

THE UNDERGROUND LAMP POST

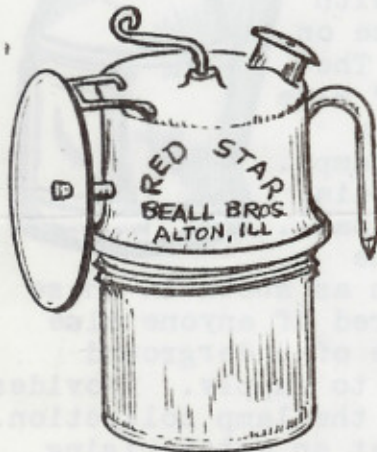
- MINERS WERE THE FIRST ECOLOGISTS -



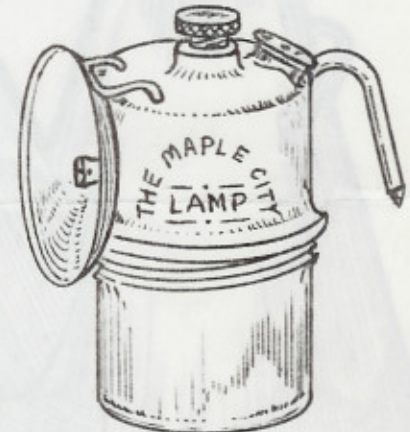
Vol. III, No. 5

Fall, 1980

The Underground Lamp Post, devoted to old mine lamps, carbides, and candleholders. Mini-editor: Henry Pohn, 4527 Quitman St., Denver, Colorado, 80212



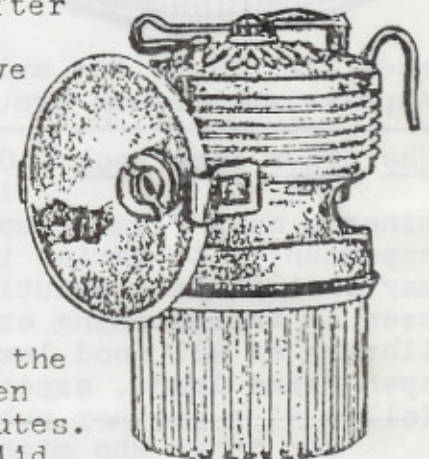
Red Star - Larry Peterson, now of Kingwood, W. Va., reports his new find - a Red Star carbide cap lamp as shown to the left. The markings indicate that the lamp was made by the old reliable (at least for oil wick cap lamps) Beall Bros. in Alton, Ill. If you check your Lamp Post for Fall, 1976, p. 3, you will see that the Red Star is quite similar to the Maple City (Maple City Lamp Co., Monmouth, Illinois) carbide cap lamp.



Lu-Mi-Num - More on Lu-Mi-Num carbide cap lamps. After the last issue which showed two of the conventional types of Lu-Mi-Num carbide lamps, we have come across the illustration at the right. It is from the August 2, 1924, issue of the Engineering and Mining Journal-Press (Vol. 118, No. 5). The description reads as follows:

"A new acetylene miner's lamp is made of cast aluminum, with walls 1/16 in. thick and seamless. The water tank and carbide cup are ribbed, as may be seen in the accompanying illustration. This feature adds strength and permits a firm grip for unscrewing the cup. Construction is simple and the lamp can be taken completely apart and put together again in a few minutes. Every part in it is replaceable. In spite of its solid metal walls and great strength, it weighs less than brass lamps of the same size. The new lamp is made by the Fred R. Belt Co., Inc., 355-361 W. Ontario St., Chicago, Ill., and is known as the "Lu-Mi-Num" lamp."

If this screwed-on design was the "new" lamp, the designers must have learned fast, for most of the Lu-Mi-Num lamps we have seen are the more familiar bayonet lugged design. Paul Wallace in Ohio has the only screwed-on lamp we have ever seen or have had reported. Anyone else?



Postage - Again we have just enough room on the first page to acknowledge our kind postage benefactors. Postage for this issue came from Illinois, New Jersey, Kentucky, Maryland, Colorado, West Virginia, Indiana, California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Virginia, and Michigan. Quite a formidable lineup. Many thanks again to all. We mailed the last issue to over 200 addresses and continue to receive letters and phone calls from all over the country. England, Germany, The Netherlands, Mexico, and Australia are also represented in our correspondence postmarks. Add our northern neighbor Canada, also.



Top

Spare carbide tin - Mike Musura in Niwot, Color., has provided a spare carbide bottom (brass) with a cap which has the strange marking shown to the left. B V W, or W V B, or V W B, or what? If anyone has an idea of the origin, please let us know.



Mule lamps - Hunter Chuck Young in Fairfax, Virginia, sent us two sketches of oil wick lamps with harness loops for use on mine mule riggings. The loops are usually 3/4" wide and he has never found a name or marking on the lamps. The small lamp is 1-5/8" dia. at the font base x 2-3/4" tall.



It has a 3" long spout. The larger lamp is in proportion as shown in these sketches. we've often wondered if anyone else has ever come across this type of underground lamp or has any information to supply. Provides an interesting sidelight to the lamp collection. The supposition could be that an enterprising operator reworked standard lamps to fit his hauling needs. But we've always seen lamps on the mules in those old postcard pictures. What happened, then, to all of the mule lamps? There must be many more around in the Appalachian hunting grounds where Chuck has found so many of his beauties.

The other lamp book - Our good friend and correspondent, Karsten Porezag, in Geiersberg, West Germany, has had his book on miner's open flame lamps published this spring. We have now had the opportunity to review the book and, although we can't read German, we can say that it is a beautiful volume. Just studying the illustrations has been an enlightening experience for us. We highly recommend it for the library of all good lamp tramps who are interested in the early history of open flame lamps, especially in Europe. Karsten tells us that he will follow with another publication on carbide lamps.

For those who might wish to order the book, we suggest the following procedure: the cost is 36 DM (Deutsch-Marks) - your bank can supply a check written in DM - include about 10 DM extra for air mail - order the book: Des Bergmanns Offenes Geleucht ("Miner's Open-Flame Mine Lamps") by Karsten Porezag Book number ISBN Nr. 3-7739-0304-9

Order from: VERLAG GLUCKAUF GmbH, Verkaufsabteilung,
Postfach 10 39 45, D-4300 Essen 1, West Germany

Another article - Stan Lefond of Evergreen, Colorado, has a neat 2-page article on old mine lamps in the July, 1980, issue of Mining Engineering Magazine, pp. 788-789. It is complemented by a full color cover photograph of six lamps and a candleholder.

Safety lamps - We know that there are many collectors who specialize in different types of lamps. So it is with the classic flame safety lamp - but information is hard to come by. Mr. Gil Flint has visited us and has expressed his deep interest in this specialty. He says that he has many to trade! Write him at: Gil Flint, Apt. #408, Franklin Park West, 125 Franklin Grand Junction Colorado, 81501.

Lenticular lamps - More on this specialty from Wendell Wilson.

"I recently acquired the octagonal lenticular lamp illustrated in the Spring issue of the Lamp Post (page 4, center-left). The maker's mark had indeed been incorrectly given when it was earlier illustrated in Early Lighting. After a careful cleaning, the mark appears as follows: "OLLAGNON/A.St.ETIENNE/LOIRE."

"Incidentally, the lenticular lamp with the mostly illegible maker's mark shown at far right on the same page turns out to be nearly identical to one in Henry Pohs' collection. Much of the mark on his is illegible, too, but some additional letters could be made out, and it now appears to be TEZ??AT. The first (?) may be an I. Anyone recognize the name yet?

"Karsten Porezag came to the rescue on the lenticular lamp mentioned last time as being stamped ★CANONI. He says the complete stamp reads ★CANNONIER★. Both Karsten and another collector, R. J. MacWillie, identified the Moroccan carbide lamp illustrated last time as a relatively recently made ARRAS from France. Tom Fallon wrote with the opinion that the rooster on the lamps represented the dawn, which all miners hoped to see each day. On the other hand, I recently saw an old (1909) French 20-franc gold piece with a rooster on one side, surrounded by the motto "Liberte - Egalite - Fraternite." So the rooster does appear to have some national significance beyond its use as a mining symbol.

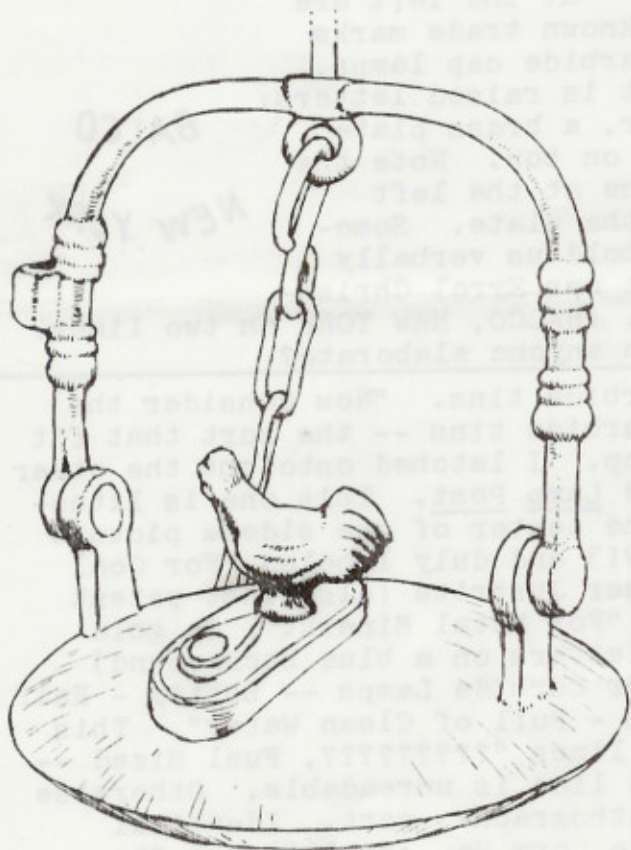
"In Karsten Porezag's new book (all in German) on open-flame miners' lamps he reproduces a page from an old Wilhelm Seippel catalog dated 1908. It shows two types of lenticular lamps (called "Tunnellampe"). Apparently these are a cheap version all in iron, with a little wick pick on a chain (no. 35), and a fancy version with tweezers on a chain and a brass rooster and brass "Knöpfen" (no. 36).

"Below is another type of lenticular lamp illustrated in Karsten's book, which I have sketched from his photo. It is stamped "P. PIRRINGER, GRAZ" (presumably Graz, Austria), and is rated as one of the most rare types of lenticular lamp. Distinguishing features include the disc-shaped font, the over-sized rooster, and the trunnions which are attached to the top surface of the font instead of around the edge. The end of the hook resembles a miner's hammer, pointed on one end and flat on the other, attached by a long rod to the bail. The lamp pictured was used in the Tauern region around 1880.

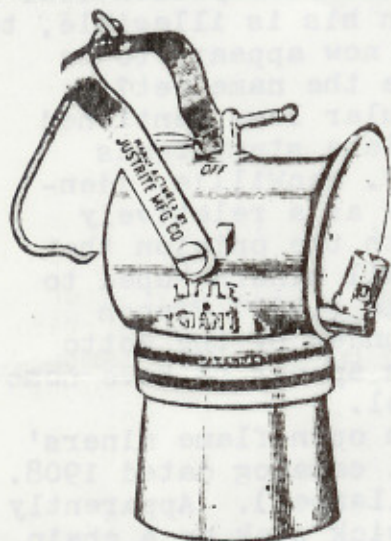
"Porezag mentions but does not illustrate a Spanish lenticular lamp having a solid brass font, and a very rare, small type of lamp called a baby lenticular lamp. Manufacturers in addition to those already mentioned include H. LUCHAIRE (Paris) and P. VARENNE (St. Etienne)."

This brings us now to the end of the current information that Wendell Wilson has supplied for Lamp Post readers. His narrative and his drawings are well-appreciated by your mini-editor and we hope that many readers have enjoyed all of this first-rate information. Many thanks to Wendell.

What other reader has lamp information that he/she might share with us? We are always glad to use as much data as we have space for.



Trade - Manfred Stutzer writes from Germany that he has been collecting miner's lamps for about two years and a half. Most of his are carbide hand lamps (German and French) and safety lamps (German and English). He would like to trade some different lamps he has for typical American lamps such as carbide cap lamps, carbide hand lamps, oil wick cap lamps, and candleholders. Write him at: Manfred Stutzer, Madenburgstr. 6, 6700 Ludwigshafen-15, West Germany.



Little Giant - One of the more interesting early carbide hand lamps is the cast aluminum Little Giant from Justrite. With a steel bail and brass fittings it appeared to have had some design thought, although its 'v' threads must have given some trouble.

The same lamp was also produced with the marking COPPER QUEEN instead of LITTLE GIANT; this is a much more elusive lamp to find.

Jack Ramsdell has found a LITTLE GIANT top;; he needs a bottom and burner tip. Come to think of it, our burner tip and water control shaft are missing also. Someone must have some trader parts to help out with these needs.

Write Jack Ramsdell, 3403 Alpine View Court, Carson City, Nevada, 89701 for more information.

Zar and Scrip - Ralph Blankenbecler writes that he has started a scrip collection. He says that he has lots of Zars yet, and would trade a Zar for scrip. He doesn't want to sell anything, but will trade for something else. Ralph Blankenbecler, Rt. 3 Box 46, Coeburn, Virginia, 24230, (703) 395-2229.

More Zar - The two drawings

at the left are the two known trade marks on Zar carbide cap lamps. The first is raised letters; the other, a brass plate soldered on top. Note the small line at the left edge of the plate. Someone has told us verbally

(Think it was Errol Christ-

man) that he took a plate off and found . . .BALCO, NEW YORK on two lines. Baldwin ??? New York !!! Probably. Can anyone elaborate?

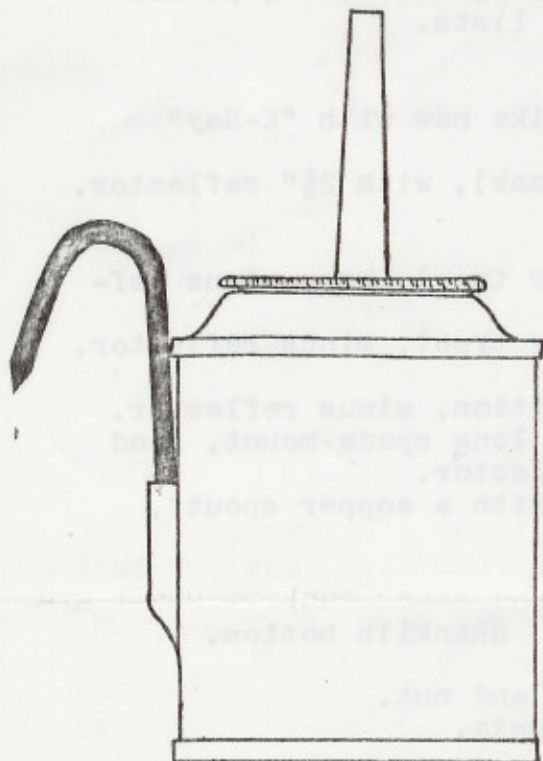
ZAR



BALCO

NEW YORK

Carbide Tins - Norm Wagner writes about carbide tins. "Now consider the slightly curved, flattish carbide tins -- the sort that fit in the hip pocket with the sliding lid on top. I latched onto one the other day that I don't recall being listed in the Lamp Post. This one is lithographed in gold and blue and contains in the center of one side a picture of a Justrite with a last patent date of 1913 and duly labeled "For Coal Miners". Then on the other side with another Justrite (also last patent date 1913) with a stick holder and labeled "For Metal Miners." In gold letters on the bottom of both sides (gold letters on a blue background) are instructions reading "Proper Filling For Carbide Lamps -- Bottom - Half full of Miner's size ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) Carbide. Top - Full of Clean Water". This in three lines. On the top, also in three lines "??????????, Fuel Sized -- Pocket Carbide Can". The first, or topmost line is unreadable. Otherwise this can is identical with the late non-lithographic sort. Identical insofar as embossing goes, that . . ." Write Norm Wagner, 2624 1st St., Baker, Oregon, 97814.



Burning Fluid Lamp - We've had this story in our files for far too long. John Leahy did a bit of research to come up with the following.

"Lamps similar to the sketch can be found in the George Bayles, Chuck Young, and John Leahy collections. The body of the lamp is tin, while the screw-on wick tube is brass. Since the internal diameter of the wick tube is only 1/8", there was some speculation over what type of fuel might have been used.

"Refer to "Flickering Flames" by Leroy Thwing. On page 59 begins a discussion of "burning fluid lamps," sometimes erroneously called "camphene Lamps". Burning fluid was a mixture of alcohol and turpentine which was considered very dangerous. The distinguishing feature of a burning fluid lamp is the wick tube (or burner). The wick tubes (generally brass) are tapered and there is no slot for adjusting the wicks (necessary on a whale oil lamp). The wick is compressed at the top by the tapered tube. It is also characteristic that the wick tube extends a

considerable distance from the fuel reservoir. A screw-in burner is typical of whale oil and burning fluid lamps."

Write John Leahy, 1001 Mt. Massive St., Leadville, Colorado, 80461.

Carbide Lamp Names - Rich Finch is working on his listing of American-made carbide mine (and cavers) lamps. He has asked for the following information.

"INFORMATION WANTED -- INFORMATION FOR TRADE

I would very much like information regarding the following carbide lamps and brand names:

Big Top	Chance	Coolamp	Dewar*	Hydrolite	Liberty
Majestic	National	Pinnacle	Red Star	Shanklin**	Universal***
Columbia Jack					

I would like to acquire photographs, xeroxes of advertisements, packages, etc., depicting these lamps. I am especially interested in any pictures which will show the brand names in use on the lamps. I have a fairly large file of photos, pictures, advertisements, etc., which I will xerox as trade material.

* not ITP, not Sun-Ray, not Dew-R-Lite, but "Dewar" used as a brand name on the lamp;

** not Guy's Dropper, Big Boy, or Shanklin Metal Products, but "Shanklin" used as a brand name on the lamp body;

*** not Auto-Lite, Big Boy or other, but "Universal" used as a brand name on the lamp itself."

Write Rich Finch, Box 5062 T.T. U., Cookeville, Tennessee 38501.

We've already given Rich our opinions, but we think that all collectors should have a crack at defining these names . . . are they real brands or are they only phantom advertising or manufacturers names?

Trades wanted - More from Ralph Blankenbecler who says that he needs reflectors for Justrites, Auto-Lites, and Guy's Droppers.

His other problem is defined as follows:

"I have a two-burner cap lamp, unknown brand, Pat. Pending is all I can find on it. I have only one base for it. Someone might have another one. I will trade a rare item for a good match to the base I have. The lamp is in perfect condition, but just one bottom. Write Ralph Blankenbecler, Rt. 3 Box 46, Coeburn, Virginia, 24230.

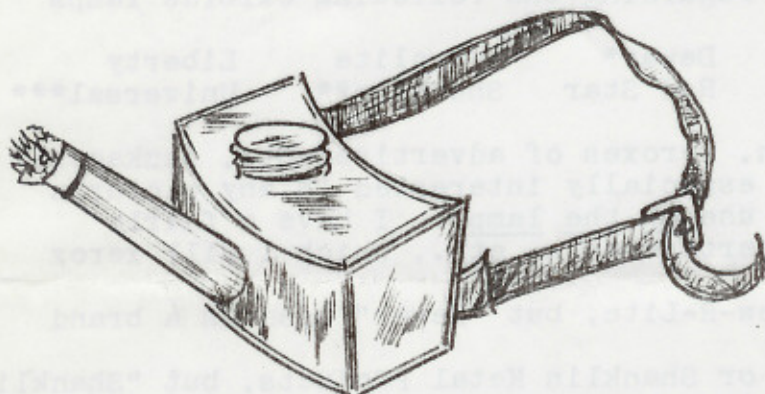
Trades - Bob Salika, 3917 Sunnyside, Brookfield, Illinois, 60513, has provided the following trade and wants lists.

FOR TRADE

Justrite "X-Ray" 3" polished brass reflector, like new with "X-Ray" striker assembly.
 Guy's Dropper (Universal) #285DH lamp (Double Hook), with 2½" reflector, brand new condition, in box stamped 1931.
 Justrite pocket flask, used but in good shape.
 Auto-Lite very early design (set-screw reflector type) lamp, minus reflector and wire clasp, good body.
 Auto-Lite early design (set-screw with reflector type), minus reflector, minus wire clasp, body in good shape.
 Justrite 4-hour horizontal hand lamp, good condition, minus reflector.
 Guy's Dropper (Universal) 2½ hour cap lamp with long spade mount, good condition, minus reflector bracket and reflector.
 Small #2 (only I.D.) tea pot lamp (grease type with a copper spout), good condition.

NEED

Lu-mi-Num Lamp. Hansen Lamp. Shanklin bottom.
 Nickel Guy's Dropper bottom (Shanklin).
 Buddy or Elkhorn water chamber, reflector, tip, and nut.
 Beall Bros Tea pot lamp with Maltese Cross insignia.
 Stick for Husson #2, 4, 5, or 6 lamps.
 Copper needle and tamper.
 Wooden fuse and charge boxes (miner's, not supplier's).
 Company money.
 Early Edison electric head lamp with battery.
 A vest pocket or baby safety lamp.
 Any original or copies of price lists, parts lists, etc., describing lamps, tools, or mining.



Oil Wick Lamp - Tony Moon writes of this unusual oil wick lamp. It is of tin construction with a brass spout and leather head or hat band. The rear face is slanted to fit the forehead. Overall height is 4", width 4-1/4" and depth 2" to 1-5/8". Screw cap. The leather strap is adjustable.

General Grant Lantern - Jack Ramsdell writes that the lamp tramps have long neglected a very prominent candle lantern, the "General Grant." He asks, "How many Justrites, Wolfs, Varneys, or Lindahls have been photographed with a U. S. president?" The photo he enclosed showed a lantern 19" tall, base to top of ring, 6-1/8" square, 3-3/4" x 8" mica window, 6-3/4" dia. x 1/4" wire ring. Brass tag on lower edge of the top shade reads: "A. CHENETEE, MAKER, VIRGINIA, NEV." Ron Bommarito says that this name appears in lists of Virginia City 1880 businesses and that the VIRGINIA is real as the early miners were mostly southerners. The CITY we now know for Virginia City was added later.

