

Matchbook Stamp Ads – of Yore!

by A. Stephen Patrick

In the main section of the May 2020 newsletter, there was a feature that showcased a recent ad for stamps that was aimed at beginners. The question was asked: “*When was the last time you saw an ad like this?*” My answer is – recently!

The only computer game I play is Freecell. If I must wait in a line for anyone or anything more than three minutes, my phone comes out, and I am trying to beat my record of 1:29 in competition. Freecell is “free” but every game starts with a pop-up ad, and one of the regular ads is from Mystic Stamp Company with a colorful ad for stamps, or a catalogue.

Of course, most of Mystic’s ads target the beginner, and they are annoying to the point that I want to play and not read a commercial. But I applaud Mystic as one of the few stamp companies that is using this traditional way of mass marketing. President Don Sundman has more recruits to the American Philatelic Society than any other each year. We may not have warm and fuzzy feelings about all of Mystic’s stamp business practices, but it is one of the last mass marketers bringing in new collectors.

Fergie also mentioned **matchbook covers** as an old-style way to sell stamps. This took me to one of three medium size boxes I have that are stuffed with match books. Illustrated are five from my collection. The first pictures JFK and is from Kenmore Stamp Co. with an offer for 1,000 stamps for less than \$3. This is exactly the way I started my stamp collecting in Christmas of 1958 from Santa. The inside cover always has a place to write one’s name and address, and with a money back guarantee if not delighted.

The second cover is also from Kenmore Stamp Co. and offers 110 valuable stamps from the British Empire



with an exotic Pitcairn Island stamp to tempt. Send 10 cents for postage and for a bonus receive a “Cinderella” set of England’s 42 Kings and Queens. The third cover features a free centennial postage stamp, the #1 Ben Franklin, offered by H. E. Harris Co. of Boston. Only ten cents can bring 25 U.S. stamps, including a \$5.00 stamp, Wild West and an 1893 Columbian – plus approvals!

The fourth matchbook features Ramses II on a Ghana stamp with the promise of 110 foreign stamps for only ten cents from the Garcelon Co. of Calais, Maine. There will be “unusual shapes, weird designs, dramatic subjects – ferocious beasts, pirate treasure, strange outer space stamps.”



The fifth ad pictures General Eisenhower on a Fujeira stamp from the Williams Co. of St. Stephen, N.B., Canada. Get a QE II Silver Wedding (bound to be a classic), giant Mongol horseman, and other global issues for only ten cents.

In researching these covers, I learned that I am a *phillumanist*! I am more an accumulator than a collector in that I can't pass up a yard sale vase, box, or other container filled with matchbooks. Many of mine still have the matches in them, although most collectors **shuck** (that's the correct term) the matches, and carefully remove the staple.

Matchbooks are divided by count 10, 20 (the standard), 30, 40 or jumbos and whether they are a front strike or a back strike. Three of my stamp matchbooks are front strike, and two are back strike. The government has mandated that for safety, all matchbooks be a back strike starting in 1973. There is a national organization called the Rathcamp Matchcover Society, a Matchbook Collectors Public Group on Facebook, and even a group of Florida collectors that meets in Winter Park on the second Saturday of the month.

Are you a *phillumanist* too? Maybe we should get together and have a trading session.



WHAT IS IT?

by Mike Linthicum



This stamp [Figure D1] has been a part of my collection for many years and has always fascinated me. The stamp is Scott# 645, 2-cents issued in 1928, and titled Washington at Prayer Valley Forge.

I am sure many of you have the same stamp in your collections but what is of interest to me is the cancel. Obviously, a biplane of early airplane history, but where do you think the cancel originated from and what does it commemorate?

You can send me your thoughts on this. I will do a follow up if we can find the answer. My email is csastamp@gmail.com.