

Treatment Report

Date: 2/25/2008

Custodian: Center for American History

Address: Sid Richardson Hall, University of Texas at Austin

Curator: Evan Hocker

Title/Description: Galveston Customs House Ledger Book

Creator: Unknown

Date of Production: 1837-1842

Place of Production: Galveston, Texas

Approximate Dimensions (HxW): 16-15/16 x 10 ¾ in (43 x 27.3 cm) (folio)

Conservators: Helen Kuncicky, Beth Antoine, Laura Bedford, Stephanie Gowler, Sonya Issaeva, Kathy Lechuga, Liz Seramur, Rebecca Smyrl.

Treatment Objective

The goal of this treatment is to remove ledger clippings from the pages of the book so that the Customs House information is revealed. The newspaper clippings will also be lined and saved. Only one folio will be treated, as the book is an ongoing project.

Description

General

After use as a ledger book, the volume was then used as a scrapbook for newspaper clippings. The clippings are adhered to the recto and verso of each leaf, obscuring the ledger information.

Media

The media on the newspaper clippings are a variety of black printer's inks. The clippings date from the 1830s to the 1870s, but specific dates are undeterminable. The ledger pages were printed using several colors: the top of the ledger is printed in black printer's ink, and the body of the graph has horizontal lines printed in gray and vertical lines in red. The ledger pages have been filled out in a variety of hands in iron gall ink.

Primary Support

The main paper is heavy weight, handmade wove, cream colored and uncoated. In previous treatments there was evidence of an eagle watermark and countermark. Determination of the grain direction, running head to tail, was made after attachments had been removed.

The newspaper clippings are from a variety of different sources and therefore are of differing sizes, types of paper, and colors of paper, with differing discoloration. The clippings are adhered to the ledger page in a consistent manner, usually arranged in four columns of text, and tend to fit the size of the page almost completely.

Housing

The Galveston log is housed in a folder stock four-flap enclosure with ties.

Condition

Media

The black printer's ink of the newspaper clippings is in good condition. There is little fading, although some offset from oil in the ink is seen in places. The ledger manuscript written in iron gall ink is largely obscured, although it seems to be in good condition. There is some sinking through and some feathering of ink sporadically throughout the ledger.

Support

The volume has been disbound, and fragments of sewing and tapes are still physically attached to the gathering. Leaves of the textblock are intact, with little tearing and few losses. The leaves as well as the newspaper clippings are yellowed throughout, and are stiff and somewhat inflexible. There are numerous liquid and adhesive stains, many of which are adjacent to the newspaper attachments. Some mold damage is associated with this staining. There is an overall cockling, particularly along the foredge, probably a result of water damage. All sections have been previously paginated in graphite during the treatment process.

Photodocumentation

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

Testing

No testing was done before treating the section due to extensive testing done previously by PCS in 1996. Results from prior testing are as follows:

1. Paper was tested by lightly abrading the surface with a dry cotton swab. There was minimal fiber disruption of both the ledger book and the newspaper clippings. When the paper was tested with moist chromatography paper or brush, neither displayed a color change and there was only minimal new cockling of the ledger paper.
2. The media of the ledger linings was tested with moist chromatography paper and water applied by brush. Neither the gray nor the red were immediately soluble. The iron gall ink was also insoluble using the same technique, as was the black newspaper printing ink.
3. The adhesive is readily soluble in water.

Treatment Proposal

1. Collate ledger pages that are missing numbers in graphite.
2. Brush off any particles or dust using dry brush.
3. Mechanically separate adhered folios.
4. Humidify folios in Gore-tex humidification chamber.
5. Wash leaves in de-ionized water bath with CaOH buffer, adding warm water as necessary to soften adhesive.
6. Roll newsprint up and off both sides of ledger using polyester film.

7. Line newspaper clippings with lens tissue using wheat starch lining paste.
8. Re-immersed ledger in de-ionized water and brush surface with soft brush to remove remaining adhesive.
9. Dry and flatten ledger page and newspaper clippings separately.

Treatment Performed

1. Brushed off particles and dust using a dry brush.
2. Humidified leaves and folios in Gore-tex humidification chamber.
3. Washed leaves and folios in de-ionized water baths with CaOH buffer, changing baths approximately every 20 minutes, and adding increasing amounts of warm water.
4. Lifted newsprint up and off both sides of ledger using polyester film.
5. Lined newspaper clippings with lens tissue using 4:1 wheat starch paste.
6. Re-immersed ledgers in de-ionized water, and brushed each surface with a soft brush to remove remaining adhesive.
7. Dried and flattened ledger pages and newspaper clippings separately.
8. Trimmed excess at edges of lined newspaper pages to approximately 1/8".

Length of Treatment: 13 hours per conservator