

Chancery Master Exhibits—Piecing It Back Together

The focus of this paper is the conservation of a 17th-century map damaged by water and iron gall ink. Triggered by a document request at The National Archives (TNA) for the Victoria County History project, archivist Amanda Bevan discovered the bad condition of a 17th-century map, which is of great historical interest. The map is part of a group of objects (C 110 64–67) dating from the mid-15th to the 18th century, which had been material evidence in a court case. In his will, Samuel Travers dedicated the proceeds from the sale of his land to the establishment of a foundation for poor naval lieutenants. Travers's will became the subject of much dispute and litigation, and the trust relating to the Naval Knights was not validated until July 26, 1793, almost 70 years after his death. The map appears to have been worked with to the extent of its material failing, which led to the production of an 18th-century copy. The transfer process of the ink drawings involved pricking through the paper onto the new support. The map also shows staining from water damage, which would have contributed to the breakdown and removal of the adhesive holding the lining to the paper and exacerbated the iron gall ink damage. The iron gall ink degradation the pricking and the water damage all contributed to the paper delaminating in fragments like a jigsaw. New treatment approaches for iron gall ink damage included the use of gels and a heat mat.

This conservation project reflects recent developments in paper and book conservation at The National Archives' Collection Care Department. It included the identification of materials and the development of tailored conservation

treatments with the help of the conservation scientists. It required historical research provided by the archivists and non-TNA historians. As a result, the map is being used as a case study for in-house training and for various outreach events. In the newly created position of the Senior Conservation Manager for Single Object Treatments, I have been focusing on high-profile documents and conservation challenges and directing the development and adaptation of new treatment methods. The present conservation project lent itself to contribute to TNA's conservation skill development program and to improve the organization's conservation methodology for single objects.

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