



THE UNDERGROUND LAMP POST



- NOT A HIPPIE NEWSPAPER -

Vol. II, No. 6

Spring, 1976

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

Henry Ford Museum - During a recent business trip to Detroit, we had the very good fortune to have enough time one Saturday afternoon to visit the Henry Ford Museum; not enough time for Greenfield Village, however. We would certainly recommend it and especially the section on early lighting. There are several sub-sections which include old mine lamps, carbides, safety lamps, candleholders, and oil wick cap lamps. While there are several mis-marked items (as in most museums),

Below, word-for-word is the description on the Henry Boker display in the Henry Ford Museum:

Henry Boker did, in fact, operate a mill supply house in New York City which was the forerunner of the present H. Boker Co. Stamped items on display are as follows:

Ed. note - exact museum identifications are used here:

1. German Iron Betty Lamp c. 1845
2. Iron Betty Lamp c. 1845
3. Iron Betty Lamp c. 1845
4. Iron Betty Lamp c. 1845
5. Hacksaw hogscraper c. 1850
6. Miner's pricket candleholder (Sticking Tommy) 'Lightning' c. 1845
7. Wick trimmer for flat kerosene wicks c. 1870

A group of primitive items were included in the display including several similar Betty lamps. All of these items, in each category, were of very similar design, had similar markings, and had similar characteristics, but were stamped with different names which included:

HENRY BOKER F. HURXTHAL & SON JOHN D. POST B. FOX

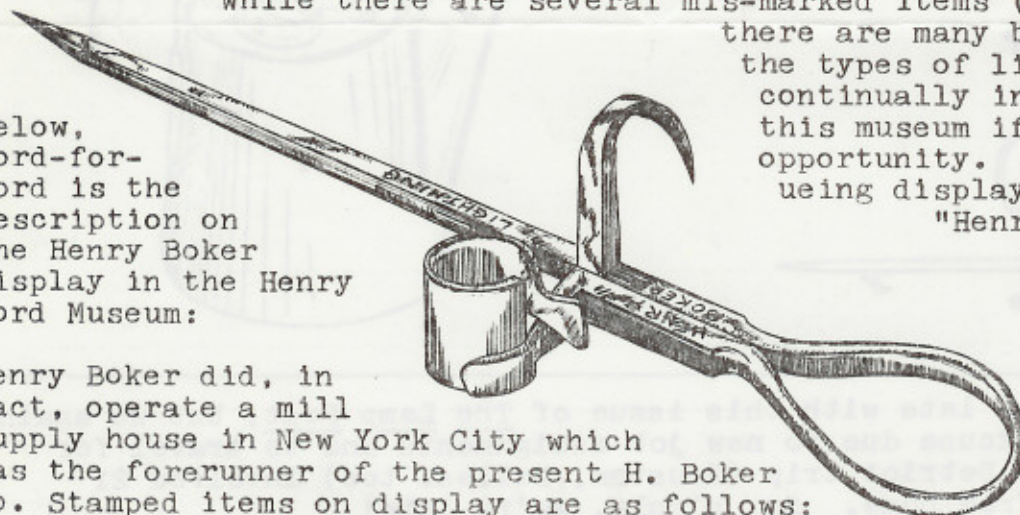
We assume an unknown maker and distribution by the several stamped named enterprisers who may have been only distributors.

Patent Office Models - The Henry Ford Museum also displayed three patent office models. Two of these are shown on page two; the third is for an oil wick cap lamp issued to J. S. Sommerville on Jan. 4, 1876, number 71,675.

Upon reviewing our notes when we returned home, we were interested enough to compile the following figures:

Full patent copies in our files - approx 225

Known underground lighting patents NOT yet in our files - 366; these are numbered thru 1933 when the patent office names were changed within their recording system to "electric lamps." There are 7 promising patent titles thru 1944. At the current 50¢ each, we haven't ordered any recently!



there are many beautiful examples of the types of lighting that we are continually interested in. Don't miss this museum if you ever have the opportunity. To us, the most intriguing display was one entitled

"Henry Boker, New York".

We have a miner's candleholder as shown to the left and we have known of an early 'frog' hanging oil wick lamp marked "Henry Boker". Several of our correspondents have mentioned both.

N. LARSEN.
Miners' Candle-Holders.

Fig. 1.

Patented May 26, 1874.

No. 151,297.

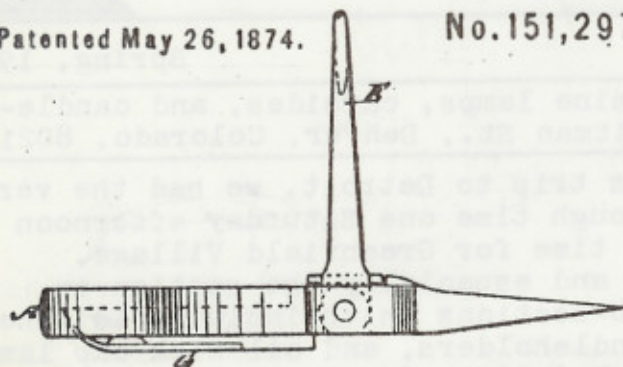
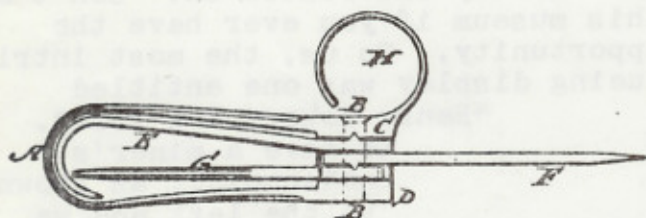


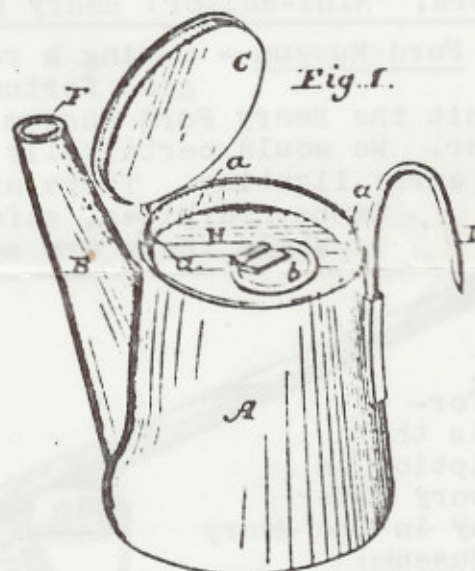
Fig. 2.



J. S. SOMMERVILLE.
Lamp.

Patented June 8, 1869.

No. 90,967.



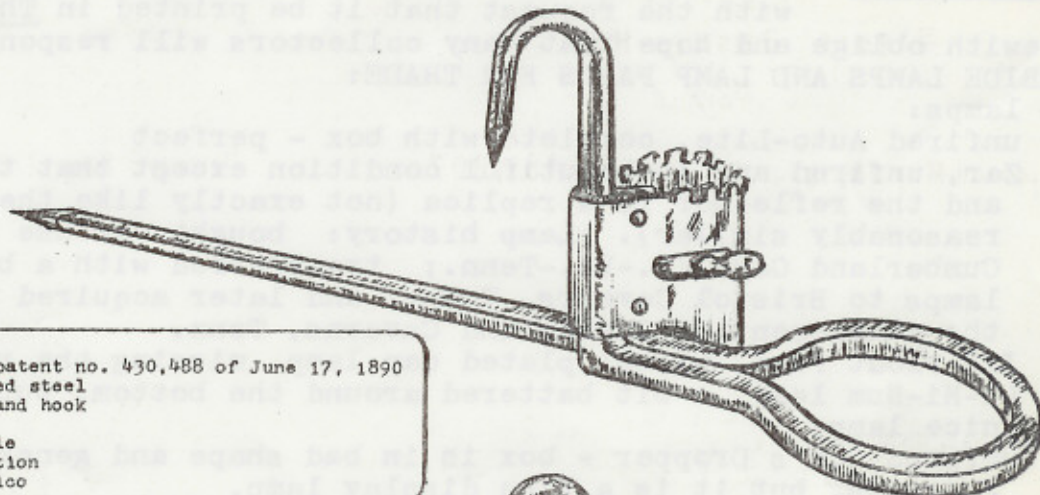
Late - We're sorry to be late with this issue of The Lamp Post, but we again plead the time excuse due to new job assignments and to travel for these assignments. The Detroit trip (Houston, Dallas, too) involved 21 consecutive days away from home. So, simply, we're late!

Postage thanks - We owe thanks as follows for postage help for this issue and for the continued correspondence from all of our friends and fellow lamp tramps. Postage help has come from Texas, Kentucky, Alabama, California, and Virginia. Many thanks.

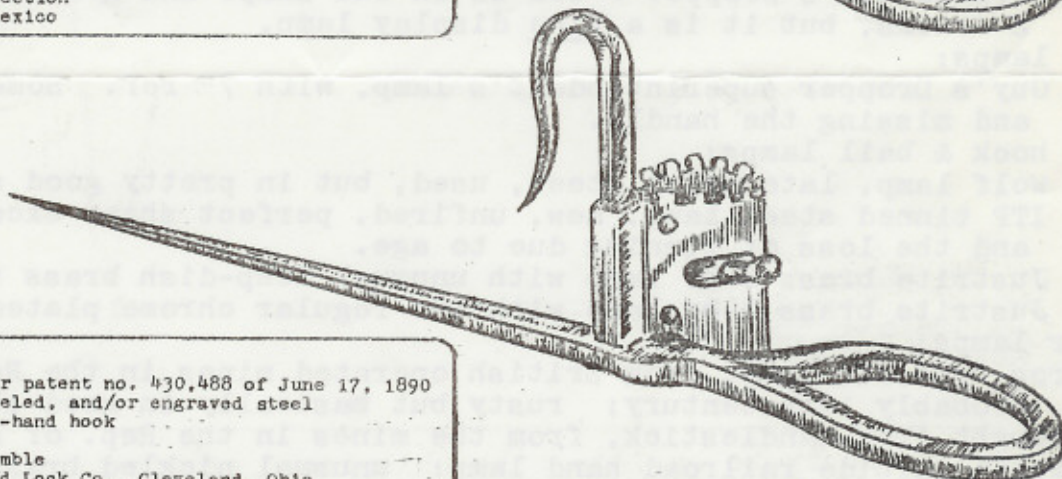
Miner's candleholders - These little friends remain of passionate importance to many of our correspondents. The brand or trade named continue to turn up and to mystify some of us. Page 3 shows an interesting set of candleholders, each authentically identified by the name of "California", "Lake Superior", or a patent with a look-alike illustration Very interesting . . . and who knows if the answers will ever be found beyond the fact of selling with a good name for the product.

Varney candleholders - Jack Ramsdell writes often and well from Carson City, Nevada. He has one of those giant collections of miner's candleholders including many of the stamped Varney varieties. Jack recently picked up a CLEAN CUT and says he needs an OCCIDENT and a SPARKLE. Jack has VARNEY, ROYAL, DENVER, BONANZA, BOKER (see p. 1), and the hollow handled LINDAHL for trade. P.S. Jack - you also need the VARNEY BN that we recently found in a Denver shop. That's right, the BN is upside down from the name VARNEY. No one we have showed it to can figure out what or why. Jack's wife collects pearl handled button hooks. Write them at: Jack Ramsdell, 3403 Alpine View Court, Carson City, Nevada, 89701.

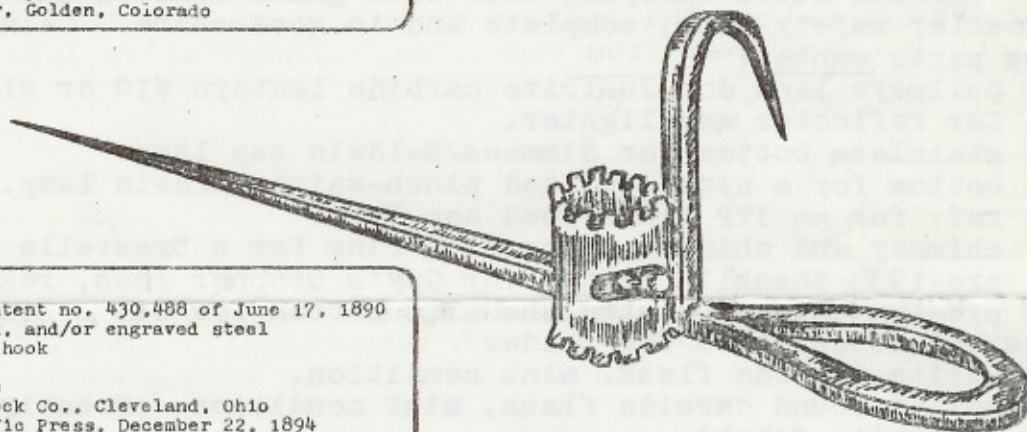
Centennial - Bi-centennial - Here in Colorado we are as interested in the 100-year centennial celebration of statehood for Colorado, the Centennial state and the Silver state, just as much as all of us are honoring the 200-year bi-centennial of the U. S. A. It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to reaffirm our love for the greatest state and nation ever.



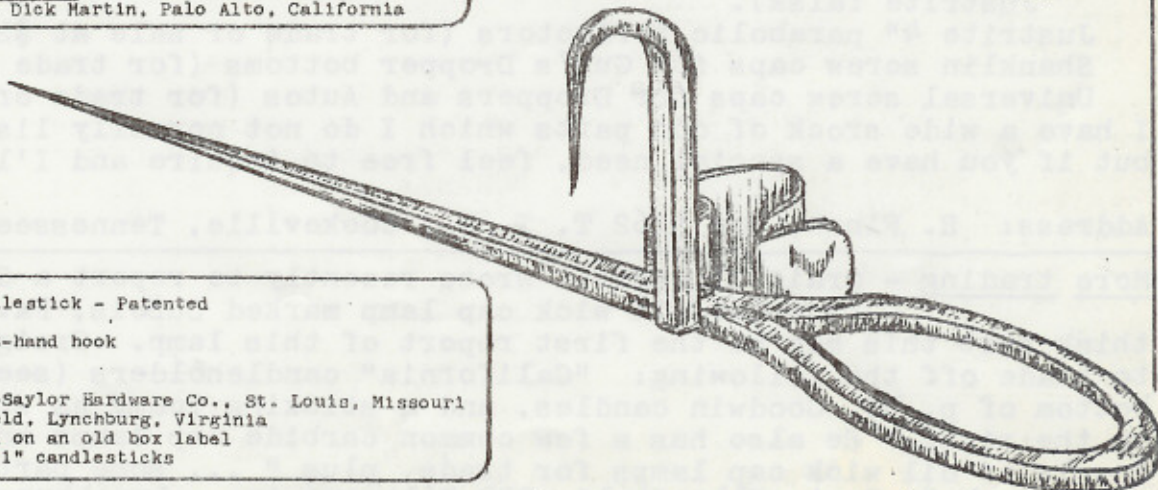
Unmarked
 Similar to L. H. Shoulder patent no. 430,488 of June 17, 1890
 Plain, hand-forged, japanned steel
 Large single-bend, right-hand hook
 Round handle loop
 Thumb-knob on candle thimble
 Source: H. A. Pohns collection
 from northern Mexico



LAKE SUPERIOR Pattern
 Similar to L. H. Shoulder patent no. 430,488 of June 17, 1890
 Plain, hand-forged, nicked, and/or engraved steel
 Small double-bend, right-hand hook
 Oval handle loop
 Thumb-knob on candle thimble
 Manufactured by Cleveland Lock Co., Cleveland, Ohio
 Source: Unreferenced photo-copy of an advertisement
 from George Eichler, Golden, Colorado



CALIFORNIA Pattern
 Similar to L. H. Shoulder patent no. 430,488 of June 17, 1890
 Plain, hand-forged, nicked, and/or engraved steel
 Large single-bow, left-hand hook
 Oval handle loop
 Thumb-knob on candle thimble
 Manufactured by Cleveland Lock Co., Cleveland, Ohio
 Source: Mining and Scientific Press, December 22, 1894
 from Jeani and Dick Martin, Palo Alto, California



CALIFORNIA Miners' Candlestick - Patented
 Wrought steel
 Large single-bow, right-hand hook
 Oval handle loop
 NO THUMB KNOB
 Manufactured by Ludlow-Saylor Hardware Co., St. Louis, Missouri
 Source: Craig Ellenfield, Lynchburg, Virginia
 as illustrated on an old box label
 for 1 dozen, 11" candlesticks

Advertisement - We have recieved the following from our friend Rich Finch with the request that it be printed in The Lamp Post . We herewith oblige and hope that many collectors will respond.

CARBIDE LAMPS AND LAMP PARTS FOR TRADE:

Cap lamps:

- 1 unfired Auto-Lite, complete with box - perfect
- 1 Zar, unfired and in beautiful condition except that the tip is missing and the reflector is a replica (not exactly like the original, but reasonably similar). Lamp history: bought for use in Cudjo's Cave at Cumberland Gap, Ky.-Va.-Tenn.; transferred with a bunch of carbide lamps to Bristol Caverns, Tenn., and later acquired as a curiosity by the management of Cumberland Caverns, Tenn.
- 1 ITP Float Feed, nickel plated cap lamp, missing the reflector.
- 1 Lu-Mi-Num lamp, a bit battered around the bottom, but complete and a nice lamp.
- 1 unfired Guy's Dropper - box is in bad shape and generator falnge has 2 cracks, but it is a fine display lamp.

Hand lamps:

- 1 Guy's Dropper superintendent's lamp, with 7" ref. Somewhat battered, and missing the handle.

8-hr hook & bail lamps:

- 1 Wolf lamp, late model steel, used, but in pretty good shape.
- 1 ITP tinned steel lamp, new, unfired, perfect shape except for rust spots and the loss of tinning due to age.
- 1 Justrite brass 8-hr lamp with unusual deep-dish brass reflector; good.
- 1 Justrite brass 8-hr lamp with the regular chrome plated ref.; fair.

Other lamps:

- Frog type oil lamp, from British operated mines in the Rep. of Honduras; probably 19th century; rusty but basically in good shape.
- Wrought iron candlestick, from the mines in the Rep. of Honduras.
- German carbide railroad hand lamp: unusual nickled brass lamp housed in a painted steel carrying casr with glass windows and a bail type handls.
- Koehler safety lamp, complete and in good share. Calny type.

Lamp parts wanted:

- 1 bullseye lens doe Justrite carbide lantern #10 or #12.
- 1 Zar reflector and lighter.
- 1 stainless bottom for Simmons/Baldwin cap lamp.
- 1 bottom for a nickel plated pinch-waist Baldwin lamp.
- 1 ref. for an ITP Float Feed cap lamp.
- 1 chimney and chimney supporting ring for a Crestella lamp.
- 1 pre-1933 Shanklin bottom for Guy's Dropper lamp, regular brass bottom.
- 1 pre-1933 nickel plated Shanklin bottom for Guy's Dropper lamp.

Parts and accessories for trade:

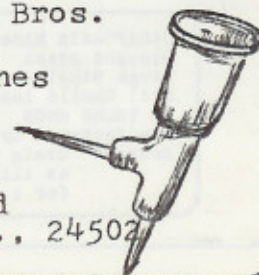
- Justrite carbide flask, mint condition.
- Unmarked round carbide flask, mint condition (probably a recent vintage Justrite falsk).
- Justrite 4" parabolic reflectors (for trade or sale at \$2.50 ea.).
- Shanklin screw caps for Guy's Dropper bottoms (for trade or sale at \$1.50).
- Universal screw caps for Droppers and Autos (for trade or sale at \$1.50 ea).

I have a wide srock of odd parts which I do not normally list as trade items, but if you have a special need, feel free to inquire and I'll see what I have.

Address: R. Finch, Box 5062 T. T. U., Cookeville, Tennessee, 38501

More trading - Craig Ellenfield wrote recently to report a Grier Bros.

sunshine/oil wick cap lamp marked DuBois, Pa. We think that this may be the first report of this lamp. Craig wishes to trade off the following: "California" candleholders (see bottom of p. 3), Goodwin candles, and a sticking Tommy as shown to the right. He also has a few common carbide cap lamps and a couple of oil wick cap lamps for trade, plus " ... some parts and misc. junk." Craig Ellenfield, 339 Biltmore Ave., Lynchburg, Va., 24502



Large Share of Illumination Furnished by Lighting Bug

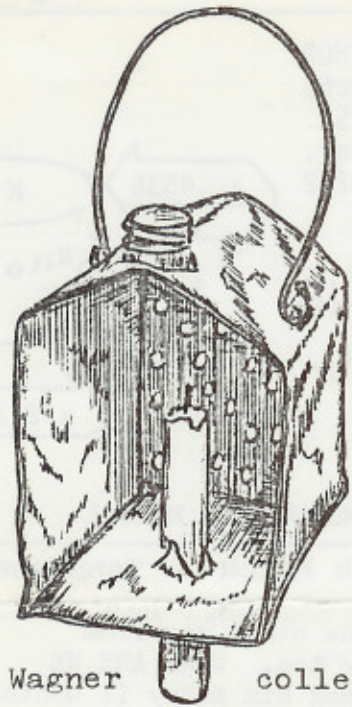
By JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH

I'm sure you know what a lightning bug is...but have you ever seen a lighting bug? Jim and Caryn Riggs never had, until they moved into a one-room log cabin in the forested foothills of southwestern Oregon's Cascade Mountains. There, an old-timer who has lived on a mining claim for 25 years introduced the Riggs couple to such a "bug."

Actually, the device is simple. Take an old-style one-pound coffee can (the flat kind), a 14-ounce tobacco tin or a one-pound lard can and place the container on its side. Then punch one hole through the rim at the front and a couple more directly across at the back edge. Fashion a section of coathanger or a similar sturdy wire into a handle and hook it to the can. Finally, make two cuts, each 1½-2 inches long, in an "X" pattern right in the middle of the "bottom" of the implement. (Use a sturdy pointed knife to form the "X".)

Gently shove a fat utility candle through the center of the cross from the outside to the inside, so that it extends an inch or two into the container. The points of the metal will hold the candle firmly.

Light your "bug," walk out into the dark and you will be surprised at the amount of even illumination it throws. The little waxed flame will shine on through rain or snow and withstand an incredible amount of wind. As it burns down, push the candle up from time to time until the stub is too short for the bent-in prongs to grip and insert another candle.



Norm Wagner collection



THE DENVER POST
22 Sunday, April 6, 1975 ★

Candle cans - We've saved the illustration and story reproduced at the right for a year now, trying to find space for it in The Lamp Post. Bob Lennon in Patagonia,

Arizona, reported the very same crafty idea to us many years ago, so we were knowingly interested in the item as it appeared in The Denver Post. About the same time, Norm Wagner, one of our consistent correspondents from Baker, Oregon, had sent a photo of the candle can he had acquired. Certainly many of our readers will recall the many breakfast pancakes they covered with maple syrup from a 'log cabin' can. We do not have either item in our collection; we do know where there is one, but it has not become available to add to anyone's collection. All you carbide and caving specialists can keep your eyes sharp for items of this kind which other of us lamp tramps are interested in.

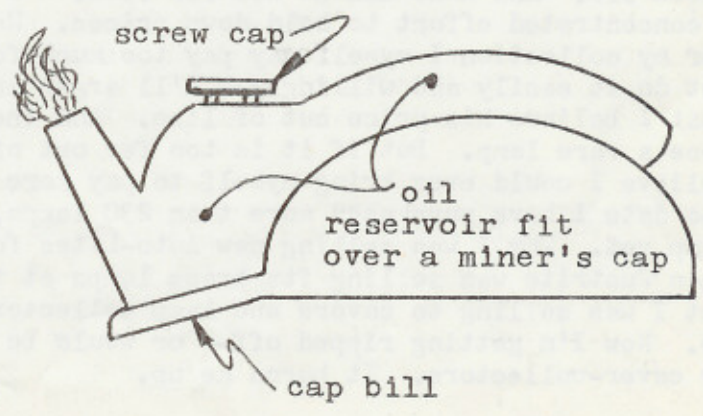
Both Bob Lennon and Norm Wagner are retired from the day-to-day business world, but have increased their interest in lighting and mining things. They welcome correspondence at these addresses:

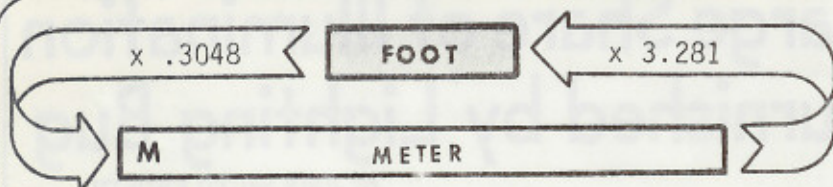
Norman S. Wagner, 2624 1st St., Baker, Oregon, 97814 and
Robert E. Lennon, Patagonia, Arizona, 85624.

Strange oil wick cap lamp patent -

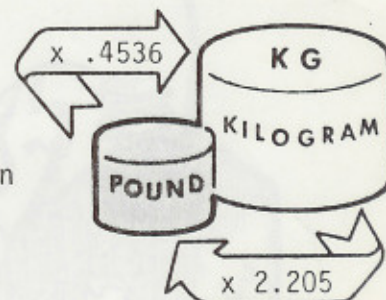
Chuck Young in Fairfax, Virginia, had sent in this sketch of a patent for an oil wick cap lamp. He called it a 'real loser.' Patent issued to a Mr. Thompson, from Bluefield, West Virginia, number 886,441.

We had the great pleasure to visit Chuck at his home last December and to study his extensive collection. Our Denver guests this year have been Rich Finch and Robert Blake.





POHS SHOP
Henry A. Pohs
4537 Quitman St.
Denver, Color.
80212



Our NEW U. S. - Metric conversion booklet, Manual PS-2, can assist in overcoming the fear of making a conversion incorrectly. We have designed a NEW set of comfortable, visual, graphic symbols to accompany the numerical conversion factors. Our full-size, 24-page conversion Manual includes all of the common technical and domestic units.

- Your check or company Purchase Order for \$2.00 brings you this NEW Metric Manual.

Guest editorial - A message recently recieved from Rich Finch in Tennessee.

Now, I am sending you one xerox of a price list I rec'd the other day from Russell Norton. He has your book so perhaps sent you a listing too. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT PRICES? This is ridiculous. But when I phoned him today (I wanted a Buddy) he said they all sold except #22 and 2 of the Autos. I'm a caver myself, but I tell you it makes me very angry and I'll say that some cavers have more money than common sense if they are willing to pay such prices. But Russ said "it seems they'll pay any price for the rare lamps" (that's a paraphrase, not an exact quote). Well, the cavers are ruining lamp collecting by this sort of cut-throat pricing and buying. Most of the cavers I know who are buying lamps are not what I consider serious lamp collectors, but are in it because it is a fad that has some prestige right now (and the caving world has long been one in which there is a lot of prestige seeking one-upsmanship). Gordon Smith says he knows cavers in Louisville who would pay as much as \$50 for a good spade mount Guy's Dropper (I told him that I had just turned one down in an antique shop at \$12.50 as being un-reasonable; he said I should get it, sell it to him for \$20 and he would pass it on at a profit). I don't mind telling you I am sorry I ever had that lamp display at the 1966 SERA meeting, which was the first NSS function with a lamp show.

So, what is to be done? I doubt that anything can be done. But I think it is worth an editorial in the Lamp Post. And I don't mind being quoted if you want to let people know that you aren't the only one who feels this way (here I am assuming that you and I feel similarly on this matter). I think we should encourage lamp collectors not to pay absurd prices, to resist boosting inflation, and to trade and deal with each other on a friendly and reasonable basis. I think some of the caver-dealers are trying to clean up cash-wise by buying lamps at flea markets and ripping off the lamp collectors by greatly boosting the prices. I know that it is still rare to see a cap lamp in a shop in these parts with an asking price above \$10. And most can be had for \$5-6. I think lamp collectors need to make a concentrated effort to hold down prices. Naturally if I see a lamp I really need for my collection I myself may pay too much for it-- but I guarantee you I will not do it easily and willingly-- I'll argue and dicker and let the dealer know that I believe his price out of line. And then I may go ahead and buy so I don't lose a rare lamp. But if it is too far out of line, I'll pass it up. I don't believe I could ever bring myself to pay more than \$20 for any kind of cap lamp. Too date I have purchased more than 230 lamps, and never paid over \$12 for any lamp yet. Why I was selling new Auto-Lites for \$6.50 in 1970, and this was cheaper than Justrite was selling its brass lamps at the time. Was I a fool? Perhaps so, but I was selling to cavers and lamp collectors, so I thought it was the thing to do. Now I'm getting ripped off-- or would be if I was paying the prices they ask-- by caver-collectors. It burns me up.

'Nuf sed about that.

Rich Finch