

Featuring Full-Lengths! *Service Stations*

Gas Stations have always been pretty popular with collectors, and so have Full-Lengths. Put the two together and you get...some *very* nice covers. Just take a look!

Gas stations are an excellent example of how one invention spawns other inventions. Once you had cars with combustion engines, gas stations had to be developed.

Filling stations, as they were originally called, eventually evolved into 'service stations'. Then, the service disappeared (in more ways than one), and they just became 'gas stations.' The first places that sold gasoline were pharmacies, as a side business. The first actual filling station was the city pharmacy in Wiesloch, Germany, where Bertha Benz refilled the tank of the first automobile on its maiden trip from Mannheim to Pforzheim and back in 1888.

The first in the U.S. was in St. Louis, MO, in 1905. Reighard's Gas Station in Altoona, PA claims that it dates from 1909 and is the oldest existing station in the United States. The first alternative fuel station opened in 2003 in San Diego.

I should take a moment here to explain (once again) why I seem to so often focus on the older, front-strike issues. There are certainly newer, reverse-strike covers falling into the same category, but it's the older covers that sport the best artwork. Newer covers may well be slicker, but you only see this type of art on the older covers.

