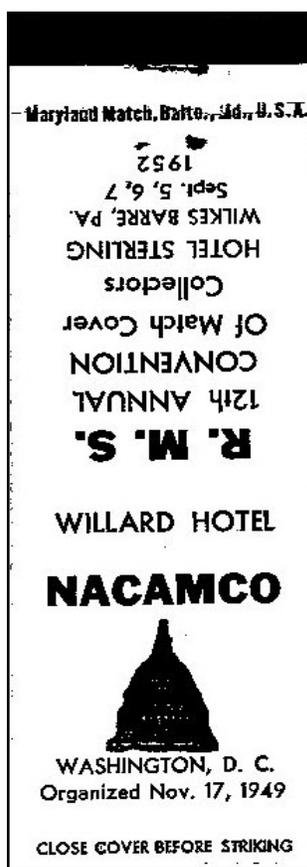
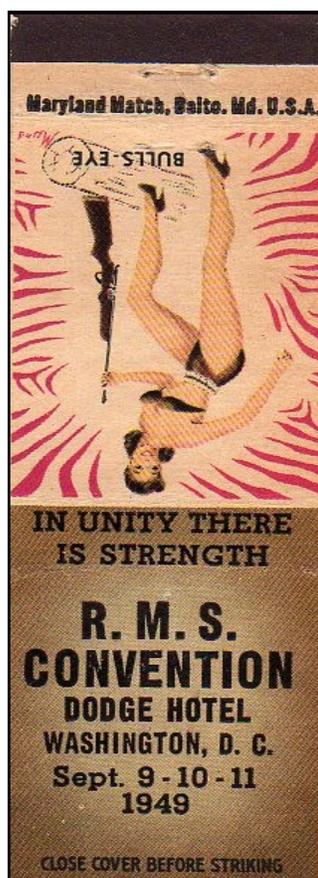
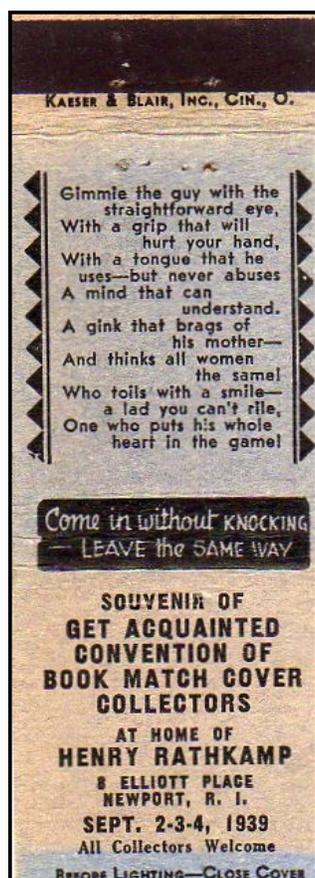


Convention

Oh, where to begin! We're talking *thousands!* We're talking sets galore! We're talking the entire history of RMS!

RMS isn't the only convention that covers have been issued for, of course, but just from what I have in my Dated collection, I'd say that some 95% of the covers in this category at least mention the RMS convention. Also, I should point out at the onset here that when a collector says he collects "Conventions", he means *hobby* conventions, not restaurant conventions, or medical conventions; nothing out of the hobby.

So, where to begin?—At the beginning! And the beginning begins with this 1939 Kaeser & Blair cover issued for the "Get Acquainted Convention" at Henry Rathkamp's home, pre-dating the formation of RMS, itself (apparently, this is a 1939 3-color set). But, from then to 1951, there were only a few convention covers issued. In 1940, Tom Torrent had a 2 color set issued for the first annual meeting. In, 1941, 43, 45, 46, and 47 there were no covers issued. 1943 and 1945 had no Conventions. In 1942 the list states that no official sets were printed; however, there were 23 Patriotic cover stock design on rear, front plain with names of 23 different collectors autographed on them. During this period, there was the War, of course. 1948 had 8 sets or single issued. The same for the next couple of years, 8-10 sets or singles. 1953 was when collectors really started to issue covers. Tom Gray went through his whole collection to count them. Many years there were 250 to 300 covers issued. One year had 451! It has dropped off considerably. The last 5 years we have had only 60-70 covers issued. "I think it is the expense of the covers and the very limited selection in cover styles offered but match companies." (Tom Gray)



Sets!

Perusing these covers, one sees the names of most of the ‘greats’ of the hobby—Rathkamp, Damron, Tripodi, Riggs, Oliver, Rush, Cooper, Conner, Perkins, Spell, Abbott, Marks, Higgs, Polick, and so many more over the next six decades. Also calling from the past are those clubs that are just a memory now—NACAMCO, Golden Gate, Old Dominion, Redwood Empire, Delchester, Sunshine State, Great Lakes (the old one!), Mid-West, Western Reserve, Horseshoe Curve, and others.

The largest number of covers, here, is in sets—lots of Girlie and Hillbilly sets, Raised-Ink and Christmas sets, and the like. Not a lot of Fancy covers to be seen. And interestingly, enough, most of these covers are *not* from the major manufacturers of the day—not Universal, or Diamond, or Lion. Perhaps it was cheaper to go with the smaller companies or jobbers, or perhaps the larger companies had minimum order requirements that were just too large for small jobs such as these.

Most of these are 20-strikes, of course, but all the other common sizes are there, as well. The earliest 30-strike I have is from 1951 (compliments of Lion match Co.); the earliest 40-strike, 1951; the earliest 10-strike, 1958; the earliest Jewelite, 1973. The first convention box I have comes from 1982. I have a Jewel for the 1987 convention, but it’s a front-strike, so I’m assuming that it was printed on an old blank.

My interest in Convention covers comes from the conjunctives to be found throughout the category, especially Dated (and most of them are Dated!), but it’s a category that has a lot to offer to those collectors who might be interested. It’s never been one of the big, super categories, but it’s always had its fans, probably starting right from the 1950s.

Tom Gray, IA, had 12,480 RMS Convention covers as of earlier this year. He’s still looking for the last some 252. Art Bustorff did the listing, covering 1940-1966. Clarence Ginder extended it to 1995 or thereabouts. Tom Gray maintains the listing now, with approximately 12,732 such covers identified. He sometimes has problems getting the covers to list from current conventions, so if you have any made be sure and send Tom the single or set. I know he’d appreciate it.

[Special thanks to Tom Gray, IA, for his help here]

