

# Florentines

Boy, if I had a nickel for every Florentine I have, I'd have \$6.10!...This is not one of your larger categories! It's too bad, too; these can be really beautiful covers.

"Florentine" was a Universal Match Corp. trademark and denoted a cover with a raised-ink surface in a definite patterned design or a patterned design with a Filigree-type raised-bubble technique. The latter type is often difficult to notice unless the cover is tilted in the light to show the pattern of the bubbled surface. The raised-ink version of the Florentine is much more noticeable and is often truly outstanding (no pun intended!).

Being observant enough to notice the distinctive pattern on the cover is very important for these covers, because the "Florentine" trademark, judging from the covers I have, rarely appears on the inside of the covers.

These covers, which are one of the types that comes under the general heading of "Fancies," come in a variety of sizes, but 30-strikes seem to be the most common, by far.

Unfortunately, Universal stopped making these gems before it closed up shop in the later 1980s, but, judging from the numbers, they certainly weren't widespread at any point in time. The production process was undoubtedly more involved and more expensive than what was called for run-of-the-mill covers, and they never became popular with customers; they were popular with collectors, though! The late Everett Hoy, OH, reported having 300 in 1988. Last time I heard, the late John Williams had 165 listed back in '93.

