

Leak-Proof Miners' Wick Lamp

Dave Johnson

This odd looking lamp has several unique features. Made of brass, the entire lamp is nickel-plated. Two features allow the lamp to be carried in one's pocket. First, there is a brass cap that fits tightly over the end of the spout to prevent the spillage of fuel. Second, the unique cap, which fits down over the majority of the font is threaded with a gasket at the top to form a tight seal. There is a serrated grip at the lower edge of the cap to screw the cap over the font. This arrangement contains the wick tube which itself has a unique shape. What appears to be the wick tube rising from the lower part of the font is actually a font brace. It is designed to simulate the appearance of a miners' oil wick tube. The actual wick tube in this case is the S-shaped tube that runs from the top of the lamp.

Jim Van Fleet has seen lamps very similar to this, but without the false spout or the hook. The lamps Jim had seen appeared to be alcohol lamps. For some time we held back this article in consideration that the lamp shown here may have been a modified alcohol lamp.

I have now located the patent (see illustration on right) for the lamp confirming it to be a bona fide miners' oil wick. It was patented by John Williams, of Sherodsville, Ohio on April 11, 1899. Another example of this lamp is in Tony Moon's collection. A lamp of this construction would have been expensive relative to the standard tin spout lamps. Perhaps this accounts for its scarcity today.



622,742. MINER'S LAMP. JOHN D. WILLIAMS, Sherodsville, Ohio. Filed Mar. 15, 1898. Serial No. 673,894. (No model)

