
PRESERVATION BASICS – TO DO

- ✓ Do nothing that cannot be undone.
- ✓ Handle material with clean hands, cotton or plastic gloves.
- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment study.
- ✓ Set priorities.
- ✓ Do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- ✓ Use manila file folders or envelopes; dye-free, and preferably acid-free.
- ✓ Use new, clean, cardboard storage boxes with re-enforced bottoms and well-fitted lids.
- ✓ Use new, polyester plastic “pocket” style page protectors.
- ✓ Use soft-leaded pencils for labels or other identifiers.
- ✓ Consider the temperature and relative humidity conditions in storage areas.
- ✓ Use a clean, low-traffic storage space such as a main-floor linen cupboard.
- ✓ Store photographic negatives apart from prints.
- ✓ Use copies for display or “show and tell.”
- ✓ Carefully plan digitization of originals.
- ✓ Backup, backup, backup digital images; use gold-quality CDs and/or an external hard drive and/or USB thumb drives.
- ✓ Know your limits, and seek professional assistance when required.

PRESERVATION BASICS – TO DO NOT

- ✘ Avoid adhesives (sticky labels, Post-It notes, all tape, and “peel & stick” albums).
 - As the sticky substance deteriorates it will cause staining and may become impossible to remove without causing damage.
 - ✘ Avoid air vents / radiators.
 - Keep items away from hot and cold breezes, including hanging on the wall above a vent or radiator.
 - ✘ Do not store treasures in attics, basements, garages or similar storage units.
 - Extreme temperature and relative humidity fluctuations cause items to deteriorate more quickly; arid and damp conditions cause desiccation and mould growth respectively; while noxious fumes react, generally unfavourably, with the chemicals and compounds inherent in the item(s).
 - ✘ Avoid using elastic bands.
 - As the elastic deteriorates it will tighten and pull, become sticky and adhere to whatever it is in contact with, and then dry completely, leaving stains.
 - ✘ Refrain from using inks and dyed materials (pens, markers, coloured file folders).
 - Inks and dyes will run when damp or wet.
 - ✘ Avoid light (natural and artificial).
 - Many dyes, inks, and photographs are susceptible to fading. Keep them out of all direct light and limit use of photocopiers and scanners.
 - ✘ Avoid using metal fasteners (staples, straight pins, paper clips).
 - Will deteriorate over time. If they get damp they may rust, thereby causing more damage in the form of stains and/or holes.
 - ✘ Avoid using recycled paper for long-term preservation purposes.
 - The fibres of recycled paper are shorter and weaker than new paper; have been bleached to make them whiter; and likely still contain lignin, the naturally-occurring acid in wood pulp which turns brown as it deteriorates.
 - ✘ Avoid using digital media as your only format for preservation.
 - A digital record is very susceptible to destruction; backup, backup, and backup again, and then print your most precious images, documents, etc..
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