



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Guidelines for Handling, Preparing and Digitising Archival Paper and Printed Materials

July 2019

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1. General records handling

Archival records are unique. When you are handling an archival record you are usually handling the only copy that exists. Because of their age, archival records are fragile and rough handling renders them vulnerable to damage and loss of information.

Ensure that you have sufficient clean work space:

1. Plan ahead so that you have a clear area when you arrive at your desk with a document.
2. Keep items flat on the work surface so they are supported.
3. Make sure items aren't overhanging on your workspace or piled up too high.
4. Do not have food or drink at your desk (except for water bottles with screw-top lids). This protects the records as well as your own health.
5. Wash hands before and after eating. Ensure that your hands are clean and free from hand lotions and moisturisers as these can stain and accelerate deterioration of the paper.
6. Always wear nitrile gloves when handling photographs or negatives.
7. A fingerstall can be used to help turn pages, but extra care must be taken with thin and fragile folios. Do not lick your finger to turn pages as this will stain the paper.
8. Never force open a volume or a file in order to capture its image. If you are unable to capture all the information on the page seek advice.
9. Do not mark archival records in any way. Do not use or leave biros, ink based pens or markers on or around the records. Only use pencils when working near archival records.
10. Do not use Post-it notes or bulky objects such as pencils as place markers. If you need to flag a page, use a piece of clean white paper. Remove the bookmarks when finished.
11. Do not use adhesive tape, glue or correcting fluid anywhere near documents, as they can cause damage to records.
12. Do not repair tears with tape of any kind.
13. Do not write on paper placed on top of documents – i.e. do not use them as a writing surface.
14. Do not crease or fold previously unfolded documents to try to fit them into a box or folder.
15. Reassemble/retie bundles of documents with care. When retying cotton tapes, be careful not to pull too tight, as it can cut into the documents.
16. When placing documents in envelopes or sleeves, or removing them, take care not to damage the edges of the item.
17. Be careful not to lean on or rest your arms on documents. This could crumple paper or break the spine of a book.

18. Do not place heavy items like boxes of records on top of other records
19. Do not leave oversized records in scanning equipment unattended or unsupported as this can lead to damage. If you need to attend to another task remove the record from the scanner, mark the page you are up to with a clean slip of paper and close the file.
20. Do not leave records or boxes on the floor.
21. Do not leave records unprotected overnight. If you are half way through a file at the end of the day it may be left open provided it is:
 - appropriately laid out in a clean area,
 - fully supported (not hanging off the edge of the bench) and
 - covered with a large sheet of plastic
 - Where possible, mark the page you are up to with a clean slip of paper, close the file and store it in a secure location (box or shelf) away from potential hazards

2. Dismantling paper files for digitisation

1. Files should be digitised from top to bottom maintaining original order as you go. After scanning, each page should be replaced the correct way up in the file in its original location. Ensure all folios that were on a file pin are rehoused on the original or a suitable replacement pin (if the original is damaged or rusty).
2. When using plastic clips ensure they are of the appropriate size. Large clips should be used when you have a large number of folios that need to be grouped together, small clips should be used for attaching small quantities (e.g. 2-3 folios).
3. If you must dismantle a page (i.e. remove photographs or stapled documents) to scan individual sections, multiple plastic clips should not be used to position the items back into their original place. Instead place the items in appropriate sized plastic bags and attach to top edge of folio with a suitable sized plastic clip or onto the file pin if the file has one (for further details see sections 7 & 8).
4. Fragile pages in plastic sleeves can be removed for scanning however please handle with care and place back into the plastic sleeve correct way up once scanning is complete.
5. Do not remove deteriorated sticky tape unless it is falling off. If the page becomes separated house the pieces in an appropriate sized plastic bag (do not attempt to reattach with new sticky tape).
6. If files contain photographs, digitise as per procedures outlined under section 8 of this document. As photographs and negatives are fragile material that absorb fingerprints they should be handled by the edges only and where possible with cotton or nitrile/latex gloves.

3. Removal of staples, pins and metal paper clips

Removing file pins

1. File pins that have become rusty should be replaced with new fasteners. Good condition file pins are not replaced. If no file pin of sufficient length is available then the folios are left loose and placed in a 4 flap wallet. There are a range of tools available to make the removal of old file pins easier. These include micro-spatulas and septum elevators. Conservators recommend microspatulas, which are available from sellers of conservation or scientific supplies. The old file pin should be disposed of safely in a sharps container so as not to cause damage to records and people.
2. How to remove a file pin



Sometimes you may come across two file pins joined together. Please carefully remove the pages above the join, then using your spatula carefully lift the prongs to separate the file pins and with your spatula or pliers straighten out the prongs and proceed as per the images above.

If a pin is badly crimped, you may need to remove the pages in groups, straightening out the pin as you go rather than as one block.

3. When putting a file back together, place the folios back on the file pin so that the folios are parallel to the center fold of the file cover and stacked as neatly as possible. Do not make new holes in the folios to achieve this.
4. Occasionally there are folios that are not spiked on file pins in file covers. These include folios that have come away from the file pin and documents which were never on a file pin. If the folios have come away from the file pin, they should be replaced using a new file pin, if needed. If the folios or documents have never been put on a pin they should be left that way and simply straightened up. Files containing such items should be placed in 4 flap wallets to make sure nothing is lost.

Removing staples

Do not use staple removers. If the staple has not rusted, and the paper is sturdy, a staple can be removed by gently prying the prongs pen and carefully slipping them through the puncture holes. The safest method is to place the stapled papers on a flat work surface with the prongs of the staple facing up. Insert the tip of a microspatula between the paper and a prong of the staple and gently pry open one prong at a time.



1. Turn the stapled papers over and insert the microspatula between the staple and the paper, and carefully slip the prongs through the puncture holes.

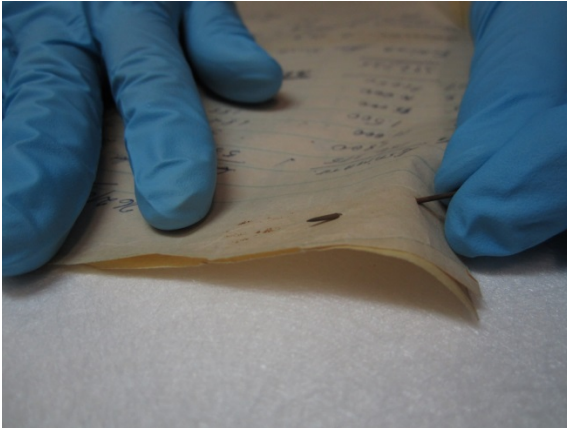


2. With fragile paper, or papers to which the staple has rusted: gently insert a small piece of Mylar between the staple and the paper on both sides; position the papers, and pry open as above. Cut Mylar into strips which are slightly smaller than the width of a staple (or tapered) to make the Mylar easier to insert. If the staple is severely rusted, first loosen it from the paper by scraping through the

rust layer very gently with the tip of a microspatula before inserting the Mylar and gently prying prongs open and removing the staple.

Removing straight pins

1. If the straight pin has not rusted, and the paper is sturdy, a straight pin can be removed by gently pulling it through the paper.



2. With fragile papers or papers to which the pin has rusted, gently insert a small piece of Mylar between the pin and the paper at all three points of contact and carefully pull the pin through the paper. If the straight pin is severely rusted, first loosen it from the paper by scraping through the rust layer very gently with the tip of a microspatula before inserting the Mylar and gently pulling the pin out.

Removing paper clips

1. If the paper clip has not rusted and the paper is sturdy, a paper clip can be removed by gently prying it open. The safest method is to place the fastened papers with the short side of the paper clip facing up and the long side against a flat surface. Holding the long side of the clip down (through the paper) with one finger, carefully pull up on the short side with the thumb-nail of the other hand. If your fingernails are not long enough to get under the short side of the clip, use a small, flat tool. Conservators recommend microspatulas, which are available from sellers of conservation or scientific supplies.

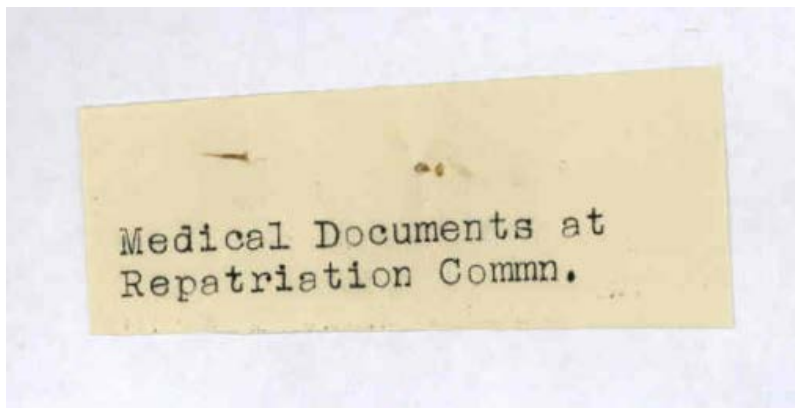


2. With fragile papers or papers to which the paper clip has rusted, gently insert a small piece of Mylar between the clip and the paper on both sides; position the papers, and pry open as above. If the paper

clip is severely rusted, first loosen it from the paper by scraping through the rust layer very gently with the tip of a microspatula before inserting the Mylar and gently prying the clip open.

4. Digitising damaged or uneven pages

1. When scanning on the flat bed, the scanner detects the edge of the page you are digitising and crops it. This provides a neat image of the page to be viewed online.
2. It is difficult for the scanner to find the edge of a page that is small, thin or dark, has folded corners and has uneven or ripped edges. The scanner will either not crop the page or the scan will be crooked.
3. To get a neat scan, place a white sheet of paper on top of the page overlapping each edge by 1-2cm. The scanner will read the edge of the white sheet and crop. If the white sheet of paper you use is considerably larger than the page you will need to crop the image so that only a 1-2cm border of white is present on the straight edges



(2)

Pte G. A. Brown

SERVICE AND CASUALTY FORM

Operation Order in A.P. 8.100-1.

James Smith **CINCLAS** **SR 10010**

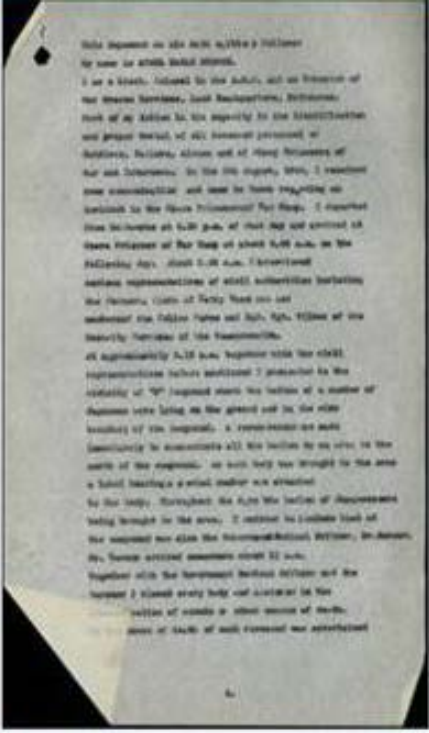
REPORT	Date of Issue	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Service	Remarks
8 2 44	12 7 50	8 2 44	at sea	at sea	
10 1 46	12 7 50	7 2 45			
10 7 45	12 7 50	13 2 42			
10 7 45	12 7 50	9 11 41			
10 7 45	12 7 50	13 11 42			
10 7 45	12 7 50	12 12 41			
10 7 45	12 7 50	10 11 42			
10 7 45	12 7 50	9 11 42			

DISCHARGED

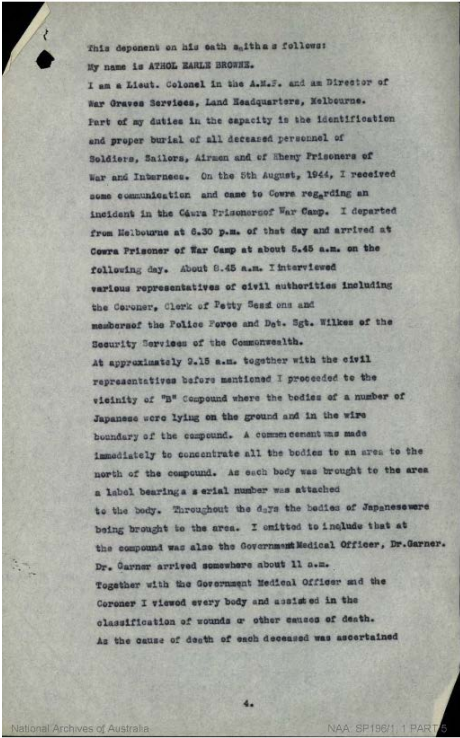
44-1000 OF 121

5. Obscured text

Many of the files we digitise have pages with edges that are folded over or creases through text. If any information is obscured please carefully fold back and/or flatten the relevant area to show all the text or information so that it can be easily read.



Obscured information



Page is folded back/flattened to show text

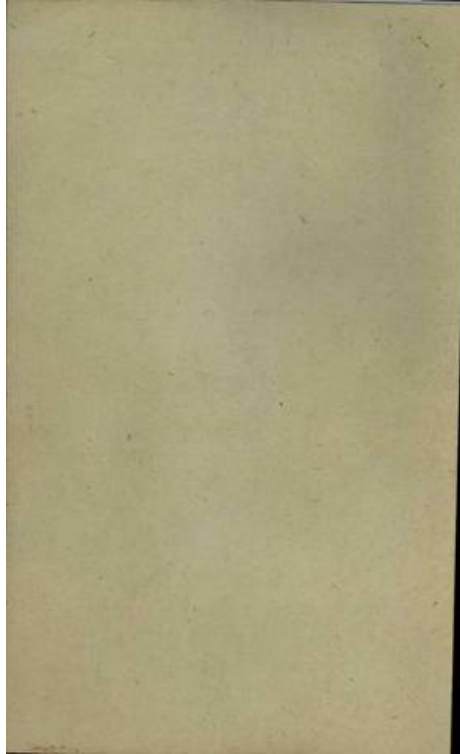
Handwritten 'NOMINAL ROLL' table for 'x Capetown Castle' with columns for Personnel/Ship Number, Rank, Surname, Names in Full, and Other Names. Includes handwritten entries and a date stamp '19 Oct'.

Printed 'NOMINAL ROLL' table for 'x Capetown Castle' with columns for Personnel/Ship Number, Rank, Surname, Names in Full, and Other Names. Includes a date stamp '19 Oct'.

6. Definition of a blank page

A completely blank page should not be digitised. We do not scan blank pages but we do scan forms that are not filled out.

A **blank page** is a page that has nothing at all on it. We **do not digitise** this



This is a **blank form** that has not been filled out. - We **DO digitise** this.

A photograph of a blank medical examination form for children. The form is titled "MEDICAL EXAMINATION" and is intended for children under the age of sixteen years. It features a table with columns for Name in full, Age, Physique, Heart, Lungs, Standard at school and intelligence, Vaccinations, Immunizations and Inoculations Received, and Any abnormal condition, especially defects of sight, hearing or speech to be noted. The form is otherwise empty, with no data entered.

Name in full	Age	Physique	Heart	Lungs	Standard at school and intelligence	Vaccinations, Immunizations and Inoculations Received	Any abnormal condition, especially defects of sight, hearing or speech to be noted
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							

I certify that I have this day examined the above-named and find them in good health and of sound constitution, and not suffering from any mental or bodily defect which, in my opinion, would unfit them for earning their own living when they become of an age to do so.

Date: _____ Signature and Qualification: _____
I hereby certify that the information supplied by me to the Medical Examiner is correct in every particular. Address: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____
Affixed in the presence of the Medical Examiner

Note—To avoid mistakes involving the Medical Examination is particularly important to verify in advance that the applicant is in every way a fit subject to pass a thorough medical examination, recommending any disengagement, abnormality, impairment of function or repair, as applicants are liable to rejection both at the point of enlistment and at the point of arrival.

In the following example, this form has the words "PLEASE TURN OVER" printed on the bottom of the page which indicates there is information on the other side.

Clients may want to know what information was on the other side of the form so the reverse side should be digitised.

FILE No. 39/224/53
NOM. No. 8967

For all persons, sixteen years of age and over, and those under sixteen not accompanied by parents.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
LONDON, W.C.2.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

Declaration by Applicant.
NAME EDA SUTCLIFFE
Full Name in Block Capitals
ADDRESS S, DALTON CLOWES, DALTON, HUDDERSFIELD.

- Have you ever had any serious accident/illness or surgical operation? If so, please furnish details
NONE
- Have you or has any member of your family ever suffered from or been suspected of Tuberculosis?
No
- Have you ever had Enuresis or any sign of disease of the Genito Urinary Organs? No
- Have you or has any member of your family ever suffered from mental disease or epilepsy or been treated in an institution of any kind for these Diseases? No
- What medical attention have you required during the last twelve months? NONE

I hereby certify that the information supplied by me to the Medical Examiner is correct in every particular:—
Signature of applicant which must be made in the presence of the Medical Referee | E. Sutcliffe

Results of Medical Examination.

Age <u>21</u>	Height <u>5' 3"</u>	Weight <u>98 10 lbs</u>
A. Heart <u>Normal</u>	F. Genito Urinary Organs <u>Normal</u>	Urine <u>Normal</u>
Blood Pressure <u>120/78</u>	G. Sight (without glasses) <u>6/6</u>	(with glasses (if worn) as specified in Type)
B. Lungs (Pneumology Tuberculosis) <u>Normal</u>	Cause of defect in sight <u>Refraction</u>	H. Hearing <u>Normal</u>
X-Ray report <u>Normal</u>	I. Physique <u>Normal</u>	J. Skin <u>Normal</u>
C. a. Nervous System <u>Normal</u>	K. If pregnant, period of pregnancy <u>Nil</u>	L. Teeth <u>Partial Dentures</u>
b. Mental Condition <u>Normal</u>		
D. Intelligence <u>Normal</u>		
E. Digestive Organs <u>Normal</u>		

REMARKS (include particulars of any departure from normal conditions not fully set out in above)

In cases where the Medical Examiner is unable to describe the applicant as being in perfect health, he should state under "REMARKS" the exact nature of the defect which he finds and whether it is of temporary or permanent nature. The presence of Pediculi should be noted.

Any disablement received on Active Service or otherwise should also be noted and commented on, and if a Pension is received the amount of it should be stated.

I certify that I have this day examined the above-named and am of opinion that the applicant is/
is ~~not~~ in good health and of sound constitution, and is not suffering from any mental or bodily defect which would cause inability to earn a living as a Woolen Mender State Occupation

Date 6-9-54 Signature and Qualifications H T O'Neill M.B.B.S.
Address Bryansford Fenwick Huddersfield

TO:— CHIEF MIGRATION OFFICER, AUSTRALIA HOUSE, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.
(FORM K.)

PLEASE TURN OVER.

PLEASE STATE THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR: D. A. PETRIE.
ADDRESS: SOMERSET HOUSE, ASPLEY HUDDERSFIELD.

7. Dismantling overlapping pages

1. Where necessary, staples and pins can be removed to facilitate scanning of pages.
2. If the pages are also held on a file pin there is no need to replace the staple or pin with a plastic clip.
3. Where pages are held loose, staples and pins can be replaced with a plastic clip, however, use should be kept to a minimum as clips can bulk out the record and cause long term damage if applied inappropriately.
4. When using plastic clips ensure they are of the appropriate size. Large clips should be used when you have a large number of folios that need to be grouped together, small clips should be used for attaching small quantities (eg. 2-3 folios).

7.1. Pages glued together

If pages are glued together you need to scan and then gently fold back the top page to reveal as much of the one below as possible, scan and crop this image as shown below. DO NOT attempt to separate the pages to reveal obscured information. These may need to be copied using an overhead scanner.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
 ALIENS ACT, 1947
 FORM R.A.1
 CERTIFICATE NO. 10192
 48/699

NOTIFICATION OF NATURALIZATION OR ACQUISITION OF BRITISH NATIONALITY

I, the Postmaster, do hereby certify that I, **YOANNIDIS STAVROS THEODOROU**, have acquired British nationality by:-

(1) Naturalization, certificate No. **E (2) 5** dated **26/5/49**

(2) Inclusion in certificate of naturalization No. **5** dated **26/5/49** issued to father

(3) Marriage to a British subject, on **1/1/48** at **London**

My certificate of registration No. **742193** herewith for enrolment.

(Signature) **S. Yoannidis**
 (Date) **17-6-49**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Particulars of certificate of naturalization or marriage, checked and found to be correct.

Commonwealth Migration Officer or Postmaster, **F. H. H. H.**

Number of Certificate issued: **10192**
 Date of issue: **2-2-48**
 Issued by: **Thompson**

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
 ALIENS ACT, 1947
 FORM R.A.1
 CERTIFICATE NO. 10192

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

(In full) **YOANNIDES**

Home name or alias, if any: **Stavros Theodorou**

Place of birth: **KALINKI**

Date of birth: **26/5/1900**

Occupation: **Business**

Port of arrival: **London**

Place of issue: **London**

Signature of applicant: **S. Yoannides**
 (Date): **2 FEB 1948**

Signature of witness: **Thompson**
 (Title): **Postmaster**
 (Date): **2 FEB 1948**

THIS SPACE FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Number of Certificate issued: **10192**
 Date of issue: **2-2-48**
 Issued by: **Thompson**

7.2. Pages with multiple components stapled together

If you have to dismantle a page, i.e. remove photographs or layered documents obscuring text, **do not** use plastic clips to position the items back into their original place.

1. Individual photographs should be placed in separate small plastic bags and stapled to the inside of the Archive folder next to the spine. Photographs should only be removed if they are obscuring significant text, especially handwritten text, see section 8 for further details.
2. All other unstapled items can be neatly layered on top of each other in an appropriate order and left loose in the archival folder.

BEFORE

Booklet containing multiple pages that need to be scanned, stapled to back page

Photograph stapled over large amounts of text

AFTER

Bagged Photograph now stapled to inside back cover of archive folder near spine. Bags should contain no more than 1 Photograph

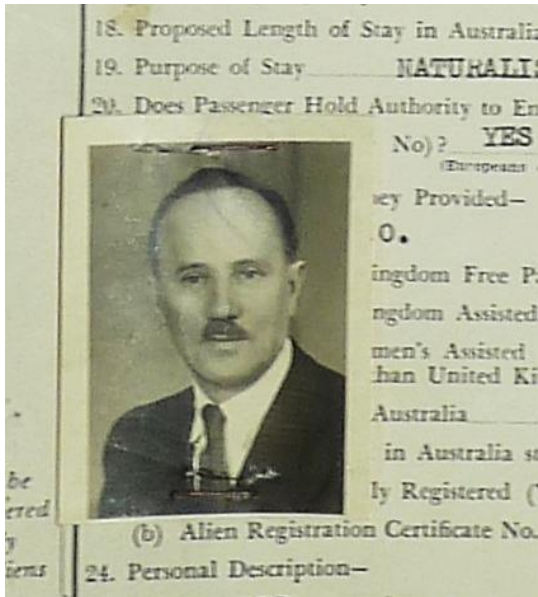
Detached pages now layered loose on top of each other

8. Digitising photographs and negatives

8.1. When to remove photographs

Photographs should only be removed if they are obscuring text with relevant information especially handwritten notations. Otherwise they should be left in place. In this instance the use of an overhead scanner for image capture may be required to prevent scratching of the scanner glass from staples.

Examples of when to remove



Covers large amount of text required to make sense of adjacent information



Covers small amount of text required to make sense of adjacent information

Examples of when to leave in place



Covers standard wording at bottom of form which can be understood without exposing



Photograph is in assigned place on page and not covering any wording

8.2. How to remove photographs

Photographs need to be removed with great care to avoid damage:

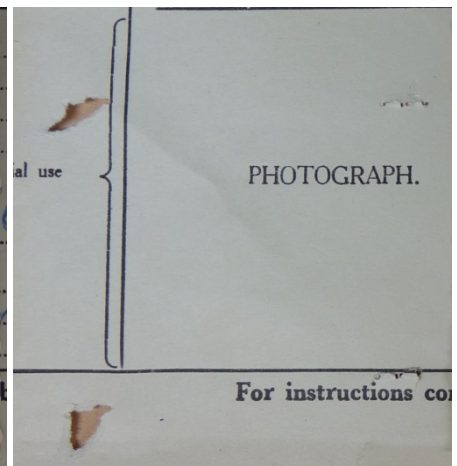
1. Turn the page over to access the back of the staple (lay flat on clean surface such as piece of paper to protect photograph surface).
2. Gently lift the prongs of the staple so that they are relatively straight. This can be done with a variety of implements.
3. Turn the page over and carefully pull the staple through the holes.
4. Where possible handle the photograph by the edges only and always wear nitrile gloves.
5. **Do not** pull the staple from the front without uncurling the back part.
6. **Do not** pull the photograph directly off the page with staples intact as this will result in damage to the photograph and page beneath.



Photograph damaged during removal



Photograph removed by pulling on staples from front adjacent image shows resulting damage to page



8.3. Digitising photographs and negatives

1. All loose negatives and photographs should be digitised with a white **A4** sized background paper. This procedure will ensure an accurate and consistently sized digital image and print.
2. Photographs should be positioned in the top left corner of the A4 page.



3. If the photograph has writing on the back you will need to scan the back as well. Note: if the photograph is portrait and the writing is landscape you will need to rotate the photograph so the writing is the correct way up when you scan it.



4. If a file contains multiple photographs grouped together, arrange them neatly starting from the top left corner. If **any** photograph in the group has writing on the back you will need to turn them all over in the order they were originally scanned and rotate if necessary so the writing is the right way up and then scan.



5. If the photographs were held together in an envelope this should be placed first (rotated so writing correct way up) followed by the photographs and/or negatives.



9. Handling and digitising inclusions

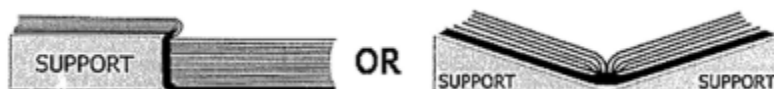
Sometimes, a file may contain an envelope or plastic bag, a folded map, plan or booklet.

1. If an envelope contains negatives or photographic material, proceed as described in section **8.3 Digitising photographs and negatives** and replace in the envelope once digitised. Gloves should be worn when handling photographs and negatives.
2. If the file or envelope contains paper or a booklet, remove from the envelope, digitise, and replace in the enclosure. If the booklet doesn't open flat please refer to **10.2 Digitising volumes**.
3. If the file contains a folded map or plan and the plan can be safely opened and is larger than A3, please proceed as in **11.3 Digitising large format items**. If the item is smaller than A3 it can be scanned on a standard flatbed scanner. If the item is splitting along the folds, brittle and fragile please refer to National Archives for advice.
4. If you come across a sealed paper envelope, do not open it but refer it to the National Archives for advice.

10. Handling & digitising volumes

9.1 Handling volumes

1. Place volumes flat when not in use. Don't stack too many volumes on top of each other.
2. Take care not to push or drag books across a surface as this can damage the covers.
3. Never move a book by grasping the ends of the spine. Spine tops are very fragile and can tear easily.
4. Don't force a book to lie flat, as they are not designed to do that. Instead, use supports such as book pillows when opening large or fragile volumes. This helps to reduce the stress put on the binding. Support one cover or both as required. You may need to adjust the supports as you leaf through the book.



5. Don't place open book downwards, if you need to mark your place, use a clean piece of paper as a bookmark.

9.2 Digitising volumes

1. Flatbed scanners are not recommended for bound volumes. Pressure should not be applied to books in order to flatten them for image capture as this can break the spine or loosen or break off brittle pages in a book.
2. Books with weak joints or restricted openings should be placed in a book cradle (blocks or rolls of polyethylene foam) during image capture.
3. Scanning equipment must be adjustable to the height of the collection item to accommodate books that need cradle support.

11. Handling & digitising maps and plans

Large format items such as maps and plans can be difficult to work with because of their size and are susceptible to damage through improper handling.

11.1 Moving packaged large format items

Maps and plans are generally stored flat in folders, or rolled up in long boxes.

1. Remove the folders on the top of the pile before retrieving or returning the item that you're after. Don't try to pull your item out or push it in with the weight of the other folders on top, as this may damage the records.
2. Handle boxes gently, as rolled items may move around inside and the ends of rolls can be damaged by impact.
3. Use trolleys to move records around the workspace. Avoid having items hanging off the edges of trolleys.

11.2 Handling large format items

1. Ensure that there is enough space in the work area to handle large items.
2. Larger items should be handled by two people.



3. Only carry one plan at a time.
4. Keep plans inside their folders to provide support when moving them. Alternatively, place the item on a large sheet of paper and hold onto the paper to carry it.
5. Don't fold or roll plans unless they have been folded or rolled previously. Always re-fold items along the original creases.
6. When unrolling large format items, make sure that there is enough clear table space. Don't unroll plans on top of other items, or have them hanging over the edge of the table. Unroll gently, and use long weights to hold the curled ends down flat.

11.3 Digitising large format items

1. Copy maps and plans with a large-format plan copier or scanner with a flat transport path that won't curl the record around a roller. Fragile or damaged records should be encapsulated before copying in purpose designed mylar sleeves.
2. Do not leave oversized records in scanning equipment unattended or unsupported as this can lead to damage.
3. Oversized materials, including books that have foldouts, must be scanned using equipment that features a scanning bed that is as large, or larger, than the item to be scanned.
4. Do not place glass or other transparent material directly on top of fragile artwork, documents, manuscripts, prints, photographs, with or without mounts, as this can cause media to crack or to detach from the item. Use spacers on fragile items to prevent compression between an item and a glass plate.