

# Blasting Cap Tins Discovered in 1993

*Andy Martin*

Before describing the tins recently reported by collectors, I would like to give a special thanks to "Cap-Tin" Bob Schroth, who gave helpful leads in tracking down several of them. Leave it to Bob to know where the rare ones are lurking.

The pick of the litter for this crop is the Arthur Kirk & Son tin. Not only was this tin unknown to me, but I had never even heard of the company, and initially supposed they were British. However, the comprehensive reference book "History of Explosives Industry in America" once again came through, and provides the following details. Arthur Kirk was a wealthy Pittsburgh businessman who

established Arthur Kirk & Son in 1887. This firm sold mining machinery, Aetna dynamite, and Austin, Hazard, Ohio, and Oriental black powder. In 1890 he went into partnership with three other men, and started the Climax Powder Manufacturing Co. for the purpose of making dynamite. This company did well, and was bought out by Du Pont in 1903, who also purchased Kirk & Son at this time.

The Kirk cap tin has a tabbed bottom construction, which might indicate that the tin and contents were actually made by the Metallic Cap Manufacturing Company. It is interesting to note that Climax also sold caps in

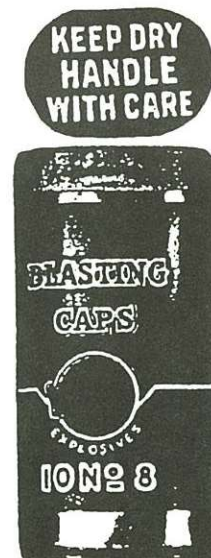
a paper label tin with a tabbed bottom. Perhaps the Kirk tin was discontinued prior to 1903 in favor of the Climax model.

Now let's turn to the "illegal alien" of our group, namely the attractive Davey, Bickford, Smith tin. In 1831 Thomas Davey, William Bickford, and George Smith started a fuse manufacturing company in Cornwall England. They became very successful, and opened foreign factories in America (1836), France (1839), and Germany (1844). Evidently they later opened an Italian subsidiary with a plant at Taino. This factory subsequently was owned by Nobel, and finally by Montecatini before being closed.



**DAVEY - BICKFORD - SMITH (8)  
MILANO**

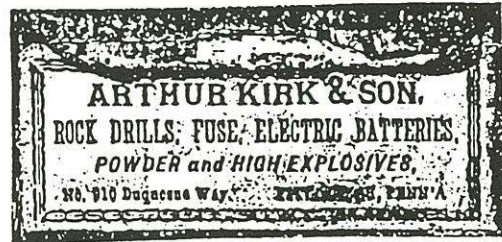
Painted red, with unpainted letters  
Reported by Alessio Grimaldi



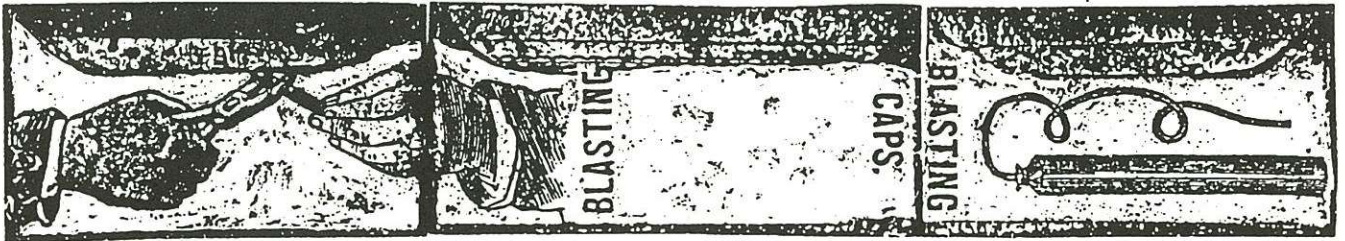
**ATLAS, N° 8, 10 CAPS**  
Painted green, black, and gold  
Reported by John Podgurski



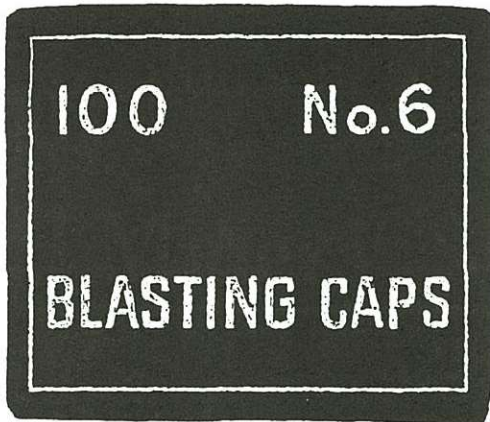
ARTHUR KIRK & SON (top)  
 Violet letters on buff paper  
 Reported by John Podgurski



ARTHUR KIRK & SON  
 Paper label on bottom



ARTHUR KIRK & SON  
 Paper label on bottom



GENERAL, No. 6  
 Top of tin



GENERAL, No. 6  
 Painted maroon with gold letters  
 Reported by "Pappy" Yeats