

John D. Gill's Sons

Dave Johnson

The name of the Gill family firm in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania is unusual in that rather than being John D. Gill & Sons, indicating a firm begun by the father and including the sons, the firm's name was John D. Gill's Sons, indicating a firm operated by the sons using their father's name.

John D. Gill, Sr. was born in Pennsylvania in 1830, the son of Irish immigrant parents. He and his wife Priscilla had three daughters and two sons: John D., Jr. and Robert A.¹

By 1890 John D., Sr. had already retired and his son John D., Jr. had established himself as a blacksmith in the area.² Brother Robert, older by 11 years, was known as a traveling

salesman as early as 1900.³ Ten years later he was listed as a manufacturer of mining tools with his sister Emma as bookkeeper, for a mining manufacturing firm: John D. Gill's Sons.

A 1909 ad (below) for John D. Gill's Sons states that they were manufacturers and jobbers of all kinds of miner's supplies. Another 1909 ad (next page) pictures John D. Gill, Jr. and Robert A. Gill as well as their store, located at 420 N. Front St. in Philipsburg. The sign on the front of the store shows them to be manufacturers and jobbers of miners' supplies, roofing and spouting. The ad also pictures some of their products: picks, shovels, augers, drills, needles, caps, lunch buckets, canteens, pow-

der bottles, and of course oil wick lamps! Some of the same items are listed on the sign on the front of the store.

Many of the Gill products were manufactured in a rented section of the Gowland Manufacturing Co., on West Spruce St.⁵

A 1912 advertisement⁶ reads:

**JOHN D. GILL'S SONS
MANUFACTURERS OF
MINER'S TOOLS, MINER'S LAMPS,
TINWARE,
and ALL KINDS OF TIN
GALVANIZED and COPPER WORK**

LARGE OR SMALL

We can handle them all

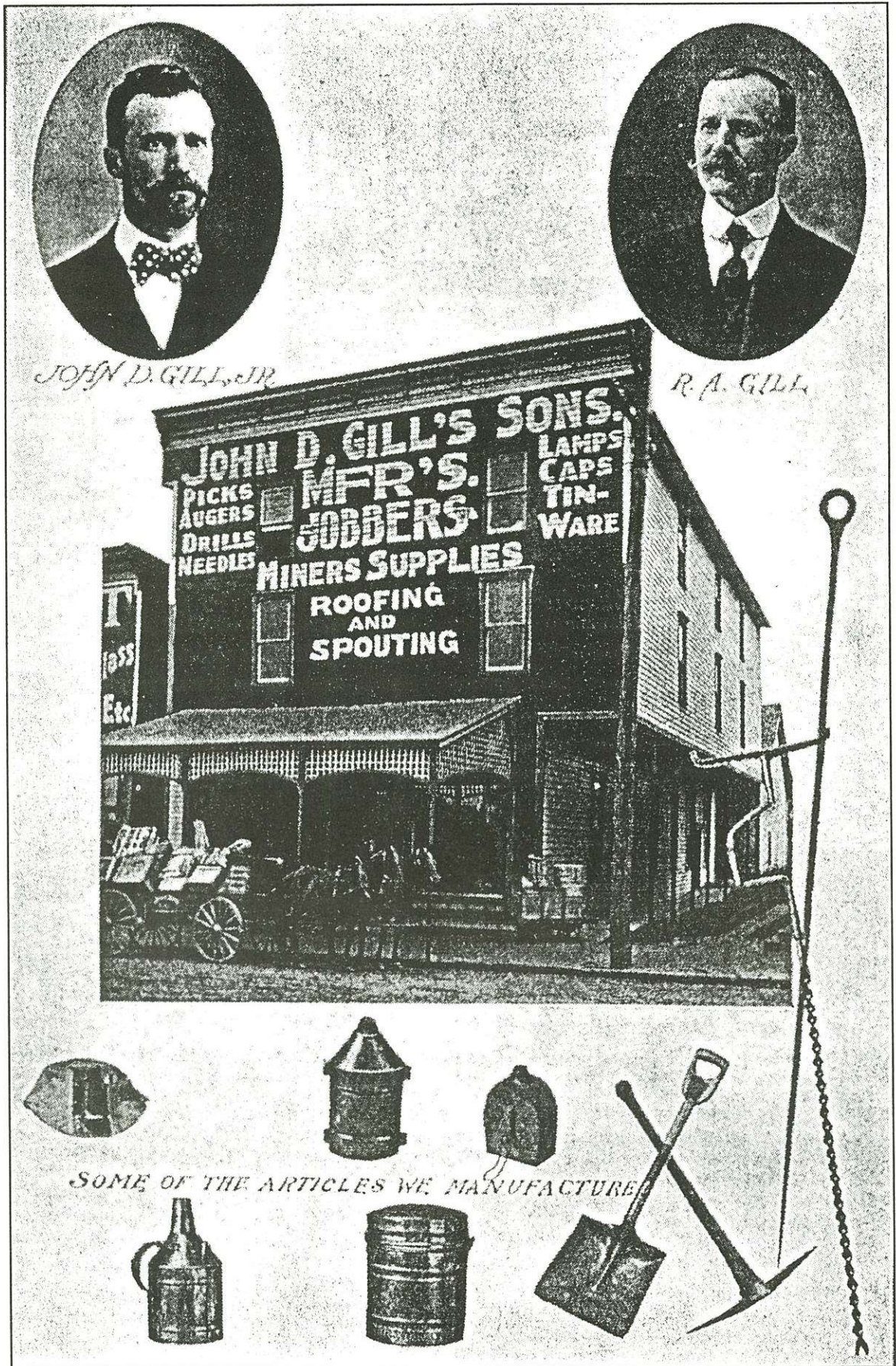
JOHN D. GILL'S SONS

Manufacturers and Jobbers of
all kinds of

Miners' Supplies

PHILIPSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

DO NOT FORGET US WHEN IN NEED
OF ANYTHING IN OUR LINE



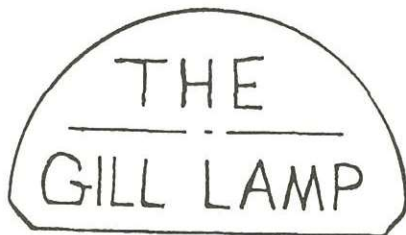
Picture from the Souvenir History Book of Philipsburg, published in 1909 by Grit Publishing Co.

THE GILL LAMP
(Face lamp size)

John D. Gill's Sons produced quality tin, brass, and copper oil wick lamps under two trademark names. The greatest number and variety of lamps were produced under the name THE GILL LAMP.



The Gill Lamp, in the face lamp size, exists in brass (above), copper (left), and tin (below). (Dave Johnson collection).



THE GILL LAMP
Stamping



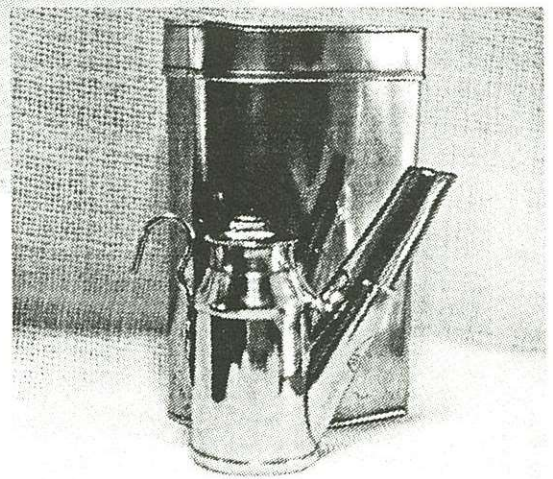
THE GILL LAMP
(Drivers' lamp size)

Several different drivers' lamp models exist that bear the "THE GILL LAMP" stamping.

Shown right is a slope-sided model made entirely of copper. It is hinged from the side.



Another drivers' lamp, shown here, is all brass. This model is of the "milk can style", and is stamped on the spout's reinforcing shield. It is also hinged on the side. This lamp was found with its own brass carrying case.



THE GILL LAMP
(Bi-metallic drivers' lamp)

Two other unusual variations exist in THE GILL LAMP. One (right) is bi-metallic. The spout is copper, while the remainder of the lamp is tin. Like the face lamps, it has a sloped font (body), but this model hinges from the rear.



THE GILL LAMP
(Mid-sized)

Finally, a mid-sized "milk can style" model is shown (left). It is all brass, stamped on the the font, and hinged from the rear. Noting these differences, I am sure other models exist.

JOHN D. GILL'S SONS (Face lamp)

Less commonly seen, but not as aesthetically pleasing, are the lamps marked JOHN D. GILL'S SONS. The lamp shown right is all tin. I have heard of this lamp in a drivers' style, but have not confirmed its existence. The stamping incorporates the STAR name, suggesting the possibility of another manufacturer such as Grier.

I was unable to find any information on what year the firm began or ceased operations, however advertisements, directory listings, and census information provide a rough time frame of 1900 through the teens. Information about the family is very sketchy.



References and Notes

1. U.S. Census (1890, 1900, 1910) notes the following children were born to John D., Sr. and Priscilla Gill: Robert A., born in 1859, Annie E., born in 1862, John D., Jr., born in 1870, Emma B., born in 1876 and Edith P.
2. 1890 U.S. Census listings.
3. 1900 U.S. Census listings.
4. 1910 U.S. Census listings.
5. Souvenir History of Philipsburg, 1909, Grit Publishing Co.
6. 1912 Philipsburg Directory.



*JOHN D. GILL'S SONS
stamping.*