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Gwendolyn Brooks Papers Treatment Record



Fig. 1. Front cover of *Black Scrapbook*

Treatment No.:	220583	Barcode:	30112128497416
Collection:	MSS00086 Gwendolyn Brooks Papers		
Series:	S04 Photographs and Scrapbooks—SS02 Photograph Albums and Scrapbooks		
Item:	Black Scrapbook ¹	Owning Library:	RBML
Item Type:	Scrapbook	Dimensions:	W 32cm x L 38cm x T 5.5cm
Treatment by:	Yungjin Shin	Record Date:	8/31/2022

DESCRIPTION

This scrapbook, compiled by Gwendolyn Brooks, includes newspaper clippings about Brooks, photographs, and her early handwritten poems (from age 13 onward). Besides these curated, attached materials, there are several materials tucked in throughout the pages, such as pamphlets, programs, full newspapers, and newspaper clippings.

Binding

The scrapbook appears to be a commercially produced loose-leaf mechanical binding (or a post binding), which was secured by two plastic posts through two holes on the side of the spine edge, although it is obscured in its current state (fig. 2 & 3). A white textile cord is laced through the two plastic posts to hold the textblock and covers together. The covers are likely to be hinged boards, where the main board and the narrow board are hinged by the paper covering (fig. 2). The narrow board is where the two holes are located for the posts and cord to lace through. It is highly likely that this binding did not have a spine covering originally, exposing the textblock leaves. The scrapbook allowed to add more leaves,

¹ This scrapbook has been mostly digitized, except for the extra brittle items.

considering the non-adhesive binding structure and the printed note on the interior of the back cover, “No. W-601 FOR REFILL, ASK FOR NO. 611”. The binding has a dark blue/black paper cover over cardboards. The front cover has an embossed design and gold stamped title, “SCRAP BOOK”, on the center. The interior of the boards is pasted down with a single sheet of machine-made paper, similar to the text papers.



Fig. 2. Two holes in the covers.

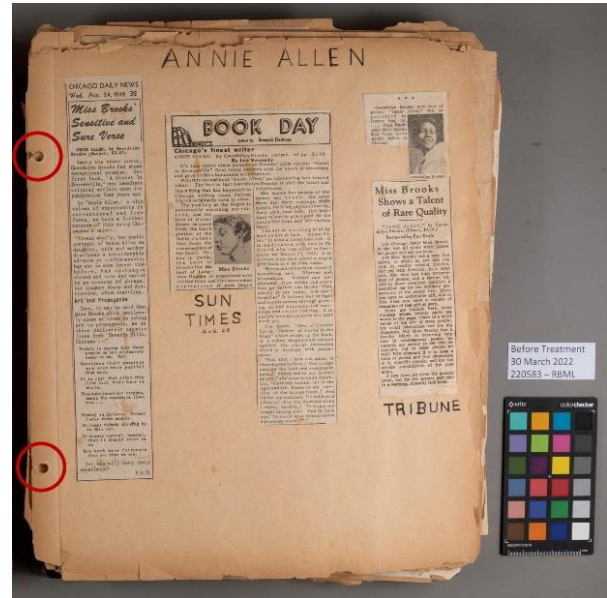


Fig. 3. Two holes in the textblock.

Textblock/Primary Support

The textblock, or the primary support, consists of twenty-five leaves of groundwood machine-made papers. Each leaf has a stub on the spine side, which is an extension of the leaf folded to the recto side (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. The detail of the folded stub.



Fig. 5. Page with a foldout newsclipping.

Attachments/Secondary Support²

The majority of the attachments are newspaper clippings, approximately from the 1940s to 1960s. Most of the clippings are contained within a page, except for three clippings that are folded at the bottom (fig. 5). Some of the clippings are labeled with the newspaper names, directly written on the primary support in black ink, and/or with the date or the author's name on a paper label written in black ink.

There is also a grouping of Brooks' early handwritten poems from age 13 to 28. They are written in black ink on light blue ruled machine-made papers. Each age grouping is accompanied by a paper label, age written in black ink. Each page that has these poems has 'Gwendolyn Brooks' written either directly on the primary support in a blue ballpoint pen or on a paper label in black ink.

One page includes four black and white photographs of Gwendolyn Brooks of different ages with her name paper-labeled on the top of the page.

All attachments appear to be attached with an adhesive.

Extra Materials

There are several materials tucked in throughout the whole textblock, but heavily inside the front and back covers. They include photographs, full spreads of newspapers (oversized), newspaper clippings, magazines, pamphlets, and other printed sheets.

CONDITION

Overall, the scrapbook is in poor condition. The whole binding has broken down with no binding structure left in the current state. The major condition issue is the highly brittle and acidic paper materials, which comprise most of the binding. The scrapbook cannot be handled without damaging the pages any further.

Binding

The binding is in poor condition. The hinges of the hinged boards on the front and back are completely detached. The narrow board on the front is in pieces with a missing top portion, and the narrow board on the back is completely missing. The covers are heavily abraded at all corners and edges, exposing the board underneath. The cord is intact, and all pieces (including the plastic posts) are present but grimy.

Textblock/Primary Support

The textblock leaves are in poor condition. The highly acidic machine-made papers became extremely brittle, crumbling down by the edges and when bent. The papers have been browned as well, although the original color is obscure. Since the pages are not contained inside the covers, the edges are beaten up with many tears and losses. All the binding holes have tears towards the spine edge, indicating the post and the cord were pulled out and tore the papers. This might have been caused by the brittle papers and the overflowing tucked-in materials, as the current stack is much thicker than the length of the plastic post (fig. 6).

² See Table 1 for a list of attachments on each page.



Fig. 6. Close-up of the tail edge next to the plastic post. Note the thickness difference.

Attachments/Secondary Support

The attachments are in fair condition. Although the newspapers are also acidic and brittle materials, they are in better condition than the textblock papers are, considering the intact foldout newspaper clippings. However, it is not to assume that these will be stable in the future as well. A few clippings are partially detached from the primary support, but most of them are well attached. The attachments that are attached to the very edge of the primary support are damaged (tears and losses) along with the crumbling support (fig. 7). All the attachments appear to be present, except for the photograph page. There are three to four missing photographs, leaving behind adhesive residue on the primary support. The remaining four photographs are in fair condition. Overall, they have mild undulation (like due to adhesive) with one matte photo showing fading and another photo on the top right corner having a crack in the center (fig. 8).



Fig. 7. Detail of damaged attachments.



Fig. 8. Detail of photos' condition—fading (L) and crack (R).

Extra Materials

The tucked-in materials are in good condition. The folded newspapers are stable as well, which can hold the unfolding action without breaking.

TREATMENT PROPOSAL

- Photo-document before, during, and after treatment.
- Lightly surface clean the overall pages using cosmetic sponges.
- Stabilize the textblock papers and attachments as needed by mending the tears.
- Humidify and flatten the folded newspapers.
- Send the pages with foldouts and OS newspapers to DS for digitization. Reproduce the foldouts to replace them with their originals.
- Encapsulate all materials in polyester sheets.
- Collect the pages together and bind them into a post binding.
- Leave the tucked-in materials as tucked in their original location. Create a four-flap wrapper to hold materials together.
- Make an enclosure to hold all materials (the new post binding, the original covers, original pages, etc.) together.

TREATMENT PROCESS

1. Photo-documented before, during, and after treatment.
2. Recorded individual items/pages in order. Assigned page numbers for all items.
3. Surface-cleaned mechanically the overall surface using cosmetic sponges.
4. Humidified full spreads of *Panorama* newspapers (x4) in a humidification chamber for 13 mins each. Dried between Reemay/blotter stack overnight.
5. Mended tears on scrapbook pages using Lascaux 498:DI Water (1:4) precoated Tengujo (5gsm) tissues, heat reactivated (fig. 9).

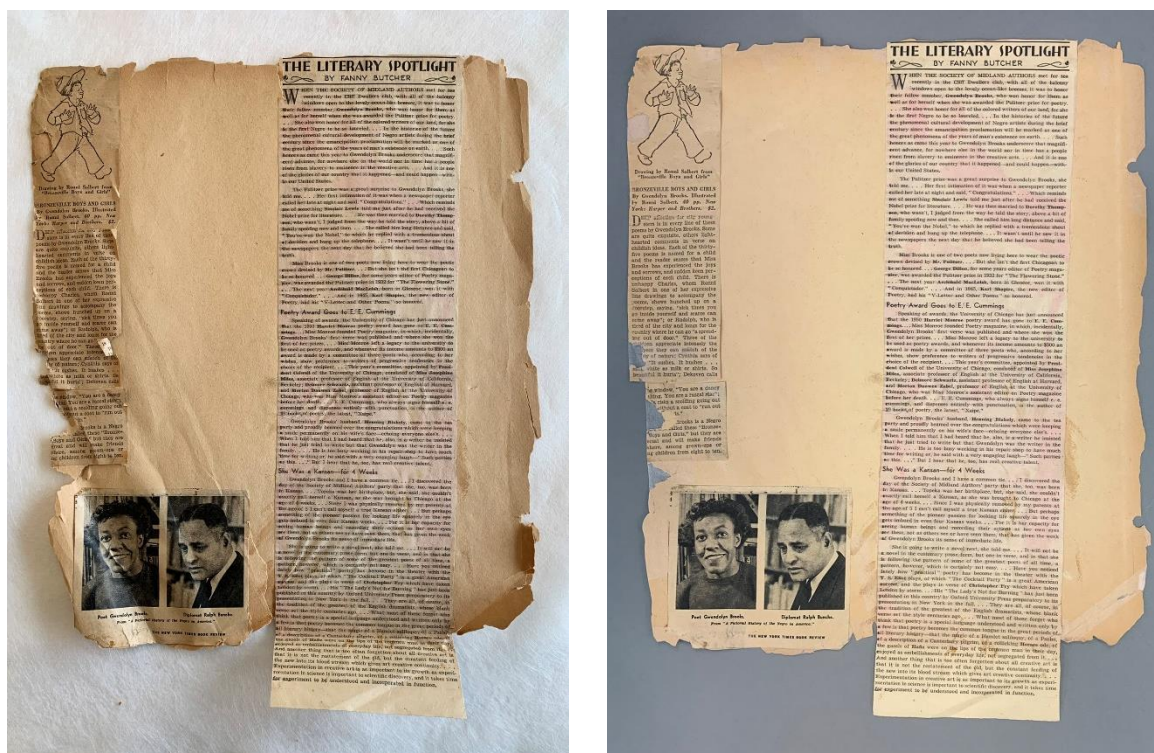


Fig. 9. Tear mending before (L) and after (R) on page 25 using heat set tissues.

6. Rehoused the tucked-in materials in mylar sleeves. Made four-flap wrappers using 10pt. cardstock or Permalife buffered papers for all the tucked-in materials.
7. Labeled each page or each item.
 - a. Album pages: "Page 1", "Page 2", "Page 3", and such.
 - b. Each tucked-in groupings: A1-11, B1, C1-2, D1, E1-5, and such.
 - c. Surrogate items: A2 Surrogate, A11 Surrogate, Page 8 Surrogate, and such.
8. Sent the scrapbook to Digitization Services to retake images of selected pages. The digitized scrapbook pages with foldout clippings and oversized newspapers were sent to a printing vendor to create surrogates.³
9. Encapsulated each scrapbook page in 3-mil mylar sheets. The surrogate pages were encapsulated in the same manner as other pages, except for cutting out a flap to access a folded clipping (fig. 10). Once welded, excess mylars were trimmed and the corners were rounded.



Fig. 10. Unfolding folded clipping on encapsulated page 8.

10. Punched three holes on the encapsulated leaves using a three-ring hole puncher.
11. Made spacers to 1" width x height of the new leaves, using 20pt. and 40pt. cardstock. Punched holes in the same location using a Japanese hole puncher.
12. Created a spine piece using 20pt. cardstock covered with black bookcloth and PVA. The spine piece extends to the width of the spacers. Punched holes.
13. Created covers using binder's board covered with black bookcloth and PVA. The covers are constructed in two parts, a main board and a narrow board, with a hinge gap in between the two boards. The narrow board sits on top of the spacers and the main board covers the rest of the pages. Punched holes on the narrow board area.
14. Assembled all pieces together and bind them with three metal posts.
15. Made fillers using mat boards covered with black bookcloth and PVA to compensate for the thickness of the front and back enclosed materials on the fore edge. Attached the fillers to the interior of the front and back covers.

³ It was decided to create surrogates for any oversized materials. The surrogates replaced the original pages and oversized items in the binding so that the users can have a similar experience of unfolding newspapers and clippings as they go through the binding while the original, fragile newspapers are kept safe but accessible in the same enclosure.

16. Made a custom-fitted box to hold the original covers, the new binding, and the oversized materials together, using corrugated boards (fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Custom made housing that holds the original covers, oversized items, and new binding.

Total treatment hours: 59 hours.