

WW II MATCH CO. CASUALTIES

World War II caused millions of casualties, trillions of dollars in destruction, and was murder to the American match industry, especially to the smaller companies.

The war brought many demands on the home-front. American industry had to retool for the war effort; cooper, steel, iron, rubber, all sorts of chemicals, etc. were in short supply; conservation and innovation were the new watch words of the day. Victory gardens sprouted up all over America, and a generation shifted roles as American women manned the factories. It was a time of change.

The giants of the American match industry survived. They used their considerable resources to adapt, doing their share at home to win the war abroad. Diamond Match Company, for example, developed a waterproof match for the military. By the end of the war, more than ten million matches a day were coming off Diamond's production lines.

The smaller manufacturers didn't have those resources, however, and, with their much smaller share of the market, it was impossible for many to adapt and wait for the war to end. For the collector, though, it would mean that covers from these World War II casualties would be all the more attractive in later years. They're all over 50 years old, now, and they're not that common.

ADVANCE MATCH CO. (1931-1944) (Chicago, IL) survived long enough to produce some of the early Girlie issues, the first 40-strike, and possibly the first 12-strike (although the latter is also attributed to the Maryland Match Co.).

ALL-TRADES MATCH CO. (c. 1930s-WW II) (Rockford, IL) was never a very prolific company.

CONTINENTAL MATCH CO. (1936-1944) (IL); hardly anything is known about this

company.

CROWN MATCH CO. (1933-1942) (Los Angeles, CA) produced what many collectors consider the most beautiful covers ever made. Crown's famous matchcover art work initiated the beginning of the Golden Age of matchcover art.

FEDERAL MATCH CO. (1923-1942) (PA/IL) started out as the Federal Match Co. but underwent several transformations. Production, as Federal Match Corp., halted in 1942.

KING MIDAS MATCH CO. (c. 1939-1944) (Los Angeles, CA) also produced what are now highly sought after covers, due to their age and rarity. Quality, however, is below average.

MANHATTAN MATCH CO. (1936-WW II) (Elizabeth, NJ) stopped production towards the end of the war and was officially dissolved in 1948. Almost all the covers here carry a Safety First footer; otherwise, Manhattan covers are quite bland.

MERIT MATCH CO. (c. 1941-c.1945) (Elizabeth, NJ) was basically a repeat of the Manhattan Match Co.

MILWAUKEE BOOK MATCH CO. (c.1940s) (Milwaukee, WI) was a very small, short-lived company. (Dates aren't firm)

NATIONAL MATCH CO. (1912-1942) (NY) is not particularly noteworthy. Not to be confused with National Press.

OWNAME MATCH CO. (1925-1940s) (NY,NY) possibly issued first 30-strike in 1935 (?).

REPUBLIC MATCH CO. (c.1939-1944) (WI) not to be confused with later TX company.

STANDARD MATCH CO. (1917-1945) (Chicago, IL) (There may be more than one Standard Match Co. involved here)

U. S. MATCH & PRTG. CO. (1940-1942) (IL) produced very little.