

COLLECTOR'S FOCUS

by Steve Rush

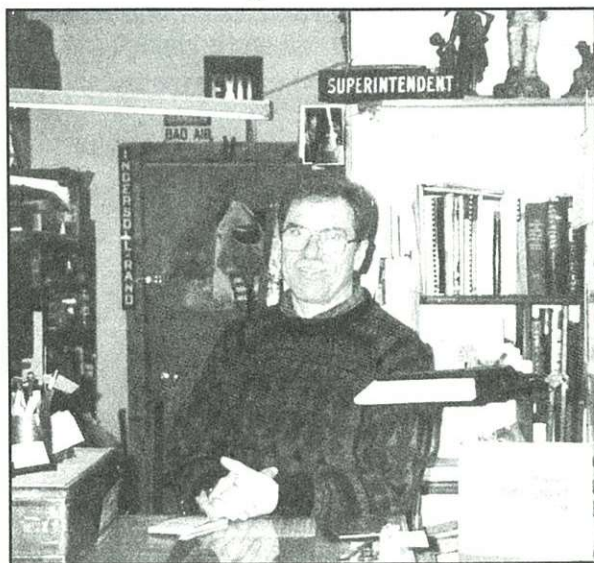
The Powder Cache

It began with a wooden tool chest. One of those dovetailed together iron hinged models that close up and contain practically every tool known to man. The fellow also had a few iron mining items that the buyer's appreciative eye for detail caught and held. The old tool collector threw in the mining items with the other stuff, and a mining artifact collector bar none was created.

Leo Stambaugh of Georgetown, Colorado, recalls that first purchase with a crooked grin and a casual wave

of his arm to take in what is now a museum of mining history. Adjoining his museum, Leo makes his living selling antiques from his store appropriately called Powder Cache Antiques from the second floor of an old stone building located at 612 6th Street in Georgetown. His is a true antique store, with very few items for sale that are less than fifty years old, and indeed contains a number of fine mining artifacts that are duplicates of items in the museum. He can be found here most days of the week greeting customers with a friendly "how ya doin' folks".

It is his museum, however, that cause many feet to follow a well worn path towards display cases and shelves that exhibit hundreds of candlesticks, carbide cap lamps, blasting caps, and original photographs of mining scenes. Enamel bell signs and elaborate underground signs from several states adorn the walls, along with 19th century calendars and advertising from long gone mining towns. Rock drills and assay items mingle with enough blacksmith tools to start a foundry, and dozens of rare Italian pattern hand drilling hammers can be found with bundles of old drill steel.



Leo Stambaugh behind his post at The Powder Cache. His friendly "hi folks" greet people seven days a week in Georgetown, Colorado.

Among the most rare items (where to begin) to be seen is a Justrite 77 carbide stick lamp, a Fort Pitt Blasting Cap tin, and several extremely rare candlesticks. I know of no other place that you can see a Kaba & Pelham, a C.H. Garland, and every variation of C. Cleaves known all in one glance. Leo has at least forty-two folders camped there in his candlestick case, along with brand name sticks of all description. His rare blasting items include a full brass plate H Julius Smith Igniting Dynamo blasting machine, bench cap crimpers from the California Cap Company and DuPont, and a bench fuse cutter from the Coast Manufacturing and Supply

Company. Dozens of rare cap crimpers, including the Silver State Crimper, the Miner's Safety Loading Tool, and other very early patented crimpers are also well displayed.

Extremely rare and colorful souvenir china showing mining scenes fill one cabinet. Another displays mining spoons, mining scrip and ribbons. Included among the ribbons are a number of Western Federation of Miners from obscure mining towns. A future article for the Review is planned for these alone.

Leo, with his wife Mitzi, daughter Stacy, and son Eric, has resided in Georgetown for many years. Mitzi owns and runs the Georgetown Mer-



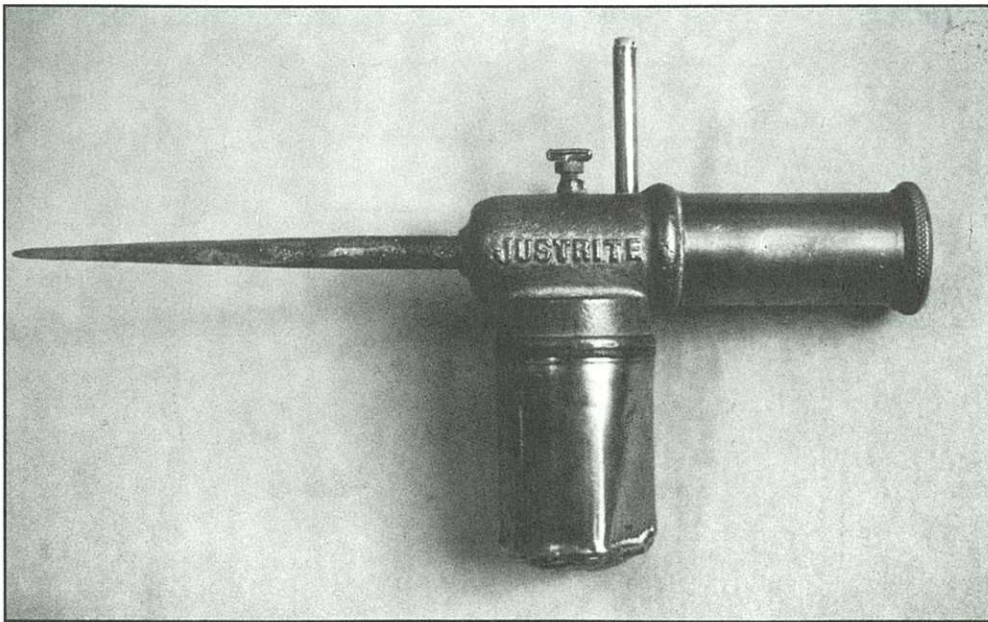
Leo, Stacy, Mitzi and Eric outside their Georgetown home.

cantile, a store which sells everything from stick candy and kitchen wares to Beanie Baby's and Boyd's Bear's. The Stambaugh's live in the upper two stories of the Mercantile, itself a previous boarding house for miners built in the 1880's. Eric and Stacy attend school in Idaho Springs, a Colorado mining town several miles down the canyon. Stacy is on her way to becoming a top-notch skier (living within ten miles of a Colorado ski resort certainly helps) and Eric collects fossils, minerals, and has an eye towards his dad's stuff.

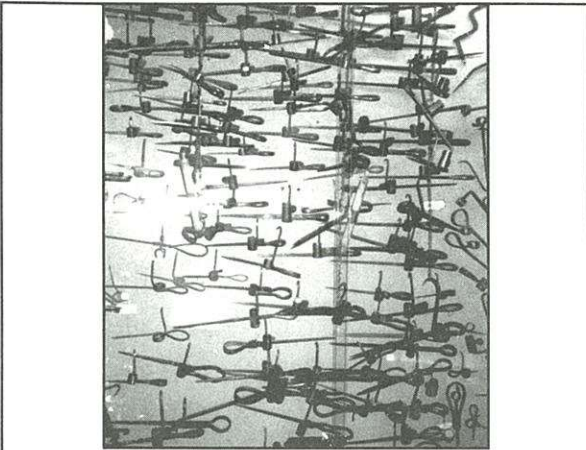
Leo is well known among the mining collector's fraternity, with many of his rare and unusual artifacts having

been traded from others. Reviewing and photographing his displays for this article was like meeting old friends again for me, as a number of items once resided within my own cases. I must add that trading with Leo is always fair and equitable for both parties, although some trades take a bit longer than others do!

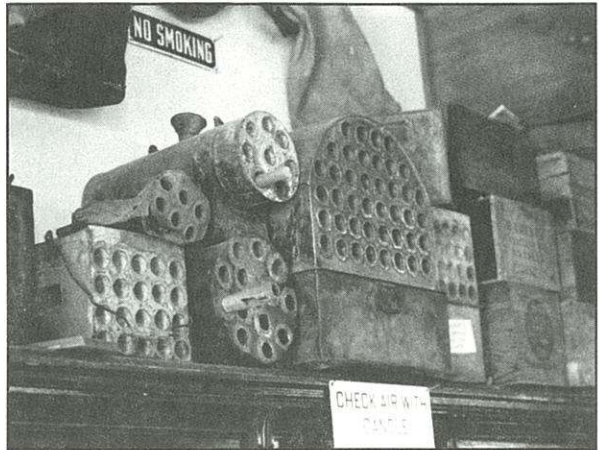
Have fun viewing a small snapshot of the Powder Cache Mining Museum, and when you're next in Colorado (like June, perhaps) make sure you make time to stop by and say howdy to Leo and his family. Plan on staying a while, though, and it wouldn't hurt to bring a couple of trade items.



Crown jewel of stick lamps, a Justrite no. 77. One of only 3 known, it originally sold for \$2.50. It was discovered several years ago at a Denver flea market.



Blacksmith, name brand and folders keep each other company in one display case.



Powder thawers, including an extremely rare 84-stick beehive style from Leadville, Colorado.



Several carbide cap lamps, inspectors lamps and oil wicks. Rare Baldwins, Brite-Lite's, Pathfinders and a Hansen Force-Feed adorn these shelves.



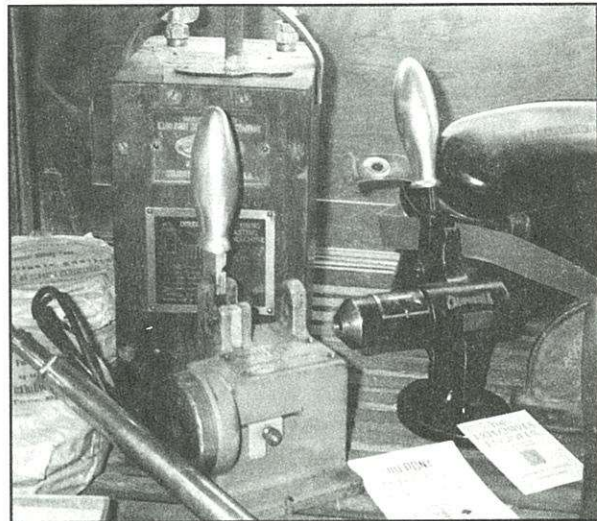
Partial stack of powder boxes. "Muck stick" on right still has a local Georgetown store label.



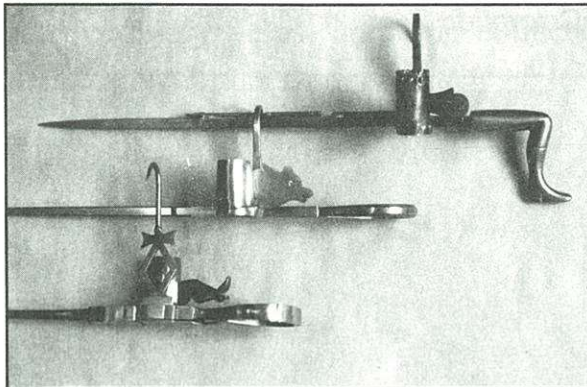
Italian pattern hammers, called "dagos" and Nevada pattern hammers. Four pounders just right for a day of single jacking into hard rock.



Very early blasters handbooks, fuse and DuPont Blasting Supplies handbook, circa 1910.



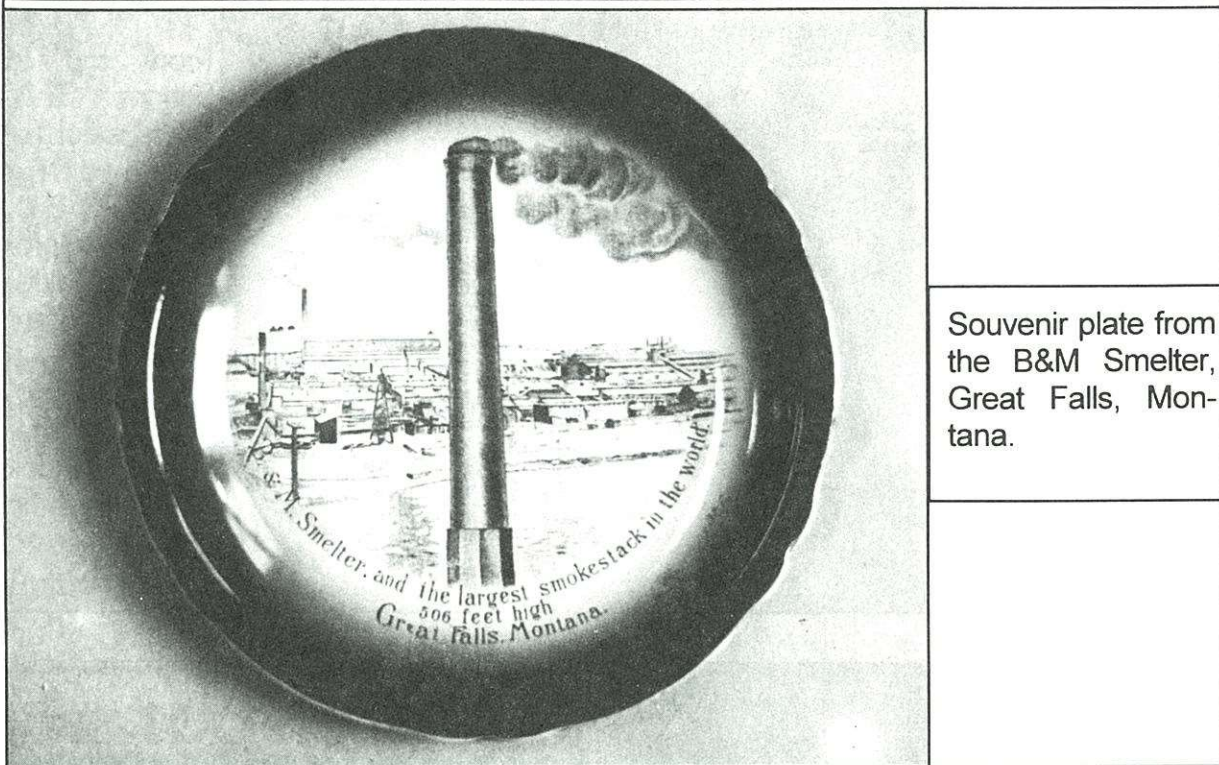
California and DuPont bench crimpers. National fuse cutter on right. German fuse cutter circa 1880's at far left. DuPont blasting machine in background.



Three fine examples of fancy candlesticks. Wolf's head thumb piece holds a green stone for an eye. Bottom stick purportedly made by C.H. Garland in Silver Plume, Colorado.



A nice display of blasting cap tins. Among the bunch reside a rare Fort Pitt and a rare American Cap Company tin.



Beautiful souvenir china. Plate at left from the Independence Mine in Cripple Creek, plate at right from the Gold Coin Mine in Victor, Colorado.

