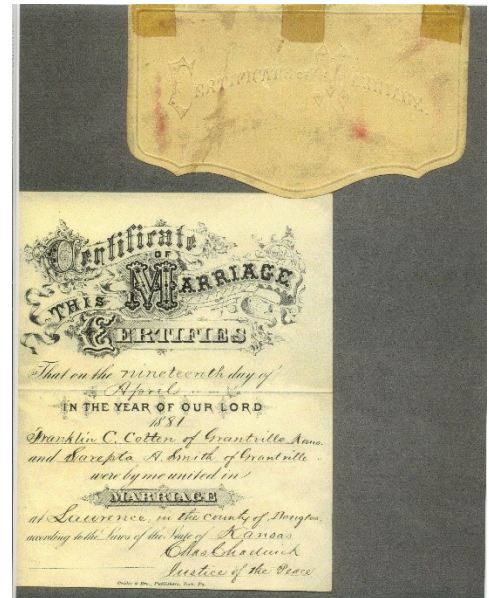


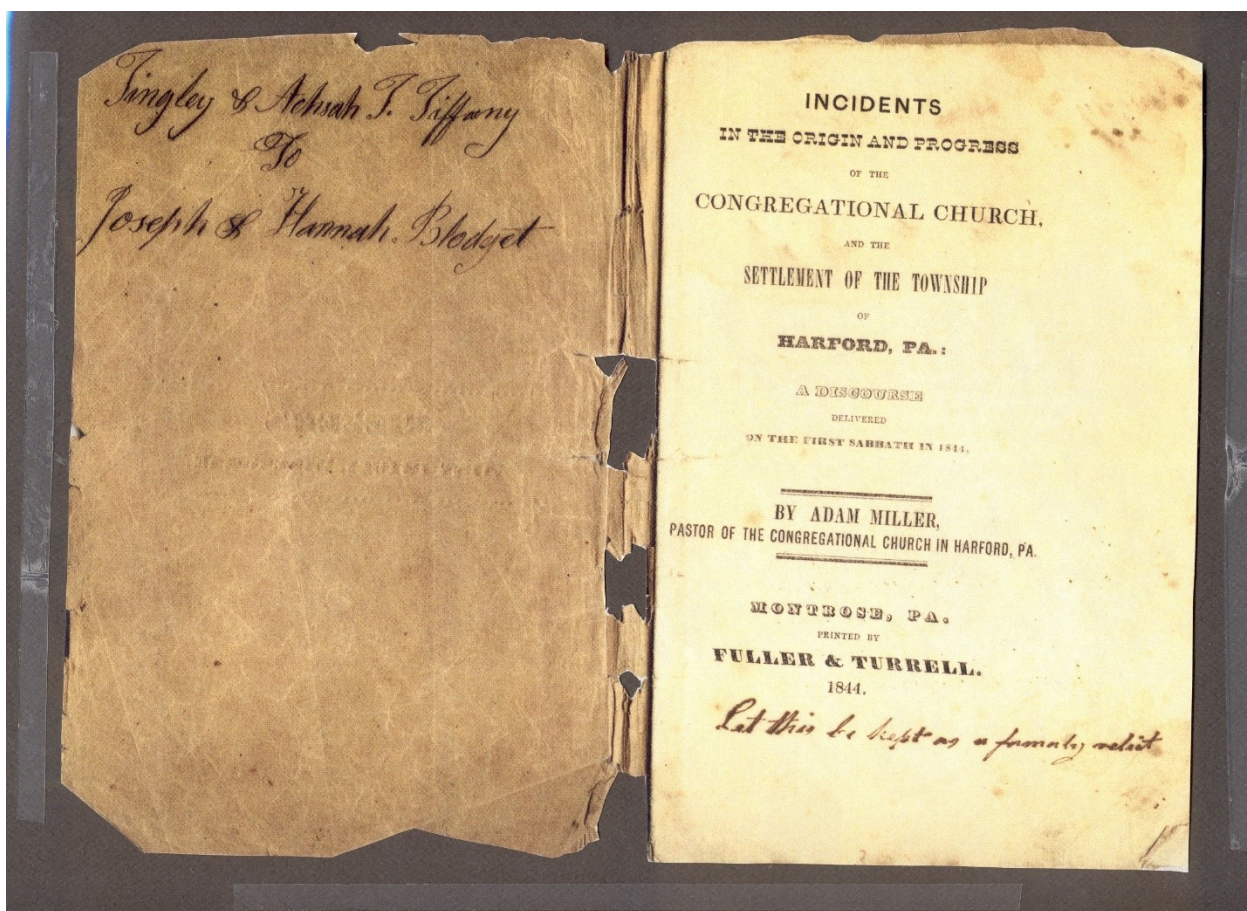
# Preserving Family Treasures

More information at: <http://www.preservingtime.org/>

- **Prevention** is better than any cure. Take time to protect the items that are important to you personally.
- It is no longer recommended by most experts to use cotton gloves to handle fragile items. **Wash your hands well** with a product that won't leave a residue (mild dish soap is what I use) and do not put on hand lotion or other products. Vinyl or nitrile gloves are an option if they don't have powder or other coatings.
- **Unfold all folded papers and fabrics carefully.** Remove all staples, paper clips, pins and rubber bands. Remove any "foreign" matter that may damage documents (dried flowers or leaves, ticket stubs, etc.) Remove thicker items that may indent or slice the other items. Newspaper clippings are acidic and should be separated from other documents. Keep the envelopes that you remove letters and documents from. Allow items that are hard to unfold to rest in a single layer on a smooth surface. They may relax and allow you to unfold them later.
- **Remove all items immediately from unsafe "protectors"** such as cardboard boxes, magnetic albums and vinyl photo sleeves.
- Do not work with original documents; **Scan, photograph or make a photocopy.** Use acid free paper for photocopies and documents you print out.
- **DO NOT LAMINATE** important documents. **DO NOT** try to remove documents from lamination.
- **For Permanent Storage--Store away from moisture, dust, heat and light.** Protect in a fireproof safe if possible. Files stored in the center of a file drawer in the center of a file cabinet would have the best chance of surviving a house fire, especially if they are "packed tightly" in the drawer. Negatives should be stored as airtight as possible. Pre-1950 negatives should be stored in tins in a separate location. These negatives have the possibility of spontaneously combusting from the chemicals used.



- Use **Encapsulation** for the most fragile items (very old items, items of historical value, thin paper etc.). Encapsulation holds the document in place with static, rather than adhesives. Use **Acid Free Page Protectors or sleeves** for the “stronger” items. Bulkier items should be stored in **acid free envelopes or boxes**. Be aware that PVC page protectors are still available on the market; they are not safe for preserving items. Polyester (Mylar), polypropylene, and polyethylene are safe plastics. Vinyl (polyvinyl chloride—PVC) and acetate are not safe plastics. Sandwich bag type bags are a safe plastic. Unsafe plastics usually have a strong smell, are stiff or cracking and stick to themselves or the photographs and copied text they cover. Acetate tears easily. (Remember the old photo album pages.) Most “Rubbermaid” type boxes are safe for storage.

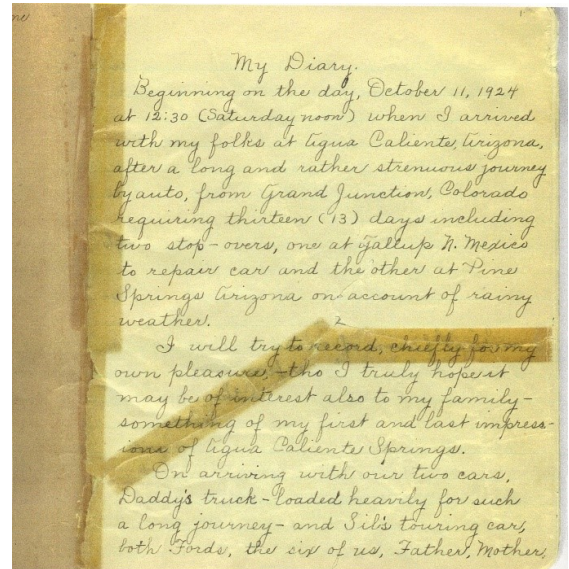


(Encapsulation Example)

- **De-acidification Spray** may help slow the deterioration of paper. De-acidify papers and allow to dry thoroughly before mounting, sleeving or storing the paper. This is especially true for original newspaper clippings that you want to keep.
- Never place items in “**Magnetic**” **Albums**. Even if they say they are acid-free they are not archivally safe. If you have things in old magnetic albums remove them as soon as possible following these steps:



- a) Copy the page to show what items are grouped together and any dates or journaling that may be included on the page.
  - b) Use dental floss to “saw” behind the items and remove them. If this doesn’t work, take the book apart and using a hairdryer on low heat, carefully heat the cardboard backing page and try to peel the items off.
  - c) If these two methods fail to work, purchase a chemical adhesive softener. This would be my last resort—it’s slow, messy and stinky.
  - d) As an alternative, color copy the pages and put those pages in an album.
- Scan or have copies made of “**Polaroid**” type pictures and **OLD color pictures**. Never cut a “Polaroid” type picture. They should not be placed in albums unless they are sleeved individually.
  - **Display copies** of pictures or other documents rather than displaying the originals. **Light of any kind shining through glass can cause damage—from fading to actual destruction of the enclosed item.**
  - Use archivally safe **adhesives and paper** if mounting items. Paper should be acid-free and lignin-free. It is also recommended that it be from a non-recycled source. If you keep the actual newspaper clipping, mount it on buffered paper. Mount documents or photos to only one side of the paper. Acid-free Photo & Document tape is available for the repair of torn papers. Use the tape on the back side/ one side only. This tape is not for mounting documents and pictures! Also **DO NOT** use rubber cement, white glue, “scotch” tape, masking tape, duct tape or other non-archival products to mount your family history papers. Slits in the mounting paper or paper and self-adhesive photo corners are a reversible way of mounting these items. Punches are available to make corner slits for you. Mounting with slits or corners only holds well if the items have very square corners. Place the photo corners on the document and then place on the mounting page. This saves a lot of time measuring and figuring where to place the corners. I have hundreds of old photos (that are not very square) and it would take me forever to mount them with corners. I use Herma Dotto Glue Dispenser by EK Success with Removable adhesive to mount these pictures. I use a soft microfiber cloth (like they sell for cleaning eyeglasses) to press the item in place and wipe off fingerprints at the same time. There are other products available in the scrapbook market that are acceptable. I do not recommend glues, glue sticks or glue pens for family history work even if they say they are acid free or archival.



- Use **permanent, pigment based ink pens** for **ALL** handwritten family history work. Take notes in permanent pen, use a full size sheet of paper for note taking and only take notes on one side of the paper. I highly recommend the Signo 207 gel pen by *uni-ball*. Beware that all ink, especially gel inks, take a little while to dry. If you prefer a felt tip pen, the pens by Zig (writer style, not millennium!) and the Micron pens by Sakura (get a .05 or larger tip for durability, smaller tips write very finely, but do not hold up long) are excellent pens. These are not the pens for labeling photographs.
- **Label all photographs** if possible. For today's resin back photos, I recommend the *Illustrator photo-graphic permanent marker* (If you can find it). Another good marker is the Light Impressions Film/ Print Marking Pen (available at: <http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com/black-film-print-marking-pen/archival-page-accessories/>). I have tested most of the photo-markers on the market and these are by far the fastest drying. These markers will also write on plastic and are good for labeling photo sleeves. If you have older paper backed photos, label them with a soft graphite pencil (Schwan All-STABILO 8008 is the one I have found around here). An alternative would be to number and sleeve the photo and then label the sleeve. Acid-free labels for photographs and several styles of sleeves are available from <http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com/>. This company is a good resource for many archival preservation products. Photos should never be labeled with ball-point pens, gel pens, felt-tip pens, wax pencils, china markers or colored pencils.
- Develop a **Standard Naming Convention** for your digital files. Label digital files with all know information.
- Use a **laser printer** or photocopy the work you do. Use **acid free paper** for all final documents you produce. Prints from Ink-Jet printers are NOT archival. Color begins to fade almost immediately.
- **Identify those who will take care of your family treasures and arrange for them to inherit your work.**
- **More information at:** <https://www.preservingtime.org/more-on-archiving--the-good-the-bad-and-the-terrible.html>

If in doubt about how to preserve an item, ask questions, rather than have it continue to deteriorate. There is a lot of information available in books and on the internet.