

## Defining “Dated” Covers

Dated Covers are always popular because sooner or later the question of exactly how old the particular cover is pops up. But just what *is* a dated cover? It's not quite as simple as you might expect. There are valid types of Dated Covers, covers that have dates but don't qualify, and some “pseudo-dated” covers.

The easiest and most obvious type of Dated Cover includes all of the covers that actually give you the contemporary year right on them (“contemporary year” being the year that the cover was issued), “Celebrating our 50th Anniversary, 1939-1989,” for example. You find such covers in all categories, but Bank covers are especially well known for such dates.

A second type of valid Dated Covers is the cover which only gives you the founding date of the company, *but* which also gives you the information needed to easily calculate the contemporary date, “Celebrating our 50th Anniversary, Founded in 1939,” for example. Here, the contemporary date you're looking for is not given, but there's no question that it's “1989.” There are quite a few of these.

It should be noted at this point that most covers can be dated within a “range of years” (i.e., this type of cover was produced between 1925-1936), either by using the manumark, trademark, or a few other more obscure factors, but this constitutes “dating covers,” *not* “Dated Covers.”

Then there are all the covers with dates that *are not* Dated Covers. A lot of covers have dates on them, but are *not* “Dated Covers” because those dates don't allow you to fix the actual date (age) of the cover. For example, a Bank cover that simply says “Founded in 1939” tells you nothing about when the cover was issued. “Founded in 1939” along with “Serving our customers for over 50 years” is just as useless because we can't pinpoint how many years over 50 has it been. And, there are few things as exasperating to the Dated Cover collector as coming across a cover

that touts “Our 25th Anniversary!” and yet has no dates given at all!

There are other types of covers with dates that *aren't* Dated Covers, as well. A number of Fair covers and covers advertising other special events will carry the month and day(s) of the event, but not the year...These don't qualify, either.

There are a number of older covers which give a sports schedule on the inside with no year. If you wanted to take the trouble to try and match up the days and dates with old calendars to find a match to determine a precise year, you could, but these wouldn't be included in the Dated Covers category because the date would not be obvious.

Last of all are the “pseudo-dated” covers. These are usually covers given out at weddings, anniversaries, etc., and they carry a year on them (i.e., “Dan and Kathy,” May 5th, 1976”), but you can't trust those dates because they weren't put on by the manufacturer. In almost all such cases, these were originally issued as stock, blank covers and have *later* had the text and dates put on by a local printer, the catering company, or by the specific individuals involved. The covers, themselves, quite probably were produced years before (We've used this process to produce Sierra-Diablo Matchcover Club covers, and I have a case of blank covers sitting in my garage right now).

Normally, these covers have the printed information *impressed* onto the cover rather than being printed on the cover, but there are some very nice, professional-looking Foilite-type examples, also. Whatever the style, though, these pseudo-dated covers don't qualify as “Dated Covers,” so don't include them in your Dated collection, and don't send them to collectors who are looking for “Dated” covers (there *are* collectors, though, who are specifically collecting “Wedding,” “Anniver-sary,” etc. covers).

As with any aspect the hobby, one should always know what one is dealing with.