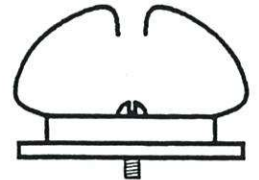


Lu-Mi-Num Carbide Lamps

by Len Gaska

Of all the American made carbide cap lamps, the Lu-Mi-Num is probably one of the least appealing in terms of esthetics. Dave Thorpe, in his article entitled *Cap Lamp Value: Not Just a Function of Rarity* (MAC, Issue 5, Fall 1989), likened it to a hand grenade in appearance! Despite its purely functional appearance, the Lu-Mi-Num has some unique and unusual features. It stands alone as the only American carbide cap lamp made of aluminum. Even the reflector on most models is made of aluminum. Its ribbed design is also unique and most likely was implemented to save weight, dissipate heat, and to increase strength and durability. Although virtually all other American made carbide cap lamps used screw threads to join the bottom and top, the Lu-Mi-Num insisted on being different by utilizing a bayonet cam-lock. A few models have turned up with screw threads, but they are quite rare and probably represent an early or trial design.

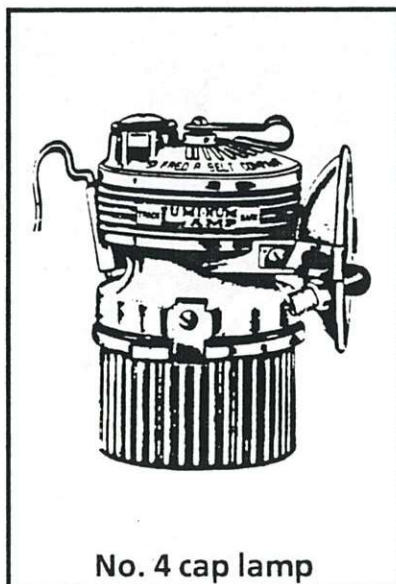
Another slightly unusual feature is that the Lu-Mi-Num cap lamp was made without hat braces. Absence of hat braces is not unusual for early lamps, but is certainly unusual for a lamp that started production in the mid-1920's. A few examples are found with a clip on "stabilizing" bar which attached to the lamp below the hook. A sketch of the clip is illustrated to the right. The water door on the Lu-Mi-Num is unusual in that it contains a one-way valve. Air can enter the water chamber, but the one-way valve prevents air or water from leaving. This feature was recently brought to my attention by Dave Thorpe.



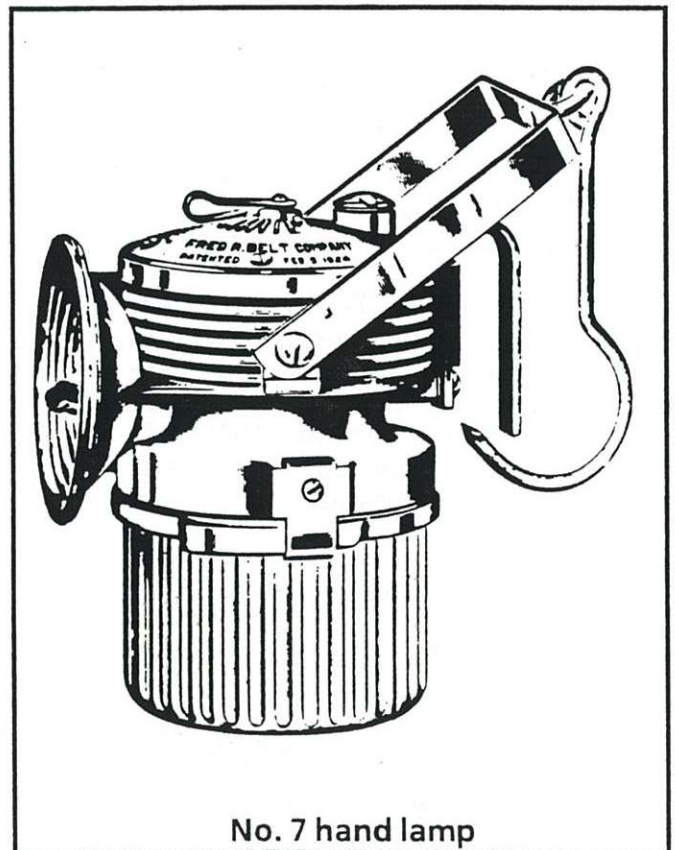
The Lu-Mi-Num cap lamp and its big brother, an 8 hour hand lamp, are virtually identical in design and make an attractive display pair. The identical styling is unusual for companies that made both cap and hand lamps. Finally, although the Lu-Mi-Num was produced for about 10 years, it underwent virtually no design changes. Only a few varieties of cap lamps are known. Besides the screw thread model, the only other known variety is the narrow spade "Michigan" mount model.

The Lu-Mi-Num was manufactured by the Fred R. Belt Company of Chicago, Illinois. The "Lu-Mi-Num" name was trademarked on May 20, 1924 and a patent was granted on February 5, 1924. According to Clemmer ¹, the Lu-Mi-Num was manufactured from about 1923 to 1933.

The illustrations are from The Mine and Smelter Supply Co. catalog No. 92, dated 1937. Although the date of the catalog conflicts with Clemmer's report of cessation of production in 1933 or so, the advertised lamps may well have been existing stock.



No. 4 cap lamp



No. 7 hand lamp

(1) Clemmer, Gregg, *American Miners' Carbide Lamps*, 1987, Westernlore Press, Tucson, AZ.