

'What' a Surprise

by Larry Click

I received a telephone call a few weeks back from a young man in Horse Cave, Kentucky. He said he had found one of the lamp cards I had tacked up in an antique shop while he was searching for his "goodies." (Bluefield area, he said.) He asked what type of carbide cap lamps I was looking for. I simply told him just any kind of carbide cap lamps. The young man told me he had a box of carbide lamps and parts that had belonged to his Great Grandpa and that Grandpa had worked in the coal mines in Eastern, Kentucky.

I asked him what he wanted for the box of carbides and parts, and what did he collect. (I was sure glad I asked what he collected!) He told me that since he wanted to be a Veterinarian one day, that he collected anything to do with animals—old veterinary books, curry combs, sheep shears, bridle bits, horse shoeing rasps, different sizes and types of horse and mule shoes, medicine and salve bottles, and tins. (Well, I knew I had his box then and there.) I told him my Grandfather on my mother's side of the family, Patton Brewster,



Here is what the What
Cheer looked like

of Big Creek, West Virginia (just a few miles from a small town called War, the only place people could go to shop) had been an unlicensed country veterinarian when I was a small boy. (Unrelated to this story, my Grandfather on my father's side of the family, Harve Click, was killed in War (the town)—formerly known as Miner's City. While loading his groceries and stock feed on a wagon, something spooked the mules, they bucked and knocked him down, and the wheels of the wagon rolled over his neck and broke it.) I told the fellow that I had a real nice horse collar with a nice set of hanes around a mirror w/brass knobs on the hanes; I had an old pair of emasculators, hog ring pliers, and a bottle of Heave and Cough Remedy from Dr. LeGears. I also had my Grandfather's Dr. L. D. LeGears stock book from 1914 which was purchased at the War Drug Sundries Company and it had my Grandfather's name written in it. I told the young man of just a few of my items and he told me that he would get the box out to me right away and even search to see if he could find any more mining items.

Well, I received the box a few days later and couldn't wait to open it. Once opened, all I could see was the common four and what appeared to be three Baldwins without reflectors. After checking out all the common lamps with no surprises, I proceeded to check out the Baldwins. The third Baldwin looked a little different and my eyes (sharp eyes, as Andy says) caught the base. It had (what I call) a three bullet case with each case spaced equally, which led me to think it was a Grier base. After looking at the top, aaaaahhhh, that's when I got the "Blind Staggers and Gapes" (vet. terms). The name WHAT CHEER TOOL CO.—What Cheer, Iowa, was what I read!!! Wow!!! Then and there I knew Santa had not let me down. The lamp has an unfired top with gilt on it; has a wire feed coming through a small hole on top; and the cap braces and hook are intact. It has the lava tip with no little holes around the sides, but no reflector. The inside is mint with the original felt retainer

and a pinkish felt. The base is a three bullet case base, with the three cases being evenly spaced apart. The bottom does not match the top in color, but is a fine bottom that appears to be a Grier.

I gave the young man plenty of time to get the items I had sent and called to see if he was pleased with the trade. He was just as happy as a duck in water!!

I asked him "What do you think your favorite animal to work with will be when you become a Veterinarian?" Assuming he got the better of the trade he said, "I think I will like jackasses." And to myself I was just grinning like a mule eating saw briars showing his big teeth!!

I am hoping he will come up with more mining items as I'll be waiting on him!!

