

# From Bach to Baseball Cards™: Caring for America's Library

Visit to the Library of  
Congress Preservation  
Directorate-Preservation Lab  
December 15, 2009

Marcus Vaska  
LCR Academic Council  
January 22, 2010



# Mission of the Preservation Directorate

- To assure long-term uninterrupted access to the intellectual content of the Library's collections, either in original or reformatted form.
  - Source:  
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv>

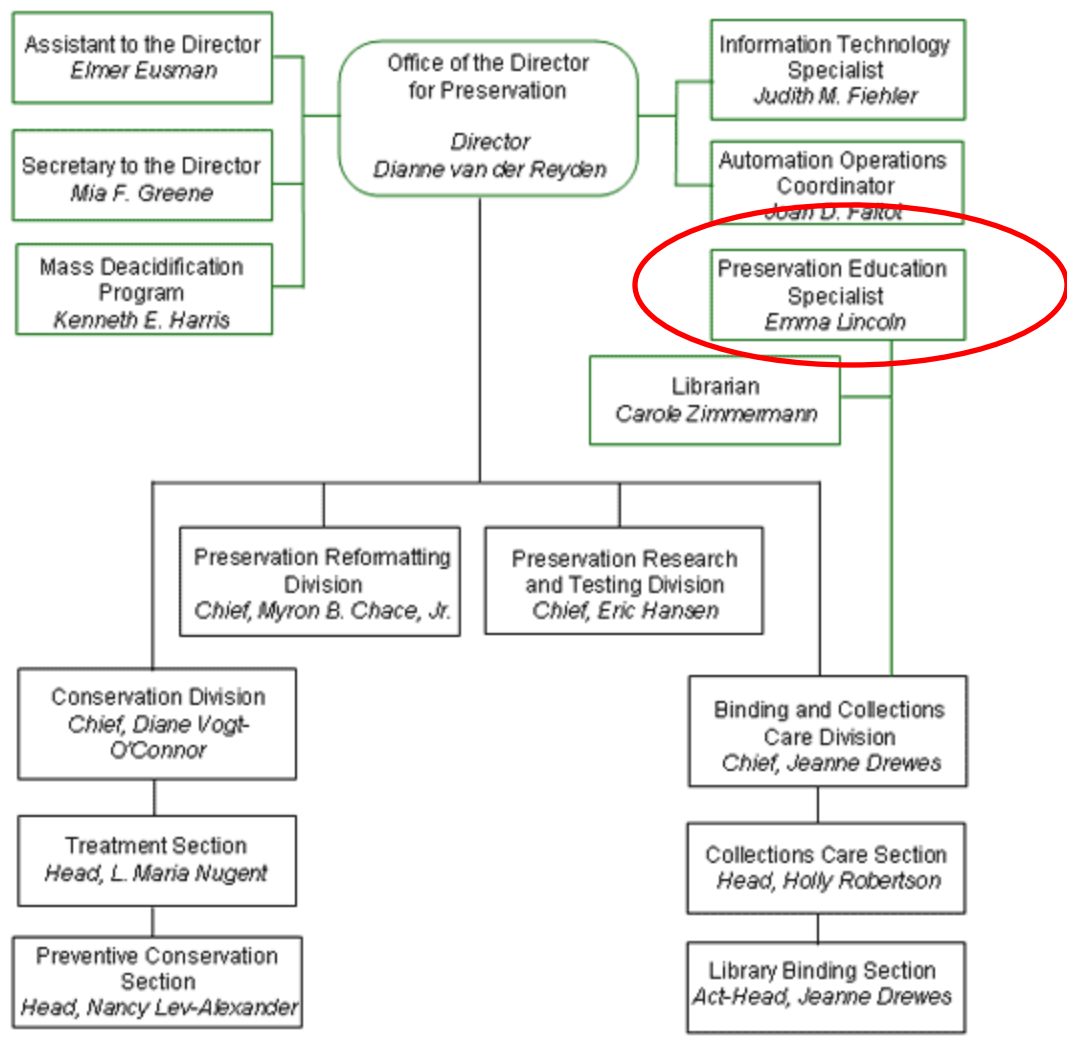


# Preservation Directorate: History

- Established in 1967
- Largest library preservation facility in the U.S.
- Responsible for overseeing Library-wide activities relating to the preservation and physical protection of Library material:
  - Top treasures
  - Cost-effective preventive care measures
  - Critical product testing and quality control



## PRESERVATION DIRECTORATE: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# VISITORS

# Plan Your Visit

[Hours](#) | [Directions](#) | [Campus Map, Floor Plans](#) | [Tours](#) | [When You Arrive](#) | [Shop, Eat](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Contact Us](#)

## James Madison Building, Ground Floor

Search this site

### Resources for...

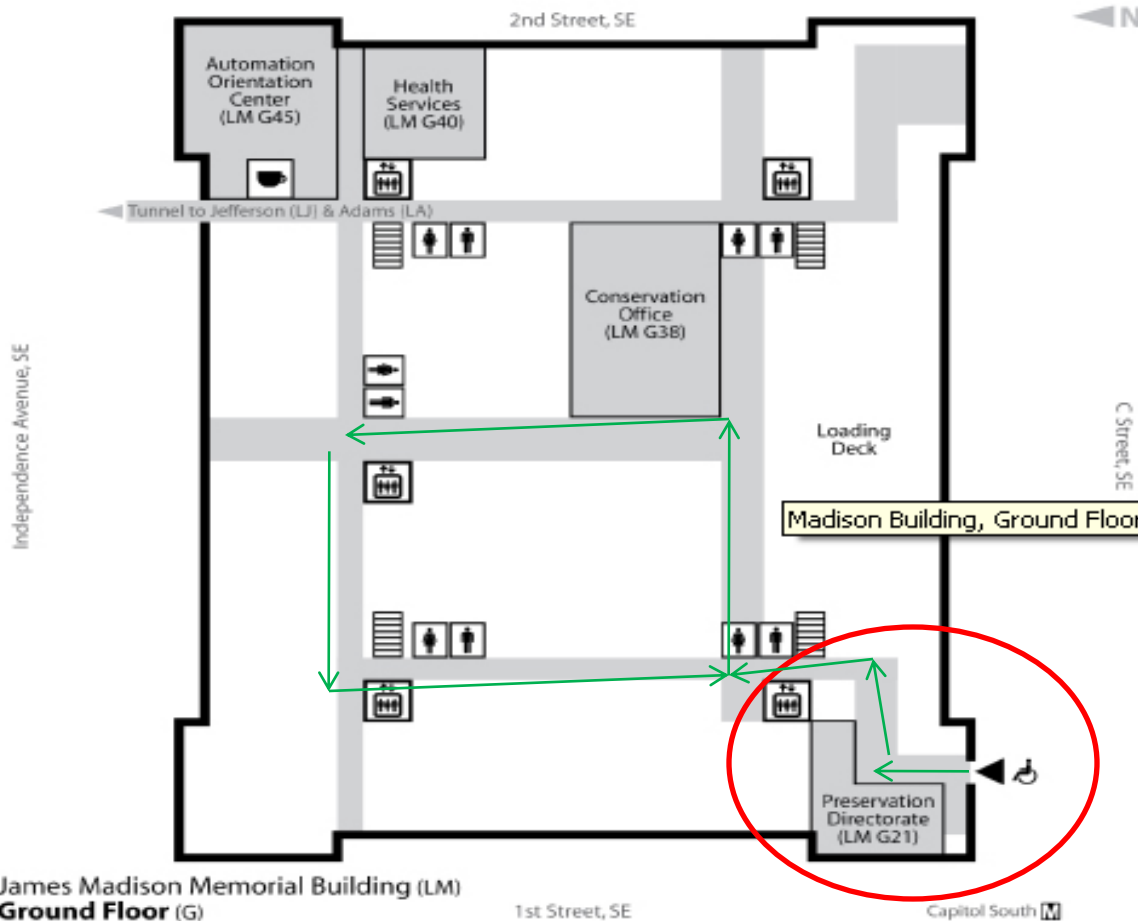
- ➔ [Kids, Families](#)
- ➔ [Librarians](#)
- ➔ [Publishers](#)
- ➔ [Researchers](#)
- ➔ [Teachers](#)
- ➔ [Visitors](#)

### General Information

- ➔ [About the Library](#)
- ➔ [Concerts & Events](#)
- ➔ [Jobs/Fellowships](#)
- ➔ [Support the Library](#)
- ➔ [Shop the Library](#)
- ➔ [Inspector General](#)

### More Library Resources

- ➔ [American Folklife Center](#)
- ➔ [Braille, Audio Materials](#)
- ➔ [Copyright Office](#)
- ➔ [Copyright Royalty Board](#)
- ➔ [Kluge Center](#)
- ➔ [Law Library of Congress](#)



James Madison Memorial Building (LM)  
Ground Floor (G)

# Preservation Directorate: Quick Facts & Stats 2006

- Treatment: 278,888
- Deacidification: 1,368,326
- Housing/Rehousing: 2,411,493
- Copying/Reformatting: 6,039,236
- Staff: 63 professional, 38 support, 3 students=104
- Expenditures:
  - Conservation: \$10,888,392
  - Supplies: \$379,738
  - Equipment: \$235,503
  - Preservation: \$22,392,286 (only 3.57% of total Library Expenditures: \$626,435,999)



# Preserving & Caring for the Collection: Types of Media

- Books
- Motion Picture Film
- Photographs
- Newspapers
- Cylinders, Discs, Tapes
- Work on Paper
  - Manuscripts
  - Drawings
  - Prints
  - Posters
  - Maps



# Preserving Books Concerns

- High humidity causes mold and attracts vermin; low humidity dries out leather bindings
- Direct sun-light fades leather and cloth
- Dust, dirt, grime causes considerable damage
- Book handling
  - Forcing a book to lie flat
  - Pulling books off the shelf
- Paper clips
- Pen/ink markings
- Folding down of page corners
- Rubber bands





# Preserving Books Solutions

- Stable, cool, clean, non-humid environment
- Closed glass case away from bright windows or damp outer walls
- Covers of a book should always be supported when the book is open
- When pulling a book off the shelf: push adjoining books inward; remove book by grasping the spine
- Place similar sized books next to each other **vertically** (and not too close → prevents warping)
- Flat, soft ribbon (cotton-twill tape)
- Custom-made box



# Foam Book Support



<http://images.google.ca/imgres?imgurl=http://www.exportyellowpages.com/Uploads/ProductThumbnail/d5d33a14-7129-4c32-bdc0-7924e97287b6.jpg>

# Suction Table



Image Source:

<http://www.hannatool.com/pictures/Used%20Router/Used%20Router%20008.jpg>

# Deacidification



# Deacidification

- A measure against the degradation of paper in old books
- Alkaline agent is deposited in the paper to neutralize existing acid and prevent further decay.
- At the Library of Congress, deacidification is performed by an extremely efficient high capacity machine
  - Goal: treat 250,000 books & 1,000,000 manuscript sheets/year for the next 30 years (35 year contract awarded in November 2005)



# Preserving Works on Paper

- Relative humidity and temperature
- Lighting
- Pollution, dust, and pests
- Storage
- Handling paper materials
- Damaged paper items



# Conservation Priorities

“As we are a very large institution with diverse collections and a complex administrative structure, it is impossible to define a single approach to prioritization, collection evaluation, or preservation workflows.”

Emma Saito Lincoln



# Preserving Special Collections Conservation Division

- In general, “materials that are high priority or at risk and for selected rare and intrinsically valuable collection materials in the permanent research collections” are attended to first.





# Preserving the General Collection

## Binding and Collections Care Division

- Collections Care program provides in-house treatment, including the production of custom-fitted boxes



# Digital Preservation

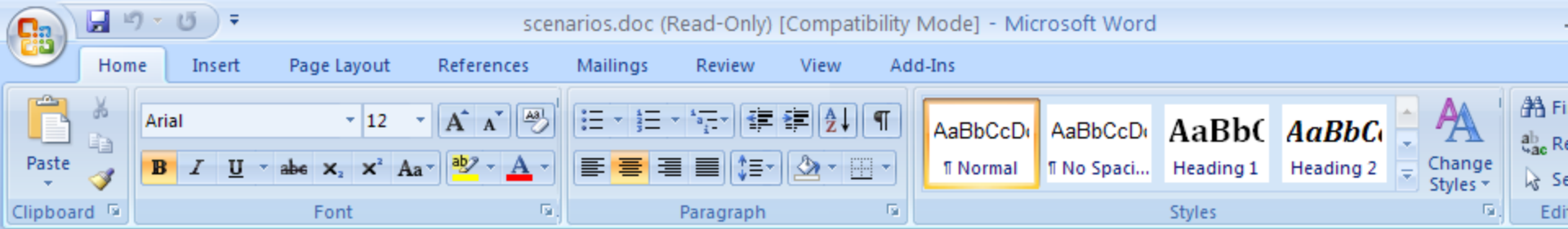
- Monthly newsletter discussing strategies used to preserve various forms of digital material (i.e. geospatial data)
- <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/>



# In the Event of an Emergency Water Damage

- Safety
  - Wear latex gloves & long sleeves
- Air-drying
  - Books
  - Paper documents, maps, posters, etc.
  - Framed items
  - Photographs
- Mold





Urgency of risk to collections based on contributing factors	LOW	1						
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
	7							
	8							
	9							
	10							
	11							
	12							

Typical wet collections emergency—collections emergency response initiated during normal working hours.

**Urgency may vary within level**

Any contributing factor can range from relatively minor to very severe, depending on the scope of the initiating event, operating conditions, the number of spaces involved, and the number and type of collections affected. Consider what might increase the urgency of collection threat in any combination of factors.



**Water**

Untampered sources include weather, spills, and infrastructure conduits, among others.



**Contamination**

May include accidental or intentional chemical, biological, or radiation hazards, in water, collection, vents, or other. Assume health risks to responders.



**Limited staff available**

Normal staffing is not available due to timing, evacuation, or health risk or other circumstance.



**COOP may be initiated**

A continuity of operations plan (COOP) provide procedures to continue essential functions in critical emergency. Consider differences with and without initiation.



**COOP initiated**

Assume scope and nature of the emergency requires COOP initiation.



**Electricity interrupted**

Range includes loss of HVAC, power outage in one area of a single building to area-wide blackout, with or without available emergency power.



**Building damaged**

Range includes disruption of a limited area of the building shell to extensive structural damage. Consider that collection furniture may be unstable, building entry prohibited, or building condemned.

# For More Information

- Caring for Your Collections:  
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/careothr.html>
- Conservation Division:  
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/conserv.html>
- Binding and Collections Care Division:  
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/binding.html>
- Preservation Directorate:  
<http://www.loc.gov/preserv>
- Preservation Statistics:  
<http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/pres/index.shtml>

