



Billboard



Billboard was Universal's famous trademark for one of its 40-strikes. It actually originated from the Billboard Match Co. sometime soon after 1931. Universal probably gained access to the copyrights when Billboard went out of business. Universal then began producing its own *Billboard* covers in 1936 and apparently continued the line until its own demise in 1987.

Universal also began using another 40-strike trademark in 1936, the *Royal Flash*. All of the earliest dated Universal 40-strikes (from the 1930s) that I have are all *Royal Flash*, but the actual trademark is *ROYAL FLASH BILLBOARD MATCH*. Sometime much later, Universal dropped the *Royal Flash* and just used *Billboard*. I don't know what the difference was supposed to be between *Royal Flash* and *Billboard*, except for the ages. I could never see any.

Billboard proved to be very popular over the years. There's no listing, but the late Andy Anderson's, MO, collection numbered 9,301 as of July 1996, although there's always an inherent problem when collecting a trademark. Sometimes, the trademark's not there! For example, Cameo's almost always carry the trademark inside; Mirro-Gloss covers, on the other hand, rarely carry the actual trademark; and Pearltone is never seen on a cover. If you look at your Universal 40-strikes, the more modern ones, you'll see many are simply blank inside. No *Billboard*. Are they *Billboards*? Or, did Universal see *Billboards* as being a 'notch up' and distinctly different from the 'blank' 40s?

We'd have to have a Universal salesman answer those questions.

