



SAVING YOUR Treasures

A Website about what you can do to protect and preserve the things of importance in your life



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NOTES ON CARING FOR TOOLS

There are considerations that are specific to the care and treatment of tools. These include the importance of use wear information, the need and methods for adding replacement parts, and the great need to avoid over cleaning.

Importance of Use Wear

The signs of use and wear on a tool tell us many things about their manufacture, purpose, use, and abuse over time. Wear on a tool handle can tell us whether the user was left handed or right-handed or handicapped. It can tell us how the tool was used. If it was repaired or made over into another tool this tells us how valued it was by its owner or how rare its materials were. **These critical testaments to the tool's past should never be removed or obliterated by over zealous cleaning and care.** Avoid over cleaning handles to preserve use and wear marks. Avoid grinding away old work patterns on edge tools. They will likely never be used again and do not need to be sharp. If using the tool, photograph the historic edges and handles before cleaning or use as record. Keep all the bits, even of broken parts, for future research and analysis.

Replacement Parts

If the tool requires replacement parts be sure that the damaged original parts are retained. Clearly mark replacements so that they will not be confused with original parts in the future....one hundred years from now. It can be effective to use a different material than the original when making replacement parts as these are easily distinguishable from the original.

Importance of Provenance

Retain all information about the object and all other items it came with. Write down where you found it, who you bought it from and when and for what price. Keep your receipts and notes and any bits that came with the tool. Photos of the tool when you received it and after any repairs or cleaning can be critical when researching its provenance and also for insurance documentation.

Storage Methods for Tools

Keep the relative humidity low to prevent corrosion. Read the "Recommended Environmental Conditions" handout for specific environmental conditions for your tool storage. Make sure there is no metal to metal contact between your tools in storage.

This will prevent galvanic induced corrosion in storage. Make sure the tools are not in direct contact with metal shelving. Read the "Materials Guidelines" handout.

Care and Cleaning of Tools

Follow the directions under the following headings on the website:

"Caring for Copper Alloys"

"Caring for Iron Alloys"

"Caring for Silver Alloys"

"Caring for Organic Materials"

"Why Not Try to Fix It Yourself?"

"Dusting and Vacuuming"

"Handling Guidelines"

"Housings"

Some tips just for tools:

- Avoid oils and dressings on metal and wood surfaces. The oils and dressings will deteriorate faster than you object and as a result will damage them in time. Waxes are OK; oils and dressings are not OK.
- **DON'T OVER CLEAN YOURS TOOLS.** Nothing is sadder than an over-cleaned tool. Do not use Dremel® tools or other mechanized wire brushes or electric grinders on your tools.

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