

Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials

Subsidiary Page 21 Corner Mounts and Stamp Mounts

Human bodies contain and give off sulphur, which is harmful to covers, documents, and photographs. Fingerprints are not just messy—they are time bombs, slowly releasing stain-forming sulphur on your material. Often you will read in an auction catalog a valuable mint stamp described as "light fingerprints appear on the gum." They will not go away and as time moves on may etch their way deep into the gum. For these, and other reasons, philatelists commonly house philatelic materials in one type or another mount to protect their philatelic materials.

With clear mounting corners used on a cover on an exhibition or album page, no part of the item is obscure. The use of corner mounts is very pleasing esthetically, but care must still be taken. Mounting corners are to be used with extreme caution with fragile and/or brittle papers because the mounting corners can easily place too much stress on a relatively small portion of the mounted item, stress which could cause the item to tear. Corner mounts for covers do provide a completely reversible mounting system.

The clear mounting corners supplied by Light Impressions of Rochester, New York, are backed with 3M's #415 double-coated film tape, an archival adhesive recommended by the Library of Congress.

A number of clear corner mounts on the market come in handy dispensers. While we have not completed a study of the plastic or adhesive used in the manufacture of these corner mounts, it appears that they do not present a major problem.

Quick Stik corners, style #80100, made in Denmark by M.B.I., are sold in the United States by the Ben Franklin stores. They come in a handy dispenser containing 100 corners and are inexpensive. Another clear corner mount, known as *Quick Corner*, #KH-150, is made in Japan by Konica Corporation. They are sold in Canada by the Eddie Black stores. They are slightly more expensive than *Quick Stik*. The clear corner mounts manufactured by Light Impressions, noted above, are recommended.

Jumbo Art Corners by Harco Corporation were tested by the Salm Foundation. Tests indicated they had a pH of 5.32, quite satisfactory for use by philatelists.

A new transparent jumbo mount, made from 2 mil Mylar D with a peelable, pressure-sensitive backing, is available from Atlantic Protective Pouches (see subsidiary Page 18). They are fairly expensive, but are highly recommended.

Stamp mounts and mounting corners made from crystal clear Mylar/polyester are available from University Products of Holyoke, Massachusetts. These are sold under the name of *Stampmount*. They are sealed on three sides and open on the top. The back of each mount features a strip of adhesive covered by a release liner. To use, you remove the release liner and press down on the mounting page.

Stamp mounts manufactured by Marlate are quite safe to use. They tested at a pH of 5.33.

Blakemore (1999) has reported his observations and tests on Showgard mounts. His tests included a comparison of the infrared transmittance spectra for the front face of Showgard mounts and a polystyrene reference sheet. Minor differences were found between the two traces. He also conducted a solvent activity test. He concluded that Showgard mounts, as made in 1999, are safe for stamps. Semeyn (1998) had also expressed confidence in the stability of the polystyrene in Showgard and Scott mounts. There seems to be a difference of opinion here regarding whether or not polystyrene is safe for use with philatelic materials. Campbell's opinion of polystyrene is unfavorable. Perhaps, in view of the lack of agreement, collectors might wish to exercise caution in the use of polystyrene materials. (See Subsidiary Page 18, Plastics.)