

Tour de Garage Aids Community Foundation

... continued from page D4



A collection of counterfeit coin detectors from Doug Scougale's collection. The slots verified proper coin size, the scale showed whether the metal was truly precious metal or a counterfeit filled with lead. Photo Cathy Dausman

Forty-niner Haven:

When it comes to daguerreotypes, Mathew Brady and Butch Cassidy were latecomers compared to Doug Scougale. In the past 15 years he has amassed what he proudly calls "an important collection" of Gold Rush-era photography and gold mining memorabilia, includ-

ing some California gold pieces. His second story man cave, although not a garage, was designed and built two years ago by his wife Leighla Douglah, and includes a bar, pool table, office space and room to display his collections.

Scougale began collecting coins as a child; it grew

to become both his avocation and his business.

With an interest in early Americana and a love of in-depth research he found absent from coin collecting – "You can look up the value in a book; what fun is that?" – Scougale began collecting daguerreotypes.

His collection of more than two dozen daguerreotypes shows men with the proceeds of their labor, some holding a poke of gold or coins traded to the assayer's office for nuggets or dust. He owns pictures of gold miners and gold camps from the Gold Rush era; rare, because it was complicated to lug the heavy photographic equipment to California, let alone drag it up to the back country and shoot subjects on site.

Scougale patiently explains the difference between early photographic methods that include daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tin types. He proudly displays his toaster-sized pre-1855 era three-quarter plate Allen camera. There are gold scales to inspect, along with counterfeit coin balances, a safe made in San Francisco, stereopticons, a Wells Fargo cargo chest and a collection of reference books with titles like "Wyatt Earp," "The Diary of a Forty-Niner," "Days of Gold" and "Five Years a Dragoon."

It is a beautiful space to behold, whether you are viewing his paintings, his furnishings, or as Scougale says, "the innumerable aspects" of daguerreotype collections.

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