

## The Mining Museum

by Robert L. Fox Jr.

The beautiful rolling hills of southeastern Wisconsin are home to lead and zinc mining towns such as Platteville, Mineral Point, Shullsburg, and Dodgeville. No longer will you find any mines in operation; the last, Eagle Picher, closed in 1979. This is however, an area where you can still enjoy eating the Cornish pastry while enjoying the history of the area. Lead mining was important enough that when Wisconsin became a state in 1848, the great seal of the new state showed a miner with a pick in one quadrant.

Located on East Main Street in Platteville is The Mining Museum and Bevan Lead Mine operated by the city of Platteville. Platteville and The Mining Museum are located in the heart of the Upper Mississippi Lead-Zinc District.

Through the use of graphic arts, miniature models, and dioramas, The Mining Museum strives to involve the visitor into understanding the heritage and history that mining played in shaping the history of the area.

The museum has displays showing the tools that were used in zinc and lead mining as well as a small collection of miner's lamps that include safety lamps, candlesticks, oilwick lamps, and carbide lamps. One diorama shows different stages of mining from early "digs" to post World War II adits. Specimens of lead and zinc-related minerals are also displayed.

No visit to the museum will be complete without taking part in a tour through the Bevan Lead Mine. Here you will be able to view additional displays including timbering, drilling and blasting, and ore "mucking."

The museum also has an operating 1931 locomotive which was manufactured by the George F. Whitcomb Company of Rochelle, Illinois. The locomotive was owned by the Vinegar Hill Zinc Company and was used near Shullsburg in the Blackstone Mine, a mine with seven miles of tunnels.

If by chance your visit to The Mining Museum is during late July, the museum hosts a special event demonstrating drilling, tramming ore, and hoisting.



## The MacKay School of Mines

by Len Gaska

The museum at the MacKay School of Mines of the University of Nevada in Reno, is long on mineral specimens and short on mining artifacts. But what they do have will bring tears to the eyes of any mine lighting collector! Not only are the few lamps and candlesticks rare or unique, virtually every item is in mint condition. There are two Hoppe Brite-Lite carbide cap lamps, most likely an early design, with water doors very similar to the Ever-Ready. One of the Brite-Lites has hand handles and the other has a reflector hood complete with glass front. The display also includes an early nickel plated Wolf cap lamp in mint condition. Drool!! Also included were several very nice and unusual Wolf hand lamps, and a nickel plated Baldwin Lightning Bug with hand handles mounted on a soft cap, the likes which I have never seen before. For the candlestick collector, the display had three incredible sticks made by John C. Doerfler of Goldfield, Nevada in 1910 (see page 81 **A Collector's Guide to Antique Miner's Candlesticks**, Wilson/Bohrink). These candlesticks must be seen to be believed! Also included are several safety lamps and a very early blasting machine. The MacKay School of Mines museum probably has the highest concentration of rare and desirable mine lamps of any museum in this country. I wonder what all they have in storage??