



Facts about Acetate base microfilm

- Produced and used 1920's to 1970's
- Not recommended for preservation or where long-term record retention is required
- Will deteriorate, it's only a matter of time
- The base will weaken and dirt becomes embedded, very difficult to clean
- The film tears easily and potentially not stable enough to scan
- Film can not only tear on film scanners, it becomes problematic to scan because the dirt can transfer to the scanner
- If the film is poor quality to begin with, duplicating it could yield even lower quality film
- Acetate film that is deteriorating emits gases and needs to be handled carefully. It's best left to experienced technicians.
- Weigh the risks



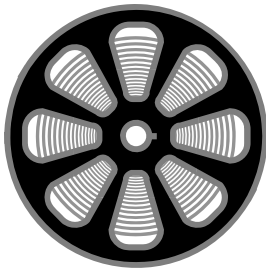
Acetate base microfilm key points

Acetate

- Deteriorating
- Warped
- Brittle
- Curled
- Dirty
- Scratched
- Unstable
- Easy to tear

Microfilm Base Determination

VIEW



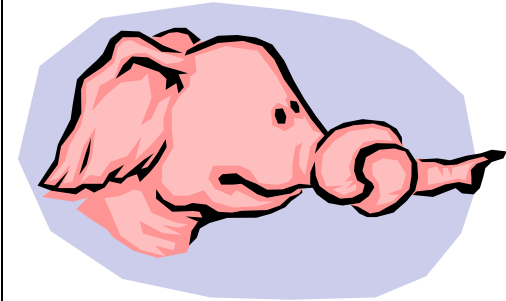
Hold a wound reel of film up to the light:
If opaque (light will not pass through it)
the film is most likely acetate

CURL



Unwind several inches of film:
acetate film tends to curl across the width of the film

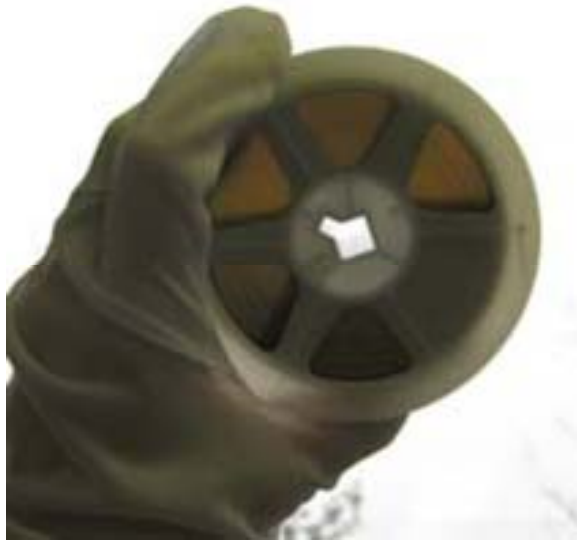
SMELL



Acetic Acid is vinegar. Acetate film that is deteriorating most likely will have a vinegar odor present.

Example of Polyester vs. Acetate

Polyester



Acetate: light blocked

