

NOTES ON SOME GOOD COLLECTING IN NEVADA

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It's dark now, the rain from the intense thunderstorm is waning, and we're inside a real Nevada cafe/truck stop/bar having two frosty Budweisers. The heat of a typical dry Nevada summer day is behind us, as are a large variety of abandoned mine workings which we had explored for mining artifacts. More than a third of our time was spent examining the workings in a district dating from the 1870's. Just about everything we explored had square nails, but a disgusting lack of artifacts. Another third of our time was taken up checking out locally moist mines in a more recent district. After being skunked in the 1870's district, we were "rewarded" with three immense light bulbs that were dated 1904, and one perfect 1912 fifty pound Hercules powder box.

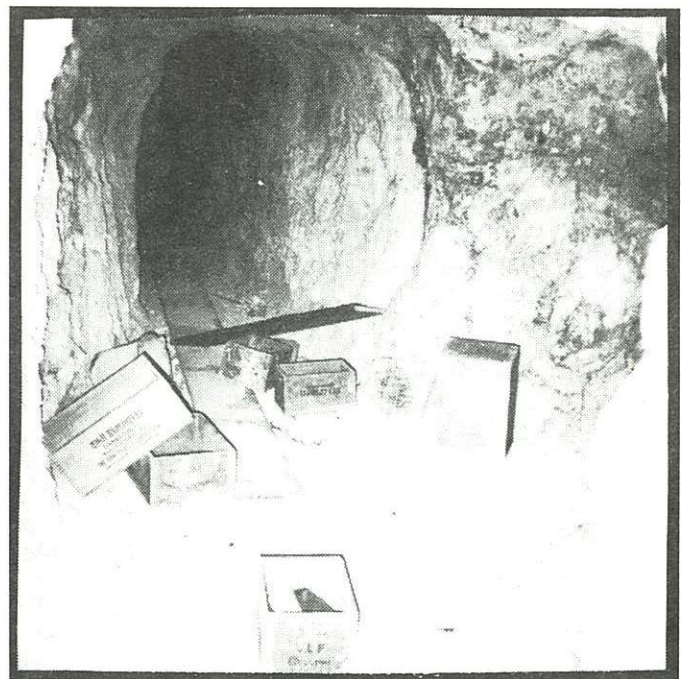
Feeling better, we decided to check out other shafts and prospects in this district. To our disappointment, all of our time and effort was in vain; more barren shafts and more fruitless searches.

As the sun was starting to get low and the mountain ranges started to become silhouetted on the skyline, we struck out for a few isolated workings away from the main district. The first decline we came upon had already been explored by field geologists with a major company--they had left their telltale pink flagging as evidence of their presence from sampling (and, incidentally, extracting most mining artifacts of interest). In this instance, however, they had left some important pieces, believing them to be of little value. It turned out that the original workers had utilized Giant Eagle products, vintage 1905-1906. We recovered two ends from Eagle boxes of a style never before seen, especially for such a rare and desirable item!

Our motivation was obviously heightened, and we thus hastily headed for another nearby area. The sun was going down, it was late, and we were tired. The mine displayed a fair-sized dump, and was well timbered and dry. Descending, a level was encountered at about 75 feet with extensive workings, but was devoid of artifacts. Descending further, another level was met with at about 150 feet. This level was similarly extensive, and peering down the shaft, we could

tell we would have at least one more level before the bottom. The 150 foot level produced a California Cap Company No. 3 cap tin, a Velvet tobacco tin, and a beautiful fifty pound Hercules Dynamite (not Powder or Gelatin) box of a type never before observed by us. This box was not ICC-14 vintage, nor was it Du Pont controlled, and it was in mint condition. The bottom was reached at about 350 feet and proved to be fruitful. This level was similarly extensive and was literally strewn with artifacts, most in perfect conditions of preservation. Another Hercules Dynamite fifty pound box was present--this time labelled California Powder Works--as well as several other more typical brands of powder boxes from the era (about 1905) and a couple of perfect bottles. All of the items were extracted carefully, and upon reaching the surface, proved to be excellent examples.

By this time the temperature had reached near-perfect. The sunset was deep orange, and our truck was well loaded with artifacts to warm the collector's heart. And that's what mining artifact collecting is all about, Nevada-style.



Some of the boxes we found in one of the mines we explored.