

Guidelines for Handling Archival Materials (letters, journals, drawings, photographs, clippings, and ephemera)

- Please exercise all possible care in handling materials to prevent damage. All items should be kept flat and fully supported. They must not be leaned on, written on, traced, torn, or handled in such a way as to cause damage. Bound materials should never be forced to lie flat or open.
- Smoking, beverages, and food (including gum) are not allowed while around or handling the materials.
- Use pencils or word processors only for note taking. Pens are prohibited.
- Digital (no flash) reference photography is allowed. If you require digital reproductions for online or in-print publishing please contact the archivist for permissions and proper citation.
- Frequent washing of hands is advised. Make sure you have clean/dry hands that are free of lotion before handling materials.
- Do not rest anything on top of manuscript material.
- Open one folder at a time.
- Manuscript folders must remain flat on the table at all times. Contents should remain flat and in order in their opened folder while being read.
- Do not change the order in which manuscript or photographic materials are filed. If filing errors are detected, bring them to the attention of the archivist.
- Do not trace or write on top of materials you are using.
- Use cotton gloves with material that is especially sensitive to damage from direct handling such as photographs, negatives, and metal bindings. You can request gloves from the archivist or supervising librarian.
- Self-adhesive "Post-It" notes are strictly prohibited for use on all Archives and Special Collections materials.
- Manuscript leaves should be handled as little as possible and turned gently one at a time, with fingers in non-text areas of the sheet whenever possible.
- No marks should be added or erased from the material.
- Materials should not be folded or bent. Do not "dog ear" papers, or use paperclips or other items to mark the material. Use only the acid-free bookmarks provided.
- Fragile or exceptionally rare materials will require special handling procedures. The Archivist will assist with these materials.
- Do not attempt to uncurl or forcibly flatten items.
- Do not attempt to make repairs to any materials. Brittle items or materials in need of repair should be brought to the attention of archivist or supervising librarian.