Preserving Your Family Treasures

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Perspective on Your Collections

48 million artifacts held in public trust by more than 30,000 institutions in the US
Perspective on Your Collections

- 4.7 million works of art
- 152 million photographs
- 189 million natural science specimens
- 270 million rare books and scrapbooks
Perspective on Your Collections

48 million artifacts held in public trust by more than 30,000 institutions in the US

Many of these collections are considered “at risk and require immediate attention and care”
Protecting Your Family Papers

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”
Temperature accelerates chemical reactions

Deterioration is the result of chemical reactions

For every 18°F (10°C) increase in temperature, there is a doubling of the rate of deterioration
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Chemical reactions require a catalyst

High relative humidity provides water molecules needed for many degradation reactions

Fluctuations in relative humidity cause dimensional changes
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Chemical reactions are fueled by energy.

Light is energy.

Ultraviolet light offers high energy and most damaging.
Protecting Your Family Treasures

All kinds of light, from natural and artificial sources, can cause fading and deterioration.

Light damage = wavelength + intensity + duration

Damage is cumulative
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Store collectibles in cool, dry conditions
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Avoid storing records in attics and basements.
Keep important treasures away from external walls and uninsulated areas.
Use boxes to hold important items and buffer them from the external conditions.
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Protect collections from natural threats

Identify risks and address issues

Prepare for disasters and know how to respond
Protecting Your Family Treasures

Inspect collections and protect them from invaders
Keep collections away from food and water sources.
Make home as inhospitable to invaders as possible.
Organizing & Storing Your Treasures
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Select containers and enclosures made from high quality materials

- Acid-free – pH of 7
- Lignin-free – less than 0.2% of lignin content
- Permanent paper – meets alkaline paper standard
- PAT – passed photo activity test
Organizing & Storing Your Treasures

- Use spacers for under-filled boxes
- Label your boxes and other containers so they can be easily identified
- Use #2 pencil for any annotations or identifying marks
- Avoid fasteners – paper clips, staples, post-it notes, and tapes
Organizing & Storing Your Treasures

- Use inert plastic sleeves made of polypropylene or polyethylene
- Make sure storage materials pass PAT if using for photographs
- Avoid albums with “magnetic” adhesives and polyvinyl sleeves
- Roll oversized posters, maps or textiles onto inert cardboard tubes
Organizing & Storing Your Treasures

- Avoid leather dressing or oils on red rot
- Use bookends to keep books upright and avoid shelving books spine up
Organizing & Storing Your Treasures

• Have boxes made for fragile or valuable books
Machine-Readable Records

- Transfer to other more usable media
- Maintain multiple backup systems and migrate or at least periodically check/open files
- Use file naming conventions or schemes to be sure can identify critical files
Displaying & Sharing Your Treasures
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- Use copies or facsimiles whenever possible
- Choose high-quality mat boards and reputable framers
- Avoid pressure-sensitive tapes and choose reversible methods
Repairing & Conserving Your Treasures
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- Damage can be caused by well-intentioned repairs
- Understand the value of your collections or treasure
- Know what you want to achieve from conservation or repair
Selecting and Working with a Conservator

How to Select a Conservator

This information will help you select a qualified conservator who can provide sound, ethical preservation services for your art objects, artifacts, and other items of historic and cultural value.

What to Know

Before searching for a conservator, learn more about the field. Read through these guides to familiarize yourself with the field of conservation and how they do their work.

1. Learn about the field of conservation. Read through our list of Frequently Asked Questions to learn more about conservation and other conservation-related topics.
2. Learn what it takes to become a conservator. Read through our information on how to Become a Conservator to learn what it takes to get into this field.

What to Ask

When selecting a conservator, seek sufficient information on the individual under consideration. Ask each potential conservator for the following:

1. What is your background?
http://guides.library.yale.edu/preservepersonalcollections

Thank you!