

THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

- SECOND QUARTER 1995 -

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THIS NEWSLETTER MAY BE REPRODUCED WITH CREDIT GIVEN TO THE SOURCE

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

What an exciting Summer! My wife and I traveled to Brimfield, MA in May to attend the Brimfield Antique Show and to meet a fellow torch collector, Dick Sarpolos and his wife Lynn from NJ.

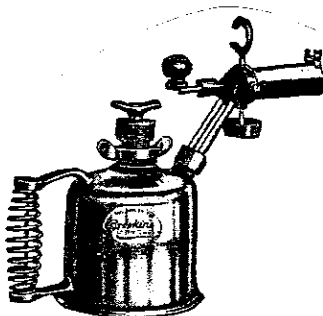
If you are not familiar with Brimfield, it must be the largest outdoor antique show in the US if not in the world. For six days more than 3500 antique vendors barter their goods to thousands of buyers.

The trip was most successful in spite of the cold rainy weather. I purchased my first Vulcan torch at a bargain price of \$15 and I also picked up one other rare torch that is a C&L kerosene pint size in excellent condition. Dick Sarpolos was also very successful in torch purchases that included an Everhot branding torch.

We all found time to share an evening together at dinner commiserating on our torch collections as well as the Aerospace Industry where Dick and I share work experiences.

In June fellow torch collector Larry Parker from Escondido, CA traveled to the Seattle area for personal business and found time to visit my home and view my torch collection. Larry is a recent member to our group and has approximately 300 torches in his collection.

Also in June Mark Pedersen and his wife from Mill City, Oregon traveled to the Seattle area visiting relatives. They visited Janet and I one evening to view my collection and to talk torches. Mark displays his collection at various shows in Oregon and receives a lot of attention due to the uniqueness of the torches. He has approximately 350 torches with quite a few old and rare pieces. Two in particular stand out as extremely rare and both are in excellent condition. One is a Brookins Manufacturing Co. torch, circa 1923 (see inset), and the other is a Acme Paint Burner manufactured by the W.P. Pope Co., Brooklyn, NY and carries a patent date of October 3, 1882. This is one of the earliest patented torches that I have seen to date ...



BROOKINS MANUFACTURING CO.
CIRCA 1923. PINT SIZE SELF GENERATING
WITHOUT PUMP

Our organization is growing at an unbelievable rate! I must receive an average of 2 - 3 calls per week from interested torch collectors and individuals wanting information or a copy of our newsletter. To date we have close to 40 avid collectors that cover the 19 states of AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, IA, MD, MA, MN, NJ, NY, NC, ND, NV, OH, OR, SC, TX, and WA ...

Letters were recently sent to seven major antique newspapers requesting that they print information regarding our new organization. Five of the seven did print the information (see below) that created a large number of requests for our newsletter and other torch related information. Since then a number of major newspapers in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Houston have picked up the information and have referenced our group in various newspaper information columns. It pays to advertise! ...

Blow torch collectors form organization

Collectors of antique blow torches are organizing a Blow Torch Collectors organization in an effort to pool collecting knowledge and to preserve the history of blow torches. Current members across the US and Canada are communicating and trading or selling through a quarterly newsletter appropriately called "THE TORCH".

The average torch collector has collected 75-150 torches with the more mature collectors topping the collecting scales at over 1000 torches. US manufactured turn-

of-the-century brass torches are preferred. However, many newer, rare US made and numerous off-shore manufactured torches are in high demand.



For a copy of the newsletter send an SASE, or for more information contact: Ron Carr, 3328 258th Ave. SE, Issaquah, WA 98027-9173, or call 206-557-0634 evenings.

I recently acquired an original Otto Bernz torch catalog #30 dated February 1, 1916. The catalog has a total of 43 pages, measures 3" high, 5 1/2" wide, and is printed on very thin almost tissue like paper. The catalog covers Otto Bernz Plumber's Furnaces and Torches as well as associated repair parts and accessories. It is interesting to note that the catalog refers to the Otto Bernz "Baby" #8 1/2 pint torch as being discontinued. A further statement refers to the availability of spare parts for the #8, however, no parts are listed. A 1/2 pint #9 torch is listed in the catalog and appears to have replaced the #8 unit. Also, the Vulcan torch is not listed or mentioned as a product or as available spare parts. I have enclosed a copy of a few pages from the catalog for your reading enjoyment ...

THE LOCKHORNS

BY BILL HOEST



Included in this mailing is an article on the history of the Clayton & Lambert Co. The text was provided by E.G. Scott of Lyndon, KY. Scotty is a retiree of the C&L Co. and has been most helpful based on his knowledge and expertise of the C&L Co. and the torch manufacturing business. Thank you Scotty for your contribution ...

Attachments also include a listing of torch related patents with copies available at no charge to fellow torch collectors. Follow the mailing instructions at the end of the listing for postage. If you have any patents not listed, please send me a good copy and I will make them available to other interested collectors ...

Last but not least, enclosed is the latest listing of torch manufacturers. I am always looking to add to the list, therefore, if you see one missing, let me know. I'll see you all in the next issue sometime in December.

HISTORY OF CLAYTON & LAMBERT MANUFACTURING COMPANY

In Ypsilanti, Michigan, in the year 1882, three young and aggressive brothers named Lambert started a pioneering venture -- the manufacture and sale of gasoline burning blow torches. Mechanics found the intense portable heat of these torches useful and time saving in the soldering of pipes, etc. As word spread about these new handy devices and the demand for them grew, the business flourished.

In 1887, a patented firepot for melting lead was added to the torch line. Its inventor, a Mr. Clayton, was taken into the partnership. Growth continued and in the year 1891, Clayton & Lambert Manufacturing Company filed Articles of Association with the State of Michigan.

By 1899, demand for the Company's products had increased beyond its productive capacity. A larger manufacturing facility was needed. Detroit was becoming the center of manufacturing for that section of the country and offered many advantages. Detroit being desirable, a site with railroad facilities was purchased and a suitable plant was built. At the time, this location was in the center of a growing automotive industry, with neighbors like the predecessor of the present Ford Motor Company, Fisher Brothers (which later became a major part of General Motors) and the Cadillac Motor Company.

The torch and firepot business continued to grow and prosper with distribution throughout the entire United States and Canada. The Company's products were of the highest quality and evaluated by users as the finest of their kind in the world. The Clayton & Lambert policy of fair, equal dealing was known and respected by all in the trade.

Being situated in the very center of all the feverish automotive activity, in 1915 the Company established a metal stamping division for the manufacture of fenders, hoods, radiator shells, gasoline tanks, running boards, body stampings, etc., for the automotive companies.

All parts of the business continued to prosper and expand until World War I came along. During that emergency, the Company produced hundreds of thousands of powder time fuses for our Allies, as well as pressed steel truck cabs for the US Army vehicles and large quantities of torches and firepots for all US Services.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1919, so great was the demand for automotive metal stampings, that the Company built a large modern stamping plant known as its Knodell Division. In the following decade, the Knodell Division, with its many possibilities and a growing automotive industry, attracted a large number of the brightest young mechanics to its facility. Their knowledge, combined with the great improvements in the quality of deep drawing steel from the mills, allowed great advances in tooling and metal forming of such difficult shapes as one piece fenders, doors, hoods, instrument panels and the like. (Later on one of these young men served a term as President of the Ford Motor Company, and another one as President of Martin Marietta Company.)

In 1925, Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Company sold its Knodell Division to the Hudson Motor Car Company. Changes in the executive personnel followed immediately. Mr. Clayton had died prior to World War I and Charles R. Lambert, one of the original three Lambert brothers, had died in 1921. The two remaining brothers, Bert and John, felt they should retire. Their stock holdings were sold to their nephew, Charles F. Lambert (youngest son of their brother Charles R.) and he became President of Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Company.

Times were good and businesses were booming in 1928. The Fisher Body Division of General Motors, Clayton & Lambert's next door neighbor, needed the land where our plant was situated for expansion. An informal agreement between Mr. Fisher and Charles F. Lambert was made and a new modern plant of equivalent space was built for Clayton & Lambert at French Road. Before the year's end, the Company was in operation at its new plant.

In 1929, Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware.

During the depression years, Clayton & Lambert managed to keep its torch and firepot business intact. With its continued search in all directions for additional business, a contract with the Navy Bureau of Ordnance gave us the opportunity to design a completely new and novel reversible cartridge case tank for storage of 5 inch, 38 caliber cases, as well as the redesigning and manufacture of many other items. Admiral Stark, then Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, was more than pleased with the quality and workmanship done in designing the new cartridge case tank and the redesign work done on other items, reflecting a savings to the Navy of approximately two dollars per unit.

At the start of World War II, a shortage of brass made it necessary to make 40 millimeter cartridge cases out of steel. The Bureau of Ordnance, being familiar with Clayton & Lambert's manufacturing ability and its executive personnel, chose it as the contractor best fitted by experience to solve the problem and produce a new steel cartridge case. The Navy awarded Clayton & Lambert a contract to produce 36,000,000 cases at two plant locations -- Clayton & Lambert's French Road - Detroit Plant and a plant to be located in Ashland, Kentucky, where the steel was to be made.

For a steel cartridge case to be successful, many problems had to be overcome and manufacturing processes had to be developed that would deliver safe, workable cases that would not stick, drag, or backfire in a rapid fire gun.

At that time Mr. Laurie Rautio left the Metallurgical Teaching Staff of Ohio State University and joined Clayton & Lambert's executive staff. With his expertise added to our staff and with the best brains in the steel companies, everyone went to work and solved the problems. Presses, annealing ovens, heat treat ovens, tools, dies, gauges, head turning screw machines, conveyors, platens and hundreds of miscellaneous items had to be designed, purchased and installed in the two plants. High priority was allocated to the project and production of cases started on schedule. Clayton

& Lambert reduced the unit cost from an estimated \$1.25 each at the start to about 65 cents each at the end.

Employment at each Clayton & Lambert plant was approximately three thousand people. Each plant produced over two million 40 millimeter cases per month. Each plant won the coveted Navy "E" Award.

Clayton & Lambert's fully heat treated steel cases came through the war without a single reported malfunction in the field. On September 1, 1945, Secretary of Defense Forrestal wrote us, "Among the companies which gave the Navy power to blast its way across two oceans, yours has been pre-eminent." After the War, the Navy desired to preserve the cartridge case manufacturing process and keep the facilities available for future needs; so it purchased the French Road Plant.

We had experienced very satisfactory relations with Kentucky personnel in our Ashland plant, so it was decided to make our new headquarters in Louisville. Suitable property was available through the purchase of the Hoffman Gas and Electric Water Heater Company located at the corner of Dixie and Lee Streets. With this purchase, we acquired a water heater business which needed modernizing and retooling. We moved our torch business from French Road - Detroit to the Louisville plant and these combined operations did well.

Clayton & Lambert purchased the inventories, machinery, equipment and going business assets of the Lamneck Company of Middletown, Ohio. In addition to its line of Lamneck furnace pipe, fittings and ducts, it also produced silos, grain bins and corn cribs fabricated of galvanized steel. We modernized and made changes in methods of production of these products and profited from this business. Income from all of our products enabled us to keep our organization intact during the following immediate years and to make good progress on the development of new products for the future.

When the Korean War commenced in 1950, we were selected to build a joint Army-Navy steel cartridge case facility on the grounds owned by the Navy in Louisville. Nearly twenty million dollars of machinery and equipment

went into this facility which produced millions of various sized steel cases for Army and Navy requirements. This project continued until the end of the Korean War.

Over the years we have supplied the Government with many thousands of gasoline torches on Government bids. At the Government's request, we designed a special flat tank torch to fit in a Government tool kit. We are proud of this record and glad we were able to be a supplier of products to our Government.

In 1956, we purchased a six acre site at Buckner, Kentucky, located at the intersection of Highways 146 and 393, from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Construction of a new factory started as soon as possible and was completed by the year-end. During December of 1956 and January of 1957, we moved out Middletown operations to the Buckner factory.

Soon after this move, conditions in the warm air pipe and duct industry became extremely chaotic. After watching this deteriorating condition for nearly two years, we decided to sell our inventory and machinery to a competitor. Similar conditions soon became common in the water heater industry, and we could see no possibility of improvement in the future. We sold that division in the fall of 1960 to a competitor who believed additional volume would improve his operating results.

In march, 1961, we moved our torch and firepot production and offices from Louisville to Buckner, Kentucky.

By now, we were well along in the restructuring of our farm program with regards to modern methods of loading, unloading, drying and storage of grain and silage. Several patents have been granted on our unique silo unloaders and grain drying apparatuses. We are continuing our involvement in the development of an energy saving device for drying grain using corn cobs and manure as fuels.

In 1970, we discontinued the production of gasoline torches and firepots because they had almost become extinct due to the use of plastics.

Clayton & Lambert was one of the early inventors of steel wall panels for use in the construction of swimming pools. We were the first to furnish pre-formed shaped, curved and angled panels to the trade, eliminating the necessity of doing this type of work at the job site. Since 1957 we have furnished thousands of galvanized, porcelainized, stainless steel and, most recently, plastisol coated galvanized steel panels to the trade. Over the years, a lot of research, development and testing of materials, adhesives and coatings have been performed in order for us to maintain the high quality and respect we have within the industry. This division of our company has been, and is today, a very important part of business. Innovations, research and development will continue to be an on-going project with this line.

In 1967, Charles F. Lambert relinquished his duties as President of Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Company and Laurie J. Rautio was appointed President. Mr. Rautio served admirably in this capacity until his sudden death in 1980. At that time, Charles F. Lambert, Jr. was appointed President and presently is holding that office.

Under the leadership of Charles F. Lambert, this company accomplished much and made a significant contribution to our nation's defense and to its economic well being. After relinquishing his duties as President, he continued to serve as Chairman of the Board until he retired in 1982. When Mr. Lambert expired in 1983, we lost a true leader and industrial pioneer.

Now the legacy of Mr. Charles F. Lambert is being carried on by his son, Mr. Charles F. Lambert, Jr. and under his leadership we are very optimistic about Clayton & Lambert's future.

NOTE: Edited from history written by Charles F. Lambert with additions and deletions made by E. G. Scott, February 8, 1984.