

## CONSERVATION TREATMENT: REDUCTION OF SURFACE DIRT

Surface cleaning removes damaging, abrasive, and disfiguring dirt and accretions. Surface cleaning prevents the spread of dirt to other collections and keeps archival enclosures clean. Examination of the paper, media, and extent of surface dirt determines which method of surface cleaning--HEPA-filtered vacuum with custom nozzles, soft brushes, solid erasers, grated erasers, foam erasers or a combination--are used to reduce surface dirt. Only specialized erasers which have been tested to be safe for paper and photographs are used.



Eugene Debs Roth photograph collection, Rare and Manuscripts Division, Kroch Library

This silver-gelatin photograph from 1922 of the Student Army Training Corps was obscured by heavy surface dirt. The names of the services members are of significant research interest but were largely illegible due to dirt.

Dirt damages photographs by scratching and becoming embedded in the fragile photographic emulsions. Reducing the surface dirt on this photograph greatly improved its condition, appearance, and research value.