

# PRESERVATION BEST PRACTICES

## SESSION 1: FUNDAMENTALS AND FACILITIES



# Topics

**Session 1: Fundamentals and Facilities**

Session 2: The Role of Environment in  
Collections Care

Session 3: Collection Care: Handling,  
Access, Storage, and  
Exhibition

Session 4: Planning and Prioritizing

# Goals for the Series

- Establish targets for collections care in cultural institutions
- Understand indicators of success in each area
- Have the tools to evaluate the conditions in your own institutions

# Areas of Discussion

- Policies
- Facilities
- Environment
- Lighting
- Emergency Preparedness
- Security
- Housekeeping
- Pest Management
- Handling and Access
- Collections Storage
- Exhibition
- Preservation Planning
- Conservation
- Additional Considerations

# Today

- Terminology
- Making the case
- Establishing a preservation program
- Facilities
- Security
- Housekeeping



# Poll



# Terminology

## Preservation

- Refers to all those activities aimed at caring for your collection.

## Conservation

- Refers to those activities that stabilize collections chemically or strengthen them physically.



Image: NARA.gov

# Professional Mandate

## American Library Association (ALA)

The Association's policy on preservation is based on its goal of ensuring that every person has access to information at the time needed and in a usable format



## Society of American Archivists (SAA)

Archivists select, preserve, and make available documentary materials of long-term value that have lasting value to the organization or public that the archivist serves



## American Alliance of Museums (AAM)

Museums make their unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world



## American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)

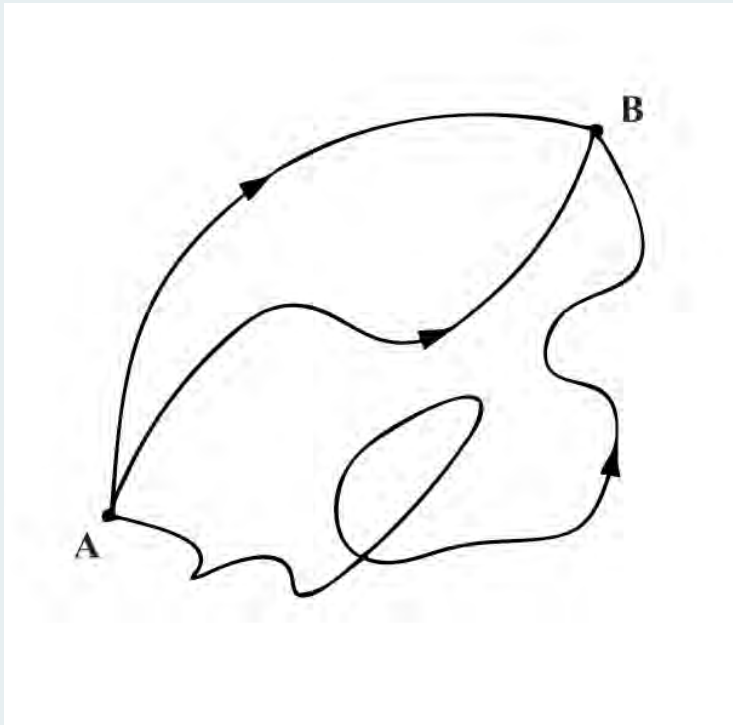
Members shall give priority to the care and management of the collections within their care and always shall act to preserve their physical and intellectual integrity





# Preservation Program

Establish preservation goals and systems.



A preservation plan is a document that “defines and charts a course of action to meet an institution’s overall preservation needs for its collections.”

*Source: Preservation Planning: Guidelines for Writing and Long-Range Plan*

# Benefits of Planning

- Continues and fulfills mission
- Saves collections
- Good use of resources
- Systematic approach



# Who is Responsible for Preservation?

- Director
- Board
- Staff
  - \* Librarians
  - \* Curators
  - \* Archivists
- Exhibit Preparators
- Facility Staff
- Janitorial Staff
- Security Staff
- Patrons/Visitors



# Establishing the Benchmarks

- Getting Started
  - ▣ The minimum level of care necessary for responsible stewardship
- Good
  - ▣ Taking actions that are above the “Getting started”, but there is still room for improvement
- Better
  - ▣ Best possible stewardship of cultural collections based on current research and methods



Image via Nicola Whitaker



# Building and Facilities



# Poll



# Building and Facilities: Getting Started

- ✓ The building structure is sound and can support necessary weight loads for the collections
- ✓ The building interior is protected from water and weather intrusions
- ✓ Maintenance issues are addressed as they occur



Image: Illinois Digital Archives

# Building and Facilities: Getting Started

- ✓ The building is inspected on a regular basis to ensure that changes in building condition are noted and addressed
- ✓ Contractors are informed of regulations for working around collections





# Building and Facilities: Good

A facilities maintenance program is in place



Library of George III



Thompson Library, OSU

# Building and Facilities: Good

## Facilities Maintenance Program

Schedules and guidelines for inspection and preventative maintenance for any location where collections are stored



# Building and Facilities: Good

Building vulnerabilities  
are known and  
monitored as necessary



# Building and Facilities: Better

- ✓ A dedicated facilities maintenance position is on staff full-time
- ✓ Plans for regular building upgrades are incorporated into the institutional long-range plan



Image: NARA

# Security



# Poll





# Security: Getting Started

- ✓ All storage rooms are kept locked when not in use
- ✓ Access to collections storage spaces is limited to essential staff
- ✓ All facilities in which collections are stored are alarmed with a centrally monitored security system



Image: NewYorkology

# Security: Getting Started

Researchers sign in and are monitored at all times while using collections materials



Image: British Library of Political and Economic Science



Image: Kansas Historical Society



# Security: Good

- ✓ Security procedures are in place and are followed by all staff
- ✓ A system is in place for tracking everyone that enters a secure collections storage location
- ✓ Research spaces are monitored with security cameras
- ✓ Regular contact is maintained with local law enforcement



Image: State Library and Archives of Florida

# Security: Better

- ✓ Security procedures are reviewed and assessed annually
- ✓ A security specialist has analyzed the institution and has made recommendations for mitigating security risks
- ✓ Security personnel are on staff and monitor facilities 24 hours a day



# Housekeeping



# Poll



# Housekeeping: Getting Started

- ✓ Storage and stacks areas are cleaned on a regular schedule
- ✓ All garbage containing food is removed from the facility on a daily basis
- ✓ Cleaning supplies and tools are kept in stock
- ✓ Staff are trained in what techniques are appropriate when cleaning around collections



Image: NY Public Library

# Housekeeping Supplies

## General Supplies

- Brushes
- Gloves
- Muslin
- Mylar
- Orvus
- Vacuum
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- Renaissance Wax
- Dust Cloths
- Screening

## Do Not Use

- Lemon Oil
- Turpentine
- Bees Wax
- Endust or other dusting products
- Any Aerosol products
- Saddle soap
- Cleansers
- Plexiglas cleaner on other surfaces
- Glass cleaner on Plexiglas
- Bleach
- Abrasive Cleaners
- Feather Dusters
- Acid-based Cleaners

List developed by the Minnesota Historical Society.  
Historic Housekeeping Handbook, 2000



HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter

Rheostat attachment to adjust the vacuum pressure



# Housekeeping: Good

- ✓ A conservator has been consulted about what cleaning products are appropriate for use around collections materials
- ✓ A formalized housekeeping policy and manual are established





# Housekeeping: Good

Staff are trained to notice and report changes in the collection that are observed during cleaning (pests, missing pieces, damage)



# Housekeeping: Better

- ✓ A system is in place for basic cleaning of stacks/boxes/artifacts
- ✓ An annual training session is held for those staff members involved in housekeeping for collections areas



Image: University of Iowa Libraries

# Thank you and Questions

Questions about  
collections care?

Contact the California  
Preservation Program  
[info@calpreservation.org](mailto:info@calpreservation.org)



# Next Session

## Session 2: Environment December 5, 2013

- ✓ Temperature
- ✓ Relative Humidity
- ✓ Lighting
- ✓ Pests

