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Spot Strikers

by
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Often called “Odd Strikers,” Spot Strikers have always been popular with collectors because they are so unique. They’re the only covers that have the strikers as an actual part of the cover design. They’re also the only covers that have strikers in unusual shapes. On the Hitler cover (*left—one of the most famous covers in the hobby*), the striker is Hitler’s pants; on the American Shippers cover (*right*), the striker is on the girlie’s pants. On the following page, you’ll see strikers as pants (*again*), golfing hole, a rock, and a race track.



Spot Strikers were the product of the Lion Match Co. They first appeared around 1941 and were produced through the 1940s and 1950s, the golden age of matchcovers. When Lion actually stopped production is unclear, but, looking through my own small collection, none look older than the 1960's as the latest. And, of course, by definition, there are no front or back strikers, here, so one can't judge time periods that way.

By the way, don't spend a lot of time looking for a "Spot Striker" trademark; you won't find it. I've never seen an actual "Spot Striker" or "Odd Striker" trademark, and I don't believe that Lion ever actually used either term, at least not officially. Both may simply be terms that hobbyists, over the years, have applied to these covers.

Almost all of these very interesting covers are 20 and 30-strikes. There are some 40s, but they're uncommon in this category. Many of the 20-strikes are also Lion



Contours.

As a matter of fact, lot of the Spot Strikers are conjunctives. Not surprising, perhaps, because these were more custom-made, this cover was more expensive to produce. Thus, you'll often find them to be "merged" with other more expensive types. There are Displays, Contours, and lots of Features.

And there are lots of other conjunctives, for you're likely to find all sorts of other categories in the form of Spot Strikers. The Hitler cover pictured on the front page is also a World War II Patriotic; the American Shippers cover is also a Girlie. Pictured below is a Bowling cover, a Country Club, and a Famous Place.

Aside from its uniqueness, the Spot Striker is also popular because of its age. Most are now between 60-70 years old. Also, of course, they just don't make 'em anymore! (*at least not domestically*)

So, what kind of collection can you expect to put together? The largest collection I have any data on is that of John Williams, OH, who had 375 as of November 2005, but that figure is undoubtedly larger now. Carmine Arpino, CT, had 611 on his Spot Striker listing as of July 2009.

As you could probably guess, this isn't an easy category to collect in. There aren't a lot of these floating around to begin with, and these are the type of covers that are collected even by non-collectors, simply because they're so unusual. So, a part of the limited supply is being siphoned off in that direction. You will be able to obtain the more common ones by trading *and, surprisingly, the Hitler cover is fairly common*), but your best overall bet is to watch the auctions and bid when you can. You should always put the word out to your collectors to keep an eye out for you, as well.

