

THE MINING REVIEW

COLLECTORS

ISSUE NUMBER 7

AUGUST 1998



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Original 16:1 Mine
Frisco, Colorado 1998
Jackson Hand Power Rock Drill
Cap Crimper Patent Book Review

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Argonaut Mine Fire
Highgrader Candlestick
South Park Mining Stories
Varney Patented Powder Spoon

\$1,000 REWARD

FOR

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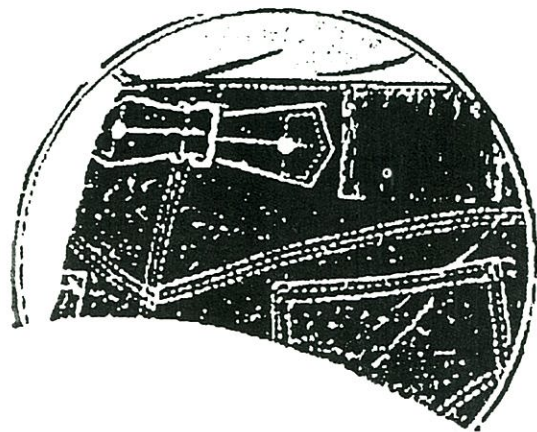
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Copy of the cover from The Jackson Hand Power Rock Drill. Catalog No. 11, 1899.

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A Beer Reviewed Journal

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REVIEW OF MINING



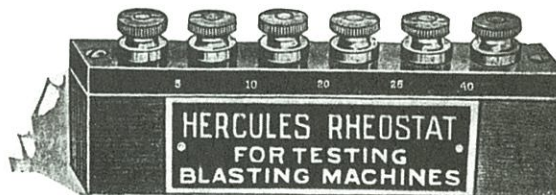
EDITORIAL

It has been an exciting and interesting summer, the show at Frisco was a great success. Steve and Malia Rush along with Leo Stambaugh and Robert Guthrie organized a great meeting and it was almost too well attended. Space was at a premium and the auction almost exceeded the limits of the room. The collecting community is outgrowing its humble beginnings and continues to get healthier every year.

The overall mood at the gathering was upbeat and conciliatory. The appearance of Ted Bobrink raised some eyebrows but I think most people felt that it was time to welcome back one of the more knowledgeable collectors into the mainstream. I'm sure there are unresolved personal issues here but I was glad to see the collecting community get back to collecting stuff instead of talking trash. Ted has a web site on the Internet which can be accessed at the following address: <www.miningantiques.com>, check it out or give him hell, whatever you like.

The usual talk about mine closures by the government is going

around and it astounds me the amount of money that may be spent on a 'non-problem'. My only advice is to get involved politically, or at least make some money from it, appoint yourself an abandoned mine expert, become a consultant and have the government pay you to check them out. I think getting rid of Babbitt would be the best solution and hopefully that will be resolved soon.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Eastern Mining Artifact Collector's Reunion. August 28-29. Morgantown, WV. See registration form on page 38.

Western Mining Artifact Collector Get Together. September 11, 12. Errol Christman's, Cedar Ridge, Calif. For information contact Errol at 916-273-3268.

THE JACKSON HAND POWER ROCK DRILL

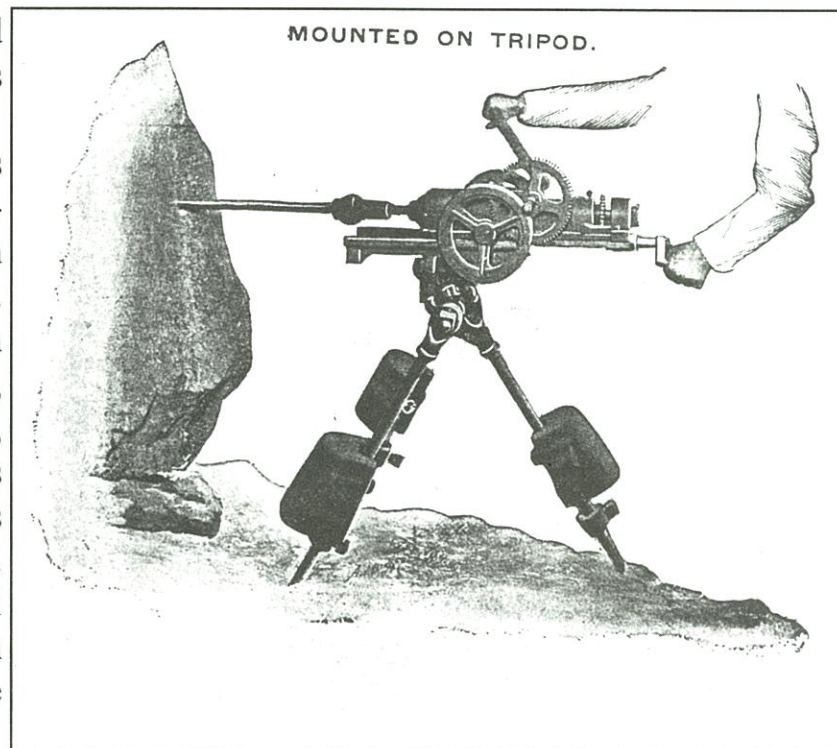
By Leo Stambaugh

The Jackson Hand Power Rock Drill was patented on May 17, 1898 and improvements were patented less than one year later on March 7, 1899. The drill was manufactured as a mining drill powered by a hand crank that turned a cam which released a tightened spring ram to hammer the drill point. The cam activated $3 \frac{1}{4}$ times per crank revolution and a tension screw regulated the force of power from fifty to five hundred pounds per strike. The catalog made claims of two hundred fifty to five hundred strikes per minute, but even the minimum two hundred fifty would need seventy seven cranks per minute.

The drill was marketed as a prospectors drill, small enough for one man to operate. It could be mounted on a column, a crossbar, quarry bar or tripod, only the column was standard, the others were special orders. The price of the drill was \$125.00, which was supposed to be

cheap because one miner could do the work of two to four hand drillers. With a drill weight of one hundred seventy five pounds, the single miner who could set it up would be a real sight to behold.

The drill sold reasonably well in the Colorado area, it was manufactured in both Denver and New York City. H. D. Crippen was the President and General Manager in Colorado. The Eastern states and foreign countries were represented in New York by licensee and manufacturer Thornton N. Motley (and crew).



There are numerous examples around the Colorado area, some in private collections, one on display in a front yard in Idaho Springs, one at the Lebanon Mine State Historic site in Georgetown, and a partial one in the Powder Cache Museum in

Georgetown. There are a few other makers of hand powered drills; Dixon and Jones are two makers that made known drills. Any other names or known examples would be a welcome addition to future articles on this subject.

What Practical Miners Say About "The Jackson Hand Power Drill"

Jamestown, Colo., June 23, 1898
Gentlemen: - In regard to work I have done with your Drill. I am pleased to state that in ground what I call good hard double hand, and too hard for single jack work, I did double the work with your Drill of any two men with hammer. At times we made 2½ inches per minute. The tunnel is 6¼ x 5 feet and over 70 feet have been driven with your Drill since it arrived.

Very respectfully,
G.T. Hoge

San Diego, Cal., Nov. 11, 1898
Gentlemen: - I have used two of your Hand Power Rock Drills which gave perfect satisfaction. One man can do the work of three and with much less exertion, thus making a great saving in expense. No mine can well afford to be without it.

Yours respectfully,
W.A. Ptolemy

Ward, Colo., Sept. 28, 1899
Gentlemen: - I am pleased to report the following on the Jackson Drill I have been using for the past nine months in the Colonel Dick tunnel at this place: I am drilling in very hard granite easily

three times as fast as I was with hand and hammer. Such results I acknowledge are an agreeable surprise to me as well as money making. I set up and operate the drill entirely alone, and find it easy for one man to handle.

Very turly,
A.F. Steuart

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CAP CRIMPER PATENT BOOK REVIEW

By Steve Rush

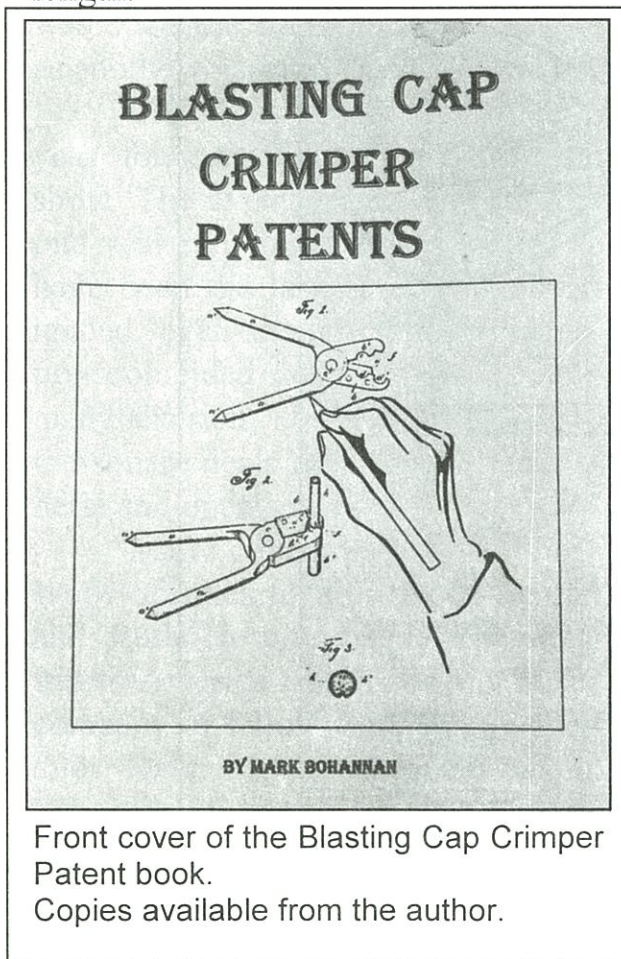
Several books specific to mining memorabilia are in the offing. I know of several, including one on mining candles, cap tins and safety fuse, and blasting powder companies. If the publishing of these books was a horse race, the Blasting Cap Crimper Patents book by Mark Bohannon is the apparent winner by at least half a length.

The text is primarily patent office specifications and illustrations for the seventy four known patents for blasting cap crimpers. Through extensive research at libraries with patent information, Mark was able to put this book together in about one year's worth of spare time and weekend work. As indicated, the patent copy quality for most crimpers was quite poor, and as such all patent text has been retyped.

In scanning the two hundred and seven pages of cap crimper information, it was fascinating to note the place names that the patent authors listed as home. These included Sparkull Independence, Colorado; Lawson, Colorado; Newport Beach, California; Yellville, Arkansas; Fort Meyers, Florida and Greasy Creek, Kentucky, among others.

The patents are listed chronologically with a very detailed drawing of the crimper followed by supporting text. Out of the seventy-four cap crimper patents, only eleven have been found. The eleven include S. Poole, Vannatter and August, Moodey, Griffin, Prince, Walker, Freund and four by Des Moineaux.

It is Mark's sincere hope that,

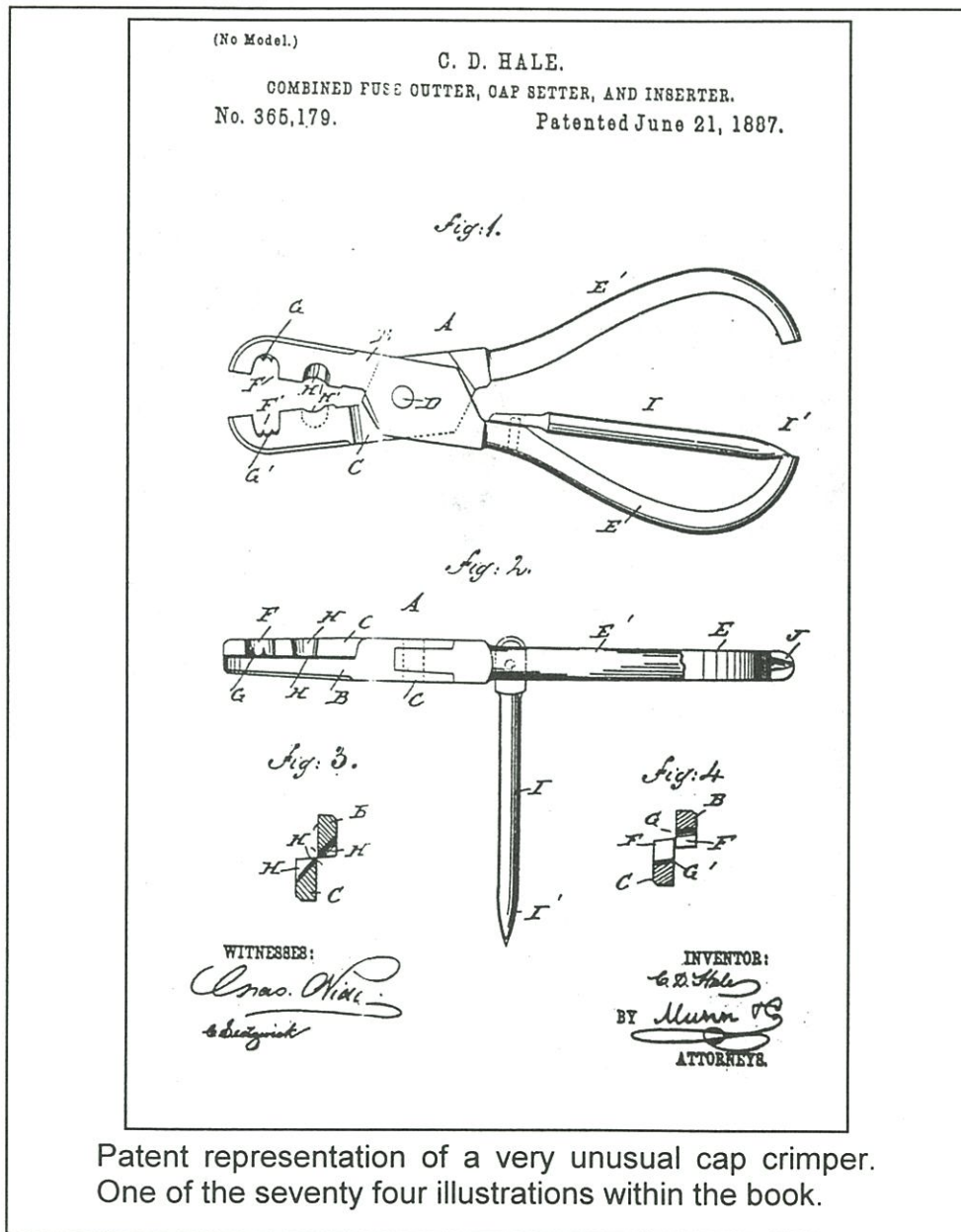


Front cover of the Blasting Cap Crimper Patent book.
Copies available from the author.

with the detail available to collectors in this book, examples of previously unknown crimpers will be discovered on our shelves.

With a purchase price of \$20.00 plus \$3.00 shipping, this book will be another valuable source of in-

formation for mining artifact collectors to utilize. Books can be ordered from Mark Bohannon by mailing a check to 22765 Itasca Road, Apple Valley, California 92308.



Patent representation of a very unusual cap crimper. One of the seventy four illustrations within the book.

FRISCO, COLORADO 1998

Mining collectors began arriving in Colorado for the Rocky Mountain/Black Hills Mining Artifact Collectors show as early as one week prior to the June 12 start date. Denver's antique row on Broadway saw several small reunions of old collector friends, who furtively eyed the cases for good stuff while trading hand shakes and "how are ya's". And the Frisco, Colorado, Holiday Inn was soon the focal point once more as another year moved on.

Christmas comes but twice a year for participants in the Frisco show. The event, staged for the second year running in Frisco, seems to have been the largest ever. Well attended, even though school graduation coincided with this weekend in many districts, there was no end to the square deals on artifacts, camaraderie and open smiles.

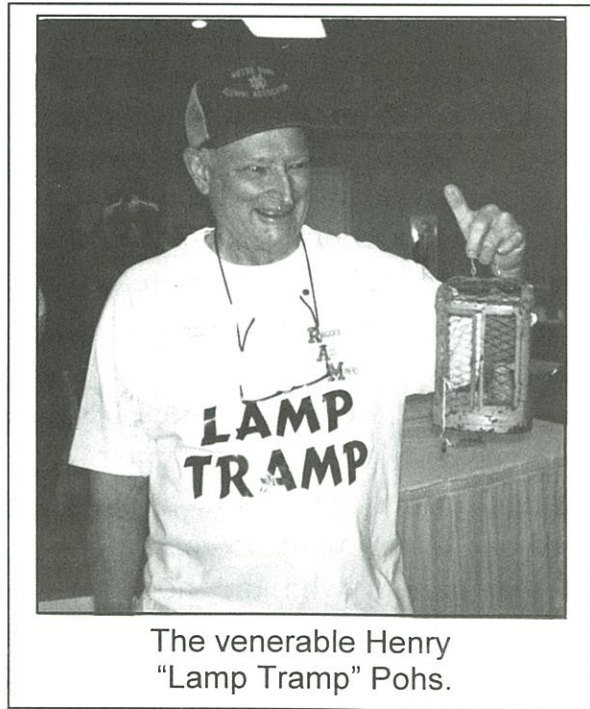
Many collectors traveled thousands of miles for this show. Werner and Ruth Horning made their first trip to America from Germany in the company of fellow Germans Siegbert and Katarina, Detlev Seel and Manfred Stutzer. Many new faces were also represented here.

Ramrodded by Malia Rush, setup of the hotel accommodations by

Bob Guthrie, and with Saturdays table sale and auction hosted by Leo Stambaugh, the organizing of allowing one hundred twenty two mining artifact collectors to arrive in one place appeared to be a great success. It's rumored that Steve Rush also assisted (comic relief, perhaps) but this is only a rumor.

Friday evening room to room sales had the likes of Bob Schroth, Larry Click, Jim Swallow and others literally giddy over the hundreds of mining artifacts and old friends to be had. Many items changed hands with prices appearing more than fair.

Saturdays table show was a



The venerable Henry
"Lamp Tramp" Pohn.



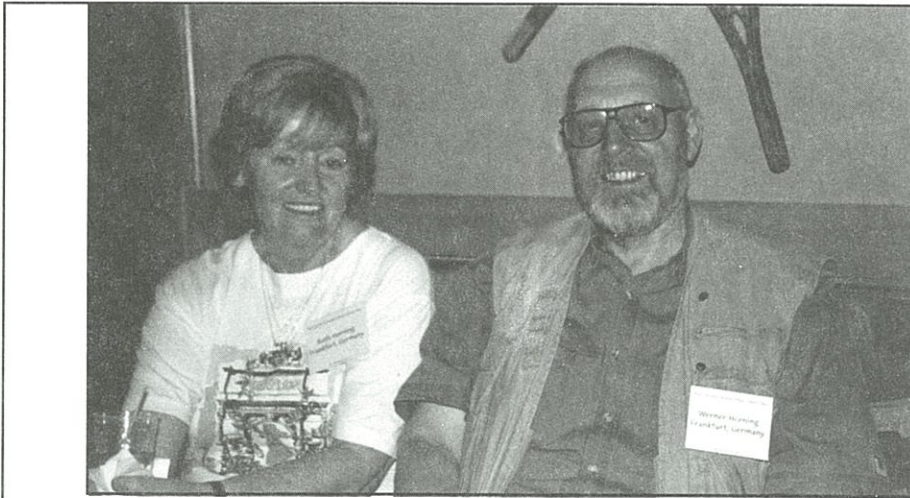
A proud Bob "Cowboy" Ross totes his bird house door prize back to his table. Brad Ross at upper left, Laura Chris and Eloise Pohns looking on.

booming success, with over fifty five tables of outstanding items offered for sale and trade. Open to participants only from eight until noon, with the general public storming in from noon to four o'clock, the low roar and occasional guffaw went on without interruption. As unusual as it sounds, several comments regarding "artifact overload" were heard along about three-thirty.

The Saturday evening festivities began with a buffet dinner, restaurant critics gave this a justified five out of ten with no reflection on the organizers who did no cooking whatsoever, and the day was culminated with a very heart warming

speech by Henry Pohns on what mining artifact collectors are really all about and an auction by Leo Stambaugh. Dan "Too Tall" Quigley, Bob Schroth, Al Winters, Chuck Tesch and Steve Rush assisted with the distribution of auction items sold.

This show will more than likely be held again in Colorado in 1999. The locale will probably remain the same, though the location may change to accommodate an ever increasing number of mining artifact collectors. This type of show, as a rule, is a success only due to the many participants. Many thanks to all the grand participants who made Frisco '98 a success.



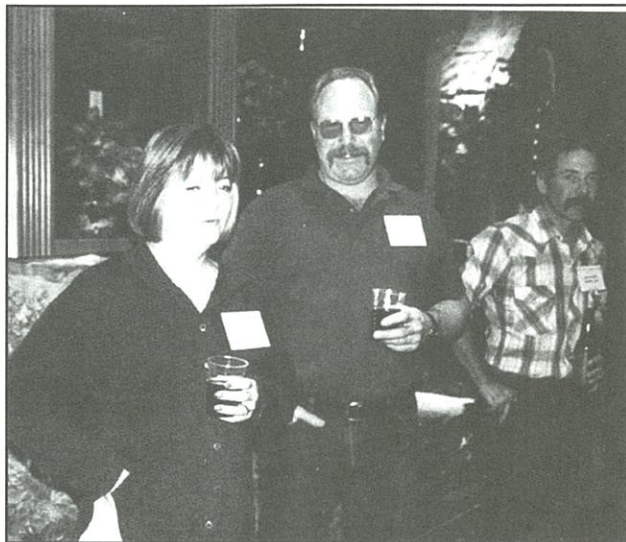
Werner and Ruth Horning, from Frankfurt, Germany came a fair distance to fraternize with the American collectors. A long time correspondent with Henry Pohn, it was their first chance to meet in person.



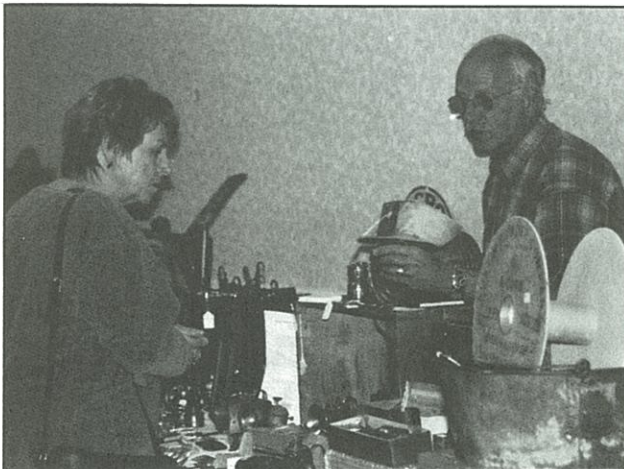
Deric English, left, and Lane Griffin share a moment of respectful silence over an old empty beer bottle.



Bill Collins standing in contemplation of one of Larry Kuester's candlesticks.



Jim and Carol Swallow are just happy to be there. Steve Rush lurking in the background.



Roger Peterson patiently explaining to Shirley Foott why this artifact is so inexpensive.

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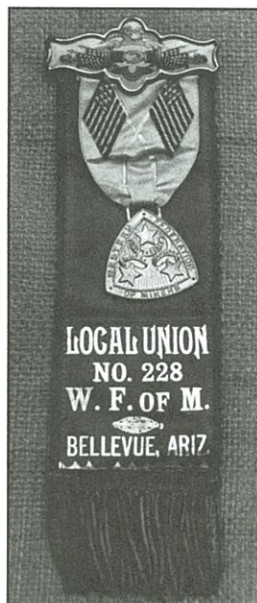
WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS' UNION RIBBONS

By Deric English, Tony Moon and Leo Stambaugh

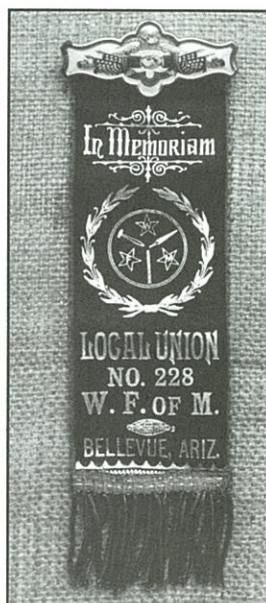
Miners' union ribbons have become an interesting aspect of artifact collecting. Like the miners' fancy candle holder, union ribbons are perhaps the most artistic and aesthetically pleasing mining artifacts that can be found. With these qualities, it is no secret that the availability of these ribbons is quite limited.

Pettibone Manufacturing Company of Cincinnati, Wm. H. Horstmann of Philadelphia and Whitehead & Hoag Company of Newark, N.J. are some of the compa-

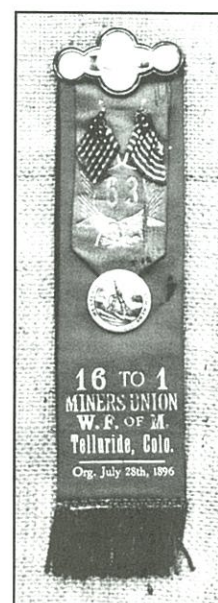
nies which manufactured miners' union ribbons around the turn of the century. Local unions would order ribbons from companies like these and then distribute them among its members. A union member would display the colorful side of the ribbon upon his chest during parades, Fourth of July festivities, Labor Day, Miners' Day, Conventions, etc. The black, mourning side of the ribbon was displayed during funeral processions and services for departed union brothers.



Parade side of badge from Bellevue, Arizona



Funeral procession side of badge, Bellevue, Arizona.



16 to 1 Miners Union, Telluride, Colorado.

The following ribbons from the collections of Leo Stambaugh, Tony Moon and Deric English illustrate the variety, beauty and historical significance of the Western Federation of

Miners' union ribbons.

REFERENCES:

Brinley, John Ervin, THE WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS, University of Utah, Ph.D., 1972



Parade side of badges,
Olinghouse, Nevada and
Creede, Colorado.



Funeral procession side of
badges,
Olinghouse, Nevada and
Creede, Colorado.



Parade side and Funeral Procession side of Badge from Confidence, California.

Location of Badges represented with City, Local Union name, Union number, and the length of WFM affiliation.

ARIZONA:

Bellevue (Pinto Creek #228)
.....1907-1915

CALIFORNIA:

Confidence (#47)
.....1900-1905
Hedges (Gold Cross #70)
.....1896-1906

COLORADO:

Creede (#20)
.....1903-1915
Telluride (Sixteen to One #63)
.....1896-

IDAHO:

Silver City (#66)
.....1896-1914

MONTANA:

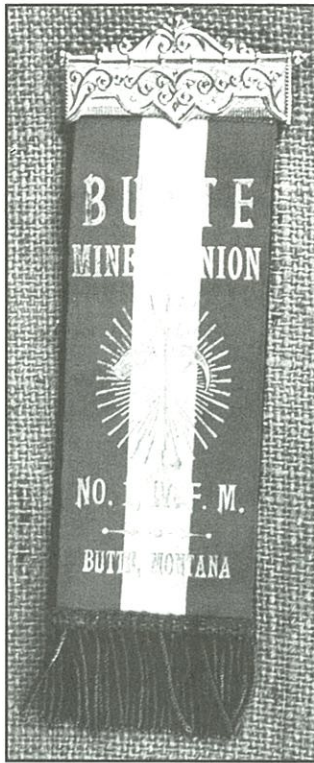
Butte (#1)
.....1893-

NEVADA:

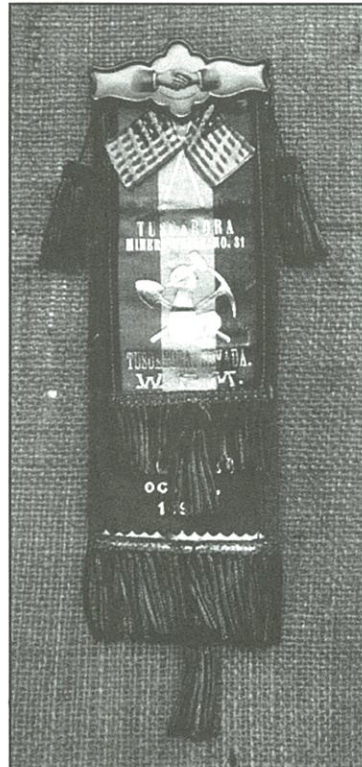
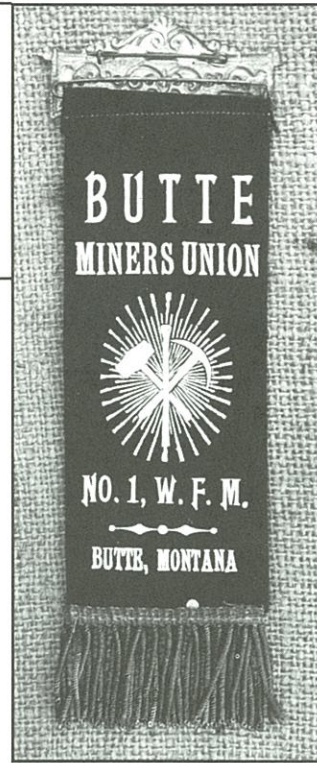
Olinghouse (#179)
.....1904-1913
Tuscarora (#31)
.....1898-



Parade side and Funeral Procession side of Badge from Hedges, California



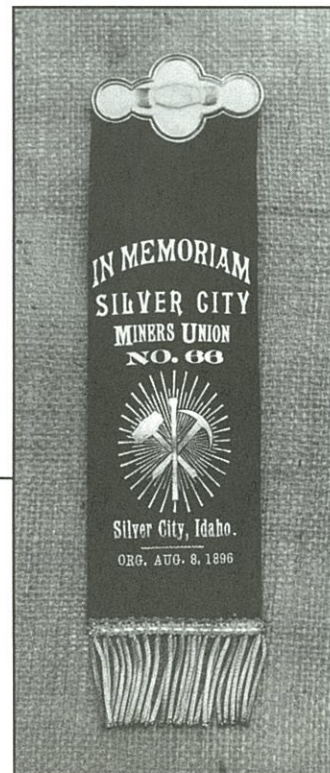
Parade side and Funeral Procession side of Badge from Butte, Montana



Fine example of Parade side from Badge in Tuscarora, Nevada.



Parade side and Funeral Procession side of Badge from Silver City, Idaho.



A FOLDER FROM BODIE

By Steve Rush

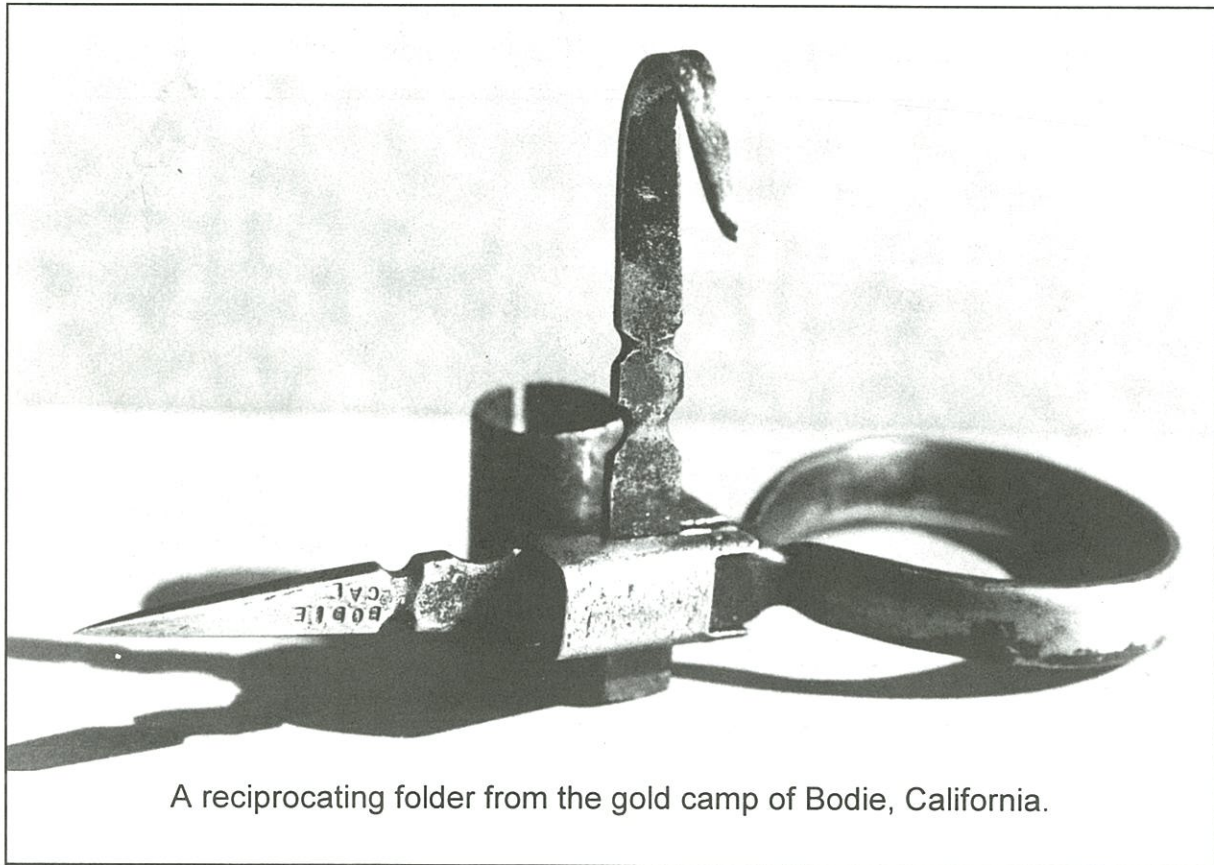
Miners candlesticks are tough to find anymore outside the collecting fraternity. With the exception of common garden variety blacksmiths sticks, you could visit dozens of antique shops and shows without coming upon a truly good stick.

The folding candlestick illustrated here was found at a local Denver antique show, and due to a couple things such as the very fair price and the stamping of a famous California

gold camp, I came near passing it up. Folding sticks are generally found on someone else's shelves these days.

This stick is of the reciprocating type design, with the hook and spike folding into the handle. The thimble also swivels to be folded flat, and a clasp holds it all together. A similarly designed stick is depicted as number 253 in the Wilson-Bobrink Miner's Candlestick book.

BODIE CAL is stamped on



A reciprocating folder from the gold camp of Bodie, California.

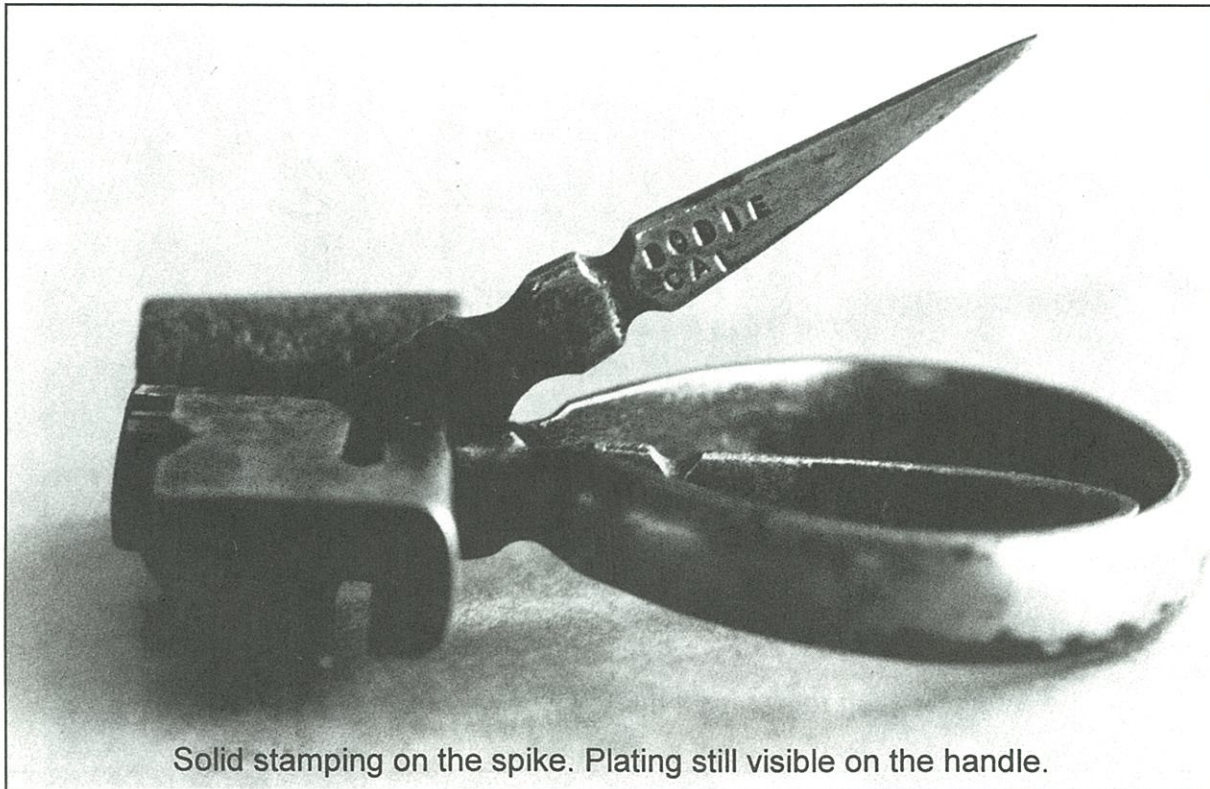
one side of the spike with the name IRWIN stamped on the opposite side. The candlestick shows evidence of plating, and the workmanship is very good. The book Bodie Bonanza lists a William Irwin and a William A. Irwin as the superintendent and assistant superintendent, respectively, of the Standard Consolidated Mine in Bodie.

The dealer I purchased this stick from claimed to have obtained the folder with a box of bits and spurs from a fellow in Oregon. Many reproduction candlesticks are still out there in the "wild", and with the cost and stamping you can bet I held my

hand lens to this beauty a long while before buying it.

Could it be a presentation candlestick made for one of the William Irwin's associated with the Standard Consolidated Mine? Maybe. Speculation to say it is, I feel. A recent immigrant from Colorado to California who is a real professional when it comes to his opinion of old metal looked closely at the stick and said he thought it may be quite old (then asked what I wanted for it... the real clincher!)

A nice find, either way, that encourages you to continue the hunt. If anyone has any information regard-



Solid stamping on the spike. Plating still visible on the handle.

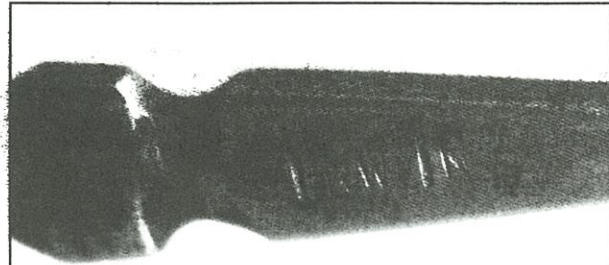
Steve Rush

A Folder from Bodie

ing this stick (good or bad news) call Steve Rush at (303) 670-9158.

REFERENCES:

Loose, Warren. BODIE BONANZA, The True Story of a Flamboyant Past. Exposition Press, 1971.



Irwin stamping on spike. Presentation stick for William Irwin, superintendent of the Standard Consolidated Mine?



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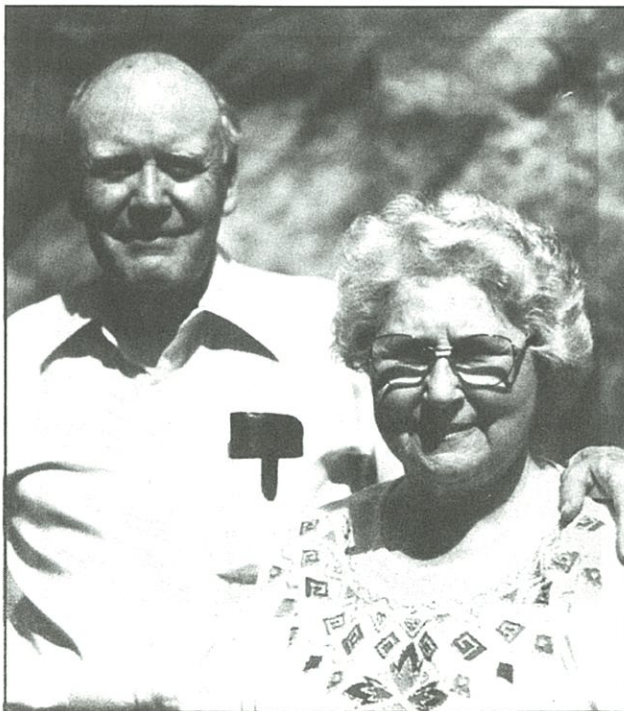
COLLECTOR'S FOCUS

By Steve Rush

Joe Elizondo

Let it never be said that Joe Elizondo has allowed moss to gather upon the north side of his upper years. At an age that we all dream of attaining in a somewhat ambulatory fashion, Joe is presently employed as an enthusiastic greeter at the Bergen Park, Colorado Wal-Mart.

When he isn't cheerfully showing customers where their buying power is best spent, Joe and his wife Peggy catalogue, categorize and sell mineral specimens and mining artifacts from their beautiful Evergreen,



Colorado home.

The previous fifty years were spent in pursuit of paying ore and its extraction from the earth. Joe and Peggy lived for several years in the high Andes of Peru where he worked as a geologist in the underground mines owned by the Cerro Corporation.

From the cold Peruvian weather, Joe and Peggy moved up to the Tri-State district of Oklahoma and Kansas. Joe was placed in charge as the Division Mine Superintendent and General Superintendent of Mines for a group of underground mines which produced about five thousand tons per day of lead-zinc ore. Fantastic mineral specimens collected from here adorn their home.

White Pine, Michigan and the White Pine Copper Company was their next stop, where Joe served successively as Mine Planning Engineer, Mine Manager and Director of Mine Engineering and Research. These mines produced as much as sixteen thousand tons of ore per day, using room and pillar methods of extraction.

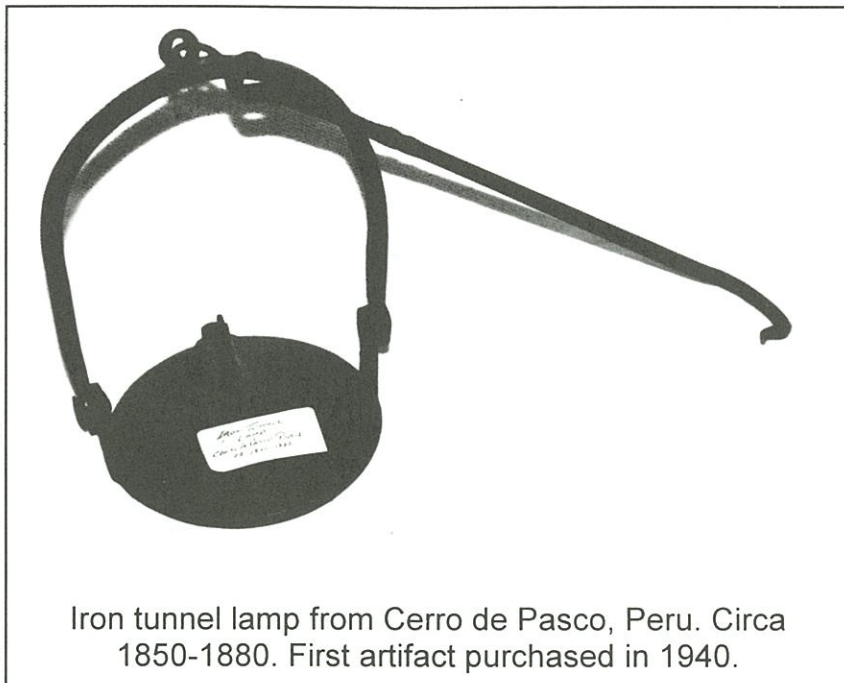
During his stay at the White Pine Mine, Joe continued to develop

underground mining skills involving drilling with a Jumbo, shaft sinking and mucking. Massive specimens of native copper occurred in this mine and Joe returned to Michigan in later years to collect these as found.

Joe went on to work the next thirty four years with AMAX-Homestake Mining Company in southwest Missouri, then into the AMAX-Exploration Mine Evaluation Department. He was based out of Denver and worked as well from AMAX's New York office, during which time Joe evaluated potential and on-going mining operations and performed as an advisor on mine engineering and operations problems in underground mines.

Joe went on to a well deserved retirement in 1982 and began to spend time developing the assets of his mineral and mining artifact collections. His first mining artifact, which he still has on display, was a Peruvian Tunnel Lamp which Peggy wrapped as a Christmas gift in 1940.

The artifact collection has



Iron tunnel lamp from Cerro de Pasco, Peru. Circa 1850-1880. First artifact purchased in 1940.

since grown to include such jewels as a mint folding Varney candlestick, a Curtiss patented stick and a patented Mead Bernier folding combined knife and candlestick. These sticks were obtained in a package deal some twenty years ago and Joe hasn't looked back since.

Mixed among the extremely rare candlesticks lie twenty nine different oil wicks, many Justrite lamp variances, almost every known Autolite patent, and an Arnold Carbide Candle in extremely good shape.

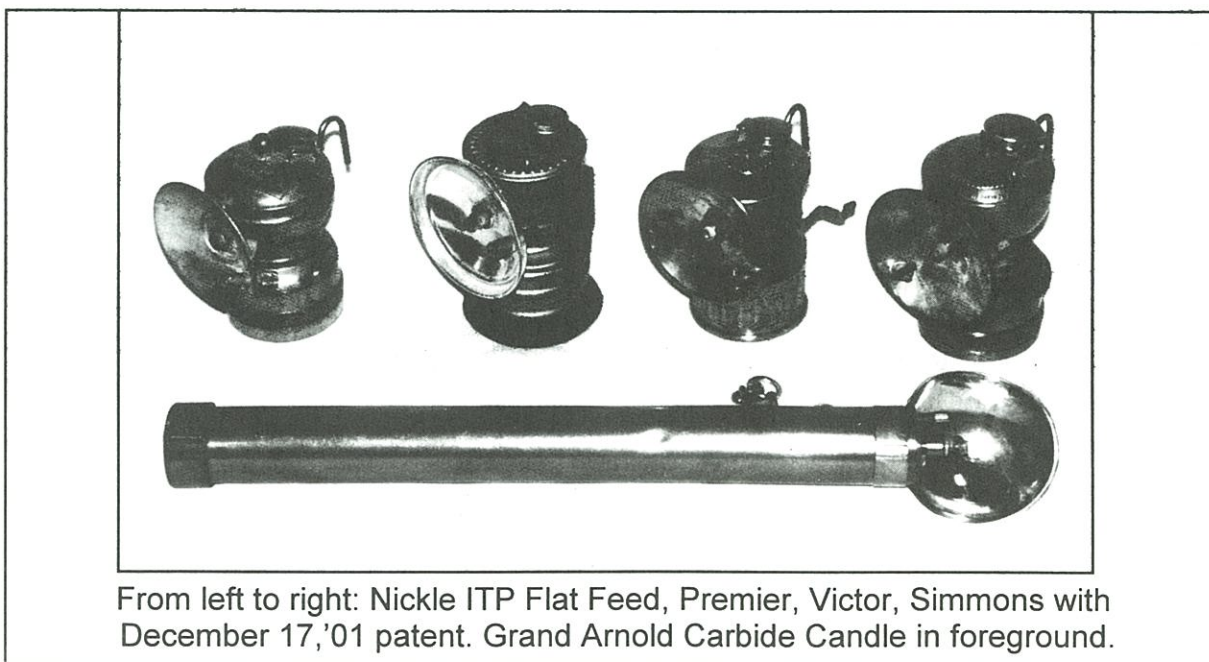
Several rare carbide lamps, including an X-Ray with accompanying box, a Victor and an early patent Simmons, also adorn the shelves of Joe's cases.

Peggy hasn't been resting on her laurels either, as is evidenced by her extensive collection of mineral eggs. Inclusive here are beautiful specimens of Chalcopyrite, Lapis, Malachite, Peruvian minerals and Waterford Crystal eggs. Several display cases and tables proudly show her efforts to balance mining artifacts with minerals.

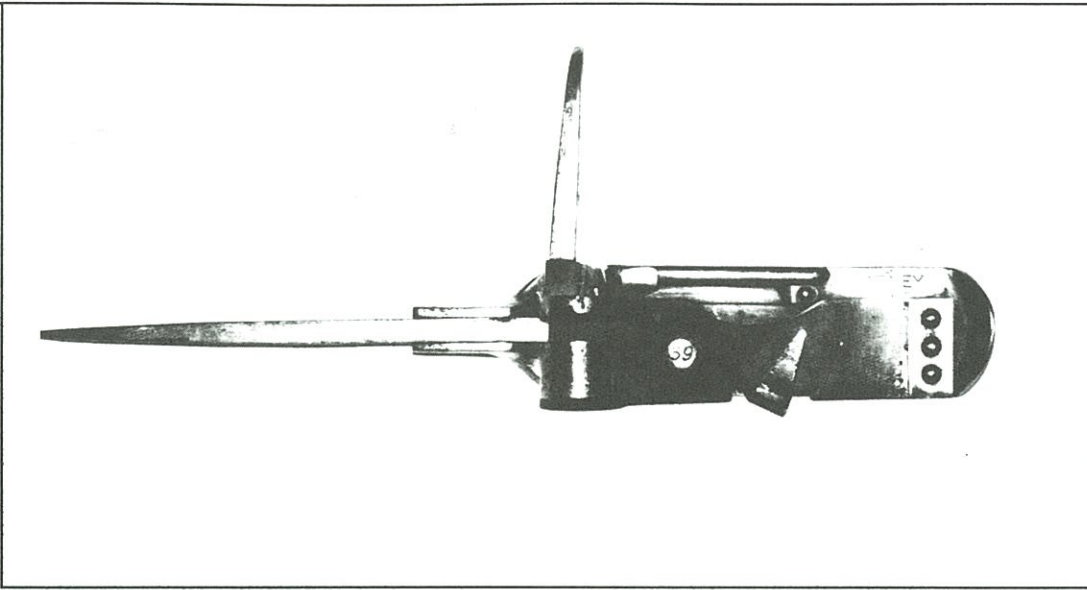
A visit with Joe and Peggy and a tour among their life's work collecting both minerals and mining artifacts is a lesson in geology, mining history and good living. Joe's side business as Colorado Minerals and Mining Artifacts is a successful enterprise, and you can contact Joe and Peggy for your own viewing when next in Colorado at (303) 674-3417.



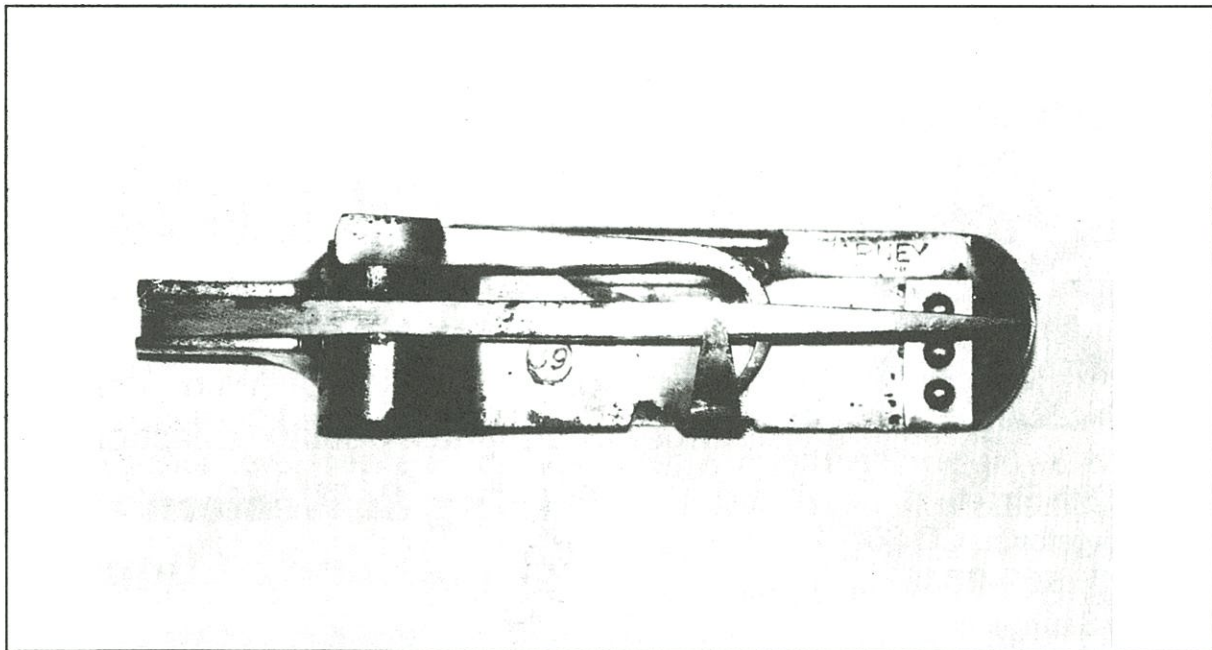
Woodcarving of miner setting rock bolts. Titled "Little Joe" and made for Joe by a talented friend.



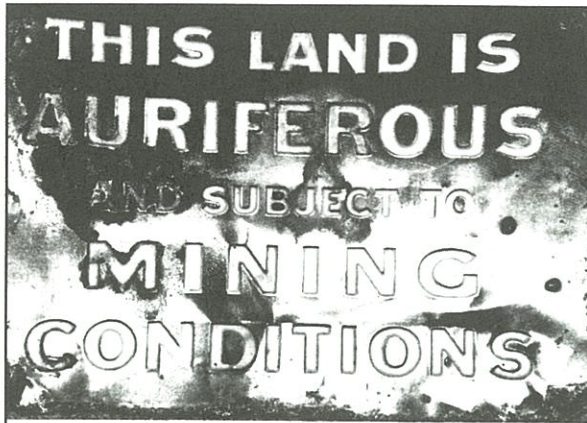
From left to right: Nickle ITP Flat Feed, Premier, Victor, Simmons with December 17,'01 patent. Grand Arnold Carbide Candle in foreground.



Folding Varney Candlestick. Near mint condition.

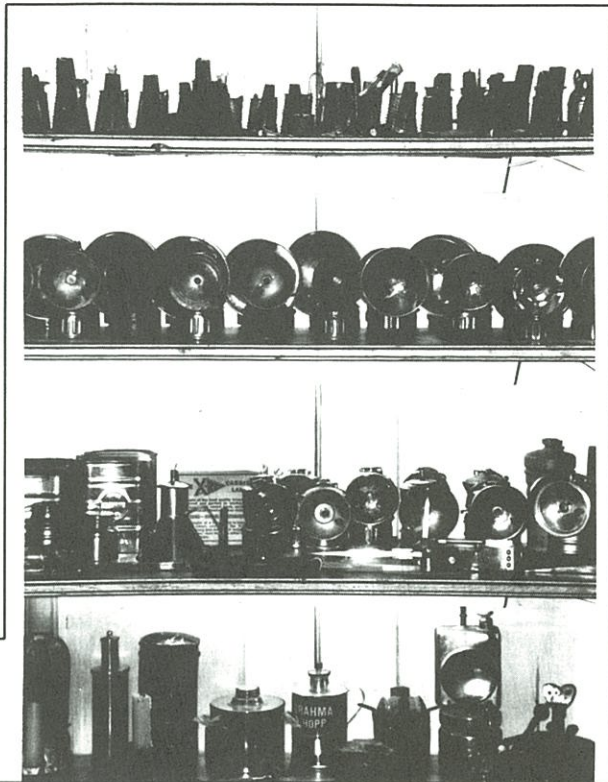


Folding Varney in folded position.



Excellent tin sign from the Melbourne, Australia, Gold District.

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THE ORIGINAL SIXTEEN TO ONE MINE

By Mark Mallicoat

Fathers Day weekend this past June, I was lucky enough to be the invited guest of Rick and Kitty Yarborough for the annual shareholders meeting and mine tour of the Sixteen to One Mine in Alleghany, California. During the ride up from the Bay area, I was like a ten-year-old kid getting ready for his first trip to Disneyland. The trip to the mine was quick as Rick and I discussed lamp collecting and I looked forward to the upcoming adventure. I was looking forward to Rick's input, as being a miner himself he would provide valuable insight in the mine.

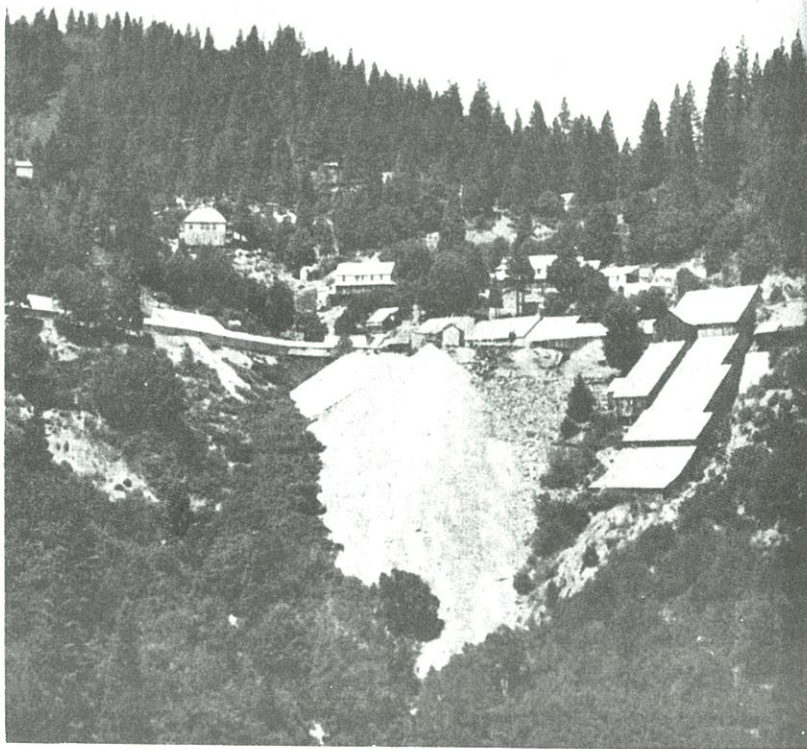
It had been almost thirty years since I had visited this mine and not a lot had changed. A few of the surface buildings had been removed but a sense of history still filled the air and I was ready. The mining company drove us from the mine office area down to the portal located at the eight hundred-foot level where entry was made through the old Twenty-One tunnel, an adit built in 1984. We put on our hard hats and lamps and headed in. Boots are recommended, as the mine is very wet thanks to El Nino and the Spring/Summer runoff. Much of the mine is solid rock with

very little timbering and rock bolts being used, still in other areas timbering looks very much like some of the Comstock mines with double decking square set timbering. Rick was pointing out the various draw points in the mine and the way the early miners took advantage of gravity in getting the ore to the surface. About Eighteen hundred feet and we were at one of the main hoisting stations where the miners brass in. This was really an interesting area to me, as this is a working mine with phones, lights, emergency equipment, supplies and a working hoist. Most of my exploring has been in old abandoned mines and there usually is not much left to give you a sense of what really went on when the mine was operating. From this area a winze runs at approximately forty-five degrees down to the Twenty-two hundred foot level via a four-man skip. It's another half mile or so from the Twenty-two hundred foot level to an area presently being worked in the mine. We continued back into the mountain another quarter mile to an area known as the Ballroom near the intersection of the Tightner shaft. This is one of the older areas of the mine having been

mined in the 1920's and 30's. A narrow trail of sorts runs down following the vein of pure white quartz which is up to fifty-feet thick into this huge cavern where you can see the eleven hundred foot level and the one thousand foot level combine. Really an awesome display of what the early miners had done with their mules and carbide lamps. This area yielded over eighty-nine thousand ounces of gold and employed a good many miners through the depression. Just to the south of this area over twenty-five hundred ounces was

mined in one day from the Thirteen hundred thirty stope for a million dollar day in December 1993. An additional five-thousand ounces were mined nearby in 1995.

The company had miners stationed in the various areas of the mine and they were easy to engage in conversation and happy to answer questions. They really gave me the day to day of what it is like to work underground. A half-hour later we were back out in daylight after having spent two and a half hours underground. It was really enjoyable to see



The Sixteen to One Mine
Alleghany, California

first hand the operation of a producing mining company. The company has approximately thirty-five full-time miners presently employed and much of their success has been with the use of metal detectors, radar and computers. Mine management estimates that only twenty percent of the gold has been mined and exploration continues. Tours are available and I would invite you to visit their web site at www.origsix.com for lots more information and history.

Lode gold mining began in this area in 1853 in the Rainbow Mine (now owned by the Sixteen to One) and the Irelan Mine. Mining began on the Sixteen to One vein in 1896. Mining in this area is known for its extremely rich pockets of almost pure gold. Two thirds of the gold from the Sixteen to One has come in the form of highgrade, with the balance coming from the mill. Present mill ore is running approximately 2.3 ounces per ton.

The company had the mill up and running for our tour. Modern equipment, but the basic principal is much the same as the mills of one-hundred years ago. What a noisy operation, but I guess it's sort of hard to crush rock in a quiet sort of way. The process is much the same except they use a ball mill instead of the old cams

and stamps. Again gravity plays in the movement of the materials through the mill. The old timers got it right and even with all our modern technology, we have not improved their basic scheme too much.

The present day Sixteen to One Mine is actually several mines that have been combined through litigation and purchase over the years. The Tightner Mine, Twenty-One Mine and the Sixteen to One Mine combine the area, which we explored. The company also owns a number of other mines in the immediate area. Mining is alive in this Northern California area. The country is remote, rugged and beautiful. Fellow lamp collector and miner, Errol Christman runs another mining operation several miles away, as well as others.

If you're going to be in the Northern California area, I would recommend a visit to Alleghany. It is a beautiful tree covered sleepy town at approximately forty-five hundred feet above sea level. There is a great mining museum in the old supply store that is worth a visit and lots to see and do. The town does have a local watering hole and a café named Red Star after one of the mines, but not much else. Get your gas and munchies in Grass Valley. A few miles away are the historic mining

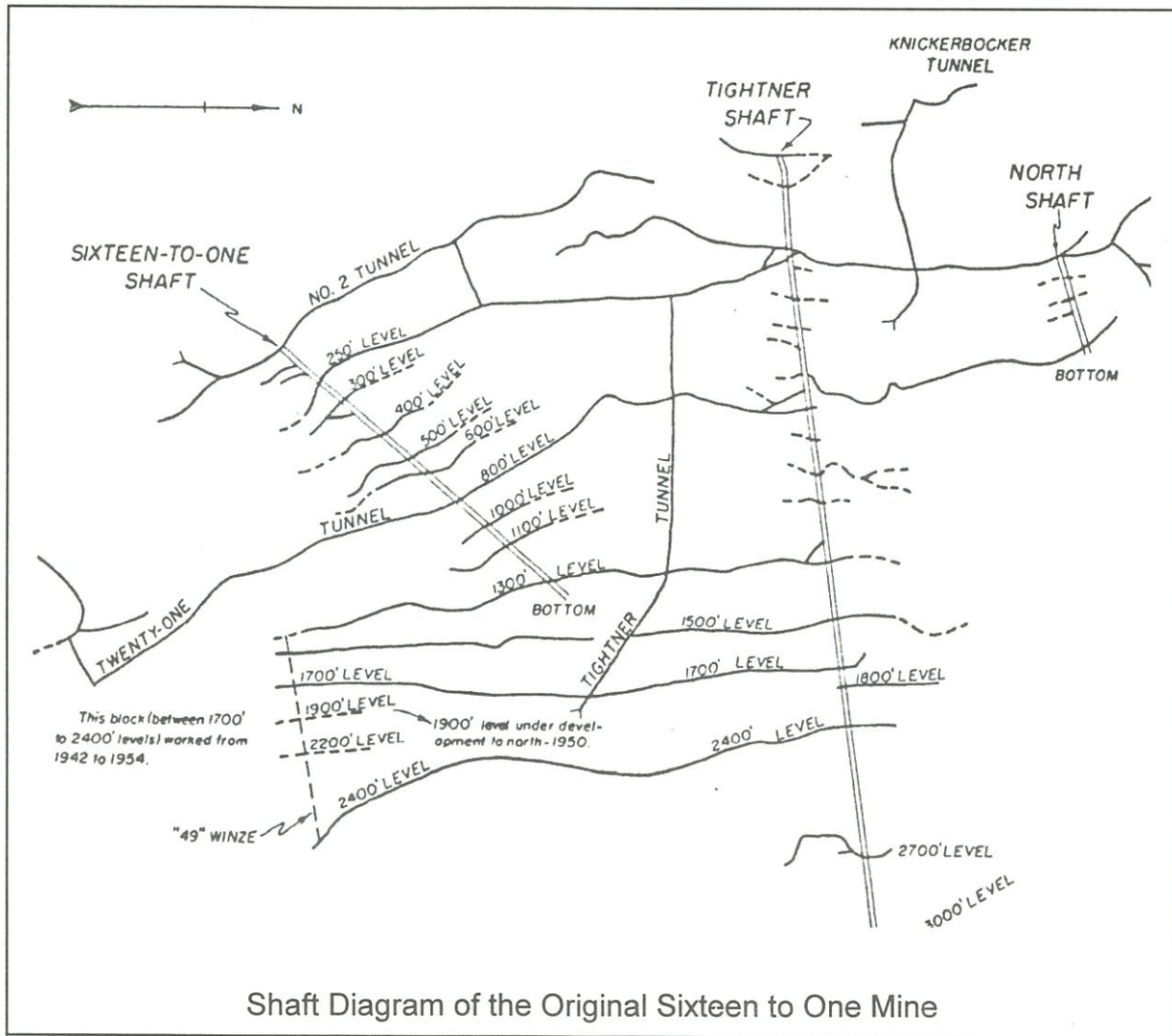
communities of Sierra City and Downieville. Downieville is the county seat of Sierra County and has food and lodging available. It's about a three-hour trip from the San Francisco Bay area.

The original Sixteen to One Mine can be contacted at 530-287-3223 or by writing P.O. Box 1621 in Alleghany, California 95910. The mine office is located right down-

town.

REFERENCES:

- Wagner, Jack R. GOLD MINES OF CALIFORNIA. Howell- North Books, San Diego, California 1980.
- CONTRIBUTIONS to ECONOMIC GEOLOGY, U.S. Geological Survey, Bulletin 580, 1913.
- CALIFORNIA JOURNAL of MINES & GEOLOGY, Volume 52 #3, July, 1956.
- Sixteen to One Mine, Inc. 1998 Shareholders meeting and brochures.



AN INTERESTING HIGHGRADER

By Roger Peterson

For the newer members of our mining artifact collecting fraternity, “Highgraders” candlesticks have long been rumored to be a method whereby the miner could augment his often meager income. By inserting any free gold nuggets he found in the mine into the hollowed-out handle of the stick and covering the nugget with candle wax he could safely smuggle the high-grade from the mine and later convert it for his own use. Some collectors have questioned the authenticity of this purported practice but I believe it to be true. Some years ago when I was very new to this hobby, I read an article in an early mining journal (circa 1900) in which a mine official was lamenting about this very practice and how costly it was to the mine owners. I wasn’t smart enough to pay the seemingly high price the book dealer wanted for the document in which the article resided. In later years when I realized the significance of what I had passed up, I went back to the book store, but alas the journal was not to be found. Whether it still remained in the store (which is absolutely *full* of all kinds of books) or had been sold is still a mystery. I sure wish I would have been smart enough

to buy it when I had my hands on it! (As I recall, the bookstore is on the main downtown street in Nampa, Idaho. If someone was a lot wiser or more thorough than me and acquired this document— call me!)

The miners candlestick shown in figure one presents some unique variations that I have not seen before in this area of mining artifacts. It was found in an antique shop in Northern Colorado a couple of years ago. I have been unable to determine if the stick actually came from Colorado, or, as it so often the case, had been transplanted to this locale from some other mining district.

The method of construction would suggest an item that was manufactured in some quantity. The symmetry of the design and its component parts is very good— the edges, bends and forming used to make the candlestick are very sharp and concise. The “Highgrader” handle design is likewise very consistent and well formed. All of this indicates to me that the item was not made individually by a blacksmith but rather turned out in volume.

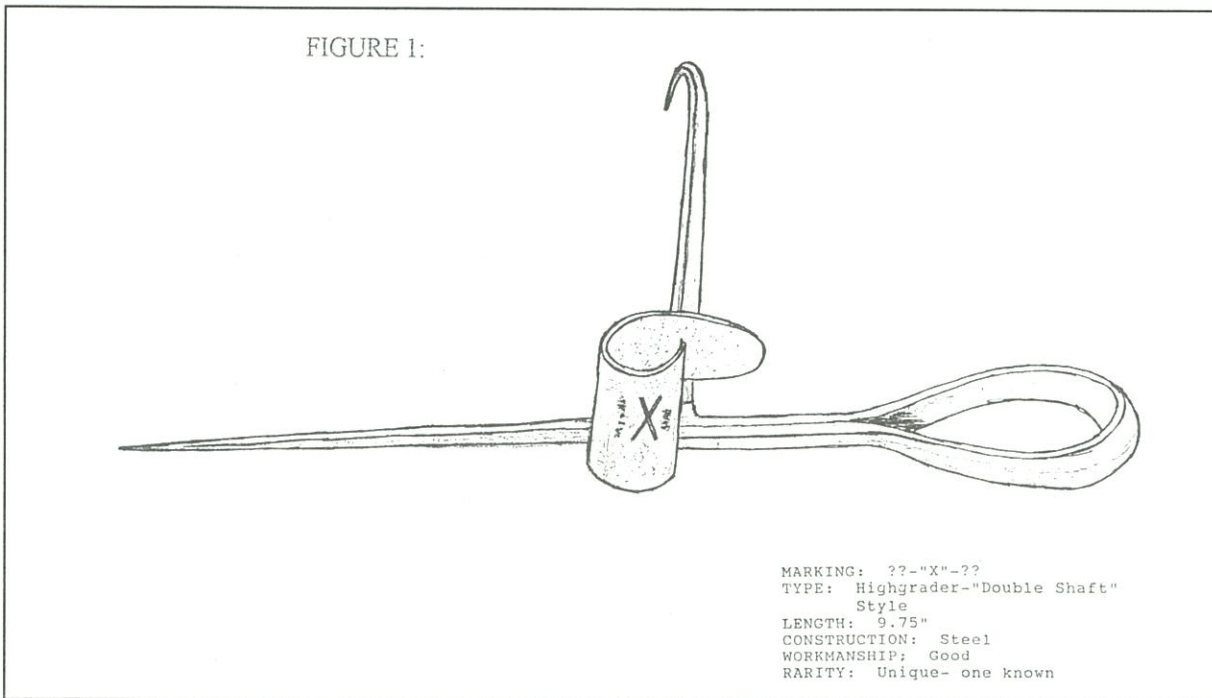
The last and probably most compelling evidence to support the

“manufactured” theory is the presence of *embossed* (raised) letters on the thimble. Unfortunately the thimble is somewhat pitted in the area of the embossment so the letter “X” is the only one that stands out clearly. There appears to be lettering before and after the “X” but it is unclear as to just what it is. It has been suggested that the embossment may be “IXL” signifying manufacturer by the knife company of that name who also made miners candlesticks (See Wilson? Bobrink “A Collectors Guide to Antique Miners Candlesticks”, page 32). Interestingly, the marking technique used on that device, although on the inside of the handle hoop, was also *raised* lettering!

If this candlestick is indeed a mass manufactured item, to my knowledge it represents the only one which utilizes a “Highgrader” style of handle in it’s design; a feature that I’m sure was not well received by the various mining companies! It would also signify that there may well be other examples of this design awaiting discovery. If anyone can shed further light on this interesting candlestick, I would appreciate hearing from them at the address below:

Connie and Roger Peterson
 14211 State Highway 49
 P.O. Box 214
 Amador City, CA 95601
 (209) 267-0848

Thanks and good hunting!



BIZARRE STORIES OF MINING, PAST AND PRESENT

By Jungle George

..."Park County has been the site of intensive exploration activity during the past several years because of uranium discoveries in Fremont County to the south and the belief that Park County also could be a source of huge uranium deposits." - **The Park County Republican and Fairplay Flume, November 20, 1980.**

Much like the Pikes Peak rush that created the Colorado Territory of over 120 years ago, another mining boom in the late 1970's (perhaps the last that Colorado would see) was in full swing. About the same time, gold prices skyrocketed too, adding to the exploration frenzy. Even today, the cartoon series "South Park" celebrates a crazy, fictional (?) mountain community. I think it may parody some real-life situations experienced in remote areas of the west.

I've collected some mining artifacts during my career as a geologist, but the stories of people along the way are just as fascinating. Here is a little true story of the new (and the old) west:



AMBUSH AT TALLAHASSEE CREEK

Bruce and I were finishing up another busy, but beautiful summer of geologic mapping and sampling for uranium in the Tallahassee Creek area in the South Park region of Colorado, four-wheeling along a primitive dirt track toward town, looking forward to a beer and bed. We were prospecting for a large energy company and my project had just been approved for acquisition; this meant survey crews had already been at work staking mining claims under the still actively applied 1872 mining law. We had even spotted some fresh wooden stakes, brightly flagged and bearing the company's name. After years of exploring, the survey posts represented potential victory over other competing companies, also racing to get a foothold on a valuable resource... We had the pride of Conquistadores; the conquest of the land and its riches!

In the late afternoon sun, a glint of glass from another pickup in a side canyon caught our eye... better check it out to see if it was one of our survey crews. As we drove up, we noticed the truck was empty. Climb-

ing out to investigate, the afternoon quiet was broken by shouts from nearby bushes and rocks "...throw up your hands, you Goddamned SOB's!!" Then bursting out from cover came an old man hobbling along on a crude aspen-limb crutch brandishing a very large-looking .44 six-gun and a younger man wielding an even larger Winchester. Still screaming oaths and "...keep your hands up and step away from the trucks!", the younger man spoke with the frightening, advantage of a hare-lip "...we are going to fill you with so many holes, the undertaker won't be able to keep the formaldehyde in." (almost laughable, but the rage

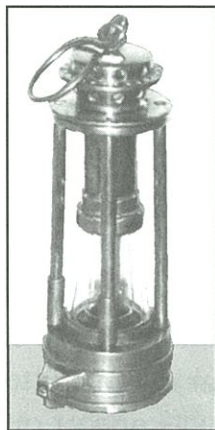
and guns were real) and "...we'll bury you like the other SOB's we've killed out here... where nobody will find you." All this while they pointed the guns in our faces, and the mentally challenged younger man, hopped from one foot to the other, continually mouthing his hairlipped oaths, "...let me kill 'em now!" (cocking weapons). If this was an act of attempting to scare the mining companies, they would win Oscars in "Deliverence II".

Where were our soldiers...? The natives of South Park were restless!!

(Continued next issue...)

MINING ITEMS FOR SALE & TRADE

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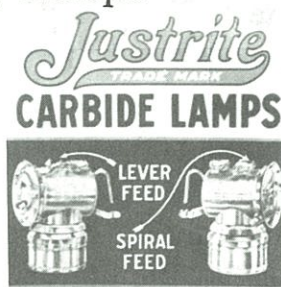


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ARGONAUT MINE FIRE
Jackson, Amador County, California
By H. Mason Coggin

Forty-seven miners were killed in the August 1922 fire at the Argonaut Mine in Jackson, Amador County, California. The Argonaut, a gold quartz mine in the Mother Lode District of California, employed about one hundred sixty five underground miners at the time of the disaster. The mine was developed and worked through an inclined (fifty-seven degree) shaft that followed the dip of the vein for forty-nine hundred feet. The three compartment shaft was heavily timbered. Two compartments were used for skipping ore and hoisting; a manway in the third compartment contained a ladderway, a compressed-air line, pump column, high-voltage electric cable, electric light wires, signal and telephone lines. Levels were developed on one-hundred-fifty foot intervals throughout the mine. Ventilation was provided by an updraft shaft to the eight-hundred level and a series of offset raises to the forty-nine hundred. Manways connected the bottom level to the surface through these interconnecting drifts and raises and the shaft. Ventilation was ensured by a forty-thousand cubic feet per non-reversing

exhaust fan at the top of the ventilation shaft. Wooden doors and brattices directed the air flow down the Argonaut shaft, through the lower levels and the ventilation shaft. The doors and brattices were adjusted to balance the air flow and provide uniform ventilation throughout the mine.

About eleven o'clock on the evening shift, the shift boss and two skip tenders noticed smoke on the forty-two hundred foot level in the Argonaut shaft and realized there was a fire in the shaft above them. They had themselves hoisted to the station on the three-thousand foot level and found two timber sets burning on the shafts hangingwall just below the station. One man remained to observe conditions while the other two were hoisted through the fire to the two-thousand foot level, where they telephoned the hoisting engineer and reported the fire. They rode to the surface to gather fire fighting equipment and return to the fire. Soon after they arrived on the surface, the mine telephone, signal system and lights went out of order. Forty-seven men in the workings below were cut off without communications to warn them of the

fire or a second means of escape.

Smoke soon started coming from the ventilation shaft and backed up the main shaft as the hot air began rising. Men equipped with self contained oxygen breathing apparatus entered the skip and attempted to extinguish the fire. The exhaust fan at the ventilation shaft could not be reversed and this would have been useless without a means of changing the ventilation in the lower levels so that fresh air could be circulated through them and up the Argonaut Shaft. Reversal of the air flow would have been short circuited by the normally closed air doors above the three-thousand that would have been forced open by the reversal. Trying to reach the trapped workers through the ventilation shaft would have required four to five hours to climb down the shaft and back up through the raises. Since the self contained breathing apparatus was good for about two hours this would have been suicide for the rescuers.

The fire fighters were able to control the fire in the shaft by using high-pressure water and hoses and kept it from extending up shaft. They also installed an airtight bulkhead on the twenty-three hundred level of the Argonaut thus smothering the fire. From this level, they were able to re-

open a connection between the Argonaut and the adjoining Kennedy Mine by driving some eighty feet of new drift and catching up several caves. Twenty-one days of arduous labor were required before the rescue crews could reach the forty-two hundred foot level of the Argonaut mine.

Forty-six bodies were recovered from the forty-three-hundred-fifty foot level where the miners had built a double bulkhead from mine waste, boards and clothing to provide

“Trying to reach the trapped workers through the ventilation shaft...”

a fresh air chamber. In spite of their best efforts the bulkhead had failed to affect a seal and toxic gases had penetrated into their chamber. The men had died a few hours after the start of the fire. Another body was later reclaimed below the forty-three-hundred-fifty.

Three possible causes for the fire were advanced:

(1) Electricity, (2) Arson and (3) Smoking.

Most of the investigators blamed the fire on a short circuit in the twenty-three hundred-volt power line in the manway compartment. The

skip tender later testified that he had observed the fire spreading from the location of the wiring.

The point of origin was near a cast-iron junction box where the armor and outer insulation from the power cord were removed to allow the cable to enter the box. On the day before the fire, a set of shaft timber just below the three-thousand station was replaced. The old timber was temporarily stored in the manway sets. Throwing or stacking the old

“The rapid spread of the fire in the heavy timber and a set of footprints...”

timber against a cable may have pulled the cable out of the junction box and caused the short circuit. This short circuit could have ignited the old timber. Some arcing was in evidence around the junction box to support this theory of the fire.

The power cable was a three conductor armored cable. Each conductor was insulated with rubber and cotton fabric. The cable was intern encased in a lead tubing and the tubing was encased in wire armor. The whole cable was protected from moisture by a covering of tarred hemp.

The arson theory was advanced because a previous fire in the mine had proven to be arson. The rapid spread of the fire in the heavy timber and a set of footprints in the drainage tunnel below the collar contributed to these suspicions. The practicality of anyone climbing three-thousand feet up the manway without discovery however, was considered unlikely. It was also pointed out that more accessible places were available and could have caused more damage to the mine.

The following procedures were advanced to prevent similar loss in mine fires.

1. Workers in the mine should be warned immediately. (This was eventually done through a stench system attached to the compressed air supply. The installation of the stench system was almost uniformly adopted by all of the major operating underground mines in the 1940's and became law with MESA and MSHA).

2. An attempt should have been made to hoist the workers. (This was not practical since the shaft was engulfed in fire and the hoist signals were lost. It would have been better to provide reversing fans and install hoists connecting the lower levels to the surface where the workers could be hoisted to fresh air and safety.

This second exit is now required by law).

3. The underground doors that could be reached should have been opened to short-circuit the air up the ventilation shaft and keep the toxic gases from the lower levels. (A mine emergency plan should have been developed very early in the life of the mine and updated on a regular basis).

4. All major mine fans should be reversible (This was adopted as a requirement in most metal mines shortly after this disaster).

5. Ventilation or air doors should be so hung and arranged as to permit air to be reversed without short-circuiting.

6. Stoppage of the exhaust fan would have allowed the Argonaut to updraft from the effects of the shaft fire and draw fresh air through the workings by natural ventilation. The workers on the lower levels could have climbed to safety through the ventilation shaft.

7. Timbered shafts should be fireproofed or fire-protected. (This was adopted by most mines shortly after this fire and most of the older wooden shafts were equipped with a sprinkler system. The use of concrete to line shafts was developed and perfected in the 1930's and has been in common practice ever since. Mines

have adopted their own electrical specifications and practices exceeding the requirements of the National Electric Code. Electrical cable specification have changed since these early days and today's mine cables will not support combustion).

8. Every mine should have an organization for preventing and controlling fires, good fire-fighting equipment and a large water supply immediately available. (Helmet crews and fire bugs were adopted at most mines during the 1930's and became law in most states that had a State Mine inspector. MSHA now requires all mines to have a mine emergency team or belong to a mine emergency association within two hours of the mine).

This is the second in a series of articles about mine disasters from the files of the Bureau of Mines. The fire in this article is described in the Bureau of Mines, Miners' Circular 55, Fires, Gases and Ventilation in Metal Mines, Metal-Mine Accident-Prevent Course Section 5. The U.S. Bureau of Mines was killed off by the Clinton-Gore Administration in 1995.



The Helmet Men

Tortured and seared in a fierce rush of flames,
Mangled and torn by the death-dealing blast,
Changed till their mothers could not tell their names;
Even the rescuers shrink back aghast.

Level and heading are horror-filled shambles,
Peopled with corpses that glaringly grin;
This, what the helmet man finds in his rambles,
Hideous goal that he risks life to win.

Staggering, stumbling, smoke-blinded and chancing
The cave from above or the black depths below,
While the brain-pressure tightens till death-lights are dancing,
Into the tangle and wreckage they go.

Not for the glory their names gain in story,
Not for reward that is motivated by greed,
Delve they in depth-traps, where horror grows hoary,
“Tis love of humanity urges the deed.

God bless them all! They are men whom the nation
Should garland with tributes from tongue and from pen—
Give them honor as heroes, above wealth or station—
In a class all their own are these brave helmet men.

By F.E. Vaughn, **The Spirit of Leadville in Verse**,
December 17, 1913.

VARNEY PATENTED POWDER SPOON

By Leo Stambaugh

Just about anyone collecting mining artifacts knows of Nathan Varneys candlesticks. At least eighteen brand name candlesticks by Varney have come to light, including a very sophisticated folder.

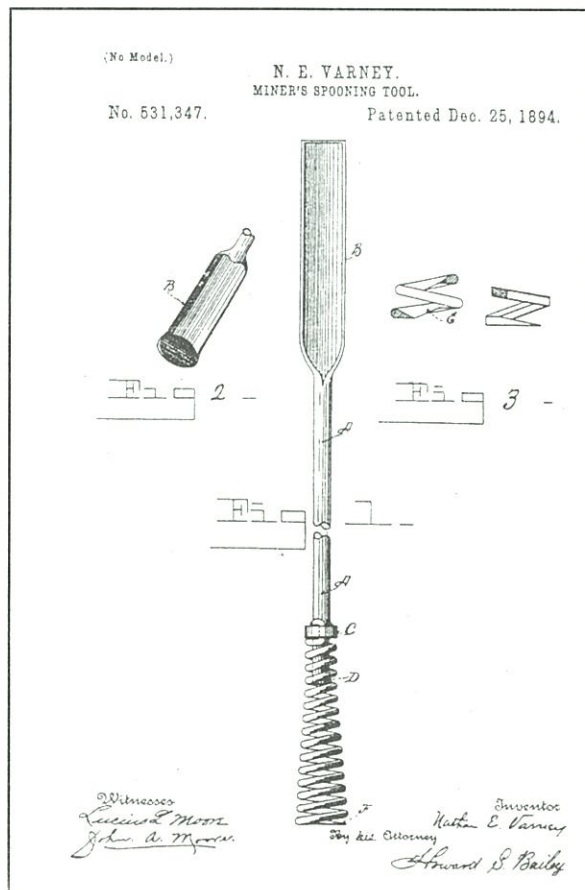
Not many collectors, however, may be familiar with a miners spooning-tool patented by Varney. Assigned patent number 531,347 and dated December 25, 1894, the patent information sheet is quite specific and detailed regarding its use.

Commonly referred to as a drill or powder spoon, this type of mining tool is used to clean rock cuttings from drill holes. Powder spoons found underground typically consist of a simple iron rod about 1/4-inch in diameter with a spoon like shape hammered from one end. Lengths vary from several inches to several feet. During the process of driving a drill hole, the spoon was inserted into the hole frequently to keep the hand steel against a hard surface instead of being cushioned by the powdered rock.

As shown in the patent illustration, the Varney Spooning-Tool is a bit more complicated than other powder spoons. The specifics of its use were two-fold; one— flexibility of the

handle could accommodate crooked drill holes and two— the helical shape of the handle enabled its use with a screw like motion to remove cuttings.

The patent information claims that no model was provided with the drawing. This may indicate these unique mining tools were never produced, though it shows itself well as one more mining artifact to keep an eye out for.



THE MINING SUMMARY

WHAT'S NEW THAT'S OLD



Electric Light Candle Box. The only known example with a paper label. Courtesy of Jon Aurich collection.

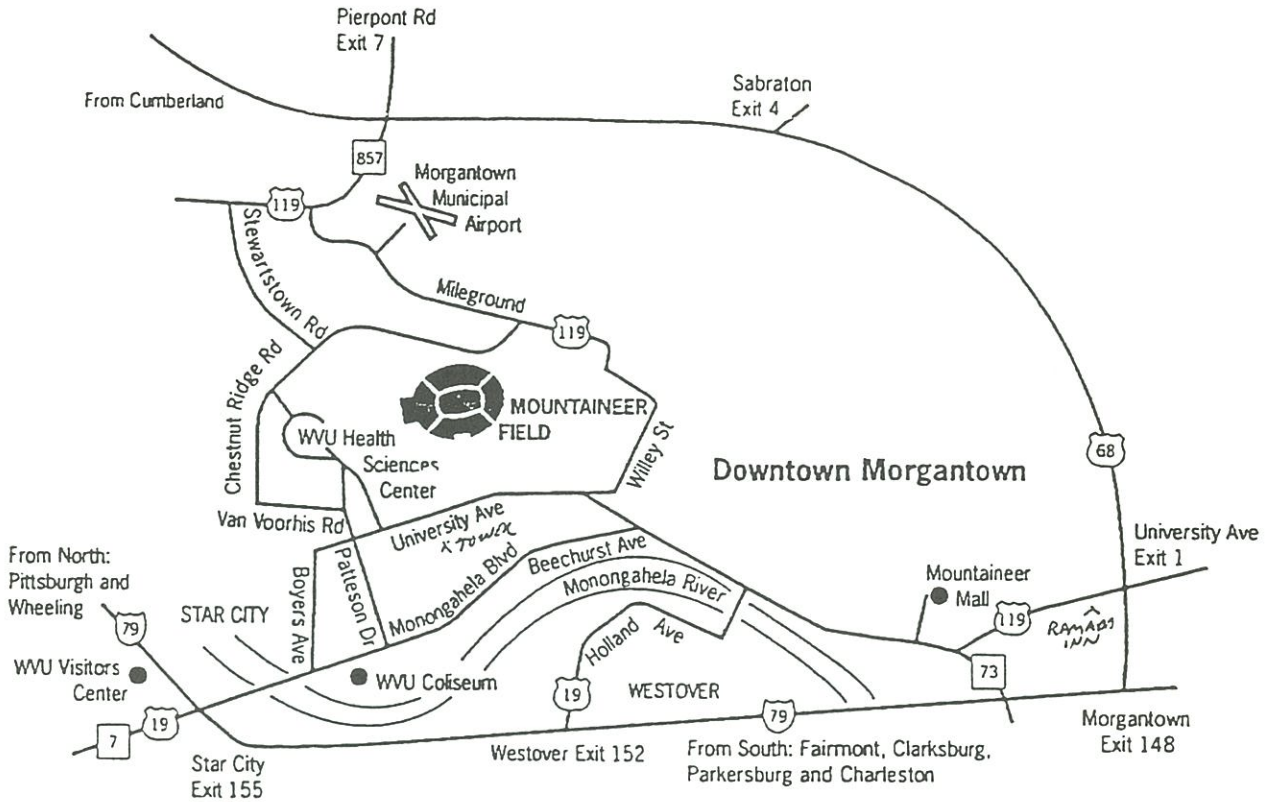


Match safe advertising Aetna brand dynamite and fuzes. Courtesy of Leo Stambaugh.

Morning Star Mine ore bag from the Cerro Gordo District. Courtesy of Larry Kuester.



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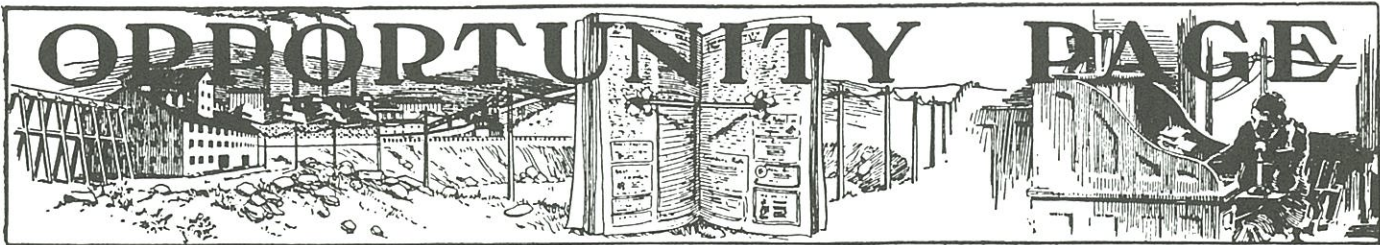
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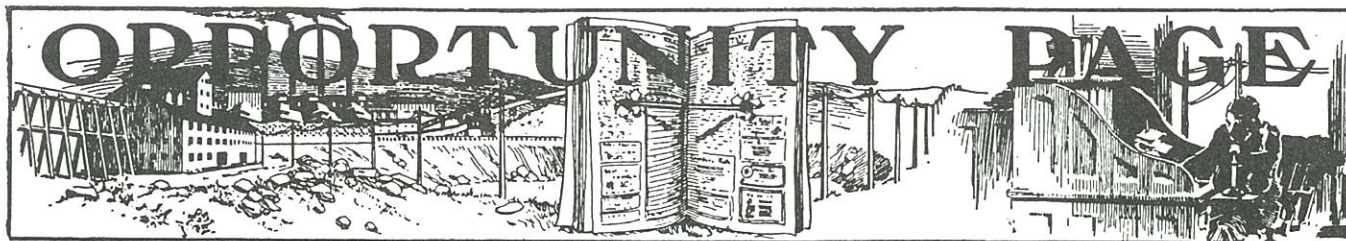
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Phone 302-234-9060
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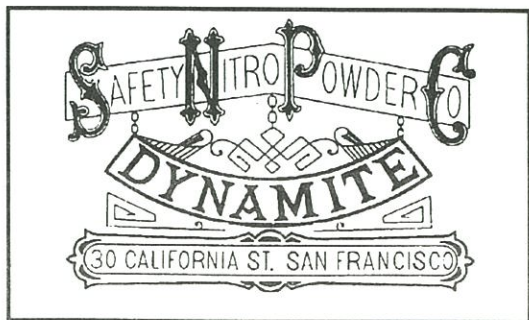
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1200 Level - Northern Belle	\$60	\$75	\$125
Ghosts of Miners Past	\$60	\$75	\$125

Dynamite Boxes \$30 ea.
 Dynamite Box Ends \$7.50 ea. /3 for \$20
 12" x 18" x 9" h. – Finger-jointed edges. Includes lid.

*Safety Nitro Powder Co. Giant Gelatin
 Giant Powder (1892) Giant Eagle
 Candelaria*

Blasting Machines \$ 75 ea.
 7" x 9" x 15" h. Box edges are finger-jointed.
Victor Electric Blasting Machine

Hats & T Shirts
 All hats and shirts printed black on ash gray.
Safety Nitro Powder Co. –Hats - \$12.50 Shirts - \$16.00 ea. (M, L, XL only)

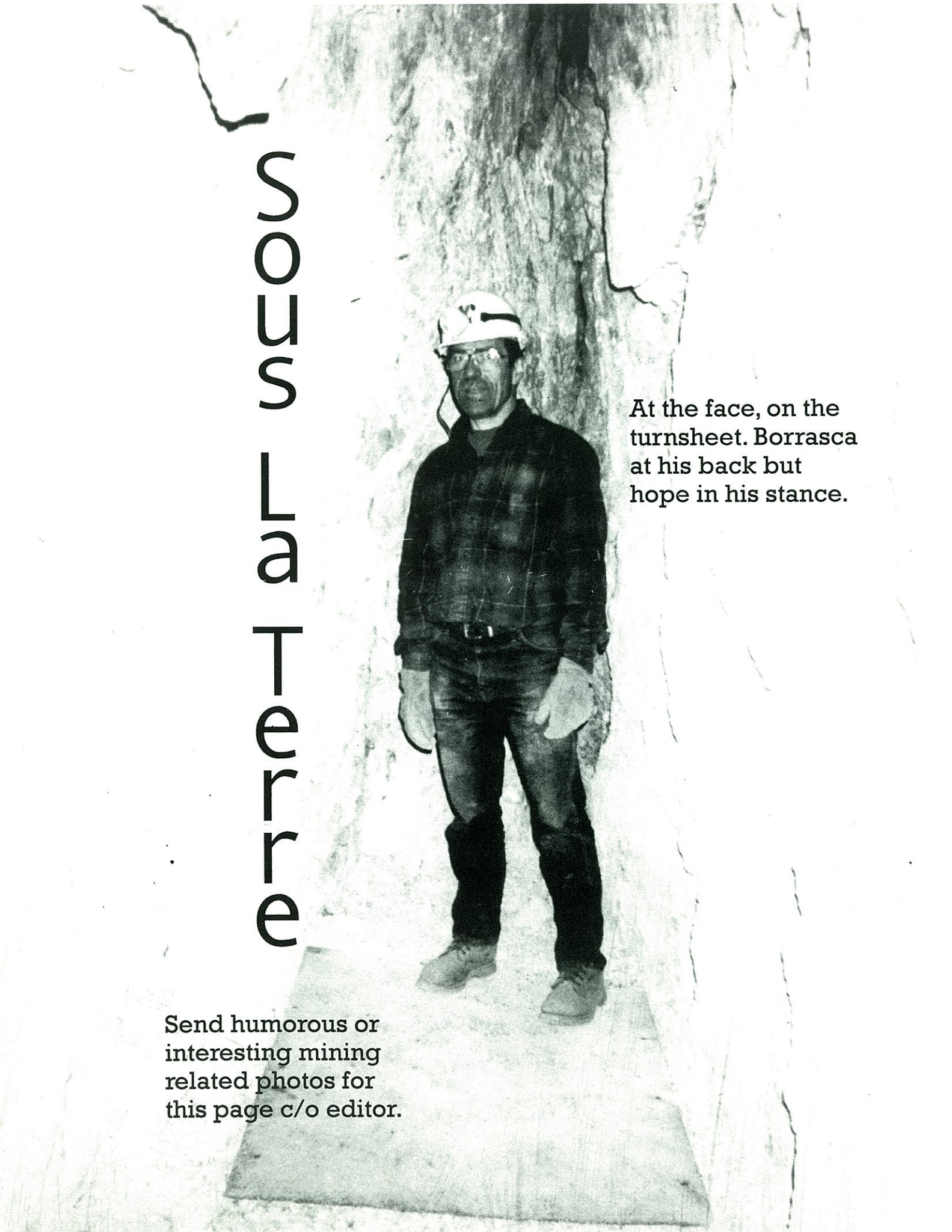
Shipping Charges

Photos: 16 x 20 & 16 x 24 \$10 ea.
 20 x 30 - \$15 ea
 Dynamite Boxes/Blasting Machines: \$7.50 ea

Hats, Shirts & Box Ends:
 Free shipping for orders that include dynamite boxes - provided all items will fit in the boxes(es). Otherwise please include 10% of total charges for hats, shirts & box ends.



MINING AT A LOSS



At the face, on the
turnsheet. Borrasca
at his back but
hope in his stance.

Send humorous or
interesting mining
related photos for
this page c/o editor.

Williams Minerals

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