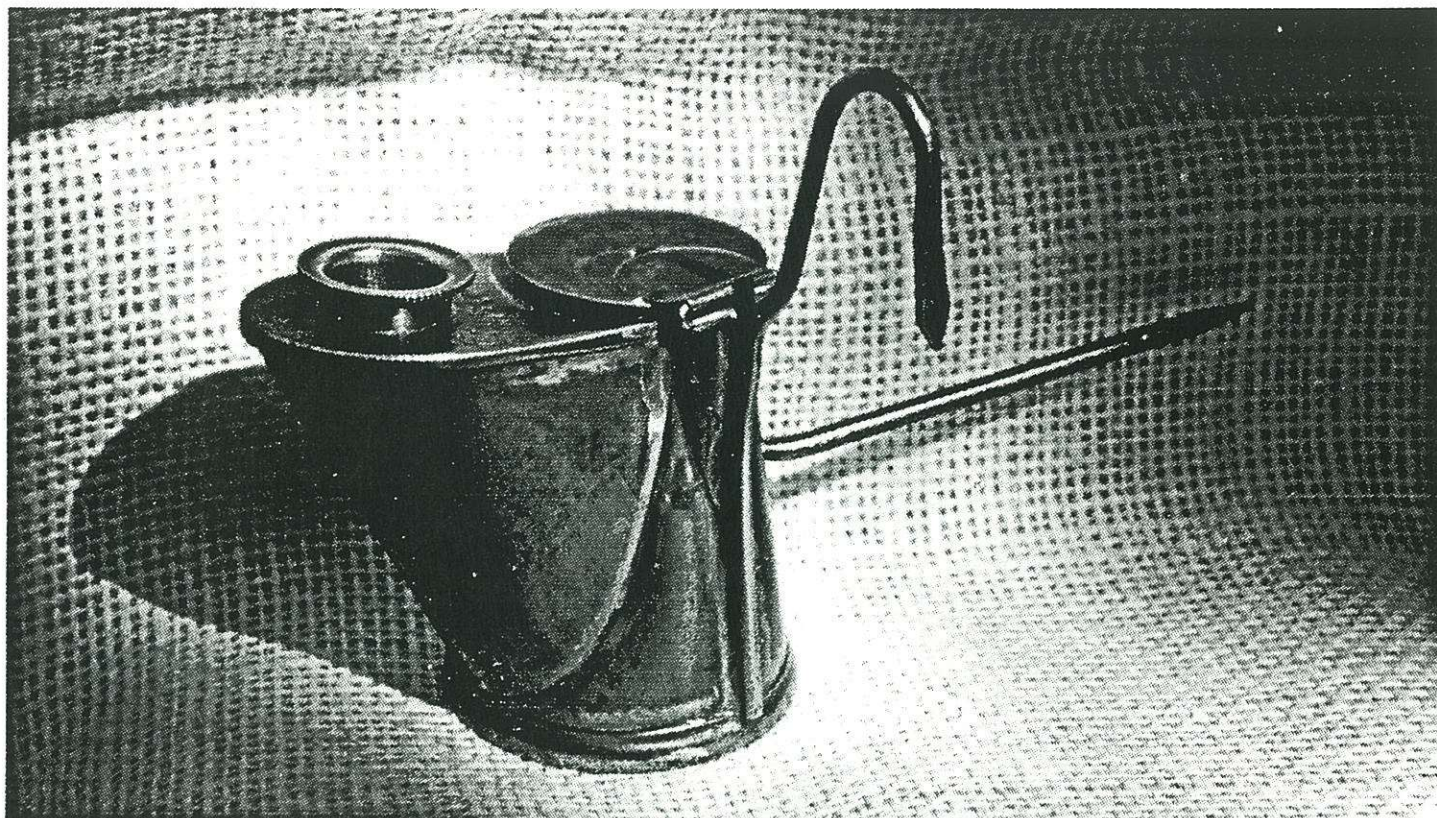


Vacuum Oil Co.

Dave Johnson



Vacuum Oil Co. cap lamp.

The Vacuum Oil Co. was incorporated in 1866, under the laws of New York. The firm was acquired by Standard Oil of New Jersey in 1879 and operated as a subsidiary under its own brandname producing specialty lubricants made from purchased crude oil until the U.S. Supreme Court ordered dissolution of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust on May 15, 1911. Following the dissolution of the parent firm of Standard Oil of New Jersey into the smaller state-named (New Jersey, New York, California, etc.) Standard Oil Companies, Standard Oil discontinued the distribution of Vacuum Oils and began producing its own brandname lubricants (Superla, Stanolind and Stanolex).

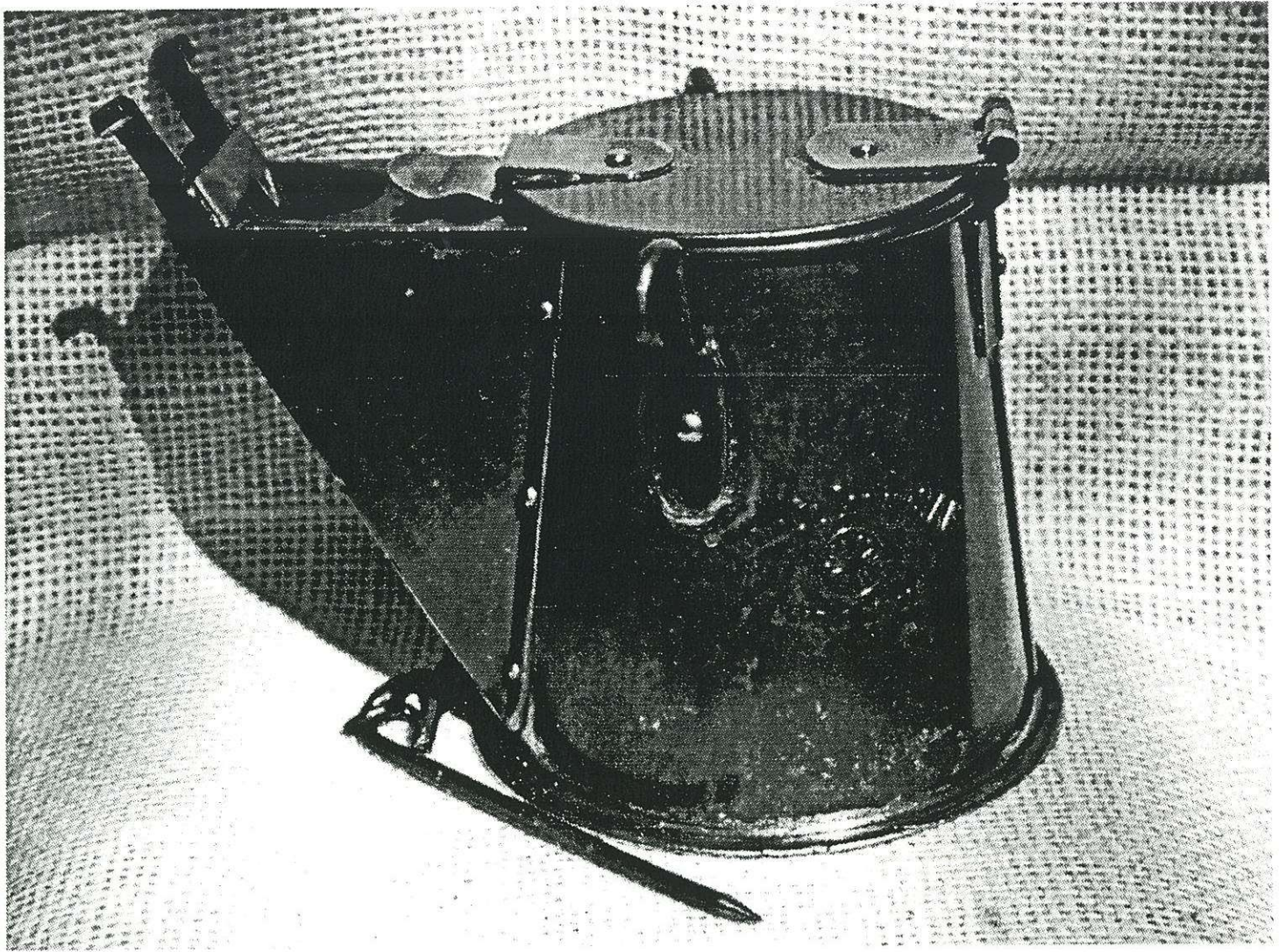
Vacuum Oil controlled many supply sources of oil by this time and in 1912 Standard Oil of New Jersey and Vacuum Oil Co. joined for a venture in the East Indies and South Sumatra. This joint venture operated as De Nederlandsche Koloniale Petroleum, headquartered in Rotterdam.

In 1930 Vacuum Oil purchased the Lubrite Corp. of St. Louis, White Refining Co. of Detroit and Wadhams Oil Corp. of Milwaukee.

In 1931 Standard Oil of New York (SOCONY) merged with Vacuum Oil to form SOCONY - Vacuum. Standard Oil of New Jersey and SOCONY - Vacuum merged their Far Eastern and African affiliates in

1933 to form the standard-Vacuum Oil Co. This was followed by SOCONY - Vacuum changing the name of its U.S. operation to SOCONY-Mobile and later to just Mobile Oil Co.

At least two distinct oilwick lamps were produced with the Vacuum Oil Co. name. Both lamps are very unusual and stand out from other oilwicks. The first is a cap model incorporating four features seen on no other oilwick lamps in their entirety. There is a permanently attached 5" spike soldered to the side of the font which protrudes 3 1/4" opposite and parallel to the spout. This spike could be used to secure the lamp to a mine timber while the miner



Large Vacuum Oil Co. oil wick lamp.

worked. The hook is unique in that it is of round stock until the last 1/2" at which point it is flattened to a small spade shape. The spout is not the usual long tube but rather serves as an additional oil reservoir without increasing the size of the font. The fourth feature is the threaded brass ring that screws into the end of the font. The lamp is 2 1/2" tall to the top of the cap. The base is 1 13/16" in diameter. VACUUM OIL CO. is stamped in larger than usual letters on the front of the large font.

The second lamp is a larger oilwick with a bail and hanging hook. The

spout is squared off and has a copper lined oblong opening to accommodate a flat wick. A copper strip with rolled ends is on each side of the wick opening and serve as heat conductors to the fuel in the font. The spout is soldered as well as being held in place by 6 copper rivets. The font and spout are tin with a brass hinge and latch on the cap. The lamp holds about one pint of fuel. There is a steel wickpick on a chain that hangs off one side of the lamp.

The font is 3 11/16" and 3 3/4" in diameter. The spout is 1 5/16" across the front. The cap is 2 3/4" in diam-

eter. The embossed lettering on the font reads VACUUM OIL CO. S.A.F. MODELE DEPOSE.

These are both extremely rare oilwicks. This author is aware of only 3 examples of each type that exist in private collections..

Sources:

Pool's Manual of Industrials and Public Utilities, 1912.

A Short History of Standard Oil of New Jersey, 1950.