

# Several Dedicated Mining Company Fuse Cutters

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The acquisition of mining artifacts that can be traced to the original user is somewhat unusual. The two fuse cutters shown in Fig. 1 are directly traceable to the mining company that originally acquired them. The top cutter is from the Anaconda Copper Mining Company's Butte operations, while the bottom cutter is from the Climax Mine of Climax Molybdenum Company.

## The Anaconda Cutter

When originally acquired, the Anaconda cutter shown in Figure No. 2 was one of those "what is it" tools. It supposedly made its appearance in the Butte underground mines in the 1950's but its use was ill-defined and according to the miners was used by the electricians more than by the miners. As a result, most of these cutters will be found with damaged cutting edges due to their use as wire cutters. The actual intended use of the cutter was for Bunch Blasting as shown on the training posters in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. These original Anaconda posters define the procedure with the first poster showing the use of a pocket knife. This poster is dated 1948. The poster pertaining to the fuse cutter is not dated. As can be seen from the poster, the nose cutter is used to end split the fuse, the internal cutter to diagonally cut the fuse as a spitter, and the large circular cutter cuts, at one time, a bunch of from 6 to 15 fuses.

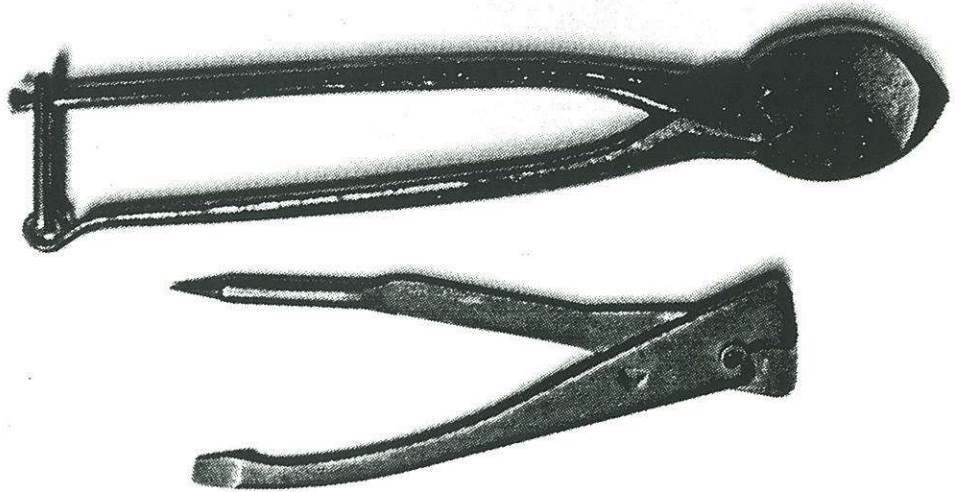
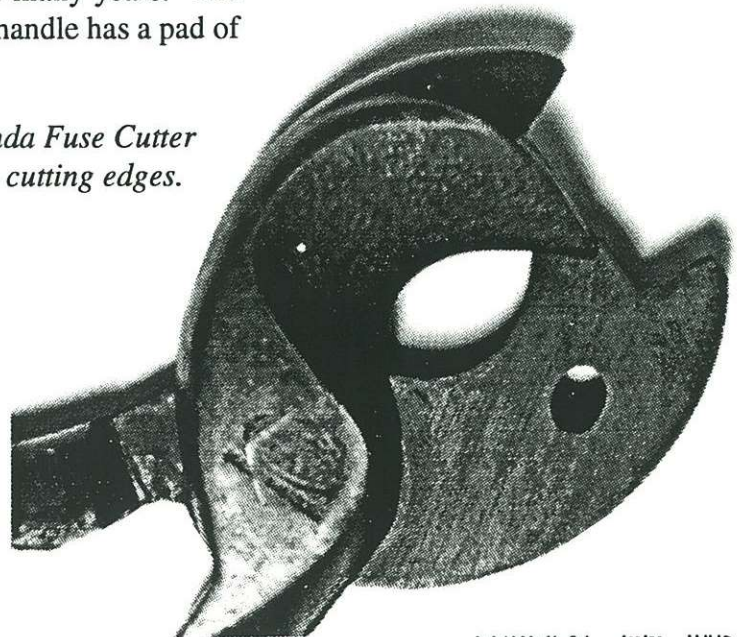


Fig. 1. Anaconda (top) and Climax (bottom) fuse cutters.

The cutters are nine and one half inches long and were made by the Peck, Stow, and Wilcox Company, and are stamped with the PEXTO logo on the center pivot. The Montana Hardware Company, a subsidiary of the Anaconda Company, sold PEXTO tools for many years. The underside of the handle has a pad of

brazing which was stamped with a property number though some were not numbered. A safety ring was installed to keep the cutter closed when not in use. Painted black, it was a finely made tool.

Fig. 2. Anaconda Fuse Cutter showing three cutting edges.



## The Climax Cutter

The Climax Mine is located on Fremont Pass at an elevation of 11,318 feet in the central Colorado Rockies. At one time, it was the largest block caving operation in the world. The fuze cutter shown in Fig. 5 is from Climax and is believed to have been used in the 1970's. A fairly large quantity were found in recent years when some of the surface facilities were demolished. It is believed that the cutter was used to cut the small diameter Ensign Bickford type plastic detonating fuse or Nobel type fuse. The diameter of the cutter is such that it will not accept cloth-bound fuse. Climax miners of the period cannot recall using the cutter. It is, therefore, in the "what is it" category. The cutter is similar to the No. 4 Dupont crimper/cutter without the crimper and with the enlarged flat cutter head. As with the No. 4, it is a stamping that has a riveted pivot in lieu of the screw pivot.

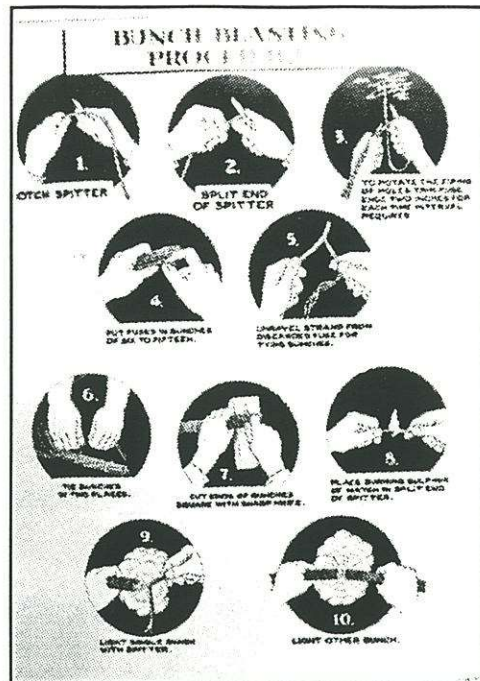


Fig. 3. Bunch Blasting using a pocket knife.



Fig. 4. Bunch Blasting using PEXTO fuse cutter.

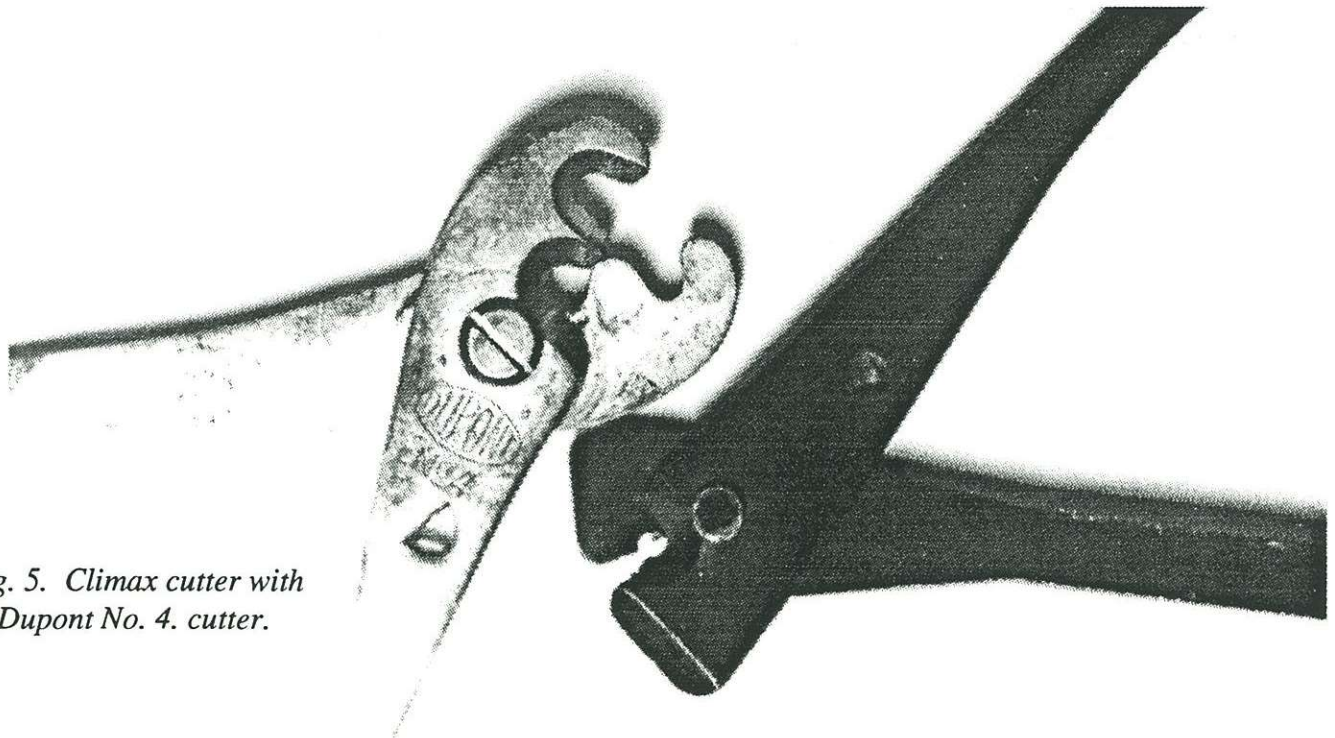


Fig. 5. Climax cutter with Dupont No. 4. cutter.