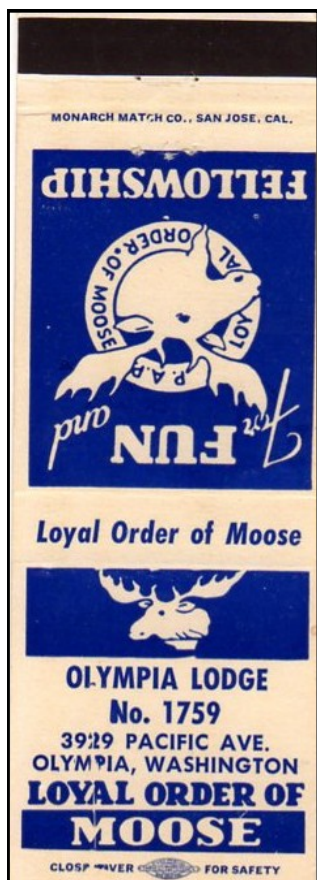


Collecting Moose

by
Mike Prero

Almost two million members make up the two components of the fraternal organization known as Moose International. Their membership is held in any one of some 2,000 Lodges and 1,600 Chapters throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Bermuda. Moose International headquarters is approximately 38 miles west of Chicago at Mooseheart, Illinois.

The Moose fraternal organization was founded in the late 1800s with the modest goal of offering men an



opportunity to gather socially. It was just the two remaining Indiana Lodges that kept the Moose from disappearing altogether, until the fall of 1906, when James J. Davis became just the 247th member of the Loyal Order of Moose. It was he who pointed the organization to its present direction of community service to children. On July 27, 1913, several thousand Moose men and women gathered under a rented circus tent and placed the cornerstone for Mooseheart, Indiana. But Davis and his Moose colleagues thought the fraternity should do more--this time for aged members who were having trouble making ends meet in retirement, and in the fall of 1922, Moosehaven, Florida, was opened. Membership mushroomed, new goals were added and accomplished...and the rest is history! [<http://www.mooseintl.org/public/default.asp>]

Given the number of lodges and the 100+ year history of the organization, there should be thousands of covers available. Oddly, though, there doesn't seem to be, at least not in proportion to the lodge numbers, especially considering that entire sets and other multiple covers were issued by the same lodge. And, certainly, there are anywhere as many as Elks covers. I currently have 1,345, myself, but Donna Longenecker, PA, reported having 2,303 as of January 2001.

I love Moose. Besides being a long series, there are Patriotics, Girlies, and more conjunctives. Not many fancy, but what the hey! Most are stock, front-strike 20-strikes, as the ones shown in this article. It's a sure bet that the annual number of issues has declined the last several years and undoubtedly will continue, but, for the collector, there are certainly a few thousand out there already, so the thrill of the hunt is still there, as well. Just advertise to your traders that you're looking for L.O.O.Moose covers...Ask, as ye shall receive! They pop up in auctions from time to time, as well...and always keep an eye peeled for estate sales, collections going on the block, etc.

If anyone has a collection for sale or covers to trade, I'm always interested!

