Exploring Public Access: Conservation Treatment Documentation as an Online Digital Collection

A Collaboration of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries

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Jessica Ebert - Conservation Technician (UCL)
About the Collaborative Lab

- The Lab celebrated its 5 year anniversary in January!
- Our team - consists of both PLCH and UCL staff working together within the lab
- Lab - located on main campus of the University of Cincinnati in Langsam Library
  - PLCH Main Library just 2 miles away

Team includes: Preservation Librarian, Conservator, Four Conservation Technicians, and a Bindery Technician (pictured above)

Plus! Seven Student Assistants and Four Volunteers
What We Do

- Our work
  - Conservation treatment - both general, circulating collections and rare & special collections for both institutions
  - Environmental monitoring
  - Insect Pest Management (IPM)
  - Exhibition prep (mounts & light monitoring)
  - Preparing rare collections for travel or loan
  - Digitization prep & handling
  - Responding to collection emergencies (i.e. water damage)
  - Preservation training, on site surveys, outreach

- Secondary mission: offer preservation consultation and conservation treatment for other cultural heritage institutions.
Preservation Lab Treatment Documentation

- American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Code of Ethics
- Important to retain treatment info with artifact
- General collections vs. special collections
Conservation Treatment Information

- What goes on the DRC?
  - Information that might be useful to researchers
    - Examination and description of materials
    - Object condition
    - Bibliographical information
    - Collations
    - Scientific sampling reports
    - Preventative care and handling recommendations
    - Details of treatment and materials introduced for repair
    - Photographic documentation
Abbreviated Reports

- Minor treatments and enclosures
- Photography sometimes conducted for documenting complicated enclosures or condition of object
Full Treatment Documentation

Includes:

- Catalog and internal/Lab information
- Description of the object
- Description of the condition - binding, textblock, primary support, medium, and housing
- Proposal for treatment
- Factors influencing treatment
- Performed treatment & housing
- Storage and handling notes and recommendations
- Treatment time
- Attached contact sheet of photographic documentation
Why place the conservation treatment information online?

- Back up for archival storage
- Share information that we already produce to share with bibliographers, curators, librarians, researchers, educators, & conservators
- Digital humanities link
- Connect to online catalog
- Expand public awareness about the importance of preservation of the physical object

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<th>Call No.</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>706.357692</td>
<td>LIBRARY USE ONLY</td>
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Bibliographic Information:

Collation

4º: π1 A⁴-F⁴, G²

Title page with flange is wrapped around first gathering (π1 A⁴)

Construction of 2nd - 6th gatherings (B-F⁴)

Construction of 7th gathering with outer guard (G²)

Upper endleaf construction

Lower endleaf construction

• = #’s of thread sewn through fold

Marbled endsheets

Light beige antique laid

Dark beige antique laid with fool’s cap watermark

Light beige antique laid with filigree watermark

Marbled endsheets
Bibliographic Information: Provenance
Storage Recommendations

Preservation Lab - Abbreviated Treatment Report

Database ID: 1065
Department: PDM
Form Record #: 075-6557
Call Number: 990.01531
Title: [The divine libation, the humble deodor of Neupu:] The Blanket, ca. 3500 B.C.
Author: Lila Sherr, King of Iran
Exhibit: [T. Balderston, ca. 3500 B.C.]
Date Returned to Origin: 3/10/2016

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time in House Repair other</td>
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Conservator's Note:

A group of 6 stone tablets owned by the Public Library were housed together in an archival and related lid enclosure. There are five tablets and one cone. The tablets are essential for epigraphy. The cone contains an inscription that does not contain visible salt accretions, but is fragile with loose, strong area of the inscription. Table 3 contains minor salt accretions near some of the writing. It is highly recommended to store the stone tablets in an environment that is at or below 45% RH to discourage more crystals from forming and handling carefully. If stored in an environment where humidity fluctuates from one season to another, salt can create fractures in the stone that can lead to loss of material.

Friday, March 11, 2016
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Exhibition and Handling Recommendations

Whirling Words By Carol Fried
Handling Instructions

Remove top tray

Lift support here

Book slides out and into sleeve easily; use handle

While book is held upside down, install support, point side down

With two hands, flip the book and support so the book handle is facing up

Display on cloth covered support
Enclosure
Construction
Other Uses of Conservation Science Online

- How does conservation of the analog item fit into the digital world?
  - Blogs are the frequent solution for sharing conservation treatments with the public

- UK
  - British Museum - [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/about_the_database.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/about_the_database.aspx)

- US
  - Studies of artists or types of media:
    - Image Permanence Institute
    - MoMA’s Object : Photo
    - Art Institute of Chicago Alfred Stieglitz collection
      - [http://media.artic.edu/stieglitz/](http://media.artic.edu/stieglitz/) Collaboration between digital, conservation and curatorial departments to create user friendly website to appeal to many audiences
Preservation Lab Treatment Documentation as a Digital Collection

- Collaborative decision
- Luna vs. DRC
  - File format
  - Metadata and controlled vocabularies
  - Viewer
- Treatment documentation as a stand-alone digital collection
  - Built in archival storage of files
  - Cross-linked with the catalog records
Photographic Documentation - A Visual Piece of Treatment Documentation

- December 2013 - creation of PhotoDoc studio
- PhotoDoc workflow in relation to DRC
  - Filenaming conventions
  - Photography metadata

The Preservation Lab

Since forming in 2012, the primary mission of the collaborative Preservation Lab is to preserve and conserve the collections of the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries. The treatment reports and photographic documentation that comprise this Digital Resource Collection are a record of conservation treatments conducted in the lab on special collections items held either by the University of Cincinnati Libraries or the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The collection is divided by owning institution.

For more information about the reports you’ll find in this collection, please visit The Preservation Lab digital collection landing page.

For current information about Preservation Lab activities and events see blog.thepreservationlab.org.

News

Please take our survey on this digital collection!

Collections in this community
- Other Cultural Heritage Institutional Clients
- Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- University of Cincinnati Libraries
PhotoDoc Workflow - Conservation

- Intake, evaluation, photo doc request form
- Our setup and basic shooting parameters
  - Tethered - Camera Control Pro
  - Raw format - nef
  - ISO 100, aperture priority, Adobe RGB colorspace
  - Minimal processing to the images - color correction, exposure compensation, minor distortion control & cropping
- Number of images is dependent on the projected treatment, provenance, etc.
- Folder & filenaming - item record number, our internal database ID number, etc.
  - i29278284_1204_PLCH_HughesAnnual1870 (ex. folder)
  - i29278284_1204_A04N (ex. filename)
PhotoDoc: Metadata and File Storage

- Camera metadata – settings
- IPTC Core – Description:
  - Catalog record
  - Photography setup
- Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) from the Getty Research Institute
  - [http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/](http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/)
- Image formats – nef (raw), dng, tiff
  - Jp2 for DRC Viewer
- Portable hard drive & shared lab drive
DRC Workflow

- Batch uploading and when to batch?
- Where to start?
  - Completed folders
  - Bridge Label Designations

Select - Done - already uploaded to DRC
Review - Folders that require revision before the next batch
To Do - Ongoing multiple object project
Second - Treatments not going on the DRC
Approved - Conservator has updated the treatment report and it is ready to be entered into the metadata spreadsheet
None (no color) - Treatment in progress
### Metadata for the DRC

- **Contributors** - conservator, other (includes author), photographer
- **Title** - title of book/object followed by “: Preservation Lab Treatment Report”
- **Date** - creation - date arrived in lab/entered into our database
- **Description** - try to include links to digital library, if digitized
- **Relation** - catalog record URL
- **Relation** - is part of: series
- **Subject** - aat - ex. Books, maps, enclosures, photographs, etc.

Following upload - work with metadata librarians to crosslink.
Photographic Techniques

- Add another layer to the digital “object” that is not captured in digitization, but can be beneficial to researcher and bibliographers when exploring provenance and history.

- Raking illumination
- Transmitted illumination
- Ultraviolet radiation

Fore edge painting - custom made acrylic support
Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)

- "RTI is a computational photographic method that captures a subjects’ surface shape & color and enabled the interactive re-lighting of the subject from any direction." (definition from Cultural Heritage Imaging)
- Highlight capture - 36-48 images where everything is constant except the light position
- Reflective black sphere capture the highlight points
- Free software from CHI

Reflective black sphere used to capture and map highlight points as the light moves around the object.

Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)

1568 Martin Luther Reformation text, alum-tawed binding featuring wooden boards and decorative paneled embossing

Video capture of the RTI Viewer
Site Visit Statistics & Response

 preserving Lab DRC Survey

The Online Preservation Lab Treatment Documentation

This survey is about the collaborative Preservation Lab’s treatment documentation found in the University of Cincinnati Digital Resource Commons and also found in University of Cincinnati Libraries Digital Collections.

You can also read about the preservation collaboration between the Cincinnati Public Library and the University of Cincinnati Libraries on our website http://pages.uc.edu/preservationlab/ and see some of our current projects on our blog http://blog.thepreservationlab.org/.

Please complete this survey to help the Preservation Lab and the University of Cincinnati Libraries improve the support and delivery of digital collections and to plan future digital collections.

Thank you.

1. How did you discover the Preservation Lab’s online documentation?
   - A Google search
   - A link from the Public Library online catalog
   - Via the University of Cincinnati online catalog
   - From the UC Digital Resource Collection’s page
   - Other:
     [input field]

2. Please indicate your professional background:
   - Conservation professional
   - Student
   - Librarian
   - Professor
Thank you and Questions?

- Many thanks to Nathan Tallman, Linda Newman, Carolyn Hansen, Holly Prochaska, Michael Christian-Budd, and Holbrook Sample for their support, insight and expertise, without which none of this would be possible.

- Please visit our site and take our survey; we welcome feedback!
Follow Us!

- Website: http://thepreservationlab.org/
- Blog: http://blog.thepreservationlab.org/
- Instagram username: thepreservationlab

- Want to know more about conservation or find a conservator?
  - Visit the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) website: http://www.conservation-us.org/
PLCH’s Digital Library

http://digital.cincinnatilibrary.org/

- Expansive collection of digitized genealogical and local history collections (including city, county, and business directories), photographs, lantern slides, Audubon folios, arts, literature, childrens books, scrapbooks/albums, and online exhibitions.
- OCLLC platform
UC Libraries’ Digital Resource Commons

http://digital.libraries.uc.edu/collections/

- Contains Cincinnati Morgue and Birth & Death records, Fine Art collections, UC’s News Record and Cincinnatian collections, Winkler Center collections and oral histories, Neil A. Armstrong Commemorative Archive, etc.

- Part of the Ohio Digital Resource Commons (DRC) platform - an OhioLINK initiative