

The In's and Out's

It's probably not all that surprising that since a lot of covers have maps on them, some collectors collect...hmmmm....*maps!* Ohhhhh, I see some good challenges here--a map of every state, a map of every country---How many U.S. counties do you think you could put together with maps? (might go nice with your County Seats collection).

But, we're getting a little ahead of ourselves here. Do you know just how far back maps go? *Way* back! The oldest known map is on a Babylonian clay tablet dated at c. 2500 B.C. That's 4,000 years ago! And, although the basic concept, of course, has remained the same for all those millennia, maps have undergone some major changes since the days of the clay tablet [*although, it's interesting to note that, after 4000+ years of progress, electronically, we're back to using tablets!*]

The Ancient Greeks were the ones who first came up with the concept of latitude and longitude lines, although the idea was later thought of independently in other places around the world, such as China. And, even though we take it for granted today that the top of any map is always oriented toward the north, It certainly wasn't always that way. In Medieval Europe, for example, maps were always drawn with east at the top! Later, during the Renaissance, world maps finally began to be pictured with more details and more realistically, as information about geographical discoveries poured into Portugal, Spain, England, France, and Holland from their respective explorers. Before Columbus set off, Europeans were only aware of three of the seven continents. Even after the great Age of Exploration was over (1400s-1600's), the last two continents (Australia and Antarctica) were still unknown. It actually wasn't until very modern times, with satellite and GPS technology, that maps finally became completely accurate down to the *nth* degree. Now, perhaps, you can more readily appreciate those marvelous little squiggles on matchcovers that depict areas from across the street to the other side of



Of Maps

the world. Well, from *that* perspective, no wonder some people collect them!

And that *does* bring us to the matchcovers, themselves. Those who actually collect maps on matchcovers seem to have their specific preference as to whether said map should be on the outside or inside of the cover. Numerically, from what I've seen at least, the majority of maps seem to come on the inside, but there are still quite a few, all in all, which display the map on the outside.

As you might well guess, Hotel/Motel/Restaurant covers are going to be the greatest source of maps. It seems to me that on more modern covers, maps seem to be more plentiful in the 20-strike size, but for older covers I'm thinking about all those great Lion 30-Sticks and 21 Features (both 30-strikes), *many* of which had maps, almost always inside, and very often quite beautiful ones, too.

I don't collect maps, myself, but I would guess that map collectors would especially prize full-length maps, as opposed to their shortened brethren. And, I would think that multi-colored maps would be seen as a cut above one-color maps. From there, we could go on to other embellishments...maps done in foil, embossed maps, etc.

One more point...Note that on the first cover shown on the reverse page, the cover has a map *outline*, rather than a regularly detailed map. Although a collector might not count such map outlines as qualified to be in his or her collection, most map collectors I've come across over the years have accepted such as "Maps".

Fred Kuecke, CO, reported that his collection ran 1,610 back in April 1993, but I wouldn't be surprised if a more complete collection today numbered into the 5 digits.

