

Information:

- Title: Dorothy Lowd Scrapbook
- Creator: Dorothy Lowd
- Date/Date Range: 1911-1914
- Accession Number/Identifier: 901.003.001
- Repository/Institution: University of New England
- Location/Storage: Box 2
- Report Prepared By: Vivian Nunez
- Date of Report: 11/10/2025

Object Description

- Format: Scrapbook
- Dimensions:
- Materials:
 - Interior pages: Paper
 - Adhesives: Tape, Paste
 - Inserts: Various Ephemera Photographs, newspaper clippings, letters
- Construction: Sewn Binding (Deattached)
- Contents:
 - This scrapbook consists of newspaper clippings and ephemera. Newspaper clipping primarily consists of Westbrook sports teams and athletic competitions, containing images, rosters, and schedules of the teams. Also included are clippings discussing events and changes in faculty at Westbrook Seminary. The scrapbook also includes ephemera from student events and academics such as programs, decorations, dance cards, absence slips, and schedules.

Historical Context

The scrapbook of Dorothy Lowd is an important example of traditional “student scrapbooks” that depicts the overall experience of students in the early 20th century. Throughout the 19th century, there was an increased production and circulation of photographs and newspapers. Small Prints, known as Carte de Viste, would be exchanged between friends and family. As a result of this, there was a need for ways for people to store the photographs.

Scrapbooks evolved from the previously existing Signature books that people would use to collect signatures and other small memorials such as flowers, hair or stickers. Individuals began adhering the prints to the thin pages of these books, which provided a somewhat effective but temporary fix to the issue. Over time, issues began to emerge from this method as the weight

of the carte de visite would wear down the pages. To combat this and also meet the consumer demand, stronger and more stable photo albums began to be produced commercially.

By the mid 19th century, commercial scrapbooks were popular among youth, who used the scrapbooks to hold not only photos, but newspaper clippings, ephemera, and other memorabilia. Several historical factors contributed to the appeal of collecting items throughout the mid 18th to early 19th centuries. This included the increase of preparatory schools, which required young adults to leave their hometowns and live on campus. Additionally, several conflicts during this period such as the Civil War and World War I prompted individuals to collect material culture, photographs, and personal documents to memorialize their experience.

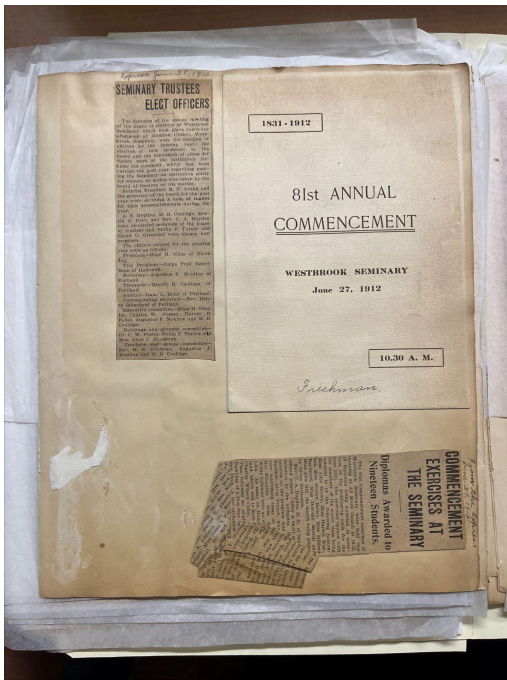
Condition Assessment

The exterior scrapbook condition is poor. The cover and backing are completely disjoined from one another and the pages. The black cover has visible fading and wear to the cloth.

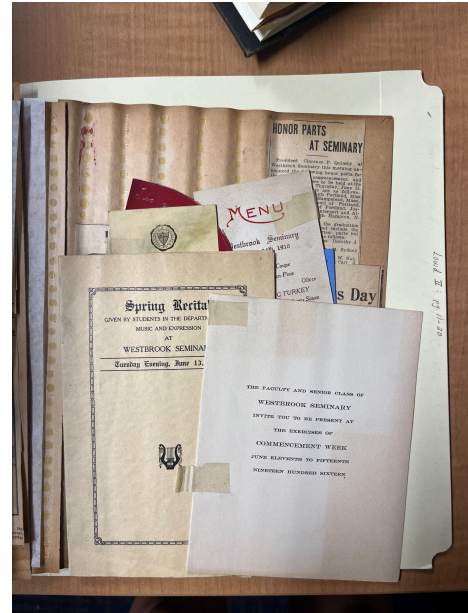
Due to the detached cover boards and broken spine, the pages have become unbinding from one another. In order to store them, they have been separated into several folders. The paper is extremely brittle and has visible chipping of improper storage and quality of the paper. The pages are constructed with highly acidic wood-pulp paper that contains lignin, an organic material that causes the cellulose fiber in wood to be binded. This composition makes the papers highly susceptible to damage from light exposure, temperature, and other environmental factors.

Many of the pages have evidence of discoloration and tearing as a result of the adhesives used to attach the items onto the pages. On the pages of the scrapbook where items have begun to fall off, there is evidence of adhesive residue from glue and tape used. Several of these pages have signs of loss, due to the attached item ripping the page during detachment. Discoloration from newspapers adhered to a page resting on the backside of another page is also evident.

The attached items within the scrapbook also have evidence of damage. Newspaper clippings in the scrapbook have visible creases and signs of embrittlement. The papers' loss of flexibility increases the probability of further breaking or disintegration when attempting to bend the material. Due to this factor and adhesive failure, there are many pages where there are several newspaper clippings stacked upon one another or are bent. Signs of yellowing from oxidation are also evident from improper storage.



Other inserts such as programs, decorations, dance cards, absence slips, and schedules have evidence of damage and deattachment. A common issue appears to be the use of tape to attach items to the pages. Since the tape adhesive has dried out over the years, many items have fallen or taken off the pages causing damage to both the item and the page. This is apparent by the traces of skinning on the scrapbook pages where the fibers have been disrupted from the adhesive. Similarly, there are remnants of the attached items left on the pages. As a result of detachment, items within the scrapbook have been stored stacked on top of each other. This has led to further deterioration, specifically cracking and discoloration.



Significance and Risk Analysis

The scrapbook of Dorothy Lowd is a part of a larger collection of scrapbooks belonging to previous students and faculty members at Westbrook Seminary and Junior College. Scrapbooks provide a personal and candid perspective of the culture that is cultivated within the dormitory halls, classrooms, and on the grounds of a college campus. While tailored to the experiences and interests of their creators, scrapbooks contribute to a collective history of student life in the United States, placing the student in a larger story about higher education and social life on campus.

The main concern of the scrapbook is further deterioration from aging and handling. It is important that the scrapbook is accessible to researchers who are interested in viewing the scrapbook and the contents within it. There are several risks with this, primarily associated with the handling and storage of the scrapbook. Although the book is unbound, flipping the pages of the book can cause additional stress on the edges which could result in further chipping. Additionally, the turning of the pages has the potential to lose the attached items, particularly since in many places the adhesive is already weakened. Other risks from handling the scrapbook include soiling from the materials exposure to oils and dirt from hands. This is heightened by the fact that many of the items are no longer adhered on the pages, requiring unnecessary handling by researchers. Due to these conditions, this particular conservation project is assessed as Medium urgency. There are no visible signs of pest damage, mold, or water damage.

Treatment Plan

The goal of this project is not to return the scrapbook to its original appearance but rather take preventative measures to limit the continued deterioration of the object and ensure safer



handling and storage. This will be completed by performing basic conservation techniques to stabilize the pages and inserted material. Loose items that were either not attached or have fallen off of the page will be placed in archive-grade envelopes and mylar sleeves. This will prevent the materials from interacting with one another but still allow for visibility. Newspaper clippings that have become folded or creased will be unfolded to prevent complete breaking.

Once the conservation of the items have been addressed, then the entire pages will be placed

in large mylar sleeves. This will improve the stability of the page and will limit the amount of hands-on contact viewers will have with the physical scrapbook. By doing this, it will limit the amount of exposure to oils and dirt from hands. If it is determined that further stability is needed, archival grade tissue paper will be placed in between the sleeved pages.

Final Recommendations

Other suggestions can be made regarding the handling, storage, and digitalization of the scrapbook to improve its overall accessibility and condition. Handling the scrapbook should be as limited as possible, however it is important that researchers can access the content. Prior to handling and making contact with the actual item, hands should be washed and dried to limit the amount of oils and dirt. The use of lotions and hand sanitizers should be avoided as the oils and fragrances can result in the staining of materials. Additionally, any loose jewelry that could catch or drag onto the material should be removed. When turning the pages of the scrapbook do so page-by-page to limit stress put onto the pages. If documents such as newspapers are folded or creased, they can be unfolded by sliding a micro spatula under the folded portion and lifting it back. It is important to do this slowly and pay attention to the flexibility of the item to prevent chipping.

The current storage of the item raises several concerns despite it being housed within the University's archives. Currently, the pages are separated with two pages of archival tissue paper that is not properly fitted to the page. Excess use of archival tissue paper creates bulk in the box. This puts pressure on the edges of the page when



the box is closed which could potentially advance the deteriorating and crumbling of paper. This scrapbook is stored in a series of acidic-free buffer folders within an archival box. When in the box, there is also a significant amount of space causing the folders to shift when the box is moved. This can also contribute to stress on the pages and attached items. A “tuxedo” box can be placed inside of the archival box to compact the folders.