

Ten Tips for Preserving Family Treasures

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Lincoln County Public Library
Our Community, Our Heritage Festival
November 10, 2018

Presentation and handout: <https://ncpreservation.org/resources/>

Tip 1: Provide a Good Environment

- 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit +/- 5 degrees
- 40-50% relative humidity +/- 5% humidity
- Fluctuations in these conditions should be minimized and controlled
- Keep light to a minimum
- Keep storage areas clean and food-free
- Keep collections at least 6" off the floor
- Reduce pollutants and dust
- Monitor the environment (temp/rH), monitor for pests
- **Avoid** storing treasures in the garage, shed, basement, or attic



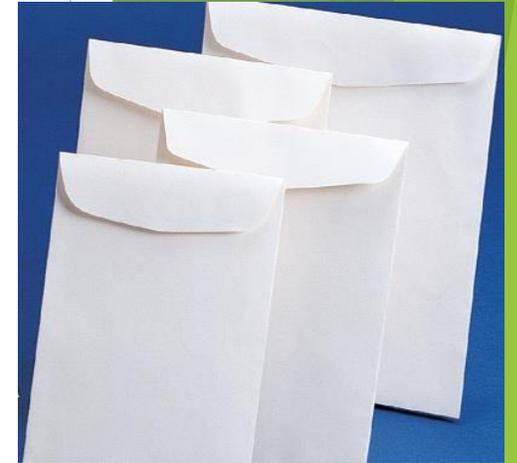
Onset HOB0 MX1101



Blunder trap for monitoring insects

Tip 2: Provide Proper Enclosures

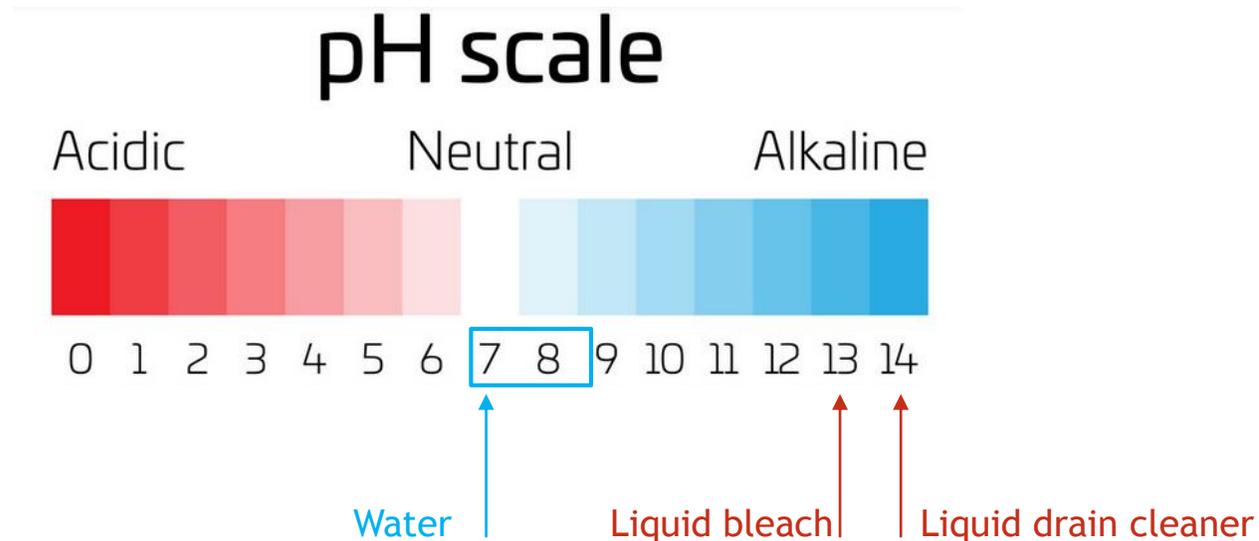
- ▶ An enclosure can be anything that provides protection from the elements: a box, envelope, folder, page protector, etc.
- ▶ The enclosure should have just enough space around the object to allow you to remove and replace it without difficulty.
- ▶ Paper enclosures are a good choice if you need to limit light exposure.
 - ▶ Paper should be buffered with calcium carbonate
 - ▶ Should have a pH between 7.0 and 8.5
 - ▶ Lignin free
- ▶ Plastic enclosures are good for collections that you like to look at often such as photographs.
 - ▶ Polyester (trade names include Mylar and Melinex), Polypropylene, Polyethylene
 - ▶ **NO VINYL.** As it ages and deteriorates it releases harmful gases that speeds deterioration.



All courtesy Hollinger Metal Edge

“Acid Free” and “Archival” are Marketing Ploys—Don’t Fall For it!

- ▶ These terms mean nothing
- ▶ Know the pH of the paper
- ▶ Know the type of plastic
- ▶ Ask the vendor or read the package. If it doesn’t say, don’t buy it.





Avery® Plastic Sleeves, Clear, 12 / Pack (Quantity)

- Letter-size file sleeve sealed on 2 sides to hold loose papers and more
- Transparent sleeves allow quick identification of contents
- Lightweight, PVC-free material is ideal for active projects
- Holds up to 20 sheets
- Clear; 12 / Pack

www.walmart.com

Book, Document, & Paper Storage

Box, Print & Map Folders

Archival quality protection for large format materials such as maps, posters, broadsides, etc.

Oversized folders provide individual artifact protection when stored in boxes, flat files or map cases. Catalog, organize and identify collections during storage or handling. Manufactured from standard 10 pt. or heavyweight 20 pt. tan acid/lignin-free folder stock with a 3% calcium carbonate buffer (pH 8.5). Folders are flush folded and straight cut.

Passes Standard "Photo Activity Test"

Additional Shipping Charges May Apply



www.hollingermetalede.com

Tip 3: Handle With Care

- ▶ Do not eat or drink around collections
- ▶ Wash your hands often
- ▶ Provide clean, flat space to look at collections
- ▶ Use good paper as a book mark, don't leave in for long periods of time
- ▶ 100% Pure Graphite pencil for marking backs of photos
- ▶ Pigma Micron™ Pen if you must use ink
- ▶ Wear gloves when handling metal objects or photographs
 - ▶ Nitrile (powder free) are best
 - ▶ Cotton gloves only if clean and you are very careful

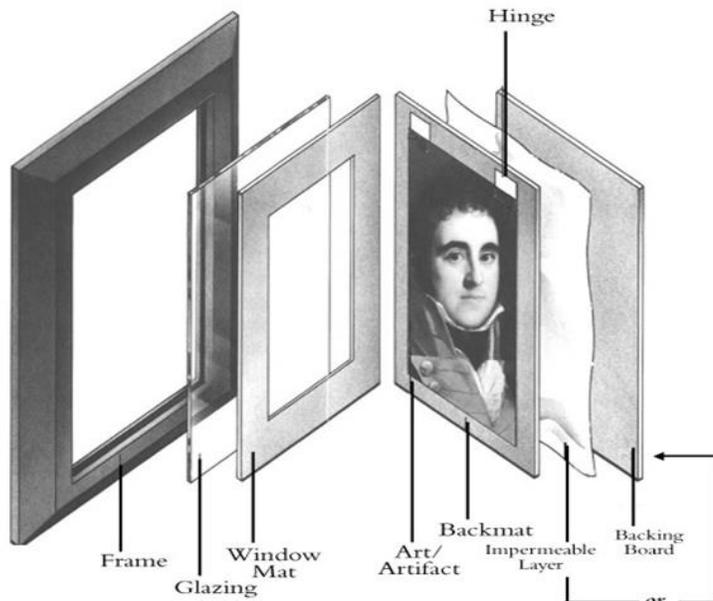


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Tip 4: Display Responsibly

- ▶ **All light is damaging.** Keep away from windows and lighting fixtures.
- ▶ Choose a good framer and ask questions.
- ▶ Consider using facsimiles and keep the original in a good enclosure.
- ▶ For objects and textiles, be sure to have adequate and secure supports.



www.gaylord.com

www.archives.nysed.gov/records/memory/matting-and-framing

Tip 5: Be Prepared for Disasters

- ▶ Have an updated family emergency plan
- ▶ Complete a home inventory
- ▶ Decide what documents/items are important to take with you in an evacuation.
- ▶ Keep vital records and treasured documents/items in one easily-accessed location in case you have to “grab and go.”
- ▶ Consider storing digital copies of vital records on a secure/encrypted cloud storage service

Department of Homeland Security/FEMA

<https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>

- See FEMA [“Protect Critical Documents and Valuables”](#)
- See FEMA [“Document and Insure Your Property”](#)



University Products

Tip 6: Disaster Recovery

- ▶ Reduce humidity
- ▶ Do not turn up the heat if humidity cannot be controlled
- ▶ Air dry damp papers and books with uncoated paper
- ▶ Wet books and documents with coated paper, and some photographs, can be frozen to delay treatment
- ▶ Avoid home remedies like Lysol or bleach for moldy items
- ▶ Consult a professional conservator before undertaking any treatment



All courtesy Duke University Libraries

Tip 7: Preserving Non-paper Collections

- ▶ Scrapbooks and photo albums (various papers, photo processes, attachment methods, adhesives, binding styles, etc.)
 - ▶ Collectible objects (metals, china, bone, plastics, glass, adhesives, etc.)
 - ▶ Textiles (silk, cotton, linen, manufactured, various dyes and surface treatments, plastics, bone, metallic and silk threads, etc.)
 - ▶ Photographs, film (glass, paper, silver, non-silver, plastics, various dyes and pigments, etc.)
 - ▶ Guns, swords, etc. (metals, metal composites, plastics, wood, bone, etc.)
 - ▶ Digital files and photos (deterioration is not visible, multiple formats, etc.)
- ✓ Good environment (cool, dry, stable, clean)
 - ✓ Good housing (and identification/labeling)
 - ✓ Good handling practices (clean hands and surfaces)
 - ✓ Gloves if necessary (especially with metals & photos)
 - ✓ Good display practices (low light, short duration)

Tip 8: Access and Preservation Go Together

- ▶ Preservation does not mean sticking your collections in a box and never looking at them.
- ▶ If items are not used, you won't know what condition they are in or whether your digital files are corrupted.
- ▶ Label enclosures adequately so you know what is inside.
- ▶ Inspect items regularly for mold, insect activity, or other damage.
- ▶ Rotate items on display. Inspect for damage when you take them down.



Courtesy Duke University Libraries



Tip 9: Be an Informed Consumer-Websites

There is a lot of misinformation out there when it comes to preservation and repair instructions. Trusted organizations include:

[American Institute for Conservation](#)

See [“Caring for Your Treasures”](#)

[American Library Association Preservation and Reformatting Section](#)

[Association of Moving Image Archivists](#)

[Conservation Online](#)

[Library of Congress Preservation Directorate](#)

See [“Collections Care”](#)

See [“Low Cost Ways to Preserve Family Archives”](#) (free webinar)

[National Archives and Records Administration](#)

[Northeast Document Conservation Center](#)

See [“Caring for Private and Family Collections”](#)

[Society for American Archivists](#)

Tip 9: Be an Informed Consumer-Vendors

There are several vendors that specialize in conservation-quality supplies. Listing here does not imply endorsement. Again, be an informed consumer.

[Gaylord Brothers](#)

[Hollinger Metal Edge](#)

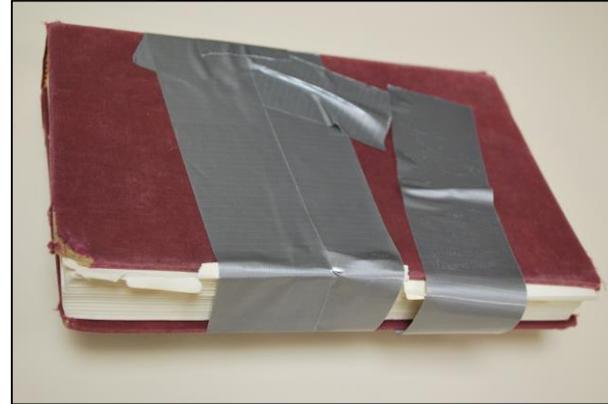
[University Products](#)

[Talas](#)

Tip 10: Leave the Repairs to the Professionals

- ▶ **There is no such thing as good tape.**
- ▶ If your collection is valuable to you sentimentally or monetarily, it is best to consult a professional conservator.
- ▶ A good conservator will give you a range of options from a simple enclosure to full treatment.
- ▶ She should be able to discuss with you, in plain language, what your choices are and how the treatment will affect your material.
- ▶ Do not be afraid to ask questions until you are satisfied that you know what the treatment will be and what outcomes to expect.

See American Institute for Conservation
[“How to Choose a Conservator”](#)



Courtesy Duke University Libraries

Bonus Tip 11: Enjoy and Share!

The best thing you can do with your family treasures is to use them and enjoy them. Share them with your family along with the stories they signify. With planning and care, your heirlooms will be around for generations to come.

Thank you!

www.ncpreservation.org

- ▶ NCPC is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to helping organizations and individuals preserve tangible and intangible heritage in North Carolina.
- ▶ Programs include low-cost workshops and Annual Conference
- ▶ NCPC Members receive discounts on workshop and conference registrations. Membership starts at \$25/year for individuals.
- ▶ Sign up for our NCPC-News google group for news and announcements. Send request to: doylencpc@gmail.com
- ▶ Robert James Preservation Excellence Award is open to any organization in North Carolina.
- ▶ NCPC Preservation Grants
Up to \$2,000 for a preservation project
Deadline: March 15, 2019
Must be an NCPC Institutional Member to apply

Presentation and handout: <https://ncpreservation.org/resources/>