



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TRANSPARENCIES

Priority: Salvage priorities. Within 24 hours: 1) ambrotypes, daguerreotypes, tintypes, silver gelatin glass plate negatives, wet collodion glass plate negatives; Within 48 hours: 2) color prints and film, silver gelatin prints and negatives; 3) albumen prints and salted paper prints. Cyanotypes in alkaline flood water must be dried as soon as possible; in acidic water they drop to priority 3. Consult a conservator to determine the ph of the water.

Handling: Do not touch emulsion, hold by the edges or margins. Always lay with emulsion side up.

Precautions:

Supplies Needed

blotter paper	bubble pack	brushes (soft bristle)
cheese cloth	clothes line	dehumidifier
distilled water	Falcon squeegee	drying racks for RC prints
fans	plastic bags	Kodak Photo Flo solution
plastic trays	rust-proof clips	Salthill dryer
scissors	sponges	

Preparations For Drying: Secure a clean area to work, free from particulates. Keep the photos and/or negatives in containers of fresh cold water until they are either air dried or frozen. If allowed to partially dry in contact with each other, they will stick together. To maintain wetness until the drying process can take place, pack photos inside plastic garbage pails or boxes lined with garbage bags.

Equipment and materials needed: plastic trays, cold water, clothesline, clothespins and/or photo clips, soft bristle brushes, Kodak Photo Flo Solution, Hollytex and clean photographic blotter paper, Falcon squeegee and drying racks for RC prints; Salthill dryer for recent fiber based prints.

Carefully remove prints and film positives and negatives from their enclosures. Keep the enclosure or the file number with each film item as it contains vital information to maintain intellectual control.

Cased photographs - Carefully open the case and place the photograph face up on blotters. **Do not** attempt to disassemble the components, remove debris or wash the photograph. If the affected photo has water or debris trapped within the assemblage, contact the Conservator for proper disassembly.

Uncased images - Air dry emulsion side up on clean absorbent blotters. Remove and retain cover slips from glass lantern slides if present. Do not attempt to clean debris or wash these images. These procedures will be performed by a Conservator.

Black and White Prints - Place the prints in a tray and fill with cool water (60 to 70 degrees). Agitate the tray and change the water several times. After 15 minutes, drain the water and air dry. Reduce washing time for deteriorated and card mounted prints. The water temperature should not change radically from hot or cold because of reticulation.

Color Prints - Use the same procedures as for black and white prints but with decreased washing time: 10 minutes. Reduce washing time further for deteriorated prints.

Negatives (glass and film)- silver gelatin - Soak the films in clean, cool water (60 to 70 degrees) for 30 minutes. Use caution to avoid reticulation. If there are particulates on the film, rinse for 10-15 minutes while gently brushing surfaces under water with a soft bristle brush, then continue washing for an additional 15 minutes. Rinse with Kodak Photo Flo solution (1/2 ounce per one gallon of water).

Glass Plate Negatives - collodion - Do not wash or expose plates to further moisture; if any image remains, air dry immediately, emulsion side up, reverse of read right viewing.

Kodachrome Transparencies - Wash as described above for negatives - silver gelatin.

Ektachrome Transparencies - Wash as described above for negatives - silver gelatin, omitting the Photo Flo, then dry. Consult a photo conservator after transparencies have dried, as some may require stabilization.

Color Negatives - Wash as described above for negatives - silver gelatin, omitting Photo Flo, then dry. Consult a photo conservator after transparencies have dried, as some may require stabilization.

Drying Method: Order of preference: 1) air dry, 2) freeze/thaw and air dry, 3) vacuum freeze dry.
Do not vacuum thermal dry or freeze dry.

Prints and Films - Dry film by hanging on a clothesline at room temperature in a dust free area. Lay glass plates and prints emulsion side up on a clean absorbent blotter.

Photo Albums - To air dry, place sheets of blotter covered with Hollytex between each leaf. Change the blotter paper as it becomes damp or wet. If the binding structure is no longer intact or the album can be dismantled, separate the leaves and air dry on clean blotters covered with Hollytex; periodically turn from recto to verso to promote even drying. If drying cannot proceed immediately, wrap the volume in plastic and freeze. The volume can then be thawed and air dried at a later date.

Keep the air moving at all times using fans. Direct fans into the air and away from the drying records. Use dehumidifiers as needed to maintain humidity at or below 50% RH.

If air drying is not possible due to media solubility or unacceptable disruption to the structural integrity of the volume, vacuum freeze drying is recommended.

If difficulty is encountered, consult a Conservator for assistance.