

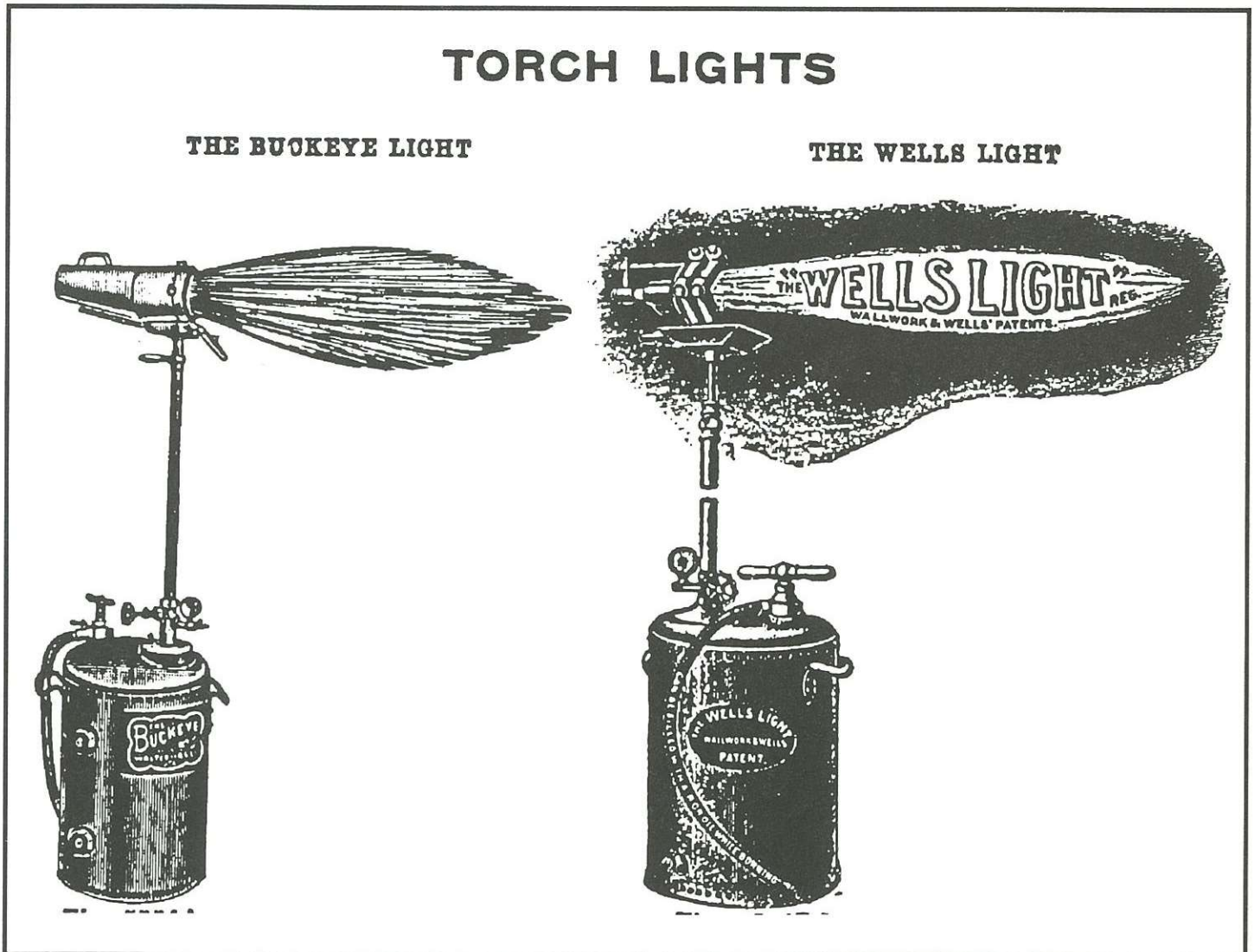
The Bittenbender Co. Catalog

by Tom Stranko and Dave Thorpe

A 1912 catalog from Scranton, PA...what a year! Miners' oil wick lamps were in full swing, and carbides were gaining popularity, and this catalog gives a glimpse into what this distributor offered the anthracite miners of Scranton.

Torch lights for the mines? Maybe not terribly popular, but they were advertised for mine use as well as other industrial applications. They burned oil, and by the looks of things, the flame shot out like a jet engine. Notice the Wells Light, of A.C. Wells fame, made in England. This model, unlike the Wells cast iron "unbreakable" lamps is riveted sheet metal. The advertisement logo would indicate this lamp was made by Wells along with Wallwork whose businesses were known to have mingled.¹

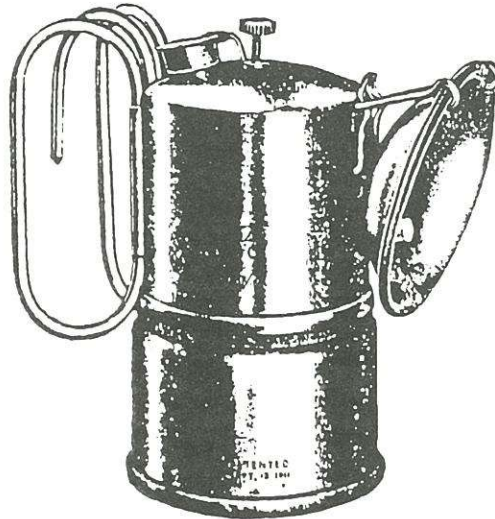
Several English distributors sold U.S. made mine lamps, and it is interesting to see literature showing American imports from abroad.



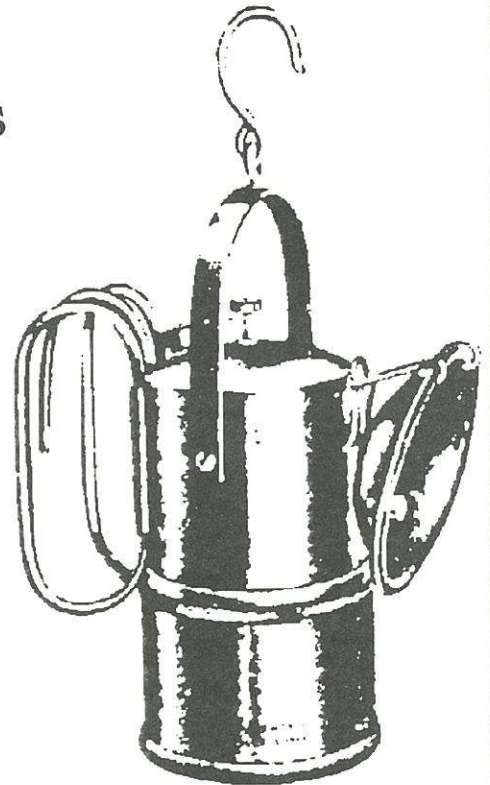
1912-issue Scranto Lamps



No. 1

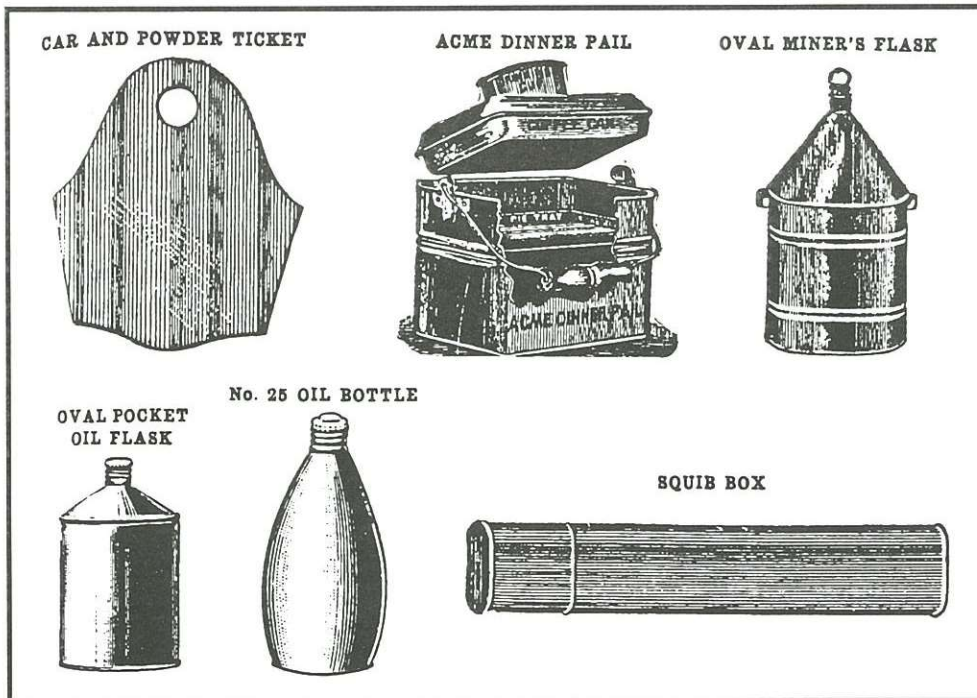


No. 2



No. 2 with bail

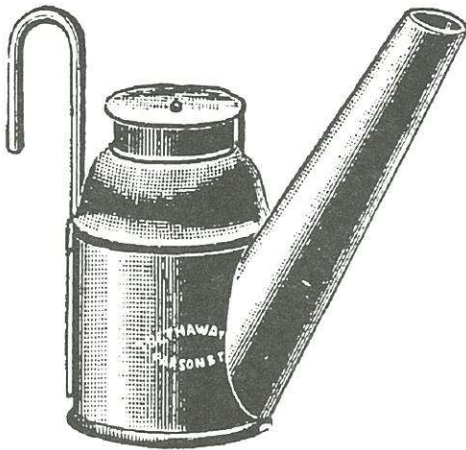
The "loop-in-hook" configuration for reflector attachment (a wire loop penetrating the tank) identifies this as a DesMarais classification Type III Scranto lamp. These lamps bear only the 1911 patent date, while later styles showed two dates including the 1914 patent. The 1912 issue of this catalog is consistent with other advertisements from Sept. 1912 to Feb. 1914 showing the same style lamps, and is consistent with previous assertions that the lamp was manufactured between 1912-13. (See EUREKA!, Issue 9, Jan 1994, p. 14-22).



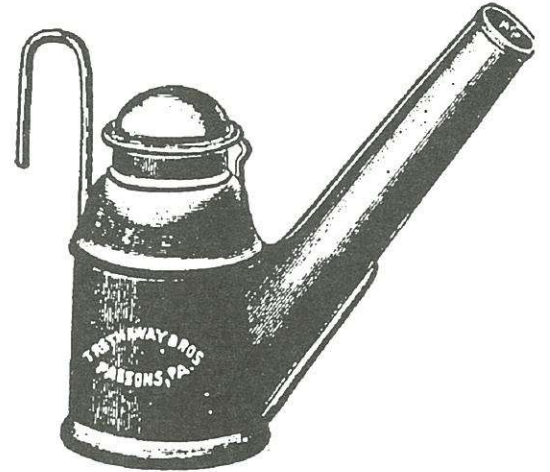
A smattering of the 'lesser' collectibles is seen in this cross-section. Acme was a popular name in Scranton and in mining. Perhaps a few Acme dinner pails will turn up to display beside the Acme carbide and oil wick lamps.

MINERS' AND DRIVERS' LAMPS

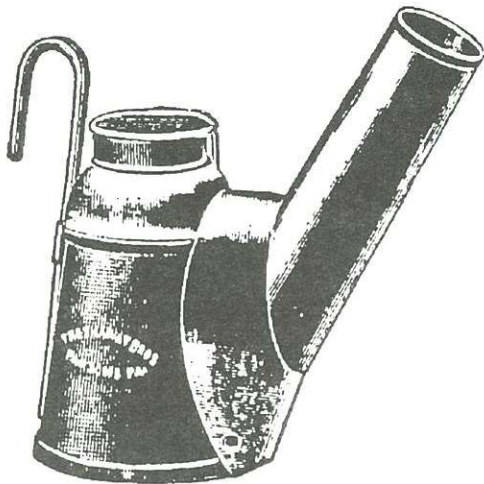
COMMON MINER'S



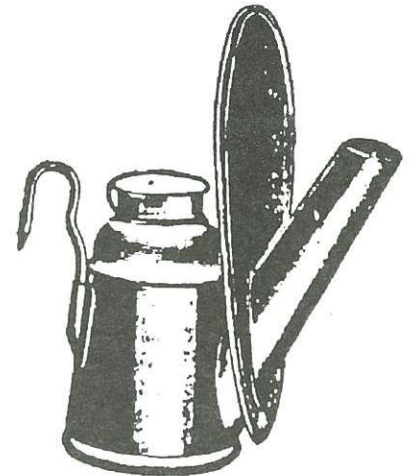
ACME MINER'S



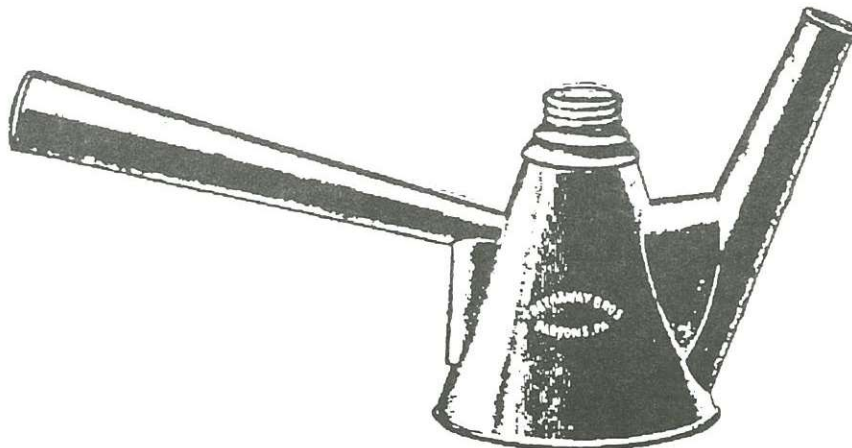
DRIVER'S



DRIVER'S REFLECTOR



BOSS LAMPS

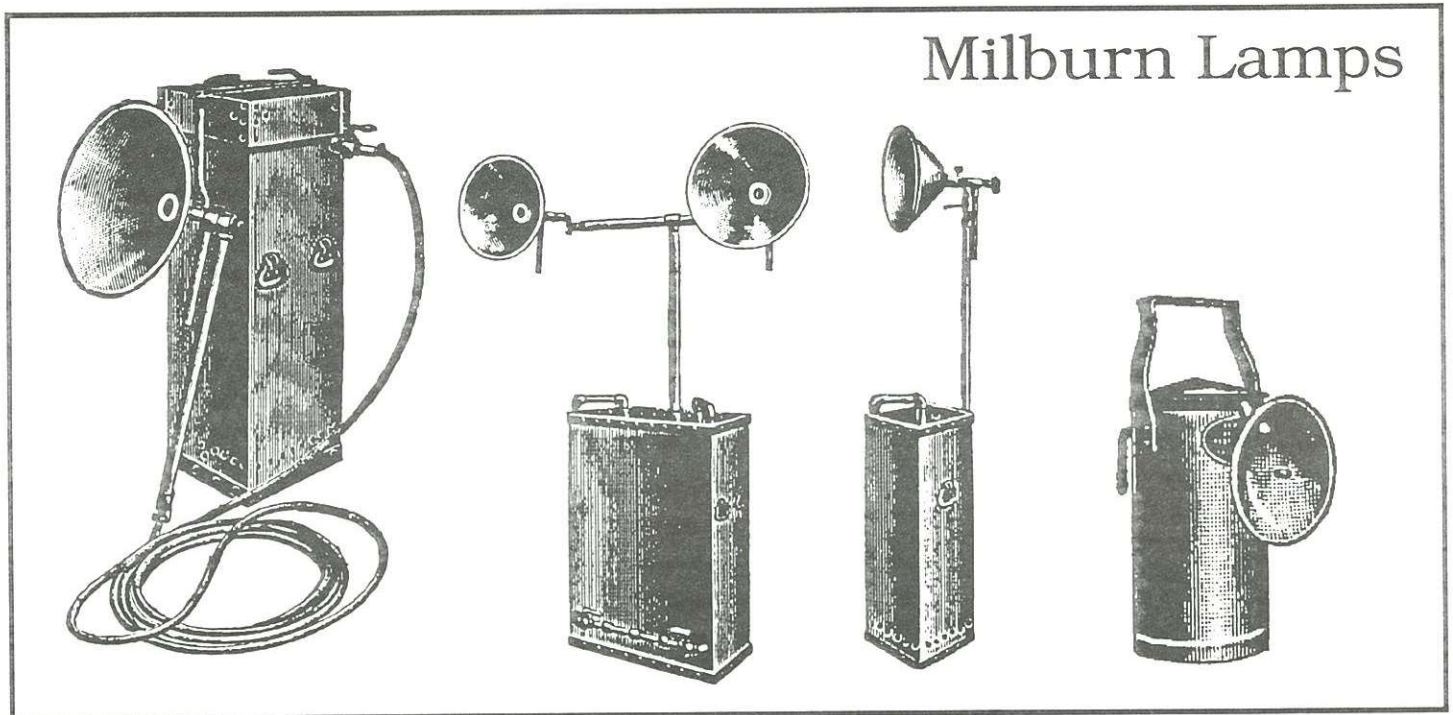


Trethaway Oil Wick Lamps

The show-stopper here is the oil wick in the upper right corner. Just being called an Acme in the catalog is interesting as one of this variety has been reported . There is no seam between the spout and the body of the lamp, rather it is formed from one piece and folded together like a clam-shell. This is not just a trick of illustration, the written description in the catalog describes it as "body and spout in one piece". Some other (rare) brands were constructed similarly², but this would be the first uni-body Trethaway. The solder seam appears to run along the top of the spout, while the bottom edge of the spout looks crimped as a reinforcement, or boot-kick. The lamp shown in the upper left corner was named "Common"...the Acme would qualify as rare.

Check out the Driver's lamp: is door is missing, or is this just an illusion of the illustration? Could this lamp have been intentionally made without a door?

Finally, meet the "Boss"... that is, the large hand-held oil lamp at the bottom of the page. It was advertised with either tin or copper handles.



Milburn was famous for its area lamps, The variety shown above range from 3,000 to 12,000 candlepower. The lamp at far right is a simple, but extraordinarily rare carbide hand lamp. It is actually fairly large: 6 X 12 inches. Its empty weight was 6 ½ pounds and it carried 1 ½ pounds of carbide. It looks like it bears the Milburn badge just behind the eight inch reflector. It was known as the "No. 1".

References

1. The Unbreakable Cast Iron Lamps of A.C. Wells, Eureka!, Issue 14, April 1995. Stutzer and Appleton.
2. The Edward K. Rollins Miners' Lamps, Eureka!, Issue 13. January 1995, Guthrie and Hileman. Also see: E.F. Long Oil Wick Lamp, Eureka!, Issue 2, April 1992, Hyatt.