



Latah County Historical Society

Treasure Great Memories – Preserve Them for the Future

Non-textiles: Leather, Metal, Wood, Glass, and Ceramics

Non-textiles require careful handling, inspection, and care specific to the type of materials they are composed of. All items should be thoroughly inspected and evaluated with regards to condition before they are used or stored. Remember, the results of your actions should be reversible.

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

Choose the right storage containers

- Designed to provide physical support and stability
- Comfortably filled, do not fold or bend
- Supported with crumpled tissue

Careful attention to preparation

- Dust with soft brush or vacuum the item using the hose attachment, open end covered with mesh to remove loose dirt and foreign material
- Gently clean with method appropriate to the material
- Do not fold or bend

Avoid further damage

- Work on clean surfaces
- Wash your hands frequently and wear clean gloves to avoid transferring body oils to the objects; dry hands on cotton towel
- Remove jewelry to protect from scratches and snags
- Support all parts of the item while moving
- Be careful that pens and pencils do not come in contact with the items
- Polyethylene plastic does not give off harmful gases – use this rather than other plastics to cover items

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The following procedures are recommended by the Idaho Historical Society.

Leather

Avoid extreme heat, moisture, and ultraviolet light

Keep from insects and rodents

Avoid oils and greases which seal the leather and do not allow it to breath

In rare cases certain leathers can be cleaned with saddle soap followed by a treatment with a neatsfoot oil/lanolin compound mixed at 60%/40%. This mixture is made by heating the neatsfoot oil and melting the lanolin into it and stirring completely.

To clean mold or mildew – brush the problem area carefully with a soft brush and place the article in sunlight

For dry, stiff items – re-humidify slowly by laying the item on a wood frame over water in a plastic tent; manipulate every three days for as long as it takes to get back to the original shape; stuff to original form slowly with cotton cloth or tissue

Stains – leave alone, it is better to under treat

Metal

To clean – inspect and evaluate after every step

Dust and gently wash with water

Wash with soap and rinse thoroughly

Clean with mineral spirits and wipe thoroughly

Polish, if appropriate, with chemically-treated wadding (Nevr-Dull)

Coat with wax if necessary – microcrystalline, carnuba, or beeswax protective coatings

Wear gloves and be gentle; use abrasive pads carefully and never on painted surfaces. Protect other materials, such as wood or leather, while treating the metal

Wrap item in acid-free paper for storage

Wood

To clean – inspect and evaluate after every step

Clean with vacuum and brushes

Gently wash with water using as little water as necessary, DO NOT saturate

Wash with Trisodium Phosphate and rinse thoroughly

Dry thoroughly

Coat with wax if necessary

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Wear gloves and be gentle using “well broken-in” abrasive pads
Allow article to dry thoroughly before storing

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