

Making Up Your Own Categories

“What do you collect?” is always one of the first questions one collector asks of another. If you collect everything, your answer is simply “General”. But, of course, there are hundreds of established categories, as well—Big ones, such as: Matchoramas, Banks, Hotels, Motels, Restaurants, Military, Girlies, and so forth—and smaller ones, such as: Howard Johnson’s, Hyatt, Satin, and Kaeser & Blair. There are ‘new ones’—Millennium, Web Site Addresses, Fax Numbers, etc. And, there are those that individual collectors simply make up according to their own individual tastes and preferences.

For example, occasionally we’ll see a collector who collects all covers with his first or last name on them, or covers with hearses on them...or...and the list can go on ad infinitum. It’s always been the rule that a collector can collect whatever he or she wants. True collecting, after all, is spurred on by interests not investments. One of the kings of these small categories [*which I’ve always affectionately referred to as ‘off-the-wall’ or ‘odd-ball’ categories*] is Chester Crill, CA, who has hundreds of such wants. I always inwardly smile as I see Chester and others eagerly searching for such treasures at the Spring Swapfest or wherever. In a very real way, that’s what collecting is all about—that moment of triumph at having found exactly what you were looking for. I’ve been collecting for twenty years, and I still feel it.

In my own case, I’ve made up several of my own categories, as well. For me, part of the reasons is because, although I am still very much interested in my larger, more traditional categories, such as Navy Ships and Girlies, you reach a point eventually, where finds are few and far between, so in the interim, you need other categories to keep you stimulated. I’ve created categories for Eddy color-photo covers, Atlas Foils, Historical and Literary figures, and Indian tribes, just to name some.

One of the great joys for the collector of starting in any new category is that thrill of discovery all over again. You can drag out the big box of dupes and go through them all over again, because now you’re looking for something entirely different than what

you were looking for previously. And, by golly, pretty soon you’ve got a nice tidy, little stack of covers that aren’t dupes anymore...because they’re going into their own brand new collection now, a collection that you’ve just started. Why, right now, in my box of Hotel/Motel/Restaurant dupes, there are Beer Steins and Musical Notes, Trees and Treasure Chests, Ice Cream Cones and Hamburgers, and so much more—all yearning for the day when someone will make them part of a collection.