

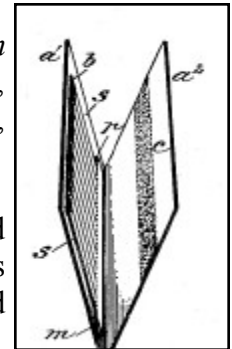
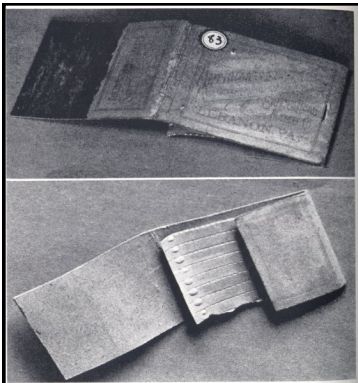
## Editorial

### Are We Celebrating The Wrong Hero?

We all know the story of our hero, Joshua Pusey. Hobby babies are weaned on it; collectors pass it on by word of mouth; editors publish it in their bulletins. Indeed, it *is* an epic tale, almost Homeric—how a Philadelphia attorney invented the matchbook in 1892 and thus brought the world out of a Medieval-like existence and into the modern world we have today. Ah, ‘tis a grand story, don’t ‘cha know!

Time has an annoying habit of bringing more information to light, though, [*no pun intended*], and the actual story is quite a bit more complicated...with conflicting dates, conflicting dollar amounts for the sale of the patent, and a number of patent suits, some of which Pusey won, and some of which he lost.

Overshadowing everything, though, is the inescapable fact that what Pusey invented *wasn't* a matchbook, at least not the matchbook we know today. He put paper matches in what, at best, could be called a matchfolder (he called them ‘flexibles’). *See pic >>*



As it happens, research conducted by Rich Greene, NJ, shows that on June 20, 1893, Charles Bowman patented a matchbook that looks like our matchbook today (and he, too, had actually applied for his patent in 1892). <<*See pic*. Pusey sued Bowman and lost. Using Bowman’s patent, The American Safety Matchhead Company, PA, produced said matchbooks in 1893, but the company folded in 1897.

So, who’s the hero? Pusey....or Bowman?