

Diamonds Are Forever!

You bet! Even though Diamond Quality hasn't been on covers since 1938, "DQs" will be forever on collectors' wish lists. They're not the oldest; they're not the rarest...but just watch that face light up when a DQ appears. "Diamond Quality," rather than being a manumark or a trademark, is a "footer." It appears at the bottom of the cover, along side the CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING MATCH. Coming after Diamond's other famous footers, SAFETY FIRST and DIAMOND MATCH, the DQ first came out in 1925. Earlier DQs were significantly longer than the later ones. Not surprisingly, DQ's are difficult to come by.

As with any old cover, you may notice that many DQs have strikers that have not aged gracefully. They may have browned, oxidized, and become very brittle. Many a full-book DQ has disintegrated in the collector's hands as he tried to remove the staple, or even open it! The deciding factor is how the matchbooks were stored over the years. When you *do* have those DQs open, stripped, and flattened, I'd suggest you store them in plastic pages. The *slit* or *slotted* pages can really tear up the corners of old covers, especially since old covers tend to be thicker than the newer ones.

How many different DQ's exist today? Well, I currently have 4,010 listed [*I don't HAVE these covers, but I have verified that they exist*], but Harry Branchaud's collection in the 1980s numbered 5000+. Of course, Harry started at the ground level. He was going around to cigar stores and tobacco shops back in the 1930s, getting many of those DQs when they were brand new!

DQs, then, have become a highly respected category unto themselves. If you're interested in OLD, look for the Diamonds of the hobby.

DIAMOND CLOSE COVER BEFORE
QUALITY STRIKING MATCH

