

THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

A Workshop for SUL SCRC Staff
and Students

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Introduction

- To help preserve our collections and help fulfill the Syracuse University Library's mission of transforming the Library into the University's primary gateway for scholarly information, care needs to be taken in the everyday handling of materials. Covered in this talk will be guidelines for:
 - Retrieval
 - Reading Room Practices
 - Photocopying
 - The storage of books
 - Routing books to Conservation

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Retrieving

- Do not pull the book by the spine. This causes damage to the headcap or can cause the spine to detach. If not treated, this can lead to the boards detaching as well.



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Retrieving

- Pull books from the shelf by pushing the two books adjacent to the desired book in.



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Retrieving

- Grasp the book between your fingers and pull out.
- Put in the out slip so there is a location record and so the person re-shelving the book knows it is in the proper place.



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Retrieving

- After you have pulled the requested books, do not leave gaps. Unsupported books can tip over or even fall off the shelf causing severe damage.



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Retrieving



- Help support the rest of the shelf by moving the books gently (not scraping across the shelf) and replacing the book end.

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Retrieving



- When placing books on the cart, either stack flat according to size or...

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Retrieving

- ...use book ends.



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Retrieving



- Stack manuscript boxes only one-high on the top shelf of a cart. Stacked two-high there is the potential for a toppling domino effect going over bumps.

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Retrieving

- When pulling books or manuscripts from higher shelves, always use the ladders for your safety as well as the materials.
- When pulling manuscript boxes from higher shelves, be careful, the boxes may be heavy.
- When pulling flat folios, get help if the book is extra large or heavy.



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Retrieving: Summary

- Don't pull the book by the spine but rather grasp the spine between your fingers and pull out.
- Put in an "out slip" and support remaining books with the bookend.
- Support the books on the cart with a bookend or by stacking according to size.
- Stack manuscript boxes only one-high on carts.
- Use the ladders, beware of heavy manuscript boxes and get help for extreme oversize volumes.

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Re-shelving

- Do not put a book away that does not have an out slip. Re-shelving without the out slip may result in the book being in the incorrect place and makes it very difficult to find again.
- When re-shelving a book, shift the books on the shelf so there is room and then re-shift so all the books are supported by the bookend.

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In the Reading Room



- For large volumes, damaged bindings, or volumes with stiff openings, use the foam cradles and snakes behind the desk.

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In the Reading Room

- Be sure to enforce the “pencil only” rule. Removing a stray pencil mark is easy. Removing the stray mark from an ink pen requires us to contract out to another conservator due to the chemicals involved.



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In the Reading Room



- Remind the patrons not to take notes directly on books or manuscripts. This can leave impressions, or worse, lead to stray marks or tearing.

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In the Reading Room

- Encourage manuscript users to use a place holder to maintain the order of items in folders and folders in boxes.



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In the Reading Room



- Encourage the use of slips of paper as bookmarks. Notebooks, pencils, etc. should not be used as bookmarks since they can break the spine of the book.

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In the Reading Room: Summary

- Encourage the use of the foam cradles and snake weights for large or stiff books.
- Enforce the “pencil only” rule.
- Don't take notes with the notepaper directly on the book.
- Encourage the use of place holders in manuscript boxes.
- Encourage the use of paper bookmarks not the use of notebooks, pencils etc.

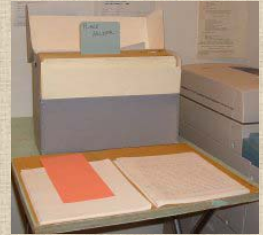
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Photocopying

- When photocopying materials, it is important to maintain the proper order of items in the folder and in the box. Use a place holder so order is preserved.



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Photocopying



- **DO NOT** squash a book on the flat copier!

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Photocopying.

- When copying a book, open to the required page and place carefully on the book copier, supporting large bindings so they don't fall off the copier.
- Do not close the lid of the book copier. Mask off around the book with plain waste paper.



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Photocopying



- Be **VERY** careful when copying brittle material.
- Before copying any brittle bound volume, consult with the conservation lab.
- **DO NOT** use the form feed for **ANY** manuscript or archival materials.

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Photocopying

- When copying materials held together with a paper clip, do not simply pull it off because it will tear the paper. Remove as follows:
 1. Use a piece of Mylar as a barrier and slide a spatula under the clip.
 2. Carefully lift the upper half of the clip while holding down on the lower half so the paper does not rip.
 3. Dispose of the paper clip and replace with a piece of copy paper folded in half around the materials.
- Click to see a [video clip](#) of how this is done.

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Photocopying

- When copying materials held together with a staple, do not use a staple remover, it will tear the paper. Remove as follows:
 1. Slide a spatula under one fold of the staple.
 2. Carefully lift the fold so it is upright, supporting the lower half so the paper doesn't rip.
 3. Repeat with second fold.
 4. Flip over and carefully pull out staple.
- If a stapled item is the only thing in a folder, do not re-staple when photocopying is complete.
- Click to see a [video clip](#) of how this is done.

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Photocopying: Summary

- Maintain order in manuscript boxes with a place holder.
- Do not squash books on the flat copier.
- Carefully handle books when using the book copier.
- Brittle material is VERY fragile, handle with care.
- Carefully remove paper clips and staples before copying.

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Storing Books on Carts

- DO NOT stack books such that smaller books are below larger. This creates a leaning tower that is an avalanche in the making.



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Storing Books on Carts

- DO NOT let books lean when storing on carts. This can damage the cover-textblock attachment and can lead to books sliding off the cart if it gets bumped.



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Storing Books on Carts

- DO NOT store large books on their fore edges. This encourages the textblock to fall out of the case.



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Storing Books on Carts

- Store books on a cart just as you store them on the shelves - use a book end to support the books or stack them according to size.



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Storing Books on Carts: Summary

- Stack books according to size or store upright with a bookend.
- Do not store large books on their fore edge, even if you use a bookend.

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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage

- Many of the books in SCRC have been in use for well over 100 years. For example, the Ranke Collection was originally collected by Dr. von Ranke as his private research collection. SUL's initially purchased it to create a circulating collection, it is now the core of the SCRC rare book collection.



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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage



- Because of its history of circulation, the Ranke collection has sustained a lot of damage, best shown in the number of spines that have gone missing.

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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage

- Another contributing factor in the damage to the Ranke collection (and other individual volumes) is the environment in which they were stored for the majority of their life.



Photo courtesy of the Syracuse University
Archives

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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage



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- Before the advent of modern HVAC systems, buildings were heated with coal or wood, lit by sunlight, oil or gas, and lacked humidity control. These factors accelerate the deterioration of leather, paper and cloth making the materials weak and more susceptible to damage.

The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage

- Modern fluorescent lights are not a great improvement. The ultraviolet wavelengths given off are almost as damaging as sunlight and also cause the weakening of leather, cloth and paper.



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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage



- History is not the only culprit. Deterioration is an ongoing problem. Damage occurs every day from handling materials. If care is not taken in pulling, transporting, storing, using and photocopying materials, damage will occur that takes time and money to repair.

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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage

- Some materials, however, were inherently destined to disintegrate. Paper printed between 1850-1950, modern newspaper, color photographs, slides and negatives and many adhesives used in paperbacks will deteriorate even in ideal situations.



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The Costs of Improper Handling and Storage



Photo courtesy of Peter Verheyen

- Treating materials in SCRC can take anywhere from 5 min. for a simple mend to several hours for a full treatment. The Nuremburg Chronicle took 84 hours of labor to complete.
- Most repairs take around 2 hours.

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Routing to Conservation

- To help ensure our books remain in usable condition, any books requested by patrons or used by staff that need repair should be routed to the conservation lab. To do this, either place on the conservation shelf in the re-shelving area or bring the item to the lab directly.

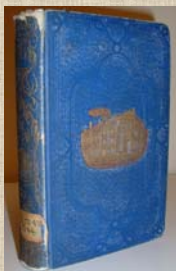


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Routing to Conservation Types of materials include:



- Books with damaged outer joints, inner hinges or endcaps.
- These books do not look like they need much but it is a 15 minute repair versus a 1 hour repair if it gets left too long.

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Routing to Conservation Types of materials include:

- Books with their covers or spines falling off.
- If not taken care of the textblock could get damaged or important bindings may be lost.



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