

## **WHAT IS PRESERVATION FRAMING?**

The term refers to special methods and materials used to frame an item of significant sentimental or monetary value. Various items require different considerations, but here are the basic rules:

- Framing should involve no permanent changes to the item; no trimming, folding, pressure sensitive or heat-activated glues or tapes.
- Mounting should be completely reversible at any future time, with the use of non-destructive materials and procedures. The item should be easily restorable to its original condition.
- Mats and backings in direct contact with the item should be museum-grade, 100% ragboard or lignin-free alpha-cellulose board. "Acid-free" standard wood-pulp matboards are not museum-grade and would eventually cause damage.
- Glazing (glass or acrylic) should be an ultraviolet light-filtering type, to prevent fading. Common non-glare glazing has no more protective qualities than regular glass. UV filters are invisible coatings on the inside.
- Glazing should not press against the item. Mats or spacers should be provided to hold them apart. The resulting air gap is important.
- Framing should provide protection from expected environmental hazards. If not prevented by proper framing, damages are caused by temperature and humidity changes, dirt, insects, and airborne contaminants, to name a few.

## **IS IT WORTH THE PRICE?**

Preservation framing typically costs 25% to 35% more than standard framing. Whether your item is worth that extra cost is up to you, the owner. We usually recommend it for anything original or irreplaceable, or anything likely to increase in value over time. When we speak of value, we refer to both monetary and sentimental values. Here are some things you should know:

- Any collectible thing keeps its best value if it is in pristine condition. Whatever happens to change its original condition reduces its value. Therefore, any change is considered to be damage.
- Standard framing methods and materials almost always change the condition of (damage) the item being framed. Immediate and permanent damage can result from standard mounting methods and materials such as drymounting -- common for non-collectible items, but unacceptable for preservation. Not all changes are immediate; discoloration from acid burn, for example, is slow but cumulative damage. Also, foxing (mildew), fading and other environment-related damages are usually not prevented by standard framing.
- Preservation framing can prevent damage. However, damage already done can not usually be repaired.