

## Harvard College Library Preservation & Imaging Department

### Annual Report: FY 1998

July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998

Throughout FY 1998 the Preservation Services Department continued to examine preservation workflows and procedures, products and services. Based on this ongoing assessment, change is being initiated where warranted while valuable elements of past practice are being retained and documented. Staff members with extensive Harvard experience bring skill and context to this process and new staff members bring fresh perspective.

### **Collections Conservation**

#### *Construction of the Laboratory*

The first half of FY 1998 was devoted to finalizing the design and construction of the new Harvard College Library conservation laboratory. Nancy Schrock, Chief Collections Conservator, and David Moore, Collections Conservator for Widener Library, worked closely with architects from the firm Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott; as well as with project manager Paul Bellenoit, Director of Facilities Management for the Harvard College Library to develop a space plan and designs for benches, cabinetry, and other furniture. Attention to detail was required throughout every phase of the project to ensure that the lab can accommodate 1) work stations that meet the special demands of a high-volume conservation program; 2) the operation of large machinery and equipment; 3) storage of tools, supplies, and work-in-progress; and 4) the safe handling of many types of objects, including delicate and oversize books and papers. By January 1998 the new facility was operational and on April 27 an open house was held for Harvard College Library staff.

#### *First Stages of Program Restructuring*

The second half of the year was devoted to designing and implementing a program that will take full advantage of the potential inherent in the new facility. Job descriptions were reviewed and rewritten for all support staff. Humberto Oliveira received an upgrade in rank and a new title (Supervisor of Protective Enclosures). Emine Gecer, Senior Conservation Technician, assumed responsibility for teaching and supervising minor repair. Casual positions were reestablished with two-year end dates and a two-step progression from box making to book repair.

In addition to reconfiguring existing positions, the hiring of well-qualified new staff was a high priority. A committee consisting of Nancy Schrock, Julian Stam, and David Moore conducted a successful search for three conservation technicians. (Two positions had been vacant for some time and one was newly established.) Because positions were filled simultaneously it was possible to hire a well-balanced team. Susan Barbarossa, Linda

Oliver, and John O'Regan bring a considerable range of complementary skills and experience to the program.

Additional staff support was provided by two interns: Lisa Long from Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science (September through January) and Heather Caldwell from the University of Texas Graduate School of Library & Information Science, Preservation and Conservation Studies program (January through August). A talented group of casual technicians round out laboratory staffing.

Ensuring a steady flow of work during and in the immediate aftermath of lab construction was a challenge. Building on a new focus on preventive conservation treatment, Julian Stam worked closely with circulation staff to identify damaged materials needing only minor repair, while continuing to sort damaged books and journals sent by various library units to the Processing Division. When the lab was complete, Mr. Stam, Preservation Review Librarian, migrated from Processing to Conservation in order to more closely integrate decision making with follow-up treatment. The sorting of worn and damaged materials now maps to established conservation work flows and Mr. Moore, who formerly resorted incoming materials, is able to spend less time making treatment decisions and more time training. To improve reader services, circulation charge categories were refined to facilitate retrieval of in-process materials requested by patrons. In August 1997, when the microfilm preparation program was established in the Preservation Processing Division, policies and procedures were established to facilitate decision making and the flow of work between units.

### ***Training***

Training is an ongoing component of the conservation program. David Moore has worked with all new technicians, guiding them systematically through the progression of skills that are required to undertake collections conservation treatment in the College Library, where many books in the general research collections are old and fragile. Similar training programs are underway in the areas of personal health and safety as well as maintenance and use of equipment. Professional, support, and casual staff attend staff meetings, which provide a forum for information sharing and team development.

### ***Service to the College***

With reestablished staffing it has been possible to extend conservation services. One technician is dedicated to the treatment of materials for the College libraries outside Widener, supplementing the efforts of locally established repair units. The Loeb Music, Tozzer, Kummel, Cabot, and Fine Arts libraries were served this year. During a period when the conservation lab floor was being resurfaced, technicians brought tools and book presses to Tozzer and Cabot libraries and worked onsite. In addition, intern Heather Caldwell developed a start-up repair program for the Music Library. At the conclusion of her internship she was funded by Houghton Library to produce exhibition cradles for a major exhibition.

### *Service to the University*

The Conservation Division supports the efforts of libraries university-wide through the provision of information services. Nancy Schrock and Lisa Biblo, Preservation Information Librarian in the Preservation Center, created an electronic discussion group for all Harvard staff engaged in conservation treatment. "Bench-list" provides a vehicle for discussing conservation issues, products, treatments, and activities. The laboratory's resource library includes a collection of books and periodicals on collections conservation topics, a vertical file, catalogs and samples of conservation supplies and materials. Citations are being entered into a database that will ultimately be merged with a companion database maintained by the Preservation Center.

### *Disaster Preparedness and Response*

Disaster preparedness and response has been the focus of considerable effort. Nancy Schrock, David Moore, and Lisa Biblo developed a workshop on the handling of wet books, which they presented to all staff in the Preservation Services Department and the HUL Preservation Center. The need for increased disaster readiness took on a new urgency on June 13, when torrential rains flooded Harvard Yard. Storm drains backed up and water covered the basement of Widener Library. Fortunately, the problem was discovered and pumping began in time to prevent damage to the collections but floor surfaces in the conservation lab and elsewhere were destroyed.

### *Productivity*

Experienced or new, permanent or temporary, all staff worked with extraordinary dedication, flexibility, and good humor through a year marked by persistent change. Humberto Oliveira and his staff kept pace with production needs even when cutters and heavy equipment were displaced. His operation was the first to be up and running in the new lab and production statistics were 32% higher than in FY 1997.) When lab space had to be vacated, the already-crowded Processing Division compressed its operations so that conservation staff could move in and keep the minor repair operation running. Within a week of occupying the new conservation lab, both initially and after the original floor was replaced, full production levels were reestablished. library renovation activities and water-related emergencies put professionalism and collegiality to the test this year and conservation staff passed with flying colors.

Despite the upheaval of construction, moving, and periods of reduced staffing, total production increased 6% over last year. Staff conserved 10,831 books and 169 maps, charts, and posters. They constructed 3,269 enclosures, salvaged 488 wet items, and prepared 385 items for exhibition. A total of 15,016 items was treated. Of these, 789, or 5.2%, belonged to HCL libraries outside Widener.

## **Preservation Processing**

### ***Bindery & Shelf Preparation***

The Binding and Shelf Preparation Section of the Preservation Processing Division headed by Oliver Cutshaw, Binding Librarian, faced several challenges over the course of the year. In September, a key serials binding preparation position became vacant. The search for a qualified replacement took longer than anticipated and by the time Emmet Murphy joined the staff in April 1998 a considerable backlog of serials had developed despite the efforts of Mr. Cutshaw and his remaining staff, Dunstant Duncan, and Connie Toon, to keep it under control.

Shortly after Mr. Murphy's arrival, a second key position fell vacant and was ultimately filled by Jay Hurd. In May, to minimize the effects of reduced work flow on library users and staff, a cap was placed on the number of serials moved from the Periodicals Reading Room to Preservation each week for binding. By early summer, significant progress had been made toward eliminating backlogs. Mr. Murphy, a former MIT employee, brings years of experience and a solid knowledge of serials publishing patterns to his position. Mr. Hurd, a new graduate of the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science also has significant serials and bindery preparation experience, having worked in the Processing Division before pursuing his library degree.

Despite the pressures created by reduced staffing, progress was made in Binding and Shelf Preparation on various fronts. A project was initiated to improve access to the inventory of bookplates for some 900 separate gifts and endowments (amounting to over a half million individual plates).

Marion Taylor, Head, division head, initiated a project to clean up records for approximately 25,000 volumes charged to Processing since the late 1980s but not held there. This problem has more than one source (there are 88 pseudo-patron IDs dispersed through Widener Library, 68 of which are currently active). Analysis of printouts reveals a broad array of problematic bibliographic records, classification numbers, and barcodes, which complicate cleanup but makes it all the more important that the work be done.

Through efforts to improve accuracy and shorten turnaround time in Shelf Preparation, it was discovered that spine-labeling errors are caused by the labeling software currently in use, which frequently drops piece-level information from call numbers. Such problems must be spotted during quality control procedures and can be easily overlooked. An understanding of the source of the problem is helpful in controlling it. Implementation of HOLLIS II will enable software changes.

An overhaul of workflow routines has resulted in elimination of the trucks and shelves of unsolved problems. In collaboration with the various serials units, the division began in earnest to examine binding policies and will make significant changes in the coming year.

In order to increase throughput and flexibility, a new bindery preparation workstation and labeling workstation were established and staff were cross-trained. The perennial inability to unpack an entire commercial binding shipment upon receipt was addressed by securing use of part of a stack range adjacent to processing space. Shipments can now be unboxed quickly, a capability that improves quality control, speeds up processing, and enables us to provide better service to patrons. The time it takes to move materials from Processing to the stacks after return from the bindery has been reduced to an average of one week.

Methods have been improved for processing the increasing number and variety of non-book formats acquired by Widener Library. These include compact disks and videotapes, in combination with leaflets, pamphlets, and books, packaged in odd-shaped containers printed with information that must be retained. These mixed-media publications pose housing, property marking, and security challenges. Some commercial solutions have been found and the Conservation Division has developed others on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Reformatting***

The Reformatting Preparation section was established in August 1997 under Todd Bachmann, Reformatting Librarian. Formerly, Todd supervised Harvard's NEH-funded brittle books microfilming project in the Preservation Center. Mr. Bachmann began half time while an NEH project replacement was sought, and in March he joined the staff in Preservation Processing full-time. Ann Kern, Senior Preservation Cataloger for the NEH project joined the staff one-quarter time in August; and Nelly Feldman and Oxana Linda, experienced bibliographic assistants for the NEH project, joined the staff full time in August. In order to create a viable unit, Greer Gilman and Kathy Berry, who previously held different positions in the Processing Division, accepted new assignments—Greer to catalog preservation microfilm and Kathy to prepare microfilm targets and carry out other preparation functions. Marion Taylor assumed responsibility for space planning, and transformed two dingy rooms into pleasant work spaces.

The Reformatting Preparation section conducts bibliographic searching, does original and copy cataloging, collates books and serials, prepares film targets, and performs quality control procedures that together make up the complex routines associated with preservation microfilming. Four principal workflows were developed over the course of this initial year of the program. They include: brittle materials returned to Circulation after use by patron, materials brought to the Imaging Division by patrons, brittle materials identified by Collection Development staff, and Slavic materials drawn from Widener's great and decaying collection.

Candidates for filming are also identified by staff in the public services and processing units as well as by patrons. Priority is given to meeting the immediate needs of researchers who have requested microfilm copies of specific volumes. Special projects included microfilming of Sanskrit materials that had been earmarked some years ago for preservation, as well as Cuban and Breton pamphlets identified by bibliographers in Collection Development.

Given the years of experience embodied in the new Reformatting team and the fact that four staff members had worked previously on NEH projects, program start-up was swift and smooth. By year's end an efficient, highly productive microfilming program had been established for Widener Library. Because materials are selected based on risk and use, the books and serials entering the workflow are written in many languages and cover many subjects. This variety ensures cataloging and target preparation challenges as well as stimulating jobs for all.

### ***Productivity***

Despite reduced staffing in Bindery Preparation, 13,355 serials and 13,109 monographs were bound and 1,077 items were fitted with custom-made boxes, for a total of 27,541 items handled.

In Shelf Preparation, 26,748 new hardbound books, 26,664 library-bound monographs and serials, and 2,220 other materials were prepared for shelving, totaling 55,632 volumes. Retagged volumes totaled 8,073, and volumes prepared for shipment to the Harvard Depository totaled 11,179. Throughput, including 6,290 volumes reviewed and routed to other library units, was 81,174 volumes.

In its first year, the Reformatting Section prepared 2,140 volumes for filming (approximately 146,150 pages). Mr. Bachmann's management skills and Ms. Kern's extensive cataloging expertise are critical elements in the program's early success.

## **Imaging Services**

### ***Microfilming and Photography***

FY 1998 was a productive year for the Imaging Division. It marked the first of a two-year NEH-funded brittle books microfilming project, The History of Science in America. Books and monographs were collated, and cataloged by staff in the Preservation Center and delivered to the Imaging Division for filming. Over the course of the project approximately 8,200 volumes will be preserved. The establishment of the new microfilming program for Widener Library has resulted in a new work stream, which was incorporated smoothly into existing routines. Shirley Holcomb and her expert staff ensure that microfilm is carefully exposed, processed, and inspected.

The Photography Studio completed its fourth full year of operation with great success. Departments throughout the university were served and as in previous years, Houghton Library was a major client. Photographers Stephen Sylvester and Bob Zinck handled a large and complex work flow with great skill, solving the problems that inevitably arise when materials as diverse as those in the Harvard collections are reproduced. New quartz lights were purchased so that photographs of high quality can be created more efficiently.

### ***Self Service Copiers/Crimson Cash***

The Imaging Division maintains, on a cost-recovery basis, 30 self-service copiers housed throughout the College. In FY 1998, 3,381,702 copies were made on these machines. This was the second year of a multi-year program to implement the university's on-line card system, Crimson Cash, and Imaging Services worked closely with Dining Services to ensure a smooth transition. The new system enables students, faculty, and staff to use Harvard IDs to pay for photocopying. Imaging staff will continue to conduct assessments throughout the College to ensure that the Harvard community is well served and that the preservation concerns inherent in a self-service photocopy environment are addressed to the extent possible.

Jay Willwerth, division head, visited Océ in Holland to talk to engineers about the continuing need for machines on which books can be copied when opened only part way. (College Library equipment must be replaced within 18 months and continued production of such machinery appears to be at risk.) Mr. Willwerth's persistence may ultimately be helpful to libraries worldwide. He also visited the Selectech Corporation in England, seeking to stimulate the development of a competing book-edge copier, and encouraging more user-friendly help displays for existing machines.

### ***Administrative Copying***

The Imaging Division oversees 28 administrative copiers in the College Library. In FY 1998, 1,634,579 copies were made by library staff at an average cost per-copy of .035 cents. This was the second year in a row that costs declined by one cent per copy. These savings can be attributed to successful renegotiation of paper, rental, and maintenance contracts. Departmental responsibilities vis-à-vis photocopy services include helping the libraries to select new machinery and to update equipment when necessary, overseeing service calls from vendors, monitoring equipment usage, recording monthly meter readings for each machine, distributing monthly department reports based on meter readings, and managing contracts.

### ***Microform Readers***

In September 1993 the Imaging Division assumed responsibility for microform copying in the College Library. Departmental responsibilities for microform readers and printers are the same as for copy machines. There are now 20 reader-printers in the libraries. In FY 1998, 259,465 copies were made. An effort is underway to replace mechanically complex reader printers, which are often out of service, with readers fitted with screen scanners. Five screen scanners were installed this year.

### ***DCPP Pilot Project***

In April 1998 a scanning project was initiated in coordination with the HD Transfer & Linkage unit and the HUL Office for Information Systems. The Digital Contents Pilot Project will test the feasibility of providing better intellectual access to unindexed runs of

19th century journals that are being transferred to the Harvard Depository for safe, low-temperature storage. Currently targeted for the project are journals in European local history. Digital images of tables of contents are scanned and then linked to catalog records in HOLLIS. Over a 13-week period from April to June 1998, a part-time technician scanned 3,734 pages from 820 volumes (46 titles). The book scanner in use enables face-up scanning. Its cradle will be modified in an effort to provide better support for fragile bindings, improve image quality, and increase production. As part of research underway to identify scanning equipment that is well suited to the copying of historic materials, several companies are being encouraged to develop hardware and software that meets the document handling, image quality, and production goals of the department.

### ***Automation***

Work is continuing to automate many office functions, largely through the efforts of manager Lynn White. Among them is conversion to machine-readable form of a large card file of historical records documenting the production and acquisition of preservation microfilm in Widener Library.

### ***Digital Imaging***

During the past year, Mr. Willwerth and Stephen Chapman, Preservation Librarian for Digital Initiatives in the Preservation Center, visited several photography and imaging laboratories, including Unidigital Boris in Boston (to see the firm's photography labs and darkrooms), Minolta in New Jersey (to inspect a new overhead scanner), DSI in Scituate, MA (to learn about microfilm scanning capabilities), and Xerox PARC in Palo Alto (to see a prototype overhead scanner). Mr. Willwerth also visited laboratories at MIT; in Arlington and Hingham, MA; in New Hampshire, and in Rhode Island in search of high-quality backup microfilm processing services.

### ***Productivity***

Over the course of the year, 2,051,980 frames of microfilm were shot and 457,200 feet of duplicate film were produced, 8,175 photographs were shot, 3,734 black & white pages were scanned, and 5,275,836 photocopies were made on machinery maintained by the division.

Available from <http://preserve.harvard.edu>  
<http://preserve.harvard.edu/hcl/hclFY98report.pdf>