

A PATENTED OIL WICK REFLECTOR

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On June 1st, 1909, Zachariah Hough and Leslie Weaver of Banning, Pennsylvania, were granted patent number 923,655 for a reflector that attached to the lid of an oil wick lamp. The primary objective was to provide a movable reflector which would help (or not interfere) when the lamp was being filled with oil (I doubt this was much of an improvement as most reflectors would not interfere when a lamp was filled). The second objective was to allow the miner to observe the interior of the lamp as it was being filled. This sounds a little more effective as all conventional reflectors would cast a shadow over the lamp lid area and one would have to fill the lamp by feel. The patent drawing for this improved reflector is shown in Figure 1.

Two examples of this reflector are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Both reflectors are marked "PAT JUNE 1ST 1909" and the reflector on the Grier lamp has the additional marking "WEAVER & HOUGH, BANNING PA." The larger reflector on the Grier has a bracing system similar to the patent drawing with the brace assembly soldered to the lid. It is certainly possible that the reflector was added after the lamp left the factory, but somehow I doubt it. The brace on the Hardsocg lamp is an integral part of the lid with double "U" raised reinforcing with the reflector.

Patented June 1, 1909.

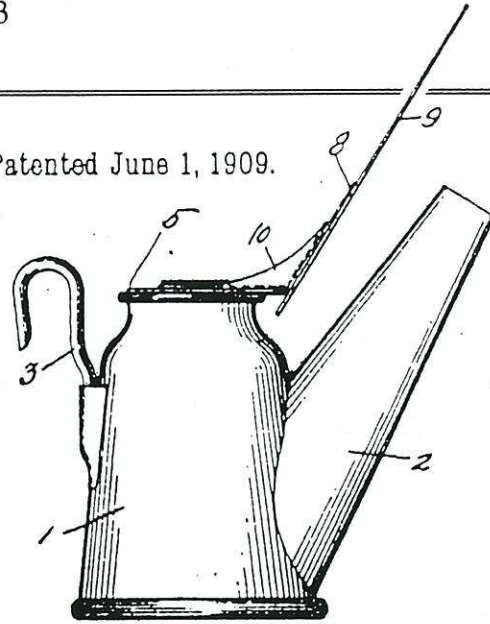


Figure 1. The patent drawing for an improved reflector by Zachariah Hough and Leslie Weaver.

I have seen only one other example of this reflector and it was on a Grier identical to the one in my collection. I would be very interested in hearing about other examples, especially if they are on other brands of oil wicks.

Many thanks to Henry Pohns for tracing the patent number for me.

Figure 2. Left: Brass and tin drivers lamp marked on the spout with Grier star marking in shield; single spout with drip ring. Right: Tin face lamp marked on the side with Imperial, Hardsocg marking in shield; double spout. (Both lamps from the author's collection)

