

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 1999--31 AUGUST 2000

Section 1. - Introduction

The Preservation Department, although over ten years old, is new in many ways. There is a new department head, a preponderance of new staff, new challenges and initiatives, particularly in the realm of digital technology. However, the level of service and expertise that the staff provides to the Library remains consistently high. It is a major goal of the near future to build on this foundation a preservation program that will be reconfigured and refocused to address the changing and expanding needs of the Library's collections in all formats.

Section 2. - Current year's activities

The Department has responded with flexibility and creativity to a year characterized by change in systems, organization, and personnel. Staffing has become slightly more stable compared to last year; however at no point was the department without at least one vacancy. Four positions funded by the preservation endowment were modified with the goal of making them more attractive for recruitment and retention. The Digital Technology Assistant and second Conservation Assistant position were converted to permanent appointments, and the Materials Processing Assistant for reformatting was increased from 75% to full-time. In addition, the departure of the UBRP assistant created the opportunity to revise and upgrade the position from LA2 to Departmental Assistant 2. These changes foster the stable workforce that is essential to peak productivity and effectiveness of the preservation program.

Voyager continues to adversely affect key aspects of the Department's activities. The slowdown in cataloging new acquisitions reduced workloads for Library Binding and Conservation, and factored into the underexpenditure of the library binding fund. The Department was able to readjust to some extent: Conservation undertook several projects to treat particular collections, and Materials Processing resumed processing all paperbacks for commercial binding at Heckman. In addition, a project to retrieve previously unbound paperbacks from the stacks and send them for binding has allowed us to better utilize available library binding resources. Mass deacidification is relatively unaffected by Voyager implementation, and work proceeded smoothly. The departure of the staff person primarily responsible for UBRP resulted in a dramatic slowdown in that program in the latter half of the year. The Department completed its portion of the CIC5 microfilming project a year ahead of the grant deadline.

Conservation kept pace with the treatment needs of the traditional library collections. Two major projects were building Oriental-style boxes for Asian limp bindings, and working with the Art Librarian to refurbish the Art Collection. Conservation staff made valuable contributions to the Bologna book fair exhibit and have been working with the Facilities Director and others to ameliorate the damage to collections during moving and renovation work. In addition, the unit began to plan for a new lab which will consolidate the two existing facilities. This should increase efficiency and result in more pleasant work environment.

The Digital Technology unit has made great strides in its two major grant-funded projects, in addition to small local projects. Of particular note is the *Building History: Northwestern University* website on the University Archives web page. Digital Technology staff were instrumental in digitizing the materials selected by Archives staff, and made great progress toward implementing the website in time for the Sesquicentennial celebration.

The Department also cooperated with Library Development to host a visit from donor Susan Bodin, and to develop digital project ideas for funding through Foundation Relations.

Progress on 1999/2000 goals

1. *Initiate planning for the review of the Preservation Department and the Library's overall preservation program.*

Preliminary discussions among the management staff yielded a set of internal goals for the program review.

2. *Develop projects for grant funding for preservation microfilming and digitization.*

CIC6 has been funded by NEH, and the Department will participate by contributing more preservation microfilming of African newspapers. Two grant proposals were submitted to federal agencies: a proposal to IMLS to digitize the text of Curtis' *North American Indian*, and one to NEH to microfilm railroad periodicals from the Transportation Library collection.

3. *Enhance the efficiency of the Use Based Preservation Reformatting Program.*

Progress on this goal was delayed when the UBRP Assistant position became vacant in May. However, we were successful in developing in conjunction with Collection Management a process to prioritize and select large sets of deteriorated titles for replacement.

4. *Participate in creating an organizational structure within NUL to support digital library initiatives.*

Both the Department Head and Digital Technology Librarian have been appointed to the Library's Digital Library Committee.

5. *Continue to broaden and improve the environmental monitoring program.*

The Department has been accepted by the Image Permanence Institute to participate in a field trial of newly developed preservation management technology. We will receive hardware, software, and training free of charge under the terms of a grant from NEH. The purpose of the project is to test and refine a computerized system for gathering and interpreting data on environmental conditions in collection storage and display areas.

6. *Improve the public education aspects of the Department Web site.*

The Department participated in the development of the new Library web presence, and successfully migrated all of its information, including the educational "Care and Handling of Library Materials," to the new site.

Section 3. - Goals for the coming year

1. *Continue planning for the review of the Preservation Department and the Library's overall preservation program.*

(Strategic Plan Goal P1.d.: Review the Library's 1986 preservation plan and make recommendations for its revision.

Context: It has been nearly fifteen years since the Library conducted the comprehensive self-study developed by ARL to evaluate the physical condition of its collections, and undertook measures to control the environment and systematically preserve and protect the collections. With the increase of digital formats in the Library's holdings, it is time to review the earlier plan and expand it to include consideration of electronic resources.

Resources: Existing Library staff will perform this work.

Performance Measures: The Library will achieve this objective when it completes the review of the original study and makes recommendations for updating the preservation program.)

Review and revision of the original program should result in adjustments in resource allocation and a new staffing plan.

2. *Develop projects for grant funding for preservation microfilming and digitization.*

The Department has a successful track record of participation in cooperative microfilming grants, primarily through CIC. NUL has been a participant in all six CIC cooperative microfilming projects, and has submitted its first proposal for an independent preservation microfilming project. We are exploring NEH opportunities for hybrid proposals (e.g., preservation microfilming and electronic finding aid, microfilming and conservation treatment) that can be designed to address a range of preservation and access needs of the Library's collections. In addition, the Department plans to revise its IMLS proposal for resubmission in 2001. We will also pursue other

opportunities, including participating in preliminary planning for a CIC cooperative digital preservation project (CIC7). It should be noted that all digital project plans are contingent on review and approval by the Digital Library Committee.

3. *Continue to broaden and improve the environmental monitoring program.*

The program will be expanded to include monitoring of ultraviolet light levels. Participation in the IPI pilot program will also enhance the local monitoring program. The Department Head will continue efforts to ensure that environmental conditions are considered in future plans for relocating library collections.

4. *In coordination with the Web Redesign Group's efforts, develop a plan for monitoring the effectiveness of the Preservation Department website, particularly "Care and Handling of Library Materials."*
5. *Investigate CIC cooperative preservation initiatives for mass deacidification processing and shipping, and microfilm print negative storage.*

Statistics may be found in the individual unit reports.

Professional Contributions

Lorraine Olley:

- Member, ALCTS Publications Committee, CMDS/PARS Library Collections Review Guide Subcommittee;
- Member, ALA/ALCTS/PARS Preservation Management Committee;
- Chair, CIC Preservation Officers;
- Preservation consultant for Meadville/Lombard Seminary Library, Chicago.

Professional contributions of other staff may be found in the individual unit reports.

Lorraine Olley
Head, Preservation Department
November 1, 2000