

Consigned To Oblivion? The Unwanted Categories

by Mike Prero

Covers! Covers! We all want covers! Military! Girlies! DQs! Crowns! There are hundreds of categories that leave collectors salivating. Some collectors want struck, damaged, bob-tailed, even flats. We want all of 'em!....Well, not *all* of them...

It's somewhat paradoxical, but no matter how many covers we've gathered for our collections, whether thousands or tens of thousands or even millions, we've all probably turned up our noses to even more.

There are a number of reasons for this: that cover is a national; this cover is a dupe; that one over there isn't in one of my want areas, and so on.

But, there are whole categories of covers that *no one* wants. Generally, most of these fall under a broad heading of "Industrial Covers", such as Electrical Companies, Paper Companies, Steel Companies, and the like. There are other categories, such as Personal Monograms, such as the last cover pictured on p.4, that also fall under the UNWANTED umbrella.



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“But what about General collectors? They collect in all categories, don’t they?” Not really. A number of new collectors start out as General Collectors, but only to get an idea of what’s out there. Eventually, they decide on what strikes their fancy and chuck the “General” title. Very few collectors seriously stick with General. For one thing, they soon run out of storage space! And in the 37 years I’ve been in the hobby, I’ve never run into any collector, General or not, that sought out Steel Plating Companies, Ball Bearing Corporations, and the ilk. *[Now watch my inbox fill up with “Hey! I collect Widget Companies!!!” texts]*

Now, all this is not to say that particular covers in these Unwanted Categories aren’t collected, and collected with enthusiasm. All the covers shown here happen to be Ohio Wide-Strikers, for example...which I collect...with enthusiasm! You may want that Engineering Company cover because it’s a Filigree...or perhaps it’s from your hometown of Pittsburgh, and so on. There are any number of these covers that are wanted because of their *Conjunctive* value. But *not* because they’re Engineering Companies!

It’s a shame, really. These covers, and the categories they make up, are part of the historical panorama that the world of matchcovers has to offer. Every one of those companies has left its mark on someone; every one of those businesses has made its own contribution to its surrounding neighborhood, city, state, and the nation in general, and perhaps even on a more personal level. “My grandfather used to work for that company”; “I used to buy those all the time”; “I used to pass that store every day on the way to school.”

Indeed, they’re inarguably part of our cultural heritage, and, yet, they’re apparently to be consigned to oblivion. They should be held dear, lovingly cared for, cherished...But don’t send them to me...because I don’t want ’em!

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