

# The Challenges and Successes of Collaboration: Preservation and Archives

## Introduction

Collaboration between Archives and Preservation is important to maintain the care and storage of documents and artifacts. The goals of collaboration must be to meet challenges head-on and create innovative solutions for the preservation of archive materials. In order for collaboration to be successful, communication between departments must be open and free-flowing. The following are examples of collaborative projects between the Preservation Librarian at Miami University and the Archivist of the Western College Memorial Archives, Miami University.



Helen Peabody Daguerreotype

## Helen Peabody Daguerreotype

A Daguerreotype of Helen Peabody, which was on permanent display in the Western Memorial Archives Reading Room, was showing signs of severe fading. In order to preserve this very important photograph, while still being able to display the image, we came up with the solution of using a digital surrogate for display. With this solution in place, visitors to the Archive are still able to enjoy the portrait on display, while the original is safely protected from harmful light in a custom clamshell box. Having a digital copy of the image also gives the Archive more options for use and handling, further protecting the original from damage.



Custom clamshell box for daguerreotype

## Preservation Needs and Priorities

As part of an ongoing project between the Western Memorial Archives and the Preservation Department at Miami University, a preservation assessment survey was conducted at the Archives. The results of this survey identified several areas of preservation needs at the Archive:



Stacks at Western Archives

- Lack of documented policies regarding handling and use, and display of materials
- Need for long term preservation planning
- Need for proper housing and storage of materials

The Preservation Department has been working closely with the Archive to find solutions for these preservation needs. Many of the collaborative projects between the two departments center around properly housing materials, thereby insuring the items' safety when stored, moved, or handled.

## Custom Boxes for Artifacts

Western Memorial Archives is home to many items and objects that do not fall under the traditional category of books, manuscripts, or other paper based ephemera. It can be quite challenging to store these unusually shaped items, especially when space is limited. A solution that we have come up with is to create custom boxes for many of the items. The boxes serve to protect the items from damage and make it easier to store and retrieve the items.



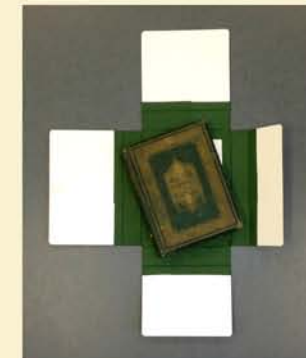
Custom box for viewfinder



Custom clamshell for Fraternity paddle



Small collection of Western monographs awaiting treatment



Example of custom phase box

## Monographs

Western Memorial Archives is also home to a collection of monographs. Many of the volumes had not been treated for years and were suffering the effects, including a coating of dirt/dust, broken bindings, torn spines, and loose pages. In order to stabilize the volumes as quickly as possible, the books were cleaned and put into custom made phase-boxes for easier storage and handling.

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