



## FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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*For Immediate Release*

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# Preserve Your Family's Treasures Like a Pro

As families gather together for the holidays, it's a perfect time to ask questions about old, family photographs, to catalog family heirlooms, or to dust off antiques. The Fairfax County Park Authority's Museum Collections section has compiled a list of ten guidelines to help citizens preserve their family's treasures for future generations to enjoy.

Ten things you can do to protect your family treasures at home include:

- Document items by photographing and cataloging them
- Inspect items for signs of recent damage from pests, dirt or deterioration
- Be sure to wash your hands before handling sensitive items
- Keep temperature and humidity constant with fans to prevent mold and mildew
- Keep colors from fading and wood from bleaching by avoiding direct light
- Avoid fireplaces or rooms where smoke and soot can darken or stain surfaces
- Have your treasures mounted professionally
- "The best treatment is the least treatment." Dust carefully and avoid detergents
- Store heirlooms in acid-free materials
- Insure your most valuable items

The Museum Collections section, located at the Walney Visitor Center in Chantilly, follows professional standards of stewardship and is responsible for preserving over six thousand pieces in the permanent collection. These objects date from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2002, the section received accreditation by the American Association of Museums.

In addition to the original structures and archaeological materials at its historic parks, the Park Authority collects objects, documents and other materials related to the county's history. There are more than one million artifacts so far. These are placed in exhibits to promote the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of Fairfax County material heritage and historic resources by its citizens and visitors.

For more information about the Park Authority's Museum Collections section call 703-631-1429 to speak with the Collections Manager, or visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/collections/caretips.htm>

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