

# Forties

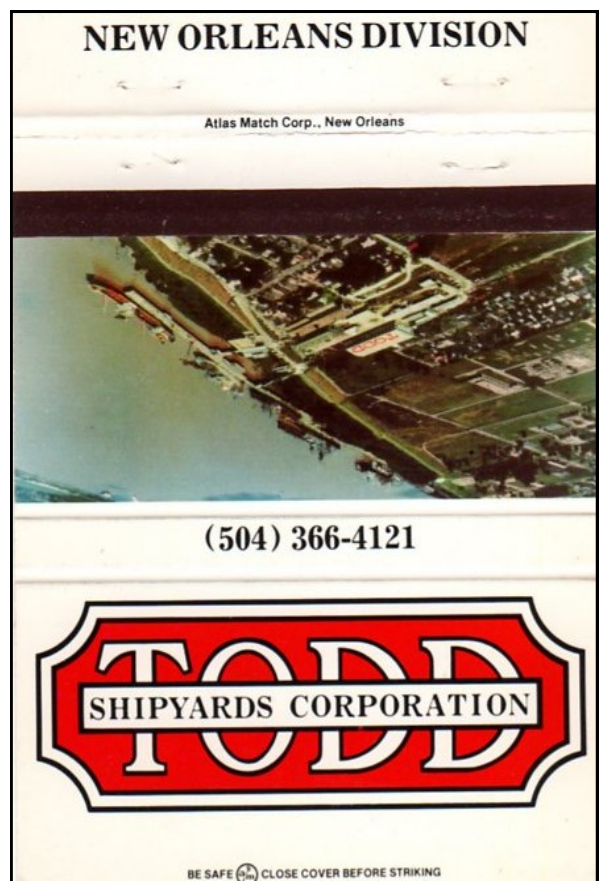
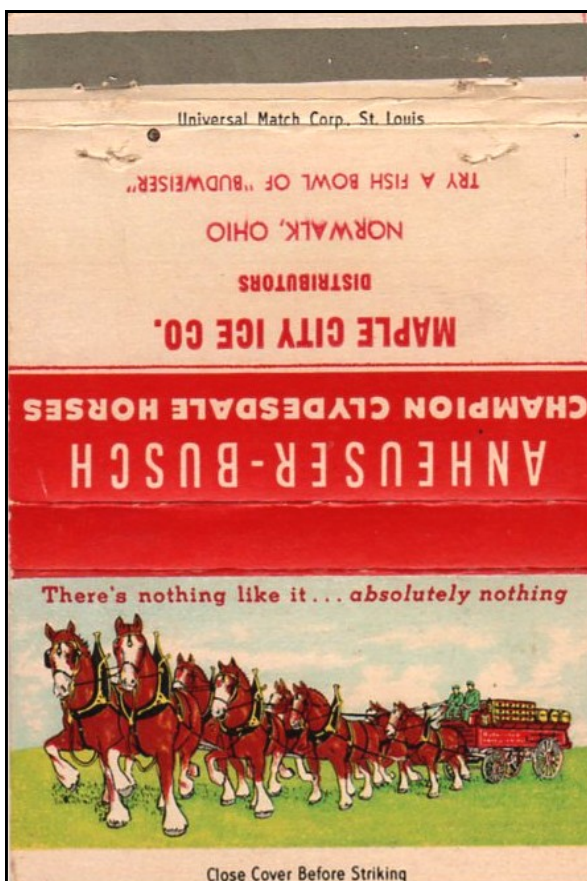
by Mike Prero

Not to denigrate the bread and butter of 40's collectors, but, over all, don't you think that 40's is a pretty lack-luster category? That used to be my impression, but now that I'm sitting down and actually focused on the topic, I can see...wait!....What are those?....Why, they seem to be glimmerings.... Yes!...Glimmerings of hope. There *do* seem to be bright spots here and there.

But, first things first. Forties have quite a history, going back farther than even 30-strikes. Advance Match Co. first introduced the size in 1931. After that, it wasn't that long before most of the other major manufacturers jumped on the bandwagon and began issuing 40-strikes of their own, including Match

Corp.,  
Monarch,  
Maryland,  
Diamond,  
American,  
Columbia,  
Atlas, and  
others.

A few companies even issued multiple types of 40s. Lion had the 22 "Feature", the 40-STICK, and, later, its regular 40-size issue, for example. Monomatch (not an actual match manu-



facturer) had its Mono-major, Deluxe Monomajor, and Foil Mono-major.

The most prolific manufacturer was Universal, by far, with its Royal Flash and Billboard issues. It's my impression that all of the Universal 40s that bore no trademark at all were either one of those types. Early on, both trademarks were often used together on the inside of the cover, but in later years the Royal Flash notation became much less frequent, while the Billboard moniker became much more common.

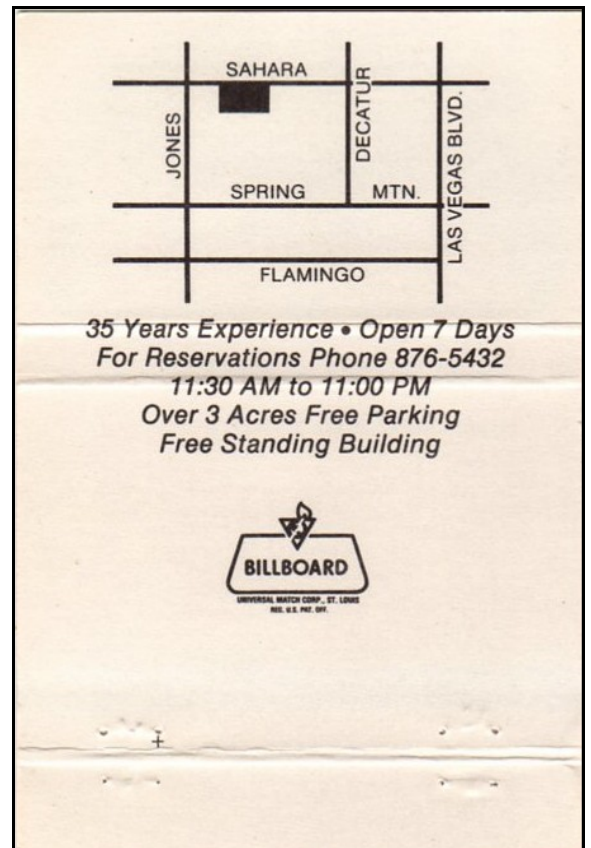
Universal started issuing its Royal Flash 40-strikes in 1936, but it was actually World War II that enabled not only Universal's 40s to become popular, but the 40s size in general. It was then that the 40-strike matchbook was used as a postcard. Most, if not all, of us have seen the World War II Military 40s with the square or rectangle on the inside for placing a postage stamp and the small warning about not mailing matches. These were by and large designed for military personnel and proved both convenient and popular.

Universal's Royal Flash 40s tended to be especially attractive, often sporting not only attractive, custom art work on the outside, but on the inside, as well. And, somewhat surprisingly, the inside art work was often in color, not just black and white graphics. No surprise then, that a number of collectors over the years have focused in on Royal Flash as a specific want area. The late Andy Anderson, MO, reported having over 9,300 in his collection in 1996.

And, certainly, the US 40-strikes weren't all by themselves. Strike Rite issued 40s in Canada; Bryant & May had their 'Sovereign' in England. Foreign 40s are relatively few, though. But, that's to be expected, since foreign matchbooks have always been overshadowed by matchboxes.

Although most collectors certainly have 40s in their collections (simply because there are 40-strike

issues in their particular categories (40-strike Lobsters, etc.), not many collectors actually collect 40s in and of themselves. I assume the main reason for that is the size. They take up twice the amount of space, demand twice the number of pages, and so forth. Still, it's a big category, and in a big category one can usually find reasons for collecting such.



BAR and LOUNGE

NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER, BETHESDA, MD.

**ROYAL FLASH**  
BILLBOARD MATCH  
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.  
MANUFACTURED EXCLUSIVELY BY  
UNIVERSAL MATCH CORP.  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

LOWRY FIELD  
Denver, Colo.

**ROYAL FLASH**  
BILLBOARD MATCH  
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.  
MANUFACTURED EXCLUSIVELY BY  
UNIVERSAL MATCH CORP.  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

UNIVERSAL MATCH WASHINGTON, D. C.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

IWO JIMA MEMORIAL,  
in Arlington, Va.,  
commemorates the  
flag raising on  
Mount Suribachi  
on Feb. 23, 1945.  
The statue, by  
Felix de Weldon,  
was dedicated in  
1954.

PLEASE CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING

AMERICAN NO. 60 870 244 8280 - PRODUCT OF DENMARK

www.watergapcountryclub.com  
570-476-0300 • 866-GOLF-GAP  
OUTINGS • OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS  
FINE DINING • BANQUETS • GOLF  
18 HOLE CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF COURSE  
**Water Gap**  
COUNTRY CLUB

MOUNTAIN ROAD-DELAWARE WATER GAP, PA

DELAWARE WATER GAP, PENNA.

BE SAFE • CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING