

Force Feed Quartet

by Dave Thorpe
&
Mike Puhl



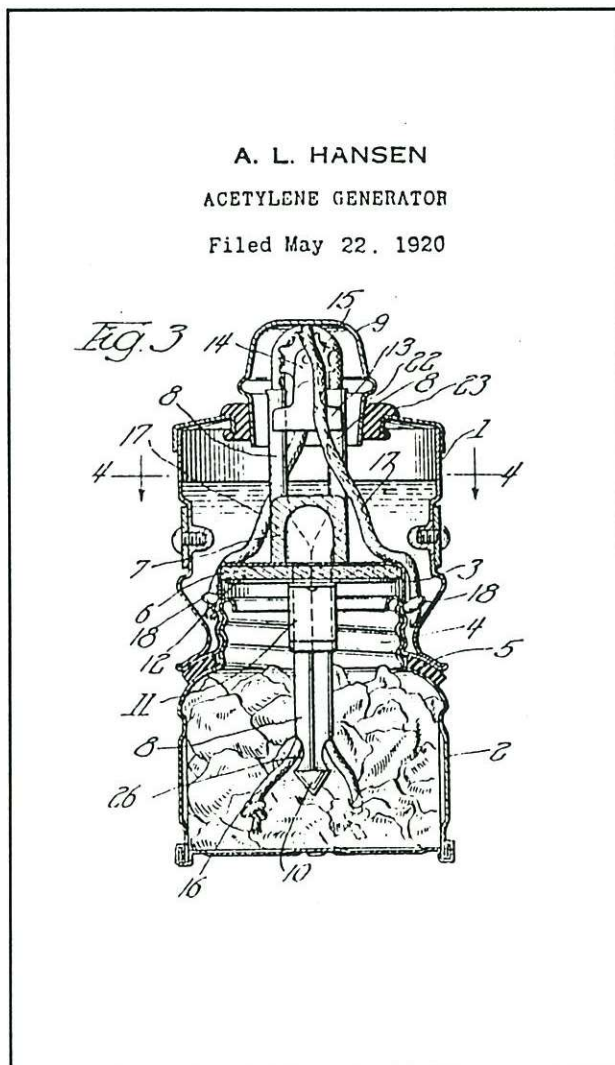
Among the lamps made by Augie Hansen, only the Force Feed is found in variations. Four distinct styles show a regular transition from their predecessor, the Drylite, to the final basic Hansen cap lamp.

The earliest Force Feed lamp was the boldest in design. It used the Drylite's larger capacity tank as well as the heavy reflector brace.

Ask most cap lamp collectors about Hansen lamps and they can recite the names Drylite, Force Feed, and Hansen as if it were a grammar school drill. Augie Hansen patented and manufactured these three lamps, beginning in 1920, with the unusual Drylite which used a wick to feed water instead of a conventional dropper. The mechanism did not work well and, a year later the lamp was replaced by the Force Feed. Much more functional, this new lamp stood the test of time long enough to undergo several design modifications. These subtle changes are reviewed in the following article.



Early Force Feed top stamping.



Drylite patent showing tank cut-away.

1 The Force Feed cap lamp used a true water dropper. In addition, a small patented plunger was added for an extra squirt of water when needed. The first Force Feed models resembled the Drylite in their outward appearance (see opposite page). They are identified by a more robust waist than seen in later models. This appearance is due to the larger water tank, taken directly from the Drylite.

The patent cutaway diagram shows how the tank surrounds the screw threads. This made rational use of space in a lamp where water could be wicked up from any recess, but in a dropper-based lamp, like the Force Feed, the water from this space was unusable.

The early Force Feed lamps also used the heavier reflector brace as on the Drylite. Additionally, all first generation models were equipped with the reflector-slot igniter.

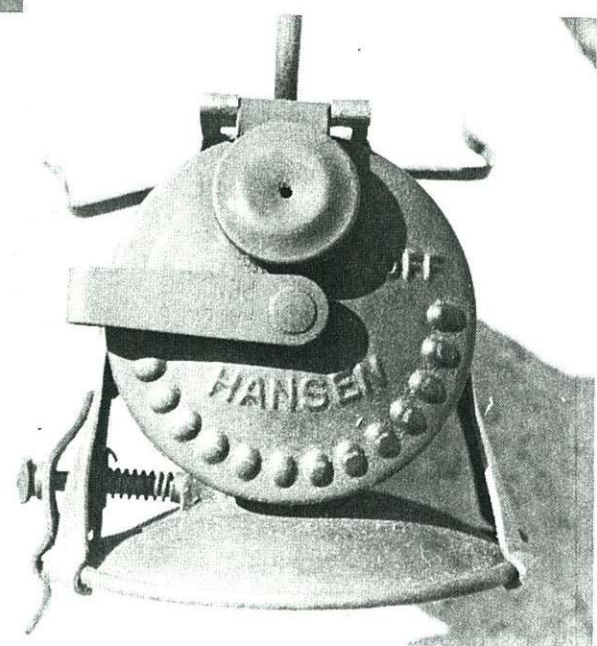
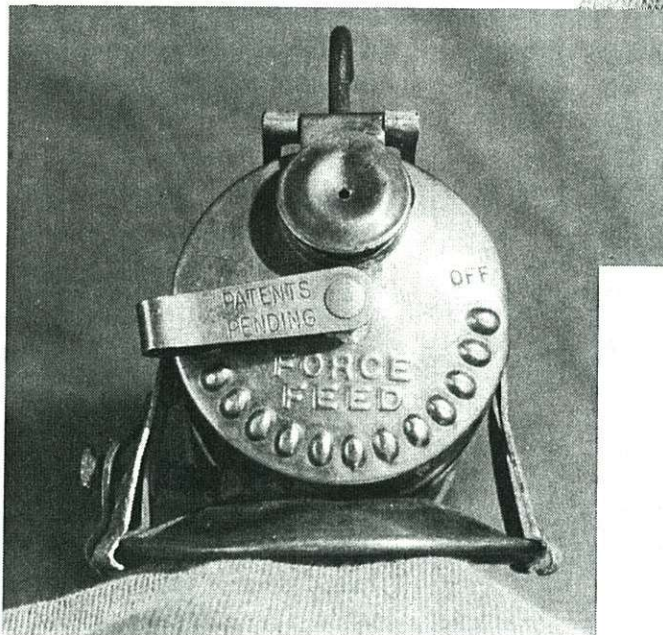
2 The first change in design was logical: the large tank was slimmed down so that the entire water chamber lay above the threads. The lamp had a much less stout appearance. The example shown right is from Mike Puhl's collection. The reflector-slot igniter is still retained on this model, but the reflector brace is now lightened with several windows along its length.



3 The third Force Feed variation, shown left, introduces the patented Snap-lite® igniter in place of the reflector-slot wheel. The igniter is neatly attached in one of the diamond shaped windows of the lightened reflector brace. The first lamps to use the new Snap-lite® still retained the old reflector stamping with two small ridges as finger guides for the now absent slot igniter. Obviously, no slot is cut between them.

4 The final Force Feed variation, shown right, is from Mike Puhl's collection, and represents the most radical change of all. The lamp is now a Force Feed by name only, for the plunger mechanism has completely disappeared. The new water feed screws in a reverse direction to the old one, so now the stamping "OFF" (on the tank's top) is changed from its position on the right hand side (in raised letters), to the left hand side (in incuse letters). The new incuse stamping suggests that it was added *after* the die was stamped.

With no rationale for continued use of the Force Feed name, a new die was made for the top, sporting the new name: "Hansen". On the new lamp, the word "OFF" is die stamped in raised letters and is properly located on the left.



Top stamping of latest Force Feed (above) compared to its replacement: the basic Hansen (right).