

Dates To Remember!

by
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Dates? Who wants to remember dates?! [*and as a history teacher, it takes a lot of self control to say that, I assure you!*] But, dates are the matrix that holds otherwise random information together. With dates, that information becomes organized and presents an understandable picture of the whole... especially important when dealing with history...as in the history of the modern domestic match industry that ultimately led to our hobby! So, let's start with...

1880: Diamond Match Co. forms, CT. (production doesn't begin until 1881). The American match industry certainly didn't start with Diamond, but Diamond would go on to spearhead book match production all the way through the 1940s.

1892: Our hero, Joshua Pusey, US, invents the matchbook. Although...there's some doubt as to whether or not he really deserves the credit (!) Rich Greene, NJ, for example, has done some research in this area and may have come up with evidence that (1) someone else beat him to it, and (2) Pusey's matchbook didn't look anything like the matchbook we're familiar with.

1893-94: Binghamton Match Co., NH, forms and issues the first machine-made matchbook (Piso matchbook)

1894: [*trivia, but it's interesting*] *New York Dramatic Mirror* runs first newspaper reference to matchbooks (about Binghamton)

1894-95: Diamond Match Co. buys Pusey's patent rights and promptly, as the story goes, sues Binghamton out of existence.

1903: First phillumenic club organized, Japan (for labels)

1910: Diamond Match Co. produces the first non-phosphorous match

1925: First huge matchbook order (from Diamond Match Co.) (Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, I believe). This helped in both making the matchbook a household item and taking the focus off matchboxes.

1925: Universal Match Co. forms. It would be the industry leader from the 1950s-1987.

1927: First back-striker.

1932: Blue Moon Match Label Club forms, NY. This is the earliest American phillumenic club that I'm aware of.

1933: First World's Fair covers appear (Century of Progress, Chicago). This was to be the impetus for RMS several years later, as a number of the key founders traced their collecting interest to these covers...which they collected personally from the Fair!

1935: First commercial matchcover albums appear (by Gromey of NY [date approximate])

1937: Match industry begins switching from Tall (XL) stock to shorter stock to accommodate needs of vending machines.

1938: First widespread appearance of back-strikers (Ohio Match Co.)

1939: First matchcover collectors' meeting, Henry Rathkamp's home, Newport, RI (counted as first RMS convention)

1941: RMS forms in Pocasset, MA

1941-1945: A number of match companies disappear due to the material shortages of World War II (Advance Match Co., American Pullmatch Co., Crown Match Co., National Match Co., US Match & Printing Co., Continental Match Co., Jersey Match Co., King Midas Match Co., Manhattan Match Co., Republic Match Co., Standard Match Co.)

1948: *[also trivial, but also interesting]* First matchcover exhibits at a convention

1973: Industry mandated to switch from front-strikers to reverse-strikers

1978: Last front-strikers issued *[manufacturers were allowed to use up their existing Stock before the above 1973 law kicked in]*

1980-88: Decline of American match industry

- 1980 - Maryland Match Co. relocates to Canada, 1981
- 1981 - Universal Match sold to Swedish Match AB, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1985 - Ohio Match Co. listed as foreign corporation
- 1986 - Diamond Match Co. closes its Springfield, MA, plant
- 1987 - Ohio Match Co. defunct
- 1987 - Universal discontinues all fancy covers (Jewel, Jewelite, Uniglo, Cameo, etc.)
- 1988 - Universal closes its last US plant

2001: Cougar Match Corp. closes - last Canadian manufacturer

2015: Kevin Saucier, CA, purchased a full-book Lindbergh for \$6000. A new record