

# Abstract Care and Preservation

Information provided by Kelli Lydon

## FREE STORAGE

American Abstract & Title Company will store your abstracts for free. This is the best way to ensure they will be protected and preserved. Contact them at:

American Abstract & Title Company  
1840 NW 118<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 110  
Clive, Iowa 50325  
(515) 283-2266  
[www.american-abstract.com](http://www.american-abstract.com)

*If you choose not to use American Abstract to store your document, here are some recommended best practices for archival care and feeding of your Abstract:*

## 1. ACIDITY

Much of the paper used since the 1860s is acidic, meaning it was made with wood pulp and binding agents that are chemically volatile and break down the paper over time. It becomes brown and brittle, eventually crumbling away to dust. The key to preserving your paper documents and photos is to keep them in an acid-free, humidity-controlled environment. Your paper documents and photos need protection from a variety of elements which contribute to their deterioration -- namely: light; heat; humidity; acids in papers, plastics, and adhesives; pollutants; and pests.

You can store and preserve your paper documents in a few different ways. You can organize and file them in acid-free folders, and keep them in an acid-free box. Or you could place your documents in archival-safe, acid-free plastic sleeves and keep them in an album or binder. Another popular alternative is to encapsulate a document between two sheets of polyester (Mylar) film. Points to remember:

- Acid migrates, making even the non-acidic paper attached to your Abstract brown and brittle.
- Heat speeds the process along (in other words, don't store them in the attic).
- Too much moisture swells the paper, dissolving it, sometimes separating it from the ink (in other words, don't store them in the basement).

## 2. LAMINATING = BAD

Lamination of a document is **NOT** considered a safe conservation technique because the process may potentially damage a document due to high heat and pressure during application. Moreover, the laminating materials themselves may be chemically unstable and contribute even more to the deterioration of the document. Lamination also violates a cardinal rule of conservation, and that is to only apply treatments that do not alter the item, and which can be reversed. ***Lamination cannot be reversed.***

## 3. ADHESIVE TAPE = BAD

Adhesive tape can discolor the paper and make it even more brittle over time.

#### **4. STORE YOUR ABSTRACT IN TYVEK**

First of all, make sure that you don't have to fold, roll, dogear or otherwise change the shape of your Abstract to make it fit the envelope. Make sure the Abstract can lay completely flat and be completely enclosed by the envelope. The typical size of an Abstract is 9.5" x 15.5" x 2".

Look for envelopes with the Tyvek brand – many will state they are made of Tyvek right on the flap. You can buy them at any office supply store or directly from the US Post Office, UPS and FedEx, who offer it for good reason: it's durable and moisture and rip resistant. Yep, the same material used to wrap homes should be used to wrap your home's Abstract.

#### **6. RECOMENDED STORAGE BOX**

Gaylord archival boxes are most recommended by archivists and are the industry standard for storage. Visit <http://www.gaylord.com/listing.asp?H=3> to see what they offer for archival conservation tools and storage boxes.

More resources:

<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/>

Still have questions? Contact Kelli Lydon, [kelli.a.lydon@gmail.com](mailto:kelli.a.lydon@gmail.com), (515) 451-7559.

