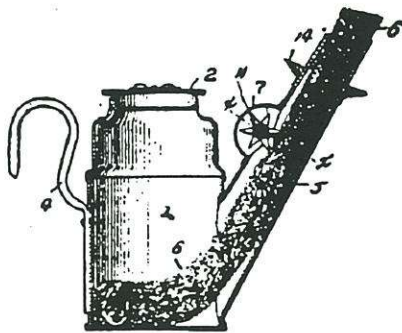


Zicha Mechanical Oil Wick Lamp

Dave Johnson

Many unique mine lamps have been patented, but few of the truly unique ones have actually been manufactured. There are dozens and dozens of patents for safety lamps, carbide lamps, oil wick lamps and candlesticks that were never produced. One truly unique patent that was produced was number 829,824 granted to Rudolf Zicha of Cleveland, Ohio on August 28, 1906.

829,824. MINER'S LAMP. RUDOLF ZICHA, Cleveland Ohio. Filed Apr. 2, 1906. Serial No. 309,573.



This lamp's most unique feature is a mechanical wick raiser that consists of a brass knurled knob connected by a shaft to two brass five pointed "wick engaging wheels" housed in a semi-circular housing mounted on the top of the wick tube. This housing allows the pointed wheels to sit approximately half way into the diameter of the wick tube to engage the wick. Guess what? It really works!

There are four other unusual features on this lamp, all of which appear in the patent drawing. First, the top portion of the hinge that is usually just a short tab soldered to the top of the cap extends all the way across the cap where it is rolled under and forms an extended cap lip to facilitate the opening of the cap. This piece is riveted in two places as well as being soldered in place. The hinge tab that attaches to the font is also riveted and soldered.

Second, the cap hook is soldered and held in place by two rivets, just like the early model Dunlap oil wick (the later model Dunlap has 3 rivets). Third and fourth, the end of the wick tube is flared out just above a drip ring that is $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the end of the wick tube.

The lamp measures $2\frac{1}{16}$ " high to the top of the cap. The spout is $3\frac{5}{8}$ " long. The diameter of the font base is $1\frac{9}{16}$ ". Overall the lamp is well constructed and is quite functional.

Another oddity of the lamp is the stamping that appears on the bottom of the spout. According to the patent document the lamp was patented by Rudolf Zicha. However, the name stamped on the lamp is clearly R. Jicha. A search of the Cleveland City Directory found no Rudolf Zicha or Rudolf Jicha; but the surnames Zicha and Jicha both appear in the 1905, 1906 and 1907 Directories with other first names. So who was Rudolf Zicha or Jicha, which name is correct, the one on the patent or the one on the lamp?

PAT. AUG 28, 06
R. JICHA
CLEVELAND, O.

