

# Pullmatches

by  
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The Pullmatch is one of those historical oddities that is a delight to collectors today. Each row of matches was wrapped so that the ignitable heads were already situated against the striking surface, the striking surface not being visible to the user. Upon pulling the individual match from the container, the match would automatically ignite—hence the various terms for this concept: “Pullmatch,” Pull Quickly,” Pull Quick,” etc. Pull Quicks, however, differed slightly in that the matchsticks themselves were round, and their container was more box-like [#s1, 2, 3]. Pullmatches, on the other hand, featured flat matchsticks contained in slimmer containers [#4]. In fact, Pullmatches were often to be found on the backs of business cards. Pull Quickly [#5]

Pullmatches were made in the 1930s and 1940s by several different manufacturers, both domestic and foreign. Here on the homefront, we had the American Pullmatch Co. which was founded in 1936. The company went bankrupt in 1939 and was purchased a few months later by the Kilgore Manufacturing Co. of Westerville, OH. It then became the American Pullmatch Division and was moved to Tipp City, OH. Final pullmatch production ended in 1949.

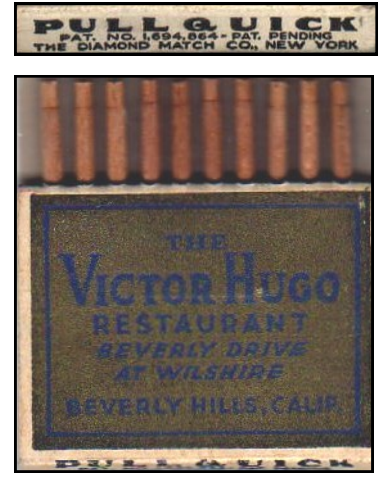
Canada had the Canadian Pullmatch Company, Toronto (1937-1940). This company, started by Walter Levy, a Jewish refugee from England, was a subsidiary of the British Pullmatch Company. The matches, in fact, were made in Great Britain and, thus, required the import tax stamp [#6]

The third main pullmatch manufacturer, and probably the largest, was the British Pullmatch Company, London (1933-?). Its plant was in Buckinghamshire. There were also a number of smaller companies operating in other countries at the same time period and for the same purpose. All of these companies, not coincidentally, popped up in the 1930s. It was in the early 1930s that the necessary patents became available for use. They all belonged to the German inventor, Willy Luck of Stuttgart, and these companies were set up to manufacture the pullmatch packages to Willy’s patents.

Pullmatches were apparently gone from the scene by 1949. “Why” is open to speculation, but a couple of good guesses would be World War II and the fact that Pullmatches didn’t lend themselves to vending ma-

chine use. Also, one has to wonder about the safety considerations that went along with carrying matches around with you which were already laying on the striking surface.

As an aside, Pullmatches were also available for use in decorative stands, usually chrome. Stan Tombs, CAN, has a great collection of these. The largest collection of Pullmatches/Pull Quicks that I'm familiar with numbers over 362, and that figure is from 1989.



[Special thanks to Stan Tombs, CAN, for

help here]

