

Why are you preserving your family's documents?
Your reason will help you decide time, space, items to preserve, financial investment, storage location

Preservation (preventing damage): Protecting cultural property by minimizing chemical and physical deterioration and preventing the loss of informational content.

Conservation (physical treatment): The deliberate alteration of the chemical and/or physical aspects of cultural property, aimed primarily at prolonging its existence by stabilization or restoration. Consult a professional conservator.

Four Enemies of Paper: Light, Moisture, Acid, Pests

- Keep out of direct sunlight and artificial light to prevent fading and damage
- Store in a well-ventilated, climate-controlled space (40%-50% relative humidity, 65-71°F)
- Fluctuations in heat and humidity will cause damage and may encourage pest and mold activity
- Provide an acid-free buffer between items

Acid-free Supplies

- 8.5 pH
- lignin-free
- clear, colorless, inert polyester film or transparent polyethylene
- enclosures provide physical support and protection; buffer against environmental conditions; provide a way to organize collection

Proper Care and Handling

- Keep away from food, drink, cleaning products
- Wash hands before handling documents or wear cotton or nitrile gloves
- Use a pencil
- Support the item
- as it is moved by placing a rigid support under the document
- within the storage container to prevent damage
- rest an open book on pillow(s) to protect binding

What to avoid and remove

- Post-it notes (permanent residue)
- rubber bands (dry and stick to paper)
- tape (dry or sticky residue, stains)
- lamination (expensive to remove)
- commercial adhesives (Elmer's glue, rubber cement)