

# Early Illinois Blasting Cap Tins

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Two of my favorite blasting cap tins are the early versions of the Illinois and the Western tins. I recently called folks attention to a very nice example of an early Illinois tin on eBay, and I had a discussion with John Kynor about another nice example of the early Illinois tin. John has also posted a lengthy note about the Illinois and Western tins on the Eureka Face Book page. Of course, the earliest version of the Illinois tins is the rare round, white example. But the early red tins of both companies are also very desirable. There are two versions of the early, red Illinois tins in my collection. One is bright red with gold lettering, the other is a darker red, brown-toned tin. Both have abbreviated legends, not the detailed warnings of the later tins, and they use an old-styled font that I love. The brown-toned tin in my collection is noticeably taller than the bright red tin. I believe that the brown-toned tin is the earlier of the two. Here are some photographs for comparison.





The bright red tin in my collection is 1 5/8 inches (4.1 cm) tall; the brown toned tin is 1 7/8 inches (4.8 cm) tall. The length and width of the two tins is identical. The top of the bright red tin measures 2 1/2 inches (6.5 cm) by 2 1/8 inches (5.5 cm). The top of the brown-toned tin also measures 2 1/2 inches (6.5 cm) by 2 1/8 inches (5.5 cm). The seemingly greater width of the brown-toned tin shown in the above photograph is an illusion, probably caused by the fact that the brown-toned tin was positioned slightly closer to the camera lens.

Andy Martin classifies these early Illinois tins as Very Rare (less than ten examples known). With the advent of eBay, it is difficult to estimate the number of these tins residing in collections, but in my experience, good examples of these tins are still hard to find and well worth having.