

LAMP POST

- NOT A HIPPIE NEWSPAPER -



Vol. I, No. 3

Fall, 1969

The Underground Lamp Post has been described as the Official Journal of the Old Mine Lamp Collectors Society of America (OMLCSA).
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Recent articles of interest:

"Lamps for Deep Underground" by Peter Hauer, Relics Magazine, Spring, 1969, Western Publications, Inc., P. O. Box 3668, 1012 Edgecliff Terrace, Austin, Texas, 78704, p. 27.

"Miners' Candlesticks" by E. M. Gosling, Spinning Wheel Magazine, Jan-Feb, 1969, p. 20.

An older article of accurate historical interest:

"The History of Mine Lighting" by George E. Bayles, Mechanization Magazine, Vol. 20, No. 12, Dec., 1956, p. 77 and Vol. 21, No., 1, Jan., 1957, p. 73.

This editor was privileged to visit with Mr. Bayles in Cincinnati, Ohio, in May of this year. Mr. Bayles has the definitive collection of approximately 350 old mine lamps and miners' candleholders.

Sign seen on an automobile junkyard south of Quincy, Illinois:
"Well . . . so long, Lady Bird."

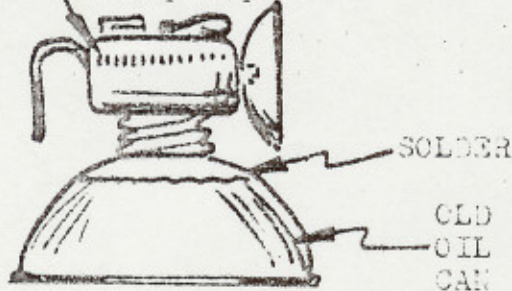
OLD MINE LAMPS
SAFETY LAMPS * CARBIDES
MINERS' OIL WICK LAMPS
MINERS' CANDLESTICKS

We need collectors names.
Send in addresses of other collectors you know.

Who is hiding all the carbides I want to trade for? Swap with the Editor.

HANSEN * MAPLE CITY * BRITE LITE
FULTON * EVER-READY * GRIER (horiz.)
MAUMEE * WOLF * ITP * FLEMING
ARROW * LIBERTY * MILBURN
GEN * CRYSTELLA * GIANT

Standard Guy's Dropper lamp top

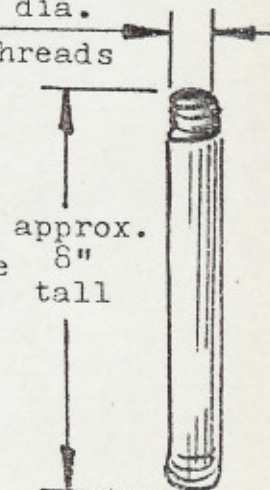


Odd adaptation recently found near Silverton, Colo.

Send me your copy and advertisements; I'll try to print as much information as possible. It will help if you have it pre-typed and ready to print. But remember, no definite schedules - editions only as time and materials allow.
Ed.

1-3/8" dia.
standard threads

Did you know that Shanklin (early Guy's Dropper) made a "tall" carbide can - same diameter as a standard lamp bottom. Anyone ever seen one?



Your sometimes editor has had several requests for reprints of John Leahy's "Carbide Comments" which was included in the last issue of The Underground Lamp Post. The following is reprinted with permission from the SPELEONEWS, November, 1965, (Vol. IX, No. 11), Nashville, Tennessee. The author was none other than our own much-traveled friend, Rich Finch (see his advertisement this issue). Rich and John have exchanged trade material (lamps) through the original agency of the U. G. Lamp Post. More recently, Rich spent the summer in Honduras doing field work on his geology dissertation for his M. S. requirements. He is now back at Texas University in Austin, Texas, as a teaching assistant. Sorry, no old mine lamps reportedly could be found in Honduras.

That's Lamps in Them Them Hills !!



- The "enlightened" Col. Finch -

The untimely demise of my sole Guy's Dropper lamp in the icy waters of Lost Cove Cave about a month ago precipitated some of the most interesting "country adventures" I have ever experienced. Determined not to be Dropperless, I invited Alan Lenk to join me in exploring the dying Cumberland Plateau coal fields, hoping we might pick up a lamp from an old miner. The ensuing quest for the Holy Grail occupied four weekends, but the results were only slightly short of phenomenal. We saw some wild country, met some wilder characters, and hit the jackpot, lampwise.

The procedure we established ran something like this. First select a likely target area (Coalmont, Dogtown, Phifer's Mine, Gruetli, Wilder, Green Pond, etc.), put on worn and grubby clothes - simple enough for a caver - and drive to the target area, stopping at the oldest, most trashed-out looking, general store. Here we'd saunter in (never be in a hurry around country folk), mill about, maybe warm ourselves by the pot-bellied stove and eat a moon pie. Directly, the storekeeper comes over: "Whut kin I do fer ye?" We'd then ask him if he has any carbide lamps, which he does, but they're you-know-what-kind. Anyway, this gets a conversation going, and since the storekeeper knows everybody around we soon have the names of two or three old miners who might have either some old Droppers or Autos. (Incidentally, never day Guy's Dropper or Auto-Lite, just "Dropper" or "Auto" or maybe "Guy Dropper" with no "s".) Although I have completely given up hope of finding any brand new Droppers, it's worthwhile to inquire about parts; I picked up five new bottoms at Meeks' Genl. Mrds.

Then we'd head out for Jesse Welch's or Save Boles' or whomever the storekeeper sent us to. This turns out, often enough, to be the hardest part of the game: following country directions. Arriving at Mr. Welch's, we'd walk up, pat his hound, and knock on the door (we know he's home, because he doesn't have a job!) We: "Knock! Knock! Knock!"

Mr. Welch, "Get in this house!!" (in all the houses we stopped at,

not a single person actually came to the door!).

Me: (entering) "Howdy, Mr. Welch...I'm Richard Finch from over here at MAC-Minnville." (Never let 'em know you're from Nashville, the city). "Mr. Meeks" (important name-dropping; you're an insider now) "says you can help me out. I'm looking for somebody that's got an old carbide lamp...you know, a reg'lar old miner's lamp."

All too often the answer is that he had a half-a-dozen, but threw them all away when the mines went electric, seven or eight years ago. Or he may say something like this: Mr. Welch: "Well, I got one here, but I use hit to go spotlightin' with." (Hereupon, he hauls it off a shelf to show it to us; the reflector is homemade, out of an old brass automobile light of pre-sealed-beam vintage.) "The only thing elst I got is a ole piece of junk out in the smokehouse but hit ain't no 'count. The 'flector's all bent up on hit an' hit ain't got no tube (a tip) in hit."

Me" "Well, gee, if it wouldn't cause you too much trouble, we'd like to see it. I've got one old beat-up lamp, but maybe we could get enough good parts to put a whole one together."

So we go out to the smokehouse, where our friend finds not one, but two lamps, and maybe an extra bottom to boot, all of which are in pretty good shape, and all of which he cheerfully donates to the cause. Before leaving, I am sure to ask, "Reckon where there's anybody else around here might have a lamp?" And thus we have a new lead, and can tell him that his friend Jesse Welch, told us to see him. And so we proceeded from house to house, lamp by lamp. By the end of the day, we'd have all the good leads in one area run down, and would be ready for a new target the next trip.

On our "Eastland-Clifty Campaign" we drove down the old railroad bed, through cuts and along grades above streams into some real back-country. Here I saw the only Justrite I ever really craved: a big quart-sized mother-of-Justrites, but he wouldn't part with it. I had to accept a Guy's Dropper from him as a consolation prize. This Dropper had a square bottom: it seems the local method for removing a frozen carbide bottom is to put it into the crack of a door and close the door on it, which holds it while you turn the top part. Kinda plays hob with the bottom, however.

Nearby we found an active coal mine, and prowling about the audit I spotted two Auto-Lites sitting on a beam. Picking one up, I discovered it was still hot! We got the heck out of there, not wishing to be caught trespassing.

We found Mr. Bohanna, the mine operator, at lunch at the nearest house. I explained our problem in the usual way; he said he had a lamp he'd give us, and asked what we wanted to use it for. When I said we like to explore caves, he broke in: "Say, you said you was from McMinnville; isn't there some big cave over there some feller's got open so's you can see it?"

Me: "Yeah, you must mean Cumberland Caverns."

Mr. Bohanna: "Yeah, them fellers was over here some time back, some

feller and his family with about three men. They was towin' a jeep with 'em, and wanted to know all 'bout gettin' some mine rails. I took 'em down an' showed 'em about my mine. Do you know them fellers?'

Me: "Well, I've met that guy with the big cave. I think his name's a Mr. Davis or somethin'". (Said that with a perfectly straight face, believe it or not.) So, he took us back down to his mine (with me being careful to park my car where the Cumberland Caverns sticker wouldn't show), and there he gave Alan a Guy's Dropper. But then he felt bad about not having a lamp for me. And it just wouldn't do until he found a lamp for me in the glove compartment of the old truck which powered his winch. And like several old miners we talked to he felt bad about not having a complete lamp, so we spent another ten minutes down at the audit searching for wingnuts and a felt holder-inner.

It was while we were at Mr. Bohanna's house that we saw a real relic; a miner's lamp from pre-carbide days. This was a grease lamp, shaped like a miniature coffee pot. A mixture of grease and coal oil was burned by a wick which stuck out of the "spout" and it had a hook on back so it could be worn on the cap. But I'd surely hated to dig coal by its feeble illumination. (By the way, if the lady of the house is in, don't let her think you want the lamps as antiques, or she'll blow the whole deal.)

On another trip, we arrived at the forlorn town of Wilder, Appalachia at its zenith (or perhaps nadir), on the very day the train made its last run. Here we picked up a few lamps, paying for most of them. I paid \$2 for an almost new Dropper, which the guy would have let me have free, but I didn't have the heart. Then we bought two Droppers and an extra bottom for the grand sum of \$1. The character who sold us these was a harelip, which combined with his East Tennessee mumble made him pretty difficult to communicate with. As we squatted there in his living room, he pointed out that one of the lamps had a special tip, the likes of which I had never seen. It had a perforated brass wind-guard built in as a part of the tip.

Harelip: "That's a good tube there; hit won't go out in thw wind. I'd kinda like to keep it." (He looke up to me for an answer.)

Me: (I don't say anything; I've never seen a tip like that and I'd like to have it.)

Harelip: "I reckon that you can buy new tubes for it." (Looks up, hoping I'll say "yes", that I don't need the tip.)

Me: (I still don't say anything; if he doesn't want to sell it, I'm not making him.)

Harelip: (Obviously hoping I'll say it's all right for him to keep it.) "Yeah, I sure kinda want to keep this tube."

Me: (I still don't say anything.)

PAUSE...

Me: "Well, whut would ya take for 'em?"

Harelip: "I reckon I'll take a dollar off ye."

Me: "Well... I guess that's fair enough." And so we thanked Harelip, paid him and walked out, windproof tip and all.

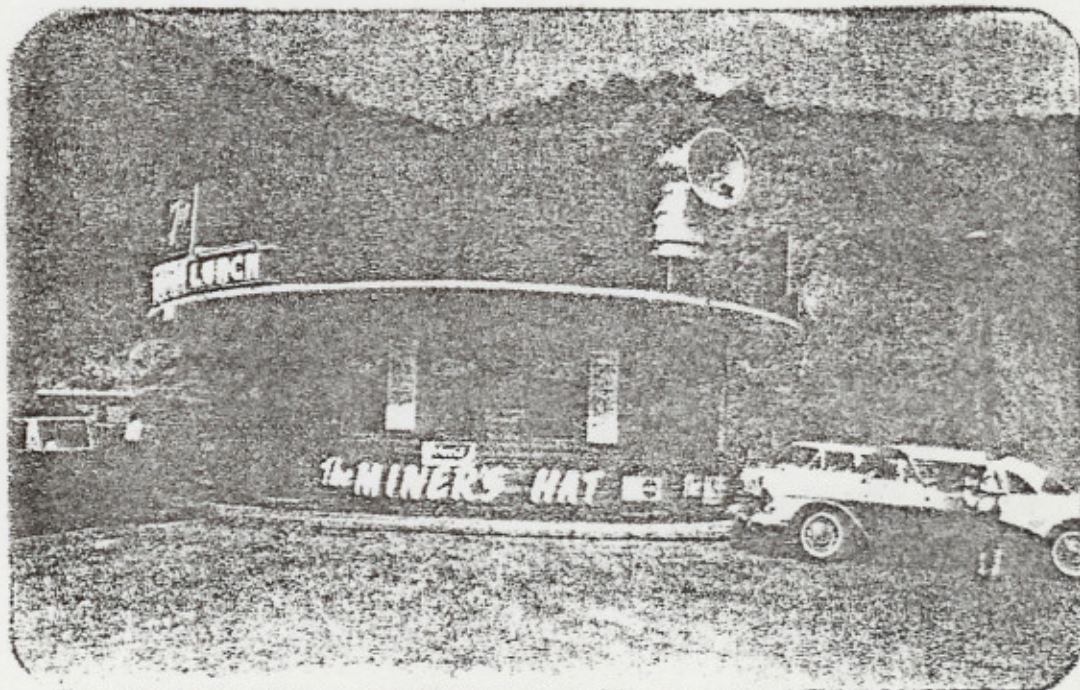
All in all, we had a real ball! The fringe benefit of meeting all these friendly country folk, and seeing the wild areas they live in was really more valuable than the lamps we collected; but then the "take" in this department wasn't too bad, itself: nine Guy's Droppers and six Auto-Lites, along with a number of spare bottoms.

Just one more thing...if you are thinking of trying your hand at lamp hunting, you are welcome to use the above as a technique manual, but don't be too surprised if you hear, "Well, I'd like to help you out, son, but I just give the last ones I had about three weeks ago to a feller in a funny lookin' little, red car..."

-- Col. R. Finch

FLASH - FLASH

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MINE LAMP
ON RECORD
DISCOVERED
IN IDAHO



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

POST CARD

THE SPELEO-EMPORIUM . . . "Last of the Good Carbide Lamps"
 . . . regrets to admit that numerous vital parts (Universal tips, Auto bottoms, Universal reflectors, etc.) can no longer be supplied. The Universal Lamp Co., manufacturers of both Auto-Lite and Guy's Dropper Lamps since the thirties, moved to Springfield, Ill., to Murfreesboro, Tenn., in 1960, and ceased its lamp production at that time. They now manufacture cigarette lighters, brass whiskey pumps (in which a portion of the Guy's Dropper Lamp is still used!) and other such products. They have no lamp parts left.

During the last five years the Speleo-Emporium has gathered Universal lamp parts from the mine fields of Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Utah, Arizona, and Colorado. These parts have become increasingly difficult to locate, and now some are impossible to find. Country stores, hardware stores, mine supplier companies, retired miners, company stores, antique-junk-swa- stores have been contacted. Some small supplies of certain items were located; some have since been used up. In short, the Speleo-Emporium is running out. Some of the items listed below may represent one or two left in stock. The listing is varied, but the number of unit behind each listing is very limited. First come, first served. If you don't find what you want, make a special request - I'm always on the look out and will try to get it, but I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you.

Note: Universal parts fit Autos and Droppers. Justrite parts marked with an * are also suitable for use in Autos and Droppers. NLS means no longer supplied, but you can make a special request and I'll put you on the wants list.

LAMPS:

NEW AUTO-LITE LAMPS - never fired - Round hook and clip, 2 1/4" ref. \$5.50 plus postage. (Flat clip lamps are not available new, don't ask.).

Used lamps: Used to have a wide variety of used lamps. Now sold out, but a few drift in sometimes. Chances of acquiring very many are not very good, however, as I am now located far from mining country.

LAMP PARTS: UNIVERSAL LAMP COMPANY

Guy's Dropper Bottoms, new, with Bumper Grip	1.50
Guy's Dropper Bottoms, new, without Bumper Grip	1.25
Auto-Lite Bottoms (use Dropper bottom).	NLS
Guy's Dropper felt holders . . . . .	.25
Auto-Lite felt holders . . . . .	.20
Universal wing nuts . . . . .	.25
Universal water doors . . . . .	.75
Felts . . . . .	.08
Gaskets . . . . .	.12
Universal lighter hex nuts . . . . .	.10
Universal lighter springs . . . . .	.05
Universal lighter caps . . . . .	.15
Universal lighter units complete	NLS
Auto flat clip brads (two per lamp) each . . . . .	.10

ADVERTISEMENT (Continued)

LAMP PARTS: UNIVERSAL LAMP CO. (Continued)

Universal brass jacketed tips, small size, esp. for Universal lamps	NLS
Shanklin plain lava tips, for Guy's Droppers, will fit Autos also . . . . .	.10
Lava tip inserts for brass jacketed tips . . . . .	.05
Tip drills . . . . .	.05
Flat hooks for Guy's Dropper lamps (used) . . . . .	.50

LAMP PARTS: JUSTRITE LAMP CO.

Gaskets* . . . . .	.12
Felts* . . . . .	.08
Felt plates* . . . . .	.10
Wing nuts . . . . .	.18
Flints* . . . . .	.05
Lighter springs* . . . . .	.05
Sliding cover reaners . . . . .	.50
Tips* . . . . .	.15
Lighter hex nuts . . . . .	.05
Lighter spring caps . . . . .	.08
Water doors . . . . .	.50

* Suitable for use in Autos and Droppers

THE SPELEO-EMPORIUM SHOULD LIKE TO ACQUIRE LAMPS BEARING THE FOLLOWING BRAND NAMES AND TRADE MARKS:

Fulton, G-B, Ever-Ready, Hansen, Fleming, Milburn, Sun-Ray, Grier Bros., Zar, Baldwin, Wolf, Acme, X-Ray, Maple City, Britelite, Lu-Mi-Num, Victor, Dewar, ITP, Uncle Sam, Square Lite, Union Carbide, Pathfinder, Lucas, Solar, Springfield, Brilliant Search Lite, and old models of Guy's Droppers, Auto-Lites, and Justrites. Also interested in oil cap lamps, and mining lamps of any nature, if old. Leads appreciated.

DO YOU LIVE NEAR A MINING AREA? Then chances are you can turn up some of the lamp parts you want by visiting some of the older hardware stores, country general stores, and similar establishments. If you should encounter any quantities of the items I am now in need of (Universal tips, Auto bottoms, Universal reflectors, especially 4" reflectors) and do not need all of them yourself, I would greatly appreciate your sending me the name and address of the establishments at which such items can be purchased.

ADDRESS: SPELEO-EMPORIUM
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