

## Small Categories Series

### Flat Features

Well, that's what *I* call them. They're not 'flats'; they're stripped Lion 20-strike Feature covers. But 'stripped' may not be the right word, either. I can't imagine collectors having stripped those great, graphics-covered matches out of the matchbooks, not even early collectors, and I've never heard of that being an early practice, not like bobtailing, for example. On the other hand, I *have* seen numerous examples of Lion Feature matchbooks (Lion 21 Features come to mind) with no Feature matches! So, I'm assuming that the majority of these covers, at least, never held Features. Perhaps what we're really talking about, here, are overruns, where the extra covers were used but with regular matches.

Anyhow, there are a relatively large number of them in existence. Dan Bitter reported having 3,212 in January 2006. There's no listing, though. But, just how does one know them if they don't have Feature matches in them? By the manumark. They all 'FEATURE' in the manumark, although there are a number of variations. The older ones show FEATURE MATCH REG. U.S. PAT. OFF, whereas the later version has 'FEATURE MATCH BOOK PAT 1839845-6. The second manumark line can have any one of a number of different locations—New York, Philadelphia, etc. There are also some minor variations, as well, such as some of the periods and dashes not showing up.

There are some nice covers here, including some fairly long series made up of earlier Florsheim Shoes and Sweet-Orr clothes issues, for example. But the real attraction is the FEATURE manumark, so you might want to keep an eye out for this type of cover.

