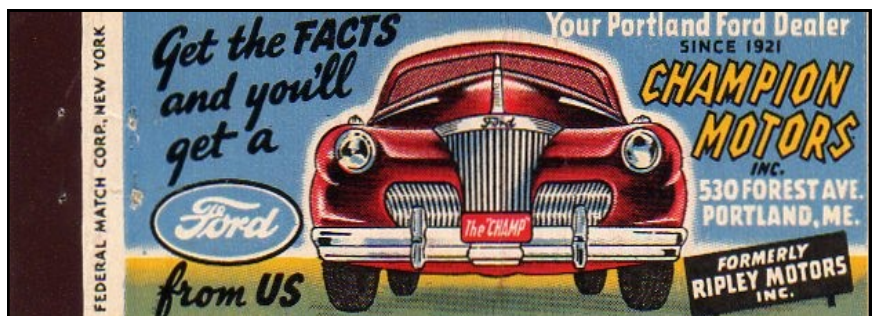
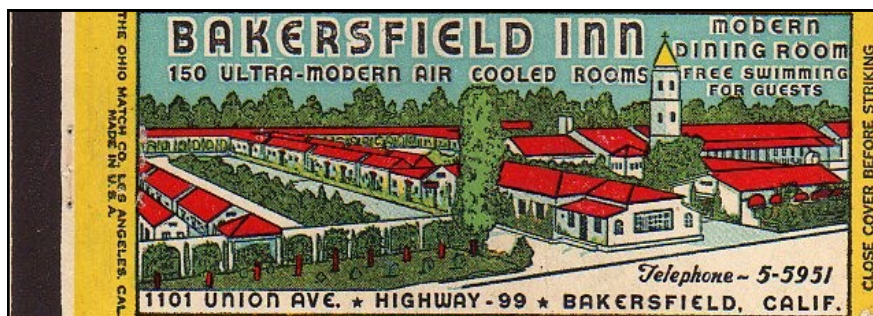


Full-Lengths

by
Mike Prero



Full-lengths, until recent years, perhaps, have always been popular with collectors. They offer something that no other cover-type offers - a design that spans the entire length of the cover, at least from the bottom tip to the beginning of the striker, or thereabouts. More room means a better opportunity for a larger and nicer graphic, and that's what many Full-lengths are known for—Full-length Diners, Full-length Trucks, Full-length Railroads, etc.

There are two kinds of Full-lengths: horizontal (where the design runs sideways) and vertical (where the design runs up and down). Both types are shown here, but the vast majority of Full-length covers are horizontals, running at a ratio of about 100:1. There are also 3/4 Full-lengths (where the design runs for 3/4 of the cover), but those are not accepted as Full-length covers.

The horizontal designs come in both directions. Some go from right-to-left; others go from left-to-right.

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I don't suppose it makes much difference to collectors...until it comes time to put them in albums. Then you have to decide whether to put them in all with the striker on top, all with the striker on the bottom, or both, according to which way the design is going.

Full-lengths go back at least to 1918 (I have a Full-length Diamond Safety First). I also have some Lion Safety-Firsts, but they're from the 1920s. By the early 1930s, Full-lengths had become more common. Indeed, many of the early World's Fair covers, including the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress group, were Full-lengths, both horizontal and vertical.

I don't think anyone can say for certain exactly which company can be credited with coming up with the Full-length idea first, but, as things stand now, I'd definitely opt for Diamond. It wasn't all that long before most, if not all, of the other companies came out with their own Full-lengths. Ohio, especially, put out many beautiful examples.

Full-lengths come in all sizes—10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, Jewels, and Midgets. Most, of course, are 20-strikes. The vast majority are also drawings (some are even just all text), but there are many attractive full-color photo Full-lengths among the many Matchoramas and the like.

Full-lengths constitute, numerically, one of the bigger categories in the hobby. Dan Bitter has over 7,000...and that's just 20-strikes!

