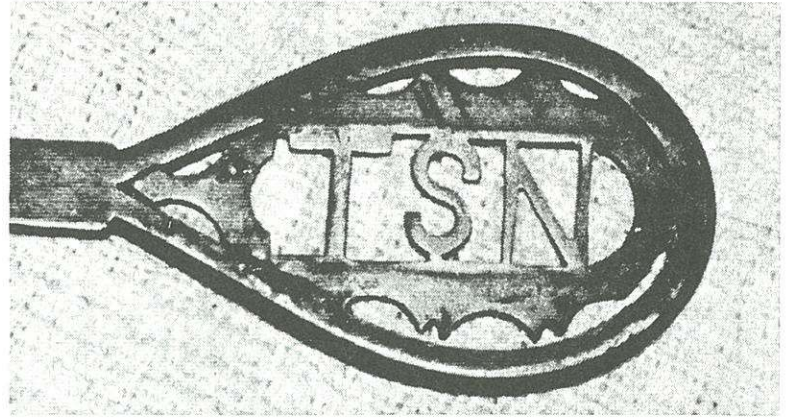


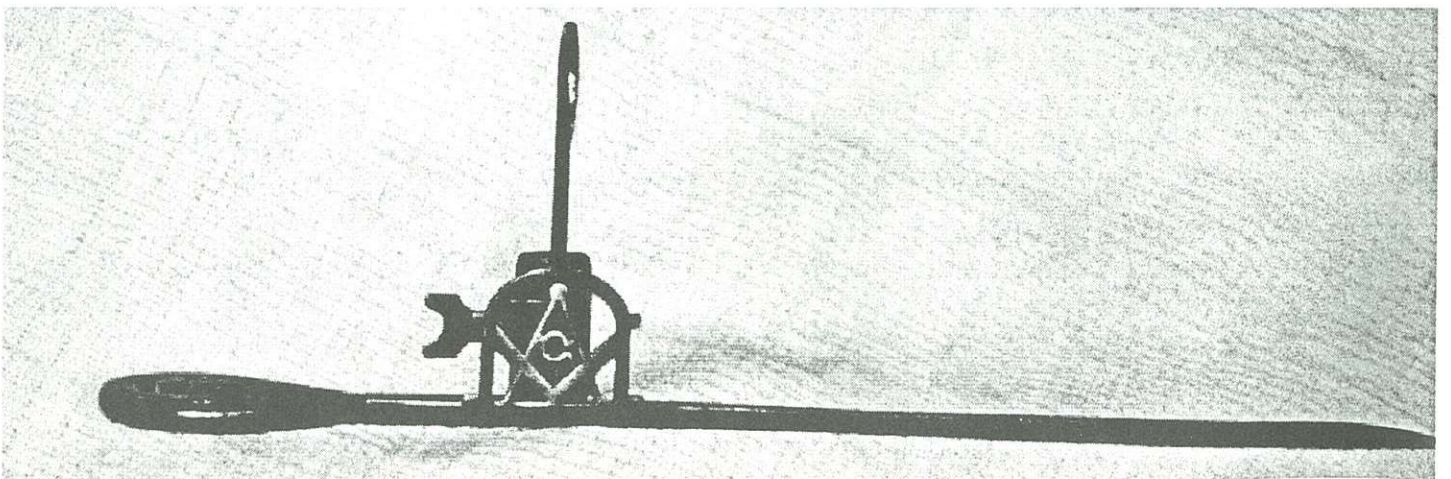
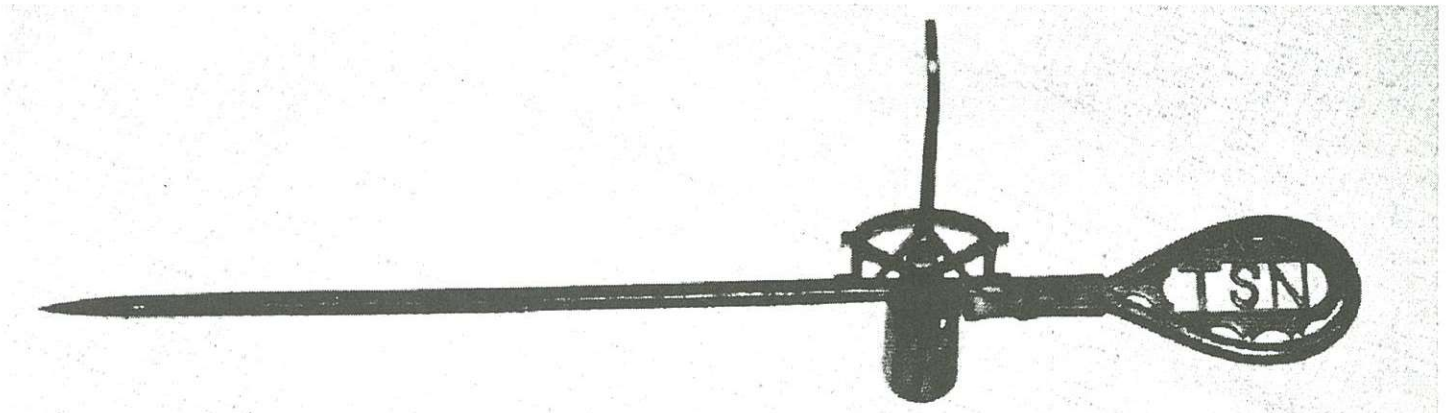
Fraternal Presentation Candlestick

by Al Winters



I was lucky to acquire a beautiful presentation candlestick as well as several other mining artifacts all of which belonged to a Homestake Miner by the name of Thomas Sullivan Noonan. These artifacts were preserved by long-time Black Hills historian, photographer and studio owner George Fassbender of Spearfish, SD.

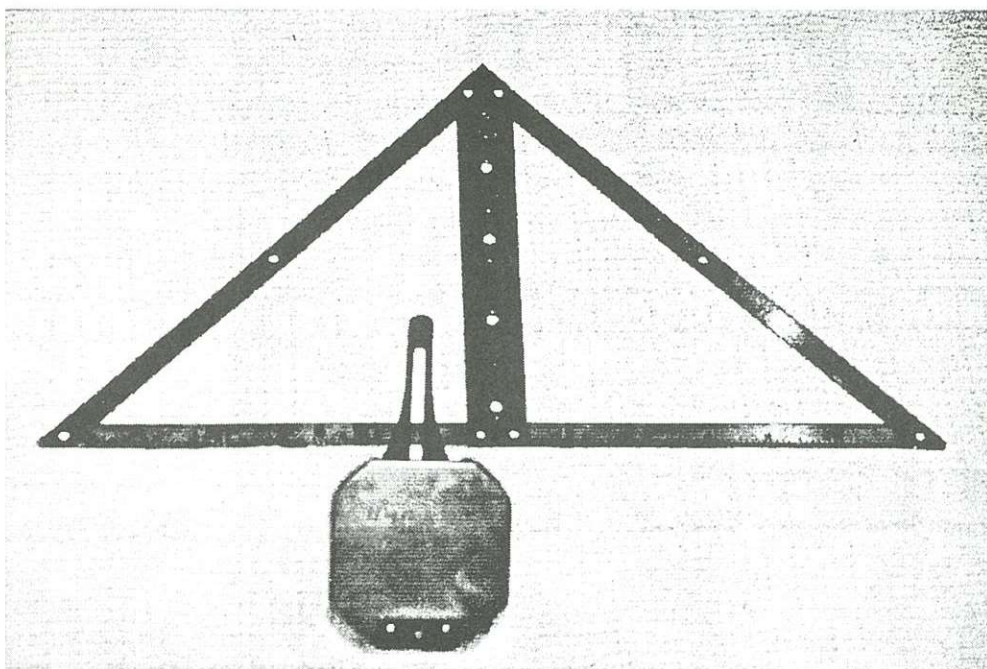
The nickel plated all-steel candlestick is 16 inches long and with a 5 inch high hook. A Masonic compass and square emblem is built within the base of the hook and the initials TSN are inlaid in the handle. The faceted thimble with an exceptional thumb piece is 2 inches high, smooth on the inside and 9 sided on the outside. What appears to be a brass plating coats both the initials and the Masonic emblem and creates a striking contrast with the nickel plating. The excellent workmanship of this candlestick resembles the type of construction credited to Tony Bono of the Silver Thread Mine near Tombstone, AZ.



Along with the stick came a personalized "Limoges" occupational shaving mug with a picture of a miner holding a pick and wearing a cloth hat with what appears to be an attached oil wick. The name Thos. Noonan is printed in large golden letters beneath the miner. It was common practice at that time for a customer to have his personal shaving mug kept at the Barber Shop for his sole purposes. Other mining artifacts were a folding brass protractor/square-rule/scale surveying piece, an early Brunton compass, a small French compass, a hand-held gold scale in a pocket tin plus a couple of common candlesticks.



Little is known about the "Welshman" but it is recorded that Noonan was born in 1852 in Wales and worked at some of the early mining camps in old Mexico before he took up the call of the Alaskan Gold Rush. After making his stake in Alaska, he hired as a miner on the 1250 level of the Homestake Mine on February 10, 1910. Later that year he was given time off to return to Alaska as a witness in a murder case. Upon his return to Homestake following the trial, he worked until he retired in 1927. Toward the end of his Homestake career, he was assigned to less strenuous jobs such as tool carrier, crusher operator, surface haulage and watchman. This was common practice at Homestake in order that older employees might remain gainfully employed and on the payroll. Noonan worked steadily but did take 3 weeks off in June of 1923 to attend the Michigan State Fair. His only serious accident was a broken leg which occurred on November 1st, 1914 when he was struck by a motor while drilling in a trackdrift. The motor was being operated by the shiftboss at the time. Noonan was well-known and highly respected at Homestake and in Lead, SD. He died at home of myocarditis-pneumonia on July 5, 1929 after a short 3-week illness at the age of 76. Noonan's son Bernard and grandson Ralph, also worked for Homestake in various capacities.



Where and by whom the candlestick was made is unknown. Was it made and presented to Noonan at another camp prior to his time at Homestake or was it made and presented to him upon his retirement from Homestake? Whatever, the stick is of exceptional quality and the type only presented to a very special individual. It is also very rare and a privilege to have a brief history of the candlestick owner.