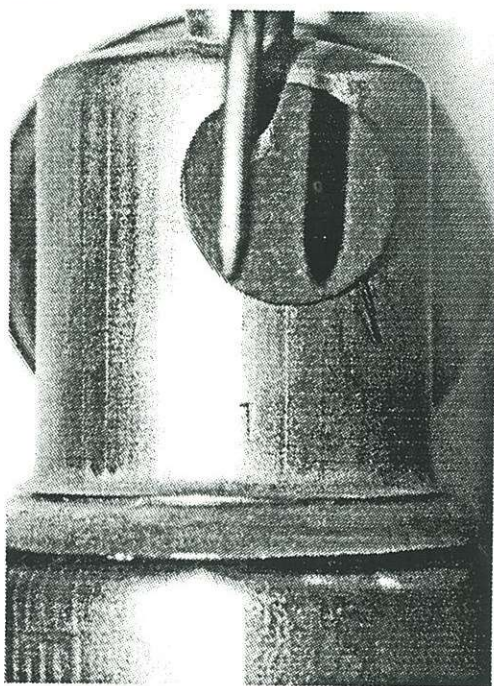


# Strange Numbers on Pennsylvania Lamps

Dave Thorpe

For as long as the early Victor lamps have been rediscovered by collectors, it has been noted that each has a number stamped into the back of the water tank. The two numbers that have been brought to my attention are "1" and "3". Chuck Young once speculated that they may relate to the degree of tilt on the reflector. Then, not too long ago the "ACME" cap lamp was reported.<sup>1</sup> This is a lamp that is identical to the Victor except for the reflector being centered and straight up and down. Wouldn't you know it: it had the number "2" stamped in the same location beneath the hook in the back of the lamp. Certain structural characteristics suggest that these lamps were made by Hughes Bros. of Scranton, PA.<sup>2</sup> If not made by Hughes, the style is nonetheless classic eastern Pennsylvania.

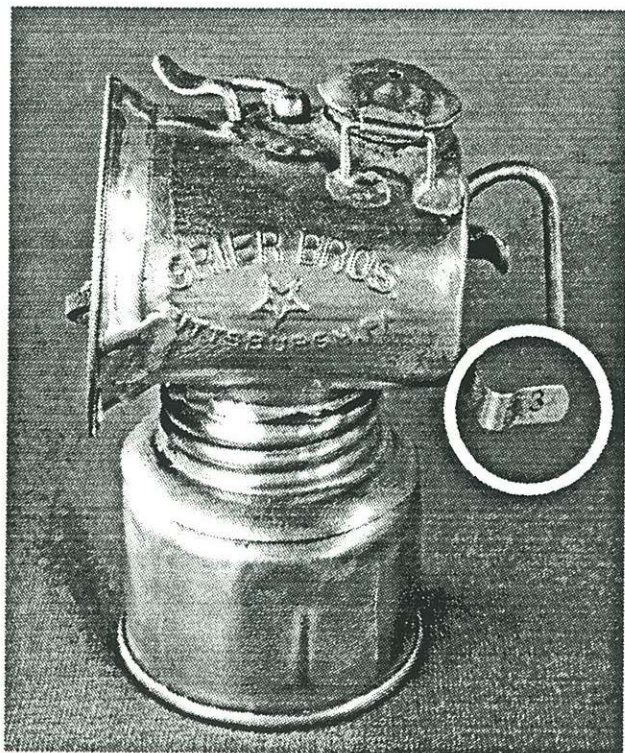


*The number "1" is stamped into the back of this early Victor lamp. (looped over the hook is disc with tip-cleaning wire found on Victor and early Baldwin lamps. (Dave Thorpe collection and photo).*

I began to notice that various Grier (Pittsburgh, PA) lamps were also stamped, but these numbers were located near the outside ends of the cap braces. I have seen the number "3" on a horizontal Grier and "5" and "2" on a vertical models.



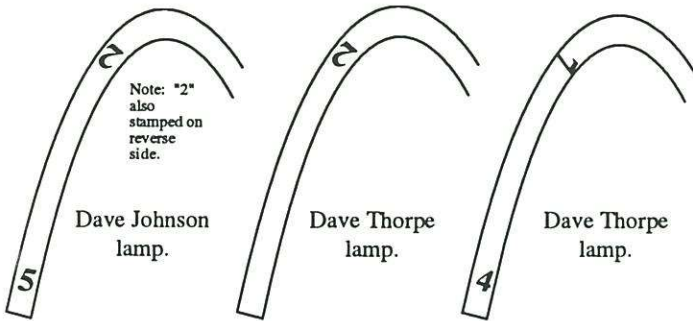
*Vertical Grier with the number "5" on cap brace. (Keith Williams collection, Dave Thorpe photo).*



*Horizontal Grier with the number "3" on the cap brace. (Dave Thorpe collection and photo).*

Mike Puhl has told us that he once removed the hook and solder from the back of a Pathfinder. Lo and behold, there was a single digit number!

I'm not able to examine many Scranton brand lamps with original fittings, but the two I own, as well as one in Dave Johnson's have numbers stamped into the hook itself. Some lamps have one number, others have two or three numbers on their hooks. Bob Schroth owns a Scranton with no numbers. The various stampings are shown below.



*Numbers and locations on Scranton hooks.*

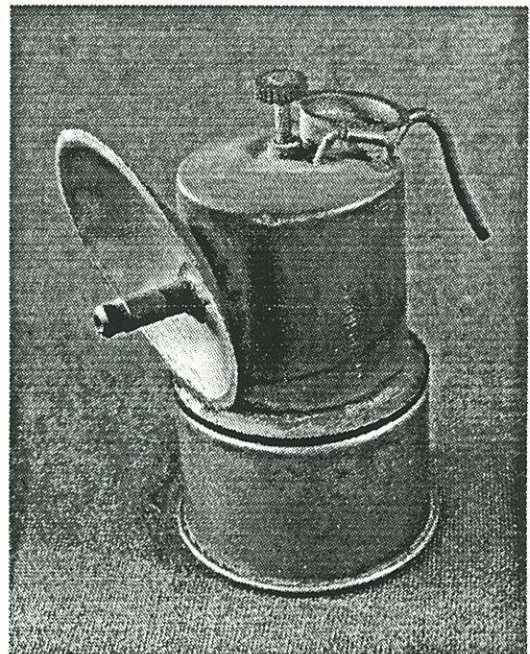


*Closeup photo of a Scranton hook showing stamped number "4". (Dave Thorpe collection and photo)*

What all of these lamps have in common? They are all from Pennsylvania manufacturers. I have never seen a number stamped on a non-Pennsylvania lamp with any regularity. As to what these numbers signify, I have not the slightest idea.

**References:**

1. Acme Cap Lamp, *Eureka!*, (1994) Issue 9, p. 27.
2. Victor-Acme-Pathfinder, *Eureka!*, (1994) Issue 12, pp. 29-35, David J. Des Marais.



*Scranton (top) and Victor (bottom) lamps (Dave Thorpe collection and 35mm photo)*