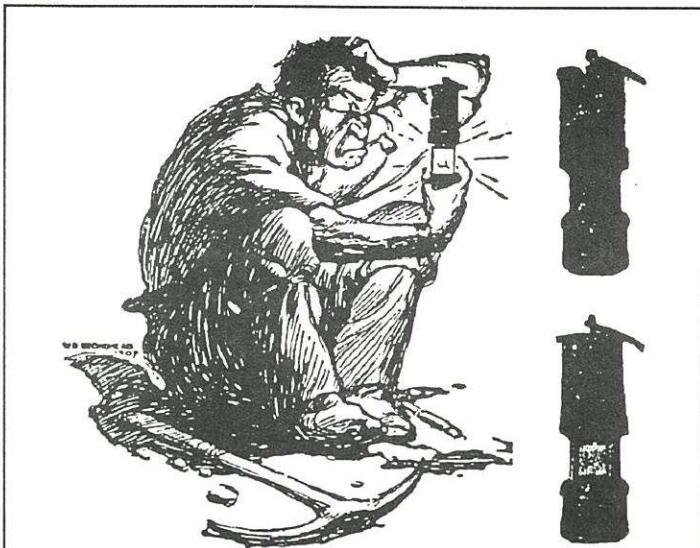


Smoke and Chew: A Miner's Way of Life

by Jim Van Fleet

Over the years, we have seen a number of tobacco products that related to some mining theme. And although coal mining and open flames often didn't go together, it seems that the miner still longed for his smoke. At least one mining text from the

Ignoring such dangers, the tobacco products themselves advertised mining as a profession with a certain amount of glamour. One cigar box depicts the "Knight of the Mine," with his oil wick lamp and tools. A good cigar was the "Miner's Pal."

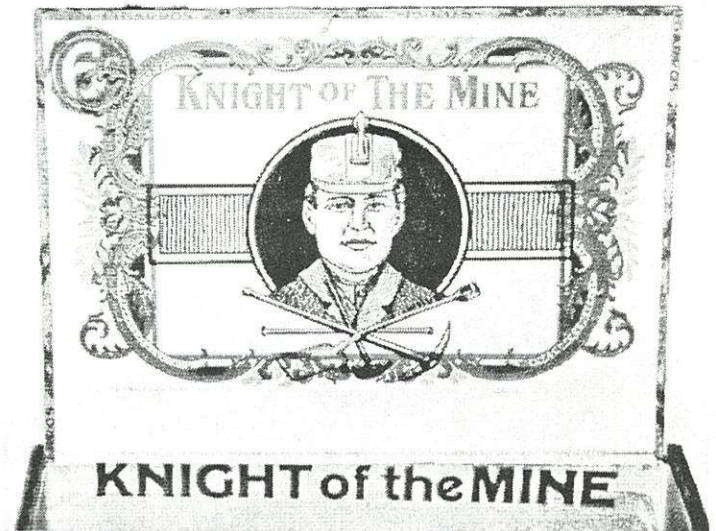


No Smoking Allowed!

To prevent smoking in your mines you should install our **SAFE MINERS' SAFETY LAMPS** which are fitted with **Hailwood's Patent IMPREGNABLE MAGNETIC LOCK** having extra-strong spring; also **HAILWOOD'S PATENT** fool-proof, flame-proof, **UNDERGROUND LAMP RELIGHTING MACHINES**. **Lamproom Lighting and Unlocking Machines; Lamp Cleaning Machines; Filling Machines; Iron Lampstands; Cleaning Benches, etc., etc.**

early 1900's reports that coal miners used to light their pipes by sucking the flame through the gauzes of a safety lamp!

At least one major mining disaster has been traced to a lit pipe. The 1907 explosion of the United Coal Company Naomi Mine, in Fayette City, Pennsylvania, was probably sparked when a worker stopped in an inactive part of the mine for a smoke.¹



*Knight of the Mine cigar box.
(Thanks to Blair Keefer.)*



Miner's pal cigar box.

Other tobacco labels depict the miner striking it rich with a huge gold nugget.

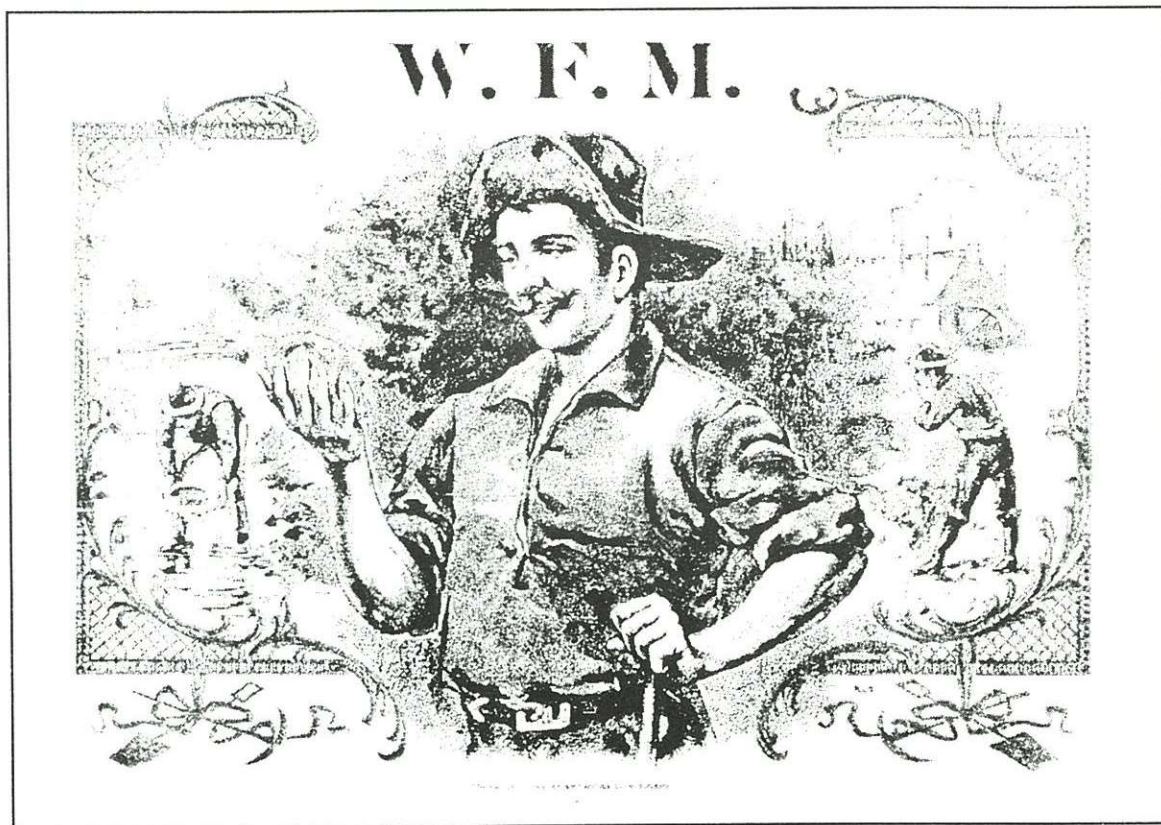


Welcome Nugget cigar box label,

Some tobacco labels show a stylish miner with his oil wick lamp. "Miner's Light" brand labels are particularly desirable collectibles.



Miner's Light tobacco label.



*1899 label showing a happy member of the Western Federation of Miners
(from Bob Schroth collection).*

Still other tobacco brands celebrated the coal itself; anthracite was often known as “Black Diamond,” and “King Coal” was mined from Pennsylvania to Colorado.

Besides these beautiful paper products, smoking and chewing tobacco was also sold in cans. The King Koal tin shows oil wick lamps, tools, and mine cars. Other examples include “Miner King long cut,” or “Miners and Puddlers” tobacco, in both tin and cardboard containers (below).

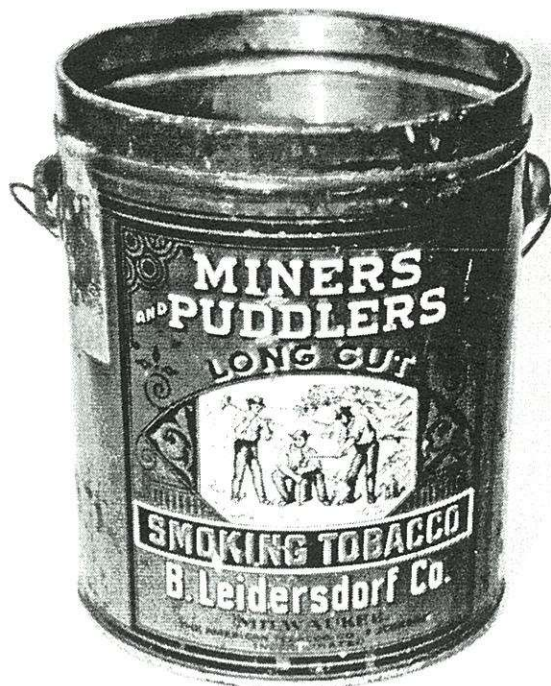


Black Diamond cigar box label. (Special thanks to Neal Ressler, who loaned his tobacco labels to be photographed.)

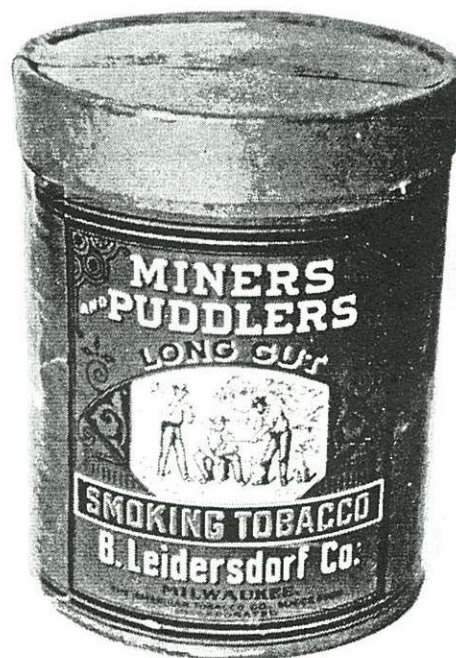


KING COAL CIGAR FACTORY MANUFACTURERS **KING COAL** TRINIDAD, COLO.

King Coal label.



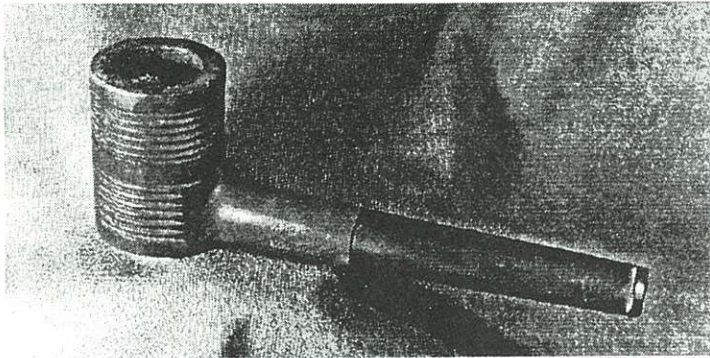
(From Paul Johnson collection.)





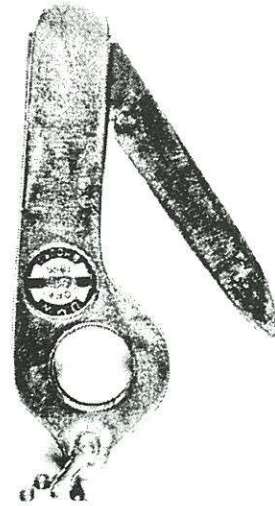
King Coal tobacco tin.

Finally, there are the tools of smoking themselves. As John Kynor reports, DuPont offered promotional pipes marked "DUPONT EXPLOSIVES," with the bowl for the pipe carved in the form of a blasting powder can! These pipes came with either a curved or straight stem. ²



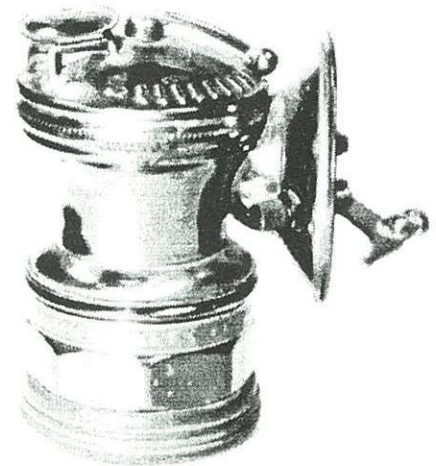
*Dupont pipe carved in the form of powder can.
Lower photo shows stamping.*

Another unusual item is the U.M.W.A. cigar-cutter shown here.



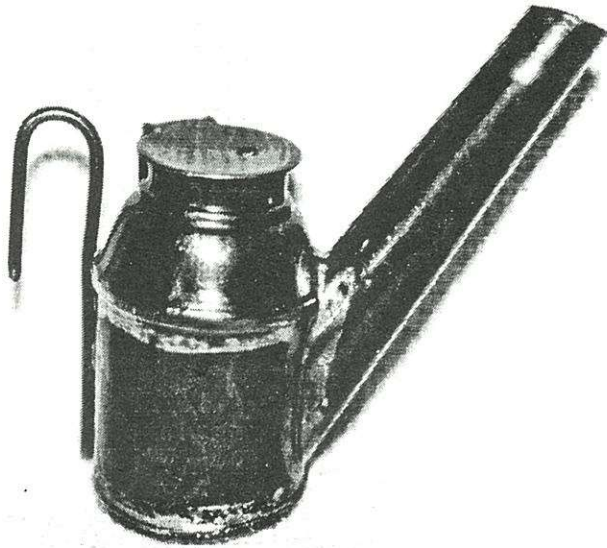
Cigar cutter - Pen knife. Actual size 2 3/8 X 3/4 inches. Bill Lorah collection & photo. United Mine workers. From Cranberry Colliery Employee.

My own favorite tobacco/mining items are actual mining lamps or imitation lamps adapted for use by smokers. The most famous is certainly the batch of Auto-Lite cap lamps that were converted into cigarette lighters for the "Lorain Dock and Coal Sales Co., Cincinnati, Ohio." Each "Auto-Lighter" bears a red and gold enamel band around the base with this company name. The base itself has lead poured into it to make it a suitable paper-weight and more stable as a lighter (below).

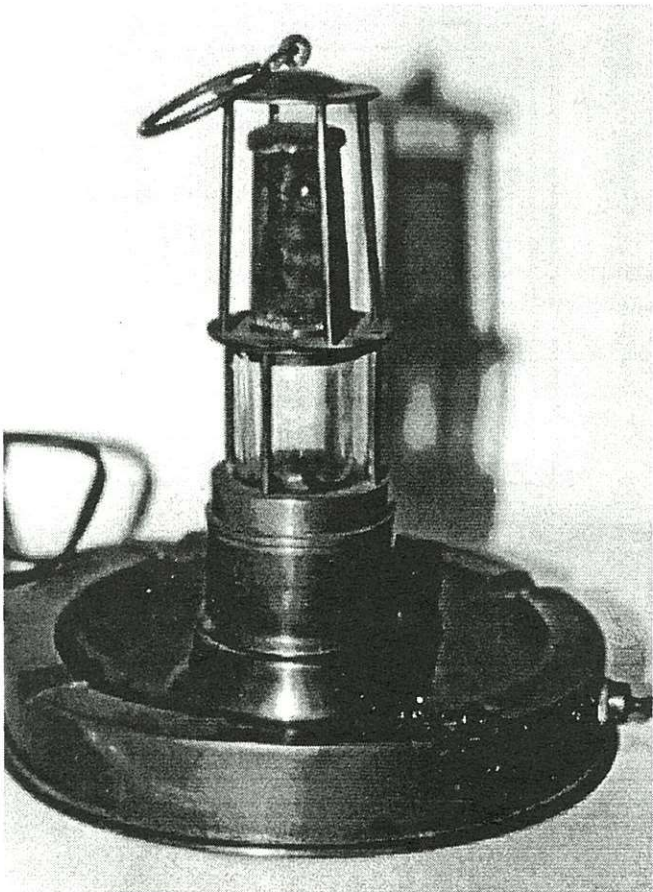


The water chamber of this lamp has been sealed off from the base, and filled with cotton so it can hold lighter fluid. The burner tip has been replaced by a wick, and an additional snap-lighter attachment was added to the reflector.

One famous lamp (below) is the oil wick marked “Smoke and Chew Shining Light Tobacco.” Several examples are known, although the stamping in these is consistently weak.



One of the most bizarre tobacco accessories I have seen is a safety lamp ashtray (below). It's wired or an electric bulb, and the lamp actually unscrews from the ashtray base.



Above: Cast iron ashtray marked “Kaier’s Special Beer.”

Last, but not least, is a bit of mining memorabilia that combines several vices. It’s a cast-iron ashtray marked “KAIER’S SPECIAL BEER” from Scranton, PA, showing a coal mine with a mug of beer (between smoke, no doubt!)

Sources:

1. Jackson Carlton, The Dreadful Month, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1982.
2. Kynor, John “Smoke After the Shot”, Mining Artifact Collector, No. 15, Summer 1992, page 18.

Many thanks to Bob Schroth, Paul Johnson, Kelley Deem, Paul and Nancy Hyatt, Neal Ressler, Len Gaska, Bill Lorah, Nelson Ressler, and Blair Keefer for contributing photographs and information for this article.