Railroad Inspection Torches With a Mining Link

by Dave Johnson

These are three old solid brass railroad inspection torches that all having a link to mining. The first one in the photo has engraved on it F. & C.C. RR. July 1, 1894 CRIPPLE CREEK (see photo below). The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad was the narrow gauge line that served the mines of the Cripple Creek and Victor area of Colorado. The line went from Cripple Creek to Florence, to the south, where it connected with the Denver & Rio Grande main line. The line was built to transport ore from the mines to the reduction mills and smelters in the Arkansas Valley, and haul coal and supplies back up to the mining communities of Cripple Creek and Victor. I'm not sure of the significance of the July 1, 1894 date, but 1894 was the year the line was completed to Cripple from Florence. This appears to have been some type of presentation piece as it is engraved rather than stamped as the other two pieces seen here are.

The second brass torch is stamped L.C. & N. Co. for the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Co., a well- known name in the coal mining trade.

The third torch is stamped O.I.M. Co. for the Oliver Iron Mining Co., an early subsidiary of United States Steel, with mines