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Royal Flash

by
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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 notwithstanding? 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.

