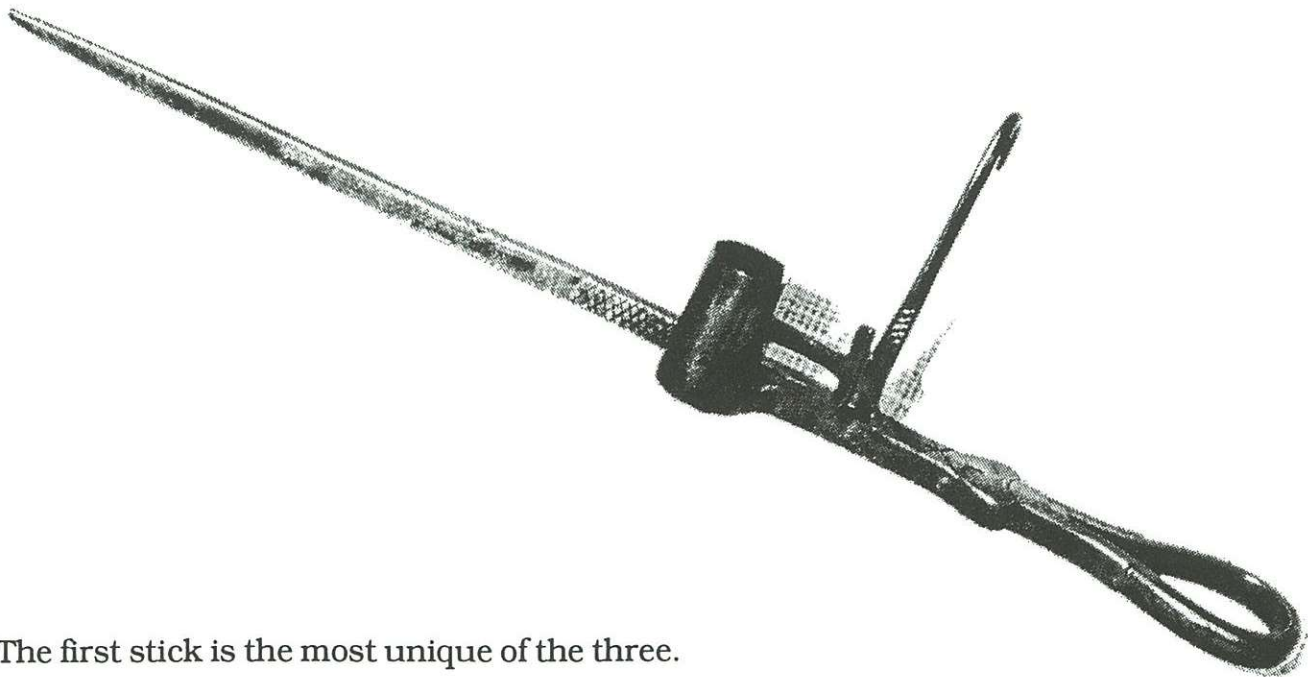


Candlesticks

by Dave Johnson

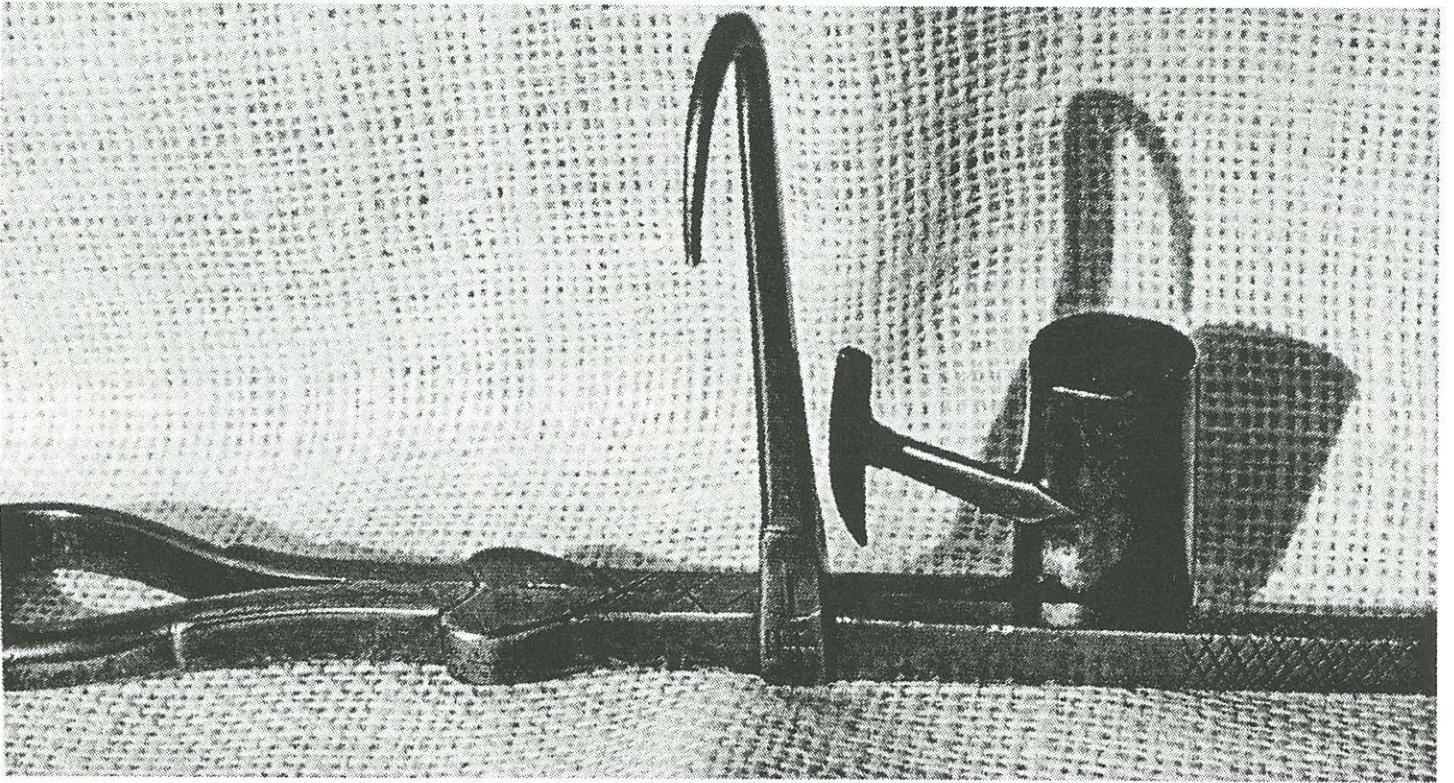
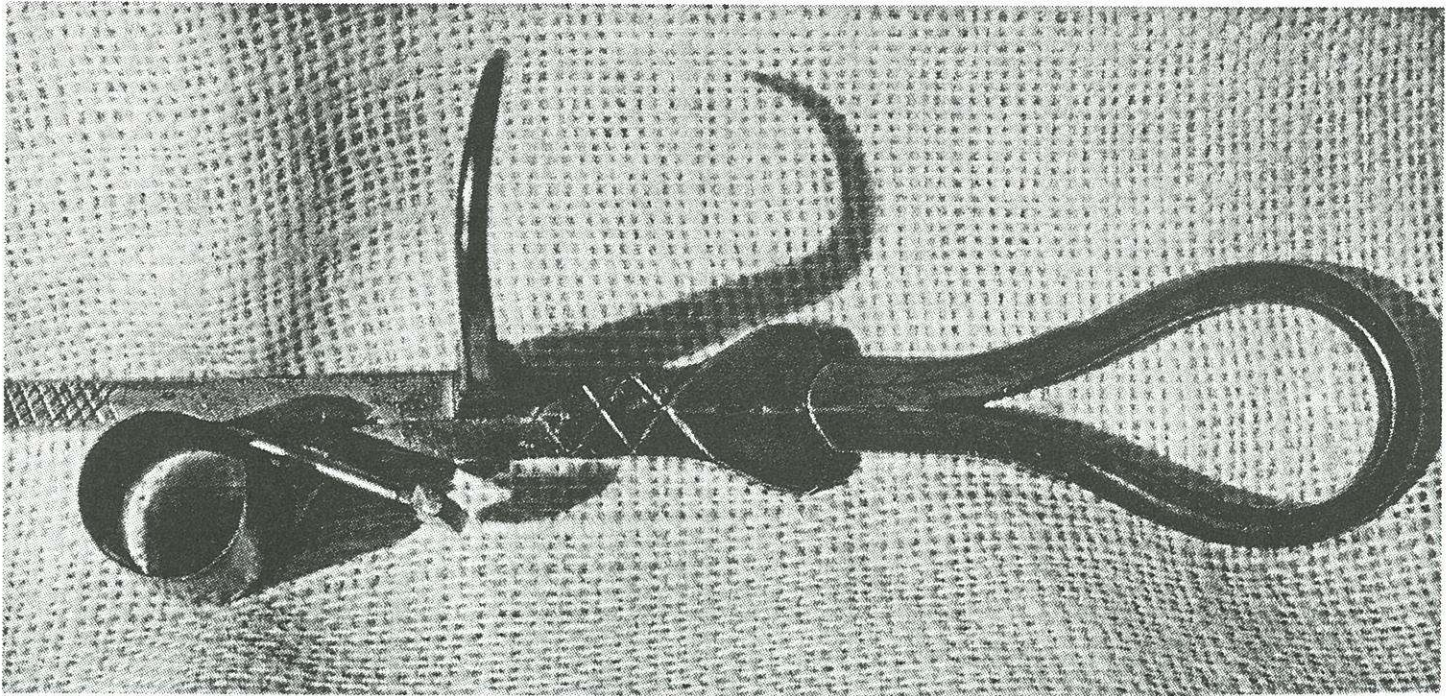
Among the big four of miner's lamps in the U.S. (carbide, oil wick, safety and candle sticks), candlesticks seem to appeal mainly to western collectors. Most collectors see candlesticks as western hard rock mining artifacts. They stir up little interest among eastern collectors who identify more with the lighting associated with coal mines. While many sticks have western origins they were also used extensively in the Lake Superior (Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan) iron and copper mining regions. The three sticks shown here are all western in origin.



The first stick is the most unique of the three.

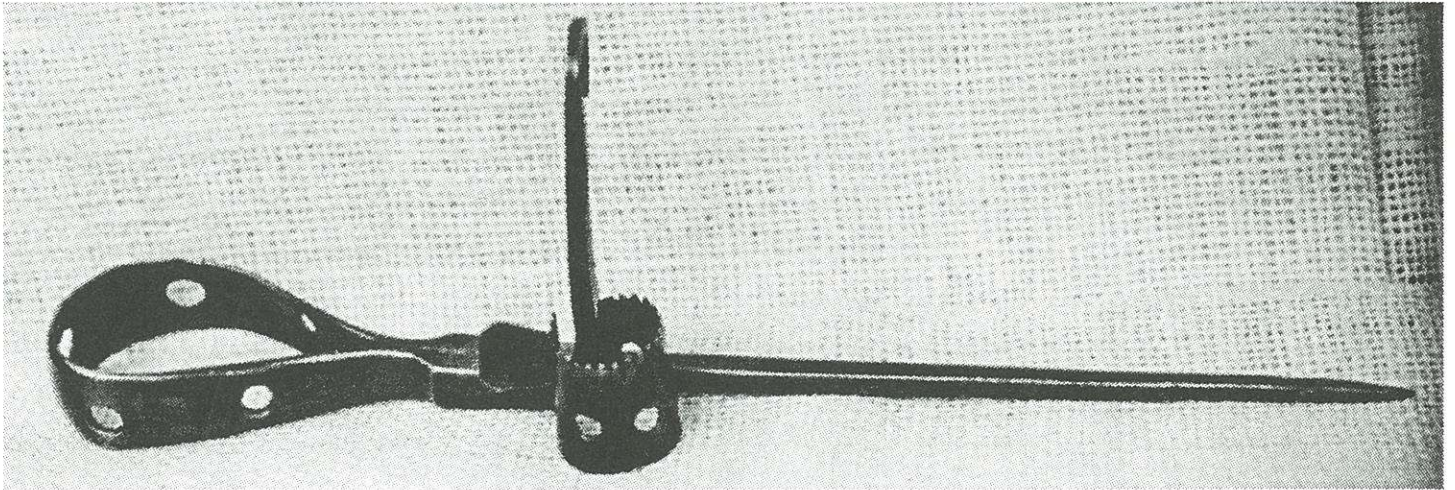
This heavy stick is 15¼" long and well ornamented.

The most unique ornamentation is the rock pick shaped thumb lever on the thimble. There is a heart at the point where the spike joins the handle loop and two areas of cross-hatching on the spike and one on the hook just above the spike. On the back of the hook where it meets the spike a pick, hammer and drill are engraved. On the top of the handle loop a vine-like engraving appears. The thimble is exceptionally tall at 1 ¾". This stick is well made and has seen a great deal of wear and use. This was obviously a working stick, not a presentation piece that sat on someone's mantel.



The second is a style of stick (next page) that was unique to western gold mining - the high-grader handle. Looking for a means to supplement their income many gold miners felt a certain right to help themselves to high-grade ore. Since the mining companies took a differ-

ent view of the situation the miners were always looking for ways to sneak small amounts of high-grade ore out of the mines past mine officials. One means of doing this was the high-grader handle candlestick in which the loop handle was curved and hollowed out. This configuration allowed canny miners to stick small pieces of high-grade ore into the handle held in place by small amounts of candle wax. This particular high-grader stick measures 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ " in overall length. The top edge of the thimble is serrated. There are five holes in the handle and five holes in the thimble for a unique form of ornamentation. Three of the holes in the handle are more elliptical than round. The overall workmanship is quite good.



The third stick (below) has two interesting features. First, there is the filed ornamentation on the spike which adds greatly to the aesthetics of this 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " long stick. The second feature is the thimble which sits out 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the spike rather than tight against the spike as most sticks do.

