

Collecting

As the #1 producer of warm fuzzies, Hallmark Cards is the Goliath of greeting cards. The company's cards are sold under brand names such as Hallmark, Shoebox, and Ambassador and can be found in more than 43,000 US retail stores (about 4,000 of these stores bear the Hallmark Gold Crown name; the majority of these stores are independently owned).

Hallmark also owns crayon manufacturer Crayola (formerly known as Binney & Smith). It offers electronic greeting cards and flowers through its web site. It also owns a controlling stake of Crown Media. Members of the founding Hall family own two-thirds of Hallmark.

Hallmark Cards, Inc., the personal expression industry leader virtually synonymous with consumers' preferred brand of greeting card, was founded in January 1910 by Joyce C. Hall (1891-1982). Donald J. Hall succeeded his father as chief executive officer from 1966 until 1986, presided over a period of explosive growth, and continues to influence and shape the company as chairman of the board. In 2002, Donald J. Hall, Jr. succeeded Irvine O. Hockaday, Jr. as president and chief executive officer.

J.C. Hall established the Hallmark brand's reputation for quality through uncompromising attention to detail and, since 1944, through the slogan, "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best." The company achieved distinction through its products, its network of specialty retail stores, national advertising, and as sponsor of the Hallmark Hall of Fame, television's most honored and enduring



Hallmark

dramatic series.

In addition to its flagship brand, Hallmark markets products under the brand names Expressions From Hallmark and Ambassador. Consumers' favorite product line names include: Hallmark Keepsake Ornaments, Party Express From Hallmark, Shoebox, and Mahogany, Sinceramente Hallmark, and Tree of Life ethnic personal expression products. Hallmark's Crayola subsidiary markets creative art products branded Crayola® and Silly Putty®. [http://pressroom.hallmark.com/hmk_fact_sheet.html]

Well, that's the Wall Street rundown on the company, but what about the covers? It seems to me that I was in the hobby for almost two decades before I even heard that there *were* covers and that at least some collectors sought such out as a category. If I had actually run across any prior to that I never noticed them, probably just writing them off as "nationals". Well, now, of course, I collect them, myself! [*I'm smacking my forehead!*].

All of the covers here that I'm aware of bear the *Hallmark* name somewhere on the cover, so you can, unlike the old me, readily tell them apart from other covers. They all have multi-colored designs and are 20 and 30-strikes (almost all 20-strike). I've never seen any 10s or 40s.

I don't have any reported stats on this category from other collectors, but I have at least 32 in my novice collection, so...

