

The Pull Up Blasting Machine

by Tom Stranko



For years I have been envious of the guys out west who (from my perspective) can just head out of town a few miles and voila, there is a great ancient mine shaft loaded with 19th century mining artifacts, great old bottles etc. Well now I have a fun story just like that to tell.

Today, Easter Sunday, I promised my wife a "scenic ride" through the upstate NY & Pa. countryside in this wonderfully unseasonable 65 deg. weather. After much enjoyable driving we were leaving the site of a mid 1800's railroad landmark surrounded by the sad remnants of anthracite coal's mining and transportation glory days. We zipped past a fallen down wooden structure out in the boondocks. My brain scanned the jumble of wood and rusty metal shapes and about 50 feet past the building (an old repair shop) my internal "warning-you-just-passed-a-great-pile-of-old-

rusty-junk" light went off and I did a fast U turn. My wife says she spotted it first and thought I was just being coy by walking all around it but there on the ground, stuffed with dead leaves and spider webs was the body of a piece of rare mining hardware. "PULL UP BLASTING MACHINE" just screamed out.





From the big cast brass tag. I was NOT going to let this just rot and rust away there so I popped it into the car. I assumed I had found a match for the "Pull Up" I already own which is missing the base and needs lots of cosmetic work.





When I got home I saw that we had found the same model blaster (#3) but in what I would say is a much earlier case. The cast tag and the smaller upper plunger rod brace (made of brass not iron) are the give aways.

The mounting holes for both the cast iron step plate and the bipolar generator fit both units. The machine I found today is an inch or so shorter but that would make just the wooden parts non-interchangeable. I could make up one complete unit from the parts I have. I would probably use the older case I found today and install the internal parts from the newer unit. I say I "could" do this but I will just save them as they are and hope sometime, maybe on another holiday drive, to explore another local mining site and find more of the parts I need. At least I won't have to worry about bats, mountain lions or rappelling.