

FLASHBACK!

Pertinent Comments

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THE PRESIDENTS were printed by Diamond between 1940 and 1942, picture and legend on blue field. Your complete set should consist of 32 different; and, if lucky, two extras - an upset in the pictures of John Adams and John Q. Adams, and a miscue in the Woodrow Wilson date. Or, if you go in for closer variations of tape width, there is an approximate ONE MILLIMETER variation between the first and last runs. The assembly begins with Washington and ends with F. D. Roosevelt. President Jackson appears twice, first as "Stonewall Jackson", considered an error, and also as the most valuable cover in the set, and later, the correction "Old Hickory." Truman and Eisenhower were never added, although each had, or will have, sufficient personal covers in his own right, to compensate for the omissions.

It had been declared every President since Theodore Roosevelt used personal match books, reminding us of a charming lady, who, upon seeing the famous Lindbergh matchbook on display, cried: "Can I touch it?" While not attempting to challenge the existence of any of the earlier presidential matchbooks, we would be happy to see, let alone touch, any issue prior to the two versions of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which later received considerable publicity in the national press. Collector demands for the booklets reach an all-high soon after the war, at approximately 200 per week. So far as it is shown, no mailed demand was ever met. The writers did receive a souvenir of questionable merit - a bleak mimeographed letter on White House stationery, and a franked envelope. In spite of seeming "precautions" to keep the books from the collectors, many are found in collections, either by way of a leak from the famous 'desk', or a derailment at the jobbers. Even today, neither the (1) "Stolen from the Desk of Franklin D. Roosevelt" on blue Mirror-Gloss by Universal, or (2) the F.D.R. fashioned as a sailboat (sailing was Roosevelt's favorite pastime), is particularly rare.

Nothing in recent years provides a more accurate barometer to the popularity of matchbook collecting than the books that were made for a man who didn't even smoke, Harry S. Truman. Yet, his yacht, plane, temporary address, initials, even "Swiped From the Desk of Harry S. Truman (obviously a holdover gag from the last administration) in all shades of the rainbow - leaving little doubt as to the motives behind it all - give something for collectors to worry about.

One amusing incident occurred last year when a collector accidentally stumbled into a flood of "President's House" overruns, and then, at least for a day, the National Capital had moved to Brooklyn!

Most highly prized of the Truman corollaries is, perhaps, the 1949 Inaugural "Perfect 36", a size that has since been discontinued by Diamond. This is the only booklet we know of that carries a picture of his Excellency - this one with the excellent likenesses of Truman and Barkley in smiling postures. This booklet sold for \$11.00 at the Empire Collectors' Auction in New York, February 1949. Later, when Diamond heard of the deal, about twenty were sent down from Springfield, Mass., for auction at the 1949 Convention with proceeds going to charity. The members voted One Dollar per cover as a fair price, and then drew lots.

As you may have read, Diamond published a special booklet for the 1953 Inauguration, described below, which, when added to the General's own Royal Flash, and his many campaign books, plus the myriad of books that are bound to follow, will doubtlessly make President Eisenhower the best