

# Where Are We Going To Display, This Dinosaur Leg?

By Chase Pipes

At Smoky Mountain Knife Works, we see 1.3 million visitors walk through our doors every year. But I'd say the vast majority of those visitors are quite surprised when they stumble upon our Relic Room and learn that this unique little corner of our 110,000-square-foot facility is home to the most diverse collection of historical artifacts in North America.

What do I mean by historical artifacts? I'm talking dinosaur bones and fossils, meteorites and moon fragments, Native American tools, unique gems and minerals, military relics, political Americana and rare coins - just to get you started. Our collection spans virtually the entire history of the universe, not to mention every culture from around the globe. So if you're the type of person that might be interested in checking out, say, an 18th century ninja suit of armor or a real-life witch doctor's kit, the Relic Room would be the place to go.



What makes the Relic Room truly unique, however, isn't just the fact that we have all these items on display, it's that pretty much everything you'll see here is real - not a reproduction - and we offer it for sale to the public at prices that are remarkably affordable. I love looking at the expressions on our visitors' faces when they comprehend that for the first time, they can own authentic pieces of history, like actual dinosaur bones or ancient Roman coins, and they don't have to be independently wealthy or a museum curator to do so.

How is this possible? We are guided primarily by the simple fact that there are more historical artifacts and relics in the world than there are museum spaces or private collections to house them. As a result, we are motivated to see this abundance of historical treasures wind up in the hands of people who are interested in protecting them and passing them down to future generations.

My father and grandfather were both antique and artifact dealers, so I grew up with a passion for history in my blood. In fact, Smoky Mountain Knife Works actually got its start in the 1970s as a dealer in rarities and antiquities. The knife side of the business eventually became more popular over the years, but when I got the opportunity to resurrect and expand the Relic Room about 15 years ago, I knew I'd found my place in the family business.

Since then, I have traveled the country and the world, meeting people who dig for fossils and minerals and recover historical artifacts for a living. And that's important, because it's these long-established relationships I've had with the men and women who save these treasures from destruction that enable me to assure our customers that the items they purchase are not only authentic but also accurately researched and legal to own.

We believe history belongs to everyone. So the next time you stop by Smoky Mountain Knife Works, we invite you to embark on a journey through the Relic Room. Even if you choose not to make a purchase, we think you'll appreciate the journey back in time and all the knowledge that goes with it. History Rocks!