Can’t Judge a Book without Its Binding

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The history of research libraries is, in one important regard, the history of institutions in conflict with themselves. Responding to competing interests, they strive to provide unimpeded access to scholarly books while maintaining those same volumes in perpetuity. In practice, these bastions of knowledge lean toward pragmatic maintenance solutions when dealing with the vast majority of their collections, employing methods often antithetical to archival or museum practice. While providing access to a wide range of books greatly benefits users, research libraries’ policies governing general collection repair often disregard the significance of the historical material culture held by these cultural storehouses, naively shortchanging future scholars.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century publishers’ cloth bindings scattered throughout a research library’s circulating collection represent cultural treasures. These fragile objects are important artistic works integrally linked to the book they were designed to protect; moreover, they are significant evidence of publishing’s evolving history. Unfortunately, their preservation is often arbitrary. Over the past century sanctioned library repair and rebinding practices have destroyed the covers and sewing structures of possibly half of these scarce bookbindings, and the damage continues unabated.¹

Throwing out the Baby with the Bathwater

Since the early 1980s the study of material culture has blossomed as a methodology for exploring the previously undocumented evolution of specific technologies or little-known histories of minorities, working women, and the anonymous masses who left few if any written records upon which to base critical research. The research potential of books retaining their original publishers’ bindings has gained recognition during the past two decades because these three-dimensional works provide
evidence of two hundred years of book history, including technological advances brought on by the Industrial Revolution, the development of commercial art, and the changing nature of women’s work. Laudable bindings were designed by noteworthy painters, architects, typographers, and some of the first female graphic artists. Collecting and preserving material needed for scholarly research, a universally acknowledged responsibility of research libraries, includes preserving multiple editions of books and their bindings. Comparing subtle changes occurring between different editions, for example, can lead to an understanding of the author’s role in shaping a text’s evolution and how this has possibly been adulterated by other editors over time. Further, the quality of the materials used in the book’s production reveals clues about the publisher’s intended market with different editions and the way the book was originally received by contemporary readers. Pirated editions, often lacking a publication date, can be attributed to a specific decade by clues gleaned from the binding’s physical cloth, stamping media, and graphic design elements. Rather than being redundant, retaining numerous copies and editions in original condition, both locally and in libraries throughout the country, provides access to three-dimensional information essential for scholarly comparison.2

As the only storehouses of both material and textual literary information, research libraries have a vital role to play in preserving their three-dimensional holdings. This concept has been recognized over time by library organizations such as the Commission on Preservation and Access and the Council on Library and Information Resources and by scholarly groups such as the Modern Language Association.3 Yet these cultural resources are threatened by the use of damaging repair materials and methods such as improper use of tape and the complete rebinding of books in a misguided attempt to make them more durable. Future scholarly use of these increasingly rare resources will be thwarted if research libraries do not actively reverse this trend.

The preservation role of libraries should be as great as that of museums. Society trusts museums to collect and permanently protect significant artwork and historical objects: the paintings of John Sloan and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; the ceramics and embroidery of Walter Crane; the furniture and textiles of William Morris; the drawings of Aubrey Beardsley; the posters of Will H. Bradley and Blanche McManus; and, outside the museum walls, the architecture of Augustus Welby Pugin, Bertram Goodhue, and Stanford White. That these same notable individuals also designed publishers’ bookbindings is a fact seldom recognized by the research libraries holding their books. Precariously, most of
these nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century bookbindings are not yet considered rare and thus continue to reside in the open stacks. Under-valued and unappreciated as significant cultural property, those that still survive are at risk of being destroyed by the library’s prevailing rebinding and repair policies (paradoxically, its “preservation program”).

Endangered Bookbindings in General Collections

Protecting original bookbindings also serves to preserve the artist’s intent, a broadly held tenet of professional museum conservation, because modifications of or alterations to a work of art can forever obscure its meaning. Within research libraries, however, the idea of preserving the original intent of the author, publisher, designer, or manufacturer typically prevails only if the book becomes classified as “rare.” Repair policies in both the United States and Europe habitually disregard the potential scarcity and aesthetic or research value of the bookbindings housed in general collections. Rare book protection afforded by exhibition cases or prohibitions on handling do not provide viable solutions for approximately three-quarters of a research library’s collection that is stored in the open stacks. But does that mean that the bulk of the institution’s cumulative property lacks artistic, historical, or cultural import? Within general collections, significant holdings representing Victorian bookmaking are endangered by current rebinding practices that can “clear-cut” a collection within a generation or two. Records in shared bibliographic databases do not describe the physical condition of “nonrare” books, thus the uniqueness of a binding cannot be determined before rebinding occurs.

The oeuvre of master engravers and typographers such as Frederic W. Goudy and books designed by their own authors such as artists John Leighton, Christopher Dresser, and James McNeill Whistler are often rebound with little concern for the essential connection between the cover and the text. Were a museum to discard a picture frame designed by Rossetti or Whistler for one of his own paintings, the loss would be deemed irresponsible and brutish by the art world at large and the museum’s judgment justifiably questioned; in libraries the loss of a binding designed by one of these same people occurs uncereemoniously as a matter of course. While libraries are not museums (and this paper advocates continued public access to historic collections to keep patrons in touch with reality as opposed to virtual reality), no other type of collecting institution can take responsibility for protecting the cultural treasure trove represented by original publishers’ bindings.
Recognizing that no online record exists to define whether books in circulating collections retain their original bindings, Elizabeth Call, a library school student I advised in 1996, conducted a survey to determine the loss rate of a representative hundred-year-old publisher’s cloth binding. *A Singular Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896) was designed by Sarah Wyman Whitman, the first professional woman bookbinding designer and an important although as yet largely unsung figure in the women’s movement in America. This particular binding is unsigned but typical of the work Whitman produced during her tenure as principal bookbinding designer at Houghton Mifflin from 1880 until her death in 1904. Of the forty-five copies of *A Singular Life* identified in OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, the largest U.S. bibliographic database) and ordered through interlibrary loan for hands-on examination, only 49 percent retained the original Whitman binding. Today, ten years after Call’s survey, it is conjectured the loss has continued (see tables 1 and 2).

Through serendipity, the survey revealed that *A Singular Life* originally had been produced in at least three colors of book cloth (green, blue, and gray), each with a different grain pattern. The prevalence of color variants in Victorian editions is not yet well understood and can never be documented without data drawn from numerous original bindings representing different publishers, time periods, and geographic locations. Unfortunately, the evidence needed to conduct such a study may already be lost. More critically, the lack of appreciation for original publishers’ bindings in circulating collections generally has a long lineage in library culture.

### Table 1
Survey of Bindings of *A Singular Life*: Condition of Books Examined

| Condition                                      | Quantity | Percent of Total |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Copies listed on OCLC and RLIN databases       | 45       | 100              |
| Received in good to fair condition             | 23       | 51               |
| Received with bindings damaged or lost          | 22       | 49               |
Table 2
Survey of Bindings of A Singular Life: Condition of Damaged Bindings

| Condition                              | Quantity | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Received with bindings damaged or lost | 22       | 49               |
| Unable to circulate due to condition   | 8        | 18               |
| Received rebound                       | 12       | 27               |
| Received with damaging repair          | 2        | 4                |

Book Repair: A Nonissue

Book repair traditionally has been a subject of little interest within librarianship, and the training of new aspirants historically has been inadequate and occasionally inappropriate. E. W. Browning, second director of the Library Binding Institute, observed in 1950 that book conservation theory was almost completely lacking in library school curricula in the United States.9 According to Pelham Barr, creator and first director of the Library Binding Institute, this irresponsible attitude toward collection care often left crucial decision making in the hands of an “inexperienced assistant, whose only training” was learned on the job, and where both the “good or bad methods employed by [the assistant’s] predecessor” were readily absorbed.10 As such, determinations about which books to retain in their original bookbindings and which to rebind were randomly made and had nothing to do with meeting future researchers’ needs. The pragmatic necessity of balancing a predetermined budget overshadowed the entire question.

Lacking Barr’s insight into responsible collection custody, library administrators during the 1940s and 1950s frequently situated their institution’s in-house bindery “in the basement or one of the not-so-respectable corners of the building.”11 This “out of sight, out of mind” legacy still exists in some libraries and corresponds with a prevailing predisposition to ignore the repair program.

Surprisingly, a more progressive discourse on preserving the collection’s physical integrity was actually in play one hundred years ago. In 1903, for example, librarian Walter Powell of Birmingham, England advised:
Before sending an old work to be rebound, it should be carefully considered whether it actually needs rebinding. Even if the side is off and the back is loose, is it beyond repair? . . . [I]s there sufficient character in the old binding to make it desirable to preserve it? . . . In such cases the old binding can be “restored” by removing the old back, re-backing the volume, and then pasting on the old back again. In this way, the “style” and “character” of the old binding are preserved, with the strength, or almost the strength of a new one.  

In fact, the professional library literature a century ago was rife with debate about whether to repair books in-house or send them out for commercial library binding. That decision determined whether the book’s original binding was lost or retained.  

Published lists of tools and machinery needed to establish an in-house bindery were common and occasionally included whimsical admonitions such as: “Often a little attention given to a book when it first shows signs of wear will postpone [by] many months the evil day when it must be withdrawn to go to the binders.” The design value of original publishers’ bindings was also commonly mentioned in late-nineteenth-century book reviews, a fact noted by Brander Matthews in his 1895 classic, *Bookbindings Old and New*. Yet seldom was the sagacity of Walter Powell’s admonition to preserve original publishers’ bindings for their own sake debated. The fate of this material was often only a matter of happenstance or of the kindhearted attention of an anonymous library mender.

Most early-twentieth-century preservation deliberation focused on the economics of durability rather than collection historicity. In 1910, for example, librarian George Stephen of St. Pancras, England, called attention to the “steadily deteriorating . . . quality” of raw materials and workmanship incorporated into publishers’ bindings and urged book manufacturers to reform this irresponsible trend he felt would otherwise absorb “a disproportionate part of the library income.” Similarly, once a purchased book did require repair, Arthur Bailey of the Wilmington Institute Free Library, Delaware, believed “resewing and recasing” (i.e., saving the original binding) constituted “a mistaken policy” because he feared a “recased book [would] not wear as long as it should.” Librarians of his generation recognized, however, that attracting readers was the overarching goal and that decorative publishers’ bindings did just that. Bailey held out that “since recasing often preserves an attractive cover, the possibility should always be considered when such books come up
for binding. Furthermore, recasing may be done by girls in the library at a very small expense.”

The advantages of paying low wages to female employees in the early twentieth century predictably influenced the economic decision to repair in-house or send books out for commercial rebinding. Cyril Davenport, superintendent of bookbinding at the British Museum, could not have been more forthright in his assessment of the benefits realized by employing one “binder”—inevitably male—“provided the workman is paid the full union wage” to train and oversee a group of semiskilled workers who could mend paper or resew books, tasks traditionally entrusted to women in binderies. He explicitly stated that these techniques were “expensive to send out and cheap to do on the premises,” noting as well that a supervisor’s technical instruction was “difficult to obtain,” especially for women, because “the Technical Education Board of the London County Council does not admit amateurs.” Use of this staffing strategy was rare but progressive in 1903, and Davenport praised the Hull Public Library both for using it and for retaining 67 percent of the original bindings repaired that year.

Assuming most libraries were not going to employ a professional binder, the American Library Association published its first book repair guide in 1910, aimed at “librarians who are entirely inexperienced in the work of mending and repair.” Authored by Margaret Wright Brown of the Iowa Library Commission, this tiny but influential manual (republished four times by 1921) described, among other approaches, recasing as an option. Unfortunately, the instructions for executing this technique for retaining original bindings were so poorly described that they offered little help to the unskilled practitioner. Other important bookbinding manuals, the most famous being Douglas Cockerell’s Bookbinding and the Care of Books (first published in 1901 and still in print today), provided elegantly clear direction for seasoned tradesmen working in well-equipped binderies. But the craft is best learned experientially, and so the technique of recasing remained obscure to the average librarian.

From the late 1920s through the early 1990s any serious book repair training that might have included the means to preserve original bindings was almost nonexistent in the United States. Librarians interested in learning basic book repair techniques gained their meager one-on-one experience primarily from traveling bookbinders/salesmen employed by one of the large library vendors. This instruction promoted the book-mending products sold by the respective suppliers. In classes offered at host libraries the demonstration relied on that company’s
limited tools, materials, and guidebook. Gaylord’s *Bookcraft: On Book Repairing for Schools and Libraries*, published in 1928, depicted on its title page the United States divided north to south from North Dakota to Texas, illustrating the eastern and western territories covered by the company’s two itinerant bookbinders/salesmen. Similarly, Joe Holler, retired regional manager for Demco, is remembered today as having “personally conducted book repair workshops for more than 20 years,” from the late 1960s through the early 1990s, throughout the territory covered by Demco.

During the fifty-plus years library vendors employed this marketing strategy to promote their own products their book-repair techniques emphasized strength and durability without concern for the long-term impact on permanent retention material. While reasonable for heavily circulated public library books, repair decisions in research libraries were inevitably entrusted to “inexperienced assistants” with abysmal consequences, as noted by Pelham Barr. Lacking alternative sources of instruction or supplies, menders in U.S. research libraries indiscriminately applied these crude approaches to historic bookbindings with the result that pressure-sensitive tape residues proved disfiguring over time. Yet despite their shortcomings, these stopgap measures often managed to retain the books’ original boards and spine, leaving modern book conservators with at least something to salvage. The same cannot be said for those books routed to the commercial library binder.

**Library Binding**

In the first years of the twentieth century England’s Royal Society of Arts established a blue-ribbon Committee on Leather for Bookbinding to identify the cause of leather deterioration (termed “red rot”) in libraries. Included among the luminaries comprising this twenty-member committee were Douglas Cockerell, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, Cyril Davenport, Sarah Prideaux, and Joseph Zaehnsdorf. Among its published findings the committee issued “Suggested Recommendation for Ordinary Library Binding,” a specification so exacting it came to clearly demarcate the English definition of library binding from the far more damaging approach adopted in the United States.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century rebinding, which at the time included the repair or replacement of a book’s original sewing and the replacement of its original cover, was widely seen by libraries as the optimal solution to repairing damaged publishers’ bindings when the materials broke down due to use. The rapid development
of free libraries during this period created specialization within commercial bookbinderies willing to provide cost-effective rebindings that emphasized durability. A range of innovative technical options arose to service this new “library binding” market, but the few individuals who truly understood the craft recognized that some of the approaches were shortcuts that, while profitable for the binder, would ultimately have deleterious effects on the books.

To protect the uninformed consumer, the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding rigorously endorsed the traditional approach to repairing the backs of damaged sections with thin paper (“guarding”) before resewing them through the fold. Although labor intensive, guarding preserved the text’s ability to open completely to the spine fold of each section during use, thus retaining the book’s normal functionality after rebinding. Conversely, the committee prohibited the use of overcasting, a laborsaving trick advocated by Cedric Chivers in his patented (1885) “Duro-Flexile” binding style. Overcasting eliminated the need for guarding by simply ignoring spine-fold damage and sewing straight through the side of small groups of sections, in a style called “stab sewing,” rather than through each section’s fold. These small groups of stab-sewn sections were then additionally sewn to tapes or cords to form a text block. Like tiny mousetraps attached to the spine, overcasting prevented the text from opening flat, and gaps inevitably occurred between the sections.

Chivers streamlined this approach in 1904 by patenting hand oversewing, a modification that would come to define American library binding for most of the twentieth century. In Chivers’s original conception hand oversewing required that each section be opened to its center and pierced with a series of holes running parallel to the spine fold. The sections were then closed and stab sewn obliquely through these predrilled holes and into the gutter margin of the two sections immediately below, adding additional sections until the entire text block was similarly stitched. It soon became clear, however, that the work could be expedited by simply cutting off the spine fold of each section as a first step, turning every book into a generic sheaf of pages prepared for uniform oversewing.

No longer did the individual characteristics of the text or its construction affect the repair approach employed, as every damaged book—regardless of size, sewing structure, or paper condition—could be treated identically by technicians instead of trained binders. Most attractively, the approach was inexpensive because it converted a proclivity for efficiency into production line work. Oversewing’s propensity to inhibit
the text from opening fully in use was seen as a minor inconvenience because the technique was strong; loss of the original publisher’s binding in exchange for a characterless buckram case was simply the cost of doing business. But the worst was still ahead.

The low profit margin inherent in library binding required an enormous flow of material to generate substantive profits. Being tremendously ambitious, Chivers, in addition to his shop in Bath (England), opened an American branch in New York City in 1905, which he relocated to Brooklyn the following year to accommodate ongoing expansion.29 By 1908 his American operation employed eighty people and serviced approximately five hundred libraries from coast to coast.30 To manage operations on both continents Chivers is thought to have sailed between England and the United States at least 120 times during the eighteen years he operated his American plant, but the attraction was obvious.31 Libraries in the United States were far less concerned with traditional bookbinding methods than they were with low prices, and Chivers’s business boomed. Always a suave and charismatic salesman, he is reputed to have set foot inside more public libraries in the United States than any American at that time.32 His noncompliance with the specifications of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding was not an issue to North American librarians.

Chivers also marketed his services indirectly by presenting papers at regional and national library conferences in both the United States and England. His two principal publications were self-published, professional talks, one of which—his 1909 book Paper of Lending Library Books—bears scrutiny.33 This work essentially undermined the belief in traditional rebinding methods by contending that oversewing was stronger than traditional, through-the-fold sewing and therefore more appropriate for repairing contemporary (1890–1910), poor-quality, wood pulp book papers. Diametrically opposed to the conclusion reached four years earlier by the blue-ribbon Committee on Leather for Bookbinding, Chivers’s position was eminently self-serving. While this argument helped build his clientele and ultimately made him a wealthy man, it can be credited with providing the intellectual underpinning for oversewing being broadly accepted as an essential component of library binding in the United States.

In 1920 Los Angeles library binder W. Elmo Reavis invented the oversewing machine, effectively mechanizing Chivers’s hand-oversewing process and further evolving library binding into mass-produced, assembly line work.34 Three years later the American Library Association’s (ALA) Committee on Book Binding, in conjunction with the Library
Group of the Employing Book Binders of America (of which Reavis was a member), established the first standard for library binding for the United States. Perhaps not unexpectedly, ALA’s standard explicitly incorporated Reavis’s invention into the guideline, stating: “Oversewing either by machine or hand is entirely practical for nearly all library binding, including books and periodicals, estimated by various binders at eighty to ninety per cent of the entire output.” Once adopted, oversewing remained the national norm for sixty-three years (until 1986, when it began to decline) and was promulgated in each subsequent iteration of the library binding standard. As late as the 1981 edition of the Library Binding Institute’s Standard for Library Binding, for example, the text clearly specified: “Oversewing shall be used on all volumes with suitable paper provided that the sewing does not infringe on the print,” stubbornly neglecting to acknowledge the technique’s by then well-identified failings.

European research libraries avoided the pitfalls of mass oversewing largely because commercial hand binderies in England and on the Continent observed the specifications for library binding defined by Douglas Cockerell and the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding in 1905. One is left to speculate what inflamed America’s love affair with mechanized library binding. A similar phenomenon affected numerous other fields during the twentieth century, prompting architect and U.S. émigré Walter Gropius to conclude: “Increasingly, patterns of taste dictated by purely commercial considerations win acceptance, and the natural feeling for quality and appropriateness is dissipated in the giddy tumble from novelty to novelty.”

From the modern preservation perspective of 2007, it is abundantly clear that American librarians’ reliance on oversewing was misguided. As acidic book paper became fragile over time, oversewing caused the leaves to fracture in the gutter margin approximately 3/8 inch from the thread due to stress from opening acutely against the sewing’s fixity. Books afflicted with this “gutter snap” are usually impossible to repair, leaving few or no affordable options. This was first documented as a severe problem by Matt Roberts, chief of the circulation department of the Washington University library, in 1967. Nevertheless, challenges to oversewing’s market dominance proved futile over the next two decades. Even the “brittle book crisis” of the 1980s glossed over oversewing’s contribution to the problem in its myopic rush toward microfilm replication, though it cannot be denied that oversewing can absolutely destroy books once the paper becomes fragile due to acidity. This point is clearly driven home when two copies of the same late-nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century
title remain shelved together: the pages of the oversewn volume crack in the gutter margin, while the paper from the original publisher’s binding remains undamaged and in serviceable condition.

In his later years even Cedric Chivers came to publicly concede oversewing’s trap. In 1925, three and a half years before his death, the then-mayor of Bath was invited to address the Royal Society of Arts (whose Committee on Leather for Bookbinding had rebuffed him twenty years earlier). During his lecture on oversewing he confided his change of heart:

These methods were the best which at that time could be contrived, but presently complaints began to be made as to the durability of some of my bindings. Pages broke away from the sewing . . . Indeed I [now] frequently lose contracts for Library binding because of my refusal to follow the instructions of a specification which under other conditions I personally drew up. 39

While a touching confession, Chivers’s acknowledgment of the damage caused by the unbridled use of oversewing did not go far enough. The significantly more serious consequence of America’s indiscriminate reliance on library binding throughout the twentieth century is that by systematically jettisoning rather than repairing publishers’ bindings research libraries helped drive to near extinction the single type of cultural patrimony they were responsible for preserving.

**General Collections Preservation**

If some percentage of historical bindings remaining in research libraries is to be preserved, research libraries need to consider the long-term benefits achievable by implementing a competent, fully integrated approach to book repair. As has always been the case, some repairs are simply more cost-effective to carry out in-house than to send out commercially, and having the option permits institutions to prioritize important works for greater attention.

Approximately 15 percent of the books in circulating collections that pass through a research library’s book repair department have historic bindings requiring rebacking or some comparable form of hinge repair to retain the original cover. 40 Preserving these few bindings, however, is impossible without providing both sufficiently trained staff and appropriate materials, tools, and equipment. Outsourcing to private conservators is simply too expensive to be practical for most circulating
collections, which means that research libraries need to act in their own best interests to maintain their older book collections for as long as they are needed. Without such a commitment, the all-too-common, one-size-fits-all alternatives will continue to blindly strip historic and artistic primary source materials from the general collections like a blight.

**Shades of Things to Come**

A 1997 study of the Library of Congress’s (LC) closed stack collections revealed a startling fact. In a random sample of 294 books published between 1830 and 1914 by six prominent American publishers, only 105 (36 percent) retrieved from LC’s general collection retained their original publishers’ bindings. Nearly twice that number—180 (61 percent)—already had lost their covers to library rebinding. While retention of publishers’ cloth bindings from the general collection is clearly not a priority for LC, this prestigious institution is as close to a national library as exists in the United States, and research libraries often have a tendency to follow its lead. It is time to acknowledge that there is no library of last resort and that as a result of previous well-intended acts of preservation fragments of America’s cumulative cultural heritage have been lost.

Most publishers’ bindings are unlikely to be reclassified in the foreseeable future as rare books, thus ongoing rebinding and repair practices will continue to nibble away at their diminishing numbers. Moreover, in permanent retention collections “collection development” does not generally include a review process to ensure that each individual book receives an appropriate level of care in perpetuity as part of the institution’s commitment to future generations of researchers.

The motivations for preserving original publishers’ bookbindings and other forms of historic material (such as dust jackets) are simple: (1) this material already belongs to the library; (2) ongoing maintenance demands little more than a level of stewardship appropriate to preserving research library collections; and (3) future academic research that requires the use of these physical resources is without recourse if libraries do not act. Library users recognized this more than a decade ago when, in 1994, the Modern Language Association (MLA) adopted its “Statement on the Significance of Original Materials,” requesting the safeguarding of vulnerable material that research libraries have heretofore chosen to discount. Since research libraries are experienced at protecting primary source material, it is now time to fine tune the definition of what is significant and what is at risk in the twenty-first century.
Notes

1. Little information concerning the loss rate of publishers’ bindings exists. A study conducted by Elizabeth Call in 1996 indicated a 49 percent loss rate for a single, randomly selected example of a publisher’s binding. While this study needs to be replicated and expanded to create greater confidence, the findings confirmed concerns that losses have already occurred in far greater numbers than is generally recognized.

2. G. Thomas Tanselle, *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing* (Charlottesville: Published for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia by the University Press of Virginia, 1990).

3. See, for example, Barclay W. Ogden, *On the Preservation of Books and Documents in Original Form* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Preservation and Access, 1989); Stephen G. Nichols and Abbey Smith, *The Evidence in Hand: Report of the Task Force on the Artifact in Library Collections* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2001); and Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Print Record, “Statement on the Significance of Original Materials,” October 14, 1994, http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/mla/mlaprimd.html, accessed October 23, 2006.

4. Alberto Campagnolo, “Il book repair come disciplina integrata: Analisi dell’esperienza in Nord America e confronto con l’approccio europeo” (Book Repair as an Integrated Discipline: Analysis of the Experience in North America and Comparison with the European Approach), master’s thesis, Università “Ca’ Foscari” di Venezia, 2005.

5. Randy Silverman and Maria Grandinette, “Connoisseurship of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Publishers’ Bookbindings,” in Carlo Federici et al., eds., *International Conference on Conservation and Restoration of Archive and Library Materials, Erice, 22–29 April 1996* (Rome: Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro, 2000), 287–317.

6. G. Thomas Tanselle, *Libraries, Museums, and Reading: The 6th Sol. M. Malkin Lecture in Bibliography* (New York: Columbia University School of Library Service, 1991).

7. Charles Gullans, “The New Generation: Sarah Whitman and Frank Hazen,” in Sue Allen and Charles Gullans, *Decorated Cloth in America: Publishers’ Bindings 1840–1910* (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies, 1994).

8. Elizabeth Call, “An Assessment of Sarah Whitman Book Cover Designs Held in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, Provo Utah,” April 1993.

9. E. W. Browning, “More Training Needed in Bookbinding and Book Conservation,” *Library Journal* 75 (February 1, 1950): 190–91, quoted in Edward Connelly Lantham, “Some Personnel Considerations for Binding and Conservation Services,” in John P. Baker and Margeriget C. Soroka, eds., *Library Conservation: Preservation in Perspective* (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1978), 161. An exception to this norm was the Teachers College of Columbia University, which taught binding and repair early in the twentieth century and published Sarah J. Freeman, *A Syllabus of a Course on Elementary Bookmaking and Bookbinding* (New York: Teachers College of Columbia University, 1910).

10. Pelham Barr, “Book Conservation and University Library Administration,”
College and Research Libraries 7 (July 1946): 214–19, quoted in Lantham, “Some Personnel Considerations,” 150.

11. Ibid.

12. Walter Powell, “Library Bookbinding,” Library World 5 (January 1, 1903): 173.

13. See, for example, Harriet Price Sawyer, How to Care for Books in a Library (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1912); and E. R. Norris Mathews, “Library Binderies,” Library Association Record (March 15, 1906): 73–78.

14. Lovina Knowlton (Indianapolis, Indiana), “Library Mending Kit,” Library Occurrent 10 (December 1907): 5; see also F. J. Williamson, “Specification for the Fittings of a Small Bindery,” in E. Wyndham Hulme et al., Leather for Libraries (London: Library Supply Co., 1905), 51–54.

15. Brander Matthews, Bookbindings Old and New (New York: Macmillan Company, 1895).

16. George A. Stephen, “Publishers’ Bindings,” Library Association Record 12 (1910): 10.

17. Arthur L. Bailey, Bookbinding (Chicago: American Library Association Publishing Board, 1911), 14.

18. Cyril Davenport, “The Repairing and Binding of Books for Public Libraries,” in Hulme et al., Leather for Libraries, 44.

19. Ibid., 42, 43.

20. Ibid., 46. In 1903 the Hull (U.K.) Public Library recased 633 volumes, repaired and glued up 1,697 volumes, and rebound 3,465 volumes.

21. Margaret Wright Brown, Mending and Repair of Books, Library Handbooks no. 6 (Chicago: American Library Association Publishing Board, 1910), 3–4.

22. Douglas Cockerell, Bookbinding and the Care of Books (London, 1901).

23. Donald M. Kidd, Bookcraft, an Industrial Art Subject: On Book Repairing for Schools and Libraries (N.p.: Gaylord Brothers, Inc., 1928).

24. Letter to the author dated December 1, 1998 from June Paynter, manager, Bids and Specification, Demco Inc., Madison, Wisconsin. The company’s involvement in book repair instruction before the 1960s is now forgotten.

25. Cobham and Wood, eds., Committee on Leather for Bookbinding (London: Royal Society of Arts, 1905). Douglas Cockerell had an enormous influence on the committee, as his own library binding specification, published in 1901, looks nearly identical. See Douglas Cockerell, Bookbinding and the Care of Books, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1912), 173–77, 308–11.

26. Cobham and Wood, Committee on Leather for Bookbinding, 34.

27. Abridgments to Specifications, Class 16, Books, 1901–4 (1906), no. 10, 439. The method is illustrated in Cedric Chivers, The Paper of Lending Library Books with Some Remarks on Their Bindings, Illustrated by Diagrams and Photomicrograms (Portway, Bath: Cedric Chivers Ltd., [ca. 1909]), 22; see also W. Elmo Reavis, “Book Sewing Distinguished from Book Stitchery, Part III,” Pacific Bindery Talk 10, no. 5 (January 1938): 74–77.

28. Cedric Chivers, “Bookbinding,” Journal of the Royal Society of Arts (6 November 1925): 1082.

29. Cornelia Marvin, “Notes for Librarians,” Wisconsin Library Bulletin 1 (May 1905): 42, gives the address as 542 Fifth Avenue, New York City; Clara Field, “Papers Read at the District Meetings during 1906,” News Notes of California Libraries 2 (1907): 105, places the new bindery at 1242 Fulton Street, Brooklyn,
New York. An ad on the inside cover of Chivers’s self-published pamphlet, *The Relative Value of Leather and Other Binding Materials, Illustrated by Diagrams and Photomicrograms* (N.p., n.d. [ca. 1911]), places the bindery at 911–913 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, indicating a third move.

30. Barbara Buckner Higginbotham, “Cedric Chivers: Portrait of a Turn-of-the-Century Binder and Entrepreneur,” *Technicalities* 15, no. 12 (December 1995): 10–11. Chivers is discussed in glowing terms by numerous American librarians in the literature, including Cornelia Marvin, “Rebinding Made Unnecessary,” *Wisconsin Library Bulletin* 1 (May 1905): 42; Clara Field, “Book Repairing,” *News Notes of California Libraries* 2 (July 1907): 105; Kirke H. Field, “Binding and Other Workroom Problems,” *News Notes of California Libraries* 5 (July 1910): 372.

31. Chivers sold the Brooklyn bindery in 1923 to Karl Schaefer and Frank Barnard, themselves owners of well-established binderies. See Michael Dewe, “Cedric Chivers and Library Binding,” *Library World* 72, no. 844 (October 1970): 125.

32. Ibid., 123–27; Harris, 5.

33. Chivers, *The Paper of Lending Library*; and Chivers, *The Relative Value of Leather*.

34. W. Elmo Reavis, “The Stream of Bookbinding, a Historical Sketch, Part III,” *Pacific Bindery Talk* 10, no. 9 (May 1938): 180–82.

35. The ALA Committee on Book Binding and the Library Group of the Employing Book Binders of America, “General Specifications for Library and School Book Binding,” reprinted from the *Library Journal* (September 1, 1923): 4.

36. Library Binding Institute, *Standard for Library Binding*, 7th ed. (Boston: Library Binding Institute, 1981), 3.

37. Walter Gropius, “The Curse of Conformity,” in Richard T. Thruelsen and John Kobler, eds., *Adventures of the Mind from the “Saturday Evening Post”* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 263–74, quote from 264.

38. Matt Roberts, “Oversewing and the Problem of Book Preservation in the Research Library,” *College and Research Libraries* 28 (January 1967): 17–24.

39. Cedric Chivers, “Bookbinding,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (November 6, 1925): 1077.

40. This 15 percent figure is an estimation based on my twenty-three years of professional experience working in two research libraries and as a result of discussions with other conservators engaged in the repair of circulating collections as cochair of the Library Collections Conservation Discussion Group of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (1991–98).

41. Maria Grandinette and Randy Silverman, “Book Repair in the U.S.A.: A Library-Wide Approach to Conservation,” in *La conservation: Une science en évolution, bilans et perspectives, actes des troisièmes journées internationales d’études de l’ARSAG* (Paris: Association pour la Recherche Scientifique sur les Arts Graphiques, 1997), 274–80; Randy Silverman and Maria Grandinette, eds., *The Changing Role of Book Repair in Research Libraries*, SPEC Kit 190 (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Services, 1993).

42. Linda J. White, “Packaging the American Word: A Survey of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Publishers’ Bindings in the General Collections of the Library of Congress,” master’s thesis, Catholic University of
America, in conjunction with the Library of Congress Preservation Directorate, 1997. Besides original publishers’ cloth bindings or commercial library bindings, other possibilities included two leather bindings (0.00068 percent), six paperbacks (0.02 percent), and one unbound (0.0034 percent).

43. Ad Hoc Committee, “Statement.”