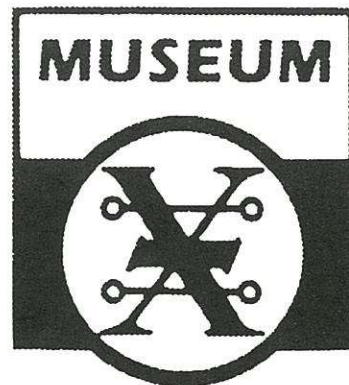


THE ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

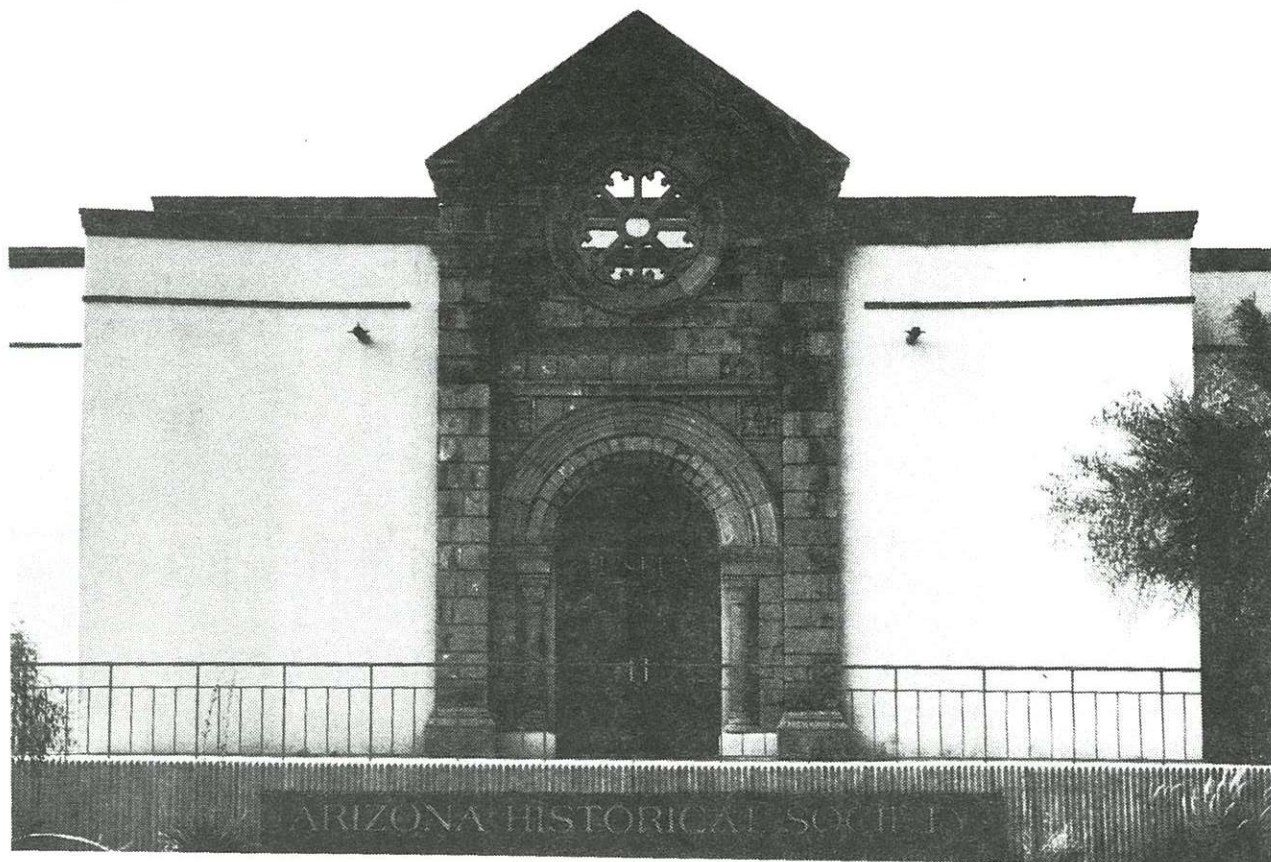
MUSEUM, TUCSON

by **Wendell E. Wilson**
Tucson, Arizona

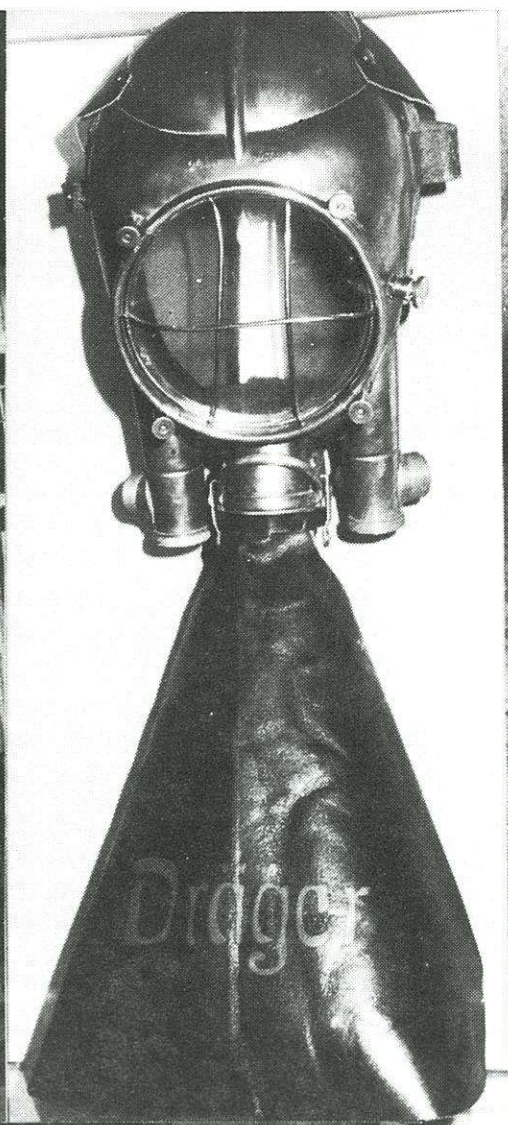
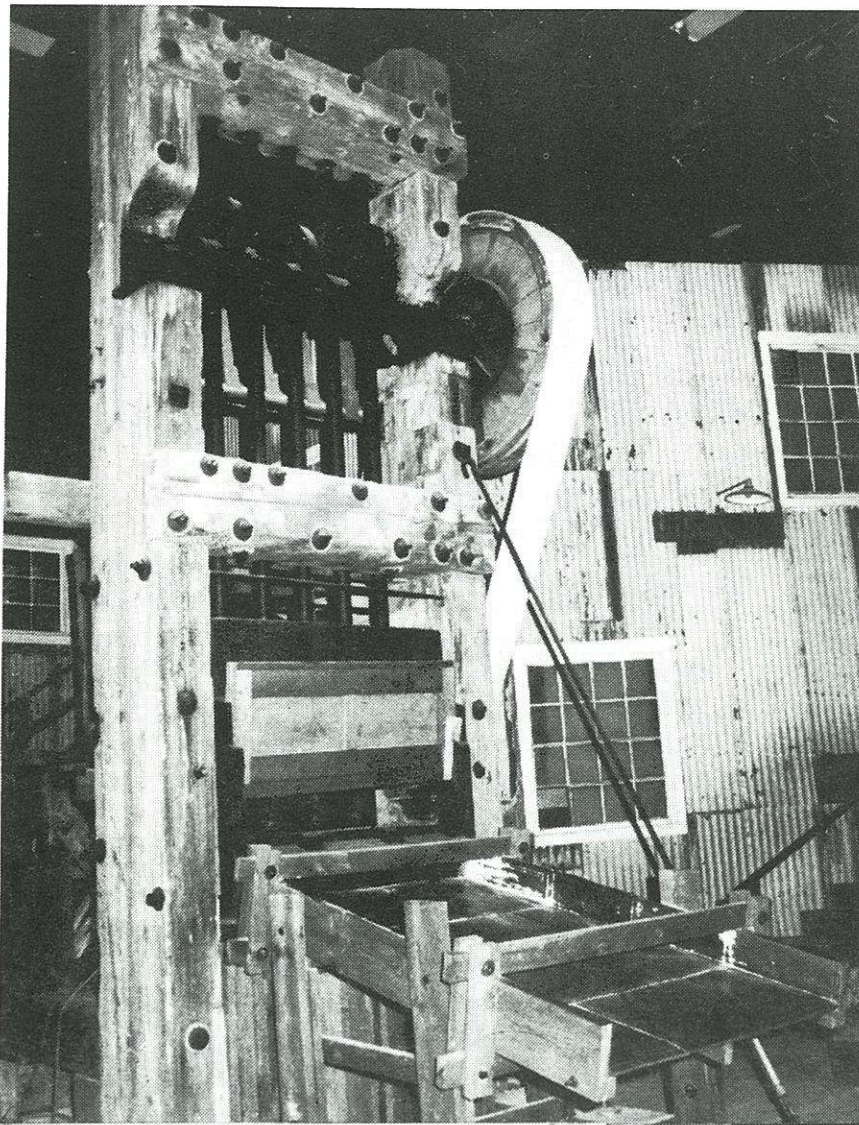


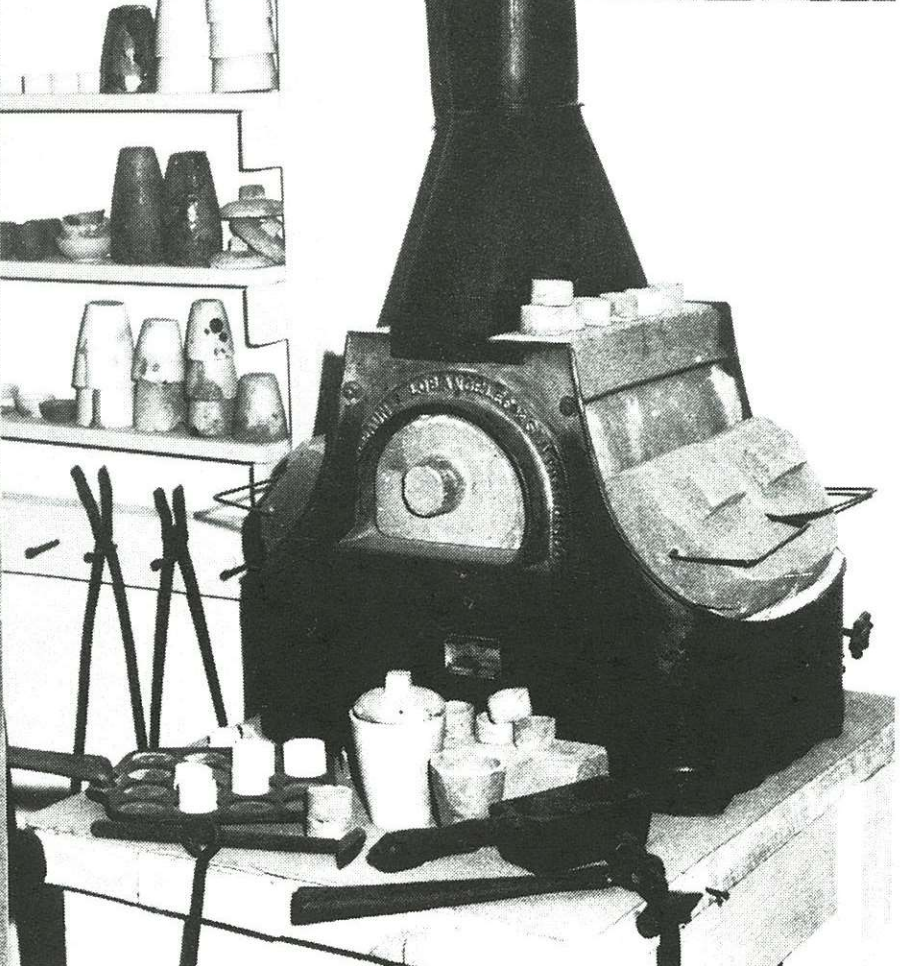
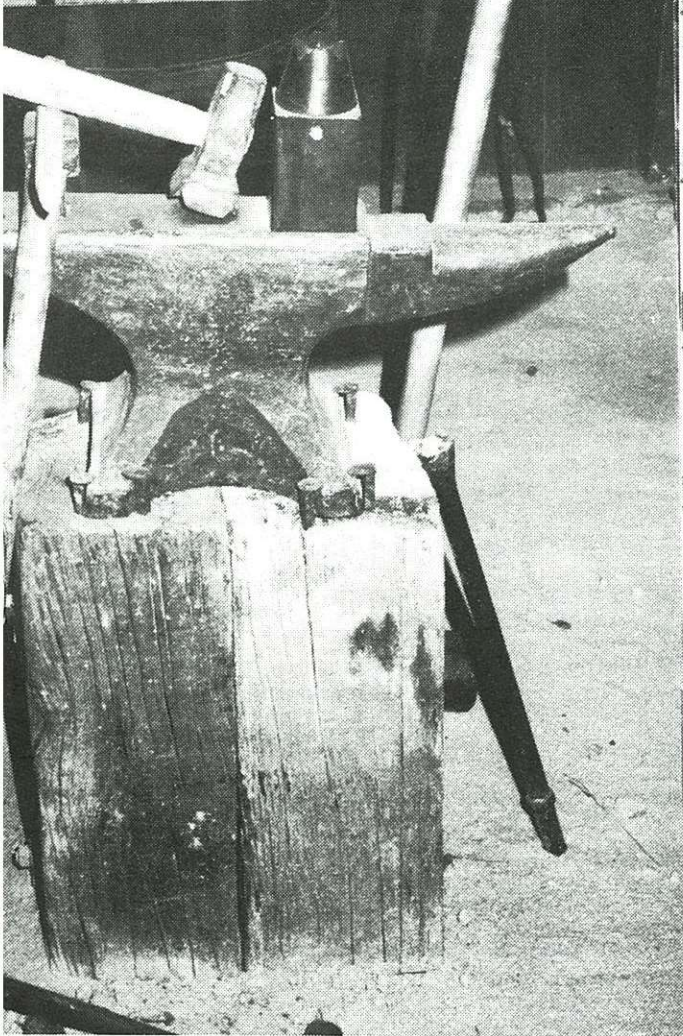
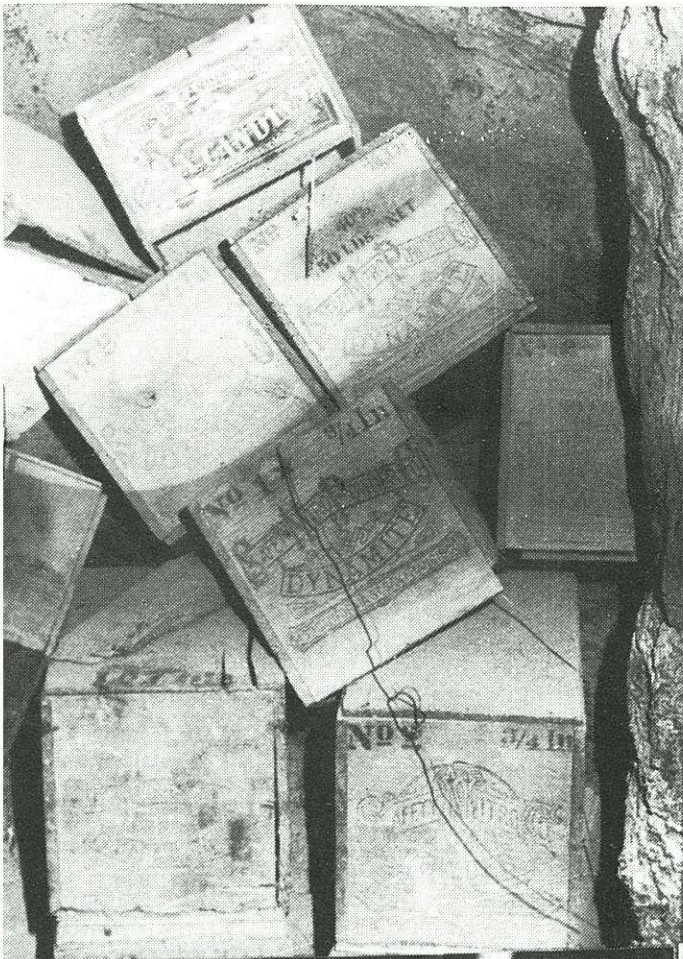
The Arizona Historical Society was founded in 1884 to begin the task of recording and preserving Arizona's rich historical heritage. A significant part of that heritage involves the history of mining in Arizona, from the Spanish Conquistadors to the modern underground and open-pit mining operations of the 20th century. Consequently, the Society's museum has devoted a significant portion of its space to mining artifacts and exhibits about mining in early Arizona.

The "Arizona Mining Hall," as that portion of the museum is called, was dedicated in 1979, thanks to corporate donations from Arizona's most prominent mining companies. It includes a full-scale, 85-foot underground mine tunnel, complete with timbers, track, ore cars and stopes being worked by mannequins in period dress. At one end of the tunnel is a miner's cage (elevator) and shaft station, complete with mine bell signal sign. Even the rock and dust on the floor is surely authentic; I



The Arizona Historical Society Museum. The entrance structure was salvaged from an early Arizona church.



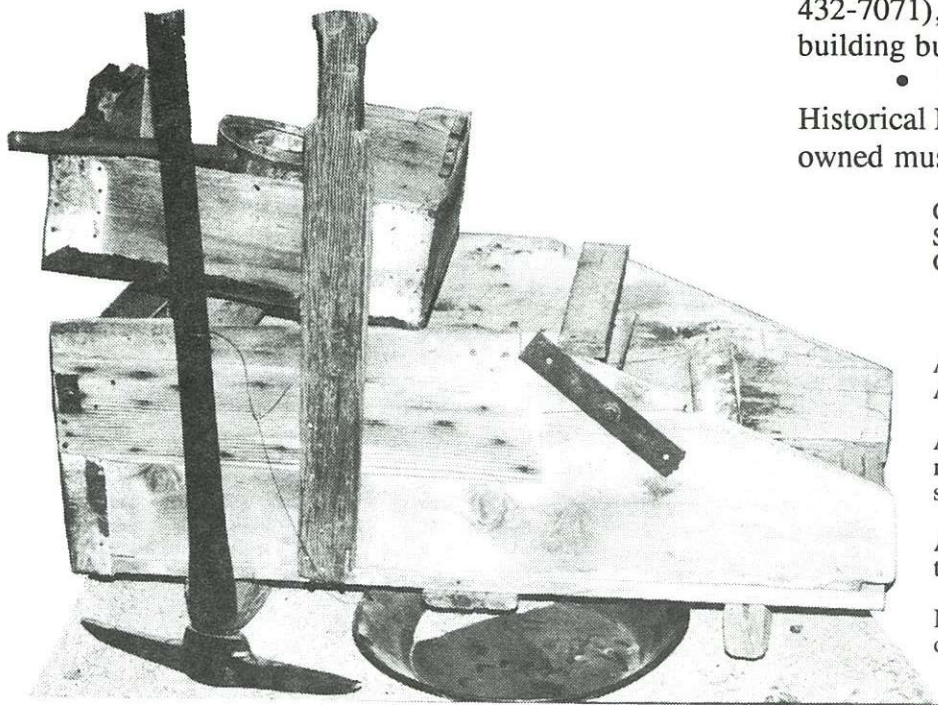


remember when this exhibit first opened, it even *smelled* like a mine, although that effect has diminished over the years. Odd little corners and dark recesses in the tunnel contain typical refuse (e.g. empty powder and candle boxes) piled carelessly just as the old miners would have done.

In addition to the tunnel there is a fully equipped assayer's office, a mine blacksmith shop, a miner's tent stocked with memorabilia, and (remarkably) a full-size five-stamp mill, crusher and Wilfley gold concentrator.

Among the most interesting old lighting devices in the museum's collection is a fancy miner's candlestick, a one-of-a-kind blacksmith model with a heart-shaped thumb lever and the initials (E.F.H.) of its owner. This piece is not in the Arizona Mining Hall, but out in the area devoted to general early Arizona history, where there is a case or two on mining as well.

Surveying instruments, a large brass bullion scale, a Dräger mine rescue mask, and a wide range of other items (e.g. gambling equipment) used by miners are complemented by an interesting array of old photos.



A 'rocker' used by placer miners; it could process a larger volume of stream gravel than the traditional gold pan, although the pan was usually used to make the final separation from the heavy concentrate produced by the rocker.

The Arizona Historical Society Museum is located near the University of Arizona campus at 949 E. Second Street in Tucson (phone 602-628-5774). Museum hours are 10-4 Monday through Saturday and 12-4 on Sunday. Admission is \$3. The society's historical library and a gift shop (with fake candlesticks usually on sale) are also in the museum building.

Readers may be interested to know that, although rather sparsely populated relative to some other states, Arizona is home to more than 175 museums of various sorts. Many of these museums also have mining artifacts in their collections. Examples include:

- The Jerome Historical Society Mine Museum, corner of Main and Jerome Streets, Jerome, AZ (602-634-5477).
- The Gold King Mine and Museum, located one mile northwest of Jerome on the Perkinsville Road (no phone).
- The Arizona Mineral Museum on the grounds of the State Capital in Phoenix. (602-255-3791)
- The Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, 5 Copper Queen Plaza, Bisbee (602-432-7071), in the former Phelps Dodge office building built in 1897.
- The Tombstone Courthouse State Historical Park and several other small, privately owned museums in Tombstone.

CAPTIONS FOR THE ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWN FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE CENTERFOLD.

TOP ROW

A full-size five-stamp mill salvaged from an old Arizona mine.

A Dräger mine rescue outfit, designed to allow miners to breathe for a short time in bad air situations while carrying out rescue operations.

An assortment of candle and powder boxes tossed carelessly in an alcove.

Miners (mannequins) operating a jack-leg drill; charges and fuses are set in the working face.

BOTTOM ROW

A view down part of the recreated mine tunnel; the elevator is to the rear, and stopes are developed off to the right.

Mine elevator and mine bell sign.

Anvil and tools in the reconstructed mine blacksmith shop.

Assayer's oven and cupelling equipment.