

## Best Practices: Preserve and Protect the Collection

The single most important factor in record preservation is providing adequate storage facilities including the following.

- Protection from extremes of heat, cold, dampness, and dryness.
- Protection from dust, vermin, chemicals, and atmospheric impurities. Always be on the lookout for evidence of insects or rodents and, if necessary, take the proper measures for extermination. If books or scrapbook pages look nibbled on, a pest problem may exist.
- Shielding from excessive light, either sunlight or artificial lighting.
- Climate control, with stable temperatures and humidity, is key to long-term storage.
- Boxes placed on sturdy shelving made of steel with a baked enamel finish or of sealed wood. Raw wood emits gases that are harmful to photographs and papers.
- Avoidance of metal filing cabinets as a storage mechanism for archival records. Materials stored in filing cabinets tend to slump and are subjected to more physical wear and tear, as well as greater infiltration of air-borne pollutants, than those that are appropriately boxed and shelved.
- Acid-free paper stock for filing and storing original records.
- Careful removal of foreign objects, such as rubber bands, paper clips and staples. As these items rust and deteriorate, they harm papers, books and photographs. Papers should be clean and unfolded.
- No use of pressure-sensitive tape on records of enduring value. These types of tape, including as Scotch tape, eventually stain papers or photographs.

The archivist should keep track of when a collection is used and for what purpose. During use, archival items should be kept near the archives, not "borrowed" and taken elsewhere. The archivist is responsible for maintaining a written record of all items removed (such as a photo to be duplicated), including the purpose for its removal and the name of the person responsible, that is kept with the collection.

Sources for Archival Supplies

Hollinger/Metal Edge Inc. <http://www.hollingermetaledge.com/>

University Products <http://www.universityproducts.com/>

Gaylord <https://www.gaylord.com/archivalsupplies.asp>