

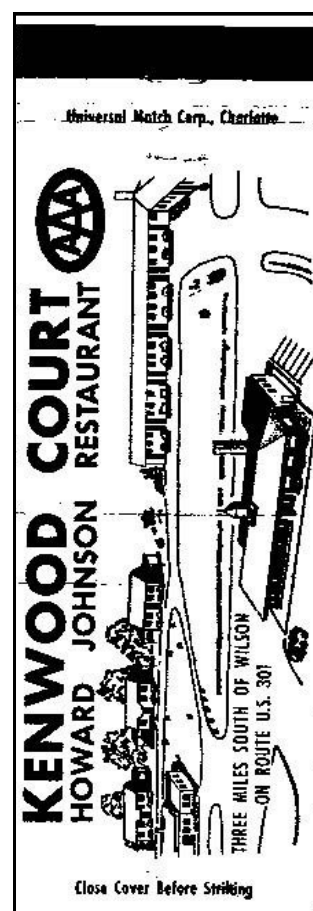
Howard Johnson's

The Howard Johnson's chain (of restaurants, motels, and hotels) over the years has produced a very respectable array of covers for collectors to garnish in any number of categories. There are the Hotel/Motel/Restaurant categories, of course, but as you survey the variety of covers, there are lots more here than just those three big categories. There are sets, color photo covers, and (*here's where I come in*) oldies! Why, I'll bet the Howard Johnson in Las Vegas even qualifies as a Casino cover. There must be at least a few slot machines in the joint, but I couldn't swear to it, since I've never been there (*my gambling days seemed to vanish right around the same time the children started populating the house*).

I must admit, I haven't had the chance to research the historical background of Howard Johnson's the way I normally do for any article, so I don't know when the chain actually started, but it was obviously a long time ago, because there are a number of Howard Johnson's covers that are Federals, and that means Pre-War. So, this category spans some half a century, at a minimum.

Judging from the covers, themselves, Howard Johnson's has evolved from restaurants and ice cream shops to the giant, modern H/M/R chain that it is today. And, that evolutionary road is sprinkled here and there with covers. I have no idea how many such covers a complete Howard Johnson's collection would entail, but I can tell you that there are at least 142 different covers in existence ...because that's how many I had as of November 2005...and, surely, there are more than that.

Most of the covers are 20-strikes, of various stock designs, but there are non-stock issues, especially from the more recent hotels and lodges. Size-wise, we're looking at 20s and 30s; I don't think I've ever seen any 10s; at least there aren't any among my numerous dupes. The only 40-strike I know I've



come across is actually an error...two uncut stock 20s from Universal. There is also quite a variety of conjunctives to be seen among these covers: Uniglos, Foilite-types, Full-lengths, Embossed, AAA, Duncan Hines, and so forth.

Manumarks show just as much variation over the years: Federal, Diamond, Universal, Lion, D.D. Bean, Eddy, American, at the very least.

For any H/M/R collector, I'd say Howard Johnson's is a must, but they also make a nice small category.