



THE MAPLE CITY LAMP

by

Bill Spence and Dave Thorpe

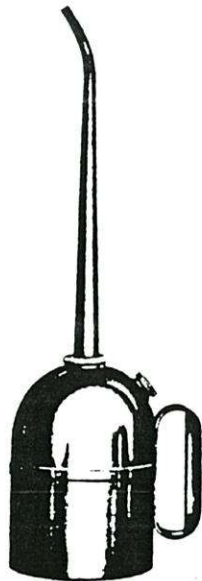
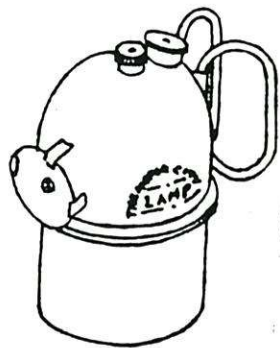
The Maple City Manufacturing Company has been known for some years among lamp collectors as the maker of some of the most prized miners' carbide lamps of all. The company was founded in 1904 and set up shop in a large building on South First Street in Monmouth, Illinois that had previously been the home of the Maple City Soap Works. The company's principal product was always oilers, in particular the "Howland Pump Oiler" which was supplied as original equipment with Packard automobiles circa 1911-1912. In addition it made miners' carbide lamps, the "Illinois" carbide feed acetylene generator for home lighting and miscellaneous other tinware. The factory burned to the ground in November 1917 and was apparently never re-opened.

Maple City made carbide miners' lamps from mid-1911 until some as yet undetermined date. The earliest journal ad known to the authors comes from the July 1, 1911 Mining & Engineering World. Maple City ran half- and full-page ads in Mines & Minerals from at least October 1911 through the end of 1912, after which time, the ads abruptly disappear. The company's activities from 1913 through 1917 are not well documented and it is not certain that it was still making carbide lamps at the time of the fire. The similarity of the Maple City lamps to other miners' lamps suggest that the company made lamps for other concerns, although the time of such relationships is speculative. In 1916 The Shapleigh Hardware Company in St. Louis advertised a Union Carbide Lamp with generally similar features which might represent a late version of the company's product. Other similar lamps would appear to have been made at an earlier date.

Not surprisingly, the original 1911 Maple City lamp is the most primitive. It features a simple dish reflector soldered at some distance from the water tank and machine cut threads connecting top and bottom, making the threads not externally visible. It was available only with the "regulated" water feed (i.e. with a knurled knob and shutoff valve). The water door was screw-threaded. Versions of this lamp were shown in advertisements without markings of any kind as well as with the Maple City logo.

In early 1912 the body design was modified to incorporate rolled, externally visible threads. The reflector was brought closer to the water tank, and later, was given a rolled edge. In the spring of 1912 they introduced a new version without the shutoff valve which was designated number 32, while the regulator model was designated number 30. (The reason they weren't designated #1 and #2 probably lies in the fact that the Baldwin lamps, which outsold all other brands by 4 to 1 combined in 1912, used the same numbers on their most popular models.)

*Photo opposite page: Top lamp - Maple City model # 32 next to spare base with inset knurled screw cap
Middle lamp - Maple City model # 30
Bottom lamp - Earliest unstamped style Maple City ca. 1911, note lack of stamping or visible screw threads*



Maple City hand lamp compared to oiler as depicted in 1912 catalog



Maple City oiler from Dave Thorpe collection, and close-up of its screwcap, below. Same as waterdoor of handlamp?



Hand Lamps and Oilers

There was apparently also a Maple City hand lamp. The authors have not examined this lamp, but sketches show a remarkable similarity to certain dome topped Maple City

oilers. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the hand lamp was created from parts already available from production of the oilers and the cap lamps.

Norleigh Diamond and Red Star

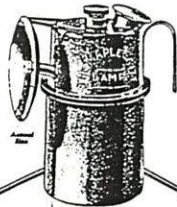
In addition to producing the Maple City marked lamps, there can be little doubt that the company manufactured custom-marked (or perhaps unmarked) lamps to customer order. Obvious examples of this are the Norleigh Diamond and Red Star lamps. The Norleigh trademark belonged to the Norvell-Shapleigh Hardware Company of St. Louis, which certainly was not in the lamp manufacturing business, so it is plausible that Maple City made the lamps to their order. All external features of the lamp are identical to the Maple City #30 except for the curvature of the shoulder of the water tank. The Norleigh features a rounded shoulder not typical of known Maple City lamps. Tops and bottoms are fully interchangeable between the two.



Similarly the Red Star logo belonged to Beall Bros. of Alton, Illinois, but Beall's manufacturing facilities were devoted primarily to hand tools, not brassware, so purchasing custom made lamps would have been plausible. No examples of the Red Star lamps have been examined by the authors, but the features portrayed in the catalog illustration closely resemble the Maple City #32. The vintage of both brands coincides with the known existence and activities of Maple City. That together with the physical similarity of the lamps and the geographical proximity of the three businesses makes the connection hard to refute.

Opposite page: Full and half page ads (reduced here) ran regularly in mining journals during 1911 and 1912, then abruptly discontinued. Thereafter, private-label lamps resembling the Maple City began to appear (Red Star, Norleigh Diamond, Anton, Union Carbide).

The Maple City Mine Lamp



The Maple City Mine Lamp

The Pinnacle Of Mine Lamp Efficiency

In the real sense as an every other kind of lamp has been made to higher efficiency, the greater results are seen. The lamp lighting has taken all other lamps of the same operation, from the period of the torch through that of the candle and the oil lamp to the day of the acetylene lamp. For today in the day of the acetylene lamp and it is necessary for the Miner, Engineer, or Superintendent to buy the best acetylene lamp of his time for the highest degree of efficiency in his mine lighting.

The Maple City Mine Lamp is the best Acetylene Mine Lamp made.

Let Us Send You A Free Trial Lamp

Consider a great deal about the new lamp and you will see that the Maple City Mine Lamp is the best. Take your choice from the many and compare the lighting efficiency, reliability, and convenience. Let your choice be based on the facts, and you will be satisfied with the results.

Send for your free trial lamp. It is the best of its kind and is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind. It is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

Maple City Manufacturing Co.
Monmouth, Illinois

EFFICIENCY WITHOUT WASTE

How It Is Secured In The Highest Degree By The Superior Construction Of The Maple City Mine Lamp



An acetylene mine lamp is a necessary gas producer. By letting a little or large amount of water pass into the carbide chamber. The idea, however, is not merely to produce gas, but to produce the greatest possible amount of light with the least amount of water.

It is not possible to make an acetylene lamp in which a certain amount of water will always drip into the carbide chamber and there are thousands of lamps of this kind in the market. Some of these lamps are made of metal and some of wood. They are made of various materials and are of various designs. They are made of various materials and are of various designs.

For more details, and complete details in regard to the construction of the Maple City Mine Lamp, send for our free trial lamp. It is the best of its kind and is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

Mr. Superintendent, Send For Free Trial Lamp!

Maple City Manufacturing Company
Monmouth, Illinois



The Miner Doesn't Have To Dump The Water From A Maple City Mine Lamp. He Just Shuts The Valve When Not Using The Light

By turning the handle on top of the lamp the Water-Flow Regulator is lowered down into the water and about 1/2 inch of water is drawn into the lamp. This is the water which is used to produce the gas. The water is drawn into the lamp by the force of the vacuum created by the gas. The water is drawn into the lamp by the force of the vacuum created by the gas.

The Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp

The practical manner in which the Maple City Mine Lamp gets its acetylene gas is by means of a water flow regulator. This regulator is a simple device for the miner to keep his lamp lit at all times. It is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

Lighting efficiency is not the only thing that counts. The miner also wants a lamp that is safe and reliable. The Maple City Mine Lamp is the best of its kind. It is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

Free Trial Lamp

Maple City Manufacturing Company
Monmouth, Ill.

MAPLE CITY MANUFACTURING COMPANY
MONMOUTH, ILL.

Reason for High Lighting Efficiency of the Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp Is Here



The Lamp that holds the Steady Light

The Mine Lamp that Lights the Miner's Way

The reason for the high lighting efficiency of the Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp is its unique design. The lamp is made of metal and is of a simple design. It is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

The Maple City Manufacturing Company
P. O. Box 42, Monmouth, Illinois



MAPLE CITY MINE LAMPS Give Long and Highly Efficient Service

It is not every acetylene mine lamp that has a long and highly efficient service. The reason for this is that many lamps are made of cheap materials and are of a poor design. The Maple City Mine Lamp is made of the best materials and is of a superior design. It is the most reliable of any lamp of its kind. It is the most efficient of any lamp of its kind.

Send For Free Trial Lamp

The Maple City Mfg. Company
Monmouth, Illinois

With Automatic Feed

This lamp is provided with a special device which automatically feeds the water into the lamp. This device is the most reliable of any device of its kind. It is the most efficient of any device of its kind.

Price with water container, \$1.25

With Water Regulator

This lamp is provided with a special device which regulates the water flow into the lamp. This device is the most reliable of any device of its kind. It is the most efficient of any device of its kind.

Price with water container, \$1.25

LIGHT

The Maple City Mfg. Company
P. O. Box 42, Monmouth, Illinois

What an Acetylene Lamp Should Do

An acetylene lamp should do the following things: 1. It should be safe and reliable. 2. It should be efficient. 3. It should be easy to use. 4. It should be durable. 5. It should be of a simple design. 6. It should be of a high quality. 7. It should be of a low cost. 8. It should be of a long life. 9. It should be of a high efficiency. 10. It should be of a high reliability.

Maple City Batteries are ready and will be maintained for anyone interested. Send for your free trial lamp.

The Maple City Manufacturing Co.
P. O. Box 42, Monmouth, Illinois

Advantage of the Water-Flow Regulator

And why the addition of it to the feature of automatic central-lamp-highest-lighting efficiency all the time



The Water-Flow Regulator is a simple device for the miner to keep his lamp lit at all times. It is the most reliable of any device of its kind. It is the most efficient of any device of its kind.

Mr. Superintendent: Send For Free Trial Lamp

The Maple City Manufacturing Company
Monmouth, Ill.

The Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp

Description of Features

The Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp is a simple device for the miner to keep his lamp lit at all times. It is the most reliable of any device of its kind. It is the most efficient of any device of its kind.

Send For Free Trial Lamp

The Maple City Manufacturing Company
Monmouth, Illinois

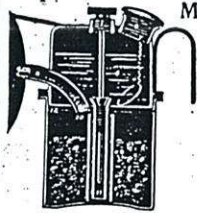
Advantages of the Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp

The Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp has many advantages. It is safe and reliable. It is efficient. It is easy to use. It is durable. It is of a simple design. It is of a high quality. It is of a low cost. It is of a long life. It is of a high efficiency. It is of a high reliability.

The Maple City Mfg. Co.
P. O. Box 42, Monmouth, Illinois



**Important Constructional Points in
Maple City Mine Lamps**



The body is made from brass being susceptible to zinc poisoning, constructed by means of a perfect thread and a rubber gasket of special composition, which eliminates leakage.

The water regulator is sensitive and permits the user to regulate the flow of gas to give a steady light that penetrates every corner.

The burner, reflector, and lens are properly adjusted in the body.

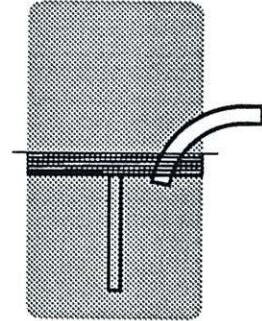
The gas chamber is provided with a valve so as to prevent outside dirt reaching the burner.

We don't want manufacturers to simply take our word for it, but we want them to test our lamps themselves, because they will then be satisfied. A sample lamp will be sent to any mine superintendent writing for it on his company's letterhead.

The Maple City Manufacturing Company
P. O. Box 41, Monmouth, Illinois

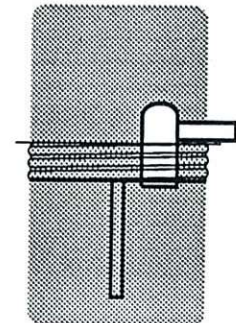
Early "anthracite"

Early "anthracites" and early Maple Citys (ca. 1911) utilized cut threads and a simple gas tube arrangement. Lamp shown and matching spare base are from Mike Puhl collection. Barely visible is knurling on tank flange and screw cap for base.



Late "anthracite"

Later model "anthracites", shown here, had rolled threads (not visible from outside lamp) and an improved gas tube. The lamp on the left, from the Bill Bowman collection, is externally similar to the early "anthracite" above (except for lack of knurling on tank flange). This style of gas tube is the same as that seen on late-model Maple City lamps (1912).



"Anthracite": Unmarked Loop-hook Lamps

Known to Illinois miners as "the barrel" ¹, and dubbed "anthracite" by the late George Bayles, these lamps are distinguished by a tiny loop in the wire hook. Though unmarked, certain design features indicate that this is a Maple City product. Generally, all "anthracites" feature a wide-mouth bottom, soldered-on reflector, lack of a striker, and similar size and shape to a Maple City. (Similarity of size and shape is not a trivial matter. The Maple City lamp was smaller than most other carbides and, except for those mentioned here, had its own distinctive shape.) The exteriorly located gasket is fully interchangeable with a Maple City.

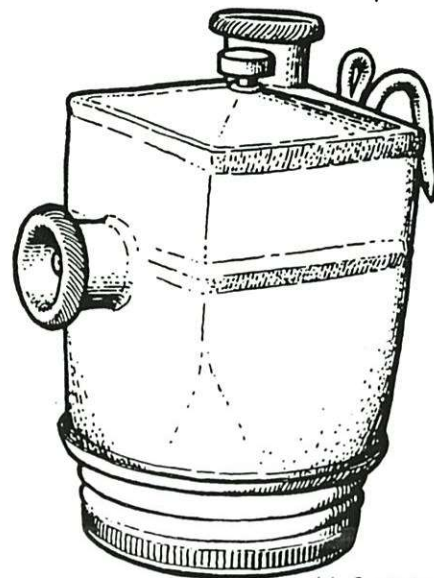
However, they also featured a separate threaded insert, machine-cut on some lamps and rolled on others, comprising the bottom threads, which are not externally visible in either case. Those lamps with the machine-cut threads have a crude gas tube apparatus in the upper chamber, much the same as the early 1911 vintage Maple City lamps. Later lamps, found with rolled threads, had a different gas tube arrangement just as the later model 1912 Maple Cities (see diagrams). On all lamps a little wad of orange wool is stuffed into the lower end of the gas tube as a filter. Perhaps it is only coincidental that Maple City Mfg. Co. shared an industrial complex with a manufacturer of mittens. ²

The most odd of the loop-hook lamps is the very rare "square-light" variety. Its distinctive rope-knurled waterdoor has been seen elsewhere... on a Maple City lamp. ³

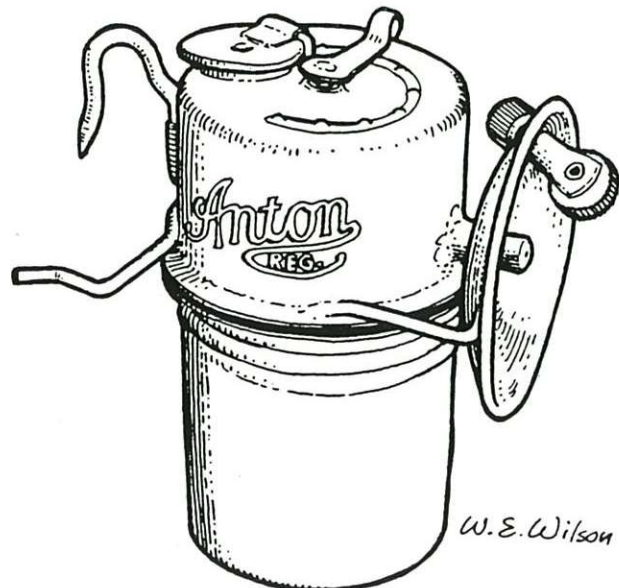
Considering these design similarities, it appears that Maple City produced the "anthracite" concurrently with its own name-stamped lamp over an extended period that at least included the years 1911-12. Were the loop-hook lamps made for other retailers? At least one collector claims that the "anthracite" was marketed by Montgomery-Ward, a Chicago-based firm just a stone's throw from Monmouth.

The Cylindrical Anton

Another lamp generally similar to the Maple City is the cylindrical Anton Carbide, for it has a wide mouth bottom with eccentric gasket, a soldered-on reflector, and generally similar size and appearance. However, it does have some distinguishing features not found on marked Maple City lamps, such as a striker, a backbrace and distinctly different water lever and water door. Based on knowledge of the vintage of the Anton "squaretop" and of striker mechanisms, this lamp probably dates from 1914. ¹ It is a reasonable hypothesis that the Antons had some of these made up by Maple City pending the introduction of their "squaretop" but admittedly circumstantial.



Loop-hook "square-light"



Cylindrical Anton

Union Carbide

Of all the possible lamps connected to Maple City, the Union Carbide Lamp is the least similar. The most notable physical similarity is the wide mouth bottom, but more importantly, "Monmouth, Illinois" is stamped on the side of the lamp. The striker suggests it was available no sooner than 1913, and it is known to have been included in the 1916 Shapleigh catalog--prior to the Maple City fire. In addition, sources in Monmouth believe that there was a connection of some sort between the Maple City Mfg. Co. and Union Carbide Corporation (which is known to have had a sales office in Monmouth), although this is thought to have been primarily in connection with the Illinois carbide feed generator. Was Maple City the manufacturer of the Union Carbide Lamp? It is certainly possible that this is how the Maple City lamp evolved, but more evidence is needed to firmly establish a connection.

References and Notes

1. Federal Reporter, Vol. 236., No. 2366, page 729. Circuit Court of Appeals, Dec 7, 1916. Prior to manufacturing his own lamps, Frank Guy of Springfield, Illinois installed his dropper in lamps used in his area. Two of these mentioned were the Blesser Lamp and a lamp known to the locals as "The Barrel".
2. Clemmer, G. S., American Miners' Carbide Lamps. "The Maple City address was actually a huge plant housing three companies - Maple City; Boss Manufacturing Company, maker of mittens; and Monmouth Acetylene Company."
3. Mark Bohannan collection.



The Lamp
that Lights
the Miner's
Way

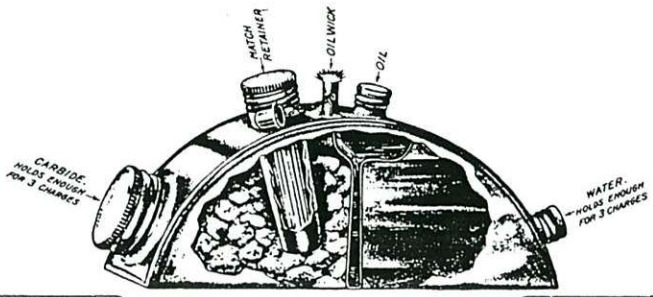
Reliable
Under the
Hardest
Conditions

THE MAPLE CITY

ACETYLENE MINE LAMP

The day of inefficient, dirty, smoky, air-contaminating miner's lamp or candle is past. The bright, clear, non-smoking Maple City Acetylene Mine Lamp meets up-to-date requirements. It is strongly constructed to withstand the hard usage incident to mining and consists of two seamless brass shells. The lower chamber containing the carbide is securely fastened to the upper or water chamber by a thread in combination with a special rubber gasket forming a perfectly tight joint. The water regulator is controlled by a knurled knob that raises or lowers the valve regulating the flow of water into the carbide, keeping the gas pressure at the proper degree to give a steady brilliant light. An extra carbide retainer and cap is supplied with each lamp. When it is desired to replenish the supply all that is necessary is to unscrew the cap and exchange the full retainer for the empty one. We want every mine superintendent to become perfectly familiar with Maple City Lamps and to this end we will send a free lamp on trial upon request. Test it in every way. Then compare it with other lamps. We know the Maple City Lamp will win out--that is why we make the offer. Write today, using Company letterhead, when possible.

Maple City Mfg. Company
P. O. Box 42, Monmouth, Illinois



Maple City

Emergency Lamp and Flask

Ever since the invention of the acetylene, or carbide gas lamp, miners and others who use them constantly have been looking for some apparatus compact in form that would hold several charges of carbide, water and matches.

Many have been the complaints and when miners take were told of injuries sustained in groping through dark passages in search of a fellow workman for a light or a match. Then, too, the supply of carbide has given out absolutely. Nothing to do but get to the top, obtain a new supply and return, thus losing a lot of valuable time.

Furthermore, when a carbide chamber has to be refilled necessarily the light must be extinguished, leaving the workman in darkness for the time being.

Now, all this can be abolished. There need be no more trouble of any kind.

The flask illustrated above is constructed as shown with a chamber containing space for three charges of carbide, a chamber large enough for three charges of water, a pocket for matches, and a compartment for oil and wick.

When the supply of carbide is exhausted in a lamp, the miner simply lights the Emergency Lamp and recharges his carbide lamp without having to do it in the dark and without being compelled to go to his next door neighbor for a light or a match. When his lamp is ready, he simply extinguishes the Emergency Lamp and fastens the flask to his belt by an arrangement provided for this purpose.


Another important advantage of this is its use as a Safety Lamp in exploring unexplored parts of a mine. It can be depended upon to signal the miner when black damp is present. Its utility as an emergency lamp is self evident, should the carbide lamp get out of order for any reason.

The Emergency Lamp and Flask is made in two qualities and prices:

Heavy Tin	45c. each, prepaid.
Brass	75c. each, prepaid.

Protect yourself in your work--Send for one today--now.

We also make the famous Maple City Acetylene Lamps, used the country over. Bulletins will be sent on request, or a sample lamp free to any Superintendent writing on his Company letterhead. To others \$1.00 each with extra carbide container.




No. 22

The Maple City

Manufacturing Co.

P. O. Box 42
Monmouth Illinois



No. 30

Opposite page: Photo by the ever-witty Steve Loftin of Union Carbide cap lamp in his collection.



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