

MINIATURE SAFETY LAMPS

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Of special interest to many mining lamp collectors are small lamps. For some reason we seem to be attracted to a lamp or other collectable that is small and elegant instead of large and bulky. A great example of this is the miniature or "pocket" safety lamp. My first exposure to the *pocket* safety lamp was from a Hughes Brothers advertisement in the 1922 Keystone Catalog. In this book Hughes Brothers of Scranton, Pennsylvania, has a photograph showing a row of the different types of safety lamps they manufactured. On each end of the row of lamps is an extra small safety lamp, one Davy and one Clanny.

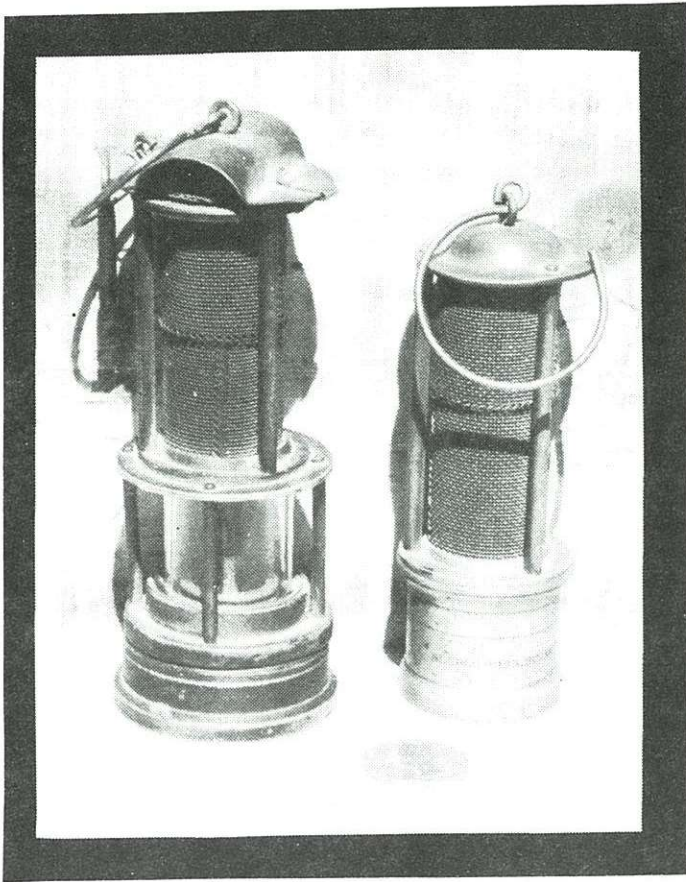


Figure 1. A photograph of a miniature Clanny (left) and Davy (right) Safety Lamp. Note the quarter in the foreground as a size comparison.

One nagging question of these lamps is: Were they a real working lamp or a salesman's sample? Many believe these lamps to be salesman's samples, just for display, primarily because their size would not allow for much time for the lamp to burn. I personally believe these lamps were manufactured to be used, generally by mine officials or inspectors. My reasons for this belief include:

1) **Quality of Workmanship.** These lamps, marked "Hughes Bros.," are too well made to be a salesman sample. Some of the details that would not go into a salesman sample include:

- The gauze has the proper hole opening and is laced.
- Both the Davy and Clanny have a wick pick that is usable.
- Davy has a screw in ring to support the gauze.
- Clanny has a screw in ring to support glass.
- Clanny has a working lock.
- Wick holder is kept in place with screw in ring.
- Lamps are made with a good quality brass.

Clearly if these were salesman's samples they would be relatively expensive to produce.

2) **Pocket Lamps Mentioned in Literature.** There are many references to a "pocket Davy" in textbooks on mining. Quoting the International Library of Technology from a description of Davy lamps in general: "A similar form of lamp, in which the height of the chimney is reduced to about 3 1/2 or 4 inches, is known as the *pocket Davy*, and when not in use is frequently carried in the pocket by the fire boss." The Hughes Brothers Davy has a chimney height just under 3 1/4 inches. Although this is slightly less than the literature states, it illustrates how the small lamps could be used. At the end of this article is a bibliography of references that mention the *pocket Davy*.

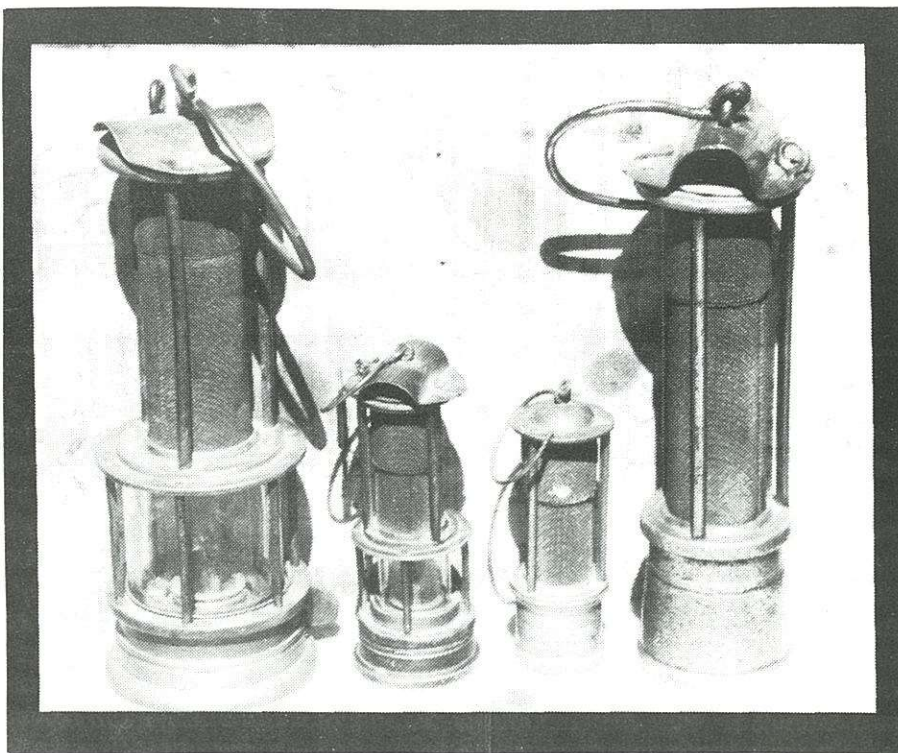


Figure 2. A photograph of the two styles of miniature safety lamps (Clanny on the left and Davy on the right) next to their standard size counter-parts.

HUGHES BROS.
 Manufacturers of
 Safety and Acetylene
MINE LAMPS
 Supplies of All Kinds
 424 No. Main Ave., Scranton, Pa.

Figure 3. Shown below is a close-up view of the stamping found on the Davy Pocket Safety Lamp manufactured by the Hughes Brothers of Scranton, Pennsylvania.



3) Evidence of Use. One of my two pocket Clanny lamps (which is pictured) has obviously been used. Evidence of this use includes:

- This lamp has been filled with the greenish whale or sperm oil that is found in many old lamps.
- The original owner scratched his name, "GRIFFITHS" in the font as if he wanted to be able to identify it if lost.
- The gauze is black with the carbon of being fired.
- The lamp does not have the original glass.

Although the lamp has obviously been used, it is still in very good shape which could indicate use by an inspector or mining official.

To summarize, Hughes Brothers made a version of their Davy and Clanny lamps in a small version that I choose to call a *pocket* safety lamp. Evidence for this lamp being used in the mines include quality of workmanship, references in literature, and signs that lamps had actually been used. If any of you have additional information on these interesting lamps, please let me know. My address and telephone are; Brad Ross, 913 Clarion, Gillette, WY 82716 (307-686-7070).

Bibliography

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