

L. E. Polhemus Manufacturing Company



Miner's Lamps and Supplies

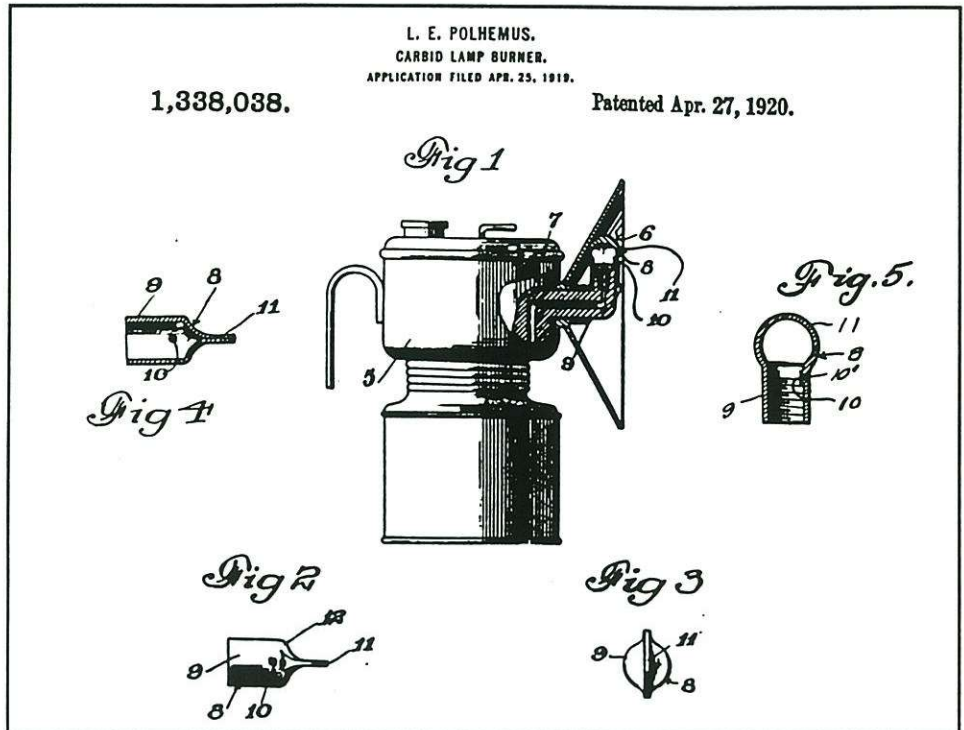
Bob Schroth, Dave Thorpe, Tony Moon, Tina & Todd Town

In the rural copper mining foothills of Miami, Arizona, lived an eccentric fellow whose two loves in life were carbide lamps and parrots.

Louis Edward Polhemus is still remembered as "Polly" by a few of the old folks in the Globe-Miami area. They knew him as the man who sold parrots from his variety store throughout the 1920's.¹ He also sold several models of carbide lamps to the local miners including Justrite, I.T.P., and Wolf. Additionally, he manufactured and sold two patented burner tips. His logo shows both a parrot and a miners' lamp.

The so-called "Polly" Burner was a fairly simple device: a crimped tube with a hole in the side. Its purpose was to convert a vertically directed flame (as on many hand lamps) to horizontal. An advertisement from a 1923 Keystone Catalog shows it stamped with "The Polly" name, the patent date, and a parrot (below right).

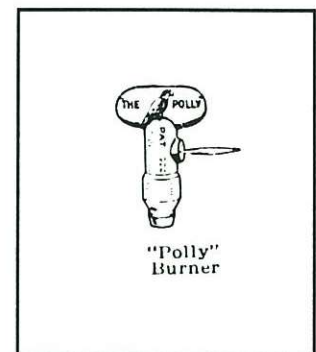
The patent drawing is not so fancy. The tip is shown on a generic type cap lamp with a vertically oriented gas tube. It was probably designed for the canister type Wolf hand lamp, many of which are found, used and abused, in eastern Arizona. The patent was filed in 1919 and granted in 1920.



Patent for burner tip described as crimped brass tube with hole in side. Actual product may have been cast (see below).

His other flame tip was known as the "Bess" Burner. Advertisements show it to have been patented in 1921. His only child Elizabeth, born later in 1927, was also known as "Bess".² The burner had a wide knurled edge for easy finger removal from the lamp. Either of these tips, if stamped as in the ads, would be very collectible today.

Polhemus was granted his last patent in 1924 for a carbide lamp. He had filed for this patent in 1919, just as he had for the "Polly" burner. From the



The "Polly" Burner.

outside, the lamp looks like a canister Wolf lamp. A series of specially beveled surfaces are described for the carbide chamber, however the patent text is so difficult to make sense of, it is no wonder that it took the U.S. Patent Office a full five years to consider it, compared to the "Polly" burner which was run through in twelve months flat.

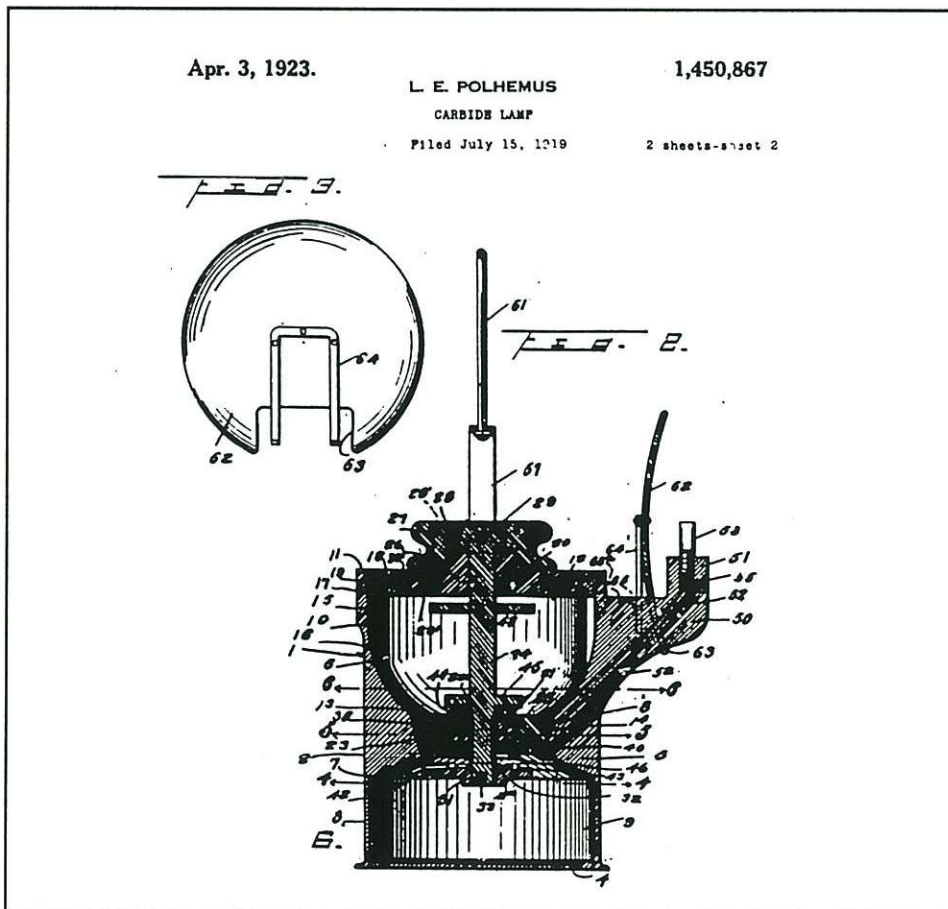
"Polly" began to advertise in Arizona Mining Journal in 1923. His first ad, shown right, babbles on with camp enthusiasm. Although he proposes a monthly "Polly" column, subsequent entries are little more than cute self indulgent advertisements.

His ads ran for only two years and nothing more was seen of him in the mining literature. Today, there is no one with the name of Polhemus living in Arizona. His parents and a baby are buried in a Globe graveyard, but his own whereabouts remain a mystery. Polly has achieved a sort of immortality though, for his name lives on in old mining documents and perhaps on a few well used burner tips.



Enlarged reverse views of the "Bess" Burner. Length overall, $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Greatest diameter $\frac{3}{8}$ ". 1 is the tapered shank; 2, the milled edge; 3 and 4, water grooves provided to lead water around the gas flame.

The "Bess" Burner.



Canister lamp with complex beveled chambers.



My Debut

Well, "Folks":
The other day Mr. Willis, the editor of the Arizona Mining Journal, asked me to come into the Journal with my "Polly" column every month—so here I am, "Folks", and now you will have to "Abide With Me" for some time to come.

First of all, my business is selling merchandise. I own the only store of its kind in the world, called the "Polly", located at Miami, Arizona—in the heart of one of the largest copper-producing districts in the world. We sell all kinds of sporting goods, miner's lamp supplies and about everything that you can think of, from a steam engine to a pair of "Galluses". Now that that is settled, and I have made my "debut", I will try, from month to month, to wrap your heart strings around mine, and we will, in due time, get better acquainted with each other.

It matters not what you want or where you are located, the North or South Pole, or the center of the desert, when you are in need of anything, just drop your order to us; it will have the best of attention and will be speeding back to you in a very few hours. SERVICE! is the nickname of the "Polly", and now, you many mining men, when you have finished reading this "Coming Out" story, just remember that we are the headquarters for miner's lamps of all makes.

Here is a little burner, called the "Bess", \$3.00 per hundred. It's a dandy. Mr. Mine Manager, equip your miners' lamps with them—they are guaranteed. Send for as many as you wish, and if you don't like them, they won't cost you a penny.



L. E. POLHEMUS, Prop.



MIAMI, ARIZONA

First ad from Arizona Mining Journal, 1923.

Notes

1. Store was first located on Sullivan St., second at Live Oak, and third at Keystone Ave. In the 1927 Directory he is listed under "Notions".
2. "Bess" is remembered by her best friend Clarisa Case who went to college with her in Tempe. They graduated in 1947. "Bess" became a teacher at the Lower Miami School. She later married a government worker from Kansas. They moved to Cuba where she was killed in an auto accident. She was buried in Kansas.