



CARE & STORAGE OF MANUSCRIPTS MATERIALS

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What is a “manuscript” anyway?

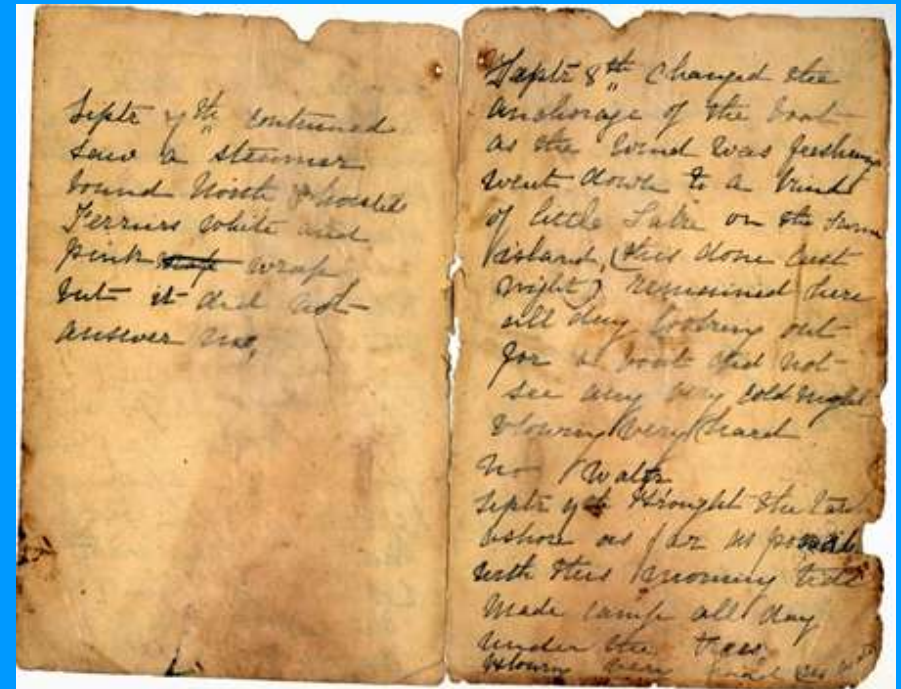
Archivists refer to any unpublished, paper-based record as a “manuscript.”

Manuscripts can be letters, diaries, business or organizational records, ledgers, maps, etc.



What causes paper to degrade?

- The nature of paper!
- Acidity (ph=7) makes paper brittle
- Inks
- Colored or dyed paper
- Chemicals in copied paper
- Glues, tape, other adhesives, staples, paper clips
- Contact with other unstable, acidic materials
- Handling and use



Bad Storage Conditions for Manuscripts & Paper-based Materials

- High temperature
- High humidity
- Big swings in temperature/humidity
- Lots of light, dirt, and/or dust
- Mold or mildew growth
- Near heaters, washers, water pipes, copy machines, food, drinks, or plants
- Exposure to pollutants or chemicals



Good Storage Conditions for Manuscripts & Paper-based Materials

- Stable temp: 66-68 F
- Stable humidity: 35-50% (monitor with hydrothermograph)
- Store on metal shelves on interior walls
- Store away from pipes, windows, drains, heat sources, & chemicals
- DO NOT store materials directly on floor or on top of shelves
- DO NOT double-stack boxes
- Consider these questions: Will the shelves hold the weight of the boxes? Are the shelves earthquake-resistant?



Acid-Free, Lignin-Free Boxes



Letter or legal-sized document boxes



Record cartons (1 cubic foot)



Oversize boxes

Acid-Free, Lignin-Free Folders



Use appropriate-sized folders for documents:

- Letter size
- Legal size
- Oversize

Special Storage Conditions: Oversize Materials

Maps, posters, blueprints, & other oversize manuscript material may not be able to fit into a folder or document box.

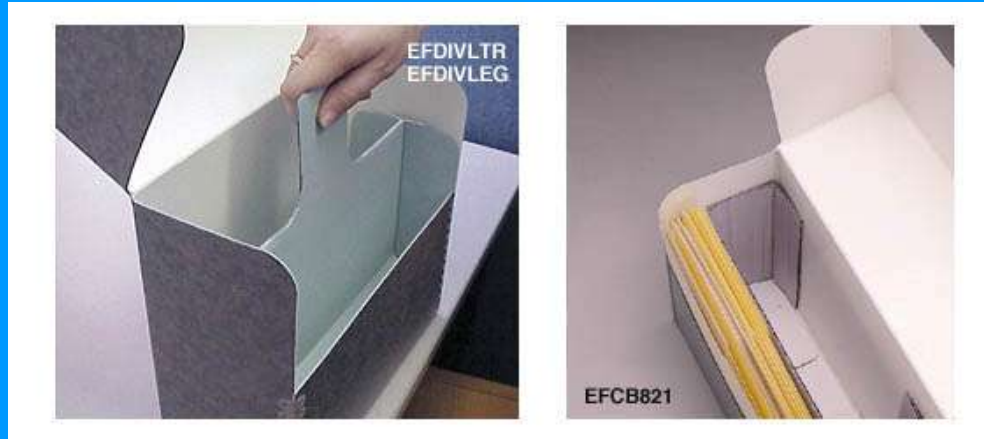


Use flat files to store
oversize documents...

...or use map tubes for rolled
oversize documents.

Do not roll up documents that were originally flat!

General Rules for Storing Manuscripts



- Always fill boxes - or use spacers to fill up extra space (see photo)
 - Do not overflow boxes or folders
- Do not cut out or remove manuscripts from bound volumes or scrapbooks except when documents are in 3-ring binders with no historical value
 - Remove rusted paperclips, staples, or other metal fasteners
 - Store bound volumes flat on side on shelf or in oversize boxes
- Do not cut, fold, or otherwise alter the record to fit inside of the box



Archival Suppliers

Gaylord

<http://www.gaylord.com>

Hollinger Metal Edge

<http://www.hollingermetaledge.com>

University Products

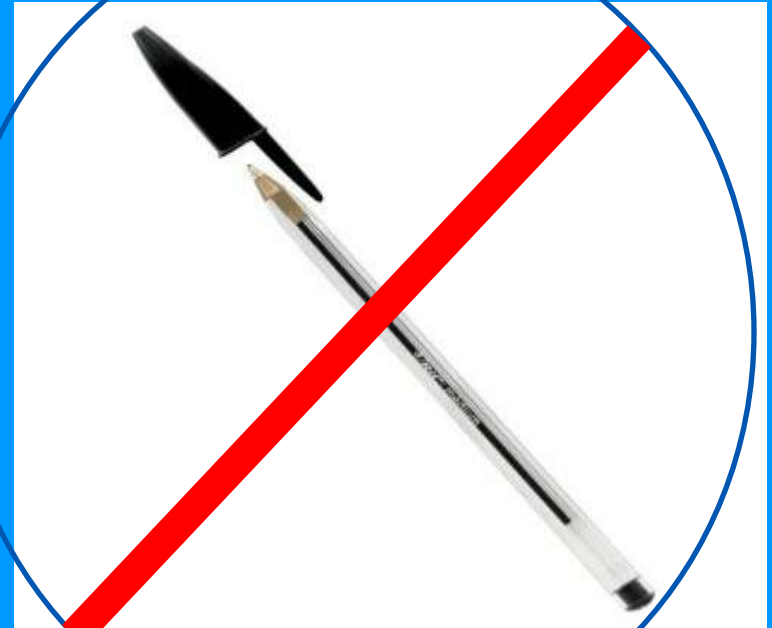
<http://www.universityproducts.com>



Handling Manuscripts: Rules for Staff & Patrons



Require patrons & staff to ONLY use pencil when working with or around archival collections





Handling Manuscripts: Rules for Staff & Patrons



Use book cradles for bound volumes.

Handling Manuscripts: Rules for Staff & Patrons



Limit patron handling of original copies of fragile, damaged, and/or valuable documents. Consider making a duplicate copy for patron use by photocopying, scanning, or microfilming.



Should staff & patrons wear cotton gloves when handling manuscript material?
Generally speaking, no, as the cotton can catch on brittle documents.

Preservation vs. Conservation

Preservation stops degradation of materials from progressing.

Conservation reverses degradation and restores materials to “original” state.

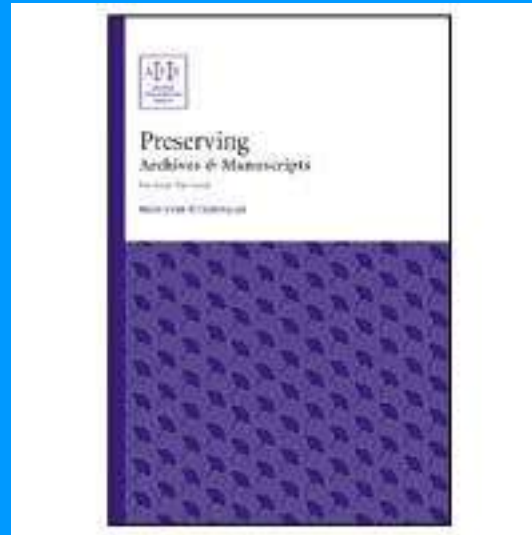
Archivists are preservationists.

Conservation should only be done by trained professional conservators.



Further Reading

Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler. *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts (2nd ed.)*. Society of American Archivists, 2010.





Whom to contact for further information:

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