

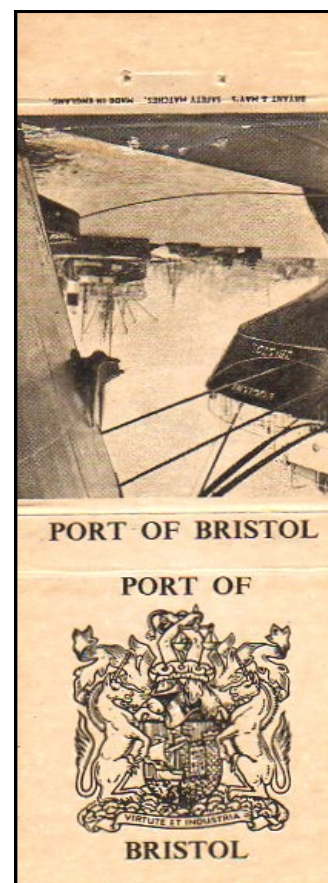
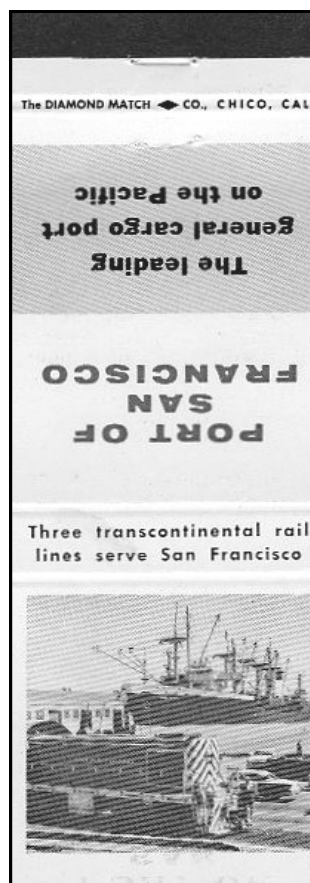
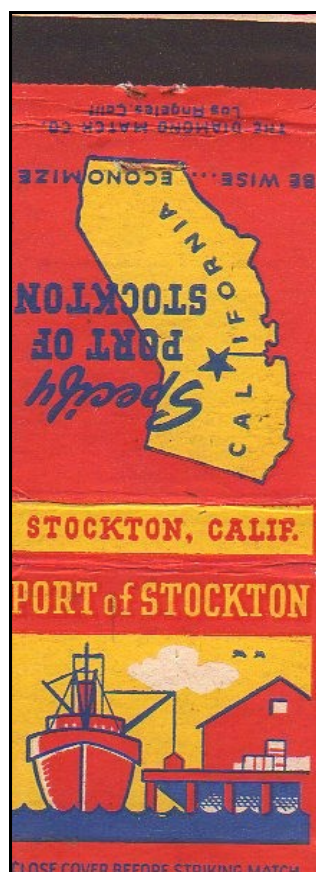
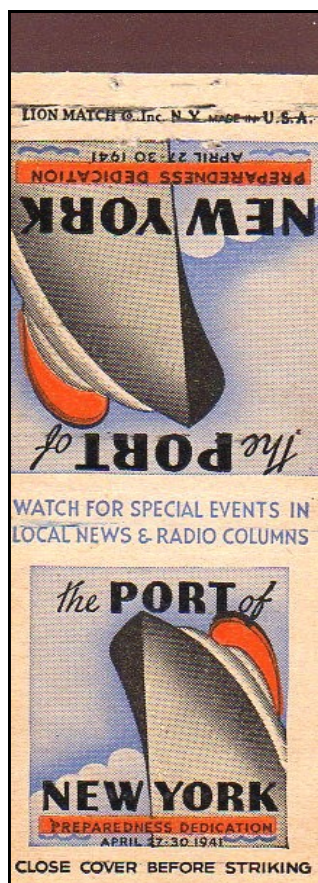
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Ports Of The World

by
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Ports of the world! What pictures the phrase conjures up in the mind...the jolly roger flying over a 40-gunner gliding into Port Royal...a giant cargo ship loading thousands of cases of Dutch beer in Amsterdam Harbor...the Enterprise cruising beneath the Golden Gate. All those ports, and many more, can be yours forever if you happen to collect them in matchcovers.

Ports, of course, go back as far as shipping, itself, as far back as the earliest civilizations or before. Today, many of the world's great cities owe their beginnings and eventual success to the fact that they served as great ports. In fact, if you were to ask yourself, "Which came first, the port or the city?" you



might be surprised to see how often the answer was “the port!” London, for example, was started as the port of “Londinium” by the Romans.

Wars have been fought...just to secure a good port. A case in point was when Russia’s Peter the Great fought Sweden so that he could gain access to the Baltic. Upon winning, he built St. Petersburg in 1703, his new port and capital city.

A survey of the world’s greatest ports is like a who’s who of the world’s great cities. Rotterdam, Holland’s second largest city, actually ranks as the world’s busiest port. Located on the Rhine River delta, 15 miles from the North Sea, it handles more ships and more cargo tonnage than any other port.

Our own port of New York, once the world’s busiest port, itself, is still one of the major ports of the Western Hemisphere. Sitting at the mouth of the Hudson River, in New York City, it ranks as one of the best harbors in the world, deep and well-sheltered, with relatively small tidal movements. Today, it handles 1/10th of all the imports coming into the United States. In one year, nearly 100 million tons of cargo are handled. It covers all the waterways and port facilities within a 25-mile radius of the Statue of Liberty and boasts more than 250 berths for deep, ocean-going vessels.

Canada’s leading port, on the other hand, is Vancouver, B.C., on the West Coast. A little further south, we hit our own major West Coast ports: Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Santos and Buenos Aires, both in Argentina, are South America’s leading ports. Asia’s greatest ports are Hong Kong and Singapore, in China, and Chiba and Yokohama, in Japan. You probably wouldn’t be able to guess Africa’s leading port (although Boggie would)...Casablanca, Morocco!

Over the years, many such ports have issued their own matchcovers and boxes, some of which are shown here. There are some fine old covers in this group, such as the Beaumont and Stockton covers, and note that “The Port of New York” 20-strike is also dated (April 27-30, 1941).

But the newer covers have plenty to boast about, as well. The “Cleveland World Port” 30-strike is a Foilite-like cover, and there is a “Port of Cleveland” cover which is a Jewel. The real “jewels,” however, are the ‘Rama-types, for full-color photos abound in this category. There are Matchoramas, True-Colors, and various “off-brands.” The Port of Los Angeles, in particular, has at least two such sets. San Diego and New York also have color-photo covers. San Francisco put out a couple of sets (identical, but different colors) with black and white photos. There are at least 13 covers in all for the latter sets.

Ports may certainly be thought of as a distinctive category in and of itself. You don’t hear much about them from collectors, though, so it’s anyone’s guess how the majority go about organizing them. I have my PORTS housed as an introductory adjunct to my SHIP LINES collection, but separated in front of the first album. The covers, themselves, are arranged in alphabetical order. John Williams had at least 177 NY Port Authority covers listed alone, as of 1996, so there must at least be a few hundred covers in the Ports category.

