

Verkamp's - 100 Years

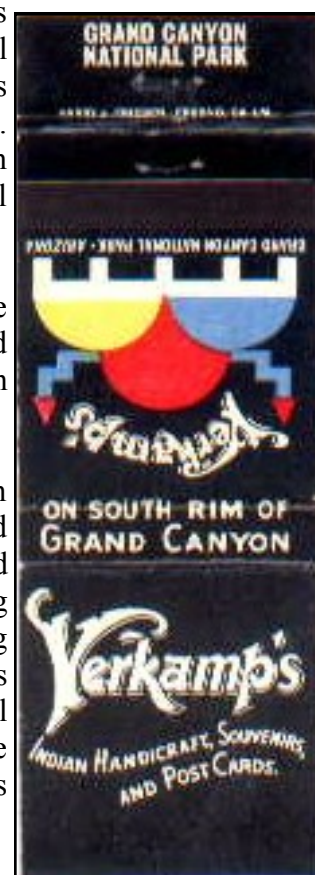
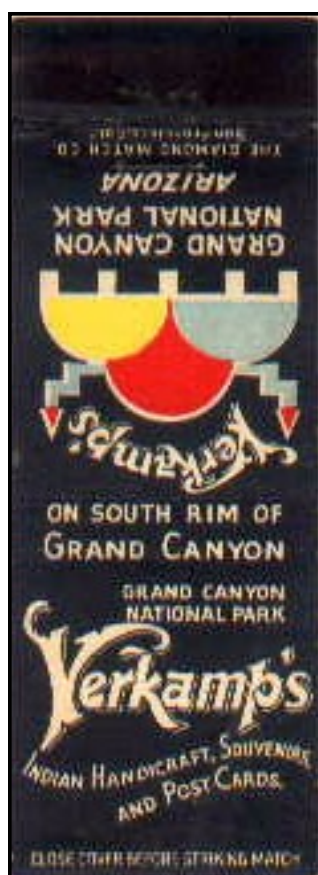
by
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Anyone who collects National Park covers is familiar with Verkamp's. Over the years, it's been a good source of Grand Canyon covers.

Celebrating their 100th anniversary this year, Verkamp's Curios is the oldest family owned and operated gift shop in all of America's National Parks. Built in 1906, Verkamp's is located literally steps from the Grand Canyon's South Rim. The building, which also served as the family residence from 1906 through the mid-1980's, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Open year-round, visitors have warmed themselves by the elegant limestone fireplace in fall and winter and enjoyed canyon views from the shade and comfort of the front porch in summer.

From its humble beginning in 1898, Verkamp's has grown to be one of the most extensive and widely known gift and souvenir stores at the Grand Canyon. John G. Verkamp rented a tent from the Bright Angel Hotel in 1898 and began selling curios and Indian crafts for Babbitt Brothers' Trading Company. After several slow weeks, he closed and sold his stock to the hotel. But he sensed Grand Canyon's potential and returned in 1905, building Verkamp's Curios. The Verkamp family still owns and runs the business, which is now a Grand Canyon landmark.



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Verkamp's native American arts and gift store, being established by John Verkamp Sr., in 1906...actually was there 13 years before the Grand Canyon was designated as a National Park. John's son and daughter, Jack and Peggy, and Jack's son, Mike, managed the store from 1936 until the late 1990's. Today, other family members continue the tradition of this family owned business.

You might be wondering what, exactly, Verkamp's sells. Well, aside from natural curiosities from the area, itself, the family has a long history of buying directly from local Native American artists and regional traders, hand-selecting only the finest pieces. The business showcases one-of-a-kind Navajo rugs, Hopi kachina dolls, Zuni fetishes [*I already have enough of my own*], pottery and baskets from many tribes, and the finest sterling silver and gold jewelry. Over the years, Verkamp's has also branched out and now handles coins, as well. [<http://www.verkamps.com/>]

I currently have eight covers from Verkamp's. They range from old Diamond covers to the more recent 'jobber' issues out of Fresno, CA. If you're a Mileage chart collector, by the way, almost all of these covers have mileage charts on the inside. All of my covers are 20-strikes. At one time, at least, Ed Brassard, WA, had a huge National Park collection. I wouldn't be surprised if he had a number of issues that I've never seen. Anyone have any 30-strike or box issues?



Verkamp's in the 19th century >

