AMBROSE

ARCHIVES CARE AND HANDLING POLICY			
Policy Type	Academic	**Initially Approved**	Not known
Policy Sponsor	Vice President, Academic Affairs	**Last Revised**	
Administrative Responsibility	University Librarian	**Review Scheduled**	
Approver			

POLICY

To ensure the preservation of the archival records entrusted to Ambrose University College for the use of present and future generations, the documents will be stored and handled according to accepted preservation standards. All archival material in the collection will be properly processed and carefully handled. Appropriate storage techniques and materials will be used to house the collection. (See Appendix 1 *Definition of Terms Used for Storage Materials*).

PROCEDURES

Processing and Maintenance

- Hands and work surfaces will be clean.
- No food or beverages will be allowed near archival objects. All food supplies will be kept in tightly closed containers away from the archival collection.
- The original order of archival documents will be maintained as much as possible.
- Harmful fasteners such as pins, papers clips or staples which can rust, stain and cause tearing, will be removed. Plastic paper clips may be substituted if association of the material is essential, but a better option is to folder such material in a separate folder.
- Soft black pencils will be used to annotate documents. Wherever possible the folder or protective enclosure rather than the original will be labelled. All folders should be properly labelled in pencil before documents are inserted into them
- Fragile documents will be placed in inert plastic sleeves within their file folder to prevent further physical damage. It is possible that the item may break or crumble while being handled. If an item appears to be very fragile, it will not be opened or removed in risk of further damage.
- Documents of poor quality materials such as newsprint clippings will be recopied on acid free paper to keep as the permanent copy. The originals will be segregated from the collection.
- White cotton gloves will be worn when required and will always be worn when handling photographs which are not encased in inert plastic sleeves.
- White cotton gloves will be worn when handling film and magnetic media.

- When unusual damage or deterioration is noticed, a record of the condition will be noted in the file.
- If moisture, mould, or insects are found anywhere on or near the collections, staff will act promptly to isolate the material or remove documents from the affected area. (See Appendix 2 *Guidelines for Handling Mould and Insect Infestation*)
- All computers and electrical appliances will be turned off, drawer and file cabinets will be shut, and lights will be turned out before leaving the Archives.

Handling

- Staff will handle the enclosures rather than documents wherever possible.
- Special care will be taken when handling fragile, rolled or folded documents. The use of fragile and damaged materials by researchers will be limited.
- If copies are available, they will be used instead of originals whenever possible.
- When a document is removed from a file, the original position of the document will be marked with acid-free paper.
- When in use, documents will be placed flat on a table not piled on top of each other.
- All materials will be put back into enclosures and placed into the stacks to prevent damage from exposure to light.
- Archival materials will be protected from contact with materials that contain dangerous components (certain woods, plastics, paints, adhesives and papers) which emit chemical vapors and can react with some records to cause irreparable damage.
- Photographic prints and documents will not be dry-mounted or adhered to any additional support. Acid-free mat board may be placed in the enclosure to provide extra support to damaged or brittle objects.
- Staff will supervise researchers at all times and enforce researcher rules in order to protect the documents.
- Items used for research will be inspected and reorganized if necessary, before being returned to the stacks.

Textual Material

- The contents of each box and file folder will be kept neat at all times. Papers will be realigned manually before being placed back into folders and will not sit over the edge of the folder.

Photographic Materials (Photographic Prints, Negatives and Slides)

- Cotton gloves will be worn when handling photographic materials.
- Photographic prints will be held with both hands and supported from the back. Extra caution will be used when handling older prints or prints mounted on brittle board.
- Negative film and slides will be handled by the edges. Never touch the image.

Oversize Materials (Maps, Plans, Posters, Drawings, Prints)

- Archives staff will get assistance when handling oversize material too large for one individual.
- Large fragile items will be placed on a larger piece of smooth clean paper or mat board for support when transported, even for short distances. Measures will be taken to ensure the

materials do not bend or buckle during transport.

Bound Materials (Books and Scrapbooks)

- Books will be grasped at the boards, not at the end cap when being retrieved on re-shelved.
- Scrapbooks will be handled with extra caution to ensure that articles do not become detached from the pages or that loose items are not crushed or folded during use.

Film (Motion Picture, Microfilm and Microfiche)

- Cotton gloves will be worn when handling film.
- Film will not be pulled on the reel but handled carefully.
- Original or master copies will not be projected. Copies of the original will be made for projection purposes
- Extra caution will be used when threading film. When inspecting or rewinding film the film will be run on low speed to prevent breakage.

Magnetic Media (Video and Audio Cassettes, Reel to Reel Audio Tapes, and Computer Tapes, Disks and Diskettes)

- Cotton gloves will be worn when handling magnetic media.
- Media will be handled with extra caution to ensure the material is not creased, twisted or scratched.
- Reel to reel audio tapes will not be rewound after playing.
- Copies will be made of tapes, disks or diskettes which are used frequently.

Three-dimensional Objects

- When lifting three-dimensional objects, support the bottom. Do not use handles or other projections to lift the object.

Framed Works of Art

- Paintings should be carried with both hands on the sides of the frame with face inwards. Ornate frames should be handled carefully as pieces can break off with pressure or impact.

Storage

- All materials will be stored in appropriate storage materials. New materials used in the storage of records will incorporate appropriate criteria for the preservation of records.
- Damaged boxes or file folders will be replaced when identified.
- Archival boxes should not be piled on top of one another or placed on the floor.

Textual Records

- Documents should be placed in acid-free, lignin-free file folders within acid-free, lignin-free boxes. The more records per file folder the greater the potential for damage. All file drawers or boxes will be adequately packed to avoid overfilling or under filling file folders.
- The materials should be well supported. Spacers will be put in boxes that are not full.

Photographic Materials (Photographic Prints, Negatives, and Slides)

- All photographic prints will be housed in folders, sleeves or envelopes which are specifically designed for photographic storage and have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). Storage folders should be slightly larger than their contents. Photographic sleeves can be stored in metal file cabinets or acid-free boxes.
- Slides will be stored in a vertical position in lignin-free containers or inert plastic sleeves.
- Original or duplicate negatives will be stored in stable archival envelopes or sleeves and placed in acid-free boxes or metal drawers.
- Papers or boards which come in contact with photographs should generally be neutral pH or unbuffered. An alkaline environment may adversely affect some papers and processes.
- Like-sized photographs should be stored together if possible. Ensure that the folders are not too full and that photographs are interleaved with unbuffered acid-free paper.
- Oversize photographic materials should be stored in metal drawers or drop front, acid-free boxes.

Oversize Materials (Maps, Plans, Posters, Prints)

- Storage equipment will permit oversize documents to be stored flat without folds to avoid the risk of stain or distortion.
- When stored together, oversize materials will be interleaved with acid free tissue.
- Large plans, maps or drawings will be stored in large map folders or encapsulated, if appropriate, and placed in drawers.
- If oversized records must be rolled, archival materials will be used.
- Smaller documents will be stored in shallow acid free boxes.
- Odd or oversized materials not housed in the drawers will be placed in an acid free box of proper dimensions. These will be manufactured or made in-house and will be large enough to permit easy removal of the item but will not allow any lateral movement in the container.

Bound volumes (Books, Scrapbooks)

- Volumes will be stored upright or flat. Protection may be provided for bound materials with acid-free boxes, inert plastic jackets, or acid-free paper jackets.
- Large oversize bound volumes will be placed in an acid-free container or wrapped in acid free paper and placed flat on the shelves.

Film (Motion Picture Film, Microfilm and Microfiche)

- Film will be stored with a good, even, flat, wind to prevent damage and placed in inert plastic or clean rust-free metal canisters.
- Films will be stored vertically on metal shelves except for heavy reels, which will be stored flat.
- Microfilm will be stored on inert plastic reels in unbuffered paper carton.
- Sheets of fiche will be stored in lignin-free paper envelopes.

Magnetic Media (Video and Audio Cassettes, Reel to Reel Audio Tapes, Computer Tapes, Disks and Diskettes)

- Cassette, video and computer disks will be stored upright in acid-free paper or inert plastic

boxes. Tapes will not be stacked horizontally on top of each other.

- Video and other magnetic media tapes will be rewound before storage and placed vertically with tape on the reel on the bottom of the upright cassette.
- The condition of magnetic media tapes will be monitored and the tapes will be copied before they deteriorate. (For long-term storage of this media, plan to provide back up copies every five to ten years as the longevity of magnetic media has not been determined).
- All equipment used to play tapes will be cleaned and maintained on a regular basis.

Optical Media (Audio CDS, Optical Disks, CD-ROMs)

- Optical media will be stored in the enclosures provided by the manufacturer. Replacement containers will be of similar quality.
- Additional protection may be provided by placing the container in an inert plastic bag.
- Additional materials in the cases (information on paper, or foam pads) should be monitored for changes. The effect of these materials on optical media is not yet known.

Three-dimensional Objects

- Objects can be fitted with a storage box provided the object is not subjected to pressure at any point.
- Heavy objects or irregular shaped objects will be wrapped loosely in acid free paper or inert plastic to provide protection.
- Shelves will properly support the object without exerting pressure on the object at any point.

Framed Works of Art

- Paintings will be hung on inside walls away from sources of heat.
- Framed items on paper should be hinged and matted with acid-free or 100% cotton rag mat board. Plexiglass should not be used with loosely bound media such a pastel, chalk, or pencil.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED FOR STORAGE MATERIALS

Acid-free paper or board – refers to paper stock which is neutral or alkaline due to the method of manufacture. The pH will vary between 7.5 and 10 for both inner and outer layers. For preservation purposes the paper stock should be fully bleached chemical wood pulp or new rag pulp. The stock must also be virgin pulp or high alpha cellulose which means it contains no recycled materials.

Inert plastic – types of plastic which do not contain additives or chemicals which will contribute to the deterioration of documents. A number of plastics have been tested and are suitable for archival enclosures. These include Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP), Polycarbonate (PC), Polystyrene (PS) and Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) which is a polyester film commonly know as Mylar D and Melinex 516. The film must not contain any plasticizer, surface coating, UV inhibitors or absorbents.

Lignin-free – paper stock which has had lignin (the unstable component of wood pulp) removed adds to the strength and performance of paper.

Unbuffered – refers to papers manufactured without an alkaline reserve which is a mineral compound put into the paper to neutralize acid. Alkatline reserves raise the pH of the paper. Some photographs such as colour, diazo, cyanotypes and dye transfer prints are alkaline-sensitive and require a neutral (pH of 7) or unbuffered enclosure.

Photographic Activity Test (PAT) – test used by the Image Permanence Institute in Rochester N.Y. to determine which types of enclosures, inks and adhesives are safe for use with silver photographic images. Archival suppliers regularly send samples of their materials and will advertise this in the catalogues.

For a comprehensive guide on preservation storage materials refer to the Canadian Council of Archives publication, Archival Enclosures: A Guide, by Edward Kulka, 1995.

APPENDIX 2

HOW TO RESPOND TO MOULD AND INSECT INFESTATION IN THE COLLECTION

Mould

1. Before handling the contaminated items individuals should wear protective clothing which includes a half face HEPA filter mask -NIOSH No. TC – 21C, protective overalls, goggles and latex or vinyl gloves. These items are available at most safety supply stores.
2. Isolate the affected material sealing them in air-tight plastic bags or sheeting. If the item is valuable, seal it in a box with a container of silica gel. This will minimize the spread and protect other individuals from contact with the mould. If the material is damp or wet take it to an area with a low Relative Humidity to dry.
3. Determine what has caused the mould to grow. Check the humidity and temperature and look for sources of water. Also check the heating and air conditioning coils which are a prime area for fungus growth. Until the cause of the mould outbreak is discovered and corrected, mould will continue to grow.
4. Attempt to lower the humidity and increase the circulation of air. Set up dehumidifiers or re-adjust the HVAC system. Set up fans and open windows if it is not raining.
5. Wash all shelves and walls with a 2% bleach solution (1 part Javex to 50 parts water) and floors and mops with a 5% bleach solution (1 part Javex to20 parts water). Any cloths and pails used in a clean up should be cleaned with a 5% chlorine bleach solution. Any vacuum used in the clean up should be fitted with a certified HEPA filter.
6. After each use, the respirator and goggles should be cleaned with alcohol swabs or detergent and water. The items should be rinsed and air-dried and stored in a plastic bag. All equipment and protective clothing should remain in a designated ‘dirty’ room. Hands should be washed with antibacterial soap.
7. Once mould contaminated records have been identified and isolated it is recommended that mould samples are tested by a mycologist to identify the species present. Major blooms and those involving highly toxic species require outside professional help. If the contaminated material is to be treated it should be unsealed in a fume hood or in an area where there is an extraction source.

Insects

If any evidence of insects is found the material should be isolated immediately in a plastic bag. If possible, place the insect in a well-sealed jar and send it to a local entomologist or to the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) for identification. Remember that it is difficult or impossible to identify a crushed insect.