GENERAL PRESERVATION TERMINOLOGY

Acidic: Having a pH lower than 7. Acidic paper objects can become brittle and yellow as they age.

Alkaline: Having a pH higher than 7. When used to describe matboards and paperboards, the term indicates a material that has a 3% reserve (by weight) of calcium carbonate to mitigate against acid deterioration.

Conservation: Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education. Conservation usually includes both preservation and restoration activities.

Preservation: The process and practice of preventing or delaying the deterioration of objects through environmental monitoring, fabricating safe housing for objects, and preventive care of materials.

Historic preservation: The theory and practice of preserving, conserving, and protecting historic buildings, objects, and landscapes.

Housing: Supportive enclosures for objects. This can range from a frame on the wall to a specially designed clamshell box for a book. Conservation housing is constructed with materials that are safe for storing an object in the long-term.

Inherent vice: The tendency in objects to deteriorate because of the instability of the components with which they are made, as opposed to deterioration caused by external forces. This is also known as inherent fault.

Neutral: This refers to a pH of 7; it means that an object is neither acidic nor basic (alkaline).

Recto: The front of a flat object—usually the side that is seen most. In a watercolor painting, the recto would be the painted side. For books bound on the left, the recto is the right-hand page.

Restoration: The act of returning an item to its original, or near-original, condition. Restoration activities are usually focused on the aesthetics of an object and can involve the addition of material (i.e. restoring a vintage car).

Treatment: A procedure designed to strengthen, stabilize, and/or repair an object.

Verso: The back of a flat object; the left-hand page of a book bound on the left.