

Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials

Subsidiary Page 19 Stamp Hinges

The Arthur Salm Foundation of Chicago has tested philatelic paper products for their archival qualities. The stamp hinge, a product used by most stamp collectors, was tested with very interesting results. The test results are summarized in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Comparison of Stamp Hinges

| Brand | pH | % leaving a residue |
|---------------|------|------------------------|
| C. M. C. | 4.79 | 0 |
| Exactaphil | 5.02 | 90 |
| Denison | 5.08 | 50 |
| Western Stamp | 5.09 | 0 |
| La Mor | 5.29 | 0 |
| Denison #4 | 5.45 | 50 |
| C & K Hobby | 5.62 | Poor |
| Gibbons | 5.67 | 25, tear |
| Fold-O-Hinge | 5.77 | 50 |
| Scott | 5.77 | 50 |
| Novofold | 7.11 | Poor |

All stamp hinges manufactured in the United States tested very acidic. A hinge known as *Novofold*, manufactured in Sweden, was found to be alkaline. The *Fold-O-Hinge*, made in the United States, is semi-glassine with a white opaque color, while the *Novofold* hinge is glassine and quite transparent. A pH of less than 7 is acidic while over 7 is alkaline. Both hinges use a starch base adhesive.

The Arthur Salm Foundation tested a number of different stamp hinges. The results of these tests are shown in the chart below. The peelability noted in the chart was for hinges affixed to an album page, not to stamps. A pH reading of 7 is neutral, and a pH 4 is 100 times more acidic than a pH 6. In layman's terms, a hinge with a pH of 7 or more is excellent; over 5.50 is not too bad providing the album page is alkaline.

A German manufacturer, KA-BE, produces assorted philatelic supplies, including a folded hinge known as *FASTO*. The gum is described as being a vegetable type-free of acids. Global Stamp and Coin Company of Lewiston, New York, handles KA-BE products. At this time we have no report as to the type of plastic film or the pH in these hinges. Another hinge is the La Mor stamp hinge, manufactured in Germany and distributed by the La Mor Corporation of Congers, New York.

The *Fold-O-Hinge* and the *Scott* hinge are manufactured by H. P. Industries of Bradford, New Hampshire, and distributed by Harold Cohn and Company of Chicago, Illinois. The quality of these products has varied from package to package.

If you use hinges, test each new package on inexpensive stamps. When the applied hinge is thoroughly dry, remove the stamp and note the peelability of the hinge and whether or not a residue is left on the stamp after the hinge has been removed. Some hinges will leave a residue on the stamp when peeled off, while others will actually thin the stamp when removed.