

Did You Say “Variation”? (III)

Texture Variations: You could possibly get a legitimate ‘texture’ variation in a cover that, for example, was produced as a plain cover and then as a Fancy (i.e., the same design as a plain cover and then as a Filigree), or perhaps one as a regular Foilite and then as a Signet. Not surprisingly, perhaps, collectors could argue that these represent two completely different covers, even though the designs, themselves, are the same. In some cases, here, this might also represent an error. A cover, on the one hand, appears as a Cameo, while its twin also says “Cameo” on the inside, but is obviously not a Cameo. Another texture variation could be a cover produced as plain and then as embossed. As a case in point, I believe I’ve seen the same Girlie cover with and without embossed breasts!

The example that I really had in mind for this category, though, was the same cover as a regular issue and then as a glossy issue (i.e., one of the covers has had that telltale veneer of plastic overlaid on the outside surface). This type of variation is not too uncommon, and I’ve seen examples while listing the Lion 30-STICK and Lion 21 Feature covers, especially. Even here, though, one has to be careful, since there are a number of these early glossy covers where the laminating overlay has simply come off and is no longer there. Thus, a cover that was initially produced as a glossy now appears *not* to be a glossy. Normally, on a cover such as this, however, even when the plastic covering is absent, you can still tell that it was originally there, since the adhesive can plainly be seen on the remaining surface of the cover...Something to look for when you’re looking at “variations.”

Text Variations: When we get to the actual text of the cover, we’re also in an area where there are definite legitimate variations, as well as gray areas. The legitimate variations include differences in fonts and differences in size. As an example, frequently two covers will be exactly the same but the font style is different on the telephone numbers (i.e., the phone number is the same, but on of the covers will have taller numerals, or more rounded numerals, etc.). Likewise, one cover may simply have a bigger font.

Again, though, there’s a pitfall here with the “differences” in text font and size. Sometimes, the two sections of text you’re comparing will look significantly different, either in style or size, but in these particular cases that’s actually misleading because the ‘differences’ are actually due to manufacturing processes rather than design. For example, text on one cover may appear ‘thin,’ as opposed to ‘thick’ text on the other cover. The difference may well have been caused by varying pressure applied to the two covers during the actual printing.

What about the common situation wherein the two covers are exactly the same except that they have different telephone numbers...or the name of the manager has changed...or...? Well, you get the picture. Personally, it’s here that I draw the line. Variations of the same text may or may not be legitimate variations, depending on the factors noted above, but, when we get into covers with *different* text, I classify those as completely *different* covers, not merely variations.

Well, after all this, are your eyes crossing yet?! Seem too complicated and hair-splitting? It’s not really as bad as it might sound. As with most things in life, once you get some experience in this area it becomes less daunting, and your observations become more automatic. You begin scanning covers, looking for and classifying such differences, as part of your regular sorting or pre-sorting procedure. It becomes just another part of your routine...a valuable routine. You’ll begin to discover all sorts of little, but possibly important, differences that you may well have glossed right over before....and, after all, variety is the spice of life!