

Guidelines for Patron Use of 19th C. Materials with Original Pigments

Last updated 2023-09-13, Preservation Services

Overview

This document provides guidelines for handling and providing access to materials in publisher bindings from 1800-1899 with original pigments, including monographs and other volumes bound at the time of publication. Pigments may be present in:

- Book cloth
- Edge decoration
- Decorative end pages
- Decorate papers used to cover hardcover boards (not paperback volumes)

NOTE: Items fully bound in leather may contain decorative end pages or edge decoration with applied pigments. Items in library bindings may retain original edge decoration with applied pigments.

Safer Handling Practices

Units who hold 19th Century materials that have not been tested, or test positive, for the presence of heavy metals may choose to provide access to these materials to library users. If your unit chooses to provide access to these materials, please follow these guidelines to ensure the safety of library staff and patrons:

- The materials should be used in a designated area within the library, they cannot be checked out.
- Staff and patrons must wear disposable gloves when handling these materials.
- Cover the work surface or book cradle with a sheet of paper, and/or wipe down the work surface with D-wipes after handling.
- Do not eat or drink while handling these materials.
- After handling, dispose of gloves, wipes, and paper in a designated disposal bag.
- Wash hands immediately after handling.

***Preservation Services will provide gloves, D-Wipes, disposal bags, and large sheets of paper if desired.**

Additional Information

To learn more about the Library's research into heavy metals in 19th C. bindings, visit the project website:

<https://go.library.illinois.edu/heavymetals>

For additional information or training on identifying potentially problematic materials, please contact Shelby Strommer (strommer@illinois.edu).