

# Collecting Political

by  
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Here's a nostalgic part of Americana...Political covers! Here, you can trace most of the major races and contenders of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, so far: FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, JFK, Nixon, Carter, etc. The covers are colorful; they cover the campaign slogans that would later be as famous as the politicians, themselves: "Win With Wilkie", "I Like Ike", "Tippecanoe And Tyler, Too!" (Oops! That one's a little early for matchcovers...but you get the idea)...And all this is just at the Presidential level!

Any cover of any political contest or political advertising qualifies for this category. Those covers with dates and locations are definitely preferred over others (except for national contests, where the information is well known anyway). There are two major sub-categories here, though, each often collected as separate collections: Major Political, referring to Presidential, gubernatorial, etc. [*did you ever wonder how they got 'guber' out of 'governor'?!*] (I actually take my Major Political down to senatorial); and Minor Political, referring to local races and positions (county commissioners, judges, mayors, etc.

Most of those who collect in the area only collect the Major covers. That's where all the glitz and name recognition are. There's such a plethora of Minor covers, most of which have no date and location, that any initial interest is often stymied early on. You could certainly put together a nice display or mini-collection of your local



area's politics—city, county, state. Public libraries, service organizations, etc. are always looking for such displays.

The earliest known Political cover, as far as I know, is “Al Smith for President, 1928”. That gives Political collectors some 82 years to play with, so far. Within those eight decades are some quite historical and especially collectible covers. The 1940 Wilkie Pull-Quick pictured here is an example of the oldies that exist in this category. On the newer side, there are patriotic sets issued for Goldwater, Nixon, JFK, and others. There are at least two different “sticky backs” issued for Eisenhower, etc.

Another interesting facet of this category is that many of these covers carry a photo of the candidate, which lends some additional history and character to the covers. This also means this category would be rich diggin's for, say, a black & white photo collector....hmmmm....such as myself!

No doubt about it; this is a very interesting category. I used to think this was a rather limited category, though, since the covers only appear, for the most part, during political campaigns, but, after collecting them, myself, for awhile, I've found that, numerically, it's really a big category (if you collect Minor and Major)...because you have/had potentially covers being produced from every town and hamlet in the land...since they all steadily have elections!

Some stats: I've got 1,941 Minor (and I only started a couple of years ago); Dave Kennaday, PA, reported 1,108 Major, as of October 1987; Dave later reported at total of 7,535 for all Political covers as of December 2000. Although there is no Political listing, as such, there *is* at least a Presidential listing (Pat Griffiths, 1987-1988). I don't believe it's ever been updated, though.

