

THE UNDERGROUND LAMP POST

- NOT A HIPPIE NEWSPAPER -

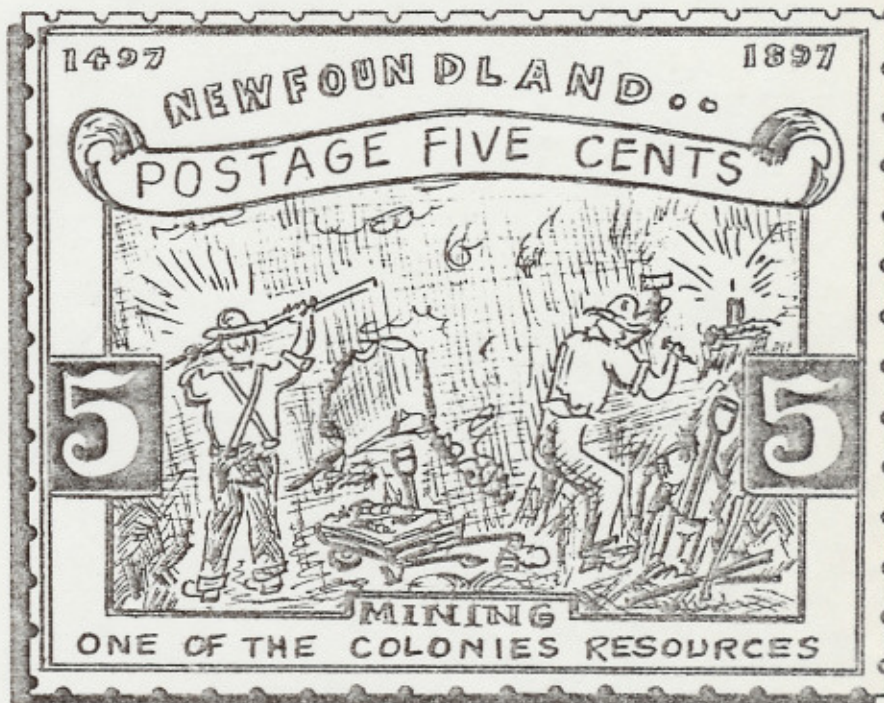
Vol I, No. 8

Spring, 1972

The Underground Lamp Post, devoted to old mine lamps, carbides, and candleholders. Mini-editor: Henry Pohs, 4537 Quitman St., Denver, Colorado, 80212.

Underground Illumination on Postage Stamps - We're not philatelists, but we recently acquired several foreign postage stamps with a mining motif. Each stamp includes some form of illumination device in its illustration. To the right we've sketched the oldest known or cataloged mining stamp, an 1897 issue from Newfoundland; it is a typical violet and white color. A single candle shows on a rock ledge; the miner at the left evidently has another candle in his cap, but it is hidden and only its rays show in the etching.

Others we have include three Czechoslovakian stamps - one shows ancient miners with their oil wick pan lamps, another shows a miner at work with a pneumatic drill and a safety lamp, the third is an underground miner with a carbide hand lamp. Two French stamps include safety lamps - one pictures a group of miners leaving the portal, the other shows a beautiful 4-color print of a stylized safety lamp with the symbolic miner's mallet and chisel in front of the French Mining Academy.



Time To Boast Department - He who tooteth his own horn, findeth his horn untooteth. Each of the following library services, by their own request, now receive and catalog copies of The Underground Lamp Post:

- Denver Public Library, Western History Division
- National Speleological Society Library
- ULRICH'S International Periodicals Directory

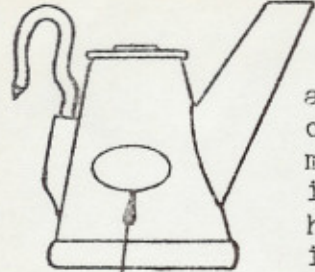
Mr. Vernon Hatley, Rt. 5, Shawnee, Oklahoma, 74801, wishes to buy or trade for old mine lamps. Mail your sketches and proposals to his attention.

Question - An old miner was trapped in the underground darkness. He had only one match but he also had a miner's candle and candleholder, an oil wick lamp with fuel and wicking, a safety lamp with fuel but no lighter, and a good carbide lamp with water, carbide, felt, gasket, lava tip, but no striker. Which should he light first?

If you need parts for your rare (or even common) carbide lamps and haven't yet contacted Donald Davis, you are missing a sure thing. Write him at: Donald Davis, c/o Jerry Davis, P. O. Box 25, Fairplay, Color., 80440.

Thank You - Many thanks to John Leahy of Leadville, Colorado, for pages 4 and 5 of this issue. John has contributed to earlier issues, too.

ZAIS - FROSTBURG MYSTERY



Old mine lamp addicts have long been mystified by the various trade markings on a series of oil wick cap lamps in several collections. One Fred B. Zais apparently made most of these lamps over 70 years ago. New information and comparison of several lamps has put a bit of a story together. Although incomplete, it is an interesting story and it challenges completion.

Mr. George Bayles of Cincinnati, Ohio, has a lamp as shown to the left with a full legend or trade mark - FRED B. ZAIS, 1876, FROSTBURG. Markings on similar lamps, however, appear as shown to the right; These lamps are from several other collectors.



It seems that Mr. Fred B. Zais was an old tinsmith who lived at the foot of Mt. Savage west of Cumberland, Maryland. He began making his tin oil wick cap lamps by hand in the 1870's to service the local coal mining trade. Later, when the demand for Zais' lamps increased, he devised a code to identify the continuity of his product.

Using only portions of the letters in the names of different members of his family, Zais provided himself with a code which covered both the quantity and the date of manufacture.

No one has yet found the key to these codes as shown in the upper right illustrations. It is probably lost forever unless one of our eastern correspondents can discover an old timer in western Maryland who might have known Zais or his family. Perhaps those who frequent antique shops or flea markets in that area can make some inquiries.

This background information on the Zais lamps was provided by Charles J. Whetstone, a Denver antique dealer, who is originally from Frostburg. He returns to Frostburg annually, buying and visiting. After I finally aroused his interest, he inquired in the neighborhood and turned up this information.

Now - go to work you mid-Atlantic lamp tramps and complete this story for us by finding the key to the mystery.



Rich Finch has three of those once-in-a-lifetime lamps for trade - they're all UNFIRED and guaranteed in good condition.

- Unfired FLEMING SPECIAL (as illustrated) carbide hand lamp; manufactured in Germany and sold in Canada 1900-1910; steel with brass fittings; 6" tall over body; 8-1/2" tall over bail; 4" diameter polished steel reflector; will trade for 2 rare or 3 not-so-rare cap lamps.
- Unfired ZAR carbide cap lamp; all brass; one of those rare Zar lamps from the early carbide design era; will trade.
- Unfired early BALDWIN carbide cap lamp; another hard-to-find item in many collections; will trade.

Write to Rich with your trade offers at this address: Col. R. C. Finch, Dept. of Geology, Room 418, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 78712.

One of our newer correspondents, Rane Curl, has recently acquired the lamp body and carbide cup from a Columbia "Model C Automatic" lamp, but the head assembly and the gas valve is missing. Does anyone have these parts? Write to the following address: Rane L. Curl, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48104.

Check a copy of the November, 1971, issue of National Geographic Magazine. Page 597 tells us of a Tennessee moonshiner with half-gallon jars in his saddlebags on a steep mountain trail. He broke his moonshine jars and he was carrying a miner's carbide lamp. Burned everything up right there!

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Mining Engineering Magazine for December, 1971, carries a short description of George Bayles' (Cincinnati, Ohio) collection of lamps on page 22. It is (was) their centennial year, and the editors had been running occasional references to old time mining history and equipment. Congratulations Geo.

Wanted - Parts as indicated for the following cap lamps, or accurate sketches with dimensions of those marked (*) so I can make reproductions:

- Nickeled Autolite (set screw holds reflector to tube): tip (unvented); felt plate; and felt holder.
- Gee-Bee (Grier): clip* (of "hook and clip"); felt plate and holder*.
- Grier Bros.: clip*; lighter; tip (unvented); felt plate and holder*.
- Sun Ray (Dewar): reflector*; reflector support*; clip*; tip.

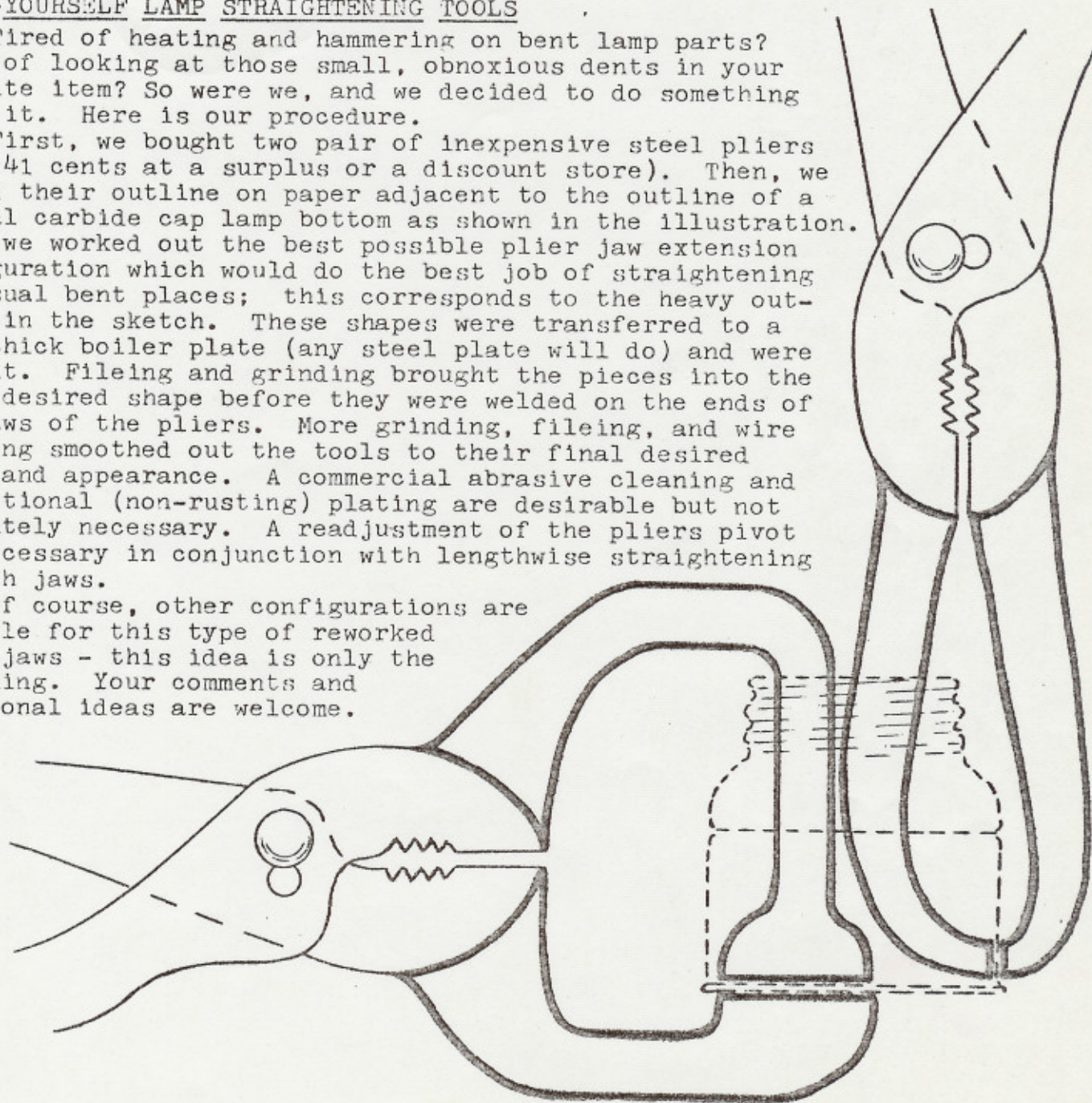
Unfortunately, I do not have easy access to examples of most lamps in "original" condition, so I don't know what the original parts look like in many cases. Write: Rane L. Curl, President, NSS, Dept. of Chemical Engineering, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 48104.

DO-IT-YOURSELF LAMP STRAIGHTENING TOOLS

Tired of heating and hammering on bent lamp parts? Tired of looking at those small, obnoxious dents in your favorite item? So were we, and we decided to do something about it. Here is our procedure.

First, we bought two pair of inexpensive steel pliers (only 41 cents at a surplus or a discount store). Then, we copied their outline on paper adjacent to the outline of a typical carbide cap lamp bottom as shown in the illustration. Next, we worked out the best possible plier jaw extension configuration which would do the best job of straightening the usual bent places; this corresponds to the heavy outlines in the sketch. These shapes were transferred to a 1/4" thick boiler plate (any steel plate will do) and were cut out. Fileing and grinding brought the pieces into the exact desired shape before they were welded on the ends of the jaws of the pliers. More grinding, fileing, and wire brushing smoothed out the tools to their final desired shape and appearance. A commercial abrasive cleaning and a functional (non-rusting) plating are desirable but not absolutely necessary. A readjustment of the pliers pivot was necessary in conjunction with lengthwise straightening of both jaws.

Of course, other configurations are possible for this type of reworked plier jaws - this idea is only the beginning. Your comments and additional ideas are welcome.





REFLECTORS WANTED

I need the following reflectors in mint or near mint condition in order to complete lamps in my collection:

- 1) Wolf Hand Lamp; 4-1/2" Diameter, Aluminum, Hole for Striker, Two Holes for Mounting Screws. (Not the Slip-On Type).
- 2) Wolf Cap Lamp; 2-1/2" Diameter, Brass, Hole for Striker, Two Holes for Mounting Screws.
- 3) Lum-I-Num Cap Lamp; 2-1/4" Diameter, Aluminum, Hole for Striker, No Indentation to Prevent Rotation.
- 4) Sun Ray Cap Lamp; 2-1/4" Diameter, Cast Aluminum, Hole for Striker, Four Reinforcing Ribs on Back.
- 5) Victor Cap Lamp; 3" Diameter, Brass, Hole for Striker, No Indentation to Prevent Rotation, Marked on Back Around Striker Hole "Made in USA - Patent Applied For".
- 6) Acme Hand Lamp; 3" Diameter, Nickel Plated, Hole for Striker, No Indentation to Prevent Rotation.
- 7) Guy's Dropper Cap Lamp; 2-3/8" Diameter, Brass, Hole for Striker, Indentation to Prevent Rotation.
- 8) Autolite Cap Lamp; 2-7/16" Diameter, Nickel Plated, Hole for Striker, Indentation to Prevent Rotation, Raised Ring Around Inside 2-1/4" Diameter.

John Leahy
 1001 Mt. Massive Drive
 Leadville, Colorado 80461

LAMPS FOR TRADE

THESE LAMPS ARE FOR TRADE ONLY FOR LAMPS OF SIMILAR RARITY AND CONDITION. TRADES ARE NOT LIMITED TO CARBIDE.

① X-RAY LAMP

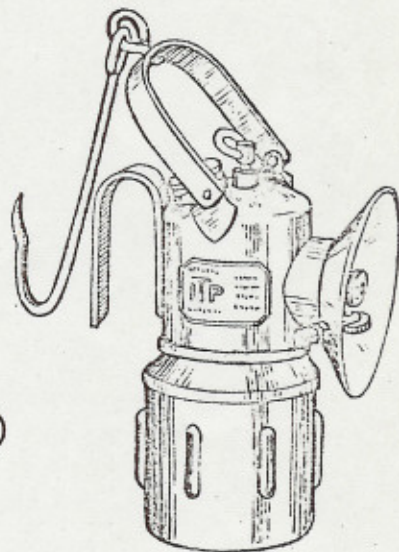
THIS LAMP IS IN MINT CONDITION. IT IS UNFIRED AND IN ITS ORIGINAL BOX.



①

② ITP HAND LAMP

THESE LAMPS ARE NEAR MINT. THEY ARE UNFIRED, BUT THERE IS SOME CORROSION ON THE BASES AND SOME OF THE ORIGINAL TINNING IS GONE. OVERALL THEY ARE VERY GOOD. THESE ARE THE EARLY MODELS WITH THE BRASS TAG SOLDERED ONTO THE WATER CHAMBER.



②

JOHN LEAHY
1001 MT. MASSIVE DRIVE
LEADVILLE, COLORADO
80461

