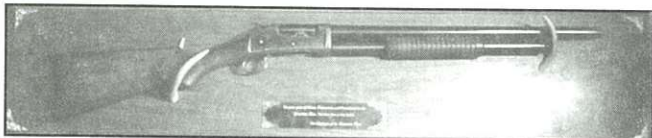


Guarding the Bullion

by Al Winters

Western gold and silver mines presented many security challenges for the operators throughout the mining, milling, storage and shipping processes. Coarse gold in the ores became the target of a few underground miners and at least a few mill workers were tempted by the fines which collected in the stamp traps and on amalgam plates. Temptation however, was magnified many times over when the ores were finally processed into bullion. At this point bullion bars were as good as gold and received the utmost attention during the storage and final shipment from the property. Many highway robbery attempts and at least a few successes were recorded as bullion shipments were made from isolated mines and settlements throughout the vast Western territory.

Guards were hired and armed by the various gold mining and transportation companies to protect the mine's product from both internal and external theft. Gold bullion from the Homestake Mine was shipped by stage during the early years and later by rail after train service was established in the 1880's. The picture is that of a Homestake bullion guard and a bullion shipment to the



Winchester 12 Gauge Shotgun.

U.S. Mint. The guard is Mr. Harry Teer, who served Homestake in several capacities over many years. The arms used by the Homestake bullion guards during this period were the Winchester 12 gauge, riot Model 1897



A turn-of-the-century guard stands watch over an impressive stack of bullion.

shotgun with an outside hammer and Colt 1892, 38 caliber revolver.

Both weapons were marked with the letters HMC cut or burned into the shotgun stock and HMCO cut or burned into the pistol grip. The revolver shown is also numbered and the words Homestake 3 stamped into the metal Frame (probably means there are at least 2 others somewhere). The revolver and shotgun shown make

wonderful additions to my collection of Homestake artifacts and I only wish they could talk.



Colt 1892 - 38 cal revolver

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