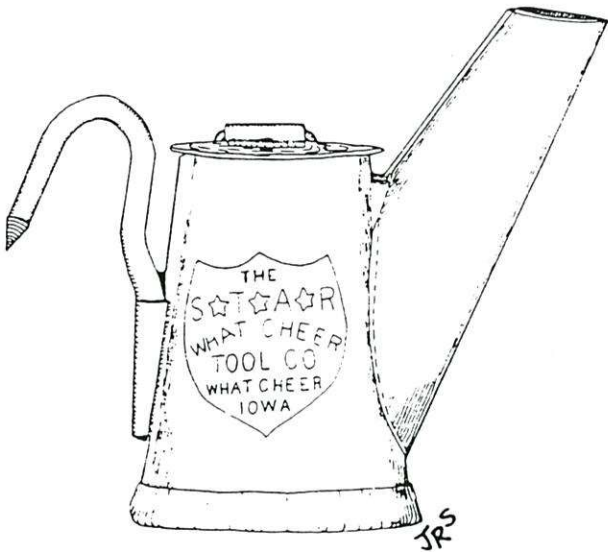


Oil and Sunshine Lamp Products of the What Cheer Tool Company

by Jim Steinberg

The What Cheer Tool Company of What Cheer, Iowa, distributed a variety of products for use by miners. Among them are axes, picks, and the very rare and desirable What Cheer carbide cap lamp. Less difficult to find but none the less desirable in a miner's wick lamp collection are the face and driver's lamps sold by What Cheer. At least one What Cheer oil lamp has been seen that has the Grier Bros. logo on the spout. Since The What Cheer Tool Company was primarily a distributor and not a manufacturer, it is likely that their oil lamps were made by Grier Bros. and other manufacturers.

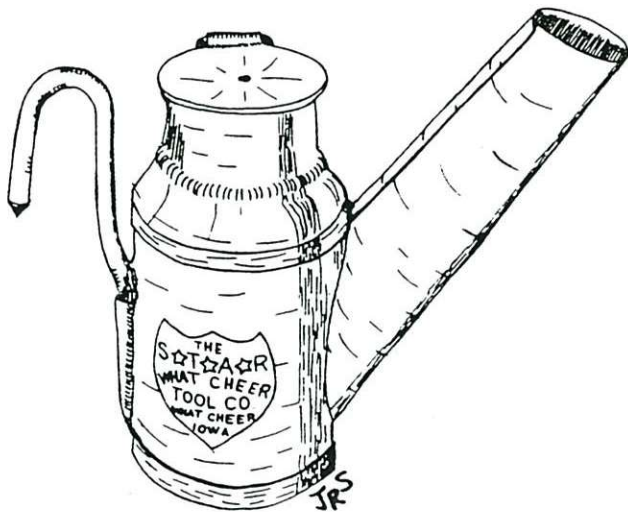


The lamp to the left is a miner's Sunshine face lamp as evidenced by the double spout. The lamp is made of tin and stands 2.8 inches tall at the top of the spout. From the collection of Jerry Spintig.

The lamp to the right is an oil lamp, visible in the single layer spout. Notice the drip collar on this face lamp. This lamp is made of tin and brass, with the brass comprising the main body and lower spout. The cap, the bottom, and the upper portion of the spout are tin. Standing 3.1 inches tall, this lamp is from the Jim Steinberg collection.



This somewhat larger lamp, measuring 3.5 inches tall, is a driver's lamp. The most striking feature of this What Cheer oil lamp is its solid copper construction. (Note: When considering a lamp to be copper, be sure to test with a magnet to determine if the lamp is solid copper or merely copper-plated steel). This lamp is in the Len Gaska collection.



The What Cheer Tool Company also distributed a miner's lamp oil canteen. Prominently displayed on the front of the canteen is the label in white lettering on a red background. Careful examination of the label will reveal that it has been applied over raised logo lettering of the words: "DIAMOND TRADE MARK" all enclosed within a diamond. On the reverse of the What Cheer oil canteen is a belt loop which is swivelled. This is a clever feature intended as a convenience to the miner. Just unscrew the cap and rotate the canteen to fill any oil cap lamp. The What Cheer oil canteen is 4.5 inches in diameter and 1.6 inches deep. Most known examples appear to have some numbers penned onto the paper label. From the Ted Bobrink collection.

