

## CONDITION GUIDELINES FOR GIFT SELECTION AND OUT OF PRINT ORDERING

When ordering out of print materials and selecting gift items, subject matter is not the only concern. Older materials are more likely to be in disrepair and brittle, a combination of preservation problems with limited economical options. It is therefore important for subject librarians to consider condition along with subject matter when making decisions about out of print orders and gifts. The following are preservation related issues to consider regarding these types of materials.

### ***“Bad Paper Era”***

Most paper from the mid nineteenth century forward was made using a process that creates acidic paper, and that acid causes the paper to break down chemically and become brittle. Many publishers in the United States, however, have switched to acid free paper in the last decade. When ordering from an out of print dealer, examining the date and place of publication can assist in determining the likely condition of a title. When considering older materials for the collection remember:

- Materials published from the mid nineteenth century forward were made with acidic paper.
- The older these materials are, the more brittle they are. Some are brittle within 25 years, but usually not until about 60 years.
- Brittle books are more likely to be in disrepair.
- Books published during World Wars I and II were made with low quality materials and are more likely to be brittle and in bad condition.
- Books published in poorer nations are often made with low quality materials and deteriorate at a much higher rate than most books.

### ***Options for “New” Deteriorated Materials***

When a deteriorated (brittle and in disrepair) item is added to the collection, the following options are available for preservation. The options are listed from least to most expensive.

- Archival enclosure (approximately \$3-\$4 to construct in house)
- Reformat – microfilm or preservation photocopy (approximately \$70-\$100)
- Extensive out of house conservation work (varies from approximately \$75-\$275, depending on extent of work)