

Saving Your Family History

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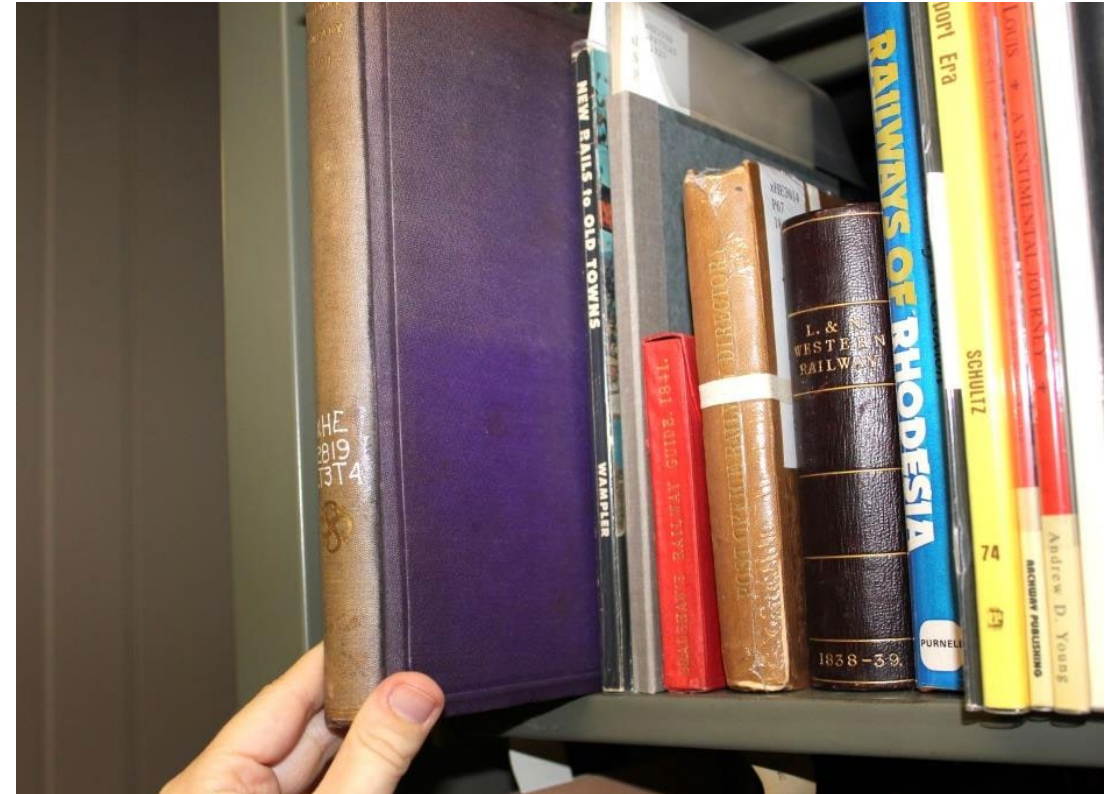


TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

COMMERCE

General Environment

- Temperature-Room temperature (68-72°) ok, but colder is better
- Relative Humidity- keep between 30-50% for most objects
- Light-avoid long exposure if possible (UV Rays cause fading)



Buildings and Storage

- Away from light
- Avoid attics and basements
- Use interior rooms
- Keep items in boxes or other containers
- Keep items off floors
- Avoid wood containers/shelves



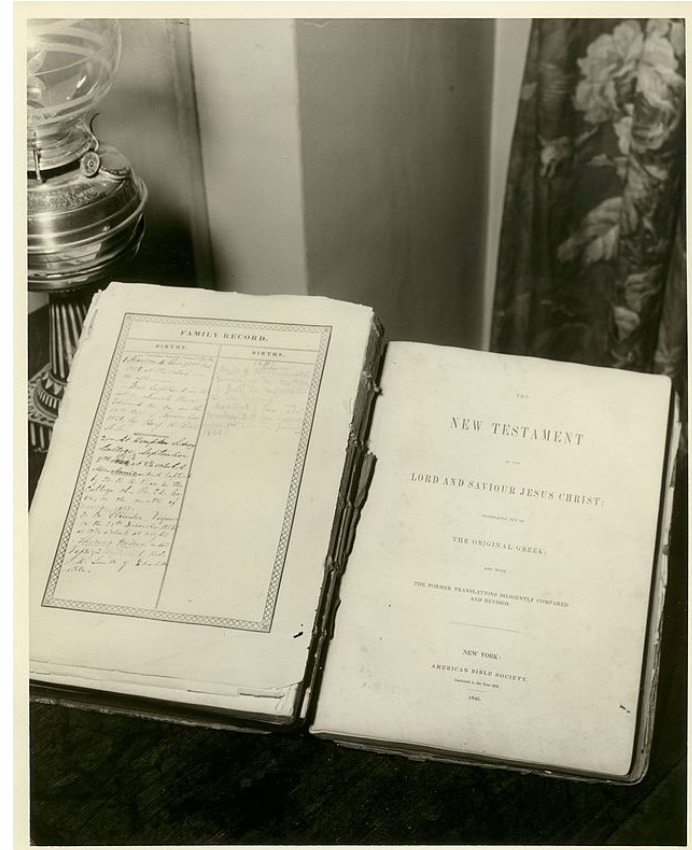
Documents

- Put papers in folders
 - Large enough to cover all of document
- Create a system for organization
- Limit use of paper clips/staples/fasteners
- Limit handling and display



Books and Bound Volumes

- Check binding for cracks
- Red Rot-leather
- Turn pages regularly if open and displayed
- Store vertically or flat (if oversized)
- Stack items larger to smaller
- Don't force open
- Seek professional help if spine broken

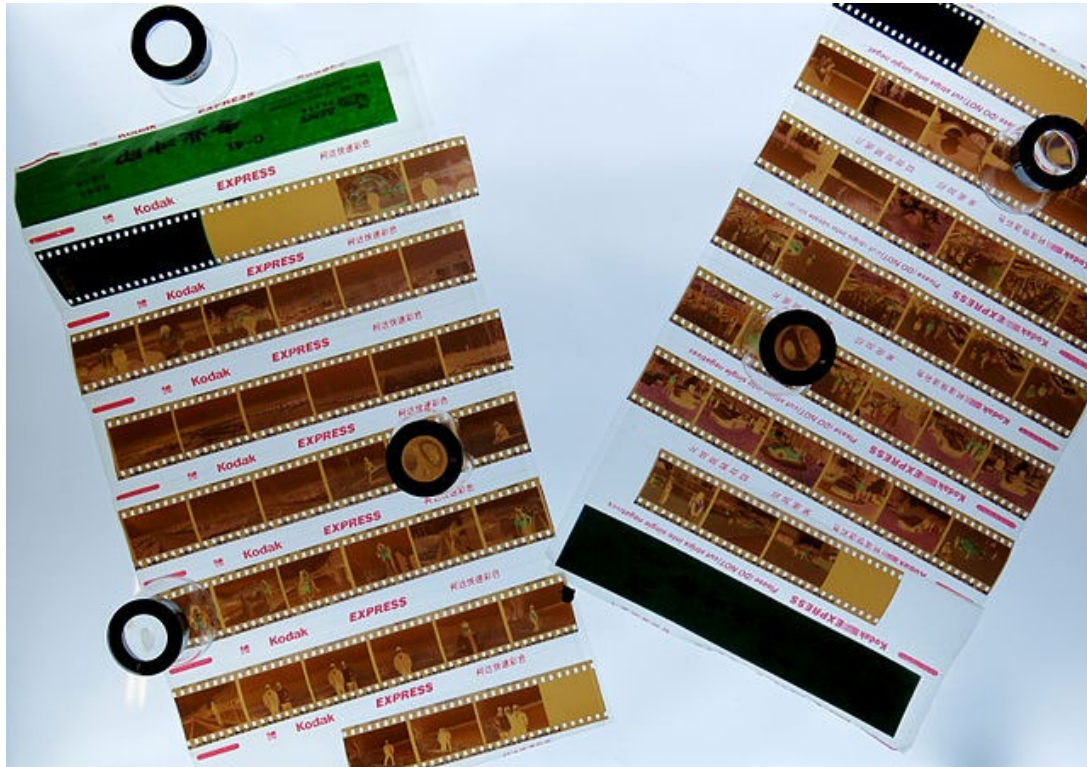


Photographs



- Use gloves/hold by edges
- ID people/location/dates if known
- Use soft lead when writing on back of images
- Store in sleeves, envelopes, or folders
- Moisture problem
- Color fading

Negatives



- ➔ Handle similarly to photos
- ➔ Place in sleeves
- ➔ Limit light exposure



Photo albums and Scrapbooks

- Use copies of original items
- Use photo corners instead of glue or tape
- Store similarly to other books



A/V Cassette Tapes



- Limit number of plays
- Test playback machine before using
- Tape is fragile and susceptible to moisture
- Digitize to other format for long-term access

Framed Items and Artwork

- Store upright
- Watch for moisture
- Check backing materials
- Contact conservator for cleaning/restoration
- Consider removing from frame (non-artwork)



3D Objects

- Care varies based on type of material
- Refer to the National Park Service Conserv-O-Grams for more information: https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/cons_toc.html



Preserving Your Digital History

- ➔ Your digital history includes:
 - ➔ digitized copies of physical items (photos, VHS tapes, etc)
 - ➔ Photos and videos taken on camera
 - ➔ Documents or other files created on your computer
- ➔ Standards apply to any of these



Storage of Files

- ➔ Good idea to have backups of digitized files
- ➔ External hard drives are usually adequate for personal purposes, and are reasonably affordable
 - ➔ Don't store on DVD/CDs as these are becoming obsolete; Drives are less common
- ➔ Cloud storage (OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive) may be an option, but may require a subscription



Resolution and File Size

- Higher resolution better for printing, lower resolution better for browsing and sharing online
- Check phone or camera settings for resolution and file type
- Check cloud settings
- Exporting directly from phone/camera vs. downloading from social media/text (compression)



Digitization - More Information

- Additional details about standards for digitizing different types of media, including resolution and format

[Standards and Practices for Creating Quality Digital Objects](https://bit.ly/3LaLGCD)

<https://bit.ly/3LaLGCD>



Digital Documents

- ➔ PDF is a good format for documents
 - ➔ Mostly read-only, more secure
 - ➔ Accessible across different platforms (PC to Mac)
- ➔ Can use optical character recognition-many scanners have software
 - ➔ Makes your documents text searchable
 - ➔ Doesn't work as well on handwriting
- ➔ Important e-mails saved as PDF, convert attachments



Audio/Video

- ➔ Can be labor intensive, may require special equipment or outsourcing
- ➔ Consider how your files are coming back to you
 - ➔ CDs/DVDs being phased out
 - ➔ May be better to convert cassette or VHS to an mp3 or mp4 format instead of CD/DVD



Organizing Files

- ➔ Consider file naming, do not use name from camera or phone
 - ➔ YYYY-MM-DD format for sorting chronologically
- ➔ How will you organize your digital folders?
 - ➔ Match physical collection?
 - ➔ Date? Location? Events?
- ➔ Examples that follow are a simple version of what we do in the Archives to organize and describe our own files



Leading Zeros

- ➔ Leading zeros can help eliminate sorting issues – three is good practice
 - ➔ YYYY-MM-DD_Birthday_001
 - ➔ FamilyHistory_B001_F001_019
- ➔ Download batch rename tools online
- ➔ Most importantly: **do what works for you**



Contact Us

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