

Treatment Report

Temporary ID: 08-59.02

Date: 2/10/08

Owner/Custodian: Center for American History
Address: Sid Richardson Hall, The University of Texas at Austin
Curator: Evan Hocker
Owner/Custodian Call No.: Box 2E936, folder 2
Title/Subject/Description: Winchester Family Papers
Creator: Winchester family
Date of Production: 1783-1906
Place of Production: Natchez, Mississippi
Approximate Dimensions (hwx): 9 ¾ x 7 ¾ inches (25 x 19.7 cm) (folio)
Conservator: Helen Kuncicky

Treatment Objective

Present condition of the letter makes accessibility dangerous. Treatment will allow safe handling of the document.

Description

General

Approximate Dimensions (hwx): 9 ¾ x 7 ¾ inches (25 x 19.7 cm) (folio)
The manuscript is written in iron gall ink and graphite on machine made paper. The document was written on a folio which was then folded into quarters widthwise.

Media

Iron gall ink

The first and second pages of the document are written in iron gall ink. There is much white space in relation to the amount of ink. The ink is unevenly applied with some large ink blots. The ink is heavily applied and lines of text from the first and second pages do not line up with each other.

Graphite

The text on the third page is written in graphite. The graphite is lightly applied. The last letter on the bottom of the page, an "O", is sharper, and so is likely to have been written with a different pencil.

Primary support

The primary support is a cream 2-colored, medium weight paper, according to the standards established in *The Print Council of America Paper Sample Book*¹. The paper is a machine made, wove paper. It is a good quality paper with even formation overall. Transmitted light reveals a watermark reading "HUDSON".

¹ Lunning, Elizabeth and Roy Perkinson. *The Print Council of America Paper Sample Book*. 1996: The Print Council of America.

The paper was folded first into a folio and then into quarters horizontally, thus there are five is one vertical fold and three horizontal folds. There is an additional horizontal fold that does not match the quarter-folds and was likely made at a different time. The fourth page of the folio is blank.

Condition

General

The manuscript is in poor condition overall, with heavy soiling, several minor losses, and small tears.

Media

Iron gall ink

The iron gall ink is in relatively poor condition. It remains a rich brown in some areas but has faded to a lighter brown elsewhere on the leaf. There is medium penetration which interferes slightly with visibility of ink on the opposite side of each page.

Graphite

The graphite is in good condition, with no visible loss or offsetting.

Primary support

The primary support is in poor condition. There is discoloration to beige across the folio, with areas of heavy discoloration to brown on the top half of the first page, the top and bottom right edges of the second page, and the top edge of the third page. These areas were on the outside of the quarter-folded folio.

The paper is flexible overall with slightly brittle edges on the first leaf. There is heavy soiling in the areas of discoloration, and light soiling on the remaining areas of the paper. There are black spots of soil across the pages. There is a cluster of small black dots on the top right half of the first page, which appear to be mold under magnification. UV light reveals light yellow haloing around these dots, which suggests foxing.

There are several significant tears and losses. The top half of the second leaf is missing entirely. There are small tears at the top, left, and right edges of the first leaf. The folio fold is torn at the top and bottom. There are several small holes across the folio, likely due to insect damage. Raking light reveals very small round impressions in the paper, likely imprints from grit.

The folio has a water stain on the left edge of the bottom quarter-fold. This damage occurred while the document was folded into quarters, as evidenced by the identical shape of the stain on either side of the fold. The water stain fluoresces pale yellow under UV light.

Treatment Proposal

1. Surface clean document as needed.
2. Mend tears with long-fiber paper and wheat-starch paste.
3. Locally humidify and flatten as needed.

Documentation

Photo-documentation was completed with a Pentax digital camera. Images include front, back, inside, and outside shots of the folio in spectral, raking, and transmitted lights. The images document the manuscript's condition before and after treatment.

Testing

Media

Iron Gall Ink

Friability: Lifts onto a cotton swab with one stroke of medium pressure.

Solubility: Particulate comes off onto water-soaked chromatography paper after five seconds of medium pressure.

Graphite

Friability: Lifts onto a cotton swab with one stroke of light pressure.

Treatment Performed

1. Surface cleaned using a soft brush, vinyl erasers crumbs, and soot sponges.
2. Aligned and mended large tears with lens tissue adhered with wheat starch paste.
3. Trimmed lens tissue along the manuscript's edge.
4. Housed in original folder.

Length of Treatment: 3 hours.