

## Desensitization of Non-Image Areas

**WHAT IS MEANT BY "DESENSITIZATION?"** The non-image areas of a lithographic plate must be treated so they are water-receptive. When such areas are wet by water they will not pick up ink when the plate is run on the press. The non-image areas which have been rendered water-receptive by the proper treatment are said to be *desensitized*. This means that these areas have been made insensitive to ink as long as they are previously wet with water.

In order to desensitize the non-image areas of the plate, they are treated with a "plate-etch" and then "gummed." Both the plate etch and gum solutions contain gum arabic, cellulose gum, or some other desensitizing agent. Both the etch and the gum aid in the desensitization of the plate. A plate which has been given an "etch" and a "gum" treatment is usually better desensitized than one which has been given only an "etch" or only a "gum" treatment. Usually the etch contains certain inorganic salts such as nitrates, phosphates, or bichromates, in addition to the gum arabic or cellu-