

Astrology!

One of the many fascinating aspects of collecting matchcovers is the truly astounding range of the subject matter covered. Of course, that's why I keep saying that matchcovers chronicle American culture for the last 100 years...and they do! And here's yet another example!

One has to be very discerning when dealing with what most of us would see as a 'pseudo-science'. Look at a typical description of the history of Astrology: "Astrology is the oldest of all the sciences. It is older than all religions. It has helped to guide mankind from the campfire to the dawn of the modern age. Make no mistake about it, Astrology was essential to the survival of early man. It told him not only when to hunt, when to fish, when to plant. It also told him when to celebrate." The author misleads in two ways. It's not and never has been a science, and Astronomy is being blended into Astrology here...both, in my opinion, to lend credence to the belief in Astrology. The author, not surprisingly, believes in Astrology!

Astrology is concerned with the observation of the motions of heavenly bodies, reducing to mathematical order these observations, and then applying them as casual factors of human behavior...or, from a layman's point of view...the stars run your life. Astrology is said to have originated with the Chaldeans, in Babylon, Mesopotamia, (now Iraq) around the fourth millennium BC. It was practiced in the temples, where it was blended with religious elements. Later, it spread to Egypt, and around the third millennium BC was being used by rulers to predict the fate of nations: war or peace, famine or plenty. The tradition of Greek, Arabic and Medieval astrology which was inseparable from the parallel tradition of alchemy, believed that Man responds to certain indefinable energies or vibrations of the Sun, Moon and planets, and words still used today to define different human characteristics, such as mercurial, saturnine, lunatic, venereal, jovial, martial, came from the astrological-chemical schools of the 13th to the 17th centuries.

Astrology for centuries was used by kings, emperors, popes, scientists, doctors, the bourgeoisie and the poor alike, and together with astronomy was taught in the schools and universities of the world. But, as with most things, toward the close of the sixteenth century in Europe, astrology was losing ground; although in England it continued to flourish for another hundred years. The reasons for the decline in astrology are varied. A new scientific age, The Age of Reason, was dawning and with it a demand for technical explanation—everything not scientifically provable or rationally explicable was rejected. The vast distances between the planets were discovered, and people began to say that these distances were too great for any influences to reach earth. Also, the realization that the sun was at the center of the solar system somehow added to the devaluation of astrology.

It was the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that began the present revival of interest in Astrology. Much of this is owed to psychoanalyst Carl Jung, among others, who used astrology in his studies and wrote on the subject extensively. The focus today is less on the attempt to predict events, and more on the use of astrology for personal growth: self-discovery, realizing one's potential, and learning to resolve conflicts, with a strong trend toward spiritual astrology—the realization of the Self or the Soul. Whether you're into it or not, you have to admit ...it's interesting! *[parts of the above from <http://www.astroenergetics.com/HTML/History.html>*

