

THE UNDERGROUND LAMP POST

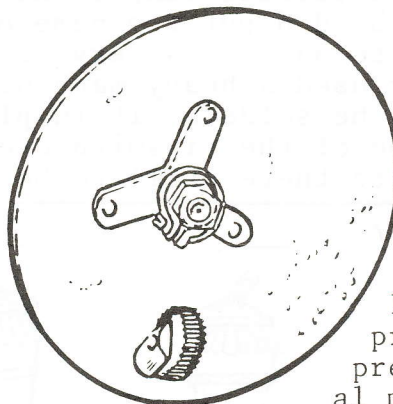
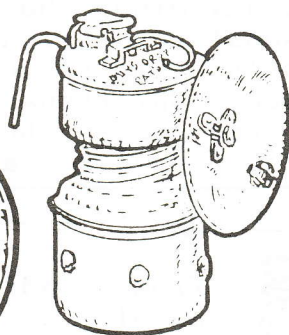
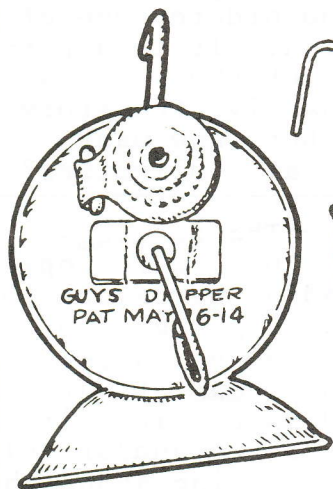
- MINERS WERE THE FIRST ECOLOGISTS -



Vol. V, No. 5

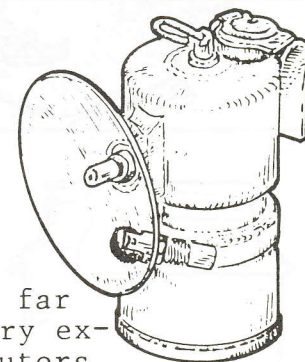
Fall, 1990

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

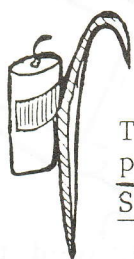


DROPPER - A little-known and even less publicized GUY'S DROPPER brass carbide cap lamp is shown here. The distinctive features are the brass bridge under the water control lever (apparently to provide a spring tension pressure against accidental movement) and the 3-rivet mounting for the 2.125 in. (53.975 mm) diameter brass reflector. There are 5 equally-spaced, round, raised projections on the carbide container bottom.

Cap lamp - Karsten Porezag's fine book on carbide lamps included a photograph of this brass cap lamp. Correspondence from a long-forgotten source once called it a PINNACLE, but our Australian collectors tell us that it has no relation to the PINNACLES from down under. Can any of our readers help with definitive information?



Grateful - Editors Len Gaska and Dave Thorpe of The Mining Artifact Collector (known as the MAC) have been very kind to the Lamp Post. Their resources and materials far surpass those of the L P; their fund of information is very extensive. Many of our long-time correspondents and contributors are now also appearing on their pages. We can certainly recommend the MAC to all others. For subscription information, write to: Len Gaska, Editor, 1688 E. Corson St., Pasadena, California, 91106.

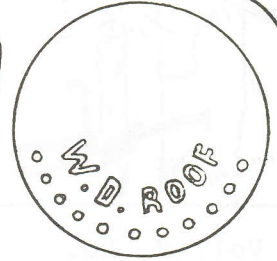


Candleholder - Bill Mayershon, Asamera Minerals, 6121 Lakeside Dr., Suite 130, Reno Nevada, 89511-8502, has sent this sketch of a candleholder that was found near Pioche, Nevada. It is 3.5 in. (88.9 mm) tall and seems to be hand-forged steel. The candle thimble is split, the hook point is sharp, and the lower point is very blunt.

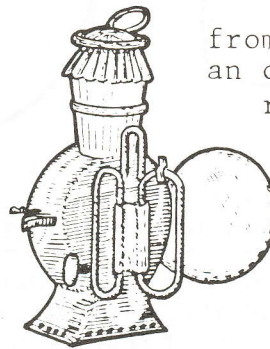
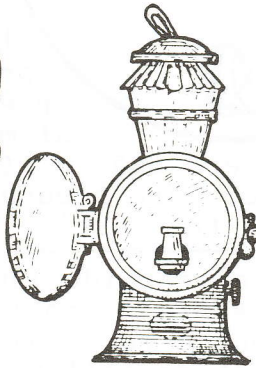
Sales - trades - Mike Puhl, 29 Stonehill Cove, Jackson, Tennessee, 38305, 901-664-5403, has sent his new address and phone number plus a lengthy list of items for sale, items for trade, and items wanted. Many of our readers may have already seen Mike's extensive lists. With his recent acquisitions he has quite a sale list of duplicates. Write or give Mike a call to request his listings.

Sales - trades - Ditto for regular correspondent Dick Sears, 4831 Vespucci Drive, Sierra Vista, Arizona, 85635. Dick's lists also include miscellaneous mining items as well as miner's lamps and candlesticks. Dick also includes some rare printed matter, tokens, script, post cards and a squib case.

Carbide lamp - Consider the lamp illustrated here . . . brass water reservoir top, 3.0 in. (76.2 mm) diameter, conical tin reflector, and a cast iron bottom with cut "V" threads. That much makes the lamp significantly different from most of its carbide cousins. Now, add the inscription W. D. ROOF, and you have a quite unique lamp. The story

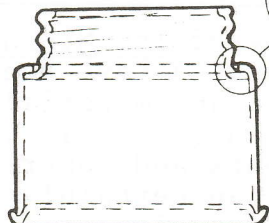
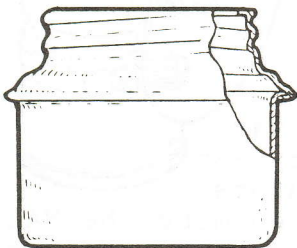


goes that early in this century an itinerant tinsmith roamed the coalfields of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky where he repaired carbide lamps. Eventually he began to make a carbide lamp of his own style and design. No, his name was not Roof, but he did put the name of any miner who ordered one of his lamps on that lamp to make it a very personal possession. It is apparent that the lamp maker used a heavy machinist's stamp to set the letters on the top piece before he soldered it in place. Unfortunately, the story legend has lost the name of the tinsmith over the years. But, how many other Roof-type lamps are there still to be discovered by lamp collectors?



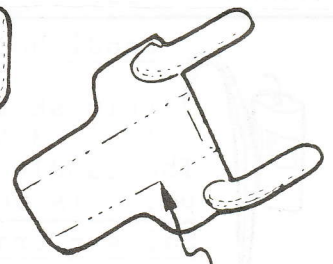
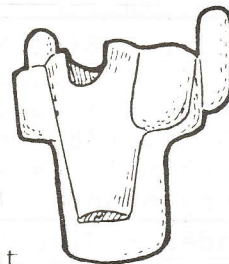
Cap lamp - The drawings here were copied from a fading xerox copy of an old catalog page, no reference available.

Perhaps one of our readers can identify the source and/or tell us something about the lamp and its use. It appears to be a flat wick, liquid fuel, handles-and-hook lamp.



Bottoms - Here are two carbide lamp bottoms which need identification. Neither have any markings, and no history of either is known. The threads do not quite match anything in our collection or several others we have queried. Both are 2 in. (50.8 mm) to 2-1/8 in. (53.98 mm) diameter depending on the way they are measured.

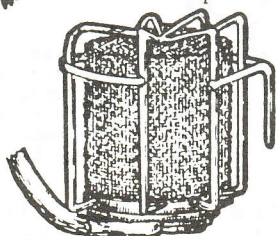
Peg board - Many collectors have struggled with the problem of displaying their hooked lamps and candlesticks on peg board panels. It just seemed that this would be an easy, handy way to go. But, an efficient 'hooking' piece was seldom available. The white plastic hook shown here fills the need and will not mark a valued lamp or stick. It has a hole in the top front for wire hooks and, with a little ingenuity, the back side can be shaped to accept a flat hook lamp. This plastic hook is available at \$8.00 per hundred from: Tebo Store Fixtures, 468 E. 58th Ave., #1305, Denver, Colorado, 80216. 303-292-2426.



Wanted - I am anxious to buy or trade for lamps, candlesticks and mining items. I specially need a SCRANTON bottom, blasting cap tins, souvenir spoons with mines and mills in the bowl, and a carbide safety lamp. Write or call: John Coons, 1127 Adams St., Denver, Colorado, 80206, 303-399-5176 (evenings).



Safety lamps - The subject of flame safety lamps is such a large and complex subject that it is difficult to cover even 'small parts' of it in this mini-journal. However, the lamp illustrated to the left is worth showing. It is in the University of West Virginia lamp collection and consists of an unmarked carbide belt (?) generator, a hose, and a cap burner enclosed by a wire gauze and a wire frame. The unit is well-made; it could be a factory-type rather than a home-made trial lamp. Has anyone ever seen a similar unit?



Varney - Ed Hunter of Cripple Creek, Colorado, offers that the 'odd looking' VARNEY on page 1 of the last L P issue looks like a first class repair job for a miner who broke off the vertical hook and had a buddy blacksmith with talent and smarts. Other comments have included thoughts on reproductions and the lack of conformity in the shape of the thimble. We'd like to hear your thoughts.

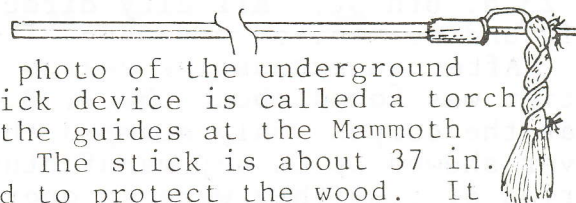
More candlesticks - Mr. Forbes Freeburg, 14010 252nd Avenue E, Buckley, Washington, 98321, has approved use of this quote from one of his recent letters.

"While I was at an antique show in Portland a few weeks ago, I observed some candlesticks with extremely high quality workmanship that were not old. The individual that made them is at this point in time also the person selling them, and is very open about the fact that they are not old. Each of the sticks that I saw is labeled as newly made sticks despite their appearance. The sticks themselves have been chemically treated to make them appear old, and they look very similar to authentic sticks in this regard. All of the sticks that I saw had unusual embellishments of some sort which would make them desirable to collectors. Some had thimble levers in the shape of a woman's leg, one had a thimble lever in the shape of a heart; several models had folding shafts. The individual that made these pieces has placed an identifying mark comprised of three diamonds on each as a signature.

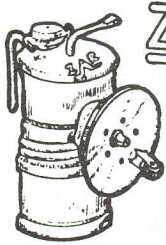
"Ultimately one or more of these pieces will be resold by someone who may unknowingly or dishonestly represent them as being old. They are presently being sold for around \$325.00, and could easily pose a temptation for someone to double their investment by reselling it as an authentic antique. I have to give credit to the artist that made them for the creativity and skill that they display. The truly unfortunate part is that he wasn't making them 80 years ago."

Cave light - Roger Weir, 208 W. 32nd St., Huntington, West Vir-

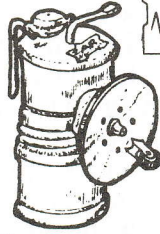
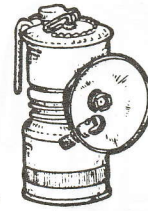
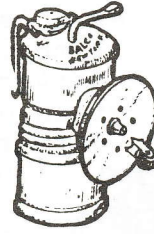
ginia, 25704, has written about and sent a photo of the underground lighting device illustrated here. "This stick device is called a torch stick or a torch thrower. It was used by the guides at the Mammoth Caves before lighting as we know it today. The stick is about 37 in. (939.8 mm) long and fitted with a metal end to protect the wood. It is tapered and has a hex cross section. It is hand-made of some local wood. The rag at the end is twisted in a specific fashion and soaked with keorsene or other flammable liquid. It is then fastened to the end of the stick and thrown into the higher formations where it landed and burned as a backlight to illuminate the formations. There were several cave guides at Mammoth who were well-known for their skill in the use of the torch. I have seen mention of this lighting method in books about Mammoth and its early history. This particular stick was used in Mammoth Cave. I can not say how old this torch stick is but it is hand-made and was given to me by a cave guide who worked there several years ago. I judge this type of lighting device to be very rare."



Hold-A-Lite



ZAR

ZAR
NEW YORKBALCO
NEW YORK

- Brass
- 2.0 in. (50.8 mm) diameter
- 3.5 in. (88.9 mm) tall
- 3.0 in. (76.2 mm) diameter reflector
- Incuse stamped name

- Brass
- 2.0 in. (50.8 mm) diameter
- 3.5 in. (88.9 mm) tall
- 3.0 in. (76.2 mm) diameter reflector
- Soldered-on name plate

- Brass
- 2.0 in. (50.8 mm) diameter
- 3.5 in. (88.9 mm) tall
- 3.0 in. (76.2 mm) diameter reflector

- Brass
- Zar-type top
- Advertised as Hold-A-Lite
- No marking on top
- Simmons diamond-S trade mark on bottom

The ZAR family - Illustrated here are four members of Frederic E. Baldwin's ZAR brass carbide cap lamp family, so interrelated because of their design similarities. Left to right, they are: ZAR, with incuse stamped name; ZAR, with soldered-on name plate; BALCO; and the combination Hold-A-Lite. The ZARs are distinctive by reason of their design shape (U.S. design patent #45,514, application September 16, 1913, issued March 31, 1914), their primitive water feed, and their unique, vented reflector. Note - We are now trying to provide a careful reporting of lamp names - all caps means that the name is marked on the lamp (or other illuminating device); lower case indicates a name from a source other than the item itself, i.e., advertisement, catalog, correspondence, letters patent, etc.

Safety lamp - J. Roger Mitchell, 19 Eric Lane, Glen Riddle, Pa., 19037, 215-891-0974, has sent the

following information. "Several months ago I attended the estate auction of an old miner in Lake Harmony, Pa., I purchased a Clanny-type safety lamp. The bonnet was stamped 'T. B. Bickerton & Co., No. 12 S. 4th St., Miners Supplies, Philadelphia'. My friend Bill Lorah acquired a Davy-type lamp marked the same. These were the first lamps I had ever seen with a Philadelphia stamping. While on vacation, I decided to spend some time in that city researching this company. Here is what I found.

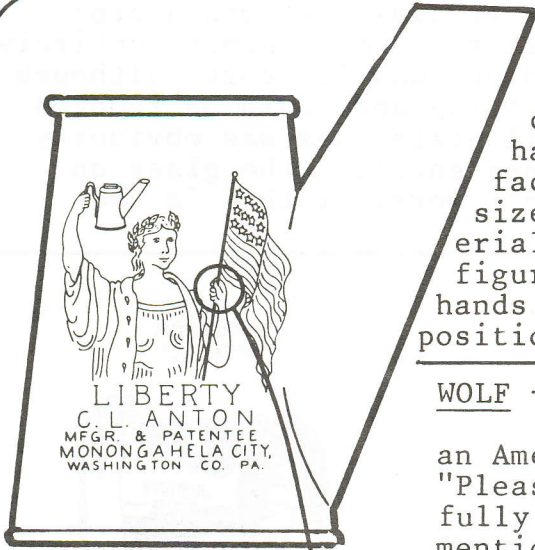
"Thomas B. Bickerton was born in 1838; the son of the real estate magnate Benjamin Bickerton. Thomas started a business with his cousin Joseph A. Errickson in 1871 at 12 S. 4th St. selling railroad supplies. T. B. Bickerton & Co. operated at that address until 1889. In 1890 the address changed to 19 S. 4th St.; in 1891 to 21 S. 4th St.; in 1900 a final time to 23 N. 6th St. All city directory listings were for railroad supplies only and no mention was made of miners supplies.

"After an exhaustive search through many other sources, no other information was found about the T. B. Bickerton Co. This leads me to believe that the company only stamped these lamps and resold them as the company never showed up in any manufacturing journals or city guides during the period of time they were in operation. Unless they had a brass foundry they probably could not have produced these lamps. Also, the lamps are very similar to other lamps produced by both U. S. and English companies. Why would a supplier of railroad materials try to compete with the big manufacturers in the Scranton area during their heyday? This is only my speculation and I welcome any comments. Anyone wishing to pursue this please feel free to contact me. I can provide sources and possible leads."

Ed. note: A later letter from Mr. Mitchell makes this offer also: Wanted - oil wick lamps; I will trade carbide lamps for oil wick lamps.

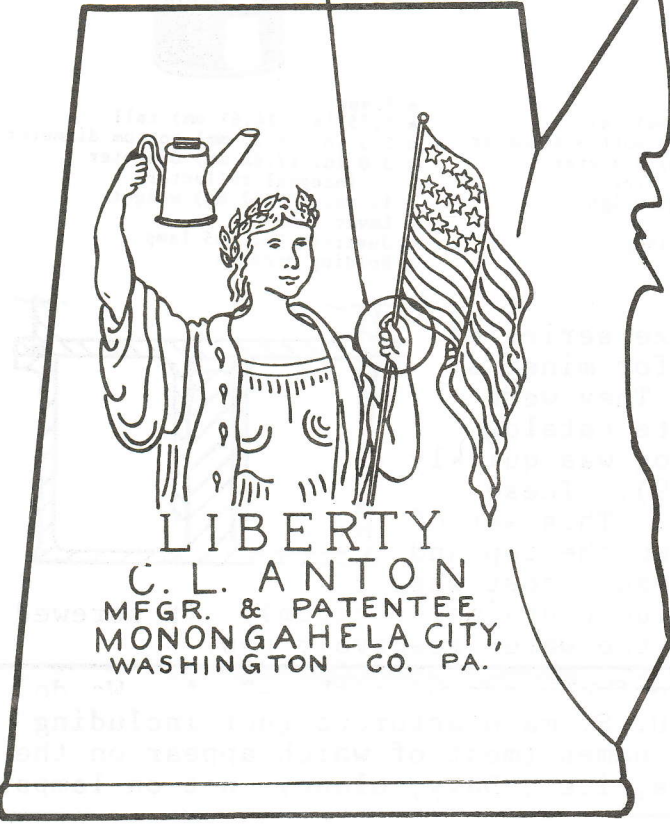
Question - How many Husson oil wick cap lamp models are there? A. We're not sure. The following have been reported: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, A, B, BB, FB, and 22 (peg lamp). We're not certain of the 3 and the FB. Will any of our readers comment?

T. B. BICKERTON & CO.
NO. 12 S. 4TH ST.
MINERS SUPPLIES
PHILADELPHIA



LIBERTY - Wick cap lamps show up in several sizes and were made from tin, brass, and/or copper. One of the key pieces in any collection is the LIBERTY wick cap lamp which has been found in at least three (3) sizes . . . face miner's size, driver's size, and car lamp size, each manufactured from the three common materials. More interesting, however, is the Liberty figure in the trade mark with its two (2) right hands. The enlargement here shows the impossible position of the hand holding the staff of the flag.

WOLF - M. Jean-Claude Delhomme, 5 Allee des Narcisses 78120, Rambouillet, France, would like to buy an American WOLF safety lamp at a right price. "Please send your offer." Ed. note: M. Delhomme is fully aware of the escalated U. S. prices and has mentioned that he may not be able to reach them.

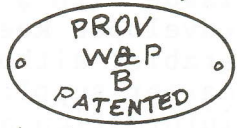


Questions - From as far back as Vol. 1, No. 9 (Fall, 1972) the Lamp Post has been answering questions as best we can from readers. Recently we have been asked how come the Lamp Post doesn't always have Q and A. Well, we didn't last issue because access to a reducing-enlarging copier allowed us to use more illustrations than usual; some of the copies we made then are now in this issue.

Q. We have had many inquiries in various forms this season about lamp prices and trading. We'd like to avoid any comment on prices, but there is much to be said about trading. A good trade is one where both participants are satisfied. You can trade a duplicate of yours for something else you need (want). Or you can 'trade up' . . . trade several items for something you think is rare (at least, rare to your current knowledge). Or, you can 'trade down', hoping that diversification now will allow you to 'trade up' later.

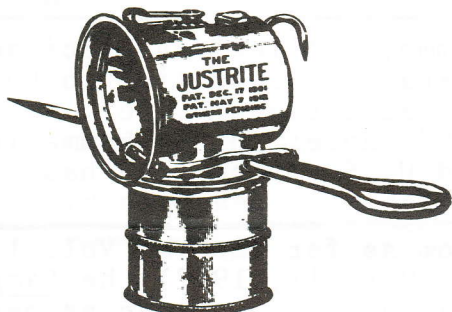
Q. From J. Roger Mitchell. "Do you know anything about a 6 in. (152.4 mm) tall model safety lamp made to raise money for the families of the

Stanley disaster? The lamp is pictured in the September, 1987, Senior Con-flow calendar (No. 5 in the picture). Is Stanley a mine or a town? Do you know anyone else that has one? I found one in an antique shop in Ohio recently. The brass tag is marked as shown." A. From David Barrie in West Midlands, England. "The lamp you now have is indeed a Stanley Colliery Disaster Lantern. Stanley itself is in County Durham, England. The lamp itself was made in Birmingham not far from where I live. The date of manufacture was shortly after the disaster in 1909. One hundred-sixty-eight men died. The design of the lamp was patented (No. 23,573) by two workers and the works manager of Burt Bros. Coppermiths of Edward St. Parade, Birmingham. I don't know what the first two initials stand for because the patent holders were Messers Southhall, Wynn and Harris. There was more to the design (continued next page)



than the desire to raise money for the disaster victims. It was a prototype for a full-scale miner's lamp - the first to be made almost entirely from stamped or drawn parts. Chiefly the advantage was low cost, although the top of the lamp was secured by a bayonet fitting and could be removed quickly. Though the model was popular, the full scale idea was obviously not since it was never put into production. Incidentally, the glass on the model lamp usually doesn't fit well, so don't worry if this is the case; it is quite likely to be an original."

THE
"ANACONDA SPECIAL"



- Brass
- 5.75 in. (14.61 mm) tall
- 2.5 in. (6.35 mm) bottom diameter
- 3.0 in. (7.62 mm) diameter integral reflector
- 17 oz. (0.482 kg) weight
- Lever feed
- Justrite No. 93 lamp
- Candle-stick (sic) name used in the trade literature even though it had nothing to do with a candle
- Named, of course, for the Anaconda Mine



THE
"ARIZONA SPECIAL"

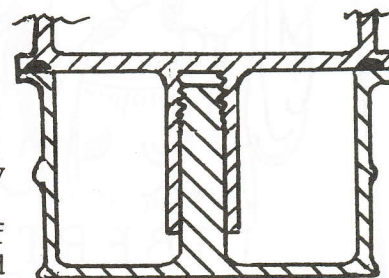
- Brass
- 5.75 in. (14.61 mm) tall
- 2.5 in. (6.35 mm) bottom diameter
- 3.0 in. (7.62 mm) diameter integral reflector
- 14 oz. (0.397 kg) weight
- Lever feed
- Justrite No. 83 lamp
- Bail and hook

THE
"WESTERN SPECIAL"



- Brass
- 5.75 in. (14.61 mm) tall
- 2.5 in. (6.35 mm) bottom diameter
- 3.0 in. (7.62 mm) diameter integral reflector
- 14 oz. (0.397 kg) weight
- Lever feed
- Justrite No. 105 lamp
- Folding handles

JUSTRITE - The 1915-1919 JUSTRITE mid-size series of carbide lamps were too large for miner's caps and a mite small as hand lamps go. They were well-illustrated in an unnumbered Justrite catalog dated March, 1919. (This Justrite catalog was quickly followed by Catalog No. 3 dated May, 1919). These illustrations are from the March catalog. This set of lamps featured a unique attachment between the top and bottom. A 3/8 in. (9.5 mm) diameter threaded post was affixed to the inside bottom of the carbide container (bottom). It screwed into a threaded tube which was a part of the water reservoir top.



Question - How many flame safety lamp manufacturers were there? A. We do not know. Our files show 14 U. S. manufacturers (not including Bickerton), 343 non-U. S. manufacturing names (most of which appear on the lamp), and at least 14 generic-type names, i.e., Davy, Clanny, not on lamps.

Thanks - We are indebted to many readers for helping to cover the costs of the last issue of the Lamp Post. We started preparation of this issue with \$2.00 in the till; several generous checks and a big box of envelopes keep us confident that the deficit for this period will be tolerable, although our prospects for Social Security (sans any corporate or career supplement) in 1991 could cause reevaluation. With the bulk of the information and buy-sell-trade notices going to the MAC, we'll search harder for the kind of lamp items and lamp-related news which our mail indicates are enjoyable. Specific thanks go to Germany, Utah, Washington, California, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, Virginia, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Nevada, Canada, New Mexico, Illinois, Ohio, South Dakota, Minnesota, Tennessee, Maryland, and Belize (CA).

Seasons Greetings to all. Lamp Post © Copyright, Henry A. Pohn, 1990