

# **Big Read Program - Preserving Scrapbooks**

## **Common Problems with Scrapbooks that make them vulnerable to damage:**

Scrapbook pages tend to be made of poor-quality paper, which deteriorates rapidly becoming stained, brittle and weak with time.

Written notations often span the pages and the enclosed artifacts.

Newspaper clippings are commonly stored in scrapbooks for their informational value. The clippings become very brittle and stain any unprotected items in direct contact with them.

Folded documents are adhered to the scrapbook page over other documents.

Harmful tapes, adhesives and fasteners used to attach documents to the pages of scrapbooks deteriorate and stain items.

Multi-paged letters, pamphlets, heavy cardboard items and two or three-dimensional objects including locks of hair, ribbons, fabric, tokens, badges, pressed flowers are often attached to pages ill equipped to handle the weight of such objects.

The binding structure is often not strong enough to support the bulge caused by too many items contained in the scrapbooks.

## **Basic Solutions:**

### **Handling of Scrapbooks**

Limit the amount of handling of scrapbooks.

Always support the binding and the pages of scrapbooks by transporting volumes with two hands and on a rigid support. Items can easily become detached or torn, and the bindings can break.

Wear white cotton gloves while handling scrapbooks that contain photographic materials.

Examine the condition of the scrapbook before attempting to reformat pages or the entire volume. If reformatting is desirable, avoid force that could damage mounted items or the binding structure.

Reformatting fragile scrapbooks offers a good option for documenting how it was created before partially attached items become loose. It is also a good way to reduce the amount of handling.

## **Housing and Storage of Scrapbooks**

Tie scrapbooks with weak covers or those with covers attached by strings looped through the pages together with unbleached linen or cotton tape. Position the bowknot at the foredge to prevent indentations on the cover caused by pressure.

Wrap scrapbooks with red rot or flaking paper with archival quality paper before placing them in a folder or box.

Sleeve loose, fragile pages of scrapbooks individually. Number each page in pencil (using brackets around the numeral) and maintain the pages in order before placing in a box.





Interleave scrapbook pages with archival-quality paper sparingly; most bindings will not accommodate the bulk added by protective sheets. Interleaving is generally required to protect materials from newspaper clippings, ribbons, artwork, etc.

Smaller volumes can be stored vertically in archival quality boxes with the spine down.

Oversize scrapbooks should be stored flat in archival quality boxes. Flat storage provides better protection for scrapbooks with artifacts loosely attached to the pages.

Store scrapbooks in an area that is cool and dry away from direct sunlight.

**DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR PRESERVING SCRAPBOOKS**

|  | Condition          | Procedures  |
|--|--------------------|---|
| If scrapbook is important for informational content only<br><br>    | Excellent – Good ▶ | House in appropriate box  |
|  | Fair ▶             | Reformat (Photocopy or scan)<br><br>Number copies. Box and retire original artifact.  |
| If scraps have value and the binding does not<br><br>               | Excellent – Good ▶ | House in appropriate box  |
|  | Fair ▶             | Treat Scraps<br><br>House detached items separately in folders or encapsulate and store with scrapbook. Loose items in good condition can be attached with corners. |
| If the book has historical significance and scraps do not<br><br> | Excellent – Good ▶ | House in appropriate box  |
|  | Fair ▶             | Treat Book<br><br>Tie volume with cotton twill tape or wrap in tissue paper.  |
| If the scrapbook has artifactual value<br><br>                    | Excellent – Good ▶ | House in appropriate box  |
|  | Fair ▶             | Treat as an object<br><br>Photocopy or scan scrapbook. Interleave pages with archival paper or silicon release paper to prevent acid migration or smearing.         |
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