

Who Used Matchbooks to Advertise in the 1920s?

To answer that question, I took a look at 288 Lion Safety Firsts (1919-1928). Judging from the location of the advertisers, it should be a representative sample. Most of these are a collection that I purchased from Jim Moffett back in the 1980s. I would have liked a bigger sampling...but how many Lion Safety Firsts are floating around?!

The actual numbers, here, are incidental. It's the frequency of the business type compared to the frequencies of other business types. Not surprisingly, Restaurants comprise almost half the sample and far outstrip the appearance of any other category. Hotels come in second. There were no covers from auto courts, but there was an 'Inn' that was clearly what we would call a 'motel' today. The actual word 'motel' wasn't coined until 1925, in San Luis Obispo, CA, so it certainly hadn't become popularized by 1928, when Lion discontinued its 'Safety First' footer.

Everything else shown here put in a relatively minor showing, with Clubs and Drug Stores topping the list of 'also-rans'. In perspective, though, Chinese Restaurants, Country Clubs, and Laundries/Cleaners have a respectable showing, I think. I would have thought Banks would have been more prolific, but that may just be a quirk of this sampling.

Some categories from the 1920s have basically disappeared in modern times due to obsolescence—Haberdashers, Ballrooms, and Newsstands, for example. Many

others have only recently disappeared, victims of anti-smoking campaigns.

<u>Business Type</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Restaurants	47.5%
Hotels	9.0%
Clubs	3.4%
Drug Stores	3.1%
Chinese Restaurants	2.4%
Country Clubs	2.4%
Laundry/Cleaners	2.4%
Clothes/Clothiers	2.0%
Gas Stations	2.0%
Insurance	2.0%
Cigar Stores	1.7%
Shoes/Shoe Repair	1.4%
Banks	1.0%
Dept. Stores	1.0%
Yacht Clubs	1.0%
Manufacturing	1.0%
Resorts	.6%
Bowling	.6%
Political	.6%
Trucking	.6%
Match Co's	.6%
Golf Clubs	.6%
Motor Oil	.6%
Haberdashers	.6%
Taxi	.3%



Food	.3%
Motels	.3%
Tavern	.3%
Batteries	.3%
Hardware	.3%
Dentists	.3%
Whiskey	.3%
Jewelers	.3%
Medicine	.3%
Ballrooms	.3%
Meat Co's	.3%
Coal Co's	.3%
Appliances	.3%
Supply Co's	.3%
Beauty Shops	.3%
Barber Shops	.3%
Lumber Co's	.3%
Newsstands	.3%
Sporting Goods	.3%
National Parks	.3%
Billiard Parlors	.3%
Antique Stores	.3%
General Stores	.3%
Grocery Stores	.3%
Natural Wonders	.3%
Auto Parts Stores	.3%
Swimming Schools	.3%