

# PRESERVATION

Preserving your stamps, covers, and albums can be as simple as avoiding certain factors, such as:

- § Ballpoint pens
- § Cellophane or plastic (Scotch) tape and masking tape
- § Rubber cement.
- § Paper clips and other metallic paper fasteners.
- § "Magnetic Albums." These are adhesive coated pages with plastic covers. Most are made out of PVC plastic and acidic adhesives.
- § Constant contact with your hands.
- § Typewriting added to covers or photos, often on the reverse side.

## Environmental Factors Affecting Stamps and Covers

The three essential environmental elements necessary for preserving philatelic materials are pure air, a temperature of 70 F, and 50% relative humidity.

Mold spores are normally dormant if the temperature is below 64.5F and relative humidity is below 65%. The damage caused by molds is known as "foxing," "rust," or "tropical staining." In addition, molds constitute a food source for insects, which, on their own, are capable of causing irreparable damage.

Sunlight can quickly cause a newspaper to become yellow and brittle. Even the best type of paper can be susceptible to the effect of not only direct sunlight but reflected sunlight as well.

For removal of large amounts of water from the atmosphere, use an electric dehumidifier. For enclosed cabinets and cases in which albums are stored, there are three commonly available and relatively inexpensive drying agents useful in efforts to control excess moisture in the air:

1. Calcium chloride crystals. Spread these crystals in a small saucer. As the water pools, discard the water and replace the old crystals with fresh crystals.
2. Silica gel. These crystals last for years because after they have absorbed water, they can be regenerated in a hot oven. Silica gel has approximately 40 times the drying power of calcium chloride crystals.
3. Activated alumina. This agent has a drying power of about 200 times that calcium chloride. It costs about the same as silica gel, but it doesn't last as long.

Various atmospheric pollutants must be strenuously guarded against: particulate matter (such as smog), dusts, carbon, and -- perhaps most importantly -- tobacco smoke.