

## Little-Known Facts About Filigrees

“Filigree” is a Universal Match Corp. trademark for a special type of fancy cover issued from 1969-1987. It has the same type of ‘oily’ texture that is seen in another of Universal’s popular cover types, “Uniglo,” but the Filigree has a bubbled surface. It’s always counted as one of the ‘Fancies.” I happened to run across an old article on early Filigrees by the legendary Duke Rohrer in the May 1975 issue of the Long Beach bulletin. If you like to know more about the covers you deal with, and especially if you’re a Filigree collector, read on...

“ After Holiday Inns, filigrees are probably one of the most popular collecting categories today. These covers have a clear web-like rough surface with the printing underneath. The first filigrees, made by Universal, appeared in 1969. By January of 1970, 111 of them had been listed in the filigree listing issued by Evelyn Hovious.

The first 150 filigrees were made by Universal. However, by June 1970, Atlas Match, using a similar process, issued its first filigree-type match, #152 on the filigree list. This matchcover has a much different pattern, but is still of the filigree type. Atlas also issued 3 covers from the China Doll in San Diego. These covers are perhaps the hardest to obtain of the early filigrees.

Monarch Match, joining Atlas and Universal, issued its fist filigree early in 1972. This cover is #564 on the filigree list. By then Atlas had issued 5 covers and Universal, who owns the trade name filigree, 458 covers. Today most match companies have climbed on the band wagon and issue filigree matches. There have been 2 sets, 31 single jewels and many 10 strikes. One of the earliest dated filigrees is 1881-1971.

Many banks now have sets from 2 to 16 covers to a set, with captions or information about the bank’s services on the inside. The Marines and the Navy have also issued filigree jewelites in their recruiting campaigns.

Filigrees come from all over; from the mountain backwoods of West Virginia to Angel Fire Country Club in the high mountains of northern New Mexico; to Eagle Nest, to Miami Beach. They contain strange names such as Leather Jug, Duke of Dare, Look’d Depot, Rabbit Hatch, Kin’s Cabin, Crazy Horse, The Cup and Saucer, The Iron Horse and many, many more.

Despite the fact that the early filigrees are scarce (only a caddy or so was issued with a case of regularly ordered matches), there have been 2,232 filigrees listed.”

What’s interesting to me here, personally, is that the filigree list contains non-filigree covers—IF you only look at the term “Filigree” as meaning the Universal covers. The listing, then, is actually a “Filigree-like” listing, wherein any cover that is an actual Filigree or like a Filigree is included.

The original listing was initiated by Jim Moffett and then taken over by Evelyn Hovious. Ruth Richmond handled the list from 1981-1989, taking the list up to 6,063. Margo Houser added a supplementary list of older issues not yet listed. Today the list is dormant. There are still many unlisted covers, but no one has stepped forward to continue the listing.

The largest collection I know of was that of George Bruckman, who reported having 11,043 in May, 1993.