

Archival Materials Handling Guide

Archival materials, rare books, and other materials accessed in the Archives require special care to ensure their long-term preservation. Each time collection materials are handled carefully and correctly, you are practicing 'hands-on conservation' in its most basic sense. The following guidelines should apply whenever collection materials are handled:

1. Please do not take any items out of their polyester or mylar covers. This ensures that photos and other print materials do not get damaged during handling. Staff will provide gloves when handling photographs that are not in a protective covering.
2. No food or drink is permitted while handling archival materials. This helps to prevent pest infestation, the growth of mold, and ensures that materials are not unintentionally harmed.
3. Only use pencils. Markers, pens, highlighters and sticky notes are not permitted around archival materials. Liquids from these materials may leak and damage archival materials. Similarly, the adhesive from sticky notes may cause damage to the materials.
4. Please clean your hands before handling archival materials. This will ensure that dirt and oils are not transferred to any of the collections. Do not use hand creams before handling materials.
5. Requests for a reproduction of an item must be made to the Archivist. Depending on the nature of the request and materials being requested, patrons may be asked to make an appointment for a reproduction. Please do not take flash pictures of the materials as the intensity of the light may damage the materials, causing them to fade.
6. Keep items flat and do not bend items unnecessarily. Avoid touching fragile surfaces. Use caution when unfolding items.
7. Do not place, lean other items on, or otherwise cover the surface of archival materials with other materials. Do not stack materials.
8. Turn pages by lifting from undamaged areas. Avoid turning pages by the corner of an item. Instead lift the page gently and slowly move your hand to the center of the page before flipping. Please do not lick your finger before turning pages.
9. Do not change the order in which archival items are filed.
10. Do not trace or write over any materials that are being viewed.