

## What Constitutes A Damaged Cover?

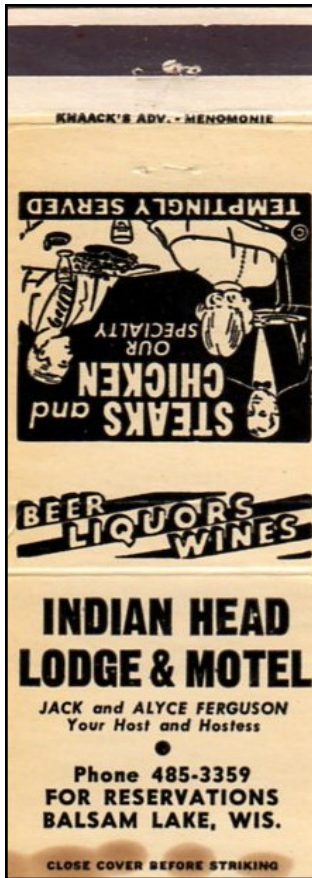
Damaged is damaged! Although, that's a fairly vague term. There are all sorts of different types of damage, and somewhere in there is the dividing line for most collectors, I imagine, between "Well, this is damaged, but I'll use it until something better comes along"...and..."This is just too damaged to use under any circumstances."

The goal of any collector, as far as individual covers are concerned, is a wanted cover in pristine condition. Often, however, that goal is elusive, and so the collector settles for something less. It's not all that easy to find covers in pristine condition to begin with, and older covers...especially ones that have circulated over the decades within the hobby, migrating through several collectors' collections...often bear the marks of repeated handling, going in and out of slotted pages, and so forth.

As noted above, damage comes in several forms and in just as many degrees. For example, there is...

1. Chipped corners (almost always caused by tight-fitting slots cutting into the cover)
2. Bent corners (usually caused by trying to force a cover into tight-fitting slots)
3. Frayed side edges (usually caused by fitting the cover into too-snug hand-sewn pages)
4. Discolored strikers (caused by oxidation and...?)
5. Brittle strikers (more chemical goings on with the striker material)
6. Spots and stains (due to...carelessness!)
7. Creases (due to rough handling or rough storage)
8. Faded colors (caused by prolonged exposure to sunlight)
9. Missing strikers (from being bobtailed or breaking off due to brittleness)
10. Unraveling threads on Satin covers (caused by wear and tear)
11. Bubbling and curling of plastic coating on Mirro-Gloss covers (due to...age?)
12. Glue (from pasting insides of covers in albums, etc.)
13. Holing (from affixing covers to walls, etc. with tacks or small nails)
14. Ripped strikers (caused by inept shucking)
15. Unintentional embossing (by match heads being pressed into covers)
16. General beat-up appearance (caused by wear and tear, usually on edges, especially on saddle)

In addition to all this, there are errors, but, since those are the result of production processes *before* the cover goes into circulation, errors aren't being considered here.



Still, that's quite a smorgasbord in any event. Depending on the degree, any one of those types of damage could be grounds for discarding, even by the 'lenient' collector.

But, just on the face of it, where would you draw the

**Minor:**

- Chipped corners
- Bent corners
- Frayed side edges
- Discolored strikers
- Brittle strikers
- Spots and stains
- Creases
- Faded colors
- Unraveling threads
- Loose plastic coating
- Glue inside
- Embossing
- Beat-up

**Major:**

- Missing strikers
- Holing
- Ripped strikers
- Severe creasing
- Major staining

line between keeping and not? Although we may all have our own standards, we might begin by sorting our damage types here into minor and major categories:



ries:



Well, seen this way, it doesn't look so bad! Of course, you'd hope to replace *any* damaged cover, but, assuming the degree of damage wasn't extreme, I could live with any of the minor types of damage (this is for covers I really needed, it should be noted; certainly not for trading material). Personally, though, I'd draw the line at covers suffering from the major damage types seen below.

But, these are all just my own standards. As noted previously, other collectors would probably have slightly to significantly differing standards of their own.

