

Development of Werntz Candlesticks

by Al Winters

Carbide lamp development is generally well documented with changes in design and improvements noted by various patent dates stamped into the brass components. Many excellent articles have described the development of the various carbide cap lamps through research and actual observation of the various models themselves. The path of candlestick development is however, seldom documented or for that matter, known.

Wilson and Bobrink briefly touch on the various examples of the Edger Curtiss patented stick in their candlestick book. Another known example of candlestick development through observation of actual models is the Gabriel Werntz candlestick of Placerville, California. Werntz developed a beautiful disassembling, flame-snuffer that could be broken down for carrying in the pocket or assembled for use in the mine. He was granted patent #395,097 on December 25, 1888.



An early and crude prototype of the patent was first developed by Werntz prior to his patent. The thimble of the prototype is attached by means of a sliding brass post and the hook, when disassembled is secured by a sliding square brass socket. Because of the various deficiencies for practical use the prototype was probably quickly scrapped as Werntz went on to develop his patent model. The prototype is illustrated below.

Following his early experimental candlestick, Werntz probably developed his patent which incorporated the flame-snuffer disk as shown (later improvements include a marked and slotted disk for more secure attachment when disassembled). As noted by Bobrink and Wilson, in practice the snuffer was probably lost or discarded within the first few days and it is therefore rare.

***“Standard Issue” patented Werntz
candlestick with flame snuffer.***



Later (or earlier?) than his patent, Werntz probably attempted to make a more durable stick that could better stand up to the severe treatment of mine work. The larger and heavier duty stick, shown below, incorporates a single but much larger post on the thimble and no flame-snuffer.

Heavier stock Werntz style candlestick.



A comparison of the three types of Werntz candlesticks assembled and disassembled is shown.

