

Halafax Explosives Company

1936-1938

by Eric Twitty

The Halafax Explosives Company began manufacturing high explosives in the latter half of 1936 at a plant in Saugus, California, and administered to business out of offices in Los Angeles. Halafax is known to have made gelatin and gelatin-extra compounds and it probably made straight dynamite as well. It has been suggested that chlorate-based explosives were also made.

Halafax is significant because it was the first company documented to use cardboard for its dynamite boxes. The Interstate Commerce Commission, which regulated all aspects of shipping hazardous materials, mandated that dynamite boxes be of wood until 1931 when it finally approved cardboard. Although Halafax used cardboard in the mid-1930's, other companies did not follow suit until the late 1940's, when Hercules Powder Company began to phase them into its packing line.

The Halafax Explosives Company went out of business in 1938 for reasons unknown.

The box shown here, dated October 1936, is the same size as wooden 50 lb. dynamite boxes. Its label is an orange on black logo with black lettering. Because of the perishable nature of cardboard, and the short history of the Halafax Explosives Company, this surviving example may be unique.



End view of Halafax dynamite box.



Top view of Halafax dynamite box.