

Trademarks—Oey Vey!

Some collectors don't pay all that much attention to them, but *I* do. But, I have to admit it's often frustrating....because, when one actually takes a look at the 'big picture', one quickly finds that manufacturers 1) didn't even put most of their trademarked names *on* the covers! 2) didn't use them uniformly even when they did put trademarks on covers; and 3) apparently didn't use any discernible rhyme or reason in deciding *which* trademark to use on covers when there conjunctives involved.

We're all used to seeing *some* trademarks—Cameo, Matchorama, Foilite—but when's the last time you saw "Matchtone", "Taffeta", Taffeta Foil", "Jumbo King", "Rhapsody", "Orleans", and a wealth of others? The simple fact *is* that many of the manufacturers used many of their trademarked names apparently as 'in-house' references only, never actually putting said names on the covers. They would use those names in salesmen's sample books to refer to those cover types and might have even put out some initial covers advertising that type (with the trademark on the *outside*), but they never actually put the trademark on later covers on the *inside* (which is the traditional place for trademarks), nor used the trademark on later covers at all.

Then there's the frustration that comes from the manufacturer using the trademark on *some* of the covers, but not all of them, and certainly not consistently. Here, the collector has to first recognize the cover type; recognize that it's, indeed, from the manufacturer that puts out that trademarked type; and finally categorize that cover as the trademarked type, despite the fact that the trademark doesn't appear on the cover. It's a small frustration, granted, but life would be that much simpler if things were just a bit more uniform.

Then, there are all those covers, usually Fancies, that are conjunctives and therefore are two or more trademarked types simultaneously. Does the manufacturer put *all* the appropriate trademarks on the cover? Nope! Only one...And how that particular choice is made I have no idea. Such cases usually involve Universal covers, since Universal was putting out most of the Fancies...So, one might be looking at a Cameo/Foilite/Matchorama, but it would only show the Matchorama trademark. Did the manufacturer have some sort of priority list it used in making such a choice? (i.e., Matchoramas always take precedence over Cameo; Cameo always takes precedence over Foilite; and so forth). Apparently not, because I've seen examples to the contrary in almost all such cases. So, was the final choice of which trademark to use simply made at random?

And then, there's the small group of trademarked-type covers that *do not* bear the manumark of the manufacturer, but rather the name of the middleman-distributor, such as "Jones Advertising & Spec. Co." You *know* that cover is a Universal Foilite, but there's no trademark and there's nothing saying that it's actually a Universal cover. Frustrating! I don't put such covers in my collections of Cameos, Signets, etc.

Finally, there are the error covers that fall into this discussion—not the miscuts, not the covers missing strikers, and the like, but the covers that *have* the trademark name on the inside...only the cover is obviously *not* that type!. You've seen them—Uniglo covers that aren't Uniglos; Foilites that aren't Foilites, etc. Technically, of course, they *are* errors (and some are *obviously* errors), but, generally, I don't really know that such covers were actually mistakes. For all I know, they could have been overruns, for example, with the final Fancy application withheld as a cost-saving measure.

Any way you cut it, dealing in Trademarks is definitely interesting, and, as with all categories, knowing a little something about the background behind the topic just makes it all the more so.