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Perkins Americana

by
Mike Prero

“Americana,” “Americana Indian,” or “Perkins Americana,” I’ve seen them disdainfully brushed aside by some collectors and actively sought by others. In a number of cases, they may represent the only covers known to have been issued from certain county seats. Interest in this very large series seems to ebb and flow at various times within the hobby, but for those who seek the challenge of putting together a ‘complete’ collection of something...this series has a lot to offer.

“Americana” is actually a name copyrighted by the late Edgar Perkins, a past RMS president and collector of more than a little merit. His unique covers, some of which are pictured here, are of several different designs, but each carries the distinctive American Indian and the word “*Americana*” on the saddle. There is normally an advertising message on the front panel and an historical sketch of the community or state on the back panel.

Although Perkins described them as the “largest set in all matchcover history, and probably the most interesting,” the over 1,100 covers actually represent a series, rather than a set, since they were issued over a period of several years. They were first issued in 1957 to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, VA, and were made by the Maryland Match Co. By the end of 1960, the bulk of the covers had been produced, but occasional sets were added to the series in the 1970s.

Initially started to procure covers from tiny county seats in Virginia, the idea spread and later included many other small towns. Perkins formed the Americana Club. Its members bought the surplus covers sold to advertisers in small towns at a discount. Basically, the covers were usually issued in 5-cover sets (yellow, pink, white, orange, and green), with 222 such sets eventually being produced (all 20-strikes).

There are also some oddities and variations in the series, making the collecting even more tantalizing. There are 14 singles, honoring past RMS presidents; there is at least one gold-foil cover (#58); there is a 4 or 5-cover Girlie set, issued for the 1968 RMS Convention; set #74 carries no number; there is a single advertising the series, put out by Regal Match Co.; there is also an entire set advertising the series and bearing no number; and there are a number of errors and variations. Sets and singles are numbered consecutively.

The Original Edgar Perkins Americana Listing

(# = single; * = county seat; IC = independent city; ALL CAPS = U.S. Civil War Centennial)

1957	53 Pointe Ala Hache* La.	104 Danielsv* Ga.	156 Jefferson* N.C.	208 SUMMERSVL* W. Va.
1 King & Queen* Va.	54 Asbury Park, N.J.	105 Conejos* Colo.	157 Boone* N.C.	209 CHANCELRV VA.
2 Eastville* Va.	55 Swan Quarter* NC	106 Luverne* Ala.	158 Robbinsvl* N.C.	210 Allentown* Pa.
3 Charles City Va.	56 Buxton N.C.	107 Benton* La.	159 Murphy* N.C.	211 SHILOH TENN.
4 Courtland* Va.	57 Cape Hatteras NC	108 Water Valley* Ms.	160 Hayesville* NC	212 BULL RUN VA.
5 Montross* Va.	58 San Francisco* Cal.	109 Southport* NC	161 Hiawasse* Ga.	213 APPOMATTOX* VA.
6 Madison* Va.	59 P.O. Buxton N.C.	110 NewKirk* Okla.	162 Walhalla* SC.	214 CENTERVIL* MO.
7 Amelia* Va.	60 Currituck* N.C.	111 S. Norfolk IC Va.	163 Pickens* S.C.	
8 Saluda* Va.	61 Camden* N.C.	112 Preston* Ga.	164 Clinton S.C.	
9 Warsaw* Va.	62 Manns Harbor NC	113 Walthall* Ms.	165 Kingtree* SC.	
10 Mineral* Va.	63 Accomac* Va.	114 UpMarl* Md.	166 Myrtle Bch SC	
11 Lancaster* Va.	64 Kiptopeake BC Va.	115 Clay Cent* Neb.	167 Tarboro* NC.	
12 Louisa* Va.	65 Gate City* Va.	116 Augusta* Ga.	168 Mt. Jackson Va.	1963
13 Lunenburg* Va.	66 Clintwood* Va.	117 N. Hero* Vt.	168a Winnsboro* SC.	215 Winton* NC.
14 New Kent* Va.	67 Hardy* Ark.	118 Osippe* N.H.	169 BUCKLAND VA.	216 Delta Iowa
15 Goochland* Va.	68 Yellville* Ark.	119 Brandy Va.	170 PHILIPPI* W VA.	217 Warren* Penn.
16 King George* Va.	69 Monterey* Va.	120 Berwyn Ill.	171 AMISSVILLE VA	218 Detroit* Mich.
17 Prince George* Va.	70 Carrollton* Miss.	121 Gore Va.	172 NEW MARKET VA.	219 Horse Sh Crv. Pa
18 Boydton* Va.	71 LeRoy Ohio	122 Rehub. Bch Del	173 MthSeneca W. Va	220 Nashua Iowa
19 Hanover* Va.	1959	122a " " "	174 Goldfield* Nev.	1964
20 Chesterfield* Va.	72 Lansing Mich.	123 Beth.Bch. Del.	175 WILDERNESS VA.	221 E. Chelmsfrd Mass.
21 Charlotte* Va.	73 Ticonderoga NY	124 Gambriills Md.	176 BumbleBee Ariz.	222 Grayling* Mich.
22 Rustburg* Va.	74 Fairfax* Va.	125 Lipscomb* Tx	177 Cloverdale Va.	223 Piasa Ill.
23 Sussex* Va.	75 Crawfordsvl* Ga.	126 DeVIHBlf* Ark.	178 MAX MEADOWS VA.	1965
24 Nottoway* Va.	76 Wilmington* NC	127 Huntsvl* Tn.	179 ELKTON* VA.	224 St. Augustine* Fla.
25 King William* Va.	77 Norlina N.C.	128 McKee* Ky.	180 Harriman Tenn.	
26 Washington* Va.	78 St. George* SC.	129 Homer* Ga.	181 Hiawatha* Kans.	1966
27 Stanardsville* Va.	79 Fresno* Cal.	130 Eaton Ind.	182 Oberlin* Kans.	225 Seville Ohio
28 Lovingson* Va.	80 Pasadena* Calif.	131 Brunswick* Me.	183 Wheatland* Wyo.	1967
29 Yorktown* Va.	81 Wentworth* NC	132 Pocahnts* Iowa	184 Kaycee Wyo.	226 Bronson* Fla.
30 Powhatan* Va.	82 Ocean Grove NJ	133 Benjamin* Tx.	185 Big Timer* Mont.	227 Glassboro N.J.
31 Wicomico* Va.	83 Indianapols* Ind.	134 Zapata* Tx.	186 Livingston* Mont.	1968
32 Princess Anne* Va.	84 Santa Rose* Cal.	135 Coalville* Utah	187 Va. City* Mont.	228 Narrows Ga.
33 Surry, Va.	85 O'Neal* Nebr.	136 Jessup Md.	188 Coulee Dam Wash.	229 San Antonio* Tex.
34 Dinwiddie* Va.	1960	137 Godfrey Ill.	189 Waterville* Wash.	230 New Salem Ill
35 Heathsville* Va.	86 Dixie Va.	138 W. Kingston* R.I.	190 Moro* Ore.	1969
36 Mathews* Va.	87 Grodonsv'l Va.	139 Kalaupapa* Hawaii	191 Shaniko Ore.	231 Winter Haven Fla.
37 Spotsylvania* Va.	88 Manassas* Ba.	140 Bedford* Va.	1962	1970
38 Bland* Va.	89 Bishopville* SC	141 St. George* NY	192 Cont. Div. NM.	232 Barrow Alaska.
39 Independence* Va.	90 St. Matthews* SC.	142 Hermitage* Mo.	193 BEN HUR VA.	
40 Wilkes-Barre* Pa.	91 Olar S.C.	143 Malad* Idaho	194 PHILOMONT VA.	
41 Bowling Gren* Va.	92 Hawkinsvl* Ga.	1961	195 BERRYVILLE* VA.	
42 Harrisonburg* Va.	93 Butler* Ga.	144 Mentone* Tex.	196 STONE BRIDG* VA.	
43 Tappaahannock* Va.	94 Americus* Ga.	145 Bristol* Fla.	197 PORT GIBSON* MS.	
44 Chatham* Va.	95 Mt. Solon Va.	146 Ashland* Miss.	198 LIBERTY* MISS.	
45 New Castle* Va.	96 St. Cloud Fla.	147 Eagle River* Mich.	199 Woodville* Miss.	
46 Hillsville* Va.	97 Knoxville* Ga.	148 Ashland* Miss.	200 SUMNER* MISS.	
47 Chincoteague* Va.	98 Edgard* La.	149 Gove* Kans.	201 MAYERSVIL* MIS.	
48 Princess Anne* Ma.	99 Pittsboro* Miss.	150 St. Louis* Mo.	202 NEW AUGUSTA* MS.	
49 Kill Devil Hills, N.C.	100 Boston* Mass.	151 Pikeville* Tenn.	203 DBL. SPGS* ALA.	
50 Manteo* Va.	101 Paint Rock* Tx.	152 Rough&Ready Calif.	204 GETTYSBURG* PA.	
51 Lebanon* Va.	102 Brewster* Neb.	153 Park Rapids* Minn.	205 SHARPSBURG MD.	
1958	103 Wewahcka* Fla.	154 Rosarito Bch. Mex.	206 S. Chelmsfrd Mass.	
52 Alexandris IC Va.		155 FridayHarbor* Wash.	207 Show Low Ariz.	

Note: Sets #233 and 234 were added later. 233 Joseph Allis (for the 1972 RMS Convention; 234 Connecticut Matchcover Club (for the 1977 RMS Convention)

Perkins Americana Variations

by Art Houser

The Americana series had a Great Outdoors theme, and so the five-color sets. The colors green, orange, yellow, and white represented the four seasons. The pink represents the concept of Indian worship of sunsets (*RMS Bulletin, July 1960*). To my knowledge, there are 10 variations of the established numbers from 1-234; one, Fairfax, Virginia, was not given a number. However, it is universally accepted as #74. The following are the 10 variations:

- #5 - Montross, Virginia (1) Carlisle's Esso & Grill
Delicious Sandwiches
Complete Meals
MONTROSS
VIRGINIA (2) Carlisle's Esso
Grill-Restaurant
7 A.M. to 9 P.M.
Phone: GYpsy3-3584
ONE STOP TOURING SERVICE
MONTROSS, VIRGINIA
- #10 - Mineral, Virginia (1) Line 8 - Mr. Thelma Mc Ghee, owner (2) Line 8 - Mrs. Thelma Mc Ghee, Owner
[Perkins referred to this difference as "a minor change" in the January 1963 RMS Bulletin]
- #15 - Goochland, Virginia (1) has - Member F.D.I.C (2) no such line
- #16 - King George, Virginia (1) Elmer P. Morris Store
King George Esso Station
Morris Chevrolet
KING GEORGE, Virginia (2) Morris Chevrolet
Edgehill Esso
Virginia Esso
KING GEORGE, VA
- #31 - Wicomico, Virginia (1) Sponsored by
J.L. OLIVER
General Merchandise
It Please Us To Please You
Phone:-HAYES 23828
RES. HAYES 23823
WICOMICO, VIRGINIA (2) VIRGINIA
FOUNDED IN 1607
Historical epitome by
J.L. Oliver
General Merchandise
Wicomico, Virginia
[Comment by Ed Perkins, "J. L. Oliver, Wicomico, Virginia Americana #31 gave two orders" - RMS Bulletin, January 1963]
- #53 - Pointe a la Hache, Louisiana (1) Point a la Hache, La. (2) Pointe a la Hache, La.
[From RMS Bulletin, January 1963 - "#53 refused the first shipment - Point a la Hache misspelling. On the second order it was corrected to 'Pointe a la Hache'"]
- #100a - REUNION DINNER OF MEMBERS WHO FOUNDED Rathkamp Matchcover Society - *[Back panel listed those members. This one does not have the Indian Head preceded by Americana (#100 does) on the saddle. Its mm is 'Convention Sets 100A']*
- #122 - Rehoboth Beach, Delaware (1) "The Willin" Motel (2) SEA RANCH MOTEL *Front panels are different, with the back panels the same, except for 1960 on the Willin. Can't find an explanation why, only that these were a first for each motel - matches, that is).*
- #168 - Mt. Jackson, Virginia *[These two sets have the same number but are completely different. #168 is Sky Chalet; #168a is Royal Hotel & Restaurant. No explanation why]*
- #168a - Winnsboro, South Carolina
- #219 - Horseshoe Curve, PA (1) HORSHOE CURVE (2) HORSESHOE CURVE *[I would imagine the misspelling is the first printing and the corrected version the second printing]*
- 233A - is a set of completely different covers. They're multi-colored (each cover) from the 31st RMS Convention in San Diego

I also have parts of three more convention sets. They are the Americana 5-colors and makeup. One has an mm of "Convention Sets by Edgar A. Perkins, 21st RMS." The second has a Maryland Match mm, Edith Cooper - 17th RMS. The third is for the 26th RMS with an mm from Regal Match Baltimore.

How about a third one from Montross, Virginia? I have a white cover from Maryland Match for the Tercentennial Year of Westmoreland County, advertising Peoples Drug Store. Single or a set? RMS Luminaries (they use different and stronger words now days) are pictured on nine pink covers from Maryland Match. None of the covers in these last two paragraphs have the Indian or *Americana* on them.

But, with the Indian and *Americana* are the "Hints to Matchcover Collectors." I have three: pink, white, and orange. Does anyone alive know just what makes up the fascinating covers that we call "Perkins Americana"?! There is no doubt that Ed Perkins left his mark on our hobby with his many innovative ideas and ways of merchandising matches in the hobby. But, the stories about him must be abundant. Send me your favorite one and/or any information you may have about him and this most interesting category.

[My thanks to Roy Buckley, Armand Levesque, Ray Vigeant, Mike Prero, Win Lang, Mary Conkle, and Ralph Arnold, as well as the RMS and Forest City bulletins for their information, covers, and patience in helping me; Note: I've made some updates here since the original articles were published in 1995]

[Ed note: Wilton Mason, LA, found another error in t h e m a n u m a r k o f s e t s #121,66,85,94,95,96,97,99,112,117,118,121, 125,139: 6501 Central Ave., Washington, 27 D.C.]