Who Produced The Most Matchbooks?

Has to be either Universal or Diamond, right? Universal went out of the manufacturing business in 1987, so, to be fair, let's limit our question up to that date. Also, for the purposes of our discussion here, we talking about *different* matchbooks, not the general total.

From the matchbook's inception in 1892 all the way up to 1987, there have been at least 155 different matchbook manufacturers in the United States. We can eliminate all the smaller companies right off the bat. That leaves Universal, Diamond, Lion and Ohio . Both Ohio (1895-1987) and Lion (1917-1993) have long manufacturing histories, but any collector's who gone through his or her share of covers can verify that neither can match the total output of Universal or Diamond.

So, that brings us down to Universal and Diamond...Hmmmm!

Now, Universal produced matchbooks from 1925-1987, whereas Diamond produced matchbooks from, say, 1896-1987 *[remember, we're cutting off our analysis at 1987, not the present]*. That gives Diamond a 29-year head start.

However, even though the number of Diamond covers far exceeded those of all other manufacturers up to at least World War II, it was during World War II that Universal's numbers began to soar...and soar they did—through the 1950s—through the 1960s—through the 1970s—and through the 1980s.

And during the 1960s-1980s, although Diamond had always produced boxes *[they started off as a matchbox manufacturer, after all]*, they seem to have emphasized matchboxes over matchbooks. And, especially towards the end of that period, the domestic industry had been pretty well divided into three parts: Universal handled most of the individual matchbook consumption; Diamond handled most of the box production; and D.D. Bean handled the resale (i.e., vending) matchbooks.

Thus, my answer (to my own question) is that Universal produced the greatest number of different matchbooks. Of course, there's no way to verify this, short of examining the production records of both Diamond and Universal. And that ain't going to happen. So...