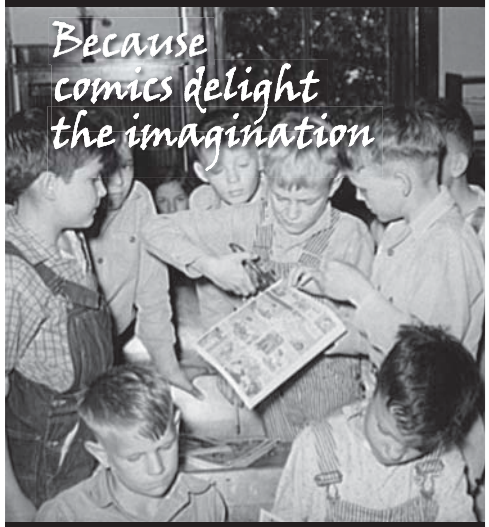
COMIC BOOKS



PRESERVE YOURS
for future generations

Comic books have many preservation needs in common with books and photos, but were traditionally printed on low-grade newsprint pulp paper and can quickly become acidic and brittle.

FIND A STABLE STORAGE SPACE
Store comic books in a clean storage area where temperature and relative humidity (RH) are moderate and stable: 68°F or less, and between 30-40% RH. Moisture and temperature speed decay. Low humidity can crack, peel, or curl pages. Avoid attics and basements and provide good air circulation. An air-conditioned room or closet is best.

Don't expose paper to fumes, plywood, cleaning supplies, or cardboard. Good housekeeping helps protect your treasures. Check regularly for signs of rodents, silverfish, "book lice," and other pests—eliminate them if found!

PROTECT FROM LIGHT
All light, especially the ultraviolet (UV) part of the spectrum, causes fading and other damage. Store and display items away from natural and artificial light. Comics and newsprint are particularly vulnerable.

COLLECTIONS

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SOME VERY BASIC PRINCIPLES
Every object is made of chemicals—liquid, solid, or gas; in many forms and combinations; from smaller-than-an-atom particles to elements and compounds. These interact to cause chemical reactions and damage. Water (moisture) starts reactions that damage materials. Undesirable pollutants in the environment (like dust and fumes) also contribute to deterioration. Heat and light speed damage. Some damage we can see easily, but often only a microscope or chemical analysis can reveal it.

BUT WHAT CAN I DO?
Use preservation-quality storage and exhibit materials. "Archival" and "acid free" have no sure meaning. Use high-quality buffered (pH 7-9.5) or neutral (pH 7) material, or plastic boxes, tissue, rolls, folders, mats, backings, and other coverings or padding. Look for products that pass the photographic activity test (PAT). Read labels and ask questions. The more protection, the safer your item.

Only use uncoated polyester, cellulose triacetate, polyethylene, or polypropylene

MAKE A TIME CAPSULE

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for future generations

WHAT IS A TIME CAPSULE?
A time capsule helps preserve the memory of a place, experience, or people at a special time. People often make time capsules for someone to open many years in the future—the 1938 World's Fair buried one to be opened in 6939! You or your family can make one, too.

Your time capsule could celebrate a summer vacation; the year you were a special age; your friends, family, pet, or school; or something else important to you.

WHAT CAN I PUT IN A TIME CAPSULE?
That depends on what you care about and the size of your capsule. Choose pictures or other items that remind you of the time the capsule celebrates. Clean, dry black-and-white photos, things written or printed on high-quality paper with "archival" ink, undamaged metal or fabric, and glass or the same plastics you'll use for the container are good choices. Food, non-dried plants or anything alive are not! Digital media may not be readable when you open the capsule.

TEXTILES

PRESERVE YOURS
for future generations

Because we use textiles almost constantly, we forget they need preservation, too.

FIND A STABLE STORAGE SPACE
Store textiles in a clean area with stable temperature, and relative humidity (RH) below 65%, since moisture encourages mold. Avoid attics, basements, and garages. Textiles are vulnerable to pests, which thrive in dark, undisturbed, dusty spaces. Prevent pests with good housekeeping, including vacuuming. Check regularly for signs of insects or rodents–eliminate them if found!

PROTECT FROM LIGHT
Light causes fading and speeds deterioration. Store textiles away from natural and artificial light and limit display; avoid sunlight, and minimize indoor lighting. UV-filters (in frames, or on windows and flourescent lights) don't prevent deterioration—only slow it.

USE PRESERVATION STORAGE ENCLOSURES
Use preservation-quality enclosures to protect textiles from dirt, fading, and unnecessary handling. Use unbuffered (neutral) tissue for protein fibers (wool, silk, fur) or when fiber content is mixed or unknown. Use buffered tissue for cellulose

Finished size is 2.25 x 7.25 inches. Test back-to-back registration on printer/copier before printing large quantities. Duplex using letter-landscape orientation and short-edge binding. Specify paper weight within range machine will allow.

fibers (cotton, linen, jute, flax, bast, etc.).

Lay small, flat textiles like samplers, handkerchiefs, and historical fragments in a simple preservation-quality tray or folder to prevent flexing and folds. Roll larger flat textiles around a preservation-quality tube to avoid creases and distortion. Do not roll textiles with stiff linings, 3-D components (like tassels, sequins), or fragile velvet piles, or costumes. Pad costumes, wedding gowns, uniforms, hats, and baby clothes with tissue to support shape and prevent crushing. If you fold quilts or coverlets, use tissue to pad folds; make the fewest creases you can. Store textiles in a preservation-quality box. Don't stack heavy textiles on top of delicate ones.

HANDLE WITH CARE
To preserve historic textiles, retire them from use. Minimize handling and bending. Use a rigid mount to support fragile textiles. Pad hangers for garments sturdy enough to hang, and evenly distribute their weight. Remember dyes can transfer from adjacent textiles even in a closet or box; 3-D elements (buttons, sequins, etc.) can snag. Use a preservation-quality barrier between textiles, and between textiles and wooden chests, drawers, shelves, or mounting poles. Neutral tissue or washed undyed cotton muslin, "archival" grayboard or rag board, Ethafoam™, Tyvek®, and preservation-quality polyester film or paper are all good barriers. For wet cleaning or stain reduction consult a conservator.

For more information:
www.textilemuseum.org/care/care.htm
and
www.thehenryford.org/research/caring/textiles.aspx

This text is by the American Institute for Conservation, **www.conservation-us.org**.

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES
www.imls.gov/collections/index.htm

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
www.loc.gov/preserv/careothr.html

Photo: "Chilkat woman weaving blanket, Alaska" by Winter & Pond, 1910. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-105856.

HOW DO I MAKE A TIME CAPSULE?
Your container and everything inside should be made of materials that conservators call "stable." This means the chemicals in your items won't react quickly to cause rust, brittleness, fading, or other damage.

Box or wrap like items together with preservation storage materials, and pad them well. Pack the capsule full, with heavier things on the bottom and lighter on top. Fill any space with crumpled preservation tissue.

1 PETE 2 HDPE 5 PP

The container should keep out air and moisture, and be strong enough to protect the contents. A big uncoated polyethylene (PET or PETE 1) jar with a screw-top lid of the same material is the best inexpensive choice. You can also use uncoated plastic with recycle codes HDPE 2 or PP 5. Put a list of contents in the capsule, and keep a copy. When it's full, have an adult turn the capsule carefully upside down and drip melted wax around the lid to seal it.

Put the capsule in a cool, dry place like a high shelf in a closet in an interior room, and keep a reminder of where you put it! When enough time has passed, open and enjoy comparing "then" and "now" with family and friends!

For more information about time capsules:
www.si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care/timecaps.html
and
www.ehow.com/how_6637_make-family-time.html

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES
www.imls.gov/collections/index.htm

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Photo: "New York Children's Colony...French refugee child painting" by Marjory Collins, 1942. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USW3-009955-E.

plastic for storage—never PVC. If you can't keep RH below 80%, don't use plastic enclosures—items may stick.

Handle objects carefully. For handling, wash and dry your hands well and often. Use two hands to support items you move. Use mat board to support larger or fragile flat items.

If you mount or frame, don't use PVC, glue, pressure-sensitive tape—or adhesive or "magnetic" pages. Preservation-quality photo corners are OK. Don't use paper clips, rubber bands or staples—all can stick, stain, deform, or otherwise damage items. Store items of the same format and size together.

Store or exhibit in a stable environment. See **www.loc.gov/preserv/presfaq.html** or other bookmarks in this series for details. Do not use attics, basements, or garages.

Protect items from natural and artificial light. Rotating exhibited objects into storage helps. UV-protective glazing is not enough.

Keep storage areas clean, and check often for signs of bugs, rodents, and other pests. If you see them, eliminate them.

Look around your storage or exhibit areas for sources of damage—avoid them or fix them! Have a plan to relocate valuable items in an emergency.

Always consult a professional conservator before trying to clean or repair an item, which can reduce its value. Find a conservator through the American Institute for Conservation, **www.conservation-us.org**.

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES
www.imls.gov/collections/index.htm

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
www.loc.gov/preserv/careothr.html

Photo: "Mother and child—Apsaroke" by Edward Curtis, 1908. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-99609.

USE PRESERVATION STORAGE ENCLOSURES
Use see-through preservation enclosures to minimize handling and prevent edge damage, creases, and tears.

If you use plastic enclosures, use uncoated polyester, cellulose triacetate, polyethylene, or polypropylene—never PVC. If you can't keep RH below 80%, don't use plastic enclosures.

HANDLE WITH CARE
Don't use paper clips, rubber bands, staples, marking pens, or highlighters—all can stick, stain, deform, or otherwise damage comic book issues.

Store comic books vertically. Store like sizes and types together, with good support, preferably preservation-quality backing boards.

Store comic books in preservation storage boxes that are the right size for the issues. Do not over fill the boxes.

Handle gently. Wash and dry hands often, and use two hands or a support to prevent bending.

Consider carefully before repairing damaged or worn issues yourself, as this may lower value. Send issues to specialists for flattening or dry-cleaning to avoid damage and decreased value. Special issues can be submitted to a commercial expert for grading and special encapsulation in hard-shell preservation-quality holders.

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www.imls.gov/collections/index.htm

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Photo: "Making books of comic strips" by Russell Lee, April 1939. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USF34-033065-D.

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