

## What Ever Happened to...? (II)

**-Ohio Match Co.:** Another one of the industry's historic giants, Ohio Match Co. was founded by E.J. Young in Wadsworth, OH, in 1895. It was purchased by Diamond in 1928; Diamond then sold half interest in the company to Ivar Krueger. When Kreuger's empire collapsed in 1932, the company was reorganized by Diamond in 1936. By 1948, when it had again become independent, it was considered one of the three largest match manufacturers in the world. The Wadsworth plant was, at one time, the largest in the world, making more than 300 million wood and paper matches a day; it was a 18-acre facility. The company became a subsidiary of Hunt Foods & Industries in 1957; Hunt Foods and Industries merged with Simon (Norton), Inc. in 1968; purchased by Bradley Industries, Inc. in 1976. In 1985, the company was listed as a foreign corp., indicating foreign ownership. It discontinued production in 1987, and Universal bought at least part of what was left.

**-Pacific Match Co:** This, the third company so named, was founded by O.V. Snyder and associates who had relocated to Tacoma, WA, from Wheeling, WV, where he had apparently worked in the match industry previously. The high cost of labor and materials forced the closure of the company in 1964.

**-Regal Match Co.:** Regal Match Co., of Baltimore, was originally part of Maryland Match Co. and formed as a separate entity in 1956. It lasted until 1990

**-Republic Match Co:** Not to be confused with the earlier Republic Match Co.(Plymouth, WI, 1939-1944), this company was actually set up by Atlas in 1973, at Arlington, TX, to handle smaller orders. It occupied the same building complex and then moved to Euless, TX, with Atlas. Republic still functions as such, but it never produced its own matches.

**-SEITA:** SEIT was the state-owned tobacco monopoly in France. When it added the production of matches to the monopoly in 1935, it became SEITA. In 1995, it became a publicly held company listed on the Paris stock exchange, and, as such, entered into full competition with the international tobacco giants of the industry. In 1997, the company held just 1% of the world's tobacco market. In 1999, SEITA disappeared in a merger with Tabacalera, forming Altadis.

**-Southwestern Match Co.:** This Fort Worth company started in 1957 by Herbert Oakes, Sr. It lasted until 1960, when it was taken over by newly formed Atlas Match Co.

**-Star Match Co.:** One of the gem smaller companies, it started in 1892 in St. Louis, MO, and incorporated in 1928. It was taken over [*Universal says 'formed'*] by Universal in 1930. It ceased production in 1936.

**-Strike-Rite Match Co.:** This Canadian manufacturer closed in 1989. That's all I have on it.

**-Superior Match Co.:** This Chicago company **was** founded by Harold Meitus, whose son, David, founded Atlantis Match Co. in 1971. Superior issued the first Girlie set in 1938 (Elvgren Girls) and switched to Petty Girls after 1948. It was taken over by Momart Co., Inc. in 1946; sold to Sutherland Paper Co. in 1958 and merged into it in 1960. It then merged with Monarch Match Co. in 1966. It was taken over by Gulf & Western Industries, Inc. in 1968 and sold to James River Corp. of VA in 1979. Richard Meitus bought Superior Match Co. in 1985. Production stopped in 1990.

**-Union Match Co.:** This, the second company so named, started in 1926. It was located in Hudson, NY. It produced the distinctive Blot-r-Match. It was bought by Federal Match Co., and both companies

merged to form Federal Match Corp. in 1938.

**-United Engineering Corp.:** This Kenilworth, NJ, company was started by Russell Smith, NJ, an inventor of match-making machinery, in 1926. The company produced few matchbooks. It survived into the early 1940s.

**-Universal Match Co:** Arguably even bigger than Diamond at its height, the Universal Match Co. was founded in 1925 by A.H. and S.M. Rosenberg. Production started in the spring of 1927. It 'formed' Star Match Co. in 1930. It was purchased by Pan American Match Corp. (a Diamond holding company) c.1937/1938. In 1941, Federal Match Corp. and West Virginia Match Corp. were merged with Universal, making it one of the world's major match manufacturers. Later, Universal became independent and went back to Universal Match. It started operating in South America in 1955. Its name was changed to UMC Industries, Inc. in 1966. It produced Jewels, Jewelites, Matchoramas, Filigrees, Uniglos, Cameos, and a host of other notable brand names. It was sold to Swedish Match AB of Stockholm in 1981 and consequently merged with Trans Match Inc., and the resulting entity became Universal Match Corp. Universal dominated the American market from the 1960's to 1987. Reflecting the shrinking American match industry, Universal closed its last US plant in 1988. It was bought by Diamond Brands in 1991. Universal relocated to Canada as a middleman, no longer a manufacturer.

**-Western Match Co.:** Canadian company that closed in 1968.

**-WIMCO:** WIMCO, incorporated in 1923, was once the largest match manufacturer in India. In 1998, it was taken over by Swedish Match. In the early 2000s, it experienced widespread labor strikes