

CAP TIN TALK

by John Kynor

With this column it is my intent that from time to time I can hopefully put out a little information that cap tin collector's will find interesting, or at least a little useful in their pursuit of that next tin for the collection. I've been collecting tins for 20+ years, and if I find a tin that is a little different it goes into the collection. To me these differences whether it be color, size, construction or wording are important in establishing a trail for that particular company's blasting cap acquisition process and their marketing. In many cases some of the differences pose more questions than they solve. Also, I hope maybe some additional data on cap tins will generate a few new collectors.

While looking for tins close observation to what you are looking at is a must, one of the best examples of this is the yellow 100 count round Hercules tin. This tin was produced for both #6 and #8 caps, can we all say without a doubt that we have not missed a #8 tin, by casting a quick glance at a round yellow tin and dismissing it as another common item. Always look close.

In my talks with other collectors I've found some who only want pristine tins, or only U.S. tins, or are satisfied with one style of a tin when there are several styles. I'm not knocking any method of collecting, but I believe that in order to get a total picture of blasting cap history, any tin located should be considered for addition to one's collection. Several of the tins in my collection are only 50% at best, but they are one of a kind, and others may only have two or three other examples known that are similar. Because I've found it easier to find the second example of a specific tin, I always hang onto the first one I acquire as long as it can be identified. Good hunting.

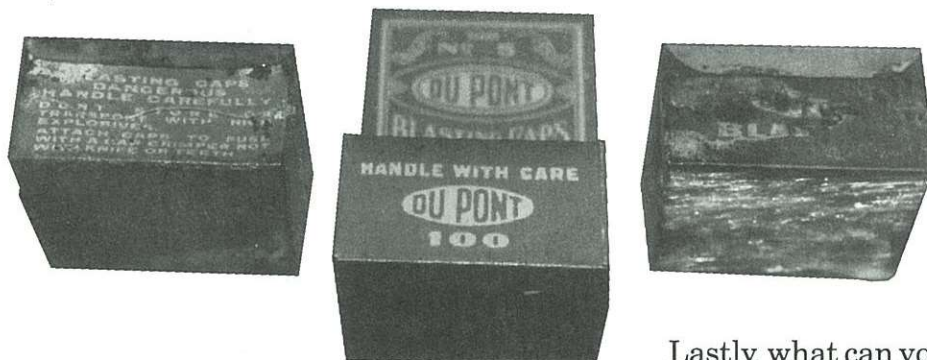
For this issue I want to address varieties of the Dupont #5 square cap tin. If you have a copy of Andy Martins's Blasting Cap Tin Catalog, it is shown on page 39. If you don't have Andy's book and you want to collect cap tins, you should invest in one ASAP. The #5 tin is listed as rare, but I've usually seen at least one for sale at any show I've been to. Do you know there are at least three types of this tin, an although they are all thought to be light blue and white, I know of one that is dark blue.

I have the three types in the collection, and have found they are all $1 \frac{3}{8} \times 2 \frac{1}{8} \times 2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches as reported in Andy's catalog. The lids are all printed the same, with what I refer to as a "scroll" style. The variations are found in the construction of the bottoms, the width of the lid overhang, and the different markings associated with a bottom. Refer to the attached photo.

The first tin and probably the oldest of the three has a paper Dupont logo wrapped around the bottom of it, this also acted as a seal. The bottom on this tin is of a tabbed type fabrication, and resembles the bottoms of early M.C. tins. This style could be from 1900 to 1920's era. The lid on this tin has a different width of overhang as it folds over to cover the bottom of the tin. This overhang is $\frac{3}{8}$ th's of an inch a opposed to $\frac{5}{16}$ th's on the other lids. I've noted on almost all of the tins I have with tabbed bottoms, the lid folds further over, this is true on the embossed Dupont and Aetna, Climax, Hecla, and M.C.'s examples, and I believe this is to provide an added degree of rigidity to the container. The paper label wrapped around the tin is blue and white, and printed with the oval Dupont logo and the same wording that was painted on the later tins. See page 38 of Andy's catalog under No. 6 round.

The second variety of the #5 tin is the one I see most frequently at shows and in collections. It is reported on page 36 of Andy's catalog. It has a painted bottom with the oval Dupont logo, the KEEP DRY warning, along with the HANDLE WITH CARE citation. This tin dates from about 1905 to 1920 and has a folded seam type construction at its corners. This is the middle tin in the photo.

The third variety is one I almost left on the table at a Denver gun show, my thoughts were, "Ah, another #5 which I already have, and in better condition." However, the more I looked at this tin the more I felt it was different, but I just could not determine how it differed from what I had. The price was right so I drug it home and was rewarded for the effort with a #5 scroll type tin with printed instructions (Variety 2), as written on page 40 of Andy's catalog. This tin also has the folded seam type bottom and dates from the 1920's to ?



As near as I can determine Dupont stopped production of #5 caps with this style of tin. I do not know of any #5 tins in the later style containers, nor do several elderly blasters I've spoken with. I found there is no mention of other than #6 and #8 blasting caps in the Dupont Blasters Handbook from 1925 on. As written instructions began appearing on a restyled type A #6 tin around 1915-20 (page 41), the end of the line for #5's could well have been the early 20's.

If you look closely on your #5 tin you will see some writing on the white border line

at the bottom corner, in this case its the American Can Co. logo. They were the manufacturer of many of the cap tins of this period. There is also a numeral on some of the tins I have, one is a 10, the other 11A. The 10 and 11A appear on many different Dupont tins, as well as Atlas, Austin, M.C., and Hercules, so it probably is a manufacturer code, not a date. For you history buffs, a great deal of the 37mm and 75mm artillery rounds expended in WWI were produced by American Can Co.

This takes care of the differences in the square #5 tin that I've seen, but if in your collection you have something different I'd sure like to know about it. Since the round #5 tins are also in many collections, look at them, there are some differences in labeling and in bottom construction also.

Lastly, what can you expect to find; since we know of a paper label, and two types of painted label #5 tins, does this hold true of the other cap sizes? I think it is fair to say that a paper label might exist in the #6 with a scroll type lid, someone may already have one. But, and I'm speculating here, I doubt that there is a square paper label #7 or #8 scroll type out there, or even with the oval painted bottom, but then that's what ROOT'N is all about-FINDING THEM.

References:

Blasting Cap Tin Catalog, Andy Martin
Dupont Blasters Handbooks 4-16