

# Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

March 2017

After World War II, toy cap guns became popular and one of the largest cap gun manufacturers was Nichols. The company was started in 1946 by two brothers out of Texas and they continued producing toy cap guns until 1965. This artifact of the month was discovered along Snake Road during an archaeological assessment survey. Generally, toy cap guns were given western sounding names such as “Silver Pony”, “Mustang”,



“Stallion”, “Pinto”, and “Cowhand” which were engraved near the trigger. The toy cap gun found on Snake Road, however, does not have a name, but the maker’s mark (circled N) and Nichols appear on the toy gun. The toy cap gun could be an early unnamed model or a variation of another design. The closest “named” Nichols toy cap gun that has similar characteristics is the 1959 Mustang 500 toy cap gun. Some toy gun aficionados consider the Mustang 500 to be one of the most beautiful Nichols’ Toy Cap Guns with its floral and scroll patterns. The THPO toy cap gun used strip or paper caps that rotated in the cylinder of the toy gun when the hammer was drawn back and the trigger pulled. The hammer would strike the cap producing a loud noise and smoke. The THPO toy cap gun could possibly be a Mustang model toy cap gun dating to the late-1950s.



**Interesting Fact:** Toy Cap Guns manufactured in the United States today are required to place a bright orange, red, or yellow tip over the muzzle of the toy cap gun, or to make the toy gun in bright colors. Lawmakers indicated that the toy guns must have these markings to not be mistaken for real guns.

