

Collecting Your Hometown

Here's another small category that's popular with many collectors—collecting covers from your hometown ('hometown' is defined here as the one you happen to be living in, usually).

It's a category that is collected simply because of the collector's connection to that town—not because the covers are old, or rare, or colorful—they just happen to come from your hometown. And, although such a collection will probably not be appreciated by any other collector, you collect them...just because.

Moreover, unless your hometown is on the level of a New York City or Los Angeles, you'll probably be the *only* collector who collects that particular town (which is why I normally don't run those totals in the Largest Collections issues). Thus, I collect Auburn, CA, and just down the road, Loren Moore collects Roseville, CA. Who else collects those towns? *No one!* When those collections eventually find their way to someone else, they'll undoubtedly be broken down into the new collector's wants. *Doesn't matter.* We weren't looking to leave a personal monument behind; we got what we wanted from them—the memories, the history, the nostalgia.

If it happens that the town you are thus collecting also happens to be a small town, your enjoyment is multiplied exponentially...because you probably *know* almost, or even all, of the places you're collecting. Here in Auburn, for example, I can look at that old Crown from the Auburn Hotel and remember having one of their great Basque dinners there, and I can remember when it was torn down to put in the small indoor mall that was there. I can hold that Military cover from the DeWitt Army General Hospital and remember when I did grad research there when it had been turned into a state mental hospital. And, I can remember the times when I went to the Shanghai Restaurant, the oldest Chinese restaurant in California, before it closed down. I also happen to collect New York City (for a different reason), but it's just not the same. I can't identify with those Big Apple covers. None of that will matter to the next collector who will someday inherit that Auburn collection, but, again, I will have enjoyed them when I had them, and, at least for that particular collection, that's all that matters.

So, how do you go about *finding* those covers. Some, at least a few, will eventually come your way just through the normal ebb and flow of covers through your hands over the years. But, if you're really going to *look* for those covers, your best bet is to advertise *locally*, because many of those covers will still be in the area, no matter how old they might actually be. You can run a small ad in the local newspaper, or I've had good luck with such an ad in the local weekly advertising circular, one that specializes in such ads. There are always matchbook accumulations waiting forlornly in some forgotten nook or cranny in an attic, garage, or closet. They're just waiting to be rediscovered...and recirculated!

And, by the way, such collections are ready-made for local displays at the library, Elks club, or whatever. Not only that, but one could readily argue that such displays are even more effective than other displays because the people viewing that display will have much the same connection to those covers that you do. They'll remember those places, those businesses.

So, think about starting your own hometown collection. It's a great way to become even more invested in your hobby, and that personal investment will provide you with even more years of enjoyment.