

# The Port Authority of New York/New Jersey

by Fred Boyle

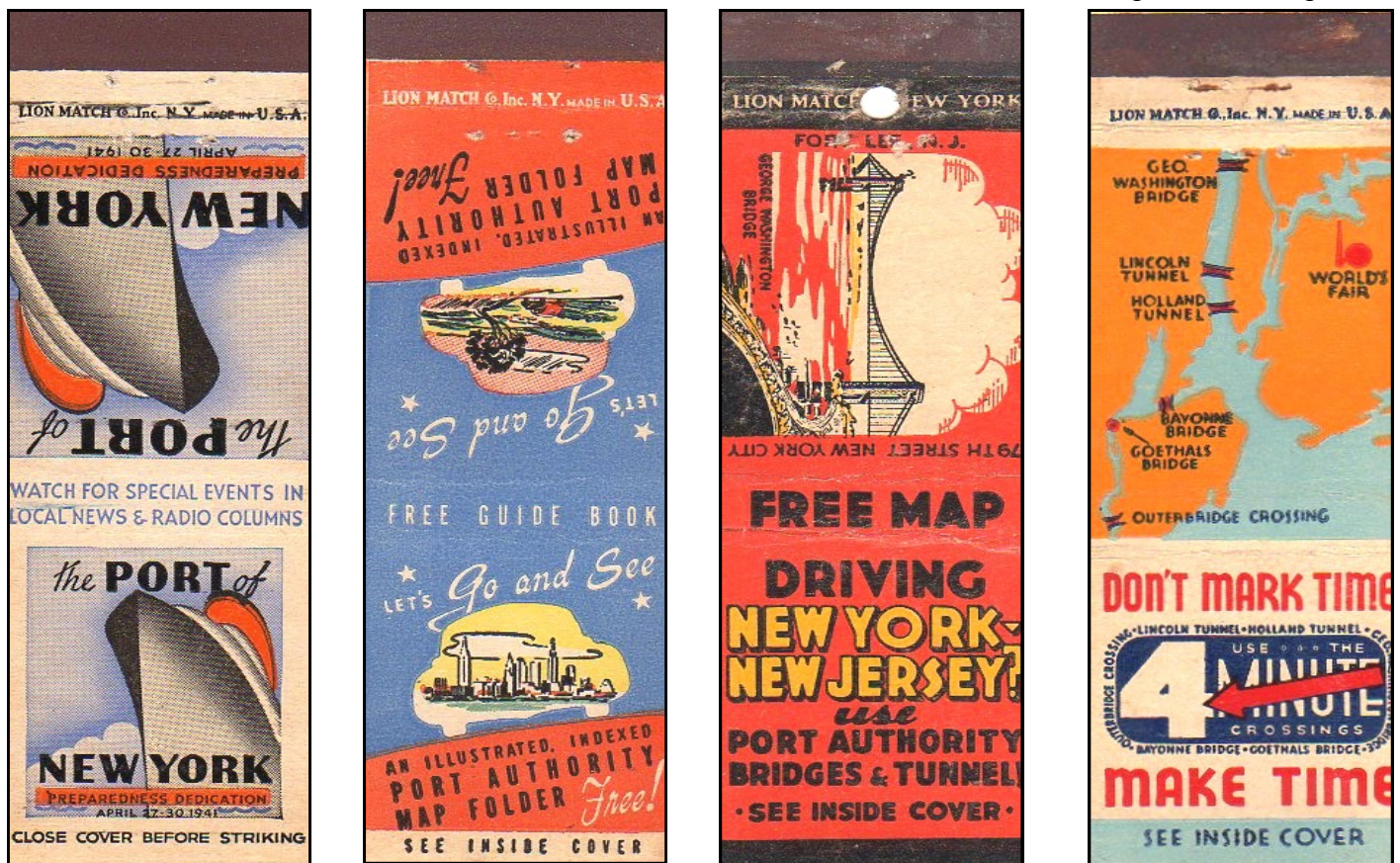
[From Sep/Oct 1996 RMS Bulletin]

John Williams writes that “the first reference to Port Authority covers is in the 8-24-1936 issue of *Match Pack Notes*.”

Here is a small category that I believe represents visually the best advertising campaign from the 1930s - 1940s on a matchbook cover. All the early covers from the Port Authority promote the “Four-Minute Crossing” via Holland Tunnel, Goethals bridge, Outerbridge Crossing, George Washington Bridge, Bayonne Bridge, or Lincoln Tunnel. In addition to promoting the “Four-Minute Crossing,” thirty-one known covers also promoted the 1939-40 World’s Fair; there are 98 known full-length covers. John Williams writes, “The September 1938 issue of *Match Pack Notes* reports on a contact with the purchasing agent for the Port Authority.” The PA agent reported that “one million covers per year are being issued. A new cover is being issued every 30 days. The old offer of free maps and information on the inside had to be discontinued because the demand was so great as to necessitate the hiring of too much help to take care of it.” This was major advertising with top notch illustrative art!

As my collection grew, so did my interest in the history of these bridges and tunnels. granted, I knew the names, but I didn’t know how the names were selected, or when these crossings were opened to the public. I hope you will find the following information educational and find it provides insight into covers from the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey.

The **HOLLAND TUNNEL** was the first Hudson River vehicular tunnel and was opened to the public



November 13th, 1927. It was considered an engineering achievement and was named after its engineer, Chifford M. Holland. The construction presented many problems that Mr. Holland resolved. The methods and principals employed form the basis for construction of many underwater tunnels throughout the world. It has been designated a National Historic Civil and Mechanical Engineering Landmark. It is 1.5 miles long and connects lower Manhattan with Jersey City, NJ.

**GOETHALS BRIDGE** connects Elizabeth, NJ, with Staten Island, NY and is similar to the Otterbridge Crossing. This bridge is a memorial to Major General George W. Goethals, builder of the Panama Canal and the first consulting engineer for the Port Authority. It opened on June 29th, 1928.

The **OUTTERBRIDGE CROSSING**, named for Eugenius Otterbridge, first PA chairman, was opened on June 29th, 1928. This bridge connects Perth Amboy, NJ, with the Tottenville section of Staten Island, NY. Both the Goethals and Otterbridge provide a 135' clearance, permitting passage of deep-sea vessels on the Arthur Kill waterway, a major industrial path.

The two-level **GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE** designed by Othmar Ammann crosses the Hudson between Manhattan and Fort Lee, NJ. Opened on October 25th, 1931, two upper level lanes were added in 1946 and a lower level in 1962, making it the world's only 14-lane suspension bridge.

The **BAYONNE BRIDGE** is one of the longest steel arch bridges in the world, spanning the Kill Van Kull to connect Bayonne, NJ, with the Port Richmond section of Staten Island. One of the most spectacular bridges in the metropolitan area, it opened on November 15th, 1931. It is also a National Historical Civil Engineering Landmark.

The **LINCOLN TUNNEL**, the world's only three-tube underwater vehicular tunnel, connects mid-town Manhattan with central New Jersey. The three tubes provide important flexibility in traffic handling. The north tube opened in 1945, the center tube in 1937, and the south tube in 1957. Each is over 1.5 miles long.

If this small category sparks your interest and a pursuit of Port Authority of New York/New Jersey covers, you may wish to contact John Williams, who organized, prepared, and maintains a list of all known NY Port Authority covers (currently 177).

*[Ed. John Williams, OH, maintains the list of New York Port Authority covers. There were 177 different covers listed as of 9/96. That's the latest stat I have on these. And, just as an aside, I have all my Port covers from around the world in the front of my Ship Lines collection, sort of as a nice introduction to the larger collection—goes nicely, looks nice]*

