



# History in the Making

## Preserving Your Archives

Your archives are an important part of your legacy. Take some time to store, conserve, and describe the materials you accumulate as you create your collection.

### Store . . .

- papers in a cool, dry location; avoid the attic and basement
- papers away from pests, mold, leaks, and extreme temperatures
- papers in acid-free boxes, folders, and polyester sleeves (no PVC – if it smells like a new shower curtain don't use it)
- digital files on hard drives or in the cloud, not CDs and DVDs

**If you're not sure, ask someone!**

Attend a preservation workshop at your local library.

Consult experts at a regional preservation center ([www.rap-arcc.org](http://www.rap-arcc.org)).

### Conserve . . .

- by avoiding adhesives like tape, glue, sticky notes, and magnetic albums; rubber bands; and fasteners like staples and non-stainless steel paperclips
- by handling with clean, dry hands and as little as possible
- by saving digital images in a high resolution and in file formats such as .pdf, .jpg, and .tif
- by backing up your digital files and keeping multiple copies of your physical and digital collection in different geographic locations (and/or in the cloud)

### Describe . . .

- photographs, slides, negatives, and audio/video recordings with short descriptions, places, dates, and names (use full names, not 'Sam' or 'Mom and Dad')
- digital files with the same details, using a spreadsheet and detailed file names
- print materials using a pencil with soft lead – never pen or marker
- your materials clearly and consistently throughout your collection, to make it easier for you – and people using your collection in the future – to navigate

