

Pioneer: A Real Name

by Errol Christman

From time to time I am asked about Pioneer carbide cap lamps and whether this is really the lamp's name. Some argue that the word Pioneer was used only to describe the lamp in advertisements, rather than as a name of this John Simmons lamp.

After discontinuing the Baldwin pinchwaist, Simmons offered both the Pioneer and the much rarer Hold-A-Lite. Like the Pioneer, the Hold-A-Lite is not stamped with its name, but is known amongst collectors by the name it was advertised by.



(left) Pioneer cap lamp box and lamp.

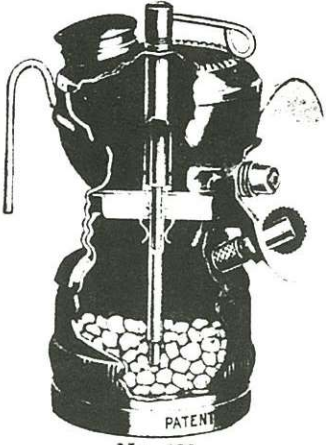
(below) Advertisement for Pioneer lamp. (From Proceedings of the Coal Mining Institute of America. Annual Meeting Fort Pitt Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA. December 5th and 6th, 1917.)

(opposite page) Instruction sheet for Pioneer cap lamp

I have unequivocal proof that the term Pioneer was the lamp's intended name. The photograph above shows an unfired Simmons lamp, along with the box it was purchased in. Though the name "Pioneer" is not stamped into the lamp, it is printed on the box as a title, *not as a descriptive term*.

The instructions for use of the lamp also refer to the lamp as the "'Pioneer' Carbide Lamp". (see opposite page)

Finally, even advertisements such as the one shown right indicate that the term Pioneer was a formal name. In the descriptive text the word is capitalized as a proper noun rather than an adjective.



THE PIONEER CARBIDE CAP LAMP

Wind Proof Drip Proof Shot Proof

Extra capacity—Non-leakable water cap—non-breakable hook—removable reflector—valve and raking wire can be taken out and cleaned without the use of tools—Light enough to be worn on cap in comfort—strong enough to stand hard knocks.

Write Us for Catalogue and Prices.

No. 130

The Red Glare Trip Lamp

Used as a warning light on front or rear of trip—also used by repair crews, at fire exits, switches, etc. The red glare is obtained through the use of a red reflector—no glass is used.

Write us for particulars.

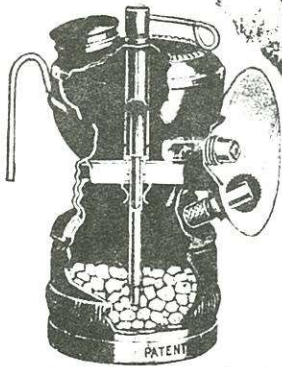
The Wind Shield

The wind shield makes the Pioneer immune to the strongest air currents ever met with inside of mines. The shield will make the Pioneer hold its light in air currents which will put out oil lamps, even safety lamps.

JOHN SIMMONS COMPANY

108 Centre StreetNew York, N. Y.

HOW TO USE THE No. 130 "Pioneer" Carbide Lamp



HALF fill the container with carbide. Never more than that, as carbide expands as it is used, and if too much is put in the slaked carbide will pack and harden, making it difficult to empty the container.

See that the gasket is in place around the thread of the container.

Open the valve and let about half a dozen drops of water fall on the carbide before the container is screwed to the water tank. The gas generated in this way expels the air in the carbide container, which relieves the pressure when the container and cap are screwed together, and prevents a rush of gas.

After the lamp is screwed together, advance the lever to a point which gives you the desired size flame, and it will

require no further attention for an hour or more. It operates automatically.

If gas escapes at the thread and takes fire, blow out the flame and tighten up on the screw. A little grease on the screw thread will make the thread work easier and the lamp last longer. Keep the thread and the gasket free from dirt, and when emptying the container be careful not to dent the thread by striking it against a rock or any other hard substance.

To Fill the Water Tank

Close the valve by moving the lever at the top of lamp to the (lamp facing you), without forcing it. The valve closes easily. Then fill the tank with water. When doing this do not allow any water to drop on the burner; it might stop up the small gas way, and the gas would not burn. Should this happen, dry out the burner by holding a lighted match near the burner until it is dry and the gas burns.

When the Flame Dies Down

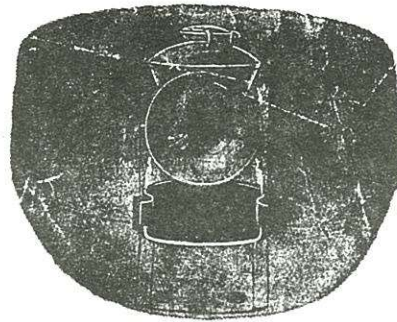
If the flame begins to die down it indicates that the slaked carbide is stopping the flow of water. When this happens, move the lever backward and forward once or twice, then bring it back to the point where it was before moving it. This stirs up the slaked carbide at the bottom (of the lamp) and clears the end of the water tube.

When the charge of carbide is about used up and the flame dies down, lift the lever out of the slot in valve head and pump up and down a few times. Only do this towards the end of the charge.

There should be a slight bend in the raking wire in order to set up sufficient friction to prevent the wire from dropping out if lamp is upset.

This type of valve is simpler, more reliable, and easier to clean than any other valve made. **NO TOOLS ARE NEEDED.** Just pull out the wire and unscrew the valve, remove the dirt, replace valve and wire, and it is as good as new.

DETACHABLE LAMP CLIPS



This clip takes the place of the spreader wires on the lamp. When used on the regulation miner's cap, the clip snaps on to the tin shield of the cap. If it is to be used on a hat the snaps can be cut off and clip fastened to hat by means of rivets or staples and in this same manner the clip can be fastened to the lapel of the coat if lamp is to be used suspended from the button-hole in the lapel.

The clip will hold the lamp securely and the lamp can be snapped into place or removed with the greatest ease.

Price, each 10c.

CARBIDE CAN NO. 307

Designed to fit the cap pocket, holds one-half pound, has snap top, one-half inch opening for charging your lamp. Entire top is removable for filling.

Price, each 15c.



BRUSH BURNER CLEANER

No. 62 consists of 40 wires set in a holder. Has no protecting case.

Price, each 5c.



Use the Pioneer Wind Shield

It will make your Pioneer Carbide Lamp hold its light in the strongest mine air currents. Protect the burner from overhead drip. Enable you to use your lamp outside in stormy weather, to light your way home after dark.

Easy to put on or take off. Price, each 10c.

Can be used only on Pioneer Lamps

JOHN SIMMONS CO., Bush Terminal, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

I recently discovered this instruction sheet for a Pioneer lamp when it fell out from between the pages of a catalog I was reading. It advertises some interesting accessories.

The "Detachable Lamp Clip" is something I had thought Justrite was the sole manufacturer of, since it was advertised in one of their later catalogs. That never made much sense since Justrite lamps all were equipped with their own cap braces. The Pioneer Detachable Lamp Clip certainly served a purpose as the lamp had no braces. Since the Pioneer clip predates Justrite, it is possible that Justrite either bought the

patent (if one was ever issued) or acquired the parts themselves from John Simmons Co. when they dissolved.

The "Carbide Can No. 307" also listed looks very similar to the Union Carbide version. Again the age-old question: who made the can, and who made the Union Carbide cap lamp?

I have seen many of the burner wind shields shown above on Pioneer cap lamps. I guess I can now call these "Pioneer Wind Shields"...that is if no one objects!