

Miners Folding Gimbaled Candlesticks

by Al Winters

Folding miners candlesticks are relatively rare as are candlesticks incorporating a thimble mounted in a gimbal. The purpose of the gimbal is to allow the candle to remain vertical regardless of the angle the candlestick is positioned in. This characteristic theoretically increases the life of the candle.



Folded Gimbaled Candlesticks (spike down). Left: Al Winters collection with detachable hook. Right: Roger Peterson collection with folding hook.

Three gimbaled candlesticks were patented and others that exist were most likely intended to be patented. Location of the three patents granted for a gimbal design was one from California and two from Oregon. Few examples of these patented sticks or any other gimbaled sticks are known and they are considered very rare.

Two of the known gimbaled sticks that were never patented are very unique in that they also incorporate folding mechanisms.

Both of the candlesticks shown were found in California. The candlestick shown on the left came from an estate sale in the mother lode country. The two are considered sister sticks and assumed to be made by the same hand. Most likely the maker was trying to develop a practical model that he could patent. A similar constructed non-folding stick is known and believed made by the same hand.

The metal work of both sticks is exceptional and required a lot of work in the design and build. Neither of the candlesticks was found with the hooks and Roger Peterson, owner of one of the sticks, took on the job of designing and building the hooks. The sticks were slightly different in the way the spike set when folded down as well as the spike locking devise. How exactly

the maker was going to design the hook is unknown but it is assumed that he would have made the hook to fold or detach and lock in so that the candleholder could comfortably be carried in one's pocket when folded and not in use.



Folded Gimbaled Candlesticks (spike down). Above: Al Winters collection with detachable hook. Below: Roger Peterson collection with folding hook.



Roger's stick incorporates a folding hook which threads into the gimbal base ring and is locked down by the spike when folded. The sister stick incorporates a detachable hook that pins into an unthreaded base ring and locks down via a pin and encasing hook design which partially surrounds the thimble.

Which stick was made first is a good question. The stick on the left is a little beefier but the locking devise of the stick on the right is certainly better designed. Neither however, would probably survive for any length of time in a mining environment. What is needed now is a third sister stick to show up with the final design by the maker.

Left: Folded Gimbaled Candlesticks (spike up)