

HOBBY HISTORY

The Original Plan of the Organization of The Rathkamp Memorial Society of Match Cover Collectors

*[From an October 1, 1941 document by then
Secretary Edward Perkins and President R. A.
Lockard]*

During business meetings of the Second Annual Collectors' Convention held at Pocasset, Mass. on dates of September 11th, 12th and 13th, 1941 urgent need was seen in securing accredited lists of the many highly desired match covers, both current and obsolete. Equipped with such data the task of associating such covers by size, structure, color, date and history might be minimized. The collector would then have accurate information on the status of his collection. Added interests would be stimulated by his quest for such material, known to be absent from his sets. With the prime purpose of utilizing the vast man-power of the general match cover collecting body throughout this country and abroad in this channel, and in other channels wherein our hobby might be enhanced and popularized the RATHKAMP MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF MATCH COVER COLLECTORS was organized. The name selected honors Henry Rathkamp, the best known and most beloved pioneer in the field.

1. MEMBERSHIP open to all "Flat" and "Full" match cover collectors in good standing with the hobby upon approval of the Membership Committee.

2. The Society shall be conducted on a mutually governed plan and a non-profit basis. There shall be no overhead costs for rent and salaries. Officers will be elected annually. Each member shall have a voice in the policies of the organization, and those who attend the conventions may vote for the officers.

3. Receipts shall be returned to the members in the following manner:

Uniform lists will be mailed out at sundry times upon subject, which in the opinion of the members require the greatest immediate attention. Such lists will be compiled on 8½" x 11" standard size paper which may be placed systematically in loose leaf binder.

New items for various hobby publications.

News letters of interest.

Research for new covers.

Standard and fair price lists for new set covers.

Miscellaneous benefits to the collectors.

Printing, mimeographing and mailing.

4. To facilitate the exchange of covers desired, a compile list of all members will be supplied. Monthly additions to the membership list will be sent out in the news letter.

5. When new sets of covers are placed on the market certain members will be appointed to govern fair costs of same. At the same time their authenticity will be thoroughly investigated.

6. Complete listings of all set covers, as well as other groups and types of covers will be compiled by committees of old time collectors who are recognized authorities upon such subjects. These covers will be tabulated and numbered for purposes of quick identification and less ceremony in corresponding.

7. To defray costs herein mentioned the annual dues will be \$2.00 per member.

A plan is already underway to purchase special certain issues in case lots. The membership roster may thereby secure its covers on a community basis, for least cost.

It is a well-known fact that collecting preferences vary to a great degree. A member's symbolized system will be placed in effect whereby one collector may know the other's specialities at a glance.

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The Secretary will gladly accept resolutions governing ethics, suggestions, etc. for the benefit of the hobby. These will be voted upon by the membership body.

The following resolution was recently approved and seconded and will shortly be placed before the members for voting:

RESOLVED that in lieu of any prior understanding between parties regarding the exchange or sale of any such match covers, or the offer of any match covers as inducement for new membership into any hobby exchange group, or the advertisement of any number of match covers being given away in conjunction with the sale of any album, or match collecting accessory; such match covers be authentic and known to have legitimately contained matches, and the proper kind and number of matches originally ascribed to them. In view of the fact that the vast majority of collectors look with disfavor upon accepting any but legitimate cover or full match book this Society emphasizes the fact that it will not countenance any departure from this policy. On the other hand it does not wish to interfere in such isolated cases where covers or full books not meeting these specifications are desired by certain collectors. The dealer, trader or club official is therefore instructed not to circulate questionable covers of this character without full knowledge and consent of the recipient.

In organizing the society no attempt is being made to form a clique of master collectors, or to enter into competition with any of the existing match exchange clubs. On the contrary one of the main objectives will be to assist the clubs in every way possible. Every collector will have his share in the scheme of mutual assistance. A warm welcome to join the Rathkamp Memorial Society is given every "fair-play" hobbyist. Such applications will be accepted by Edgar A. Perkins, Secretary, 600 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Edgar A. Perkins,
Secretary

R. A. Lockard,
President.

Washington, D.C. October 1, 1941

Ed note: A few especially interesting things are laid out in this original document. First, notice the 'wage and price' controls put into place vis-a-vis selling covers within the purview of RMS. Collectors would never stand for that today, for a number of reasons, but, originally, there must have been early problems with people sharking covers to collectors. Second, notice the emphasis on the authenticity of covers. One must gather from that there was a counterfeiting-modifying problem already to be seen even in these early days of collecting. Finally, notice the prohibition against flats right from the outset and the resulting implication that such are not to be recognized as legitimate covers.

As you read through this document, especially if you're familiar with the current workings of RMS, you can readily see a number of instances where, in ensuing years, the membership has voted to depart from specific original instructions...but such would be true in the evolution of any organization, be it government, church, or hobby club. Times and circumstances change!