

## **Conservation Needs Assessment Project** **Special Collections**

### **1. Preparation:**

- **Inventory:**

- The inventory will be used to create sample lists and to determine our approach to the actual assessment.
- Student assistants will make a detailed map of Special Collections. We will need assistance from Special Collection Staff to go over the details of each sub-collection.
- As part of that process, we will obtain a fairly accurate count of the number of containers and books (and their general location). We will determine the number of ranges/bays/shelves along with the number of books or containers per shelf. Containers that are not on shelves will be assigned range, bay, and shelf numbers depending on their arrangement.
- We will enter the data from the inventory into Access databases by room (Main, Reading, Annex, Plume, Workroom, Vault).

- **Sampling method:**

We will create a random sample for shelved books and a separate sample list for items in containers. The CALIPR method of creating random samples is not designed to address the variety of housing/shelving techniques used in Special Collections. We will use a combination of the above inventory, an Access database, and Excel.

- Shelved books –
  - In order to develop a random list based on range/bay/shelf, we will use the information from the inventory to create a list of all shelves that contain books.
  - Each shelf with books will have a separate record which includes range number, bay number and shelf number.
  - Each shelf/record will be assigned a unique identification number.
  - We will then use Excel to create a random list of identification numbers and then a pull-list arranged in order by range, bay and then shelf.
  - Every seventh book on each listed shelf will be assessed.
    - If a shelf does not have seven books, the last book on the shelf will be assessed.
    - If a shelf is listed more than once, we will assess the 20<sup>th</sup> book, then the 5<sup>th</sup>, and then the 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - All other –
    - Items in containers –
      - We will use the same method to produce a random

- sample list as we use for books (see above).
  - Every 3<sup>rd</sup> container on each listed shelf will be assessed.
  - If a shelf does not have 3 containers, the last container on the shelf will be assessed.
  - If a shelf is listed more than once, we will assess the 1<sup>st</sup> container, then the last container.
- Items not in containers that require use of the modified Mellon database.
  - These were counted as containers (i.e. vinyl records, CDs, or video cassettes)

## 2. Assessment Process:

### Data Collection:

We will be using two databases based on the type of material being assessed.

- SF1 database
  - Only shelved Book items ([Instructions are online](#))
- Mellon database (view original version at [Columbia University](#) )
  - Items that cannot be assessed using the SF1 form.
  - Items in containers

Which database we use will be determined by the type of material, therefore for many collections we will use both databases.

- SF1 database
  - Children's Books (Creamer only. We have completed the Bloch and Epstein collections.)
  - Dewey Serials
  - General
  - Publisher's Bindings
  - Reading Room Reference Collection
  - Women Poets
- Mellon database
  - Art Collections:
    - Art Collection - general
    - Japanese Prints
    - Picture File
    - Portrait File
    - Postcard Collection
  - Artist's Books
  - Bakelite Purses
  - Manuscript Collections
  - Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts
  - Miscellaneous
  - Photographic Portfolios

- Willard Pamphlets.
- Both – these collections have been identified as having both shelved books (use SF1) and other material (use Mellon database). Other collections may require the use of both databases.
  - Fine and Small Presses (For example, the Richardson collection includes ephemera as well as books.)
  - Mountaineering
  - Other
  - Photo-books
  - Spanish Collections (behind other books on stacks in the workroom)

We will not assess Transfer items nor will we assess newly acquired items in the back room.

- **Workspace**
  - We will work with Special Collections to schedule times when we can use their computers.
  - If possible, we will use a laptop as our back-up computer. That will allow us to assess items when the Special Collections computers are in use. It is also possible that we will want to use a laptop to assess some items *in situ*.
  - Books and smaller containers that require secondary review will be stored on carts until the review is completed.
  
- **Handling Material**
  - Book cradles will be used for all books.
  - Gloves will be used for all photographic prints and all photo-books. They may be required for other types of items or for specific collections.
  - Special Collections staff will handle all Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts. They may prefer to handle other items as well.
  - Shelving:
    - Whenever a book or container is removed from a shelf, we will insert a flag in the empty space so that SPC staff will know where to look for the item if it is needed.
    - We will re-shelve the books with LC call numbers and probably most of the other books. The flag will be placed in the book and the book will be shelved on its spine so that SPC can check the shelving. The flag will be placed to the right of boxed items.
    - Special Collections staff will re-shelve all other items.

**Time Table:**

We will begin assessing books as soon as we have completed the inventory, made the necessary changes to the databases, and completed training material. We will work with Special Collections to develop a schedule that will address our mutual needs for work space and computer access. We hope to make good progress over the summer, but expect that the project will extend into the fall semester (at least). However, we plan to complete the entire Conservation Needs Assessment Project by the end of summer, 2008.