

Dealing With Sets

Even though you may not collect sets, as such, you undoubtedly have many of them within your other collections. These are covers which were issued at the same time (unlike “series”) and have a common design, i.e. the popular Joe Camel sets, grocery store sets of presidents or animals, Four Seasons Hotels sets, the Disney-Pepsi set, etc. Sets (along with Series) have that special visual appeal that comes from seeing parts making up a whole. Here, then, the end product really *is* greater than the sum of the parts.

In terms of general cover design, there are two different types: 1) design and text is the same on all covers; only the color varies; 2) design and text is the same on one panel or one side, but different pics or themes on the inside of each cover or on one of the outside panels.

In terms of numbers, a set can be made up of three or more covers (I suppose, technically, you could have a set of two, but three seems to have been the standard minimum issued by industry manufacturers over the decades. Sets of four and five seem to be the most common, but there are sets that run into the hundreds—some of the mid-1930s Group I sets, for example.

Putting sets in albums is no problem if the individual cover differences are on the outside, but what do you do when the outsides are all the same and the insides are different? What I do, with my Bank sets for example, is simply put in the first set cover so the outside shows and then the other set covers so the *inside* shows. That way, the first cover shows what the outside design is like, and the other covers show what the different pics, etc. are. If you have a dupe of any of the covers, you can use that as the first cover to mount, and then you have the entire set left to show the different insides. Of course, this is assuming you’re mounting these covers on slit pages. If you’re using plastic pages, you can put all the covers in the same way, since you only have to turn the page to see the insides.

Here’s another thing to keep in mind. Often, the sets with different insides will have a manufacturer’s design number on each cover (i.e., “526-1,” “526-2,” etc.). Say you have a set that goes up to “526-10,” but you only have eight covers—you’re missing “526-5” and “526-9.” Those covers may not exist. The manufacturer may have designed it as a 10-cover set, but the advertiser may have only ordered eight out of the ten designs. Usually, the collector has no way of knowing unless he eventually comes across the missing covers.

