

THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

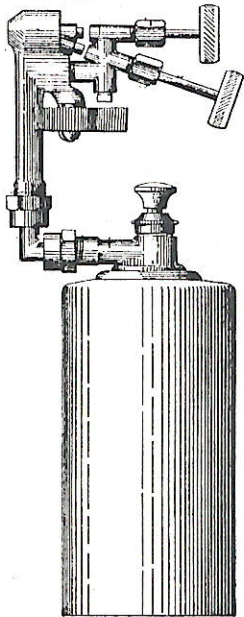
- SECOND EDITION 1998 -

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- THIS NEWSLETTER MAY BE REPRODUCED WITH CREDIT GIVEN TO THE SOURCE -

Spring has sprung and summer will soon be upon us. The flea markets, auctions, and rallies are ready for the summer surge and all of the antique hounds. I trust you will all be out there looking for those "Best-Ever" torches!

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TURNER BRASS WORKS
#100 Double Jet
Alcohol Torch

Patented
February 2, 1909

A.W. Straight, inventor

Intense needlepoint flame
Double swivel burner head
Nickel-plated brass tank

NEW MEMBERS

Nine new members have joined our group since the last newsletter. **Frank & Cathy Bellovary** - Waukesha, WI, both collectors for 28 years of numerous antique items that decorate their home, including blow torches. **Al Carter** - Charlotte, NC is a two-year torch collector with a growing collection of

torches, and he also collects fire extinguishers. **Herman Meier** - Spokane, WA has, in addition to his modest number of blow torches, a collection of antique gas engines. **Han Melisse** - Dordrecht, Netherlands, in six short years has accumulated over 600 torches, all of them polished and displayed. Han also collects plumber's association plates. **Harold Pope** - Sun City, AZ with over 120 torches that he has amassed since 1984 when he started collecting in England. Harold also collects fire extinguishers and he offers a helpful suggestion of boiling your torches in lemon juice before buffing to ease the labor. **Dave Schulte** - Sperry, IA began his collection 5 years ago and has over 100 torches to date. **Dave Thomas** from Cheshire, England and a long time collector of 38 years with well over 500 torches, ~250 polished & displayed, along with a collection of welding & cutting torches. **Mel Wiley** of Sun City, AZ, a 10 year torch collector that also has a fire extinguisher collection. **WELCOME ABOARD!**

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GOOD LOOKING BRASS

I've been reading a number of articles written about brass and copper polishing. Maintenance is important with brass and copper torches; they need a good cleaning at least once a year to maintain their appearance and yearly polishing reduces the level of effort.

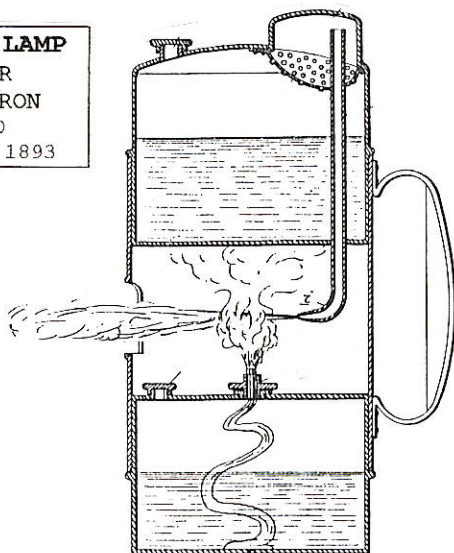
Two important things to keep in mind when displaying your polished torches; keep them out of direct sunlight since the sun will escalate the oxidation effect, and never handle your torches with bare hands. There is sufficient moisture/oil/salt in perspiration to also cause corrosion. I handle my

torches by any wood or ferrous part, or I use a cotton cloth kept handy near the displayed pieces. In a pinch, you can also pick up a polished torch using the sides of your fingers where the pores are not as large and abundant. What the dentist reminded us as children holds true in torch maintenance; "prevention is as important as polishing". By giving some forethought to proper storage and handling, and by giving your torches regular and careful cleaning, you can maintain the value and beauty of your collection for years to come.

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PLUMBER'S LAMP

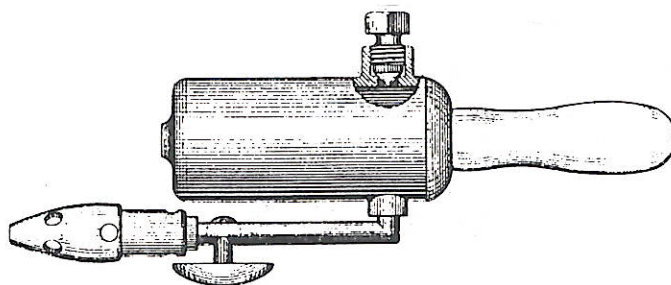
INVENTOR
LEON CHARRON
PATENTED
October 17, 1893



NOTES FROM ALL OVER



Mark Pedersen just concluded a trade with Philip Touillet for a SURMELIN TORCH. Mark has a Bakelite HANAU laboratory torch for trade if anyone is interested. Also, Mark and his lovely wife just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations! Larry Fields has provided me with translations of a recent French blowtorch newsletter. There are blowtorch organizations in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Spain, and there is talk of a European organization forming that could perhaps encompass all of the groups. Richard Gjersee recently completed a trade for a UNIQUE red oval torch as listed in the last issue of *THE TORCH*. Richard is also now available on the Internet at: jag@foxinternet.net. Glenn Harrison dropped me a note and indicated that he has 5 of the WHITE/TURNER torches that I have been discussing in the past two newsletters. Glenn acquired a GLOBE torch earlier this year (one that I have been seeking desperately for years), and his collection just went over the 1000 mark! I also heard



GASOLINE TORCH

G. HEIDEL, INVENTOR
PATENTED, NOVEMBER 8, 1892

from Walt Gretkowski who has been torch shopping in Florida since his kids just moved to the Sunshine State. Maurice Jernstedt's daughter is trying to find a blowtorch line drawing, or anything blowtorch related that she can use to make a business card for her dad. If anyone has a torch line drawing or has scanned a torch photo and is willing to email on, then please send it to jonshmat@cet.com. Jim Maclean sent in a photo from a March 1997 National Geographic magazine that shows a firefighter using a drip torch to ignite wildfire-fueling debris. Jim has a similar torch in his collection that he has obviously fired up since he described the strong flame and jet-like roar.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

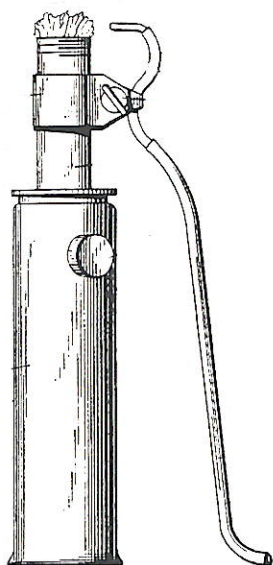


DRIP TORCH, MANUFACTURER UNKNOWN

THE FIRST TORCH MEETING?

John Suta has offered to host our first US blow torch convention/meeting/rally at his home in Mt. Vernon, WA sometime in the near future. It would be interesting to hear from those members that have the desire for such a gathering, and it could be a very successful meeting if there was ample participation. Please let me know if you are interested in a gathering, and your timing, to have a one-day torch swap meet in Mt. Vernon or at my home in Issaquah.

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PLUMBER'S ALCOHOL BLOWPIPE

INVENTOR

Wm. M. MURPHY

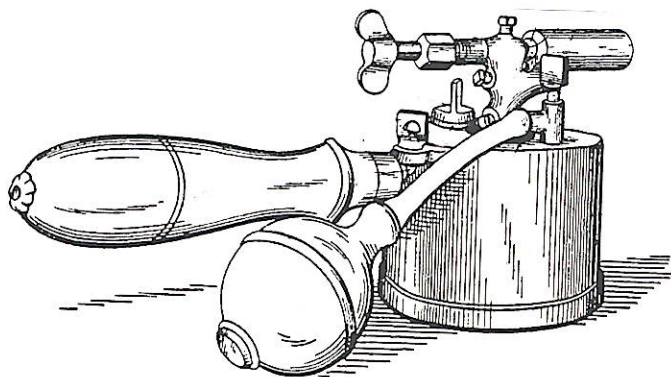
Patented

April 24, 1894

INTERNATIONAL TRADERS

Many of you have successfully conducted international torch trades, and I suspect that others are interested, but are not sure what to do to get started. If there is an interest, then drop me a note and I will list your name with the British, French, and Belgium groups. **Han Melisse** advises that he is a very avid collector and has a serious interest in trading with US collectors. He has a large amount of European torches ready for trade for those interested. Other collectors that have traded internationally or have an interest are **Richard Brazil**, **Gary Fye**, **Richard Gjersee**, and **Mark Pedersen**.

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TORCH FOR BURNING PAINT MANUFACTURED BY THE UNION HEATER SUPPLY CO.

INVENTOR, B. REIN
PATENTED OCTOBER 29, 1895

BAKELITE

Many US torch manufacturers converted to Bakelite handles & valve knobs shortly after 1909 for reduced material costs and lower heat transfer complaints. I suspect that strength and durability were compromised since numerous torches with Bakelite handles and knobs are found seriously damaged or missing.

For those interested; here is a way to determine if your handle or knob is Bakelite. First remove other scents and oils from your thumb by rubbing it thoroughly on a piece of fabric, such as your sleeve. Then vigorously rub the surface of the item suspected to be Bakelite. Apply sufficient pressure to create friction. When your thumb feels hot, stop and sniff both your thumb and the object being rubbed. If you detect a rubbery odor, it is Bakelite. This is not a foolproof method, but is certainly a simple one.

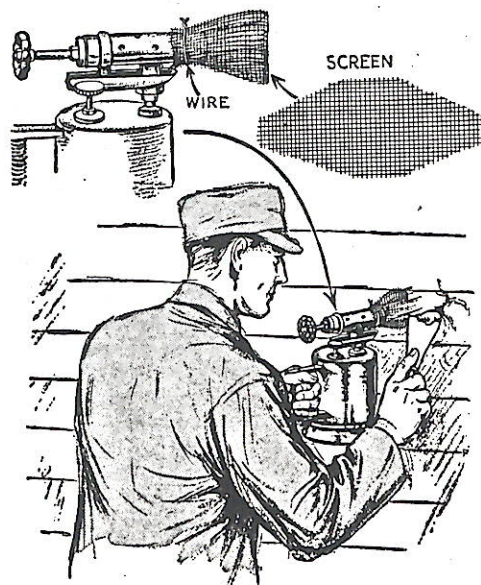
Bakelite was invented by the Baekeland Company, which began producing it in 1909. In 1932, the Catalin Company purchased the patents and produced their own product, called *Catalin*, using the same formula. *Marbalin* is another name for the same material. Chemically, the products under these three names are identical.

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While perusing through an antique bookstore in Seattle, on one of those rainy days that we so "infrequently" see, I came across this article in a Popular Mechanics magazine from 1943:

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Screen-Wire Baffle on Blowtorch to Burn Off Paint



Baffle of screen wire spreads flame evenly against painted surface to avoid deep burning in spots

CHICAGO CYCLE SUPPLY CO.

Richard Gjersee recently acquired a 1915 Chicago Cycle Supply Co. Catalog from a neighbor, and he submitted it for distribution to the membership (see enclosed). I found page 282 interesting since it lists 2 braziers; both manufactured by the National Cement & Rubber Co., Toledo, OH. I found it most unusual that a cement & rubber company would manufacture anything relating to torches, but then I remembered manufacturers such as the Globe Light & Heat Co., the Boston Globe Gas Light Co., the Sun Vapor Streetlight Co., and it didn't seem so unusual. I also suspect that the unlabeled torch in the lower left corner on page 282 is an Otto Bernz torch. Page 283 has one of the few engine spray cleaners that I have seen in a catalog. Note its second use as a dryer or blower when empty and pressurized.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

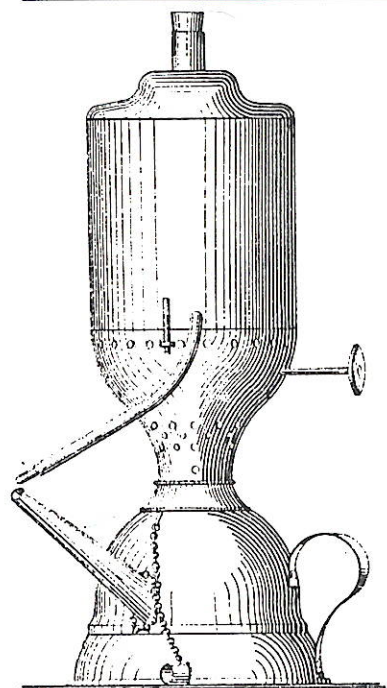
PATENTS

I had the opportunity to research additional torch patents at the University of Washington Technical Library since the last newsletter, and uncovered 23 new torch related patents.

Three in particular are worth mentioning since they were patents that were put into torch production. One is referenced as a *DEVICE FOR CLEANING PAINT AND VARNISH FROM SURFACES*, invented by Benjamin F. Aiken with a patent date of July 5, 1898. I am only aware of two such torches, Dick Sarpolus has one in his collection, and I have the second one in my collection. It is one of the most unique torches, has a very simple yet functional design, was produced in limited quantities, and is, without a doubt, one of my favorite pieces. I have enclosed a copy of the patent, however, the actual production model differs slightly. There is an air pump located at the end of the fuel tube (in lieu of the rubber bulb as shown), and the paint scrapper blade is somewhat larger than depicted in the artist's rendition.

The torch fuel tube measures 12 inches long, 1½ inches in diameter, and the torch is made entirely of brass except for the scrapper blade and the fuel valve shaft. It was manufactured by and stamped with: *THE CLIMAX CO., Hyannis, Mass Patented July 5, 1898*. I would like to hear if anyone else possesses one of these jewels. If my assumption is correct, I think we'll find very few collectors with a CLIMAX paint/varnish burner.

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BLOW PIPE

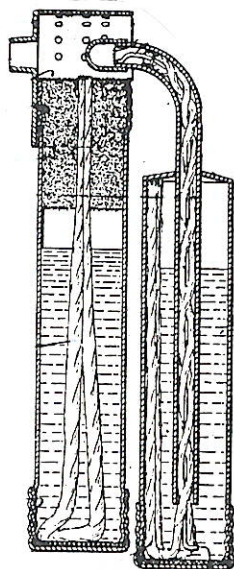
INVENTOR

C. W. DEAN

PATENTED

Sept. 5, 1882

The second and third enclosed patents reflect the typical dual-cylinder alcohol torches that many of us have seen, in great abundance, during our torch hunts. The abundance supports the obvious popularity of the torch, considering its portability, ease of start-up and operation, and the use of a less volatile fuel – denatured alcohol. Earlier models were usually all brass, and later versions were marketed with chrome plating. There were many model variations that supported the numerous manufacturers as can be seen in the attached two patents. I recently acquired a LENK alcohol torch with stamped data reflecting earlier production practices of the 1920's & 1930's. For those of you that have models with stamped data, you'll find that these pre-date the "decals" data torches by a number of years, perhaps decades. On my LENK torch, the metal strap that connects the two cylinders has stamped: *Model #108, LENK automatic blow torch, patent 1925.*



**LENK
ALCOHOL
TORCH**

INVENTOR
S. STANCZYK
PATENTED
AUG. 25, 1925

The data that I have indicate that there were at least 4 manufacturers/distributors of the dual-cylinder alcohol torch, SEARS & ROEBUCK CO., LASHER-WEBBER CO., MODERN METAL PRODUCTS CO., and the LENK MANUFACTURING CO.

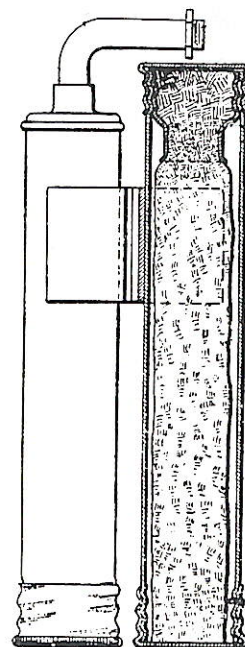
SEARS & ROEBUCK CO. distributed the DUNLAP brand, and it was manufactured by the MODERN METAL PRODUCTS CO. of Boston, Mass. On a recent trip to Southern California, I came across another Dunlap alcohol torch. While I have a number of dual-cylinder alcohol torches in my collection, I could not pass this one up because it was what I would consider to be a GIANT version of the standard dual-cylinder torch. While the standard size has a typical cylinder diameter of 7/8 inches,

mine has a diameter of 1 1/4 inches. The standard height is 5 1/2 inches and the GIANT is 7 inches. It is in perfect condition, has a perfect decal with the Dunlap information, and stamped into the metal strap is the JIM DANDY data.

LASHER-PEERBLOW CO.

ALCOHOL BLOWTORCH

INVENTOR
L.L. LASHER
PATENTED
OCT. 26, 1926



LASHER-WEBBER CO. manufactured THE JIM DANDY, #80 AUTOMATIC ALCOHOL BLOW TORCH. At some point in time it's assumed that the MODERN METAL PRODUCTS CO. of Cambridge, Mass, which is also listed as a JIM DANDY manufacturer (and produced model #80-124), either purchased the LASHER-WEBBER CO., or there was a company merger that caused the name change. In any event, the LASHER-WEBBER CO. name disappears from records, and the MODERN METAL PRODUCTS CO. appears in subsequent records.

The enclosed patent 1,604,751, references the LASHER-PEERBLOW CO. of Boston, Mass., however no known torches were ever manufactured by this unknown company.

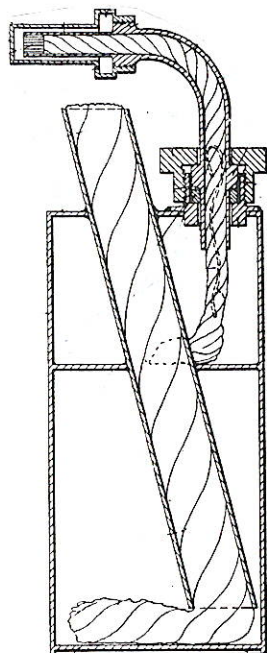
LENK MANUFACTURING CO. manufactured a similar alcohol torch (LENK New Model #108, automatic blow torch, patent 1925), as well as later models. The enclosed patent, 1,551,069 was assigned to D. Allen Lenk by the inventor, and D. Allen Lenk was the founder of the LENK MANUFACTURING CO.

Records indicate that there was a HUNT-LASHER CO. of Lynn, Mass, a city just north of Boston, however, no data are available on what products were manufactured.

There was also a PEERBLOW MANUFACTURING CO. of Pittsburgh, Penn, and they manufactured a line of torches, including the PEERLESS #14 model. Known records do not indicate if the PEERBLOW MANUFACTURING CO. had any relationship to the LASHER-PEERBLOW CO. Two known torches owned by **Ron Johnson, Syracuse, New York,** and **Graham Stubbs, Poway, California** carry the PEERBLOW mark, and unless I am mistaken, they are both of the standard quart/pint style torches.

As always, if any of you have dual-cylinder torches with different or unusual markings, please drop me a note and I will pass the information on in the next newsletter. I am especially interested in hearing anything on **HUNT-LASHER, LASHER-PEERBLOW,** and **PEERBLOW.**

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LENK ALCOHOL- GASOLINE TORCH

INVENTOR

STANLEY STANCZYK

PATENTED

SEPT. 18, 1928

NEW MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

I have enclosed the latest membership roster for your personal use. This list should not to be copied or distributed, nor should the information be used for any purpose other than business relating to this torch collecting organization. Adhering to these guidelines will prevent our names from getting into the wrong type of mailing lists.

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PLUMBER'S TORCH

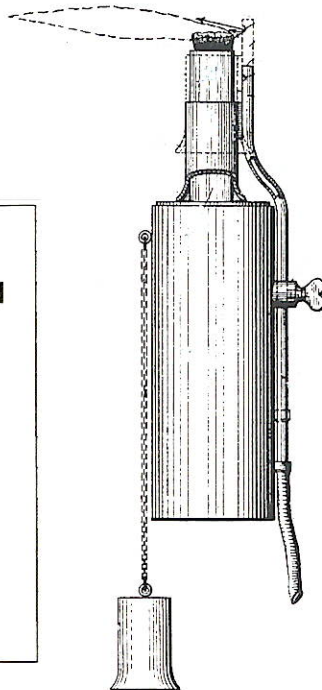
INVENTORS

H. J. TAYLOR

W.J. TAYLOR

PATENTED

JULY 9, 1895



? TWO UNKNOWN ?

Dave Schulte acquired an Otto Bernz torch that has a BRENT SOLDER GUN mounted onto the burner head. The Brent Solder Gun appears to be a solder dispenser that would automatically feed solder into the flame path when initiated by the user. The nameplate offered a serial number, indicated patent pending, and manufactured by Brents Manufacturing Co, Eugene, OR.

Harold Pope has a torch with a manufacturer that is not listed as one of the known manufacturers or brand labels. The nameplate is partially obliterated, but what is visible indicates PREWAY, and the PRENTISS PRODUCTIONS CO., Wisconsin Rapids, WI. If anyone has any information on either of these unknown items, please share your knowledge with Dave, Harold, and myself.

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Please, keep sending all of those cards and letters. A wealth of information has been submitted by many of you, and in the end, we all benefit. Thanks to all that have written, and especially those that have contributed information.

Have a great summer and happy torch hunting!

Ron

Oct. 26 , 1926.

1,604,751

L. L. LASHER

BLOWTORCH

Filed March 12, 1926

Fig. 1.

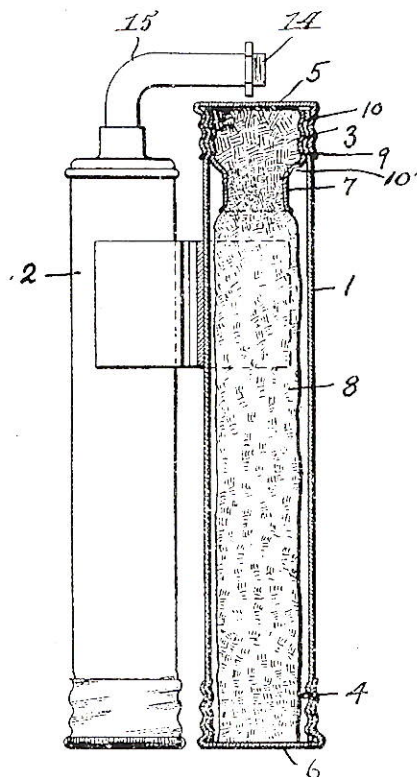


Fig. 2.

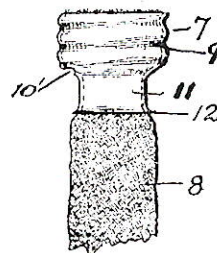
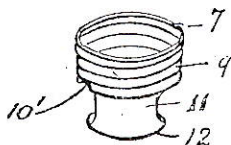


Fig. 3.



Lester L. Lasher
Inventor

By *W. S. Rawlings*
Attorney

No. 606,907.

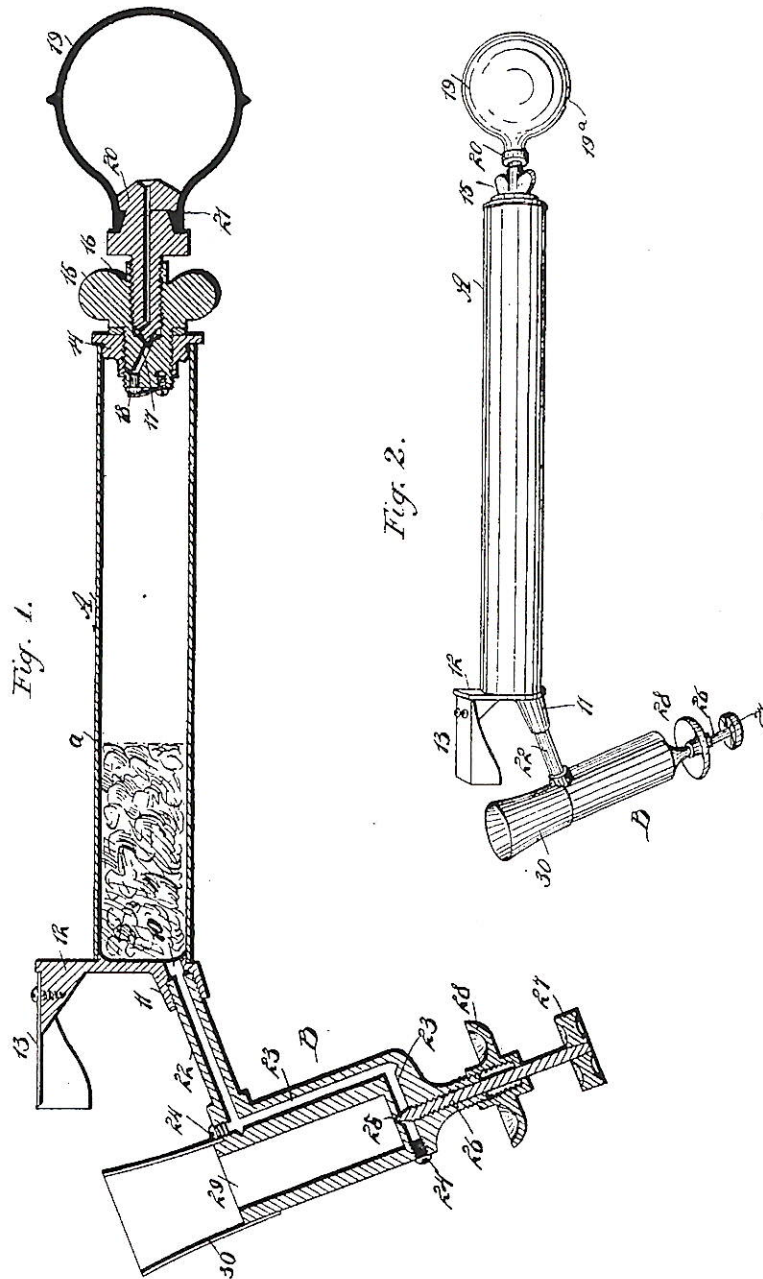
Patented July 5, 1898.

B. F. AIKEN.

DEVICE FOR CLEANING PAINT AND VARNISH FROM SURFACES.

(Application filed May 18, 1897.)

(No Model.)



WITNESSES:

Otto Spieth
B. F. Aiken

INVENTOR

B. F. Aiken

BY

Munroe

ATTORNEYS.

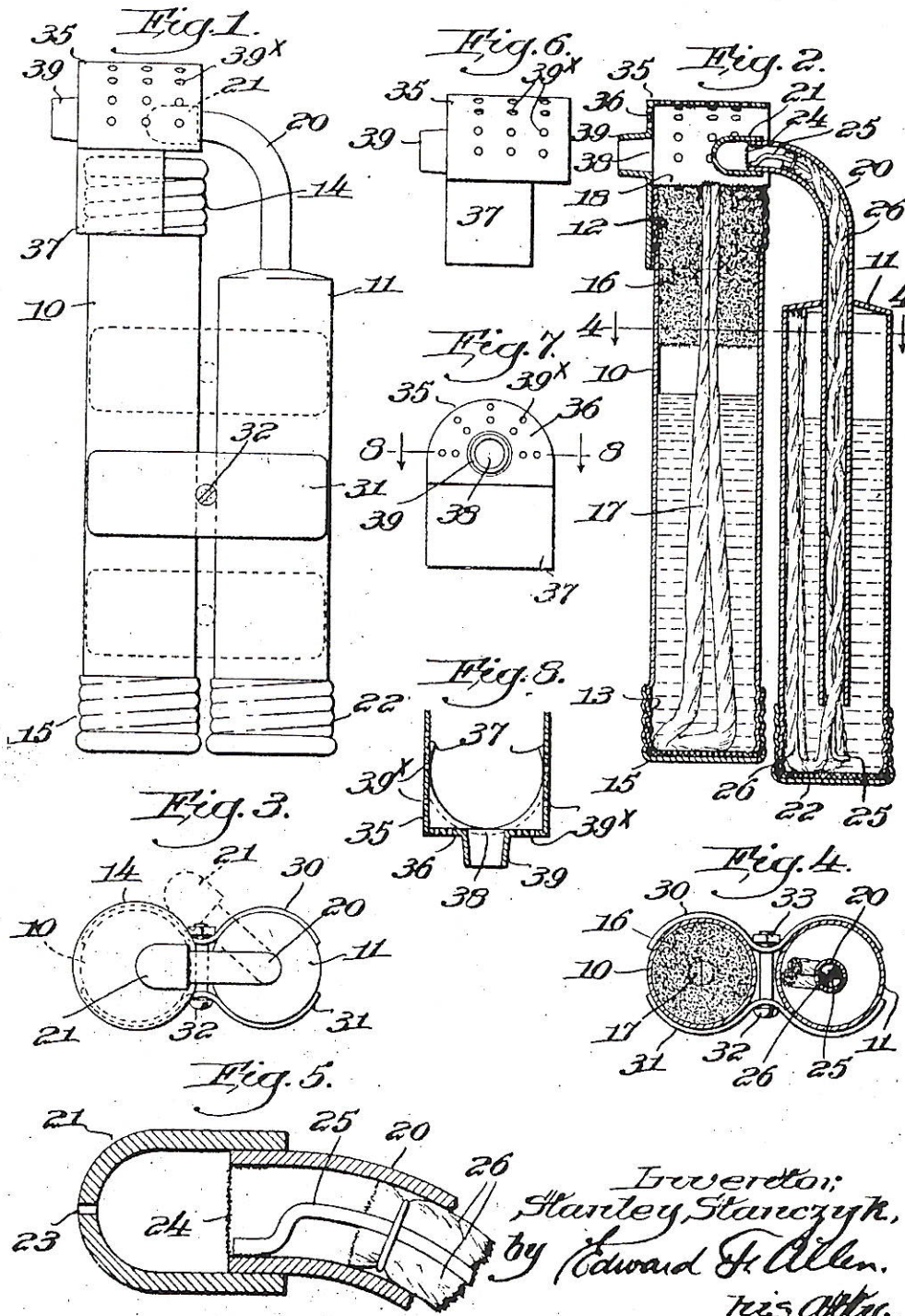
Aug. 25, 1925.

S. STANCZYK

1,551,069

AUTOMATIC BLOWTORCH

Filed Dec. 1, 1921



Inventor:
Stanley Stanczyk,
by Edward F. Allen,
his atty.