

THE V. L. OIL LAMP - AN UPDATE

by **Tony Moon**
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Since the initial information on the V. L. lamp (Steinberg, J., "Notes on the V. L. Lamp," MAC Issue No. 1, Fall 1988) was published, one distinctly different style of V. L. lamp has been found, one minor variation of the lamp sketched in the original article has been identified, and a total of three patents have been traced.

Two different styles of V. L. lamps were manufactured and are shown in Figure 1. The lamp on the left is very similar to the one sketched by Jim, but the lamp in the photograph follows the 1914 patent more closely. The differences are in the hinge construction. (There are no spot welds and the bottom part of the hinge is comprised of a bent piece of the lamp body.) The hook fastening (spot welding is not used and the hook is attached with a plate or brace which is riveted to the lamp body), the hoop or hinged heater attachment is not by rivets, and finally the words "PAT PENDG." are not present on the lid. The lamp on the right works using a principle similar to the others but its construction is very different. The lamp has two fixed tin discs at the end of the spout which allow the flame to heat a single copper strip.

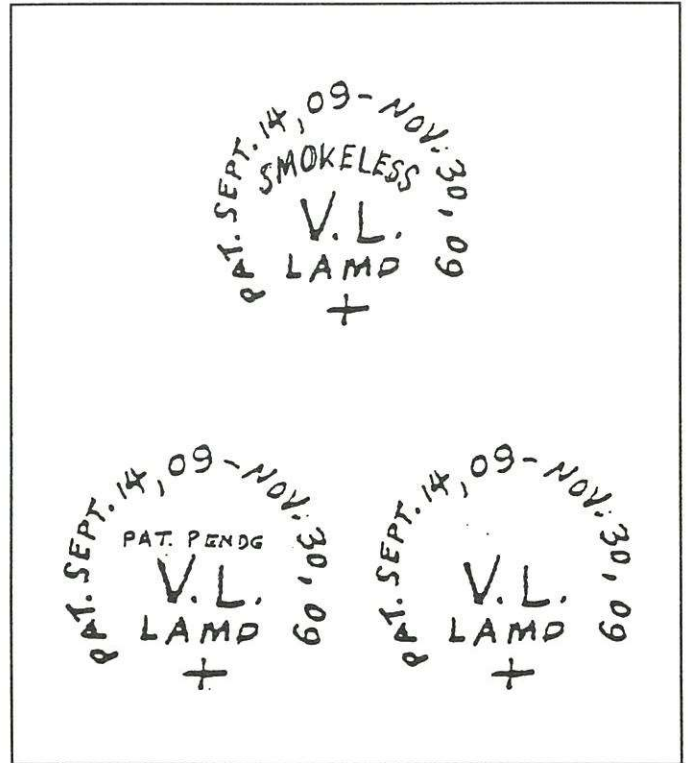


Figure 2. The different V. L. lid markings.



Figure 1. The two distinctly different styles of V. L. lamp. (Tony Moon collection)

Miner's Sunshine

*Brightest and Cleanest
Light a Miner Can Use*

The strip is in contact with the discs and goes down the inside of the spout and across the base thus heating and melting the sunshine fuel. The wick is split at the top of the spout and divides on either side of the discs. This design is somewhat impractical as the discs make it very difficult, if not impossible, to raise the wick. The lamp is of conventional, unpainted (not Japanned) tin construction. The lid has the word "SMOKELESS" added to the other markings. The various lid markings are shown in Figure 2.

The lid markings indicate that there are two patents for the lamp. A third patent, which illustrates one of the lamps actually manufactured, has also been found. The patents were granted to either (or both) Adletia Mae Van Liew or John Van Liew (the surname is presumably the origin for the V. L. name) who resided in Houghton, Michigan, in 1909, and by 1914 were residing in Chicago. The patent dates and numbers are as follows and the more important patent illustrations are shown in Figures 3, 4, and 5.

Application Date	Patent Date	Patent Number
Dec. 2, 1908	Sept. 14, 1909	934,243
Mar. 31, 1909	Nov. 30, 1909	941,897
Apr. 23, 1912	Mar. 17, 1914	1,090,250

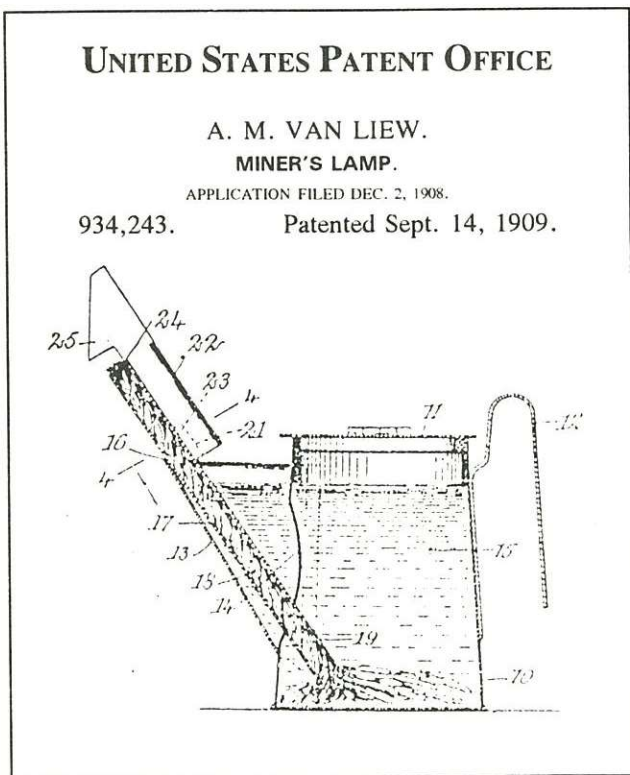


Figure 3. The September 14, 1909, patent drawing for patent No. 934,243.

As pointed out in Jim's article, the V. L. lamp was of late vintage for an oil wick lamp. The 1914 date of the third patent and advertising which has been found dating as late as 1914, indicate that it was one of the last oil wicks trying vainly to complete with the carbide lamp.

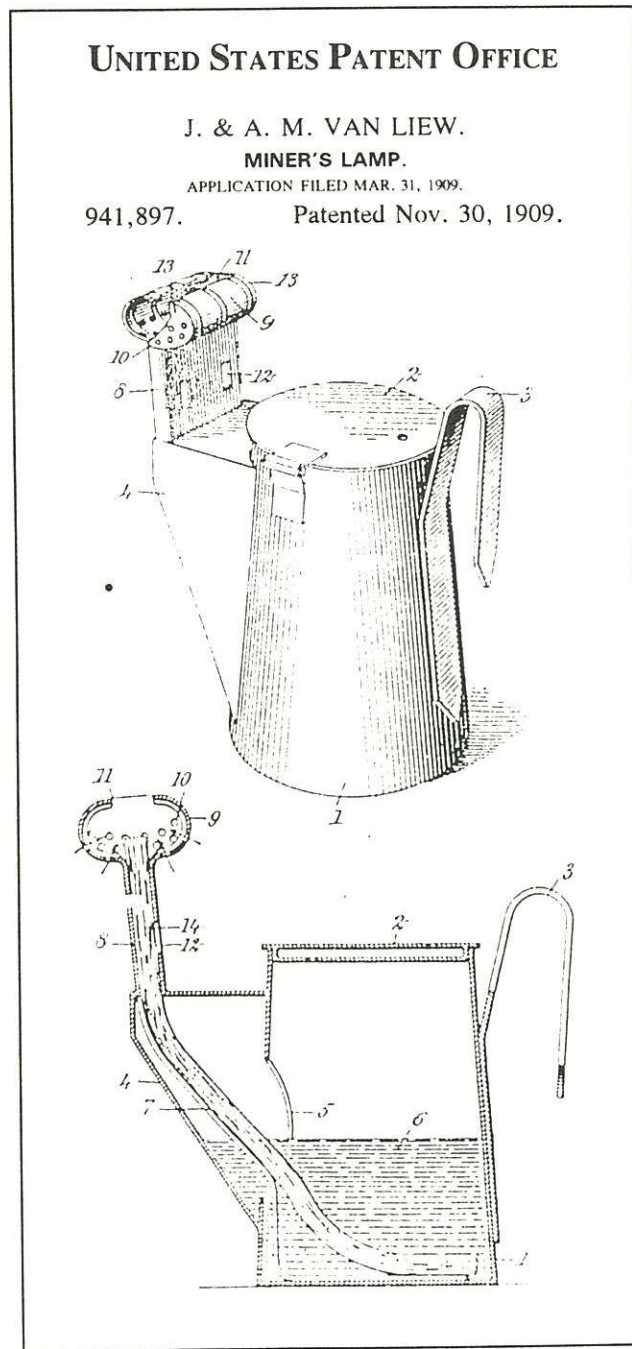


Figure 4. The patent drawings for patent No. 941,897, dated November 30, 1909.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

J. VAN LIEW.
MINER'S LAMP.

APPLICATION FILED APR. 23, 1912.

1,090,250.

Patented Mar. 17, 1914.

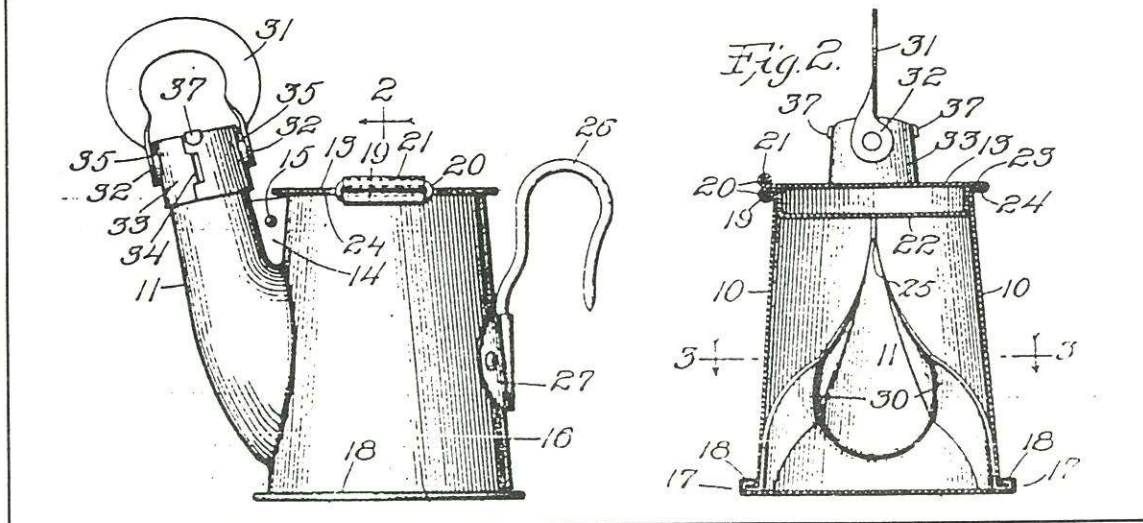
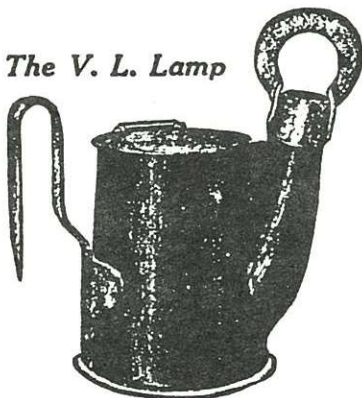


Figure 5. The patent drawings for patent No. 1,090,250, dated March 17, 1914.

The V. L. Lamp



Sectional View, Showing Heater

Miner's Sunshine

Brightest and Cleanest Light a Miner Can Use

Office of
STATE INSPECTOR OF MINES
Room 110 State House
INDIANAPOLIS

STANDARD OIL COMPANY:

Gentlemen:—Some two years ago I gave you a recommendation on Miner's Sunshine, stating at that time I had always advocated its use in our mines and that my reason for this was it produced better light and comparatively no smoke at all.

I am pleased to state that my views regarding this product are the same today, if not even stronger than they were at the time I gave you the recommendation referred to and, furthermore, in making our rounds of inspection I find practically every mine of any consequence using Miner's Sunshine.

It is my desire and I should like very much to see the time when Miner's Sunshine takes the place of oil entirely in the mines.

You may rest assured that not only myself, but my deputies (who agree with me that Sunshine is better than oil) will take pleasure in recommending its use, fully believing that in so doing we are aiding a good cause.

Yours very respectfully,

(Signed) JAMES EPPERSON,

Inspector of Mines.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY

(AN INDIANA CORPORATION)