

# THE "FLEMINGS SPECIAL" CARBIDE LAMP

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Some twenty two years ago the existence of an 8-hour carbide lamp labelled "Flemings Special" surfaced and three were offered for trade by Rich Finch<sup>1</sup>. Some ten years ago the author acquired the unfired example shown in Figure 1 which was in Chuck Young's collection. It is a well made galvanized steel lamp some 6 inches high to the water door with both superintendent handles, and a hook and bail. The lamp has a screw type brass water feed, a brass threaded water door complete with chain to prevent its loss, and brass threads on both the carbide chamber and water chamber. The reflector brace is also brass and the lamp has a 4 inch nickel plated reflector. The lamp is marked "Made in Germany" on top of the bail and there is a brass plate soldered to the side of the water chamber with the words "Flemings Special" as shown in figure 2.

The lamp remained a mystery until a few weeks ago when Mr. Ludwig Strah, a retired mining engineer from Canada, provided some additional information. The lamps were manufactured in Dresden, Germany, in the early 1920's for Mr. P. M. "Paddy" Fleming of Haileybury, Ontario, Canada, five miles north of the famous Cobalt Silver Camp. The two models were made to special order for sale throughout Northern Ontario and Northwestern Quebec through the P.M. Fleming Engineering and Sales Ltd. The other model has a lever style water deed. "Paddy" Fleming was, in earlier years, superintendent of the Kerr Lake Mine in Cobalt, Ontario.

I have looked through my German reference books and have been unable to identify

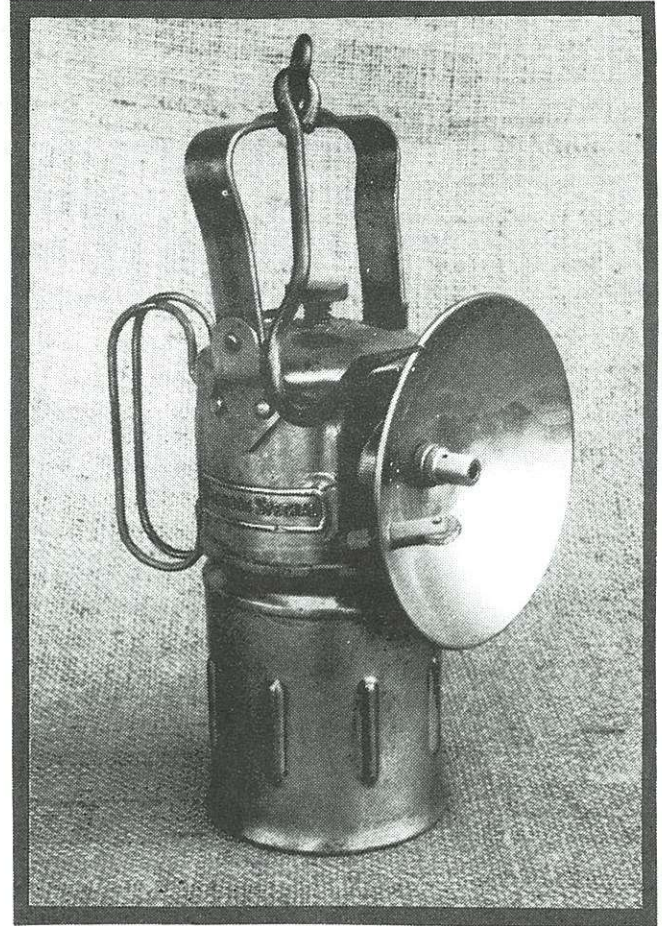


Figure 1. The "Flemings Special" 8-hour carbide lamp.

the manufacturer of a similar looking lamp. Maybe some of our German readers can help.

All too often the human side of the story behind the artifacts we collect is lost forever. In this case Mr. Strah knew the late Mr. Fleming and continues to be a close friend of his son Richard. In his letter to me Mr. Strah provided some details of "Paddy" Fleming's career as follows:

"'Paddy' was born in Cantley, Quebec, son of Irish immigrants to Canada (mid-1850's). He started his mining career as a miner at the Wright Mine: highgrade (Pb) Galena ore. The mine is located directly across Lake Temiskaming from Haileybury, Ontario. After a couple of seasons at the Wright Mine, and having gained some experience, he migrated to the Coeur d'Alene's in about 1897. He worked in the Kellog-Wallace area as a stope miner, shaftsman, raiseminer, until about 1905 when there was a mass migration of experienced miners to Cobalt from Coeur d'Alene, Tonopah, Comstock-Virginia City, and Butte. The surface outcrops and open cuts at Cobalt had been mined out between 1904-1906, and it was necessary to go underground.

"He started in Cobalt as a miner and believe it or not, was the secretary of the Western Federation of Miners in the Cobalt camp. His talents as a shaftman, etc., were

recognized and he was made a shaft captain and then superintendent of the Kerr Lake Mine.

"He left the Kerr Lake Mine and went into business in Haileybury. He entered into the mining equipment field, built a shop and represented numerous companies - Shell Oil, Michelin, Goodyear V-Belts, Hose, etc. With the opening of the Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Noranda, Val d'Or Camps, he prospered. Simultaneously with his brother, they owned the Vendome Hotel in Haileybury.

"'Paddy' sold his Shell Oil distributorship throughout northern Ontario and northwestern Quebec to BP when they first got into the Canadian market in the late 1950's. His son kept the BP bulk distribution business into the mid 1970's.

"All in all, 'Paddy' was a very interesting individual and a true product of another mining era. If my memory serves me right, I believe he passed at a ripe old age in 1963."

1. Pohns, Henry, *Underground Lamp Post*, Vol I, No. 8, Spring 1972.



Figure 2. The name-plate tag of the "Flemings Special" that is soldered to the side of the lamp.