The Ever-Ready Cap Lamp
by Len Gaska

Wendall Wilson in his oft quoted rarity guide of carbide cap lamps states, "It should be remembered that rarity is only one of the factors determining value. Other considerations include uniqueness and beauty of design, condition, and variety or sub-type." The uniqueness and elegant design of the Ever-Ready makes it one of the most popular and desirable American carbide cap lamps.

The most striking feature of the Ever-Ready is the spherical water tank. Another unusual feature is the placement and operation of the water adjustment mechanism. The adjusting lever is on the side of the Ever-Ready at the very bottom of the water reservoir. The lever rotates a small cam which raises and lowers a valve at the end of the water tube. Because of the small size of the adjustment lever and the absence of positive click stops, stable and consistent regulation of the water flow was probably difficult.

The Ever-Ready was patented April 28, 1914 by Charles Hoppe and was manufactured by the Charles Hoppe Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio. The Charles Hoppe Co. merged with the Harker Manufacturing Co., also of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1915. The Harker Manufacturing Co. began production of the Brite-Lite carbide cap lamp in 1916. Some models of the Brite-Lite also had the water control lever on the side of the lamp. The placement of the burner tip on the Brite-Lite was very similar to that of the Ever-Ready.

Minor variations such as the configuration of the burner tip and the reflector attachment configuration have been reported for the Every-Ready. However, the lamp apparently did not have a long production period and thus went through very few changes. At least one advertisement for the Every-Ready, shown on the next page, pictured an optional small oil lamp that could be used in place of the water cap. The idea being that the oil lamp would function as an emergency light source when the carbide lamp failed. The miners of the day must have thought this to be impractical as the author is not aware of the existence of a single example of the optional oil lamp.

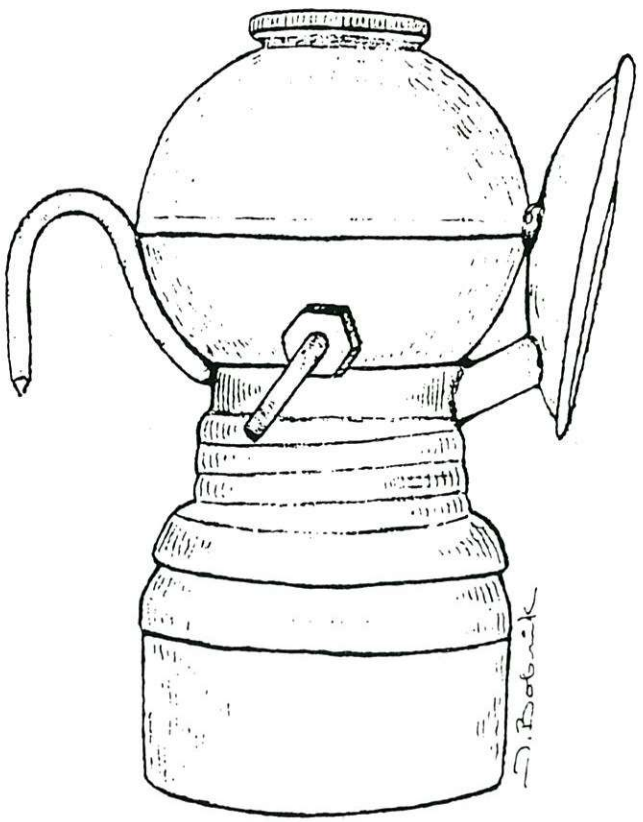

Fig. 1

Type: Cap
Material: Brass
Rarity: Rare
Owner: Ted Bobrink

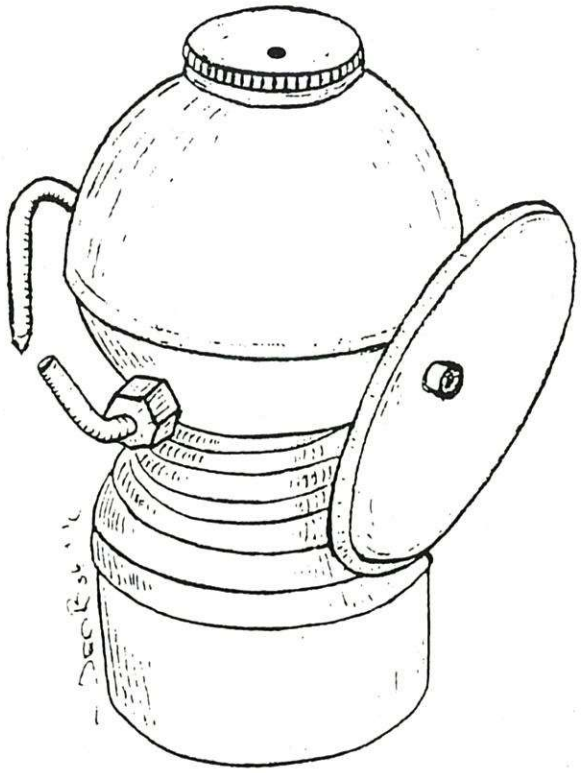

Fig. 2

Type: Cap
Material: Brass
Rarity: Very Rare
Owner: Errol Chrisman

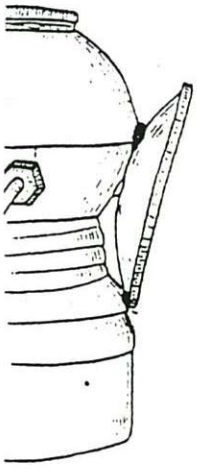

Fig. 3

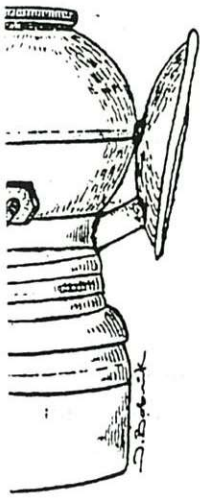

Fig. 4

The Ever-Ready illustrated on this page (fig. 2) is apparently an earlier model than the one pictured on the previous page (fig. 1). The earlier model has a slightly larger water tank (57 mm.) than the later model (54 mm.). On the earlier model, the reflector is larger and is soldered to the water tank and the lower flange (fig. 3). In the later version, the lower part of the reflector is soldered to a brace which is in turn soldered to the area just below the water tank (fig. 4). In the earlier Ever-Ready, the threads go all the way up to the water tank whereas in the later version, the threads terminate 1/4" below the water tank.