Improper treatments can do more harm than good.
- Reversing previous treatments can be very time consuming and produce further damage.



## CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS:

### STABILIZATION with ENCLOSURES

- Enclosures can provide adequate stabilization until treatment can be performed by qualified individuals.
- Polyester jackets and boxes are simple alternatives to invasive treatments.
- Proper storage can greatly improve an object's chances of survival.



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### Determining the right size:

- What will be repaired? - General circulating materials, special collections, or both (hybrid lab)

OR, another way of looking at it

- Treatment to be conducted in lab
  - Bookbinding
  - Full conservation
- Dominant material type in collection – bound volumes or flat works on paper (maps, drawings, etc.)
- Number of staff and volunteers – bench space and office space



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### LOCATION

- Secure
- Close to the loading dock to easily receive materials
- Somewhat removed from other technical services, chemicals and noise
- Availability of a water source
- Adequate electricity
- Is community engagement a priority?



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### LAYOUT

- Consider the flow of the work through the department
- Work zones by processes
  - Wet
  - Dry
  - Clean
  - Dirty (moldy, pests, quarantine, etc.)
- Work zones by function
  - Office space
  - Work bench
  - Commercial bindery prep/unpacking
  - Disaster Recovery
  - Specialized equipment not used every day



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### ENVIRONMENT

- natural light source
- ventilation
- windows and light fixtures with UV filters (on bulbs and lenses)
- Temperature and relative humidity
- pest management (i.e. no eating in lab)



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### EQUIPMENT and SUPPLIES

- **“Archival”** – what does this really mean?
- **Lignin free and acid free** – why are these important characteristics?
- **Paper products** – acid-free, pH neutral or slightly higher (8-8.5 in the case of buffered papers), lignin free, calcium buffer, strength and durability specifications based on functionality – what are you using the paper for? Folders, boxes, etc.
- **Adhesives** – pH neutral, reversibility, aging characteristics (will it adversely affect the material it is in contact with), will it discolor or lose its strength over time?



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### SUPPLIES

- What will you be doing? Treatments? Enclosures?
- Tools and sewing supplies
- Book cloth, various papers, blotting papers for drying
- Paste and other adhesives
- Mylar, various boards for enclosures
- Off the shelf archival boxes and pamphlet binders



## Setting up a basic book and paper lab:

### EQUIPMENT

- What will you be doing?
- Paper cutter or board shear
- Presses and weights
- Sewing frames
- Specialized equipment and tools



Alternatives to going it alone:

3<sup>rd</sup> PARTY CONTRACT CONSERVATION – pros

- Allows you to focus your work on basic paper and book repair, while still addressing the needs of special collections
- If rare books is a small fraction of your collection, likely more cost effective than having a conservator on staff
- Works well with the adopt-a-book model of fundraising where often the level of conservation may teeter closer to restoration
- Finding reputable private practice fine book binders/ conservators or regional labs that intake work is relatively easy
  - AIC directory, OPC directory, referrals from local labs, etc.



## Alternatives to going it alone:

### 3<sup>rd</sup> PARTY CONTRACT CONSERVATION – cons

- Valuable items usually must go off-site, security and insurance
- Staff miss out on training opportunities to advance their skills
- If rare books make up a fair fraction of your collection, it is likely NOT more cost effective than having a conservator on-site



## Alternatives to going it alone:

### COLLABORTIVE LAB MODEL – our model

- Jointly staffed, equipped, managed, and administered Preservation Lab on the campus of the University of Cincinnati
- Supports the preservation and conservation needs of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries
- Employees from both institutions work on the general circulating and rare/unique collections of each institution. The division of labor for all work performed by the preservation lab is split evenly between UCL and PLCH.



+



=



A COLLABORATION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI & HAMILTON COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI LIBRARIES

## Alternatives to going it alone:

### COLLABORTIVE LAB MODEL – why our solution

- Pool our staff resources to expand our capacity for general repair treatments and special collections conservation
- Share the cost of staffing, equipment, and supplies
- Opportunity to seek an innovative solution to address preservation needs
- With a larger staff we have the capacity to offer services to smaller institutions for a fee, addressing outreach needs in Ohio and positively impacting the sustainability of the preservation lab
- Impetus to improve the preservation facility at UC Libraries
- Rejuvenate both our departments – new staff, new goals, new techniques





A COLLABORATION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI & HAMILTON COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI LIBRARIES

### FINAL THOUGHTS:

- Sometimes the best solution is no intervention.
- No one knows everything. Seek out advice from colleagues and join listservs like padg and consdistlist.
- Robust preservation policies and disaster preparedness plans go hand and hand with effective conservation labs.
- Seek out opportunities for collaboration.

Thank you for your time and attention!