

# EUREKA!

THE JOURNAL OF MINING COLLECTIBLES

Issue 19

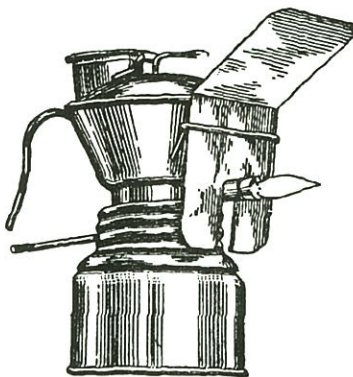


July 1996

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***EUREKA!***

**The Journal of Mining Collectibles**

# EUREKA!



**A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO THE COLLECTING,  
PRESERVATION, AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH OF  
EARLY MINE LIGHTING AND COLLECTIBLES**

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**Cover:** The Baldwin Lamp. Advertisement from Mining and Scientific Press, August 15, 1908. Submitted by Todd Town.



## EVENTS

This issue of Eureka! includes a write-up of the Eastern Mining Collector's Reunion, which was a great success. We took our cue from the continuing success of the annual show held in Lead, South Dakota, and expanded our activities to include mine tours and a dinner.

Speaking of South Dakota, we include in this issue a write-up of the Lead Show, submitted by Bob Guthrie to the "miningcollect" electronic discussion list. We also have information from Bob that the show will change its venue next year. The "1997 Black Hills / Rocky Mountain Mining Collector's Convention" will most likely be held in the Denver, Colorado area sometime in early June 1997. After that, the show is likely to alternate sites between the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains.

We can be even more specific about the "Tucson '97 3rd Annual Mining Antique Collectors Dinner, Auction, & Swap Meet." Don Dalton sent us a flyer for the event, which will take place in conjunction with the annual Tucson Gem and Mineral show on Saturday, February 8, 1997. Don Dalton and Jane Becksted are organizing the event, which will now include "by popular demand," a three hour swap meet.

Manfred Stutzer sends us a nice pictorial review of the International Miners' Lamp Collectors Meeting in Wilnsdorf, Germany. The next Wilnsdorf show is already scheduled for June 7, 1997.

## SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW...

Just when you think you know it all, someone will surprise you with a history lesson. Manfred Stutzer sends us an article on the Welsh "Peg and Ball" oil wick cap lamp, a miners' lamp I have never seen in 20 years of collecting!

## ...SOMETHING BLUE

Speaking of 20 years, I've lived through an interesting evolution in the hobby of collecting mining artifacts. There are still many of us collectors who can remember buying a rare carbide lamp for the "going rate" of about \$8.00 (it still happens, rarely). Now, I find it difficult, and often tedious, even trying to find lamps worth buying, at any price.

The rare find is still a delight, and I can honestly say that the "people" who share this hobby include friends who will continue to delight me.

However, this collector needs a rest. I've submitted my resignation to Eureka! and will end my tenure as Managing Editor after the October 1996 issue. The other members of the editorial board have already divided up the responsibilities of continuing Eureka!, and I truly expect they will continue in such fine form that no one will notice the difference!

I would like to offer sincere thanks to Dave Thorpe, Len Gaska, Dave Johnson, David DesMarais, J. Roger Mitchell, Bob Schroth, and Manfred Stutzer, and to the many, many collectors, researchers and historians who have made Eureka! a success by contributing their time and talents, and sharing their special knowledge with all of us.

I look forward to reading about new finds in 1997, and insights into the history of mining artifacts which can be found nowhere else but in Eureka!

And if a rare miners' lamp drops in my lap once in a while, I know who to call.

Jim Van Fleet

# Mining Safety Collectibles

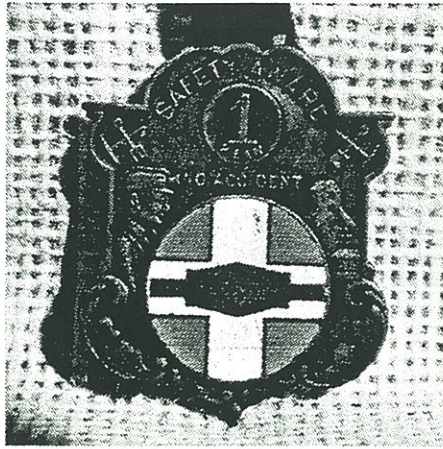
*Dave Johnson*

Many of us collect mining artifacts in air-conditioned antique malls and feel we are enduring real hardships when we must search for our treasures in large outdoor antique markets on hot summer days before retreating to our climate-controlled cars. Many collectors have no real appreciation for the conditions under which the original owners of their treasures toiled.



*Hanna Coal Co. Silver safety award belt buckle.*

Imagine working as a 19th or early 20th century coal miner. Your already low wages are reduced by the routine shorting of your daily production tonnage by company check weighmen, you are paid in company scrip that must be spent at the company store with its inflated prices, you are forced to live in company owned housing, and in many cases contribute through a forced payroll deduction for a company doctor and bathhouse. You probably have no union and definitely no Workmen's Compensation or paid sick leave. If

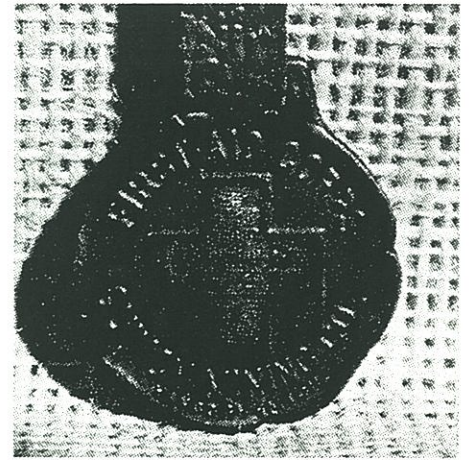


*Pittsburgh Coal Co. safety award.*

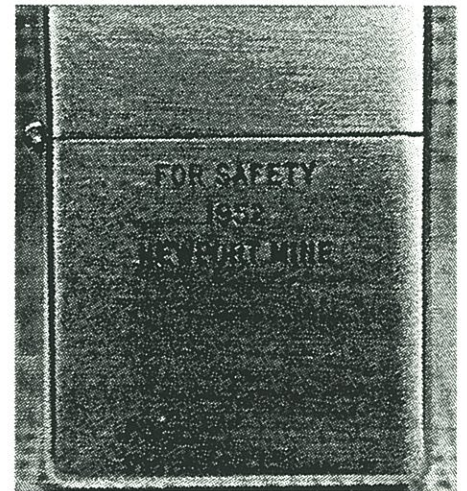


*UMWA District 1 Safety Committeeman brass and enamel pin.*

you are injured on the job you receive no pay or benefits beyond what the union or the miner's benevolent society can offer, if one exists. You are an employee-at-will, the company can fire you for any real or imagined offense and you have no recourse. When you lose your job you and your family are evicted from company housing. If you are killed on the job your family is soon evicted from company housing.



*Quincy Mining Co. First-Aid Corps brass and enamel watch fob.*



*Newport Mine (Ironwood, MI) cigarette lighter safety award.*

While they had an investment in equipment, tools, mules and horses, mine owners had no real investment in their miners. If one were killed or severely injured they merely hired another, miners were as expendable a commodity as blasting powder, thus the personal safety of the miner was of little concern to mine owners. From the mine owners' perspec-



*Calumet & Hecla Consolidated  
Copper Co. Safety First Pin.*



*Enamel and brass Illinois Mine Rescue Station Pins.*



*Safety First Porcelain safety signs.*

tive, accidents were to be prevented not because they caused death or injury to individual miners but because they disrupted production and thus adversely impacted profits.

Conditions for hardrock miners were somewhat better during this time period. In many instances they lived in their own or rented houses or bunked in a company boarding house. They were not paid in scrip and while many times there was a company store, they did not have to buy from it. This is not to say that conditions in hardrock mines were good. While hardrock mines did not have the same dangers of methane gas, low ceiling coal veins and coal dust, they shared the danger of underground fires, falling rock, hoisting accidents, drilling accidents, blasting accidents and haulage accidents. Hardrock miners had the equivalent of coal miner's black lung caused by the silica dust generated by "widowmaker" compressed air drills.



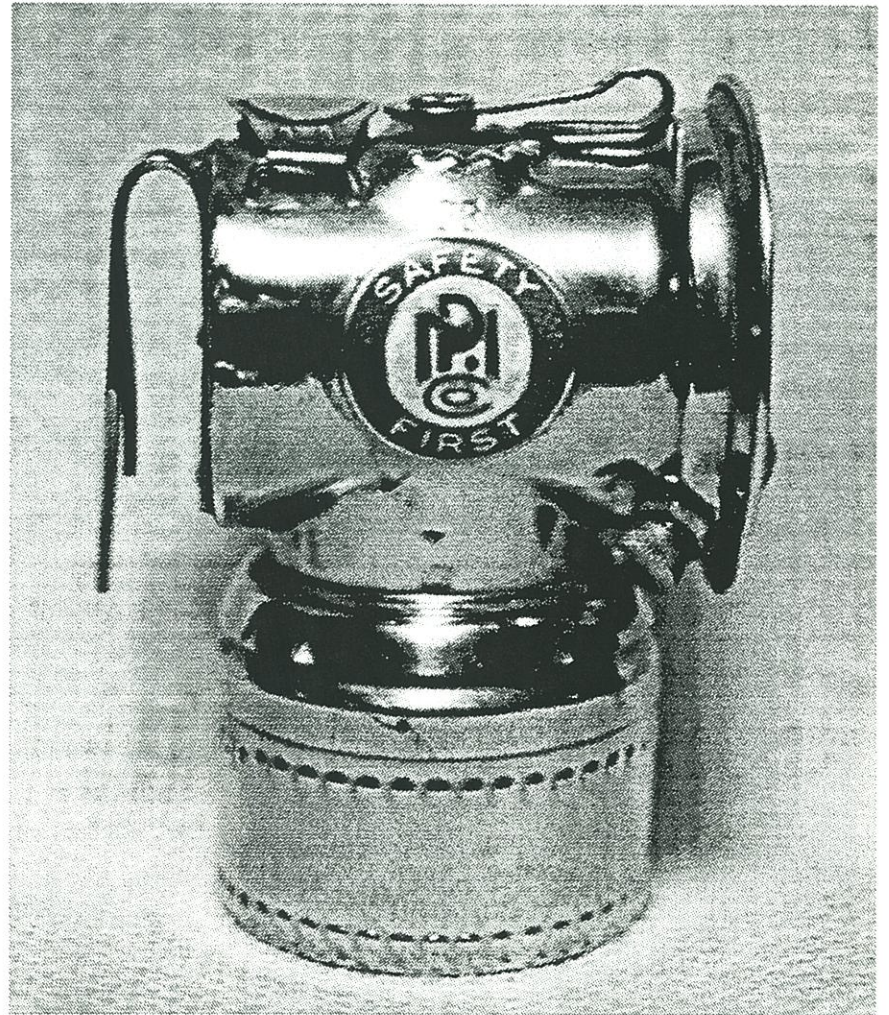
Pickands Mather Iron Mining Co. safety award knife.



Back of 1925 International Contest watch fob.

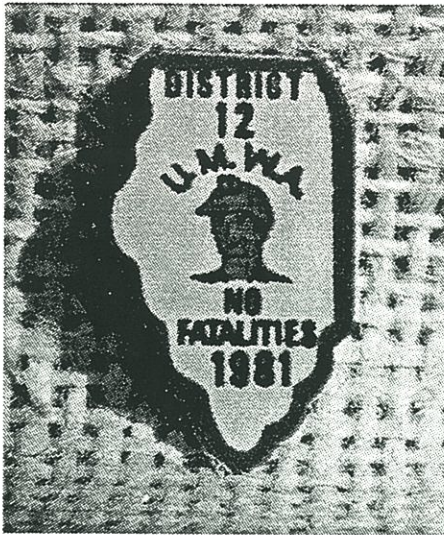


National Coal Association safety award ring from 1917.



Pickands Mather Iron Mining Co. safety award lamp.

Given these dangers, the miner's life was obviously not a safe one. Until mine accidents could be shown to cost more than the cost to prevent them, mine owners had little reason to do so. Although generally subordinated to the wage issue, safety has been an issue championed by unions such as the United Mine Workers, Western Federation



UMWA District 12 safety pin.



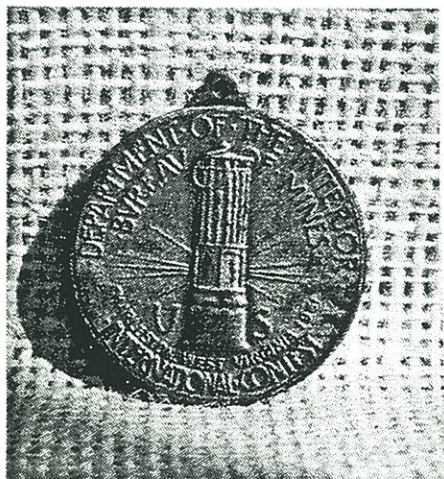
Front of 1953 National First-Aid & Mine Rescue Contest watch fob.



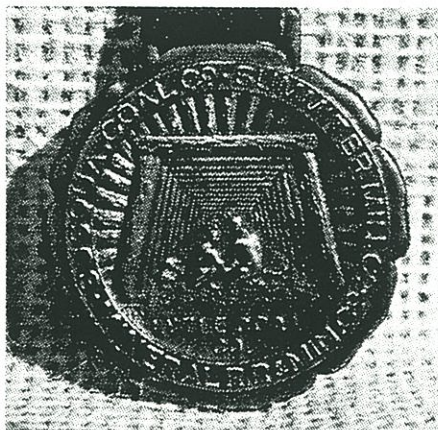
Back of 1929 International First-Aid & Mine Rescue contest watch fob.



Front of 1929 International First-Aid & Mine Rescue contest watch fob.



Back of 1961 International Contest watch fob.



Lytle Coal Co. Brass watch fob showing two miners administering first-aid to a third mines.

of Miners, Progressive Mine Workers and other smaller mine unions since their inception. Basically three things led to an increased awareness of safety by all parties concerned: 1) pressure from unions, 2) National and State laws, 3) a realization by mine owners that some safety measures were in their best interest.

This new found awareness of, and interest in, safety led to many innovative ways to get the safety message to miners, many of whom were prone to take shortcuts that saved them time and energy but could ultimately take their life. Since most coal miners were not paid for "dead work" such as placing shoring timbers they were reluctant to install more than what they thought they could get by with, as were hardrock miners working under the contract and tribute systems.

Safety related collectibles are a field of collecting of their own within the larger field of mining collectibles.

There was the SAFETY FIRST campaign that started in the teens (see accompanying photos) with its signage. Safety awards were presented to miners in the form of watch fobs, pins, lamps, coffee cups, cigarette lighters, pocket knives and rings. Local, State, and National first-aid and mine rescue contests were held at regular intervals to encourage mine safety and mine disaster preparedness. There are a large number of different collectibles related to mine safety available to collectors but few of the items are commonly found today.

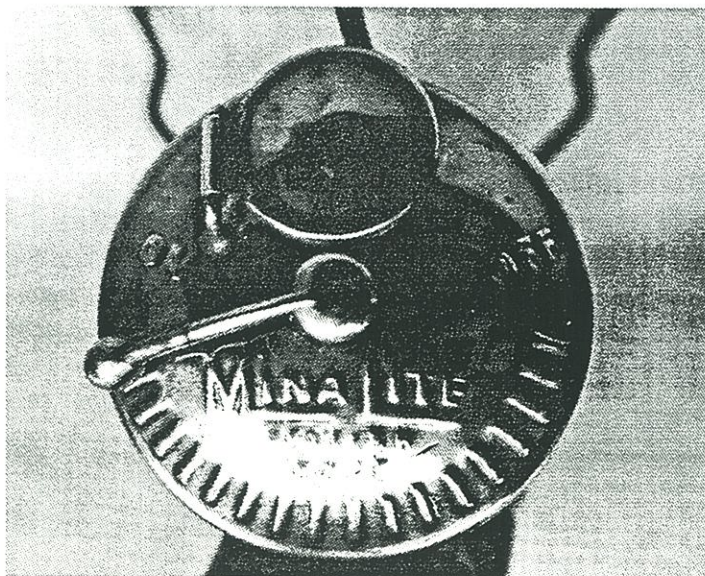
# MINALITE

*Dave Johnson*

If you saw this lamp from a distance at a flea market, you probably wouldn't give this "AUTO LITE" a second look. A closer look would have shown this common "AUTO LITE" to be a MINALITE. Very much like an AUTO LITE on the surface, there are subtle differences. First, the vertical knurling around the base on the AUTO LITE is different than the cross-hatching around the base of the MINALITE's carbide chamber. Second, the knob on the end of the AUTO LITE's water lever is round while the MINALITE's is teardrop shaped. Third, overall the Autolite is 1/8" shorter than the MINALITE. Fourth, the opening on the MINALITE's base is 3/16" smaller in diameter than on the Autolite so the bases are not interchangeable. The overall diameter and height of the base is the same for the Autolite and the MINALITE. The overall 1/8" height difference is in the upper half of the lamp. This is a very well made lamp, not a cheap foreign knock-off of an Autolite like the newer Safesport Butterfly knock-off of the Guy's Dropper made in Hong Kong.



I have been unable to obtain any information on who manufactured the MINALITE. The only clue to its origin comes from the stamping on the water chamber and base which both say "BRITISH MADE". Mick Corbridge, a lamp collector from England, confirms that these lamps were used in the North East coal mines around Newcastle, although Darge Daylights, Droppers, and AUTO LITES were more common there. He only knows of two or three in British collections. Do any of our readers have any information on this lamp?



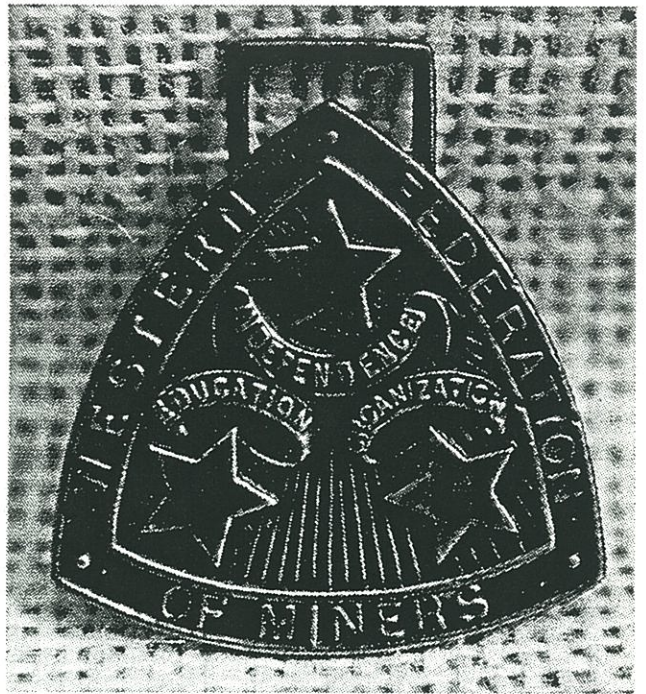


# Western Federation Of Miners

*Dave Johnson*

While not the earliest miners' union, the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) was one of the two major unions to represent miners and other mine workers beginning in the late 1800's, along with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

The Western Federation of Miners was organized on May 15, 1893 in Butte, Montana. The union's first test came in January of 1894 when miners struck over a 50 cents per day reduction by Cripple Creek, Colorado mine owners. The striking miners prevailed and the 50 cents was reinstated. This victory won many new union members in new locals across the West.



*WFM Fob.*



*I.U.M.M.S.W. Fob*

For more information on the Western Federation of Miners I recommend the following source book:

Roughneck: The Life & Times of Big Bill Haywood  
W. W. Norton & Co. NY, NY (1983)

The early Western Federation of Miners was led by President Ed Boyce, a radical unionist. Another early leader was William "Big Bill" Haywood who signed up as a charter member of Local 66 in Silver City. Haywood actively advocated "the overthrow of the profitmaking system". Haywood was elected Secretary/Treasurer at the WFM's 1901 National Convention. He actively opposed AFL President Samuel Gompers's conservative policies and pushed to withdraw the WFM from that organization. In 1901 the WFM motto was: "Labor produces all wealth; all wealth belongs to the producer thereof". This philosophy was in line with that of American Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs, who was actively supported by Haywood.

Unlike the United Mine Workers, the Western Federation of Miners sought to organize mill and smelter workers as early as 1902, rather than just miners. This philosophy led to the reorganization of the Western Federation of Miners to become the International Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers as can be seen on the 1916 watch fob pictured here.

# 1996 Cap Tin Update

by Andy Martin

Once again, it is our pleasure to report on novel cap tins that collectors have tracked down the last few months. We also get to introduce three new contributors: Don Dalton, who has put together a large collection in an impressively short time period, Lane Griffin, an accomplished member of the vanishing breed of underground collectors, and Leo Stambaugh, who runs Powder Cache Antiques in Georgetown Colorado. This shop is loaded with mining artifacts and related books, a must see if you are in the area.

The most surprising tin for me in this group is the GERMAN DETONATOR. The only tin from this company previously known was one mangled sample from West Australia. Lane managed to find this one in decent condition underground in Nevada, and estimates the date of the workings is 1910-1930. It is hard to imagine German products being very popular after 1914, so my hunch is the tin dates pre WWI, even though the caps are pretty powerful (No. 6) for this period. The arrows on the label are reminiscent of the lightning bolts on the German Silesian Detonator tin (page 71 of our Bible), and it is possible that the companies are related.

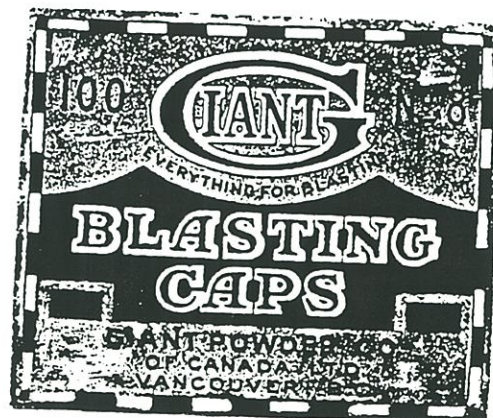
The GIANT POWDER CO. OF CANADA tin is also a nice one. It is the first one known from this company, which is an offshoot of the Giant Powder Company headquartered in California. Giant Powder owned a dynamite plant near Victoria, British Columbia dating back to 1884. On January 1, 1916, the operations were renamed Giant Powder Company of Canada, limited. This was done under the direction of Atlas Powder, which controlled Giant after 1914. It appears that the name was changed again to Canadian Giant, Limited in 1925. This dates the tin to the 1916-1925 period, unless the name was maintained after 1925 for trade purposes.



TWENTYFIVE No-6 CAPS  
Painted yellow with black letters  
Reported by Don Dalton



GERMAN DETONATOR,XXXXXXXX  
Blue letters on White Paper  
Reported by Lane Griffin



GIANT POWDER CO. OF CANADA, No 8  
Reported by Leo Stambaugh

The FRENCH MUNITIONS tin is the second to turn up from this company, the No. 8 was described in the April 1994 Eureka. This tin appears to be a bit older than the No. 8, and may be rarer, as 7 strength caps are unusual in both Europe and America.



FRENCH MUNITIONS, NO. 7  
 Black letters on white paper  
 Reported by Don Dalton

Finally, another type of MONTECATINI tin has turned up, this one from the Orbetello factory. Alessio also reports a No. 8 strength size to both this tin and the Taino factory tin. Even though Montecatini is truly the “Du Pont of Italy,” it is almost impossible to locate any of their tins on this side of the pond.

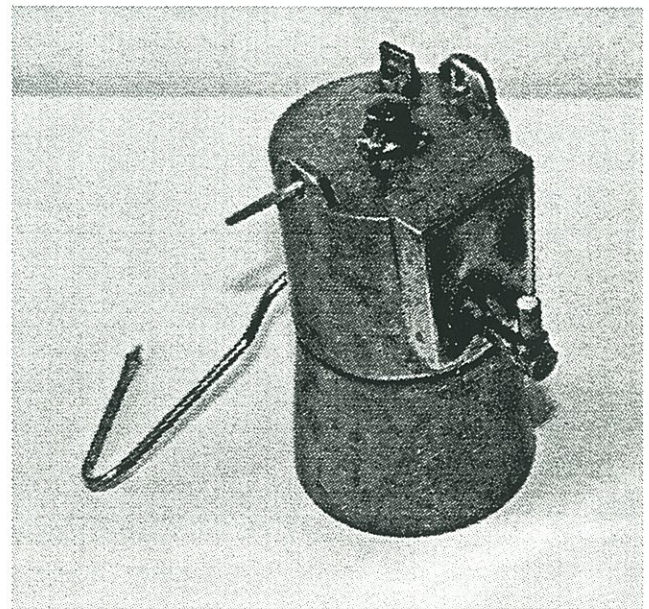
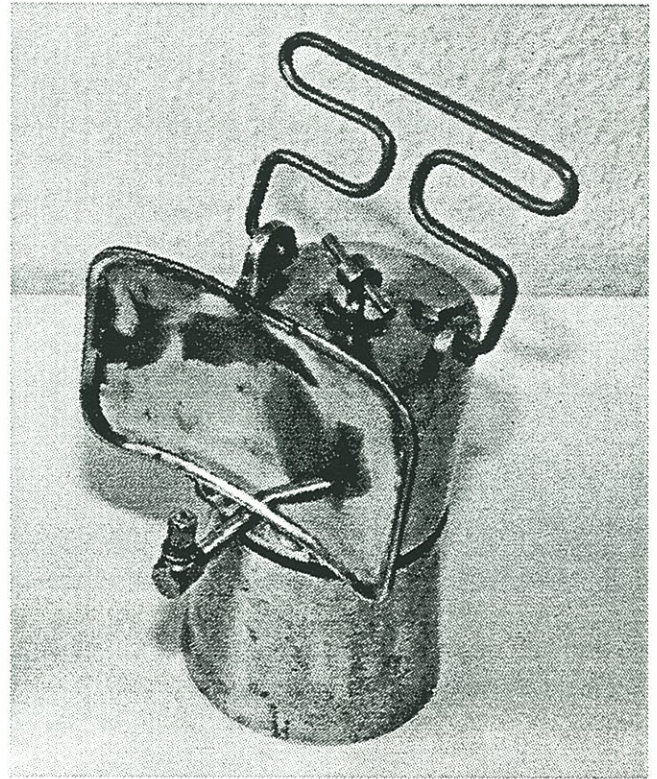


MONTECATINI, ORBETELLO, No 10  
 Painted red and white  
 Reported by Alessio Grimaldi

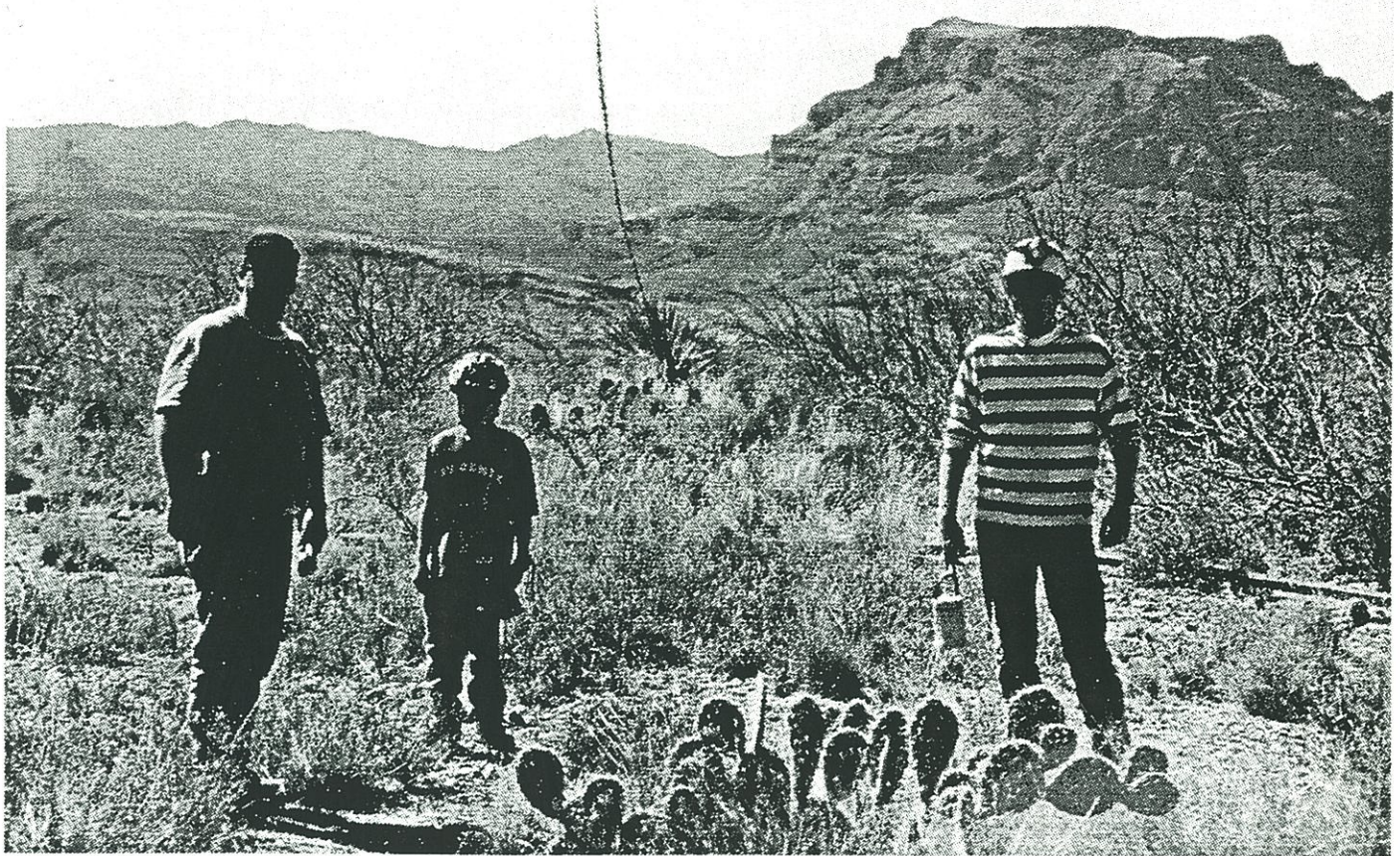
## Cast Aluminum Lamps

*Mick Corbridge*

These two lamps are made by Thorn & Hoddle of London and are dated 1932. They both have an integral cast aluminum reflector over which a large tin plate reflector can be mounted. This is hinged and can be swung up to reveal the small cast reflector. The one below is not complete and should be as the one above.



# Aritfact Hunting in Arizona *by Dave Thorpe*



*Standing in front of the Grand Pacific, near Superior, AZ. Picket Post Mountain in background. From left: Todd Town, Stephen Nevarez, and Dave Thorpe. Photo by Roger Becksted.*

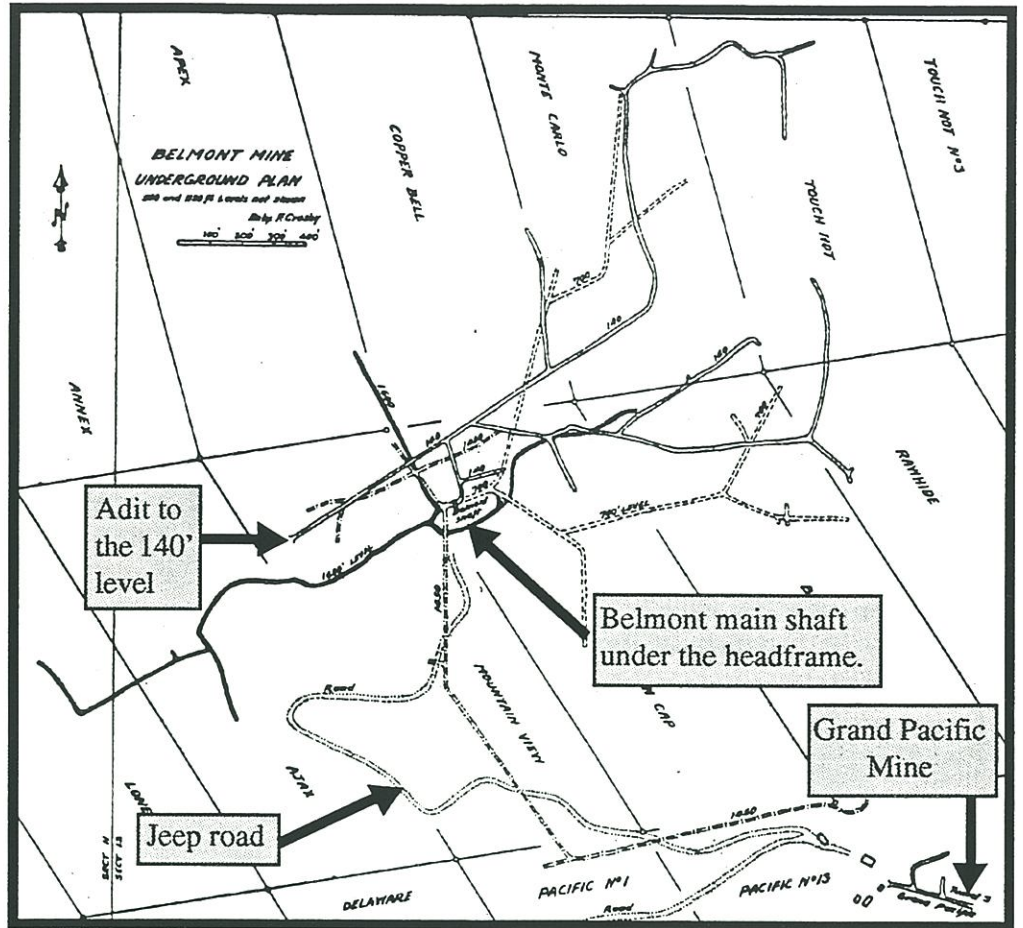
The desert hills in Arizona are loaded with rattlesnakes, and the single most likely place you'll find them is in the entrance of a mine. Fortunately, they do not come out of hibernation until May. With this in mind, Todd Town, Roger Becksted, Bob Schroth, and I made several trips to mine camps near Superior, AZ during April of this year. The area has many defunct mining camps and ghost towns. Most of them are not listed in the tourist books, and finding them is a hit or miss operation of driving up dusty jeep roads. One day while driving a road towards Apache Leap (a cliff named after a band of renegades who jumped to their deaths rather than surrender) I happened upon the sight of a massive steel headframe with two dilapidated buildings nearby. As we would later learn from Andy Martin, this was the Belmont Mine which had seen no activity since the thirties. Next to the headframe was the hoist house with

two huge spools inside. The control levers were still intact and we moved them back and forth. I imagined that this was how a wreck diver would feel. Todd pointed out the worm-screw level marker that indicated the depth the cage would be lowered to. We noticed that the cable was entirely paid out...to the 1600 foot level! Roger would later find a map of the mine showing this to be the ultimate depth. In another building we found hundreds of core samples and crucibles that suggested assaying had been done here. Laying on the ground were five mine cages all of varying ages. The earliest was simply two wooden platforms conected with an eight foot pipe. Others were more sophisticated with heavy metal "saloon" doors. Some had gear-tooth dogs near the roof which were the safety brakes. They were spring loaded so that in case of a cable breakage, they would snap tight against the wooden rails in the mine shaft.

Roger pointed out to us that special wood had to be used for the shaft rails with an extraordinarily straight grain. We examined a section of rail, and he was right!

A steel ladder ran up the headframe, and who could resist the challenge. It seemed stable. The two wheels were a massive eight feet in diameter. Roger spun the one without cable, it must have weighed three tons.

After this trip we did some research of the Belmont Mine. Operations began in 1913 by John C. Greenway, whose fame as a developer/entrepreneur in Arizona is memorialized in a brass bust in the Smithsonian Institution. The mine changed



*Preparing equipment for underground: rappeling gear and extension ladder.  
Photo by Roger Becksted.*

hands several times, never producing large quantities of ore. Most operations had ceased by the late twenties, though some activity at the 140' level carried on into the 40's. At its peak in 1925, it extended to a depth of 1600 foot level. An Arizona Bulletin of Mines report in 1943 indicated that it was flooded to the 700' level, and the shaft station at 500' was caved.

We returned to the Belmont with our hardhats and lights. Down the hillside (actually a large tailings



*Dave Thorpe at the top of the 150-foot headframe of the Belmont Mine. Photo by Roger Becksted.*

dump) we found the entrance to the 140 foot level. This level was the most recently worked section. We squeezed through a small hole that had washed open on the hillside to enter walking passage to find a big steel door, which swung open. Roger's old map, which he found at the Tucson Gem and Mineral show, guided our way. We hiked around for what seemed like over a mile of passage. Occasionally a chute would open to an upper level where things were considerably less stable. We brought in an aluminum extension ladder to access these areas. In other areas, chutes took off downward. I rappelled into two of these and both times they choked out in passage of smaller dimensions.

We located the main shaft that reached up to the headframe. The same lone cable ran down, and penetrated an area fifty feet below blocked with wood debris. From our reading, the next level down (the 500' level) was "caved", and below that, the mine was flooded. There could be no hope of a rapell down this shaft. The tail end of a wooden ladder hung in space some thirty feet



*Dave Thorpe and Todd Town restuff the rope sack after a rapell into a side chute. Stephen Nevarez signs his name with carbide soot. Photo by Roger Becksted.*

above and I felt lucky I had not climbed down from above. Standing there next to the shaft, we realized we were in a room that was filled with heavy pumps and large plumbing.

Later in the day we explored the Grand Pacific Mine, a smaller operation about a quarter mile south of the Belmont. A cool breeze blew throughout this passage leading us to a shaft heading straight up. Shining our lights up, there was a wooden ladder running alongside an ore chute. Etched in carbide soot near the shaft were the words: "Dangerous Climb". We left.

Back on the surface Todd poked around and found a wire candleholder. It was crude, but real. Later, with a metal detector he located a reflector for a Wolf hand lamp buried a foot under the soil.

Disclaimer: The authors and editors note that old mine exploration is dangerous and discourage this activity.

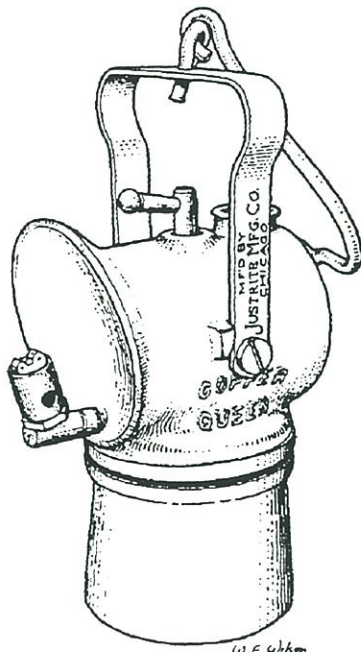
# The Trade

Bob Schroth

I have been asked many times, why do you only want to trade on some items. The answer is simple: some things can not be replaced as easy as other items. The unusual mining collectable is very hard to come by. Many collectors come up with items that they themselves do not collect but they know that others do. Now they have something of value for a good trade. I don't collect safety lamps, but I have been lucky enough to come up with a few over time, I now have something that a safety lamp collector might want, and might part with something I would like out of their collection.

I know that this all sounds simple and makes common sense, but I have been asked so many times that I thought this might make a good article. When trading, put a goal in your mind and what your trade item is worth to you. Many times you might have to trade more than the item you want is worth, but that is part of the game. Over the years I have watched the major players in our collecting hobby, I noticed how they worked trades and I have seen some of the most interesting trades go down. One of the best trades went off at the East coast reunion. It seemed that five or six guys were involved and all of us got something that we needed for our collections, or to complete lamps. When ever I go to a major show I bring a few pieces that I really like but I might be tempted out of for the right trade. I hope many more collectors do the same thing at the next few shows, I am sure that this will help as far as neat pieces changing hands and for some of us to view artifacts, rarely seen by most of us.

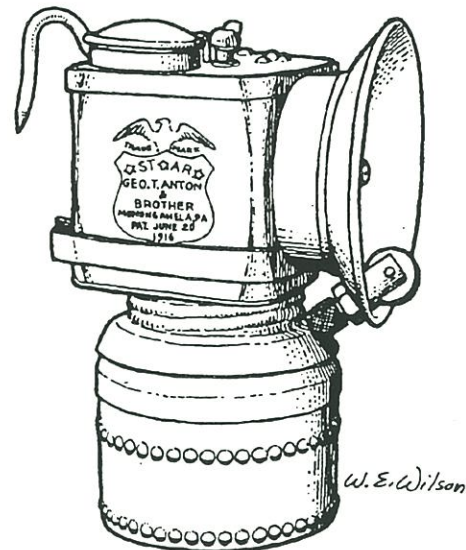
This example just happened at the Tucson mining show. I bought a fair condition Copper Queen hand lamp from Mike Puhl. I then



traded this lamp for a Maple City cap lamp. Fred Gaunce and I were going to meet at the Tucson show and he wanted some safety lamps that I had. I told him that I wanted more than cash

and to bring some neat cap lamps. He moaned and groaned but brought to my surprise some very rare lamps including, an Abercombie & Fitch I found out later, that his goal, besides the safety lamps, was to also trade me out of my new, but extra Maple City. I only brought this lamp to show people my new prize, it was not available.

While talking with Mike Puhl, (who by the way was the only guy on the planet with three square Anton's.) about what he thought of a Abercombie & Fitch lamp, he got excited at the news that this lamp was around. I then formed a plan: trade Freddy G. out of his lamp. Using my Maple City as bait, then trade the Abercombie & Fitch plus something to Mike for his Square Anton. Now some of you out there might think that some of these lamps are worth way more than some of the others. I believe all parties involved are very happy with what they came home with, to me that is the mark of a good trade, when everybody comes away happy.

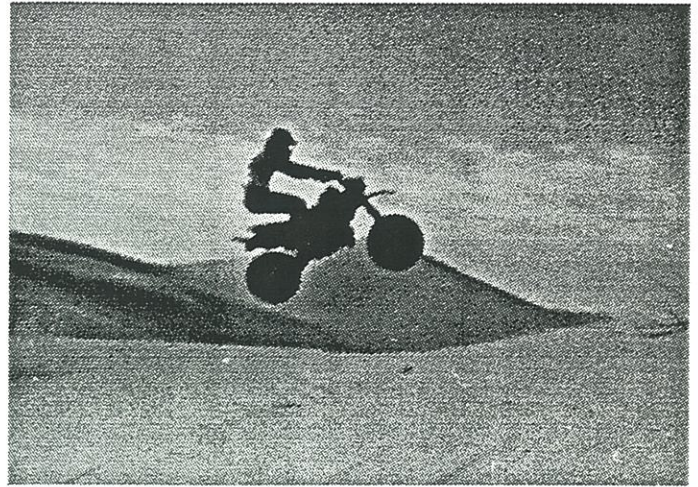


Cap-Tin-Bob

# Death Valley Adventure

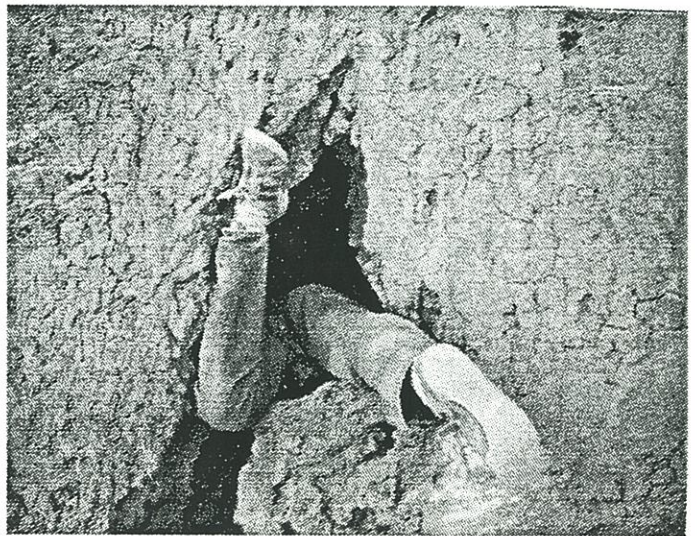
*Bob Schroth*

Fall had turned to winter and I was starting to get cabin fever. Sitting in the house with snow over 3 ft. deep I knew that I wouldn't be pouring any concrete for at least 3 days, probably a week. I got out my maps of old mining districts and ghost towns and started planning a desert exploring trip. The hardest part of planing this kind of trip is finding others to make the trip with you. As usual, I was going out alone. I loaded up my truck, and picked a destination: Death Valley. Now that it has become a National Park instead of a Monument, I wasn't even sure which roads were going to be open. The 4 hr. drive is a little tedious so I stopped at the Du-Mont Sand dunes on the way, for those of you who have never seen sand dunes before, these are some of the steeper and highest dunes in the country. I unloaded my bike and took off over the steep hills of sand. I was driving like a kid of 16 and before I knew it I was flying over a razor back and had launched myself 30ft. in the air, I then realized that if I hurt myself now, no one might find me until the weekend. Luck was with me and I landed hard but didn't kill myself. After about 2 hr's. of more *careful* riding I decided to check out some mines in the foothills. I had been to most of these mines before but the desert has a funny way of always changing. I found a small prospect shaft and climbed down the steep incline. I found a level at 40ft. This short level contained a huge pack rats nest, I dug through the nest always worried about some of the exotic sickness that rats carry. I really don't need to catch the Hanta Virus. After about 3 min. I found a base of a Calif. cap tin, a few bits of fuse wrapper and a claim notice. The mine was called the Mary Bell and was first located in the 1920s. I couldn't make out the rest, thanks to the deposits the rats left on it. I then went down to the bottom level, here I found not a single thing. I left the mine with dust in my lungs and a desire to get back on the road. I drove up to Shoshone, this little town is famous for its hot mineral springs. I had read about some small erosion caves in the area and got out of the truck to stretch and explore. After about a 20 min. hike I found some interesting holes in the Green clay hills. I crawled into a few and I was a little to fat to fit very far. A while later I came upon a larger one and explored by belly



*...I was driving like a kid of 16 and before I knew it I was flying over a razor back and had launched myself 30ft. in the air...*

crawl for about 200 ft. The cave then made a sharp turn straight up to the surface and I couldn't force myself through. Great, I have to back all the way out! Now more bad news the cheesy pen light I was using just quit. So here I am in a little hole in the middle of nowhere and I am without light? I tried taking the stupid thing apart but no way was it ever going to work again, I had lost part of the switch. I have been in this situation before so I had learned from my mistakes, I did have a Cylume with me and after breaking it open and shaking it I had a nice glow of green chemical light. I know what some of you are probably thinking, rule 1. never cave alone, rule 2.



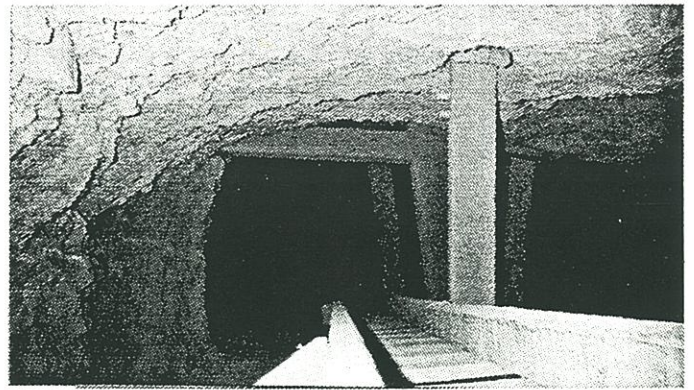
*Entering small cave near Shoshone*



always have 3 light sources, rule 3. never crawl into small holes in the California desert!! Well you are right on all accounts but this is part of the exploring fun for me? I did escape, and on my way to the truck I found a small dump site, while poking around I found a few early bottles, and a neat toy truck made of tin.

Enough of this, I gassed up and off to the area I planed to explore. Virgin Springs Canyon is the place for me, so I found my way to what I think is the right road and off I went. This wasn't really a road it was a rocky, rutted rip in the earth. I bounced my way out the 1 mile distance, before primitive camping is allowed. After finding a flat place to park I reread my directions to the mine. Quote: "Virgin Springs Canyon, 9 miles one way, Vehicle access, high clearance recommended, for 2 miles on gravel road bed. Beyond that, route is not well defined. Moderately strenuous, to gentle grade. Mining Camp at 4 miles. Camping is allowed beyond 1 mile from highway." Sounds like no problem but I am in a dead-end canyon with no possible way to go much further. Night was starting to set in so I set up camp and decided to spend the night. It got very cold and like a fool I had only brought my 3 season bag. I got in the truck and fired up the heater and listened to the radio for a while until I fell into a fitful sleep with mining relics on my mind.

Morning came and the sun is shining bright, yes a glorious day in the desert. I packed up my ATV and started looking for the right road to the mines. I rode for what seemed like hours and I drove up every wash and side trail I could find, so far no mines or even trash or relics. I was having fun riding around, but I like to find the place I have set off for. I finally found a pile of rocks that must have been a corner marker for a mining claim. I searched for the claim notice, these are usually located in protected part of the marker, in a tin can or bottle. No luck, sometimes people think these are fun to take home as a souvenir. I spotted a faint trail heading up the steep mountain, so I decided to hike. After 15 minutes, I now know this is a mountain goat trail, or might as well be one. Huffing and puffing I climbed up to the top of this mountain, and I saw? You guessed it another higher mountain. Well not one to be easily discouraged, I kept EUREKA July 1996



*Looking down the shaft.*

going, and going, I started to feel a little like the energizer Bunny.

I then saw way off on another hill, a reflection of glass, I pulled out my binoculars and found the mining camp, I had only missed it by two washes and 3 or 4 miles. So now for the hike back to the bike and a long ride to the new search area. I am starting to think, hanging out at home wasn't so bad after all? It was almost 3 PM by the time I got back to the truck, I decided to make lunch and

rest for a bit before hitting to road for the next leg of my now, incredible journey. The winter days are so short that darkness was setting in by the time I reached the elu-

*...it is real easy for the bad thoughts to overcome you. I have on occasion had small panic attacks...*

sive mining camp. I was glad to find the main tunnel entrance with little problem. I put on all my underground gear and went into the blackness. It is hard to describe climbing into a old mine by yourself, in the middle of nowhere. I imagine what the camp might have looked like in it's prime and what they were mining, and I try to keep my thoughts positive, it is real easy for the bad thoughts to overcome you. I have on occasion had small panic attacks when a rat leaps out of nowhere, or some bats come flying out at you. You always think to yourself is this worth it? I say yes, for some odd reason I enjoy this kind of adventure. This mine wasn't as large as I had hoped or filled with rare mining artifacts but the trip was well worth the effort. I saw some real interesting wildlife, a ring-tailed cat, a couple of coyotes, and of all things a small mountain lion. I came home with some photos and some memories of a neat place in the desert.

# Howells Mining Drill Co.

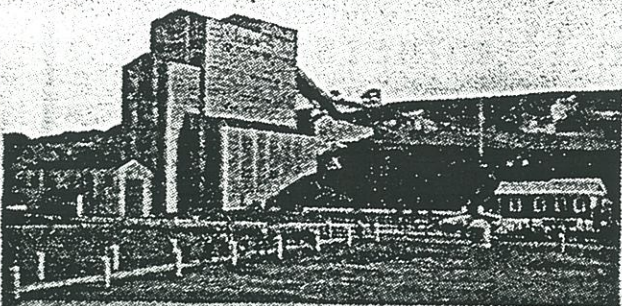
*of Plymouth, PA*

*by Jim Chapman*

My original intention in writing this article was to describe an unusual miners' pick head I had acquired locally a couple of months ago. As it turned out, I discovered an interesting history of the manufacturer of this implement: Howells Mining Drill Company of Plymouth, PA.

According to records in the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Howells Mining Drill Company was established in 1878 by John R. Howells, in Plymouth, Luzerne Co., Pennsylvania, no doubt to stake its claim among the other industries eager to contribute to and no doubt invest in the already-burgeoning business of anthracite coal. One of the shareholders of the fledgling company was Daniel K. Spry, Civil War veteran, Plymouth's leading druggist and real-estate entrepreneur, who owned considerable tracts of commercial property in a town already made affluent by the discovery of black diamonds in the area in the early 1800s by the Smith brothers, Abijah and John.

D.K. Spry had a brother, Frederick E. Spry, who in the 1870 census was listed as a tinsmith residing in nearby Scranton. An entry in the 1873 Plymouth City Directory reveals F.E. Spry taking up residence on Main St. in Plymouth as a merchant of hardware and tinware. Miners' oilwick lamps with the F.E. Spry imprint are valued by collectors of mining artifacts for their scarcity as well as their association with early anthracite coal mining in northeastern Pennsylvania.



## FOR EVERY CLASS OF DRILLING

**F**OR every class of drilling, and any material that can be penetrated by a steel augur, you will find the right drilling machine among our fifty varieties.

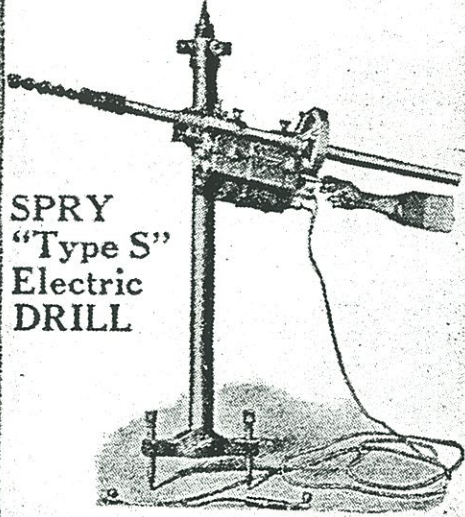
We manufacture hand-operated bar and post drills for either one or two-man use, and invite especial attention to the SPRY "Type S" ELECTRIC DRILL which drills through hardest anthracite at the rate of 8 ft. per minute.

By reversing its large gear the machine is readily changed from direct to compound drive; and is then well adapted for drilling shale, slate, or soft rock.

*Catalog on request*

**Howells Mining Drill Co.**  
Plymouth, Penna.

Representatives in Russia, Great Britain, and Philippine Islands—R. Martins Company of New York.



**SPRY  
"Type S"  
Electric  
DRILL**

# HOWELLS DRILLS

The reputation of Howells Mining Drill Co. continued to prosper under its present ownership. Howells, however, sold his interest in 1883, the year the company was incorporated. His departure certainly did not cause any decline in the company's productivity. Advertisements taken out in trade publications of the era attest to the company's success in its field. An ad in the Mine Foreman's Pocket Book of 1883, states, "Howells Mining Drill, Still Ahead, Demand Continually Increasing." Ads appearing in circa 1890s issues of Mines and Minerals included unqualified testimonials from officials of large companies eager to take up future orders.

However, as quickly as Howells Mining Drill Co. climbed to the pinnacle of the industry, its downfall arrived just as quickly. Before discussing the company's demise, I would like to mention a future president and general manager, Franklin B. Spry, who guided the company into its most successful years and who won gratitude from politicians, military leaders, and the nation for service rendered during World War I.

Franklin B. Spry was born in Plymouth, PA, on October 6, 1875, the son of the previously mentioned D.K. Spry and his wife Mary Evans. Franklin Spry attended the local schools and graduated from the prestigious Wyoming Seminary in 1897. Upon graduation, he became associated with the Howells Mining Drill Co. as an apprentice and eventually worked his way through the ranks of journeyman, foreman, superintendent, and eventually general manager. In 1902, at the precocious age of 27, he was elected president of the company while retaining his duties as general manager.

It was because of Spry's business acumen and skills as an inventor that the company reached unprecedented acclaim in the mining community, both among management and laborers. While holding down two titles, Spry continued to develop new and better electric drills and products, becoming known as one of the foremost inventors in his field. The Spry Type "S" Electric Drill was lauded as an especially adaptable drill for penetrating anthracite coal not to mention shale, slate, and soft rock (see illustration). The drill boasted of a boring rate of eight feet per minute through hard anthracite coal—no small feat.

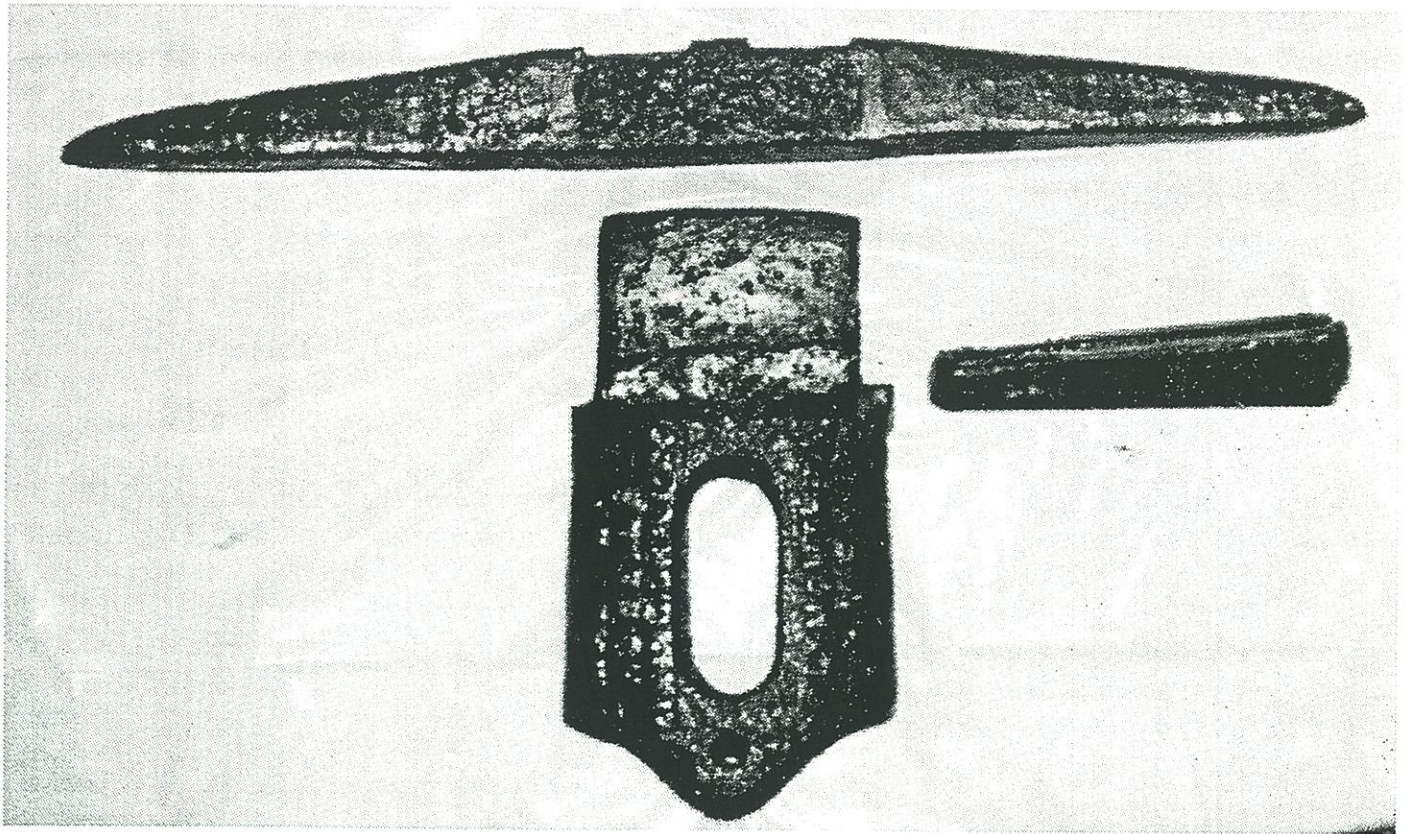
Distributors of Howells drilling equipment could be found in as diverse locations as Great Britain, Russia and the Philippines, testifying that Howells technology was in demand the world over and not just for applications in the coalfields. In addition to its line of drills was a full complement of mining equipment from spads to shovels to miners' caps. However, it was the patented Spry drill that was the company's most successful implement. Indeed, Howells Mining Drill Co. owned the patent for every implement they manufactured.

The year 1917 saw the entry of the United States into the first world war, creating an immediate demand for men and materials to bolster America's contribution to the war effort. This period was to represent the pinnacle of coal production in America, after which saw a decline but short-lived resurgence during World War II. However, the industry would never again witness the output of tonnage as it did when it sent its men to fight at the Western Front. Howells Mining Drill Co. also made its contribution in support of the men at the front. It was this unselfish act that ironically helped lead to the demise of the company.

Early during America's participation in the conflict, Howells Mining Drill Co. converted a large portion of its factory in Plymouth to the production of drills and trenching tools that the allied war effort desperately needed. The electric drills, trench machines, and massive augers shipped by Howells to France and Belgium churned up the soil of the battlefields to provide American troops and their allies with refuge from enemy machine-gun nests and artillery barrages. Howells equipment even found its way to the Russian front. The employees of Howells Mining Drill Co. took great pride in their contribution to America's war effort. The company offered its services to the government at little or no cost, much to the consternation of its clientele who were forced to take a backseat while waiting to have their orders filled for equipment.

F.B. Spry was a man who put country above profit. His efforts lead to the U.S. government formally honoring Howells Mining Drill Co. with a certificate for meritorious service which read:

"This company willingly did development work gratis and its bids were in some instances 1/5 to 1/6 of its



nearest competitors. Its business methods were of a high order and seldom equalled. It is very gratifying to be enabled to transmit this visible recognition of patriotic war service.”

Interestingly, Howells’ contribution came as a welcome relief to government officials who were dealing with large scale graft and corruption by other companies that overcharged the government for services rendered. Even in our day, news of contractors overcharging the government for goods and services is shamefully still rampant. As a result of Spry’s patriotism, regular clients decided that they could no longer afford to wait and canceled their orders with Howells. Even after the armistice, once-loyal customers continued to give their orders to other manufacturers. As a result, business suffered.

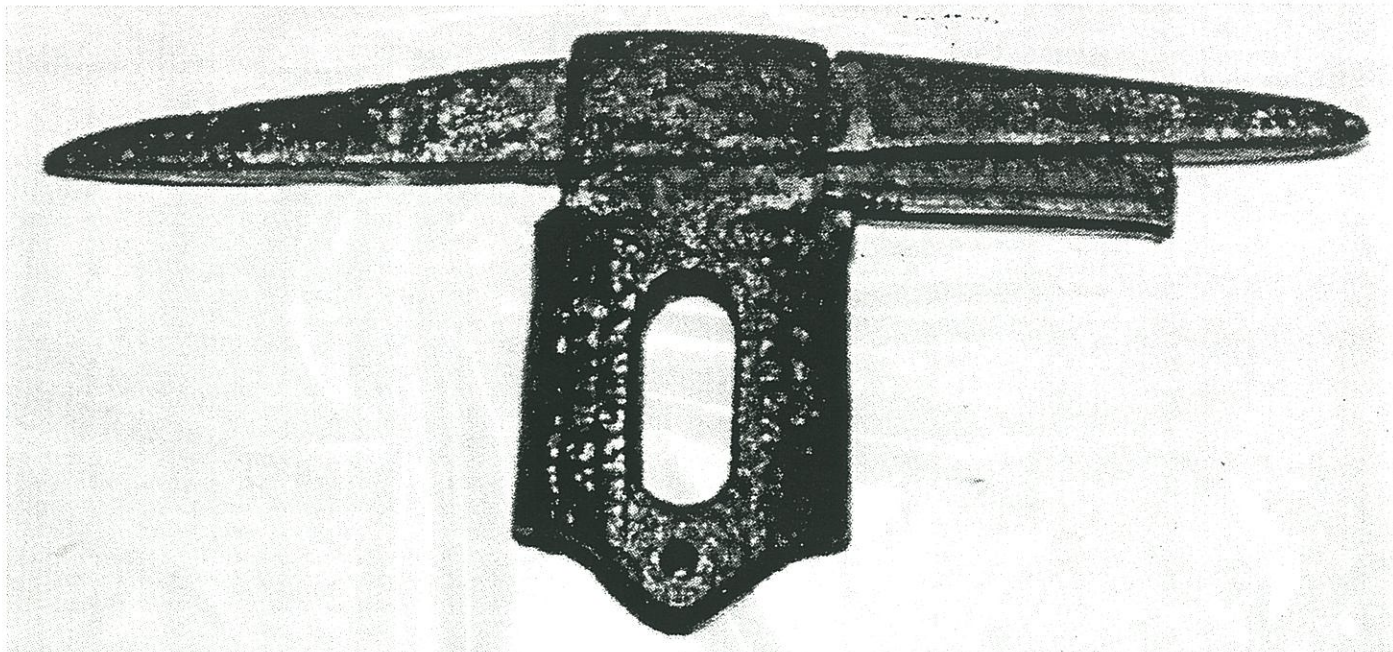
However, one cannot blame Howells’ demise entirely on their contribution to the war effort. Alternative fuels, such as gas and oil, began to take the place of coal. Howells Mining Drill Company limped along with the times until its close in the 1960s.

Franklin Spry, the company’s guiding force, had died in 1935. The last appearance the company made in the Plymouth City Directory was in 1962, with yet another Spry at the helm, Mae S. Spry.

If you should visit Plymouth, you can still see the former Howells manufacturing plant building, which was taken over by a supply company and since then by a printing company. The repair shop, located several blocks away, has since been torn down, as has been the fate of numerous other structures relating to the coal-mining industry. Though Howells Manufacturing Company is but an echo of a once-thriving coal industry, its contributions to home and country should not be forgotten.

The miners’ pick, manufactured by Howells Mining Drill Co. and shown above, consists of three parts: socket, pick head, and wedge (fastener) to secure the pick head to the socket.

The patent for the design, actually for only the pick-head fastener, was granted to William D. Lewis, of Plymouth, on September 2, 1924. Lewis is listed in the Plymouth city directory as a blacksmith employed by Howells Manufacturing Co.



The purpose of the wedge, according to the patent, was to: “firmly lock a blade in its socket, against accidental displacement and which may be readily manipulated for releasing said blade.”

Lewis stated in his patent application that the wedge can be used with other types of interchangeable “blades,” and is not restricted to use with a pick head, although I have not seen these other applications to which he refers. Shown in the top photograph are the three main parts of this apparatus when it is disassembled.

The photograph above shows the blade secured in the socket by the wedge fastening device. One side of the wedge contains grooves that facilitate in locking the blade in place more securely. (You would definitely not want a situation where the pick head came flying off readily when in use). The wedge could be loosened or tightened “by a knock with a suitable instrument on the appropriate end thereof.”

This is the first example of a miner’s pick head I have seen with interchangeable parts. My guess is that this was a very useful tool to have on hand especially when the job demanded flexibility in the type of blade required for a task. Other manufacturers may have produced similar pick heads with this same flexibility of use. It would be interesting to know. I’m sure the miner appreciated it.

#### Sources:

Coal Age (various years)

Copy of U.S. Patent for Pick-head fastener (no. 1,507,494), U.S. Patent Office

Edward L. Phillips, History of Luzerne County and Wilkes-Barre, PA (unpublished typescript located in the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society library)

Mine Foreman’s Pocket Book. 1883.

Mines and Minerals (various years)

Oscar J. Harvey, History of Wilkes-Barre and Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Wilkes-Barre, PA: Raeder Press, 1909-

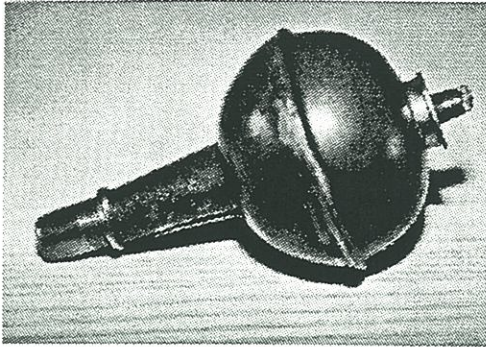
U.S. Census for 1870

Various City Directories.

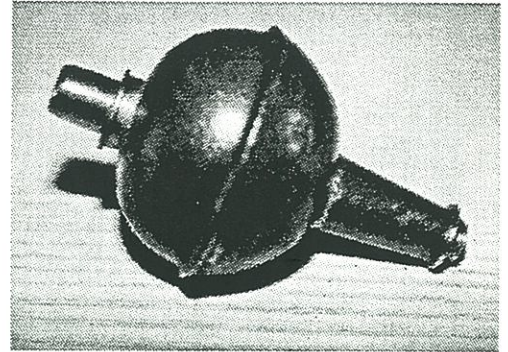
The Wilkes-Barre Record, May 4, 1920

# The “Peg and Ball” Lamps

of  
South Wales



by Manfred Stutzer



Some years ago I found a strange looking oil lamp in an antique shop in Abergavanny, Wales. The antique dealer was not able to explain what kind of lamp it was, though the Colliery “Big Pit” was not far away. After visiting a very good mining museum in Blaenavon, we had lunch in a nearby pub called the “Whistle Inn.”

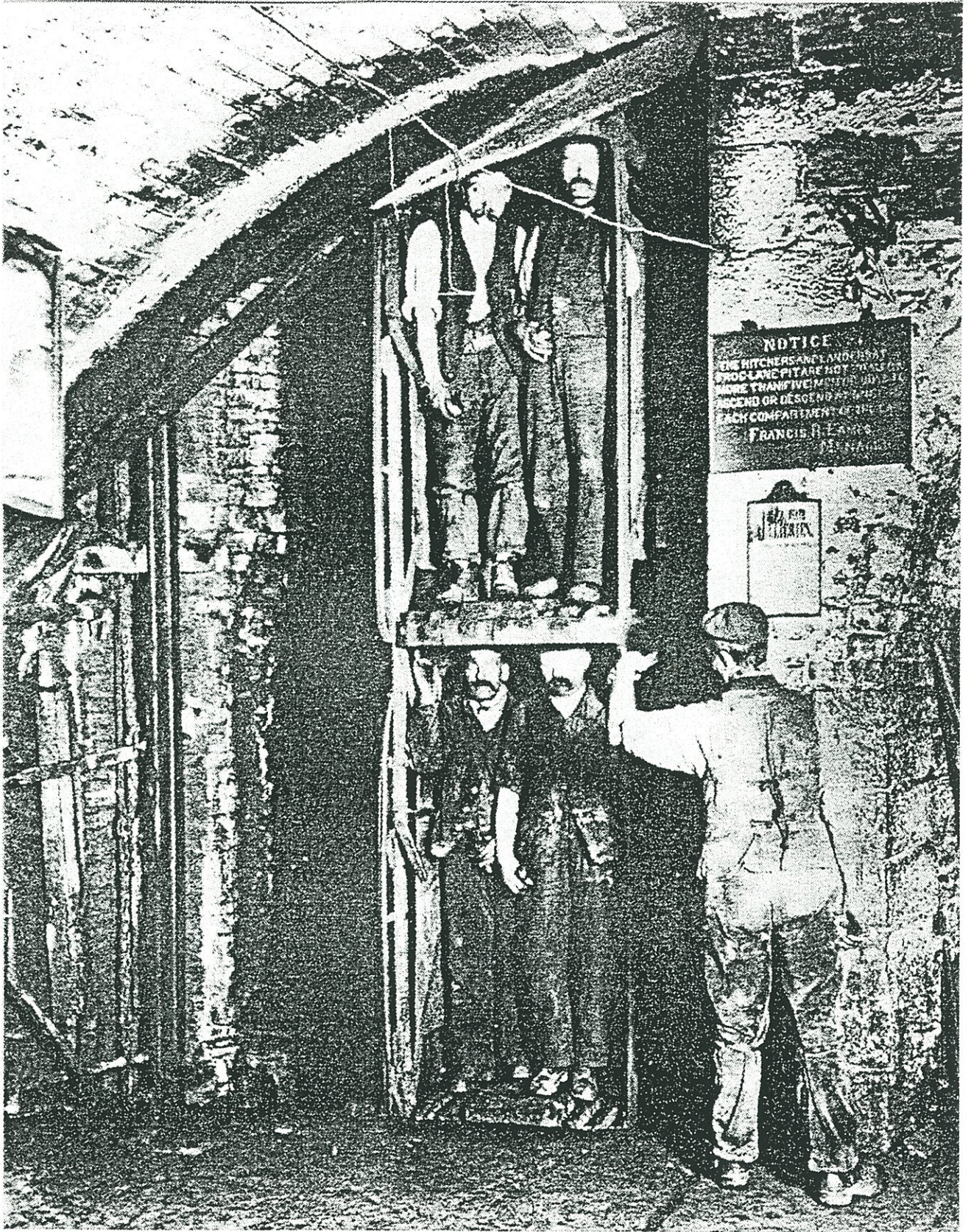
What a surprise to see many miners’ lamps hanging around, including some of the “peg and ball” oil wick cap lamps.

I was told that the “peg and ball” lamps were only used in the coal mines of South Wales, in Collieries without gas. Therefore, “peg and ball” lamps are typical only for South Wales and considered to be very rare.

I went through all of my mining books and discovered several old photographs of Welsh miners carrying “peg and ball” lamps on their caps.

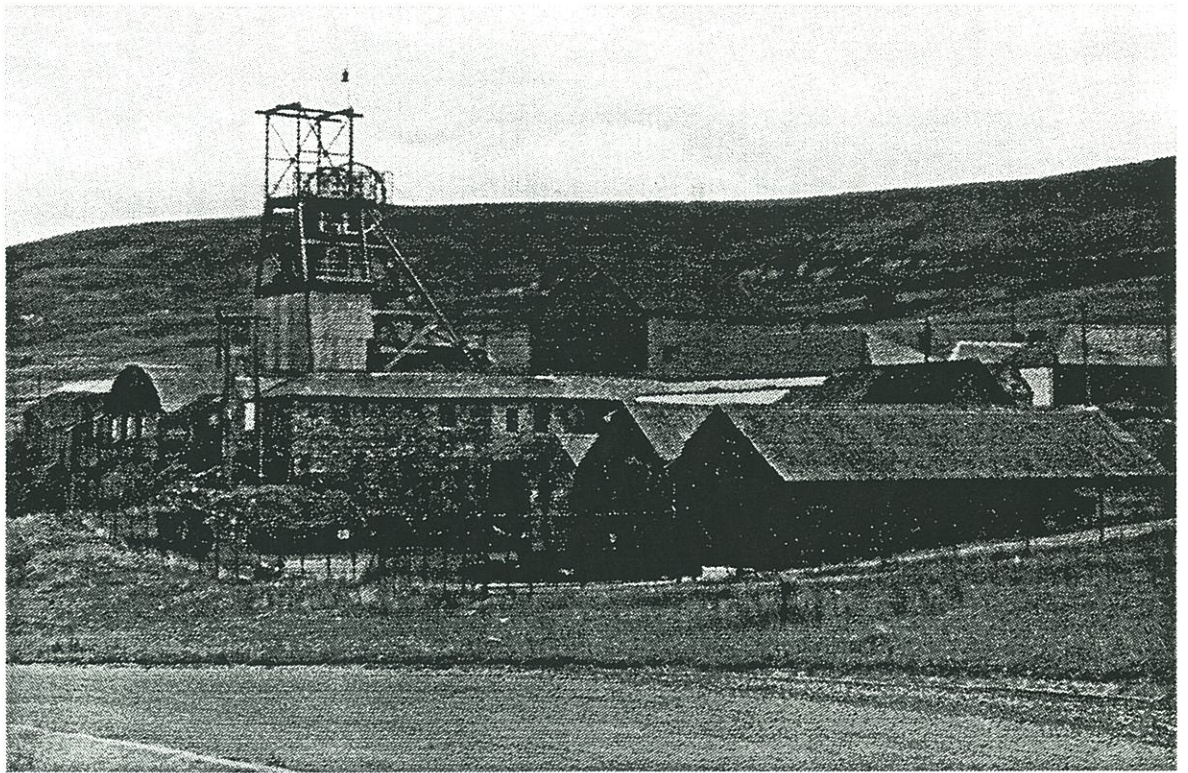


*Old print showing a woman and a young miner near Pontypool, Wales, from the book “Le Tour du Monde” by M.L Simonin, 1862.*



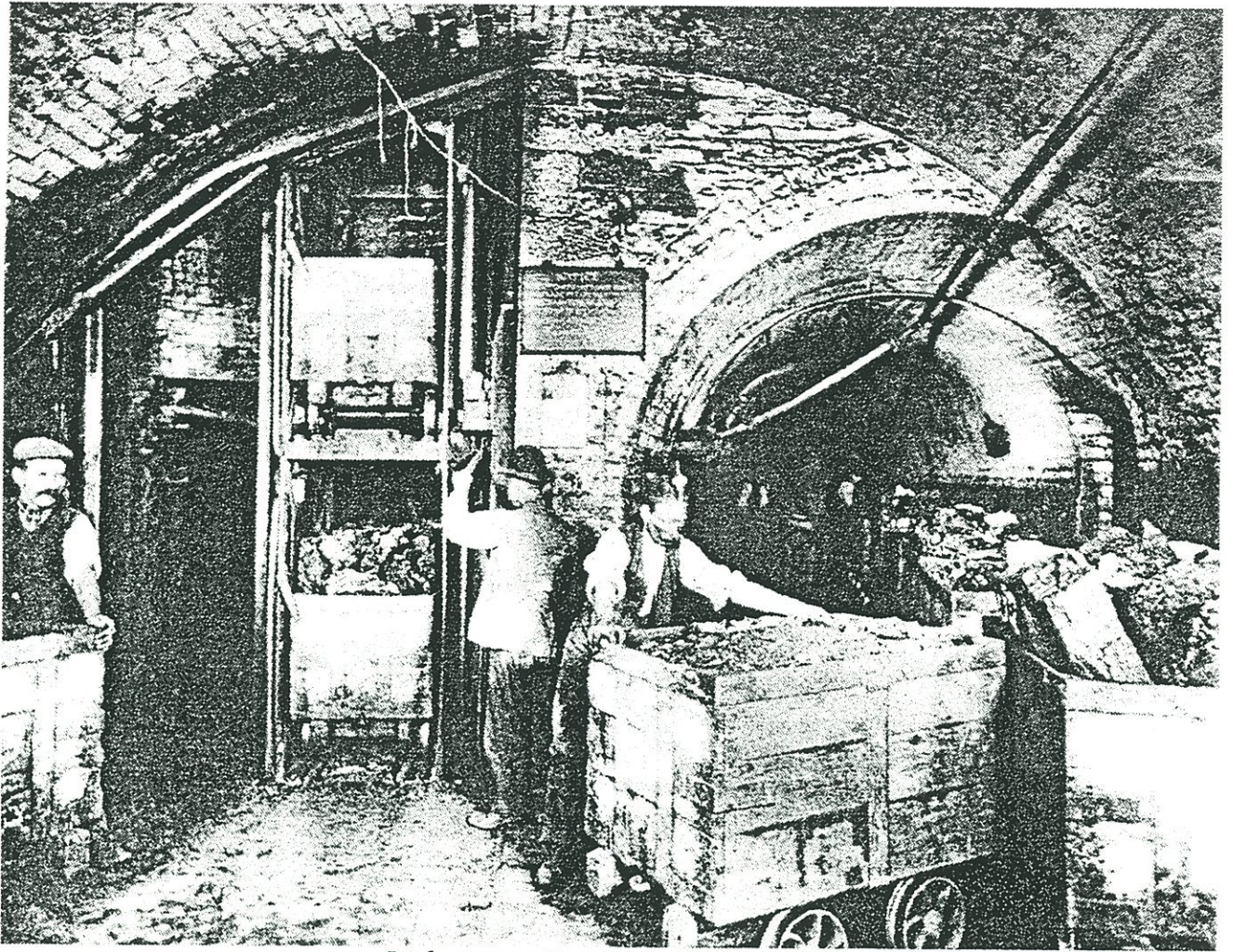
*Frog Lane Colliery, Wales, around 1905. The men in the cage carry "peg and ball" lamps in their hands.*

*Colliery "Big Pit" where the "peg and ball" lamps were popular. It was near this mine that I found such a lamp in an antique shop.*



Group of Welsh miners from Gorseinon, near Swansea, 1895. One of them has a "peg and ball" lamp on the shoulder.

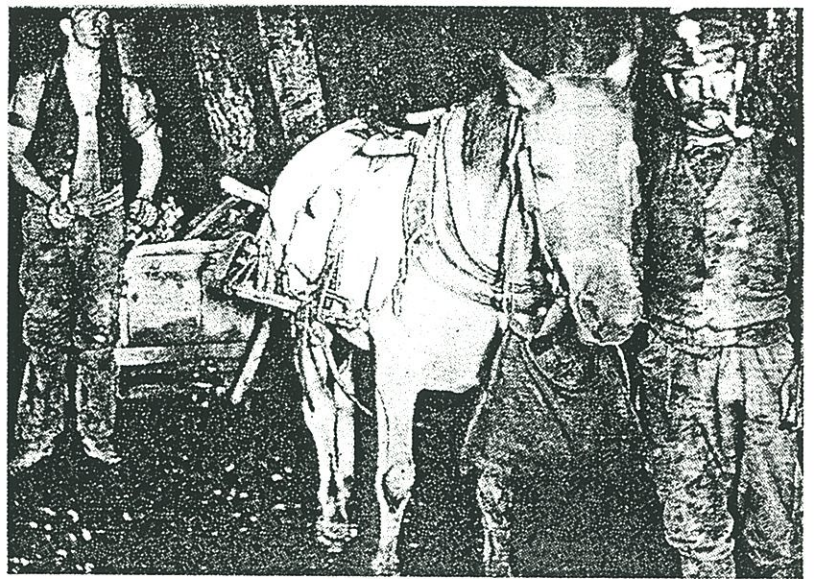




*Pit bottom at Frog Lane Colliery, 1905.*



*Two young Welsh miners carrying "peg and ball" lamps, 1903.*



*Photograph taken 1906 in a Welsh coal mine. One miner has a "peg and ball" lamp on his cap.*



*Group of Welsh miners having a lunch break, 1905, Frog Lane Colliery.*



*Group of Welsh miners from Darren Colliery, 1908 fitted with "peg and ball" lamps.*

# Avondale Mine Fire

*by Jim Van Fleet*

The Avondale Colliery was started in 1867 in the Wyoming Valley of the Pennsylvania anthracite region by the Steuben Coal Company. The common practice of the time was to sink a single shaft through which workers entered the mine and coal was sent out, and to locate the breaker building which processed the coal as close to the mouth of the shaft as possible. In fact the breaker at Avondale covered half an acre of ground directly over the entrance to the mine, and rose “60 feet above the mouth of the shaft. Four hundred and fifty thousand feet of lumber were required for the buildings and the brattice work of the shaft” (Chase, 1869).

The shaft was 237 feet deep, 10 by 22 feet wide, with a 7 foot wide airway and flue built of wooden brattice. As with most of the mines in the anthracite region, ventilation was achieved using a coal burning furnace within the mine, causing a current of hot air to rise up the flue. The furnace at Avondale was about 130 feet from the base of the shaft.

On Monday morning, September 6th 1869, the Avondale miners were lowered down the shaft, and the furnace was started with a wood fire as 107 men went to their working faces. They were followed by Palmer Steele, the stable boss, with a carload of hay for the mine’s mules. Mules were the primary means of haulage underground, and were housed in a stable near the bottom of the shaft.

Fifteen or twenty minutes later, flames were seen rising from the flue in the shaft. The surface engineer, Alexander Weir, managed to “blow the [breaker] whistle and arrange matters to prevent a boiler explosion, being obliged finally to make his exit without securing his hat” (Chase, 1869). The shaft, breaker, and clustered mine buildings burned furiously, being put out finally in the late afternoon. As soon as possible, the wreckage was cleared from the mouth of the shaft, and a derrick and hoist erected, worked by horse power. To test the air down the shaft, a small dog and a closed lantern were lowered. The result of the primitive test when the box was raised - “the dog was living, but the light in the lantern was out” (Chase, 1869). At this news, which seemed to offer some hope for the lives of the trapped miners, the spectators gathered around the wreckage of the mine became uncontrollable, and the police on the scene had to turn the water hoses on the crowd to drive them back.

While pandemonium reigned on the surface, the men below fought a losing battle with the smoke and gas generated by the fire. Many of the miners bratticed themselves in the east gangway, as far as possible from the fire in the shaft, and waited for rescue. Immediate attempts to reach the trapped men were dangerous, as the mine was full of the gases generated by the burning wood and coal, including deadly levels of hydrogen sulfide, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon dioxide, called carbonic

acid gas or black damp by the miners (Lewis, 1964). Two volunteer rescuers who descended the shaft on Monday evening were overcome by the gas and died before they could be brought to the surface.

On Tuesday September 7th fresh air was pumped into the mine, hoses were lowered and the fire underground finally put out. It was Wednesday before the air in the mine had been cleared so that rescue could be attempted. Behind the makeshift barrier in the east gangway, 67 men and boys were found dead. Compounding the tragedy, fathers were found close by their sons, some of the miners being only twelve years old. All of the 108 workers underground had been suffocated, probably within the first hours of the fire.

The Coroner's Inquiry into the Avondale fire took evidence from miners and mining engineers, doctors and mine owners. The possibility of the carload of hay taking fire was examined, but the conclusion was that the flue in the shaft had caught fire from the strong draft originating from the furnace. The witnesses were almost unanimous in stating that the miners could have saved themselves if a second shaft or means of exit had existed. The Avondale disaster led to reforms in Pennsylvania mining law, which prohibited building the breaker directly over shaft openings, and required all anthracite mines to have at least two openings (Roberts, 1984).

## REFERENCES:

"Avondale!" Scranton Weekly Republican. Avondale Special Edition. Saturday, September 11, 1869.

Special thanks to Neal Ressler for loaning me an \*original copy\* of this rare newspaper edition. The Plymouth Historical Society has reprinted this newspaper edition in its entirety. Special thanks to John Sarris for loaning me a copy of the reproduction.

Chase, H.W. "An Account of the Unparalleled Disaster at the Avondale Colliery, Luzerne County, PA, September 6th, 1869, by which One Hundred and Ten Lives Were Lost." Scranton, PA: J.B. Furman, 1869.

Lewis, Robert S. and George B. Clark. Elements of Mining. Third Edition. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964.

Roberts, Ellis W. The Breaker Whistle Blows: Mining Disasters and Labor Leaders in the Anthracite Region. Scranton, PA: Anthracite Museum Press, 1984.

# International Miners' Lamp Collectors Meeting

Wilnsdorf, Germany

*Manfred Stutzer*

Wilnsdorf is a small village in "Siegerland," a formerly famous area for metal mines, predominantly iron ore. Nowadays, all the mines are closed, and cheaper, higher concentrated iron ore comes from other countries.

Heinz Zander and Henner Schardt, the organizers of the show, have made every effort to guarantee a successful meeting. Many collectors and dealers were already assembling their stands on Friday, and all were involved in "first buys", sales and trades. It is no overestimate to say that more than 1,000 lamps were available.

On Saturday at 10:00 am, the doors were opened for all visitors. All day it was very busy, with local newspapers and even a local radio station doing interviews. Several hundred visitors found their way to Wilnsdorf to see the show.

No really rare American carbide cap lamps or candlesticks were seen, but many high quality European miners' lamps changed owners. Examples included:

**Frog lamps** (including a Reusch-Frog)

**Oil wick cap and hand lamps**

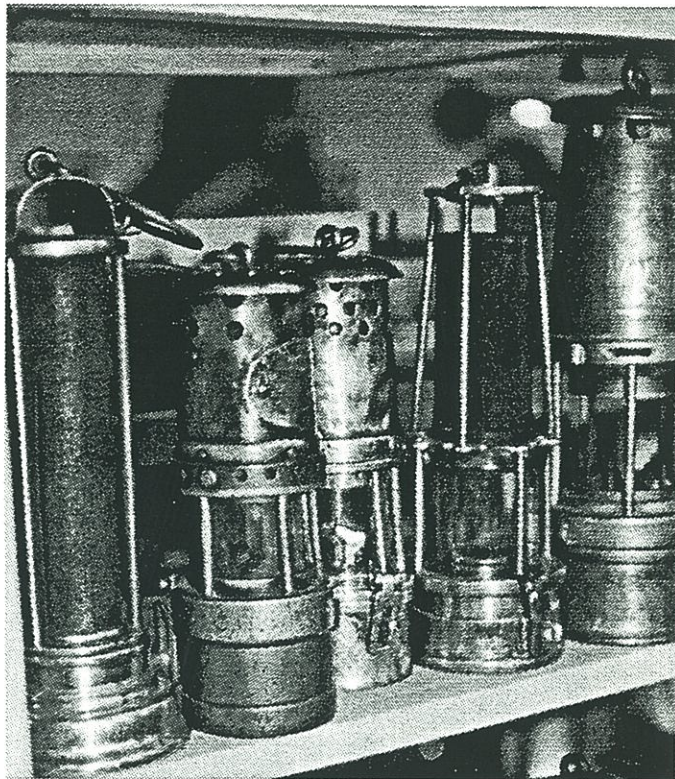
**Carbide hand lamps**

**Carbide cap lamps** made by Hess, and Friemann & Wolf  
**Safety lamps** made by Friemann & Wolf, Seippel, Koch, Arras, Bainbridge, Cossett-Dubrulle, Naylor, Patterson, Thomas & Williams, Teale, Davis/Derby, Koehler, Wolf/USA, and others.

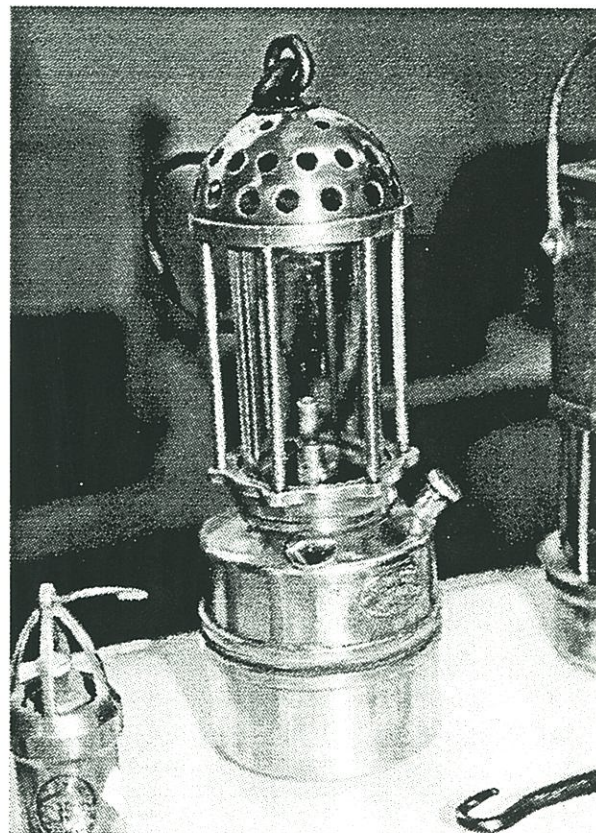
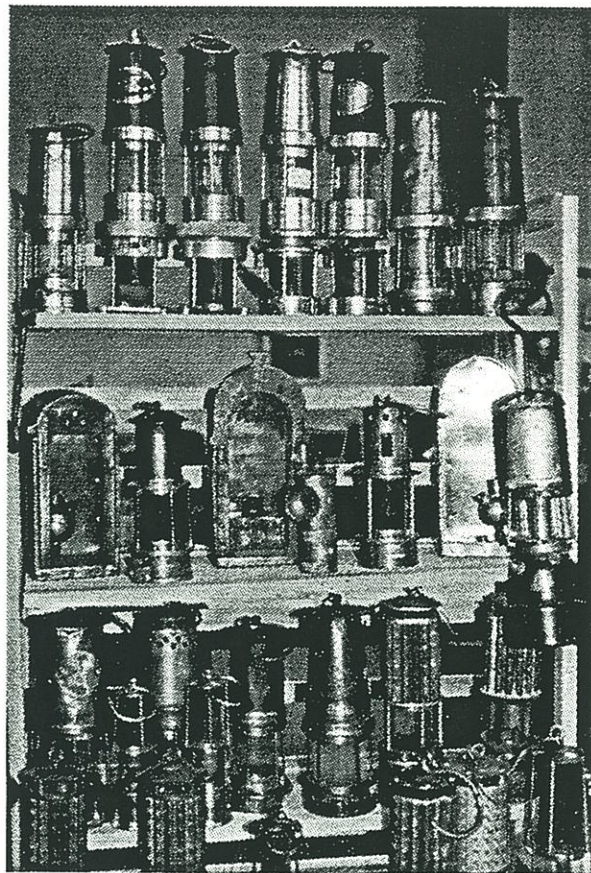
**Gas-Testing Lamps** including Chesneau, Pieler, Ashworth-Hepplewhite-Gray, Spiralarms, Ringrose, and others.



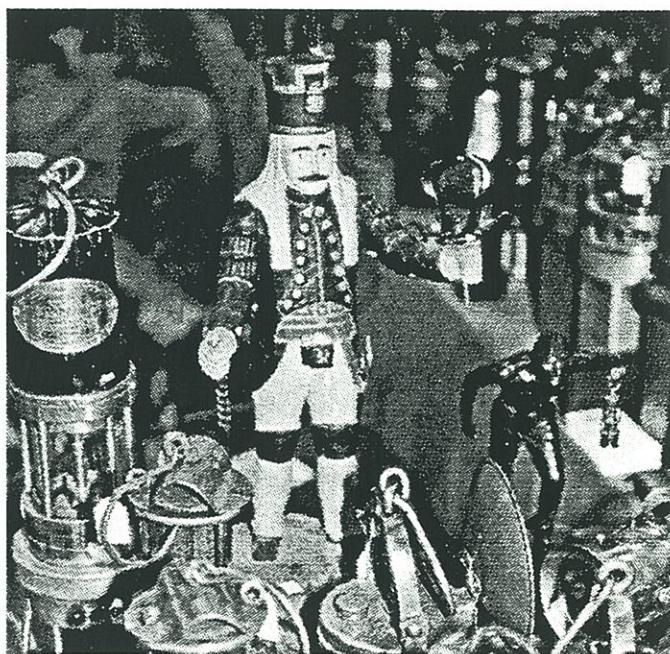
There was a small exhibition in three cabinets, displaying oil wick cap and hand lamps from all countries, and the annual volume of Grubenlampen Info was issued, a 113 page book with many pictures of open oil lamps other than frog lamps.



Two Baby safety lamps. Left: "Midget" E. Thomas & Williams/Aberdare. Right: Davis/Derby "Dwarf".



Arras carbide hand lamp in brass, a so-called "Carmaux"-lamp.



Old wooden miner's statue from Saxony, pre-1900.



The author was lucky enough to acquire two nice mining pieces from Norway, pictured here for the readers of Eureka!  
The cap tin (below, right) is marked:

**Fenghetter - Norsk Sprengstoffindustri - Alfred Nobel - Nitroglycerin Compagniet - Oslo - 100 No.8**

with the warning **FORSIKTIG!** repeated four times around the central logo, the brand name "STAR" in the bottom corners, and a six-pointed star in the upper corners of the tin.

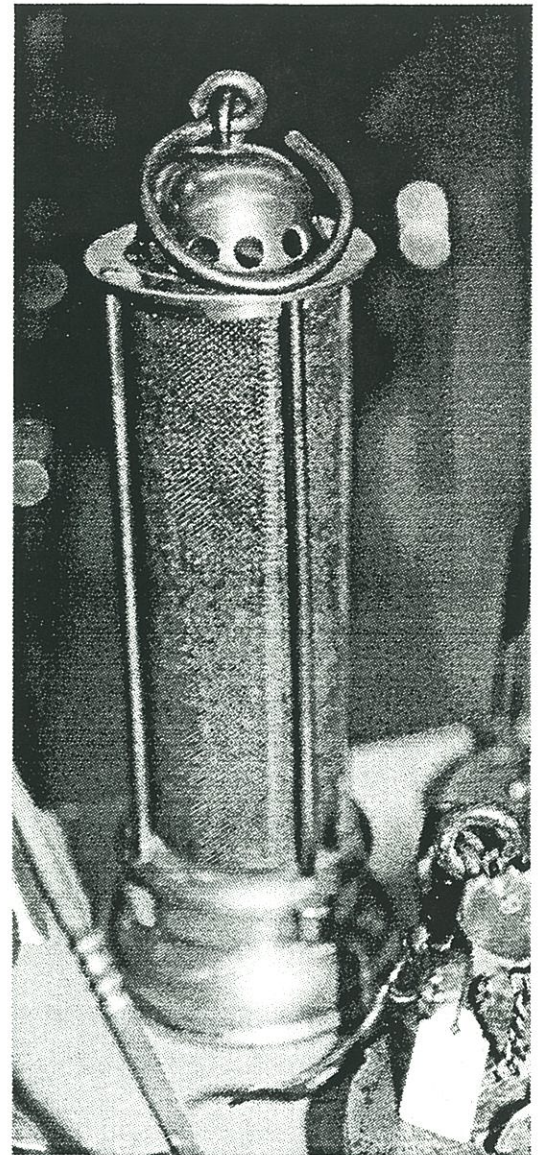
The wooden dynamite box (above) is marked:

**Nitroglycerin - Compagniet - Oslo - Alfred Nobel - Fabrik-Mærke**

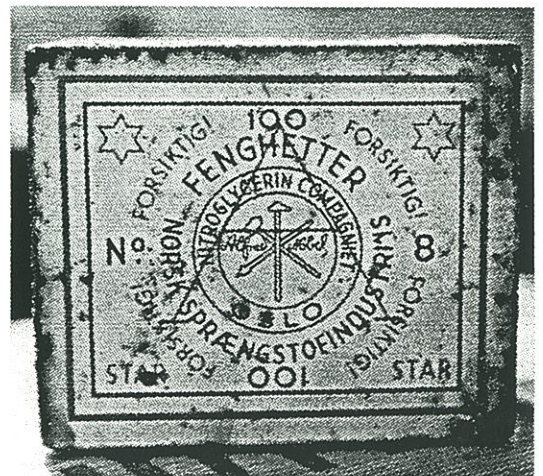
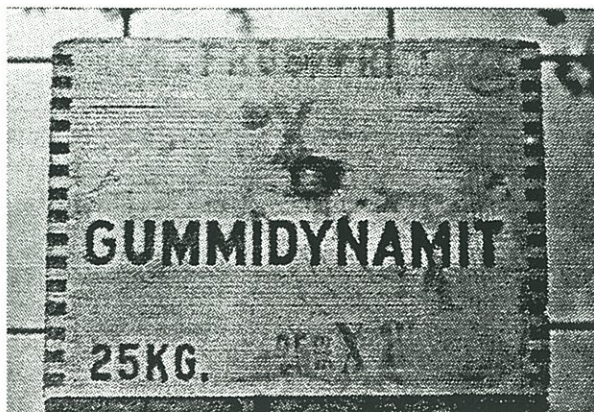
on the side panel. One end panel is marked:

**FROSTFRI - X - GUMMIDYNAMIT - 25 KG.**

For readers of *Eureka!* who are interested in finds like these, the next International Show has already been set for June 7, 1997.



*Mills/Newcastle-on-Tyne Stephenson lamp.*



# A Patented English Clanny Lamp

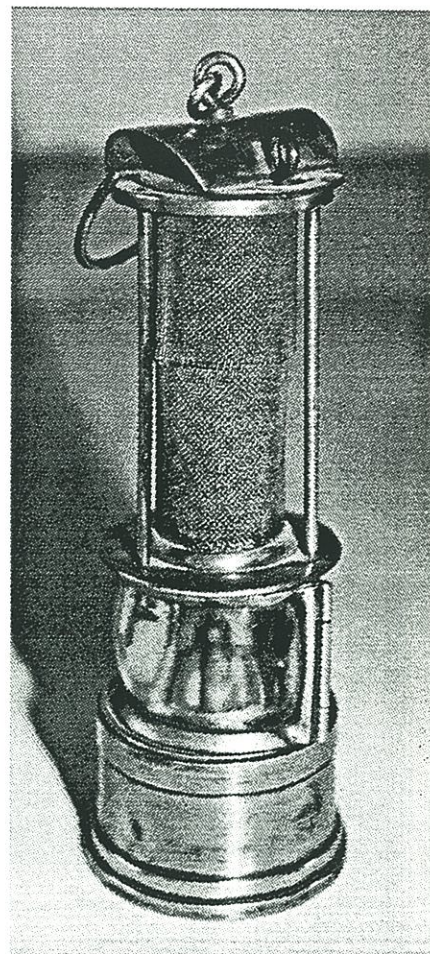
by Manfred Stutzer

Recently, while on a visit to England and the huge antique fair near Newark-on-Trent, I found a clanny safety lamp I have never seen before. This lamp has three remarkable differences from ordinary clanny lamps:

1. It is fitted with a thick "bulls-eye" glass lens on one side.
2. On the reverse is a maker's sign, with the embossed letters YATES 1871 PATENT.
3. It has a locking device similar to the Cosset-Dubrulle oil safety lamps from France.

This locking device is the subject of the lamp patent. I received a copy of the patent letter dated October 9th, 1871. The patent number is 2677, and was given to William Yates, of Upper Bedford Place, in the County of Middlesex, for the invention of "Improvements in Miners' Lamps."

I consider this lamp to be one of my favourite flame safety lamps!







A.D. 1871, 9th OCTOBER. N° 2677.

### Miners' Lamps.

LETTERS PATENT to William Yates, of Upper Bedford Place, in the County of Middlesex, for the Invention of "IMPROVEMENTS IN MINERS' LAMPS"

Sealed the 9th April 1872, and dated the 9th October 1871.

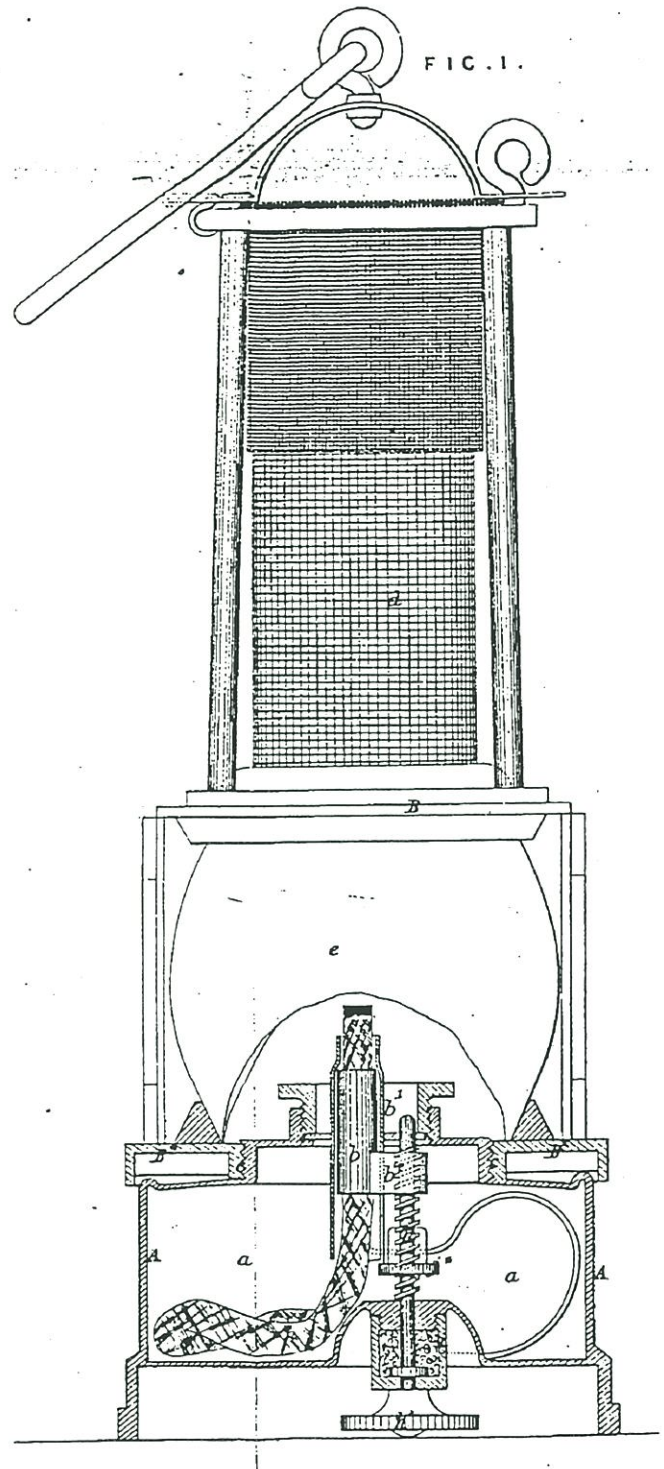
PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION left by the said William Yates at the Office of the Commissioners of Patents, with his Petition, on the 9th October 1871.

I, WILLIAM YATES, of Upper Bedford Place, in the County of Middlesex, do hereby declare the nature of the said Invention for "IMPROVEMENTS IN MINERS' LAMPS" to be as follows:—

The object of this Invention is to construct miners' lamps in such a manner that they cannot be tampered with or opened by the miner without first extinguishing the light, thus preventing all risk of explosions in the mine from an exposure of the naked flame.

To this end I adapt to the body of the lamp a locking pin, which will prevent the lower part from being unscrewed or detached from the upper part until such pin is drawn back. This locking pin is constantly kept pressed forward by means of a spring behind it, and it is provided with an arm which bears against a shoulder or block on a screwed pin which works the wick carrier up and down. This screwed pin is provided outside the lamp with a milled head or equivalent device, v/hereby it can be turned.

The operation of these parts is as follows:—Before the bottom part of the lamp can be unscrewed and detached from the upper, the locking pin must be drawn down by unscrewing the pin connected with the wick carrier. By so doing, however, the wick will be drawn down at the same time as the locking pin, and consequently the lamp will be extinguished before the lamp can be opened.



# An Early Patent Date

*Dave Johnson*

The first patent awarded in the United States for a miner's oilwick lamp was patent number 35,264 awarded to William Seybold on May 13, 1862. However, two earlier patent dates appear on a lamp in my collection. June 2, 1857 and October 27, 1857. I have been unable to find a June 2, 1857 patent that has any tie to this lamp. The October 27, 1857 date is patent number 18,498 awarded to John K. Chase of New York, NY for an improved metallic screw cap for jars. The patent reads: "this improvement consists in forming a thin elastic screw cap out of a solid piece of sheet metal by spinning up the same out of a single plate, without casting, chasing or swaging, by which a cap is obtained without joint, seam, or flaw, for covering glass, metal or earthen cans or jars, the elasticity of the screw serving to fit the unequal threads thereon, and the seamless cap insuring tight joints".

This is not the only oilwick to have a patent date that does not relate to the lamp itself. The "Winfield" lamp having patent dates of March 30, 1858, extended to March 30, 1872 assigned to the California Fruit Jar Co. is another. The true Winfield patent dates are May 3, 1871 and May 7, 1872. These patents are for a lamp with a screw lid, while the patent dates on the cap are for the cap itself. The pictured brass and copper lamp measures 2 1/16" tall, the font is 1 1/8" in diameter, and the spout is 2 1/8" long, making this a very small oilwick lamp. The hook, cap, threads and shoulder are brass while the font and spout are copper.



# Union Carbide Advertising Brochure

*Todd Town*

The illustration at right is actually a brochure in the shape of a carbide can. It is bound at the left and is colored blue, grey, and red.

The advertisement, dated 1923, by the Union Carbide Sales Company, describes the eagerness of the company to sell direct to the consumers. The consumer was able to order directly from the warehouses, located in 150 cities throughout the United States. At \$5.40 per 100 lbs., or \$5.15 per 100 lbs. in lots of one ton or more.

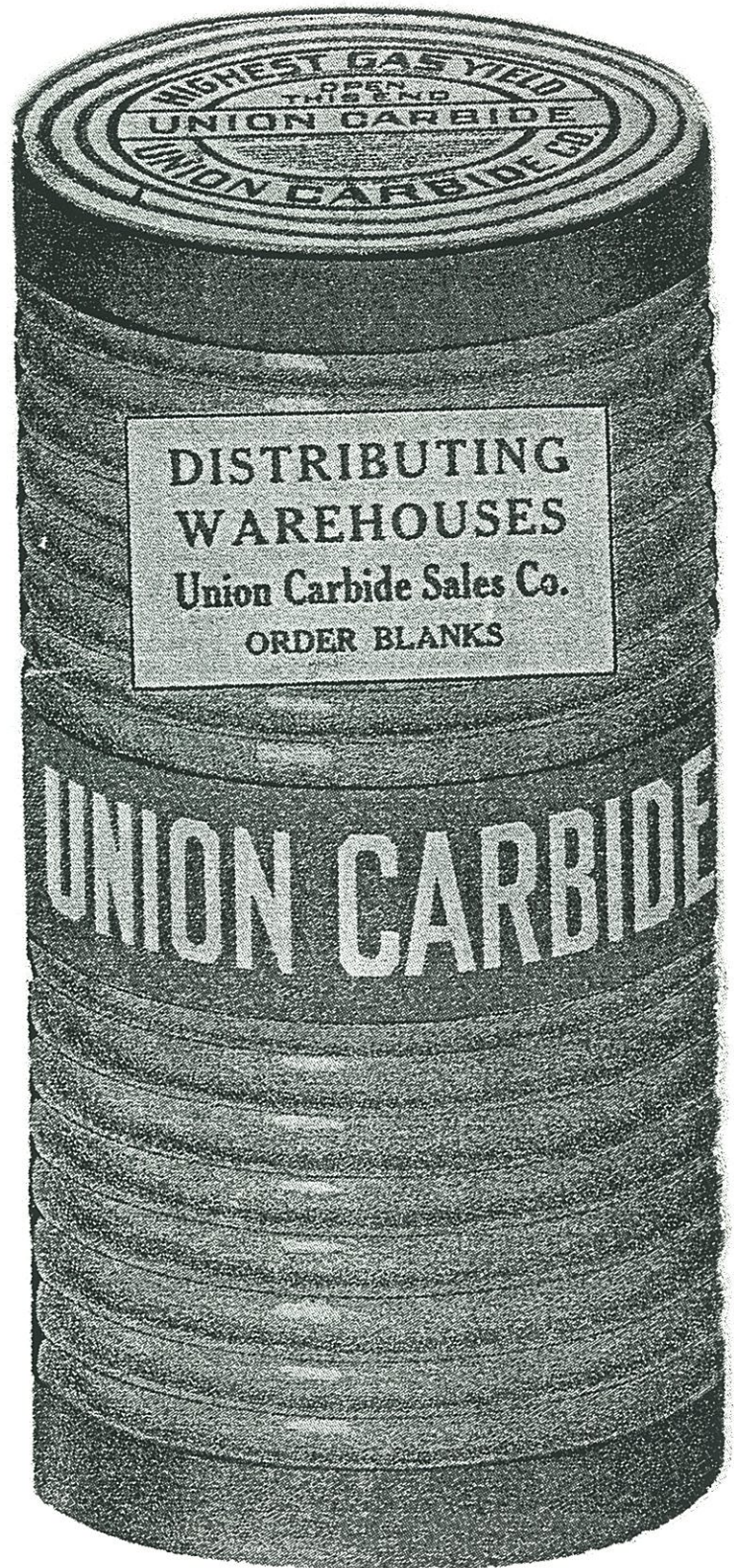
Union Carbide was manufactured in Niagra Falls, New York and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

The brochure illustrates that its product was always packed in blue and gray drums and sold in four sizes: lump, egg, nut, and quarter.

Its uses varied from lighting churches, factories and country houses, to mines, railroads, outdoor construction sites, lighthouses, automobile lights, and government posts.

From Bluefield, W. Virginia to Fresno, California, Union Carbide was out beating the bush for sales. In 1923 they also attended the International Acetylene Association Convention, where they stated that carbide was still marketable after it had turned to Calcium Oxide (spent carbide).

Frank B. O'Conner stated at this convention that carbide residue was valuable in its own right. As a soil enhancer, an insecticide, for manufacturing whitewash, interior and exterior plaster, concrete, and stucco. "The miner can at his leisure, polish the reflector of his lamp with carbide residue, take some of it home to his wife or sister to use in polishing the tinware, glassware, the bright parts of the range, and other household goods; and what is left over may be put in the hen's nest."



# The 7th Annual Eastern Mining Artifact Collector's Reunion

by Jim Van Fleet



*Len Gaska checking out Al Quamen's table. That's Mike Puhl standing behind the rear table.*

The best show east of the Mississippi continued a tradition this year, drawing a large number of collectors from all over the country to Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Picking up on similar activities held at the recent shows in Lead, South Dakota, the eastern collectors have added a mine tour and a dinner to their event.

The morning tour of the Lackawanna Coal Mine was filled to capacity, with 32 attendees riding the man-trip down the 1,600 foot slope to a coal seam over 600 feet underground. Duane Gregory, a collector who happens to work weekends providing mine tours, gave this group special treatment.

The show this year had an unusual venue; the Marvelous Muggs restaurant in Scranton, conveniently located near the hotel and the mine. Our show exhibitors filled two rooms and 25 tables with the greatest variety of mining collectibles and memorabilia I have ever seen! It seems that new categories of collectibles are springing up, and mine lamps were no longer the star of the show.

In fact, at this year's reunion, blasting cap tins seemed to hold center stage, and the item that caused the greatest stir was a new brand tin marked "B - S" for "Best Shot". Neal Ressler is the smiling new owner (see photo).

However, best of show should probably be rewarded to the collection of Coal and Iron Police badges exhibited by Dave Stutzman, Jr. and Sr. Many collectors stopped to admire these very scarce collectibles, typically found only in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania. Eureka! will run a separate article on these badges in the future.

The show ran from noon to 5 pm and was attended by easily 200 collectors, museum curators, retired miners and other local folks, and even news media personnel! This was followed by a buffet dinner. Again, the attendance was excellent, with over 40 collectors and exhibitors "digging in."

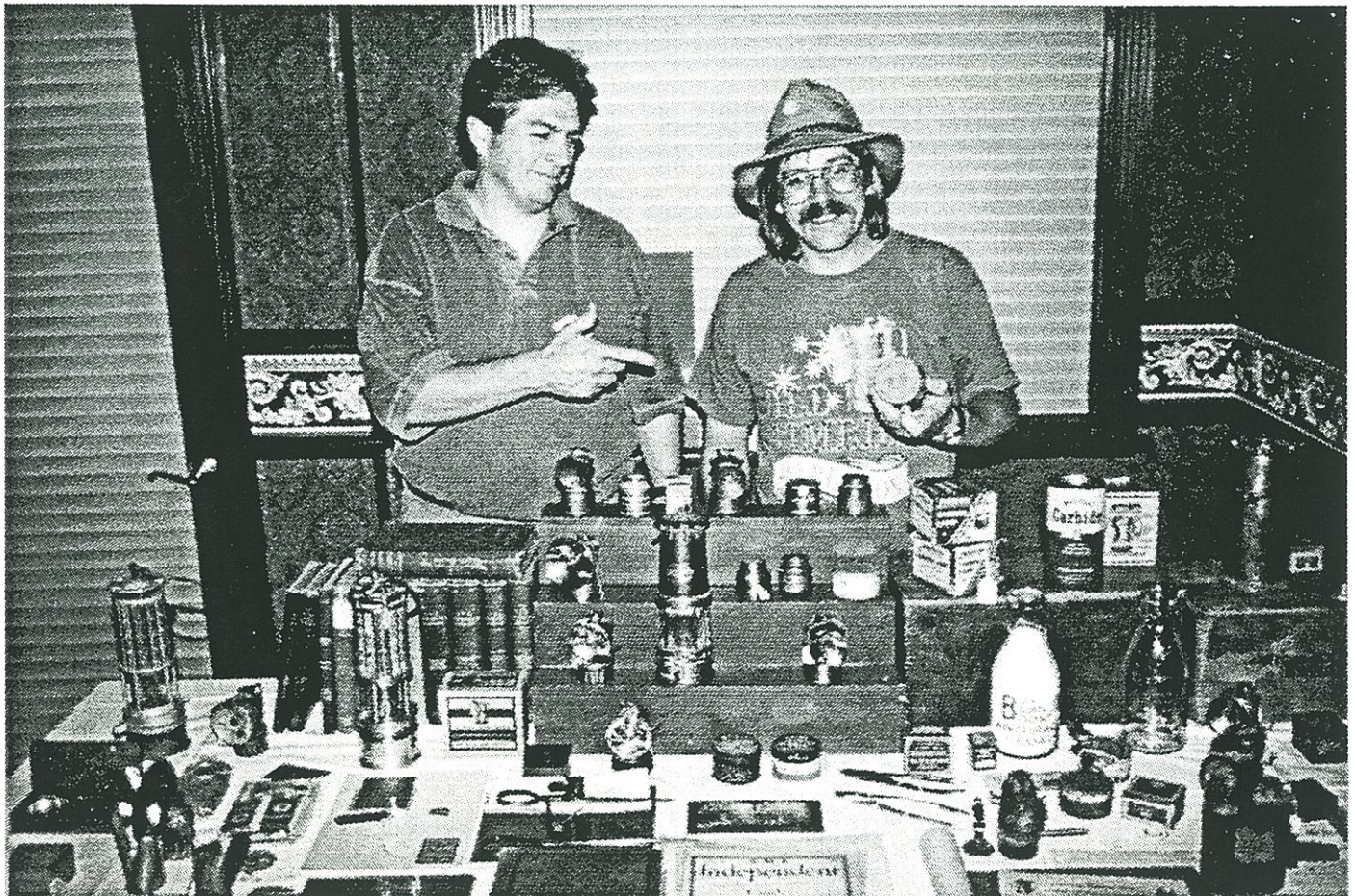
While the focus on many new sorts of collectibles was refreshing, when it came time for the auction, the traditional strength of interest in miners' carbide lamps and oil wick lamps was evident.

*(below) Nelson Ressler, taking his "Best Shot" at brother Neal's new cap tin.*

Neal Ressler, our auctioneer-in-training, handled over 130 lots, varying from mine signs and signal bells to coal company ashtrays. Among the items drawing some fierce competitive bidding were a beautiful Hansen carbide cap lamp, an F.E. Spry driver's oil wick lamp with shield, and an unmarked pocket clanny safety lamp.

These shows are run totally by volunteer collectors, and thanks need to go to Neal Ressler for auctioneering, and for working with John Podgurski to create some very nice commemorative show T-shirts (which quickly sold out). Nelson Ressler helped with planning and arranging the show space, and encouraging the author! Carl Carnien, Duane Gregory, John Sarris, Nelson Ressler and John Podgurski all played an important part in planning and preparations for the show.

Gay Bindocci, curator of the mining museum at the College of Mineral and Energy Resources, West Virginia University, has volunteered to host the eastern reunion in 1997. We can all look forward to another great event!



# The Lead, South Dakota Show

*Summarized by Bob Guthrie from his Mining-Collect Internet report.*

*Photos by Brad Ross*

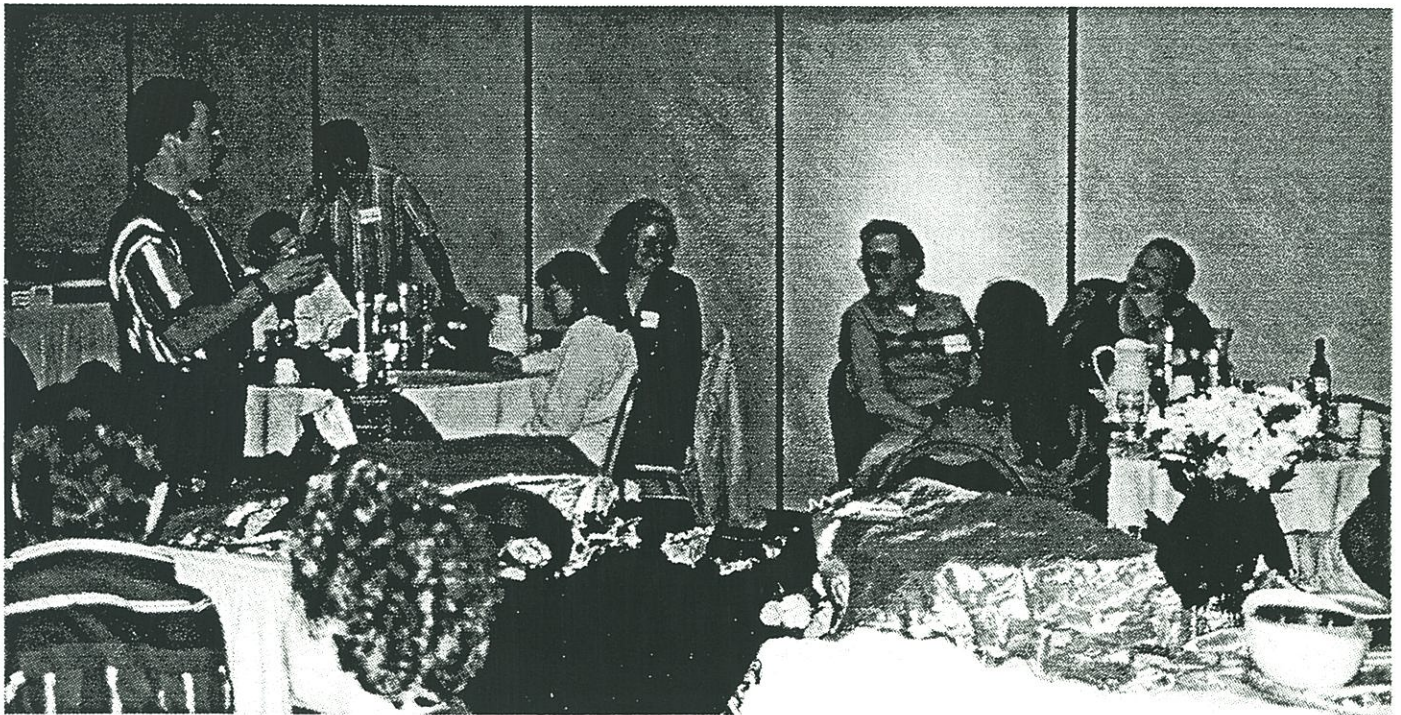
I will try to summarize some of the highlights of the Lead get together. The attendance was a bit down, but still acceptable.

I know if I try to list everyone somebody will get left out. As far as mining collect is concerned, Aqua-man, Brad and I were it. Henry Pohs, Leo Stambaugh, Steve Rush, and Skip Order from Colorado. Paul Johnson really did bring a raft of stuff but people were pretty tight with their money. Tony and Ruth Moon were there and Ruth was the highlight of the auction and made several purchases behind the hanging head of Tony. Leo did an outstanding job as the auctioneer. There were some bargains at the auction. Of course all of the SD contingent was there, but most of them are no longer in SD much.

I'm not sure how many really rare pieces were traded, but I haven't seen a Cleaves offered for sale very often or a Fielding and Peterson. A carbide safety lamp went in the auction. There were some neat signs and advertising pieces that were mainly traded. A Thompson and Walker--What Cheer Oilwick was sold. A lot of carbides were there and a lot were rare, but not too many changed hands.

Any specific question?-write me and I can try to fill in. Of course Brad Ross and Al Quamen could comment too.

Kristi Schillinger did an outstanding job of organizing but is ready for a rest after three years. **Leo, Steve and Malia Rush and I volunteered to run a show next**



*Leo Stambaugh getting Ruth Moon to bid against Tony.*

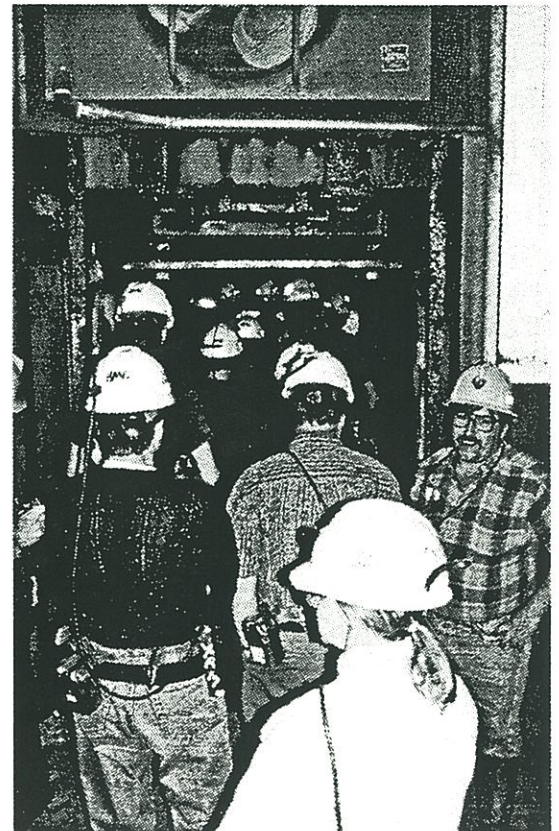


*Linda Ross showing her form in drilling being supervised by Chuck Tesch.*

year in the Denver area and alternate after that with the Black Hills. We plan to call it the Black Hills/Rocky Mtn Mining Collectors Convention. We are looking at the dates June 6-8, 1997. [Hopefully], this will provide some separation [from the eastern show in September] so maybe those who want to go to both aren't so harried. We will be having a meeting soon to organize. Henry has agreed to help and I am sure we will get assistance from others in the Denver area.

Everyone came home with some new treasures and probably (at least for me) with fewer dollars. Didn't even get too dirty on the under ground tour but I sure learned that running a Jack-leg drill is a lot harder then being a doctor.

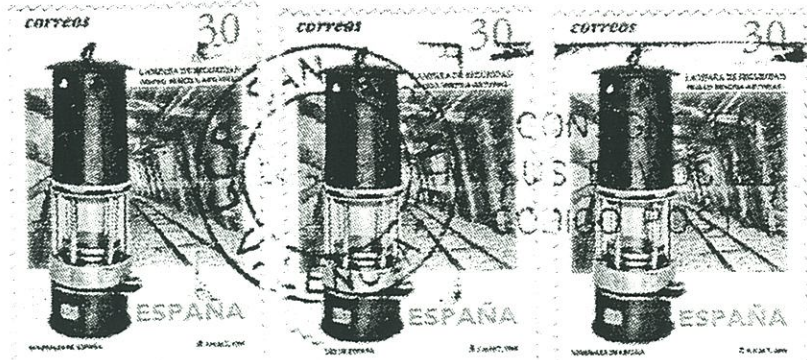
*Keith Schillinger making sure everyone gets onto the cage safely. The loading had begun.*





## STAMPS

We get lots and lots of correspondence from collectors all over the world. Every once in a while, we see some postage stamps that really stand out, like these safety lamp stamps from Spain.



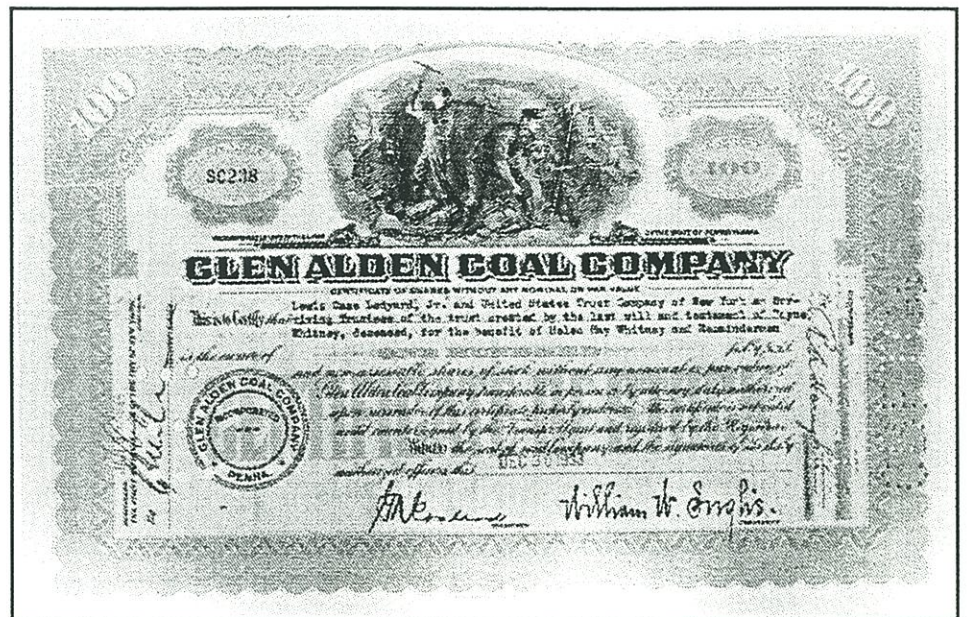
Later in 1996, Canada is offering a set of stamps under the heading "Yukon Fever." This set will include stamps celebrating the Yukon and Klondike gold rushes, with pictures of miners superimposed over the background artwork. Time to start corresponding with your Canadian friends!



## STOCKS

Subscriber and Collector Robert Kluge was kind enough to allow us to photograph a large number of mining stocks from his collection. We haven't gotten around to writing an article on these, but we can at least show you a few!

One of the nicest coal mining stocks from Pennsylvania, at least from a visual point of view, is this stock from the Glen Alden Coal Company. The vignette includes hanging safety lamps, miners wearing oil wick lamps on cloth caps, and working with hand drill and pick. The stock itself was issued in 1933, but shows a fine appreciation for historical mining apparatus.





POEMS

Collector H. Mason Coggin may have found a solution to the drought of good mining items; he is collecting "miners' poems" such as the one shown here, for eventual publication! See his advertisement, and help him out if you can.

POWDER

This page from the July 1900 issue of Mines and Minerals shows how fierce the competition was in the eastern "mining and blasting" market. Companies from New York, Ohio, Delaware, and of course Pennsylvania offered "All Grades of Mining Powders" and dynamites.

Note that the Moosic Powder Co. of Scranton, PA offered not only their own powder "made at the Moosic and Rushdale Works" but also "A full assortment of the various brands of the Laflin & Rand Powder Co." . . . and Repauno Chemical Co.'s High Explosives." Does anyone own a wooden box for the Oliver Powder Co.'s "Meteor Dynamite"?

July, 1900. **MINES AND MINERALS.** 57

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A Mule  
In the Mine**

My Sweetheart's a mule in the mine  
 I drive her all day without lines  
 On the dash board I sit,  
 And tobacco I spit  
 All over my sweethearts behind.

I laid off two shifts at the mine  
 And thought that they'd give me my time  
 But the foreman said, "No,"  
 "That damn mule she won't go,  
 A Skinner like youse hard to find".

When a stranger walks into her stall  
 He's in for a helluva brawl  
 She kicks with a sock  
 And won't haul any rock  
 As for work, she won't do it at all.

For me she can do nothing wrong  
 Pulling ten loaded cars right along  
 The boss has a grin  
 As the tally rolls in  
 For rock in the box is his song.

Females are all quite the same  
 If you want to get next to a dame  
 A kind word or two  
 Or some sugar will do  
 It's all just a part of the game.

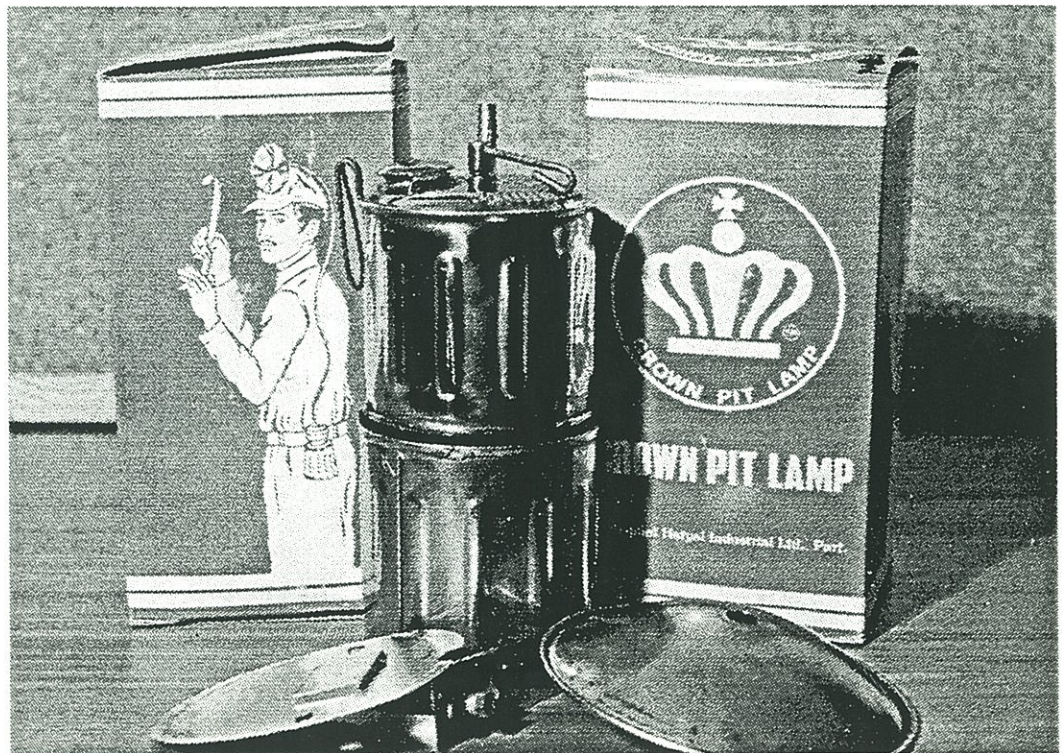
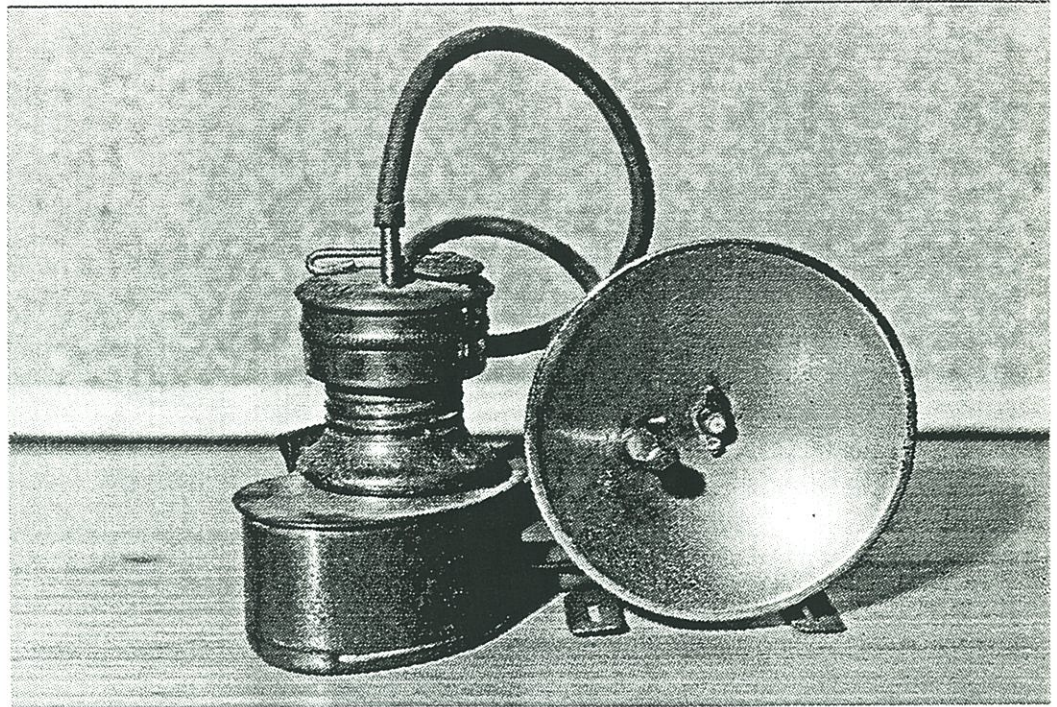
Anon.

## FROM DOWN UNDER

Stephen McCabe, our most reliable Australian correspondent, sends photographs (courtesy of Chris Gregory) which shed light on some previous "BITS".

Back in issue #14, page 5, Bob Schroth featured an enameled tin box displaying a Butterfly Belt Generator lamp model 624. Stephen sends this photo of the lamp itself, and notes that he has seen only one other example.

The other photo relates to a "BIT" from Eureka! #8, page 37, regarding Ken Rupp's mystery belt generator lamp. Recently a friend of Stephen's traveled to Thailand, and purchased these lamps for a few dollars. They are still being manufactured and used for mining, and they are so labeled. One model is all-brass, the other stainless steel. Note the crude construction, with a side seam on the base. It is known as the Crown Pit Lamp, and the box displays a miner using it.





# TRADES & SALES



## RATES

All classified ads up to 75 words are free to subscribers. For subscribers, quarter-page ads are \$25, half-page \$50, and full-page ads \$95. The fee for nonsubscribers is \$15 for ads up to 75 words. For larger ads, add \$25 to fee for subscribers. Fee includes custom computer layout.

**Higher prices will not be published. Contact seller for prices if not listed.**

**No reproductions of any type will be knowingly advertised unless so stated.**

**No member of the staff will act upon an advertisement in EUREKA! prior to its mailing.**

## CONDITIONS

Ads must be submitted for each issue in which they will appear. Send all ads to Jim Van Fleet prior to Dec 10, Mar 10, Jun 10, and Sep 10 for publication in the following issue. Ads are accepted on a space available, first-come first-served basis. We reserve the right to refuse any ad. Eureka! assumes no responsibility or liability for the contents of ads; however, every effort will be made to assure a high standard of honesty in advertising.

If any advertiser is contacted about an item in their ad prior to the publication being mailed, they are asked to report the incident to the Managing Editor. Remember that it is to the advertiser's benefit to wait until Eureka! is in the hands of all subscribers before disposing of a trade or sale item. Please keep in mind that a trade or sale conducted through the mail is not complete until both parties are satisfied!

**Trades Welcome for Western Stock Certificates:** And related mining paper. Have many old certificates from boom and /or bust locations to trade. Want similar material related to the Pacific northwest, Alaska, and British Columbia. Dale McNee, P.O. Box 926, Pendleton, OR 97801, (541) 276-1384.

**Wanted:** Atlas, DuPont, Hercules blaster's handbooks. Ronald Champeau, 100 Indian Run Rd. Bellingham, Mass. 02019 (508) 883-9026.

**Buy or Trade:** A soft miner's cap (for carbide lamp). I had one, but it was stolen in a exhibit. I have Spanish carbides and electric safety lamps for trade.

Write to: J.Manuel Sanchis  
C/Jesus 23  
46007 VALENCIA  
SPAIN

**Miners Poems Wanted:** I am planning a book of mining poetry for the western US from about 1850 to 1950's. Because of its limited appeal, I expect to self publish in limited numbers. Send copy to H. Mason Coggin, Director, Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources, 1502 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007 or call (602) 255-3795.

**Books for Sale:** History of the American Zinc Company by Norris. Hardcover \$11.00 Jeep Trails to Colorado Ghost Towns by Brown \$ 12.95 One Man's Gold Rush; A Klondike Album by Murray Morgan. (Reprint) \$26.95 Colorado Ghost Towns: Past and Present by Brown \$16.95 Fire In The Hole: The Untold Story of Hardrock Miners by Dolph \$30.00 Postpaid in the U.S. Send \$1.00 for complete book catalog. Robert Fox 1235 N. Westfield Street Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

**Wanted:** Mint condition ore cars, esp. "unfired" potty car. Will trade candlesticks or pay cash. Have very nice brass and steel candlestick. Would also trade for nice cap lamp. Dave Thorpe, (602) 548-1959.

**Cap Lamps for Sale or Trade:** Buddy, Wolf, others. Need reflector for Springfield cap lamp, or complete lamp. Interested in acquiring Arizona Special hand lamp. Todd Town 520-425-0423.

**Oil Wicks Wanted:** Highest prices paid for rare oil wick lamps. If you have an unusual wick lamp and need information, I have a complete list of patents, and will gladly answer your questions. Dave Johnson 502-327-7559.

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