

Are There Variations of the Imperial?

by Dave Thorpe and Dave Johnson



A particularly ornate cap lamp made by Justrite is most commonly found with the X-ray stamp on the bottom. Yet, other stampings are also found, one with Fulton EM. HAW. CO., and the other with Imperial Hardsocg. Both were specialty lamps made for other firms. The Fulton is thought to have been made for the Emmons Hawkins Hardware Co. of Huntington, West Virginia. The Imperial, found only in nickel-plating, was sold by the Martin



Hardsocg Co., a supplier of mining equipment. Fultons are found only in brass. While most are identical to the X-ray, some major variations exist. But that is not the subject of this article.

For years it has been rumored that a major variation of the Imperial existed in a Louisville collection. Few had seen it, those that did seemed to recall a different reflector set-up, possibly set-screw. Dave Johnson was kind enough to visit this collector and provide photographs of this curious lamp.

The first view says it all. The lamp is not different from other X-rays except that it is missing the square reflector brace. Like all other Imperi-



als, it is nickel-plated over unpolished brass. Also, like all other nickel-plated X-rays, the lamp is equipped with a brass reflector. Of note are the short ribs on the base. All Imperials are found with such ribbing. This differs from common Xrays, most of which have ribs double that length. A few Xrays, however, have short ribs as well, and these are roughly ten times rarer than the lamps with the longer ribs.

The next photo shows the inset stamping of the base, and this of course is what makes it an Imperial.

Finally, an inside photo shows the dropper mechanism. A length of screw threads protrudes from the end, and this is said to be another characteristic of Imperial lamps. Looking over the various Xray lamps available to me, I find a variety #of lengths protruding from the dropper, from none at all to

about 3/8". It is likely that the run of lamps Justrite destined to be Imperials were all made this way. The most compulsive collector will no doubt examine a lamp for this as a means of verifying that the top is not a mere nickel-plated Xray! On the other hand, the lamp is so rare, most will not care. After all, it is the base which makes it an Imperial.

With these photos, we can now conclude that (to date), no variations of the Imperial cap lamp exist. This lamp needs only a reflector brace to make it complete. In any form, the Imperial represents a "must have" for cap lamp collectors.