

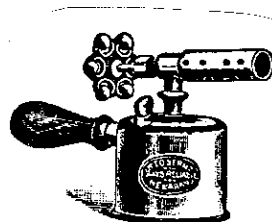
THE TORCH

WELCOME TORCH COLLECTORS!

My name is Ron Carr, a blow torch collector from Issaquah WA and this is my first attempt at a newsletter. I've spent a considerable amount of time communicating with a number of you and I thought that this would be an easier and more informative method. Hopefully, this newsletter will provide information to all of you torch collectors as well as circulating information regarding torches, torch related items, collections, emperma, and anything else we care to share or talk about. With the hundreds of different and unique torch styles and types that have been manufactured, each of us probably owns something unique or unusual that can be shared. I encourage each of you to write or call me with information regarding your collection or an unusual torch and I will be glad to include it in the next newsletter.

I'll start the show off with some information about myself and my torch collection. I started collecting torches around 1987 when I was living in Southern California. My wife and I were in a antique shop browsing one Saturday afternoon on one of those cold rainy days that, according to the Beach Boys, never happens in Southern California. I remember picking up a tarnished and dirty brass blow torch and remarking to my wife how great it would look if it were all polished up. I was impressed with the quality of the materials that were used to manufacture the torch and could only imagine the amount of labor involved in the machining and assembly process. I have always felt that many of the turn-of-the-century products were well made and designed to last forever. I purchased the torch for a modest sum and took it home.

The torch gathered dust in my garage for quite some time before the next rain storm when I was bored and looking for something to do. I resurrected it from the storage area and proceeded to completely disassemble the dirt caked and corroded parts. I lightly wire brushed each part to



OTTO BERNZ #8 BABY TORCH
as pictured in the circa 1910 Otto Bernz catalog. I would be interested to know if anyone has this model.

clean off the years of corrosion and then polished each piece with a 3 inch buffing wheel attached to my electric drill. I had not yet invested in a heavy duty buffer and had to improvise with my drill. Needless to say, the final product was not perfect, however, the torch did look 1000% better than when I started.

Over the next few months while browsing through various antique shops I noticed more torches and I remember thinking about the many different ways that there could be in designing and manufacturing blow torches. again, I was impressed with the quality and workmanship as well as intrigued with the uniqueness of the designs. I believe that is when I became "hooked on torches" and took the challenge to acquire the more unusual and unique torches as well as learn more about their history.

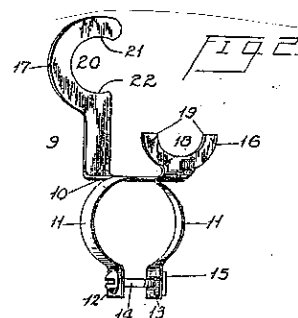
My torch collection currently stands at approximately 170 torches and includes mostly quart sizes, 22 pint size, one gallon size, 10 auto torches, 12 foreign from various countries, and numerous sized alcohol and other unusual shaped torches. I have very few duplicates and prefer the older turn-of-the-century torches and tend to ignore the newer

bakelite handle models. That's not to say that I do not collect the 1950-1960's models as my favorites include the oval red steel model made by the Unique Mfg. Co. and the 75th anniversary Otto Bernz model with a tapered aluminum fuel tank and red Bakelite handles. I have cleaned and polished approximately 90 torches and have them displayed on shelves in my den. They all look quite impressive considering the condition each was in prior to the process. ...

DID YOU KNOW THAT.....

Otto Bernz, the founder of the Otto Bernz Co. of Newark NJ, holds the US patent for the adjustable soldering iron rest?

O. Bernz filed his patent on January 3, 1910 and was awarded patent number 955,313 on April 19, 1910 for his invention. The device was stamped out from a single piece of sheet steel and was formed and shaped to fit the contour of the burner head and fastened at the bottom with a simple machined screw and nut. The new soldering iron rest solved two problems, eliminating the costly integral cast soldering iron "hook" and making it possible to adjust the iron rest for various tight situations. The device is listed in the O. Bernz plumbers tool catalog circa 1910 for 20 cents....

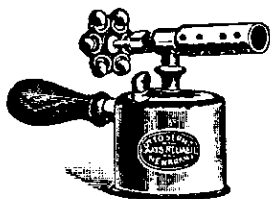


INVENTOR
Otto Bernz
BY
Russell M. Edwards,
ATTORNEY.

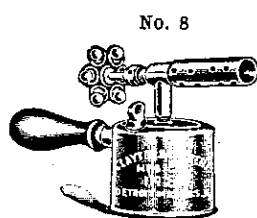
THE TORCH

There appears to have been a lot of design copying on the part of the various torch manufacturers considering that there are so many identical and similar models. A good example is the 1/2 pint gasoline torch manufactured by Clayton & Lambert, Otto Bernz, P. Wall Co., and others not identified. The construction is all too similar not to have been copied. Each is constructed of a cast brass tank and has a threaded base that is soldered or brazed in place to withstand great pressure. The fuel tank has a drip cup cast into the top of the tank as well as a small filler plug. It must have been difficult and time consuming to fill these torches with fuel considering the size of the opening and the capacity of the tank. Also, none of the models shown have a pump and rely on the built up heat to generate pressure for operation.

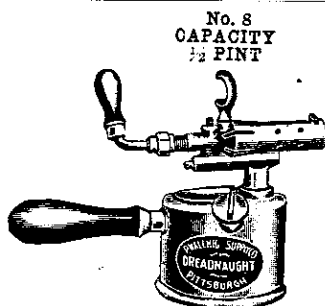
The real surprise is that each of the three manufacturers use the same model number, no. 8, to identify their respective torch.



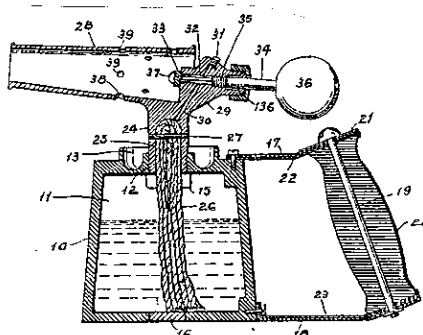
The Otto Bernz no. 8 Baby Torch↑ is advertised as having an adjustable handle so that the torch can be held in any position, however, from the catalog photo it is difficult to see how that could be accomplished. I suspect that there could be another threaded area on the side of the tank where the handle could be relocated. As I indicated in the caption on the front page, I would like to hear from anyone that has one of these "Babies" in their collection. I believe that they are somewhat rare considering that they do not show up in catalogs much past the 1920's. I also have not seen this type of torch in any of the photos that many of you collectors have sent to me.



The Clayton & Lambert No. 8↑ as pictured in a Pettingell - Andrews Co., Boston, MA electrical merchandise catalog # 14 dated 1910. The C & L no. 8 appears identical to the Otto Bernz Baby no. 8 according to the photos.



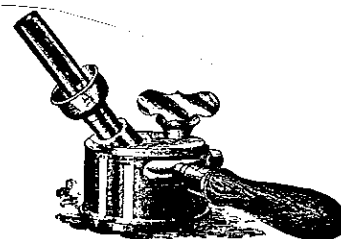
The P. Wall Mfg Co. no. 8↑ as pictured in the Beals & Co., Buffalo, NY tools and supplies catalog #6 dated 1913. While there are a number of similarities in design, the P. Wall torch offers the soldering iron hook as well as two threaded access holes for clean out....



W. Gierth's pumpleless torch↑ is another plumber's torch that I uncovered while searching through US patents and closely resembles the above mentioned 1/2 pint torches. According to patent no. 965,136 dated July 19, 1910, W. Gierth assigned the rights of the patent to Edward E. Decker of

Elizabeth, NJ (Elizabeth is a suburb city of Newark). It appears that Edward Decker established the Decker Manufacturing Co. of Newark, NJ, a company that produced blow torches under the Decker name. With this in mind, I can only conclude that W. Gierth worked for the Decker Co. and was not a separate manufacturing company.

There is an interesting coincidence in that W. Gierth utilized the same patent attorneys, Russell M. Everett & Frances W. Blodgett, as the Otto Bernz Co., the competing blow torch manufacturer in Newark. It could be that there were very few patent attorneys in Newark at the time, however, that seems doubtful considering that it was in the year 1910 and that Newark was a sizable city.



The Vulcan Torch↑ is another favorite of mine in spite of the fact that I still do not own one. I have found very little information on its use or operation. From its appearance, I suspect that it utilized a larger fuel orifice and produced a larger lower temperature flame. The fuel tank appears lighter in weight and construction and would not take the higher gas pressures of the higher temperature torches. I have only seen Otto Bernz advertise the Vulcan torch and am not aware of any other manufacturer producing this style of blow torches. I would like to hear from any of you that own Vulcan torches, especially if you have one that was manufactured by someone other than Otto Bernz. Also, if you have any information on the operation of the torch or can confirm my suspicions on the large low temperature flame.

My fellow torch friend, **Dick Sarpolus**, from Shrewsbury, NJ owns a Vulcan torch that has a patent date of April 4, 1893, is marked "made in USA", and has no reference to the manufacturer. It appears identical to the Vulcan torch that is shown in Otto Bernz catalog circa 1910....

THE TORCH

I have compiled a list of blow torch manufacturers and brand label names that were manufactured by others. I secured the data from various sources including old technical publications and early Thomas Guide books that listed almost everything conceivable that was available in the market place. Many of the names are very familiar to most of us, however, there are quite a few manufacturers that I have never encountered before in my torch travels. Perhaps some of you can share with us information on the less common torch manufacturers. A "•" in front of each of the manufacturers indicates that I have one or more torches made by that manufacturer.

MANUFACTURERS:

- **Acorn Brass Works**
Chicago, IL
- **American Stove Co.**
St. Louis, MO
- **Ashton Mfg. Co.**
Newark, NJ
- Atlas Brass Works**
San Francisco, CA
- **Baum & Bender**
Jersey City, NJ
- Beach-Ross Co.**
New York, NY
- Best Light Co.**
Canton, OH
- Brookins Manufacturing Co.**
Dayton, OH
- **Otto Bernz Co.**
Newark, NJ
- Wm. Boekel & Co.**
Philadelphia, PA
- Bridgeport Brass Co.**
Bridgeport, CT
- **Clayton & Lambert**
Detroit, MI
- Decker Mfg. Co.**
Newark, NJ
- **Geo. W. Diener Mfg. Co.**
Chicago, IL
- **Detroit Torch & Mfg. Co.**
Detroit, MI

Emmelmann Bros. Torch Co.
Indianapolis, IN

- **Everhot Mfg. Co.**
Maywood, IL
- C. Gefroror & Son**
Philadelphia, PA
- Gemco Mfg. Co.**
Milwaukee, WI
- EP Gleason Mfg. Co.**
New York, NY
- Globe Brass Works**
Baltimore, MD
- Hauck Mfg. Co.**
Brooklyn, NY
- **Hibbard, Spencer
Bartlett & Co.**
Evanston, IL
- Hine-Watt Mfg. Co.**
Chicago, IL
- Wm. Holland Co.**
Chicago, IL
- **Huffman Mfg. Co.**
Dayton, OH
- M. L. Hull Co.**
Cleveland, OH
- JS Hull Mfg. Co.**
Baltimore, MD
- Wm. Johnson Co.**
Newark, NJ
- Mathias Klein & Sons**
Chicago, IL
- Knapp Mfg. Co.**
New York, NY
- **Lenk Mfg. Co.**
Boston, MA
- Macleod Co.**
Cincinnati, OH
- McGill Mfg. Co.**
Valparaiso, IN
- Wm. Otto Metal Goods Corp.**
Jersey city, NJ
- W. P. Pope Co.**
Brooklyn NY

Quadriga Mfg. Co.
Chicago, IL

- Chas. T. Ridgely Mfg. Co.**
Springfield, OH
- **Ridgely Trimmer Co.**
Springfield, OH
- Reserve Foundry & Mfg. Co.**
Cleveland, OH
- **Schaefer & Beyer**
Newark, NJ
- Schneider & Trenkamp
Div. of American Stove Co.**
Cleveland, OH
- Sievert Torch Co.**
Boston, MA
- Smith of New York Co.**
New York, NY
- **Turner Brass Works**
Sycamore, IL
- Union Heater Supply Co.**
Detroit MI
- Volcano Torch & Mfg. Co.**
Erie, PA
- **P. Wall Mfg. Co.**
Wall Dreadnaught Products
Grove City, PA
- Wellington Mfg. Co.**
New York, NY
- **White Mfg. Co.**
Chicago, IL

BRAND LABEL NAMES:

- Belknap**
Mfg'd by Clayton & Lambert
Bluegrass label
- **Dunlap**
Sold exclusively by the
Sears & Roebuck Co.
Mfg'd by Turner Brass Works
- **Eclipse**
Mfg'd by Clayton & Lambert

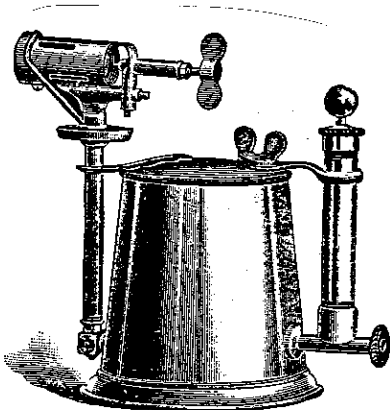
THE TORCH

BRAND LABEL NAMES CONT'D.

Goss Gas Co.

- **Hercules**
- **Merit**
- **Montgomery Wards**
Mfg'd by Otto Bernz Co.
- **National**
- **Sears & Roebuck Co.**
Mfg'd by Turner Brass Works
- **Shapleigh Hardware Co.**
Norleigh Diamond
- **Straton & turstegge**
Mfg'd by Clayton & Lambert
- **Worth**

It is difficult at best to determine who was a manufacturer and who was a brand label distributor considering all of the design copying that appears to have occurred in the torch industry. I suspect that some of the companies listed under manufacturers are actually brand label companies. I recently acquired a torch that carries the name **Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co.** from Evanston, IL. The torch is a standard quart size, wooden handle, pump in the tank and is identical to a Clayton & Lambert model that is also in my collection. But until I can disprove that Hibbard etc. is not a manufacturer, I will carry them as a manufacturer. •••



DANGLER PAINT BURNER ↑
CIRCA 1892

THE OTTO BERNZ CO.

is featured in a handsomely illustrated 1894 publication titled: **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY FROM FOUNDATION TO THE PRESENT TIME**. The book describes the commerce, resources, and major businesses that lead to the success of Newark NJ. The article includes a photo of the two buildings that housed the Otto Bernz Co., however, the quality of the photo was of very poor quality and would not reproduce for this article. The text of that article is as follows:

OTTO BERNZ CO.

A branch of industry of a most useful and important character in the city of Newark is the manufacture of plumbers' tools and mechanical specialties. In this connection we desire to refer to Mr. Otto Bernz, whose offices and factory are situated on South Thirteenth Street, and comprise two buildings, which are connected by bridges. The various departments are fully supplied with modern appliances, tools, and machinery operated by a 35 horse-power steam engine. Mr. Bernz employs twenty skilled hands and manufactures all kinds of plumbers' tools and mechanical specialties, including Bernz's patent pulls for water closets, overdraw reinchecks, tea can handles, chisels, cutters, wrenches, drills, hooks, calipers, compasses, gas tongs, mallets, spirit levels, pliers, saws, trowels, moulds, and other articles too numerous to mention. He also keeps in stock Eaton's patent oil cloth binding of brass and zinc, and also does turning in wood and metal, automatic turning, japanning, polishing, etc. All goods are made of the best materials and are unsurpassed for utility, efficiency, and reliability, and have no superiors in the market. Orders are filled promptly at the lowest possible figures, and a heavy and choice stock is always on hand. Mr. Bernz is a native of Newark, and gives close personal supervision to the manufacture of his goods, and is greatly respected in trade circles for his skill and just methods.

No mention was made to blow torches, alcohol lamps, firepots, or any of the Bernz fuel powered devices. I can only assume that the author was not a torch collector or did not have an appreciation for blow torches. •••

PLEASE

contact me if I have your mailing address incorrect or you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter. I am also very interested in hearing from you regarding any information on other collectors that you may know of or have any information regarding names, addresses, or phone numbers. As always, I gratefully accept any and all literature or information on torches, so keep sending those cards and letters. I have a few torches in excellent condition that I have refinished and I will trade or sell. I will advise in my next newsletter with descriptive information and possible photos. If you have a torch or other torch related items that you care to trade or sell, please advise.

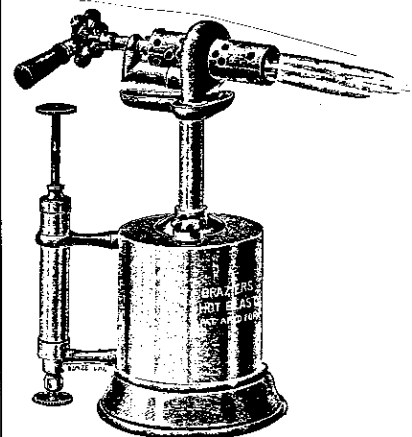
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BRAZIERS TORCH ↑
CIRCA 1896