

Unique Oil Wick Lamps

Dave Johnson

Most collectors have seen a one-of-a-kind candlestick made by a craftsman for himself or as a presentation piece. Even rarer are the one-of-a-kind oil wicks. The two specimens shown here are two of the finest examples I have ever seen.

The first example is brass and measures 3 3/8" to the top of the handle on the cap. The cap handle, seldom seen on oil wicks, is an extension of the cap hinge. The cap is one-piece, with the number 916 stamped in front of the handle. The hook is exceptionally heavy, held in place by a contoured diamond-shaped overleaf, on which the initials W.F. appear.

The font is flared, with a small hole at the base of the neck which holds a wick-pick attached by a chain to a piece between the font and the spout. The font is 2 7/8" in diameter at the base and 1 1/8" at the top of the neck.

The spout is 3" in length and 3/4" in diameter at its end. A rarely seen accessory on the spout is the cap which is connected by a chain to the piece between the spout and font. Crossed hammers on the end cap suggest a European influence. Like

presentation candlesticks, I don't believe that this oil wick was ever meant to be used underground.

The second example of the lamp maker's craft is also brass, standing 3 3/4" tall to the top of the cap. The font is 1 1/2" in diameter at its base and 1 3/16" at the top of the neck. The spout is 4 3/8" in length and 3/4" in diameter at its end. There is a small decorative inverted tear drop shaped shield on the spout. The hook has an unusual configuration, being attached to the font at only the lower 1 1/8" of its 4" overall height. This configuration gives the lamp very poor forward balance, but adds to its uniqueness.

It has been my experience that at least five unique candlesticks exist for every unique oil wick in collections. Have other collectors had similar or different experiences?

