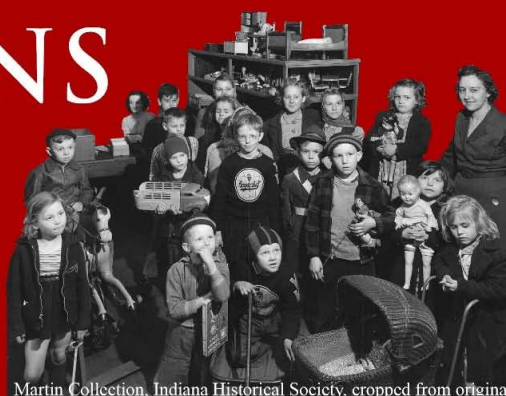


This publication is a service of the [Hoosier Heritage Alliance](#) Connecting to Collections project.

COLLECTIONS

Advisor



Martin Collection, Indiana Historical Society, cropped from original

Issue 18, April 2013

Object Storage: Tips from the Minnetrista Heritage Collection Basic Collections Care Guide

by Nadia Kousari, collections specialist, Minnetrista,
www.minnetrista.net

Proper object storage is very important to preserve the artifacts in museum collections. Objects made of varying materials require different types of storage methods. Be sure to research the proper techniques and archival storage methods for specific objects in your collections when undertaking rehousing or storage projects.

Remember, it is important to do no harm. If you have any questions about the best way to store an object, check with a conservator before you begin.

Storing clothing

- Use your best judgment when storing clothing.
- Lightweight clothing, such as blouses and slips, should generally be stored in garment boxes interleaved (placing tissue paper, unbleached muslin, or white cotton cloth between each layer) with tissue paper.
- Heavier clothing, such as jackets and coats, should be hung on padded hangers.

Storing objects in boxes or drawers

- Acid-free boxes should be used for general storage of objects.
- A variety of object storage box sizes are available. Choose the best size for the objects housed in the boxes.
- Use your best judgment when preparing objects for storage in the boxes.
- Do not over pack the box and be sure to provide adequate packing material so objects do not rub against each other.
- Use tissue, ethafoam, and archival polyethylene bags for long-term storage.
- Well-labeled, smaller boxes can also be stored in larger boxes when necessary.
- Consider the weight of the box. Heavy boxes should not be stored on top shelves or stacked on top of other boxes.
- Always label the box with the object numbers and names.
- Use one word to briefly describe the object.

- The label should also include the location and the box number.
- An archival pen can be used with the archival labels. Do not use a standard felt-tip pen to mark boxes or labels.
- Small objects may be better suited for drawer storage.
- Objects can be stored in small boxes or polyethylene bags with the object number written on the storage container.
- Object numbers for objects stored in boxes can be written directly on the box with pencil.
- An archival label can be attached to a bag and the object number written with archival ink.

Basic information about tissue paper

Most tissue paper will become acidic and brittle with age. The acidity will transfer to adjacent objects, causing these objects to become weaker and possibly discolored. Acid-free tissue papers are specially processed to remove contaminants.

With buffered papers, calcium carbonate (chalk) is added to paper pulp during the paper-making process as a buffering agent. This buffering agent raises the pH level of the paper to the alkaline side of the scale. The addition of 3 percent calcium carbonate provides a pH of approximately 8.5 in paper, making it non-acidic.

Buffered papers are acceptable for metals, cotton or linen textiles, but are potentially harmful to silk or wool objects.

It is suggested a neutral pH (about 7) unbuffered acid-free tissue paper be purchased for general textile or costume storage. For storing costumes or other items, some "stuffing" or interleaving may be necessary to maintain a three-dimensional shape or to prevent abrasion between textile surfaces.

Resources

- Connecting to Collections Online Community
www.connectingtocollections.org
- IHS Conservation Lab www.indianahistory.org/our-services/conservation
- IHS Local History Services Lending Resource Center
www.indianahistory.org/our-services/local-history-services/lending-resources

Reprinted courtesy of Minnetrista

This is a free publication. Anyone may subscribe.

Collections Advisor is provided for the benefit of local historical societies and museums throughout Indiana. It is emailed to a subscriber list maintained by the Local History Services department of the Indiana Historical Society.

To be added to or removed from the mailing list, simply email collectionsadvisor@indianahistory.org.

For more information about the Hoosier Heritage Alliance, please visit www.indianahistory.org/hha.



*This publication from the Indiana Historical Society
is a service of the Hoosier Heritage Alliance*

*This project is made possible by a grant from the
U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services*