# Special Collections Research Center

# Processing Manual

SCRC Staff  
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## Supporting documents

* Conversion process for creating MARC records from EAD:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\notes\EAD\_to\_MARC.doc*
* EAD manuals:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Processing\_manual\ead\_manual.doc  
   G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\Archives\_EAD\_Manual.docx*
* EAD style guides:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING*
* This document: *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Processing\_manual\proc\_manual\_combined.doc*

## Record of Changes

31 Jan 2018 – Archives and SCRC merged, new version!  
12 Jun 2018 – “Media Archivist” changed to “media specialist”  
14 Feb 2019 – Added section on changing the Collection ID  
9 May 2019 – Minor updates (typos and page breaks)  
31 Aug 2021 – Changes relating to retirement of AT  
30 Sep 2021 – Added HIPAA, FERPA, and University records (pp. 30-35)



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# File Locations

**Please keep the various directories clean -  
Delete extra copies, backup copies, old versions, as you go!**

## Shared Documents

* Survey Report and Processing Plan worksheet lives here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\SurveyReport.doc* *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Processing\_manual\SurveyReport.doc*
* Media Processing Form lives here:  
   *G:\LIB\ Special Collections\Processing\Forms\media\_processing\_form.docx*
* *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* lives here:   
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\DACS2E-2013.pdf* *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Processing\_manual\DACS2E-2013.pdf*

## SCRC

* Files needed by the SCRC Database live here:  
    *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Database Support Files*
* Local subject headings live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\notes\standard inventory notes*
* XML files live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\xml\_files*
* When you run the batch file, HTML files are output here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\saxon\testdata*
* Print versions of the files are created here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\saxon\print*
* When files are ready to be uploaded, move them here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Digital Projects\EAD\html\_files\_pending*
* Processing tracking spreadsheet is here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\processing\_tracking.xls*
* Box and reel label templates, barcode sheets, and many other useful files/forms, are here:   
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Forms*
* Inventories not yet in EAD (e.g., working copies in Word, etc.) are here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Inventories\aaa\_not\_yet\_converted*
* Inventories converted to EAD are moved here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Inventories\aaa\_converted\_to\_EAD*
* Item-level inventories for cartoons and other collections live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Inventories\Cartoon and Other Item-Level Inventories*
* Lists or inventories created for a special purpose, that are not intended to ever go in EAD (e.g., a list of useful items created for a class on Black Arts Movement, etc.) go here:  
   *G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Inventories\Special Lists****Note: DO NOT put special lists like this on your personal H drive or local C drive. No one will ever find them there!***

## Archives/Pan Am 103

* Collections tracking spreadsheet is here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\Collections\_Tracking.xlsx*
* Local subject headings live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\local\_subjects\_sua\_pa.txt*
* Box label templates are here:   
   *G:\LIB\Archives\ADMINISTRATION\Labels\Archives Box Label Templates*
* Archives and Pan Am XML files live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\xml\_files\_sua* *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\xml\_files\_panam*
* When you run the batch file, HTML files are output here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\testdata\_archives\html* *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\testdata\_panam\html*
* When you have files ready for upload, they go here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\testdata\_archives\uploads* *G:\LIB\Archives\PROCESSING\EAD\testdata\_panam\uploads*
* Pan Am 103 binder cover pages live here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\Pan Am Flight 103\Website\Collection Pages*
* Pan Am 103 box label templates are here:  
   *G:\LIB\Archives\Pan Am Flight 103\Labels*

# Core SCRC Policies and Procedures

Following are the core policies and procedures we all need to follow to ensure things run smoothly, materials are tracked properly, and other people can find things if you get hit by a bus someday.

* NO EATING IS PERMITTED in the processing area. Drinks are OK provided they have a tight-fitting lid and are kept on the floor or on a separate table from collection material.
* Handle and store collection material properly at all times – no teetering stacks of paper, no piles of boxes, no collection material on the floor, etc. Keep collection material clearly separated from non-collection material.
* Collections should not be moved from their permanent location without consulting either the Public Services Librarian or the Lead Archivist. If you do permanently (or long-term-temporarily) relocate all or part of a collection, it is your responsibility to ensure that the database locations are updated.
* Any removal of a box from its permanent location must be done using a call slip, no exceptions; this includes material going to conservation.
* Any removal of an item from its box must be done using a call slip, no exceptions; this includes material going to conservation.
* Nothing should sit in the processing area without being clearly identified with collection and box number (and accession number, if it’s unprocessed material).
* Nothing should go to Hawkins, or into the stacks in Bird without being clearly labeled with collection and box number (and accession number, if it’s unprocessed material).
* Nothing should go to SULF without a MARC record and at least a minimal inventory. All boxes must be clearly labeled with collection and box number (and accession number, if it’s unprocessed material). If a box contains Magnetic media or Film media, it must be identified with “M” or “F” sticker.
* Always cross out obsolete collection names on boxes and folders to avoid confusion.
* For supplies, if you open the last carton or take the last package of anything, please let the Lead Archivist know so more can be ordered if necessary.
* Remember that our space is tight and there are other staff and student employees working in the same areas. Be thoughtful of others, and keep shared workspaces neat at all times.
* Promptly throw away or recycle trash, break down empty boxes and dispose of them, and return extra supplies to the supplies area in the stacks.

# SCRC Workflow

When a new accession arrives in SCRC, it enters into the workflow. New material may be either an addition to an existing collection or a new collection. It may be processed immediately, or not. The steps below outline the proper steps to take.

## New Collection or Addition?

The first step is to determine whether the material constitutes a new collection or an addition to an existing collection. This decision is made by SCRC staff, and depends on a number of factors.

Generally speaking, archival principles dictate that material is added to a person’s Papers or an organization's Records if, and only if, it has the same creator and same provenance as the existing collection. Small amounts of material that have a different provenance may be added if they have the same creator.

Suppose we have an existing collection called the *Mary Smith Papers*, which were donated by Mary Smith, a professor of art and an illustrator of children’s books, now deceased. Consider the following examples:

* Mary Smith’s daughter finds a box of her mother’s correspondence at their family home and donates it.  
   This would be added to the Mary Smith Papers.
* A colleague of Mary Smith’s in the art department donates a box of Mary’s departmental correspondence found in her office after retirement.  
   This would be added to the Mary Smith Papers.
* A friend of Mary Smith’s donates a single original illustration, signed by Mary Smith, “To Joe, best wishes, Mary.”  
   This would be added to the Mary Smith Papers, with proper documentation of provenance.
* A long-time admirer of Mary Smith’s work donates a three letters Mary wrote to her, two original pieces of Mary Smith art, a folder of clippings about Mary Smith, and several books and exhibit catalogs that include Mary Smith’s work.  
   This would not be added to the Mary Smith Papers, but would form a separate collection.
* We purchase from a dealer a set of ten letters written by Mary Smith to various individuals.  
   These could be added to the Mary Smith Papers, but would require additional discussion.

## New Collection

All tasks are done by SCRC staff unless otherwise noted.

1. Update SCRC Database (see **SCRC Database Step-by-Step** for specifics):
   1. Create collection record in SCRC Database. Be sure to set the Repository field appropriately.
   2. Create donor record, if necessary.
   3. Create accession record for new material in SCRC Database and set processed level to "none."
   4. Create a finding aids folder with printout of accession record and any other pertinent information (e.g., narrative description sent with contents, box list provided by donor, etc.)
2. Survey the collection and hold kick-off meeting (if necessary).
3. If the new material includes media, contact Media Archivist. Media Archivist will survey, list, and update PhysMedia as necessary. See **Media Processing** for details.
4. Process to required level:
   1. No processing at this time:
      1. Rehouse into archival containers, making a general note of the types of material in each box.
      2. Label all boxes with collection name, accession number, and "Box X of X"
      3. Place printout of accession record in Box 1 of the new material immediately.
      4. Find place for boxes (consult with Public Services, Manuscripts Processing Librarian) and update SCRC database with location information, including accession number.
      5. Create collection-level EAD finding aid (basic information gleaned from survey, boilerplate language indicating not open for research, no inventory)
   2. Minimal processing:
      1. Rehouse into archival containers, creating complete list of all boxes/folders and/or description of items
      2. Create EAD finding aid with basic inventory.
   3. Fully process: See **Processing Step-by-Step**, including complete inventory and EAD finding aid.
5. Generate MARC record from EAD and send to cataloging. When Cataloging replies with BIBID, update database with collection ID number. For non-Archives collections, update the EAD file (<unitid> element) with the BIBID.
6. Print and file hard copies of finding aid as applicable:
   1. Archives – no hard copies are maintained
   2. Non-Archives – print one copy and file in the finding aids folder.
   3. Pan Am
      1. Print 4 double-sided copies – 3 for the reading room, 1 for the staff area.
      2. If necessary, update the cover sheet for the appropriate section of the finding aid binders to reflect a new collection or that an unprocessed collection is now processed.
      3. Print 4 color copies of the new cover pages, and replace old copies in binders.
7. Update accession record in SCRC database with appropriate processed level.
8. Update collection information in SCRC database as necessary; this includes container summary, location, dates, extent, etc.
9. Barcode boxes following approved procedure and give completed barcode sheets to Lead Archivist for ingest into Voyager.

## Additions/Updates to Collections

All tasks are done by SCRC staff unless otherwise noted.

1. Create accession record for new material in SCRC Database.
2. Print copy of accession record; add it and any other pertinent information (e.g., narrative description sent with contents, box list provided by donor, etc.) to the finding aids folder
3. If the new material includes media, contact Media Archivist. Media Archivist will survey, list, and update PhysMedia as necessary. See **Media Processing** for details.
4. If new material is not going to be processed at this time:
   1. Rehouse into archival containers, making a general note of the types of material in each one.
   2. Label all boxes with collection name, accession number, and "Box X of X"
   3. Place printout of accession record in Box 1 of the new material immediately.
   4. Find place for boxes (consult with Public Services, Manuscripts Processing Librarian)
5. If new material is going to be processed at this time:
   1. Integrate into existing collection, if possible. - OR -
   2. Minimal processing: rehouse into archival containers, numbering new box(es) consecutively after last box in existing collection. - OR -
   3. Fully process.
6. Update EAD finding aid, if applicable.
   1. Add revision item to <revisiondesc> section at top
   2. Add new inventory information as applicable
   3. Update scope and content, subject headings, etc. as applicable
   4. Generate html and put in appropriate folder for upload
7. Update accession record in SCRC database with appropriate processed level.
8. Update collection record in SCRC database as necessary (container summary, location, dates, extent, etc.)
9. If the collection has associated item-level description (for example, the cartoon collections):
   1. Update the associated Excel spreadsheet (G:\LIB\Special Collections\Processing\Inventories\Cartoon and Other Item-Level Inventories)
   2. In the footer of any updated page, put “Last updated [today’s date]”

**NOTE: A few other collections, such as the American Book Company, also have associated Excel files. Check the finding aid for references to these and update if necessary.**

* 1. Save an updated PDF
  2. Put the updated PDF in appropriate folder for upload.

1. Create.mrk record using MarcEdit. Compare to existing Voyager BIB record and notify Cataloging of any changes.
2. Print updated hard copies of finding aid (or of individual pages, if very large) and place in finding aids folder (1 copy)
3. If processing resulted in new boxes added to the collection, barcode new boxes following approved procedure and give completed barcode sheets to Lead Archivist for ingest into Summit. Update container summary in SCRC Database.

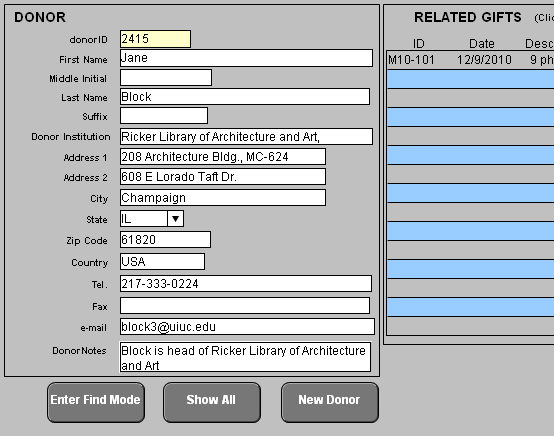
# SCRC Database Step-by-Step

**IMPORTANT NOTE: There is no “undo” in the database. Take your time and be careful!**

## New Donors

Donor information is tracked in the SCRC Database. New donors are created as follows:

1. Go to Donors tab.
2. Click on "New Donor."
3. Donor ID: Automatically populated
4. Donor name: Enter first, middle, last. If the item is a transfer, use donor IDs as follows: Belfer, 2186; Archives, Rare Books, 2187; Archives, 2429; General collections, 2558; Other manuscript collection, 2580; Other university department, 2686; SU Art, 2840.
5. Donor institution: Enter if applicable
6. Donor address: Enter address, city, state (REQUIRED)
7. Donor contact information: Enter as much as known
8. Related gifts: will automatically populate when associated accessions are created



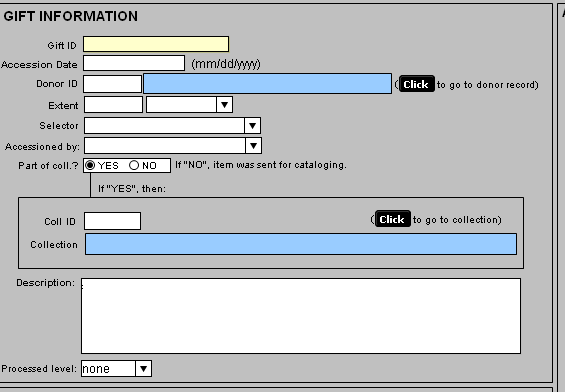
## New Accessions

The first step is to determine whether the material constitutes a new collection or an addition to an existing collection. This decision is made in conjunction with the Lead Archivist; the Curator is consulted if appropriate. IN ALL CASES, if a new accession contains media, contact the Media Specialist to survey the media and verify that PhysMedia has a record for the collection. If not, the Media Specialist will create one with a brief note about media present in the material.

### Additions to Existing Collections

Additions are handled as follows:

1. Gather required information from database:
   1. Go to Donors tab. Find donor name and write down donor number. If the donor is not in the database you will need to add them.
   2. Go to Collections page. Find the collection and write down the collection ID.
   3. Obtain the size and a rough description for the materials.
2. Create accession record for new material in database:
   1. Go to Gift Log page and click on "New Gift" to display a new gift record:



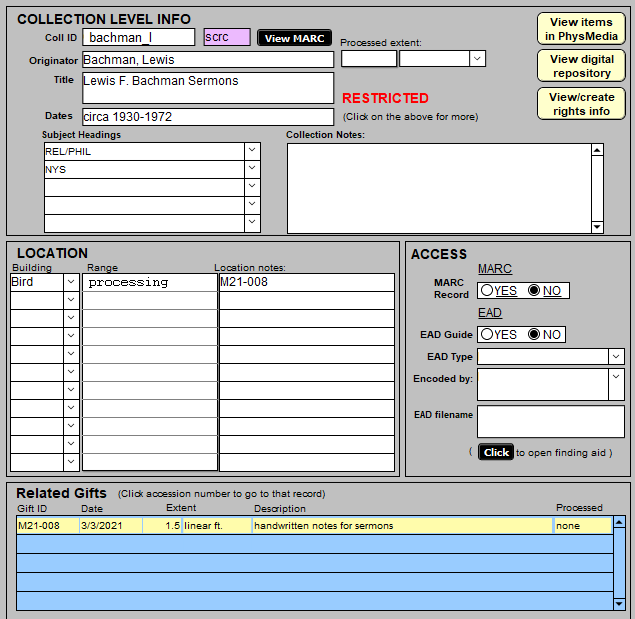
* 1. Gift ID: Should automatically populate
  2. Accession date: Enter today's date in format mm/dd/yyyy, for example “05/27/2011”
  3. Donor ID: Enter ID number of donor, from "Donors" page. Donor name should automatically populate.
  4. Extent: Enter size of gift. Always use one of the unit options from the drop down. Linear feet is preferable but any unit in the drop-down is OK to use.
  5. Selector: Use drop-down to select name of person who authorized acquiring the gift
  6. Accessioned by: Use drop-down to select your name
  7. Part of coll.: Set to "Yes."
  8. Coll. ID: Enter the ID number of the collection. Collection name should automatically populate.
  9. Description: Enter general description of the materials. If a box list was provided with the gift, do not copy the entire box list in here, just note that a box list was provided and is in the finding aids file. ALWAYS MENTION media, if present in the accession. If the accession is a transfer from an SU unit or department, enter the contact information for the individual who arranged the transfer.
  10. Processed level: Set to appropriate option from drop-down.

1. Curator notification: While working on the record, you may see a popup asking whether the curator should be notified about this accession.
   1. If you are still entering data, Choose “Notify Later.”
   2. If you are entering an old accession from years past, choose “No.”
   3. When you are finished entering data, choose “Yes.” In a few moments an email will appear, pre-addressed to the curator(s). Edit the text if necessary and click “Send.” The small box at the bottom of the accession record “Curator notified” will change to “Yes.”
2. Print two copies of accession record and file:
   1. Place one copy in Box 1 of the new material
   2. Place one copy in the finding aids file for the collection
3. If new material is not to be processed immediately, print label(s) for box(es) with collection name, accession number, and “Box X of X”. Contact Public Services to find location for box(es).

### New Collections

Creation of a new collection is handled as follows:

1. Gather required information from database:
   1. Go to Donors page. Find donor name and write down donor number. If the donor is not in the database you will need to add them.
   2. Obtain the size and a rough description for the materials.
2. Create new collection record (see next page for screen cap)
   1. Go to Collections page and from the menu bar across the top choose "Record > New record."
   2. Collection ID: Enter temporary ID made up of last name\_first initial, for example smith\_j [**IMPORTANT**: See **Changing the Collection ID** below for what to do when the ID is finalized.]
   3. Repository: Choose the appropriate repository from the drop-down.
   4. Originator: Enter name of person who created the collection in format last name, first name (Smith, John). If unknown, leave blank.
   5. Title: Enter title in format "[Name of creator] [Papers OR Records]" or "[Name of subject] Collection." (Other forms are possible, but be sure it is DACS compliant. If in doubt, ask.)
   6. Dates: Enter inclusive dates for collection
   7. Subject headings: Select from the drop-down one or more of our local collecting areas
   8. Notes: Enter any additional useful information. For Archives or Pan Am collections, enter the RG number.
   9. Location: Enter "Processing area" (will be updated when it gets a permanent location)
   10. Access: MARC and EAD should be set to "No" and the other three fields remain blank (these will be updated when EAD and MARC records are created)
3. Create accession record for the specific items, following "Additions" process above.



## RestrictIONS

If a collection includes material that is restricted for any reason, that information must be noted in the database on the Collection Record. Restrictions may be either “access restrictions” (restrictions on who can view the materials) or “use restrictions” (restrictions on what researchers can do with the information, for example “No photocopying is permitted”). Restrictions are also used to document MISSING, TRANSFERRED, or CANCELLED collections.

All unprocessed collections must have a restriction note stating "Unprocessed. Not open to researchers."

To create a restriction note:

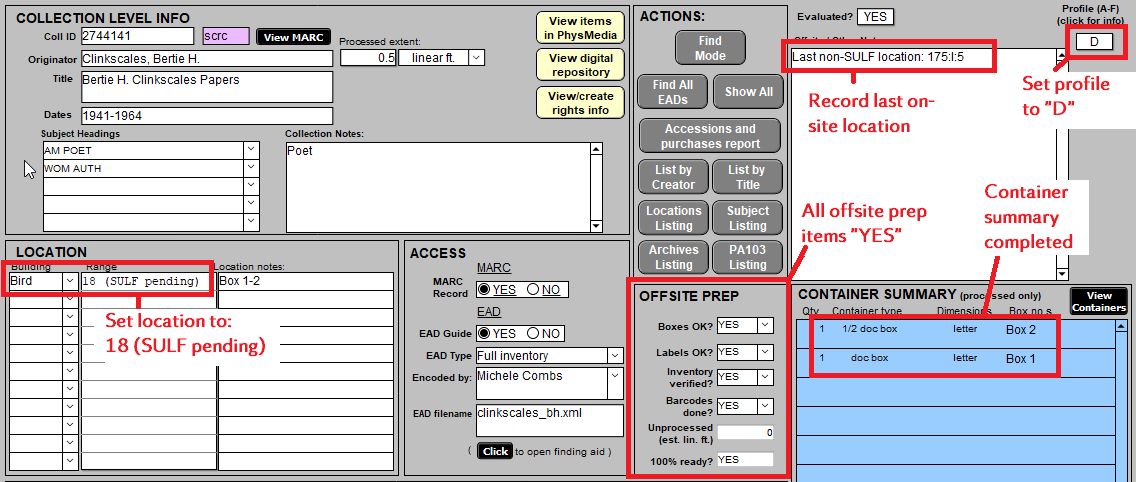
1. Go to the Collections page and note the collection ID.
2. At upper left, under "Layout" choose "Restrictions."
3. Across the top select Records > New Record.
4. Enter the collection ID in the Collection ID field (first column).   
   The collection name should automatically populate.
5. Choose the appropriate option from the drop-down. Options are as follows:  
   RESTRICTED (if the entire collection is closed to researchers)  
   RESTRICTED IN PART (if only a portion of the collections is closed)  
   RESTRICTION EXPIRED/LIFTED (self-explanatory!)  
   CANCELLED (collection has been de-accessioned)  
   MISSING (collection is missing)
6. In the last column, enter the appropriate text for the restriction, including terms and expiration date. For RESTRICTED IN PART, include a statement about what portion is restricted. For CANCELLED, include where the collection was transferred. For RESTRICTION EXPIRED/LIFTED, include the date, the restriction, and by whose authority. For MISSING, include the date and any other helpful information.

Note that unprocessed collections should *always* be flagged as restricted, with the standard text “This collection is unprocessed and is not available for research.”

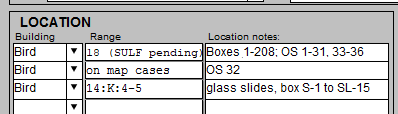
Restriction information must also be included in the EAD finding aid; see **Restricted material** and the *EAD Manual* for details.

## Offsite Prep and Transfer

The database is also used to track which collections are ready to be moved offsite to SULF. The following areas will need to be updated when a collection is sent offsite:



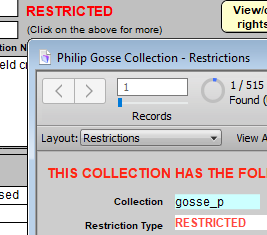
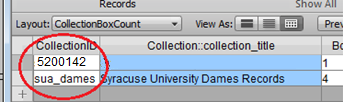
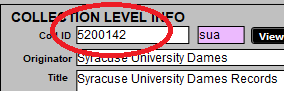
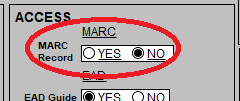
If only a portion of the collection is moving off-site, be sure to note which boxes are in which locations:



Once a collection has been picked up by Facilities, remove the word “pending” so that is just says “SULF”

## Changing the Collection ID

New collection records are created in the main SCRC Database with a temporary ID, as described in **New Collections** above. Once the collection has a MARC record in Voyager, this ID needs to be changed to the BIBID. Because the Collection ID is the key that links the Collection record to (1) purchases, (2) gifts, (3) container summary, (4) restrictions, and (5) PhysMedia, it must be updated there as well.

1. Go to the Collections record for the collection.
2. Update linked purchases:
   1. If the “Related Purchases” area shows any purchases, jot down the purchase ID(s).
   2. One by one, click on each Purchase ID to open the Purchase Log, and change the Collection ID from the temporary one to the new one.
   3. Return to the Collections record.
3. Update linked gifts:
   1. If the “Related Gifts” area shows any purchases, jot down the Gift ID(s).
   2. One by one, click on each Gift ID to open the Gift Log, and edit the accession record to change the Collection ID from the temporary one to the new one.
   3. Return to the Collections record.
4. Update restrictions:
   1. If the Collections record shows a restriction, click on the red text to open it:  
      
   2. Change the Collection ID from the temporary one to the new one.
   3. Close the Restrictions window and return to the Collections record.
5. Update container summary:
   1. If the container summary contains information, click on “View Containers”. For each container listed, change the Collection ID from the temporary one to the new one. (The Collection Title will disappear. Don’t panic.)  
      
   2. Leave the Container Summary window open, but move it out of the way.
   3. Return to the Collections record.
6. Update PhysMedia link:
   1. Click on “View items in PhysMedia.” If PhysMedia opens to the collection record, change the Collection ID from the temporary one to the new one.
   2. Return to the Collections record.
7. Now that all the related records have been changed, you may edit the Collection ID here on the Collections record and change it to the new one:  
   
8. In the “Access” section, change the “MARC Record” radio button to “YES”  
    
9. Verify that all links are re-established:
   1. If applicable, verify that all Purchases re-appear in the appropriate window.
   2. If applicable, verify that all Gifts re-appear in the appropriate window.
   3. If applicable, verify that the Restriction re-appears.
   4. If applicable, in the Container Summary window, verify that the collection title re-appears. Close the Container Summary window.
   5. If applicable, click on “View items in PhysMedia” and verify that it opens correctly.

NOTE: For non-Archives collections, be sure to update the EAD file, in archdesc > did > unitid.

## Large Cataloging Projects

Occasionally, a large number of books may be donated, or may be removed from a manuscript collection for cataloging. In that case, to enable us to track progress on these large chunks of Rare Books material, you will need to create a temporary collection for it.

1. Create a new collection record and give it an ID of [collection]\_bks (e.g. “spock\_bks”)
2. Give it a title of [collection] books [RB] (e.g. “Spock books [RB]”)
3. In the Notes field, enter “Part of cataloging backlog. Will be deleted once they are dealt with.”
4. In the Notes field, enter any other useful information (e.g., “Needs curatorial review”)
5. In the Locations section, enter the location in the stacks where the material is being stored.

If an accession record has already been created by the curators, go to that record and in the “Collection ID” field enter the collection ID created above. If an accession record has not already been created, create one following the steps outlined above, with these specialized changes:

1. For Donor:
   1. If known, enter the appropriate donor ID (if a donor record does not exist, create one following the steps outline in “New Donors” above)
   2. If not known, enter a donor ID of “2580” (Transfer, Other ms collection)
2. Enter the number of items.
3. For the “Selector” field
   1. If the material was removed from a ms collection, enter the name of the person who removed it (usually the processor of the collection)
   2. If the material was a gift, enter the name of the curator who accepted it
4. For “Part of collection” check “No” (because the material is going to cataloging)
5. If the material was removed from a ms collection, in the Description field enter “Removed from [name of ms collection] for cataloging.”

At any time, you can generate a list of these chunks of material awaiting cataloging by going to Gift Log and choosing “Scripts > UncatBacklogList.” This list should be generated and reviewed periodically by the curators and the Lead Archivist, to ensure that completed “chunks” are removed. Be sure to mention this material in the finding aid in the “<separatedmaterial>” section.

# Processing Step-by-Step

According to the Society of American Archivists’ glossary, processing is “the arrangement, description, and housing of archival materials for storage and use by patrons.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Step 1: Survey the collection

In this step, get to know the collection by gathering background information and discovering what exactly it contains. The goal is to find out what types of materials are in the collection, how the creator used it or had it arranged and the context of the materials. These initial surveys are not intended to be exhaustive, but are used to provide a general overview of the types and condition of materials contained in the collection. It should take no more than 20 minutes to survey 1 linear foot of material. The information gathered during your survey will be compiled in your Survey Report and Processing Plan (see **File Locations** at the beginning of this document), and discussed during the kick-off meeting.

### Research

Research the creator:

* Locate biographical information or organization/company histories
* For Archives collections, check the Clipping Files. If the creator is a faculty member, check the Faculty Files. If the creator is an alumna/alumnus, check resources such as the Onondagans and directories.
* For Pan Am 103 collections, check *On Eagles’ Wings*, the On Eagles’ Wings Collection and the Individuals Collection.
* For non-Archives collections, check the donor files.
* Check printed material in the Rare Book collection
* Search relevant databases
* Try general online sources

Research the collection:

* Locate any relevant preliminary and older box listings or finding aids
* Review accession and collection records in the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database).
* Review any notes about past processing or other activities associated with it
* Review information in finding aids folders and donor files (where additional information about accessioning, processing, etc., may be found).
* Review finding aids for related collections in our holdings, particularly for PA103.
* Locate finding aids from other repositories that hold more of the person’s papers

### Survey contents

The purpose of this step is to determine what is in the collection and make brief notes on each box’s contents. Use the Survey Worksheet (see **File Locations** at the beginning of this document) to document what you find.

1. Make sure to locate and identify all accessions (all the stuff to be processed) before you start.
   1. Start with the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database) and make a list of all accessions.
   2. Review the relevant files since not all accessions may have been migrated to the database, making note of any box lists or other descriptions that may help you out
   3. If necessary, ask Access Services staff to do a visual check of shelves at Hawkins or Warehouse.
2. Determine what is in the collection and make brief notes on each box’s contents:
   1. What types of physical material (paper, photographs, books, oversize…)? What types of intellectual material (correspondence, speeches, reports…)?
   2. What is the current arrangement, if any? Does this arrangement make sense? How do the different parts relate to each other? Does the current arrangement reflect how the creator maintained their files or would have used the materials?
   3. What condition are the materials in? Are there any preservation concerns? Are items brittle, extremely fragile? Is there mold?
   4. What size folders, boxes and special enclosures may be needed?
   5. Does the collection contain any media (film, tape, computer media)?

## Step 2: Develop a preliminary processing plan

Using your findings and notes from the survey as well as any relevant background information you have compiled, develop a preliminary processing plan. What will you do first, second, third, etc.?

Your preliminary plan will likely change and that is okay!

### Naming the collection

Collections typically have one of four possible naming patterns:

1. Papers – materials generated and accumulated by an individual or family

Examples: Marcel Breuer **Papers**, Margaret Bourke-White **Papers**, Brenda Carmer **Papers**, Burton Blatt **Papers**

1. Records – materials generated and accumulated by an entity (business, government, organization, etc.)

Examples: Grove Press **Records**, American Association of Adult and Continuing Education **Records**, School of Architecture **Records**

1. Collection – materials accumulated by one or more individuals other than the creator. SAA defines these as “artificially created and may contain works by many different creators and have different provenances; typically do not grow out of a single, specific function, and are often arranged for the convenience of description or retrieval rather than in an order originally established by the creator.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Examples: General Cartoon **Collection**, Oneida Community **Collection**, Photograph **Collection**, Student Activities Reference **Collection**

1. Collection Relating to, Collection of – significant collections created by one person/entity but the collection is about someone or something else

*Examples: Antje Bultmann Lemke* ***Collection Relating to*** *Albert Schweitzer, Ronald G. Becker* ***Collection of*** *Charles Eisenmann Photographs*

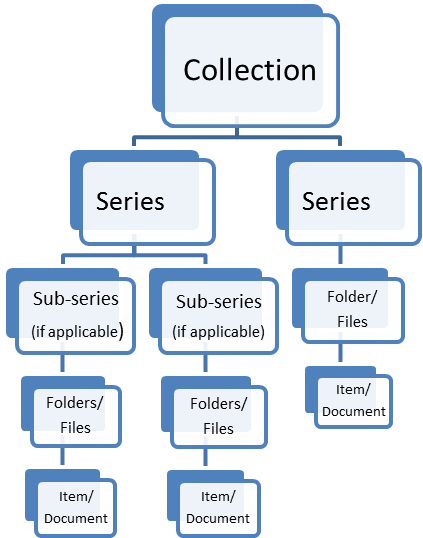
Document the collection name on the Survey Worksheet (see **File Locations** at the beginning of this document).

If necessary, update the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database) and the MARC record for the collection to have the correct name.

### Deciding on an arrangement

Using information from the survey, decide on a preliminary arrangement (at least to the series level). The existing original order may be sufficient, and original order if it exists should be respected if at all possible since it is a window into the creator’s thought processes. However, often there is no original order or the original order hasn’t been maintained, so you will have to determine the best arrangement.

Decide on series: Series are the main intellectual and physical divisions in a collection. Not all collections will lend themselves to the same arrangement; be flexible, and be sensitive to the nature of the collection and of the material.

The diagram at right shows a general organizational structure for collections. Smaller collections may only be made up of one series. Some collections need sub-series; others do not have any sub-series at all.

Possible series choices include:

By physical format:

* + Films
  + Printed material
  + Artwork
  + Writings
  + Memorabilia
  + Architectural drawings
  + Musical scores
  + Audio recordings

By organizational function:

* Correspondence
* Financial
* Legal records
* Subject files
* Writings
* Coursework/Teaching materials

By other useful categories such as:

* periods in an artist’s career (1910-1935, 1936-1955)
* types of architectural projects (residential, commercial, etc.)
* Syracuse University and non-Syracuse University materials
* Personal and professional papers

### Other considerations

Make note of any physical requirements, including custom or oversize housing that may be needed and preservation needs or treatments that the conservator may need to perform.

Also, note that the physical arrangement may not always match the intellectual arrangement. For example, similar folders could be grouped together in the EAD finding aid but kept in separate boxes. Another example: you may have 10 videotapes that fall under the “Publicity Series” but for preservation reasons, you may decide to physically locate them with all of the magnetic media in the collection.

Are there materials in the collection that may be subject to either access restrictions or use restrictions? See **Restricted material** for more information about determining whether material might be restricted.

Identify non-traditional formats in the collection, including media (audio/visual, time-based, digital), three-dimensional objects, artwork, photographic materials (including prints, negatives and slides), and books. Note all unique formats (including an item count for media) and any other preservation concerns on your Survey Report and Processing Plan in order to ensure the appropriate staff are consulted for the kick-off meeting.

## Step 3: The Kickoff Meeting

Once you’ve completed your survey and recorded your findings in your Survey Report and Processing Plan, submit your report to the SCRC staff members overseeing the processing for review. They may have some initial questions or ask for clarifications. If everything is in order with your report, the archivists will schedule a kick-off meeting with all relevant staff. Required attendees are:

* The person(s) who will do the processing (including, if possible, student workers and interns)
* The SCRC staff member overseeing the processing
* The Lead Archivist

If the collection is very large, the Assistant Director may wish to attend. If the collection has preservation needs, the Conservator should attend. If the collection contains media, the media specialist should attend.

Those at the kick-off meeting will review your survey findings, discuss the proposed arrangement, identify any special needs in terms of preservation, digitization, or housing, and agree upon a timeline and/or milestones for processing the collection.

The outcome of the meeting will be an approved processing plan, general timeline, and target completion date, agreed on by all.

## Step 4: Arrangement

Arrangement includes sorting, foldering and boxing the material as necessary.

* Decide how folders might be arranged within each series: Alphabetical? Chronological? Another system that makes sense based on how the collection was used/maintained by the creator?
* If it makes sense to do so, use the folder name provided by the creator. If rehousing, copy the folder title to the new folder. You may also wish to cut the front flap of the old folder and include it inside the new folder, as evidence of the original creator's title.
* Determine the date range of the materials in each folder
* Make notes of anything particularly interesting, unique, etc. to mention in the finding aid.
* If unsure about something, set it aside. Often its place will become apparent later and then you can integrate it into the collection.

### Filing Order

The “Biographical material” series is generally filed first, if present. Folders labeled “Miscellaneous” are filed at the end of their respective series or subseries. Within a given series, material may be filed alphabetically or chronologically, whichever is most suitable. Personal names should always be inverted for folder titles (“Smith, Mary” not “Mary Smith”).

### Cross References

A cross reference is an entry in a list, index, or catalog that points to other headings. “See” cross-references are used to send the user to the preferred or consistent heading among alternative terms. “See also” cross-references are used to send the user to additional information – e.g., more general or more specific headings, or related items. “See also” is only used when sending researchers to ADDITIONAL information, so a “See also” reference in the inventory will have a box number associated with it. A “see” reference will not.

Check with the SCRC staff member overseeing the processing before using cross-references. If you do use cross-references, they will need special encoding in the EAD.

*Examples: Box 12 Cats. See also Pets.  
Cats. See Siamese cats; Russian Blues.  
Box 9 Gilbert, W. S. (3 folders) See also Sullivan, Arthur.  
Clemens, Samuel Langhorn. See Twain, Mark*

See and See also references should be included in the finding aid inventory, but there is no need to write them on the actual folders, or to include an empty placeholder folder for “See” references.

### Acronyms/Abbreviations

Spell out unless an entity is commonly known by that name. For example, “IBM” should be filed under "IBM" but "U.N." should be filed under United Nations. If an item or folder does not have a discernable date, use “undated”. Do not use n.d. (no date). For approximate dates, use “circa” i.e. circa 1969. Do not use ca. or c.

### Foldering

If an original folder has labels, annotations, etc., cut off the flap bearing the information and place in the new folder with its original contents. Original folders that are still usable should be put with other supplies for use as temporary folders during processing.

DO NOT over-stuff folders. They should not be so full that they bulge out at the sides, or that material spills out when the folder is laid down on the table. This makes it difficult for researchers to handle them. Bend the scores at the bottom of the folder to make more space if necessary (*and only if necessary*!).

Label each folder with the following components:

* Record group to which the collection belongs (Archives collections only)
* Name of collection (e.g. Marcel Breuer Papers)
* Series/subseries/etc. (e.g Correspondence-subject files)
* Folder contents (e.g “Gropius, Walter” or “Family photographs”)
* Date of contents (e.g 1929-1935)

Neatly label folders by hand using pencil (printed, not cursive), or using stamps (premade or use the custom stamp kit).

Archives examples:

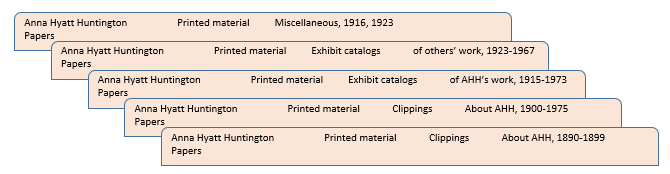
RG 01/DAY

Chancellor Day Papers Biographical material 1910, 1925-1929

RG 01/DAY

Chancellor Day Papers Correspondence by Subject - Death Threat 1908

Non-Archives examples:



When boxing folders, the box should neither be crammed so tightly that folders are hard to remove/reinsert, nor so empty that folders tip over or slump since they will eventually sag and the documents within them will become curled. If a box is too empty, and a smaller box cannot be found, fold a piece of archival board to form a spacer to hold folders upright:



### Additions

You may or may not be able to integrate new material into existing boxes.

1. If the addition is small, add the material to an existing folder or insert the new folder(s) in the logical place.
2. If the addition is large, place folders in new boxes. New boxes should be placed at the end of the collection and labeled with the next consecutive box number.
3. In the finding aid (and in AT, for Archives/Pan Am) list all folders in their correct logical location.
4. Barcode any new boxes following approved procedure and give barcode sheets to Lead Archivist for ingest into Summit.

### Media Processing

For purposes of this document, “Media” is defined as time-based media (moving image, audiorecordings) and computer media (DVDs, floppy disks, etc.). It does *not* include photographs, slides, microfiche, etc. This also happens to be all media that cannot be directly accessed by an end user, but requires creation of a use copy. The details will be slightly different depending on whether a collection has already been processed, but the overall workflow is the same:

1. Media is placed in box(es)
2. Archivist completes form with necessary information and places in box with media
3. Archivist places media box(es) on the “Media For Ingest” shelves in the Media Processing area
4. Media Processor processes media per standard procedures
5. Media Processor returns box(es) and/or items to Archivist
6. Archivist updates database and finding aid as appropriate

Once processed, media usually (but not always) will go straight to SULF. Follow the appropriate procedures for bar-coding and offsite prep, if desired.

#### Media Processing Form

Regardless of whether a collection is processed or not, the Archivist who is requesting media be processed must fill out the Media Processing Form (see **File Locations** at beginning of this document) as follows:

* Collection name: The name of the collection, e.g. John Smith Papers.
* Accession number: The unique identifier for the accession containing the media (if known)
* File root: short name of collection, to be used as root for ID numbers in PhysMedia and for filenames when/if item is digitized, e.g. smith\_j
* Archivist: Name of Archivist requesting the processing of the media, in case Media Processor has questions
* Box # to start with: If media will be going into new boxes, provide the starting box number. If this is not provided, Media Processor will NOT number the boxes.
* Donor: Give name of donor, so we can record in PhysMedia
* Total item count: How many media items are in this batch?
* Barcode? Yes/No: Indicate if the boxes should be barcoded and entered into Voyager.

#### Media step by step – Processed or in-process collection

Media from already-processed collection may or may not be listed in the finding aid, and may or may not go into new boxes. The workflow above is enacted as follows:

1. Archivist places media in box.
   1. Even if it’s only one item, it must be in a box.
   2. If there is a lot of media and it’s already in its own box(es), the Archivist may simply leave it in those box(es).
   3. If the collection is currently being processed, Archivist should consolidate all media from the entire collection before handing off to Media Processor, rather than handing them off one or two at a time.
2. Archivist completes Media Processing Form (see **File Locations**) and places in box with media.
3. If media is listed in finding aid, Archivist prints page(s) listing media, and places in box with media. (If inventory is excessively long, electronic list -- e.g. Exel or Word -- is fine.)
4. Media Processor rehouses media per approved procedures.
   1. Do not separate media from its context. For example, if a tape is accompanied by slides, or by a transcript, do not separate the two items. Keep them together. Consult with Lead Archivist or media specialist as needed.
   2. If new boxes are needed:
      1. If starting box # was provided on Media Processing Form, assign new box numbers starting with that number and label boxes appropriately
      2. If no starting box # was provided on Media Processing Form, number boxes in pencil “Media 1, Media 2, Media 3” etc.
5. Media Processor enters information into PhysMedia following approved procedures.
   1. If media is listed in finding aid, use the information provided in the inventory above to flesh out the descriptions entered into PhysMedia. For example, if the actual film reel just has the number “523” but the finding aids says “Story of My Life #523” use the full title in SCRC Media.
   2. If media has accompanying context, be sure to note that in the “Summary of Content” field. For example: “Accompanied by slides” or “Accompanied by filmstrip.”
6. If media was listed in finding aid, Media Processor compares the inventory provided above to the processed items. If any listed media items were NOT FOUND during processing, Media Processor will mark them as "MISSING" in the title field. If there are mismatches (for example the finding aid lists 3 VHS but the Media Processor finds 2 VHS and 1 film), Media Processor will make a list and notify the Archivist.
7. If “Barcode: Yes” Media Processor barcodes boxes (see **Barcoding step-by-step**).
8. Media Processor adds or updates collection note in PhysMedia, "Media complete as of [date]".
9. Media Processor updates container summary in SCRC Database as necessary.
10. Media Processor returns box (with any notes, if appropriate) to Archivist or places on SULF pending, as specified on Media Processing Form. If SULF pending, Media Processor updates location in SCRC Database.
11. If no starting box # was provided on Media Processing Form:
    1. Archivist labels boxes.
    2. Archivist provides final box numbers to Media Processor
    3. Media Processor updates PhysMedia with final box numbers
12. If media is going offsite, Archivist initiates appropriate barcoding and offsite prep process
13. Archivist updates finding aid with new information exported from PhysMedia

#### Media step by step – UnProcessed collection or accession

Media from an unprocessed collection, or unprocessed accession, won’t be listed in the finding aid (since it’s unprocessed) and will always go into new boxes.

1. Archivist retrieves all boxes containing media, ensuring that accession number appears on the box (very important!)
2. Archivist completes Media Processing Form (see **File Locations**) and places in box with media.
3. Media Processor rehouses media per approved procedures.
   1. If starting box number was specified on Media Processing Form, number and label box(es) as necessary, starting with that number.
   2. Do not separate media from its context. For example, if a tape is accompanied by slides, or by a transcript, do not separate the two items. Keep them together. Consult with Archivist as needed.
4. Media Processor enters information into PhysMedia following approved procedures.
   1. If the collection is not yet fully processed, enter the accession number associated with the item in the Acquisition Source field.
   2. If media has accompanying context, be sure to note that in the “Summary of Content” field. For example: “Accompanied by slides” or “Accompanied by filmstrip.”
5. If “Barcode: Yes” Media Processor barcodes boxes (see **Barcoding step-by-step**).
6. Media Processor returns new box(es) to Archivist or places on SULF pending, as specified on Media Processing Form. If SULF pending, Media Processor updates location in SCRC Database.
7. Media Processor updates container summary in SCRC Database.
8. Media Processor adds or updates collection note in PhysMedia, "Media complete as of [date]".
9. Archivist updates finding aid with new information exported from PhysMedia (if desired).
10. Archivist updates accession record in SCRC Database to reflect that media was pulled and processed.

### Restricted Material

Restrictions on a collection may be either “access restrictions” (who can look at the material) or “use restrictions." If a collection includes material that is restricted *for any reason*, that information must be noted in the collection record in the SCRC Database. University Archives collections are particularly likely to contain material governed by restrictions or records retention.

Restriction information must also be properly encoded in the EAD finding aid at the collection and (if only a portion is restricted) at the relevant location in the inventory. This means you will need to create a note at the collection level and possibly at the folder level (check with SCRC staff).

#### Access restrictions

According to SAA, access restrictions “may be defined by a period of time or by a class of individual allowed or denied access. They may be designed to protect national security…, personal privacy, or to preserve materials.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Items restricted for security or privacy reasons must be segregated in their own box and marked as “Restricted.”

**NOTE: Please review later sections on FERPA and HIPAA for special instructions regarding educational and health/medical records**.

Examples of common access restrictions for security or privacy reasons include:

* Social security numbers of living people
* Personnel (including faculty) records
* Medical records (protected by HIPAA)
* Student records, including grades and evaluations (protected by FERPA)
* Items requiring permission of the donor or other party (e.g., donor’s estate) to access, either for a certain period of time or in perpetuity. This information may be in the deed of gift, the donor file, and/or the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database).
* Items that are fragile or of particular security concern

In accordance with University policy, University records have the following restrictions:

* Records of the Office of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Board of Trustees and University Senate are restricted to the office of origin for 50 years from date of creation.
* School, college and department records are restricted to the office of origin for 30 years from date of creation. This restriction also includes non-academic campus offices.
* Faculty personnel files are restricted for 80 years from date of separation from the University.
* University publications are not included in this restriction. Examples include newsletters, alumni magazines, and department brochures.

General processing instructions:

* Review materials with an archivist to see if materials should be kept. For example, a list of grades in a set of faculty papers may be shredded.
* If the restricted items will be kept, pull and place them in separate container(s).
* If practical, redacted copies may be created and filed in their place in the unrestricted container
* Stamp “Restricted” on the folder(s) and box(es) that contain the restricted material
* Note the restrictions in the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database) and in the finding aid at both the collection level and the folder level

Specific guidelines for Archives collections:

* As the processing archivist, you can process these records but should use discretion. Please do not share restricted records or their information with anyone but the supervising archivist and/or University Archivist.
* Please write dates on each folder if not already available. This will help Public Services staff determine if records are restricted and help the University Archivist review the collection to the file level to determine when they can be removed from their restriction.
* If there are unrestricted records in the same collection, the restricted records should be housed in separate boxes.
* While the existence of restricted records should be acknowledged in a finding aid, an inventory of these records should not be made publicly available.
* Patrons and other campus offices cannot view restricted records without the written permission of the office of origin. The access restriction statement in the University Archives’ finding aid templates should be used.

Examples of restriction statements:

* For preservation and security reasons, the original Syracuse University Alma Mater, written by Junius Woods Stevens, is housed separately from the Stevens Papers. A facsimile is provided in the papers, and a digital image is provided in the inventory below. Researchers who wish to view the original must first obtain permission from the University Archivist.
* For privacy reasons, personnel files are restricted until 2067.
* Access to correspondence requires permission of Joyce Carol Oates or her estate.
* Access to recordings requires advance notice to produce a use copy.
* Please note that the Archives does not have the equipment to enable researchers to listen to the audio recordings in the Lansing Papers.

#### FERPA

**What is FERPA?**

The Family Educational Rights Protection Act (FERPA) is a federal law passed in 1974 that requires a University to obtain a student’s written permission before disclosing their education records or personally identifiable information (PII) contained therein. Of the rights granted to students by FERPA, the right to consent to disclose is the most crucial when it comes to archival processing.

While there is no legal end date to FERPA protections, common archival practice dictates that FERPA no longer applies once a student is or can reasonably be assumed to be deceased. The Syracuse University Archives has imposed a restriction period of 80 years from the date of graduation or separation from the University for educational records.

**What types of records *are* protected under FERPA?**

“Educational records” are defined as any records directly related to a student and maintained by the University. These can be in any format. They include records from campus offices as well as records or student work found in other collections such as faculty papers. Student records maintained by the University include, but are not limited to:

Grades and evaluations including assignments or exams with scores or feedback and recommendation letters. Personal opinions are not covered by FERPA, but any reference to class standing, attendance, or degree progress is!

Documentation of academic standing and processes such as class rosters, class schedules, disciplinary records, and transcripts.

**What types of records *are* *not* protected under FERPA?**

Many types of student records are created and maintained by the University, faculty, staff, and students themselves during their educational career. While some of these records may be protected by other regulations (such as HIPAA – the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act), they are NOT protected under FERPA. Examples of student information NOT protected by FERPA include, but are not limited to:

* Directory information - Syracuse University classifies the following as “directory information:” Name, address (permanent and current), phone number, email address, date and place of birth, participation in sports or officially recognized activities, dates of attendance, honors and awards, degrees earned and dates, full-/part-time status, majors/degree programs, college class/level, official university photographs, and prior post-secondary institutions attended.
* Law enforcement records
* Medical treatment records (note, these records may be protected by HIPAA)
* Employee records - Employment records not related to the employee’s status as a student (Work-Study records ARE protected under FERPA). Note, many types of employment records DO have a Records Management retention schedule.
* Alumni records collected after graduation.
* Observations - Information obtained through personal knowledge or observation or conveyed orally. An example of an observation may be a student’s general demeanor in class, or their level of participation.
* Records personally donated by the student or their family/estate in the case of deceased students/alumni.

**How do I handle FERPA-protected records while processing?**

* Identify the records and confirm whether they are protected by FERPA.
* If records are protected, notify the archivist overseeing the processing of the collection. If it is a University Archives collection, the University Archivist may need to be consulted as well.
* A decision should be made to remove the records from the collection or restrict them. Remember that the standard restriction for FERPA-protected student records is 80 years from the date of graduation.
* Consult with the supervising archivist regarding standard finding aid language for any records that will be retained but restricted.
  + For collection-level, description-only finding aids: Please note some materials in this collection may be restricted in accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
  + For processed collections: Please note some materials in this collection are restricted in accordance with the Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

#### HIPAA

**What is HIPAA?**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law passed in 1996 that applies to all uses of Protected Health Information (PHI) regardless of when or by whom the records were created, or whether the subject is alive or deceased.  Of the rights granted to patients by HIPAA, the right to grant written authorization to access their health records is the most crucial when it comes to archival processing. This right is part of the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

Information about Syracuse University’s compliance with HIPAA can be found on the University’s Policies portal [here](https://policies.syr.edu/legal-notices/hipaa-notice-of-privacy-practices/), and in relation to student medical records [here](https://policies.syr.edu/policies/academic-rules-student-responsibilities-and-services/hipaa-compliance-student-medical-records/). All uses of PHI beyond sharing between health professionals for the purposes of treatment are subject to HIPAA protection. This includes the access to PHI for scholarly and historical research. The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects individually identifiable health information about a deceased person for 50 years following the date of death.

**What types of records *are* protected under HIPAA?**

Under the HIPAA Security Rule, PHI must be protected from unintended disclosure. This included both paper and digital records. Examples of health records include, but are not limited to materials that:

* contain individually-identifiable health information and include a name or other PII (Personally Identifiable Information;
* concern past, present, or future health of an identifiable individual;
* are created, maintained, or received by a “covered entity” such as Syracuse University.

**What types of records *are not* protected under HIPAA?**

The records of a deceased individual are protected for 50 years past their date of death, at which time HIPAA no longer applies.

**How do I handle HIPAA-protected records while processing?**

* Identify the records and confirm whether they are protected by HIPAA.
* If records are protected, notify the archivist overseeing the processing of the collection. If it is a University Archives collection, the University Archivist may need to be consulted as well.
* A decision should be made to remove the records from the collection or restrict them. Remember that the HIPAA protection lasts for the life of the individual, plus 50 years past their date of death.
* Consult with the supervising archivist regarding standard finding aid language for any records that will be retained but restricted.
  + For collection-level, description-only finding aids: Please note some materials in this collection may be restricted in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
  + For processed collections: Please note some materials in this collection are restricted in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

#### Use restrictions

SAA defines use restrictions as something that “may limit what can be done with materials, or they may place qualifications on use.”[[4]](#footnote-4) In this case, researchers may access materials but be limited in how or whether they can copy, quote or publish. Deeds of gift should be checked to see if donors have placed restrictions. Examples may include:

* Users must wear gloves when examining photographic prints
* No use of direct quotes from client case files is permitted without permission of the donor.
* No photocopying of personal journals allowed

All access restrictions should be noted in the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database), in the finding aid (using standard language), and (if appropriate) on the box or folder housing the physical items.

### University records and records management

Some University records are only kept for a certain period of time in accordance with recordkeeping laws and regulations. These records are kept for a pre-determined retention period, which is “the length of time a record must be retained to comply with legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical needs and requirements” (see [here](https://library.syr.edu/urm/recordkeeping.php) for more information). In the University Archives, those documents without a permanent retention period are considered transitory records and are not considered to have historical value. University records that have retention and disposition schedules should never make it into the University Archives in the first place, but they sometimes do anyway. If found, these files may be sent to the University Records Center or destroyed, depending on their retention schedule status.

How do I handle records with a retention schedule while processing?

* Before processing University records, it is recommended that the University Archivist review any available inventory and flag possible transitory records. Processing staff should also feel free to consult with University Archives staff at any point about records with retentions.
* Before processing any University records, please review and become familiar with [this page](https://library.syr.edu/urm/retention/index.php), which lists retention schedules for many types of records. Records with a retention that are commonly found during processing include invoices, personnel records for faculty/staff/students, and examinations and papers completed by students.
* Identify the records and confirm whether they have a retention schedule.
  + For instance, you may have some invoices. You can find the retention schedule for Invoices (Paid) [here](https://library.syr.edu/urm/retention/financial.php), which is “Current fiscal year plus 7 years.”
  + If you encounter a record that you suspect may have a retention but cannot find it online, please talk to University Archives staff, who can inquire with the University Records Manager if necessary.
* Determine if the records are past retention or not.
  + If they are not past retention, set them aside for the University Archivist to arrange to transfer to the University Records Center.
  + If they are past retention, set them aside to be shredded, pending approval from the University Archivist. In the example above, if the invoices are more than 7 years old, they are past retention.
* If the records are past retention but appear to have strong historical value anyway, an argument may be made to keep them in the collection. Please consult with the University Archivist, who will decide.

### Weeding/Transferring Items

Sometimes an item may be transferred from one collection to another in the Archives, or materials may be removed and discarded.

Transfers should always be noted in the EAD finding aid under <separatematerial>. Weeded material should be noted in the finding aid only as applicable, at the end of the Scope and Content note (<scopecontent>). Examples:

* All Syracuse University football programs and annual schedules were transferred to the University Archives' reference collection, and two motion picture films were transferred to the Archives' film collection. A list of removed items is kept in the Archives' administrative files.
* The collection originally contained a complete run (1940-1960) of *Wombat Breeder’s Quarterly*. This journal is now available in its entirety online, and therefore the paper copies were discarded.

#### Weeding

Before you discard anything, **CONSULT WITH A CURATOR**. The Deed of Gift may require that any unwanted material be returned.

* For faculty papers, Archives may keep published articles and books written or annotated by the faculty member. Because they are usually available elsewhere, articles and books not written or annotated by the faculty member are usually removed from the papers.
* Consider removing University publications from faculty, staff and alumni papers. These can usually be found elsewhere in the Archives’ collections or may be transferred to those collections.
* Duplicates of published material: (books, exhibition catalogs, magazines) may be sent to cataloging if appropriate. If not appropriate, check with the curators about adding to the SCRC deaccessioning queue.
* Duplicates of other material (including newspaper clippings): keep 2 copies, discard the rest
* Envelopes: can be discarded if all relevant information (sender and receiver names and addresses, dates) is present on the piece of correspondence.
* Any still-usable archival folders can be placed in the box of leftover folders
* Recycle items when possible (note that per SU’s sustainability and recycling guidelines, newsprint older than 7 years cannot be recycled and should be placed in the trash)
* Break down all cardboard boxes before recycling or throwing away
* Shred documents with sensitive information that are not being retained. Small amounts can be placed in SCRC's shred bin in Public Services area. For larger amounts, call the business office for pickup.

#### Transfer to Rare Books /Cataloging

Published books and serials found in manuscript collections may be transferred to rare books for detailed cataloging. Some items might be more accessible if they have individual MARC records. This is done on a case by case basis. Consult with the curators and lead archivist about transferring the items to cataloging; if the decision is made to transfer an item:

1. Fill out the cataloging checklist for each item, including what collection the item is being transferred from, who donated the material, and any specific subject headings or notes you want included in the MARC record
2. In the “Separated material” section of the finding aid, note the transfer:

Example:A signed, published compilation of MacGregor's cartoons, *Doug MacGregor's Cartoons: A Twenty-five Year Retrospective* (2005) has been removed from the collection and sent to Rare Books.

### Oversize materials

When handling oversize material, always use both hands. Support items in the middle if they are especially fragile and bend easily.

When boxing oversize materials, group items of similar size together, and select the smallest box that will accommodate all items. Remember, physical arrangement need not always match intellectual arrangement. Items should not slide around inside the box. If appropriate, folder items just as you would if they were in a document box, but be sure to use folders the same size as the box to fully protect the material inside.

If there are only one or two oversize items that don’t warrant the use of an oversize box, put the item(s) in a map case drawer. Folder the items using a folder large enough to completely cover the items, and label just as you would if the folder were in a regular document box (e.g., Collection name, Series, subseries, folder title). In the EAD finding aid, use “Map-Case” for the @level attribute for the <container> element. Be sure that the collection record in the appropriate database (AT or SCRC Database) includes the map case/file cabinet designation (AT uses MC/FC, SCRC Database uses “map-case”) and drawer number.

### Separating Items

Do not separate items originally joined together unless *absolutely necessary*. If it is absolutely necessary, follow these steps:

* Photocopy each item (or at least some identifiable part of each)
* On the photocopy, add a note giving the location of the original item (“Original item is located in Box X Folder X”)
* Place each pair of items (original and associated photocopy) inside a folded sheet of photocopier paper to preserve the original grouping and file the two sets in appropriate locations.

For example: Suppose there is a lengthy personal letter from John Smith, accompanied by an audiocassette which has been given the ID number smith\_j\_003. Photocopy the first page of the letter, and on the copy write, “Original of this letter is filed in Correspondence : Smith, John.” Photocopy the front of the audiocassette, and on the copy write, “Audiocassette which accompanied this letter (item smith\_j\_003), is in Box 34 with other magnetic media.” Place the original letter and copy of cassette inside a folded sheet of paper and file under Correspondence : Smith, John. Place the original cassette and the copy of the letter inside a folded sheet of photocopy paper and place in Box 34.

### Preservation Considerations

More product, less process! Preservation work, whether removing staples or creating a custom box, is time-consuming. Always make such decisions based on the significance of the item and the necessity of the work (i.e., don’t do it just to make things look pretty). For specific preservation problems and questions consult with the conservator and/or the head of preservation.

**REFER TO Preservation FOR DETAILED PRESERVATION INFORMATION.**

GENERAL GUIDELINES

* Although it’s tempting, ***never, ever trim or cut a document***, even if trimming it would not detract from its informational or documentary value.
* Folded/rolled items should be unfolded/unrolled if possible/practical.
* Everything in a box should be in a folder or archival envelope unless it has a sufficiently sturdy enclosure.
* No food or drink near collections.
* Clean, dry hands.
* Ensure you have an adequate clean and dry work space.
* Gloves should be used with all glossy photographs, negatives, and plastic materials, and with any three-dimensional artifacts.
* Archival quality housings and enclosures should be used for all items. Acid free boxes, folders, envelopes and Mylar sleeves will provide physical protection from atmospheric changes, abrasion and stresses.

Acidic paper

Newspaper clippings that are brittle and/or disintegrating can be enclosed in Mylar sleeves, or photocopied and the originals discarded; be sure to write the citation information (e.g., *Buffalo Evening News, 8 Apr 1947*) in pencil on the front of the photocopy if it does not already appear as part of the copied material. If acidic documents are retained, segregate them either in their own folder or by placing a sheet of photocopy or interleaving paper between acidic and non-acidic items.

Art (Paintings, Drawings, Sketches, Etc.)

For lithographs, prints, paintings, sculptures, and other types of art, consult the Conservator about proper treatment and housing.

At a minimum, original drawings and sketches should be interleaved with the appropriate type of paper. Interleaving should cover the entire surface of the artwork. Never place heavy items on top of light items. Do not stack too many together, as this can damage items on the bottom. Artists’ notebooks may require interleaving between pages; consult the Conservator.

Binders and scrapbooks

Consult with the conservator before disassembling any scrapbooks or binders. In some cases, screwposts or string binding may need to be removed so that pages may be turned without damage. Some binders and scrapbooks can be taken apart and the individual pages foldered, but this is not the preferred approach and should be done only after due consideration of whether it will detract from the item’s intent or significance.

Books and other bound volumes should be placed either flat (especially large, heavy volumes) or upright, spine-edge down in a box.

Fasteners

Remove paperclips, binder clips or staples only if they are rusted and likely to come apart, stain other items or damage the paper; otherwise leave them. Rubber bands should be removed if possible (especially if they’re dried/crusty/sticky/nasty or even if they’re not they will be some day!). If staples or clips are removed, place items inside a folded sheet of photocopier paper to preserve the original grouping.

Fragile Items

Place in a Mylar sleeve if appropriate (refer to **Preservation**). If the item is fragile and does not fit into a Mylar sleeve, consult with conservator about appropriate wrapping materials and/or custom housing.

Framed items

Remove items from frames unless doing so would detract from the item’s intent or significance. Deframing toolkit is in Archives area. Consult Archivist or Conservator if item is sutck to glass or requires specialized tools. Do not put glass directly in the trash.

Photographs and NEGATIVES

Refer to **Preservation** and consult an Archivist or Conservator about proper identification and treatment of photographs and negatives.

Please handle photographs and negatives with clean hands or wear gloves. Use plastic sleeves for those that have significance or are rare/fragile.

**IMPORTANT:  Nitrate negatives are considered a hazardous material and require special equipment and procedures when processing, housing, or handling in any way.  If you encounter negatives that are, or may, date from before 1952 in a collection, please check them against the information given in Appendix A to determine whether they are nitrates.  If you cannot determine, do not handle them further.  Notify the Lead Archivist and the Conservator.**

Negatives after 1952 will not be nitrate, but they may suffer from vinegar syndrome and damage other items in proximity.  They may remain with the collection, but should be foldered separately from photographs.  If you find nitrate negatives or there is a strong vinegar smell (you’ll know it if you smell it), consult with the Conservator and/or Lead Archivist about proper housing and use of the fume hood.

Media

Magnetic media, including audiocassettes, VHS cassettes, floppy disks and hard drives, must be housed separately. Film media must be housed separately. CDs, DVDs, and other optical media can remain *in situ* in the collection. Refer to **Preservation**, and consult with the media specialist and/or Conservator as required, regarding proper housing of media items.

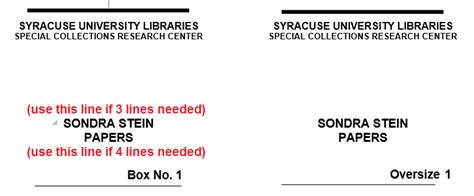
When processing media, refer to the section on **Media Processing** and follow all steps. In the EAD finding aid, include all relevant formats in <genreform> elements in the <controlaccess> section at the top.

## Step 5: Finishing up

### Box labeling

The last step is to label and barcode all collection containers. Steps are as follows:

* Open the appropriate box label template (see **File Locations** at beginning of this document). If you have lots of boxes use the autonumbered one.
* Edit the label(s) as needed.Start the numbering over for oversize boxes (you may have Box 1 AND Oversize 1). Be very careful not to change the font, font size, or line spacing.  The collection title should always be in ALL CAPS (can span up to 4 lines of text), and the container type should be Initial Caps.  Note that both grey document boxes and the larger cartons (also called banker’s boxes or record storage boxes) should all be labeled as “Box #”. Archival drop-front boxes should be labeled as “Oversize #”. Tubes should be labeled as “Tube #”. For other types of containers, consult with your supervisor.



* Print labels using manual feed printer setting
* Affix labels on the side of the document box that has the pull cord, on the bottom (not the lid). For cartons, place label in the center underneath the handle opening. For oversize boxes, place the label in the middle of the *long side* of the box. PLEASE PLACE LABELS NEATLY AND SQUARELY. See **Barcode (and label) placement examples** to see how it should look.
* Barcode boxes following approved procedure (see Barcoding step-by-step) and give barcode sheets to Lead Archivist for ingest into Voyager.
* Contact Assistant Director to determine where material goes (Bird, Hawkins, SULF, etc.) If going offsite, refer to **SCRC Database Step-by-Step : Offsite Prep and Transfer** and to **Transferring material offsite** in this manual.

### Estimating linear feet

Estimate the linear footage of a collection as follows:

* White carton = 1.5 linear ft
* Standard (5”) document box = 0.5 linear ft
* Half-size (2.5”) document box = 0.25 linear ft
* Map case drawer = 4 linear feet
* For oversize material, measure the long side of the box.

### Update collection record and accession(s) in database

Review the collection record in the SCRC database, and update any information connected with processing: date range, extent, location, EAD type and file name, accessions marked as processed, unprocessed linear ft., box/label/inventory verification for offsite prep (marked in green below). The container summary (yellow) is helpful but optional – if not done by the processor, it will be completed by the person doing the barcoding.

Graphical user interface

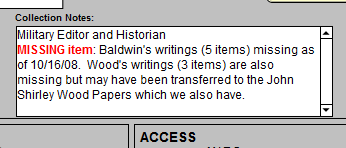
Description automatically generated

### Missing Material

If you finish a collection and determine that something is missing, follow these steps:

1. Check the stacks and other areas where the collection was shelved, since the material might have gotten mixed in with one of its neighbors. For instance, clipping and photograph files occasionally get mis-filed by students.
2. Check to make sure it’s not on reserve for a researcher.
3. Check the white copies of the call slips at the reading room desk to see if another staff member has it
4. Check the database to see if any transfer or deaccession is noted there. If so, note it in the finding aid in the <separatedmaterial> section.
5. If there is no mention in the database, check the donor files and finding aids file(s). If so, update the relevant accession in the database to note that that item(s) were transferred, and note it in the finding aid in the <separatedmaterial> section.

If the material truly is missing and cannot be located, notify the Assistant Director and then record the information in the database, in the “Notes” field in the Collection record, as follows:



If the item is the only item in an accession, also set the processed level on the accession to "missing." In the finding aid, note the missing material in the scope and contents section and also in the correct location in the inventory in the item title, e.g. "Photograph, Mary Smith and parents [MISSING Feb 2013]"

# Create/Update the Finding Aid for the Collection

**Refer to Additions/Updates to Collections above for important workflow information.** Keep notes while processing of things that may be interesting or important so that you remember to mention them later in the finding aid. *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* defines the minimum required information that must be included in a description. In particular, note folders containing photographs or negatives.

The EAD template (see **File Locations** at the beginning of this document) contains placeholders for all required and most optional descriptive components; if you use this template, you can be sure your finding aid will be as complete as possible. For detailed information on EAD encoding, refer to the EAD manual listed at the beginning of this document

For the biographical history, always begin with a sentence or two listing the person’s birth and death dates, nationality, their occupation and/or what they are most known for, for example:

Paul Conrad (1924-2010) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American editorial cartoonist.

If nothing is known about the person, use a boilerplate statement such as:

Nothing is known of I. Mains beyond the information given in the collection materials. He was a resident of New York Mills, New York.

For the “Scope and Contents” section, discuss each series in the order it appears in the inventory. Mention notable names or items of particular interest. Bold the name of the series the first time it occurs in the discussion (<emph render="bold">, for example:

The **Correspondence** series contains…  
**Printed material** consists of…

For the controlaccess section (the section called “Selected Search Terms” for Archives, “Subject and Genre Headings” for non-Archives), select and enter relevant terms, including names, places, occupations, and subjects. Use LCNAF and LCSH (<http://authorities.loc.gov>) to determine the correct forms of names and to choose valid subject headings. Separate sub-headings with a double dash, for example:

Painters -- United States.  
Syracuse University -- History.  
World politics -- Caricatures and cartoons.

In addition, certain terms are required.

* Pan Am and Archives EAD templates are pre-populated with their required terms; do not delete these without checking with an archivist.
* Non-Archives finding aids should always include one or more of our “collection strength” categories; for a list of these, see **File Locations** at the beginning of this document. These local subject headings should match the ones assigned to the collection in the SCRC Database.

Use AAT (<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat>) to choose genreform terms for the types of material (e.g., diaries, clippings, etc.)

Always include information about how the collection was acquired in the “Acquisition Information” section. Include the type of acquisition (gift or purchase), name of donor, and date. If unknown, say so. For example:

Gift of Franz Waxman, 1998, 2001, 2005. ["gift of" is required to generate MARC 541 and 590]  
Purchased, 1993.  
Unknown.

Images inserted into the finding aid, either as embedded images in the Biography/Historical Note or as digital objects, should be carefully selected. Archives tries not to display images of living alumni, and only images under public domain, created by Syracuse University, or images for which the rights have been transferred to the Archives should be used.

If any of the collection has been digitized or microfilmed, be sure to note this in the “Alternate Forms Available” section.

If any material has been removed from the collection and sent to Rare Books for cataloging, be sure to note this in the “Separated Material” section.

In the inventory section, folder titles will be coded as <unittitle>. Additional descriptive information may be encoded as <abstract>. Mention the presence of photographs or negatives, if possible/appropriate, and if not already part of the folder title. Refer to the EAD Manual for more specifics on encoding.

Sometimes old inventories may contain valuable information that should be included in the finding aid but it may not be EAD-friendly – for example, family trees or item-level indexes. In other cases, the nature of the collection may warrant the creation of an additional inventory or descriptive guide that is not EAD-friendly or that supplements the EAD (for example, an item-level list in Excel file so the end user can sort or filter it).

* Old lists - These can be OCR’ed (but you’ll need to review it carefully for errors) and the plain text can be inserted into the EAD finding aid, or they can be scanned “as is” and uploaded as a PDF, with a link from the EAD in the <otherfindaid> section.
* New lists - Check first to ensure this is the best way to represent this information in the finding aid. These lists should be saved as PDFs and a link created from the EAD in the <otherfindaids> section.

Such lists should be mentioned (and if possible linked to) in the appropriate section of the finding aid (usually <otherfindaid>). See the Ted Key Papers (<http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/k/key_t.htm>) or the Genesee College Collection (<http://archives.syr.edu/collections/org_non_su/sua_gnc.htm>) for examples. ***Be sure to evaluate any such additional files for accessibility to screen readers!!***

# Cancelling a Collection

A collection is cancelled when it existed once, but no longer does. Reasons for cancellation include being merged with another collection, transferred to another institution, deaccessioned for disposal, or determined to be irretrievably lost (!!).

When a collection is cancelled, several things need to be done to ensure that no one stumbles across it by accident and is disappointed when they learn they can't access it.

1. Remove from the catalog:
   1. If the collection has a MARC record, contact Cataloging to ask them to suppress it.
2. Remove from the website:
   1. Delete the associated HTML files from the server (both web version and print versions). If the finding aid has any supporting files (Excel, images, etc.) delete those as well. (See **File Locations** at the beginning of this document).
   2. Delete the XML file from the server, so that the finding aid will be removed from the finding aids search index. (See **File Locations** at the beginning of this document)
3. Remove from the XML folder on the G drive:
   1. Move the relevant XML file from the regular directory on the file system (G drive) to "retired" or “superseded” folder. If the finding aid has any supporting files (Excel, images, etc.) move those as well. (See **File Locations** at the beginning of this document)
4. Update the SCRC Database.
5. In the finding aids files, write "CANCELLED" on the folder and leave it in place.

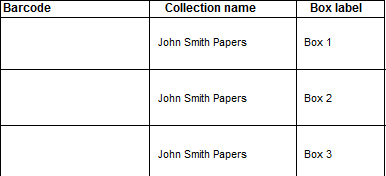
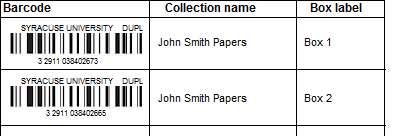
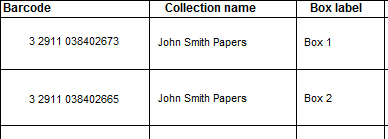
# Barcoding step-by-step

Upon completion of processing and finding aid creation, all boxes in a collection must be barcoded and the barcodes entered into Voyager (the library catalog). We use "double dumb" barcodes, meaning that there are two copies of each barcode, an original and second indicated by the letters "DUPL" in the upper right corner. Both copies of the barcodes are used in this process as follows.

## Applying barcodes to containers

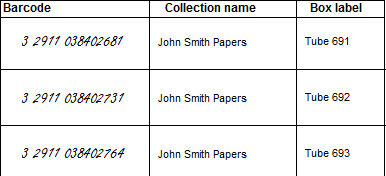
### Process for all containers except tubes

Once processing is complete and all items are in their final labeled boxes, apply barcodes as follows.

1. Create a list of all containers in the collection (boxes, oversize boxes, cartons, tubes, etc.) with three columns as shown below and fill out with the correct information. If the collection is small (less than 20 boxes or so), this can be done with paper and pencil. If the collection is large, create and save an Excel spreadsheet using the barcode\_template.xlsx as your starting point, and print out a paper copy to use in the following steps.  
     
   
2. Verify that all boxes in collection are listed in spreadsheet, that all boxes listed in spreadsheet are present in the collection, and that listed box labels (e.g. “Oversize 3” “Box 12”) EXACTLY MATCH actual box labels.
3. Locate Box 1. Remove first copy of barcode and stick it on Box 1 (see photos at end of this section for correct placement).
4. Remove second copy of barcode (has the letters DUPL at upper right) and stick it on the paper printout in the barcode column for Box 1.  
     
   
5. Repeat for all other boxes, taking care that the type and number on the label of the box is the exact same as the type and number listed on the sheet.
6. When finished:
   1. If using pencil-and-paper sheet, continue to step 7.
   2. If using an Excel spreadsheet: Return to workstation and open the electronic copy of the spreadsheet. Scan each barcode from the paper printout into its corresponding cell in the "Barcode" column and save the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet should end up looking something like this:  
        
      
7. Consult with SCRC Staff regarding creation of item records in the library catalog (see section below).
8. Once step 7 is complete, file barcode sheet(s) with duplicate stickers in the finding aids file.

### Process for tubes

The process for tubes differs, because the second copy of the barcode is needed at SULF so it cannot be stuck onto the box list sheet. For tubes, do the following:

1. Remove first copy of barcode and stick it on the inner side of the tube just below the label (see photo in next section).
2. Leave second copy of barcode on original sheet and write the tube # above it using Sharpie.
3. Write barcode on Excel spreadsheet in appropriate location:  
     
   
4. Place sheet(s) with labeled second copies of barcodes with tubes; SULF staff will take the sheet(s) when they pick up the tubes, and will put the second copy of the barcode on the tube cap over at SULF.

### Barcode (and label) placement examples

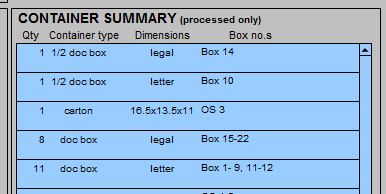
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Manuscript Box (doc box) - label goes at upper right, horizontally. Half-doc boxes are not wide enough, so those go vertifaclly: | Cartons - label goes at upper right, horizontally: |
| Portfolios - label goes at upper right, horizontally. | Tubes - label and barcode go on INNER side of tube. Second copy of barcode goes on cap of outer tube (placed by SULF staff). |
| Oversize flats - label goes at upper right, horizontally. | |

## Entering container summary into database

Enter into the SCRC database the number of each type of archival container, and the associated box numbers. Choices are:

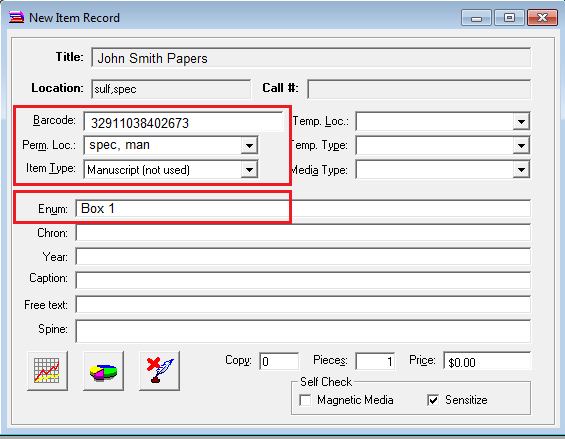
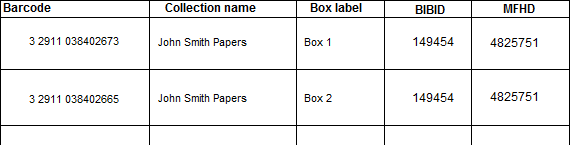
* doc box and 1/2 doc box - gray flip-top document boxes, metal edges, 6" wide or 2" wide’; note whether legal or letter
* carton - white or blue or gray archival box, 16” x 13"x 10.5"
* tube
* oversize - archival drop-front boxes; most are 3" tall but the other dimensions will vary
* reel - film or tape reels (includes film cans)
* non-standard - anything else (include dimensions)

For Oversize and Non-standard items you must enter all 3 dimensions, in order from largest to smallest. For example, "18x12x3" (not 3x18x12 or 12x3x18). So if you have two different sizes of oversize boxes, they must be entered separately. See below for example.



## Creating item records in Voyager

The final step in barcoding is to enter the barcodes into Voyager, our ILS (Integrated Library System). This can be done manually for small collections, or using a macro for very large collections.

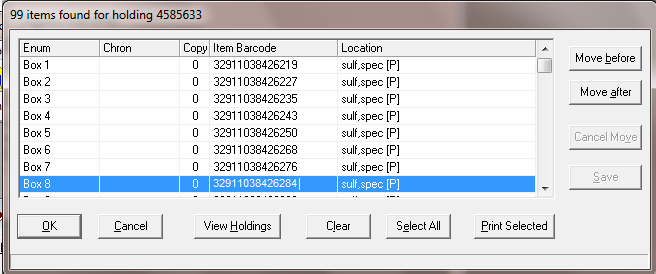
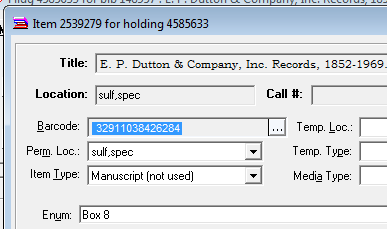
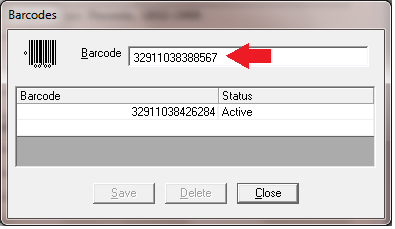
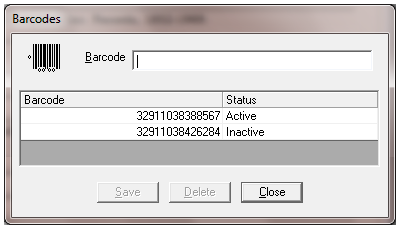
1. In Voyager Cataloging module, choose Record > Retrieve by BIBID and enter the BIBID number for the collection (the ID number in the SCRC Database).
2. Click “Get Holdings” and confirm there is only 1 holdings record (for the finding aid).
3. Click “New Holdings” and create a new holdings record (MFHD) with 852 field and notes as follows:  
   *852 ‡b spec,man ‡x created for SCRC barcoding process to hold item records for boxes/barcodes*
4. Save this new holdings record to the database.
5. If this is a small collection and barcodes will be entered manually, proceed as follows:
   1. Open the holdings record (if not already open)
   2. Click “New Items."
   3. Using the sheet of DUPL barcodes created in the previous steps, enter the barcode, set Perm Loc. (permanent location) to "spec,man" and Item Type to "Manuscript", and enter the box label associated with that barcode. For example:  
        
      
   4. Save the item record, and repeat steps b and c for all containers in the collection.
   5. When finished, return to the holding record, click "Get Items" and review the list of barcodes against the actual barcodes stuck to the sheet, to ensure they have been entered correctly.
6. If this is a large collection, the SCRCItems macro in MacroExpress can be used to generate the item records. Enter the BIBID and the holdings record ID (MFHD) in the barcode spreadsheet for every box in the list, as shown below, then save the spreadsheet and consult with SCRC staff on next steps.  
     
   

## Replacing, retiring, or re-using a bar-coded box

Once a box is bar-coded, it MUST NOT be replaced, discarded or re-used without the appropriate steps being followed, so that Voyager doesn't get confused.

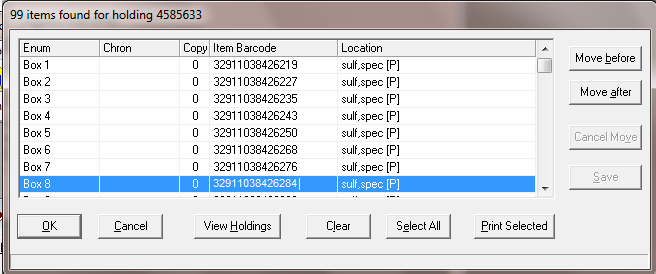
### Replacing a bar-coded box

Sometimes a bar-coded box is damaged beyond repair and the archival materials must be moved to a new box with a new barcode. In this case, you will need to update our internal box/barcode information, update the item record in Voyager, and notify SULF.

1. Update our internal box/barcode information:
   1. Pull the barcode sheet(s) from the files
   2. Find the appropriate box number and stick the DUP of the new barcode over the old one
   3. If the replacement box and the new box are different dimensions, update the Container Summary in the SCRC Database.
2. Update the Item record in Voyager:
   1. Retrieve the BIB record and click on "Get Hldgs". You should see two holdings records.
   2. Double click on the holding located at SULF and then click "Get Items."
   3. A list of all barcoded items will display. Double click the item that's being replaced:   
        
      
   4. Click on the ellipses (...) next to the old barcode number:  
        
      
   5. Enter the new bar code number in the field and click "Save":  
        
      
   6. The old bar code will now show as Inactive, and the new one will show as Active:  
        
      
3. Notify SULF:
   1. If the replacement box and the old box are the same size:
      1. Remove the old barcode from the box and tape it to a small sheet of paper. Add a note to the effect that, "This box/barcode is a replacement."
      2. Attach the piece of paper with the old barcode to the new box so that when it arrives at SULF, staff will know to remove the old item from their database and add the new one.
   2. If the replacement box and the old box are different sizes:
      1. Email SULF that the old barcode is to be "retired."
      2. Treat the replacement box as a New Ingest.

### Retiring a bar-coded box

If collection material has been reorganized such that a bar-coded box is now empty and no longer needed, you will need to update our internal files, information in Voyager, the SCRC Database, , and notify SULF.

1. Update our internal box/barcode documentation:
   1. Pull the barcode sheet(s) from the files
   2. Find the row for the retired box, and clearly/distinctly cross out the entire row.
   3. Write "RETIRED" in the right-hand margin beside the row.
   4. Update the collection's Container Summary in the SCRC database to reflect the removal of this box. (If this alters the collection total size, be sure to adjust that as well).
2. Update Voyager:
   1. Retrieve the BIB record and click on "Get Hldgs". You should see two holdings records.
   2. Double click on the holding located at SULF and then click "Get Items."
   3. Find the box number that's being retired and double click it to open the item record:   
        
      
   4. With the item record open and active, click on "Record > Delete" from the menu bar across the top.
3. Email barcode to SULF staff with a note that that the barcoded item no longer exists and that it should be removed from their system.
4. If the box is suitable for re-use, peel the old barcode off the box and throw it away, then put the box in the stacks with the other supplies. Be sure to cross out the old label information as well.

### Reusing a bar-coded box

**NEVER DO THIS!!!** If at any time you find an empty bar-coded box lying around, *immediately* bring it to the attention of the Reading Room Supervisor or Lead Archivist.

# Transferring material offsite

When a collection has been fully processed and barcoded and all barcodes have been entered into Voyager, the collection can be transferred offsite to our high-density storage facility.

Place the entire collection – boxes, film cans, cartons, whatever – in the SULF Staging area in the stacks to indicate that it’s ready to go, and update the SCRC Database accordingly to indicate that transfer is pending (see **Offsite Prep** in the **SCRC Database Step-by-Step** section).

The day before a scheduled pickup, load material onto pallets in the designated pick-up area (back by the freezers). Use the smaller library-size pallets, otherwise they won’t fit through the door! When the pallets have been picked up by SULF staff, update the SCRC Database accordingly (see **Offsite Prep** in the **SCRC Database Step-by-Step** section).

General guidelines:

* NOTHING should stick out past the edges of a pallet (if they stick out, they could be damaged)
* Pack boxes snugly together for stability
* Place heavier boxes on the bottom, lighter ones on the top
* Do not mix Archives and non-Archives collections on the same pallet
* Always place containers with the barcodes facing OUT (this makes it easier for SULF staff to scan the barcodes for ingest).
* DO NOT stack more than four layers high
* Drop-front oversize boxes can be placed in the center on top of a loaded pallet, but don’t stack more than 2 of them on top

To distribute weight properly, don’t stack layers in same pattern. Legal-size boxes should alternate as follows, for example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

Letter size document boxes should alternate layers, for example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

Cartons should alternate layer, for example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

Examples of properly loaded pallets:



# References and resources

Balloffet, Nelly, Jenny Hille, and Judith A. Reed. *Preservation and conservation for libraries and archives*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005.

Hensen, Steven L.. *Describing archives: a content standard.* Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004.

Northeast Document Conservation Center. "Northeast Document Conservation Center â€”Â Resources: Preservation Leaflets." Northeast Document Conservation Center. <http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets.list.php> (accessed May 16, 2011).

Pearce-Moses, Richard. "SAA: Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology." Society of American Archivists. <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/> (accessed May 23, 2011).

Roe, Kathleen. *Arranging & describing archives & manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

# Preservation

## General Guidelines

Due to the diverse composition of formats, each will merit a different approach in terms of handling, storage conditions, housing materials, and conservation treatments if warranted.

Format pages feature helpful information including item descriptions, problems, storage & handling best practice, and staff contact information, see below.

### Storage Options

Special Collections storage areas currently fall into three distinct environmental categories (below). Different library formats should be assigned a storage location best suited to their long term preservation needs however, while we strive to locate all material in its optimum environment, other considerations will undoubtedly affect decisions. Location choices may be influenced by a number of factors including cultural, historic and academic relevance; together with environmental sensitivity, physical condition and available space.

Some specific collections need to be located within SCRC for access reasons, and although many formats would benefit from colder storage at south campus, fragile and sensitive formats would be exposed to detrimental environmental changes and physical damage while in transit.

Category A: – Room Temperature 68°F and 40% RH.

Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

Category C: - Frozen < 32°F and 40% RH

### Shelf Size Options

Regular Stacks 0 -28cm tall

Folio (f) 29 – 49cm tall

Flat Folio (ff) 50 cm tall and up.

### Handling Rules

* No food or drink near collections.
* Clean, dry hands.
* Adequate clean and dry work space.
* Gloves should be used with all photographic and plastic based materials, and with any three-dimensional artifacts.
* Archival quality housings and enclosures should be used for all items. Acid free boxes, folders, envelopes and Mylar sleeves will provide physical protection from atmospheric changes, abrasion and stresses.
* Existing paper clips and fastenings should only be removed after consultation with the conservator, training will be provided.
* Items such as scrapbooks, photograph albums and other composite items should never be dis-assembled, trimmed or altered in any way without consulting the conservator.

Certain formats may require careful handling techniques and aids. To prevent damage, problematic items/formats should be referred to the nominated staff specialist or the conservator for assessment or clarification.

More detailed format information can be found at <https://psap.library.illinois.edu/>

The following pages describe specific formats of material, common problems, recommended procedures for use, handling, and storage, and ideal climate. At the end of each format sheet is the person to contact with questions or for further information.

## Paper (Rag Fiber)

**Description**

Papers made from relatively stable cotton, linen, flax, or hemp fibers.

Usually gelatin sized and often watermarked.

**Problems**

Sensitive to light, water exposure, high humidity, and high heat. Exposure to light and/or heat will accelerate deterioration in the form of yellowing and sometimes embrittlement. Acidic paper (pH below 7.0) commonly exhibits both deteriorative traits. Colored media on the paper support will fade rapidly. Water exposure can ultimately lead to desiccated or brittle paper, making it more easily torn or damaged through handling. Fluctuating temperature and RH may result in warping and cockling of the paper surface. High humidity (higher than 68% RH) promotes mold growth and insect infestation, both of which can cause permanent damage.

**Use and Handling**

Ensure adequate clean and dry desk space.

Use foam book supports and snake weights where appropriate, care should be taken to give adequate support at all times. Route catalogued material to the conservation lab as part of end processing. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged, fragile or with special needs.

**Shelving/Storage**

Unbound material should be housed in acid free/buffered protective paper based enclosures.

Melinex (Mylar©) enclosures can be used if de-acidified first.

Use only archival quality housing materials, such as acid free tissue, interleaving and boxes.

Do not use polyester (Mylar©) sleeves without consulting the conservator.

Avoid exposure to light, dust and atmospheric pollutants.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact** Conservator

## Newsprint, Pulp Paper

**Description**

Papers made from mechanically ground wood pulp with short fibered cellulose stock and a high lignin content (acidic)

Some paper pulps are chemically treated to achieve better longevity.

**Problems**

Inherent chemical instability

Becomes very fragile and brittle with age.

Light, temperature and humidity sensitive.

Discolors and stains adjacent materials when in contact.

**Use and Handling**

Handle with extreme care.

Storage at high temperatures leads to lower moisture content in paper, resulting in embrittlement and mechanical damage if handled improperly.

Adhesive bindings (paper backs) will break if opened with excessive force.

Do not open brittle folded materials, consult conservator for help if necessary.

**Shelving/Storage**

Storage should be cool/cold with moderate humidity,

Low light levels, high light levels will cause discoloration.

Oversize items should be stored horizontal.

Unbound material should be housed in acid free/buffered protective paper enclosures or boxes.

Mylar© enclosures can be used if item is not acidic.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact** Conservator

## Books and Bound Items

**Description**

Cloth, paper or skin (leather, vellum, parchment) covering materials over wood, pulp or paper boards.

Text block can be of paper, parchment of vellum and can be sewn, glued or punched construction. Text inks can be printed and/or manuscript.

Bound scrapbooks should not be disassembled without consulting the Lead Archivist and Conservation Librarian.

**Problems**

Brittle/acidic paper, loose/detached boards and spine, broken/weak sewing structure, cover damage. Broken inner/outer hinges. Water or fire damage. Loose or torn pages.

Scrapbooks with loose or detached materials.

**Use and handling.**

Use foam book supports and snake weights when handling heavy or fragile bound volumes, care should be taken to give adequate support to the book at all times. Route catalogued material to the conservation lab as part of end processing. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged, fragile or with special needs.

**Shelving/Storage**

Appropriate containers and enclosures will provide some degree of protection against sudden or short term environmental changes and protect from dust, dirt and light.

Use only acid free buffered boxes, wrappers, papers and archival linen tying tape - any knots must be on the fore-edge or head to prevent compression marks on book boards or text block.

Regular size books can be shelved upright and well supported with book ends and/or neighboring volumes.

Oversized volumes should be stored flat no more than 4 deep with full shelf support.

Books with loose boards should be boxed or at least tied up with linen tape; any knots/ties must be on the fore-edge to prevent compression marks on bindings or neighboring books.

Vellum and parchment bindings should be boxed as they are extremely sensitive to changes in humidity levels.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold, 50°F, 30% RH.

**Contact** Conservator.

## Illuminated Manuscripts

**Description**

Parchment, vellum, or paper leaves with calligraphic script and decorations made with pigments and a binding agent. Although most manuscripts were originally bound, single sheets are common due to their being removed from a volume.

Parchment or vellum manuscripts are decorative leaves of stretched and dried calf, goat, or sheep skin with painted or gilded surfaces.

**Problems**

Parchment and vellum are extremely sensitive to changes in humidity levels. If the sheet is bound, stresses are set up as the sheet tries to expand or contract and permanent deformation as well ink/pigment delamination may occur. Similar but less extreme problems can occur with paper manuscripts.

Water will cause irreparable damage to parchment and vellum.

Surface contact with storage materials should be avoided.

Polyester (Mylar) should **not** be used for storage as the static cling may loosen inks and pigments.

**Use and handling**

Ensure adequate clean and dry desk space.

Use foam book supports and snake weights where appropriate, care should be taken to give adequate support at all times. Route catalogued material to the conservation lab as part of end processing. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged, fragile or with special needs.

**Shelving/Storage**

Appropriate enclosures will help to buffer short term fluctuations in humidity that will cause mechanical deformation and dimensional change.

Use only archival quality housing materials, such as acid free tissue, interleaving and boxes.

Do not use polyester (Mylar) sleeves without consulting the conservator.

Avoid exposure to light, dust and atmospheric pollutants.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold, 50°F and 30% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Photographic Monochrome Prints on Paper (Black & White)

**Description**

Albumen Prints Matte Collodion Prints

Carbon Prints Platinum/Palladium Prints

Cyanotypes Salt Prints

Gelatin POP Prints Silver Gelatin Print (DOP)s

Glossy Collodion Prints

**Problems**

Fading and image change from light exposure.

Accelerated deterioration caused by adverse &/or rapidly changing temperature and humidity.

Mechanical damage during use, tight curls, folds, scratches and tears.

Chemical damage from adjacent materials &/or bad storage enclosures.

Finger grease.

**Use and Handling**

No food or drink.

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Gloves should be worn at all times

Adequate support and protection at all times.

Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Remove all rubber bands and metal fixtures.

Use acid free boxing and individual interleaving/enclosures that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).

All interleaving papers or folders must be the same size as the outer enclosure.

Uncoated polyethylene, polyester or Mylar sleeves can be used in storage environments < than 70% RH.

Prints should have emulsion side facing away from any seams in the enclosures.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

Rare, high value prints Category C: - Frozen < 32°F and 40% RH

**Contact** Curator or Conservator

## Photographic Negatives

**Description**

Many of our archival collections contain valuable photographic material, including film-base negatives. Unfortunately, some film-base material found in the collections is unstable and rapidly deteriorates when stored improperly. Film deterioration can also harm nearby film and artifacts and create a health threat if improperly handled by staff. The following guidelines should be reviewed and discussed with the Conservator whenever developing a processing plan for a collection that contains negatives.

**Problems**

Manufacturers have produced three common types of film bases: cellulose nitrate, cellulose acetate, and polyester. While polyester is stable, cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate are not. Degrading cellulose nitrate emits toxic fumes, and becomes increasingly more dangerous as it deteriorates.

Cellulose nitrate is highly flammable and cannot be extinguished once it catches fire. It can catch fire very easily and self-ignite under certain conditions such as hot, enclosed environments. As it deteriorates, nitrate gives off acidic by-products (nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide). These acidic gases are deep lung irritants. Repeated exposure may cause eye irritation, rashes and sores on the face and skin, vertigo, nausea, headaches, swollen glands, and respiratory irritation.

Cellulose acetate –aka “safety film”—emits acetic acid fumes (vinegar syndrome) as it deteriorates. Cellulose acetate has similar problems and health concerns as nitrate. Although acetate negatives are flammable they are not prone to the same fire risks as nitrates.

Shrinkage of acetate and nitrate supports during deterioration causes channeling and curling. Negatives become increasingly fragile with adverse storage conditions and age. Color negatives and dye based negatives and are very prone to fading due to light exposure.

**Identification**

Sheet negatives can differ dramatically in size, from 35mm transparencies matted in card stock to 8” x 10” sheets or larger. Rolled film can be a variety of widths and is usually cut down to the length/duration of the movie. Negatives can be color or black-and-white, and are often housed in original envelopes, sleeves, boxes, or film canisters.

Identifying the type of negative can be difficult but is often aided by an edge notch code or manufacturers’ markings (see below). Duplicated negatives many not show identification markings from the original.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Date Range** | **Edge Marking** | **Notch Code on Border** | **Example** |
| Acetate | 1925 - present | “Safety” | VVU  V (from 1949-1974) |  |
| Nitrate | 1889 - 1951 | “Nitrate” | VVV  V (prior to 1952) |  |
| Polyester | 1955 - present | “Ester” or “Cronar” |  |  |

**Use and Handling**

Always use gloves when handling negatives.

Always consult the conservator prior to handling large quantities of negatives (a folder or more).

Always use the fume hood when handling large quantities of negatives (a folder or more).

Do not handle nitrate negatives for more than three hours per day.

If you identify a nitrate negative showing signs of stage 5 or 6 deterioration (see below), stop working immediately and notify the conservator. The conservator will inform the SU Environmental Health Office.

Polyester negatives can be used in the reading room with cotton gloves, but all other negatives should not be available to researchers.

**Processing**

Negatives should always be interleaved, sleeved, or enclosed. Consult with conservator on best option.

Large quantities of negatives (a folder or more) should be segregated from other formats.

Small quantities of negatives can stay in place, but should be interleaved, sleeved, or enclosed.

Store negatives vertically, if possible.

Consult with conservator before removing negative from original housing.

**Storage and Climate**

Acetate and nitrate negatives should be kept in frozen storage with vapor proof packaging.

Polyester should be kept in a cool/cold environment with moderate humidity (50°F and 30% RH).

No light exposure.

**Contact** Conservator

### Cellulose Nitrate Negative Deterioration



**Level 1**

No deterioration.

**Level 2**

The negatives begin to yellow and mirror.

**Level 3**

The film becomes sticky and emits a strong noxious odor (nitric acid).

**Level 4**

The film becomes an amber color and the image begins to fade.

**Level 5**

The film is soft and can weld to adjacent negatives, enclosures and photographs.

**Level 6**

The film degenerates into a brownish acid powder.

### Cellulose Acetate Negative Deterioration



**Level 2/3 Level 4 Level 5 Level 6**

**Level 1**

No deterioration

**Level 2**

Film has a vinegar odor. Shrinkage and embrittlement begin.

**Level 3**

Film curls and turns blue or pink as anti-halation dyes reappear.

**Level 4**

Film warps

**Level 5**

Film develops bubbles and crystalline deposits under/on the emulsion due to the plasticizers moving onto the surface of the negative.

**Level 6**

Extensive channeling on both sides of the negative.

## Photographic Cased Images

**Description**

Daguerreotype

Ambrotype

Tintype

**Problems**

Fragile – can break and scratch easily.

Fading and image change from light exposure.

Accelerated deterioration caused by adverse &/or rapidly changing temperature and humidity.

Chemical damage from adjacent materials &/or bad storage enclosures.

Rusting, flaking or blistering varnish

**Use and Handling**

No food or drink.

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Gloves should be worn at all times

Adequate support and protection at all times.

Do not remove from case.

Flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Use acid free boxing and individual enclosures that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).

Store horizontal.

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact**  Curator or Conservator

## Photographic Glass Plate Negatives

**Description:**

Albumen Glass Negative Lantern Slides

Collodion Glass Negative Bare glass plates with positive image in gelatin

Gelatin Glass Negative Collodion or albumen binder (e.g. bare ambrotype plates)

**Problems**

Very fragile – breaks and scratches easily.

Fading and image change from light exposure.

Accelerated deterioration caused by adverse &/or rapidly changing temperature and humidity.

Chemical damage from adjacent materials &/or bad storage enclosures.

Finger grease.

**Use and Handling**

No food or drink.

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Gloves should be worn at all times.

Adequate support and protection at all times.

Flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Remove all rubber bands and metal fixtures. Consult conservator for instruction.

Use acid free boxing and individual enclosures that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).

House each item vertically in 4-flap paper enclosure and box, oversize or fragile items should be stored flat.

All papers or folders housing must be the same size as the box interior so stop movement.

Plates should have emulsion side facing away from any seams in the enclosure.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climates**  Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contacts** Curator or Conservator

## Photographic Color Prints on Paper

**Description**

Chromogenic dye-formed images.

Polaroid dye-transfer images

Cibachrom/Ilfochrome silver dye bleach images

**Problems**

Fading and image change from light exposure.

Accelerated deterioration caused by adverse &/or rapidly changing temperature and humidity.

Mechanical damage during use, tight curls, folds, scratches and tears.

Chemical damage from adjacent materials &/or bad storage enclosures.

Finger grease.

**Use and Handling**

No food or drink.

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Gloves should be worn at all times

Adequate support and protection at all times.

Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Remove all rubber bands and metal fixtures. Consult conservator for instruction.

Store flat in boxes with interleaving paper

Use acid free**, unbuffered** boxing and individual interleaving enclosures that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).

All interleaving papers or folders must be the same size as the outer box to prevent movement.

Uncoated polyethylene, polyester or Mylar sleeves can be used in storage environments less than 70% relative humidity.

Prints should have emulsion side facing away from any seams in the enclosures.

**Shelf Sizes**

0-28 cm Regular stacks

29-49cm Folio (f)

50cm and up Flat Folio (ff)

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

Rare, high value prints Category C: - Frozen < 32°F and 40% RH

**Contacts** Curator or Conservator

## Moving Image Film

**Description**

Cellulose Nitrate (1890s – 1950s)

Cellulose Acetate (circa. 1909)

Polyester (mid 1950s)

35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Super8mm

**Problems**

The most common types of film decay and damage encountered are mechanical damage (ripped perforations, torn and scratched film, and broken/decayed splices), biological agents (mold and mildew, usually identifiable as white spots), and vinegar syndrome. Vinegar syndrome, or acetate decay, is a natural process affecting cellulose acetate film stock. Vinegar syndrome is most readily identified through the pungent vinegar odor, but advanced stages of the process will show as shrinking/spoking of the film stock, and eventually the appearance of white powder along the edges and surface of the film. Acetate decay is a natural process, and so it is not reversible, but it can be slowed significantly if proper storage conditions are maintained. Digitization, or transfer to new film stock, is the only way to insure low-term access to materials affected by acetate decay.

**Use and Handling**

Should only be played/viewed for digitization and handled by staff with clean cotton gloves.

**Shelving/Storage**

For 16mm and 35mm film, ideal storage consists of vented, polypropylene film cans (or lignin free boxes). 16mm and 35mm films should ideally be transferred from original reels to 3” plastic cores. 8mm film should remain on original reels, or be transferred to plastic reels (cores are not used for small gauge films). Film should be shelved flat.

Cellulose acetate film exhibiting signs of vinegar syndrome should be segregated from other collection materials. Acetate film showing advanced signs of vinegar syndrome degradation should be moved to cold storage (below freezing). Cellulose nitrate film should also be segregated from other collection materials. A few reels of nitrate film can be stored in a frost-free freezer, but larger quantities (25-750 pounds) should be stored at low temperatures in specialized, externally vented steel cabinets or vaults with built-in fire suppression. Magnetic tracks and composite prints with magnetic tracks should not be stored below freezing, unless advanced vinegar syndrome is detected.

**Ideal Climate**

Category B: – Cold. 50°F and30% RH.

Category C: - Frozen. < 32°F and 40% RH

**Contact.** Moving Image Archivist

## Optical Discs

**Description**

Though optical carriers generally are considered among the oldest of audiovisual carriers (in use for more than 170 years), optical disc formats specifically are a relatively recent innovation. There are a wide variety of optical disc formats commonly in use including: DVD (Digital Versatile Disc), CD (Compact Disc), CD-ROM (Read-Only-Memory), CD-R/DVD-R (recordable), CD-RW/DVD-RW (rewritable), Blu-ray Disc (BD) and Laser Vision Disc (LV) formats.

The bulk of an optical disc is typically made of polycarbonate, stamped with a spiral pattern of “pits” (holes) and “lands” (flat areas) that encodes information in a binary system. A reflective layer, usually aluminum, covers the pitted surface and a protective layer of clear lacquer sits on top. When played, discs are spun at varying speeds (based on format) and the information is “read” via laser diode. Variations in reflective depth register the binary encoding on the disc. Recordable discs utilize a dye surface information layer (either cyanine, phthalo-cyanine or azo), while rewritable discs use a phase-changing metal alloy to record information.

**Problems**

While there is no detectable deterioration of discs based on replay, some disc formats are highly susceptible to damage from exposure to heat and sunlight (especially recordable and rewritable formats), and metal oxidation from exposure to moisture is a factor potentially affecting the reflective layer of optical discs (gold discs excluded). Dust and dirt, surface scratching and disc fracture are the greatest concerns with preservation of optical disc formats.

**Handling and *S*torage**

Discs should be handled with care to avoid scratching of read-out surface. Playing surface of discs should not be touched with bare fingers. Two hands should be used when releasing discs from containers with center holding clamps (as with a typical jewel case) – one hand to release the mechanism, the other hand to remove the disc. Discs should not be bent and writing on disc labels with hard tipped utensils should be avoided.

Optical discs should be stored vertically. Appropriate containers and enclosures will provide some degree of protection against sudden or short term environmental changes and protect from dust, dirt and light. Acid free paper sleeves, plastic jewel cases or polypropylene cases or sleeves should be used to house individual discs. Ideally, discs should be stored within a drawer or larger archival container for additional protection.

Duplication of discs or transfer of contents to digital format/storage should be considered for singularly unique items, to insure against future damage/failure of original carrier.

**Ideal Climate.** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact** Moving Image Archivist.

## Videotape

**Description**

Videotape first came in to use in the mid-1950s, when 2” Quad tapes allowed television networks to delay programs for performance in different time zones. Over the years, a variety of different formats have come in to use, both professional and consumer-oriented, including 2” Quad (reel-to-reel), 1” Type C (reel-to-reel), ½” EIAJ (reel-to-reel), Umatic (cassette), VHS (cassette), Betacam (cassette), Hi 8 (mini-cassette), D-2 (digital cassette), and many others.

All videotape is made of a polyester base film (most are polyester terephthalate, or PET), with a carbon-black backcoat and magnetic coating on top. The magnetic coating includes magnetic particles, a binder (to adhere the particles to the back film), a lubricant, head cleaning agent, and a surficant. While the exact constitution of the magnetic particles and the mix-recipe are proprietary to each brand, it is known that the earliest Quad tapes used iron-oxide particles, while the first 1” varieties used a cobalt-based mixture.

**Problems**

Hydrolysis of the polyester tape binder (typically urethane) is usually considered the primary factor in the life-span of a video tape, so it is very important that tapes are maintained in a low humidity environment. Tapes are also very susceptible to damage through repeated play back, which is why it is recommended that original tapes are only ever performed a single time, for the production of a preservation master copy; use copies can be subsequently generating from the preservation master.

Videotape is commonly affected by sticky-shed syndrome—a condition marked by the decay and flaking of the surface binder. Videotapes are also affected by a whole host of playback problems (signal degradation) that result from the degradation of the magnetic coating layer and changes in the elasticity of the base film.

Unlike paper and photographic formats, access to videotape content is entirely dependent on the availability of functional playback equipment. The obsolescence of this equipment, combined with the degradation of the physical tapes, makes videotape preservation an urgent challenge. Digitization of videotape, or transfer to digital formats, is the only effective long-term action for preservation of videotape.

**Shelving and *S*torage**

Tapes should be shelved vertically and should not be stacked because cassette-casings are prone to breakage. Ultraviolet light exposure, dust, heat and humidity are the primary concerns for videotape storage. Care should be taken to keep tapes away from sunlight, excessive heat and strong magnetic fields. Videotape should ideally be stored in the lowest humidity storage conditions possible (lower limit of 20% RH).

**Use and Handling**

Videotapes should be handled gently and kept in protective cases when not in use. Open reel tapes should be handled by the hub.

Videotapes should not be transported in excessively hot conditions. Tapes moving from cold storage should be allowed a period of acclimatization at room-temperature before playback. Original videotape items should ideally be played back once, for preservation purposes. Digitization should be done by an experienced handler.

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact** Moving Image Archivist.

## Magnetic Audio Tape

**Description**

Width ¼-inch, ½-inch, 1-inch, 2-inch.

AEG Telefunken developed magnetic audio tape in Germany in the 1930s but it wasn’t until after World War II that use expanded beyond Germany. From the late 1940s and early 50s, it was used mainly in the broadcast and recording industries.

Home recorders, capable of recording at lower speeds and in different track configurations were introduced in the late 1950s. Portable magnetic tape machines came onto the market at this time and led to an explosion of sound recordings on magnetic tape for field research.

Magnetic tape is comprised of two main layers: The magnetic layer (on which the recording is held) and the base layer. Many tapes have an additional back coating, which helped for smoother winding and tighter packing of the tape, and which also reduced the electrostatic charge that playing and recording induced.

Base layers are made of four main substances: cellulose acetate (1930s–70s), polyvinyl chloride (1944–72), polyester (polyethylene terephthalate (1950s – ), and polyethylene naphthalate (used mainly for digital video and computer back-up tape).

**Problems**

Cellulose acetate (CA) can be identified by holding the tape pack up to a light source. CA is, with few exceptions, translucent and the light should shine through. There are two main processes that affect CA tape and lead to deterioration and potential loss of playback: **hydrolysis** (more widely known as “vinegar syndrome”) and **plasticizer loss (embrittlement)**. Vinegar syndrome is brought on by the presence of water and/or high humidity; it is an auto-catalytic process, so once it starts, acid is released, and this reaction with the base speeds the release of yet more acid. **Plasticizer** loss may also result in deleterious effects. Tapes which are losing or have lost their plasticizer may exhibit this through geometric deformations, such as spoking through the packed tape, squared packs (deforming the normally round pack), or curling/cupping of the tape itself; the type of reel or hub that the tape is on, as well as the quality of the pack, contributes to these types of deformation. Tapes which have lost their plasticizer become brittle and can break or shatter.

Polyester tapes are opaque when held up to a light source. Polyester tapes do not show embrittlement and depending on the type of polyester and the time at which it was produced, chemical deterioration varies. PVC tapes (primarily German in origin and produced between ~1944 and ~1972) have shown “no systematic chemical deterioration” … but are prone to winding problems (uneven packs, windowing, etc.). PET tapes, produced from the 1950s on, also shows no systematic chemical breakdown but it stretches rather than breaks. **Shoelacing** is a lengthening and thinning of the tape. Tape that has shoelaced may be unrecoverable. Proper mechanical playback is required to prevent this from happening.

Binder Problems:

Pigment binder problems occur on both CA and Polyester tapes. Pigment binders are the chemicals that adhere the magnetic layer to the base layer and to the back matting.

On CA tapes, pigment binder problems manifest as dry pigment shedding. Tapes are highly fragile. Such binder shedding is, however, not frequent on early tapes (1950s – 1960s).

On polyester tapes, binder problems can be more problematic. A frequently observed problem is **sticky shed syndrome** (SSS) or **hydrolysis.** Back matting of tapes (1970s onward) was intended to reduce pack problems and winding problems. As these tapes age, the pigments that bond the tape to the back matting, as well as lubricant, can absorb moisture from the surrounding environment. The result is tape that sticks to itself (you hold the tape up and the end does not fall freely away from the pack). This can cause pigment to slough off on the guides, heads or capstan. Sticky shed can be remediated (temporarily) by exposure to low humidity and elevated temps (baking). New research has investigated new explanations for and methodologies to combat SSS; however, baking is the primarily agreed upon remediation.

**Use and Handling**

Tapes on hubs without flanges (the tape is not on a reel) should **not** be taken out of the box without the use of a flange. Unspooled tape looks like spaghetti, and can be difficult and time consuming to fix. Please flag for the Sound Archivist’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Tapes on hubs should be housed in acid free boxes with plastic centers which fit the hub snuggly. Tapes on reels should be housed in acid free boxes.

Magnetic tape reels and hubs come in four main sizes: 3”, 5”, 7” and 10.5”; there are also larger reels in our collections. Everything save oversized reels should be stored upright and supported by book ends or other tapes. Book ends should be placed at the equivalent distance to the diameter of the tapes. Shelves should minimally be set to accommodate 7” reels, but if collection contains all sizes, set shelves at 11” to accommodate all recordings (or segregate by size to achieve some space efficiency).

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and 30% RH.

**Contact** Audio Archivist and/or Curator

## Instantaneous Recordings; Transcription Discs; Lacquer Discs; “Acetates”

**Description**

Diameters: 7-inch; 10-inch; 12-inch; 16-inch

Lacquer discs were mainly used for recording rehearsals, test pressings, and radio broadcasts and dubbing recordings from off air (transcription discs). Lacquer disc recordings are, most of the time, unique recordings.

Instantaneous discs are a media format that allowed recording onto disc without pressing or commercial means. The discs’ surfaces were soft enough to cut a recording into but hard enough to allow playback. Discs were either homogenous in composition (aluminum, zinc, PVC or gelatin) or were composed of a substrate with a lacquer laminate surface composed of cellulose nitrate mixed with castor oil or camphor. Since 1930, laminate lacquers were made primarily of aluminum. During WWII, aluminum was in short supply so discs were made out of glass with cardboard centers. For home recordings, cardboard was popular. You can identify the substrate of laminated discs visually (the center holes and edges) and weight (glass discs are heavier than their aluminum counterparts).

**Problems**.

Cellulose nitrate laminated discs will deteriorate quicker over time. The process is aided by (and speeded up) exposure to humidity. The breakdown of cellulose nitrate provides a catalyst for the production of palmitic acid, a white waxy substance that accumulates on the surface of the recording. All build up must be cleaned off only by staff before playing, excessive build up may have an effect on playback. Moreover this degradation combined with the loss of the plasticizers (castor oil/camphor) leads to progressive embrittlement and shrinkage.

Embrittlement and shrinkage leads to cracking and flaking of the recorded surface because the lacquer is bonded to a substrate that cannot shrink. Mechanical and thermal stress should be avoided. Cardboard and paper based lacquer discs will exhibit uneven cracking and flaking.

**All lacquer discs should be considered fragile. Life expectancy across the format is unpredictable and discs should be assessed as soon as possible, rehoused, and added to the queue for digital transfer**

**Use and Handling**

Always hold a record by the edges; fingerprints deposit oils and dirt on the record that can create further problems. Discs should be put into acid-free cardstock sleeves.

**Shelving/Storage**

Discs should be stored upright. Book stops should be used at half the linear distance of the diameter (e.g., book stops should be 8” apart for 16” discs). The only exceptions to upright storage are soft homogenous discs (like those made from gelatin), glass lacquer discs that are cracked, or discs that show excessive flaking and delamination. These discs should be stabilized (if physically damaged) and stored horizontally.

**Ideal Storage.** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contacts** Audio Archivist and/or Curator

## Cylinder Recordings

**Description**

Wax or celluloid on a metal or plaster core.

Predominant sizes (Diameter x Length): 2.25" x 4.50"; 2.25" x 6.00"; 3.50" x 4.50"; 5" x 4.50"

Date range: 1877-1950s

**Problems**

Fragile and highly susceptible to mold attack compounded by bad storage conditions which also increases chemical breakdown, efflorescence (resembles mold), brittleness, expansion and contraction stresses. Easily damaged by careless handling or physical abrasion.

**Use and Handling**

Cylinders are always handled by the interior, either on a mandrel or by using two or three fingers. Never hold a cylinder by applying pressure on the outside of the cylinder.

**Shelving/Storage**

Cylinders should be stored upright in either their original container or in acid free boxes or trays on metal shelves or in metal cabinets. Shelving should be tall enough so as not to inhibit the removal of the cylinder.

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold, 50°F and30% RH.

**Contacts** Audio Archivist and/or Curator

## Plastics

**Description**

A synthetic material made from a wide range of organic polymers such as polyethylene, PVC, nylon, etc., Can be molded into shape while soft and then set into a rigid or slightly elastic form.

Includes commercial items, domestic items and household furnishings, personal items, jewelry and adornment.

**Problems**

Sensitive to light, heat and humidity fluctuations, ozone and other atmospheric contaminants.

Signs of decay include color change, chalkiness or bloom, softening, surface tackiness, and embrittlement. Mold, mildew, odors and surface acidity can also occur.

Deteriorating items may pollute other adjacent items.

**Use and handling**

Ensure adequate clean and dry desk space

Use cotton gloves.

Handle with great care.

**Shelving/Storage**

Separate different types of plastics.

Separate deteriorated items from collection.

Deterioration can be slowed by lowering temperature and relative humidity levels, reducing light exposure and avoiding mechanical stress or contact with liquids or vapors.

Ventilated boxes with loose wrapped acid free tissue and closed cell ethylene foam supports.

**Ideal Climate.** Category B: – Cold, 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Ivory, Bone and Horn

**Description**

Ivory and bone are comprised of 70% calcium phosphate, various carbonates and fluorides; the remaining 30 % is collagen. Horn is 100% organic

**Problems**

Adverse and/or rapidly changing temperature/humidity will weaken items over time, causing cracking and other dimensional changes. Ivory is less susceptible to this unless it’s been cut into thin sheets.

Can be mistaken for plastic, or vice versa.

**Use and Handling.**

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Dependent on nature of object, care should be taken to give adequate support and protection at all times. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Store with adequate support and protection, separate from other formats if possible.

Use ventilated boxes with loosely wrapped acid free tissue and closed cell ethylene foam supports.

**Ideal Climate** Category A: – Room Temperature 68°F and 40% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Textiles

**Description**

Cotton, linen, wool, silk and man-made fibers (Rayon, etc.)

**Problems**

Sensitive to heat and humidity fluctuations; light, ozone and other atmospheric contaminants.

Avoid exposure to light, dust, dirt and all liquids.

Susceptible to biological attack by animals, insects, fungus mold and mildew.

**Use and Handling**

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space

Use cotton gloves.

Handle with great care.

**Shelving/Storage**

Store flat with adequate support and protection

Use ventilated boxes with loosely wrapped acid free tissue and closed cell ethylene foam supports.

**Ideal Climate** Category A: – Room Temperature 68°F and 40% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Wood

**Description**

Organic cellulose material consisting of 49% carbon, 6% hydrogen, 0.2% nitrogen; the remaining elements vary from one tree species to another.

Characteristics can vary in color, grain, cell and tissue arrangement, durability, porosity and strength.

**Problems**

Extreme or rapid temperature and humidity fluctuations will cause expansion/contraction causing cracking, warping and other damage.

Susceptible to biological attack by animals, insects, fungus mold and mildew.

**Use and Handling**

Dependent on nature of object, care should be taken to give adequate support and protection at all times. Route catalogued material to the conservation lab as part of end processing. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Use ventilated acid free buffered boxes, wrappers, papers and closed cell ethylene foam supports.

Store flat and well supported on shelf.

**Ideal Climate** Category A: – Room Temperature 68°F and 40% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Metals

**Description**

A substance (such as silver, gold, tin, copper or brass) which has a shiny appearance, is a good conductor of electricity and heat, can be melted, and is usually capable of being shaped.

**Problems**

Possible corrosion, discoloration and tarnishing in adverse environments.

Can be integral with other types of materials (book clasps, nails, screws, etc.)

Can be heavy objects and difficult to handle or carry.

**Use and Handling**

Use cotton gloves.

Ensure adequate clean, dry desk space.

Dependent on nature of object, care should be taken to give adequate support and protection at all times. Please flag for the conservator’s attention if the item is damaged or fragile.

**Shelving/Storage**

Store with adequate support and protection

Use ventilated boxes with loosely wrapped acid free tissue and closed cell ethylene foam supports.

**Ideal Climate** Category A: – Room Temperature 68°F and 40% RH.

**Contact**  Conservator

## Born Digital

*[This section is preliminary only; more work is required.]*

**Description**

Born digital materials are materials which began their existence as a digital file. Although born-digital objects may reside on a physical carrier, and physical surrogates may be created (e.g., a printout of a Word document), the original archival item is the born-digital object consisting of one or more digital files.

**Problems**

Born digital material presents special problems. First, like recordings on film or magnetic tape, born-digital materials may exist on a physical carrier (a CD-ROM, a floppy disk), necessitating preservation of both content and carrier (or the decision to remove the content from the carrier, e.g. by creating a disk image). Second, various types of hardware and/or software may be necessary in order to access born-digital material. This hardware and software may or may not be available as time goes by. The question of use copies thus becomes more complicated with born-digital items – for example, will a standard format like PDF serve as an appropriate use copy of a music score written in Sibelius, or an email message originally in Outlook? Third, metadata about a file (creation date, software used, etc.) may be embedded within the original digital file; this information may be altered if the file is opened or copied, even if it is not edited. Fourth, some born-digital objects consist of several inter-related files (for example, a website or a “project” in AutoCAD); rearranging or separating these files may damage or destroy the born-digital object.

**Use and handling**

Ideally, a disk image should be created of any physical carrier of born-digital material and any handing or use should be performed on a copy of this disk image rather than on the original carrier. This should be done on a dedicated standalone workstation not connected to the internet or intranet. If possible an appropriate use copy should be created; the format of this use copy may vary depending on circumstances.

**Shelving/Storage**

For born-digital materials that arrive on a physical carrier, a disk image should be created and placed in the Repository and the physical carriers placed into appropriate containers and enclosures to provide some degree of protection against sudden or short term environmental changes and safeguard from dust, dirt and light. For born-digital material that arrives without a physical carrier – e.g. a PDF emailed by the donor – the files should be detached from the email and placed into the Repository in a folder, using existing naming conventions (e.g. “charters\_an\born\_digital\_accessions\M10-085”). Repository files, whether disk images or original donations, should be periodically verified using checksums or some other accepted method.

**Ideal Climate** Category B: – Cold 50°F and30% RH.

**Contact.** Lead Archivist

1. 1. “Processing” *SAA Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005, accessed May 23, 2011 <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=431> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Artificial Collection” *SAA Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005, accessed May 23, 2011 <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=205> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Restrictions” *SAA Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005, accessed September 4, 2015 <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/r/restriction> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Restrictions” *SAA Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 2005, accessed September 4, 2015 <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/r/restriction> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)