

FEDERALS

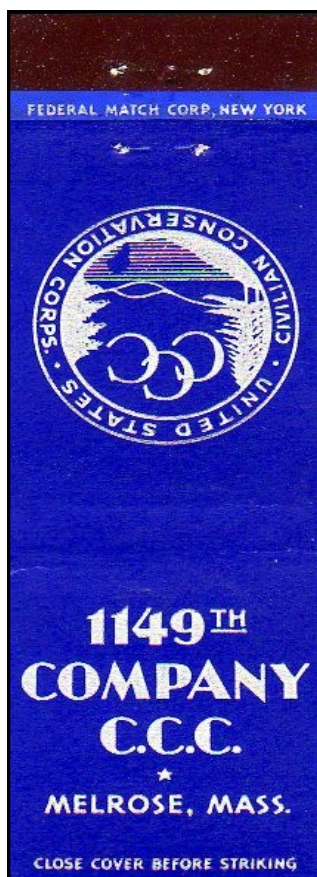
by
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This has always been one of my favorite categories. I like *OLD*, and Federals are *OLD*. The company that made them has long since disappeared, yet they're still quite readily available—all things considered—so here's a group of definite “keepers” that even the novice collector can still get a hold of. Federals were also one of the first things I was told to look for as a new collector...and I haven't stopped looking since!

In something of a replay of the earlier creation of Diamond Match Co., the Federal Match Corp. was formed in 1923 by a merger of nine companies. It absorbed the Bean & Symonds Co. and the New Hampshire Match Co. in 1928. In 1931, the Federal Match Corp. became part of Ivar Kreuger's International Match Corp. when it was purchased by Vulcan Match Co., one of Kreuger's subsidiaries. It was later purchased by the Pan American Match Corp. (a Diamond holding company) in the Kreuger bankruptcy auctions in July, 1937. It then merged with the Union Match Co. in 1938, and both were consolidated under the Federal Match Corp. Both Federal and West Virginia Match Corp. merged into Universal in 1941, and the company disappeared as a distinct manufacturer.

Earlier covers (four shown on p. 2) are noticeably longer than later issues, leading to the distinction between “Federal longs” and “Federal shorts.” As you could undoubtedly predict, the earlier issues also sport wide strikers as compared to the thinner strikers of many of the issues.

Production centers for Federal that I am aware of include: Bloomsburg, PA (closed 1937); Bellefonte, PA; Duluth, MN; Joliet, IL (closed 1939), Spokane, WA; Crawfordsville, IN (closed 1929); Cleveland, OH (closed



1929); Ashland, OH (closed 1929); Cloquet, MI.

As far as company trademarks are concerned, I don't believe there were any for the covers, themselves, but there were at least several for Federal boxes: "Economy" (box, c. 1920s), "National Safety Match" (box, 1930's), "Reliance" (box, 1930's), "Staylit" (box, 1930's), and "Pride" (box, 1930's). Federal did not use any distinctive footers (no "Quality," "Safety First," "For Safety," etc.).

Of course, looking through Federal covers, you can see just about the entire array of categories collected within the hobby, except the Fancies. There are a number of series—Fashion Park Clothes, Timely Clothes, Piper Cubs, Massachusetts Bonding and Insurance Company, etc. And, the famous Filippo Berio Olive Oil contact set is a Federal issue, as well as some of the sought after CCC covers (as shown on p. 1), but Federal is probably most noted for its Military and U.S. Navy Ship issues, all Pre-War. There are just over 100 of the Federal Navy Ship covers...nice additions, indeed, to any Navy Ship enthusiast's collection.

At the moment, there are currently 3,585 Federals listed, and 32 of them are even dated (1934-1941). Who knows how many more there are out there! It's not that hard to locate Federals. They can frequently be seen in auctions, and I see them turn up in routine trades on a fairly frequent basis. I'm sure there are a number of veteran collectors, at least, who would be willing to specifically trade them, as well, but don't be surprised if they expect Federals in return because these aren't your every day, run-of-the-mill covers. I have a few to trade, myself [*hint, hint!*]

Just another reason why this is such a fascinating hobby!

