COLLECTIONS STORAGE: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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To reduce deterioration, museums are advised to rotate artifacts between exhibition and storage. Exhibit conditions, such as lighting, dust, and the way in which artifacts are mounted or hung, can accelerate deterioration and often cause irreversible damage. A good museum preservation plan eliminates as much as possible the permanent exhibition of artifacts. When not on exhibit, collections must be stored carefully. Appropriate collections storage includes providing dedicated space, proper shelving and other furniture, and acid-free or inert enclosures and containers.

The Field Advisory Service recommends the following resources for information on collections storage. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are part of the Field Advisory Service/OMA lending library and may be borrowed from most public libraries through the Otis interlibrary loan system of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. Please note that video tapes are borrowed directly from the Field Advisory Service office.


“Beware the Artifact: Hazards in Museum Collections,” AASLH annual meeting cassette tape, 1986.*

Canadian Conservation Institute, 1030 Innes Road, Ottawa, Canada KIA OOS, (613) 998-3721.

Produce two- to three-page leaflets, some with illustrations and lists of suppliers. CCI also offers more detailed technical bulletins such as, “Fluorescent Lamps,” and “Controlling Museum Fungal Problems.” Most publications are available free of charge. Leaflets include:

5/1 Care of Ceramics and Glass, 1990
6/1 Care of Ivory, Bone, Horn, and Antler, 1983
6/2 Care of Basketry, 1988
6/4 Care of Objects Decorated with Glass Beads, 1987
6/5 Care of Quillwork, 1983
8/2 Care of Commercially Tanned Leather, 1988
8/3 Care of Mounted Specimens and Pelts, 1984
8/4 Care of Rawhide and Semi-Tanned Leather, 1983
9/4 Basic Care of Coins and Medals, 1989
10/2 Making Padded Blocks (for paintings storage), 1986
10/3 Storage Systems for Paintings, 1986
11/2 Storing Works on Paper, 1986
13/2 Flat Storage for Textiles, 1986
13/3 Rolled Storage for Textiles, 1983
13/5 Hanging Storage for Costumes, 1983
13/12 Storage for Costume Accessories, 1987
15/1 Care of Objects Made From Rubber and Plastic, 1988
15/3 Display and Storage of Museum Objects Containing Cellulose Nitrate, 1988
16/1 Care of Encased Photographic Images, 1986
16/2 Care of Black-and-White Photographic Glass Plate Negatives, 1986
16/3 Care of Photographic Black and White Photographic Negatives on Film, 1986
16/4 Care of Black-and-White Photographic Prints, 1986
16/5 Care of Colour Photographic Materials, 1986


Ellis, Margaret Holben. The Care of Prints and Drawings Nashville: AASLH, 1987.*


Green, Sara Wolf. “Maintenance and Storage of Quilt Collections,” Conservation Notes, Materials Conservation Laboratory, Texas Memorial Museum, University of Texas at Austin, 1983.


The Library of Congress Preservation Office, Washington, DC 20540; 202/707-1840, offers the following technical leaflets free of charge:

- Preservation of Scrapbooks and Albums. Leaflet No. 1 of the Preservation Basics Program of the National Cooperative Information Project, November 1991.

MacLeish, A. Bruce. The Care of Antiques and Historical Collections. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1985.*

Good information on collections storage as well as environmental control and other topics. Some of the suggested conservation treatments should not be undertaken without first consulting a professional conservator.


Cost is $36 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325; GPO Stock Number 024-005-0107-5. Call the GPO information desk at 202/783-3238 to verify the price.

National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division, Harpers Ferry, WV 21526.


The Field Advisory Service offers on-site consultations to help with the development of a collections storage plan. For more information, or to schedule an on-site visit, contact the Field Advisory Service, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2100 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City 73105-4997; 405/521-2491.