

TREATMENT PROPOSAL/AUTHORIZATION FOR TREATMENT

Date: 9/10/07
PCS Identification number: 08-20
Owner/Custodian: Stephanie Malmros
Address: Center for American History
Sid Richardson Hall, Unit 2
University of Texas at Austin

Telephone: 512-475-4257
Owner/Custodian call no.: 2J457
Title/Subject/Description (.01): March 19, 1865, Virgil Rabb to Mama, Mary Rabb
Creator: Virgil Rabb
Date of production: March 19, 1865
Place of production: unknown
Approximate dimensions (hxw): Letter: 10 7/16" x 8 3/8"
26.5 cm x 21.3 cm

Fragment: 3 1/2" x 7 5/16"
8.9 cm x 18.6 cm

Conservator: Sarah Norris

Authorization

The undersigned requests and authorizes the Kilgarlin Center at the University of Texas, Austin, TX, to undertake conservation treatment of the artifact described in the attached Condition Report according to the procedures outlined in the appended Treatment Proposal. In the event the Owner/Custodian authorizes the Kilgarlin Center to proceed with the treatment recommended in the proposal such authorization shall be deemed to include acceptance by the depositor of the terms and conditions appearing in the original Authorization for Examination and Treatment. The undersigned further agrees that the Kilgarlin Center and the conservator may share any information or images obtained during the agreed upon examination, treatment, or investigation in written and public presentations.

Signature of Owner/Custodian: _____

Date: _____

Signature of conservator: _____

Date: _____

Description

Primary support (letter) (hwx): 10 7/16" x 8 3/8"
26.5 cm x 21.3 cm

Primary support (fragment) (hwx): 3 1/2" x 7 5/16"
8.9 cm x 18.6 cm

General

The manuscript is iron gall ink on machine made paper. The letter shows evidence of having been folded into four sections horizontally and two sections vertically. The fragment shows one horizontal and one vertical folding crease.

Media

Medium 1

Iron gall ink has been applied extensively on the recto and verso of the letter and fragment. The ink varies from light to medium thickness and is smudged in several places.

Medium 2

Graphite or possibly copy pencil appears in the lower left corner of the verso of the fragment. This may be a cataloguing inscription.

Primary support

The manuscript is written on machine made paper, with machine roller marks and a reticulated pattern visible in transmitted light. The paper is of medium (1) thickness, smooth in texture, and blued white in color.¹ The letter has three horizontal crease lines and one vertical crease that appear to be contemporaneous with authorship. The fragment shows one horizontal and one vertical folding crease, and appears to be a piece of a different document.

Condition

General

The letter is in fair condition overall with multiple creases and losses that have been repaired with pressure-sensitive tape. The tape has made the primary support transparent where it is adhered. The primary support has experienced noticeable burn-through and dropouts due to the iron gall ink.

Media

Medium 1

The iron gall ink is a warm brown color. It is visible from the opposite side of the manuscript, and it has caused dropouts throughout. Haloing is visible, especially in thickly applied areas. Beneath the pressure-sensitive tape repair that appears at the center right side of the recto, the ink has settled into an unusual, dotted pattern that may mimic the dotted pattern visible in the primary support.

Medium 2

The graphite or copy pencil is applied in a medium weight and says "Jan 12" in the lower left corner of the verso of the fragment. This inscription is most likely not original.

Primary support

The primary support is flexible, but fragile due to losses caused by folding and iron gall ink. The largest loss spans 5.6 cm at the bottom edge of the letter. Some browning has occurred at the upper corners of the letter and on the right side of the recto of the fragment. Five repairs have been made to the letter's edges with pressure sensitive tape. The repairs average 3.25 cm in length. Two of these repairs appear at the center and top of the letter's right side; three appear at the center and bottom of the letter's left side (when viewed from the recto.) The tape has caused the paper to become more transparent where it is adhered.

¹ Lunning, Elizabeth and Roy Perkinson. *The Print Council of America Paper Sample Book*. 1996: The Print Council of America.

The repair at the top right edge has creased the paper back on itself by 3 mm, rendering a maximum of 6 vertical mm not visible. The bottom left corner of the recto of the letter is nearly detached.

Treatment Proposal

1. Remove tape.
2. Mend tears with Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste.
3. House in an acid-free folder.

Photography

Digital images, recto and verso, will be taken both before and after treatment. The images will feature ambient, raking, and transmitted light.

Possible Effects of Treatment

The lower left corner of the recto of the letter could become detached, requiring mending.

Treatment Notes

9/14/07: 3 hrs: Removed carrier mechanically with heat. Removed adhesive with creoe eraser, vinyl eraser, alpha cellulose, ethanol, ethyl acetate, and eventually naphtha, working at a slant in fume hood.

9/17/07: 2.5 hrs: Repeatedly sprayed document out with naphtha, removing carrier and adhesive. Folded portion in upper right corner fell apart into multiple pieces (preserved in mylar) when tape was removed and paper unfolded. Under tape repair in middle left, several pieces of paper were broken by creasing and burnthrough, and tape was the only element holding them together. When tape was released, these pieces came out (preserved in mylar.) One piece was affixed on top of the paper with the tape repair, and does not appear to have originally belonged with this tear.

9/21/07: 1 hr: Attempted stain removal with ethanol, acetone, ethyl acetate, and amyl acetate on suction table. No success. Decided against using more dangerous solvents. Locally humidified.

9/23/07: 2.5 hr: Mended tears with thin tissue and WSP. Filled two major losses with lens tissue and replaces fragments as possible. Some fragments could not be placed. Taped-on loss still does not appear to be part of this document. Housed in paper sleeve in original folder.

Treatment Performed

1. Removed carrier mechanically with heat: 2 hr.
2. Removed adhesive with naphtha: 3.5 hr
3. Attempted stain removal but decided not to proceed: 0.5 hr.
4. Locally humidified: 0.5 hr
5. Mended tears with thin Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste: 2 hr
6. Filled major losses with lens tissue and replaced fragments as possible: 1 hr
7. Housed in paper sleeve in original folder. Loose fragments included in small envelope within sleeve.

Total time: 9.5 hr