

## **PRESERVATION PROCESSING STEPS FOR PAPER-BASED COLLECTIONS**

**Collection is accessioned** into the legal custody of a repository (if it supports the repository's mission statement) and planning begins.

- Collection is priority-surveyed on the basis of value, use and risk relative to other collections in the repository, to determine its relative housing, duplication and treatment needs.
  - Collection selected as a priority for preservation is surveyed to determine resource needs such as housing, duplication, treatment, staff, training, time, space, furniture, equipment and budget (for custom housing, computer, contracts, photocopying and photographing).
  - Resources are allotted; procedures are formulated and tested in a pilot project, depending on the degree of processing desired. (Preservation planning must establish the parameter of processing, such as whether original order must be maintained or a new order developed at the collection, container, folder or item-level for rearrangement, access, treatment selection, etc.).
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**Collection is processed** and its content (physical and intellectual) is identified and entered into a computer record.

- Sets of documents (in file units such as folders or envelopes) are removed from poor quality enclosures and physically sorted by substrate, media, and format, as well as by stability and whether the document is text or pictorial image, original or duplicate. Duplicate material may be sorted out for duplicate master or reference copies if desired. These duplicate copies may also be converted to digitized form for increased distribution/accessibility of collection content.
  - Depending on processing parameters previously agreed upon, where appropriate, documents may be flattened and surface-cleaned; damaging fasteners may be replaced.
  - Appropriate enclosures, folders and containers are selected (based on the document's value, use and risk, as well as substrate, media and format, and depending on whether documents will go into flat, vertical, rolled or hanging storage systems and cabinets, and cool or cold storage).
  - Document folders are labeled and documents are returned to archival quality containers (document or print boxes); in stable furniture (closed shelves or shallow map drawers); in appropriate environments (cold storage for all originals and master duplicates, cool storage for duplication and distribution copies, and ambient temperature for user copies). Relative humidity, light, pollution, and pests must be controlled.
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**Documents are described** in a manner and at a level set by the processing parameters.

- Information is entered into an integrated internal descriptive system designed for texts and images using standard forms of names, places, subject index terms, styles, etc., including inventories, catalogues, data bases, etc.).
- Original or archival original documents having first priority condition risk problems (embrittlement, fragility, flaking media, mold, etc.) are identified on an item-level condition survey form (on a computer) to be slated for conservation treatment.

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**Reformatting options are determined** for original or archival documents having high value, use or risk. Reformatting can be done on site at that time, or at a later time depending on substrate, media, and format of the original and the copy master.

- Duplication or reformatting is considered a preservation activity, under the jurisdiction of conservation and complimentary to conservation treatment, by some federal agencies, at others, it has been under the jurisdiction of individual managers as a reference or publication activity. Reformatting should be a preservation activity undertaken by processors as a routine preventive care procedure to protect collections from reference handling. Reformatting for reference can be done through polyester film enclosures. Duplication for publication should be done only after documents have undergone any necessary conservation treatment to clean, repair, and stabilize them. This way continued handling of original collection material is reduced. Master copies for reference for small monochrome documents, of legal size or under, can be photocopy paper positives or microfilm, each of which should be copied a second time for distribution to users as service copies. The duplicate masters should be stored in optimum conditions such as cold or cool storage, user copies may be stored in ambient conditions. Master copies for reference for small colored documents can be 35mm or 70mm black and white or colored slide or roll film, or 4x5 color transparency sheet film. Master copies for reference of oversized documents should be 4x5, 5x7, or 8x10, unless resolution is adequate on 35mm or 70mm film. Original documents and master copies and duplication masters should be stored in optimum conditions; distribution copies may be digitized for increased accessibility.

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Documents needing treatment are scheduled for treatment; after treatment they may be duplicated using 4x5 - 8x10 for publication quality image.

Prepared by D. van der Reyden, 6/94.