

## Handling Paper Based Material and Photographic Prints for Scanning

### Purpose:

We intend to provide patrons with access to material in digital format while preserving the original (analog) materials. Preservation of analog materials requires proper handling of items being scanning to prevent damage and may involve preservation treatment before and after scanning is performed.

### General:

- The Preservation department will review all paper based material and photographic prints as part of the project assessment process.
- All pages or items will be turned by hand, not mechanically (unless otherwise specified).
- All material will be handled as little as possible in order to minimize damage and to prolong the life of the original document.
- Scanning workspaces:
  - No food, drink, gum, or smoking is allowed.
  - The follow items or tools are not allowed near the material –
    - No pens, markers or sharp objects.
    - No rubber bands (use grip-tites or unbleached cotton tape to secure material).
    - No paper clips or sticky notes (use acid free paper flags).
  - Provide enough workspace for safe handling of all materials.
  - Avoid stacking materials. If they must be stacked, place largest items on the bottom.
  - Before leaving the workspace for any length of time:
    - Close all books.
    - Return unbound documents to their enclosures or return them to their original order.
    - Cover any unprotected documents left in the workspace.
- Wash hands and do not apply lotion of any sort before handlings materials.
- Gloves are not required, as a rule, since they often make it difficult to handle the material and need frequent cleaning to avoid the transfer of ink, dirt or other unwelcome matter. Exceptions for specific collections or types of material will be noted prior to scanning.
- If any material is too fragile to handle, stop immediately and contact Preservation.
- Never force a book to open when you encounter resistance.
- Do not apply pressure to any item when scanning.

- In some instances, we may provide special instructions for handling depending on the condition and type of material being scanned.
- Items that we consider to be extremely fragile will be scanned by the University of Colorado Libraries, not by a vendor.

### **Bound material:**

- All bound items will be scanned in their entirety to minimize handling. This is particularly true of rare or fragile books. (On occasion only a section of a book may be requested for a particular project. However, it is possible that in future other sections or the entire item may need to be scanned. We will scan the entire item and will extract the requested section(s) digitally). Individual exceptions will be considered based on the condition of the material.
- As a rule, all bound books will be supported by a book cradle or similar support while being scanned unless they can safely be opened 180 degrees.
  - Exceptions:
    - Sheet music and pamphlets that can be safely opened 180 degrees.
    - Non-brittle books with adequate gutters (3/8" or more) and that can easily be opened to 120 degrees may be scanned using an edge scanner, but must be handled with care since this method requires extra handling to invert the book and turn pages. Do not apply pressure when scanning.
- Bound material includes scrapbooks and similarly "joined" material.
- Bound material may contain foldouts.
  - Foldouts will be supported while being unfolded and while being scanned.
  - Large foldouts or fragile centerfold pages that are included in the text block of a bound book may be detached by Preservation from the text block by the University prior to scanning. We will re-insert these pages in their original location within the text block (to assist with file naming).
  - Foldouts will be re-folded and returned to their original position(s) after scanning.
- If the paper appears to be brittle enough to break when handled (or it does break), stop scanning the item immediately and alert Preservation.
  - Brittle pages may be separated for turning by using a thin metal spatula to reduce the possibility of breakage.
  - Particularly fragile materials may be scanned if individual pages are supported while the pages are being handled. This support may consist of a sheet of non-acidic paper if the page or document is small. If the item is particularly fragile it may be supported between two clear sheets of plastic or Mylar (temporary encapsulation). Ask Preservation for assistance.

## Unbound material and flat documents:

- Disbound books will be scanned in their entirety to minimize handling.
- Loose pages, disbound books and flat documents may require support while being scanned to prevent tearing or other damage (see requirements for Fragile Material).
  - Large flat documents will be supported by rigid boards, front and back, while being moved or turned over.
- Unbound material that has been folded may be particularly fragile at the fold lines. If these cannot be unfolded with ease, please alert Preservation. These may require treatment or temporary encapsulation for scanning. However, if they are too fragile to scan without damage, return the material un-scanned with a note providing an explanation.
- Particularly fragile materials may be scanned if individual sheets or documents are supported while being handled. This support may consist of a sheet of non-acidic paper if the item is small. Large or delicate items should be supported between two clear sheets of plastic or Mylar (temporary encapsulation). This is very helpful when the item will need to be scanned on both sides. Ask Preservation for assistance.

## Photographic Prints:

- Handle all photographic prints by the edges. Never touch the emulsion (surface with images).
- Wear clean gloves that fit well. They may be made of lint-free cotton, latex, or nitrile. Gloves will be provided in small, medium or large sizes.
- Curled or curved prints should not be flattened since that may cause the emulsion to crack or flake off. It may be possible to use an overhead scanner, depending on the condition of the print. Contact Preservation.
- More specific guidelines may be provided depending on the type of material being scanned.

## References:

Many of the guidelines defined in this document are drawn from the following sources.

Library of Congress

[\*Principles and Specifications for Preservation Digital Reformatting.\*](#)

[“Session on Care and Handling of Library Materials for Digital Scanning: Safe Handling of Library Materials – Review of Practices” workshop handout \(1999\).](#)

*Best Practice Guidelines for Digital Collections at University of Maryland Libraries.*

*Care and Handling of Physical Collections for Digital Conversion. Yale University Library, Preservation Department.*