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Texas County Seats: Follow up

by
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Ref July's article on Texas County Seats, my interest in County Seats goes back to the mid-1950's when my brother and I would take vacations with our parents and we would stop at as many County Seats as we could across the country to collect as many as possible.

As you know, County Seats was established as a category by Charles M. "Doc" Reed, a pharmacist, from Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1935. It was among the top categories of the hobby for many, many years, and in some cases still remains the prime interest for many collectors.

I have been working on them for over fifty years and still find a few that I have not been able to get good upgrades on. I still search for those very elusive covers from those really tough County Seats.

Of the 254 Texas County Seats, I consider four of those County Seats to be the toughest to find anywhere in anyone's collection. Those four County Seats are as follows: Lipscomb, Mentone, Montague and Sarita.

Lipscomb is in the center of Lipscomb County and is located in the far northeast corner of the Texas panhandle. Over the years there have been only three covers found to say Lipscomb on them. One is pictured here, but the problem with this cover is that it also has the town of Higgins, which is located in the northern part of the county. The other two covers are a Kurt Freier salesman cover along with an Americana from a Texaco station back around 1960.

Mentone, Texas, is located in the far western part of the state, near the border of New Mexico, and it is the county seat of Loving, the smallest county in the United States. Its population numbers around 250 people in the entire county, and the town of Mentone is literally a crossroads with nothing more than a couple of small standing buildings, one of which is the county courthouse. The only covers found from this town were two in number, the Americana and the Kurt Freier cover.

Montague, Texas, to my knowledge, has never had an Americana cover but has had a Kurt Freier cover, along with the one I have in my collection. That cover came from the collection of Charles Westenhofer, in Indianapolis. His wife told me that he wrote for this cover back in the 1950's and received the one shown here in response. I acquired his county seat collection many years ago.

Sarita, Texas, has always been considered the toughest in the state. I received the cover shown here from Bert Ladensohn of San Francisco, who, in his County Seat collection, had an unused cover from this charter boat company and then he gave me this used one. I have no idea who bought Bert's collection, but someone out there has that unused cover and has one of the really rare covers from Texas in the way of County Seats. No Americana was ever issued for Sarita. Kurt Freier did issue one.

I spent many years corresponding and talking with Win Lang about County Seats, and both of us agreed that the Americanas and Kurt Freier covers are not legitimate County Seat covers. A number of the Americanas ordered by Ed Perkins were from businesses that really never wanted covers or places that Perkins simply had covers made for that business so that he could get a cover from that County Seat. I have personally visited four County Seats and gone to those businesses and confirmed that fact that the business owners either never ordered the covers or that they had never heard of Ed Perkins.

Kurt Freier was a Superior Match Company salesman from Brownsville, Texas. He was a very pleasant collector and sold a lot of his overruns to collectors back in the 1960's. I bought a number of them, and I can assure you, from correspondence from him, that all of his covers were made simply to have collectors be able to have a cover from that County Seat. He never had an office in those towns, and in some cases never even visited them in his travels selling book matches.

I do have a complete County Seat collection but am in need of probably fifteen to twenty upgrades, most of which are Americanas and ones like the Glen Turner cover from Higgins and Lipscomb, Texas.

[Ed note: Thanks to Clem for these detailed comments about Texas County Seats and for the over all view of County Seats collecting.]

