Quilter's and Quilt Collector's Tip Sheet

Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc. manufactures a variety of archival storage materials that are perfect for the individual quilter or collector. These are the very same boxes and acid-free tissues that have been supplied to the textile curators and collection managers of museums worldwide, like the Smithsonian Institution and The National Archives. The Hollinger Corporation, specialists in archival storage since 1945, supports the private collector as well as

Choose the best quality storage box available.

Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc. buffered box boards are acid-free, lignin and sulfur free to provide the best storage protection. Ordinary brown kraft corrugated boxes and many decorative dry cleaner or craft store containers are comprised of poor quality, acidic materials. Physical contact with these acidic materials will cause staining and deterioration of the fibers in the quilt. Hollinger Metal Edge fiberboard and corrugated board have a slightly alkaline pH with a 3% calcium carbonate buffer. This means that the box will retain its own integrity, and that the buffering material will neutralize environmental acids. Laboratory aging tests indicate that Hollinger boards will provide archival protection for five centuries.

Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc. unbuffered, inert boxes are constructed with acid free polypropylene. An inert material is one with maximum chemical stability and the least propensity to chemically react with other substances.

Boxes protect your quilt from ambient light and airborne contaminants like dust and heating/cooking oils. Ultraviolet rays, found in sunlight and incandescent and fluorescent lights cause fibers to deteriorate. Choose a room with a constant temperature and stable relative humidity (like a bedroom – not an attic or basement) for your storage area. Avoid placing perfume sachets, mothballs, photographs or other artifacts with your quilt.

Choose a rolling tube that is safe if you don't wish to fold your quilt.

Many conservators do not like to fold their textiles because of the pressure and distortion that can occur on the folded sections. Long term compression on the inside of the fold can create a setting or creasing of the fabric. The outside fibers stretch around the curve of the fold. Quilting stitches will be more stressed in folded areas. If you choose to fold your quilt, take care to refold it periodically along different lines.

Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc. carries a textile rolling tube with a 3 or 6 inch diameter and heavyweight 1/4 inch side walls. Tube lengths are from 24 to 144 inches. Tubes are manufactured from the industry's highest quality, pH 8.5, acid/lignin-free, buffered board. If you are currently using a brown kraft tube, you can protect your quilt by wrapping the tube with Tyvek or polyester film before rolling. You may also use several layers of acid free tissue as a barrier. Roll your quilt with the image side out, and consider interleaving it with tissue. Use tissue or Tyvek as a final wrapping layer. Periodically rotate the tube to relieve the flattening effect of shelving pressure.

Support your quilt with acid free tissue.

Use acid free tissue for interleaving or layering to provide the proper pH environment and physical support for your quilt whether it is folded or rolled. Tissue may be purchased in 36 inches x 250 feet rolls or in sheet packs that are 20 inches x 30 inches or 24 inches x 36 inches. Ask a friend to help you. To interleave your quilt, place a bed sheet on the floor. Cut a few sections of tissue slightly longer than your quilt. Overlap the sections slightly. It is best not to attach the lengths together with tape or adhesive because they may contribute an unwanted element to the storage environment. Place the quilt on top of the tissue, face or image side down. Fold the quilt to fit your box size. Loosely wad or crumple tissue to place in the folds. The tissue wadding gives loft or support to the quilt during storage; it helps the quilt resist the pull and set from gravity. To reduce the crimping of fold lines, store only one quilt per box. The weight of added items would compress the folds.

Which acid free box and tissue do you choose, buffered or unbuffered?

Buffered boxes and tissue have a minimum pH of 8.5 with a 3% calcium carbonate buffer. Choose buffered materials for quilts comprised of cotton, linen, jute, flax, hemp and synthetic fibers.

Unbuffered tissue has a 7.0 pH. Hollinger Metal Edge, Inc. unbuffered boxes are made with inert polypropylene. These neutral pH and inert materials are best for storage of wool and silk materials. Conservators also use them for storage of leather, fur and feathered materials. When in doubt regarding the fiber content of your quilt, use the unbuffered tissue and inert boxes.

Acid free tissue can be used in multiple layers as a lifting sling to remove a folded quilt from its box. This will reduce the contaminants and abrasion that human hands could contribute to very fragile antique quilts.

What is Tyvek?

Tyvek is an inert, water resistant sheet that is strong, versatile and inexpensive. This archivally safe material resists mold and mildew. Its smooth, white surface will shield collectibles from ultraviolet light and dust when used as final wrapping material for unboxed or rolled quilts. Unlike tissue or other papers, Tyvek will not tear and remains strong even if crimped. Cut a length at least 8 inches longer than your rolled quilt or tube. Secure it around the quilt with non-adhesive, flat woven tapes or ribbons. Do not use cord or tie too tightly.

Cedar chests have long been used as a protective storage container for textiles. The cedar presents some potential damage to contiguous fabrics. If you use a cedar chest, consider lining it on the bottom and sides with Tyvek to maximize protection.