

# Miniature Heavies

*Ted Bobrink, Bob Schroth, and Dave Johnson*

A mining artifact that is a smaller duplication of the original item can be hard to classify. Owners in the 'wishful thinking' category declare them as patent models or salesman's samples. Either of these categories will assign a greater value to the item. Other apparent miniatures were actually used in special situations calling for a smaller dimensioned tool. Some small items are actually toys, advertising items, or replica models. Ted Bobrink perhaps says it best: "In the antique world everyone wants to call their items salesman's samples to enhance their value when most of the time they are just children's toys." The following article will examine three beautifully made miniature mining artifacts. The reader will make his own conclusion as to what the item was used for.

The small ore car in front was recently acquired by Ted Bobrink. Says Ted: "It stands 15" high - 13" long and the box is 8" deep. It weighs 35lbs with 162 real rivets and is painted gray with black trim. I have contacted some of my friends who have Anaconda Copper Co catalogs and they are going to send me some illustrations of all the ore cars that Anaconda sold.



The man I bought it from, said he bought two of these cars both different from an old man in Butte Montana for \$15 each. He said the cars were built to use as salesman's samples to be carried to the various mining companies in his wagon. There were originally six different cars made representing all of the styles of underground haulage equipment made and sold by the ACMCO foundry. Of course this is only a story, but the fact that they are made so true to scale I have no reason to doubt it."





It is all metal and riveted together to exact scale just like the larger ore cars. It has a brass metal tag that says "ACMCO-FDRY-DEPT " It has the locking lever and clasp that opens the rear gate and dumps to the rear or to either side. It has cast wheels and axles with lubeing plugs, a cast iron turn plate and front carriage locker made to exact scale.

Shortly after Ted reported his finding, Bob Schroth dug out an ore bucket from his collection that has a a similar brass tag.

Bob relates: "A year ago while I was at the Vetrans antique market I bought a small ore bucket that has a brass tag ACMCO FDRY Dept. While it is big enough to work a small prospect it isn't really ehough to do much work. It has the rivited steel and a dumping devise to tip it. I thought I was dreaming that it could have been made by the copper mining co. Perhaps it is a salesman sample also?"

While Ted is convinced that his ore car is a saleman's sample, he is less convinced about the ore bucket: " The brass tag is the same though I'm sure they were generic for lots of things they made. Your bucket would have to be very small to be a salesman's sample. If it is taller than one foot, I don't think it would be one. Last year I found a really cool pot belly ore bucket in a mine in Nelson, Nevada that was only 13" high and 9" wide. It was at the bottom of a 60' shaft and still had the hemp rope hooked to it."





Finally, Dave Johnson shows this example of a coal car. Dave states: "This is a coal car patent model that I found here in Louisville. A toy dealer had it and thought it was a toy but it still had part of an old U.S. Patent Office tag attached to it. Unfortunately most of the tag was missing so I was not able to track the patent yet. The end opens for dumping and the whole thing is riveted together just like a big coal car. It measures about 14" long and is all steel."

