

Oldest Printed Match?

TitanicItems.com says this is the oldest known printed matchbook, but doesn't give any definitive dating.

“Contrary to popular beliefs, the handmade Mendelson Opera matchbook, said to be the oldest and made by the Diamond Match Co., was actually made by Binghamton...From rare modern pictures taken by a fellow collector Jeff Ackman, the Binghamton name on the saddle (or top) is now mysteriously missing when compared to the 1941 Life magazine photo...see the difference here! This has left the entire hobby believing in the story that a group young desperate entertainers, bought a box of blank Diamond matchbooks, hand-printed an ad with clipped pictures and gave them out on street corners and created the first matchbook ad. This is now possibly proved to be inaccurate.



The thought that they copied the idea from already seen printed Binghamton books is only a strong theory, but it does make sense. The only two known, Fendrich Tobacco book above and the Piso Cure book, both have printed sticks and full cover ads. Either the Opera crew made their own by looking at near exact examples or the Binghamton Match Co. got a hold of an Opera book, with about 100 given away on distant street corners (or Opera House patrons), and had a brainstorm. What we do know is that the Mendelson book was made by covering up a Binghamton book to include the staple, with paper and pictures” [Thanks to Duane Ready for this]