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## **Report of a Preservation Needs Assessment**

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Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library  
Rhode Island College  
Providence, RI  
January 3, 2022 – January 13, 2022

Submitted on March 11, 2022 by:

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## Executive Summary

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Between January 3, 2022 and January 13, 2022, paper-based, audiovisual, and photographic materials housed in Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library at Rhode Island College were assessed for preservation planning purposes by Elena Cordova, Contract Preservation Specialist for the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, MA. The assessment, which was funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant, evaluated the buildings and environments as they relate to the preservation needs of the materials; examined current policies, storage, and handling procedures; and assessed the general condition of materials. Observations and recommendations are based on a pre-site visit questionnaire, a site visit, and discussions with Digital Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, Molly Bruce Patterson; Digital Initiatives Coordinator, Andrew Davis; and Carissa DeLizio, Library Director. Due to ongoing public health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interview portions of the assessment were conducted via video conference, and the site visit was limited to assessment of the physical building and collections.

Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library were established in 1974 as the repository for Rhode Island College's (RIC) departmental and administrative records. RIC was established in 1854 as the Rhode Island Normal School, a state teacher's college. In 1960 the school expanded its programs to offer bachelor's degrees in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. As Rhode Island's state public college, RIC has a long and important legacy in designing degree programs for non-traditional students and welcoming students from diverse backgrounds and local immigrant communities. The college has been celebrated for its commitment to racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, and today students of color represent the fastest growing student population on campus. As stated by Ms. Bruce Patterson, "RIC's history reflects [Rhode Island's] changing landscape of education, economy, and social diversity since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the college archives give insight to the impact of public education on equity in American society."

RIC's commitment to public education, underrepresented communities, and social justice is reflected in Special Collections stewardship of several important manuscript collections as well. Important collections include: the Cape Verdean Collection, which sheds light on the political, family, and cultural lives of Cape Verdean and Cape Verdean Americans living in southern New England during the 20th century; as well as the Nancy Elizabeth Prophet Collection, which includes artwork and photographs from the career of sculptor Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, the first woman of color to graduate from the Rhode Island School of Design; and the Irving Jay Fain Papers, which record problems in housing, public health, and civil rights in Rhode Island between 1959-1970.

Constructed in 1963, Adams Library building reflects a typical mid-twentieth century architectural style with its flat roof and use of concrete. Its namesake, James P. Adams, served as chairman of the College's board from 1955 to 1960. In non-pandemic times, collections in Special Collections are accessible to students, faculty, staff, and the public by appointment only, Monday through Friday between 9 AM and 12 PM and 1 pm and 4 PM. Collections are stored in three connected spaces—a reading room, a storage room, and a work room.

Primary reference and archival functions for Special Collections are performed by Molly Bruce Patterson, Digital Archivist & Special Collections Librarian. She is assisted, as need arises, by Andrew Davis, Digital Initiatives Coordinator; and Erica Florenz, Special Collections Assistant.

A number of preservation activities are currently underway and should be continued. These include:

- Writing and revising clear policies to guide work, according to professional best practices, within Special Collections.

- Monitoring the temperature and relative humidity of storage locations.
- Utilizing archival-grade folders, boxes, and enclosures across the collection.
- Instructing users on proper care and handling of historic materials.
- Establishing a robust digitization program and digital repository, with successful prioritization of unstable documents and audio-visual media.

Special Collections is encouraged to continue these practices, which are detailed in the report. Recommendations for short-, mid-, and long-term activities are listed in the appendices. In order to best care for the collections, actions in the foreseeable future should focus on activities that provide the broadest benefit to all collections, rather than actions that only affect a small number of items.

The Library staff is aware of the preservation challenges presented by the collections and has shown a commitment to improving the storage and handling of the collections. The decision to pursue a general preservation assessment attests to an interest in improving care and handling practices to ensure that collection materials are available into the future.

As Ms. Bruce Patterson and the staff at the Adams Library continue efforts to preserve and maintain these unique collections, They faces several challenges, including:

- Lack of dedicated staff and funding to adequately address preservation activities;
- Unstable and potentially hazardous environmental storage conditions, due in part to an aging building and fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity;
- Insufficient disaster preparedness and knowledge of emergency response techniques on the part of Library staff;
- Inadequate digital storage system for the department's growing digital assets and repository.

With these challenges in mind, efforts over the next several years should focus on:

- Continuing to advocate with College administrators to increase Library spending so that open staff positions can be filled, outstanding building-related problems can be addressed, and preservation issues can be attended to incrementally, over time.
- Identifying and applying for outside sources of funding in attempt to address the aforementioned critical staffing, budget, and building issues;
- Developing a collection-specific disaster plan and procedures, in tandem with other departments within the Library;
- Purchasing cloud-based digital storage for digital files and instituting comprehensive digital preservation workflow moving forward;
- Documenting a long-range preservation plan.

Certainly few, if any, institutions have sufficient resources to address *all* of the preservation needs of *all* of their collections. Limited resources require choices to be made among activities, the cumulative result of which will have greater impact if guided by a long-range preservation plan. Preparation of such a plan should be the next step for the Adams Library's Special Collections. The plan should be reviewed annually, and modified as preservation needs are addressed, and new ones identified.

Ms. Bruce Patterson shows a clear enthusiasm for moving forward with preservation planning. Still, putting this enthusiasm in practice collection-wide while balancing other duties can be difficult. A completed preservation plan will help to guide staff time and the institutional resources to activities that will have the greatest overall impact on preservation for the entire collection.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with Molly Bruce Patterson and her colleagues on this project. It was a pleasure to spend time with her in RIC's Special Collections and to learn about the various collections. If this report has raised any questions, or if I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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# I. Introduction

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## *Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College*

Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library at Rhode Island College was established in Providence, RI in 1974, fourteen years after the school transitioned from an educational school to a public liberal arts college. Special Collections at RIC is composed of a rich collection of early college records, many of which pertain to the school's founding and development over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. These founding documents are important not only because they document RIC's history, but also because they trace the gendered history of education and pedagogy in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Rhode Island more generally. Special Collections also holds a substantial amount of manuscript material, which documents the activities of local immigrant groups—from Italian to Cape Verdean—as well as numerous prominent social justice and political causes, including refugee resettlement programs, fair housing, and the integration/segregation of Providence schools. The department also holds a comprehensive book collection on a range of relevant local history topics.

Primary reference and archival functions for Special Collections are performed by Digital Archivist & Special Collections Librarian, Molly Bruce Patterson. She is assisted, as need arises, by Andrew Davis, Digital Initiatives Coordinator; and Erica Florenz, Special Collections Assistant.

Based on observations made during the site visit and an inventory provided by Ms. Bruce Patterson, materials in the collection include 11,400 bound volumes and rare books, 240 linear feet of serial and newspaper runs (predominantly contained within a collection of social and political materials), approximately 1,500 linear feet of documents and manuscripts, and around 120 linear feet of photographs and audiovisual objects.

Priority and high use collections currently include:

- The College Archives.
- Collections relating to Black History, such as the Dr. Carl Russell Gross Papers and the Nancy Elizabeth Prophet Collection.
- Collections that pertain to regional ethnic and immigrant communities, including the Cape Verdean Collection and Italian American oral histories from the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project.
- Collections centered on the social justice histories and cultural heritage in Rhode Island, such as the Irving Jay Fain Papers, Clare Gomme Letters to Caroline DiOrio, and the Social and Political Materials Collection.

The goal of Special Collections is to preserve and provide access to college records and historic materials of regional and cultural value to both RIC's campus community and to the interested public. Currently the department services around 150 users a year, but its digital collections have had wider reach and use—with nearly 40,000 downloads in the 2019-2020 academic year. Collection materials have been used as teaching tools in RIC's classrooms as well as in local high schools and as the collection is preserved and access improves, it will continue to be better utilized by the community. Special Collections at RIC is committed to free and open access.

Five years from the time of this assessment, Ms. Bruce Patterson and Ms. DeLizio would like to have a plan in place for a completely renovated library space. This is the most important goal for Library staff, across special and circulating collections. The current climate conditions in the building are uncomfortable at best and a hazard for the health of staff and historic collections, at worst. This goal takes precedence over all others. The Library has had two feasibility studies done in the past, but due to budget constraints and cuts,

plans have yet to be realized. From the perspective of the author of this report, the physical renovations of the Library building are of primary concern for developing a holistic and meaningful preservation plan for the future.

## *The Preservation Needs Assessment*

### **Process**

Paper-based, audiovisual, and photographic materials housed at RIC's Special Collections were assessed for preservation planning purposes between January 3, 2022, and January 13, 2022, by Elena Cordova, Contract Preservation Specialist for the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), based in Andover, MA. The assessment evaluated the buildings and environments as they relate to the preservation needs of the materials; examined current policies, storage, and handling procedures; and assessed the general condition of materials. Observations and recommendations are based on a pre-site visit questionnaire, a site visit, and discussions with Molly Bruce Patterson; Digital Initiatives Coordinator, Andrew Davis; and Carissa DeLizio, Library Director.

Two concepts are necessary for evaluating the adequacy of preservation in any library or archives:

*Responsible custody* describes “a level of environmental control, housing, care and maintenance that will retard further chemical deterioration and protect materials from physical damage.”<sup>1</sup> These preventive measures include climate management, protective enclosures, fire detection and suppression, effective security, disaster planning, and training staff and users to handle and care for the collection appropriately.

*Optimal Storage* is defined as meeting or exceeding the guidelines proposed by professional organizations and national standards-setting organizations. Such guidelines and standards are authored by committees made up of professionals in the field, and they are informed by recent scientific research into the deterioration of collections. The challenge for standards-setting organizations (and for collections-holding institutions) is to translate scientific findings into practical and affordable recommendations for storage. In many cases, optimal storage may not be achievable, but institutions should be aware of the ideal as they work towards providing the best conditions possible.

As part of responsible custody, improving storage conditions for collections of long-term value to the institution provides the best overall protection for all collections; however, reaching optimal conditions requires long-term planning and resource investment. **Achieving the best possible environment that is sustainable<sup>2</sup> for your institution should be an ongoing effort and a long-term goal.**

### **Report**

This report is intended for continuing reference for this institution and its staff. Observations are preceded by best-practice information for each of the topics addressed. Many of the practices described may already be familiar, but they are included here to provide context for the recommendations that follow. Recommendations are bulleted and in bold type. For additional best-practice information, reference will be

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<sup>1</sup> Commission on Preservation and Access. 1993. *The preservation of archival materials. Report of the task forces on archival selection to the Commission on Preservation and Access*. Washington, D.C.: Commission on Preservation and Access. <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/arcrept>

<sup>2</sup> Rochester Institute of Technology. 2012. *IPI's guide to sustainable preservation practices for managing storage environments*. Rochester, N.Y.: Image Permanence Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology. <https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/store/publications/sustainable-preservation-practices-guidebook>

made to leaflets available in the *Preservation Leaflets* section of NEDCC's website ([www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org)), as well as to resources that best describe various aspects of each section. Referenced leaflets and resources for more information can be found in the endnotes and appendices.

Throughout the report, the word 'staff' is used to indicate anyone responsible for collections care, whether they be professional staff, interns, volunteers, or some combination thereof. Staff is likely to change over time, but this report can be used for several years as a roadmap to priorities, and a foundation on which to build a preservation program and specific goals. Over time, as collections evolve and buildings age, and preservation projects are accomplished, another assessment may be required to identify new priorities.

Archival and preservation supplies are recommended throughout the report. Most of these supplies are available from multiple vendors, and staff should select the one that best meets their needs in terms of cost, shipment method, etc. Examples of particular items are intended as illustrations, not recommendations of one supplier over another. A list of the resources, reference material, and supplies included throughout this report is collated and made available in the Appendices at the end of this document, along with an implementation worksheet and an example preservation plan.



## II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning

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The most basic requirement for successful preservation planning is local commitment. An effective preservation program requires effort and involves some expense—for space, environmental control, storage supplies and equipment, and/or other strategies. Everyone in the organization must be willing to find the time and at least some money to undertake preservation activities.

### A. Preservation Planning

**Effective preservation planning<sup>3</sup> requires that an institution prioritize its various collections for preservation.** This process—called “selection for preservation”—takes into account the resources available for preservation activities, as well as the condition, current or anticipated use, and relative value of materials to be preserved. Every institution with records of enduring value should have a preservation plan that weighs the needs of the collections against resources and provides a list of priority preservation actions.

This preservation assessment report may be viewed as the first step in creating a preservation plan, but it is not itself a plan. This report identifies preservation needs and provides an appendix that offers some guidance in prioritizing these needs; however, it cannot take into consideration many other factors that must be considered when balancing the needs of collections against institutional resources.

There is general consensus regarding the factors to be considered when prioritizing potential preservation actions:

- **Use** - materials that are used frequently, whether by staff or researchers, may be at higher risk than other collections.
- **Storage** - collections that are stored under adverse conditions, whether in an unstable environment or in damaging enclosures, may require prompt preservation action.
- **Condition** - items or collections in fragile condition may be at risk of loss unless they receive attention quickly.
- **Value** - either absolute value (rarity, monetary worth, intrinsic or associational value, etc.) and/or relative value of collections to an institution may influence preservation priorities. Whether collections have long- or short-term value to an institution will influence decision-making.
- **Format<sup>4</sup>** - whether or not materials need to be preserved in their original format will also influence priorities.

In general, preservation activities may be compared using the following criteria:

- **Impact** - those actions that will result in dramatic improvement or that will affect the greatest number of items will often be the highest priority (for example, improving climate control, rehousing a collection, or reformatting fragile materials).
- **Feasibility** - this factor is essential; it includes staffing levels and expertise, financial considerations (outside funding, capital outlay, operating costs, expenses for materials and services), policy and procedural changes required, and political considerations. Even if the impact of a preservation action is high, it may be given a low priority if implementation is not feasible.

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<sup>3</sup> Foot, Mirjam. 2001. *Building a preservation policy*. Rev. ed. London: Preservation Advisory Centre, British Library.  
[http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/building\\_a\\_preservation\\_policy.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/publications/booklets/building_a_preservation_policy.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2014. “Preservation Self-Assessment Program format ID guide.”  
<https://psap.library.illinois.edu/format-id-guide>

- **Urgency** - there will always be some activities that require immediate action; collections may be damaged or lost, or an opportunity to act on a particular project may be lost, if action is not taken.

Some factors change as institutional circumstances change; these include available funding for preservation, staff time and expertise, and user demand for collections. Others require an in-depth understanding of the institution and its collections that only the staff possess, such as organizational priorities and the relative value of collections.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- The Adams Library does not yet have a preservation plan for its historic paper-based collections, but Special Collections staff are keenly aware of the most pressing preservation issues within their department. Even without a formal preservation plan in place, there are many successful preservation activities already underway in the department. These include:
  - Recording temperature and relative humidity in collection spaces regularly and sharing subsequent data with relevant college facilities staff and administrators.
  - Inventorying, cataloging, and processing manuscript and archives according to professional best standards.
  - Digitizing and providing digital access to at-risk and high-use materials.
  - Drafting and finalizing comprehensive policies that guide the accession and care of historic materials. These include: a collection development policy, a transfer policy, researcher handling instructions, and an introductory digital preservation framework and workflow.
- Stated preservation goals, as articulated by Library staff over the course of the assessment include :
  - Improving environmental and building conditions.
  - Improving disaster preparedness and drafting a comprehensive emergency plan.
  - Refining staff knowledge of preservation actions, including care and handling best practices.
  - Centralizing intellectual control data in one database, such as ArchivesSpace.
  - Improving digital storage and digital preservation tools through the implementation of cloud-based storage and routine checksums.

### *Recommendations:*

- **NEDCC is available to help as RIC finalizes its preservation plan. We will review drafts of your plan and answer any questions you may have.**
- **Use this report to advocate with institutional stakeholders about preservation issues and engage them in a discussion about future goals.** Building improvements in particular need to be discussed as the needs in this area are at or near critical levels.
- **Consider a digital preservation assessment.** Special Collections has made excellent inroads into digitizing its collections and managing its digital assets. A digital preservation assessment would help the institution document digital preservation successes, recognize areas that need further

growth, and identify challenges that stand in the way of that growth. It can also help to prioritize next steps for improved long-term access to digital collections with a digital preservation plan. Learn more about NEDCC's digital assessment program [here](#).

- **Utilize this report and the subsequent preservation plan as tools to support grant applications to fund special projects when institutional funds might not be available.**

## **B. Mission Statement & Collection Policies**

**A thorough awareness and articulation of institutional goals and objectives for a collection as a whole—what the organization wishes to document, who it wishes to serve, and what types of material it will collect to accomplish those goals—provides the underpinning for all preservation actions.** This broad understanding provides context to support preservation decision-making, and it should be articulated in the institution's mission statement and the set of policies for collection management.

Collection management practices have a direct impact on preservation and committing them to writing serves to document institutional knowledge and helps ensure consistent practice over time. By stating a collecting focus and providing guidelines for acquisition and deaccession, a collection management policy guides the growth of a collection and ensures that an institution spends its resources on acquiring—and preserving—only materials that serve its mission. Specific, written requirements for access are useful to staff and researchers alike, and they strengthen the security of collection materials.

While a mission statement and a collection development policy are integral to defining an organization's goals and setting out collecting parameters, once these are in place there are a range of policies that can be prepared to further document practices, guide activities, and establish expectations for staff, researchers, and patrons. These are just a few examples of policies that may be desirable:

- Handling Guidelines
- Guidelines for Accession and Deaccession
- Access and Use Policy
- Security Guidelines
- Loan/Exhibit Policy

### ***Observations & Recommendations***

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#### *Observations:*

- Special Collections staff has done an excellent job in this area. Several important policies to guide the department's work now and in the future have been drafted or finalized. These include: a collection development policy, a transfer policy criteria statement, and an archival records transfer form. All use clear and concise language and are in line with professional standards.
- Special Collections at RIC does not have its own mission statement, but both the Library and the College do. Of course, these are more general statements and do not discuss preservation goals, but they do speak to the overall mission of Special Collections as a department that wishes to "provide access," "support faculty and students" and "organize materials according...to professional standards."
- As mentioned above, Special Collections has also worked to clearly articulate its digital workflows and immediate digital preservation objectives.
- In general, the documentation in Special Collections is very well done and it is an area where the institution and its staff should be applauded.

*Recommendations:*

- **Continue to review and update policies as needed.**
- **Draft a mission statement for Special Collections specifically.** Special Collections would do well to have its own mission statement. This statement could detail for whom the collection is intended (for example, not only RIC students and faculty, but also the wider Rhode Island Community, including several local immigrant communities). It should also articulate the Department's goals for the future.

## **C. Staffing and Budget**

Adequate staffing is crucial to preserving collections. Some preservation projects, such as shelf cleaning and disaster planning, do not require an investment in equipment or supplies, but do require a commitment of time. To plan and coordinate these activities and other, more collection-specific projects, someone on staff should be assigned responsibility for managing preservation—including maintaining up-to-date knowledge of preservation best practices, maintaining an understanding of the current preservation needs of the collections, and making preservation decisions based on this information. Ongoing professional development alongside participation in local, regional, and national conversations about collections care should be a goal for any staff engaged in managing preservation.

Preservation management requires a dependable budget with active administrative coordination and at least a small amount of money for supplies, training, and equipment. To ensure a lasting commitment to preservation and allow better tracking of expenses, a budget line for preservation should be part of a collecting institution's annual budget. A budget line item ensures that many day-to-day projects and activities are recognized as part of the larger organizational operations.

If an important project is identified but funding is not available internally, consider the many grants and other funding opportunities available locally and nationally to support preservation activities. Understanding and clearly identifying the goals and outcomes of the project will help in matching with potential funders.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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*Observations:*

- Since 2020, RIC has experienced financial difficulty. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and declining enrollments have hit the entirety of the college very hard and the Adams Library is no exception. Almost all Library budgets appear to be frozen, and several budget lines have been cut all together. However, Library Director, Ms. DeLizio, is hopeful that as the pandemic eases, the recently-hired Provost will be able to turn her attention to the Library and work with staff to address the outstanding building issues, budget needs, and staffing concerns.
- RIC is a public college and as such relies on state appropriations for a portion of its revenue. Due to COVID-19 state funds have also been delayed. The library director has submitted a budget of \$1,121,488.00 for fiscal year 2022.
- The Preservation Assistance Grant (PAG)—awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)—is the Adams Library's first grant directed at improving the preservation of its historic collections. Library staff hope to use it as a springboard to bolster preservation efforts and

to continue to seek additional outside grant funding moving forward. Library Director, Ms. DeLizio, also hopes to explore the Rhode Island Capital Projects Program, RICAP, as a potential outside funder for special projects in the years ahead.

- RIC's Special Collections orders supplies on an as-needed basis, using the Library's general budget line. How much money Special Collections can spend is determined by the Library's overall budget for the year. While the department does not have its own budget, Ms. Bruce Patterson has felt very supported by the Library Directory in this area. Supplies needed for collection work usually can be acquired (within reason).
- There are currently two full-time staff members in the department as well as one part-time assistant.
- Ms. Bruce Patterson, Digital Archivist & Special Collections Librarian, holds an MLIS and has extensive professional experience with historic collections. She received some preservation training while at Simmons and has had on-the-job training over the course of her career. Ms. Bruce Patterson has experience with the safe handling of moldy materials and water-related disasters and emergencies.
- As the head of the department, Ms. Bruce Patterson oversees all areas of collection development and management. She also responds to research requests. Her faculty position and tenure line at RIC requires that she serve as a liaison/subject librarian, too. It should be noted that Ms. Bruce Patterson will be leaving her position in the spring of 2022. Filling her position with a qualified professional is a priority for the Library Director in the summer of this year.
- Andy Davis is the Digital Initiative Coordinator in Special Collections. Mr. Davis coordinates digital projects and is responsible for managing the digital repository. He has digitized many of the most valuable assets in RIC's collection as well as nearly all fragile and soon-to-be obsolete media. He has on the job training in the care and handling of historic documents and volumes and has extensive experience in the processing of AV materials as well. Given the tight budget at Adams Library, the fact that Special Collections has been able to create and manage so much digital material is to the institution's credit. Mr. Davis is taking an NEDCC course in Spring of 2022 as a professional development opportunity.
- Erica Florenz works as a part-time Special Collections Assistant. She assists with special collections projects and processing manuscripts and archives. She holds an MLIS
- Special Collections also employs student workers. They primarily work in Digital Initiatives under Mr. Davis for approximately ten hours a week.
- There are several open positions across the Library, including in Special Collections, where Ms. Bruce Patterson will be leaving her position in spring of 2022. Special Collections at one time had two part-time archives assistants, which was reduced to one position during the pandemic. The Library Director hopes that as the pandemic eases, she will eventually be able to fill staff openings.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Hire a new Digital Archivist and Special Collections Librarian as quickly as possible.** This assessment has made clear what an asset Ms. Bruce Patterson has been for Special Collections as she has wholly been committed to the preservation and access of RIC's historic collections. It is imperative that someone with equal or greater qualifications fill her position. In particular, the hiring committee should identify a professional who can work collaboratively with Library staff and

college administration to improve the Library's pressing environmental, budgetary, and staffing issues. A commitment to human resources is imperative to the success of Adams Library's preservation efforts.

- **Continue to pursue professional development for staff.** Staff should be encouraged to continue developing skills and should maintain membership in relevant professional organizations. All staff would benefit from training (either online or in-person) on basic policies, care and handling practices, new research in sustainable environments, and digital preservation planning, all of which can inform long-term preservation planning moving forward. The NEH grant includes \$400 in funds for Special Collections staff members to attend NEDCC preservation trainings.
  - NEDCC offers a roster of preservation workshops and webinars that may prove helpful. They can be found online at <https://www.nedcc.org/prestr>
  - NEDCC also offers a free, self-paced course in preservation training. Details on Preservation 101 can be found here: <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation101/welcome>
- **Continue efforts to secure grants and other funding for high priority preservation projects.** RIC has done an excellent job in securing and completing the work required for an NEH-PAG grant, especially during a pandemic, but additional funds will be needed to address the fundamental preservation issues raised in this report. In particular, “big-ticket” items such as improving the collection storage environment will require significant financial investment. Internal funding demonstrates an institution's commitment to long-term collections care as well as to increasing access to materials. Even if funds are not eventually allocated for specific projects, drafting an internal annual budget based on goals from the preservation plan will demonstrate a commitment to preservation that granting agencies will notice.
  - NEDCC maintains a continually updated list of preservation- and conservation-related grants. Available here <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/funding-opportunities/overview>
  - The NEH's Research and Development Program supports projects in all stages of preservation planning and development—from space planning to working to save archival artifacts that may be facing digital obsolescence. For more information see: <https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/research-and-development>
- **Consider including either a budget line for Special Collections specifically, or for preservation activities and supplies generally across the Library.** As mentioned in the point above, reliable preservation funding will demonstrate to outside funders RIC's commitment to maintaining their collections in the long-term.

## D. Intellectual Control

Intellectual control helps staff and researchers to identify and locate potentially relevant materials. It is inextricably linked to physical control – the recordkeeping, retrieval, and shelving practices that ensure that materials are where they are supposed to be. Intellectual control may be achieved through the creation of catalogs, inventories, finding aids, and other descriptive guides. These descriptive tools not only facilitate access, but they can also support preservation in several ways:

- They decrease the risk of theft by providing documentation of ownership.

- They prevent damage and disorder caused by rummaging through boxes and documents in archival or historic collections.
- They help to maintain intellectual links between materials that may be physically separated for preservation purposes (e.g., papers separated from cased photographs). Preservation needs vary by format, and to meet these needs, items from the same collection may be physically separated and placed on different shelves, in different rooms, or even in different buildings. Good intellectual control and well-written descriptive guides allow staff to meet varied preservation needs while maintaining the conceptual idea of a collection and providing the information required to find separated items.
- In the context of disaster recovery, they are invaluable in helping staff to determine which materials, if any, have been damaged or destroyed.

Cataloging practices for published books differ substantially from cataloging practices for archival materials (e.g., documents, photographs, scrapbooks, etc.). Where published books are cataloged individually, archival materials are usually cataloged (“arranged and described”) in groups. Finding aids are the primary means of describing archival collections, but there are many ways of arranging these materials, and the method best suited to one group of records may not work for another. The ultimate approach to organization should promote access, both by expediting availability of the collections for research and by providing a reasonable means of identifying relevant sets of records.<sup>5</sup>

Many standards, best practices, and guiding documents exist to assist in describing and organizing different types of collections, and even different formats. Regardless of how intellectual control is achieved, at a minimum the organization should know the legal ownership of collections, the formats and quantities represented, and the physical locations of materials.

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### ***Observations & Recommendations***

#### *Observations:*

- Overall, intellectual control over both bound volumes and archives and manuscripts is good. As in many cultural heritage institutions, cataloging and inventorying has happened in a somewhat haphazard manner over a long period of time, but it is clear that qualified staff members have worked over many years to implement and maintain professional best practices. Finding aids and other guides are maintained in a variety of formats—EAD files, Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and in some cases, card catalogs.
- Approximately 85% of the collection is physically processed with some minimal amount of processing information. Ms. Bruce Patterson works on the backlog in the summer months when classes are not in session. She has not added to the backlog since she started at the library in 2019.
- Since 2019, Ms. Bruce Patterson has done significant work in the area of intellectual control. She has been working to collate and standardize finding aids and collection data and has made sure that EAD files are published in the online catalog, RIAMCO (Rhode Island Archives and Manuscripts Online). She uploaded PDF finding aids to the Library website and has transcribed the analog card catalog into Excel. In doing this, Ms. Bruce Patterson ensured that researchers have an entry point into important collections via the internet.

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<sup>5</sup> Greene, Mark A., and Dennis E. Meissner. 2005. "More product, less process: revamping traditional archival processing". *American Archivist*. 68 (2).

<http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/pre-readings/IMPLP/AA68.2.MeissnerGreene.pdf>

- Implementation of ArchivesSpace is the ultimate goal for the department, and it has been approved by administration. Staff are hopeful that the software will be purchased and implemented when COVID budget restrictions are lifted.
- Acquisitions have traditionally been recorded with what is internally called a “lead file.” Many of these files contain documentation on acquisitions or donations that never materialized. In other instances, these files grew to contain processing notes, research requests, and grant documents. Ms. Bruce Patterson is going through the lead files and updating the files into “Collection Documentation Files” with accession data logged into Excel. The data will eventually be ingested into ArchivesSpace.
- Prior to Ms. Bruce Patterson’s hire in 2019, there was not a workflow in place for documenting the transfer of archival material to the Library, but since her hiring she has incorporated a transfer form into the Collection Development Policy and Procedures document.
- There is also a collections processing manual for the department.

*Recommendations:*

- **Continue to create and retain record transfer documentation for all incoming materials.**
- **Continue to work towards unifying record formats across intellectual control tools to guarantee easy to use for staff and researchers.**
- **Continue to advocate with Library and College administration for the implementation of ArchivesSpace to standardize collection data moving forward.**



### III. Building and Environment

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A well-maintained building provides the first line of defense for collections. Staff caring for historic collections within a larger organization (for example, staff of an archives housed within a library) will have to work closely with facilities and administration to ensure that the entire building envelope is monitored and maintained. This will protect circulating and non-circulating materials, as well as any other materials and services within the building. Temperature, humidity, and air quality are best controlled when monitored building-wide to determine how shifts in one area are affecting other areas. Because any disaster is likely to affect the building as a whole, having a comprehensive disaster plan that also addresses collections, along with staff cross-trained in disaster preparedness, will help ensure that all collections are cared for should the building flood, catch fire, or face other emergencies. Finally, maintaining a secure building requires the concerted efforts of all occupants.

#### A. The Building

The building is a collection's primary defense against the elements, making regular upkeep a foundational element of preservation. Unless the structure is sound, it cannot prevent the entrance of pests and intruders, support climate control, or protect records from fire, water, and other disasters. To ensure that their building fulfills these functions, institutions should provide regular preventive maintenance on a fixed calendar basis, with inspection of roof, gutters, skylights, flashings, and drains, and maintenance of any climate control, fire protection, and security systems. Keeping a log of building problems will preserve institutional knowledge about the building despite staff changes over time.

#### *Observations & Recommendations*

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##### *Observations:*

- The main part of the building was constructed in 1963 and an addition was completed on the north side in 1979. Renovations were completed on Levels 1 and 1a in 2017.
- Special Collections is housed in a secure 3,093 square foot location within the Library. It is comprised of an office, reading room, work room, and collections storage (which includes compact shelving).
- Throughout the Library—not just in Special Collections—there are pockets of intense temperature and humidity fluctuations (discussed in greater detail below). Peeling paint as well as excessive moisture buildup on carpets, windows, and ceilings observed during the site visit. It is evident that the envelope of the building is very unstable and that the subsequent maintenance issues pose a threat to both Library collections and staff, including those in Special Collections.
- In recent years, special collections has had water-related problems and incidents of mold.
- Maintenance of the building is provided by the Rhode Island College Facilities and Operations department and any necessary outside vendors.
- Records of any work done to the building are kept by the Facilities and Operations staff. However, there is not one single log that includes all maintenance activity.
- The Adams Library had a new roof installed in 2021. It is a Johns Mansville PVC roof (80 mil) with Polyisocyanurate roof insulation and has a thirty year warranty. There have always been major leaks via the roof in the past, and leaks have persisted since the new roof has been installed as well.

Currently, there are several active leaks throughout the Library; however, they are not believed to be roof leaks. Instead, they are assumed to be leaks from drain piping or from a wall proximate to the building's lower roof. These issues are in the process of being addressed. The roof is inspected occasionally.

- Routine maintenance is performed on filters for the HVAC system, the generator, and the seasonal cooling system. Other maintenance is addressed on an as needed basis.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Prioritize building care by increasing the budget line to include large-scale building projects and high-quality, ongoing maintenance measures.** Reliable internal funding will demonstrate to granting organizations RICs ongoing commitment to preservation. Continue to advocate, in tandem with the Facilities and Operations department, for building improvements with the College's administration.
- **Continue to apply for outside funding to address large-scale building improvement projects.** Having a preservation assessment completed is an excellent first step for the Adams Library. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has additional programs aimed at improving building and storage environments. In particular, Library staff may wish to explore the NEH's Infrastructure and Capacity Challenge Grants: <https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/infrastructure-and-capacity-building-challenge-grants>
- **Ensure that roof inspections and preventive building maintenance at Adams Library are occurring on a routine schedule.** Because the building provides the collections' primary line of defense against the elements, routine preventive maintenance is an indispensable component of preserving collections. Preventive maintenance will also maximize the useful life of the building and help to reduce the need for potentially costly repairs.
- **Maintain an onsite log of building-related problems.** While Facilities and Operations might maintain these records, the Library should maintain its own log of building work performed. Over the long term, documenting the extent of recurring problems that threaten the collections will be helpful when advocating for improvements.

## **B. Temperature, Relative Humidity (RH) & Air Quality**

In the storage environment, temperature, relative humidity (RH), and air quality all play significant roles in determining the longevity of collections. Heat and moisture, along with air pollutants, act as catalysts for chemical, mechanical, and biological decay, making the rate at which materials age directly proportional to the conditions in which they are stored.

"An optimal preservation environment," states the Image Permanence Institute, "is one that achieves the best possible preservation of collections at the least possible consumption of energy and is sustainable over time."<sup>6</sup>

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Rochester Institute of Technology. 2010. *Seminar reference workbook for sustainable preservation practices for managing storage environments*. Rochester, N.Y.: Image Permanence Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology. [http://ipisustainability.org/pdfs/sustainability\\_workbook\\_connecticut.pdf](http://ipisustainability.org/pdfs/sustainability_workbook_connecticut.pdf)

## ***Temperature and RH***

Optimal storage conditions vary depending on the type of material. As a very general guideline, collections are best stored below 70°F, and at an RH of 30-50%. In recent years, though, conservation research has focused increasingly on the creation and maintenance of *sustainable* preservation environments. Where past recommendations called for strict regulation of temperature and RH ( $\pm 2^\circ\text{F}/\pm 3\%\text{RH}$ ), current thinking is less prescriptive and takes into account material characteristics, environmental risks, current institutional capabilities, and available resources.

Temperature and relative humidity are inextricably related: as one changes, so will the other. Seasonal fluctuations resulting in extreme conditions—where materials are subjected to high temperature or RH for longer than a few weeks—hasten decay. Optimal storage requirements for books and paper are different from those for photographs (including still and moving-image film) and audiovisual media and, again, depend on the type of material (i.e., nitrate, acetate, polyester, magnetic tape, etc.).<sup>7</sup> The lower the temperature, the more slowly items will decay.

Likewise, the lower the RH (within the range of 30%-50%), the more slowly materials will age, but because RH fluctuations can have broader and more serious effects on collections, control of RH in particular should be a priority for every organization caring for collections. Besides accelerating chemical deterioration of collections, extreme seasonal RH fluctuations cause mechanical stress in paper as it absorbs and releases moisture in response to changing humidity levels in the surrounding environment. High RH causes image decay of film and photographs, discoloration of color film and photographs, and binder degradation in magnetic media. Moreover, humid environments put collections at risk of damage from mold (which can bloom where RH exceeds 60%), and they can be inviting to pests (e.g., silverfish) that feed on cellulose—the primary ingredient in paper. Very low RH levels (below 25%) can cause paper to become dry, brittle, and weak.

Just as different formats have different environmental needs, they also have different vulnerabilities: some are more sensitive to temperature and RH fluctuations than others. Ideal conditions necessarily vary from institution to institution, and will depend on four factors:

- the characteristics of the institution's highest priority materials;
- the environmental risks associated with those materials;
- the capacity of existing environmental controls; and
- institutional resources dedicated to operating climate control equipment.

## ***Air Quality***

Pollutants in the storage environment fall into two main categories: particulate and gaseous. Particulate matter such as dirt, dust, and fibers can stain and abrade collection materials. Gases such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and peroxides catalyze chemical reactions that lead to acid formation in paper. Sulphur dioxide, which converts to sulfuric acid in the presence of moisture, causes red rot in leather bindings. Nitrogen dioxide and ozone cause fading and discoloration of photographs.

Exposure of collections to pollutants can be controlled by good building maintenance, routine housekeeping, and mechanical air filtration. Most HVAC systems now offer some level of particulate

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<sup>7</sup> Adelstein, Peter Z. 2004. *IPI media storage: quick reference*. Rochester, NY: Image Permanence Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology. [www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/301](http://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm_send/301); National Film Preservation Foundation (U.S.). 2004. *The film preservation guide: the basics for archives, libraries, and museums*. San Francisco, Calif: National Film Preservation Foundation. [www.filmpreservation.org/preservation-basics/the-film-preservation-guide](http://www.filmpreservation.org/preservation-basics/the-film-preservation-guide)

filtration. Gaseous pollutant filtration is also available; however, it requires a significant investment in equipment and maintenance. Following a regular schedule of cleaning or replacing filters will ensure that the system operates as intended. Other steps that can be taken to prevent exposure to pollutants include keeping exterior windows closed and housing materials in protective enclosures.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations*

- Two Elitech RC-51H dataloggers monitor the environment in Special Collections and the data shows that temperature and relative humidity fluctuate significantly over the course of the year.
- The data is downloaded to a spreadsheet once a month and more frequently during the seasonal switchovers, when the building's AC is turned on and off, or when there is an acute environmental issue such as a leak.
- Recorded environmental data is used to alert the Manager of Campus Environmental Functions and Services. Ongoing conversations with the Facilities and Operations department have indicated that the existing HVAC system has limited capacity to meet the environmental needs of Special Collections.
- Temperature and RH are unsurprisingly higher in the summer. From July 3 – August 12, 2020, for example, temperatures ranged from 72.8 to 79.1. In that same period, RH was recorded between 51.6 and 67.6. The average temperature of Special Collections for 2020 was 71 degrees, the highest temp registered was 80.9° (7/22/20) and the lowest temperature was 65.8° (11/2/20). The average RH was 48%. High RH was recorded at 68.8% (9/3/20) and low was recorded 30.8% (3/16/20).
- Because of COVID-19 and the subsequent building closure due to the pandemic, the most comprehensive data on file is from 2020 (discussed in detail above). However, it is important to note that the summer of 2021 was an extremely hot and humid one for Rhode Island. RH was recorded in Special Collections to be in the upper 70% range several times and was noted as having fluctuated close to 10 percentage points within a 24-hour period.
- Heating is typically set for 68° and AC is set to 74°. Special Collections are typically set around 70°. There are no humidity controls in Special Collections.
- The current HVAC unit is a constant volume system with duct steam humidification and was installed in the 1960s. It services the entire south side of the Library building. In the 1990s, the existing constant volume system was converted to a variable air volume system with reheat. At the same time, the humidification system was removed. The system is predominantly serviced by campus maintenance staff, or a private vendor if needed. Systems are continuously monitored by RIC's Building Monitoring System.
- Cooling is usually turned on in late April or early May and the heat is turned on in October. During non-pandemic times the heating and cooling system operated in accordance with library hours. At the present time the systems are in occupied mode—meaning they do not run continuously throughout the day, which can lead to a significant amount of environmental variability during off hours.
- MERV 13 filters for air filtration and particulate are in use.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Continue recording the temperature and humidity with dataloggers and continue to share the data with facilities teams and college administrators.** Fluctuations in temperature can cause historic books, documents, and photographs to expand and contract. As a result, documents can experience accelerated deterioration as a rapid loss or absorption of moisture can cause unseen, but critical, damage to materials. Additionally, overly damp areas can encourage mold growth and pest activity.

Maintaining an accurate and ongoing understanding of temperature and relative humidity in storage environments is a core aspect of good collection management. The results of this work will likely prove useful in determining where best to store specific materials or formats or advocating for more controlled storage with college administrators and other state stakeholders.

- eClimate Notebook is a respected tool to manage and analyze environmental data (<https://www.eclimatenotebook.com/>).
  - For more information about environmental monitoring and the various devices available, see NEDCC Preservation Leaflet 2.2, “Monitoring Temperature and Relative Humidity,” at <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/2.-the-environment/2.2-monitoring-temperature-and-relative-humidity>
  - Also see the National Park Service Conserve-O-Gram 3/3, “Comparing Temperature and Relative Humidity Dataloggers for Museum Monitoring,” at [www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/03-03.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/03-03.pdf).
- **Continue to review the environmental sensitivities of various materials and formats in the collection in an effort to guide the planning of improved storage spaces .** If rooms without climate controls are used to house collections items, select items for storage in these areas by format and condition.
    - For more guidance on format-specific storage needs, refer to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s PSAP Collection ID Guide here: <https://psap.library.illinois.edu/collection-id-guide>
  - **Monitor for mold growth after any water or moisture-related incidents.** The spike in humidity caused by a water leak can be drastic. Monitoring for leaks and associated high humidity can prevent damage and mold bloom. Be sure to note if RH reaches 65% or above in areas around leaks. This may require that collection items be moved until the mold issue is properly addressed.

*Please note mold must be dealt with promptly and appropriately. Under no circumstances should staff members work with moldy materials without proper protection or if they have preexisting health concerns. For more information on how to work with mold in your collections, see [NEDCC’s Preservation Leaflet 3.8 Emergency Salvage of Moldy Books and Paper](#).*

- **When planning for more energy-efficient and sustainable environmental systems, consult the Image Permanence Institute’s (IPI) publications and resources on environmental management.** They can be found here: <https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/education/publications.html> and here: <https://ipisustainability.org/> IPI also offers several free online tools to help institutions get the most out of environmental data. The Dew Point Calculator is particularly helpful, especially when used in combination with eClimateNotebook: [www.dpcalc.org](http://www.dpcalc.org)

## C. Protection from Light

All light accelerates deterioration by providing energy to fuel damaging chemical reactions. **This damage is cumulative and irreversible.** While the ultraviolet (UV) spectrum of light is the most damaging, it is important to understand that visible light can also cause a great deal of damage. Its extent is determined by the intensity of the light and the length of exposure. Light causes paper to fade, yellow, or darken, and media to fade or change color. While all materials are vulnerable, particular care should be taken with composite objects (those made of a variety of materials such as paper, fabric, leather, inks, colorants, etc.) because each component part may have a different degree of light-sensitivity.

As with studies on optimal storage environments, recent research on lighting for cultural heritage organizations has focused on improving preservation, reducing energy consumption, and increasing sustainability over time. LEDs (light-emitting diodes) have emerged as a preferred lighting option because they emit no ultraviolet, they emit very little infrared, and they reduce overall energy needs.<sup>8</sup>

Institutions that are not in a position to invest the staff time and resources needed to explore retrofitting lighting systems can make a number of improvements to reduce light damage to collections. Exposure to natural lighting can be reduced through the use of blinds or curtains, or by placing UV-blocking films and panels over windows and skylights. UV-blocking sleeves and covers are available for fluorescent tubing. Display cases and frames can be fitted with UV-blocking glass or Plexiglas, and original collection materials can be replaced on exhibit with high-quality facsimiles, where appropriate. Storage and exhibit areas can be fitted with timers or motion-activated lighting, and items in storage can be boxed or otherwise housed in protective enclosures to further reduce exposure.

### *Observations & Recommendations*

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#### *Observations:*

- Protection from light in Special Collections is fine overall. Given the significant threats to collections posed by the temperature and humidity, light exposure is not something the staff needs to be overly concerned about at this time.
- Archives and manuscripts are stored in compact shelving and most items are in appropriate, archival boxes. Lights in the storage room are left on during workday hours as the room is often used by staff throughout the day.
- There is bound Special Collections materials on the shelves of the Reading Room and they are exposed to north-facing sunlight over the course of the day. Ms. Bruce Patterson has observed some fading on these volumes due to this light exposure. There are high-value framed items (which include prints, illuminated manuscripts, etc.) decorating the walls of the Reading Room as well. These items are exposed to the same amount of north-facing daily sunlight.
- The department uses LED bulbs, and the reading room windows are equipped with blinds.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Keep storage spaces as dark as possible.** In particular, turn off lights in storage rooms when rooms are not in use, when possible. If items in process need to be left outside of storage, keep them in folders and boxes.

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<sup>8</sup> Druzik, James R., and Stefan Michalski. 2012. *Guidelines for selecting solid-state lighting for museums.* <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/SSL-Guidelines-Ver.-10.0.pdf>

- **As storage space allows, rotate manuscript and other paper-based materials that are on view in the Reading Room.** As Library staff are aware, prolonged exposure to light—both natural and artificial—can be detrimental to historic materials. For more information regarding best practice see [NEDCC’s Preservation Leaflet 2.4 Protection from Light Damage](#).
- **Continue to enclose materials of lasting value to protect them from light exposure, as well as dust, dirt, and water.**

## D. Protection from Water

The best insurance against water damage is regular inspection and maintenance of the roof covering and flashings. Gutters and drains should be cleaned at least twice per year (ideally at the end of each spring and fall). Storing collections underneath water or steam pipes, lavatories, mechanical air conditioning equipment, or other sources of water should be avoided, as should storing collections directly on the floor. Shelves or pallets should hold materials at least 3” above floor level. Water alarms should be installed in areas at high risk of seepage or flooding. It is also a good idea for staff to familiarize themselves with the location and operation of water mains and shutoff valves in the event that it is necessary to shut off the water supply during an emergency. This information should be included in the institution’s disaster plan.

### *Observations & Recommendations*

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#### *Observations:*

- Special Collections has suffered water-related incidents in the past several years, which have damaged collection material and, in at least one case, led to potentially dangerous mold growth on a historic collection of books. In August 2021, while Ms. Bruce Patterson was out of the office, water leaked into the collection storage room and damaged 100 volumes of the Juvenile Book Collection. Additionally, sometime around 2016 (prior to Ms. Bruce Patterson’s tenure) a window leaked in the reading room and damaged an illuminated manuscript that hung on the wall.
- Ms. Bruce Patterson has experience dealing with water and mold-related incidents—she has both safely quarantined materials and worked with outside vendors to mitigate irreversible damage. As such, she was able to appropriately and safely manage the aforementioned emergency situation in 2021. Nevertheless, this incident did reveal gaps in the Library’s emergency preparedness procedures and general staff knowledge of what to do when water enters collection spaces. This will be discussed further in the section below on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster response.
- Water detectors are not installed in Special Collections, and collection items were not observed to be on the floor.
- Remnants of water damage—stains on the ceiling and floors—as well as active leaks were observed throughout several library spaces during the site visit.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Continue to monitor the building for signs of damage and any water-related incidents.** If collection items do get wet and mold is present, remediate collections by deactivating mold, cleaning materials, and rehousing them in new archival-quality enclosures. For guidance on this process, consult NEDCC’s [Preservation Leaflet 3.8 Emergency Salvage of Moldy Books and Paper](#) or the Library of Congress’ “What To Do when Collections Get Wet,” here: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/dry.html>

- **Continue to keep collection material at least 3” off the ground to protect against damage from water.** Even minor leaks can lead to pooling water, which can pose a serious threat to collection items stored on the floor.
- **Ensure that roof inspections are conducted annually and be sure to examine the efficacy of existing flashing as often as possible.** Flashing, typically made of galvanized metal, is crucial to protecting the most vulnerable areas of the roof, or those most likely to leak, by directing water away from areas like walls, chimneys, and valleys. Ensuring the integrity of a roof’s flashing is an important step in mitigating against water damage.
- **Have polyester sheeting and tarps on hand, to protect collections immediately if a water incident occurs.** Keep sheeting in a disaster response kit alongside other supplies that are helpful during small emergencies, such as paper towels, tape (to secure sheeting), sponges, nitrile gloves, and a bucket.
- **Confirm that water-related emergency procedures are covered comprehensively in any new emergency and disaster response documentation.** It is critical that as many staff members as possible have knowledge in this area as water and moisture are known areas of high-risk for the Adams Library’s historic collections.

## E. Protection from Fire

All preservation efforts become moot if collections are destroyed by fire. For this reason, it is recommended that buildings housing collection materials be equipped with a building-wide fire detection and suppression system. Fire detection devices—ideally including both smoke and heat detectors—should be wired directly to the local Fire Department or another agency where they can be monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All fire protection systems should be tested and inspected regularly.

The installation of fire sprinklers in close proximity to collections was once a subject of debate because of the risk of leakage. Today, however, building-wide fire suppression is an accepted practice. There are several reasons for this. First, wet materials can often be salvaged; burned materials cannot be. Second, sprinkler heads activate individually and can extinguish a fire at an early stage, before it spreads to multiple rooms. A study completed in 2011 by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) found that 90% of structure fires are extinguished with three or fewer sprinkler heads.<sup>9</sup> Third, sprinklers discharge far less water than fire hoses: the average sprinkler head discharges 20-25 gallons of water per minute in a relatively gentle spray. By contrast, fire hoses discharge between 100 to 250 gallons per minute. In the event of a fire, limited sprinkler action would cause water damage to a relatively small portion of the collection, in contrast to the devastating damage resulting to both the building and collections from the deluge of pressurized water during an uncontrollable fire.

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<sup>9</sup>

Ahrens, Marty. 2017. *U.S. experience with sprinklers*. Quincy, Mass: National Fire Protection Association. [https://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fire-protection-systems/ossprinklers.pdf](https://www.nfpa.org/~/media/files/news-and-research/fire-statistics/fire-protection-systems/ossprinklers.pdf)



## Observations & Recommendations

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### Observations:

- Adams Library has an FCI detection system that monitors for smoke. The fire system is connected to the Providence Fire Department; however, there is not an established routine of annual fire drills and checks with the PFD. Library staff estimates that fire drills are conducted every two to three years. Typically, the fire department arrives on the scene only if there is an emergent issue that needs attention.
- The Library staff has not been trained on the proper use of portable fire extinguishers.

### Recommendations:

- **Strengthen fire protection by scheduling annual fire drills and training staff on extinguisher use.** Fire drills help employees respond to fire quickly, calmly, and safely, and they provide institutions with the opportunity to evaluate their emergency procedures. With all emergency response procedures, the more often staff can practice, the more comfortable they will be as the process becomes routine. This helps to promote an orderly and efficient response in the event of a real emergency.
- **Invite the Providence Fire Department to visit and discuss priority collections.** Regularly scheduled inspections with the fire department are integral to protecting collections from fire damage. Establishing a strong relationship with the local fire department creates the opportunity to make firefighters aware of (or refresh their memory of) the location of critical materials, increasing the possibility that they will be taken into consideration during firefighting operations.
  - The Museum SOS Fire Safety Self-Inspection Form for Cultural Institutions provides additional guidance on what to look for during inspections:  
[http://museumsos.org/docs/strat\\_assess\\_fire\\_checklist.pdf](http://museumsos.org/docs/strat_assess_fire_checklist.pdf)

## F. Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness — efforts to prevent damage from fire, water, and other hazards — is an essential component of preservation. Every institution with collections of enduring value should evaluate its risk of events that could damage holdings. Plausible risks should be addressed, and the institution should prepare a formal, written plan for responding to collection-related disasters.

A disaster plan should include the following information:

- Identification of a disaster response team to coordinate first response and salvage activities.
- Contact information for staff members who will assist in case of a disaster, including home and cell phone numbers.
- Phone numbers and contact names for providers of local freezing services, building dry out services, and vacuum freeze-drying services.
- Identification of proper procedures for drying the range of materials found in your collection, as well as the location of in-house disaster supplies.
- Identification of priority items to be rescued in a disaster.
- Information about insurance coverage.

Collection emergencies can be addressed quickly, and damage avoided or minimized, if staff are prepared to respond. For this reason, every collecting institution should ensure that staff members are familiar with the plan and trained to carry it out, and that at least one complete disaster response kit is on hand. Some of the

most common incidents that affect collections are burst pipes and roof leaks, so staff should be equipped to recover small quantities – approximately 200 books or fewer, depending upon available space – of water-damaged materials. Large quantities of material, or materials damaged by contaminated water, will require professional assistance. For many types of materials that become wet, quick freezing (within 24 hours) prevents mold growth and can keep damage to a minimum; however, freezing can damage other types of materials (e.g., audiovisual).

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- Better, more comprehensive emergency preparedness has been identified as a critical need for Special Collections by Ms. Bruce Patterson. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the department has been affected by two water and mold-related emergencies in the past five years, both of which caused damage to collection materials and revealed gaps in staff knowledge of what to do in an emergency.
- Emergency preparedness duties are overseen by the Assistant Director of Access Services and the Access Services Operations Manager. There is an adequate Emergency Procedure Document on file for general, circulating collections, but it does not directly address Special Collections' materials. The recent incidents with water exposed the ways in which the current procedures fall short in terms of properly protecting RIC's historic materials. The current document was last updated in October of 2019.
- In addition to not having specific procedures in place for high-value, unique collections held in the Library, Special Collections staff has not received training in emergency preparedness and response.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Work on a new disaster plan, across Library departments.** An institution' emergency preparedness is strengthened if it crosses departmental lines. However, if this is not possible, Special Collections should write a department-specific plan.
  - For additional guidance on the process of creating a disaster plan, see NEDCC's Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan, available here: <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.4-worksheet-for-outlining-an-emergency-response-plan>
  - Take note of the timeline for creating the disaster plan. Imposing deadlines for various sections or information gathering categories will help to move the process along efficiently.
  - Once the plan is ready, set up a time to familiarize staff with the processes and procedures outlined. Making these procedures routine will help ensure efficient action in the case of a real disaster.
  - Consider creating and using a Pocket Response Plan (PRP) or Pocket Response Resource (PRR) while the full disaster plan is being drafted. Like the PRP, the PRR distills the most immediate actions for disaster response onto a single sheet of paper for quick reference. A template for the PRR is available here: <https://www.nedcc.org/dplan>
- **Establish a list of priority collections.** Because it is not feasible to save all items in a large-scale disaster, a priorities list weighed against the actual situation will determine those items that will receive the most immediate attention.

- **Establish a cache of disaster supplies and information that will be easily accessible in an emergency.** Disaster kits can have any number of useful items in them, such as polyester sheeting, gloves, absorbent materials, and copies of an institution’s disaster plan and salvage guides.
  - For guidance and a list of suggested supplies for a disaster supply kit, see the National Park Service’s Conserve O Gram 21/2: An Emergency Cart for Salvaging Water-Damaged Objects: <https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/21-02.pdf>
  - A salvage guide gives concise instructions on salvage techniques based on format and substrate. The Connecting to Collections Care Online Community revised WAAC’s Salvage-at-a-Glance chart to include a wide variety of formats, available here: <https://bit.ly/2Or55js>
  
- **Invest in staff training in disaster response and salvage practices for collection materials, such as a hands-on workshop on the recovery of wet materials or an emergency response plan writing series.** Funds for such a training were allotted to Library staff as part of the NEH Preservation Assistance Grant that awarded this assessment.
  - NEDCC’s webinar on “Salvaging Damaged Books, Paper, and AV Collections” is available for on-demand purchase, here: <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-currentlist#ondemand> NEDCC also offers customized training programs; more information here, <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-about>

## G. Housekeeping & Pest Management

Dust, dirt, and paper detritus can attract pests, and may also serve as a substrate for mold growth, especially in warm or damp environments. Systematic housekeeping, including periodic vacuuming of floors and dusting of shelves, boxes, and books, serves two important functions: it actively discourages pest infiltration and mold growth,<sup>10</sup> and it indicates to staff and patrons that the collections are valued.

Many pests see collections as a source of food or nesting material. Clutter and food remains attract pests, and food odor is one of the cues to pests that a space may be hospitable. Eating and drinking should be restricted as much as possible and should be prohibited in all spaces where archival materials are stored, processed, or used.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the standard practice for organizations holding cultural records. IPM focuses on addressing and correcting causes of pest infestation rather than symptoms. Strategies include routine monitoring, controlling pest habitats, identifying and sealing points of entry, and eliminating food sources to prevent infestation. The goal is to control pests using methods that are least harmful to humans, least damaging to the general environment, most likely to show concrete results, and that can be most effective with the least difficulty and cost. In most instances, a combination of strategies will offer the best solution.

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<sup>10</sup> Zachary, Shannon. 1997. “Managing a stacks cleaning project“. *Archival Products News* 5 (1), [www.archival.com/newsletters/apnewsvol5no1.pdf](http://www.archival.com/newsletters/apnewsvol5no1.pdf); and

NEDCC. 2012. “Preservation Leaflet 4.3: Cleaning Books and Shelves.” Andover, Mass: NEDCC. [https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/4\\_3\\_CleanBksShelves.pdf](https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/4_3_CleanBksShelves.pdf)

In cases where problems do not respond to preventive techniques, direct treatment for infestation may be necessary; however, due to the toxic nature of pesticides, chemical extermination for pest problems should be used only as a last resort. <sup>11</sup>

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- Food and drink are allowed in the main stacks, study spaces, and most offices in Adams Library.
- Food and drink are not permitted in Special Collections reading room, storage room, and office areas. It should be noted that a slight exception to this rule has been made over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, Special Collections staff have been able to eat in an archival supply closet to avoid unmasked contact among staff during mealtimes. Surfaces in this area are cleaned daily by staff and the practice will cease when social distancing measures are lifted.
- Trash and recycling are removed daily, and dusting and vacuuming happens weekly. Housekeeping staff does not touch collections and the custodial supervisor oversees all cleaning staff.
- Over the past few years, Library staff has noted insect and/or rodent activity from the lower level through the fourth floor. However, no pest activity has been recorded in Special Collections area.

### *Recommendations*

- **Continue routine housekeeping activities.** The cleaning schedule and procedures described above are best practice.
- **Record pest issues and consider implementing routine visits from an exterminator who is experienced with Integrated Pest Management.** Accurate and consistent record keeping of findings provides a more reliable means of detecting pest problems and determining their extent should they arise. An IPM expert could also identify and seal any mice entry points. For more information, see NEDCC's [Preservation Leaflet 3.10 Integrated Pest Management](#).
- **Lay insect traps in collections storage areas.** This will allow staff to identify what kind, if any, insects exist collection areas. Trapper brand "monitor and insect traps" are a good, affordable, and non-poisonous option. For information on pest monitoring techniques and trap selection and placement, see <https://museumpests.net>
- **Establish a routine cleaning schedule for collection storage areas to deter pest activity and to prevent the buildup of dust and debris.** Special Collections staff should be trained to carefully dust shelves, as well as books and boxes in collections areas. Books, containers, and shelves should be cleaned bi-annually to remove accumulated dust. Collection areas can also be cleaned as materials are organized, processed, and rehoused. See NEDCC's [Preservation Leaflet 4.3 Cleaning Books and Shelves](#) for more information.

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<sup>11</sup> NEDCC. 1999. "Preservation Leaflet 3.10: Integrated Pest Management." Andover, Mass: NEDCC. <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3-emergency-management/3.10-integrated-pest-management>; and Integrated Pest Management Working Group. "MuseumPests.net" [www.museumpests.net](http://www.museumpests.net)

## H. Security

Security of both the building and collections should be maintained from several angles. Building security as a whole should be considered, along with storage area protections and reading room practices. The building must be well-secured when it is closed to the public. Perimeter intrusion alarms and internal motion detectors wired directly to the local police department or to another monitoring agency are recommended. For the purpose of controlling access during working hours, as well as controlling loss of materials, it is best to limit open entrances, ideally to one used by researchers and staff alike. All other doors should be alarmed to detect unauthorized use.

Access to collections must also be controlled during working hours. To minimize unnecessary access to the building after-hours, master key systems are not recommended for collecting institutions. Building keys and keys to collections storage areas should be strictly limited. A list of key holders should be kept current, and staff members should be required to return keys when they terminate employment.

Researchers using collections should be continuously supervised to prevent theft and vandalism, and to spot accidental mishandling of materials during use.

### *Observations & Recommendations*

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#### *Observations:*

- Security measures could be improved in Special Collections, but overall the current measures are adequate and as such improvement does not need to be a top priority for staff. There have not been any incidents of theft to date within special collections, though it should be noted that at some time in the 2000s a suit of armor, which stood outside Special Collections, was stolen. It was not locked.
- There is not a formal process for controlling which staff are in possession of keys, but key issuance, collection, and copying, as well as access to the Library's safe, has traditionally been overseen by the Access Services Department. The returning of keys after the departure of Library staff has traditionally been on an honor system or left in the hands of specific managers.
- There is a master key, which opens Special Collections and its storage areas. Three staff members are in possession of this key, in addition to the Library's housekeeping staff.
- Researchers are instructed to use materials in the Reading Room while Special Collections staff is present. They are provided with a "Reading Room Rules" document before they work with historic materials and are overseen by staff.

#### *Recommendations*

- **Continue to keep storage areas closed and locked as much as possible.** This not only helps maintain environmental consistency of the storage spaces, but also provides a significant level of security for staff-only areas.
- **Conduct a key audit and draft clear procedures regarding key control across the Library .** Knowing who currently has access and then documenting the retrieval of keys when staff depart is important to collection security.
- **Continue registering and monitoring researchers.**

## IV. Collections Storage & Handling

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### A. Storage and Use Spaces

Collections represent an investment to be maintained in the same way that buildings and equipment are maintained. The most basic element of such maintenance is the provision of safe, appropriate storage and use space. Overcrowding materials on shelves and stacking materials on the floor exposes them to distortion, disfigurement during removal and reshelving, and damage from water.

Sufficient workspace promotes safe handling. Both the processing space and the patron-use spaces should provide enough table space for safe handling of the range of collections held within the institution—for example, tables that can fully accommodate most oversized materials. Ideally, the processing space is within or in close proximity to the collections' storage area, while the patron-use space is outside of the collections storage room. Pathways should be free of obstruction and wide enough for carts to move freely between storage, processing, and patron-use areas.

### *Observations & Recommendations*

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#### *Observations:*

- Collection storage is overall quite good in Special Collections at the Adams Library. All archival and manuscript collections, and even a significant portion of the rare books, are appropriately shelved in compact storage just off the reading room. The compact storage was not observed to be overflowing during the site-visit; in fact, there is room for collection growth or additional processing (e.g. the addition of protective enclosures). There is, however, a shortage of storage for oversized documents as flat file drawers were observed to be over-filled and somewhat in disarray.
- While the storage in the department is very good, the storage environment threatens the longevity of RIC's historic collections.
- There is adequate workspace within the department for most staff members. Ms. Bruce Patterson has a good-sized office, and there is ample work and processing space in the workroom for both her and Special Collections Assistant. The Digital Archivist, however, is running short on space in his office. This is in large part because his work depends on several large pieces of equipment.
- While on a tour of the Library during the in-person site-visit, the Preservation Specialist observed a large unused space in the Library—what is internally called the “mail room.” Ms. Bruce Patterson noted that it is a perfectly-sized workspace for Digital Initiatives as it could comfortably accommodate the large-scale photography equipment, computers, and other legacy media devices that are used in the Digital Archivist's work. However, this room is known to be environmentally unstable and prone to leaks, making it unsuitable for office for collections work, especially that which relies so heavily on electronic equipment.

The inability to use certain areas of the Library because they pose both a risk to staff health and safety as well as to collection health and security, is a clear indicator that the current building is nearing unsustainability for twenty-first century library work.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Prioritize the reorganization of existing collections storage and workspaces as part of the Library's next round of strategic and space planning.** Good collections storage overall,

equipped with stable environmental conditions, is vital to the long-term preservation of historic and cultural material and should not be an afterthought.

An improved workspace for Digital Initiatives should also be a priority, especially as increasing digital access to Special Collections is a stated priority for the department and the Library as a whole.

- **Consider having all storage and staff work areas evaluated by a reputable space planner or architect who has experience working with Special Collections.** A qualified consultant would offer expertise in how to maximize the space according to disciplinary best practices as well as to the department's specific needs.
  - “Space Planning: Getting Started,” a webinar produced by the New York State Archives offers many space planning strategies: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/workshops/description/dhpsny-space-planning-getting-started>

## B. Preparing Collections

### *Protective Enclosures*

Protective enclosures serve several purposes. They facilitate intellectual control of collections by providing a means of keeping like materials together, slowing chemical deterioration caused by light exposure, limiting water damage in the event of a disaster, and protecting against dust and pests.

Two principles should be kept in mind when selecting protective enclosures. First, they should be chemically stable. Paper enclosures should be acid-free and lignin-free, and in most cases, buffered with an alkaline reserve. The purpose of the buffer is to neutralize acids as they form in storage materials through contact with acidic items and atmospheric pollution. Plastic enclosures should be composed of polyethylene, polypropylene, or archival-grade polyester (often sold under the trade name “Melinex”). Enclosures should not contribute to the deterioration of the materials they house. For this reason, buffered enclosures are generally *not* recommended for blueprints, cyanotypes, diazotypes, color photographs, or works of art on paper with alkaline-sensitive pigments. These items can be damaged through reaction with the alkaline buffering agent.<sup>12</sup>

The second principle to keep in mind is that enclosures should keep their contents reasonably stationary and provide them with good structural support. Boxes that are significantly larger than their contents will allow items to shift, making damage more likely to occur as the box is moved on and off the shelf. Boxes that are too small will compress items, causing creases and tears. In flat file drawers, folders should match the size of the drawer (with about 1/2” to spare on each edge), rather than the size of the item, to prevent contents from sliding out of folders as drawers are opened and closed.

### *Inserts and Fasteners*

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<sup>12</sup> NEDCC. 1999. “Preservation Leaflet 4.4: Storage Enclosures for Books and Artifacts on Paper.” <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/4.-storage-and-handling/4.4-storage-enclosures-for-books-and-artifacts-on-paper>; and 2018. “Preservation Leaflet 5.5: Storage Enclosures for Photographic Materials.” [https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/5\\_5\\_photostorage\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/5_5_photostorage_2018.pdf)

When processing, any acidic inserts (e.g., bookmarks, scraps of paper, etc.) should be removed so that the acid they contain does not migrate and cause staining. For books that will be retained permanently in a collection, identifying information is best placed on acid-free, lignin-free, buffered paper flags inserted between the volume's first page and front flyleaf. These are available from conservation suppliers. Adhesive labels, such as sticky notes, can stain or otherwise disfigure collections, and should be avoided. While the tacky portion of the note seems quite weak, it bonds well enough to tear brittle paper when removed. Even when items are not torn by sticky note removal, residual adhesive can cause staining and will attract dust and dirt. On a practical level, sticky notes often come loose, effectively rendering any descriptive information on them useless. A better option if the item is thin enough would be foldering and labeling the folder or, if the item is thicker or bound, inserting a book flag.

Most fasteners crimp pages and lead to permanent structure changes. Although often made of chemically stable materials, plastic clips exert too much pressure on the papers they hold. This is especially problematic for brittle or weakened papers, which can be easily torn.

### ***Observations & Recommendations***

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#### *Observations:*

- Special Collections uses archival-quality protective enclosures throughout, and when supplies of this kind are needed, they are almost always approved by the Library Director.
- Occasionally, metal fasteners were observed within archival folders on the site visit, but they are not ubiquitous and thus not worrisome. Their removal need not be a priority at this time.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Continue to use appropriate archival and museum quality enclosures when processing and storing historic documents and photographs.** When processing, it is usually best to concentrate on rehousing any fragile, exposed, high-value, and/or high-use items first. As a reminder: take care to avoid overfilling or underfilling boxes, drawers, and folders when processing collections.

## **1. Storage of Bound Materials**

### ***Books***

The width, height, and binding of a book affect its preservation outlook. As much as possible, volumes should be shelved by size. Small volumes will not support larger ones and can be crushed by the weight of surrounding books.

Volumes under 12" are generally considered non-oversized and need to be shelved upright and supported by bookends to prevent leaning. Leaning can cause distortion over time from the stress placed on bindings. Broad-edged ("non-knifing") bookends are safer than the flat ("knifing") variety, whose sharp edges may damage books. Staff can modify knifing bookends by slipping a piece of acid-free foam-core covered with bookcloth over the sharp metal edge. A brick covered with bookcloth fastened with PVA adhesive also makes a good book support.

Volumes over 12" tall are generally considered oversized. These are best shelved flat for overall support; placing them in stacks no more than two or three volumes high will facilitate safe handling. Alternatively, where flat shelving is not possible, oversized books can be shelved on their spines—but never on their front edges (or "fore edges"), since the weight of a book's pages will pull the text block away from its cover.



Shelving practices play a major role in keeping books in good condition. All books need to be supported completely by their shelves. Those that protrude past the edge can become misshapen over time, and they can easily be bumped, which can cause damage. Regular shelf maintenance will give staff the opportunity to spot and correct improper shelving.

For damaged items, enclosure in custom-fitted boxes or four-flap enclosures is often the best option. Protective enclosures provide structural support, protect volumes as they are moved on and off the shelf, and protect against light, dust, and water.

### ***Booklets & Pamphlets***

In general, it is most practical to store pamphlets and booklets in folders and boxes, or in hanging file folders in file cabinets. For additional guidance on choosing enclosures, see Section IV.C Preparing Collections. Booklets more than about ¼" thick should be stored spine down in individual folders. Pamphlets of very different size should not be stored in the same folder. For additional guidance on foldering and boxing practices, see Section IV.C.2 Documents and Manuscripts. Pamphlets and small booklets can also be stored in specially made enclosures, and those of similar size can be stored in drop-spine or phase boxes.

Any pamphlets shelved between books should be individually enclosed. Groups of pamphlets shelved between books can be boxed together as long as they are similar in size and in good condition. Pamphlet binders where pamphlets are sewn in are a good storage option. Stitching should be done through the fold or in the item's original fastener holes where possible. Adhesive pamphlet binders should never be used for pamphlets with special value. Pamphlet covers can break along the stiff edge of the adhesive-lined cloth, and the adhesive's chemical properties can irreversibly damage the items attached to them.

### ***Scrapbooks, Photo Albums & Binders***

Scrapbooks and photo albums pose challenging preservation problems. Their components often encompass multiple formats with different weights and thicknesses. In scrapbooks, it is common to find newspaper clippings pasted alongside items such as photographs, programs, and postcards. The collective bulk of pages can strain and weaken bindings. Most scrapbooks and many photo albums have support pages made from poor-quality paper prone to embrittlement, with acids that migrate to the attached items. Adhesives may degrade, causing items to become detached from pages and lost.

The value of scrapbooks varies widely from item to item and from institution to institution. Those composed of newspaper clippings may be valuable only for their information. Others may have significant associational, artifactual, or aesthetic value. Valuable scrapbooks may have a high priority for evaluation by a conservator and for digitization. Scrapbooks that have enduring value in their original form, along with valued photo albums, should be individually boxed in custom--fitted boxes.

Binders are common in recently acquired collections and pose many of the same preservation concerns found in scrapbooks and photo albums. The binder itself is often made from unstable materials. Contents may include multiple formats with differing needs. The weight and quantity of pages is often greater than can be safely accommodated by the binder and the binder rings, leading to strain on the pages and to unsafe handling. As pages become damaged around the hole punches, there is a risk of loss of loose sheets. Where the binder itself does not have artifactual value, pages should be removed and stored according to guidelines given in Section IV.C.2 *Documents and Manuscripts*.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- There are approximately 11,400 books and pamphlets in Special Collections. The department also houses an institutionally significant collection of scrapbooks. Books were observed to be stored upright along Reading Room shelving, and unstable volumes were tied together neatly with twill tape. Other volumes have been identified by Ms. Bruce Patterson as needing phase boxes. Some books, mostly on the history of education, along with some general special collection volumes, are stored in locked bookcases elsewhere in the Library, including in a hallway next to the Education Room.
- Pamphlets have received detailed attention from Ms. Bruce Patterson. In some cases, pamphlets were observed to be filed within the Reading Room's rare book collection, but for the most part they have been gathered and arranged according to their call numbers. In all cases, pamphlets have been enclosed in archival envelopes and have been properly cataloged in the Library's system.
- Scrapbooks are housed in appropriate archival boxes, and several have been digitized to ensure their longevity and to limit handling as they are quite brittle in nature. They are available to the public via RIC's DigitalCommons website.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Maintain good shelving practices for bound volumes and pamphlets.** As mentioned above, the shelving practices are quite good in Special Collections, but good maintenance requires staff diligence over time. Staff should be ready to identify problem areas such as shelves with no bookends and slumping books. Remember to ensure that non-oversize volumes are stored upright whenever possible and that volumes stored horizontally are stacked no more than three or four high.
- **Consider a deaccession project as a long-term goal.** Materials for deaccession include rare books and bound volumes on local history subjects that are likely held by other regional institutions or are available online through subscription databases. Deaccessioning these volumes could free up space for new acquisitions moving forward .

## **2. Storage of Unbound Materials**

### ***Documents & Manuscripts***

Foldering and boxing are common practices for the preservation of collections. This relatively simple activity does require some consideration, though. Documents stored in overfilled folders or boxes suffer damage as materials are handled and as researchers search through papers to find what they need. Under-filled boxes lead to the folders slumping, which warps the materials held in the folder. If a box is not full a spacer can be added to keep materials upright. In general, fewer items per folder are best, especially for particularly fragile or damaged items. If a folder must hold a large group of papers (for example, a script), it should be creased along the score lines at the bottom to accommodate the greater bulk of materials. This will prevent pinching at the bottom and also prevent papers from being pushed upwards over the top of the folder where they will be at increased risk of damage from handling and pollutants.

Polyester sleeves are helpful in protecting paper and photographic materials from direct handling and abrasion while allowing easy viewing. Used in large numbers, though, they add bulk to collections, increasing the amount of shelf space needed to store materials. For this reason, and because these

enclosures are fairly costly, it is wise to use them selectively—specifically, for items that are fragile (e.g., torn or brittle papers) or vulnerable to abrasion (e.g., photographic prints and negatives). Plastic sleeves can carry an electrostatic charge and should be avoided for items with friable media (media that lift easily from their support) such as pastels, charcoal, flaking inks, or chalk.

### ***Oversized & Framed Materials***

Prints, maps, broadsides and other oversized objects present both storage and handling difficulties due to their size, and they may pose concerns related to the processes used in their creation. In particular, maps and plans have been produced on both paper and plastic supports and using different production methods. These processes and materials introduce different preservation concerns. For example, blueprints are alkaline-sensitive and, unlike other paper objects, are best stored in unbuffered enclosures.

Oversized objects of a similar type and size are best stored together in flat file cabinets or oversized boxes made of preservation-quality materials. Small groups of materials should be placed in archival folders cut to fit the size of the drawer or box. Interleaving within the folder using neutral paper is desirable, especially if oversized materials representing multiple types and processes are stored together.

Depending upon available storage space, the physical condition of a rolled object, and institutional resources, rolled storage using preservation-quality tubes and enclosures may be the best option for some or all of an institution's oversized collections. Although rolled storage is not ideal, it requires less space than flat files, and allows for safe storage of rolled objects that are too brittle to safely flatten.

Framed objects are at risk from poor-quality framing materials and from light exposure. Any prints, drawings, or other objects that have been matted or backed with acidic materials or wood should be removed from those mounts. These objects are best stored unframed—matted or unmatted—in folders inside boxes or drawers, as described above. If items must be kept framed, care should be taken to use preservation-quality materials and UV-protectant glazing. Framed objects must be stored in a manner that ensures their physical safety. Storage solutions include construction of a unit with vertical dividers where framed objects can be stored upright and separate from each other. Alternatively, framed objects may be hung on a museum storage rack.

### ***Newspapers, Clippings & Printed Ephemera***

Newsprint and ephemera are generally more fragile than other paper objects, as they are often made of poor-quality materials and are not always cared for to the same standards as personal or institutional records. Making sure these resources are evaluated closely for condition issues, housing them in supportive enclosures, and prioritizing them for cool, dry storage is the best way to extend their useful life.

Digitization is a popular strategy for preserving access to the information in loose newsprint or small items, even as the physical object continues to deteriorate. In-house photocopying onto permanent, durable paper is also an excellent way to preserve acidic paper materials, especially for those items where the value lies in the content. Preservation photocopying in the strictest sense adheres to standards for paper, type of copy machinery used, and methods of copy production.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> National Information Standards Organization (U.S.), and American National Standards Institute. 2010. *ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R2009), Permanence of paper for publications and documents in libraries and archives*. Bethesda, Md: NISO Press.

## Observations & Recommendations

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- Processed collections are generally housed very well at Special Collections, with most documents, newsprint, ephemera, and photographs stored in acid-free and lignin-free folders and boxes. However, many folders are showing signs of age and wear, with visible discoloration and as such are good candidates for reprocessing in the future.
- While most collections were observed to be housed in appropriate folders and boxes, the folders are sometimes stacked horizontally within the boxes (for example, this is the case for the Maurice and Vera Vendettuoli Papers as well as several other collections). Additionally, some collection material was observed to be stored in acidic corrugated cardboard boxes.
- Oversized documents within Special Collections could also use more attention. All three flat files in the work room were observed to be full and proper foldering within these cases is variable. Ms. Bruce Patterson is worried that some oversize documents have been damaged by being overstuffed into drawers.
- Framed items have been displayed on the walls of the reading room for many years, if not decades, and framed items in storage are typically stored lying flat in stacks.
- Blueprints are present in the work room, but staff believes they may never have been accessioned into the collection. If they have been accessioned, they may be good candidates for eventual deaccession. More research on the provenance of these blueprints is needed, as time allows.

### Recommendations:

- **Identify archival and manuscript collections for reprocessing.** The benefits of reprocessing materials into upright clamshell or banker's boxes would be fourfold from a preservation perspective: it would prevent documents from bowing and slumping; it would streamline the research process, while also limiting unnecessary handling of documents; and it would create additional storage space.
- **Unprocessed material, especially that which has high research or institutional value, should be properly housed as soon as possible to support their long-term preservation .**
- **When processing and rehousing unbound material, refer to the department's in-house processing manual and keep these important actions in mind:**
  - Avoid overstuffing folders. As a general rule, placing no more than 10-20 pages per folder will prevent material from being pinched and will reduce damage from handling.
  - Use spacer boards to keep folders upright in boxes. An example of an appropriate, acid-free, lignin-free and buffered spacers can be found here through Hollinger Metal Edge, <https://www.hollingermetalede.com/document-support-spacer/> or you can make them yourself out of archival-quality board or folders.
  - Torn and damaged documents can be placed in polyester sleeves to keep the pieces together and to allow for safer handling. Please note: sleeves that are sealed on only two sides are preferred for ease of placing or removing the document.
  - Unroll and unfold materials during processing and rehousing. If an item is resistant to flattening or begins to break or tear, do not force it.

- **Improve storage methods in flat file drawers to increase available space, prolong the life of collections, and increase accessibility.**
  - Use folders that are the size of the drawers to protect documents and provide a space for description. Folders should follow the same guidelines as those for documents and manuscripts (that is, they should completely enclose the object, they should be fitted to the size of the box/drawer, and they should not be overfilled.)
- **Evaluate the need for additional flat file storage to safely house items currently in overfilled drawers.** When flat storage is not an option due to space concerns or the fragility or size of the item, rolled storage can be used safely.
  - For more information about rolled storage for preservation, please see Syracuse University's Storage of Architectural Materials, here: <https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=sul>
  - Seek professional services to flatten fragile, high-value oversized items before attempting to store them flat.
  - Oversized paper objects can be stored safely and inexpensively in large drop front boxes and folders, which may be an option when items are too large or if space is at a premium in the flat file. Folders should fit both the boxes and contents well, not too tight or loose, and every item should be in a folder.
  - Be sure that all oversized materials retained in the collection are protected by enclosures, whether in archival quality tubes wrapped with polyester sheeting or in oversized folders fitted to boxes and drawers.
- **Carefully unfold and rehouse any blueprints that will be retained in Special Collections .** Blueprints should be stored either lying flat or carefully rolled in unbuffered enclosures as they can fade when in contact with light and alkaline materials. For more on care and handling of architectural materials see, Syracuse University's "Storage of Architectural Materials": <https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=sul>
- **Assess framed materials according to preservation and access priorities.** Original items that are on permanent display and that are identified as high priority should be removed from frames and transferred to archival-quality folders for easier storage and organization. Facsimiles may be displayed instead. (See Section V.C Exhibition for related information.) Deaccession framed items that do not fit within the scope of collections.

### 3. Storage of Photographic & Audiovisual Materials

Photographic and audiovisual collections are often found stored alongside paper-based records. While many photographic prints—and even some audio recordings—have paper substrates with frailties similar to materials discussed in previous sections of this report, the diversity of materials, processes, and techniques used over time to produce prints, negatives, motion picture film, and audio and video objects pose unique preservation concerns. Identifying the broad formats within your photographic, motion picture, and audiovisual collections is an important first step in responsible stewardship of these materials. Once formats and their general preservation needs are broadly understood, priorities can be established for further investigation of specific preservation needs within each format.

The substrate of an object—the glass in a glass plate negative, the paper in a photographic print—is the base layer that acts as a support for the information carrier. Identifying substrate materials will assist in making preservation decisions. Photographs may have base layers of paper, glass, or tin, while negatives, motion picture film, and microforms will be on plastic substrates of nitrate, acetate, or polyester. Audio cylinders may be wax or plastic, and discs may be glass, metal, paper, or plastic—or some combination of those. Audio and video tape will be made of acetate or polyester.

Most photographic, motion picture film, and audiovisual items are best stored in cool or cold storage, and at a lower humidity than is suggested for paper. Cold storage is especially recommended for nitrate and deteriorating acetate.

Photographic and audiovisual collections pose complex challenges. Improving storage and handling is the first step in providing the broadest benefit for all collections and should be followed by focusing on high-priority items. Any item showing signs of degradation should be assessed for retention and, if kept, prioritized for digitization.

Additional resources on storage, handling, and identification of photographic and audiovisual material can be found in the endnotes and in the storage and identification guides at the end of this document.

### ***Photographic Materials***

Photographic materials come in a range of formats and sizes, and a multitude of processes have been used to create these objects. In general, institutions find that prints mounted on board, silver gelatin prints, slides, and negatives are the predominant types in their collections, followed by holdings of tintypes, daguerreotypes, glass negatives, and lantern slides.

Enclosures for photographic formats should subscribe to ISO 18916:2007, the Photograph Activity Test (PAT), an international standard which determines whether a product is stable and appropriate for use with photographs. Ideally, each item would be enclosed individually and housed with items of a like size and type. Any item on a glass substrate should be clearly labeled to ensure careful handling during retrieval, use, and reshelving.

### ***Motion Picture Film***

Motion picture film comes in an array of formats and sizes (“gauges”) and may be found on nitrate, acetate, and polyester supports. Edge codes, where available, and descriptive information detailing dates of creation can assist in determining the type of support. The gauge—8mm, 16mm, 35mm, etc.—can also be helpful: 35mm film may be on nitrate, acetate, or polyester, while 8mm and 16mm will be acetate or polyester only.

Identifying the base and gauge of a film are important aspects of physical control for moving image collections and will guide the identification of priorities for reformatting. Determining the generation of a film is another consideration; a camera original may inherently be more valuable than a copy or print. Motion picture film collections should not be played on projectors or other equipment unless inspected by an audiovisual professional. Preservation strategies for motion picture film include film-to-film transfer, digitization, and stabilization of the original media. Stabilization is achieved through maintenance of a cool, dry, clean storage environment, accompanied by protective enclosure of individual items.

Films should be stored individually on a core inside appropriate canisters and shelved horizontally. Enclosures should subscribe to ISO 18916:2007, the Photograph Activity Test (PAT), an international standard which determines whether a product is stable and appropriate for use with photographic materials. Any film on a nitrate base should be assessed for retention and reformatting, especially if showing signs of deterioration. Film on acetate substrates showing signs of decay including curling, warping, or a vinegar odor are also at increased risk of information loss and should be assessed.

## ***Audio and Video***

Format obsolescence is a significant obstacle for access to audiovisual materials. The declining availability of playback equipment, coupled with wide variations in the chemical and physical stability of recording media, make the migration of recordings to modern, widely-supported formats integral to their preservation. Even if playback equipment is available for older formats in theory, those formats become *locally* obsolete if the equipment is not available in-house. Dust and other particulates pose a major risk to the longevity of recordings because they cause abrasion, resulting in information loss.

Preservation strategies for audiovisual media must include prioritization for digitization as well as stabilization of the original media, particularly until reformatting can take place. Stabilization is achieved through maintenance of a cool, dry, clean storage environment, accompanied by protective enclosure of individual items. Any item showing signs of degradation should be assessed for retention and, if kept, prioritized for digitization. Correct storage is also important: all cassette tapes, open-reel tapes, and discs should be stored vertically and well-supported to prevent leaning.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- Photographic and audio-visual materials are very well cared for Special Collections in the Adams Library. Given the budget and staffing cuts of recent years, Special Collections has made tremendous progress in this area—one that is typically out of reach for many short-staffed and under-funded libraries. Ms. Bruce Patterson and Mr. Davis have worked collaboratively to identify and digitize at-risk items, as well as to store originals according to best practice to preserve their physical integrity. Photographs, slides, glass-plate negatives, and 35mm negatives, most of which document college history, were observed to be housed according to best practice.
- Nitrate negatives are present in the collection and have been digitized by Digital Initiatives Staff. One negative has completely deteriorated, but the others appear to be in stable condition for the time being. These materials are of concern for Ms. Bruce Patterson. Given the poor environmental controls within Special Collections, coupled with the fact that the informational value of the images has been retained digitally, any nitrate or acetate negatives are likely to be good candidates for disposal.
- There are approximately 60 linear feet of AV materials in the collection. Most AV material belongs to the College Archives, but a survey of AV materials across Special Collections has been completed too. A substantial portion of AV material has been digitized by Digital Initiatives, and anything that has not is in a queue to be done so by Mr. Davis as time allows. To date, approximately 75% of the magnetic media identified in the College Archives have been digitized.
- Film, tapes, records, CDs, etc. were observed to be stored properly on metal shelving within collections' storage.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Continue housing photographic materials that will be retained in chemically and mechanically stable enclosures.** All enclosures used for photographs should be PAT certified. Consult [NEDCC Preservation Leaflet 5.5 Storage Enclosures for Photographs](#) for more information.
- **Continue to make audiovisual materials a priority for digital reformatting.** As staff is aware, media resources, particularly magnetic media, risk obsolescence in the next 10 –15 years. Keep in

mind that these materials may be duplicated across formats (e.g. a film may have been copied onto tape and DVD, resulting in three copies of the same content).

While Special Collections has a good handle on how to approach the digitization of AV material, it is good to remember that there are many factors to consider when determining priorities for the preservation and digitization of AV media. These include relevance to Special Collections' mission statement, user interest, as well as the risk of obsolescence and format vulnerability. For more information on format obsolescence and vulnerability, the Museum of Obsolete Media offers two useful ranking systems:

- o Media Stability Ratings:  
<https://obsoletemedia.org/media-preservation/media-stability-ratings/>
- o Obsolescence Ratings:  
<https://obsoletemedia.org/media-preservation/obsolescence-ratings/>
- **Ensure that staff and patrons wear nitrile gloves when handling original photographs and negatives.** This protects the emulsion by preventing finger oils from transferring to the surface and also protects the hands of anyone handling deteriorating items.
- **Take immediate steps to properly dispose of nitrate negatives within Special Collections .** This is the best course of action for RIC especially since the content has been captured via digitization. The environmental conditions in the department are facilitating an increased speed of deterioration, which could cause nitrate negatives to auto-ignite.
  - o According to the Library of Congress' guide on Care, Handling, and the Storage of Photographs: "*Cellulose nitrate in poor condition can auto-ignite at temperatures as low as 41C. Fire codes require that the nitrate materials be stored separately in fireproof cabinets, in vaults, or offsite. Storage at low temperature and low RH greatly slows the deterioration of nitrate film.*"
  - o Because of its flammability, nitrate film is classified as a hazardous material and as such is subject to various Federal, State, and local regulations. Contact a HAZMAT disposal company such as Clean Harbors or ask the local fire department for a company they recommend.
  - o The Library of Congress suggests that nitrate it is housed in buffered paper enclosures (never plastic) and stored away from other collection materials in a well-ventilated room. All nitrate films should be inspected periodically for signs of deterioration. *Special Collections staff should follow these suggestions until its nitrate is properly disposed of.*
  - o The National Park Service's also provides good guidance at:  
<https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/consveogram/14-o8.pdf>

## D. Handling Policies & Practices

Damage to collections through unintentional mishandling often goes unrecognized and can pose a significant threat to the longevity of materials. Damage can be prevented by training staff and researchers alike in proper handling techniques for the different types of materials in the collection. Supervising researchers will provide staff with an opportunity to spot and correct any accidental mishandling and is also



a good security practice. Signage reminding staff and researchers of basic good practices, such as using only pencil, can also be helpful.

Providing staff and researchers with the correct tools, and instruction on the correct use of these tools, contributes to safe handling of collection items. Depending upon the types of collections held, an institution may have book cradles, snake weights, micro-spatulas, or other handling aids available. The use of gloves, though, is discouraged.<sup>14</sup> Gloves inhibit the user's tactile sense which leads to unintentional damage to pages as they catch on the gloves or as the wearer attempts to turn pages. **A notable exception is in the handling of photographic and film objects.** Anyone handling these materials should wear nitrile gloves to prevent transfer of damaging finger oils to the emulsion layer of the object.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- Ms. Bruce Patterson, along with the Special Collections Assistant, is responsible for handling, processing, filing, shelving, and paging materials in Special Collections. Ms. Bruce Patterson received on-the-job training in handling paper-based materials in her previous positions at the Newport Historical Society and Tufts University. Ms. Bruce Patterson noted during the site visit that care and handling is an area she would like to strengthen through workshops and professional development opportunities for departmental staff.
- Mr. Davis, Digital Initiatives Coordinator, received training in care and handling during digitization from the previous Special Collections Librarian. He also came to Adams Library with extensive knowledge and experience in the safe handling of photographs and audio-visual materials.
- Special Collections Assistant has received training on the job under the supervision of Ms. Bruce Patterson, and student workers are trained by Mr. Davis.
- Pre-pandemic, Special Collections serviced approximately 150 in-person researchers a year, and each user is instructed on handling historic materials. Gloves are provided to those researchers consulting photographs and book supports are given to those using unstable bound volumes. The importance of maintaining the original order of loose documents is also discussed. A written document with fourteen reading room rules is also provided to users—it covers the important basics of working with non-circulating and/or unique materials.
- Users are allowed to take photographs provided there are not any restrictions on the material and staff will occasionally photocopy material for researchers.

### *Recommendations*

- **Continue to register and provide handling procedures to all in-person researchers.** Continue to provide book supports, book weights, and nitrile gloves when appropriate.
- **Encourage care and handling training for all staff who work with collection materials.** For guidance, refer to [Preservation Leaflet 4.1, Storage Methods and Handling Practices](#).

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<sup>14</sup> Baker, Cathleen, and Randy Silverman. 2005. "Misperceptions about White Gloves = Fausses idées sur les gants blancs". *International Preservation News*. Vol. 36, p. 4-16.  
<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipn/ipnn37.pdf>

## V. Conservation, Reformatting, & Exhibition

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The ultimate goal of collections stewardship is to ensure that the materials in our care remain accessible to our community—whether that community is the general public, a municipality, faculty and students, researchers, or any other group defined as our institution’s core audience. Conservation, reformatting, and exhibition all serve this goal.

Conservation involves the examination of individual objects, formulation of a treatment plan (or plans) specific to that object, and documentation of any treatment or repair performed in order to stabilize the object so that it can continue to serve its purpose as defined by the institution. Conservation treatment may be required for damaged, delicate, or otherwise problematic objects before they can be handled for reformatting or exhibition. Reformatting may include digitization for online exhibition, digitization for the production of physical facsimiles for exhibition, or preservation photocopying for use.

Most institutions will, at some point, engage in one or more of these activities. Few institutions will have the capacity to perform all of these activities in-house and will need to work with appropriate service providers. Any provider chosen should be evaluated for their expertise in handling items with historic value. Because these activities often require significant resource investment, and may only benefit small parts of the collection, they are most effectively approached within the context of a long-range preservation plan.

### A. In-House Repair & Professional Conservation Treatment

When considering any treatment on collections of lasting value, it is best to consult a conservator before proceeding.<sup>15</sup> A conservator has received specialized education and training allowing them to assess and choose treatments that are safe and appropriate for a particular object and that take into account institutional needs and goals for that object.

#### *In-House Repair*

In-house repair is only suggested for general circulating collections. Despite best intentions, seemingly simple treatments—such as basic repair, surface cleaning, and humidification and flattening of paper—can cause unintended, irreversible damage if not performed properly. Mending supplies marketed as “archival” (e.g., document preservation tape) may be stable today; however, their aging properties are often unclear. Moreover, product formulations can change without notice: this year’s nonstaining tape or adhesive may have a different chemical structure next year. Fragile papers and certain writing media (e.g., iron gall ink) may react adversely to the moisture needed for mending or humidification.

#### *Professional Conservation Treatment*

The decision of whether or not to have an item treated by a professional conservator should be determined by the item’s value to the collection and the availability of funds for conservation. Setting priorities for selection should be the first step. Criteria to consider include condition; monetary, historical, or artifactual value; importance for research, and expected use. On examining an item, a conservator may propose a range of treatment options. Choosing a treatment will depend not only on cost, but also on the item’s value in its original form, the importance of the information it contains, its condition, and the need to provide access to the original item itself, rather than to its contents alone.

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<sup>15</sup> NEDCC. 2018. “Preservation Leaflet 7.7: Choosing and working with a conservator.” [https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/7\\_7\\_chooseconservator\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/7_7_chooseconservator_2018.pdf)

Once conservation treatment is performed, staff should retain full treatment reports indefinitely. This will allow them to refer back and find out exactly how item(s) were treated in the past, should questions or problems arise in the future.

## ***Observations & Recommendations***

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### *Observations:*

- Special Collections staff do not attempt to repair damaged documents and books in the collection. Staff understand that all repairs must be outsourced to conservation specialists.
- In 2016 NEDCC treated a water damaged illuminated manuscript from the Bacon-Ballinger Collection. The department was provided with a detailed treatment report and the object has been reframed with UV filtering glass.
- As of 2021 approximately 100 volumes from the Juvenile Collections were being treated for mold and water damage by Sole Source Restoration in Cranston, RI. They are still offsite.

### *Recommendations:*

- **Consult with conservation professionals as needed.** Priorities for conservation treatment will depend on a variety of factors, including condition, content, and research value. Maintaining a list of conservation priorities will help to ensure that any resources for conservation are spent effectively and used for those items identified as most in need.
  - Review NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 7.7 Choosing and Working with a Conservator <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/7.-conservation-procedures/7.7-choosing-and-working-with-a-conservator>
  - To find a professional conservator use American Institute for Conservation's database: <https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/find-a-conservator>
  - NEDCC's conservators are available for free, basic consultations via telephone during normal business hours. You can reach them at (978) 470-1010.

## **B. Digitization and Reformatting**

Digitization, or digital reformatting, is the process of making a digital copy, sometimes called a digital surrogate, of a physical collections item. While digitization is often an effort to increase access, it intersects with the care of physical collections in important ways. Additionally, rather than reducing the stress on physical collections, digitization can increase demand for use of all the collections as a wider audience becomes aware of them.

As with selection for preservation (see [Section II.A](#)), selection for digitization should be grounded in the collecting policies of the organization. Beyond the policy underpinnings, there may be physical preservation concerns that drive the decision of what to digitize and when. As discussed in section IV.C.3, audiovisual materials have very serious format vulnerabilities that help establish their priority for digitization. Photographs, manuscript materials, and bound volumes also need to be physically evaluated for digital reformatting. Digitizing large items, such as maps or folio volumes, requires increased time and expense. Condition issues, such as those with deteriorating scrapbooks, will increase the complexity of digitization and may require conservation work before reformatting, in turn increasing the time and expense required.

A major concern for collections items during digitization is proper care and handling. Many collections items only rarely come out of their protective enclosures for use, and digitization requires heavy handling and physical manipulation. Items often need to be specially prepared for capture, including removal from frames or unfolding, and may need to be cleaned or repaired. If digital reformatting is taking place in house, the same guidance provided in Section IV Collection Storage and Handling should be followed. Achieving a preservation quality environment is not usually necessary, unless collections will be stored in digitization workspaces for significant periods of time.

Despite its popularity, digitization introduces complex challenges to the ongoing preservation management program in an organization. Digital objects (the products of a digitization project) are an investment of time and resources and, as such, should be preserved. Digital preservation requires a long-term institutional commitment to staff, technology infrastructure, training, and other ongoing preservation costs. Periodic assessment of the digital preservation program will ensure that policies and resources are continuing to meet local standards for commitment to preservation.

### ***Observations & Recommendations***

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#### *Observations:*

- As mentioned throughout this report, Special Collections has done an excellent job of digitizing high-priority and high-use items through its Digital Initiatives program. Digital Initiatives was formally added to Special Collections department in 2019 after a decade of functioning independently within the Adams Library. According to staff, Digital Initiatives started as something of an experiment and as such many of its policies and procedures were developed in an ad-hoc manner. After joining Special Collections, Mr. Davis and Ms. Bruce Patterson began drafting a digital preservation document which details digital workflows; file structures and naming conventions; the role of public-facing databases, such as Digital Commons and Jstor; as well as who should have access to the backend of the archive, which holds the raw master files.

The most pressing issue for Digital Initiatives, which was raised by both Mr. Davis and Ms. Bruce Patterson during the assessment, is proper, reliable digital storage. Master files and edited files are currently stored and backed up on a local server on a system developed by Mr. Davis, and while there is good version control in place, cloud storage is the ultimate goal. Prior to COVID-19 budget cuts, cloud storage was in the queue for financial approval by the Library Director. Ms. DeLizio is committed to purchasing it when pre-pandemic budgets are restored.

- As mentioned elsewhere in this report, Mr. Davis' has a substantial amount of digitization equipment in his office. Not only does he have a professional photography set up, but he is also well equipped to work with a variety of legacy media formats. (Note: he did mention that to complete the current backlog he is in need of a new U-matic player.)
- Mr. Davis is working to standardize metadata across digital files, and he typically tries to adhere to a Dublin Core schema when possible. He is also working to establish a system for running checksums to ensure that files have not been changed or corrupted over time.
- Again, Special Collections should be applauded for the efforts in this area. The fact that so many of its collection materials are available digitally was a huge benefit to students, faculty, and outside researchers over the course of the pandemic when so many libraries and archives were closed for in-person research appointments.

### Recommendations:

- **Revise and expand upon the existing digital preservation plan and workflow as needed.** As with all good policies, a digital preservation plan should be revised frequently to ensure it is in line with current professional standards. Special Collections has done an excellent job documenting its existing workflows and future goals for Digital Initiatives, but it would do well to expand its vision as it continues to meet its objectives.
  - NEDCC offers webinars, workshops, and customized training on the topics of digitization and digital preservation, including “Building an Easy Digital Preservation Workflow with Small Tools” and “Diving Deeper with Digital Preservation Tools Using the Command Line.” Consult our list of Preservation Training opportunities [here and learn about our annual Digital Directions training event here](#).
- **Ensure Digital Initiatives and Special Collections have sufficient space for the storage of its digital collections.** Diversified storage is essential for the continued success of Special Collections’s digital initiatives and the preservation of already existing digital collections. Special Collections has already identified the cloud-based solution that best fits their needs and budget at this time. It will hopefully be implemented in 2022.
- **Consider contracting with a consultant for a digital preservation assessment.** A digital preservation assessment evaluates how well an institution is preserving digital materials and suggests next steps for improved long-term access to digital collections. For an overview of NEDCC’s series in this area, see [www.nedcc.org/assessments](http://www.nedcc.org/assessments)

## C. Exhibition

The need to exhibit collection materials complicates the goal of preservation. When preparing to exhibit collections, many of the same concerns faced in general collections care need to be considered, but the materials displayed have, almost by definition, special value. When considering an exhibition, first determine whether an existing exhibit policy is in place. The policy should address institutional needs as well as processes for loaning or borrowing materials for exhibit.

Exhibit cases should be built of stable, pollutant-free materials and coatings. Mounts, supports, and other exhibit materials should be made from inert materials like Plexiglas and polyester, or from neutral board and paper. If cases are lined, only fabric made from cotton or linen should be used, since wool and silk are inherently acidic, and wool is a food source for pests. The fabric should be washed with a mild, unscented, liquid detergent prior to use to remove any sizing.<sup>16</sup>

Remember that different materials have widely varying light sensitivity. For example, although they are both types of photographic prints, a black and white silver gelatin print is much more resistant to fading than a cyanotype. The production process and the types of materials used in any composite object will all affect susceptibility to fading. Research will be required, not just into the susceptibility of the particular type of object (cyanotype, leather bound volume, illuminated page, etc.) but, if possible, also into the exhibit history of that particular item.

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<sup>16</sup> NEDCC. 1999. “Preservation Leaflet 2.5: Protecting Paper and Book Collections during Exhibition.” <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/2.-the-environment/2.5-protecting-paper-and-book-collections-during-exhibition>

Before exhibiting any collection object, determine:

- how long the object will be on display;
- that the object is stable enough to withstand exhibit without additional stabilization, and able to withstand the added light exposure;
- whether there are records of the object's exhibit history and past light exposure;
- whether the object will be secure, both in the building and within its exhibit case/frame;
- the climate control capabilities both in the exhibit space and in the case/frame, and
- that appropriate supports and mounts are available, or can be produced, to safely display the object.

<sup>17</sup>

Answering these questions will provide avenues for mitigation of risks, but the vital point is that original materials of enduring value should never be exhibited permanently. If originals must be exhibited, damage from light can be reduced by keeping light levels as low as possible, and by limiting the duration of the exhibit. Many institutions avoid exhibiting original materials by using facsimiles when feasible.

### *Observations & Recommendations*

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#### *Observations:*

- The department does not have a practice of regularly exhibiting materials. However, materials were on view in the vitrines outside of Special Collections during the site visit. The installations had been on view since before Ms. Bruce Patterson's hiring in 2019 and the display consisted of many reproductions. Special Collections materials are occasionally put on temporary display in the Adams Library for 1 to 3 months at a time.
- Ms. Bruce Patterson is responsible for preparing any collection materials for exhibition. The department has had very few outside requests for exhibition materials. The most popular collection for outside loans is the Nancy Elizabeth Prophet Collection, an important collection pertaining to the life and career of sculptor Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, the first African-American graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design in 1918. Over the past thirty years, Special Collections has loaned material from the Prophet Collection for exhibition at six institutions.

#### *Recommendations:*

- **Continue using facsimiles for permanent or long-term displays.** The use of high-quality facsimiles in place of original objects is the best practice for exhibiting paper-based and photographic collections.
- **Document preferred practices for display and create an exhibit policy to guide the display of Special Collections materials.** For information about additional display techniques, see Preservation Leaflet [2.5 Protecting Paper and Book Collections during Exhibition](#).
- **Consider curating an exhibition, which would showcase the richness and diversity of RIC's Special Collections.** Such an exhibition could be part of an institution-wide push to raise necessary funds to care for the Library building and its important historic materials . Exhibitions are

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<sup>17</sup> NEDCC. 1999. "Preservation Leaflet 4.10: Matting and Framing for Art and Artifacts on Paper." <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/4.-storage-and-handling/4.10-matting-and-framing-for-art-and-artifacts-on-paper>

a good way for special collections to showcase their value to the broader institutions which house them, by highlighting the value of archival materials, emphasizing their relevance to other institutional priorities (such as ongoing diversity and inclusion initiatives), and can strengthen relationships with administrators.

Exhibitions can be designed online or in person. If items are to be displayed in-person, be sure to adhere to the best practices discussed here.

## VI. Conclusion

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Ms. Bruce Patterson and the entire staff in Special Collections at the Adams Library have exhibited an awareness of preservation practices and needs and have shown a commitment to improving the storage and handling of the institution's collections. The decision to pursue a preservation assessment attests to an interest in improving care and handling practices to ensure that collection materials are available into the future.

As staff continue efforts to preserve and maintain these unique collections, they face several challenges, including:

- Lack of dedicated staff and funding to adequately address preservation activities;
- Unstable and potentially hazardous environmental storage conditions, due in part to an aging building and fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity;
- Insufficient disaster preparedness and knowledge of emergency response techniques on the part of Library staff;
- Inadequate digital storage system for the department's growing digital assets and repository.

With these challenges in mind, efforts over the next several years should focus on:

- Continuing to advocate with College administrators to increase Library spending so that open staff positions can be filled, outstanding building-related problems can be addressed, and preservation issues can be attended to incrementally, over time.
- Identifying and applying for outside sources of funding in attempt to address the aforementioned critical staffing, budget, and building issues;
- Developing a collection-specific disaster plan and procedures, in tandem with other departments within the Library;
- Purchasing cloud-based digital storage for digital files and instituting a comprehensive digital preservation workflow;
- Documenting a long-range preservation plan.

In particular, as this report hopefully makes clear, Special Collections at Rhode Island College will want to begin thinking about how they can prioritize improving their building and environmental issues as soon as possible. The staff has done an excellent job trying to preserve their collections with the resources currently at their disposal, but collections face the threat of permanent damage due to the physical instability of their repository. The collections contained in RIC's Special Collections are treasures—they document the stories and experiences of several underrepresented and often marginalized communities and as such they deserve to be preserved for the long-term so that they can contribute to the important work of establishing an accurate historical record.

A preservation program will be most effective if it is guided by a written preservation plan. Preparation of a plan should begin as soon as possible. As noted earlier, few institutions have sufficient resources to address *all* of the preservation needs of *all* of their collections. Limited resources require choices to be made among activities, the cumulative result of which will have greater impact if guided by a long-range preservation plan. Preparation of such a plan should be the next step for Special Collections. The plan should be reviewed annually and modified as preservation needs are addressed, and new ones are identified.

I hope that the overview provided here, combined with the priorities outlined in the Appendices, will serve as a helpful starting point for preservation planning. I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with Ms. Bruce Patterson on this project. If this report has raised any questions, or if I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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March 11, 2022



# Appendices

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## A. Prioritized Recommendations

### *Special Collections at the James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College*

This appendix and the accompanying report are intended for continuing reference for this institution and its staff. Best-practice information for each of the topics is included in the respective report sections, and additional resources are listed in the Endnotes and Appendices.

All of the recommendations in this report are compiled below and organized as short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Recommendations within the short-, medium-, and long-term categories are listed as they appear in the report. This organization of the recommendations is based on the consultant's observations and expertise; responsibility for ranking these priorities further rests with the institution.

### 1. Short-Term Priorities

Projects that can be undertaken with existing resources and/or problems requiring immediate action:

#### *II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning*

- **Finalize a preservation plan. NEDCC will review drafts of your plan and answer any questions you may have.**
- **Use this report to advocate with institutional stakeholders about preservation issues and engage them in a discussion about future goals.**
- **Hire a new Digital Archivist and Special Collections Librarian as quickly as possible.**
- **Continue to review and update policies as needed.**
- **Continue to create and retain record transfer documentation for all incoming materials.**
- **Continue to advocate with Library and College administration for the implementation of ArchivesSpace to standardize collection data moving forward.**

#### *III. Building and Environment*

- **Ensure that roof inspections and preventive building maintenance at Adams Library are occurring on a routine schedule.**
- **Maintain an onsite log of building-related problems.**
- **Continue recording the temperature and humidity with dataloggers and continue to share the data with Facilities teams and College administrators.**
- **Monitor for mold growth after any water or moisture-related incidents.**
- **Keep storage spaces as dark as possible.**
- **Continue to enclose materials of lasting value to protect them from light exposure, as well as dust, dirt, and water.**
- **Continue to monitor the building for signs of damage and any water-related incidents.**
- **Continue to keep collection material at least 3" off the ground to protect against damage from water.**
- **Have polyester sheeting and tarps on hand, to protect collections immediately if a water incident occurs.**
- **Strengthen fire protection by scheduling annual fire drills and training staff on extinguisher use.**
  
- **Establish a list of priority collections (in case of emergency).**

- Establish a cache of disaster supplies and information that will be easily accessible in an emergency.
- Continue routine housekeeping activities.
- Continue to keep storage areas closed and locked as much as possible.
- Continue registering and monitoring researchers.

#### *IV. Collections Storage & Handling*

- Continue to use appropriate archival and museum quality enclosures when processing and storing historic documents and photographs.
- Maintain good shelving practices for bound volumes and pamphlets.
- Continue housing photographic materials that will be retained in chemically and mechanically stable enclosures.
- Continue to make audiovisual materials a priority for digital reformatting
- Take immediate steps to properly dispose of digitized nitrate negatives.
- Continue to register and provide handling procedures to all in-person researchers.

#### *V. Conservation, Reformatting, & Exhibition*

- Ensure Digital Initiatives and Special Collections have sufficient space for the storage of its digital collections.
- Continue using facsimiles for permanent or long-term displays.
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## **2. Medium-Term Priorities**

Projects that will require planning and organization or additional resources and staff time:

#### *II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning*

- Utilize this report and the subsequent preservation plan as tools to support grant applications to fund special projects when institutional funds might not be available.
- Continue efforts to secure grants and other funding for high priority preservation projects.
- Draft a mission statement for Special Collections specifically.
- Continue to pursue professional development for staff.
- Continue to work towards unifying record formats across intellectual control tools to guarantee easy to use for staff and researchers.

#### *III. Building and Environment*

- Apply for outside funding to address large-scale building improvement projects.
- As storage space allows, rotate manuscript and other paper-based materials that are on view in the Reading Room. Encourage care and handling training for all staff who work with collection materials
- Confirm that water-related emergency procedures are covered comprehensively in any new emergency and disaster response documentation .
- Ensure that roof inspections are conducted annually and be sure to examine the efficacy of existing flashing as often as possible .
- Invite the Providence Fire Department to visit and discuss priority collections.
- Work on a new disaster plan, across Library departments.
- Invest in staff training in disaster response and salvage practices for collection materials, such as a hands-on workshop on the recovery of wet materials or an emergency response plan writing series.

- Lay insect traps in collections storage areas .
- Conduct a key audit and draft clear procedures regarding key control across the Library .

#### *IV. Collections Storage & Handling*

- Unprocessed material, especially that which has high research or institutional value,
- should be properly housed as soon as possible to support their long-term preservation.
- Improve storage methods in flat file drawers to increase available space, prolong the life of collections, and increase accessibility.
- Evaluate the need for additional flat file storage to safely house items currently in overfilled drawers.
- Ensure that staff and patrons wear nitrile gloves when handling original photographs and negatives.

#### *V. Conservation, Reformatting, & Exhibition*

- Consult with conservation professionals as needed.
- Revise and expand upon the existing digital preservation plan and workflow as needed.
- Consider curating an exhibition, which would showcase the richness and diversity of RIC's Special Collections.

### **3. Long-Term Priorities**

Steps to be taken once short- and medium-term goals have been accomplished; and/or larger general goals that will require major funding and/or significant reorganization of resources:

#### *II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning*

- Consider a digital preservation assessment.
- Consider including either a budget line for Special Collections specifically, or for preservation activities and supplies generally across the Library.

#### *III. Building and Environment*

- Prioritize building care by increasing the budget line to include large-scale building projects and high-quality, ongoing maintenance measures.
- Continue to review the environmental sensitivities of various materials and formats in the collection in an effort to guide the planning of improved storage spaces .
- When planning for more energy-efficient and sustainable environmental systems, consult the Image Permanence Institute's (IPI) publications and resources on environmental management.
- Record pest issues and consider implementing routine visits from an exterminator who is experienced with Integrated Pest Management.
- Establish a routine cleaning schedule for collection storage areas to deter pest activity and to prevent the buildup of dust and debris.

#### *IV. Collections Storage & Handling*

- Prioritize the reorganization of existing collections storage and workspaces as part of the Library's next round of strategic and space planning.
- Consider having all storage and staff work areas evaluated by a reputable space planner or architect who has experience working with Special Collections.
- Consider a deaccession project as a long-term goal.
- Identify archival and manuscript collections for reprocessing
- Carefully unfold and rehouse any blueprints that will be retained in Special Collections .

- **Assess framed materials according to preservation and access priorities**
- **Encourage care and handling training for all staff who work with collection materials**

V. Conservation, Reformatting, & Exhibition

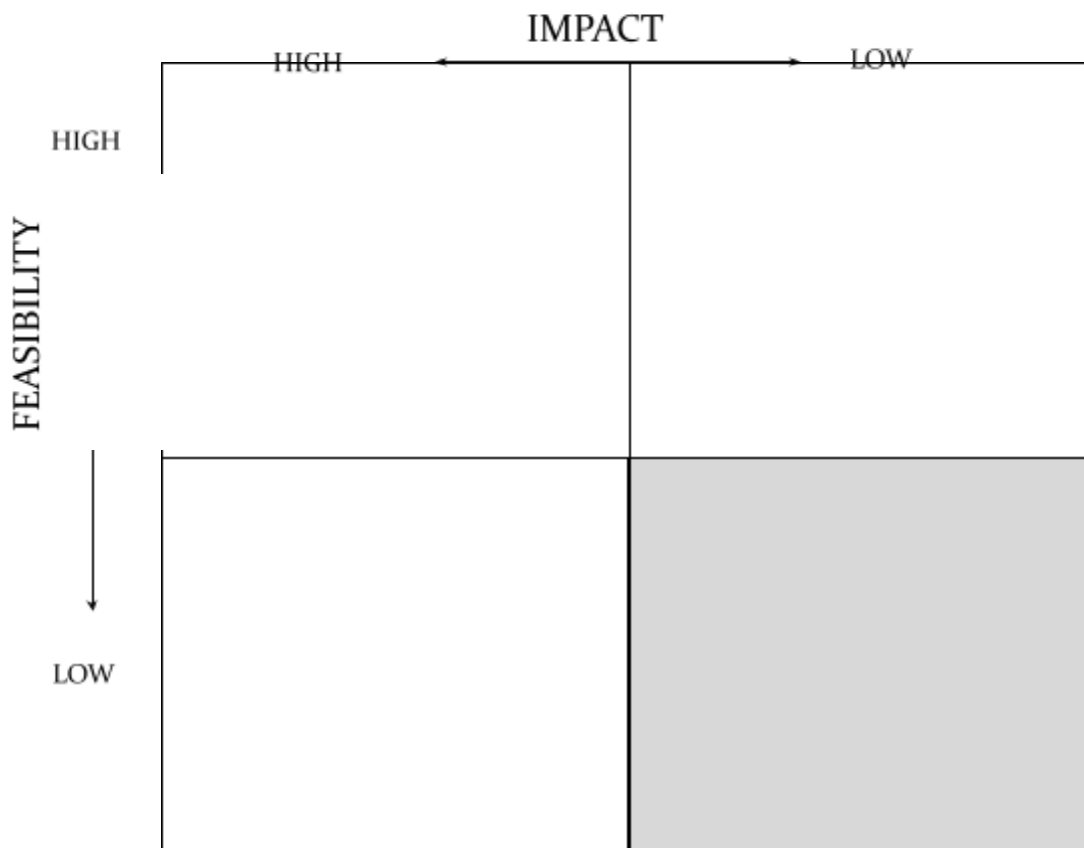
- **Consider contracting with a consultant for a digital preservation assessment.**
- **Document preferred practices for display and create an exhibit policy to guide the display of Special Collections materials.**

## B. Implementation Matrix

Understanding your implementation priorities will assist you in preparing your long-range preservation plan. To determine priorities, use the recommendations listed in this report to plot the impact and feasibility for each action against the matrix below, which is adapted from: Pamela W. Darling, *Preservation Planning Program: An Assisted Self-Study Manual for Libraries*, expanded 1987 ed., Washington, D.C.: ARL/OMS, 1987.

High impact actions that can be implemented with little difficulty are placed high in the chart, towards both IMPACT and FEASIBILITY. Items that are difficult to implement and have little impact go in the bottom right corner, distant from both IMPACT and FEASIBILITY.

Actions ranked high in both IMPACT and FEASIBILITY should be pursued immediately, since they can be easily accomplished and will have significant benefits. Those ranked low in the chart can often be postponed or even disregarded because they achieve little while requiring great effort. Many of those items ranked low for IMPACT, even those high on the FEASIBILITY aspect, can be eliminated because they accomplish little—though some may be pursued in order to gain momentum or because they are easy to complete. Items high in IMPACT but low in FEASIBILITY warrant implementation because of their benefits, but will require careful consideration.



## C. Resources and Vendors

Archival and preservation supplies may be mentioned throughout the report in order to provide guidance and to show examples of shelving, storage enclosures, pest management tools, and more. Most of these supplies are available from multiple vendors, and staff should select the one that best meets their needs in terms of cost, shipment method, etc. Examples of particular items are intended as illustrations, not recommendations of one supplier over another.

In addition, to assist in understanding and following best practices in archives and special collections, a number of publications, guides, and grant opportunities have been suggested and are listed here for ease of access.

### *Audiovisual and other media:*

- Preservation quality enclosures such as those available from Hollinger Metal Edge ( [videocassette boxes](#)) and Gaylord ([LP sleeves](#))
- Image Permanence Institute's [IPI Media Storage Quick Reference](#)
- Preservation Self-Assessment Program Collection ID Guide for [audiovisual media](#).

### *Custom Enclosures for Books, Scrapbooks, or Photo Albums:*

- For high-priority damaged or fragile items, CMI Micro-Climate™ boxes: [www.archivalboxes.com](http://www.archivalboxes.com)
- Four-flap enclosures can be made in-house or purchased. Gaylord offers one example: <http://bit.ly/17HZQ3l>

### *Digitization:*

- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 6.6 [Preservation and Selection for Digitization](#)
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 6.7 [Outsourcing and Vendor Relations](#)
- Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) [Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Cultural Heritage Materials](#) (2016)

### *Disaster planning:*

- dPlan, online disaster plan template <https://dplan.org/>
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 3.3 [Emergency Planning](#)
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 3.4 [Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan](#)
- Emergency Preparedness and Response resources from the California Preservation Program [https://calpreservation.org/information\\_resources/emergency-prep-and-response/](https://calpreservation.org/information_resources/emergency-prep-and-response/)

### *Environmental controls:*

- Image Permanence Institute's [IPI's Guide to Sustainable Preservation Practices for Managing Storage Environments](#) (2012)
- Image Permanence Institute's [IPI's Methodology for Implementing Sustainable Energy-Saving Strategies in Collections Environments](#) (2017)
- Image Permanence Institute's [The Role of Dew Point in Sustainable Environmental Management](#)
- Image Permanence Institute's [Environmental Management Quick Reference](#)
- Image Permanence Institute's [IPI Media Storage Quick Reference](#)
- Image Permanence Institute's [DewPoint Calculator](#)

### *Exhibit and Shelving:*

- Powder-coated steel from Brodart: <http://bit.ly/VPikIL>

- Lining: MarvelSeal 360, a chemically inert metallic laminate, as supplied by Talas: <https://www.talasonline.com/Marvel-Seal>
- Lining alternative: buffered box board such as this from Gaylord: <https://bit.ly/2Ocv5ht>
- NPS's Conserv-o-Gram no. 18/1 [Polyester Film Book Supports](#)
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 2.5 [Protecting Paper and Book Collections During Exhibition](#)

#### *Funding and Grants:*

- National Endowment for the Humanities [Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#)
- NEDCC's [Funding Opportunities](#) webpage
- NEDCC's webinar "Creative Fundraising for Preservation," available for free on-demand at <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-currentlist#ondemand>

#### *General Book and Document Supplies:*

- Acid-free, lignin-free, and buffered interleaving paper like this from Hollinger Metal Edge: <https://www.hollingermetaledge.com/buffered-acid-free-tissue-sheets/>
- Spacer boards to keep documents upright like these from University Products: <https://www.universityproducts.com/document-case-spacer-board.html>
- pH testing pens for older storage materials like these from Gaylord: <https://www.gaylord.com/Preservation/Conservation-Tools-&Equipment/Measuring-Devices/Abbey-pH-Pen&%023153;/p/PH65>
- Norfolk Book Sofa from University Products: <https://www.universityproducts.com/norfolk-book-sofa.html>
- Clarkson Foam Book Support System from Hollinger Metal Edge: <https://www.hollingermetaledge.com/foam-book-support-system/>
- [Homemade cradle using recycled Tyvek shipping envelopes](#) and air pillows
- An example of non-knifing bookends can be found at this link: <https://www.demco.com/demco-reg-titan-iron-trade-book-supports>

#### *Pamphlet Supplies:*

- Acid-free, lignin-free, and buffered document preservation binders like these from University products: <https://bit.ly/2LURZgw> (item 324-7010)
- Acid-free, lignin-free, and buffered flip-top shelf files like these from Gaylord: <https://bit.ly/2vHL7lp> (item WW-EFCROC1)

#### *Pest Management:*

- Pest Management methods and ID <http://museumpests.net/>
- Pinnigar, David, and Peter Winsor. *Integrated Pest Management: A Guide for Museums, Libraries and Archives*. London: Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2004. [http://formacaompr.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/ipm\\_guide-pestes.pdf](http://formacaompr.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/ipm_guide-pestes.pdf)
- National Park Service, *11 Step Process to Developing and Implementing an IPM Strategy* <http://npshistory.com/publications/wildlife/integrated-pest-mgt-11-steps.pdf>

### *Photographs:*

- Unbuffered tissue like this from Hollinger Metal Edge: <http://bit.ly/YwavqV> (item 10778 )
- Glass negative storage containers like these from Gaylord: <http://bit.ly/WpF6on> (item WW-GNB45)
- Information on the deterioration of photographic film bases can be found in NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 5.1 [A Short Guide to Film Base Photographic Materials: Identification, Care, and Duplication](#)
- National Film Preservation Foundation's [The Film Preservation Guide](#) (free online) for guidelines and templates to use when caring for films.
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 5.5 [Storage Enclosures for Photographic Materials](#)
- Glass negatives and slides
  - A brief resource for handling and storage tips: [Caring for Glass Plate Negatives](#).
  - Purpose-built storage containers such as these are available from [Hollinger Metal Edge](#) and [Talas](#).
- Preservation Self-Assessment Program Collection ID Guide for [photo and image materials](#)

### *Policies, Practices, and Forms:*

- Accession and processing
  - [Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning](#) – additional sample policies are found under the heading ‘Organizational Repositories’ in Appendix E
  - [A Guide to Deeds of Gift](#) from the Society of American Archivists
  - [Deed of Gift with Language Addressing the Possibility of Deaccession](#) – follow the link and see Appendix C for a template
  - [Accession Forms: Representative Samples](#) from the Library of Congress
  - National Archives' [Fastened Documents](#)
- Access and handling guidelines
  - [Typical Usage Guidelines in Archival Repositories](#) from the Society of American Archivists
  - Reproduction and publication guidelines - for example, [Image Use Policy and Fees](#) from Forbes Library
  - ACRL/RBMS [Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections](#)
  - [Notes on Copyright, Restrictions, and Unprocessed Collections](#) from the Society of American Archivists
  - NEDCC Preservation Leaflet 4.1 [Storage Methods and Handling Practices](#)
  - Handling videos
    - “Handling Harvard’s Special Collections”  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOvoSOQ8B68>
    - Handling Rare Materials (Folger Library)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NWYruNYILw>
- Exhibit policy
  - University of Washington Exhibits Guidelines (example document) - <http://www.lib.washington.edu/about/news/exhibits/guidelines>
  - NARA – Borrowing NARA Materials - Technical Guidelines (example document) - <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/borrowing/technical-guidelines.html>
  - Stanford University Exhibit Loan Policy (example document) - <http://library.stanford.edu/spc/exhibitspublications/exhibit-loan-policy>

### *Preservation Education:*

- NEDCC's training calendar: <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-currentlist>



- *Preservation 101*, NEDCC's free, online self-guided preservation course  
<https://www.nedcc.org/preservation101/welcome>
- *Fundamentals of Audiovisual Preservation*, NEDCC's free, online textbook  
<https://www.nedcc.org/av-textbook>
- [About Archives](#) series from the Society of American Archivists
- NPS's Conserv-o-Gram no. 13/2 [How To Flatten Folded Or Rolled Paper Documents](#)
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 7.2 [Surface Cleaning of Paper](#)
- NEDCC's Preservation Leaflet 7.7 [Choosing and Working with a Conservator](#)
- American Institute of Conservation's online [Find a Conservator](#) tool

*Staffing and Budget:*

- Data about preservation expenditures in collection institutions across the country is captured in [A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of American's Collections](#)
- Data about preservation expenditures in academic libraries is captured in the [Preservation Statistics Survey](#)
- Data about preservation expenditures in institutions that collect American art is captured in [The Heritage Health Index Report to the Henry Luce Foundation on the State of American Art Collections](#)
- [Total Cost of Stewardship: Responsible Collection Building in Archives and Special Collections](#) from OCLC. Free to download. Includes Quick Cost Estimator and Operational Impact Estimator.

*Storage and Identification Guides:*

- Preservation Self-Assessment Program (PSAP) Collection ID Guide for [audiovisual](#), [paper & book](#), and [photographic & image material](#)

## D. Sample Preservation Plan

September 1, 2020-August 31, 2025

Year	Activity	Strategies & Steps	Measures of Progress	Target Date
1	Policy Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop mission statement.</li> <li>2. Start keeping use statistics do determine core use collections</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mission statement written</li> <li>2. Form completed, new procedures instituted</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March</li> <li>2. March</li> </ol>
1	Develop an infrastructure for preservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assign responsibility &amp; allocate staff time for preservation activities</li> <li>2. Add budget line item for preservation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibilities assigned, job descriptions amended if necessary</li> <li>2. Line item approved</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nov.</li> <li>2. June</li> </ol>
1	Improve relative humidity in storage areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a schedule to check and empty portable dehumidifiers at a regular intervals</li> <li>2. Obtain portable fans to help air circulation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule created</li> <li>2. Fans purchased</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct.</li> <li>2. Dec.</li> </ol>
1	Improve light levels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install UV filtering sleeves on all fluorescent lamps</li> <li>2. Inform Facilities of the filters so they are not accidentally thrown away when lights are changed</li> <li>3. Box all materials in storage area exposed to sunlight</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work completed, noted in maintenance log</li> <li>2. Memo written and distributed to Facilities.</li> <li>3. Boxing completed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dec.</li> <li>2. Dec.</li> <li>3. June</li> </ol>
1	Improve protection from water hazards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a monitoring schedule for the foyer to watch for new or recurring leaks.</li> <li>2. Obtain leak diverters to intercept overhead leaks until the cause of the leak has been repaired.</li> <li>3. Relocate materials in the foyer to safer storage</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule and log set up.</li> <li>2. Leak diverters purchased and in place.</li> <li>3. Location identified and materials moved.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dec.</li> <li>2. March</li> <li>3. June</li> </ol>
1	Fire protection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include check on all small appliances in kitchen and staff offices into closing procedures to ensure they are unplugged at night.</li> <li>2. Initiate regular testing, inspection, and maintenance of fire detection and suppression systems.</li> <li>3. Include fire detection/suppression system maintenance in building maintenance schedule.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check integrated into closing procedures.</li> <li>2. Activities scheduled and completed with appropriate vendors.</li> <li>3. Maintenance written in to overall schedule</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nov.</li> <li>2. Jan.</li> <li>3. June</li> </ol>
1	Disaster preparedness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assemble response kit for water emergencies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kit assembled</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Conduct risk assessment</li> <li>3. Begin disaster plan by completing a call tree and panic sheet of important individuals and services for disasters as identified by risk assessment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Risk assessment completed.</li> <li>3. Call lists complete</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. June</li> <li>3. July</li> </ol>
1	Begin pest monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install sticky traps in the storage areas</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traps installed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. April</li> </ol>
1	Improve security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discontinue allowing the public in the Archives storage area.</li> <li>2. Keep door between general collections and the Archives processing area closed.</li> <li>3. Compile a list of staff with keys and codes and maintain a log for all subsequent changes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All staff know and comply with new policy.</li> <li>2. All staff know and comply with new policy.</li> <li>3. List and log completed.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dec.</li> <li>2. Dec.</li> <li>3. March</li> </ol>
1	Improve storage and handling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove cans of spray paint (and other such products) from the Archives storage closet.</li> <li>2. Turn all books stored on their fore-edges to their spine.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Materials gone.</li> <li>2. All books rotated.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct.</li> <li>2. March</li> </ol>
1	Continuing efforts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarterly air filter change</li> <li>2. Annual inspection of building &amp; systems</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change completed</li> <li>2. Report</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March, June, Sept.</li> <li>2. May</li> </ol>
2	Policy development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop written collection development policy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document completed, shared with staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. July</li> </ol>
1	Pursue grant funding for preservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify specific projects</li> <li>2. Identify potential funding agencies</li> <li>3. Select grant to pursue and begin information gathering.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List of potential projects</li> <li>2. List of funding agencies</li> <li>3. Grant narrative begun (if pursuing a larger grant)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feb.</li> <li>2. March</li> <li>3. Aug.</li> </ol>
2	Improve control of temperature & RH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase environmental monitoring equipment</li> <li>2. Train two staff members to use equipment</li> <li>3. Begin environmental monitoring of the vault</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase order cut</li> <li>2. Equipment installed, staff know how to use</li> <li>3. Monthly reports</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sept.</li> <li>2. Nov.</li> <li>3. Dec.</li> </ol>
2	Lower risk of water damage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase pallets to raised boxed materials off of the floor.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pallets and boxes in place.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. June</li> </ol>
2	Disaster Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule fire extinguisher training for all staff.</li> <li>2. Complete full disaster plan</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training completed.</li> <li>2. Plan written</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March</li> <li>2. June</li> </ol>
2	Improve housekeeping	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule regular housekeeping in all collections storage rooms.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cleaning scheduled</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct.</li> </ol>

2	Improve security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Register high-value items with the Art Loss Register™</li> <li>2. Prepare call slips to use in requesting materials from the Archives</li> <li>3. Purchase lockers for patrons to keep bags and other personal belongings in while using the reading room.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Items registered</li> <li>2. Call slips designed and printed.</li> <li>3. Purchase order cut</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March</li> <li>2. June</li> <li>3. Aug.</li> </ol>
2	Improve handling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare written handling guidelines for staff and researchers.</li> <li>2. Purchase bookends and tidy up books on shelves.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guidelines completed, shared with staff</li> <li>2. Bookends purchased, books tidy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct.</li> <li>2. July</li> </ol>
2	Improve storage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore options for adding more shelving</li> <li>2. Purchase storage bins for framed materials.</li> <li>3. Add or adjust shelves to allow for flat shelving of oversized materials.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vendors contacted, literature &amp; estimates collected</li> <li>2. Purchase order cut</li> <li>3. Shelving adjusted and books moved.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. April</li> <li>2. Aug.</li> <li>3. Aug.</li> </ol>
2	Improve storage of collections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey scrapbooks to identify damaged items for boxing</li> <li>2. Survey existing folders and boxes and test with a pH-testing pen.</li> <li>3. Purchase spacer boards for partially-full boxes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare list</li> <li>2. Quality of materials determined and recorded.</li> <li>3. Purchase order cut</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jan.</li> <li>2. July</li> <li>3. July</li> </ol>
2	Continuing efforts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change sticky traps</li> <li>2. Update disaster plan emergency contact info. for staff &amp; vendors, as needed</li> <li>3. Quarterly air filter change</li> <li>4. Annual inspection of building &amp; systems</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change completed</li> <li>2. Updates completed</li> <li>3. Change completed</li> <li>4. Inspection completed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oct., April</li> <li>2. Feb.</li> <li>3. March, June, Sept.</li> <li>4. May</li> </ol>
3	Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-open part-time Collections Assistant position if possible.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review/rewrite of position description complete.</li> <li>2. Job announcement posted and interviews conducted.</li> <li>3. Staff hired and begun work.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dec.</li> <li>2. Jan. – April</li> </ol>

				3. July
3	Complete grant for preservation	1. Complete grant narrative for preservation project	1. Grant submitted	1. March (or whatever month the grant deadline falls)
3	Improve control of temperature & RH	1. Analyze 12 months' worth of monitoring data to identify extent of seasonal spikes 2. Work with Facilities to research new storage and year-round climate control for the Archives.	1. Report on data written 2. Vendors researched and system selected.	1. Jan. 2. Feb.
3	Disaster Planning	1. Train staff involved in disaster response and recovery techniques	1. Staff trained	1. Aug.
3	Improve storage of collections	1. Place scrapbooks from survey in year 2 in custom phase boxes. 2. Purchase additional flat file unit(s) 3. Begin purchasing replacement folders and boxes for those materials identified in survey in year 2. 4. Rehouse collections	1. Boxes purchased 2. Purchase order cut 3. Purchase order cut 4. Rehousing complete for ordered supplied	1. Dec. 2. April 3. June 4. Aug.
3	Reformatting	1. Create preservation photocopies of newspaper clippings.	1. Copying complete	1. Aug.
3	Continuing efforts	1. Change sticky traps 2. Update disaster plan emergency contact info. for staff & vendors, as needed 3. Quarterly air filter change 4. Annual inspection of building & system 5. Environmental monitoring	1. Change completed 2. Updates completed 3. Change completed 4. Inspection completed 5. Monthly reports	1. Oct., April 2. Feb. 3. March, June, Sept. 4. May 5. Monthly

4	Improve control of temperature & RH	1. Write grant for new storage with climate control system	1. Grant written using information gathered in year 3 and submitted	1. Dec.
4	Lower risk of water damage	1. Relocate restroom	1. Site selected for new restroom 2. Construction of new restroom complete. 3. Old restroom removed and water pipes capped.	1. Dec. 2. May 3. June
4	Improve storage of collections	1. Continue purchasing replacement binders, sleeves, folders, and boxes 2. Rehouse collections	1. Purchase order cut 2. Rehousing completed	1. Sept. 2. Aug.
4	Reformatting	1. Prioritize audiovisual materials for reformatting. 2. Create a pilot project to test vendors and reformatting criteria.	1. List complete 2. Samples sent and vendor and criteria selected.	1. Jan. 2. Aug.
4	Continuing efforts	1. Change sticky traps 2. Update disaster plan emergency contact info. for staff & vendors, as needed 3. Quarterly air filter change  4. Annual inspection of building & systems 5. Environmental monitoring	1. Change completed 2. Updates completed  3. Change completed 4. Inspection completed 5. Monthly reports	1. Oct., April 2. Feb.  3. March, June, Sept. 4. May 5. Monthly
5	Disaster preparedness	1. Thorough review of disaster plan 2. Replenish emergency response supplies that are missing, worn out, or used up	1. Review completed & updates made as needed 2. Kit up-to-date	1. Feb. 2. March
5	Reformatting	1. Begin reformatting audiovisual materials.	1. Materials sent out.	1. Dec.
5	Continuing efforts	1. Change sticky traps 2. Update disaster plan emergency contact info. for staff & vendors, as needed 3. Quarterly air filter change  4. Annual inspection of building & systems	1. Change completed 2. Updates completed  3. Change completed 4. Inspection completed	1. Oct., April 2. Feb.  3. March, June, Sept. 4. May 5. Monthly

		5. Environmental monitoring	5. Monthly reports	
5	Planning	1. New five-year plan	1. Plan approved	1. August

## Endnotes