

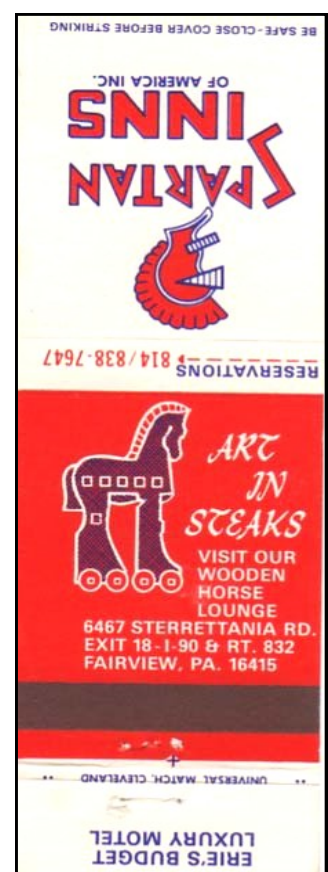
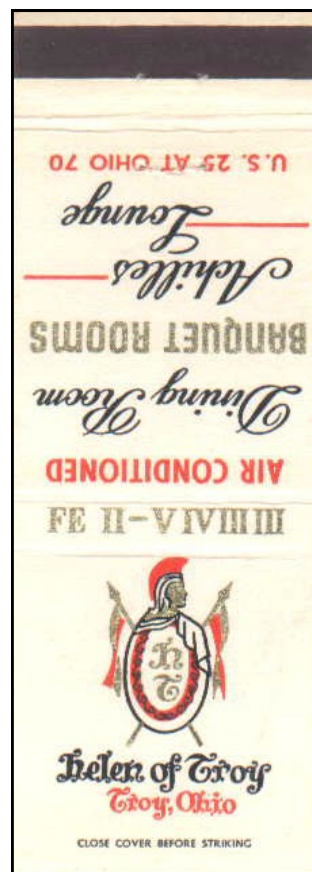
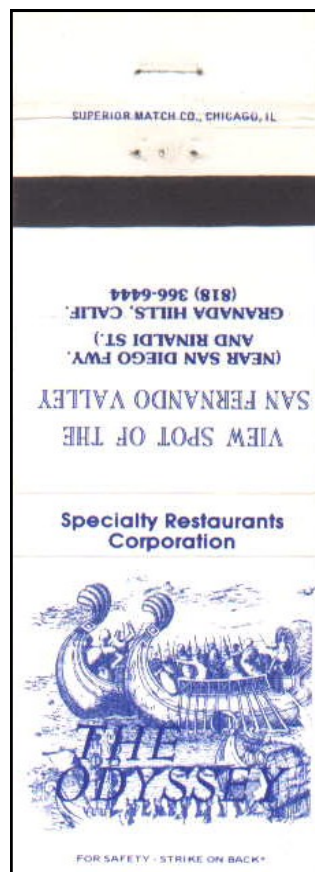
The Greatest War

Of all the wars in history, none has captured the imagination of mankind more than the Trojan War, and that's exclusively due to Homer and his two timeless epics--*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. For the better part of 3,000 years, people have been reading of the Greek and Trojan struggle over Troy. And for almost as long, all those who read it never realized that it was anything more than a grand yarn spun by Ancient Greece's greatest writer....until Heinrich Schliemann came along.

Schliemann was a fascinating character. Born in Germany in 1822, he was a linguistic genius who taught himself to read Greek as a child and then read *The Iliad* just as Homer had written it. He became convinced that Homer couldn't possibly have made up such a tremendous story, and he was determined to prove it, even though, as far as the world was concerned, Mycenae and Troy were fictional. But first, there was the little matter of money.

Schliemann made his first fortune as a businessman in California, during the Gold Rush, and he was there when California became a state in 1850. He then moved on to Russia, where he made another fortune in fur trading. Now independently wealthy, Schliemann retired in 1863 in order to devote himself to his dream of finding Troy. In preparation, he studied and traveled for several years, and then gathered together his own archaeological expedition to track down the fabled city.

Going only on the information contained in *The Iliad*, Schliemann eventually began digging in 1871 at Hissarlik, on the western coast of Asia Minor (Turkey). He not only found Troy...He found *four* Troys, each built atop the ruins of its predecessor! And the world was astounded! As he dug and discovered, Schliemann related every object he found to the verses of Homer, which he knew by heart.



Story In History!

Still, there was a problem, more than one of these levels showed destruction by fighting and fire. Schliemann originally opted for the third level, and then decided on the second. Eventually he left in 1882 and went on to discover the site of Mycenae. Later excavations at Troy, however, revealed another *five* Troys...for a total of *nine* cities and villages, going all the way back to the Neolithic. And some of these also became candidates for the Homeric Troy. Wilhelm Dorpfeld, after conducting his own excavations of the site, opted for level 6. More recent discoveries by a University of Cincinnati dig indicated that level 7 is more probably the Troy of legend.

The truth is...no one really knows which one is the right one, but Schliemann had already made his point. There *was* a Troy; there *was* a Mycenae; and there *was* a Trojan War! Now, Homer's characters are another matter--Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Helen, and the rest--There's never been any evidence discovered of their actual existence. Homer *did* write the story several hundred years *after* the actual war, after all. A likely scenario is that the story of the Trojan War was already in circulation as an oral tradition during Homer's time, and he became the first one to write it down, embellishing and dramatizing it into the world's great epic.

As an interesting side note, there is some slight suggestion by the existing historical evidence that there might have once been more to the story than just *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*... perhaps as many as *nine* books in all! If so, the others, unfortunately, haven't survived the test of time. But, that might explain Homer's unusual approach in *The Iliad*, for when the book opens, as you remember, nine years have already passed, and the war is almost over. He does the same in *The Odyssey*. In any event, when you see covers such as the ones here, each and every one is a testament to story that has endured for some 3,000 years!

