

Cleaning Guidelines for Dry Plate Glass Plate Negatives

Tara Kennedy (Updated April 2004)

The surface where the objects are to be cleaned should be clean and covered with a non-abrasive tabletop covering. Adequate ventilation should be provided to reduce fumes.

- ❖ Soft hair brush (Chinese or Japanese Hake brush)
- ❖ Lint-free disposable cleaning tissues or cloths
- ❖ Glass cleaner (50% ethanol; 50% deionized water) in non-spilling container (Menda jar)
- ❖ Cotton swabs
- ❖ Paper towels and table brush for cleaning work area
- ❖ Nitrile gloves
- ❖ Cotton gloves

The person cleaning the negatives should be wearing long sleeves and nitrile gloves to prevent the absorption of the ethanol into the skin (the ethanol used has methanol in it, which is poisonous). If any of the solution gets on the person's skin, it should be washed off immediately with soap and water.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

Emulsion side of the negative

- ❖ Gently brush away loose dust and dirt with a soft hair brush. Leave stubborn dirt as harsh rubbing or abrasion can damage the emulsion.
 - ** NOTE: this should be attempted only if the emulsion is **NOT** flaking, cracking, or soft.

If you have questions, consult the Photographs Curator or the Paper Conservator.

Glass side of the negative

- ❖ Gently clean away loose dust and dirt with a soft hair brush.
- ❖ For more stubborn dirt, use a lint-free disposable cloth and the glass cleaner provided. Cotton swabs may also be used for smaller areas of stubborn dirt. DO NOT use ammonia-based cleaner (e.g. Windex) to clean glass plate negatives; ammonia is too harsh a cleaner for these objects.
- ❖ When the negative is clean, place it in a proper enclosure to protect it from future dust and dirt.
- ❖ Occasionally sweep away excess dust and dirt in your work area with a table brush. This is to prevent more dust and dirt from getting onto the negatives.

If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the Photographs Curators or the Paper Conservator.