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## Photograph and Paper Preservation Tips

### April 27, 2022

- Handle items carefully with clean hands, and avoid touching the surface of photographs
- Remove items from harmful enclosures such as unknown plastics or aging photo albums
- Yellowing is a sign that documents are becoming acidic and will become brittle and fragile
- Storing things in the house where the people are will provide climate control will help minimize damage from fluctuations of temperatures and humidity
- Extra care is needed unfolding or unrolling items; store things flat and unfolded if possible to minimize wear and tear at the folds or cracking of photo emulsions
- Keep items out of direct or constant light—whether displayed or stored.
- Use archival materials for framing, such as acid free and lignin free mats and backing materials
- Avoid using adhesives for preservation items, do not attempt repairs

## Researching Photographs

### Northeast Document Conservation Center

Leaflets for identifying various photographic process and dates:

Types of Photographs, part 1: 19th and Early 20th Century

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.2-types-of-photographs>

5.2.2 Types of Photographs, part 2: Color

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.2.2-types-of-photographs,-part-2-color-new>

5.2.3 Types of Photographs, part 3: Digital Output Media

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.2.3-types-of-photographs,-part-3-digital-output-media>

5.1 A Short Guide to Film Base Photographic Materials: Identification, Care, and Duplication

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.1-a-short-guide-to-film-base-photographic-materials-identification,-care,-and-duplication>

### Image Permanence Institute

Excellent tools for identifying photographs, especially digitally printed Materials:

<http://www.dp3project.org/identification>

[Graphics Atlas: Welcome](#)

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## Sources for Archival Supplies

Remember to look for the following:

- Acid Free and Lignin Free paper products
- PVC Free plastics Good” plastics such as *polyester (also known as Mylar)*, *polypropylene*, *cellulose triacetate*, and *polyethylene*.
- “Passed PAT” (Photographic Activity Test) means the material has been tested safe for photos

Many frame shops and arts and crafts supply stores or websites now carry archival quality materials, be sure to examine the descriptions or specifications for the terms above.

Gaylord Archival: [www.Gaylord.com](http://www.Gaylord.com)

University Products: [www.UniversityProducts.com](http://www.UniversityProducts.com)

Print File Archival: [www.PrintFile.com](http://www.PrintFile.com)

Sterilite® Brand CLEAR plastic boxes are archivally safe (as of this date). Choose styles with loose fitting lids to avoid creating microclimates.

## Conservators and Appraisers

American Institute for Conservation <https://www.culturalheritage.org/> (202) 452-9545

Book Restoration Company, James Twomey, Kenosha, WI <https://bookrestoration.co/> 800-228-1943

American Society of Appraisers <https://myaccount.appraisers.org/Directories/Find-An-Appraiser>