

Manufacturer Distribution For U.S. Navy Ships

Of course, one of the burning questions collectors have wondered about over the years is whether or not one particular manufacturer had more or less a lock on the Post-War Navy Ship market....Well, OK, maybe not. But, it *is* interesting to look at how the numbers fall. Perhaps there's an untold story or two to unfold. *[Numbers are based on listed, or scheduled to be listed, covers as of October 2011; covers with no manumark have not been included]*

Pre-War				Post-War		
Diamond	678	58.4%	In the Pre-War covers, Diamond certainly <i>did</i> dominate the field, issuing over half. Lion was responsible for a fifth, and Federal just over half that. You may find it surprising that Universal is in that latter group, but Universal wasn't even formed until 1925, so on December 7th, 1941, the company was only 16 years old, whereas Diamond had already been around for 60 years. You'll notice that Universal had a much better showing	Diamond	673	33.3%
Lion	236	20.3%		Lion	649	32.1%
Federal	147	12.6%		Universal	268	13.2%
Universal	58	5.0%		Ohio	223	11.0%
Maryland	20	1.7%		Monarch	75	3.7%
Ohio	15	1.3%		Match Corp.	25	1.2%
Match Corp.	4	.3%		Superior	14	.6%
Advance M&P	1	-		Maryland	12	.5%
Crown	1	-		American	11	.5%
			Mercury	11	.5%	
			Misc.	63	3.1%	

in the Post-War ships, especially in the later issues.

Crown's showing of only one measly Pre-War cover seems to be surprising, especially since it was located right on the west coast (Los Angeles) with easy access to the Pacific fleet, and even more so since it had a very strong presence in Hawaii at the time. You'd think that it would have had a much stronger showing. On the other hand, Crown only got started in 1933, so it hadn't been around all that long, and the company was gone by 1942, so perhaps it was already in trouble by the time the war was approaching...But still... Perhaps it was a question of politics, with the older, more established companies having more influence with government sources. Although, if that were the case, that would make Ohio an exception, since it had been around since 1895.

In the Post-War ships, Diamond still has the lead, but its share of the market has dropped to a third, with Lion breathing right down its neck. Universal has almost tripled its Pre-War share, and Ohio, which was a minor player in the Pre-War Navy Ship market, is now a respectable competitor. No Federal Post-War issues...That's because Federal, itself, was gone by the time the US entered the war. But, new manufacturers had appeared in the interim between the two wars: Superior (1932), Maryland (1934), Match Corp (1935); and after World War II ended, more entered the market: Monarch (1946), Mercury (1946), and American (1956).

Note the absence of 'jobber' manumarks in the Pre-War ships...no "A&H Advert. Co." or "Johnson Sales Notions"...the type of manumarks we see all the time in recent decades. Just when did the match manufacturing companies 'relinquish their hold on the manumarks? That's a question for another time.

