

# BLASTING CAP TIN COLLECTING

by **Bob Schroth**  
P.O. Box 687  
Twin Peaks, California 92391

Blasting cap tins are some of the most colorful mining artifacts around. While many collectors want only a few examples for display purposes, others will try to acquire examples of all the known cap tins. I have been collecting cap tins diligently for five years, and have traded heavily to acquire some of the rare one-of-a-kind tins.

The collecting bug bit after visiting Ted Bobrink and seeing several of the displays at his home; I had to have some of this stuff! The next problem was where to find these elusive cap tins. Underground dry mines seemed like a good bet, but most of the mines I'd been in on the West Coast contained only a few different examples of California Cap Company tins. Antique stores rarely have cap tins, but they do turn up every now and then. Flea markets and other tin collectors have been my best sources.

Traveling to seek out these prized mining collectibles has been a rewarding experience. I have met a lot of fine people and have seen several collections and different ways to display these artifacts.

I recently found out that taking my prized mining artifacts on board an airplane can be a very exciting challenge. The airport X-ray inspector was very interested in the identity of all of the small square metal objects that were in my carry-on baggage. You should have seen his face when he opened my bags and found a dynamite box, 21 blasting cap tins, six dagger-like weapons (candlesticks), and four brass gas-generating "grenades" (carbide lamps). From

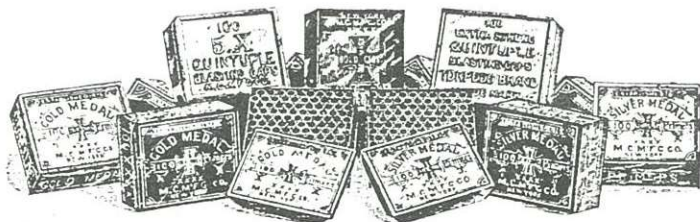
their reaction, you would have thought that they thought I was a terrorist or something. It took about ten minutes of pleading with the inspector's supervisor to let me board the plane, and even then I had to put all of the candlesticks with the check-in luggage. So, beware of airports!

The condition of blasting cap tins varies greatly, from mint unused, to poor and rusted. Often, cap tins were used as containers for nuts, bolts, tacks, nails, etc. I have seen several tins with a bolt size scratched into them. There's nothing sadder than finding a rare cap tin with - 3/8" - etched boldly across the lid. I will usually keep any different tin in any readable condition until I get a chance to upgrade it.

The good news is that blasting cap tins are still relatively cheap to buy. It seems that more and more collectors are getting in the hunt for them. I expect that with so many people looking for cap tins now, some new names and variations will turn up, possibly along with more information.

Mark Bohannon is currently compiling information on cap tins and other blasting-related artifacts for his book. If you have any new tins, please contact either Mark or myself. If anyone has any cap tins in the 50 count or other odd size, I would like to hear from you. Also, I have advertising in mining magazines and catalogs for several cap tins that have not yet been located; does anyone have information about these tins? A comprehensive reference book is in print and available from Andy Martin of Tucson, Arizona.

THE GENUINE AMERICAN BRANDS.



**GOLD AND SILVER MEDAL  
BLASTING CAPS.**

**STRONGEST and BEST MADE.**

Manufactured by

**THE METALLIC CAP MFG. CO.,**

271 Broadway, NEW YORK, N. Y., U. S. A.

AD-1898