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Scene outside the Uffizi

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(Editor this issue: Mary S. Coryn)

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The Cover: Drawing by Sidonie Coryn from the photograph which was used as the frontispiece of Saving the Libraries of Florence. (See footnote on facing page)

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Saving the Libraries of Florence

A few days after the disastrous floods that occurred in Italy on November 4, 1966, a group of art lovers in the United States organized the Committee to Rescue Italian Art (CRIA). One of their first acts was to send, on November 8, two art historians to Florence and Venice, the areas where the art losses were reported to be the greatest, to assess the damage and to find out what could be done to help. Word was received from them by transatlantic telephone that restoration experts and materials were urgently needed. By November 14, there were 16 conservators on their way to Florence. Within the next week, they were joined by four more conservators. This group of 20, headed by Lawrence Majewski, acting director of the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, included: a chemist; 13 conservators of paintings, frescoes, mosaics, and furniture; two conservators of prints and drawings; one librarian; and three bookbinders, specializing in the restoration and conservation of books, manuscripts, and other library materials.

I was one of the three bookbinders in this original group. After I returned to the United States, I was asked to make a second trip in December, with one of my assistants, Sergio Ceccarini, to help continue the work in Florence. In the course of my three decades as a bookbinder and restorer, I had dealt with many water-damaged libraries. Although most of these libraries had been victims of fire, the damage to the books was usually done chiefly by water that had been used to put out the blaze. Even so, I had experienced nothing of the magnitude of the flood in Florence and hardly knew what to expect. I knew that water alone does not usually destroy the paper in books, unless they are printed on coated paper. However, when books are damp for any extended period of time, mold spores begin to become active. Older handmade papers were sized with gelatine; this makes an

excellent medium for the growth of some types of mold and bacteria. Other types grow on the cellulose fibers of the paper itself. The mold organisms actually feed on the sizing, making the paper spongy, or on the cellulose, causing the paper to disintegrate. The growth of mold in books may come about also from their being stored in rooms that have a relative humidity of over 70 percent. Books are hygroscopic, i.e. have the capacity for absorbing water from the air around them. Therefore any books stored in conditions of high humidity are in danger of being damaged by mold. We had received reports that the flooded area of Florence had become, in effect, a huge humidity chamber. The wet books in rooms that were only partially flooded were humidifying the dry books on the upper shelves. The book and paper conservators agreed that we must get the wet books and the damp rooms as dry as possible in as short a time as possible.

Before we arrived in Florence we did not yet know how many books and manuscripts had been water damaged. We thought that the more valuable material might be frozen until such time as careful attention could be paid to the restoration of each leaf. Freezing prevents the growth of microorganisms and, for this reason, a frozen collection of water-soaked books can be kept mold-free indefinitely, or until facilities are available for defrosting them and drying them out in manageable batches. The great problem with a water-soaked library of hundreds or thousands of books is that it is usually impossible to provide enough workers and enough equipment to dry all the books simultaneously. Yet, if one begins to treat them seriatim a great many of the books will have become moldy long

Carolyn Horton of New York City is a hand binder specializing in the restoration of books and manuscripts. She is the author of Cleaning and Preserving Bindings and Related Materials, the first pamphlet in a series on the Conservation of Library Materials, which will be published this year by LTP/A.L.A.

Books which had been dug out of the mud were stacked outside the Uffizi until they could be transported to drying establishments.

before they are reached. We did not yet know that in Florence almost two million books and archives had been soaked and that refrigeration on the required scale was not available.

During the plane trip to Italy, the conservators compared notes concerning the reported effects of the flood. Some had copies of eyewitness accounts and lists of damage that had been done. We were all puzzled by these reports. Why were books and paintings, easily transportable, left where the water could damage them? How long would it have taken to move the paintings to a higher floor? Why were musical instruments left where they could be submerged? What kind of a flood could this have been and what kind of irresponsible curators were we going to meet?

When we arrived in Rome on November 15, we were met by two members of the United States Information Service who informed us that we would need the highest boots we could find, that we were to be prepared for a city in which there was no running water, no heat, no electricity, poor food and little of that. We bought rubber boots in Rome and had a luxurious lunch on board the train to Florence believing that it would be our last good meal for some time. We were met at the railway station in Florence by a United States Army truck (for the men and materials) and a taxi (for the women). Although we had seen flooded fields and farmyards from the train window on the way to Florence, all seemed normal in the vicinity of the station, except for the dust in the air and dried mud in the streets. Nor did we see signs of damage on our drive to Bernard Berenson's former villa, I Tatti, above Florence, which was to be our headquarters. Here we met the man in charge of CRIA's activities in Florence, Professor Myron Gilmore, director of the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, which is located at I Tatti. He gave us some idea of the magnitude of the disaster and suggested that all the conservators, whatever their field of specialty, spend the next day, November 16, interleaving books in one of the many flooded libraries. Then, after our day of work, we would return late in the afternoon to I Tatti where we could meet the Italian officials

who were in charge of the rescue operations.

Following our meeting at I Tatti, most of us were driven to a nearby *pensione* where we were housed. The next morning, while on our way by car to the flooded area of the city and to the libraries in which we were to work, we learned more about the flood. It had occurred on a national holiday which commemorates the Italian victory over Austria at the end of the First World War. The city's institutions were closed for a long weekend and many of the staff members who had keys to the buildings were out of town. In many instances, the flood made it impossible for them to get back into town to open the doors. In fact, no one but the shopkeepers on the Ponte Vecchio had been warned that the flood was about to occur. If a warning had been given, perhaps guards would have been left in the buildings.

Accounts of the great speed and force of the water were hard to understand until one remembered the principle of physics: that water passing through a funnel is capable of building up great speeds. The narrow streets of Florence had acted like so many funnels. The great force of the floodwater also compressed air in some basements so powerfully that the ceilings were burst open, causing the floor above to collapse into the room below. In addition to its inherent destructiveness the flood water was laden with fine mud which seeped into and was precipitated on books and other objects and in every possible hollow or niche—under the floors of cupboards, behind cabinet walls and baseboards. The surface of the water carried a thick layer of fuel oil from hundreds of ruptured storage tanks. As the water receded the oil tended to be deposited on and absorbed by marble statues and smeared on frescoes. It seemed also to have mixed with the residual mud to which it gave the characteristic slipperiness and luster.

The flood waters did their damage on the first floors and in the basements of the buildings in the old part of the city. Why were valuable books kept on the ground floors or cellars so close to the river? The last threat suffered by Florence was the German artillery bombardment in 1944. The greatest treasures had been moved as low as possible, since the danger was

from above, and many were never moved up again. The last flood worthy of mention had occurred in 1833. Who could have foreseen this worst of all floods?

When we reached the flooded area of Florence we found the way barred to traffic by barbed wire and soldiers. We parked the car and walked in through the narrow old streets, ankle-deep in shiny slippery mud. During our first day in the flooded area of the city, we began to understand the full extent of the devastation. We saw piles of glistening mud before each doorway and shop; soggy leather purses scattered outside a leathergoods shop; mud-soaked books in front of a bookstore; water trucks bearing signs such as "Drinking Water—Gift of the City of Bologna"; lines of people carrying plastic or straw-covered jugs waiting in line for the water; and shopkeepers wearing rubber gloves washing their goods outside their shops. We were astonished by the variations in the height of the mud and oil lines on the buildings.

We spent our first day of physical labor interleaving books. This was a valuable experience for it made us feel an immediate part of the rescue effort and helped us identify more completely with the thousands of volunteers who interleaved books all day, every day, for weeks. My fellow binder, Paul Banks, and painting conservators Kay Silberfeld and Alain Boissonas, and I were assigned to the Accademia di Belle Arti. Here the library of the school had been flooded up to the tops of the books on the lower shelves, affecting about 3,500 folio volumes. Sheets of mimeograph paper were being used for interleaving. Many of the books were receiving their second interleaving, but the pages were still very damp. Some mold was beginning to grow and it was already well developed on the outside of every leather-bound wet book. Mold was also growing on the tops of the books in the still visible layer of dust that antedated the flood. To a lesser degree mold was also visible on the other edges of the pages. We often found it on the endpapers, and on the first few flyleaves of the books. As for the insides of the volumes the occurrence of mold was sporadic. We noticed a strange blue stain on the wet pages of some volumes. At first we mistook it for ink

or a watercolor stain, but then we found that it occurred wherever the water had been able to seep directly in between the pages, through stitch holes in the backs of the folds of the signatures, at the edge of a folded plate, or at the fore edge in a quarto volume where the pages are likely to be rippled. The stain was transparent. It did not have the plantlike growth or powdery appearance of the more familiar mold. Later we learned that such stains occur whenever there is polluted water. The stains disappeared immediately when treated with a weak solution of the bleach Chloromine-T.

We were surrounded by students working patiently and steadily. From them we learned two Italian words which one heard everywhere: *interfolliazione* (to interleave), and *muffa* (mold). We also learned to ask for *un libro da fare* (a book to work on). We found several students who spoke English and from them we learned that after the flood many of the students who lived in other cities were sent home because there was no place for them to live in Florence. The students who were working with us that day were engineering students from the north of Italy who had come as volunteers. The Italian Government, which owns the railroads, had moved passenger cars into sidings near the station. Makeshift bunks were set up in these cars, where the student volunteers could sleep.

Late that afternoon as we were about to board a bus to return to I Tatti, we saw hundreds of tired Italian soldiers march past, each carrying a shovel. Other volunteers, wearing bright red rubber gloves (the mud was contaminated by sewage) and carrying shovels, also filed past. These volunteers, who called themselves the Centro Operativo Firenze, came from England, Holland, Germany, and the United States, as well as from Italy. They had spent the day cleaning the mud-filled cellars pailful by pailful. As dusk fell, no street lights appeared. In a few of the mud-spattered shops lighted candles were visible. When we returned to I Tatti, we assembled in Berenson's great library where we heard a number of speeches, one given by Signor Procacci, the man who had been in charge of restoring Florence after the war, another by Professor Sergio Camerani, director of the State

Archives. We learned that the two largest libraries, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (the largest library in Italy) with a million and a quarter wet books, and the Archivio di Stato, with over 40,000 wet volumes from the archives, were being cared for by experts from all parts of Italy, from Germany, and later from England. Most of the industrial drying facilities in Italy were also being used by these two libraries. There were many other smaller flooded libraries to which no help was being afforded. (We eventually learned of 46 such collections.) The American book conservators were assigned to assist any of these smaller libraries that requested help. Initial assignments were worked out. Alexander Yow, print, drawing, and manuscript restorer for the Pierpont Morgan Library, was assigned to help save the books at the Synagogue Comunita Israelitica. He was later joined by Dr. Menahem Schmelczer, librarian, Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. Jack Washeba, paper restorer of Boston, was assigned to the rare books at the Law School Library. The two bookbinders were given a list of libraries that had requested help, and asked to visit them. Professor Myron Laskin, Jr., Kress Fellow at I Tatti, volunteered to serve as our interpreter. When the third bookbinder, Harold Tribolet, head of the extra-bindery of the Lakeside Press in Chicago, arrived, he and Paul Banks of Chicago's Newberry Library were also given other assignments, one of which was to inspect the industrial drying establishments to which many of the wet books had been carried, and to evaluate the effects of the techniques being used to dry the books.

Eventually I visited, and in most cases revisited as a consultant, 15 of the smaller libraries and collections in Florence and one in Venice. Each library had requested help and the staff was anticipating our arrival. We were first shown the water damage at the various locations; it ranged from the flooding of the lowest shelf in the ground-floor library at the Accademia di Belle Arti and the Conservatorio di Musica Cherubini library, to the flooding of the entire ground-floor rooms to the ceiling at the Centro Didattico Nazionale di Studi e Documentazione. The flood waters rose and fell in a

comparatively short time so that in many libraries the books on the ground floor were wet only for a day. The books swelled on the shelf as the water seeped in and in some cases were so tightly wedged on the shelf that the frame had to be broken to remove the books.

The books that were in the worst shape were those that were in basements or underground library stacks where the muddy water was not able to drain away. Some 15,000 books and manuscript volumes in the basement of the building adjoining the Synagogue were steeped in mud for eight days before equipment could be brought to pump the water out. Also in bad condition were the books in the modern library stacks of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Florence. Three floors of stacks were filled with water and mud. Eventually this was pumped out. Work had to be done in darkness since there was only one slit window per floor. We saw a collection of theses going back almost a century which had soaked in water for 20 days; the weak wood-pulp paper was almost jellylike.

After viewing the area where the flood had occurred we were taken to that part of the building where the wet books were being treated. At this point the librarian would usually say: "As I show you our procedure, please tell us if we are doing anything wrong or if you see ways in which we can do the work better." In most libraries we found students, older volunteers, and staff members bundled in sweaters, sitting at tables placing interleaving paper between the leaves of the books. The paper ranged from blotting paper to cleansing tissues. In the neighborhood of Florence, all paper usable for interleaving had been exhausted soon after the flood. Paper was being sent in from other parts of Italy and other countries, but the distribution of supplies to libraries was uneven. Fortunately, we were able to help correct this situation. The most common problem in regard to drying the books was that the librarians were not always aware of the fact that the drying operation would be self-defeating if the rooms themselves remained humid. We often found that the interleaved books were kept in the workroom where the windows were closed and there were auxiliary heaters. In addition, the wet interleaving

paper which had been removed from the books was frequently left in the room. We persuaded the workers to remove the wet paper and to move the interleaved books to unheated well-ventilated rooms.

Progress in getting the books dry was very advanced in some libraries as at the Cherubini, where two weeks after the flood a number of interleavings had been given and some books had already been reshelfed. In contrast was the library at the SS Annunziata where in mid-December many wet books were still in metal bookstacks covered with mold, and swollen so that the whole stack was twisted out of shape.

Some mold was seen in all the libraries. It

apparently began to grow about five or six days after the flood; however, books that had soaked in mud and water did not begin to grow mold until they had been out of the water for five or six days. The blue stains occurred in some of the books in all the libraries in Florence but in none of the books in Venice. The librarians' greatest concern was how to combat the mold. We expected daily to find that the mold had exploded everywhere. However each day was a little colder than the day before and this natural refrigeration served to keep the mold from growing as rapidly as we had anticipated.

We saw only one library that was almost certainly largely destroyed, a collection of four



At the Law Library, Peter Waters and Professor Mauro Cappelletti examine dried card catalogs.

thousand books on Etruscan art. Many of the books were printed on coated paper. The leaves had stuck together and the separation of such leaves is almost impossible.

The mud, which was carried in by the water, was not distributed equally on the books. Where it was deposited, the edges of the pages seemed to act as a filter to keep the mud from penetrating. It stayed and dried on the tops and could be brushed off without apparent harm to the book. In those few cases where mud coated the entire leaf, we advised that it be washed rather than brushed off, so that the surface of the paper would not be scraped nor the printed image disturbed. We were shown some books whose leaves had stuck together as the mud dried and we were able to show the workers how to dampen the edges, softening the mud, so that the leaves could be separated without damage. In view of the extensive damage done by water-borne fuel oil to statues and buildings, it seems quite remarkable that we observed scarcely any oil damage to books in the libraries we visited. Possibly much of the oil was filtered out as the water seeped into the buildings. In addition we found evidence that the coatings of mud left on the books had served to protect them from whatever oil was present.

From our observations and from reports from others we concluded that except for some red ink, the inks used on handwritten documents in the flooded archives were stable. We were particularly interested in studying wet vellum or parchment, but we found that in almost every instance the librarians were aware of the special problems which this material presents and wet vellum documents and books had been sent to Rome or elsewhere for immediate treatment. We saw a collection of 150 parchment documents in the private collection of the Guicciardini family. These were being dried between large sheets of blotting paper. The writing and illumination had not transferred to the blotting paper as much as we would have predicted, perhaps because no weights had been placed on top; however, translucent areas were to be seen on almost every piece, particularly where the document had been folded. Here the writing was no longer visible, and the parchment was

shriveling as it dried. This is the result of an irreversible chemical change that occurs as the chemicals used to make the vellum are dissolved out by the water. Our advice was that whenever possible such documents should be air-dried with weights placed around the edges to control the shrinkage and curling.

In general we found that there were three areas in which we were able to offer helpful advice or practical assistance: first, the matter of getting the books dry; second, the provision of supplies, equipment, and workers; and third, in the defense against mold. As agents of CRIA, an independent agency with its own funds, we were able to act quickly and efficiently in obtaining dehumidifiers, infrared drying equipment, fans, etc. We were told it would take months to get these through normal channels.

The interleaving paper and blotters that were sent to Florence from England and other countries were stored at the British Consulate and CRIA aided in distributing them. We were the only organization to which small libraries could turn and so we were called upon to advise the librarians in such matters as where to apply for more volunteer help and to inform the committee that coordinated volunteers which institutions needed more help. Because the problem that Florence faces in saving almost two million wet books is unprecedented, it has commanded the attention of many of the conservators of the world. In addition to help from Italian conservators, chief among whom are those at the Istituto di Patologia del Libro in Rome, a German committee sent a restorer named Hans Heiland who set up a workshop at the railroad power station. Here he was directing the work of taking apart the muddiest books of the Palatine collection from the Biblioteca Nazionale, washing and drying the leaves.

Later the British Museum, with money from the Italian Art and Archives Rescue Fund (the British counterpart of CRIA) sent a team of British binders, headed by the distinguished binders and restorers Peter Waters and Roger Powell. They took over where the German work stopped, but made certain changes: sending the books first to industrial drying establishments, and separating the leaves when the books were

dry (causing less damage than when they are taken apart wet). The signatures are held in an ingenious wooden clamp while the leaves are washed in a fungicidal solution containing orthophenyl phenol and then dried, pressed, and packed for shipment. While I was there in December 15,000 books were being prepared for shipment to Vienna for rebinding. The British took photographs of the original bindings from many angles and removed and saved bindings from the dry books so that in planning the new binding there would be a record of the original.

Most of the water-soaked bindings were destroyed. Leather and vellum lose essential tanning agents when soaked in water, and shrink badly and become brittle when dry. Attempts were being made to save some of the bindings by cleaning them with saddle soap and rubbing them with lanolin. This treatment was apparently successful in the treatment of some heavy leather shields. I have no report on the results of this treatment on leather and vellum bindings. As for other binding materials, cloth loses its starch filling and ceases to protect the book. Only the paper bindings seemed to be usable after the books were dry.

It is too soon to evaluate conclusively the results of the efforts made by the various experts to save the books of Florence, or to write the definitive article on what has been learned from the experience. The remarks that follow may be considered an interim report on the methods being used to dry books and control mold.

Drying Books

The simplest way to get wet books dry is to stand the book upright with the boards extended and the leaves fanned out. By separating the leaves in a new place as the areas most exposed to the air dry, the book will eventually dry out, if the room is well ventilated or if the relative humidity of the room is below 70 percent. This drying technique is being used in Florence in such libraries as that of the Faculty of Letters or where interleaving paper is not available. The more usual method of attempting to dry books is to wick out the moisture with interleaving paper. If the interleaving paper is of the same thickness as the paper of the book each inter-

leaving of the book wicks out half of the moisture. A number of interleavings are required to reduce the moisture inside the book to a safe level. When starting to dry books that are water soaked we recommend standing the book upright with its boards extended in order to drain out as much water as possible. This lets air inside the book. The pages should be fanned out frequently to let air into new places. When the book seems to be somewhat drier interleaving can be started. If the paper is thin, weak, or clinging to adjacent leaves, the first interleaving should be applied to about every tenth page, or wherever the leaves open naturally. Only when the book is partly dry will it be possible to open and interleave each leaf safely. Better results are obtained with both of these methods if the books are placed on racks so that air can circulate all around. Cross ventilation, dehumidifiers, and infrared lamps are all helpful in speeding drying. Books may be placed open on improvised chicken-wire racks, where they are ex-



A volunteer washing the leaves of a book, which is held in a wooden clamp.

posed to the heat of infrared lamps. Aluminum foil sheets placed under the drying leaves serve as heat reflectors and speed up drying.

Talc and sawdust were being used everywhere in the city as drying agents. Although talc combined with a solvent has been used successfully to wick out the oil stains on porous marble, we do not recommend it for treating wet books. It does not absorb water to any degree and it obscures the printed image on the page. Its use causes a very serious problem in the case of illustrations. Sawdust on the other hand serves to increase the evaporating surface and wick out the moisture. At the Gabinetto E. P. Vieusseux, the books were being tumbled in sawdust as they were brought up from the mud of the basement. Fresh sawdust was sprinkled under and over them as they were placed on their fore edges on the marble floors. This seemed to facilitate drying. In other libraries sawdust was being sprinkled between the leaves of the books in order to let air circulate.

Industrial drying establishments were being successfully used to dry the books from many of the water-damaged libraries. The drying facilities were originally designed to dry the following products: tobacco, textiles, bricks, glue, straw, ceramics, and rice. In addition, drying sheds resembling wind tunnels were constructed for treating some books such as those from the Vieusseux. All the establishments seemed to be doing a good job of drying the books, provided the proper temperature and relative humidity were maintained and the books were left in long enough. For drying paper, a relative humidity of 35–50 percent and a temperature of 122–140° F. was recommended. For vellum a lower temperature of 68–77° F. was required. In one establishment centrifugal force was being used experimentally to remove water from the books. A large book dried thoroughly after 20 hours of spinning at 190° F.

We were eventually able to answer the most frequently asked question: "How can we tell when the books are dry enough to be reshelfed?" Dr. Fausta Gallo of the Istituto di Patologia del Libro demonstrated a gauge which measures the humidity inside a closed book, an instrument called "Aqua-boy for Paper," which

is manufactured in Württemberg by the Munding Company. The book to be tested is opened in the middle. Two metal prongs, resembling a tuning fork, are placed flat on the exposed page; the book is closed. A dial on an instrument to which the prongs are attached registers the absolute humidity inside the book. A reading of 8 percent or less indicates that the book is dry enough to be reshelfed.

Almost universally we found that those books that were dried in industrial drying establishments were dry enough to be reshelfed. A large percentage of books that had received three or four interleavings were still not quite dry enough to reshelve. A number of these testing instruments are being purchased by CRIA and librarians are being taught to use them.

Controlling Mold

If a book has less than 8 percent absolute humidity inside and is shelved in a room that has a relative humidity of between 55–65 percent, mold will not develop. Since these ideal conditions could not be immediately achieved in the flooded city, we had to find ways to kill the mold whenever it was encountered. One of the various means used to control mold in Florence is fumigation with formaldehyde gas, as was done at the Law Library. This must be done by a professional fumigator. Although this gas will kill all mold with which it comes in contact, there is some risk of embrittlement of leather and vellum from prolonged contact with formaldehyde. In addition, formaldehyde gas does not penetrate a closed book to any helpful degree. A more serious objection is that the treatment gives no lasting protection, so that if the relative humidity remains too high, mold will inevitably start to grow again.

Complete penetration of the closed leaves of the book and killing of all mold spores can be achieved by placing the books in a vacuum chamber and introducing ethylene oxide gas. Such a vacuum chamber was installed in the Biblioteca Nazionale. Ethylene oxide gas can also be applied by the less costly and ingenious method in which books are placed in large metal drums that have been lined with strong plastic bags. Pressurized cans of ethylene oxide

gas are placed inside the bag. The bag is then sealed and the can detonated by a simple attachment which can be operated from the outside. Excellent penetration of even densely packed material is reported, especially if the material to be treated is wet. However ethylene oxide, like formaldehyde, does not deposit anything in the paper to prevent future mold growth.

A traditional and successful method of killing mold and protecting materials from future mold growth for an extended period of time is the thymol treatment. Thymol can be applied as a vapor, the crystals being vaporized by the application of low heat, such as a light bulb, to a pan of crystals of thymol. The material to be treated is enclosed, usually in a cabinet. In Florence we set up a number of heavy plastic tents and built a wooden framework to hold the tray of crystals and the light bulb underneath. Sixty grams of thymol were used for every cubic meter of space. The books were exposed to the thymol for 24 hours. In addition, 10 percent of thymol was also dissolved in alcohol, and either painted or sprayed on moldy areas of the books. Great quantities of these materials were distributed by CRIA to any library that requested it. At the Law Library, students were painting every tenth leaf of moldy books with this mixture. The books were then put aside to marinate for several days.

The British Museum was recommending the use of the chemical orthophenyl phenol, called Topane in England, and Dowicide #1 in the United States. This too could be dissolved in alcohol, or vaporized, and tests show that it gives protection longer than thymol does. This, however, was only beginning to be used when I left Italy.

It is important to make the point that most of the leaves of the wet books in Florence have been saved, through the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of many thousands of students and other volunteers from many countries, who have gotten the books dried quickly enough to prevent destruction from biological agents. However the dried book leaves cannot be replaced on the shelves for general use until they can be rebound. There are not enough binders or restorers in the world to handle a job of this

magnitude. We need a dedicated work force to help rebind these books. These workers will need training before they can become binders and restorers. They will also have to be able to look forward to making an adequate living in this field.

A Study Committee on Book Conservation has been organized in the United States under the auspices of CRIA. The aim of the committee is to cooperate in the establishment of an international conservation center in Florence where binders and restorers from England and the United States, as well as other countries, will teach young people to bind and restore the water-damaged books.

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EDITORIAL / Laura S. Young

The Guild's Library

At the fifty-second annual meeting of the Guild in April, 1958 Mrs. Gerlach, the retiring president, suggested that the Guild start a library. To get the project under way she donated a copy of the Baltimore exhibition catalogue "The History of Bookbinding." Her idea was received with enthusiasm so the Executive Committee set to work to bring it to fruition.

The plans for the first meeting in the Fall of that year were built around our proposed library. The notice of this meeting requested that every member contribute a book or cash for the purchase of books. While the response was not overwhelmingly good, we did receive 15 books and \$20, and at the end of the evening we had a library,

Now that it was an actuality, the question arose as to where to house it and how to administer it. It was apparent that neither space nor staff was available for such a project at AIGA headquarters. Mrs. Lada-Mocarski reported that the American Craftsmen's Council was building a craft library and that possibly they would be willing to shelve our books. She offered to take the matter up with the ACC. They were amenable to the idea and a formal agreement between the ACC and the Guild, regarding the housing and administering of our collection, was drawn up in December 1958. (A summary of which was published in Vol. I, no. 2 of our Journal)

Mrs. Houlihan and Mr. Banks, both members of the Executive Committee at the time, offered to serve as a library committee, and it was through their efforts that the books were catalogued, bookplated and deposited in the library of the ACC.

In August 1960 the membership received a notice that the books were available for use at the ACC library, a copy of the Agreement, and a card file of

our holdings. In nos. 2 and 3 of Vol. I of the Journal (1962-63) our complete holdings were again listed, with annotations written by the members of the Executive Committee. Due to the continuing interest and generosity of our members the collection at this time numbered 70 volumes; a gratifying increase from our nucleus of 15 volumes.

With this apparent interest the Executive Committee created the post of librarian and in February 1964 appointed Mrs. Greenfield librarian. She served in this capacity under the Publicity Committee until the annual meeting in 1966. At this meeting a change in our By-laws made the librarian a member of the Executive Committee and Mrs. Greenfield was elected to this position.

The library has, I believe, continued to grow; and it should be a useful service to our members. We, unfortunately, have no information as to how extensively it was used at the ACC. We have, however, had enough inquiries, regrets and complaints in two areas (1) that the ACC library was open only on weekday afternoons, never in the evening nor on Saturday and Sunday, and (2) that no book in our collection could circulate unless we possessed two copies of it, to convince us that it was desirable to house our collection elsewhere.

Space in Manhattan is at a premium, few if any institutions have enough, so our search for a new home for our library proved unsuccessful.

In January of this year Mrs. Greenfield offered to house our library in her home in Connecticut and to assume the responsibility of administering it; this offer the Executive Committee accepted with gratitude.

This arrangement is, perhaps, not an ideal solution but it is a practical one. The Guild library will currently be strictly a "mail order" collection. This change has three significant advantages: it will give us control of our holdings, which we did not have under the terms of our Agreement with the ACC; it will remove the two-copy restriction, which rendered our rarer items virtually useless; and it will make the collection readily available to all members on an equitable basis.

A list of our current holdings accompanies this

issue of the Journal in the form of a supplement; incorporated in this booklet are the regulations, drawn up by the Executive Committee, governing the circulation of our books.

This change should make our books more easily available to our entire membership; and it is our hope that it will result in greater use of the collection.

EXHIBITION COMMITTEE / Duncan Andrews

There can surely be few experiences more satisfying in the world of books than the opening of a new library. The dedication of this germinal unit of civilization is, in a very real sense, a reaffirmation of the humanities; its effect on those participating, one of personal renewal.

It was thus with a great deal of pleasure and pride that The Guild of Book Workers accepted the invitation of Hofstra University to participate in the dedication of its Library on May 6, 1967.

Located in Hempstead, Long Island, 25 miles from Manhattan, Hofstra has, in the 32 years since its founding, grown from 156 students on a 12-acre estate to 12,000 undergraduates and a faculty of over 600. Pacing the growth of the University body, the campus has expanded to over 30 buildings on 161 acres, and its Library has grown from one room in the original college building to a massive 11-story tower of concrete and glass which dominates the Hofstra scene and provides a tangible symbol of the University's dynamic thrust to the future.

While impressive on the outside, internally the Library seeks to maintain the human scale. Planned by Dr. Ellsworth G. Mason, Director of Library Services, and the architectural firm of Warner Burns Toan Lunde, the Library is intended to be "...an intellectual home--inviting, warm, inspiring without being either clinical or imposing, varied, intimate for all its size."

And, to this end, the Library is replete with

nooks, study rooms, individual reading carrels, alcoves and lounges--all designed to eliminate "the tradition of musty barracks of passive books" as well as the vaulting, awesome (and intimidating) vastness of many other university libraries. Fully carpeted, colorful, quiet, accessible, Hofstra's library is modern in spirit without the sterility or eccentricity which so frequently typifies contemporary architecture. It is not a rare book library, such as Guild members have often visited, but a fine working library whose pristine newness does not dispel a sense of warmth and welcome.

For the official opening of the Library, the Guild was invited to put on a working demonstration of binding and calligraphy as part of the dedication program. Despite a spring downpour--unfortunate, as much of the dedication ceremonies had been scheduled for outdoors--the Guild group arrived at Hofstra early Saturday morning, May 6, and proceeded to set up a comprehensive display. Demonstrating the following steps were:

Mrs. Mary S. Coryn: Preparation of end sheets and sewing on raised bands.

Mrs. Mary C. Schlosser: Rounding and backing the sewn book.

Mrs. Maggy Fisher: Lining up the spine of the book and sewing the headband.

Miss Jerilyn Glenn Davis: Preparing the leather and covering the book.

Mr. Nello Nanni: Titling and finishing.

Mrs. Carolyn Horton (assisted by Miss Nancy Clark and Mr. Sergio Ceccarini): Book and paper repair and restoration.

Miss Mary L. Janes: Calligraphy.

Also attending were Mrs. Laura S. Young, President of the Guild, whose shop furnished a comprehensive display of the steps involved in the making of a case binding, and your reporter, who displayed a selection of books illustrating five centuries of bookbinding. These two exhibits remained on display at Hofstra through the following week.

In spite of the rain--which predictably ended as soon as the ceremonies were safely over--the Guild exhibit was well attended throughout the day and

Mr. Henry C. Granger
59 Clinton Street
Lambertville, N. J. 08530

Miss Elizabeth Parrish
Route 3, Arcadia Farm
Paris, Ky. 40361

Resignations: Mrs. Walker Cowen, Miss Marilyn Glenn Davis, Miss Miesje Jolley, and Miss Charlotte Van Buren.

Please note the following:

Change of status: Miss Frances Manola (B,C,IL,T-P)

Change of address:

Jean W. Burnham
435 East 79th Street
New York, N. Y. 10021

Fleda S. Myers
870-Q Avenida Sevilla
Laguna Hills, Calif. 92653

We now have 158 members, seven less than last year. There were 20 resignations, 1 death and 14 new members.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE / Mary C. Schlosser

Decorated Papers - A Workshop Demonstration

Through the courtesy of the Craft Students League and of Guild member Miss Natalie Blatt, who is Binding Instructor there, the League's spacious facilities were made available for the third meeting of the year on the evening of February 2, 1967. Despite very bad weather, attendance was splendid.

Three methods for making decorated papers were demonstrated to a very interested and appreciative audience. Mary E. Greenfield produced some lovely

Handwriting, old and new. A catalogue is available for 6d. in stamps.

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A recommended product standard, "FABRICS FOR BOOK CLOTHS" (currently designated TS-115), has been distributed by the National Bureau of Standards, U.S. Department of Commerce, for consideration and acceptance. This standard, a revision of Commercial Standard CS57-40, "Book Cloths, Buckrams, and Impregnated Fabrics," covers the requirements and test procedures for seven groups of plain finished book cloths and buckrams which are impregnated or starch filled and which are used in the bookbinding industry for book covers. Copies of TS-115 may be obtained from the Office of Engineering Standards Services, National Bureau of Standards, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. 20234.

MEMBERSHIP / Jean W. Burnham

Since the publication of the Journal, vol. V, no. 1, we welcome back

Mrs. Mary Louise Coleman
115 Murray Street
Norwalk, Connecticut 06851

Miss Billie K. Hurst
806 McCann
Springfield, Mo. 65804

and Miss Grace Margaret Webster, whose name and address already appear in the revised list of members.

We are pleased to have as new members:

Mrs. Hilda Edelman
1049 Park Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10028

generated much interested comment among the spectators. Particular thanks are due Mr. Robert D. Noble, Secretary of the University, who arranged for the Guild exhibit and provided the necessary facilities.

While no exhibitions are currently forthcoming in the New York area for 1968, we are in the midst of planning exhibits in New England, Pennsylvania, and California. Details on these projects will be transmitted as final arrangements are made. In the meantime--while there is time--all members are urged to prepare, and to earmark, samples of their work for exhibition in the months ahead.

LIBRARY / Mary E. Greenfield

Books and Printing, A Treasury for Typophiles, edited by Paul A. Bennett, Forum Books, The World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, revised edition, 1963.

This is the most interesting book I've read in some time. It is a collection of forty articles by, among others, W. A. Dwiggins, W. D. Orcutt, Sir Francis Meynell, Edwin Grabhorn, Stanley Morison, Carl Purington Rollins, Eric Gill, Frederic W. Goudy, Bruce Rogers, Paul Bennett and D. B. Updike. The articles are set in twenty-two different type faces (Centaur for Bruce Rogers for example), and complete specimen alphabets of all of them are shown at the end of the book. It is a paperback (sewn) originally published at \$1.85. However, it cost \$2.25 at the New Haven bookshop where I found it.

Two books and an advertisement may be of interest to those of our calligraphers who do not subscribe to The Journal of the Society of Italic Handwriting.

The Handwriting of English Documents, L. C. Hector, 2nd Edition, Arnold Ltd. \$7.00.

Stained the Water Clear, A Festschrift for Lloyd J. Reynolds, Reed College, Portland, Oregon, 1966. This is obtainable from Reed College.

Drummond, Bookseller, 30 Hart Grove, Ealing Common, London W. 5 (ACOrn 1974). Books on Italic

papers by the batik method, Ruth E. Setterberg demonstrated the method of marbling papers with a variety of papers and colors, and Mary C. Schlosser effectively used "finger-painting" technique in the production of paste papers.

Present were: Enid Perkins, Hope Weil, Marian Lathrop, Mary Schlosser, Martha Singer, Howard E. Welsh, Jean Newell, Ruth Setterberg, Madeline Schonberger, Henry Reviere, Mary E. Greenfield, Ruth Tayler, Olga Harvey, Jean Burnham, Andree V. Pimont, Melanie A. Pimont, Sarah Ratner, Beatrice Lockhart, Nancy Clark, Patricia Selch, Frances Manola, Mary S. Coryn, Laura S. Young, Jerilyn G. Davis, Louise Russell James, Katharine Nash, Ruth Stein, Elizabeth A. Hull, Edwin A. Popenoe, Elaine Haas, Helen Clark Gucker, Philip Gucker, and Natalie Blatt. (Apologies from the editor to those whose signatures could not be deciphered.)

By popular demand, the demonstrators have supplied written descriptions of the paper-decorating methods used.

BATIK PAPERS / Mary E. Greenfield

The equipment needed to produce wax resist batik paper is:

Paraffin wax (available at grocery stores or supermarkets); colored ink; 2 water color brushes, one for wax, one for ink; some form of double boiler (a small can within a larger one will do); a stove; an electric iron; paper towels, waxed paper and newspaper; almost any kind of good quality paper.

Heat a small amount of wax in the smaller can for about five minutes. The wax should be so hot that it penetrates the paper as soon as it is brushed on. Put the paper on waxed paper to protect the surface you are working on, and paint your design on the paper, dipping the brush in the wax frequently as only hot wax is effective. When the wax has dried, which is almost at once, apply a coat of colored ink. When the

ink is dry, iron the paper between paper towels on a thick layer of newspaper. It may be necessary to change the paper towels once or twice as they become saturated with wax.

It is possible to add as many colors as you like. For example: brush yellow ink over the entire sheet. When it is dry apply the wax for the design and brush orange ink on the paper. The waxed area will remain yellow while the rest of the sheet will be a yellow orange. When the ink is dry paint in additional designs and apply a brown ink. Iron the paper and you will have a yellow, orange and brown design. Experimentation will tell you what colors go well over others.

It is also possible to put different colors on a sheet at the same time, by separating areas with wax.

MARbled PAPERS / Ruth E. Setterberg

Used for this demonstration were the following:

Approx. 2" depth of clear, cool tap water in 3" deep 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " photographic tray...a white tray, the better to see color pattern on the surface of the gently swirled water, & thus more readily capture the most desirable design area on paper carefully and directly dropped thereon.

Colors: - Artists' tube Oil Paints.

Palette used - lemon yellow, warm yellow, red, bl. green, yel. green, white. Each color individually thinned with Varnolene (or Turpentine) to liquid consistency, by use of small wooden spatula or artist's small bristle brush. For this demonstration a plastic ice cube tray furnished individual containers for the various colors.

Material marbled: - Rag paper - white, yellow, lt. blue, pastel rose - all of absorbent quality.

Rice paper - white, brown.

Book cloth - Dk. blue untreated surface.

Note: Waterproofed fabrics and non-absorbent

papers can be used quite successfully if, after thoroughly dried, they are sprayed with a fixative to insure more permanent finish. (Personal preference: - "Krylon Matte Finish Spray, water clear" procured at art and paint stores.)

Also - Taffeta, satin, linen and cotton (which are absorbent) have been happily used.

Tweezers aid in placing on and removing paper or fabric from water.

Newspapers provide excellent mat on which to place and dry marbled sheets.

Re: colors - We began with 2 or 3 colors, each in small quantity, for light and airy effect. Adding more color to the water's surface gave deeper and greater coverage. Color combinations are interesting; results are always a surprise. To gray a color, add a bit of black; for opacity and/or pastel shades, add white. Experimenting with color can present a delightful unexpected accent.

Clean-up: Newspaper may be used to blot paint from the water's surface. For final cleaning of tray, brushes, etc. use one of the above-mentioned thinners. Then wash with soap and water.

PASTE PAPERS / Mary C. Schlosser

Mix a tablespoonful of cornstarch with enough cold water to make a thick cream. Add boiling water - stirring the while - till the mixture clears. Allow the mixture to cool.

Paper to be decorated should be damped between wet blotting papers and squeezed in the press. Any type of water color can be used.

Brush the paste or mixture over the paper and then apply the colors with brushes, running them into each other to suit your fancy. Paste may be pre-colored and applied direct to the paper.

Interesting patterns may be attained by the use of graining combs.

The finger-painting technique works very well!

Florence as Viewed by Carolyn Horton

This season's largest gathering of Guild members and friends took place on the evening of Tuesday, May 9, 1967, at AIGA headquarters. The occasion was the fourth Guild meeting of the year. The featured attraction was an illustrated talk given by Mrs. Horton detailing her experiences as a member of the team that was sent to Italy by the Committee to Rescue Italian Art.

Mrs. Horton's talk was most interesting and informative. Her collection of colored slides is so extensive and of such a quality as almost to belie her contention that she was a neophyte photographer at the start of the trip. It should certainly become one of the most treasured items in the Horton archives.

Members and friends who signed the register at the meeting were: Duncan Andrews, Howard E. Welsh, Richard F. Young, Grady E. Jensen, Virginia Sanford, John White, Mildred Ledden, Frances Manola, Niello Nanni, Jerilynn Davis, Jane Greenfield, Sarah Ratner, Johanna Zacharias, Louise Russell James, Julie D. Humphrey, Mary L. Janes, Kathleen Wick, Julie Coryn, Mary S. Coryn, Catherine Stanescu, Maggy Magerstadt-Fisher, Marilyn Hamilton, Laura S. Young, Philomena Houlihan, Vernon Johnson, Sidonie Coryn, Mary McCampbell, Mr. & Mrs. Corcoran, Hope G. Weil, Mr. & Mrs. Haas, Mr. and Mrs. V. Lada-Mocarski, Mrs. Henry Senber, Inez Pennybacker, Ruth Stein, Walter Stein, Ruth Tayler, Elizabeth N. Thatcher, Jean Burnham, Mary C. Schlosser, Donald Horton, Carolyn Horton. (Again, apologies to those whose signatures the editor could not decipher).

The January 1967 issue of "La Reliure," a French bookbinding magazine, included an article about the GBW Donnell Library exhibition last spring. Mr. Frederic Marlé, our Paris "correspondent," was the author.

Mrs. Lotte Berg has suggested that GBW members traveling in Europe might find it a worthwhile experience to visit The Klingspor Museum in the town of Offenbach, West Germany. It is one of the few museums for international/modern bookbinding, book illustration, calligraphy and type design. It has just completed an expansion and there are always special exhibitions. Personal memberships are offered at an annual cost of DM15 (\$3.75 at the current rate of 1 DM = 25¢). Members ("Friends of the Klingspor Museum") receive Museum publications, posters and invitations.

Several recent publications are still available, at the prices indicated:

- Exhibition catalogues of Karlgeorg Hoefer, Hans Schmidt (calligraphy), Gerhard Oberlander (book illustration), and the Museum's United States exhibition on "Modern German Book Design" are available at DM 6 (\$1.50) each.
- "A - nur ein Vokal," compiled by Hans A. Halbey and Max Waibel, DM 20 (\$5.00) (Members only).
- The catalogue, "Kurt Londenberg, Bucheinbände," DM 7 (\$1.75).

Address inquiries and orders to:

Ulrike Bannert
Klingspor-Museums
Herren Strasse 80
Offenbach am Main
West Germany

The museum is open daily 10 - 12 noon and on Monday through Friday 3 - 5 P.M. The telephone number is 8065384.

The January 1967 issue of the German binding magazine, "Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Buchbindereien" included six photographs of bindings by the Cuneo Studio's George Baer and William Anthony.

A recent issue of the Northhampton School for Girls' alumnae magazine contained an article entitled "Alumnae Careers VII: Bookbinding," about alumna Kathryn Edwards Gerlach. The story reviewed Kathryn and Gerhard Gerlach's work and included several photographs of their shop at Shaftsbury, Vermont.

On April 18 GBW member Hope Weil spoke in Scarsdale, New York for the Wellesley-in-Westchester Club. Also, Mrs. Weil, a Wellesley alumna, had her bindery on view during a Wellesley House and Art Tour held on May 5.

An exhibition of Italic Handwriting was held at the Cornell University Medical College Library from December 1, 1966 through January 24, 1967.

The Loujon Press in Tucson, Arizona, owned and operated by Jon and Louise Webb, received award certificates for typography, type direction and design in the Type Director Club's 13th Annual Awards Show. The awards - in the books category - were for the so-called cork edition of "Order and Chaos chez Hans Reichel" by Henry Miller.

READERS' RESPONSE

Dear Mrs. Young:

Your very fine editorial pleased me very much as did the questions you posed. My answer to the first two questions is "Yes". The third question is more difficult to answer. Good design is so subjective that it is hard to define. I think your opinion of what good design in bookbinding constitutes is correct. To me the "book" is the most important element of the whole product. Books are to be read and not to be bound in such beautiful and fragile bindings that must be covered by a chemise and a slip case and only handled with gloved hands. So you see I am in accord with your feelings about design, books and bindings.

I always enjoy the Journal and look forward to the next issue.

Sincerely

San Francisco, Calif.

Stella Patri

Dear Mrs. Young:

I thought your editorial, "Craftsman? Designer? Artist?", was very interesting. This is a subject close to my heart, and I am forever defending good design as fine art, no matter where it is found.

In my opinion, it is not what a fine artist does that makes him one, but how he conceives his design and works it out. Webster's definitions of design-- "to fashion according to a plan" and "to execute as a whole" -- are good as far as they go. To be good design it must also be unique, simple, harmonious, and fall within certain limitations. The latter is to me very important, because people when talking about art seem to have the feeling that fine art is completely free, and the arts and crafts, which depend upon a client, are not. Actually, no art is completely free, because if a client is non-existent, the artist himself must impose his own limitations. The binder is given a book and each one is a unique problem in itself. He must use ingenuity along with design and craftsmanship.

Even though, according to the definition, calligraphy and illuminating would qualify as a fine art, I doubt whether many "fine artists" -- painters and sculptors -- would consider it so, as there is a tendency on their part to exclude anything containing letters or writing as "commercial." However, I believe this is changing, and the whole idea of art and crafts as separate entities is breaking down. I, for one, do not think any clear line can be drawn down the middle.

One indication of overlapping boundaries was the Museum of Modern Art's show in 1964 called "Lettering by Modern Artists." It exhibited an 8th-century Celtic illumination, a 10th-century bowl from Iran with a Kufic script design, a book-binding design, graphics and numerous works of art using letters, writing and numerals by established artists such as Miro, Leger, Picasso, Matisse, Shahn, Steinberg, and many others including the moderns. There were also a few examples of poster and advertising design.

Recently, the commercial illustrator Aubrey

Beardsley, was given a one-man show at the Gallery of Modern Art. He was so unique as a creative designer that even in his lifetime fine artists sat up and took notice, their work being greatly influenced by his.

During the past year, in an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, William King was represented by a vinyl figure about fifteen feet tall. At the same time, the Whitney Museum of American Art was also showing this sculptor's work. It was a composition enclosed in a glass case including a number of small vinyl figures (small replicas of the tall one at the Crafts Museum).

My answer is yes, a hand book craftsman can be a fine artist in pursuit of his craft. I happen also to believe that each person has within himself the capacity to be some kind of a creative artist. Perhaps if in our early years we were taught that life itself is a creative adventure, more of us would be aware of this latent artistic talent.

Sincerely yours,

New York, N. Y.

Frances Manola

BOOKBINDING IS GREAT ART / Louis Harrow

With good intentions, this was to have been a simple answer to Laura S. Young's editorial in the Guild's last Journal issue on bookbinding - art or craft. As I kept thinking about the subject, and jotting down notes, it threatened to grow into a ten-volume lucubration on the entire field of art (about which I know little); and like the great experts who are often vastly ignorant, I was prepared to be mulishly dogmatic.

Perhaps the story of the writer's eighteen-month career as a bookbinder will explain at least one viewpoint.

From the beginning, then:

One summer day a bug bit me and I decided to build my library into a model of beauty and quality. In a short time I knew Stair of Brentano, Miss Zahn of

Sessler's in Philadelphia, Lassen of Inman, the Bartfields, Duschnes, and dozens of others. As I bought, the prices, particularly of leather bindings, soared astronomically. Finally, when I decided prices had doubled within a twelve month period, I angrily thought I should be binding the books myself. Imagine my shock when I decided to take that silly notion seriously. But first I managed to have Charlotte Ullman do a wonderful binding for me.

My bookbinding started with the endlessly patient Mrs. Young. It was a long time before I knew the difference between a casing and a binding. When Mrs. Young left for her summer home, I had finished three books, but was stranded, enthused, and with neither boat nor oars.

My first contact with that grand lady of bookbinding, Hope Weil, took the form of a telephone argument. She maintained that binding was a craft, and with my vast four months' experience I stoutly claimed it was an art. When I hung up I appealed to Webster. He said we were both right: a craft is a manual art.

I have just this moment sought out Webster again. Fascinating.

"Art: . . . 9 . Application of skill and taste to production according to aesthetic principles; specif.: such application to the production of beauty by imitation or design. . . . Syn. Art, skill, cunning, artifice, craft mean the faculty of performing or executing that which is devised. Art is so variable in meaning that it is the synonym of each of the others, which, on the other hand, are not always synonymous among themselves. . . . Art and craft may be used interchangeably only when they imply subtlety and ingenuity in workmanship."

Within the scope of philosophy there is room for endless theorizing.

Listen to the story of my step-by-step development. My next teacher was Inez Pennybacker who has a marvelous bindery in the Connecticut woods. I did a binding with her, and when she in turn went on vacation I showed the book to Mrs. Weil who complimented

me most highly by stating she didn't believe I had bound it. I confess that wonderful Mrs. Pennybacker must get credit for ninety percent of that book.

Before Mrs. Young returned in the fall I studied with Hope Weil for a time. Our discussions were decidedly entertaining. In addition I was becoming acquainted with art concepts and the importance of typography and paper.

When I finished my twelfth book, I suddenly had nothing in preparation, and was confronted with the world of book design. I had discussions with several people, including Gerhard Gerlach, who has just completed a book for me, and found I was discovering the depths of art inherent in great bookbinding. Before reverting to this I would like to mention the final step in my education, namely the choice of "press books" for binding.

In Scotland last year I bought a book bound by an Englishwoman which was magnificent, technique-wise. The spine has gold and platinum tooling, with an onlay title of extremely finely-pared calfskin letters. The paper, however, though only twenty-two years old, was already crumbling into brown dust. There is a quote I keep before me on the table in my own bindery, which you will all appreciate:

"In the same manner as a poor book (poor in the typographical sense) can be made absolutely piteous if arrayed in a magnificence unsuited to its status in the book world. . . ."

This English lady is now binding for me a noted novel, fine paper, Bruce Rogers design.

Art or craft? When you enter the British Museum, you first pass through room after room containing binding masterpieces. Very discouraging to the amateur bookbinding hopeful! When you visit our own Metropolitan Museum of Art, you are immediately aware that there are many arts.

Where does bookbinding stand? In Zaehnsdorf's "The Art of Bookbinding" the author says: "In the sixth century, bookbinding had already taken its place as an "Art". . ." And again, "Hand finishing, as before stated, is really an art (his italics)." Frederick Adams in a talk several months ago, referred

to binding as an art, "albeit a minor art." I respectfully differ with the gentleman. Minor or major is within the eye of the beholder.

I have just returned from a cross-country trip which included visits to a number of great bookbinding artists, all of whom were wonderfully gracious -- Margaret Lecky, Peter Fahey, Florence Walters, Harold Tribolet. When Mr. Tribolet made some remarks about his experiences in Florence, I observed that I now saw that it took twenty years before one began to know the subject of bookbinding. He was indignant at my underestimation. I pointed out I had said begin to know, whereupon he humorously agreed with me. But it is seriously correct. How many years does it take to really know paper? And leather? And the effects of light, humidity, atmosphere on a cover? The use of materials provokes endless discussion. In France a person may spend a lifetime doing nothing but tooling.

Yet this is not the crux of great binding. Last summer in a discussion with a fellow student some time was spent considering the aspects of "taste." It was a delight to hear how neatly she put her finger upon the very essence of fine bookbinding.

Now you must forgive me if I tell you that I believe a bookbinder is not truly great unless he is a great artist. He must not only have faultless taste for beauty, but the perfect craftsmanship to execute his own great artistic design.

Herewith my deep appreciation to all my teachers.

NEWS CLIPS / Jean W. Burnham

PAPER DETERIORATION

Two studies are underway of importance to libraries and the preservation of their materials.

One, funded by the Council of Library Resources, is being done under the aegis of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago. Richard D. Smith, a doctoral student, will be principal investigator for

a laboratory study of non-aqueous deacidification treatments to improve the permanence of paper.

The other study, conducted by the Institute of Paper Chemistry and sponsored by 20 manufacturers of cotton fiber (rag) paper, commenced in 1963. The purposes of this program are "to determine the validity of an accelerated aging test which has been in use for many years" and "to establish a better measurement for the durability of papers." The work to date, according to the Cotton Fiber Paper Manufacturers' Technical Committee, "has contradicted the basis upon which the oven-aging test depended"; it is finding that varying humidity content of the papers and the humidity during aging produce varying results.

Library Resources & Technical Services
v.2 no. 1, Winter 1967

LC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Frazer G. Poole has been appointed Preservation Officer at the Library of Congress. In his new duties, Mr. Poole will direct the Library of Congress program for the physical preservation of its varied types of library materials, developing managerial and technical solutions not only for the library's use but also for use or adaptation by other libraries faced with similar preservation problems. Libraries throughout the U. S. are concerned about preserving their collections from the inroads of time and the effects of environment. They not only face problems with paper, ink, and bindings of traditional materials such as books, manuscripts, and newspapers, but also deal with unknown factors affecting twentieth century forms, such as films and magnetic tapes. Together with the Association of Research Libraries Preservation Committee, the Library of Congress has developed a national preservation program. This includes a campaign to rescue thousands of "brittle books" printed on acid paper in the last one hundred years and now disintegrating in libraries all over the country. Through a recent grant

from the Council on Library Resources, Mr. Poole also will direct a pilot project on this problem.

Associated College & Research Libraries News
May 1967

The Mellon collection of alchemy and the occult has been acquired by the YALE UNIVERSITY library. The collection includes 159 manuscripts dating back to the thirteenth century and 170 printed volumes, five of them from the fifteenth century. Besides alchemy, the manuscripts embrace texts on astronomy, astrology and medicine, while the books include the adjoining fields of astrology, magic, witchcraft and the occult.

Associated College & Research Libraries News
May 1967

