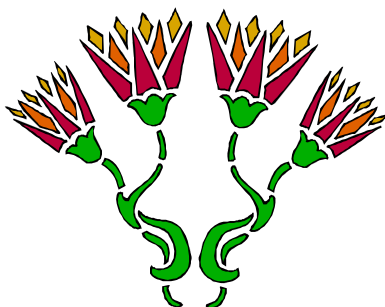


**ARCHIVAL PROCESSING MANUAL FOR STUDENT
ASSISTANTS AND INTERNS**



**TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
RARE BOOK, MANUSCRIPT, AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY
DUKE UNIVERSITY**

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ARCHIVAL PROCESSING: A Guide For Student Assistants and Interns

This manual will guide you through the basics of archival processing at the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke. To orient you to the larger picture, the manual begins with a brief overview of accessioning – the moment at which we receive new materials, but the bulk of it describes the steps and procedures needed to process archival materials and make them accessible to researchers and students.

The manual will be supplemented by other documentation including an encoding manual, a style guide for creating finding aids, a glossary, and other appendices and instruction sheets; but much of what you will learn will also come from “on-the-job” training.

ACCESSIONING

Accessioning is a process whereby the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library (RBMSCL) gains initial control over a newly acquired, donated, or "found" collection. A new collection is usually called an *accession* until it is processed and described at a designated level of detail. The Collection Development Team takes care of *legal control* (making sure donor contracts are signed, for example); Technical Services (TS; the department you work for) and Collection Development take care of *intellectual control* (describing the accessions through catalog records and box lists), and *physical control* (rehousing, labeling, storing, and performing emergency conservation work). Each of these responsibilities is also part of the full processing described in this manual, but accessioning requires fewer steps and resources.

As soon as it arrives in the RBMSCL, Collection Development assigns each accession, whether it is a brand-new collection or an addition to a collection we already hold, a unique *accession number* made up of the year and a sequential number: "2004-0017," or in a shortened form often used, "04-0017."

Upon the arrival of a new collection, the Collection Development staff also immediately create a *Collection Control File* (CCF), where all the paperwork on a collection is kept: this may include correspondence with the donor; contracts and deeds of gift; dealers' descriptions; container lists; information on restrictions, information about later additions, etc. After accessioning is completed, the CCF is kept in a file cabinet near the stacks stairs closest to the Rare Book Room. The CCF is used often – and you may use it, too – to access all the original documentation on the acquisition and subsequent treatment of a collection.

One important document you may also use is the *accession record*, where you can find a great deal of information on a new collection, including its accession number, preservation concerns, and restrictions. This record is created in our RBMSCL database and can also be printed out. The online catalog record is also an important source of information, including the official title of the collection.

PROCESSING

Several times a year, working in collaboration with staff from other departments, the Technical Services Department staff selects a number of unprocessed archival collections that have been designated as high priority and assigns staff to process them. A supervising archivist organizes the processing project, submitting a processing proposal that outlines all the information needed for the project – including the types of formats and the quantity of each; the date range of the materials; significant preservation needs; the staff time needed; supplies to be ordered; and the proposed intellectual and physical arrangement of the collection, including the backbone of the collection – the series structure.

ESTABLISHING INTELLECTUAL CONTROL

A series may be defined as "units of documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, have a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipts, or use" (from "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," by Frank B. Evans and others, *American Archivist* 37 (July 1974): 415-431).

Following the principle of *original order*, archivists work carefully to preserve or at the very least record the original structure of records, documents, and other materials, just as an archaeologist is careful not to disturb the layers of soil and artifacts before their original condition and location is recorded. Sometimes, however, archivists must impose their own order on materials when the original order either has been so disrupted that it cannot easily be reconstructed or is so complex it cannot be easily used by researchers.

Establishing a series structure involves the intellectual ordering or arranging of material in a collection. The supervising archivist who organizes the processing project usually sets the series structure in a processing proposal. Collections are most frequently divided into series according to their physical type or format:

- Correspondence (letters, postcards, telegrams, notes, memoranda, cards with substantive notes)
- Diaries (or journals)
- Legal Papers (deeds, wills, briefs, land plats, etc.)
- Financial Papers (bills, receipts, promissory notes, ledgers, account books, etc.)
- Writings and Speeches (addresses, sermons, manuscript drafts, essays, etc.)
- Printed Material (periodicals, books, pamphlets, flyers, programs, playbills, etc.)
- Photographic Material (including photograph albums, slides, and negatives)
- Audiovisual Material (audio tapes, cassettes, videos, films, etc.)
- Genealogical Material (biographies, family histories, etc.)
- Clippings (newspaper or magazine articles, illustrations, or other cut-outs)
- Advertisements (proofs, clippings, concept sketches)

Series are not limited to these categories but may be expanded to include other types of material that occur in a collection. While it is not considered a true series, an oversize material grouping following the main collection series is very common.

Series can be organized alphabetically, chronologically, numerically, or by functions within an organization, to name the most common possibilities. Within large or complex series, subseries are frequently used to further organize the material for ease of access. For example, an author's Correspondence Series can be subdivided into Family Correspondence and Literary Correspondence.

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

For the most part, the physical arrangement of a collection follows its intellectual order; the amount of physical rearrangement necessary also is affected by the intellectual order. The physical arrangement of archival material can become quite intensive, particularly if you must impose order on very disorganized material. One function of the processing proposal is to lay out the level of processing that each series will receive. The levels of processing are:

1. Collection level – uncommon
2. Series level – series or subseries groupings can be re-arranged
3. Folder level – most commonly used; file-level work within series
4. Item level – items within folders are re-arranged. Used frequently for correspondence series

Once a processing proposal has been discussed and approved, the mechanics of arrangement can begin. Below are general guidelines for the physical arrangement of archival material into boxes and folders, followed by more detailed directions for specific types of materials.

General Procedures

The following basic preservation measures usually are followed during routine processing, although specific tasks vary according to the level of processing a collection or a series receives:

- 1) Removing rusty fasteners, or dangerous fasteners (pins), and replacing them with stainless steel clips.
- 2) Unfolding materials and placing them in appropriately sized folders.
- 3) Using acid-free and lignin-free folders and boxes for storing material.
- 4) Providing best housing for non-manuscript materials (photographs, videos, etc.).
- 5) Housing printed materials in proper enclosures.
- 6) Taking notes on specific preservation problems not addressed by above general procedures.

Folder-Level Processing

Materials should be housed in acid-free, lignin-free folders and boxes, usually legal-size unless the entire collection is letter-size or smaller. Oversize materials may be items separated from collections or may form individual collections. They are housed in large folders that are stored flat either in boxes or in oversize cabinets for the largest items (usually over 24"x30"). For guidelines on how to folder or house visual materials or other unusual formats, consult with your supervisor.

Filling the Folders

Letter and legal size folders have two creases that expand the folder's capacity and provide a flat area to keep the paper from wrinkling or bending. If the folder is going to be filled to the maximum, it should not bow at all, but lay flat with the thickness of the material equaling the thickness of the folder expanded to the second crease. For less material use the first crease, and for just a few items do not crease the folder at all. To ensure a rigid and secure bend of the folder, check the thickness of the material in the folder first, then remove the material to crease the fold to the desired thickness.

Oversize folders do not have an expandable crease since fewer items are placed in one folder. The size of the material increases the weight and awkwardness of the folder, so do not overfill the folders. Use the fewest sizes of oversize folders possible, while taking care that like sizes of items are housed together. If small items are housed with very large items, they can be damaged or easily misplaced. Do not let items hang out from the edges of a too-small folder. The supervising archivist will work with you in the beginning to show you the various sizes of folders that will be needed for each project, and how they will be stored.

Labeling Folders

The information on the folder provides the only reference to the material within it, therefore *consistency and accuracy are critical when transposing information from original folder titles, or when supplying titles for materials that are unlabeled*. Check your work frequently. Only pencil and/or stamps should be used to label folders – *never use pens!* Rubber stamps and inkpads are kept in the processing room and are routinely used for stamping large groups of folders with collection and series or subseries titles. Where the labeling information goes on the folder depends on the size of the folder; below are the standard practices for our most common sizes.

Labeling Letter- and Legal-Size Folders

Follow the model below (and peek in processed boxes for examples!):

Collection Title	Series Title Subseries Title (if needed)	Folder Title (includes dates)
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Document1
7/27/2005

Print neatly, and do not write too close to the edges or margins of the folder.

Multiple folders that need to be kept in a sequence should be marked “1 of 4,” “2 of 4,” “3 of 4,” and “4 of 4.” In the finding aid, the common title for all the folders in the group will be followed by the note, “4 folders.” Some institutions number *all* folders, but we do not follow this practice.

Labeling Oversize Folders

- 1) The top line, "Collection Title," names the title of the collection to which the item belongs;
- 2) The second line of information usually specifies the series title;
- 3) The third line names the items in the folder such as maps, certificates, diplomas, posters, etc. In some cases an item count is included;
- 4) The fourth line indicates the location of the folder: either a box number (Oversize Box 8) or map cabinet and drawer number (OC:II:5 – Oversize Cabinet number 2, drawer 5).

All oversize folders should be labeled in the lower left hand corner *on the side with the fold*, as follows:

Collection title
Series title
Folder title, list of items, or type of material
Item count
Location

Changing Titles on Folders Already Processed

When finding aids are converted from legacy formats to our current encoded versions, the series and subseries names may also be changed. In that case, use the following guidelines for re-labeling folders:

- If the folder series or subseries title is still recognizable, don't re-label.
- If the title is no longer recognizable, add an empty folder with the new name at the beginning of each series/subseries and also at the beginning of each box, if the series/subseries extend through multiple boxes.

Boxes and Cabinets

The standard types of boxes used in Technical Services include full and half upright boxes (letter and legal size, grey or blue in color), and flat boxes (tan or grey). Due to a change in Technical Services procedures, almost all collections processed after August 2004 will be housed in legal-size boxes and folders. Older collections may come to you in a variety of box sizes. Other formats may get their own specialized containers, described further below in the manual.

Numbering boxes

Boxes are commonly numbered sequentially, but in large or complex collections for which we expect additional accessions, series are often numbered with their own alpha-numeric internal sequence. For example, a correspondence series might be numbered COR1, COR2, etc., while the writings might be numbered W1, W2, W3, etc.

Filling upright boxes

An upright letter or legal Hollinger box can hold roughly 8-10 fully expanded folders, but if folders are thinner, a box can hold many more. Always fill the boxes so that the material won't slide around and so that folders won't slump. To determine if a box is full, try to remove a folder. If it offers very little resistance, you may be able to add a folder(s). Once it offers a little resistance, the box is just right. If the box sides are bowing or bulging out or if it is difficult to remove any of the folders, the box is too full.

You should use legal size folders for each box, even if there is mostly letter-size material. If there is any legal-size material, the entire collection will be housed in legal-size boxes and folders. If a collection is known beyond a doubt to have all letter-size items, then the entire collection can be housed in letter-size containers and folders.

Oversize boxes

Oversize archival material that forms part of a collection can include posters, large flyers, oversize periodicals, blueprints, and maps. To house these items, we use boxes of varying sizes (your supervisor will show you where they are kept). Choose the size that best fits the oversize folders snugly so they can't slide around. They usually are stored with the rest of the collection boxes.

Oversize cabinets

Material for the Oversize Cabinets (OC) should go in drawers wherever there is sufficient room to store the folder easily, without undue force or without putting undue weight on fragile items already in the drawer. The supervising archivist will assist you in this.

Labeling Boxes and Oversize Folders

After the materials are processed and a container list (an inventory of the box or folder contents) is completed, each box is furnished with self-stick labels with our library's name, the collection title (with dates), and the box number. For collections curated by RBMSCL centers (for example, the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture), the label includes the name of the center. Occasionally a brief note on the contents of the boxes is added to the label. The staff produces box labels using a standard Special Collections Microsoft Word template called "BOXLAB97." Instructions for producing labels are attached to this document.

Location for labels on boxes

**Full letter and legal Hollinger boxes get one label on the short side.

**Oversize (flat) boxes and the larger record storage containers (the size of “banker boxes”) get two labels: one on the short side, one on the long side.

Boxes also get barcodes if they are sent off-site: another staff member takes care of this at the time the boxes are moved.

Oversize box labels

There is a Microsoft Word template to produce smaller labels. It is called “smallboxlabels” and should be on your terminal, along with the other box label template.

Oversize cabinet labels

The oversize cabinets are already labeled. They read: OC:II:4, which means Oversize Cabinet number two, drawer four. These cabinets are in the stacks – the supervising archivist will show you their locations.

“Attention” labels

Some boxes will get a sticker on each box that says, "Needs further processing attention before use," although at full processing these should be very rare as most reformatting is taken care of during processing. Such boxes may contain large numbers of clippings that need to be photocopied, or original audiovisual formats that need use copies made before the contents can be made available. Other stickers may point to the presence of photographic material, in which case the reference staff knows to provide the researcher with a pair of cotton gloves. The stickers are pre-printed in sheets, and are usually available at the workstation. The archivist will guide you on whether or not a collection will get these stickers and will show you where to get them or produce them.

Processing Tip: Temporary Labeling of Boxes

Remember to keep boxes and folders labeled as you re-house and process material. Containers should always be marked with Post-it Notes showing the following information:

- ◆ collection title
- ◆ accession number (if needed)
- ◆ box number and total number of boxes ("Box 2 of 8")

Weeding

The supervising archivist will probably ask you to do some routine weeding of material in the collection that does not have permanent research value. This might include:

- ☆ Routine personal, financial, and medical records
- ☆ Duplicates that do not contain marginal notes or other added information (one copy is retained)
- ☆ Memorabilia
- ☆ Large groups of routine or repetitive form letters or requests
- ☆ Anniversary or birthday congratulations
- ☆ Large groups of routine invitations
- ☆ Student grades (these are usually shredded or returned to the donor)
- ☆ Expressions of sympathy upon deaths
- ☆ Large groups of postcards with no message
- ☆ Individual income tax returns

Your supervisor will review these with you before each project. Once weeded, the supervising archivist will decide on disposition. Items can be discarded, shredded, separated into some other RBMSCL collection (postcards), or returned to the donor. Frequently the donor will stipulate some procedure as to the disposition of unwanted items.

Separating Printed Materials

Books and runs of serial publications that come with a collection of personal or organizational papers are usually separated from the collection, and are either catalogued individually for the RBMSCL rare materials stacks or for Perkins Library, or they are de-accessioned. We do keep other printed materials with the collection: these might include single issues of journals or periodicals; pamphlets; reprints; photocopies of articles; most maps; posters; and sheet music. There are instances when these might be separated, but your supervisor will review these printed materials (including books) with you on a case-by-case basis for each processing project.

Additions and Interfiling

Oftentimes, one collection will have many accessions. For example, Mr. Jerry Atrick may donate his correspondence (dating from 1901-1992) to the Library in 1992, his diaries (dated 1962-1978) in 1994, and some more correspondence (1992-1995) and his postcard collection (undated, mostly) in 1995. All of these are separate accessions, each with its own accession number, but together they will be considered as part of one collection whose title is the "Jerry Atrick Papers, 1901-1995 and undated."

Some processing projects involve adding or interfiling any recent accessions to the already-processed main collection. At times, an accession that is an addition to a collection and

is very small in size won't need to be rehoused; it will be simply *interfiled* with the original collection. The supervising archivist will provide instructions on how to carry this out. Larger additions, instead of being interfiled, may be re-housed, then shelved adjacent to the processed collection if space permits.

Restrictions

Restrictions on use can be imposed by the donor, by the library, or by type of format. Parts of collections that are sometimes closed to patron use by donor request include correspondence series, organizational records, and diaries and journals. Restrictions generally remain in place anywhere from 15 to 75 years, or for the lifetime of the donor. Other restrictions are imposed by the library and are often concerned with protecting the privacy of third parties represented in the collection; these include files related to tenure cases, personnel information, and sexual identity information. Certain types of medical records and student grades are closed by federal law and may be shredded. All original copies of media formats such as sound recordings, videotapes, and films will be closed to access until a use copy is made.

The supervising archivist will inform you about any known or anticipated restrictions before you start processing. He or she also will go over these categories with you before you begin processing and aid you in identifying sensitive or closed material. When in doubt, always bring the items in question to the supervising archivist's attention. The supervising archivist will also train you on how to note restrictions on folders, boxes, and in the finding aid. Restricted or closed boxes are identified as such in red ink. Closed folders are also stamped. Certain use restrictions also require a label on the box indicating that further processing is needed.

It is *very* important to label restricted or closed collections clearly and consistently. It is also essential that any sensitive information you come across while you are working on any collection not be revealed to anyone outside the RBMSCL. To do so would violate the trust we have established with our donors and possibly violate the privacy of third parties.

Potential Problems

Be alert for the following potential problems and notify the supervising archivist:

1. Missing or incomplete series, significant gaps in dates, missing items or folders
2. Many duplicates or reprints
3. Obsolete or aged media or formats (visual, audiovisual, electronic)
4. Other preservation needs (mold, acidic paper, faded ink, fragile paper, damaged or fading visual materials, deformed or damaged film or magnetic tape, odd or strong smells)

Recording Statistics

During processing, we gather certain statistics on the numbers of items processed at designated levels of processing (item, folder, or series level), the number of photocopies made,

and number of items sleeved in Mylar. Make sure to use the statistics sheet in the processing station to record this data, usually on a monthly basis, depending on the collection.

IDENTIFYING A PRESERVATION PROBLEM

The following information provides definitions for preservation problems often found in archival collections. If these conditions are found, notify the supervising archivist as soon as possible.

Acid Migration

The transfer of acid from a material containing acid to one containing less or no acid. This may occur either when the two materials are in contact with each other, or by vapor transfer from one material to nearby materials not actually in contact with it. Boards, endpapers, and protective tissues, photographs, as well as the paper covers of books and pamphlets, may contain acid and transfer it to otherwise low acid or acid-free paper of the text. Also called "acid transfer."

Brittle Material

Varying degrees of fragility, from crumbling at the touch to minimal flexibility. Often seen in newspapers and paper produced from 1870s-1980s, as well as cardboard-mounted photographs.

Cover/spine detached

For printed materials (books or other volumes) with covers or spines that are damaged or loose.

Deteriorating film or photographic materials

Notify supervising archivist immediately if any oozing, bubbling, or strong odors are noticed. This may indicate the presence of toxic substances or gases. Other relatively less urgent problems afflicting visual materials may include warping, flaking, chipping, cracking, or fading.

Frayed edges

Worn edges of the item, tattered.

Inappropriate repairs

When an item has had some type of repair that is now causing damage to the item, or the repair is not holding together.

Inappropriate storage

When an item is too large for the container, or folded, or a volume is stored on its fore edge, or the container is too large for the item.

Mildew

A growth caused by microorganisms, whose spores become molds in moist, warm environments. They derive their food from the substance on which they form, e.g., the materials of a book. During their growth they produce citric, gluconic, oxalic, or other organic acids that can damage paper, leather, cloth, etc. They also at times produce color bodies, leading to staining that is

difficult to remove. Mildew can be inactive or active. Active mildew has a distinct smell, whereas inactive mildew may or may not. It may look like tiny black dots; when inactive, it is powdery and dry and may resemble ordinary dust but usually much darker. Mildew may be accompanied by tell-tale water stains or other evidence of moisture.

Mold

A multi-cellular, microscopic vegetable plant which forms cobweb-like masses of branching threads from the surface of which tiny fertile threads project into the air bearing the part of the plant from which spores develop. Mold may be of brilliant colors or black and white, depending on the type. Molds can develop on leather, cloth, or paper, especially in the presence of relatively high heat and relative humidity. See also mildew.

Strong smell from film or photographs

Notify supervising archivist immediately if you notice any strong smells emanating from boxes with film or photographic materials. In fact, any strong smells, no matter what the format, should be investigated: they can indicate toxic substances harmful not only to archival material but also to humans!

Tape on item

Scotch tape, masking tape, book tape, duct tape, any kind of tape on the item.

Insects

Be alert to the presence of pests such as silverfish, cockroaches, worms, and other insects; they can damage archival materials either by eating or fouling them. If found, notify your supervisor immediately.

PRESERVATION AT THE BENCH

You will be trained to perform certain basic preservation tasks that will increase the longevity of the archival material you are working with, and thus ensure its presence for researchers many years into the future. These procedures can include:

- ☆ photocopying newspaper clippings and fragile or damaged materials;
- ☆ unfolding and flattening documents;
- ☆ creating use copies of audio cassettes;
- ☆ interleaving pages of scrapbooks with buffered paper;
- ☆ transferring certain items in more appropriate housing.

A Note About Mylar

Mylar is an inert, clear, stiff material that is used to enclose fragile, damaged, or very thin paper. It is also used for certain photographic material. It is very expensive, thus it is used only when necessary. The archivist supervising the project will train you on how to identify items that need this type of enclosure.

VISUAL MATERIALS **(PHOTOGRAPHS, SLIDES, NEGATIVES, MOVING IMAGES)**



Visual materials in archival holdings offer unique documentary information and at the same time pose problems in their organization and care. The term “visual materials” as used here refers to moving or still images recorded by a camera. These include photographic prints, negatives, slides, motion pictures, videotapes, microforms, and even x-rays. Because of the wide variety of visual materials that appear in the RBMSCL holdings, the following procedures are presented as guidelines and not as hard-and-fast rules. In addition, Technical Services employs a variety of levels of processing, beginning with accessioning and progressing to full processing at the item level.

Visual materials often need expensive conservation and special storage techniques and pose complex bibliographic problems. Although visual materials come in a wide variety of sizes and formats, we stock only basic conservation supplies such as non-buffered sheets of paper and polyethylene photograph and negative sleeves. However the processing archivist will order any other supplies needed to provide optimal protection for visual materials in a particular collection.

Any visual materials exhibiting signs of deterioration or damage (bubbling, cracks, odors, or stains) should receive *immediate* attention. If the film is nitrate-based, it may be combustible and should be considered a safety hazard (see the section in this Manual on nitrate film safety and handling). Notify your supervisor.

TYPES OF MATERIALS

The following guidelines only offer a basic overview of handling and storage. As part of your on-the-job training, you will learn how to handle the visual materials you may encounter in the particular collection you are working on.

Photographic prints

Photographs are usually grouped together to form a single series. When photographic prints are scattered throughout a collection, such as clipped to correspondence, it is up to the supervising archivist to decide whether to maintain the original order or consolidate photographs into a single series based on consideration of safe storage and efficient description and access.

Photographs are extremely delicate and any damage is irreversible. Caution should be used to protect the surface of the image from being scratched. *Always wear clean cotton or*

polyester gloves when arranging photographs. Be careful not to pack upright files too tightly or too loosely, or flat files too heavily. It is generally safer to store photographs that are the same size together if possible.

Negatives

Photographs and negatives should always be arranged separately within a collection even if they represent the same image or set of images. Extreme care should be taken with the handling and storage of negatives since they are far more delicate than most prints and because they are the foundation of an archival image. *As with photographic prints, clean cotton gloves should be worn when handling negatives and special care should be taken to handle negatives by their edges only.*

When processing negatives it is important to look for cellulose nitrate film. Produced between 1889 and 1951 in both sheet and roll formats, nitrate film is inherently unstable and will ultimately self-destruct. Gaseous by-products of deteriorating nitrate film will also damage other photographic materials and paper-based records stored in the same vicinity. If you are processing negatives or films made during this time period (whether they appear to be deteriorating or not), notify your supervisor if he or she is unaware of their presence in the collection. If you notice any strong smells or marked deterioration (bubbling, oozing, shrinking), notify your supervisor *immediately*.

Slides

Although slides (a.k.a. transparencies) provide a positive photographic image, their physical properties are more similar to negatives and therefore they should be arranged and handled accordingly. Film-based transparencies should ideally be stored in polyethylene envelope sheets (either in files or non-vinyl notebooks), but if they have a cardboard casing, can be safely stored in a slide box or tray that prevents them from shifting or sliding.

Films, filmstrips, motion pictures

While these materials share the same basic physical properties as negatives and slides, their storage on reels will pose different arrangement problems. Perform a visual (and olfactory) check for the presence of deterioration, damage, and nitrate. Notify your supervisor *immediately* of any strong smells or deterioration. Always use gloves!

Films are usually arranged separately from manuscript materials in a collection. If the films or filmstrips have their own containers evaluate the stability and safety of keeping the materials in their original containers. Films should be stored flat and containers may be stacked on top of one another without harm.

Microfilm, microfiche

Microforms have many of the same physical properties as other film formats and should be treated accordingly.

Videotapes

Videotapes are in most ways unlike most other photographic media. The physical properties and technology of videotapes is more akin to audiotapes. Because of the relatively

new technology and research of video media, the stability and longevity of videotapes is uncertain at this point in time. However, most sources agree that the shelf life of videotape is not more than 20 years.

When processing a collection containing videotapes, the tapes are usually viewed to appraise the content and physical quality of the tape. Archival copies should be made of videotapes that are close to 20 years old or whose images show signs of deterioration such as image/sound distortion or static glitches.

Most videotapes are produced in a cassette format. However, earlier forms of videotapes (up to mid-1970s) were also produced in a reel-to-reel format.

Videotapes should be arranged within their manuscript collection but separated from manuscript materials. They should be kept in their plastic cases and stored in an upright position (either vertical or horizontal). They should never lay flat and never be stored near a magnetic field.

X-rays, etc.

Other forms of photographic media will periodically show up in a collection and will be stored according to guidelines established for similar materials. X-rays, for example, are sheet film and therefore should be treated like negatives.

Handling Photographic Prints, Negatives, and Slides

1. The emulsion is the most fragile part of any photographic medium. *Never* write on it. Avoid scratching it. Scratching can be caused by fingernails, rubber bands, paper clips, and even particulate matter such as dust or dirt; it can occur during processing when photographic materials (prints, slides, or negatives) are removed or inserted into enclosures or when they are sorted and stacked. The emulsion side of a negative has a dull, matte finish as opposed to the base side of the negative, which is glossy or shiny.
2. *Always* wear *clean* cotton gloves when handling photographic materials. Avoid touching the emulsion with your bare fingers: the oils present on the skin damage emulsion and accelerate photographic deterioration. Hold the image by the edges, and use two hands to support prints that are 8"x10" or larger. Gloves are available in the processing room (Room 201).
3. When writing on the backs of photographs or on slide mounts, use only a #2 or softer pencil (#6 soft pencils specifically for this purpose are stocked in the archival supplies closet). Do not bear down. If the print is on resin coated (RC) paper, use a film-marking pen made by Kaiser-Schreiber or Light Impressions. Write only on the backs of prints and as close to the edge of the print as possible so that potential damage from bleed-through or future corrosion will be minimized. If necessary, a white plastic eraser can be used on the back of a print. If the print is stored in an envelope and has important identifying marks or other information on it, remove the print first, then write the

information on the top right edge of the envelope so that a researcher can easily find an item without opening the envelope.

Never write on a negative. Record the information on the top of the clear sleeve, on the paper envelope, and on the file folder.

4. *Do not use "Post-it" type notes* or pressure sensitive tape on prints, slides, or negatives. The adhesive leaves a damaging residue. Do not use adhesives, paper clips, or rubber bands on visual materials. Rubber bands should not be used in the same box with photographic materials.

TREATMENT OF CLIPPINGS AND NEWSPRINT



Clippings

If clippings are determined important enough to be maintained with the collection, then they should be preserved accordingly. Occasionally clippings can be left as they are or sleeved in Mylar to prevent acid migration to other items. However, because most newsprint (esp. 20th-21st century) is extremely acidic, most clippings will need to be transferred to a more stable medium. It is generally Technical Services' policy to make acid-free photocopies of these clippings.

The duplication of clippings is usually done within Technical Services. Decisions on whether to duplicate clippings within the department or send them out are usually based on the quantity and condition of the clippings as well as the time constraints of the supervising archivist.

Both letter- and legal-size acid-free paper are available for use in our processing room copier; letter-size acid-free paper is already loaded in one of the trays and is always available for use.

Originals should be returned to the supervising archivist at the beginning of the project so that he or she may check for quality. Subsequently, student assistants are responsible for checking for the accuracy and quality of the photo duplication, after which the original clippings can be discarded in the recycling bins (unless they are to be returned to the donor). Copies must be of the best quality possible: they must be legible and as close a reproduction of the original item as possible using our copier. The acid-free copies may be interfiled throughout various series or they may form a series unto themselves.

HOW TO HANDLE RARE MATERIALS



REMEMBER:

- * By rare materials we mean books, pamphlets, volumes, music, maps, and broadsides.
- * Handle rare materials as little as possible.
- * Use common sense: if you think what you're about to do might hurt the item, DON'T DO IT!

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- Most books should be stored upright, supported with a bookend. Large books should be stored horizontally. Never store a book with the spine up. Storage with the spine down is acceptable only if absolutely necessary (e.g., because of space).
 - Don't pull on the book's spine when removing it from the shelf.
 - Support an open book. If it's necessary to hold a page open, use a book frog, which looks and feels like a beanbag. Close the book when you're not working on it.
 - The hinges are usually the most fragile part of a book; ask your supervisor to show you where these are.
 - Leather bindings snag easily. Be careful with jewelry and watches!
 - Never use a rare book or pamphlet as a writing surface.
 - Turn pages slowly and carefully. Be especially careful of corners and brittle paper.
 - Don't put miscellaneous items such as cataloging records, flags, etc., in books. If you must put such items in books, place them in the center of the text block, and don't jam them into the gutter margin.
 - Never use paper clips or rubber bands with rare materials.
 - Do not write in rare materials unless specifically assigned by supervisor. Close nearby pens and white-out bottles. Always use pencils when working around rare materials.
 - Never eat or drink around rare materials. Wash your hands after you do eat or drink before returning to work.

Processing Guidelines for Albums and Scrapbooks: What Your Grandmother Never Knew



Photo albums and scrapbooks should be retained in their original state as much as possible. Although archivists often express concern for the preservation of photographic prints glued into highly acidic albums, the prints may in fact show no obvious evidence of deterioration. Always consult with the supervising archivist about albums and scrapbooks.

Photo albums whose leaves appear to be composed of acidic paper, but where there is no indication of deterioration, mold, etc., can be left in their original binding, but interleaved with acid-free tissue paper to promote preservation of the prints.

Where there is mold or obvious physical deterioration of any pages, notify the supervising archivist. If necessary, the album can be dismantled, preserved, and photocopied.

Many photo albums dating from the 1950s to the present are made up of self-adhesive pages with plastic sheet protectors. Others have plastic pages with pockets (jackets). Most of these plastics do not meet preservation specifications for housing photographs. When prints in such albums can be removed easily they should be removed to archivally suitable print sleeves. The rehoused pages from each album should then be kept together in individual folders. The folder should be labeled to indicate that it holds the contents of a photographic album.

Albums often contain loose photographs that appear to have been casually stored inside the album. For preservation, the loose prints can be removed from the album. If there is reason to believe that the prints were part of the original album, it should be so indicated on the housing or the prints and the prints stored in the same container as the albums.

BACK SAFETY: GUIDELINES FOR LIFTING

Our collections are in boxes of varying sizes and weights. Periodically you will be required to lift them and move materials. Narrow aisles have to be navigated and high shelves are used to store boxes. These conditions are favorable for the development of chronic back pain or can cause serious back injury if back safety guidelines aren't followed. The guidelines below will help you maintain the proper position for moving and carrying heavy materials; learn them by heart and incorporate them into your work movements!

- ☆ Warm up with stretching exercises if needed.
- ☆ Maintain good body alignment.
- ☆ Bend your knees when lifting.
- ☆ Maintain a wide base of support by placing your feet apart before lifting.
- ☆ Balance the load.
- ☆ Don't twist. Pivot or move your whole body.
- ☆ Take breaks from lifting when needed.
- ☆ GET HELP from another person whenever you need it.
- ☆ Use appropriate equipment: book trucks, step stools, dollies, etc.
- ☆ When moving full, heavy book trucks, ask for assistance to do the job OR divide the load and take several trips.



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