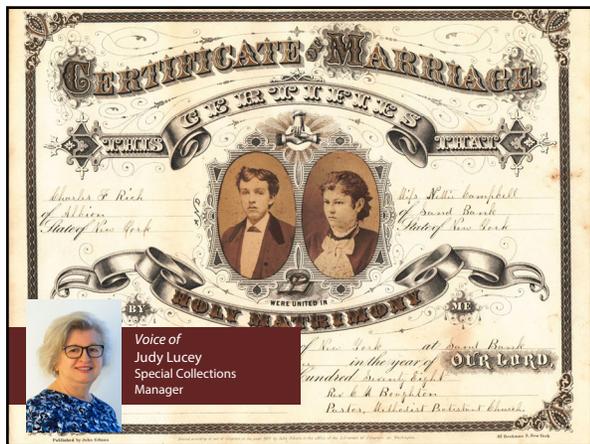


1



2



3

Organizing and Preserving a Family Archive

Where did I put that family chart!?!?



Items stored in trunk in a garage

4

What is your goal?

- Focusing on your genealogical research
- Writing a genealogy
- Donating to a repository
- Giving to the next generation
- Downsizing

5

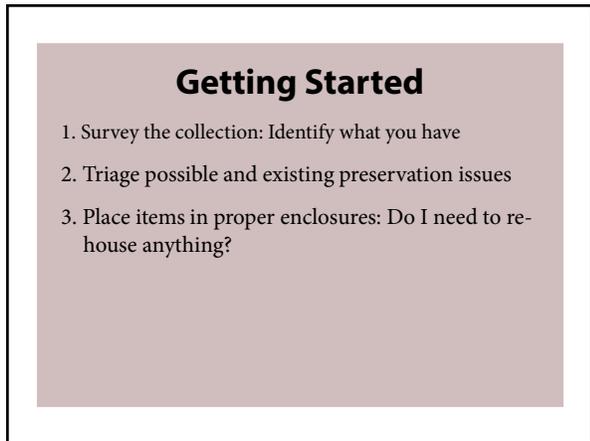
The Archivist's role



6



7



8



9

Survey vs. Inventory

<p>Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To view or consider comprehensively : appraise To examine as to condition, situation or value High-level 	<p>Inventory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An itemized list of current assets A list of goods on hand Detailed 
---	---

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/survey>

10

What does a survey do?

- A survey looks at:
 - General subject matter
 - What formats are the materials in?
 - Is there any kind of arrangement?
 - Does it have any preservation or re-housing needs?



JHC archivists surveying a new arrival of records at American Ancestors

11

What isn't a survey?

- It's NOT organizing
- It's NOT an inventory
- These steps come later!*
- A survey and initial triage can take a few passes

12

Why Should I Survey?

- You don't know what you have until you look at everything
- Genealogical research
 - What summaries have I inherited?
 - What supporting documentation?
- What is the condition of materials?
 - Does anything need preservation?
 - P.S. Remove staples



13

Surveying – What Names?

- Identify the creators of letters, scrapbooks, and other items
- Review your photographs, can you identify individuals?
- Note condition of documents and photos



14

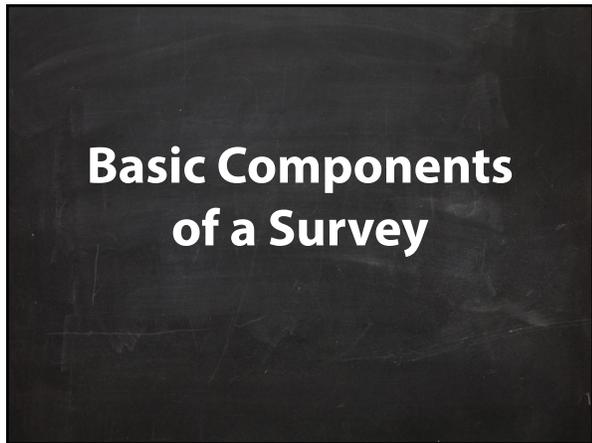
Goals of the Survey

- Identify the types of materials in your collection
- Assess the condition of the materials
- Identify the major surnames captured by your collection

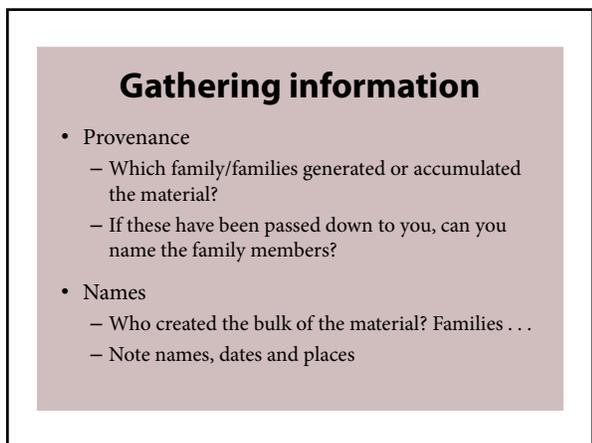
15



16



17



18

Survey Examples

High-level Survey

- Genealogical material
 - Family group sheets, charts
 - Compiled genealogies (typed and handwritten)
- Written material
 - Letters/correspondence
 - Diaries/Journals
 - Books
 - Documents (birth certificate, etc.)
- Photos, Memorabilia

Survey Using a Form

22

Simple Inventory

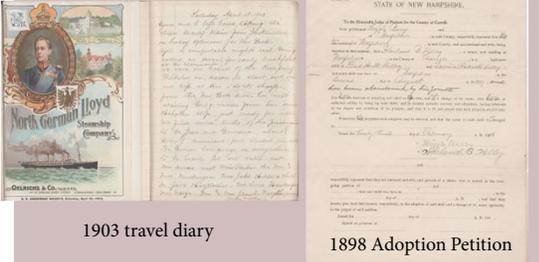
Box Number	Item Description	When was it created?	Who created it?	Condition of Item
1	Journal of Maude Bell Plowman with genealogical charts and notes	1940-1947	Maude Bell Plowman	Binding broken, pages falling out
1	Fan chart beginning with Nancy Plowman	1955-1983	Genifred Plowman	Good – some wear and tear at edges
1	Letters from Fred Homer to Genny Homer	1902-1903	Fred Homer	Very good
1	Envelope of photos – mostly of Genifred Plowman	1910-1917	Unknown	Excellent

23

Survey worksheet

24

**First Column:
Identify document types**



1903 travel diary
1898 Adoption Petition

25

**Second column:
Identify other formats**



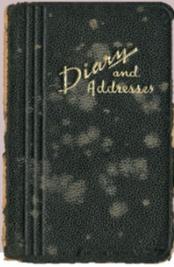
26

**Third column:
Note condition of documents**

Insect damage



Mold on diary



27

What's Bad

- Rust - paper clips, staples, etc.
- Rubber
- Folds/creases
- Adhesive - tape, glues, etc.
- Mold
- Insects and rodents
- Humidity
- Light
- Temperature

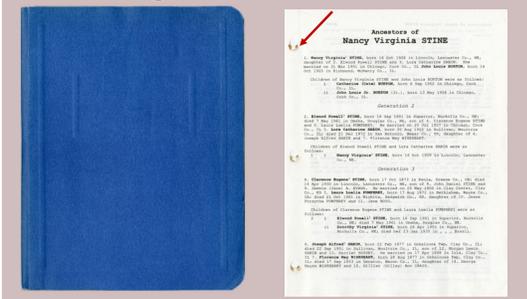
28

Identify preservation issues

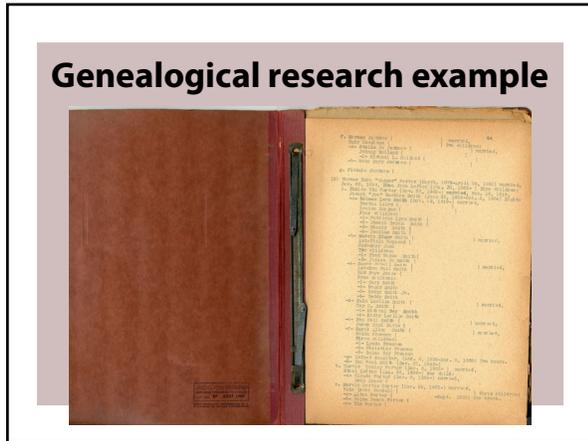


29

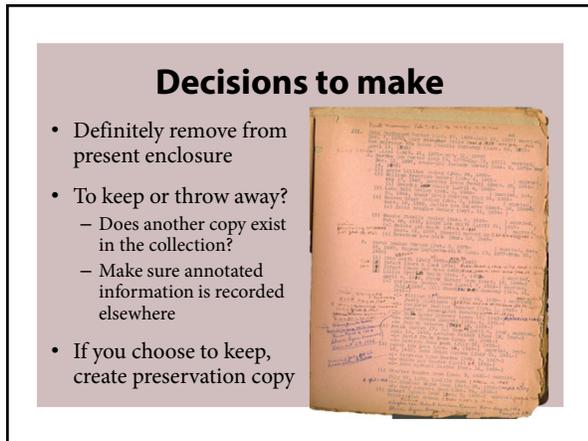
Genealogical research example



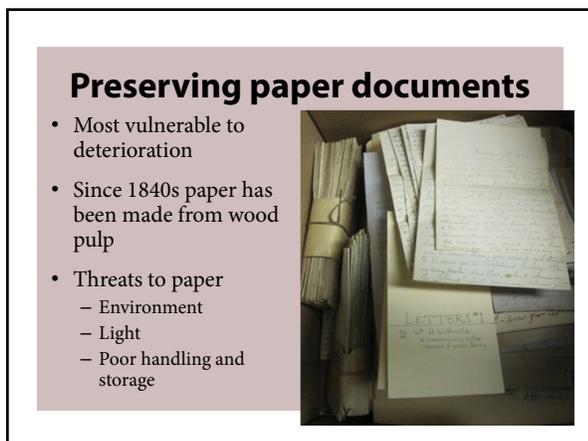
30



31



32



33

**Fourth column:
Supply needs**

- Provides a stable environment for materials
- Prioritize your needs
 - Can't afford?
 - Use present enclosures but monitor for possible deterioration
- Acid-free, lignin-free
 - Buffered vs. Unbuffered storage materials



American Ancestors
Special Collections Stacks

34

Storage Best Practices

- Store papers inside folders or boxes
- Try not to crowd papers
- Make sure items fit enclosures
- Don't mix your materials
 - Separate newspaper print from family letters and photos



35

Bound Volumes

- Don't take apart if possible
- Falling apart?
 - Remove items
 - Store separately
 - BUT keep in original order



36

When to do a survey?

- Make sure you can devote time to the project
- Can do this process in chunks
- It's an ongoing process

37

Getting Ready

- ✓ Gather all materials together in one area
- ✓ Clear a large workspace with plenty of light
- ✓ Have a genealogical chart or report handy
- ✓ Have your survey worksheet ready
- ✓ Wash your hands!

38

Tip
Handle materials
gently!

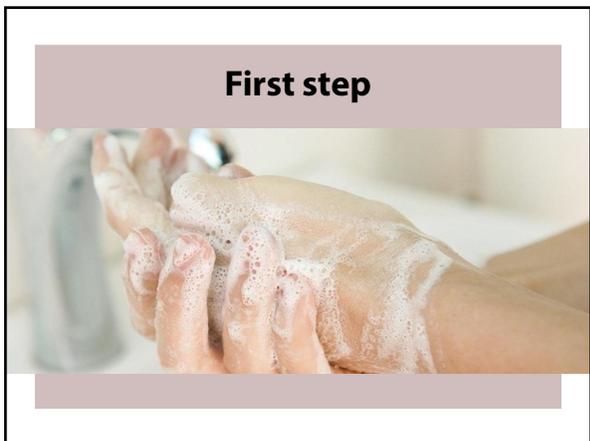
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40



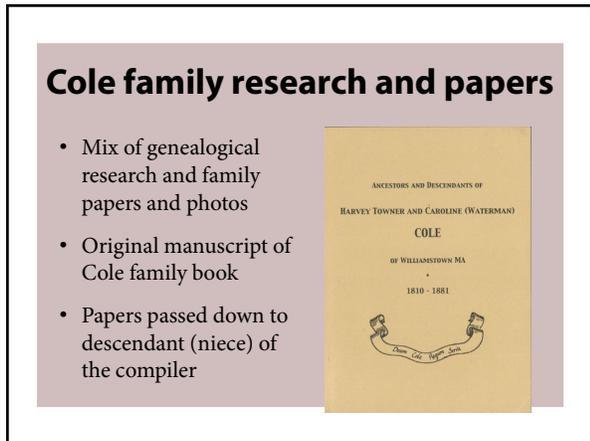
41



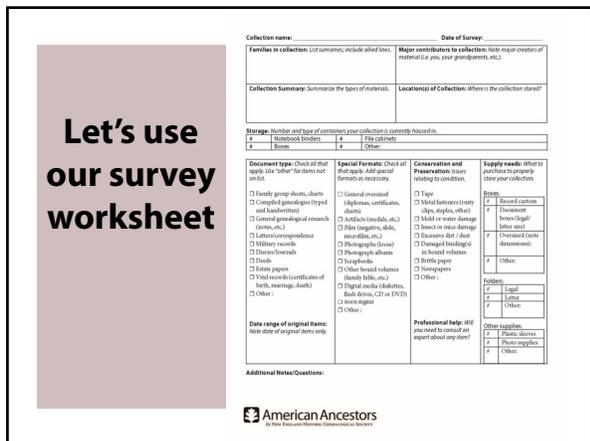
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43



44



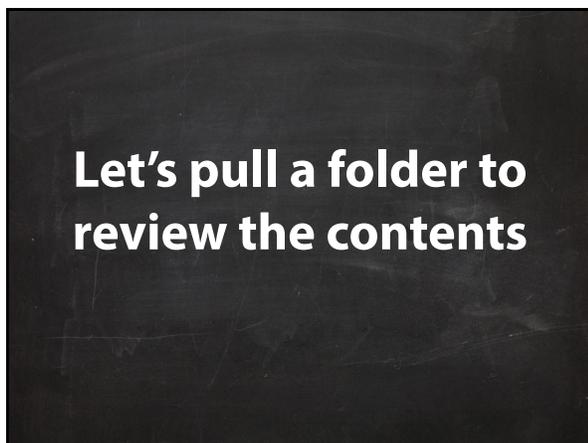
45



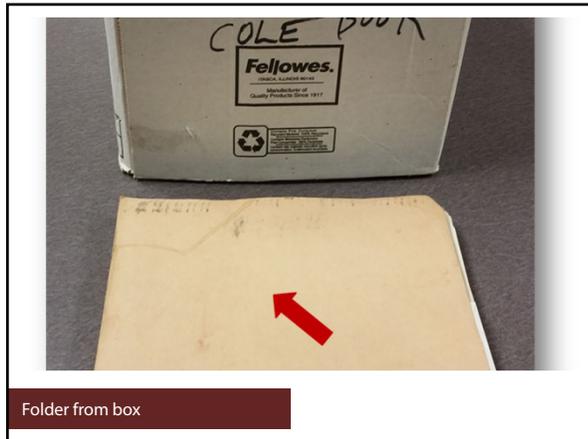
46



47

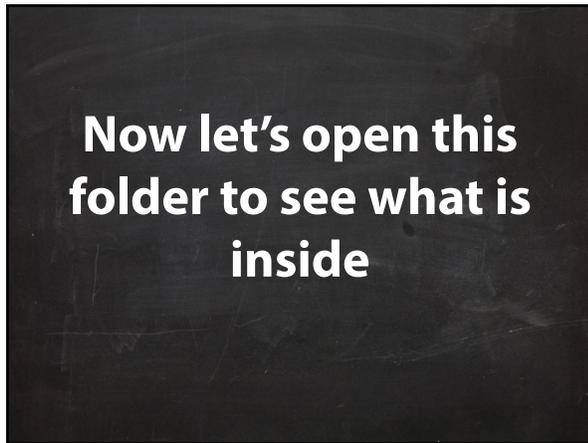


48

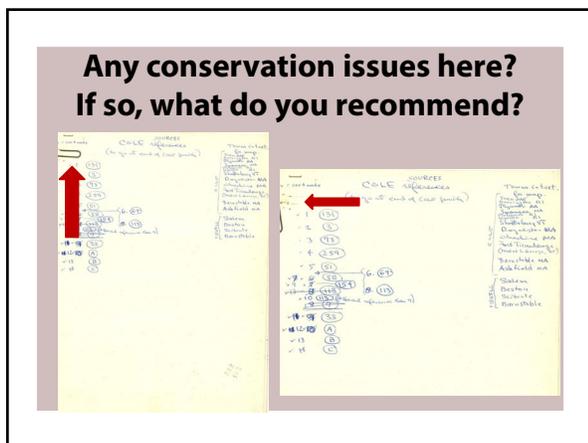


Folder from box

49



50

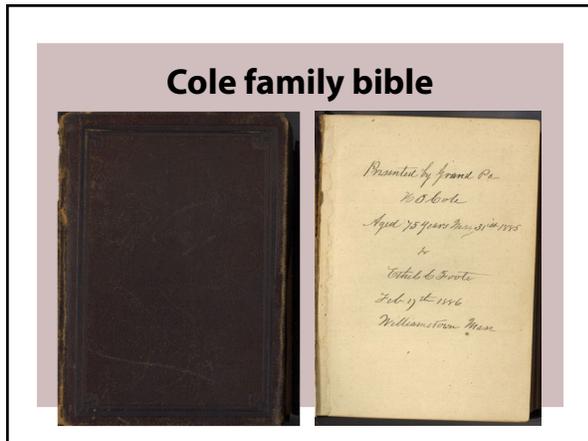


Any conservation issues here?
If so, what do you recommend?

51



52



53



54

Provenance of photo album

- Album of Sarah Caroline Cole Foote
- Placed in box on 25 July 1957 by Caroline Bennett Fogle to Louise
- Box not opened until 24 July 1983!



55

Tip

Preserve the provenance of the album!

56

What should we do with the photo album?



57

The purple box



- Found in carton labeled “Cole-Foot Family Papers”
- Content label “Foote-Cole letters 1824-1928”

58



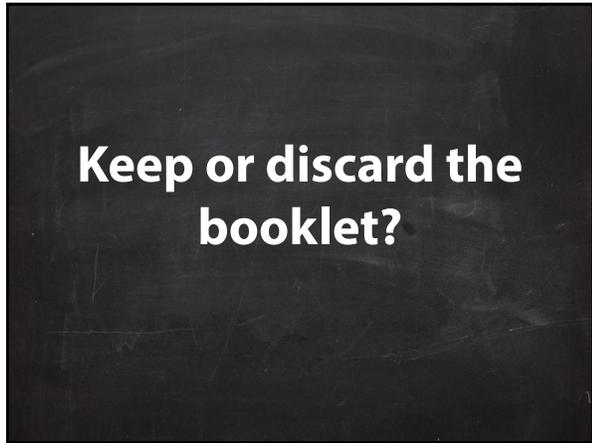
Let's take a look inside...

59

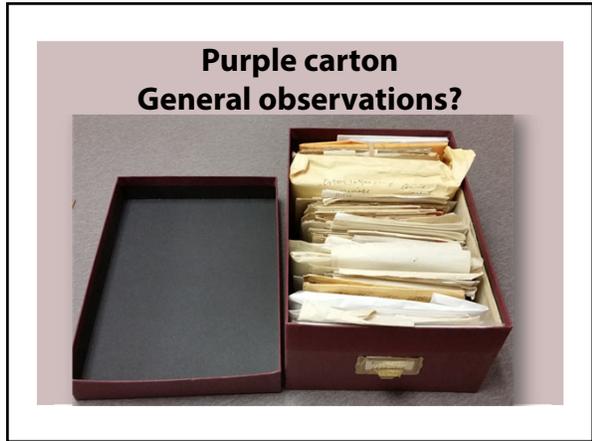
“Essay of the Manufacture of Manures” by Asahel Foote



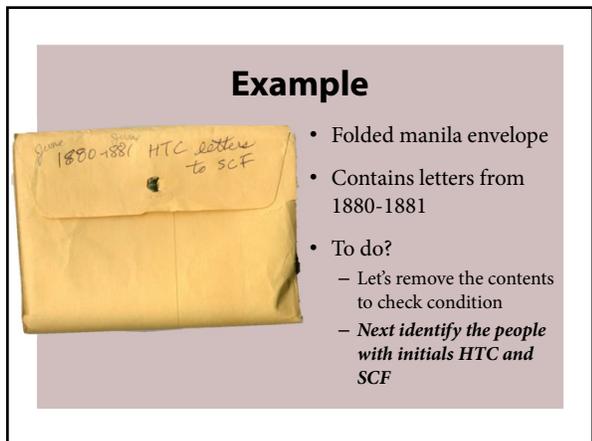
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61



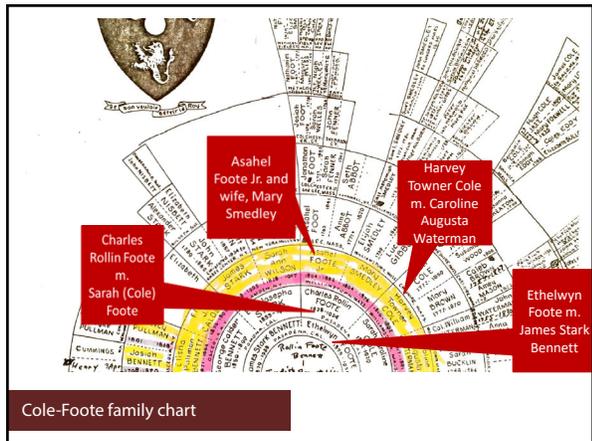
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63



64



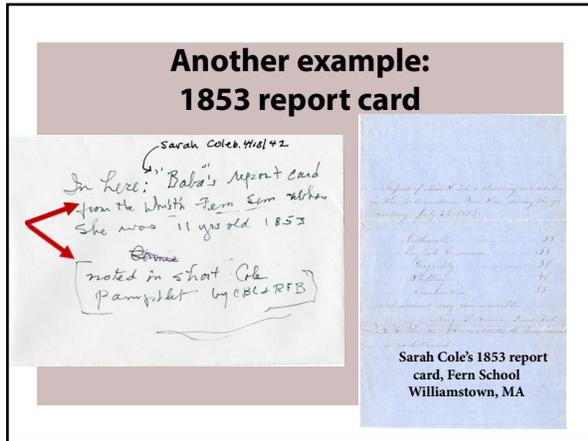
65

Contents

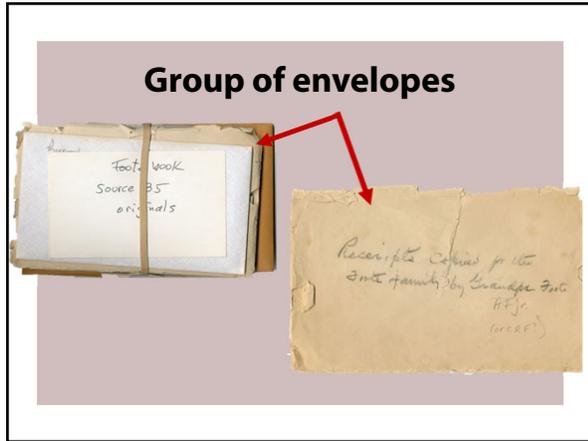
- Letters are curled
- Tears in two of the letters along the fold
- Identified SCF as Sarah (Cole) Foote and HTC as her father, Harvey Towner Cole
- *What to do?*



66



67



68



69

What conservation issues did we see in the previous two slides?

70

Review our survey sheet

Collection name: Cole and Foote Family Papers
 Date of Survey: 02-06-2025

Families in collection: List surnames; include allied surnames.
 Foote and Cole families

Major contributors to collection: Note major creators of material (i.e. you, your grandparents, etc.).
 George Wirt Clapp, Harvey T. Cole, his daughter Sarah (Cole) Foote, Asahel Foote, Charles Rollin Foote, Ethelwyn (Foote) Bennett

Location(s) of Collection: Where is the collection stored?
 American Ancestors-Special Collections workroom

Collection Summary: Summarize the types of materials.
 .

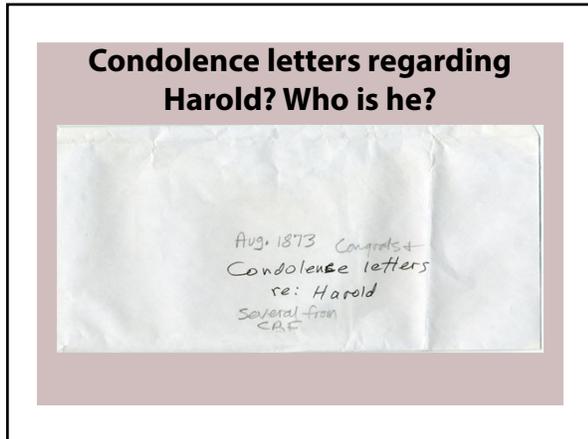
Storage: Number and type of containers your collection is currently housed in.

#	Notebook binders	#	File cabinets
# 4	Boxes	#	Other: Original manuscript of Cole book

71

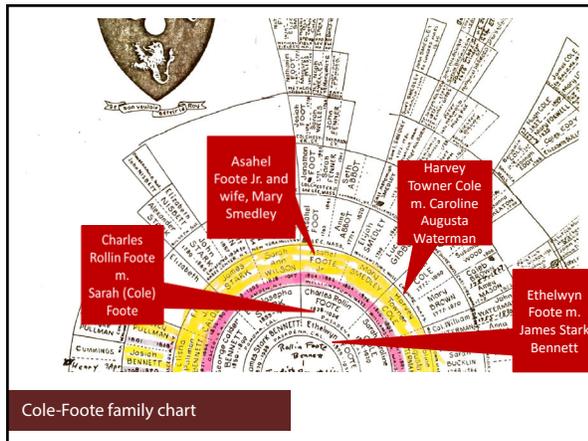


72



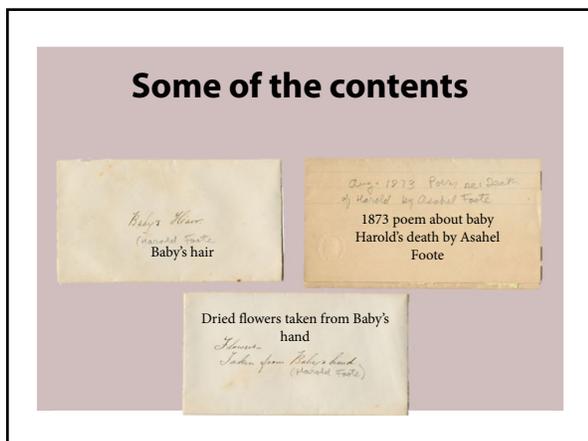
Condolence letters regarding Harold? Who is he?

73



Cole-Foote family chart

74



Some of the contents

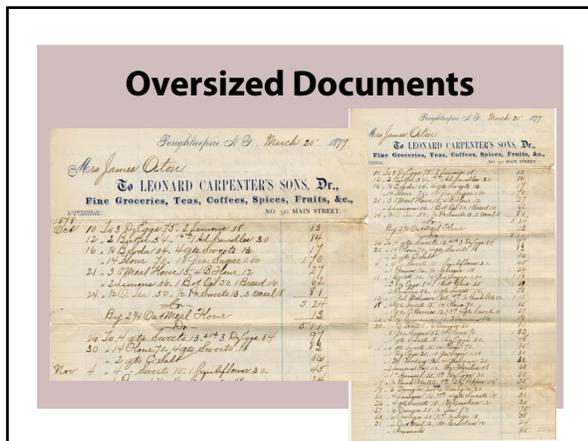
75



76



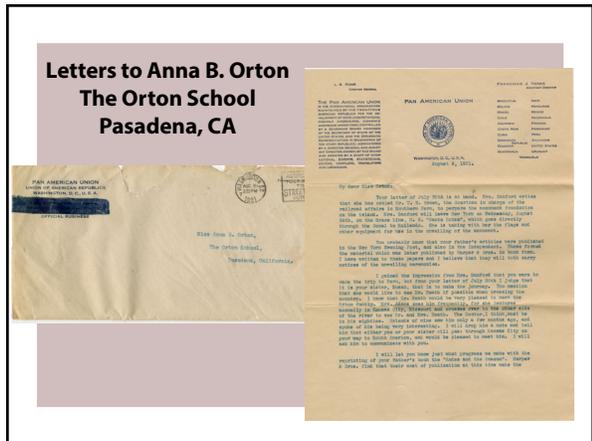
77



78

Who are the Ortons? How are they related?

82



83

Obsolete Media

84

Digital media – scanned copies of letters? Keep?

The folder contains a list of scanned letters:

- Solomon to Asahel Foot, college 1824-1828
- Charles Polin Foote to wife Sarah Cole 1873
- re: Wm. & Jackson Hamd

The separate sheet of paper contains handwritten notes:

- Solomon Foote letters 1824-1828
- re Asahel Foot at Wms.
- Charles Polin Foot letters re: Wm. & Jackson Hamd 1873

85

Accessing data from floppy disks and diskettes

The image shows a white floppy disk drive with a cable attached, and a stack of several floppy disks on top of it.

86

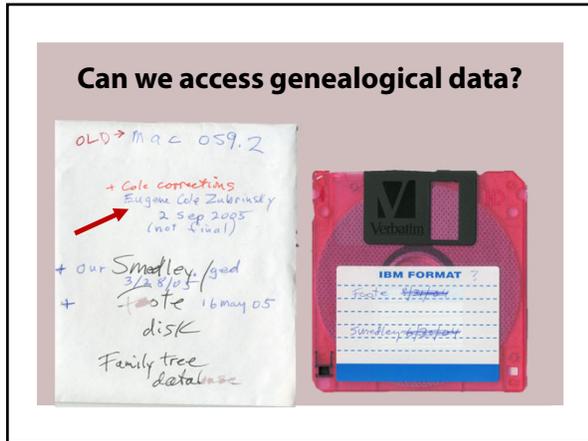
I found this in the box!!!

1824-1828 letters by Solomon Foot to his first cousin, Asahel Foote, Jr.

The envelope has handwritten text:

Solomon Foot
original letters
to his 1st cousin
Asahel Foote, Jr.
1824-1828

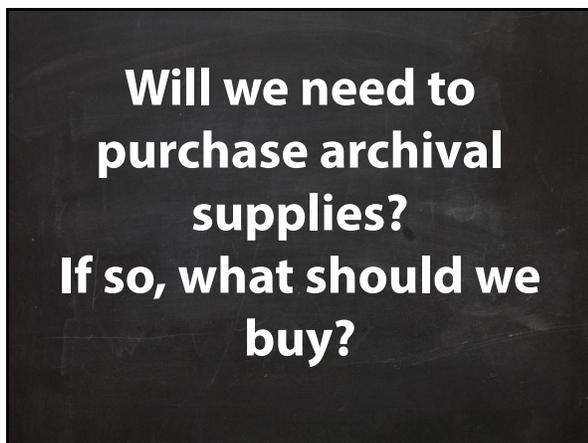
87



88



89



90



94



95
