

HOBBY HISTORY

Early Concerns

by Mike Prero

“Material from the early 1940’s which has been preserved indicates that the first official matchcover hobbyists were concerned in three areas. They worried about fake covers, flats and classification.

Faked labels were such a problem in the 1930’s that many Americans simply gave up their label collections and turned to covers exclusively. The fake label in some ways created the present cover hobby. Naturally no one wanted fake covers to appear. However, this problem sorted itself out due to rising costs. It costs too much money to fake covers. It has been done, but it has been discovered too. Matchcovers just aren’t profitable to fake.

Flats have been a continuing theme of collector discussion. U.S. flats are routinely tossed into the trash can, but foreign collectors continue to trade them much to the distress of Americans who get them. Poland, Yugoslavia and France abound in flats which keeps U.S. collectors away from hobbyists there. Flats can be obtained from the factory and in no way represent a collector’s effort. Any fool can build a no effort collection.

Classification began by simply dividing all covers into advertising and non-advertising. But those advertising covers just kept growing and growing while the non-advertising items just about vanished in the U.S. Clearly a further breakdown was needed. In the first publication of R.M.S., the following classifications were offered:

1. (A) Celebrities (B) Souvenirs (C) Bridge Sets
2. (A) Fairs (B) Dated (C) Educational
3. (A) Service (B) Transportation (C) Foreign

4. (A) Clubs (B) Fraternal (C) Colleges
5. (A) Political, Propaganda (B) Local & Foreign] relief (C) Patriotic
6. (A) Hotels (B) Recreation (C) Cafes
7. (A) Special Sets (B) Special Phases (C) Season’s Greetings
8. (A) Girlies (B) Slogans (C) Comics
- 9 (A) Ten strikes (B) Royal Flash (C) Midgets
10. (A) Giants (B) 21’s (C) Pull Matches
11. (A) One row features (B) full-features (C) Oddities
12. (A) Metallics (B) Mirro-gloss (C) Raised lettering
13. (A) Two ad types (B) Stock designs (C) Miscellaneous

From this 1941 list many names remain unchanged. The lettering and numbering has peacefully died away as have some items like Mirro-gloss and special phases, but the modern collector still generally follows this old plan.”

.....*Long Beach bulletin, May 1977*