

HOBBY HISTORY

Historical Tidbits: I

> In the latter part of the 1880s and into this century, Diamond Match Co. logged extensively in the Northern Michigan and Wisconsin areas to provide timber for its large factory in Oshkosh, WI. Many other businesses in the area also were logging their land. To keep the ownership of the logs correct, the logs were marked at each end before they were floated to the saw mill by water. In 1902, on the Ontonagon River System in Upper Michigan, Diamond had 168 different log marks.

The tradition of log marks goes way back to Colonial days when England's Queen Anne's surveyors marked with a broad arrow the finest trees in New England for the Royal Navy as masts on the vessels. Unhappiness over this taking off private property became one of the background issues in the Revolutionary War. After the war, the new U.S. government could not just take timber from private owners.

Until the beginning of the cutting of the tremendous pine forests of the Mid-West about 1840, log marks were cut into the bark with a axe. But in Michigan, to cope with the volume of logs, the log hammer was devised. This was all steel and about two feet long.

Even with the use of this hammer, thieves worked at covering over the marks with similar but different brands, much as cattle thieves changed the brands on cattle. The use of log hammers came to an end in the 1930s. They are now becoming collector's items. Certainly match collectors might find the Diamond hammers a nice adjunct to their match collections. These log hammers certainly played an important role in helping to keep the match factories running. *April 1981 Long Beach bulletin*

> For decades, Diamond claimed that the

Mendelson Opera cover was the first book match, but with a date of 1896 [see Mail Box section of Jul/Aug 2000 RMS Bulletin] the Piso cover is undoubtedly earlier [see Piso article, May/Jun 2000 and Jan/Feb 2001 RMS Bulletins].

> In 1892, the government monopoly for making matches in France operated 12 factories.

> You may know that Diamond Match Co. once gave away one of its patents in the interest of the national good, but did you know that they did it TWICE? Diamond made public domain their patent for the process that eliminates the danger of phosphorous necrosis. For this, the American Museum of Safety awarded the company the Louis Livingston Seaman medal in 1915. Then, during World War II, demand from the Pacific theatre for moisture resistant matches was so great that Diamond could not fill orders and once again turned a patent over to the American public.

> It was in 1937 that the match industry began changing from the "tall" or "XL" length of matchcovers to the shorter size we have today. Why? Vending machines wouldn't handle the older, larger size.

> In 1948, Merhl Morgan lost his entire Group I collection at the Pittsburgh bus depot!

> In 1951, 96% of all matchbooks manufactured were 20-strikes.

> Has RMS ever kicked a member out? Yes! After letters of complaint were received from 15+ members, RMS President Walter Mensch expelled Fernand Grignet, Belgium, in August 1959, for defrauding members of merchandise which had been duly ordered and paid for. (Walter was taken for \$150, himself!)

> In 1962, Midwest Matchcover Club actually organized a "Junior Mid-West Collectors Club" as an auxiliary. They had 12 kids in the group, all from 10-15 years old. [how times have changed!]

> On February 28th, 1962, there were 715 active members in RMS.