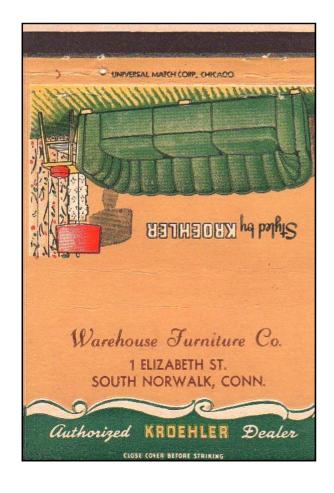
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Royal Flash was a Universal Match Corp. trademark for many of its 40-strike issues. They were produced from 1936 right up to the end of Universal in 1987, I believe. The late Andy Anderson, MO, reported having 9,301 in July 1996, but he may have included Universal's other 40-strike type, *Billboard*, in that figure. In any event, there are definitely a lot of them!





Well, what does Royal Flash have to offer the collector? And, right off the bat, I've boxed myself into a corner...I don't see that they have anything particularly exciting to offer. [Oh God! Now I'm going to hear from all the Royal Flash collectors!] I mean, these are 40-strikes, and I've always thought that, since most collectors don't specifically collect 40-strikes as such, collectors that do have to be really into 40-strikes. They have to not mind that 40-strikes take up twice the space, twice the number of pages, twice the number of albums, etc. All that's alright; it's just that 40-strikes in general have never had any special attraction for me...but that may be just me.

Universal did a great job on naming the type...Royal Flash...Exciting! Dynamic!...But the name has nothing to do with the characteristics of the cover. There's nothing regal about it; it doesn't flash, twinkle, or glow. In fact, I don't see any significant difference at all between it and Universal's other 40-strike, Billboard. Indeed, if the telltale trademark doesn't appear on the inside of the cover, I haven't discovered any way to actually tell if it is a Royal Flash, since both types were apparently produced during pretty much the same time frame. One doesn't normally see the Billboard trademark on the earlier 40-strikes, though. So, does that mean all the earlier issues were Royal Flash, trademark not withstanding? All this would lead me to believe the differentiation was basically marketing rather than some new process. Perhaps some ex-Universal salesperson who's now a collector could shed some clarification on that theory.

Boy, it sounds as if I'm doing a hatchet job on Royal Flashes! They're certainly as collectible as many another type. I collect them, myself, but only because they're conjunctives to my own personal want areas. Thus, I have Royal Flashes in with my Military, Banks, Christmas, and the like. (There were quite a few *Royal Flash* issues in the Military category, by the way.) All in all, I think you'll have to make up your own mind on this category.

