

CARING FOR YOUR PHILATELIC TREASURES

One thing that many collectors neglect is the proper care and attention necessary to preserve their stamps and covers. There are many horror stories of philatelic material stored in damp basements, attics and garages where the heat and humidity can cause untold damage and reduce the value of a collection by large amounts.

George Saqqal Philatelics in Brooklyn, New York has just made available a six-page monograph on just this subject and it is now available. Details on how to obtain a copy are appended below.

Mr. Saqqal tells of a collection of naval covers he was going through recently and was struck by the amount of damage the covers had collected through improper handling and storage. The first thing covered in the monograph is paper and it is pointed out that no matter how clean you think your hands are, every time you touch something with your bare hands, traces of fat, oil and water are left behind. These deposits will attract dust or mold, which will eventually cause damage.

The matter of acid is dealt with, since most ordinary paper products are acidic, although US stamps (and others) manufactured since the early 1980' are acid free. Even a simple job like floating stamps off paper can cause damage if one does not use several rinses and an acid free drying book. Next the problem of light is dealt with, since both natural and/or artificial light may damage philatelic material upon prolonged exposure. Heat and humidity are covered at some length, since many of us live in the North Temperate Zone, with furnaces in Winter and air conditioners in Summer. The use of silica gel is recommended and this may be obtained from a philatelic supply house.

Pests, the use of labels and tape (including hinges and mounts) are covered briefly and the monograph closes with observations on fugitive inks and a listing of helpful sites for preservation material.

To order the above monograph postpaid to any US address, send \$5.50 to George Saqqal Philatelics, 9728 Third Avenue, Suite 556, Brooklyn, NY 11209. US\$6.50 to overseas addresses.

E-mail: saqqal@msn.com

For those interested in pursuing the subject further, a joint publication between the American Philatelic Society and The British Library titled "*The Care and Preservation of Philatelic Materials*" by T.J. Collings and R.F. Schoolley-West appeared as a reprint in 1990. This work might still be available from the A.P.S. at 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823. [Ed.]
