Candle Holder

Circa: mid 20th Century.

Owned by the Joselin family since 2009. This historic purpose built candle holder was found at Silverton, disused silver mine near the South Australian border.

The artifact's original use was significant during the early 1900’s until the mine's closure late in the 20th century. Candle holders similar to this one were used by miners to illuminate their work area underground.

The purpose of the “spike” was to enable the user to embed the candle in the wall of the underground mining tunnel. The “ring” at the other end was for the miner to pull the candle out of the wall when he moved along the tunnel.

A miners candle (and candle holder) were important as without this simple but valuable tool they completely alone in the dark, often deep underground in confined areas. Observations of the artifact suggest it was made and used by a right handed miner, as the spike curves to the left, indicating thrust from the right hand side of the body. The candle clasp is also situated on the right hand side suggesting that when it was embedded in the tunnel wall, new candles were put in from the right.

In 2009, while exploring the Australian outback on a camel trek, the Joselin Family found the candle holder and brought it to the Southern Highlands where the family uses it as an addition to an outdoor area. For the Joselin family, it symbolizes the strength, determination and resourcefulness of the human spirit.

Note from the Curator:

This historic candle holder is a simple but significant tool in man’s struggle to dominate and control his surroundings. It can be seen as a metaphor for the light at the end of the tunnel as miners labored to attain the riches from deep within the earth at a time when lives were lost and fortunes were made in the rugged Australian outback.

Josh Huggett (Museum Curator)