

“Loop-Hook” Square Lamp

by Mike McLaughlin

The “Loop-Hook” Square Lamp is another of those ultra-rare carbide cap lamps that the collecting community knows little about at this time. Being an unmarked lamp, the name can be derived from two distinct features of the lamp. “Loop-Hook” comes from the shape and design of the hook on the back of the lamp. This hook design has also been seen on some other unmarked carbide cap lamps commonly referred to as “Anthracite” lamps, or on the advertised Simmons Britelite.

In fact, Gregg Clemmer reports on this lamp in his book *American Miner’s Carbide Lamps*, 1987, and refers to it as a “Loop-hook (Anthracite).”¹ A drawing by Wendell Wilson appears below (figure A).

Square Lamp is the best description of the lamp’s overall shape, enclosing both the water reservoir and carbide chamber. Speculation would suggest an American manufacturer for this lamp,² due to the resemblance of the “loop-hook” and several other features found on known American made lamps.

Another similarity to some of the “Anthracite” cap lamps is the raised horizontal band around the upper third of the lamp body.³ On the Square Lamp, this feature is not just ornamental, it marks the structural division between the water reservoir and carbide chamber.

The wheeled water feed mechanism is also similar to the Scranton,

Scranto, Non-Justrite Victor, and Pathfinder lamps.⁴ The screw-in water door, held to the lamp by an internal wire “chain”, is a feature seen on other American lamps, appearing on Maple City, Norleigh Diamond, first model “The” Justrite,⁵ and Non-Justrite Victor just to mention a few.

The screw-on lid-style bottom is one more design that has been seen on American made cap lamps like the H. Gall and S.E. Simmons.⁶

Pictured in figure C. is a “Loop-Hook” Square Lamp that was found in the state of Missouri many years ago. It is unfired and complete. The lamp body is brass, and it stands about 3 3/4 “ tall. Carbide is added

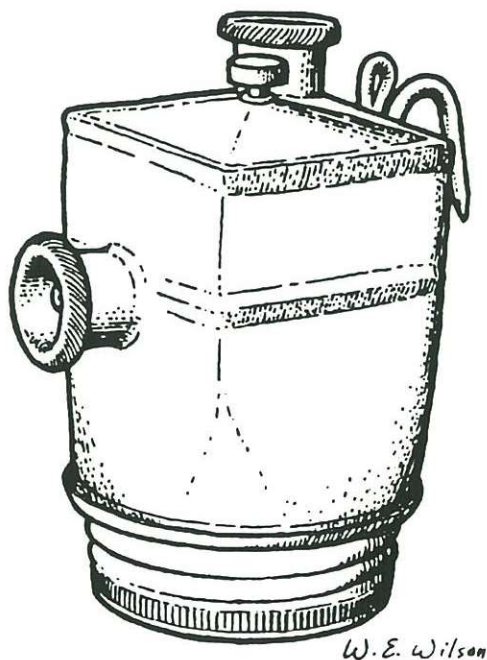


Figure A. by Wendell W. Wilson.



Figure B. from the collection of G. Wesley Pedlow.



Figure C. Loop-hook Square Lamp (author's collection).

through the bottom and water is regulated by the knurled water valve on top. The water valve stem is a threaded brass rod with a very sharp point.

The lava burner tip is housed in a special screw-off cap. When this cap is unscrewed, the miner would place cotton or fabric inside a small cavity for use as a gas screening device. This cavity can be seen when the cap is removed (figure B).

Another interesting feature of this lamp is the design to use the flat side of the water tank as a reflector. When the flame was adjusted properly, it would reflect off the flat tank for improved illumination.

Figure B shows a Square Lamp which was found in Clinton County, Pennsylvania, in an area which was mined for high silica clay at the turn of the century. It is interesting to note that the burner tip assembly and the water

door were apparently both re-manufactured from the same basic brass part. The only parts of these lamps that are not brass are the lava burner tip and the steel "loop-hook." All in all, the "Loop-Hook" Square Lamp is an extremely well made lamp, being square at the top and tapering down to the round bottom opening. The design is very striking and eye appealing. There are few other carbide cap lamps with square designs, each of them a rarity in their own right; the Guy's Dropper Squarelite, the square Anton, and the patented Gshwendner's lamp (no examples known)⁷. If any of the readers of Eureka! come across advertisements or information on the Square Lamp, please inform the editors or the author.

REFERENCES:

1. Clemmer, Gregg. American Miners' Carbide Lamps. Westernlore, 1987, p. 86.
2. Mining Artifact Collector, Issue 9, p.8.
3. Mining Artifact Collector, Issue 9, p.7
4. Eureka! Issue 12, pp.29-35.
5. Eureka! Issue 12, p.36.
6. Eureka! Issue 7, p18, and Eureka! Issue 10, p. 2.
7. Clemmer, p.33.