

The CCI-USA News

Chess Collectors International

Vol. 2008 issue III

IN THIS ISSUE:

Get ready and start packing! The **Sixth Western Hemisphere CCI meeting** will take place in beautiful Princeton, New Jersey in May 22-24, 2009. Check introduction on page 3.

The **Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)** will display a chess exhibit: *Master Pieces: Chess Sets from the Dr. George and Vivian Dean Collection*. For details, dates and directions turn to pages 4 and 5.

The very first chess set most people used or owned were these **“Small Plastic Chess Sets”** made by the *E. S. Lowe Company*. Ever enjoyed playing a good game of Bingo? What is the connection between these two? CCI member Duncan Pohl researched and brought us the fascinating history and creativity of Edgar S. Lowe and this great toy (Chess!) making company. This article is the main story in this bulleting and you can read all about it on pages 6 through 16.

Dresden, Germany is well known for its fine factories and makers of the most beautiful

chess playing figurines that many CCI members own and enjoy. In November 2008, the city hosted the top events in chess: the 38th Chess Olympiad (12th – 25th) and the 79th FIDE Congress (17th - 25th). Turn to page 18 for a brief review.



All this and more are only a few of the benefits of being a CCI member. To make sure that you do not miss out on notices of all these important chess collecting publications and activities, keep your membership in CCI current. **Promptly send your dues to your local treasurer.**

Western Hemisphere members – it is time to send in your 2009 dues. Please mail your check to **Bill Fordney at 106 East Greenbriar Dr., York, PA 17407-1014.**

CHESS AUCTIONS

Fine Chess Sets & Games

December 10, 2008

Knightsbridge

Bonhams (<http://www.bonhams.com>) is currently inviting entries for their forthcoming auction of fine Chess Sets & Games on **April 29th 2009**. The sale will include fine chess sets, boards and chess collectibles.

Put this date in your diary and plan on attending.

Contact: Luke Honey (Consultant)

+44 (0) 7900 887 054

luke.honey@bonhams.com □





In Memoriam

YORK Margaret D. "Peggy" Fordney, 70, died Monday, November 3, 2008, at Memorial Hospital. She was the wife of William H. Fordney, Jr. for 48 years. Born in Lancaster, she was the daughter of the late Charles A. and Margaret Dunlap Bowman. She retired from Philip R. Friedman & Associates LLP of York. After her retirement, she worked part-time for Young Life in Las Vegas. She enjoyed cooking and entertaining, and was an avid collector of early American stoneware, but the joys of her life were her children and grandchildren. She was a member of Advent Lutheran Church in York. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her five children, W. Mark Fordney of Henderson, Nev., J. Robert Fordney of Morristown, N.J., David E. Fordney of The Woodlands, Texas, Margaret A. Fordney of Morgan Hill, Calif., and Matthew P. Fordney of York; eight grandchildren; and a sister, Julia Ann Kauffman, Ephrata. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend a memorial service at Advent Lutheran Church, 1775 E. Market St., York, on Friday at 2 p.m. The family will meet with friends immediately following the memorial service. Private interment will be held at the convenience of the family. Please omit flowers. Contributions may be sent to Young Life, 118 Corporate Park Drive, Suite 113, Henderson, NV 89074; or to your favorite charity. Arrangements are by the Kearney A. Snyder Funeral Home, 394-4097. For more information or to send an online condolence, please visit our website www.kearneyasnryderfuneralhome.com. □

(from the York, PA paper)

Call for help to CCI members

Dr. Bradley Bailey wrote to us: "I hope that you can help me with a request for information. I am curating the exhibition *Marcel Duchamp: Chess Master* for the Saint Louis University Art Museum and the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis, which is hosting the 2009 U.S. Chess Championship. This is the first exhibition dedicated entirely to Duchamp's career as a chess player, and will include a wide variety of media and ephemera from museum collections and dealers intended to appeal to both chess and art enthusiasts. The exhibition is scheduled to take place at the Saint Louis University Art Museum from May 1 through August 16, 2009."

If you own any object or article of interest in your collection that has a direct or indirect connection to Marcel Duchamp, such as a Salvador Dali chess set commissioned by Duchamp in 1964 for the American Chess Federation, and wish to loan it to the school for this exhibition, contact Dr. Bailey directly and he will furnish additional information about this unique opportunity. They would love to discuss the possibility of borrowing any of these materials for the show.

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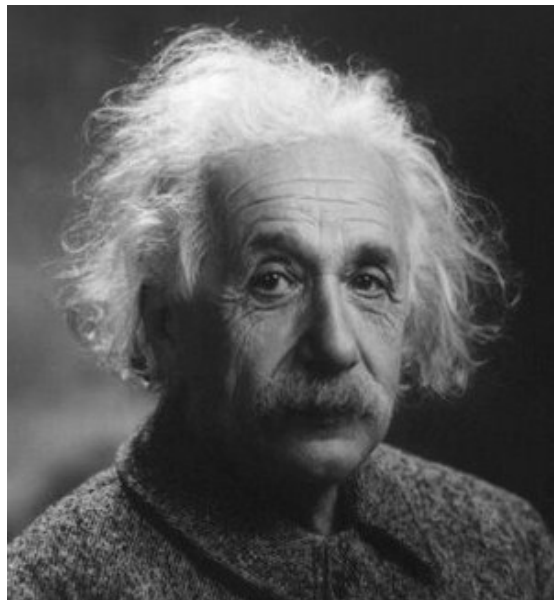
Note: neither CCI nor this publication is involved, support or sponsor this event. This call is made only in an attempt to help the cause.

SIXTH WESTERN HEMISPHERE CCI MEETING
FRIDAY, MAY 22nd TO SUNDAY, MAY 24th 2007
Princeton, New Jersey

Get ready and mark the dates in your calendars and diaries. The sixth western hemisphere CCI meeting will take place in the beautiful, quiet town of Princeton, New Jersey during the Memorial Day weekend 2009.

A detailed program, schedule, registration and reservation information will be sent to you soon but we have an action packed convention so save the dates and start making your plans.

The program is currently being finalized. We'll convene on Friday evening, May 22nd, 2009 for dinner, followed by a two day program, packed with exciting activities that include visits to local chess collections of CCI members, lectures, talks, visit to a local collectors market and exhibits, excellent entertainment program, our traditional chess fair and, above all an opportunity to meet and spend quality time with friends.



Albert Einstein



Princeton University, Alexander Hall

All this and more, exactly half way between New York and Philadelphia, about one hour from either, serviced by two of the largest airports (Newark and Philadelphia) and easily accessible by car or train –

BE THERE!

Stay tuned! Details will be in the mailed soon.

Princeton – not just a town – an experience. Visit <http://www.visitprinceton.org/visitor/> for Princeton visitor guide and a wealth of additional information and remember what they say about Princeton: it's not just a town, it's an experience. Come and enjoy a CCI unique experience!□



5200 Woodward Avenue (313) 833 7900
Detroit, Michigan 48202 www.dia.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Make a Move to the Detroit Institute of Arts to View
Rare and Exquisite Chess Sets from Around the World**

November 14, 2008 (Detroit) – Like two superior game pieces, Dr. George and Vivian Dean have strategically moved themselves around the world gathering the most dynamic, rare and unusual chess sets they could find.

Their world-renown collection will be on display at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) in the exhibition *Master Pieces: Chess Sets from the Dr. George and Vivian Dean Collection* from December 26, 2008 to March 22, 2009. *Master Pieces* includes more than two dozen exquisite sets ranging from the 16th to the 20th centuries from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. The exhibition is free with museum admission.

Dean, a physician who owned practices in Redford and Southfield, Michigan, said the hobby started when he and Vivian took a trip to the Middle East in 1962. In the lobby of their hotel, Vivian fell in love with a silver and gold chess set made by a Yemeni craftsman. The couple's \$200 souvenir budget was spent on an impulse purchase that would spark an enduring interest.

“After that, whenever we went on a trip, we would buy a chess set,” said Dean, founder and president emeritus of Chess Collectors International. “Then we got the bug and started going on ‘chess set safaris.’ We would pick a country, learn how to say, ‘Do you have any antique chess sets?’ in the language of that country, then rent a car and drive around and buy them.”

Today, the Deans have the most extensive collection of antique and fine art chess sets in the world. Included in the collection is the only Faberge chess set ever made.

Featuring a wide range of materials and designs, pieces and boards in the DIA exhibition demonstrate how differently artists throughout history and across the globe have interpreted the game of chess. The artists' superb craftsmanship and creativity are explored, with sections featuring ivory and porcelain examples, including sets by Sèvres and Meissen. Some sets include tiny insects, sea creatures, and a variety of precious bejeweled objects.

Several themes are explored in the exhibition, including the ideological oppositions that the game of chess has been used to evoke, such as Good vs. Evil or Communism vs. Capitalism; the fascinating stories of set ownership, such as one commissioned from Fabergé and another once owned by Catherine

**MAKE A MOVE TO THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS TO VIEW RARE AND EXQUISITE CHESS SETS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

the Great; and the variety of artistic styles, including abstract and modern. Some of the modern artists featured are Man Ray and Salvador Dalí.

Items including chess sets and books will be available in the DIA's Museum Shop.

This exhibition has been generously supported by Dr. George and Vivian Dean. Additional support has been provided by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the City of Detroit.

Chess related activities:

- Three chess stations will be positioned near the exhibition during business hours for attendees to play at their leisure.
- The Detroit City Chess Club meets at the DIA every Friday from 5–9 p.m. for chess practice. The club's mission is to teach area students the game and life lessons. Members of the club have won national, regional, and state competitions. People wanting to learn how to play chess should show up between 5 and 7 p.m. There will be no teaching between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Hours and admission:

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for senior citizens, and \$4 for youth ages 6-17. DIA members are admitted free. For more information, call (313) 833-7900 or see the website at www.dia.org.

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The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), located at 5200 Woodward Avenue in Detroit, is one of the premier art museums in the United States and home to more than 60,000 works that comprise a multicultural survey of human creativity from ancient times through the 21st century. From the first van Gogh painting to enter a U.S. museum (Self Portrait, 1887), to Diego Rivera's world-renowned Detroit Industry murals (1932–33), the DIA's collection is known for its quality, range, and depth.

Programs are made possible with support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the City of Detroit.

Photos available upon request

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Pamela Marcil (313) 833-7899 pmarcil@dia.org

□

Thirteenth Biennial CCI Convention Program Book available

A few copies of the Boca Raton convention program book are still available. Excellent articles including topics such as the identification of Ivory and other materials used in the production of chess sets, Paul Morphy and the history of early chess masters. Contains over 200 pages in full size and color and over 295 photos of chess sets and other interesting items, and much more.

Cost: \$50.00 plus actual postage

Contact: Flovd Sarisohn at lichess@aol.com or P.O.Box 166. Commack. New York 11725

The E S Lowe Toy Company, Timing, and Chess

The very first chess set I owned was from the *E. S. Lowe Company*. It was a *Renaissance* chess set I bought with my own money when I was about twelve, maybe thirteen, years old. I used that set for years, even using it to teach my own children how to play the game. So, while the stories about the games that made E. S. Lowe a success are well known- he apparently loved telling them himself- and though those stories had nothing to do with chess, for me, chess sets and Lowe have always seemed synonymous. Granted, though the sets may be average and mass-produced, they still contain a lot of nostalgia.

Right Place, Right Time, Right Game

They say timing is everything, and that may have never been truer than for Edwin S. Lowe. Whether his timing was good- or bad- probably depends on which story is told.

One story has Lowe the owner of a fledging toy company he started in 1928 with \$1,000 and two employees. That would have made him barely 18, freshly graduated as valedictorian of his class from Jamaica High School in Queens, New York. If this story is true, then his timing may have seemed pretty bad, as just a few months later came the Market Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression and Lowe would have very quickly found himself struggling to save his company. The other story has Lowe a 19-year-old toy salesman simply struggling to make a living.

Either way, events had Lowe on the road at the right time at the right place for the right game because, while traveling through Georgia one late December night in 1929, Lowe came across a country fair where a very popular game by the name of Beano was being played. Sensing a possible winner, Lowe inquired about the game, learned it had originally come from a fair in Germany, bought some of the game cards, and returned home to New York. With some cards of his own and some dried beans, he introduced the game to friends. One woman, seeing she had won, got so excited, she couldn't remember to yell "Beano" and yelled "Bingo" instead.

In an interview years later, Lowe recalled that moment: "I cannot describe the sense of elation which that girl's cry brought to me, all I could think of was that I was going to come out with this game and I was going to call it Bingo."¹

A parish priest of a Catholic church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania saw the fund-raising potential for the game and asked Lowe to expand the game to allow more players, without allowing more winners. With the help of a nearby college mathematics professor, Lowe delivered on the priest's request and suddenly, he had a winner. By now, so the story goes, Lowe had quit his job and started his own toy company.

Whichever story is true, the timing that night couldn't have been better for Lowe, because by 1934, it was estimated 10,000 games of Bingo were being played across the United States each week, and Lowe's company had 1,000 employees working around the clock cranking out bingo games in an effort to keep up with the demand (it was said that during this time his company was using more newsprint than the New York Times). According to one record, while Lowe "...was never able to trademark the word 'bingo,' he still became the dominant player in the industry and ***made even more money selling small plastic chess and checkers sets.***"² (italics added).

¹ Eisler, Kim Isaac. *Revenge of the Pequots. How a Small Native American Tribe Created the World's Most Profitable Casino*, Simon & Schuster, New York 2001.

² Eisler, Kim Isaac. *Revenge of the Pequots: How a Small Native American Tribe Created the World's Most Profitable Casino*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2001.

The latter story, by the way, is the one referred to in his obituary, making it seem the more creditable of the two.³

Lowe's "invention" of the game Yahtzee was another case of the right place, right time, right game when, around 1956, a wealthy couple asked him to produce a game they had invented and played with friends on their yacht, called- creatively enough- *The Yacht Game*. In exchange for 1,000 free games to give to their friends and families, the couple gave the rights to the game to Lowe. He renamed it *Yahtzee*, introduced it to his friends in the same way he had introduced Bingo, waited for word to get around, and once again had a winner on his hands. During Lowe's ownership, over 40 million Yahtzee games were sold in America and around the globe. The game has maintained its popularity. According to current owner Hasbro, 50 million Yahtzee games are sold each year.⁴

In 1973, Lowe sold his company to Milton Bradley for \$26 million and involved himself in other pursuits- such as producing plays on Broadway and buying a 322-room motel, called the Tally-Ho Inn, in Las Vegas. Ironically, though he was the one who introduced Bingo to the world, gambling was not allowed at the hotel, and it failed a few months later. It eventually became the site of the Aladdin Hotel and is currently the site of Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino.

By now some (well, maybe most) may well be wondering what any of this has to do with chess. Well, considering how successfully the games of Bingo and Yahtzee sold gives much greater depth to the scope of the statement made in Eisler's account that Lowe's company *made even more money selling small plastic chess and checkers sets*. How much so? Well, an article on *CNNMoney.com* gives an inkling of the answer to that question. While focusing on the burnout and dropout rate of many executive managers in corporate America, the article gives the interesting experience of one T. Robert O'Konski, as follows:

Because it is much easier and cheaper to buy a successful product than to develop one in the toy and game industry, major players like Milton Bradley constantly zero in on small shops that have hit it big with a winner or two. One of the company's targets was E.S. Lowe, a New York toymaker that sold the perennially popular game Yahtzee. Milton Bradley bought the company in 1973, and O'Konski was sent down as a caretaker until the business could be folded into the corporate operation back up in Massachusetts. O'Konski discovered that he had inherited a smart, motivated sales force ...E.S. Lowe sold chess sets, and the highly publicized Fischer-Spaasky matches suddenly sent sales soaring. Other products started selling better as well. By the time the parent company was ready to move the shop two years later, E.S. Lowe's annual sales had jumped from \$6 million to about \$23 million.⁵

Not bad for *selling small plastic chess and checkers sets*. And don't forget- this was in 1970's dollars. Incidentally, the managers at the new parent company were unable to find a single job for that New York crew and O'Konski ended up quitting the company in disgust. Just a few years later MB itself was bought out by Hasbro. Good Karma? Maybe. Unfortunately, my requests of Hasbro asking for information on the histories or products of either of these companies have met with little interest. Their standard response is to say they never answer questions in regard to past products, etc., and suggest enquiring elsewhere, such as from Game Collector sites, etc. I find it rather sad a company can have so little interest in where its been, what its done, or what its produced. A sad commentary on the lack of pride we see so evident in the corporate world today.

³ Newsday (Combined Editions) Long Island, NY, Feb 25, 1986. p.07.

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahtzee>

⁵ BREAKING AWAY TO GO ON YOUR OWN Call it the new corporate brain drain: More good managers, fed up to here, are walking away from careers with big companies to try business without a boss http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1990/12/17/74471/index.htm

Now, About Those “... Small Plastic Chess ... Sets”

Even though Edwin Lowe started his company- at the very latest- in 1930, the earliest I can establish chess sets being sold by the Lowe Company is 1945- based on the copyright dates found on the instruction sheets included with their sets. In fact, if one were to use copyright dates as a form of dating, it would seem every chess set ever sold by Lowe had to have been sold during three particular years: 1945- almost every set sold by Lowe seems to have that copyright date, 1959- the copyright date given the Renaissance chess set, and 1974- when new copyrights evidently became necessary due to Milton Bradley's new ownership of the Lowe company. Of course, that wasn't really the case, but the chess sets sold by Lowe remained unchanged for many years- the sets sold in the 1960s and 70s were the same as those sold in 1945 or 1959, which evidently created little need for new copyrights.

Still, from what little information I have gleaned so far, there were at least a few different styles, sizes and materials used in the chess sets sold by the Lowe Company, but as far as numbers are concerned, i.e.: actual number of models offered, total volume of chess sets sold, total dollars in sales, etc.- none have been forthcoming. For a company to have had such significant sales over the years, just in chess sets alone, makes me think the company must have made some kind of an impact on the American world of chess. But can that impact be measured? How many different styles and sizes of chess sets did Lowe offer during the company's history? And while the company primarily offered plastic chess sets, it did also sell sets made of Bakelite and wood. Were any other materials used/offered by the company? How did the sales figures for chess sets compare with the sales figures for the company's other games and products? What kind of arrangement existed between Lowe and the ANRI Company of Italy- a company famous for high quality wood carved products- to make ANRI willing to associate their name with the plastic *Renaissance* chess set sold by the Lowe Company?

Also, was Lowe the manufacturer of the sets it sold; were they supplied by outside vendors, or perhaps a combination of the two? For example, *The Embossing Company* manufactured a series of pocket games, such as “Dominoes”, “Time Puzzle” and “Bottoms-Up”, that it not only sold under its own name, but also supplied the games to both the Drueke and Lowe companies to sell under their own label- Lowe sold the series under the name *Bookshelf of Games*⁶. I have seen a Lowe *Bookshelf of Games* chess set (vol. 524), so it would seem safe to conclude chess was among the games manufactured and supplied by The Embossing Company, but sold by Lowe. The above are all examples of information I hope becomes available and/or confirmed in the future.

Sample Chess Sets Sold by the E. S. Lowe Company

No. 841 - 3 3/4" King

This set, including the board, may well be considered the company “standard” as it appears Lowe sold it, unchanged, for nearly thirty years, from its introduction in 1945 until the Lowe Company itself was sold to Milton Bradley.



⁶ <http://members.aol.com/jwmeredith/embbook>

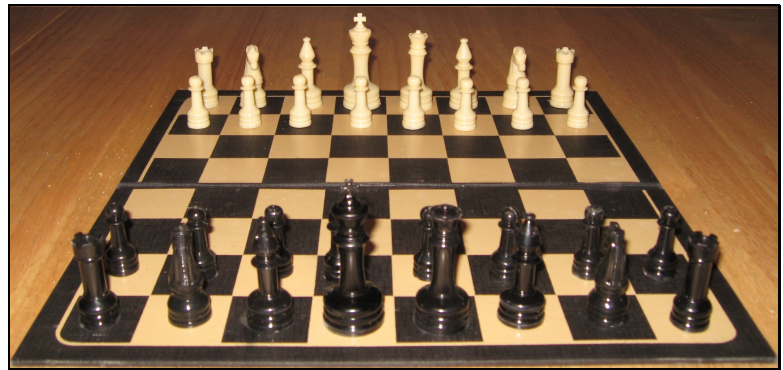
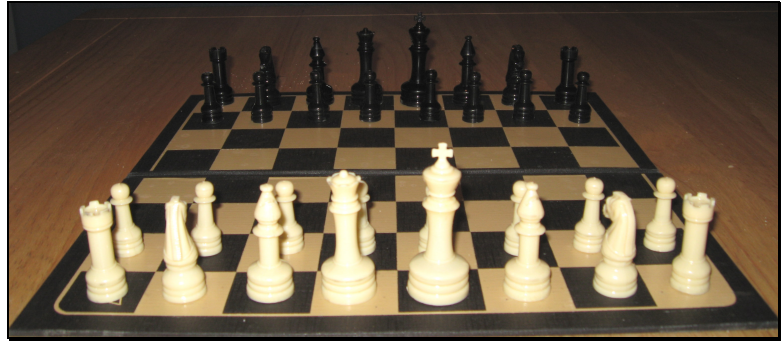
No. 815 – 2 1/2" King

Magnetic (Travel) Set

Another Lowe “standard”, as it also appears to have been sold throughout its history without a change in style/design.

Like most chess sets sold by Lowe, this set was offered in various forms of packaging and boxes. So, while the set was usually sold in a standard cardboard box (shown below) this particular set came in what I understand is called a “Presentation Case” (also pictured below). However, that is where the upgrades end, as inside is the same plastic tray found in the cardboard box.

It was surprising to find the case had the same *Magneta* board (pictured with set) sold with the basic sets, as I understood a Lowe set sold in a presentation case never came with a board. At first, I thought the board was possibly added later, but now I wonder if an attempt was made to match the backing on the board with the exterior of the case. It’s not exact- since the backing on the board is paper, and the case is upholstered- but the match is close enough to believe the board came with the set (maybe a magnetic set needs a magnetic board?)



Exterior of the presentation case...

... and back of the *Magneta* playing board.
Was there an attempt to have them match?



Standard box to the No. 815 Magnetic Set. Inside is a molded plastic tray for holding the individual pieces.



Presentation Case

Close-up of inside upper left corner of case displaying ribbon with the company logo.



Bakelite Set – 3 3/4" King

Bakelite set offered by the Lowe Company, c 1950s



Board is not original to set and is for display only.



Exterior of case containing the Bakelite set with faux alligator material. Note the Bakelite handle.



Inside of case showing wooden dividers and felt lined compartments. Set came without a board.



Note: like the previous Presentation Case shown, this case has the same ribbon in top left hand corner displaying the company logo.

HISTORY OF THE E S LOWE TOY COMPANY

Every piece of the bakelite set comes apart in this manner- including the pawns.



No. 804 - 2 1/4" King

The original owner of this set said he received it as a young child in 1949, but whether Lowe offered it on the market for any length of time before or after that year is unknown.



The black king is a replacement piece. The glass board is modern and used for display purposes only.



Original box to set above. Small end has *Mo. #804*, and original price tag, on which is stamped-

*Sattlers
998 Broadway
84¢*

On the long side of the box is the Lowe Company address-

*27 West 20th Street
New York NY*

Indicating the set's age is the lack of a zip code in the address.



Original Cardboard Sleeve to
Plastic Travel Set – No. 842
Chess and Checkers



Plastic Case to No. 842 which slips inside
cardboard sleeve shown above.



Open case, showing board, instruction
sheets for both games, and sample checker
and chess pieces.



No. 831 – 4" King

The Renaissance Chess Set, introduced by Lowe in 1959, was a major new style from the company and bore both the Lowe and ANRI names.

Through the years, as was its practice, Lowe offered the set in several different packages, different box designs, and some variations in color in either the board and/or the chess pieces- although the set itself remained unchanged. It apparently also received new packaging and copyright date in 1974, after Lowe had been purchased by Milton Bradley.

In 1975, MB introduced a set called *The Crusader*, which appears to have been a rushed replacement design for this set, making one wonder if perhaps whatever arrangement there was between Lowe and ANRI did not continue through the change in ownership. It is very difficult to find The Crusader set that does not have a lot of damage.

One of the many boxes and cover photos used by Lowe in marketing the Renaissance set.

Also shown is the chessboard and instruction sheet containing the 1959 copyright date.

As stated in the opening paragraph, a Renaissance style chess set exactly like this one was the very first set ever purchased/owned by the author.



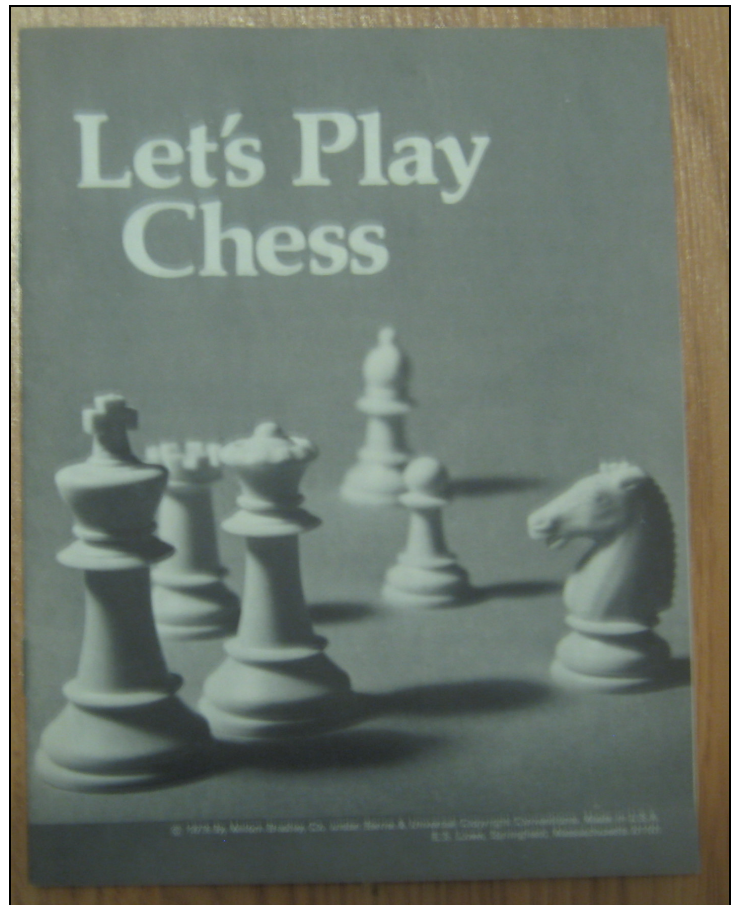
MB/Lowe Chess – 3 3/4 " King

Milton Bradley sold this set with both its company name and the E S Lowe name associated with the set.

The chessboard shown is a typical Lowe company board.



Booklet that came with the set above. On the bottom of the front cover are listed both the MB name and the Lowe company name. Both names are also listed on the back cover.

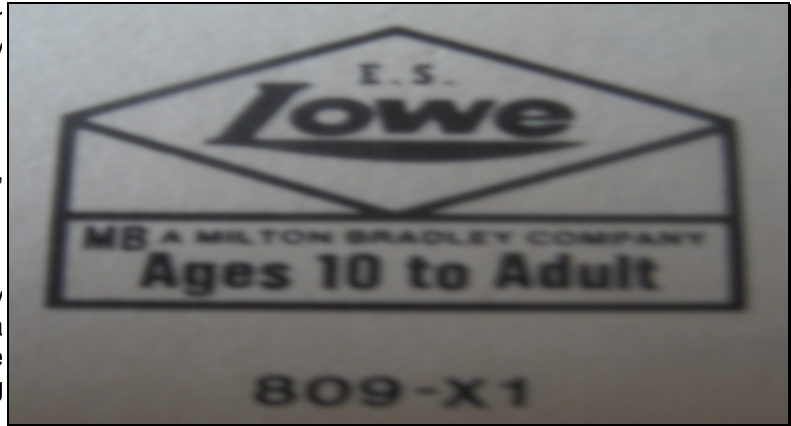




Above is a close up of the front cover showing both the MB and the Lowe company name.

To the right is a close up of the back cover, again with both company names listed.

If it had not been for this booklet, I probably would have not believed this was actually a Lowe chess set, as I have never seen the set before- at least, not with it being associated with the Lowe company name.



Conclusion- There's That Timing Thing Again

While preparing this information, the thought occurred to me that times today are such that one could wish for the return/continuation of the Lowe Company. While there is no denying the sets sold by Lowe were but basic, mass-produced plastic items, and certainly not of any great distinction in either quality or style, they did serve their purpose- and served it well. If Lowe was able to successfully sell the same chess designs for nearly thirty years, does it not seem possible the company could still be successful today- selling the same chess sets, unchanged, as it sold thirty plus years ago? And since the basic costs of designing and producing those sets would have been recouped long ago, one could well imagine the company remaining competitive. Plus, considering the knobby little stubs of wood that are passed off as chess sets in stores these days, the sets sold by Lowe in the past certainly come off the better in both style and quality, and if sold today, it is easy to think they would prove to be highly desirable- perhaps even border on classic- by comparison. It would also explain why there is still a good market for the sets on such places as ebay and other venues.

On the other hand, some say the dearth of decent-quality, mass-produced chess sets on the market today is due to one of two possibilities- if not both- either, 1) a lack of interest in chess by the younger generation as a whole, or, 2) because chess playing, for the most part, has moved onto the computer and the internet. But I wonder. Most players will readily admit the pleasure of playing with pleasing, high-quality pieces adds much to the enjoyment of the game. But if you, as a novice to the game, were presented with one of the typical, store-bought sets sold today, would you remain as interested in playing the game? Or, if Lowe's chess sets were to appear on the market today, would Edwin Lowe find timing was still working in his favor? □





November 2008 was a very busy month for the city of Dresden, Germany where the German Chess Federation (DSB) and FIDE hosted the 38th Chess Olympiad (12th-25th) and the 79th FIDE Congress (17th-25th).

The event has not only introduced some reforms to the game (see insert) but also was a record breaking Olympiad. Although it was hard to get exact data as sources quoted different numbers, approximately 2,000 active participants, a record number of 275 teams in both the open and women's events, from 148 (152 in another count) nominated federations, took a part in the "royal game" event.

It is a little known fact but, behind the Summer Olympics, the 38th Chess Olympiad was the sporting event with the second largest number of participating nations worldwide.

The stars of the international chess elite came to play in Dresden, as also were thousands of unknown players that had a one-time opportunity to rub elbows, watch and analyze with the best. For two weeks, grandmasters and inexperienced, young and mature, men and women, people from many nations gathered in the International Congress Center, Dresden, in a unique setting directly on the Elbe river banks of the Old Town – Church of our Lady, Semper Opera and Castle all within range of sight.

The 38th Olympiad broke another record in using technology and reaching millions of chess aficionados worldwide. Chessboards were connected with computers and viewers anywhere were able to watch games, in real-time, over the Internet. This connection also allowed many of the participant to stay in touch

with their families and friends, provide continuous update, exchange photos and notes, keep updated blogs and develop new friendships.

In the main event, the teams competition, Armenia defended its 1st place men's title while Israel came close 2nd. Georgia won 1st for women followed by the Ukraine. USA won bronze in both!

Results Open:



Armenia: Aronian Levon, Akopian Vladimir, Sargissian Gabriel, Petrosian Tigran, Minasian Artashes



Israel: Gelfand Boris, Roiz Michael, Avrukh Boris, Postny Evgeny, Rodshtein Maxim



USA: Kamsky Gata, Nakamura Hikaru, Onischuk Alexander, Shulman Yuri, Akobian Varuzhan

Results Women's:



Goergia: Chiburdanidze Maia, Dzagnidze Nana, Javakhishvili Lela, Lomineishvili Maia, Khukhashvili Sopiko



Ukraine: Lahno Kateryna, Zhukova Natalia, Ushenina Anna, Gaponenko Inna, Zdebskaja Natalia



USA: Krush Irina, Zatonskih Anna, Goletiani Rusudan, Rohonyan Katerina,

More information, details, photos, charts, etc., can be found in the official Chess Olympiad website at <http://www.dresden2008.de>. □

Special rules (from the official site)

Two unusual rules were implemented in Dresden. The first: No draws will be allowed before move 30 of a game.

The second, more radical: All players must be present at their boards at the starting time of each round. Anyone who is not there when the clocks are started will be immediately forfeited.

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Editorial comments and policy...

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