

About Newspaper



Newspaper is ubiquitous. Virtually all libraries, archives, historical societies, and private families have collections of newspapers and clippings that commemorate important events. Although these artifacts are often important keepsakes, they tend to become structurally and chemically damaged in a short time span.

Newspaper deteriorates rapidly because newspapers are typically printed on poor-quality paper that is not made to survive. Huge numbers of newspapers are printed every day, and cost is kept down by using low-quality papermaking

materials, like wood pulp, which contains lignin. Lignin is a component of cellulosic materials that adds strength. As lignin ages, it becomes more acidic. It is often left in fibers used to make paper pulp for newspapers, which causes newspaper to become brittle and discolor to a brown or yellow color. Inadequate storage contributes to this deterioration and often we are left with newsprint memorabilia that is tattered, discolored, and damaged after a few short years. Newspapers that are not properly stored can also cause nearby documents to discolor and lose strength. Older, pre-1800s newspapers are likely to be made of higher quality materials and will not exhibit the same levels of discoloration and damage.



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Inside this issue:

About Newspaper	1
Preservation	2
Storage	2
Environmental Controls	3
Consulting a Conservator	4
Additional Resources	4

Preservation

Newsprint is considered an ephemeral material, meaning it is not intended to last. This is probably the most important piece of information to remember when collecting newspaper clippings. Conservators urge libraries and historical societies to make digital copies and dispose of the original item. Although natural aging and deterioration cannot be counteracted, a few measures can be taken to help best preserve these sensitive materials.

Having digital records made of important news clippings is a simple step to ensure that the original

artifact is well-documented, as it will continue to deteriorate. Digital copies can be duplicated and easily shared. Printing the image onto acid-free paper can produce a high-quality 'replica' that can be displayed without causing further damage to the original. Newspaper can be duplicated by a number of processes including photocopying, digital imaging, and high resolution scanning. It is not recommended to display original newspaper clippings because exposure to light will continue to discolor and embrittle the paper.

Storage

Original newspapers or clippings should be stored in acid-free, lignin-free, alpha cellulose folders; a sheet of MicroChamber® paper can be placed behind the items, and used to absorb acids as the paper continues to produce them. Individual clippings can be stored in

polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene sleeves, and then placed in acid-free folders, for added protection. Multiple clippings or newspapers can be grouped together and housed in an acid-free, lignin-free box.

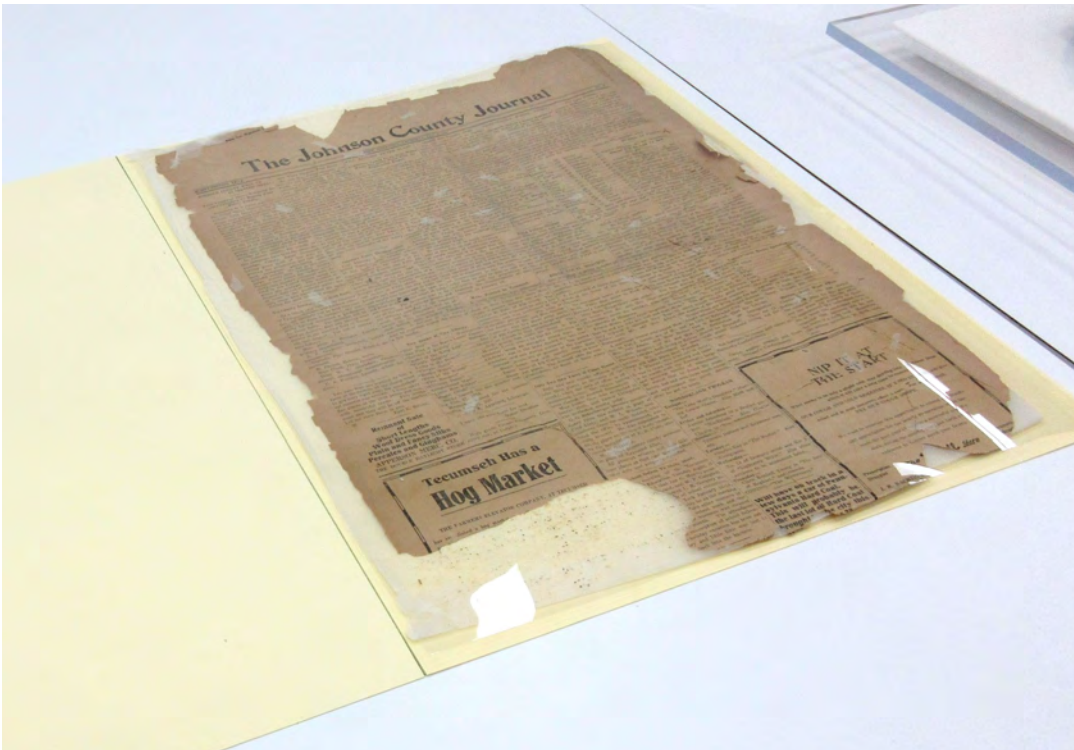
Environmental Conditions

Relative humidity levels in the range of 30-50% are thought to be best for paper-based materials. High humidity increases the risk of mold growth, while humidity that is too low may result in the embrittlement of organic materials. Temperatures should be kept within a narrow range that does not exceed 72° F. Wide fluctuations in relative hu-

midity and temperature have the most damaging effects on paper so it is important to store them in a cool and dark space. A good location is a closet or desk in a living part of the house, such as the ground floor. Avoid storing paper-based items in attics and basements where environmental fluctuations tend to be more drastic.

It is also important to protect newspaper from overexposure to light, which exacerbates deterioration and causes discoloration. Ultraviolet light from the sun is extremely damaging to paper, but UV light is also emitted from indoor light sources, such as fluorescent bulbs. Exposure can be partially limited by using window shades and applying

UV filtering films to windows and sleeves to fluorescent lights. Remember: Light exposure is cumulative and the surest way to protect your object is to keep it out of direct light (both natural and artificial) and limit the amount of time your paper-based items are on display.



Consulting a Conservator

Conservation of newsprint is usually only carried out in cases where the piece is extremely damaged or rare and must be stabilized to allow for digitization. This can be an expensive option for materials that will continue to degrade, so it is recommended that proper housing and storage always be the first line of defense for sensitive materials like newspaper.

Additional Resources

Northeast Document Conservation Center. *Inherent Vice⁷Materials*. Retrieved from <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation101/session-4/2inherent-vice-materials#paper>

Library of Congress. Preventive Measures for Newspapers. Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/newspap.html>

Conservation Suppliers

Conservation Resources International

7350-A Lockport Place
Lorton, Virginia 22079
Toll free: (800) 634-6932
www.conservationresources.com
Archival housing/storage supplies, photographic supplies, general

Gaylord Archival

P. O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
Toll Free: (800) 448-6160
www.gaylord.com
General conservation supplies, housing supplies

Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc.

9401 Northeast Drive
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
Toll Free: (800) 634-0491
www.hollingermetaledge.com
Archival housing/storage supplies

Light Impressions

100 Carlson Road
Rochester, NY 14610
Toll Free: (888) 222-2054
www.lightimpressionsdirect.com
Photographic supplies, housing, matting and framing supplies

University Products

517 Main Street
P. O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041
Toll Free: (800) 628-1912
www.universityproducts.com
General conservation supplies, housing and matting supplies

Talas

330 Morgan Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11211
Telephone: (212) 219-0770
www.talasonline.com
Conservation supplies, photographic supplies, general



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