

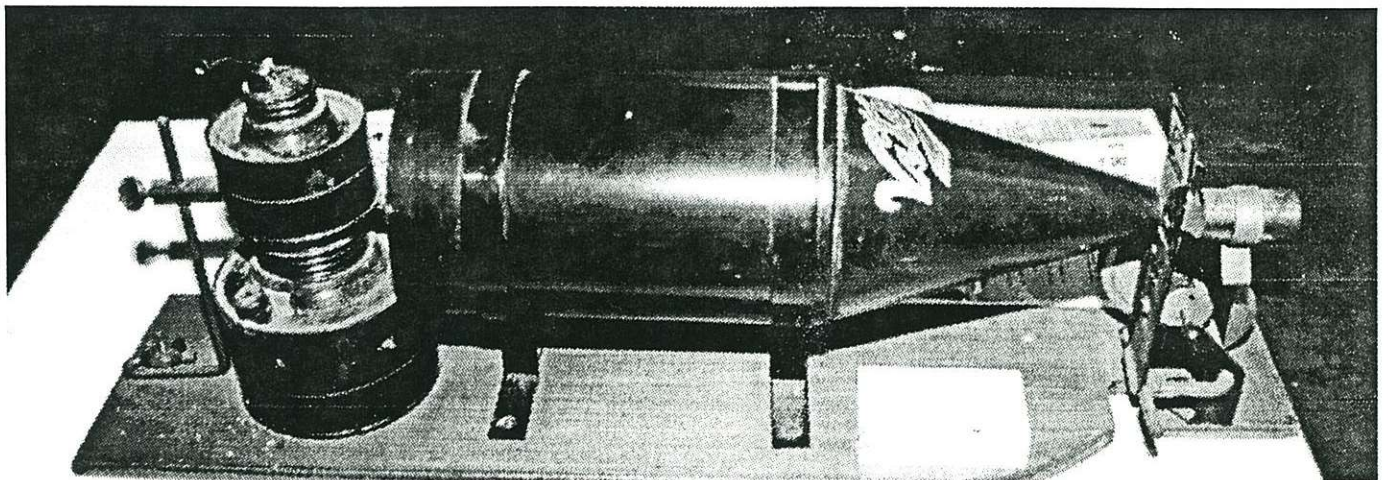
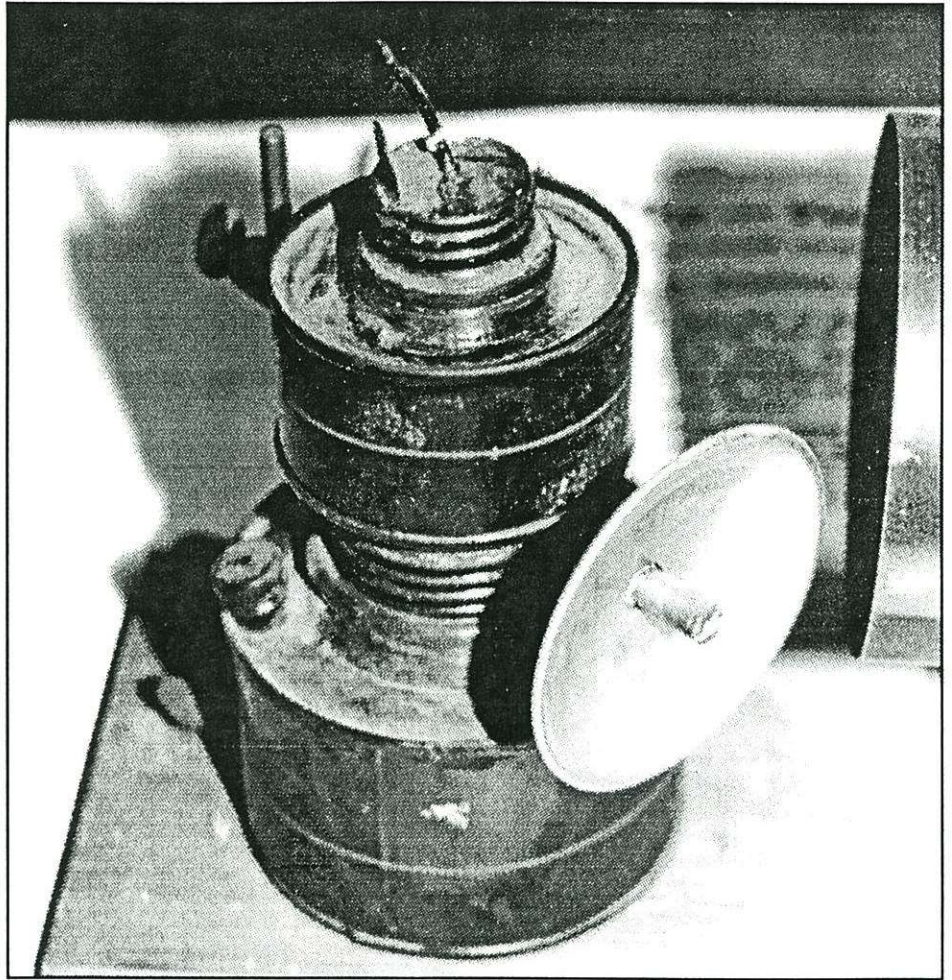
The Vitak

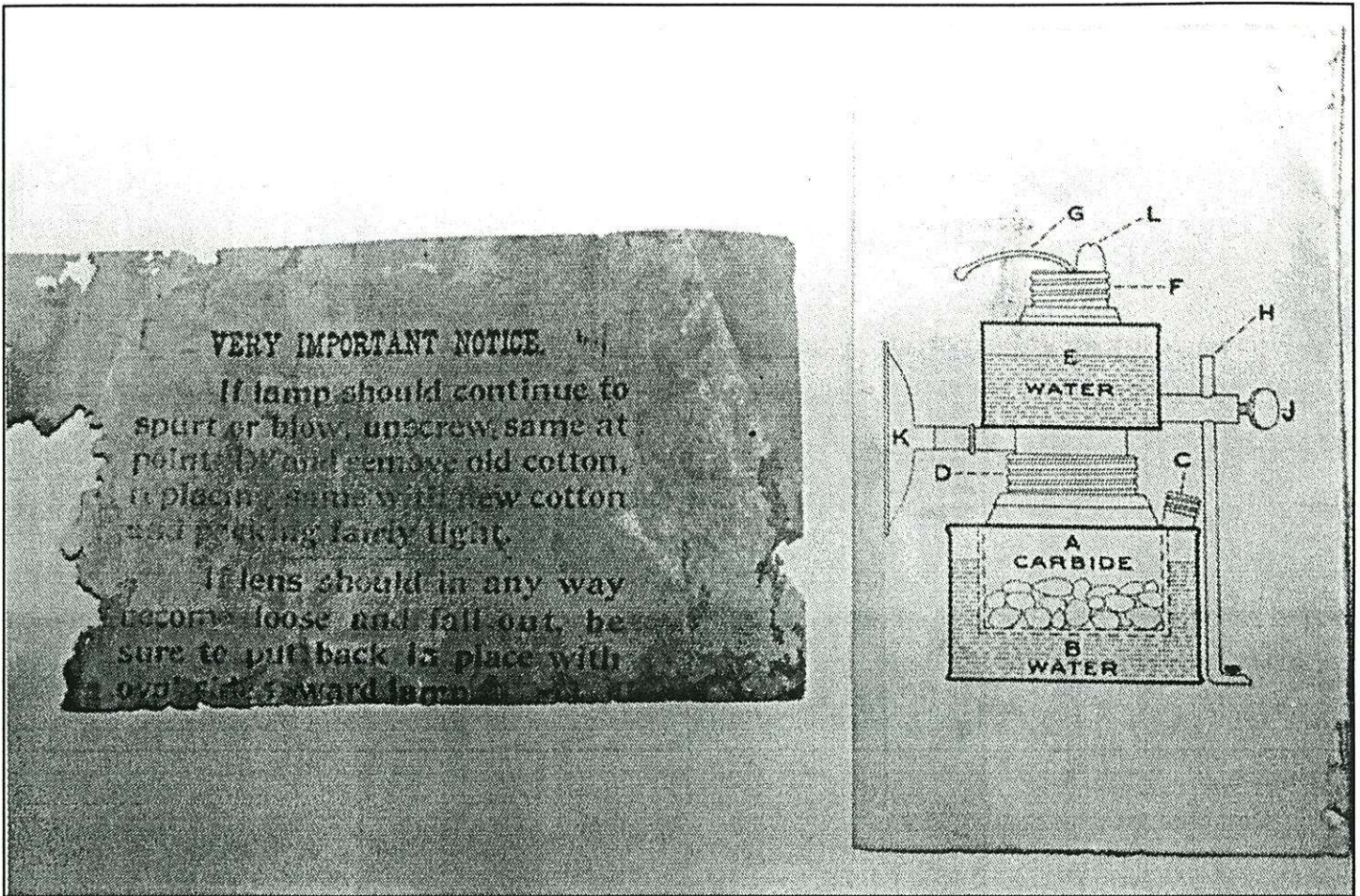
(a.k.a. Big Black Baldwin)

by Jim Van Fleet

Some collectors have acquired a large Baldwin “hand lamp”. The lamp is highly prized for several unusual features. It has a separate water-jacket that surrounds the carbide chamber, presumably for cooling. It is painted gloss black with a decorative red “racing stripe” around the top and bottom chambers. The mounting device features a round hole with a wing-nut, and the burner tube is of unusually large diameter.

Collectors with such a lamp may now rest assured that they are proud owners of a genuine *movie projector lamp*! That’s right, this was designed to be connected to a long conical apparatus for collecting carbide-generated light and focusing the beam over video frames of Charlie Chaplin and the likes. The photos I include here, taken from a nearby museum, are self explanatory.





VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE.

If lamp should continue to spurt or blow, unscrew same at point D and remove old cotton, replacing same with new cotton and packing fairly tight.

If lens should in any way become loose and fall out, be sure to put back in place with eye sight toward lamp.

Instructions and schematic diagram of the carbide lamp designed for illuminating motion picture film.

Some of the lamp's unusual features can now be explained. The wing nut clamp was used to secure the lamp to a metal rod that was attached to the table. The larger diameter gas tube was probably necessary to produce a brighter flame needed for projection. A more vigorously burning lamp would tend to become very hot, hence the water jacket surrounding the base to absorb the chemically generated heat.

Though the Vitak, as is was known, was a Baldwin product, it should by no means be considered a mine lamp, or even a hand lamp. Its value, on the other hand, should not be diminished, for it represents a significant aspect in the development of carbide lighting devices.

