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The Preserving of Gifts and Donors

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The Preserving of Gifts and Donors



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SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Cornucopia, or...

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Pandora's Box?

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Stories of the Gods and Heroes by Sally Benson, 1940, Dial Press.

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The Value of Gifts

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- Gifts are essential to the growth of any collection
- Help shape/define the collections
- Provide additional (or the only) resources
- Can bring draw attention to an organization
- But...

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The Costs of Gifts

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- **Nothing is ever free**
 - Costs of bringing a collection in
 - Costs of housing a collection
 - Costs of making a collection available to the public
 - ✦ Processing costs...
 - Costs of preserving a collection
 - ✦ Infrastructure such as heating and A/C
 - ✦ Boxes and other enclosure
 - ✦ Conservation...

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The Perfect World

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Gifts that are received are in good condition, have been well cared for over their life, are properly housed, and come with an endowment to help pay for their long-term care.

**Is this possible?
What if they're not?**

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Some of the Problems of Collections

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- **Collections received in a disorganized state**
 - Piled into boxes = Extensive processing required to make available
 - Will require purchase of folders
 - Will require purchase of boxes
 - Other enclosures for special materials...

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Some of the Problems of Collections

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- **Brittle paper**
 - Can it be safely handled
 - Reformatting or making use copies
 - If unique and valuable
 - ✦ Conservation treatment?



Which has the greater value, the content or the medium?

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Some of the Problems of Collections

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- **Deteriorated bindings**
 - Options more limited
 - “Repair” or conservation treatment
 - ✦ Consolidation, especially in case of leather... (red rot)



Conservators and even qualified book repairers limited in CNY region, costs can be quite high so informed selection for treatment critical.

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Some of the Problems of Collections

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- **Scrapbooks**
 - Enough said.
 - ✦ Rich primary sources of information
 - ✦ Contain myriad of other formats
 - ✦ Usually made of poor quality materials
 - ✦ Structure over-taxed by used and over-filling



Options can include boxing, disbinding and foldering, conservation treatment, or reformatting

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Conditions in Your Institution

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- **Do you have the infrastructure to properly house collections?**
 - If not, are fixes manageable?
 - ✦ Room-sized a/c unit
 - ✦ Dehumidifier
 - ✦ Pest management
- **Do you have the staffing and tools to properly accession/process materials?**
- **Do you have a budget for supplies...?**

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If Not...

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- **Consider options**
 - Not accepting gift (not always attractive, especially if bigger prospect)
 - Raise funds to complete improvements (not easy in today's economy...)
 - Ask for additional funds to help support acquisition and housing of collections from the donor...
 - Accept as is, but...

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What are Major Costs?

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- Enclosures
 - Folders, Boxes, Sleeves, ...
- Repair & Conservation
- Environmental Controls
- Staff (easily overlooked)



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Where to find more information

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- Department of Preservation and Conservation, Syracuse University Library
 - <http://library.syr.edu/information/preservation>
- West Lake Conservators
 - Conservation of paintings, work of art on paper, photographs
 - <http://www.westlakeconservators.com>
- Other regional resources
 - <http://library.syr.edu/information/preservation/referral.htm>

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