

Miniature Mining Lamps

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Awhile back, my friend, Reg Pattee, gave me a set of miniature mining lamps. I submitted a photograph of the lamps to several mining artifact groups, asking whether anyone knew where they came from and who made them. Sadly, no one knew the answers to these questions; however, I think I've learned a bit more about them.



The lamps appear to be handmade. They are beautifully made of brass. The tallest lamp is 2 ½ inches in height. The two lamps at the ends have moveable handles with large hooks attached in the center of each. Tiny copper rivets secure the handles to the bodies of the lamps. The lamp on the left is missing its reflector, but I think that is intended since these lamps are most often found without reflectors.

In poking around on the internet, I've concluded that the two lamps on either end are replicas of Wolf hand lamps and the lamp in the middle looks much like a Friemann and Wolf safety lamp. On a Pinterest webpage, I found a photograph of a pair of Wolf lamps that are identical to the miniature hand lamps shown above. On their Pinterest webpage, "Mining Lights from Bisbee," authors Douglas and Richard Graeme identify these as:

"Two Wolf style carbide lamps. One still retains its original reflector. The reflectors were of a poor design and almost all were lost or destroyed. In old mining photographs the reflector is normally missing." ¹



On WorthPoint, I found this illustration of a Friemann and Wolf Safety Lamp that bears a strong resemblance to the miniature safety lamp given to me by Reg.



The WorthPoint listing describes the lamp as an “[a]ntique miner’s lamp . . . made by Friemann and Wolf of Sheffield, England.”²

When I asked Reg whether he recalled how and where he acquired the miniatures, he told me that he thought he picked them up at one of the Tucson mining artifact shows from a dealer from Germany. After getting some help from Dave Thorpe, I contacted Siegbert Zecha (“Siggy”) and his wife, Karin Sielbach. They told me that they don’t know who made these miniatures or where they were made, but that they did have miniatures like these that they may have sold at the Tucson show many years ago.

I found one set of miniatures similar to those Reg gave me listed on WorthPoint.



WorthPoint describes these as a set of three miniature carbide lamps from an Arizona collection of mining artifacts. They are described as having been handmade of machined brass. The tallest of the three lamps is 3 1/2 inches in height, and the smallest lamp is 2 inches in height. This set of three lamps sold on November 18, 2020, for \$110 on eBay.³

I suspect that the lamps Reg gave me are of German origin and represent European style mining lamps, particularly the Wolf canister and safety lamps. Miniatures of Davy style safety lamps are plentiful on eBay, especially in the United Kingdom, but miniature lamps like the ones Reg gave me are unique, scarce, and of very high quality.

End Notes

1. Pinterest, Douglas and Richard Graeme, "Mining Lights from Bisbee Arizona," <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/136304326193210133/>, accessed September 1, 2022.
2. WorthPoint, <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/friemann-wolf-vintage-miners-lamp-499141913>, accessed September 1, 2022.
3. WorthPoint, <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/antique-miniature-carbide-lamps-3763118283>, accessed September 1, 2022.