

Victor Swivel Lamp Bracket

by Dave Johnson



When using a oil wick cap lamp there was always the possibility of spilling fuel through the vent hole in the lid when the lamp tipped with the cap to which it was attached. This was especially likely when miners were lying on their side undercutting a coal seam with a pick. When they were lying horizontally there was nothing to prevent their fuel from slowly leaking out of the lamp.

One far-sighted individual found a way to keep the lamp from tipping, keeping it always in a vertical position. This was accomplished through the use of a swivel built into the lamp bracket attached to the miner's cap. William Israel, of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, received patent 688,092 on December 3,

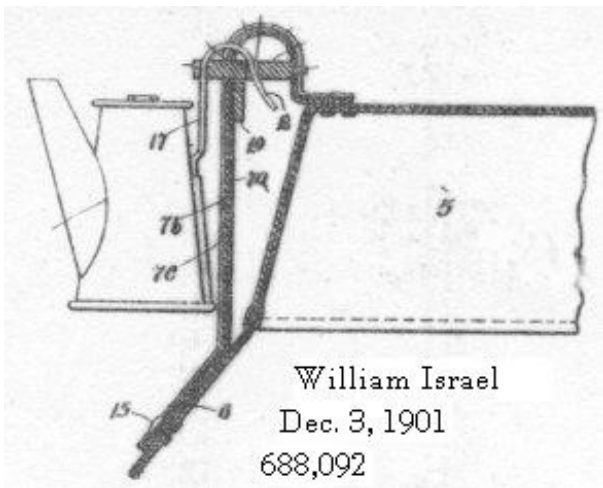
1901 for a miner's cap with a lamp bracket having a "rotatable member".

I had found this patent several years ago but had never seen a cap that matched this patent, that is, until I was able to buy this NOS example listed on Ebay recently. The lamp bracket is marked "VICTOR Pat. Dec. 3, 1901". As can be seen in the accompanying photos, this is a functional device. The question that I cannot

answer is why this design did not catch on? In my 35+ years of collecting this is the only example of this patented cap that I have seen or of which I have even heard. Obviously if this cap had been popular with miners more examples should have survived as they have with other varieties.



This was not the only patent granted to William Israel. On October 16, 1923, he received patent 1,470,923 for a "lamp supporting attachment for miner's caps. This patent was awarded for a lamp bracket that was to hold carbide lamps. I am not aware of any surviving examples of this patent but perhaps someday one of these will also surface just like this example of his earlier patent has done.



1,470,923. LAMP-SUPPORTING ATTACHMENT FOR MINERS' CAPS. WILLIAM ISRAEL, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Filed Mar. 21, 1921. Serial No. 454,047. 3 Claims. (Cl. 240-60.)

