

Demmler Brothers

by Dave Johnson

ESTABLISHED 1860.

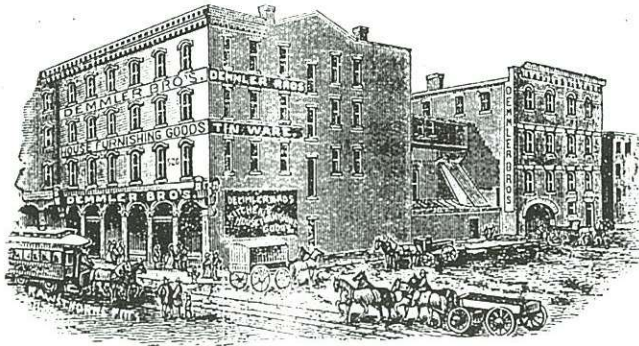
DEMMLER BROTHERS, Stamped and Japanned Ware,

TINNERS' SUPPLIES,

Bird Cages, Miners' Lamps, Sheet Iron, House-Furnishing Goods, &c.

526 and 528 Smithfield Street,
PITTSBURGH, PA.

OIL STOVES.

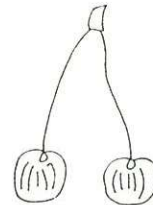


GAS STOVES.

Headquarters of all the Latest Novelties in Kitchen and House Furnishing Goods.

- BRASS GOODS,
- WASHING MACHINES,
- CURTAIN STRETCHERS,
- INDURATED WOOD FIBRE WARE,
- COPPER KETTLES, BRASS KETTLES,
- AGATE AND GRANITE WARE,
- REFRIGERATORS, FILTERS,
- ICE CREAM FREEZERS,
- PERFECTION HOLLOW WARE,
- Air Moisteners for Natural Gas Fires.

The history of Demmler Brothers begins in 1860 when brothers Louis F. and Hugh H. opened their business in Pittsburgh as jobbers of stamped and Japanned ware.¹ Throughout the next decade they were advertised under copper manufacturing² and tin-ware.³ An 1888 advertisement for Demmler Bros. shows them pursuing the mining market as dealers of bird cages and miner's lamps. Additionally, they list tinner's supplies, gas and oil stoves, sheet iron, kitchen and house furnishing goods, ice cream freezers, brass goods, and other items.



In 1889 they formally entered the oil wick lamp business, advertising themselves successors to C. Cherry. Prior to this date, C. Cherry had produced an excellent quality oil wick lamp with a trademark consisting of two cherries on a stem. While Demmler acquired the lamp design, they were unable to acquire the Cherry name or trademark. The stamping was now changed to *Chirry* which was printed twice on the lamp roughly mimicking the Cherry trademark.

CHIRRY
CHIRRY



Three sizes of Chirry oil-wick lamps.

Demmler Bros. was located at 526-528 Smithfield St. since 1867. Louis Demmler sat as President of the firm from 1897-1902.⁴ In 1897, his four brothers, E. H., Frank C., H. B., and Otto Demmler were associated with the firm. Their last listing appears in the 1902 Pittsburgh City Directory.

An undated ad from Somers, Fidler, and Todd Co., of Pittsburgh, shows Chirry oil wick lamps (face type) selling at \$2 per dozen, No. 5 Driver's lamps at \$2.30 per dozen and No. 6 extra large Driver's lamps at \$2.80 per dozen. The same ad

shows Monongahela Valley oil wicks for sale: face lamps were \$1.40 per dozen and Driver's lamps \$1.70 per dozen. The Monongahela Valley lamps in this ad do not have the Demmler name within the crest (see logo below) as those shown in this article (next page). Known examples of the Monongahela Valley lamp have John Dunlap Co. in the crest while the Demmler name appears on others.



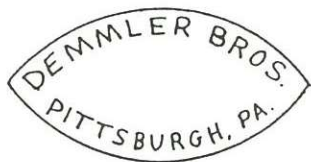
Pre-Demmler Bros. C. Cherry tin face lamp with two-cherry trademark.



An article in the 1888 Allegheny County Centennial Souvenir Booklet⁵ states that Demmler Bros. "make a special effort to carry all the best kinds of miner's lamp". There is no mention of their producing the lamps. It is my belief, until I see evidence to the contrary, that Demmler Bros. had the Chirry and Monongahela Valley lamps made for them rather than manufacture them. I welcome any information on this subject from our readers.



Tin Demmler Bros. Driver's Lamp, with stamping below.



References:

1. *Pennsylvania Historical Review*, Historical Pub. Co. N.Y. 1886
2. *Pittsburgh City Directory*, 1867.
3. *Pittsburgh City Directories*, 1870-1883,
4. *Pittsburgh City Directories*, 1897-1902.
5. *Allegheny County Centennial Souvenir Booklet*, Snowden & Peterson Pub. 1888



Copper Demmler Bros. Monongahela Valley face lamp w/ brass hook. This model is more commonly found in tin.



Nickel-plated Demmler Bros. face lamp (otherwise identical to copper lamp above).