

Superior Sign

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The town of Superior, Arizona is about an hour's drive east of Phoenix. It is one of the oldest mining towns in the state, and most of the original adobe buildings remain as they were 100 years ago. The town is inhabited largely by Mexican-Americans whose ancestors worked for the Magma Mine Co.

On the main highway going through Superior is a "junk" dealer whose front yard is littered with locally found antiques: license plates, ore cars, tamping irons, dynamite boxes, and mining signs. The owner, Glen Layne appears to be about seventy years old and most times he would just as soon talk about local history than sell his junk.

A couple years ago I spotted the sign shown above. It is blue porcelain with white lettering. The logo in the lower right corner shows it to be made by Stonehouse. This sign, unlike others I had seen (see below) was written in Spanish, presumably for the Mexican miners. Only one problem, Mr. Layne wouldn't sell it...at any price.



Stonehouse sign. 6.5 X 9 inches.



From Superior, Arizona, this Stonehouse sign is in Spanish: "FOR CAGE TOUCH 2-5". 7 X 10 inches.

Last Fall I decided to buy a tiny old brick house in Superior. It was built in the 1930's by the mine and was constructed from bricks made at the Magma Brickyard. It needed a bit of restoration, but the price was less than I paid for my last car.

Before I bought the house, Mr. Layne told me he'd sell me the sign only when I moved to Superior. Well, I haven't exactly moved there, but I went by last month and told him I'd bought the house and I was here for my sign. Without a second thought, he pulled it off the wall. It is a cage signal sign, and translates to: "FOR CAGE TOUCH 2-5".

Mr. Layne is full of lore, and once showed me how you can tell if a sign is made by Stonehouse, even if it is not marked. The "foot" of the "R" letter turns forward. The sign shown at lower left is just such a piece. Indeed, every *marked* Stonehouse I've seen is this way, and I've yet to see a non-Stonehouse with the bent-foot "R".

I am told that many people in Superior have old mining antiques stored away in their garage, and that these items are almost always for sale. I can hardly wait to get started.