Hot Tips for Caring for your Cool Treasures!

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Store items at a low temperature and a low relative humidity:

- The lower the temperature the longer your items will last, because cooler temperatures slow the rate of chemical decay and reduce insect activity.
- Keep the temperature below 75 degrees Fahrenheit (F).
- Keep the relative humidity (rH) below 65% to prevent mold growth and reduce insect activity.
- Avoid very low relative humidity because relative humidity below 15% can cause brittleness.
- Consider cold storage for acetate negatives, color negatives, prints, and slides.
- Acetate negatives and color negatives, slides, and prints are vulnerable to fading and deterioration within decades, if stored at room temperature. Cold storage can slow this deterioration, but it requires special packaging and steps.

Containers:

- Big enough for the originals to lay flat or upright without folding or bending
- The right sizes, so items don’t shift
- Use a spacer board if there are not enough items to fill an upright box.
- Don’t overstuff the box.
- Are made of board or folder stock that is lignin-free and acid-free or buffered.

Albums:

- There are a variety of binding styles and types that are safe, including spiral, ring binders, post or clamp bindings, or traditional sewn bindings
- The album cover material can be cloth, stable plastic, or leather. Choose the look and the style of the album you like. More important than the cover material is the quality of the album pages and other materials in direct contact with the photographs and papers.
- Avoid overstuffing albums; don’t add too many items to the pages or too many pages to the album. This can cause damage to the pages of the album and the attached items, as well as make it difficult to use.
- The safest method to mount photographs and papers is without glue or adhesive. This can be done by:
  - Using pages or envelopes that are acid free and sleeves made of stable plastics such as polyester, polypropylene or polyethylene.
  - Using corners made from acid free paper or stable plastic films such as polyester, polypropylene or polyethylene.