

# Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials

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One of the handiest inventions of recent times is the glue stick. Production of the first commercial type, the UHU Stic, began in 1969. Containing non-essential alkaline parts and fatty acids, the possibility of a chemical reaction on certain papers cannot be excluded.

The UHU Stic is a product of Faber Castell of Germany and has a distinct amine/amide odor, like rancid peanut butter. Another glue stick is the Pritt Glue Stick, made by Henkel of Germany. The Pritt stick has a fruity odor. This odor, the alkaline nature of the product, and a spectral band of  $1550\text{ cm}^{-1}$  suggest the presence of a non-volatile amine or amide. IR spectral analyses show that the glue sticks are predominantly polyvinyl pyrrolidone with some polyvinyl alcohol components that are quite stable. Glue stick adhesive is water soluble.

The Dennison Glue Stick, by Dennison Manufacturing Company, Framingham, Massachusetts, is nearly identical to the Pritt and UHU Stic. All three glue sticks test pH 9 and for this reason should not be used on rare covers that are alkaline sensitive.

While not recommended for conservation use, the philatelist may decide they are suitable for certain purposes. They are handy, but discretion should be used with the use of glue sticks. Be certain that the glue stick you use contains white paste and not clear glue. The clear glue is not found too often in glue sticks. It is too acidic and corrosive. The white paste actually contains a paste very close to wheat paste but in stick form and is fairly neutral. Colored glue sticks remain to be tested. Probably, it would be safest to error on the side of caution and not bring these colored glue sticks in contact with philatelic materials.