

Hendrick Mfg. Co. & the O'Keefe Patent

by Dave Johnson

Begun in 1876 by Eli E. Hendrick, a Michigander of Dutch parentage, The Hendrick Mfg. Co. of Carbondale, PA has continued in business for the past 117 years.

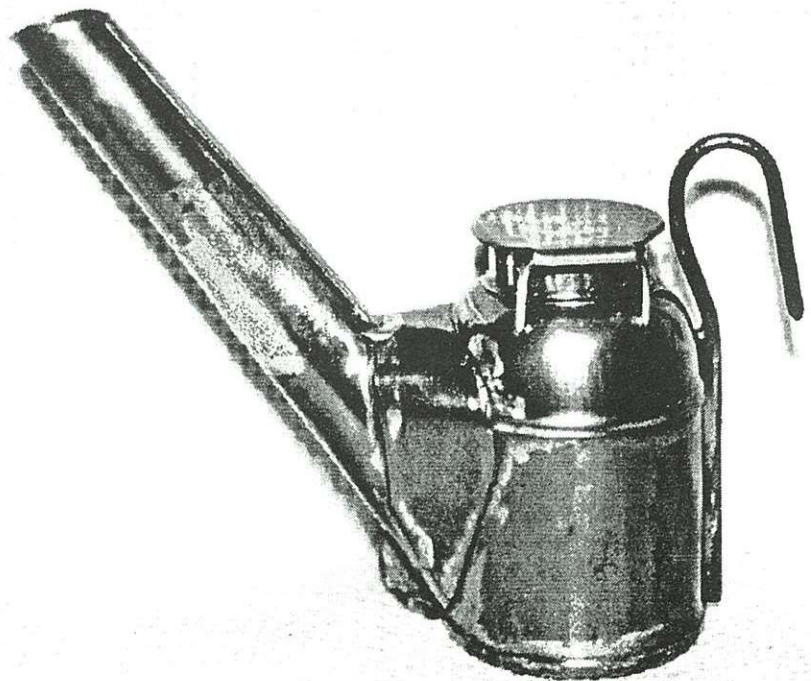
Eli Hendrick was born in 1832. As a young man he was apprenticed as a wood turner in his native Michigan. He later served as a Pony Express rider for the U.S. Mail before returning to wood turning. He moved to Franklin, PA in the 1850's.

An encounter with a Toronto con man set Hendrick back \$10 for a worthless formula for the manufacture of refined oil. This fleecing sparked an interest in that very same process. Developing his own formula, Hendrick was soon producing quality lubricating products for the railroad industry. In 1860 Hendrick opened a new refinery in Carbondale. He developed "Galena Signal Oil," an extra-fine kerosene for railway lighting and "Plumbolum," a lubricant for gear boxes. Business prospered to the point that Hendrick sold out to the Standard Oil Co. of John D. Rockefeller in 1879. At the same time he was engaged in the refining business, he had an idea for a new product. The oil refining process at the time utilized woven mats of wire and canvas in the filter presses. In this process, the wire was abraded to the point where it pierced the canvas, thus reducing the efficiency of

the filter. Hendrick believed that a perforated sheet of metal would have a longer life. Several attempts at drilling holes proved the idea would work but proved too costly. He then hit upon the idea of punching holes simultaneously in sheet metal. The metal punching machine Hendrick developed was the prototype of the modern perforating press and the foundation upon which the Hendrick Mfg. Co. was founded in 1876. Over the last 117 years, the firm has expanded from the oil industry to include coal, aggregates, steel, iron, paper, materials handling and other industries where perforated or slotted sheets of metal are required.

At least one oil wick lamp has been found with the E. E. Hendrick Mfg. Co. name. On July 21, 1896, the U.S. Patent Office awarded Patent No. 564,450 to Edward J. O'Keefe, of Vandling, PA assignor to the Hendrick Mfg. Co., Ltd.

The O'Keefe Patent incorporated a domed lid designed in two layers to prevent oil from spilling when the miner bent over. It also included a shield between the font and spout to provide an air space that prevents spilled fuel from igniting on the spout: an event which would melt the solder joint with the font. A third feature was designed to prevent damage to

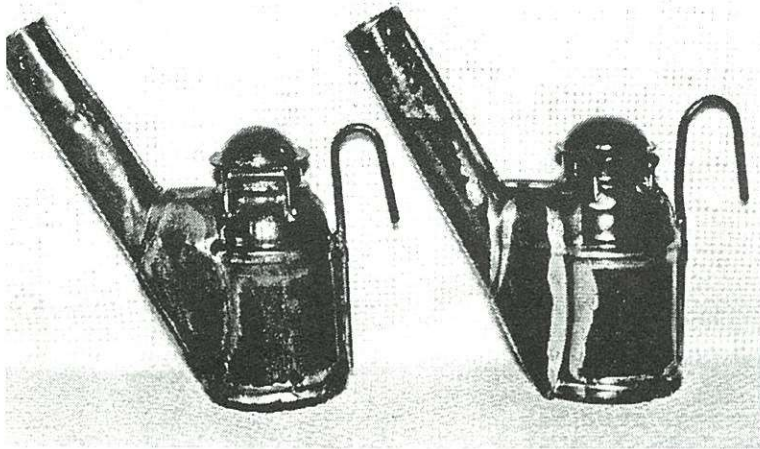


E. E. Hendrick oil wick lamp.

the lamp at the base of the font when it was struck by the miner attempting to raise the wick. While no single lamp is known to incorporate all three patent features, and no patent model was provided, several Trethaway Bros. lamps pictured here incorporated one or two of the patent features. Three Trethaway Bros. lamps in my collection are marked "O'Keefe Patent." Given its metal fabrication capabilities, the Hendrick Mfg. Co. could well have produced its own oil wick lamps. Why are they so very rare today? Could Trethaway have purchased the rights to the O'Keefe Patent from Hendrick before any number were produced?

THE HENDRICK MFG CO LTD
 July 21
 1896
 CARBONDALE PA.

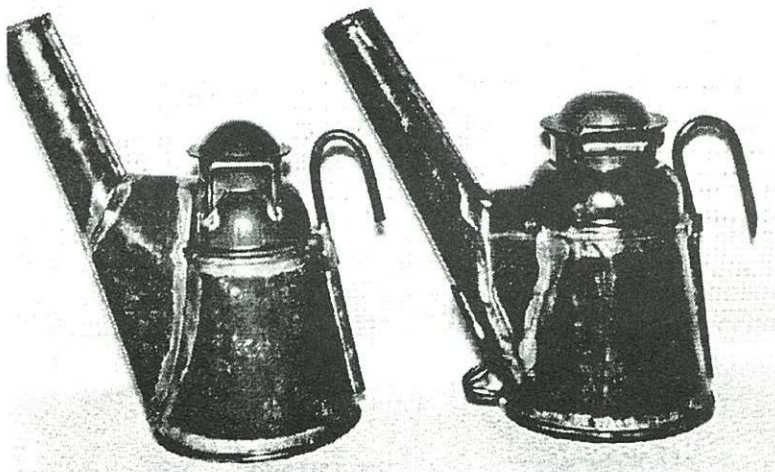
Logo stamping on lamps.



Trethaway Bros. O'Keefe patent oil wicks.



Trethaway Bros. O'Keefe patent oil wick.



Trethaway Bros. O'Keefe Patent drivers' oil wicks.



Trethaway Bros. O'Keefe patent oil wick.