

Trademarks

by
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I collect 'Trademarks', and I also list them. It's something of a "collector's collector's collection", I suppose. One's interest, here, has to go beyond 'pretty' covers or 'old' covers....It's esoteric, even. I like looking at the larger historical aspects of the match industry. Still, this category, as with any other, holds the same rewards and satisfactions for the diligent collector.

In one way, the "Trademarks" category represents a compromise, a halfway point, between collecting the usual categories and collecting "Manumarks", a seeming endless quagmire destined to be the grist of only the most ardent collector.

I actually got started on Trademarks over twenty years ago when I attended a local Sierra-Diablo MC meeting. The club had decided to put together an album of different cover types to have available to show especially to new members. Seemed like a good idea...so good, in fact, that I eventually started one of my own just for the challenge of seeing how comprehensive I could actually make such a collection. I started out by devoting one album page to each trademark, and I've stuck with that format ever since. Thus, there's a page for "Cameo", one for "Filigree", and so on. Easy! Well...it *was*...in the beginning!

But first, what are trademarks, anyhow? There's our first problem. Technically, trademarks are the various brand names that manufacturers give to their individual types of covers and boxes: Foilite, American Ace, Ten-Strike, Billboard, Midget, and so on. Over the years, however, collectors have taken to also using certain footers as trademarks: Diamond Quality, Union Match, Safety First, For Safety, etc. (A 'footer' is a key word or phrase located down by the 'close cover before striking', which is a footer, itself). Thus, for the purposes of our discussion here, and in my own collection, as well, I include the more renown footers in the Trademarks category.

Then, in some instances, it's not easy to discern what's an actual trademark and what's simply a commonly used term for that type within collecting circles. For example, one frequently hears and sees the term "Woody"

continued on p.3

in reference to wood-grained covers or boxes. Is that a trademark name? No, it's just a generic hobby term for that type. Sometimes, it's both! "Girlie" is generic in the hobby, but there was actually a Pre-War Swedish box exported to England called "The Girlie".

A second problem to be dealt with, especially on covers, is that in many cases the trademark doesn't actually appear anywhere on the cover. In some cases, that's because another trademark has taken precedence. A Cameo Foilite, for example, is likely to have only the Foilite name showing. In the great majority of cases, though, there is simply *no* trademark shown at all. In some instances, that type may simply not *have* a trademark, as far as the manufacturer and the rest of the world is concerned. In other instances, though, that particular type *does* have a trademark name (you can see it in the manufacturer's sales brochures), but it's just never put on the cover or box.

So, with something like a Cameo, that's no real problem. A Cameo is a Cameo is a Cameo after all. But, there are lots of covers that *do* represent a trademarked type, and the trademark isn't on the cover...and few people know what the trademarked type *is*! For example, the American Match Co. called its Foilite-like covers "Foil Fab", but you'll never see that trademark on those covers. Similarly, Monarch/Superior called their "Filigree-like covers "Orleans, but didn't put the trademark on the covers. Even Universal didn't put its "Mirro-Gloss" trademark on 99% of its Mirro-Gloss covers. All of which means that this category calls for lots of research into the companies and their products.

It wasn't long before I expanded this initially domestic collection to an international collection, and that opened up more challenges. Now, boxes quickly outnumbered covers. This might put an end to your interest in the category if you happen to dislike dealing with boxes, as a number of collectors do, since boxes come in all sorts of sizes, shapes, and materials—paper, wood, plastic, etc. (how do you open a plastic box?!). The reason for this imbalance of box trademarks over cover trademarks is simply that most of the world still uses matchboxes rather than matchbooks, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, especially.

And, there are thousands of box trademarks!...Some of which I'll never have, simply because I can't read the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, etc, even though the trademarked name might be staring me in the face! And modern trademarks, from Asia, especially, often are the results of current fads. *Star Wars* becomes the rage overseas, and pretty soon there are *Star Wars* matches; Mickey Mouse becomes recognizable in India...Mickey Mouse matches appear. England celebrates Elizabeth II's coronation, and a British manufacturer produces and exports "Coronation" matches.

Plus, we're dealing with an entirely different animal when dealing with foreign boxes. Domestically, we take a trademark to herald a different type of cover or box, but, internationally, match companies have historically issued the same box with different trademarks in different areas, another reason why box trademarks abound. And, complicating things even more is the fact that foreign companies, again in Asia especially, are notorious for simply co-opting other companies' trademarks, so that it's not unusual to see three or four different manufacturers putting out the same trademark. There are five different "Leopard" trademarks, for example.

Then, there is the seemingly incomprehensible world of mergers, take-overs, and trademark sales. One company takes over another, gets legal access to the original company's trademarks, begins producing those trademarks itself...Yikes!

As far as housing such a collection, this is one of the few areas where I have not gone to plastic pages, simply because the latter can't cope with the myriad of sizes and shapes to be dealt with there.

Instead, I still use blank photo album pages (the same type of paper used for slotted pages) in standard 3-ring binders. On each page, I try (ideally) to have between one and four examples of that trademark (the nicest and most colorful that I can find). The pages are arranged alphabetically, by trademark name.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, I also maintain the listing on worldwide trademarks. There are currently 2,481 listed, and that probably only represents the tip of the iceberg. Here's what the listing looks like:

<u>TRADEMARKS</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Crocodile	Elkayes Match Fac.	c. 1930	Singapore box
Crocodile, The	Wimco	1940	Indian box
Crow Brand, The	?	Pre-War	Japanese box
Crown	Diamond	c. 1908	US box
Crown	Bryant & May	1911-?	Australian label
Crown	W.A. Match Co.	1933-?	Old Australian box
Crown	Sithiah Match Factory	Contemporary	Indian export box
Crown, The	?	c. 1890-c.1920	Japanese export label to Australia
Crusaders	Diamond	c. 1939	US box
Cruxj	Vijaya Match Works	c. 1990s	Indian box

