

The Johns Hopkins University
Milton S. Eisenhower Library Preservation Program
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The Library

The Milton S. Eisenhower Library (MSEL) was opened in 1964. The building is patterned after the Georgian structures that surround it and, to maintain a harmonious scale, only two levels of MSEL's six stories rise above ground. The four levels built partially below grade open into a light well at the south end of the building. The MSEL collections include about 2.1 million volumes, 1.5 million microforms and more than 11,000 serial subscriptions. There are two additional special collection libraries in the system. The John Work Garrett Library holds 29,000 books, including a collection of incunabula and several hundred manuscripts. The Peabody Library, which emphasizes 18th and 19th century works, contains over 250,000 volumes in its collection.

Preservation program history

The MSEL preservation program began in 1975 when the library's binding operations were formalized into the commercial binding office (CBO) on A-level, the first level below ground. This was the first in the preservation program's four-phase development. With the aid of a bequest from Pauline von Mitzel, a former MSEL staff member, an in-house bindery was the second phase (1976). Located on D-level, the bindery occupied an area of 4,300 square feet and was equipped to provide the full range of book conservation services. The paper conservation department, the third component, was established in an area adjacent to the bindery in 1982. It was equipped to deal with the preservation and conservation of non-book, artistic, and historic research materials: prints, drawings, maps, manuscripts, etc. The reprography component (photocopying), the fourth and final phase, was activated in 1983.

The general unavailability of binders with the necessary combination of skills to staff the bindery was initially a problem. John Dean, who guided the MSEL's preservation program through its early years, created a five-year apprenticeship program to address this need. It was certified by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. A total of five staff members – two of whom are still employed at the MSEL – completed the apprenticeship program. They were trained according to a model Dean based on the City Guilds of London and modified for United States applications. The equipment he procured is still in use today. His influence on the department's philosophy and methodology is ongoing.

At its beginning, the treatment focus of the preservation program was the more than 300,000 items published prior to 1850 which were in daily use. By 1986 eleven full-time staff were working in the

department: a collections maintenance officer (Dean), five binders, a paper conservator, a book repair technician, a conservation liaison, CBO supervisor and her assistant as well as a modest number of student assistants. All units were linked administratively under the department head. The conservation liaison selected materials for treatment as they returned from circulation and routed them to the proper unit. One third of the department's production time was spent on routine binding: batch binding, usually in cloth, of pre-1850 books. Another third of production time was spent on special work: items that could not be conveniently batched because of the need for a detailed approach. The remaining one-third of production time was equally divided between finishing (the blocking of gold on cloth bindings and hand finishing of other bindings) and the construction of various types of boxes. The general, circulating collections received more and more attention from the mid-eighties until 1990, however, by which time post-1850 imprints received the major treatment emphasis.

Reorganization

The Preservation Department was reorganized in summer, 1991 to emphasize MSEL's new focus on the general, circulating collections. The department's organizational home was moved from public to technical services. While CBO remains on A-level where it has been located since the Preservation Department's very beginning, the bindery and paper lab moved from D-level to the ground floor of a building next to the library. Its floor space decreased to 2,600 sq. ft. Job descriptions were re-written and the number of full-time staff in the department was reduced to six. There is now a much greater reliance on student assistants to perform the batch treatments performed in Book Repair. While our adjustment to the new, use-driven work flow has been good, please keep in mind throughout your reading of the rest of this document that we are still in transition.

Staffing

Our staff is non-union. Six full-time positions combine with 1.75 FTE student assistants for a total of 7.75 FTE: 26% (2) professional; 51% (4) paraprofessional; and 23% (1.75) student assistants. Staff development is important. The Preservation Department subscribes to a number of professional publications. Staff members receive encouraging financial support to attend professional meetings and enroll in professional development courses offered by the University. One staff member, who gained her skills through the five-year, in-house apprenticeship program, is currently completing a twelve-month internship in advanced book and paper conservation at the Library of Congress (LC). The Conservation Technician also acquired her skills by completing the apprenticeship. The Book Repair Supervisor, who had no experience in preservation when hired several months ago, has received his on-the-job training from the administrator, assisted by the LC intern and Conservation Technician. The CBO supervisor, has occupied her position since it was created. The CBO Assistant, another new employee, will visit our commercial binder's plant in Ohio as part of her orientation. We belong to the Guild of Book Workers and the American Institute for Conservation. The administrator is active in the American Library Association, chairs the library-wide Preservation Committee, co-chairs the Disaster Preparedness Committee, serves on the Exhibits Oversight Committee and participates in the Department Heads Group. The person completing the LC internship is the department liaison to the PC Users' Group. Salary ranges for Preservation Department personnel are as follows:

Position	Grade	Salary
Head, Preservation Department	42	31,525 - 48,864
Book and Paper Conservator (pending)	40	25,566 - 38,348
Conservation Technician	37	18,124 - 27,186
CBO Supervisor	36	16,490 - 23,911
Book Repair Supervisor	36	16,490 - 23,911
CBO Assistant	34	13,111 - 19,011
Students	N/A	5.50/hr. - 6.30/hr.

The book and paper conservator presently completing the internship at LC will spend 100% of her time treating Special Collections items. She is also the department's representative to the PC Users Group.

The Conservation Technician has been in transition since the reorganization. Originally charged with treating older, general collections books, she spent 50% of her time cleaning and guarding; doing full, half and quarter-cloth rebinding; constructing clamshell boxes and portfolios; and completing restorations. More recently, her responsibilities have been re-defined so that she now applies her skills on general collections materials for which batch treatments are inappropriate: oversize enclosures, encapsulations and folios. The Conservation Technician also assists the administrator in assessing the effects of mass deacidification on books returned from treatment and in staff and user education activities. She will assist the Book and Paper Conservator in Special Collections treatments. The other 50% of her time goes toward working on exhibits: constructing mats, cradles and mounts as well as installing and dismantling them.

The Book Repair Supervisor collects, sorts and routes the work flow. He is also responsible for training student workers and managing the quality control of their production. He performs repairs as needed. The Book Repair unit completes regular repairs (disbinding, case repair, text block reinforcement and case binding), spine repairs, hinge repairs, phase box and crease box construction, tip-ins and pamphlet binding. The Commercial Binding Office Supervisor and CBO Assistant process serials and monographs to and from our commercial binder. Additionally, the CBO Assistant and Book Repair Supervisor process books being sent for and returning from mass deacidification.

The work

Our work is 100% use driven. While two staff members have flex schedules, work is performed during one shift per work day. No system of work quotas has been established at this point. We are, however, in the process of defining production expectations. Treatment specifications for the general collections are determined by the administrator. The administrator, Book and Paper Conservator-in-training/Conservation Technician collaborate on treatment decisions for general collections items having artifactual value. The Book and Paper Conservator, in conjunction with curators, makes decisions for Special Collections items. The retention of original material is highly valued (over reformatting) in the MSEL philosophy. While job duties are clearly spelled out and well delineated in the new job descriptions, substantial interaction and collaboration can go on during the course of a day. The Conservation Technician serves as advisor to the Book Repair Supervisor, for example. The Book and Paper Conservator-in-training advises the Conservation Technician. Book Repair and CBO staff collaborate on monograph treatments.

Book repair and conservation work take place in separate, contiguous areas of the bindery. The materials supply room and the machine room, adjoining the bindery, are shared by both operations. The paper lab is across the hall, as is the administrator's office. Repair and conservation expenses are managed out of a single budget.

The Book Repair Supervisor goes around twice per week to appointed stations throughout MSEL, gathering books for prospective treatment. Each item is inspected on site, then flagged with a paper streamer in one of the twelve colors we use to identify disposition. These books are taken to Circulation where the materials are charged to either CBO or Book Treatment or routed for brittle books processing. (Items going to CBO are either recases or re-binds.) These are placed on a truck in Circulation where they are charged then collected by CBO staff. Support Services staff brings items charged to Book Treatment from MSEL to Krieger Hall on book trucks via an automated lift that operates between MSEL's loading dock and the Preservation Department.

Once a book is brought into Book Repair, it is shelved in call number order by date. Brittle books to be boxed are similarly arranged but shelved separately. The average turn-around time for a repair is eight to ten days. Whenever a library user requests a particular item charged to Book Treatment, however, its repair is completed and the book is delivered to Circulation within 24 hours. Reference books and those placed on reserve receive priority treatment. Once it is treated, a book is returned to Circulation, where it is routed to Preparations (part of the Acquisitions Department) if it needs a new call number label.

Outreach

Grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to The Johns Hopkins University made it possible for the preservation department to conduct multifaceted programs of preservation and conservation education, technical training, and consultancy from 1982-90. The preservation training program provided pragmatic, technically sound, economical approaches to the preservation and conservation of books and flat paper materials. The audience were staff from target institutions who had complete or partial responsibility for the care and preservation of their institutions' collections, but who lacked formal training. The workshops emphasized supervised, hands-on practice with a number of simple preservation techniques requiring minimal equipment. The important companion issues of preservation principles, administration, and decision making were dealt with as well. The three- and four-month internships were aimed at library and archives staff who already knew some basic preservation techniques, but wanted training in a broader range of treatments as well as the opportunity for more extensive practice. The consultancies consisted of visits by MSEL preservation staff to institutions that were committed to preservation and wanted advice on how to implement a preservation program or expand an existing one. In 1987 MSEL preservation department staff produced the videotape, "Basic Preservation Techniques for Libraries and Archives." Accompanied by a detailed manual, the video was an effort to meet the need for a high quality instructional tool that teaches sound, practical preservation techniques. We continue to receive orders from all over the world for it. Outreach continues to be a major emphasis of our preservation program. The National Endowment for the Humanities is funding a (new) three-year grant enabling us to provide a number preservation workshops on the treatment of books and flat paper materials.