



STORAGE

Modern office supplies and archival materials do not mix. Adhesives and clips can cause staining and physical damage, while modern inks can create permanent discoloration. Pressure-sensitive tape is especially notorious for causing irreversible, disfiguring stains over time.

When preparing items for storage, consider the long-term stability of the storage materials used.

- Make needed annotations in pencil only.
- Avoid tape, stick-on notes, metal fasteners, and rubber bands.
- Contain loose pieces in folders and boxes available from archival suppliers.
- Avoid colored folders and papers.

LEARN MORE

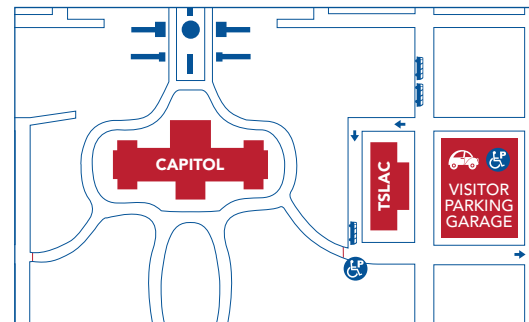
Caring for Your Treasures
American Institute for Conservation
www.culturalheritage.org

Caring for Your Collections
Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/preservation/care/



1201 BRAZOS STREET
 AUSTIN, TX 78701
www.tsl.texas.gov
 512-463-5455
statearchives@tsl.texas.gov

For current reading room hours and to plan your visit, see:
www.tsl.texas.gov/visit



To support *TSLAC* visit the *Texas Library and Archives Foundation* at
www.txlaf.org

PRESERVATION

CARING FOR YOUR HISTORICAL TREASURES



INTRODUCTION

Your personal and family heritage is part of the historical record of our state and nation.

With appropriate care and maintenance, you can help preserve your historical treasures for future generations.

This brochure outlines common deterioration problems in books and paper documents and offers solutions you can implement at home.

HANDLING

Books and paper documents can become brittle and fragile with age. Many Texas historical items were made during the mid-19th and early-20th centuries, a time period in which increased mechanization caused a decrease in paper quality.

Items from this period often have a high acid content that makes them especially susceptible to embrittlement and breaking.

Wash your hands before handling items to minimize the transfer of body oil, skin care products, and food residue that can damage paper over time.

Store documents flat and use a support to move and turn them with minimal flexing.

Open books carefully and consider supporting them with a cushion; not all books can open flat on a table.



TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

Archival documents and books are extremely sensitive to environmental conditions. Temperature and humidity impact mold growth, insect infestation, warping, curling, and many other problems.

A poor environment can trigger deterioration that might not otherwise begin.

Serious damage can be caused by environmental extremes and sudden fluctuations in temperature and humidity, more precisely known as relative humidity. A stable, controlled environment is your strongest weapon against material degradation.

Store items between 65 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit and between 45% and 55% relative humidity.

Keep temperature and relative humidity stable, with changes of only a few degrees or percentage points.

Avoid uncontrolled storage environments like attics, basements, and storage sheds.

LIGHT

Light causes cumulative, irreversible damage to archival materials. Over time, light exposure will cause inks and dyes to fade and paper to become yellow, brittle, and fragile. Just like people, historical items are especially harmed by ultraviolet rays. No treatment can reverse the effects of light, but many problems can be completely avoided with proper care.

Store items away from intense light, like direct sunlight and harsh fluorescent bulbs.

Avoid long-term light exposure and permanent display. A high-quality copy may be a viable display option to help preserve irreplaceable originals.

PESTS

Insects and rodents may view your historical documents as an inviting meal. In Texas, cockroaches, silverfish, and carpet beetles pose special threats to paper and adhesives, sometimes chewing through hundreds of sheets of paper at a time. While summer is their most active season, insects and larvae may become dormant through cold months and reemerge later. Visible evidence of pests often indicates more activity behind the scenes.

Store your valuable collections in climate- and pest-controlled areas.

Inspect items regularly to guard against unwanted visitors.

Keep storage areas clean to avoid attracting further pests.