

Mine Bell Signs

by Ted Bobrink

To me, the mine bell sign is one of the most unique and difficult mining artifacts to acquire. I use the word unique because unlike carbide lights, safety lamps, and a number of other tools that were used in many trades other than mining, the mine bell sign, along with the miner's candlestick, was invented for and used only in mines by miners.

Most of the Mine bell signs that have survived today have been rescued by someone exploring an old abandoned shaft. In some states this is very difficult and easily impossible if the water table is high. Most of the mines in states like Montana, Utah and Colorado are full of water thus destroying any signs that were left in them after the mine was abandoned. This of course would also be the case for most of the mining districts in the eastern states.

The mine bell sign illustrated from Alaska would be a good example, as this sign is only known from a Stonehouse ad. I doubt if any mine bell signs have survived from a state with such a harsh environment. This sign was made for the Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company and was most likely dark blue with white letters. Signs from individual mining Companies are rare, and one from such a famous and early mining area would indeed be a treasure to own.

ALASKA JUNEAU GOLD MINING COMPANY

SIGNALS

1 BELL	HOIST
1 BELL	STOP, IF IN MOTION
2 BELLS	LOWER
2 SLOW BELLS	LOWER, SLOWLY
3 BELLS	HOIST, MEN ON
3 SLOW BELLS	HOIST, SLOWLY
4 BELLS	BLASTING SIGNAL
6 BELLS	CALL SKIP
7 BELLS	TURN AIR ON OR OFF
9 BELLS	DANGER

LEVELS

NO.	00	LEVEL	1-4	BELLS
NO. 0	"	"	1-3	"
NO. 1	"	"	1-2	"
NO. 2	"	"	2-1	"
NO. 3	"	"	3-1	"
NO. 4	"	"	4-1	"

RULES GOVERNING SIGNALS

TO BLAST. RING 4 BELLS - ENGINEER WILL MOVE SKIP A FEW FEET AND REPLACE IT, AFTER WHICH LIGHT FUSES. STEP ON SKIP AND RING 1 BELL.

TO CALL SKIP. RING 6 BELLS. PAUSE AND THEN RING STATION SIGNAL

DANGER SIGNAL. IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT AND SKIP IS WANTED IMMEDIATELY RING 9 BELLS BEFORE CALLING SKIP.

J RICHARDS, SUPERINTENDENT