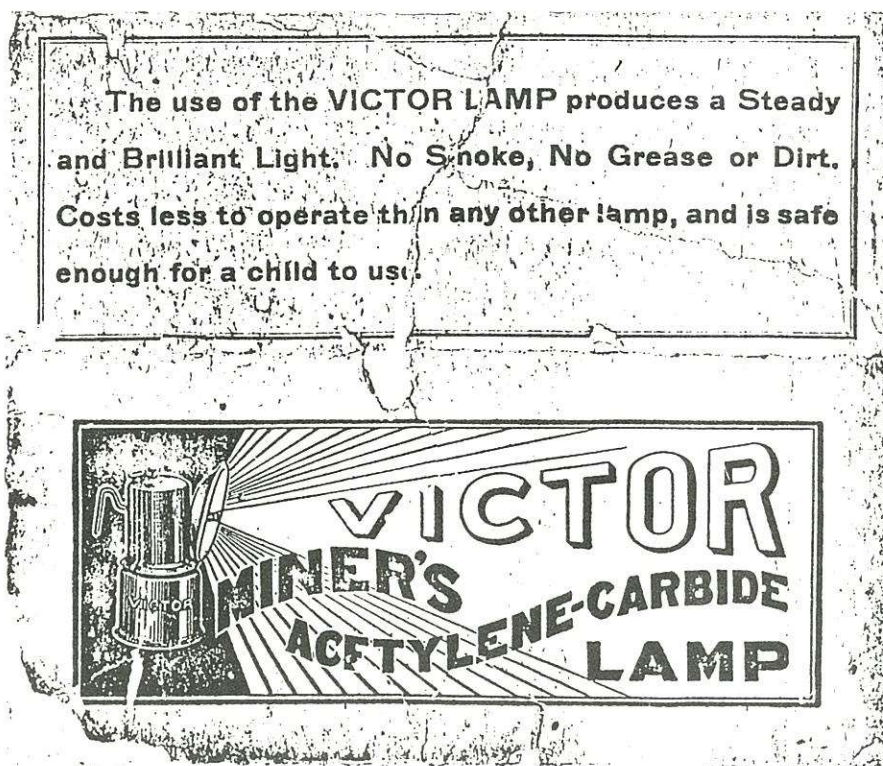


The story of The Scranton Acetylene Lamp Co. becomes interesting when it is discovered that the same company operated under a different name for its first two years. Llew Evans, a state mine inspector from Scranton, started the company in 1907 under the name of... *The Baldwin Lamp Company!* ¹ The famous lamp designer Fred Baldwin was not one of the five stockholders, and his association with them is unclear. A year later, in 1908, the John Simmons Co., long-time associates of Baldwin, opened a branch office in Scranton.²



Box for Victor lamp, note ridges in lamp surface.



Early Victor lamp.

Then, in 1909 Llew Evans discarded the Baldwin name and changed his company to The Scranton Acetylene Lamp Co.³ Just a coincidence, or did Baldwin leave the Scranton team for Simmons?

Now then, what actual lamp was made during the 1907 - 1909 period? The lamp would probably appear more primitive than the Scranton, and might have some characteristics in common with early Baldwin lamps. Enter the early Victor cap lamp. This lamp, very similar to the Scranton, is stamped with no name, but has been found in an original box with the name Victor boldly displayed. The die stamping is crude, with heavy ridge marks all around the surface. Included with these unfired lamps were small thumb-tab tip cleaners...these are the same ones found with the early "tin-can" Baldwin lamps. It is possible that this early lamp, known as the pre-Justrite Victor, was made by Llew Evans' Scranton-based company while still under the Baldwin name.

Finally, there is the Black Diamond, another Scranton look-alike. We know this lamp by name from the advertisements which show the characteristic waterfeed wheel that sits above a small sleeve. These lamps have not yet been found with stamping on the side as seen in advertisements. The name "Black Diamond" is a metaphorical term for hard coal, or anthracite, and was clearly aimed at the Scranton area miners. Some 1911 journals show ads for Black Diamond right next to Scranton ads (see below) suggesting some competition. Although this lamp was marketed in eastern Pennsylvania,⁴ the ads list the company as New York based. During this time, Fred Baldwin had become heavily involved with the John Simmons Co. of New York. One is struck by the similarity of the water-feed and raking wire apparatus on the Black Diamond with the Simmons-Baldwin feeds of the same era.

Although it is possible to positively identify each of these unstamped lamps by name, the whole story of their manufacture is yet untold. If only Fred Baldwin or Llew Evans were still around!



*Black Diamond lamp
(Errol Christman collection).*

The "Scranton" Acetylene Mine Lamp




is very simple. All you have to do is half-fill the retainer with carbide, fill the reservoir with water and regulate the patent valve to feed from ten to twenty drops of water per minute. The result is a brighter flame, one that can be positively regulated, raised or lowered at will and that burns longer without recharging.

Write for particulars and prices.

Francis H. Coffin & Co.
Board of Trade Scranton, Pa.

The Black Diamond Acetylene Pit Lamp



Carbide soon cuts and corrodes all brass valves, making them useless.

The valve seat in the

BLACK DIAMOND

can neither cut nor corrode. The water regulation is perfect.

The Black Diamond Mfg. Co.
401 Broome Street, New York

Our prices will interest you

References and Notes

1. *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Executive Department.* August 28, 1907. Courtesy, Bill Spence. Llewellyn M. Evans was the principle stock holder of the company along with four others.
2. *American Miners' Carbide Lamps,* Gregg Clemmer, 1987. L. M. Evans also held the patent for Scranton lamp, and the company address, located at 144 Belmont Terrace, also appears to have been his residence.
3. *Baldwin Lamp Company Change of Name to The Scranton Acetylene Lamp Company.* Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. A Certificate July 6, 1909. Courtesy, Bill Spence.
4. *E.C. Simmons Catalog M,* 1915, Philadelphia, PA is the last known Black Diamond ad, while the earliest journal ads are from 1911 (see left). Interestingly, the "anthracite" cap lamp is also advertised in this catalog, but is given the name of "Britelite".

From Mines and Minerals, Jan 1911.