

# Gardner & Richards "Little Gem"

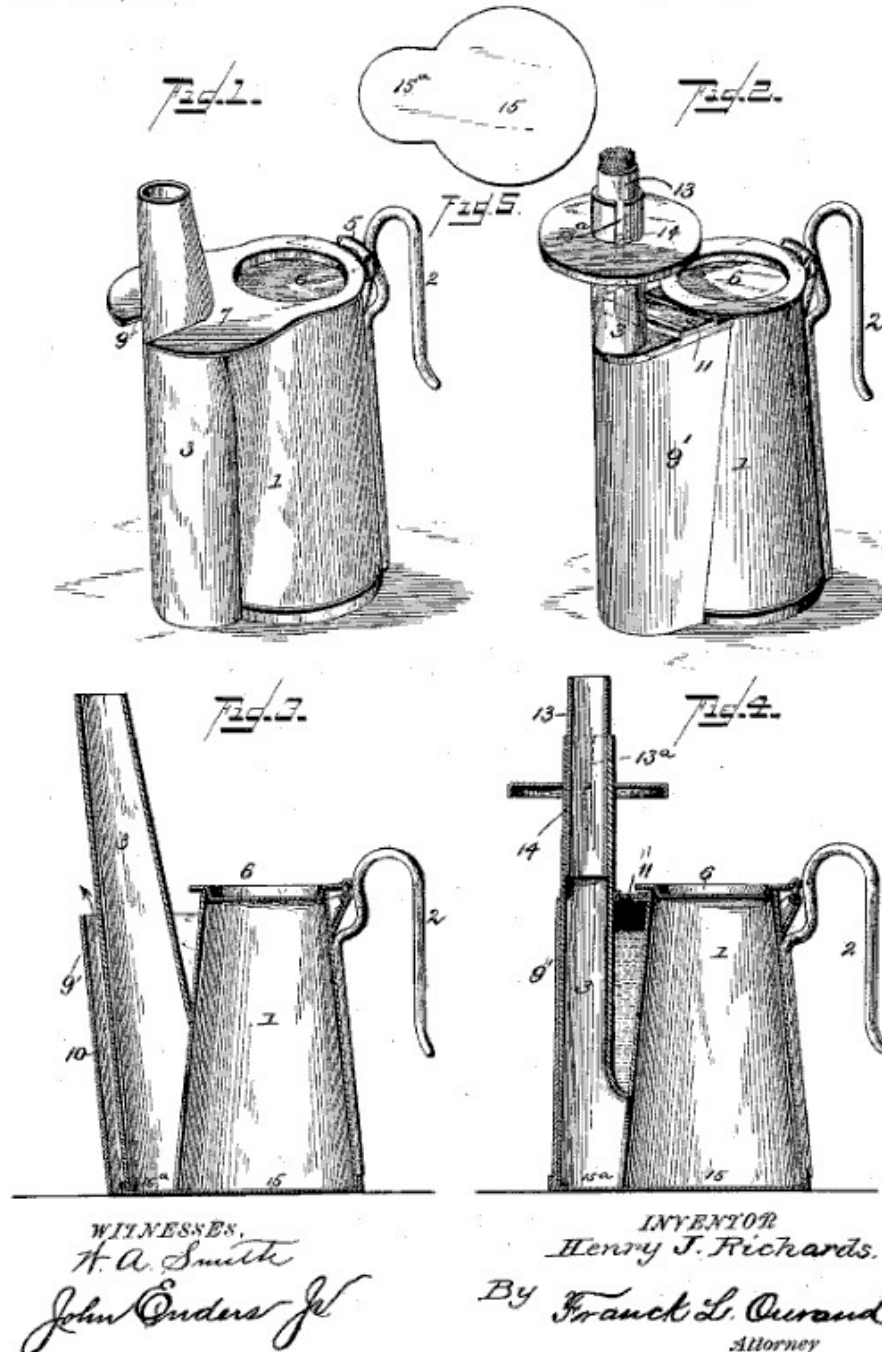
by Dave Johnson

(No Model.)

H. J. RICHARDS.  
MINER'S LAMP.

No. 427,013.

Patented Apr. 29, 1890.



Many of the unusual patented designs for miners' oil-wick cap lamps were never put into production. One of these unusual designs that were actually produced was Patent No. 427,013 granted to Henry J. Richards, of Wilkes-Barre, Lucerne County, Pennsylvania on April 29, 1890, assignor of one-half to Charles H. Gardner, also of Wilkes-Barre. Gardner had received two previous oil-wick cap lamp patents (Nos. 320,287 on June 16, 1885 and 335,041 on January 28, 1886).

The lamp produced under Patent 427,013 featured an almost vertical spout that was attached outside the font rather than being attached at an angle to the side of the font as most oil-wick spouts at attached. The bottom piece is formed to accommodate this unusual spout design and is illustrated in the patent drawing. According to the patent, this spout was designed to prevent fuel from leaking out of the lamp when the miner tipped his head forward.

The lid design was also patented and featured an extended length opposite the hinge toward the wick tube with a cut-out for the wick tube when the lid was

closed. What is described in the patent document as “a casing or housing” surrounding the wick tube, is meant to aid in keeping the lamp body cool, according to the patent document.

*The lamp measures  $3 \frac{7}{8}$ " to the top of the spout and  $2 \frac{5}{8}$ " to the top of the lid. The base measures  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ " x  $2 \frac{3}{8}$ "*

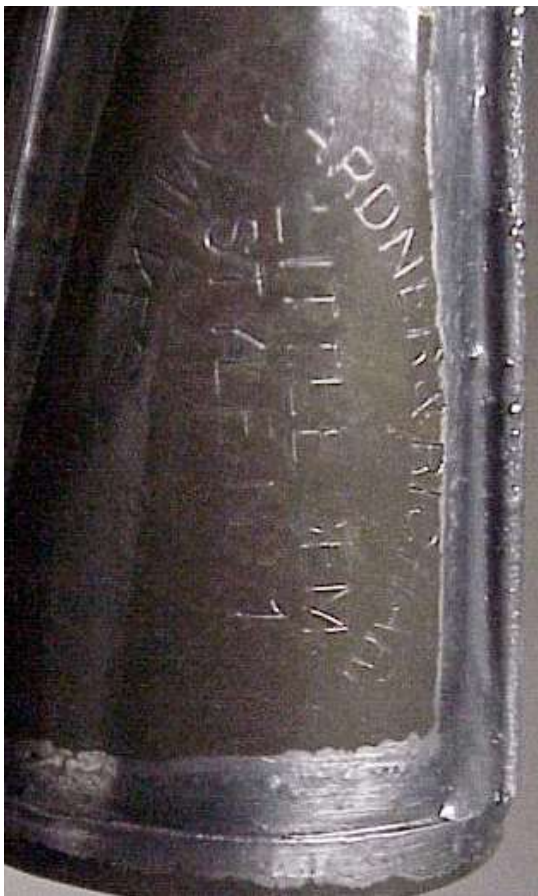




This lamp can be dated quite easily. The patent application was filed on November 6, 1889 and granted on April 29, 1890, the side of the font is stamped: PAT. AP'D FOR, so the lamp should have been produced between November 6, 1889 and April 29, 1890.

*Stamping on side of font.*

The lamp font is also stamped: GARDNER & RICHARDS over WILKES-BARRE, PA, with LITTLE GEM STYLE NO. 1 in between. There is an unusual stamping on the front of the spout, it is stamped: SPOUT 5. If this is Spout 5 one has to wonder how many different spouts were designed and produced, just as one has to wonder how many Little Gem styles there were since this lamp was labeled as Style No. 1.



*Left: font stamping LITTLE GEM. Right: spout stamping SPOUT 5.*

I have been unable to find any information about either Richards or Gardner in Wilkes-Barre. They obviously produced at least two different oil-wick cap lamps, the one shown here and a different style that I saw several years ago but was unable to obtain. This lamp ranks among the rarest of the oil-wick cap lamps found to date.

See Bob Guthrie's article in Eureka Issue 43 (pages 6 and 10) for two other unusual Richardson Patent lamps.