

Small Categories Series

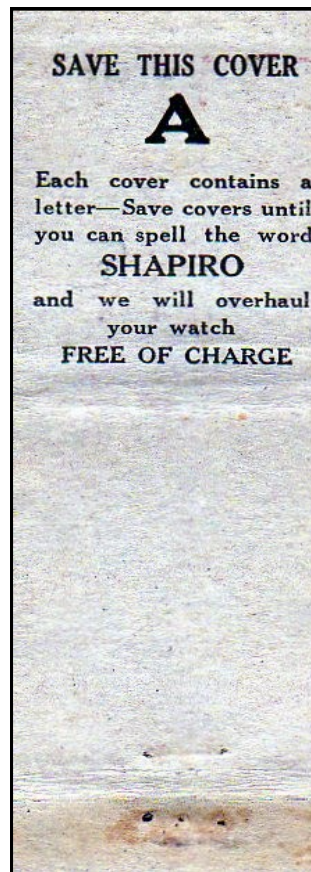
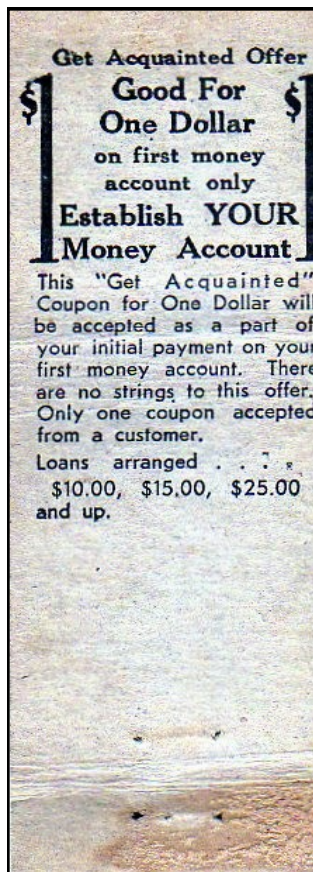
Coupons

What's better than getting something for free? Getting something for free that gets you something *else* for free...or at least at a discount! First you get the matchcover for nothing, and then, upon opening it...wonder of wonders...there's a coupon there for a free gazorninplat. Life is good!

Coca-Cola was the first product to get customers hooked via coupons, starting in 1887! Obviously, though, that wasn't on a matchcover. In 1909, Post distributed what is believed to be the second coupon ever, for a penny off its Grape-Nuts cereal. [*Retailmenot.com*] In the early 1900s, discounts were available on cereal coupons, and then coupon usage really took off in the Great Depression.

By 2009, approximately 3.5 billion coupons were being redeemed, annually, 700,000 more than in 2008. There can't be many adults alive today in the U.S. who haven't used at least one coupon at some point in their lives, and I'll bet that you know of people who still religiously cut out coupons. You don't even have to seek them out; they just magically appear in your mailbox (every day!) in all those flyers and advertisements that most of us then throw in the trash.

According to the *2014 Mid-Year Coupon Report*, 96% of Americans still use coupons, and those shoppers saved a whopping \$3.6 billion last year, thanks to coupons. Still, overall, old-fashioned physical coupons have been in decline since the early 1990s. The high point was 1992, when 7.9 billion discounts were granted with coupons. [*Time Magazine, April 6, 2010*]



Coupons on matchcovers go back to at least the 1920s. They were most prevalent during the 1930s-1950s. I don't think I've ever seen any collector actually specify matchcover coupons as a want area, but they're fairly common on the older covers.

Every once and awhile you'll hear a story about someone who has sent in a coupon to the appropriate company...30 years or so too late!...It might be worth looking into!