

The Rising Interest In ‘Peripherals’



For the last ten years or so, collector interest in hobby “peripherals” has steadily been increasing and continues its strong upward trend. “Peripherals” are items related to the match industry but are not actually matchcovers. Included here would be match ‘hardware,’ which could include everything from match-making machinery to match safes. Aside from old matches, themselves, such as “Magazine Matches,” another big peripheral category would be ephemera, a catch all category for match-related paper products—salesman’s sample books, match company stock certificates, company records, shipping labels, publications, etc.

As an example of the latter, pictured here is a pristine Lion match Co. stock certificate. Also, Diamond Match Co. had a publication produced for its stockholders in 1908/1909. Diamond actually published a number of these over its 100+-year existence. For example, there are also 50th, 75th and 100th anniversary publications outlining the history of the Diamond Match Co. and its then present state of affairs. The particular one shown here is some 91 years old and is in outstanding condition, sporting a beautifully embossed gold cover and 63 pages of great production plant drawings and photos, not to mention the information. It covers Diamond’s first 27 years, 1881-1908 and discusses, for example, the production at its six match factories in 1908 (Barberton, OH; Oshkosh, WI; Portland, ME; Detroit, MI; Oswego, NY; and Chico, CA). Washington’s Ed Brassard, after tantalizing me with it at the AMCAL convention, was kind enough to loan it to me for this article.

I’m sure this heightened interest in peripherals is partly due to the decline in the availability of new covers, but these items are important in and of themselves. They represent the industry from which our covers, boxes, and labels come from and provide the collector with an invaluable side of the ‘whole’ picture that simply collecting matchcovers doesn’t provide. The covers tell ‘what,’ but the peripherals tell ‘how,’ ‘when,’ and ‘where.’ The continued interest in this area is also a plus for the hobby and its membership in general. As collectors find more and more of these items, hopefully they’ll stay within the confines of the hobby to be enjoyed by generations of hobbyists and to give continuing insights into the ‘broader picture.’