

HOBBY HISTORY

Are You a Souvenir Collector?

*[from Walter E. Rabus, The Diamond Bulletin,
May 1939, p.12]*

Here is a hobby which abolishes all of the nuisance involved in souvenir collecting, entirely eliminates light fingers and takes up practically no space in your luggage. When you get home you have a colorful, fascinating collection of souvenirs that didn't cost a penny.

The Match Folder proves to be the ideal souvenir. You can get a match folder from practically every place you stop, eat, or sleep. And there is a real kick in collecting match folders.

For those who wish to spend as little time as possible on their collection, there are specially designed albums sold in most bookstores or department stores at a nominal cost. These books hold anywhere from two hundred to eight hundred folders. If you want to be truly economical, however, you can get a loose-leaf note-book at any five-and ten cent store and make your own album with a twin-slit cutting knife or an old razor blade. Now you are all ready to arrange your collection.

The first step comes with prying open the wire staples at the stub of each match folder and removing it. Next, discard the stub and flatten out the folder. This last step may be done by moistening the folds and putting in a heavy book for a few minutes. Take your twin-slit knife and cut the corners in your album (as in any photograph album) and insert the folder. If you are keeping a travel log of your trip, the same method may be applied and your folders kept with your daily summary.

The chances are, when you get home, you will keep right on collecting match folders. The writer did. One finds that there is an abundance of interesting folders right at home. Then you begin

to look for traders. There are many match-folder collectors who are eager to help in any way they can.

Traders fall into many different categories. One type requires fifty unused folders of one kind in exchange for twenty-five mixed folders. These persons are trying to build up trading stations and can be very helpful to the collector. They send out lists from which you may order.

Another type of trader is the one who trades on an even exchange basis and is merely interested in building up his own collection. You will find that he will often offer a premium for a particular folder he needs to fill a set.

In very few instances have I come across a trader who sells his folders. In those instances I did discover, he had a set of folders that were very difficult to obtain and was offering the complete set.

Generally speaking, you have a hobby that is practically free from cost when you start to collect match folders. *[courtesy of James Willard, MD]*

Ed note: Hard to believe that was written almost 70 years ago! The argument for collecting certainly still holds true today, but other things have changed...

In the 1930s, collectors were making their own pages, either hand-sewn or hand cut. The early albums were already out, though. Thank goodness we have plastic pages today and don't have to hassle with making our own.

The idea of creating a travel journal, accentuated with matchcovers from those places visited, seems as if it would have been a delightful idea resulting in a wonderful overall souvenir of that particular trip. One couldn't do it now, unfortunately, because of the lack of covers from so many businesses, but you might be able to do it with...business cards, napkins, soap wrappers, or other small, flat items that could be easily put into such a journal.