

HISTORICAL SITES SUFFER STORM DAMAGE (31)

Recent hurricanes caused disaster to many historical sites and museums. I was called upon by the Elliott Museum to inspect their textiles for damage from water and mildew. This is not new to me since I have worked with museums throughout the country in restoring their textiles which suffered similar damage. Museums store their textiles in acid free boxes and acid free paper. This means that the textiles are not affected by the chemicals present in other type boxes or improper storage using plastic.

CHECKING FOR DAMAGE

Damage to fabrics can be checked by non intrusive methods such as light. One device is an instrument called "Spectralight" which is a lighting unit consisting of several lights, one of which is ultra-violet. In the presence of ultra-violet light mildew will emit a glow and water rings and oxidization will show other characteristic signs. Most of the textiles I inspected were not totally damaged due to the proper storage and handling of the textiles when they became wet. The curators at the museum quickly separated wet textiles from the other textiles. When the storm was over they hung the textiles and exposed them to light.

REMOVING WATER RINGS

When textiles become water damaged they usually can be restored by a prolonged soaking using an oxygen bleach or a color safe bleach. The product you use should list as an ingredient sodium perborate or sodium percarbonate. Clorox 2 is an example of a household product containing sodium perborate.

PROCEDURE FOR REMOVING WATER RINGS

- (1) Color safe bleaches are a misnomer since they are not entirely safe for colored fabrics.**
- (2) Do not soak items in a washing machine since metal accelerates the bleach which can affect the fabric. Use a plastic pail instead.**
- (3) Use warm water (100oF).**
- (4) Put in 2 ounces of safety bleach per gallon of water.**
- (5) Soak overnight.**
- (6) Rinse.**
- (7) Neutralize the bleach by putting items in water with vinegar (2 ounces per gallon of water).**
- (8) Rinse again.**

CLEANERS WHO SPECIALIZE IN WATER DAMAGED GARMENTS

Handling water damaged fabrics requires a cleaner who possesses knowledge of fabrics and understands the use of bleaches and wetcleaning procedures. These cleaners must have the latest sophisticated drycleaning, wetcleaning and finishing equipment. It is also required that they have access to perchlorethylene solvent which is the most effective solvent for destroying mildew spores. The following local cleaners are recommended.

- (1) Radiant Leather Care-Riviera Beach, Florida-866-783-3322**
- (2) Airoso Cleaners-St. Lucie West, Florida-336-5112**
- (3) Corman's Drycleaners-Stuart & Palm City, Florida-772-283-4678**
- (4) Quality Drycleaners-Stuart, Florida-772-286-3919**