

FLASHBACK!

Pertinent Comment

[April 1953 RMS Bulletin - by Ed Perkins]

Shall I collect full books or match covers? Which? Why? The question, if placed before the assembly today, would probably result in the following verdict:- We like to receive full books, but would rather collect match covers. Evidently, full books are apt to be clean, unstruck and to represent bona fide advertisers, not always true of matchcovers and stock samples. Fullbooks, likewise, permit removal of matches, and pressing, without injury to the covers, by those receiving them. (removing and pressing will be discussed in future Bulletins).

For sheer choice between matchcovers and full books, the larger the collection, the greater the leaning in favor of matchcovers. This was particularly evident in 1949, when only 6 out of 100, replying to the July questionnaire, admitted they collected full-books exclusively. Only 7 others assembled full Features with matchcovers. However, a large percent of the 100 members were advanced collectors with large collections.

But in collections of 1,000 units, and less, the ratio of full books is certainly much higher. It is known that many persons, collecting on a limited scale, largely from places they have visited, do not take the trouble to dismantle their match books. But, with collections such as these that do not grow extensively, and are housed in boxes, there is no problem of room space.

From point of display, matchcover advantages strongly outweigh full books. For example, Convention displays often run into hundreds - usually matchcovers - on album sheets or boards. Full books are occasionally displayed but don't set well in holders. Trouble is that you can only see half of the cover at one time. Another fault is that match books are top heavy, and thus, in order to derive an equalized display, it is necessary to arrange them with abrasives up and down alternately.

The bugaboo of full book collecting, provided one is anxious to build up a large and formidable collection, is (1) finding the old and highly desirable Group One, Ship, Railroad and Steamship covers as full books. They simply don't exist - were dismantled years ago - by old timers who did not have the room space for full books; (2) finding enough full book collectors to trade with, and (3) finding sympathetic matchcover collectors willing to send full books for matchcovers. This is a large order - but there are a few accommodating souls - if you look for them. Full books are hard to mail, go up in the higher postal brackets and don't grow fast through trading.

Yet, if you are a DIE HARD full book collector - cheer up! There are a few others in the same boat who would not dismantle their collections, much less accept a booklet with so much as one match pane missing, come Hell or high water! Why? We don't know.

True, there are a few large, full book collections, highly interesting because they are different. It is also possible to build up a surprisingly large, full book assemblage without much recourse to trading with others by traveling extensively or buying books directly from wholesalers. But all of these are one-man jobs, if you are willing to work. But for the beginner, anxious to build up a large and representative collection, and on the brink of a decision between matchcovers and full books, the odds are overwhelmingly in favor of matchcovers! Why take the hard road?