

FLASHBACK!

Royal Flashes

[May 1944 RMS Letter No. 28]

In the preceding Bulletin we placed crepes upon the other Groups with many tears. But there graves will always be watered—who knows, perhaps some flowers may spring forth after all. Let us take them from issue to issue, so that they will not be completely forgotten, starting with the Advertising type of Royal Flash which is the “Last of the Mohicans” in the odd-size family (A few days ago we were informed through reliable sources that even the RF was on the way out). But don’t fret, there will be enough of them to go around for years to come!

In the light of the Gold Rush of 1943 and 1944, it is but natural that the Service Flash should eclipse the Advertising Flash into obscurity, but this fact has nevertheless stolen none of the beauty and style of the latter. There are still many who regard Flashes as TOPS, and speaking of Royal Flashes, there is only one type that we will consider: the product of the Universal Match Corporation, by patent rights the only existing Royal Flash, sometimes known as the Bill Board. There are a number of cheap imitations; let us call them “Double Sizes” as a method of distinguishing.

The Royal Flash is a group all by itself, yet all groups are represented in it. It makes a beautiful display, and only recently three distinct variations were added to make it all the more versatile: namely, the Service; State and City themes; and Comic wise-cracks. (We are still in the dark as to whether the latter are strictly RF’s, but it doesn’t hurt to keep them after all.)

A few of them may be difficult to get, to tell you the truth, you will never get all of them, or near it, but it is still possible to build up a very fine collection if you ever become serious. Most odd size prices run on an even keel. The number of Advertising Flashes which have been published since 1934 may never be known; 1000 should be a good collection; there are some within the 1,500 bracket, and now we will hear from (V.P.) Blanche Kelly—310 11th St., Braddock, Pa., who may have the largest collection in existence:

“Why collect Royal Flashes: The question has been asked me many times and I have asked myself the same question over and over again, always getting the same answer. I save them because they are my favorite covers. One will get several hundred regular size covers for every Royal Flash—that may be one reason so few people save them. I find RF’s more attractive than any other type—they come in all colors; the lovely red, blue, green, silver, gold and bronze metallic and the attractive Mirro-Gloss would add to any collection. It is not too late to start a collection of R.F. covers. I found my best covers within the last year. A few months ago a friend gave me a match book—an Alka-Seltzer RF issued in 1938. He said that 1,000 were issued—wonder where the other 999 are? Do you have them? The first Royal Flash I saved had a picture of the GOLDEN GATE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION of 1940—Benators. When I see pages of silver metallics of the Atlantic Steel Co. and Pantex Mach., Inc., then turn to Allied Van Lines, N.W. Mutual Ins. Co., Union Wire Rope, etc., I feel well paid for the time spent on my collection.”