

# A MINER'S LETTER

by Rick Yarborough  
Concord, California

and Mark Bohannon  
Oro Grande, California

One of the interesting side aspects of mining artifact collecting is that of finding more in-depth information about certain items, locations and persons. An increasing number of collectors are becoming more involved in the research of background information. Many collectors now not only want to know about the carbide cap lamps that Frank Guy manufactured, but also about the man behind those lamps. Who were the Trethaways who manufactured all of those different oil wicks? More and more collectors want to "see" who these people were. The same can be applied to certain mining localities, towns, specific people and times.

Most collectors usually have one or two favorite mining towns or districts that they specifically try to find related items from. Places like Butte, Montana; Bisbee, Arizona; the Mother Lode of California; the Michigan copper region; the Tri-State area of Joplin, Missouri; Leadville, Colorado; etc. Many of these items may not be truly mining artifacts, but they do relate to the town and its overall mining atmosphere.

Such is the case with this letter that Rick picked up recently. Although its a plain, handwritten letter, it gives a lot of insight about how the times were for a particular miner in early 1925. The letter, reprinted below for easier reading, was written by a miner named George in Stanislaus, California, to his friend John Williams in Stockton, California. Note that throughout the letter there is no punctuation and his spelling has a lot to be desired.

Stanislaus, Calif.  
Jan 16 - 25

Freind John I am up here digging a way when I am through with this job I will not take a nother like it soon a gain that Powder is no good instead of exploding it catches on Fire I have tryed evry way I can not explode it with a half a Stick of Giant it makes lot of smoke and that is all I shall ask the Gent to refund my money or give me some Powder that will explode I sent with Ruf to Sonora for

Judson Powder the same as we used in the Shaft they gave him Giant 40 % Ruf dos not no Judson when he seas it I am working a way with what I have got but can make no headway I suppose I will have to go to to Sonora and get it my Self if my Ground dos not change I wish you would get me a Box of Candles and Send them to Stanislaus By Parcel Post get the 20 Set case I have bin using Carbide it costs 15 cts a day you sea that is to expenciv for poor People I have Carbide to run me next week it has bin Freezing ever since I came up here it Snowed and Rained all day yesterday Cleared off cold and Frosty this old cabbin of Johnsons is as Cold as your Blacksmith shop that old log cabbin at the mill was warmer this leaves me well hope it finds you and Frank the Same

George

Although items like this are not the hard-core artifacts like carbide lamps, candlesticks, powder boxes and the like that most collectors want, these sideline paper items are often very interesting to read and are usually inexpensive to pick up.

