



Latah County Historical Society

Treasure Great Memories – Preserve Them for the Future

Textile Care and Storage

Many textiles are made of cellulosic fibers. These include cottons and silks which are also damaged by the acids found in papers and cardboard, insects, rodents, exposure to light, and excessive handling. Protein fibers such as wool and silk contain natural acids and do not require acid-free storage. But, because of their makeup, they are very attractive to insects and rodents and prolonged light exposure will damage them.

Keep away from extremes

- Cool, dark, and dry storage areas are ideal
- Relative humidity of approximately 50%
- Temperature of 62 to 68 degrees
- Clean area, free of insects and rodents
- Low light levels

Choose the right storage containers

- Acid-free* storage boxes lined with acid-free tissue paper or washed cotton for cottons and linens
- Storage boxes lined with tissue paper or cotton sheets for wools and silks
- Designed to provide physical support and stability
- Comfortably filled, not overstuffed, folds supported with crumpled tissue

Careful attention to preparation

- Vacuum the item using the hose attachment, open end covered with mesh to remove loose dirt and foreign matter
- Wet clean cottons and linens when needed
- Use padded hangers and cotton dust covers when hanging clothing items
- Roll flat items – quilts, household linens and accessories on cotton covered tubes, cover or lay in acid-free storage box

*8.5 pH un-buffered, free of lignum

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Avoid further damage

Work on clean surfaces

Wash your hands frequently and wear clean gloves to avoid transferring body oils to the fabrics; dry hands on cotton towel

Remove jewelry to protect from snags

Support all parts of the item while moving

Roll flat items on supports of tissue paper and/or cotton covered tubes

If items are folded, place crumpled tissue or cotton in the folds

Avoid permanent creases by re-folding periodically, using different fold lines

Replace acid-free tissue paper and launder cotton liners at least every two years as these materials absorb the acids from the textiles

Be careful that pens and pencils do not come in contact with the items

Documentation

You and your descendants will appreciate your care of these treasured textiles much more when you record all the information you can discover about the history of each item. Keep a log of what you have stored, where, when, and how you have cared for the item(s). This will also remind you to re-roll, re-fold, and change storage materials periodically. Loosely stitch a hang tag with written identification onto the article.

Enjoy your treasured textiles, preserve them for the future!

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