

# HOBBY HISTORY

## The Movers & Shakers: III

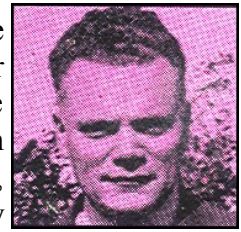
**Bob Oliver**, from California, was one of the founding fathers of RMS. He started collecting back in 1932, when he first began collecting U.S. Navy Ships. At the time, his father was a Navy captain, and he used to live in the Brooklyn Naval Yard. Seven years later, by placing an advertisement in a hobby magazine, Oliver organized the first meeting of collectors in a hotel room in Philadelphia. "We swapped all night long," he recalled. The group's first convention was a two-day affair held at Oliver's home in Jamaica, Queens, in the spring of 1939. The highlight of the meeting was everyone heading out to the World's Fair and snatching up all the matchbooks they could find. Bob would later go on to compile one of the most venerable World's Fair collections in the hobby.

He dropped out of the hobby temporarily during World War II, but he came back to it after a fling at license plate collecting. In fact, he was a collector of many things, including Christmas Seals, and, at the end of his life, credit cards and police patches. Bob and his wife had moved to California, where he became a regular at the AMCAL conventions and the various club meetings in Southern California. [*partly from Empire MC bulletin, October 6, 1974*] Just look at his credits!

President of Blue Moon - 1936-37  
 Outstanding Collector - 1954  
 President of RMS - 1955-56  
 President of Empire MC - 1960  
 President of Long Beach MC - ?  
 1st VP - Angelus - ?  
 Hall of Fame - 1991

He even met his wife, Elizabeth, at an RMS convention! He was quite a character. A regular at AMCAL in the 1980s, that's where I met him.

**Ed Perkins.** As far as name recognition is concerned, Edgar Perkins is probably more familiar to today's collector than any of the other early pioneers, except our namesake, Henry Rathkamp....because he gave us the 1,100+ Perkins Americana series.



As with all of the early collectors discussed here, Edgar Perkins was a collector's collector. This wasn't a passing fancy with him; he collected for over 40 years, and was collecting right to the very end.

But, his interest in the hobby went far beyond the actual collecting of matchcovers, themselves. He devoted his time as club administrator in a number of different positions, and he was the preeminent hobby researcher of his time. He was a founding member of RMS and served as RMS's first Secretary. In 1951, he received recognition as Outstanding Collector; from 1952-1953, he was RMS President. Perkins was also a member of the NACAMO, Old Dominion, Sunshine, and Long Long Beach clubs, and probably others that I haven't been able to find out about.

Even more fascinating (from my perspective) was his hobby research. He especially stands out here because during his era, from the inception of RMS to his death in 1978, very little research was done into the history of the industry, the history of covers, or the events that shaped the covers we have today. Going through past hobby bulletins, I'm always struck by how little interest there seemed to have been in what had already taken place, and why. The focus was almost totally on what new covers were being issued, what new types would be coming out of Universal, Lion, and the other giants of the industry, and so forth. Aside from a wide variety of articles, he wrote two booklets (Matchcover Collecting As A Finer Art and American Bookmatch Collector).

- produced the Perkins Americana series