

Newspaper Preservation

Newsprint is not archival-quality paper. It is made using untreated, ground wood fibers with impurities remaining after processing that include resins, tannins and lignins. Lignin represents the largest amount of the impurities and although not an acid, it promotes acidic reactions when exposed to heat, light, high humidity, or atmospheric pollutants. Acid is what causes paper to become brittle and deteriorate. And because of newsprint's high lignin content this deterioration can happen rather quickly.

In preserving your newspapers and clippings, you should decide what's your focus - preserving the content (information) in the clipping, the physical clipping, or both.

If the information is your focus, consider photocopying the clipping using acid free, buffered paper on a commercial copier. The National Archives has a peel test to evaluate the ink retention of a copier, which you can run if so interested.

<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/technical/peel-test.html>

Of course, you can scan and store the clipping digitally.

Most likely, you'll want to preserve the actual news clipping. There's nothing like looking at an actual clipping from times past to feel a sense of history! The following are recommended steps:

1. Optional: spray one side of each clipping with a deacidification spray, such as Bookkeeper. This will neutralize the acid and also apply a buffering layer.
2. Place the clipping in a polyester film sleeve with a sheet of acid-free buffered paper behind it.
3. Put the polyester sleeves in file folders of acid-free, alkaline buffered materials.

Finally, put your newspapers and clippings in archival storage boxes. Ones that are acid free and buffered. For added peace of mind, consider placing a full newspaper in an archival bag before putting it in the box. This will further insure protection from water and dust. Caution: NEVER store newsprint with other documents you want to preserve. The high acid content of the newsprint will contaminate the other documents. When stored against

Newspaper Preservation

another document, you will eventually observe a yellow silhouette of the clipping on the other document.

Choose storage locations for your boxes that minimize exposure to dampness, heat, air pollutants, dust, insects and vermin. Store them above the floor, to avoid damage from unexpected water.

Newspapers are still a major means of communication today. With a little care, those clippings that are important in your life can be around for many future generations.

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