Manual for Processing Manuscript Collections

Manuscript Division
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

2008 Revised Edition

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DISPOSITIONS

Preface 2008 Edition

The current manual revises the 1998 “Guide to Processing Manuscript Collections.” Some of the changes reflect updated practices and clarify ambiguities that arose over time. Other changes were incorporated to conform with the Manuscript Division’s adoption of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) practices and the implementation of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS). As in the past, this manual is intended to be used in conjunction with the Manuscript Division’s revised “Manual for Preparing Finding Aids.”

The revision committee consisted of Donna Ellis, Ernest Emrich, Melinda Friend, Laura Kells, Bruce Kirby, Michael McElderry, and Michael Spangler. The committee would like to thank Allan Teichroew, head of the Manuscript Division Preparation Section, who reviewed proposals and drafts and Karen Stuart who reviewed the section on handling computer disks.

While the committee met to revise the processing manual, another committee convened to update the Manuscript Division’s “Manual for Preparing Finding Aids.” Donna Ellis and Margaret McAleer, chairpersons of the Processing Manual Committee and the Finding Aid Manual Committee, respectively, collaborated at every stage of the revision to ensure consistency between the two documents.

Preface 1998 Edition

The Preparation Section of the Manuscript Division arranges and describes collections of personal papers and organizational records to make them accessible to researchers and preserve them for the future. The "Guide to Processing Manuscript Collections" is designed to facilitate this endeavor by codifying established practices and clarifying areas of ambiguity. It is not meant to provide solutions to every unique problem that may arise in the arrangement process.

The guide is divided into three sections: (1) the planning stage; (2) physical processing; and (3) the disposition of materials inappropriate for retention in the Manuscript Division. The table of contents provides quick access to specific topics. The guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the Manuscript Division's "Manual for Preparing Finding Aids."

The "Guide to Processing Manuscript Collections" is the result of a group effort on the part of the Preparation Section staff which was coordinated by a committee composed of Joseph Brooks, Donna Ellis, Melinda Friend, Laura Kells, Patrick Kerwin, Michael McElderry, and Michael Spangler. After devising a basic outline, the committee members met with Preparation Section staff members in small groups to discuss all aspects of processing. The committee then reviewed the assembled material and produced a draft document which was submitted to the head of the Preparation Section for final approval.

The committee would like to thank Paul Chestnut, head of the Manuscript Division Preparation Section, and Allan Teichroew and Richard Bickle, assistant heads, for allowing the committee members a generous amount of time to work on the guide and for answering policy matters as they occurred. The committee also appreciates the technical assistance it received from Richard Bickle (oversize material), Emily Zehmer and Margit Kerwin (accessioning and provenance), Audrey Walker (classified material), Mary Lacy (automation issues), Karen Stuart (automation issues and design of forms), and from Mary Wolfskill and the Manuscript Division Reading Room staff (retrieval and access issues). The committee gratefully acknowledges Janice Ruth's "Guidelines for Preparing Manuscript Division Registers," several portions of which were incorporated into this guide.

1. PLANNING STAGE

I. Accessioning

A. Functions and responsibilities

Accessioning is the act of recording the formal acceptance into custody of an acquisition and establishing the first level of bibliographic control over it. Preparation Section staff may be called upon to provide the catalogers with the information they need to create an accession record. This is usually the case with large collections stored off-site.

B. Accession information form

1. Use this form to record accession information and deliver it to the catalogers when completed. It is available on the library server and can be accessed by clicking on the MSS(LIB) desktop shortcut (\\lcdat3\mss\Preparation Section\Forms).

2. Information provided by catalogers

    a. Title of the collection (main entry)

    b. Accession number

3. Information provided by processing staff

    a. Estimated span dates of papers or records.

    b. Estimated number of items.

Standard formula for estimating number of items

One document box = ca. 350 items*
One record center carton:
    Letter size = ca. 1050 items*
    Legal size = ca. 875 items*
One transfile = ca. 2100 items*

*Count bulky items as one item (e.g., scrapbooks, financial ledgers, manuscript drafts of a book). A discrete entity is one item regardless of the number of pages comprising it.

I. Accessioning (cont.)

B. Accession information form (cont.)

3. Information provided by processing staff (cont.)

c. Number of containers, distinguishing among number of cartons, number of transfiles, number of file cabinets, etc., and taking into account any reboxing that may have occurred.

d. Current shelf location.

e. Types of material and subjects.

f. Immediate conservation needs.

C. Labeling boxes

1. Use a permanent felt tip marker.

2. Write large and legibly.

3. Include the following information on both a long and short side of each box:

a. Title of collection
b. Accession number
c. Box number ("Box 1 of 10," etc.)

II. Provenance and Background Research

After receiving an assignment of a collection, assemble all pertinent administrative information relating to the collection and ensure that every aspect of its status, history, and storage is accounted for and understood. Refer to secondary sources for general information on the subject of the collection.

II. Provenance and Background Research (cont.)

A. Provenance

1. "Provenance" is defined as the record of the source or place of origin and subsequent custody, if any. In modern archival usage, the provenance of a collection is the record of the organization or individual that created, accumulated, and/or used the materials and any other ownership before their transfer to a record center, archives, or manuscript repository. Listed below are suggested sources for determining the provenance.

2. Administrative case file

   The administrative case file is a compilation of documents relating to the acquisition and use of the collections filed alphabetically by name of collection. Located in the Division Office, the file is maintained by the division chief's staff and includes instruments of agreement, correspondence related to the acquisition and administration of the collections, preliminary inventories, biographical materials, reference correspondence, completed disposition forms, accession records, and other related material.

   a. Check miscellaneous folders at the end of each letter of the alphabet for collections with a small amount of administrative material.

   b. Check for special categories such as the Naval Historical Foundation, presidential papers, Foreign Copying Program, etc.

   c. Use a withdrawal slip when removing a case file.

3. Processing case file

   The processing case file is a compilation of documents relating to the processing history of the collections filed alphabetically by name of collection. Located in the Preparation Section, the file includes signed processing proposals, signed drafts of disposition forms, inventories, the last editing draft of the finding aid with the accompanying editing routing slip, archivists' processing notes and memoranda, microfilming information, catalog records, and other related material generated during processing.

II. Provenance and Background Research (cont.)

A. Provenance (cont.)

4. Reports

    a. Acquisitions, annual, and quarterly reports, located in the Division Office, provide information and statistics relating to the acquisition and processing of collections.

    b. Check for previously written descriptions published in the acquisitions reports. For collections received prior to 1996, consult the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*. The Manuscripts Division Web site contains reports on important recent acquisitions.

5. Finding aids

    a. The master archive file in the cataloging room contains finding aids of collections or parts of collections that have already been processed, described, and edited.

    b. The finding aid file in the Reading Room sometimes contains abbreviated finding aids of partially processed collections, container lists of unprocessed collections, finding aids that have not been fully edited, and annotations not found on the finding aids in the master archive file.

6. Conference with specialists

    a. A subject specialist is assigned to each collection to oversee its administration.

    b. Consult with the subject specialist when necessary to verify the status of ownership, dispositions, restrictions, and other considerations.

7. Accession and online catalog records

    a. The accessions database contains information on the source, date of receipt, size, location, type of material, etc., for each accession. It contains all accession records from 1987 to the present and some records from 1986. The database is updated regularly on public machines, but for very recent accessions a cataloger should be consulted.

II. Provenance and Background Research (cont.)

A. Provenance (cont.)

7. Accession and online catalog records (cont.)

   b. The accession card file in the Preparation Section contains three sets of cards filed by source, collection title, and accession number. It contains records for accessions prior to 1987 and is no longer kept up to date.

   c. The Library's online catalog provides bibliographic information for each collection title including its location and source. Catalog records for collections that have been processed or partially processed usually contain descriptions, subject and name authorities, and information on provenance, transfers, and restrictions.

8. Additional sources

   The following sources are no longer current but can be useful in establishing the provenance of older collections:

   a. National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections
   b. Historical card file in Range 1
   c. Accession daily record (AcDR)
   d. Published guides to the collections

B. Background research

1. Consult secondary sources for general information on the subject of the collection. Note information that will help arrange and describe the collection.

II. Provenance and Background Research (cont.)

B. Background research (cont.)

2. Useful secondary sources include:

Online sources

The Library's electronic subscription databases may include:

- American National Biography
- Ancestry Library Edition
- ArchivesUSA
- Biography and Genealogy Master Index
- Biography Resource Center (includes Who's Who)
- Encyclopedia Britannica
- FirstSearch
- Journals available via JSTOR
- ProQuest
- Social Security Death Index

Also useful are online search engines.

Printed sources

- Published biography or agency history
- *Dictionary of American Biography*
- *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*
- *Who Was Who in America*

III. Gathering Collection Material

A. Location information

1. Accession database

This database contains location information for all accessions received by the division since 1987.

III. Gathering Collection Material (cont.)

A. Location information (cont.)

2. Online catalog record

a. When new collections are accessioned, the cataloger creates a searchable preliminary catalog record that gives the location in the 090 field or 583 field.

b. When additional accessions are received, the online catalog record is updated to reflect changes in location.

B. Physical location

1. Landover Central Annex (LCA)

a. Accessions larger in size than one archival storage container are generally stored at LCA.

b. Accessions stored at LCA are so indicated in the location field of the accessions database and the online manuscript catalog with the prefixes LCA, Bay 3, 07xx, or 08xx.

c. Supervisors will make arrangements for the retrieval of unprocessed material from LCA.

2. Small backlog

Accessions consisting of one archival storage container or less are located in the cataloging room and filed by accession number. Oversize material is shelved separately.

3. Manuscript Division stack areas

a. Accessions are occasionally held temporarily in Ranges 1, 4, and 6, especially if a researcher or specialist has requested them.

b. National security classified material is stored in the security vault (Range 2).

IV. Analysis and Proposal

A. Analysis

1. Unpacking

   a. Confirm receipt of the number of boxes listed for each accession.

   b. Note any container label information.

   c. Look for inventories.

   d. Reconstruct any order that may have existed prior to packing or delivery as the material is transferred into processing boxes.

   e. Look for gaps in material that may indicate missing items.

   f. Look for items that do not belong and may be parts of other collections.

   g. Cross out old box labels before disposing of or reusing cartons.

   h. Ergonomics *See* Sec. 2, IV-H, **Materials handling**

2. Original order

   The original order of an archival collection is the arrangement established during the process of creating or accumulating the documents. The original order of a collection should be maintained if it lends itself to research accessibility.

   a. Preserves the evidential significance indicating how the collection was used as well as the relationship of one document to another.

   b. Documents will fit into the original system more readily than any imposed system.

   c. Staff time and effort are saved if collections are not rearranged.

IV. Analysis and Proposal (cont.)

A. Analysis (cont.)

3. Additions

a. New accessions are termed additions if earlier accessions of a collection have been processed.

b. Check the state of arrangement of the previously processed material and finding aid.

c. Include in the processing proposal any reprocessing or revising of the finding aid that may be necessary.

d. Account for all accessions.

e. Decide in conjunction with supervisors whether the addition will be organized as a separate part or interfiled with the existing collection.

4. Processing notes

Many archivists find that taking notes helps to organize thoughts and refresh the memory when writing the proposal, scope and content note, etc.

Details for processing notes

- Types of material
- Series
- Major preservation issues *See* Sec. 2, III-E, **Preservation**
- Internal clues to arrangement
- State of organization of each series and total collection
- Span dates of each series and total collection
- Oversize material
- Foreign-language material
- Gaps in material
- Classified material
    - If national security classified material is discovered, notify the classified documents officer immediately. If the classified documents officer is unavailable, bring the material to a staff member with appropriate security clearance.
    - Assume that items bearing classification markings are still classified.

IV. **Analysis and Proposal** (cont.)

A. Analysis (cont.)

5. Series headings and common terms

a. The following is a list of series titles that are commonly used within the division. The list is not comprehensive but is meant to be a general guide.

Frequently used series headings

Administrative File	Family Correspondence	Miscellany
Business Records	Family Papers	Organizations File
Case File	Financial Records	Printed Matter
Correspondence	General Correspondence	Professional File
Diaries	Legal File/Records	Speeches and Writings
Estate Records	Medical Records	Subject File

b. Collection specific series headings

- Series headings can be specific to a collection (e.g., Stage, Screen, and Studio File).
- Use the proper name of a cabinet department for a series heading (i.e., Department of Agriculture not Agriculture Department).

c. Rubber stamps

- A card file of all previously ordered rubber stamps is located in LM-130.
- Previously ordered stamps are located on the supply shelves in Range 4.
- Rubber stamps can be ordered via supervisors for large collections.
- Use stamp kits to create stamps for small collections and series. Write headings with pencil if it will save time.

IV. Analysis and Proposal (cont.)

B. Processing proposal form

The proposal outlines the archivist's recommendations for processing the collection and highlights issues that need to be resolved. It must be submitted for approval and routed via the Assistant Head for Processing, Preparation Section Head, and Specialist. After routing and approval, it serves as a rough outline for the processing of the collection. If the archivist makes major changes to an approved proposal, the archivist and supervisor will decide whether documentation of the changes should be recirculated. The form is available on the library server.

1. Name and significance of collection

    a. Use the name only as it appears in the 100 or 110 field of the online catalog record.

    b. It may be helpful at this point to note briefly the significance and history of the collection and/or its creator.

2. Accession numbers, identification number, and nature of acquisition

    a. List the accession number(s) of the collection to be processed.

    b. List the identification number of the collection.

    c. Identify the nature of the acquisition for each accession (e.g., gift, purchase, etc.). This information appears on the accession record.

3. Proposed series

    a. Order of series
        - Generally, those series containing more personal material such as diaries or family papers appear first with series of less personal material following in descending order. A Miscellany series often comes last, preceding withdrawn series.

        - Other considerations include the importance of the series or its size.

        - For the records of an organization, the administrative structure of the organization may determine the series order.

IV. Analysis and Proposal (cont.)

B. Processing proposal form (cont.)

3. Proposed series

a. Order of series (cont.)
- Withdrawn series, specifically, Restricted, Closed, Classified, Oversize, and Artifacts series, are placed at the end of all the other series and in that order. *See* Sec. 2, III-F, **Withdrawals**, for further information

b. List the series individually, with the following elements for each one:
- Name
- Span dates
- Size (approximate number of items and the percentage in relation to the total collection)
- Brief description of the type of material
- Arrangement (current and any proposed modifications)
- Suggested level of processing

4. Dispositions *See also* Sec. 3, **Dispositions**

a. Note any material that may be unsuitable for retention in the Manuscript Division.

b. State any restrictions that may affect dispositions.

5. Restrictions

a. Record donor/source, administrative or physical condition restrictions.

b. Note the presence of classified material.

6. Preservation issues

a. Note the general condition of the collection and whether there are any pressing preservation issues.

b. Note large amounts of material on unstable paper that may require a substantial investment of time to produce preservation photocopies.

c. Note electronic records.

IV. Analysis and Proposal (cont.)

B. Processing proposal form (cont.)

6. Preservation issues (cont.)

d. Scrapbooks
- Scrapbooks that contain mostly clippings may be photocopied and recommended for possible disposition.

- When dismantling a scrapbook, keep all the items together and identify them as coming from a scrapbook.

7. Comments might include:

a. Foreign-language material
b. Oversize material
c. Three-dimensional objects
d. Processing space needs
e. Consultations with other divisions
f. Supply needs
g. Material of a potentially sensitive nature

8. Staffing needs

a. Note tasks that could be accomplished with assistance from archival technicians or other members of the division.

b. State the degree of difficulty of each task.

9. Projected completion date

a. Propose a completion date based on an analysis of the various factors involved in processing the collection as explained in the processing proposal.

b. Base the estimation on the assumption that only one person will be processing.

c. Notify supervisors of factors that may arise following the routing of the processing proposal (e.g., the assignment of other staff members to the collection, the discovery of a particularly complicated processing task, etc.)

2. Physical Processing

I. Rough Sort

Rough sorting, the preliminary step in processing a collection, is undertaken concurrently with the analytic phase of the collection. It is the last step before assigning discrete tasks to the processing team.

A. Pull together like materials starting from the easily identified (e.g., diaries, family papers, correspondence) to the less obvious and more complicated material.

B. Use dividers and markers to identify series and/or sections as materials may be shifted in the work area.

C. Take any initial steps required for handling the following types of material:

1. Dispositions

    a. Devise a scheme for sorting dispositions (e.g., separating photocopies, duplicates, printed matter), if required.

    b. Remove obvious dispositions (e.g., whole boxes of magazines, memorabilia, bank records, discrete groups of photographs).

2. National security classified material

3. Donor-restricted material

4. Potentially sensitive material

5. Oversize material

6. Material needing immediate conservation

7. Computer files

II. Work Plan

A. Priorities and tasks

1. Determine the sequence in which the series will be processed.

2. The archivist may:

    a. Write processing instructions for each series as its rough sort is completed.

    b. Prepare for persons joining the project by maintaining a list of tasks with varying degrees of difficulty.

B. Role of coordinating archivist

If more than one archivist is assigned to a project, the supervisor may designate one as the coordinating archivist. The duties of the coordinating archivist include determining work assignments, writing the processing instructions, disseminating the instructions to all project members, keeping abreast of the team's progress, and submitting statistics to the supervisor as requested.

C. Processing instructions form

For large or complex collections, the coordinating archivist may wish to provide team members with written instructions regarding their primary tasks. The archivist will review instructions with the team members early in the project and then periodically throughout the processing phase. Team members should report any problems to the archivist as soon as possible. A sample form is available on the library server.

1. Statement of responsibility

2. Name of series/subseries/sections

3. Specific arrangement instructions

4. Number of containers assigned (keep records on the progress of the project for monthly statistics and for reports on team members)

5. Estimated completion date for each task

    a. The archivist will assign an estimated completion date in consultation with the team member.

II. Work Plan (cont.)

C. Processing instructions form (cont.)

5. Estimated completion date for each task (cont.)

   b. Team members should notify the archivist if any unforeseen circumstances will cause a deviation from the agreed upon schedule.

6. Comments that might include preservation and conservation concerns and identification of items for removal or flagging

7. Other useful project documentation might include:

   a. Copy of the proposal

   b. Background information
   Background information helps team members identify prominent correspondents and other important and unique aspects of the collection. It may include:
   - Information on the subject of collection
   - Information on the project (staff involved, etc.)
   - Information on specific series (e.g., lists of family members and relationships for family papers)

   c. Sample folders and templates

III. Fine Sort

A. Arrangement within series

1. Identification of subseries and sections

   "Subseries" is defined as a group of papers within a series significant and extensive enough to warrant a separate explanation in the series description of the finding aid. Subseries are arranged in order of significance in the same manner as series are ordered (*see* Sec. 1, IV-B-3a, **Order of series**). For example, look at the finding aid to the Harry A. Blackman Papers. In most cases, a large series may be divided into sections but will have a single explanation in the series description.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

2. Alphabetical rules–form of name on folder

a. Name authority

- Check the Library's name authority file for names that will appear in the scope and content note of the finding aid, making sure the name is listed correctly on the folder. Archivists should make their best effort to use the Library's name authority for significant names appearing in the container list.

- Use the name only as it appears in the 100 or 110 field of the online catalog record; it is not necessary to include the parenthetical names given in many of the records.

- Use the most prominent form of the name that appears in the collection for corporate bodies that have changed names over time. Use cross references to other versions as necessary.

- Use the name authority file for personal names, including married and maiden names of women, and use cross-references to other versions, if necessary.

- Use the most common form of a name if it is not listed in the name authority file.

- Use the name authority file for terms of honor and address, royal titles, and foreign surnames. If it is not in the name authority file, use *Anglo American Cataloging Rules, Second Edition* (AACR II). The aforementioned sources supersede *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

- Use the name authority file for names and designations of ships, for example, *New Jersey* (battleship). Consult the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* in the Reading Room as an additional source.

- Maintain consistency throughout the collection.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

2. Alphabetical rules–form of name on folder (cont.)

b. "Jr.," "Sr.," and other identical names

- When differentiating between persons with identical names, enclose birth and death dates in parentheses and place them at the end of the name.

Examples

Schlesinger, Arthur Meier (1888-1965)
Schlesinger, Arthur Meier (1917-)

- Do not use "Jr.," "Sr.," or roman numerals unless birth and death dates are unknown or when they form part of the name authority (e.g., King, Martin Luther, Jr.).

c. Multiple names in one folder

- If more than one person is represented in a folder (e.g., a husband and wife), place names alphabetically on the folder or use the phrase "Smith, John, and Smith family."
- Use cross-references if necessary.

d. Acronyms

- Use acronyms only when the Library name authority has been established in that form.
- Common examples are AFL-CIO and Unesco.
- Use the acronym NAACP even though it is not an established name authority; the Manuscript Division adopted this practice because of the large volume of NAACP records and related collections among its holdings.

e. Cabinet departments

- For the names of most cabinet departments, put the words "Department" or "Department of" after the descriptive title on the folder heading. *See also* Sec. 1, IV-A-5b, **Collection specific series headings**
- Examples:
  Agriculture Department
  Commerce Department
  Health, Education and Welfare, Department of

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

2. Alphabetical rules–form of name on folder (cont.)

f. Committees and bureaus
Use the form prescribed in the name authority file or AACR II and retain the word “committee” or “bureau” as the first word in the heading.

g. Company names
- Do not invert the first and last names or the initial(s) of company names (e.g., use "Charles Morrill & Sons," and alphabetize it under "C").

- Abbreviate words like "corporation" and "company."

- The abbreviations "Inc." and "Ltd." are dropped except when needed to distinguish corporate bodies from individuals.

h. Legal citations *See* Finding Aid Manual, Appendix B: Legal Abbreviations

i. Geographic locations
- Identify the location of schools, hospitals, museums, academies, churches, laboratories, clubs, and local institutions. Give the name of the city and the abbreviation of the state. Do not use postal abbreviations. For a list of standard abbreviations, *see* Finding Aid Manual, Appendix A: State Abbreviations

- Do not identify the location of associations, publishing houses, foundations, companies or national banks.

- Do not abbreviate the name of a state when it is used as a folder title.

- Use the most recent form of the name that appears in the collection for geographic locations which have changed names over time, and use cross-references with other versions, if necessary.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

3. Alphabetical rules–filing order

a. For general alphabetizing rules, unless otherwise noted, use the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use the word-by-word system of alphabetization. Treat hyphenated words as one word. Alphabetize acronyms as single words and not as though they were spelled out.

Example

New, Zoe
new math
newel
new-fashioned
newlywed
news conference
news release
Unesco
United States

b. Person, place, and thing
When a person, a place, and a thing have the same name, arrange them in normal alphabetical order:

Example

hoe, garden
Hoe, Robert
London, England
London, Jack

c. "Mc" and "Mac"

- Alphabetize personal names beginning with "Mc" or "Mac" as they are spelled (e.g., MacGregor, Magnuson, McCabe).

- This rule is an exception to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and follows the Library of Congress filing rules.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

3. Alphabetical rules–filing order (cont.)

d. Entries with the same last name
- File initials used in place of a person's given name before any name beginning with the same letter.
- If a person's first name or initial is unidentified, type a question mark enclosed in brackets after the last name and file the folder before all the entries with the same last name.

Examples

Coates, [?]
Coates, Benjamin J.
Coates, David
Coates, Mrs. David
Coates, E. M.
Coates, Edward Liston

e. Placement and usage of "Miscellany" and "Miscellaneous"
- Use the noun "miscellany" to describe folders of odds and ends and file them in normal alphabetical order.
- Use the adjective "miscellaneous" only to modify a heading. It should not be used as a stand-alone heading.

Examples

Correspondence
    Arthur, Chester
    "A" miscellaneous
    "B" miscellaneous
Miscellany
Reports
    Annual
    "A" miscellaneous
    Miscellaneous
    "N-P" miscellaneous
    Quarterly

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

3. Alphabetical rules–filing order (cont.)

f. Placement of "Unidentified" and "Fragments"
Place folders labeled "Unidentified" or "Fragments" at the end of the series or section to which they relate.

g. Literary drafts
Drafts should follow the sequence of creation and not a strict alphabetical arrangement.

Examples

Overtaken by Events
First draft
Second draft
Third draft

Overtaken by Events
First draft
Revised draft
Printer's setting copy

h. Indexes
File indexes in front of the material they index.

i. Numbers
- Numbers expressed in digits or other notations (e.g., roman numerals) precede letters and are arranged according to their numerical value.
- File numbers expressed as words alphabetically.

Examples

"1963--Year of Decision"
"1988--Year of Indecision"
"110,000,000 Babies"
"Men and Mice at Edinburgh"
"Ninety Million Babies to Stabilize Population Growth"
"Ninety Years of Mendelism"
"Not By Soil Alone"

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

4. Chronological rules

a. Straight and reverse chronology

- A straight chronology starts with the earliest date and proceeds to the most recent. This is the preferred system.

- A reverse chronology starts with the most recent date and works back to the earliest date.

b. Incomplete dates

- File the most complete dates first, then move to the less specific.

- File undated documents at the end of the sequence.

Examples

15 Nov. 1953
Nov. 1953
15 Dec. 1953
Dec. 1953
1953
ca. 1953
Undated

5. Span dates

a. Headings

- Provide span dates for every folder.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

5. Span dates

a. Headings

- Do not mix dates and words on the same hierarchical level.

Examples

Correct: Australia
Miscellany, 1952-1980
Newspaper clippings, 1950-1960
Reports, 1951-1961

Incorrect: Australia
1952-1980
Newspaper clippings, 1950-1960
Reports, 1951-1961

- If exact span dates are unknown, when appropriate give estimated dates preceded by the abbreviation for the word "circa."

Examples

1928-1990	When both beginning and ending dates are known.
1928-ca. 1990	When beginning date is known and ending date is estimated.
ca. 1928-1990	When beginning date is estimated and ending date is known.
ca. 1928-ca. 1990	When both beginning and ending date are estimated.

b. Style
Abbreviate the names of months, except for May, June, and July. *See* Finding Aid Manual, Sec. 1, III-A-2, **Months**

c. Century dates
When recording span dates on a folder, it is necessary to repeat the century in the closing span date, even if the century is the same as the beginning span date.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

A. Arrangement within series (cont.)

5. Span dates (cont.)

d. Gaps of more than five years.

- For material dated 1940, 1941, 1942, 1944, and 1948, use "1940-1948."
- For material dated 1940, 1941, 1942, and 1950 use "1940-1942, 1950."

e. Undated material

- If undated items are reasonably presumed to be chronologically related or associated to adjacent items, they should be left in place.
- Items for which a date cannot be reasonably inferred should be placed in a folder at the end of that file and labeled "undated."

f. Logical breaks

- Creating logical breaks between the span dates on folders facilitates creating logical breaks between the boxes.
- Use discrete span dates for each folder; breaks should occur at a particular year, month or day. Try to avoid overlapping dates:
  Pear Farm Co., Mar. 1967-Jan. 1968
  Pear Farm Co., Jan. 1968-June 1969

B. Item-level processing

1. Supplied information

Information such as names or dates not included on a document by the creator, but supplied by the processor, should be written lightly in No. 2 pencil, bracketed, and positioned as close to the upper right-hand corner of the document as possible.

2. Envelopes

Envelopes often provide information about names, dates, and locations. They are generally removed from collections after their information has been recorded elsewhere.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

B. Item-level processing (cont.)

2. Envelopes (cont.)

    a. Envelopes containing notes or text of research value should be retained as documents in their own right. If envelopes are retained, make sure that their glued edges are isolated from adjacent documents.

    b. All other envelopes should be placed with extraneous disposition material.

3. Dating a document

    a. When a document contains more than one date (e.g., a legal document with filing, certification, and received dates), use the date the document was created.

    b. For photocopied historical documents and transcripts of historical documents without substantial cover material, use the date of the original documents and not the date when the photocopies were made (e.g., a file of photocopied 1680 probate documents without a cover letter and stamped with the date 1963 would be dated as 1680).

    c. When dating a document with attachments or enclosures, use the date of the cover document. Because this document usually makes reference to its attachments or enclosures, they should remain together.

    d. Sequences of documents that have been fastened together as a unit may be retained in that format using the date of the top document.

4. Security stamping

    Security stamping is sometimes needed for items of intrinsic or historical value that are vulnerable to theft.

    a. If security stamping seems to be necessary, consult a supervisor.

    b. Use Library of Congress red manuscript marking ink.

    c. Place the stamp in an area noticeable to researchers and staff without obscuring information on the documents. Place the stamp on every page of a selected item and close to the signature on letters.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

B. Item-level processing (cont.)

5. Social Security numbers

   a. When discovered, Social Security numbers should be covered with small strips of paper and the document should be photocopied so the number is no longer identifiable.

   b. If the original document must be retained, it should be placed in a closed file. Otherwise the original can be placed with other disposition material.

6. Computer disks

   Computer disks are impermanent and not accessible to researchers because of equipment limitations. The policy for dealing with them will continue to evolve along with the technology.

   a. Handling of disks should be kept to a minimum. Accessioners and archivists should not attempt to open the files.

   b. Immediately upon discovery, give computer disks to the automated operations archivist who, working with the processing archivist, will attempt to identify the contents and determine retention options. One option may be producing a print copy of the file.

   c. Do not keep disks with the processed collection.

   d. If a file is printed out, attach a statement to the printout identifying it as having been produced in the Manuscript Division, with information regarding origin and size of the file. Use the Division's QuickWord for the boilerplate language.

C. Foldering (labeling)

1. Neatness and legibility

   a. Stamp or print all information in neat, legible letters. Do not use cursive script.

   b. Use stamps and/or No. 2 pencils.

   c. Erase completely using a non-smudging eraser before making revisions.

   d. Print large and dark enough so that headings will be legible if the collection is microfilmed.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

C. Foldering (labeling) (cont.)

2. Placement of folder information

   a. Stamp high on the folder for maximum visibility.

   b. Place label elements on the top lip of the folder with the collection name on the far left, span dates on the far right, and the series information in the middle. *See also same section,* III-A-5, **Span dates**

   c. Place labels straight across the folder if possible, but if necessary use hierarchical indentations that parallel the order of the container list.

   d. Strive for the consistent alignment of headings within a collection, especially when several processors are labeling folders. This can be achieved by using templates or by aligning folders and stamping them at one time.

3. Stamping

   a. Use correct amount of ink. Labels should be clear without spreading or smearing. Allow time for drying.

   b. Use a No. 2 pencil as a stamp substitute if a few additional folders need to be labeled after a stamp has been dismantled. Sometimes a few headings can be written with a felt tip marker on the folder faster than a stamp can be created.

   c. Add the separate "Box and Folder" stamp in combination with the collection title stamp when working with previously processed collections.

4. Multiple folders with the same heading

   a. When all of the information elements, including span dates, are exactly the same on more than one folder, write the phrase (1 of 3), (2 of 3), (3 of 3) on the affected folders.

   b. Place the phrase on the right of the folder, near the span dates and not on the front flap of the folder.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

C. Foldering (labeling) (cont.)

5. Abbreviations and ellipses

   Abbreviations and ellipses may be used on folders to help lengthy labels fit, or when a lot of writing is required on multiple folders. When abbreviations or ellipses are used on multiple folders, write out the full heading on the first folder.

D. Foldering (selection and handling)

1. Types of folders

   All folders used in the division for processing are acid free. Use standard, legal-size folders for most material. The exceptions are:

   a. Expandable folders
      Use these envelope-style folders for housing bulky items such as bound volumes, lengthy reports, and large amounts of small items such as pocket notebooks, stenographer pads, and diaries.

   b. Paper folders
      Use commercially manufactured paper folders, or construct them by folding sheets of acid-free paper. Acid-free paper folders are an alternative to polyester film sleeves and fasteners for organizing and separating material within a standard or expandable folder and should not be used alone. Acid-free paper is identifiable by its watermark.

   c. Dummy folders
      Items that are too large for folders but small enough to be boxed (such as bound volumes) can be placed loose in the box with a dummy standard folder in front of each item to identify it.

2. Creasing

   a. Sharply crease only along manufacturer's pre-set scores. If more space is needed, divide the material among several folders or use expandable folders.

   b. Fill folders to capacity depending on:
      - the condition and weight of particular material, such as onion skin and polyester film

      - uniformity of paper size

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

D. Foldering (selection and handling) (cont.)

2. Creasing (cont.)

c. Do not crease if the folder contains only one or two sheets of paper.

d. Crease folders so that the spine of the folder lies flat in the box and prevents curling.

3. Overstuffing

a. A folder is overstuffed when it is filled beyond the manufacturer's pre-set scores, or bulges when sitting flat.

b. When a folder is properly filled, all paper edges should touch the flat spine of the folder and should not ride up the sides.

c. Paper clips and staples can make a folder appear acceptable at one end and under-filled (loose) at the other. Gauge the thickness of folder contents by the thickest point of the documents.

E. Preservation

"Preservation" is the totality of activities and processes implemented by an institution to stabilize and maintain the usability of documents by researchers. Staff members routinely perform the basic preservation measures listed below. "Conservation," an element of preservation, pertains to more intrusive measures such as chemical treatment or other active interventions performed on seriously damaged documents to restore usability. The Conservation Division is responsible for all such restorative activities.

1. Fasteners

Use fasteners only when it is necessary to keep items together that would otherwise be unidentifiable as a unit. Do not use them for fragile items or when only one item is housed in a folder.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

1. Fasteners (cont.)

a. Staples
- Remove all rusty and extraneous staples.
- Leave in place staples in good condition that are not obscuring text.
- When using the standard "claw" staple remover, take care not to tear the paper. Use micro spatulas to remove staples from fragile items.
- Place staples diagonally in upper left-hand corner taking care not to obscure any text.

b. Paper clips
- Remove all rusty and extraneous paper clips.
- Use only stainless steel paper clips as replacements.
- When using paper clips to fasten together fragile items, place a strip of acid-free paper or polyester film under them to ease the pressure.

c. Binder clips
- Though not of archival quality, binder clips may be used to hold together documents and attachments that, as a unit, are too thick for staples or paper clips.
- They are available in several sizes.
- Place small strips of acid-free paper or polyester film between them and the document.
- Lengthy reports that are housed in discrete folders do not need binder clips.

d. Cloth tape or cloth pull fasteners
- Place around fragile volumes, small groups of index cards or expandable folders housing heavy items for support.
- For traditional cloth tape, cross the tape over the middle of the item and over its ends. Tie the bow so that the knot appears on the side of the item and not in the front or the back.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

1. Fasteners (cont.)

e. Rivets
Rivets are a type of circular metal fastener, equivalent to modern staples and popular from the late nineteenth century through the first three decades of the twentieth, that cannot be removed without substantial damage to the documents.

- Do not remove rivets.

- If rivets are rusty or otherwise make the documents unusable, consult supervisor about possible remedies.

f. Bindings

- Remove items from ring binders and from plastic or paper covers.

- Remove plastic comb bindings.

- Metal spiral bindings on stenographer pads or similar notebooks that are not rusty or otherwise harmful may be retained or removed on the judgment of the archivist.

- Tools are available in the Preparation Section to assist in removing bindings.

g. Adhesive tape

- Do not attempt to remove adhesive tape unless the adhesive has dried and the ribbon can be removed without damage to the document or text.

- If the tape cannot be removed without damaging the document or lifting the text, trim away any loose tape and leave the remainder. Then place the document in a polyester film sleeve to isolate it from adjacent material. If the document has no intrinsic value, photocopy the document on acid-free paper and place the original in the dispositions.

- Removal of tape adhering to materials is performed only by a professional conservator.

- Never remove tape from the emulsion side of photographs.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

1. Fasteners (cont.)

h. Rubber bands
- Remove all rubber bands. If the removal will lift text or damage the document, consult a supervisor.

- Do not use rubber bands as replacements.

2. Unfolding and flattening

a. Generally unfold documents to their original size; one preexisting fold may be maintained in order to fit a document into a folder.

b. Do not back fold documents to remove creases; this weakens the paper fibers.

c. Do not attempt to unfold or unroll documents that feel dry and brittle to the touch.

d. Flexible and sturdy rolled documents may be helped to relax by back-rolling them on a tube or placing them face down under weights on a flat surface.

3. Photocopying

a. Photocopying unstable or damaged documents onto acid-free paper extends the life of valuable information. Some examples of unstable paper include wet-process photocopies, newspaper clippings, foolscap, telegrams, faxes, ripped carbons, self-stick removable notes, and documents that have been taped, glued, or torn. See folder of samples.

b. Photocopying may be used to reduce the size of an oversized original, as long as it remains legible.

c. Manipulate legibility of photocopies by using the light/dark adjustments on the photocopier.

d. Although it is acceptable to trim clippings, it is important to retain or transcribe the name and date of the publication to the copy.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

3. Photocopying (cont.)

e. Some material in a collection may not need to be photocopied onto acid-free paper. For example, large amounts of newspaper clippings and similar printed matter may be photocopied on standard photocopier paper. Large runs of newspaper clippings and lengthy reports on acidic paper that are of less research value or that can be easily found elsewhere may not need to be photocopied; they may simply be segregated from other materials into acid-free folders.

f. After photocopying, originals should be retained (in proper housing) only if they have intrinsic value.

4. Self-stick removable notes

Adhesive is harmful to documents and can pull up text and pigment. Several options are available.

a. Photocopy the note in situ and attach the photocopy to the document, discarding the original note.

b. If the note has intrinsic value, staple it to acid-free paper or encapsulate it in polyester film and attach it to the document.

c. Dispose of notes lacking research value (e.g., those that say "Please file").

5. Cleaning

a. Brushes

- Use brushes to remove surface dust and dirt.
- Brush from the center of the page to the outside edge to avoid drawing dust across the entire surface of the page.
- Brush with light strokes to limit stress on the paper.
- Never use brushes on friable media (e.g., writings or drawings in soft pencil, crayon, pastels, etc.)

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

5. Cleaning (cont.)

   b. Specialized equipment and cleaners are available to remove dirt and small amounts of mold.
      - Document cleaning powder
        - Sprinkle on document.
        - Lightly rub with finger in circular motions (gloves may be used for very large or very dirty items).
        - Brush crumbs away. (see above)
        - Do not use this method on friable media.

      - Vacuum cleaners (follow instructions provided with equipment)

      - Use only dust cloths approved by the Conservation Division.

   c. It may be necessary for environmental health reasons to remove mold under a venting hood in the Conservation Division.

   d. If documents have been damaged by mold, place them in polyester film sleeves and photocopy them on acid-free paper to retain the information. Discard the originals and the contaminated polyester film sleeves. If damaged items have intrinsic value, recommend them for conservation.

   e. Masks and gloves are available in the Preparation Section as protection from dust, dirt, and mold.

6. Housing

   Brittle, fold-damaged, torn, crumbling, friable, acidic, or odd-sized materials require extra support or isolation for safe handling.

   a. Polyester film
      - Use polyester film sleeves to support fragile or ripped documents, items of extraordinary value, or to isolate acidic items from adjacent material.

      - Polyester film sleeves are acceptable for photographs as long as the emulsion appears to be in good condition.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

6. Housing (cont.)

a. Polyester film (cont.)
- Do not place friable material in polyester film sleeves because it will loosen and detach particles of these media from documents.
- Use of the full, legal-sized sleeve is recommended.
- Do not use polyester film sleeves that are sealed on two sides to house fragile documents.

b. Acid-free paper
- Make a packet for holding small items such as groups of business cards by folding a sheet of acid-free paper and stapling its sides in a few places to ensure items do not fall out while avoiding excessive stapling.
- Use acid-free paper as a buffer to isolate acidic material.

c. Glassine folders
Use glassine folders from the Conservation Division to house friable materials.

d. Photographic material
The division has appropriate supplies for the housing of small photographs, slides, and negatives.

7. Stabilization

Archival paper tape may be used to stabilize documents inside of scrapbooks.

8. Identification of serious problems

Bring serious problems that may require conservation measures to the attention of supervisors who may recommend treatment by the Conservation Division.

a. Problems might include mold, water/liquid damage, insect infestation, glue, items stuck together, tape, brittleness, torn documents, badly deteriorated leather bindings.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

E. Preservation (cont.)

8. Identification of serious problems (cont.)

b. Criteria for assessing conservation needs
- Consider the importance of collection/item.
- Ascertain the quantity of material affected.
- Consider whether the material can be used by researchers in its present condition without further damaging or destroying it.
- Determine whether any basic preservation measures can be performed in the Preparation Section to make the material usable.

c. Procedures
- Bring the problem to the attention of a supervisor.
- Complete a Manuscript Division Conservation Identification Form and submit it to the supervisor. The form is available on the Library server.

F. Withdrawals

1. Standardized forms and dummies

a. Substitute a standard withdrawal form printed on acid-free paper to mark the original location and indicate the current location of any item removed from its place in the arrangement. A copy of the form is available on the Library server.

b. Fill out forms with either a No. 2 pencil or on the computer and make a photocopy on acid-free paper to be attached to the original document.

c. Use a temporary withdrawal form when borrowing files, boxes of processed collection material, finding aids and books in the Reading Room or any other items from the division for use at your work area.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

F. Withdrawals (cont.)

2. Types of withdrawals

A withdrawn series consists of items that, due to special circumstances, have been removed from their normal location, replaced with a withdrawal form, and transferred to the withdrawn series housed in separate containers. The series are defined by type of material and should be organized in the following order:

a. Restricted (R)

Consists of material containing various restrictions governing its access or reproduction. Restrictions may be initiated by the donor as described in the instrument of gift or by the Manuscript Division, e.g., items deemed too fragile for circulation. Access to restricted material is limited in scope and duration depending upon the limits placed upon its use. Box numbers should follow in sequence continuing from the main portion of the collection preceded by the prefix R (e.g., R 38, R 39, etc.).

b. Closed (X)

Consists of material whose access is completely prohibited. Box numbers should follow in sequence continuing from the main portion of the collection or from the Restricted series, if present, preceded by the prefix X (e.g., X 40, X 41, etc.).

c. Classified (CL)

Although unprocessed collections known to contain classified documents are stored in one of the security vaults, some collections may unexpectedly contain classified documents that may not have been detected during the accessioning process. These documents must be withdrawn or have the national security classification markings cancelled.

Classified markings define the sensitivity of documents according to the damage posed by their disclosure. They may include:

- Top Secret - “exceptionally grave damage”
- Secret - “serious damage”
- Confidential - “damage”
- Limited Official Use - Technically not a national security classification, but this marking indicates that the document contains information that the State Department considers exempt from release under a Freedom of Information Act request. The Library has agreed to withdraw such documents and protect them at the Confidential level.

III. **Fine Sort** (cont.)

F. Withdrawals (cont.)

2. Types of withdrawals (cont.)

c. Classified (cont.)

Documents marked “Restricted” or “Administratively Confidential” are not classified, but documents bearing these markings should be reviewed and the markings cancelled during processing. Some documents marked “confidential” may be personally confidential, not classified.

An archivist or technician discovering documents bearing national security classification markings should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the classified documents archivist, a supervisor, or a staff member with a security clearance. At that point, a decision will be made regarding the status of the document(s). The material will be declassified, or removed from the collection and a dummy inserted in its place.

d. Oversize material (OV)

Any item that will not fit in a legal-size archival document box is considered oversize. It must be withdrawn from the main portion of the collection and placed in oversize storage and replaced with a withdrawal form.

- Place items of intrinsic value in oversize storage.

- For items with little intrinsic value, it may be possible to reduce the size of the document to fit the document box by trimming or making a reduced photocopy and removing the original. Folding a document on one preexisting fold is allowed.

- Housing
  - A supervisor will provide appropriate containers. The members of the processing team are responsible for arranging and labeling material in the containers.
  - Always use precut oversize folders for items stored in oversize cabinets.
  - Use appropriate-sized document containers for items stored on oversize shelves.
  - Custom housing may be created in unusual cases.

III. Fine Sort (cont.)

F. Withdrawals (cont.)

2. Types of withdrawals (cont.)

d. Oversize (cont.)

- Arrangement
    - Oversize items should be filed in the same hierarchical arrangement of the series and folders from which they were removed.
    - Multiple items may be placed in one folder provided that they remain in the sequence that they were removed.

- Labeling
    - Attach an acid-free copy of the withdrawal form to each item to aid in its identification.
    - Assign a new sequence of numbers beginning with the number one (1) preceded by the prefix OV (e.g., OV 1, OV 2, etc.) to oversize folders and containers and not to individual items.
    - Label oversize folders with a No. 2 pencil in the lower, left-hand corner of the flap side. Do not clip temporary labels to folders because paper clips may catch onto adjacent material.
    - Each OV number must be housed in a separate container.

- Storage
  Submit oversize containers to a supervisor for placement in storage. Flat items placed in oversize folders should be stored in the oversize cabinets. Bulkier items housed in document boxes should be stored on shelving dedicated to oversize containers.

e. Artifacts (VA)

Objects such as artifacts, memorabilia, and other items that require special handling should be separated from the collection and stored in the ante-rooms of the vaults.

IV. Boxing

All material is housed in acid-free archival containers. Do not place items openly on the shelves. Use legal-size archival document boxes for most items. Small boxes are available for odd-sized items such as index cards.

A. Estimating number of boxes

1. It is better to overestimate than underestimate in order to ensure that the boxes fit in the assigned shelf space.

2. Calculation formulas:
   1 transfile = 5-6 document boxes
   1 record center box = 2½ document boxes

B. Obtaining shelf location

1. Request shelf location from a supervisor after estimating the number of boxes.

2. Members of the processing team are responsible for physically shelving the collection.

C. Temporary labels

1. Use scrap card stock and used paper clips. Cards are stronger and stay on better than office paper.

2. Use the proper form of the collection title on temporary labels by employing the collection title stamp.

3. Use a felt tip pen or marker to write box numbers. Write numbers large enough to be easily visible.

4. Stamp a red dot on the temporary label if the container includes restricted material.

5. Indicate any special status (e.g., papers from the Naval Historical Foundation Collection) so that the information ultimately appears on the permanent label.

IV. **Boxing** (cont.)

D. Filling boxes

1. Place folders carefully in the box to maintain order and avoid damage.

2. Ensure that all folder spines are flush to the bottom of the container.

3. Do not pack folders too tightly or too loosely. Tightly packed folders are difficult to remove from or replace in a box. In underfilled boxes, folders will slump and curl the items within them.

4. Avoid making boxes too heavy by using spacer boards.

E. Box breaks/spacers/half boxes

1. After filling a box, indicate the box break on the draft container list.

2. Strive for logical breaks between years, months, or days or between headings and subheadings.

3. Check the number of folders and span dates in each box against the draft container list.

4. Use half boxes for heavy items or when a larger container is unnecessary.

5. Use spacers when it is necessary to leave room for separated items, such as classified material, which will be reintegrated in the future. They may also be used at the end of collections when there are more folders than will fit into a half box but less than will fill a whole box.

F. Calculating linear feet

1. Calculation formulas:
   Number of standard boxes x .4
   Number of half boxes x .2

IV. Boxing (cont.)

F. Calculating linear feet (cont.)

2. Oversize

   a. Measure oversize folders as if they were standing upright on the shelf.

   b. Measure oversize boxes in the same way standard material is measured (i.e., by the amount of linear shelf space they occupy).

G. Final stages

1. The supervisor assigns individuals to affix the permanent box labels and bar codes and to apply folder numbers.

2. Verification that these steps have been carried out is the responsibility of the archivist.

H. Materials handling–ergonomics

1. Ask for help, especially with large collections or heavy items. Nothing is worth an injury.

2. Do not go too fast or become careless.

3. Lift all boxes close to the body using knees and not the back for leverage.

4. Do not lift transfiles unassisted. They are too heavy and require too wide a "wing span" to grasp. Their loads may shift, and they sometimes collapse under the weight of the papers. Slide transfiles off the table onto a cart or get help.

5. If transfiles are placed one behind the other on a table, pull the table out from the wall so that the files can be accessed from all sides. If that is not possible, slide the far transfile into a more accessible position before working in it. Try to avoid filing into a transfile from a leaning or reaching position.

6. Moving folders into or between boxes

   a. Prop up sliding folders so that both hands are free to lift folders.

IV. Boxing (cont.)

H. Materials handling–ergonomics (cont.)

6. Moving folders into or between boxes (cont.)

    b. When grabbing and lifting folders, use the free hand to support the bottom of the folders so that the weight is not borne entirely by the grabbing hand. Alternate hands.

    c. Textured gloves are available that may give extra traction for lifting folders.

7. Take an ergonomic rest every two hours to prevent repetitive motion injuries. Break up physical boxing with an alternate activity such as entering box breaks into the container list on the computer.

8. Get help shelving large collections. Consider not using the bottom shelf of a three-shelf book truck in order to lessen the weight of the truck and reduce the strain on the back.

3. Dispositions

The collective title "dispositions" refers to material identified as inappropriate for retention in the Manuscript Division.

I. Sorting

A. Items not retained in the collection may be transferred elsewhere for permanent retention or disposal. Depending upon the volume or type of material, dispositions are sorted by one or more of the following methods:

1. Separate large groups of nonmanuscript material from the collection and sort by type of material (e.g., photographs, maps, books, etc.) for eventual review by the appropriate custodial division.

2. Maintain individual items or small groups of nonmanuscript material in their proper sequence within the collection. These items should be identified with a "flag" and, if not selected for transfer, retained in place within the collection.

3. Remove duplicates and extraneous material from the collection and store them for eventual disposal in accordance with the instrument of agreement.

4. In some cases, the Library has agreed to return disposition to the donor/depositor of the collection pending a review of the items by that person or his/her representative. It is the responsibility of the archivist to inform the Subject Specialist of the type and extent of the items so that the Specialist can relay this information to the donor/depositor and schedule a review.

B. As soon as possible, notify the Head of the Preparation Section that material has been identified for disposition. The Head of the Preparation Section will then invite staff members from other custodial divisions to review the material for transfer. Do not arrange duplicates, extraneous material, or large groups of nonmanuscript material set aside for review.

II. Types of Material

A. Nonmanuscript material

Nonmanuscript material that warrants permanent retention by the Library may be transferred to other custodial divisions. Custodial divisions to which items are most often transferred include:

II. **Types of Material** (cont.)

A. Nonmanuscript material (cont.)

1. Prints and Photographs Division

   Visual and graphic material suitable for transfer includes positive and negative photographs, prints, drawings, posters, postcards, and architectural blueprints and drawings.

2. Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division

   a. Moving Image Section accepts film, videotape, and other moving image material.

   b. Recorded Sound Section accepts sound recordings (e.g., audiotapes and vinyl recordings).

3. Geography and Map Division

   Items suitable for transfer include manuscript and print maps, charts, and atlases.

4. Rare Book and Special Collections Division

   Items suitable for transfer include books, pamphlets, and broadsides.

5. Music Division

   Items suitable for transfer include manuscript and printed music scores, sheet music, and related publications.

6. Anglo-American Acquisitions Division

   Books, monographs, periodicals, and other printed items that are not an integral part of the collection may be transferred for possible inclusion in the general collections of the Library through the Anglo-American Acquisitions Division.

B. Duplicates and extraneous material

1. Duplicate material and original items of no intrinsic value that have been photocopied for preservation or to secure individual identity (e.g., redaction of Social Security numbers) are removed and sent to the Anglo-American Acquisitions Division or disposed of according to the instrument of agreement.

II. Types of Material (cont.)

B. Duplicates and extraneous material (cont.)

2. Extraneous items of no enduring research value are discarded through the Anglo-American Acquisitions Division or disposed of according to the provisions of the instrument of agreement.

III. Transfer Procedures

A. Disposition form

Each transfer must be documented by a "Disposition of Material" memorandum that is drafted for the signature of the chief of the Manuscript Division. A draft is submitted for approval and routed through the Assistant Head for Processing, the Preparation Section Head, and the Subject Specialist. A copy of the form is available on the Library server.

1. Material

   Describe the containers and estimate the number of items involved in the transfer (e.g., "Three (3) storage cartons containing approximately 1,000 photographs removed from the John Doe Papers during processing").

2. Source and accession number(s)

   Include the source's name and address and the accession numbers from which the transferred material was drawn unless the number of accessions is excessive. In that case use the main accession number and “etc.”

3. Comments

   Include a brief statement outlining the reason for the transfer as well as any additional pertinent details (e.g., "This material is inappropriate for retention in the Manuscript Division. I recommend that it be transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division, where it should be identified as part of the John Doe Papers in the Manuscript Division. Jane Doe of the Prints and Photographs Division has reviewed the items and recommended their transfer").

III. Transfer Procedures (cont.)

A. Disposition form (cont.)

4. Accompanying documentation

   A copy of the instrument of agreement and the introductory parts from the draft finding aid must accompany the disposition memorandum if material is being transferred to another custodial division. If no instrument of agreement exists, provide a photocopy of relevant documents stating the terms or understanding of agreement.

B. Packing and labeling

1. Use only surplus boxes for transferring material. Do not use record center boxes or transfile-size cartons.

2. Although items designated for transfer within the Library should be neatly stacked, no special procedures are required when packing the box. Use care when packing material for return to donors.

3. Labels should be clearly visible and legible

   a. Strike through old labeling information on the box

   b. Write directly on the box using a felt tip marker

   c. Use paper labels only if the box contains no clear space on which to write, since these labels can tear easily.

4. Labeling information should include destination, name of the collection from which the transfer originates, and number sequence of the boxes (e.g., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3).