
Collecting State Parks

A number of collectors are interested in the category of NATIONAL PARKS, but there are also quite a few opportunities available in the area of STATE PARKS, which make the latter category one worthy of consideration.

While it's true that new STATE PARK covers have dropped off sharply, not only due to the general decline of matchcovers but also because of parks in the 1990s taking a dimmer view of smoking on the grounds, it's also true that a wealth of older covers are still available in both match collecting circles and in innumerable accumulations across the country. If anything, this gives the covers in this category the added distinction of being mostly older front-strikers.

STATE PARK covers have been generated by three sources: 1) the parks, themselves; 2) facilities located in the parks; and 3) the states in which the parks are located. Of these three sources, the latter two are, by far, the main sources.

Park facilities likely to have matchcovers, if such are available, would include: lodges, souvenir shops, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, etc. For example, Big Sur Lodge put out a couple of very nice 30-strike Cameos for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, CA; The Starved Rock Lodge put out at least one 20-strike Woody for Starved Rock State Park, IL; and so on. In many cases, there is one company that has been granted concession rights in the park, and it's that company that generates the covers and then distributes them through the above outlets.

The states (Dept. of Tourism, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, etc.) have usually been responsible for the very nice sets in this category. Probably the most well-known sets, here, are those put out by Kentucky in the 1950s. There are two sets of 20-strikes (1950 and 1952), with the former having two striker types, grey and black), and one set of 30-strikes (1958), with each cover in the set focusing on a different state park. Ohio,

Oklahoma, and Tennessee are some of the states that have put out similar sets.

Although this isn't a particularly large category, within this area you'll find all sizes and a great variety of trademarks: 10s through 40s, Perfect 36s, Displays, Features, Cameos, Foilites, Matchoramas, etc. Certainly, there's something here for everyone. It is a challenge, though, since you're going to really have to hunt, advertise, and hope...but, then, you know, that's what makes collecting fun.