
Paper Degradation: III

MECHANICAL WEAR AND TEAR: tears, rupture, holes, missing pieces, folding and creasing. With proper attention preservation can retard further deterioration. Appropriate storage and careful handling are always the first and most practical steps. *[Ed. As with any collectible—the less you mess with it, the longer it lasts!]*

The ideal conditions for paper are: 20 degrees Celsius constant temperature, 50% relative humidity, low light levels i.e.: 20 lux. [<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/1555/page2.html>]

Ed. Well, it's just not feasible to keep our collections in sealed vaults, or incased in plastic, or under glass, so...basically all we can do is use common sense and reasonable methods, as outlined in this series. Judging from my own collecting and storage procedures, I can see room for improvement. In my actual collections, going on the above information, I don't have reason for concern—except in those previously noted very large categories where I just don't have the funds or the space to house all those covers in plastic pages within albums. Honestly, I don't see what I can reasonably do about that.

But, I do admit to a certain amount of laxity when it comes to all my other covers—extras, dupes, trading stock. I'd estimate I currently have some 20,000 currently, and they sit around in a cacophony of boxes, trays, drawers, and the like, located in cabinets, closets, and corners of both the house and the garage. Heck! I even have huge trays under the bed!