FAQ about Book Repairs and Cleaning
christchurchpif (964)(view author's auctions)
09/01/02 5:50 AM

For the benefit of the book board community, we are asking that the book experts, as their time allows, post their experience, opinions, and helpful links to guide us all to answers on this, and other commonly asked questions posed in other FAQ links. The goal is to have this wisdom pinned to the top of the Book Sellers board, so it is requested that posters limit their wisdom to the topic at hand, and that individual questions not be posted to this thread. Should a poster have a question that is not answered by the archived answers, please feel comfortable posting your question on a new thread, as the book experts here are more than willing to answer your question. Many thanks to all book experts who have willingly shared their knowledge with those of us seeking to learn more.

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dad_of_monster (0)(view author's auctions)
09/02/02 11:39 PM (# 1 of 77)

Absorene is one of the best cleaners we've used for book boards. It's getting harder to find these days since Brodart no longer stocks it. Although there are undoubtedly more, one current (unpriced) source from whom we ordered remains:

The Library Store, Ltd

The cleaning and/or repair of antiquarian or very valuable books is usually best left to a book restorer or book binder.

Becoming familiar with the repair resources available by browsing library supply house catalogs can provide a mini-education about the many simple repairs easily made to current (not quite so valuable) works.

Vernon Library Supplies and Brodart are good resources.

Your local office supply store can provide you with sticker-removal products and erasers that are kind to book paper. And, many people who frequent this forum have come up with their own clever ideas on how to clean and fix books, information they will perhaps share.

But maybe the best advice on book cleaning and repair is: practice. Refine your technique on books that have no value (damaged books destined for the recycler) before you attempt the cleaning or repair of books that may still have value.

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frenchcruller (217)(view author's auctions)
09/04/02 1:42 AM (# 2 of 77)

I will pass on a remedy that was recommended on this board for removing mildew from a book. I haven't tried it yet, and I don't know if it works, but it might be worth a try. Mix 1 part vinegar with three parts water and treat book, but do not dampen book excessively (so that book won't show signs of water damage). I plan to try this myself, and will let you know how it works. Allow book to dry thoroughly.

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book-ends (1361)(view author's auctions)

09/09/02 2:46 AM (# 3 of 77)

I limit book repairs to what can be accomplished with a soft eraser or lighter fluid. Any pencil marks and sometimes soil get erased first. Then lighter fluid can be used safely to remove old price stickers and tape. Squirt some fluid on, wait a few seconds for it to soften the glue, then carefully ease a knife blade under the tape or sticker. I've used lighter fluid for more than 30 years and never yet damaged the book or hurt the ink.

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inblairs (219)(view author's auctions)
09/09/02 5:20 PM (# 4 of 77)

Hi had some books a bit back and they had magic marker on the front used hair spray to remove this was on paperbacks.And have used hair spray to remove other marks.try it on a book you are going to trash first

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finnius72 (31)(view author's auctions)
09/12/02 1:07 PM (# 5 of 77)

Removing the Mildew Odor From a Book I have found that if I fill a plastic bag with kitty litter, set the opened book inside it standing up, seel the plastic bag and let it stay that way for a couple weeks, the mildew smell will disappear

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frenchcruller (217)(view author's auctions)
09/12/02 3:00 PM (# 6 of 77)

Update on experiment using vinegar to remove mildew smell from book. I tried using straight vinegar applied to the top of the spine and some of the alleys of the pages and the cover, and it didn't seem to work. I only gave it 2 days. Maybe it works if you wait longer or if you seal the book in a plastic bag.

I think I'll try yours, finnius, and also my own pet idea of soaking something in straight chloride bleach and sealing that with the book in a plastic bag for a week or so.

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elks2 (1524)(view author's auctions)
09/16/02 2:16 PM (# 7 of 77)

This is a little expensive but it does work. I have an ionizer machine for allergies actually I have three machines. One is for my book area. It states in the pamphlet that using the machine will remove odors from the air which it does. So I tried it with a musty smelling book partically opened in front of the machine and the smell was gone after 24 hours. Then I placed some perfumed/candle scented smelling beanie babies in a box and closed the box with machine and beanies and the small was gone after a few days. It is expensive but it does work.

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dad_of_monster (0)(view author's auctions)
09/17/02 7:42 AM (# 8 of 77)

Regarding the destinkification of stinking books:

I've known dealers who swear they can kill a smell by first freezing a book, then putting the book in a mesh bag, open about half-way, and hanging the bag outside on a shaded clothes line for a few days. This I've never tried.

Another dealer told me her "secret" which at least sounds good: she filled the bottom of a wooden crate, about three feet on a side, with a layer of charcoal, except for a pedestal large enough to support a few reclining, half-opened books and a box or two of baking soda. She would close the lid of the crate, sealing the books inside for several days. On opposite sides of the exterior of the crate she had mounted bathroom exhaust fans, louvered (naturally), one to pump air into the chamber and one to exhaust air from the chamber. She'd set a timer so the fans would run for half an hour, rest for two hours, run another half hour ... like that for two days. She swore that when books were de-chambered, they were odor-free. I've not tried that either.

My personal secret is to avoid stinky books altogether.

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koolkidz@optonline.net (212)(view author's auctions)
09/20/02 8:38 AM (# 9 of 77)

The "smelly book" issue seems to be covered. What about general sprucing up of books? Any suggestions?

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christchurchpif (964)(view author's auctions)
09/23/02 5:26 AM (# 10 of 77)

From book-ends on a similar post:

koolkidz the absolute best item for sprucing up books is a soft eraser used carefully. After that would be my old standby lighter fluid to remove any stickers or tape. There are some commercial products (goo-gone, etc) that'll do the same thing. And there are commercial cleaners (Brodart makes at least one) that can be used dry to clean soil off paper and cloth. For a leather binding careful use of neetsfoot oil might help. Beyond that and you're out of my area of do-it-yourself.

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wabbitt15 (506) (view author's auctions)
6:18pm September 20, 2002 (# 2 of 5)

The trade generally accepts "cosmetic enhancements" to the extent that they do not adversely interfere with the original attributes of the book as originally issued.

Most allow for retail sticker removal (but a call is necessary for any glue residue); A call is indicated for erasures of pencil underlinings or marginalia (never attempt an erasure on coated paper); A call is indicated for mending cracked hinges; A call is indicated for tape removal that results in residue or ghosts to covers or pastedowns; A call is indicated for mends to DJs; A call is indicated for cleaning of a cloth cover when the resulting effect is inconsistent to all of the bindings; A call is indicated for mending pages of the book block; Never disguise an even minor fault or an ownership inscription with a bookplate; A call is indicated for the removal of the celluoid film that frequently covers books (i.e., some children's issues, many MM paperbacks).

Basically, then, return the dog-ears to a flat position, remove the sticker from the book or the DJ (that are great fluids for that), or perhaps very carefully reglue/repaste a loose label to place. Otherwise, efforts to improve can be timely and not worth a lesser book, and for thje more valuable property pay to have a professional facelift

(and that would still be subject the appropriate calls).

Basically, then, return dog-ears to a flat position

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christchurchpif (964)(view author's auctions)
09/24/02 1:50 AM (# 11 of 77)

From Rubyschoice on another thread:

Okay, here's what I do, and I've posted this before so it's repetitive for some here.

If it's a collectible book, I wouldn't do anything with it without professional advice, or asking the experts in here. The books I sell on half are generally not rare books, but softcovers, or newer hardcovers, textbooks and manuals. They range anywhere from $3 - $50, or more.

For the outside edges of the pages which may show handling use and would look better brightened up a bit, and for dust on the top, I lightly "sand" with one of those large nail boards. The 6" broad kind with the soft padding in the center. Hold the pages tightly together and use the fine side of the board. Practice on an old book.

I remove all stickers and residue on glossy covers and jackets with Goof-Off, lighter fluid, or Oops.

Dog ears and wrinkles can be ironed out with a warm iron. My sister just told me this, and I haven't tried it but she does it.

Sticky-tac, soft eraser and/or soft bread dough can be used to gently brighten up matte covers.

When I'm all done cleaning, I spray the jacket or cover with Pledge furniture polish, and lightly buff to a shine with a soft old baby diaper. I use new baby diapers for dish towels, they are very absorbant.

Sometimes cleaning like this can mean a difference in rating the book's condition.

Ruby

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rubyschoice (942) (view author's auctions)
12:10pm September 23, 2002 (# 7 of 10)

One more thing: For books that smell musty, I have use those dryer softener sheets, can't think of the name. Just put 3 or 4 in various places in the book, wrap it in plastic and let it sit for a couple weeks.

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christchurchpif (964)(view author's auctions)
09/28/02 3:45 AM (# 12 of 77)

To mend or not to mend?
barbaradawn (90) (view author's auctions)
10:27am September 27, 2002

We have a humngous 1500+ page reference book that has two pages torn in half. All the parts are there and have

been stuck back in the book. The previous owner tried to tape them together at one time, but they've torn more. Would it be better to let the potential buyer deal with it - pointing it out in the listing, or course?

Or would it be worth it to invest in some archival mending tape and fix it first? I assume there IS an archval mending tape?

I'm wondering - is this the kind of repair a beginner should try? Or is it better left to the experts? It IS a rather simple repair, it seems to me - but I am loath to take the risk of screwing it up.

Thanking you in advance.

Barbaradawn

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faganbooks (1746) (view author's auctions)
10:58am September 27, 2002 (# 1 of 3)

It is always better to sell as is if you are unsure. Especially when making irreversible repairs, such as with tape.

I would like to add to anyone who reads this to never ever use tape, archival or otherwise, on dust jackets. Rare dust jackets can be expertly repaired and tape is essentailly just more damage to deal with.

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xploman (0) (view author's auctions)
4:10pm September 27, 2002 (# 2 of 3)

Fagan - How about a book that is of moderate value, which is in nice condition with a dust jacket that is "not bad" except for a few long tears? I usually tape those (on the underside of course) before sale. I state that fact in the listing, but the fact that the DJ looks good in the photo seems to help more than the info about the tape hurts. I am talking about books that are not worth a restoration investment. Any comment?

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faganbooks (1746) (view author's auctions)
4:29pm September 27, 2002 (# 3 of 3)

For that, I suppose it is okay. I personally prefer to use a mylar wrapper. If you don't use good archival tape, the tape will make the repair uglier than the tear ever was. Turns all brown and crappy.

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rseal63441@aol.com (445)(view author's auctions)
10/05/02 5:56 PM (# 13 of 77)

Sirs and Madames; Once upon a time one knew what "Very Good" meant. Those days have been sucked under by E-bay and the ravening hordes of everyone with Aunt Tilley's books to dispose of. Whether this might prove a glad thing or ill remains to be seen. Lord knows the Venetians and their cash on hand dismmemberment of ancient family archives via ebay is enough! All books are neither sacred nor salable. Antiquity is quaint but hardly sacrosanct. Be that as it may be, it is foolish in the extreme to simply discard on the grounds one simply

doesn't relate too it.
PLEASE do not place ebay salabiliity before historicity whenever confronted with things of the past!

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rseal63441@aol.com (445)(view author's auctions)
10/05/02 6:07 PM (# 14 of 77)

faganbooks- Books deteriorate. Given. Some more than others, to be sure. So do water pumps in cars. Unlike the replacement of water-pumps in cars, books need either coddling or to be LEFT ALONE. Confronted with a scary book of obvious importance, I leave it alone!

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rrestis (574)(view author's auctions)
10/09/02 4:26 PM (# 15 of 77)

IS THERE ANY WAY TO GET THE SMELL OF CIGARETTE SMOKE OUT OF BOOKS.

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joeleene (430)(view author's auctions)
10/17/02 7:13 AM (# 16 of 77)

My son's mobile home burned and they lost everything. The items that were not burned were either smoke damaged or wet. Of all items lost he was most upset over the book collection he had that belonged to my eldest son who had been killed in a car accident. The odor from a burned house is horrendous. I took the books and placed them in KITTY LITTER - fresh of coarse - Some of the books were also wet but I wanted to save as many of them as I could and thought I would give them a try. I filled several large boxes with kitty litter, putting the litter inside the pages, especially the wet ones and left them sit for several weeks. The litter pulled the odor and the moisture out and I was able to save the majority of them. Sooooo - try some kitty litter, it worked for me. Hope this helps

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thisismyfakeaddress (0)(view author's auctions)
10/17/02 9:44 AM (# 17 of 77)

joeleene, I'm so sorry to hear about the pain you and your family have suffered. Thank you for sharing something good that came out of a bad thing. I need to ask, do you remember what brand of kitty litter you used? Some of them have so much dust I'm afraid to use them.

Again, my heart goes out to you and yours. Thanks for putting everything aside and allowing us to benefit from your experience.

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joeleene (430)(view author's auctions)
10/17/02 8:36 PM (# 18 of 77)

I used the kitty litter on the books in 1995 and I'm not positive on the brand but I think it was Arm and Hammer. All I can remember is how well it worked. The smell was so bad I didn't want them anywhere near the house and I kept the boxes in my husbands work shed. I tried it because I read some stupid article on it working so

thought I'd give it a try. The article also said something about kitty litter pulling out moisture. I had to throw away some of the books that were completely soaked but it also worked on a lot of them . I did go out and stir the stuff up several times but I don't know if that helped or not. The books were able to come back inside after several weeks or possibly a month. I can't quite remember but that was unbelievable in itself. Hope you get the cigarette smoke smell out of yours.

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bookphysician (220)(view author's auctions)
10/26/02 5:20 PM (# 19 of 77)

I have been restoring and rebinding books for over 20 years and teach bookbinding at a local University. If you need qualified, experienced bookbinding or restoration work, I'd be very glad to help. I also make slip cases and book boxes. Leather bindings also within me expertise. You can reach me at binder@rochester.rr.com

Thanks
Tim

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scomman (146)(view author's auctions)
11/27/02 12:52 PM (# 20 of 77)

I use wadded up newspapers in a paper sack to help get out the smells in a book especially the musty odor. Taks a paper sack open up take a couple days worth of newspapers and lightly crumple putting half under the book and half over the book Close paper sack and leave alone ofr several days and it will get rid of the odors also.

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rmg@yankeeancestry.com (1001)(view author's auctions)
11/30/02 1:44 PM (# 21 of 77)

This is a Bump to the Top for ccgif's sake.

Also, someone gave this link, re Dartmouth College's Book Reapir Guide, on another thread that wasn't directly concerned with repair. As I didn't see it in a quick review of the material above, I thought I'd include it here:

Searching the web using "book repair" through Google will give you a ton of on-line references plus various bookbinders. The Dartmouth material gets a lot of links.

Note Tim's address above. He's probably open to some specific & direct questions, if you need more of a directive hand. If there's a university in your area, there's likely a bookbinder gving some type of tutorial. Mine is a Great Curmudgeon down near Harvard Square. Ah, what he can do with dental floss on a leather spine!

So, Do an Act of Not-So-Random-Kindness This Holiday Season - Rebuild A Book! You're work can last a hundred years, too!

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slkitson (3)(view author's auctions)
12/09/02 2:08 PM (# 22 of 77)

Hi, can anyone recommend a good online source for book supplies, mainly clear book covers?
Thanks!

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keithwease (897)(view author's auctions)
12/09/02 2:54 PM (# 23 of 77)

Just type 'brodart' into the eBay search engine and go from there.

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laffite (1122)(view author's auctions)
12/14/02 3:50 PM (# 24 of 77)

Here's another tip for removing the musty smell out of a very old book: place it in a box full of dry ground coffee and cover. After two weeks, the mustiness will be completely gone (and no, the book doesn't smell like coffee afterward, either)

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lipe (692)(view author's auctions)
12/28/02 9:25 PM (# 25 of 77)

I would like to suggest a little networking with the technical service department at the largest library in your area where cleaning are repairs are an everyday chore. I will venture to say that for the price of a box of donuts you will get a tour of the most interesting department in the library and enough repair information to make your head spin, plus phone numbers and the invitation to call anytime you have a question.

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pguliangwi.net (1037)(view author's auctions)
01/24/03 5:56 AM (# 26 of 77)

dryer sheets also help get rid of musty smells and smoke smells. Pat

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paperplus (1327)(view author's auctions)
01/25/03 6:21 PM (# 27 of 77)

Since I sell books from a "Book Farm" in Lancaster County, PA, it is natural that I include a sprig of peppermint or spearment in my packaging (not actually touching the book). The whole package arrives in what I like to call "MINT CONDITION" ... never had a complaint, but lots of great feedback. Granted, I have not used this method to ship any books that were odiferous, as I don't generally handle them ... but, the ideas here may encourage me to try a few.

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frogcreekbooks (173)(view author's auctions)
01/25/03 6:55 PM (# 28 of 77)

I have found that hair spray works great for removing stickers from dust jackets.

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nora.cbks (578)(view author's auctions)
02/14/03 1:05 PM (# 29 of 77)

Hi people, I wonder if you can help me out on making a cheap bookbinding repair to a copy of The Handbook of Household Cleansing (NYC: Appleton, 1857; rpt 1875). (I love these sorts of 'receipt' books because they contain all sorts of cleaning information that can often be utilized for the sorts of things that are the main subject of this sidebar thread.) The book is not valuable enough to be professionally rebound and its problem is that it has completely lost its backstrip. Both covers are still firmly attached and the binding is unimpaired. It was originally quarter-bound in what appears to be black patent leather (the boards are maroon cloth) and the remainder of the black leatherette is still intact on the boards. Only the backstrip is gone. What can I do?

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vfrose@siscom.net (2)(view author's auctions)
03/05/03 6:39 AM (# 30 of 77)

I know about lighter fluid, etc., for dust jackets, but what is best for removing sticker adhesive from leather or cloth covers?
Thanks!
VF

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vfrose@siscom.net (2)(view author's auctions)
03/10/03 7:17 PM (# 31 of 77)

CCPif, what is NEETSFOOT OIL? From where can it be obtained?
It's not like eye of newt, is it?
I am trying to clean adhesive off leather & cloth covers.
Thanks!
VF@---->-

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mm4ever (370)(view author's auctions)
04/25/03 10:14 PM (# 32 of 77)

Hello,
I recently purchased some books where the seller used a grease pencil to write their price in the inside cover of them. I tried to carefully erase them but I can't get it all off. Anyone have an idea how to remove it.
Thanks

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hiipychic421 (0)(view author's auctions)
04/28/03 7:03 AM (# 33 of 77)

Anything I can do to repair antique book?

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kookidz (415)(view author's auctions)
04/28/03 5:45 PM (# 34 of 77)

Mmm4ever I'm not an expert, but I think the grease pencils marks are there for good.

hiipychic Can you be more specific?

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boodust (0)(view author's auctions)
05/06/03 10:14 PM (# 35 of 77)

The following link is for an excellent Dutch site with good information:
national bibliotheek van Nederland
5. Procedures and formulas for the conservation of leather bookbindings and the treatment of specific kinds of damage
Conservation of leather
This chapter provides a detailed survey of the recommended procedures and method of formula preparation for leather conservation. In addition to the dust and dirt that affects all bookbindings, the damage categories discussed here concern physico-mechanical and chemical damage that is to be found in most of the common kinds of leather bookbindings.
Also dealt with here are a few special damage categories pertaining to certain kinds of leather (alum-tawed, and leather with pigmented finishes), to overfatted leather and parchment, and to biological damage, together with the appropriate treatment procedure and the method of formula preparation.
Cleaning
When an emulsion or dressing is used, the solvent in these preparations may allow dust and dirt to penetrate even further into the leather or parchment. It is therefore advised to remove any loose dust and dirt from the bindings prior to treatment with an emulsion or dressing.
Removal of loose dust and dirt
This is best done with a soft brush and in a fixed sequence, for example: head, fore edge, tail, covers, spine. A vacuum cleaner may be used to remove loose dust by suction, but a soft brush attachment should be used to avoid (further) damaging the binding. It is also advisable to give the book a final wipe over with tissue paper. This soft quality paper will mop up any remaining loose dust and dirt, thereby revealing any ingrained impurities.
Removal of fixed dirt with a surface cleaning agent
A surface cleaning agent can be used to remove fixed dirt. The agent should be whipped to a foam before using. During treatment the dirt is absorbed by the foam and afterwards foam and dirt can be removed together. Furthermore, because only the foam is used, the leather suffers minimal humidification. Depending on the surface structure of the bookbinding and the extent of the damage, the leather surface is cleaned with cotton buds or a clean flannel cloth.
The main ingredient of the cleaning agent is a neutral (non-ionic) soap made up of molecules with a strong apolar and a strong polar part.This serves to bind the oily dirt particles, which can then be absorbed by the agent. The dirt binds with the carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC), which prevents the dirt settling back onto the book.
Due to the presence of water in the agent this treatment is not suitable for leather with chemical degradation. The surface cleaning agent works only on the surface and leaves no residue whatsoever after it has been applied.
Formula surface cleaning agent
996 gram distilled water
2 gram neutral (non-ionic) soap
2 gram carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC), medium viscosity
Mix soap and CMC. Add mixture to water. Shake well. Transfer a small quantity to a low tray. Whip the mixture

till a layer of foam is formed on the surface. Use only this foam.

Deacidification

Deacidifying leather with ammonia is a very effective method for neutralising free sulphuric acid (pH value below 3.0). During the process ammonium sulphate is formed. The excess of ammonia, which can raise the pH of the leather considerably, evaporates, leaving the pH once again within the safe pH range: 3 - 5.

This method cannot be used on those types of dye and pigment that are permanently discoloured by ammonia. As it is usually difficult to determine sensitivity to ammonia, one is advised against deacidification of books with prints and maps coloured by hand. In such cases treatment of the bindings can be restricted to buffering.

Brass components, such as clasps and bosses, are corroded by ammonia and may discolour, with the 'yellow' colour becoming darker. Although it is possible to remove this discoloration by polishing, it will also remove the patina of centuries. The discoloration of these kinds of metal components must therefore be weighed against the conservation of the leather.

Drawing 8 Example of a deacidification case

Deacidification procedure

Deacidification with ammonia is a simple procedure. The bindings should be placed in as small a space as possible. In practice a case that can be tightly sealed is used. A tray or saucer containing a layer of ammonia (15%) is placed on the bottom of the case. The books are then set on a rack halfway up the case. The case should be so constructed that there is no danger of the books coming into contact with ammonia, for instance as a result of the case being knocked over (drawing 8). Because ammonia irritates skin and bronchial tubes, gloves and protective measures for eyes, nose and mouth are necessary. After a quarter of an hour the books can be taken out of the case and put in a fume cupboard, to allow the remaining ammonia to evaporate. After two weeks the books are ready to undergo further treatment.

Additional remarks

1. In principle, deacidification of the leather can also be accomplished by means of the buffer solution described in the next section. For the blue and red damage categories this would mean two subsequent applications of the buffer solution: with the first application the effective compound (imidazole) will function as a deacidification agent neutralising the free acid present in the leather, while the actual buffering effect of imidazole will be reached only with the second application. A single application of the buffer solution with a double imidazole concentration must be advised against, because such a solution would be too alkaline and might therefore lead to damage of the leather.

2. Regarding the recommended pH criteria, the treatment procedures for the different damage categories of leather bookbindings described in chapter 3 are based on the most frequent situation, in which only pH values of the leather smaller than 3.0 necessitate deacidification, because under these circumstances free acid will be present in the leather. However, at higher pH values - and especially in the range between 3.0 to 4.0 - a (small) risk of free acid still being present should be taken into account. The fact that the pH value of leather containing free acid can still be higher than 3.0, may be caused by the presence of ammonium sulphate, formed during the leather degradation process; as this salt will cause a pH of c. 5.5 when combined with water, the overall pH value of the leather may rise and thus, as it were, camouflage the presence of free acid. Ammonium sulphate concentrations in leather of 0.5 % and higher may already lead to this effect. The presence of free acid above pH 3.0 and the subsequent need for deacidification treatment can be conclusively indicated by the determination of the differential number (cf. chapter 7); at a differential number > 0.6 free acid is present in the leather, at values smaller than 0.6 it is not.

Buffering

A stable pH value is of the greatest importance for the conservation of leather. This stability can be achieved with a buffer (solution).

If the pH value of buffered leather is disturbed, whether from inside or outside, the buffer will ensure that the pH value remains within acceptable limits. Since leather (especially chemically damaged leather) should not come into direct contact with water, the buffer must be introduced by means of an organic solvent. We have opted for imidazole, a nitrogen containing ring compound soluble in isopropyl alcohol.

Imidazole is a colourless substance that is applied to the leather in soluble form; deposition takes place after the solvent has evaporated. In addition to its buffering properties, imidazole is also hygroscopic and thus acts as a moisture retentive. Moreover, with metals such as iron and copper, imidazole forms insoluble salts, which

prevent these metals - if they are present in leather - from acting as catalysts to decay.
How often buffering should be carried out is a matter for further research.
Caution! In general, a buffer may only be applied if the pH value is no higher than 4.0. If used on leather with a pH value higher than 4, the pH value may increase to 6 - 7. Such leather becomes unstable and discolorations may occur.
Formula buffer solution
860 gram odourless kerosene
120 gram isopropyl alcohol
20 gram imidazole
As imidazole is not directly soluble in odourless kerosene, it must first be dissolved in isopropyl alcohol that has been heated to about 30 °C. The imidazole is not fully dissolved until the solution is transparent; after that the odourless kerosene is added. For product information on odourless kerosene see: Treatment with emulsions or dressings
Caution! Because of the risk of fire an electric hotplate should be used rather than a gas flame. It is recommended that the buffer solution be stored in brown glass bottles. The solution should be applied to the leather bookbinding with a soft brush. Brushing the leather surface twice will generally be sufficient. The editors are aware of the drawbacks associated with the isopropyl alcohol solvent. It is a polar solvent and may dissolve coloured or non-coloured components of the leather and transport them to the surface. It evaporates too rapidly to achieve optimum distribution of the imidazole in the leather and is a moisture expellent. We are constantly trying to adapt and improve formulas with a view to finding a suitable substitute for isopropyl alcohol.
Conditioning
Conditioning is applied to obtain an optimum moisture content in the leather with a view to making the leather more supple and elastic. Moreover, humidification renders the internal structure of the leather more accessible to the penetration of fat, which is not possible if the leather is too dry. For the same reason, one is strongly advised against treating leather in a dry environment (low RH). In theory, leather contains three balanced forms of moisture (natural water balance): free water present in the capillaries between the fibre bundles, bound water, combined to the proteins of the leather fibres as hydrates, and 'associated' water attached to the fibres through weak physical forces and hydrogen bonds. Bound water is especially important for a good condition of the leather and the optimal binding of fat (through the apolar hydrophilic part of the fat molecule) to the leather fibres. And it is actually this form of moisture that is brought to a maximum level by means of conditioning.
To allow the moisture to penetrate evenly into the internal fibres of the skin, the bookbindings should be placed for at least four days in a room with a relative humidity (RH) of 70 - 75 %, at room temperature. A simple humidifier may be sufficient to raise the humidity in a (smallish) room. If such a room is not available, a sturdy tent can be erected over the humidifier. It is not advisable to blow steam or spray water into the room if only tap water is available, because the contaminants in this water, such as salts, will be deposited on the books with all the detrimental consequences that entails.
Regular circulation of the air is necessary to prevent the growth of fungi. If these are already visible on the books earmarked for conditioning, they should, of course, be removed first. After the fourth day of the humidifying process the leather will be in optimum condition to ensure adequate fat deposition. The bindings are treated in the same conditioned room with an emulsion or dressing. Four hours after treatment with a dressing or emulsion the relative humidity and temperature may be slowly reduced to normal values of about 50% RH and 18 °C.

Treatment with emulsions or dressings
The previous guidelines (Goddijn, 1987) contained a formula for calculating the quantity of leather dressing to be applied so as to ensure a correct quantity of fat. Practical experience in recent years has shown that this calculated quantity is nearly always equivalent to twice brushing the emulsion or dressing over the leather surface with a flat, pig's bristle brush. The percentage of fat in the emulsion or dressing to be used is determined by the degree of physico-mechanical or chemical damage:
5% for slight damage;
10% for severe damage.
The basic ingredients of the emulsions and dressings are neatsfoot oil, lanolin and odourless kerosene. Neatsfoot oil is a lubricator which stands in a long tradition of use by leather manufacturers. Lanolin (wool fat) has both

lubricating and water-retention characteristics. Odourless kerosene, a refined petrol product with a boiling range of 150 - 210 °C, 'free' of aromates, has proved to be an excellent means of transporting the fats in the emulsions and dressings into the leather: the kerosene evaporates completely after the fat has been introduced, but evaporation is so slow that the fats are able to penetrate deeply and to attach themselves securely to the fibres instead of being transported to the surface again.

Caution! Emulsions and dressings contain odourless kerosene, which is a health hazard. A gas mask must therefore be worn when working with emulsions and dressings. After treatment the books should be allowed to 'evaporate' for about a week in a fume cupboard or in a conditioning room equipped with exhaust facilities.

Emulsions

Emulsions are only suitable for the conservation of leather bookbindings with physico-mechanical damage and a pH value above 3. The emulsion consists of neatsfoot oil (lubricator), lanolin (lubricator and moisture retentive), neutral soap (emulsifier), distilled water and odourless kerosene (carriers). The advantage of using emulsions is that the water (in the emulsion) makes the leather swell, so that the space between the fibres and in the fibres themselves are accessible to the lubricants.

For good results the emulsion should be applied at a relative humidity of at least 70%. It is therefore important to begin by conditioning the book for four days. After treatment the books should be allowed to 'evaporate' for about a week in a fume cupboard or in a conditioning room with exhaust facilities.

Formula for 10% fat emulsion

550 gram odourless kerosene
300 gram distilled water
60 gram neatsfoot oil
50 gram neutral (non-ionic) soap
40 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

Formula for 5% fat emulsion

625 gram odourless kerosene
300 gram distilled water
30 gram neatsfoot oil
25 gram neutral (non-ionic) soap
20 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

Start by mixing the neatsfoot oil, lanolin, neutral soap, and distilled water. The best results are achieved by mixing the ingredients over warm water (au bain marie). Then add the kerosene.

Caution! Because of the risk of fire, an electric hotplate or heating over warm water (au bain marie) should be used rather than a gas flame. Store in a glass jar or bottle that can be tightly closed. Always work with limited quantities in a separate tray and never pour used emulsion back into the bottle. This will keep the fluids pure. If stored in a refrigerator, fat emulsions can be kept for one year.

Leather dressings

The leather dressing is based on an organic solvent and is intended for chemically damaged leather. Application of the leather dressing brings the fat content of the leather up to standard. The lanolin in the dressing also helps to restore the moisture-absorbent quality of degraded leather.

The leather dressing must be applied in a conditio-ned room (after the leather has been conditioned for four days at 70% RH).

After treatment the books should be allowed to 'evaporate' for about a week in a fume cupboard or a conditioning room with exhaust facilities.

Formula for 10% fat leather dressing

900 gram odourless kerosene
60 gram neatsfoot oil
40 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

Formula for 5% fat leather dressing

950 gram odourless kerosene
30 gram neatsfoot oil
20 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

Caution! The lanolin is dissolved by heating it in a portion of the odourless kerose-ne. Because of risk of fire, an electric hotplate or heating over warm water (au bain marie) should be used rather than a gas flame. The

neatsfoot oil can then be added to the warm solution with the rest of the kerosene without any problem. The leather dressing will keep 'indefinitely'.

Lanolin dressing

The only movable parts of the bookbinding are the hinging points (joints) and, to a lesser extent, the spine. This means that the leather in these places requires extra care. Deposition of fat into the fibres is certainly necessary. This holds equally for the spine which is especially susceptible to degradation. The joints and spine of the bookbinding can therefore be treated with a special dressing containing a high amount of lanolin.

This lanolin dressing can also be used in places affected by physical damage: abraded grain, scratches, etc. After treatment the books should be allowed to 'evaporate' for about 1 week in a fume cupboard or in a conditioning room with exhaust facilities.

Formula for lanolin dressing

900 gram odourless kerosene

100 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

Dissolve the lanolin in a portion of the kerosene which has been heated to a maximum of 40 °C. Then add the rest of the kerosene. Because of the risk of fire an electric hotplate should be used, or heating over warm water (au bain marie). Apply the dressing to the damaged parts only, using a soft brush. The lanolin dressing will keep 'indefinitely'.

Impregnation

Impregnation should be seen as a last effort to preserve bookbinding leather. It is irreversible and therefore only used for bookbinding leather that would otherwise have to be considered as 'lost'. It is used mainly for leather with chemical damage such as red rot and loosened parts of the grain due to aggressive marbling. Impreg-nation does not improve or maintain the overall quality of the leather; its sole purpose is to anchor loose fragments (flakes).

As impregnating agent one may use a partially cured polyurethane (a polymer dissolved in an organic solvent with reactive isocyanide groups). The efficacy of the polyurethane is determined by the reaction of the polymer with the functional groups of leather fibres. The fine network of lateral links so produced indirectly reconnects the leather fibres and in so doing improves the cohesive quality of the leather. Because the impregnating agent extracts fat from the leather, the fibres must be lubricated before impregnation is started. Failure to lubricate results in a sharp reduction of tensile strength.

For effective impregnation the reactive isocyanide groups must react with the hydroxyl groups in the leather fibres. However, if the moisture level in the leather is too low, the free isocyanide groups react with the moisture in the air instead of with the hydroxyl groups in the leather, resulting in too few bindings with the fibres. Impregnation should therefore take place after lubrication and in a room where the bookbinding is first conditioned for about 48 hours at a RH of 70-75 %. It is difficult to say how much impregnating agent is necessary to build a sufficiently strong network. Practical experience has shown that a good result is obtained by brushing the leather (locally) twice with the undiluted polyurethane product SU41/H51. If the undiluted fluid detaches fragments of grain from the fibre network layer, the impregnating agent can be diluted with odourless kerosene. Apply the agent with a pig's bristle brush and wear a gas mask and protective gloves. Keep the storage jar closed as much as possible to prevent hardening. Any leftovers should be deposited in the chemical waste bin. Shiny patches can be wiped off with a dry cloth one day after impregnation.

Caution! Colourless, undyed leather becomes slightly darker as a result of treatment with the impregnating agent.

Formula for pre-impregnation dressing

880 gram odourless kerosene

80 gram lanolin (anhydrous)

40 gram neatsfoot oil

The dressing should be applied before impregnation.

Treatment of specific kinds of leather

Alum-tawed leather

After tanning, this kind of leather has more fat between the fibres than other tanned leathers. It is therefore unnecessary, and in most cases even detri1mental, to add to the fat content. Apart from removal of dirt, bookbindings of alum-tawed leather should not be submitted to any further treatment.

The (dry) treatment of dyed alum-tawed leather consists of the removal of any dust and dirt with a soft brush

and dirt-absorbing paper (tissue paper).
The (dry) treatment of undyed alum-tawed leather consists of the removal of dust and dirt with a soft brush and dirt-absorbing paper (tissue paper) and the removal of fixed dirt with a cleaning agent developed specifically for alum-tawed leather.
Formula for alum-tawed leather cleaning agent
950 gram alcohol
50 gram ammonia (15%).
Caution! Health risk: this agent is a powerful irritant of eyes, bronchial tubes and skin. Treatment should therefore be carried out in a fume cupboard and (neoprene) gloves should be worn. The agent should be applied with a dry cloth that is changed regularly.
Leather with water-based finishes
Finishes based on binding media such as casein, albumen and gelatin are not very resistant to contact with ammonia, alkaline solutions, or water with neutral (non-ionic) soap. They have a small wet-rub resistance. To distinguish leather with a water-based finish, from leather with a solvent- or dispersion-based finish, a drop of leather dressing is carefully applied to the leather with a pipette. If the dressing (quickly) penetrates into the leather, it is a water-based finish. This leather can be cleaned without resorting to fluids and treated with the leather dressing. Leather dressing has to be chosen because acid may be present in the leather and acids can cause discoloration if an emulsion is used. Deacidification and buffering is not recommended for this type of leather because it is not very resistant to alkaline substances.
Leather with solvent- and dispersion-based finishes
Because solvent- and dispersion-based finishing coatings are highly dirt-repellant, organic dirt is easily removed. Leather finished in this way has a high wet-rub resistance. It is difficult for fluids to permeate the leather because of the closed surface of the finishing coating.
Treatment consists of several stages:
* Removal of loose dust and dirt.
* If necessary, further cleaning with a surface cleaning agent.
* As the plasticiser may have migrated from the layer of paint into the leather, it is useful to treat the layer of paint with sulphonated castor oil. This renders the layer of paint elastic, even after the disappearance of the plasticiser (one often finds cracks in old finishing coating, due to the aforementioned migration of the plasticiser). To keep the layer of paint in good condition, a little castor oil on a damp, white flannel cloth will suffice to treat the whole binding.
* If there is also physico-mechanical damage on the spine and/or joint, local treatment with leather dressing is necessary. This is best done with a soft paint brush. To ensure an effective fat deposition in the leather, the book should be conditioned beforehand.

Treatment of leather and parchment overtreated with fat
If the leather has become too dark in colour and the leather or parchment feels (somewhat) sticky, it has been overtreated with fat. The surplus fat can be removed by a surface defatting agent made up of refined petrol, a neutral, non-ionic soap, and distilled water. Refined petrol is highly volatile and very good at dissolving fat. As with the cleaning agent, soap is added for easy removal of surface dirt. Water is added to dissolve the soap. Because of the gelatinous nature of the solution and the volatility of the solvent (refined petrol) the defatting agent works only on the surface. The water does not penetrate into the material and only surface fat is dissolved. The amount of water and soap is very small, so that the agent does not leave a residue and does not cause discoloration. It can be used to remove wax, shoe polish, smoke stains, organic dirt, and surplus fat (from earlier treatments) from the leather surface. The fairly gelatinous fluid is applied to the leather with a flannel cloth with a circular motion. The agent can be applied to bookbindings with a surface layer consisting of paint, varnish or some other surface coating. However, some care should be exercised in applying the agent. Theoretically the organic solvent could dissolve such substances as binding agents and dyes. It is therefore advisable to test the agent using a cotton bud on a small, inconspicuous area - for instance on the turn-in of the binding - in order to find out whether there are any undesirable side effects. If a layer of dirt and/or fat is difficult to remove, a larger quantity of the agent may be applied with a soft brush and then left for an hour to allow it to be absorbed. The effect the agent is having on the leather or the surface coating should be checked regularly during this hour. Before it is completely dry, it should be carefully wiped with a soft, smooth flannel cloth. If necessary this

treatment should be repeated several times. After defatting the book still needs to be conditioned to ensure a better distribution of the remaining fat in the leather.
Formula for surface defatting agent 890 gram refined petrol
100 gram distilled water
10 gram neutral (non-ionic) soap
Mix the substances together in a glass jar that can be tightly closed and shake until the mixture is fairly gelatinous. The surface defatting agent will keep 'indefinitely'. The refined petrol product used in this formula has a boiling range of 100 - 140 °C.
Caution! The ingredients used in the formula have been chosen to combine optimum effect of the agent with minimum detrimental consequences for the user's health. Nevertheless a number of preventive measures should be taken, especially for long or regular use of organic solvents. Refined petrol is a dangerous substance, not only because it is inflammable, but also because it represents a health risk when inhaled. It is therefore necessary to work in a fume cupboard with this solution and to wear protective gloves during work to avoid defatting the skin. The books that have been treated must be left in the fume cupboard until the refined petrol has evaporated.
Treatment of biological damage
Fungi
Sound climatological conditions and hygiene are a primary prerequisite for preventing fungal growth. Regular inspection is also crucial for timely detection of possible problems.
The first step in treating a case of fungal attack is to inspect the location of the affected book. Are other books in the vicinity (or in the same series) infected? Isolate the objects that are affected, treat them and inspect the room. If humidity is too high, the cause needs to be traced. If the storage conditions are good and one is faced with individual cases of fungal attack, it is most likely to be an old infection that is no longer active. Isolate the infected books by sealing them in plastic bags. If possible remove them to a separate area where they can be disinfected and cleaned before returning them to the collection.
If practically possible, the least drastic treatment is mechanical removal of the fungi using a fine paint brush, a brush, and an exhaust system. Care should be taken that the fungal remains being removed are not blown back into the room. If necessary racks and bookcases can be cleaned with a disinfectant such as a quaternary ammonium compound. Books that have been cleaned can be put back once they are dry and the room meets standards for storage conditions. In the case of large-scale infection and 'fungal explosions' it may be necessary to resort to mass disinfection methods, such as irradiation with gamma rays. But this should only be done after a careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages and after seeking advice from experts in this particular field.
Insects
Good insect control starts with preventive measures: preventing the pests from entering the building (closing openings, joints, and cracks, placing insect screens in front of windows, checking all incoming objects), sound hygiene and regular inspection.
The first step in insect control is to check which species is involved. The next step is the same as for fungi: localise the source of the attack and check whether it is an individual case or whether more books are affected. Isolate the objects that are affected, treat them and inspect the room.
For the treatment of material affected by insects there are a number of non-toxic methods, of which freezing is the simplest one for books and archives. But this cannot be done if objects are painted, or consist of several attached layers, each with a different stretching and shrinking behaviour.
Standard treatment takes 48 hours at a temperature of -20 °C and can be repeated after some time, if necessary. Other non-toxic methods are fumigating with carbon dioxide or nitrogen (carried out commercially in some countries). In principle high temperature treatment is also an option, but little is known as yet about the effects of heat treatment on different materials. Toxic insect control methods have a number of drawbacks: fumigating with methylbromide is not suitable for protein-containing material such as leather and parchment; in principle fumigating with phosphine is possible, but inadvisable if metal parts (bosses, clasps) are present because it is a corrosive gas.
Koninklijke Bibliotheek - Nationale bibliotheek van Nederland

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05/07/03 2:03 PM (# 36 of 77)

A very valuable and interesting reference.

I hope that the lesson everyone takes away is that they shouldn’t be attempting anything that involves the formulation of conservation materials.

Unless they have:

an extensive background in chemistry
know how to read and understand an MSDS
a fume hood to work in
proper insurance

and of course:

KNOW THAT THE FIRST THING YOU ALWAYS DO WHEN WORKING WITH CHEMICALS IS TO PROTECT YOUR EYES

Please forgive the shouting -- the glaring omission of the latter precaution in the above is inexcusable.

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boodust (0)(view author's auctions)
05/07/03 4:33 PM (# 37 of 77)

A true alarmist ....one assumes anyone reading will have a fair modicum of intelligence.
of course one can assume nothing.....but one cannot go through life worrying about the intelligence of readers and whether they are smart or stupid.

---

cornercube (0)(view author's auctions)
05/07/03 8:01 PM (# 38 of 77)

Of course.

No reason to worry.

So why don't you mix up a couple drums of the stuff and sell it to us a jar at a time? No reason to have insurance, or MSDS, or follow the shipping regs for hazardous materials, or any of those other inconvenient rules. Should save us a lot of money, since you're not worried about any of that.

Smart or stupid has nothing to do with it. Ignorance is the operative word.

If assumptions worked a 6-foot step ladder would have seven fewer safety stickers and cost half the money.

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b_o_o_k (157)(view author's auctions)
05/07/03 9:24 PM (# 39 of 77)

And McD's coffee wouldn't have to warn that coffee is hot. Maybe it's our legal system...

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for_the_love_of_books (189)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 12:03 PM (# 40 of 77)

Wanted to let folks know about a really nifty tool I found at Hobby Lobby for sanding very small areas of the text block. It's called a Revelle-Monogram Sander, with a tapered end for small edges, a round end, and a flat side for larger areas. It comes with several grades of sanding belts that fit on a pencil sized device. For page edges that are soiled overall, I recommend the 3m fine sanding pad (the soft thick one, gray in color), and a quality soft paintbrush to dust. And for adhesive removal, Un-Du, but only for recent self-adhesive labels. It does not work well on old lick & stick type adhesive, but it does not stain, even on the silk moire endpapers of the Easton Press books. For deodorizing-J. Godseys deodorizer is the best. You can reach her at gods@attbi.com-no personal interest, just a great product.

Regards,
Michelle

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boodust (0)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 12:07 PM (# 41 of 77)

FTLOB Good information.

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for_the_love_of_books (189)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 12:50 PM (# 42 of 77)

Thanks. You should check out www.ioba.org, the Bookfinder Insider list, and the Biblio list, too. Lots of good info, just ignore the occaisional silliness and flame wars on the mailing lists ;-)

http://bibliophilegroup.com/mailman/listinfo/biblio_bibliophilegroup.com

http://lists.bookfinder.com/mailman/listinfo/insider

http://www.ioba.org/links.html

Bests,
Michelle

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pandora (7365)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 3:56 PM (# 43 of 77)

I have a set of old law books, with soft leather covers.
The black of the leather comes off rather easily (on hands, cloth, etc. Any ideas/suggestion on how to "seal" the leather?
Thanks!

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satnrose (4065)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 4:22 PM (# 44 of 77)

pandora: Cellugel.
This effective consolident for deteriorating powdery leather was developed by professional book conservators. Cellugel is essentially a mixture of hydroxypropylcellulose and isopropanol. Cellulose ethers have been used by book and paper conservators for years for the purpose of sizing paper and consolidating deteriorated leather. When applied to powdery leather (leather with red-rot), Cellugel is absorbed throughout the entire thickness of the leather and dries within minutes. After it is dry, the dust no longer comes off the leather. Cellugel does not darken, discolour nor leave a film on the surface of the leather.
I get mine from The Library Store in Kensington, Maryland

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pandora (7365)(view author's auctions)
06/18/03 5:38 PM (# 45 of 77)

Satnrose, thank you so much!

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db2054 (1586)(view author's auctions)
06/21/03 4:09 PM (# 46 of 77)

Hello,
I have a question concerning water damaged books. I have an 1893 2 volume edition of "The Book of the Fair". Volume 2 has some major water damage to the front cover. That doesn't concern me as much as the fact that some of the pages have developed a fondness for each other. They are stuck together in a somewhat spotty fashion. Spotty meaning a small place here and then a few inches away another small spot..... My question is: How do I get these spots to unstick without pulling the face of the paper from the other page?
Any help will be greatly appreciated. In better condition this set would have been worth a fair sum. Even so if I can get these pages unstuck with out further damage the set is still salvageable.

Thanks,
db2054

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heart4adele (103)(view author's auctions)
06/22/03 5:41 PM (# 47 of 77)

Hello,
This is the first time I've attempted to post a message here and I'm not sure if this is the correct procedure, so if I'm wrong, please forgive me.
Any way, here goes ...
I have found myself in possession of a rather expensive edition of an older trade paper back. The exact edition is listed on Amazon, with its used book dealers, and on Half.com for an average price of $220.00 in conditions ranging from what they call "acceptable" to "very good". My copy is in nearly new condition (and I'm a harsh judge of book condition) EXCEPT for the fact that there is a one inch tear in the top of the front cover. Placed

face down on a scanner this tear is not even visible in the scanned image. I'd like to list it for sale either on Half.com or eBay, but should I fix it first or sell it as is? Before I researched it to see if it was in or out of print I was just going to stick some tape on it and sell it as a reading copy until I found it's rare/valuable. Any advice, suggestions, help, etc. would be greatly appreciated.
My email address for eBay is thecomputerguys2@aol.com

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db2054 (1586)(view author's auctions)
06/23/03 5:38 PM (# 48 of 77)

heart4adele ,
List the book in its current condition. Let the buyer worry about repair. If the tear doesn't show up in the scan then describe it fully in your description with the exact location. Then it is up to the bidder and there won't be any confusion or claims of false advertising. If it is as rare as you say it is it should still fetch a fair chunk of change. Don't let book prices on other sites (even Half dot com)lead you into believing that you can also get that price. If it was a good price for the book it would have sold already. If you set a reserve on it then you won't feel that you are "giving it away". I've seen books go for $100 that I can buy other places for $30 or $40 in the same or better condition.

Hope this helps and good luck. :o)
db2054

P.S..... I'm curious... What is the title of the book?

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bookphysician (220)(view author's auctions)
07/09/03 7:07 AM (# 49 of 77)

Hello,

If you have damaged books, I can help. I am a bookbinder specializing in restoration and period rebinding. In other words, I rebind or restore books for museums, special libraries, rare book dealers and collectors who want to make a book look as it should in a proper period style, not a library binding. If you were to have your books restored when needed, as in this case, you may find it easer to sell your books, and be able to sell them for substantially more than you would if left in poor condition. I’ve been binding and restoring for more than 25 years and teach bookbinding at a local university. My main employment comes from doing commissioned work for people like your self. If you are interested, email me back at binder@rochester.rr.com
Thanks for your time,

Tim

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cornercube (0)(view author's auctions)
10/11/03 2:35 PM (# 50 of 77)

spinning up to speed

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castlebooksbiz (526)(view author's auctions)
10/11/03 9:20 PM (# 51 of 77)

wabbitt15 (506)
6:18pm September 20, 2002 (# 2 of 5)

In this great post, he mentioned "a call" several times.

What is a "call"?

Thanks.

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castlebooksbiz (526)(view author's auctions)
10/11/03 9:54 PM (# 52 of 77)

I have a 6"x9" paperback that's very thin, about 50 pages...both front and back covers are curled up on the long edges...I noticed when I was looking around for values, someone else described the same thing in his listing of that same book.

Is there any way to correct this?

Thanks for the help.

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helpuspay4aba (82)(view author's auctions)
10/12/03 6:43 AM (# 53 of 77)

Hello! I recently discovered some ways to clean and repair books, quite by accident. I wouldn't try any of this on rare, old or valuable books, but it works nicely on trade paperbacks and shiny dustjackets.

1. If your trade paperback isn't quite straight, or has covers that want to stay open, heat the book with a hair dryer. Then place the book on a flat surface with a heavy book on top. It will be quite straight and look un-opened after a few hours.

2. Shaving cream removes finger paint and ground-in dirt.

3. You can erase pencil from any kind of paper with an artgum eraser. It will also remove magic marker from a smooth shiny surface. A Sanford plastic eraser will remove ink.

4. You can restore shine and remove fingerprints with window cleaner (not the vinegar kind, as the smell lingers). Wipe with a soft cotton cloth. DO NOT use kleenex to wipe off window cleaner, shaving cream or Undo. It leaves scratches. Stick with cotton.

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castlebooksbiz (526)(view author's auctions)
10/12/03 8:23 PM (# 54 of 77)

HelpUs, thanks for the GREAT suggestions!! These are really sharp.

For shiny covers I usually begin with a damp cloth to get some of the "easy" stuff off.

Btw, I have a great children's book I got at a garage sale last week, but it needs cleaning badly...it has one of those "tough" cloth covers....is that called a "library" cover? Anyway, I am a bit afraid to use the damp cloth...I do have "Clean-Cover Gel" that I use a lot, but I test first, and Document Cleaning Powder from Brodart ("non-smearing, non-abrasive and grit-free". Would any of those work, with spot testing of course?

Any help appreciated. Thanks!

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castlebooksbiz (526)(view author's auctions)
10/12/03 8:25 PM (# 55 of 77)

Oh, btw, the children's book has "dirt" all over the covers...but the pages are very clean and it is worth cleaning up.

M.

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angelwingsboys (1014)(view author's auctions)
10/13/03 1:01 PM (# 56 of 77)

crayon in favorite book and others ,any help!
Posted: October 13, 2003 12:36 PM
angelwingsboys (998) (view author's auctions) Posts: 1

i have a few books that are in great shape except one or two. one of the books i want to keep for myself is the all my children 25th anniversary collectors edition.please help me get this back close to what it was.this is what i need help with, i have had this book safe all this time but now my grandson got the book without me knowing and scribbled in crayon inside of it on quite a few pages, i have tried to get it erased without harming it but starting to rub into smears therefor harder to get off the pages.. is there anything that i can do to get this off the pages without harming them..please help, i need to save this for my collection.any help would be appreciated.angelwingsboys

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quartzierose (88)(view author's auctions)
10/17/03 7:53 AM (# 57 of 77)

bumping up, hoping it can stay on top...

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angelwingsboys (1014)(view author's auctions)

10/23/03 5:45 PM (# 58 of 77)

i need help here please! anyone know how to get orange crayon off of a few pages of my books that i collect. my grandbaby got a hold of and wrote or scribbled in, sure would appreciate the help.. i tried to erase but will not work.please let me know what to do thanks angelwingsboys..

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quartzierose (88)(view author's auctions)
11/03/03 4:21 PM (# 59 of 77)

Still hoping this thread will stay on top.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 12:43 PM (# 60 of 77)

I sent for Brodart's free guide to "book repair and protection". It came in today's mail and I think it has alot of good information in it...well worth sending for and is written so even a layman can understand. It arrived in less than a week too.

I have two questions about "breaking in a new book":

I've never seen anyone "break in a new book" nor have I heard it should be done. Is everyone in agreement that all new books should be "broken in" using a specific method?

Can older books be protected from further damage if proper breaking in techniques are used on the parts of the book that don't have damage?

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quartzierose (88)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 3:49 PM (# 61 of 77)

On a thread now purged, Fine.books gave a wonderful explanation of breaking a book. I hope I'm thinking of the same thing you are asking, Caro*mormorio. I'm thinking when you have to carefully cut the leaves to open the pages because books didn't or don't sometimes come with all the edges trimmed. Not the best terminology to describe it.

Let's hope Fine is around soon for an encore.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 5:24 PM (# 62 of 77)

Thanks, quartzierose, but I remember that post fine.books posted. What he was saying isn't the same as what this pamphlet describes. This pamphlet says that breaking in a book will "lengthen the life of any new book, as well as any newly repaired book. This process will remove some of the stiffness that is typical of most new books and lessen the danger of breaking the binding by creating a gradual curvature to the tube section of the spine."

And it goes on to describe how to break in a book. It then says, "1.Holding the contents upright, stand the book on its spine. Run your thumb,index finger or bone folder gently along the hinge of each cover. 2.Then, alternating front and back, firmly but gently press five or ten pages down at a time. When you reach the middle of the book, the pages should lay open flat."

That is all it says about this.

I don't know what a "bone folder" is.

---

quartzierose (88)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 5:28 PM (# 63 of 77)

I've seen bone folders on the book supply sites. Thank you for the explanation, Caro*mormorio.

I'm wondering now about doing that to a book, making it flat. I thought that was a no no.

---

quartzierose (88)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 5:30 PM (# 64 of 77)

Bone is the material the device is made of, looks sort of like a letter opener. I do have a terrible memory.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 6:15 PM (# 65 of 77)

You're welcome. I don't remember reading anything on this subject before in this forum or anywhere for that matter.
You said:
"'m wondering now about doing that to a book, making it flat. I thought that was a no no."

That is what I thought too, so I decided to ask! :)
I hope someone else has at least an opinion on this.

If I had read the glossary in the back of the pamphlet,I would have known what the bone folder is. It says it is a tool for applying tape and covers, like a squeegee.
It's used to fold and crease pages too.

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satnrose (4065)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 7:00 PM (# 66 of 77)

I do much repair
and I have a bone folder

it's made of plastic

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 7:48 PM (# 67 of 77)

It didn't say exactly like a squeegee...

I should have written it the way it appeared in the booklet.

The booklet says "similar to a squeegee".
:)

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brokerc (326)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 10:12 PM (# 68 of 77)

The librarian at my elementary school showed us how to "break-in" a book. I won't describe the process here because I would not want the practice to spread.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/08/03 10:27 PM (# 69 of 77)

brokerc

"The librarian at my elementary school showed us how to "break-in" a book. I won't describe the process here because I would not want the practice to spread."

Do you mean that the librarian's method is different than the one I described above?
Or do you mean you don't recommend breaking in a new book?

---

caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/16/03 5:19 PM (# 70 of 77)

They do say "three times is a charm", so here goes! Bump.
Yes, quartzierose did try to answer the question and I remembered that.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/16/03 5:27 PM (# 71 of 77)

post script:

And if breaking in a new book is not recommended, then how does one go about scanning the interior of a book without breaking the spine?

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skipper204 (60)(view author's auctions)
11/16/03 5:36 PM (# 72 of 77)

I've no idea. With my older books, in particular, I simply don't scan. For the important parts (title page copyright page, plates) I use a digital camera. Even with new books I buy, I try to treat them like collectibles -- I remove the jacket and put it away while reading. No food/beverages. No dog ears. Out of the sun. In short, I've no way to predict what will be collectible 40 years from now when my munchkin is trying to clean out my house. I'd like to leave some surprises.

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bookbiz (522)(view author's auctions)
11/16/03 7:50 PM (# 73 of 77)

I remember when I was in the 8th grade (1954), and our school librarian demonstrated that same method of "breaking in a book". Maybe it is good for a book, but it's just something that I instinctively don't feel comfortable with, and I wouldn't do it.
Many librarians have a very different attitude toward books than do most booksellers & collectors.
I think that whether or not to put a book thru the scanning process depends a lot on the individual case. You have to consider value and the condition that the book is already in. I would never subject a book to that process if it was collectable and/or in fine condition.
I prefer the digital camera approach.
Books are like living things in the sense that each one that you handle is an individual. There are no written-in-stone rules on how to handle them categorically - you have to make a decision on how to handle each individual book that you deal with.

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kookidz (415)(view author's auctions)
11/16/03 8:25 PM (# 74 of 77)

I'm certainly no expert, but I'll give your question an answer based on personal experience:

If I am reasonable sure I won't "break" the book, I put it open on the scanner with one edge (the one I don't want scanned) over the side (mine is at the edge of my desk) and the other on the platen. I don't push down. Then I scan. If I am worried that this won't work (maybe the book is too thick, then I use my digital camera.

If it is a book I'm selling, then I don't want to break it in. I let the buyer do that, or whatever he/she will with the book he/she now owns.

Hope this helps until more knowlegable bookies come along.

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caro*mormorio (0)(view author's auctions)
11/17/03 12:09 PM (# 75 of 77)

Thank you all for your responses. :)

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ctbooks_starcomm_net (821)(view author's auctions)
12/06/03 5:29 PM (# 76 of 77)

You are here!

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tcdaniel30710 (2)(view author's auctions)
12/09/03 8:01 AM (# 77 of 77)

Re: Breaking In Books: Change the Oil every 3000 reads and no page turning over 55 HaHa. I've never heard of such a thing and would be appalled to even suggest it. With that reasoning I guess they drop test the books from 3-5 feet too. Might as well slow smoke'm over a low fire.

I learned about Johnson's Jubilee Kitchen Wax on a soft cloth for a gentle, effective cleaning/polishing solution for most covers. A dab'll do ya. Problem is it's hard to find.