

## Anton Oil Wick Lamps

by Bill Spence

The Antons of Monongahela, Pennsylvania were the premier wick lamp makers in the United States. Around 1874 brothers George, John, and Christopher each set up a workshop to manufacture wick lamps for local coal miners. Subsequently George and John combined their operations, marketing their lamps worldwide under the George Anton name. The STAR brand lamp, first sold in 1898, was undoubtedly the best selling mine lamp of its time, owing probably to its quality construction and attractive logo. The STAR brand is the single most commonly found wick lamp today. In 1905 George Anton withdrew from active participation in the business, and the firm's name changed to J. Anton & Son. That son's name was George T. Anton, and after his father's retirement the company name changed again to Geo. T. Anton & Bros. Although the two younger brothers tried to make the conversion to carbide lamps, the business could not survive the demise of the wick lamps, and it closed in 1918.



Fig. 1, Star Reflector Drivers' Lamp

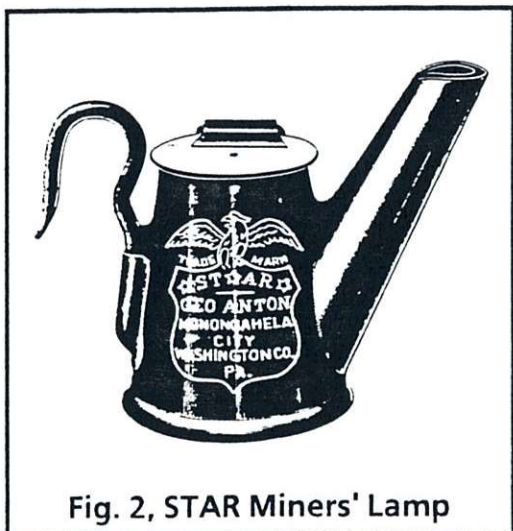


Fig. 2, STAR Miners' Lamp

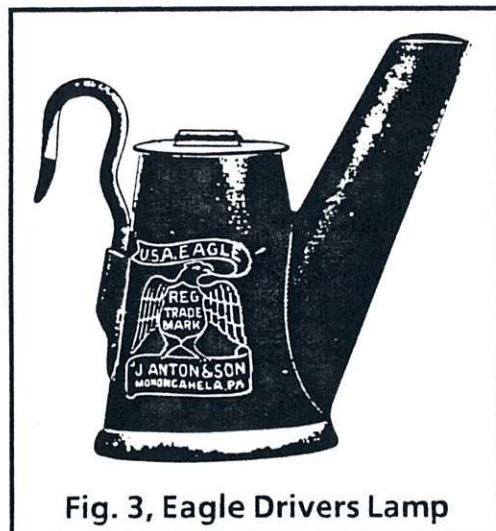


Fig. 3, Eagle Drivers Lamp



As common as the Anton oil lamps are, they are very much sought after for their attractive stampings. There are also a number of varieties that are quite unique and rare.

The most common types of Anton oil wick lamp found today are the face and drivers lamps illustrated in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. A fair number of brass Antons were manufactured and they seem to be most commonly found in the "dome" style (Fig. 6), but with the Eagle logo stamped on the front of the spout. The Globe logo (Fig. 4) tends to be somewhat more rare and will more likely be found in the drivers size.

Any unique feature on an oil lamp makes it much more desirable. The screw top lid (Fig. 5) is a very rare feature on Anton oil wick lamps.

Antons with reflectors (Fig. 1) are very rare as are any oil lamps with reflectors. The rarity is likely due to the extra cost and the substantial added weight making it cumbersome in the low workings of a coal mine.

There are a number of other varieties of stampings and styles of Anton oil wick lamps that are not covered in this article, including the magnificent Statue of Liberty lamp that will be featured in a separate article in the near future.

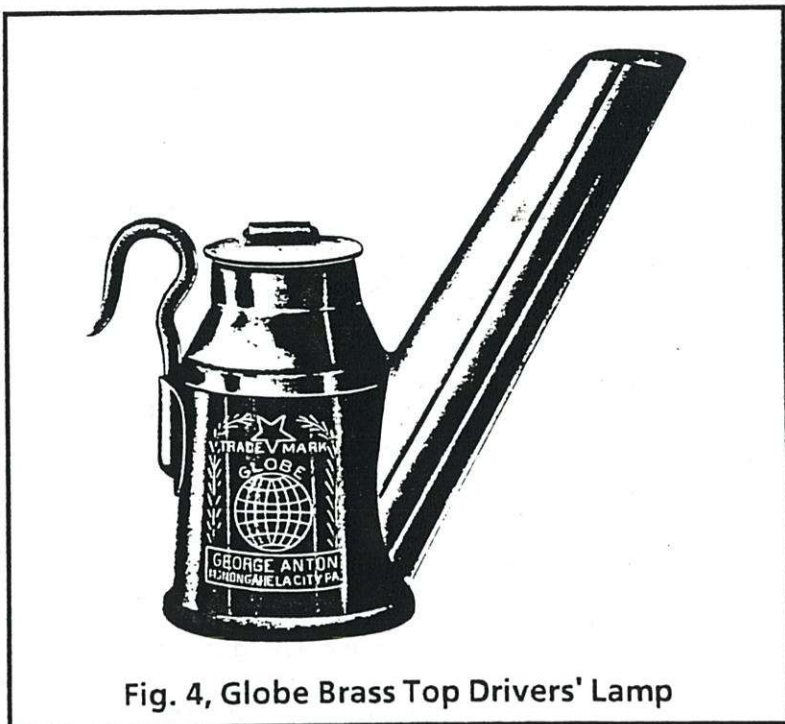


Fig. 4, Globe Brass Top Drivers' Lamp

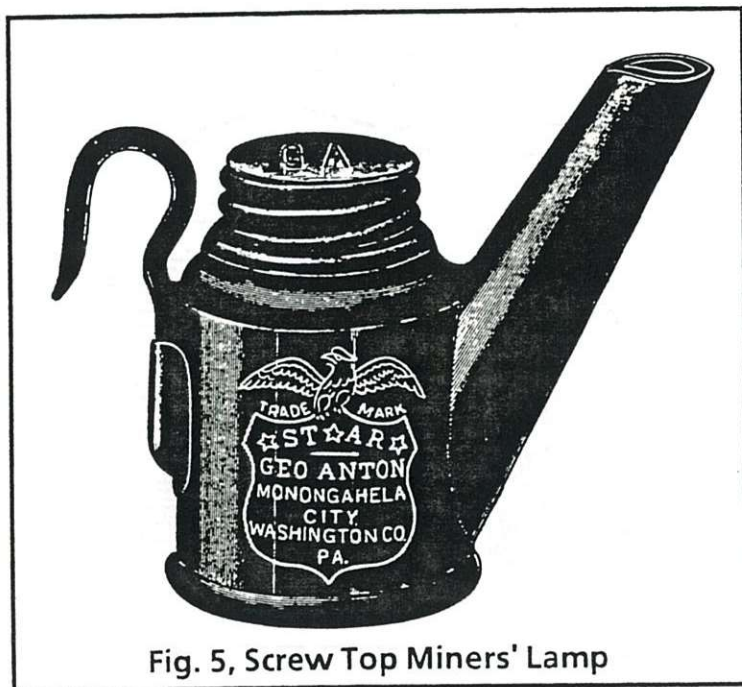


Fig. 5, Screw Top Miners' Lamp

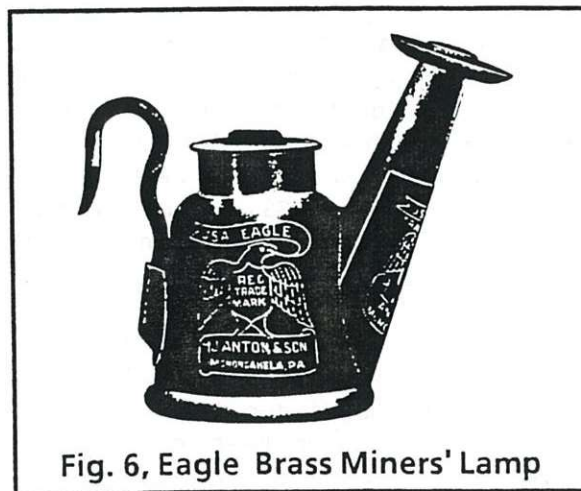


Fig. 6, Eagle Brass Miners' Lamp

Reference: Catalogue of the Star, Globe, and Eagle Miner's and Drivers' Lamps. Reprint of original catalog by Bill Spence, 1987.