

Contours

by
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“Contour” is a trademark of the Lion Match Co. and refers to an interesting die-cut cover which proved to be the forerunner of Universal’s Jewelite. It is, in fact, a smaller version of the Jewelite. Although, to give credit where credit is due, it should be noted that the Contour was not only issued far before, but it more creative in its various shapes, as can be seen with the examples here.

Contours were produced by Lion from 1951-1993, although the difference between the earlier issues and the more modern issues is readily apparent. The latter have thinner stock, poorer art work, less creativity. Indeed, the more modern issues no longer carry the “Contour” trademark, so a convincing argument can be made that the latter issues are “Contour-like” rather than true contours. Thus, when a collector speaks of “Contours”, he’s undoubtedly referring to the issues of the 1950s, which were by far the best of the lot.



A good many of the older Contours were also Features, and since Contours are hard to come by, when you run across such a conjunctive, you always have to make that agonizing decision as to which of your collections to put it in, the Contours or the Features. Or, speaking of conjunctives, in any number of other collections, as well, since, for example, some of the most beautiful lobsters are to be found on these older Contour covers.

Contours are few and far between for collectors these days. The golden age of these covers ended long ago, with the end of the peak for Features and the end of the 1950's. And, now, of course, all of the Fancies have come to an end.

Most Contours are the length of a normal 20-strike, but because of the flared sides, are as wide as a 30-strike. There are also a few 30-strike and 40-strike sizes, and I've seen a couple of Giant Contours, as well. All will fit conveniently into the appropriate slotted pages for 20s, 30s, 40s, etc. But, you run its problems with the plastic pages; the pockets are too narrow for the flared sides, so you have to put 20's in the 30's pockets, etc. They certainly make for eye-catching displays, though!

It's a tough category, though, and to the fatalist this means you might as well give up on this category. But, to the optimist, this only means the challenge and the resulting rewards are all the greater!

You can still get a very few in trade; a few more are available at the auctions from time to time, but don't forget that the majority of older, collectible covers are still sitting in jars, cans, and boxes in basements, garages, and attics all over the country, in the possession of non-collectors. Advertise locally that you are looking for covers. You'll be surprised at the treasures you'll find, occasionally right in your own back yard. And, you'll be doing the hobby a service, as well, since you'll be bringing hitherto unknown covers into the hobby.

