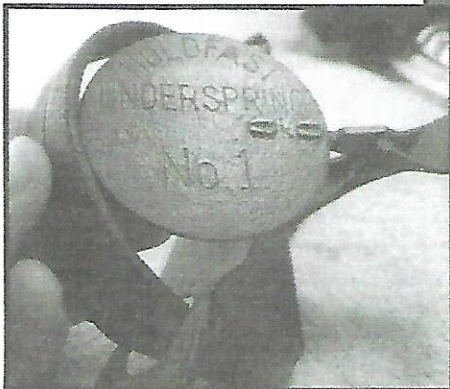


# Mystery Barrel Traps

By Scot H. Dahms

The majority of the material in this article came from Pete Askins, who formerly worked for Animal Trap Company (ATC). I had the opportunity to talk to Pete on the phone on August 14, 2015. Pete's information came from discussions with Mel Koch who was the Production Manager and tool maker in the 1970s. I put the information together and added some photos. The information is printed with his permission. Tom Parr provided the Mystery Barrel advertisement.

I have always had an interest in the underdog and the odd. Mystery Barrel traps fit into both categories nicely as the traps are the remnants of the underdogs selling out to ATC and each trap may have parts from different companies.



(#1 Holdfast Pan Kangaroo Base)

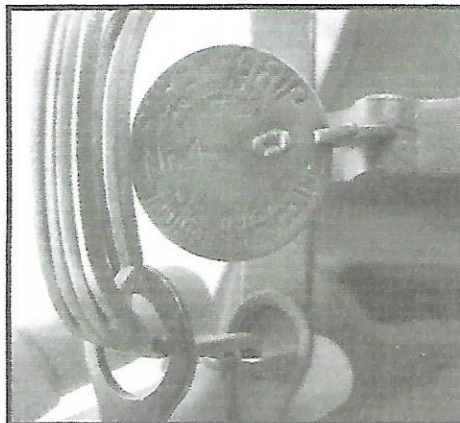
Most of the purchases of underdog trap companies occurred in the 1930s. ATC took all the parts and put them together however they could to get working traps. ATC then sent these traps to FC Taylor to sell. Many have ATC pans including Champion (no cutout B in pan) and Holdfast which were made by ATC. Some of the pans from other companies were put on upside down with ATC information stamped on the top. I have not seen one with stamping on both sides (ATC on top and bought out company on bottom) and would appreciate it if someone would send me a picture if they have one.

**MYSTERY TRAPS!** Thousands Available  
235,452 Sold Last Year  
Guaranteed New and Perfect  
Money Back If You Are Not Pleased

We do not mention name of Manufacturer because we are Selling Below Regular Price

There is no mystery about the QUALITY or EFFECTIVENESS of these traps...  
No. 0 Mystery \$1.14  
No. 1 Mystery \$1.39  
No. 2 Mystery \$3.11  
No. 3 Mystery \$4.49

GOOD DEPENDABLE  
Guaranteed  
TRAPS

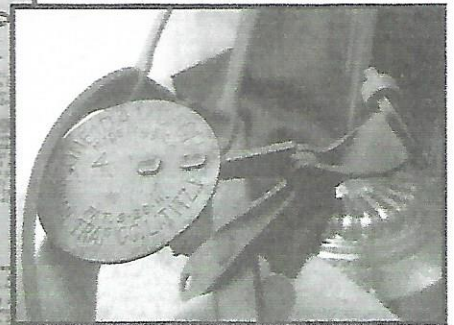


(#1 Diamond Jaws Triumph pan Victor Base/Spring)

The term "Mystery Barrel" came from the ad that FC Taylor used to sell them, which was titled "Mystery Traps", showing a barrel and a person wearing a mask. The traps included jaw spread size ranges for the traps to be ordered. The sizes ranged from 0 to 4 and came in longspring, underspring and coil-spring models. The traps are also re-

ferred to as "Transition" traps.

The ads were only put out in the 1935-1936 and 1936-1937 FC Taylor catalogs. The ad from the 1936-1937 ad claims that 235,452 traps were sold during the first year they were offered.



(#4 Victor Pan Triumph Pinched Cross)

The easiest ones to spot are those with the Triumph pinched cross with a Victor, Champion, Holdfast or any non-Triumph pan. The key is to look for trap components from different trap manufacturers on the same trap. A word of caution needs to be brought up here as many traps have been modified with parts from different trap companies to get them back into a functional condition. That is why you want to look for components that are not easily transferable such as pans on the Triumph pinched cross which makes switching pans nearly impossible without leaving some clues.

If anyone has information contrary to what was written in this article, please let me know via email, written message or respond through the magazine.

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