

# Handling archival materials

Researchers may be surprised initially at how different it is to use materials in an archive versus a public or academic library. Archives have access guidelines designed both to help preserve materials and protect them from theft, thus ensuring they will remain available for future researchers. While older materials are generally thought to be more fragile, even new materials need to be handled with care so they remain available to the next generation of researchers.

The following guidelines are general best practices for handling archival material at the **Historical Society of Long Beach** and other archival repositories:

- The following items are **NOT AUTHORIZED** near collections: food, gum, hand sanitizer, lotions, lip balm, E-cigarettes, and any liquid of any kind near collections. Securely capped beverages are allowed at ground level.
- The following materials are **NOT AUTHORIZED** near collections: pens (including ballpoint pens, felt tip pens, and markers), adhesive tape, paper clips, rubber bands, and rubber fingers.
- Do not lean on or drape computer cords or clothing over archival items.
- Materials should be handled gently and slowly. Consult with staff before attempting to unfurl rolled items.
- Staff will provide gloves to wear while handling archival items.
- HSLB allows the use of cameras, laptops, and other personal digital devices with restrictions outlined in the research agreement.
- Collection items should remain on the table, supported. If possible, do not hold them in your hands to read them.
- Please return items to the boxes in the original sequence. Archival bookmarkers can be provided for reference.
- Avoid touching fragile items like flaking ink.
- Staff will provide book cradles or wedges and light weights to prevent stress on a book's binding. Take care when turning pages to lift from the least fragile area of the page.
- Please leave all collection items in research area.
- Staff will announce closing time 20 minutes prior. Please finish with the items and collect your belongings by closing time.