

Artifact Pictures and Descriptions



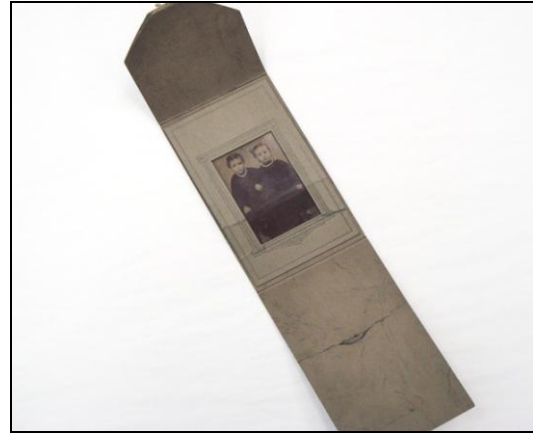
Thimble shot glass

Thimble shots could be made of inexpensive metal or sterling silver. They were usually engraved with the saying, *Only a thimble full*, and were carried by individual miners. Perhaps their owners did not trust the cleanliness of the saloons they frequented and preferred to carry their own shot glasses. Metal was obviously more durable than glass would have been.



Scrip

Miners living in coal camps were usually paid in *scrip*. This was paper currency in different denominations, and it could be used only in the company store. Scrip could not be used outside the coal camp or exchanged for U.S. currency. By spending scrip in the company store, coal miners were in effect returning to their employer the wages they had earned.



Tintype

First called *melainotypes* and then ferrotypes, the tintype was a very popular kind of photography during the 19th century. The tintype borrowed elements from earlier developed *daguerreotypes* and *ambrotypes*. The image was secured on a metal plate that was exposed in the camera. While the daguerreotype used a copper plate coated with silver, the tintype used an iron plate lacquered with black Japan varnish. Like the ambrotypes, the tintype was sensitized with collodion, a highly flammable syrupy solution used to develop pictures. Early on, it was possible to expose four images on one plate. These were then cut apart with tin shears after the plate's development. Later, when the multilens camera was used, twelve to thirty-six tiny gem tintypes could be cut from the same plate. The tintype was patented on February 19, 1856 by Hamilton L. Smith, who graduated from Yale in 1839. He later became a professor of chemistry and physics at Kenyon College in Ohio.

* *The tintype in this Colorado Mining Case History may have a picture that is different from the one shown.*



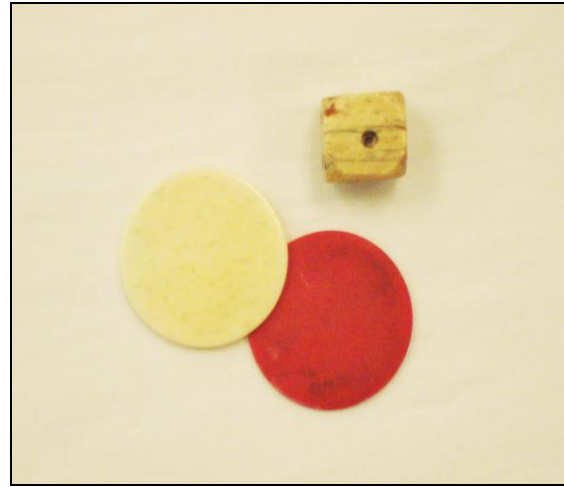
Cutlery

Early Western miners often carried their own knives and forks to use. A jar or container of spoons usually rested in the center of the table, so it was not necessary to carry one's own. You will notice that the fork has three tines. This was very common, especially with less expensive cutlery in the 1860s and 1870s.



Sewing thimble

The first silver sewing thimbles in the United States were imported from Europe, but by the mid-1700s they were being made by silversmiths in America. By the 1800s, thimbles were machine-rolled, and the design on them was impressed in the metal with a roller. Less expensive thimbles were made of brass and other cheaper metals.



Poker chips and dice

Professional gamblers arrived in mining towns almost as fast as the miners. Poker, keno, roulette, faro, and dice were commonly played in saloons and gambling halls. Most of these games had fairly low limits: \$1 or \$2 for poker; 25 cents to \$1 for faro; 10 cents for roulette; and 5 cents a throw for dice were common.

Nevertheless, there were plenty willing to play, so gambling professions could fare quite well. The fancy-dressed professional gambler was often respected in town. He tended to spend a lot, give away a lot, and often had a magnetic personality. Saloon-keepers sometimes hired professionals to man their card tables or encouraged independent gamblers to operate out of their saloons in order to increase business.



Army uniform button

This type of button is called **the Eagle Device with Raised Shield**, and it was used from 1870 to 1902. This was a general service button, suitable for all enlisted men – not officers. After serving in the military, miners might have saved these buttons from their uniforms to use on other clothing they wore in mining camps of the west.



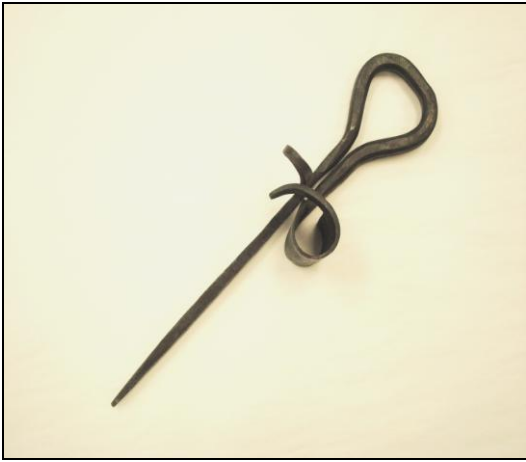
Marbles

The marbles from the 1860s to 1900 ranged from plain, fired clay to glass. The glazed clay marbles with ‘eyes’ or round spots on them are known as **Benningtons**. They were named this not because they were made in Bennington, Vermont, but because the clay resembled pots made there. The ‘eyes’ came from the marbles resting against each other while being fired. Most Benningtons are brown, but some are blue. Most of these marbles were hurriedly rolled out of clay and fired, and they aren’t precisely round. The playing of marbles goes back to Roman times. Marbles were imported to the United States from Europe until the mid-19th century when they began to be manufactured here. Some of the most interesting ones were clear glass with frosted white figures of animals, birds, flowers, or faces inside.



Minerals

The twenty-four rocks and minerals in this collection are all from various locations within Colorado. You will find a brief description of each one in their container kits.



Miner's candle holder

Miners usually carried three candles. Two were kept in his bootleg, and the third was used in a glass lantern while carried through drafty mine shafts. At his work station, the miner took the candle from the lantern and inserted it into a wrought-iron holder just like the one pictured. The holder was then inserted spike-end first into the rock face or a nearby timber. The candle maker at each mine was called the **chandler**. The miner's three candles provided about ten hours of light. Sometimes miners hung their lunch buckets over the candle flame on the wall to keep their lunches hot.



Crucible

This small, cup-like container withstands very high temperatures that are required for heating and melting ore.



Blasting cap tin

Dynamite was commonly used in mines to blast away rock, but to explode, dynamite required a heavy jolt. Small, Tubular, copper blasting caps containing fulminate of mercury were used for this purpose. A cap was inserted into the side of a stick of dynamite, and was activated by a spark or a light tap. Warnings are printed on some of the blasting cap tins. When carelessly handled, the caps could easily cause accidents. Many, including curious children, lost fingers to exploding blasting caps.



Weight for assay scale

Assayers used delicate scales to weigh both the original samples of ore, and the metals that were finally extracted from the ore. This is a troy weight, based on a pound of twelve ounces and an ounce or twenty pennyweights or 480 grains.



Miner's wick cap lamp

Invented in Scotland in about 1850, the lard-oil lamp looked like a small teapot. The body of the lamp held the oil, and a hinged cap sealed the top. A thick, bushy wick filled the spout and was drenched with the oil in the lamp. When lit, the lamp gave off a yellow, smoky flame. It burned longer and was cheaper than tallow candles. It was also very light and easy to carry. Another advantage was the thick wick and bright flame which made it less susceptible to drafts than open candle flames. The hook on the back of the lamp allowed the miner to carry it on his cap.



Mining cart track spike

Except for its small size, this spike resembles a railroad spike. This one was used for mining ore cart tracks. Workers called **muckers** loaded the loose rock or coal into ore carts. Often these carts ran on rails from inside the mine to the outside where the ore would be weighed and dumped.



Carbide lamp

The lamp consisted of a lower chamber holding calcium carbide, and an upper area filled with water. As the water dripped through an adjustable needle valve onto the carbide, it produced acetylene gas. The gas then passed through a small tube to a gas burner. The polished reflector on the lamp provided much greater light than was possible from a candle or wick lamp. Miners switched to carbide lamps around 1900.

