

# THE TORCH

## NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

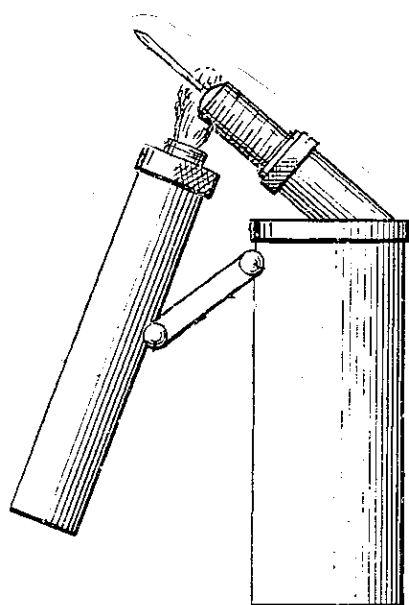
- THIRD EDITION 1998 -

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

Can you believe that in a few short weeks we'll be ringing in 1999! Where-oh-where does all of the time go? I hope everyone enjoyed themselves during the summer months, and what's left of autumn.

♦ ♦ ♦



BLOWTORCH  
Patented  
July 12, 1949

Manufactured by  
RL Livingston Co.  
Williamsport, PA

SPIT-FIRE  
MODEL A-100

### --- NEW MEMBERS ---

**James Morgan**, Fairmount, IN, is a relatively new collector with approximately 25 torches.

**Allan Cairns**, Waukesha, WI, an 18-year collector with over 150 torches, all polished and displayed. Allan owns a metal polishing business in Waukesha, GASCOIGNE COMPANY. Perhaps Allan will provide all of us with a membership discount on torch renovations?

**Kenneth Wilson**, Topeka, KS is a 3-year collector with 100 torches.

**John Owen**, Davidson, NC

**Jerome Baker**, Big Pine Key, FL

**Frank Eskra**, Princeton Junction, NJ

**Phil Roach**, Sunnyside, WA, a collector of several years, has about 50 torches, and is in the process of polishing his collection.

**Richard Carter**, Essex, MA

**John Creed**, Bow, WA, read the Skagit Valley Herald article on the October 3<sup>rd</sup> Torch Convention and decided to start collecting torches.

**Paul Johnson**, Vancouver, WA, has over 200 units including an Everhot soldering iron torch.

**Terry Foutch**, Port Orchard, WA and

**Mark Hahn**, Olalla, WA, both relatively new collectors, each with a modest number of torches accumulated.

**Greg Hunter**, Metamora, MI, a five-year collector with over 50 torches, all displayed on shelves in his pole barn.

**Jim MacSuga**, Spokane, WA, is a torch collector, and has also converted a few torches into lamps (Jim indicated that he only converts common low-value torches.)

**Malcolm Denny**, from Cloudcroft, NM is a potential new collector.

**Charles Butcher**, Evanston, WY

**Gregg Watts**, Galveston, TX with a relatively small torch collection, leans toward alcohol torches. Gregg also collects straight razors.

**Phil De Vries**, Cedar Springs, MI with over 100 torches in his collection.

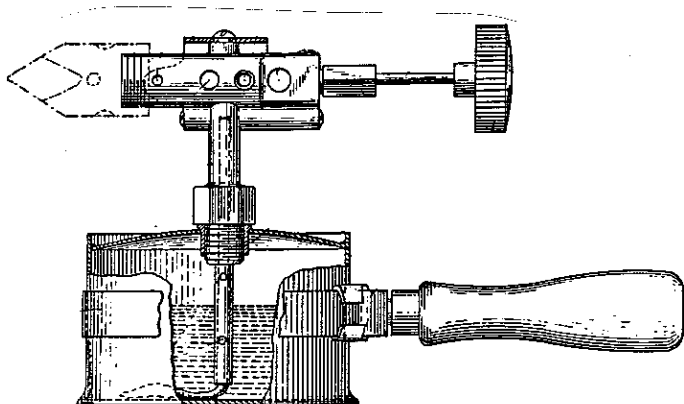
**Brian Grainger**, Bristol, England, a 5 year collector with a 500 piece collection. Brian also collects brass pressure stoves.

**Mel Olson**, Fergus Falls, MN, a two year collector with 241 torches and a modest collection of soldering irons.

## NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES

There are new email addresses that were added to the enclosed membership listing. Let me know if I did not list your email address and I will include it in the next issue.

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**ALCOHOL TORCH**  
Patented April 18, 1939  
Similar model produced by  
National Safety Device Co.

## THE FIRST US BLOWTORCH CONVENTION

Was deemed successful by all 33 attendees! Many thanks to Jon & Judy Suta, and their daughters Tina & Jodi for all of the hard work in making the entire event possible.

Jon & Judy Suta hosted the event at their home in Mt. Vernon, Washington on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Space was provided for all of the torch displays in one of his many outbuildings. Jon is an avid antique car and tractor collector, and a few of his vehicles were relocated outside to make sufficient room for all. A total of 19 collectors displayed an estimated 350 rare and unusual torches to the delight of all that attended. Jon Suta has approximately 500 torches from his collection perched on narrow shelves high above the floor for all to see. In addition to Jon's vehicle collection, included in the building were countless numbers of antique toys, RR lanterns, soldering irons, and lunch boxes, all hung high on the walls.

The event started off early with many of the collectors and guests arriving at 8:30 am, laden with an abundance of highly polished torches that brightened the Pacific Northwest overcast day. Jon registered each collector and guest, and torch

displays were quickly and randomly set up around the perimeter of the room. Considering that many collectors traveled via air, suitcases were meticulously emptied and torches carefully unwrapped. Even those that traveled by car had the same unpacking chore, but everyone got down to the task and the displays were ready in short order.

The next few hours involved roaming around and admiring all of the rare and unusual pieces on display. A few noted pieces were:

**Graham Stubbs'** Wellington torch, a one-of-a-kind-in-the-world torch. His was the original sample piece that was submitted to the US Patent Office that finally resulted in the Wellington patent, dated September 3, 1883.

**Mark Pedersen's** Quick Meal torch manufactured by the Quick Meal Torch Co., St. Louis, MO. Mark also displayed some of his other treasures (and my favorites) that included a Brookins torch, an Acme Paint Burner torch, and a WC Downey Co. Gravity Feed torch.

**Larry Fields** and **Graham Stubbs** each displayed a #37 J. Russell & Co. Seamless torch.

**Arnie DeYoung**, among his treasures, displayed a steel baby #8.

**John Tingle** showed off his pencil thin Lamb torch.

**Yours truly** proudly displayed a Climax Co. Paint Burner, only two known to exist to date.

**And the best torch on display** was the one depicted on the cake that Judy Suta had made for the occasion.

The group took a break for lunch that was served buffet style, and everyone found a comfortable seat for a relaxing meal with some great conversations. The Suta's provided a fantastic meal that had many of us going back for seconds and thirds. **Spanky**, their new puppy, provided lunch entertainment by romping through the dining rooms and begging from all the diners. **Graham Stubbs** also provided a bit of entertainment by demonstrating the technique of blowing continuously while breathing. His demonstration was the type of mouth action required to provide a constant flow of air. If you were to operate an alcohol lamp with a mouthpiece, you would need the capability of blowing continuously to successfully produce a constant flame.

When lunch was about finished, yours truly said a few words to thank the hosts, Jon & Judy, and all of the attendees that traveled so near and far for the one-day event. For the occasion, I presented a coffee mug to each of the 19 collectors present, engraved with:

*FIRST ANNUAL USA  
BLOWTORCH CONVENTION  
OCTOBER 3, 1998*

I also presented a gift to Jon & Judy Suta for their great hospitality to the group. The gift was a combination clock, thermometer, & barometer set into green marble with an engraved plate.

Then it was back to the business of trading, buying, selling, talking, and admiring. A reporter and photographer from the local newspaper, the Skagit Valley Herald, arrived mid afternoon, interviewed a few of the attendees, and photographed a number of torches. The article (see enclosed), with photographs ran in the following Monday's issue, October 5<sup>th</sup>. The article can be seen in color via email at [www.skagitvalleyherald.com](http://www.skagitvalleyherald.com).

The buying-selling activities continued for most of the afternoon, and around 4:30 p.m. everyone began packing up for the long trip home. We all said our good-byes, consummated a few last deals, and agreed that we would do it again next year. Perhaps if we did not wear out our welcome at the Suta's, Jon & Judy will host it again?

## TORCH CONVENTION ATTENDEES:

Les & Gina Adams, Devon, England  
Al & Elaine Austin, Puyallup, WA  
Ron & Janet Carr, Issaquah, WA  
Arnie & Diana DeYoung, Centralia, WA  
Larry & Pat Fields, Greensboro, NC  
Maurice Jernstedt, Hubbard, OR  
Charles & Shirley Monthy, Tacoma, WA  
Gary Morgan & R. Vensuizihen, Maple Valley, WA  
Mark & Arlene Petersen, Mill City, OR  
Suzie & Dan Proctor, Tacoma, WA  
Phil & Linda Roach, Sunnyside, WA  
Bob & Charlotte Steinke, Menomonie, WI  
Graham & Stephanie Stubbs, Poway, CA  
Jon, Judy, Tina, & Jodi Suta, Mt. Vernon, WA  
John & Emily Tingle, Bristol, England

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

➔ **It's interesting to note that of the current 105 association members, 19 are from the state of Washington. And the state population is a mere 5.5 million inhabitants.**

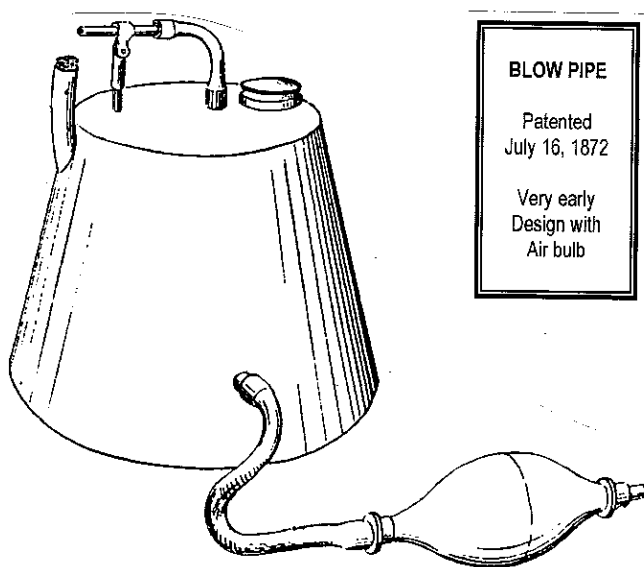
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### **Additions To The US Manufacturer List**

Additions from various members, and as a result of our Blow Torch Convention, a few new manufacturer names were uncovered. It continues to amaze me as we continue to uncover more US torch manufacturers.

#### THOSE ADDITIONS INCLUDE:

- The **WC Downey Co. Gravity Feed Torch**, (owner - Pedersen-OR). The Downey Co., while noted on the earlier manufacturer list, had no information on location or products.
- The **BLASTO** torch from the **Alex Rowland Co.**, NY, is assumed to be a brand label company since the construction is identical to a Shaffer-Beyer torch, and carries the same Shaffer-Beyer pump patent (owners - Bennett-NC & Carr-WA).
- The **Hudson Manufacturing Co.**, Chicago, IL, manufactured the Model #6103 - **Porta Flame Sprayer** (owner - Gaffney-NY).
- Literature recently received uncovered that the **Harmic Mfg. Co.** is a division of the **P. Wall Co.** I had been carrying Harmic as an individual manufacturer. It's assumed that the P. Wall Co.

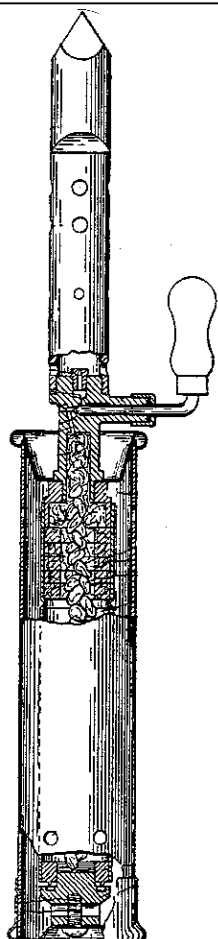


purchased Harmic since the Harmic Mfg. Co. originated in Somerville, MA.

- In addition to Graham Stubbs' **J. Russell & Co. #37 Seamless** torch, two more were identified at the Mt. Vernon, WA convention. **Larry Fields-NC** displayed his highly polished #37 Seamless, and **John Tingle-England** acquired a #37 from Larry Fields at the convention.
- Another addition to the list included the **Hiram C. Roberts Co.**, Philadelphia, PA, an Electrician's or Plumber's Torch with a patent date of June 13, 1899 (owner-Carr-WA).

This winter, as many of you wait out the snow and cold, please review the enclosed updated manufacturer list, and determine if you have any of the rare torches. I have marked the manufacturers list with a @ in the *comments column* to define a rare manufacturer. I am defining the "@ manufacturer" as rare because there is no present confirmation of the manufacturer other than by literature or documentation. Earlier literature, such as the *Thomas Guide to Manufacturers* listed general categories, such as *TORCHES*, however, the torch category included all sorts of other items including blow torches. So, please check your collection and let me know if you have a rare one!

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**SOLDERING IRON  
TORCH**

PATENT #  
1,518,404  
December 9, 1924

**JUSTRITE  
MANUFACTURING CO.  
CHICAGO, IL**

## **DO YOU KNOW**

How to remove those ugly clumps of solder that you sometimes find on a newly purchased torch?

The solder glob is usually there because of a poor repair job on a leaky torch. Unless you plan to operate the torch, it's nothing more than a distracting eyesore and certainly not necessary. I have seen quite a few restored torches recently with those ugly clumps of solder, and I can only guess that the restorer either ignored the mess, or did not have a good process to easily remove it. My method is simple and has proven to be very effective on all of my restored "jewels".

The first step is to melt off the bulk of the solder clump using a propane torch, or if you're brave, try firing up and using another blow torch. When the clump is fluid, lightly tap the piece on a hard surface to knock off as much of the bulk as possible. A few light taps will remove most of it, and remember at this step to use eye and hand protection since the hot solder tends to splatter. Repeat the first step if large clumps remain. When all of the large clumps are removed, reheat the area again to re-melt the remaining solder film. When the solder film is fluid, wipe the area with a dry cloth, several times. Repeat as necessary. You should now have an area that has a very light solder film and is easily removed during the buffing process.

Using a good buffing compound and a heavy-duty buffer will remove the film with very little effort. You'll find the extra effort in the solder removal process pays off in a more attractive torch, and more closely resembles the original piece. I'm interested in hearing from anyone who has an easier or more effective process for solder removal.

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## **CLASSIFIED ADS:**

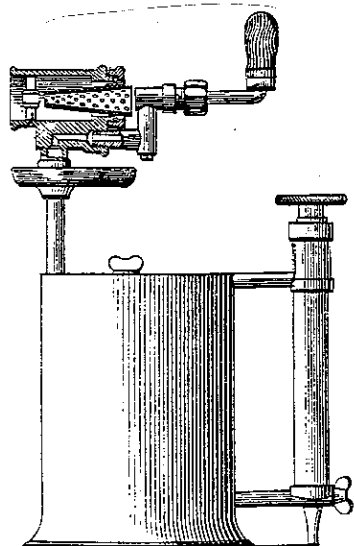
Numerous members have expressed an interest in advertising for a specific torch or component, or advertise torches for sale. Starting in this issue and in all future issues, I will provide a **CLASSIFIED ADS** section, free to anyone wanting to advertise. I only ask that you provide sufficient information describing the torch or component, price, and terms.

## DISAPPOINTING WORDS TO A BLOW TORCH COLLECTOR:

- I had a beauty last week, sold it for \$5.
- I have some I'll sell cheap, I'll dig them out someday and call you. (If they do find them, they'll lose your phone number)
- I drilled those extra holes to make it into a lamp, but never got around to making it.
- I threw the torch air pump out and soldered in a tire valve...real handy.
- This one is really old, (1965), so I want \$495 for it.
- Yeah, I have some of those....next time you are in Key West, Florida, stop by.

Words-A-Torch-Collector-Never-Wants-To-Hear  
offered by **Mark Pedersen**.

♦ ♦ ♦



### BLOWTORCH

Patent #  
622,525  
April 4, 1899

Special  
Burner design

## ANOTHER "BEST EVER" TORCH!

I recently accompanied a co-worker, Jim, who was in town from Dubai, United Arab Emirates on business with Boeing. During a lull in our business discussions, Jim asked if I knew of any near-by antique shops, since he had "cash to spend" on his favorite collectable, Franciscan glass.

Our meeting ended early so I drove him to a local antique shop in Issaquah, one that I had visited numerous times before. We had only 30 minutes to closing, so we quickly breezed through trying to take

in the entire mall. An article in a case, on a lower shelf, caught my eye and I asked to view the item close-up. I flipped over the item that was marked as a "miners tool", and I couldn't believe my eyes! There stamped in the bottom was "**ROBERT'S, PATENTED JUNE 13, 1899**". I had recently re-filed all of my 1800's patents, and remembered a Hiram Roberts patent for an alcohol torch. There I was, holding an alcohol torch from a company that I never knew existed. (A reminder that while many early torch patents were issued, few were ever produced.)

Yes, I did purchase it, and gladly paid the \$28, somewhat high, but my philosophy is, "if you see it, buy it because you may never see one again". The piece is in excellent condition, albeit has seen a lot of use, and the rubber hose used for the air supply has long ago corroded away. It is 7 inches high, 1½ inches in diameter, and the wick cap is threaded which is different from the unthreaded patent version. Another "best ever" torch to add to the shelf! I would be curious if any of you have a ROBERT'S alcohol torch. **See the attached patent copy for description.**

♦ ♦ ♦

## NOTES FROM ALL OVER

I just received a note from **Ralph Larson**, and it seems that the British invasion continues. Brian Grainger and his lovely wife from Bristol, England recently visited Ralph during a fall foliage trip to the New England area. They spent nearly all day talking and exchanging torches.

**Glenn Harrison** reports a recent acquisition of a near perfect Globe Torch, manufactured in Philadelphia. What is so unusual is that no record exists for a **Philadelphia Globe Co.**, and perhaps Glenn has uncovered another torch manufacturer. Before I update the manufacturer list, I'll ask Glenn to verify all of the nameplate information. Are there any other collectors that have a Philadelphia Globe Co. Globe Torch?

**Graham Stubbs**, while on a bicycling vacation in Iowa, visited a reconstructed historical village named Calliope. Displayed in an old-fashioned dentist's office was a Hanau dental blow torch. It brings a new meaning to pain from the earlier dentists!

**Dick Sarpolus** has suggested having embroidered patches made for our organization, and would depict a burning torch with the organization's

name. If there is sufficient interest, I will pursue the patches with Dick.

**Les Adams** reports in his latest British edition of *BLOWLAMP NEWS* that a sister torch collectors group in France, *Club des Amateurs d'outils Ancien a Flamme*, was founded in 1901, and held their annual meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup> the same date as our first annual meeting in Mt. Vernon. Their meeting was held at Villeneuve la Guyard, just south of Paris and included members from France, Belgium, Holland, and England.

♦ ♦ ♦

## HELPFUL HINTS

I recently responded to a question from **Bob Fitchhorn**, and thought that others might benefit from the information. Since I lean more toward the turn-of-the-century torches, I have developed a method of determining age. I'm sure that many of you have experienced the dilemma of what defines a good collectable torch and what is the true value. The two tend to go together since the older or more rare a torch, the higher the value. The issue of how much to pay tends to lie with the purchaser and it is also a buyer beware situation. Having some knowledge of torches, using the manufacturer list, and applying the following telltale signs for most US manufactured torches will provide some help:

**PATENT DATES:** If there is a patent date listed, obviously the earlier the better. Remember that patent dates were used long after the patent was issued, 17 years to be exact. After the 17-year period, the manufacturer could continue to reference the patent number or date, however, other manufacturers could utilize the patent design or features.

**TYPES OF CONSTRUCTION:** This comes from some experience with older torches, and is basically recognizing features such as:

Exterior air tubes from the pump to the fuel tank.  
Exterior air check valves with small wingnut style knobs.

Soldering iron hooks cast as an integral part of the burner head.

Air pump located in the handle.

Fuel feed tube exiting the fuel tank from the top center or from the front of the tank.

Heavy cast brass or bronze fuel tanks.

Vertical seams on fuel tanks, where sheet metal brass or copper was joined to form the tank.

**STAMPED OR RAISED LETTERING:** Any manufacturer information provided as raised

lettering, either as a cast piece or machined is typically a turn-of-the-century piece. In most cases, even stamped information is also an early practice of many manufacturers.

**ABSENCE OF BAKELITE & DECALS:** Bakelite didn't start appearing on torches until sometime after 1909-10, and decals came on the scene sometime later. Does any member know the history of decals?

**BRASS VS OTHER MATERIALS:** The more brass, bronze, or copper and the lesser amount of steel, iron, or wood utilized is a definite factor. Earlier torches were in some cases all brass/bronze albeit a small wood covered fuel valve handle or a steel fuel feed tube or cast iron drip cup.

**THICKNESS OF MATERIALS:** Not always an indication, however when you compare many of the earlier models, some tend to have fuel tanks made from thinner materials. Two good examples are **Mark Pedersen's** Quick Meal torch with its paper-thin tank, and the fuel tanks of most early Turner Brass Works torches that carried the OLD RELIABLE trademark cast into the pump knob.

**MANUFACTURERS NAME:** Utilizing the enclosed updated manufacturer list, you can determine rarity for just about any manufacturer know to date. If you find one that is listed as @, or with only a few owners listed, consider it somewhat rare.

**UNUSUAL CONFIGURATIONS:** This holds true for older as well as some of the newer, 1920's-40's, torches. Older examples are any of the Baby #8 torches manufactured by O. Bernz, Clayton & Lambert, and P. Wall Manufacturing Co. Some more recent examples include the Unique Manufacturing Co. red steel flattened round tank torch, and the OTTO BERNZ 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary torch of 1951 that was manufactured with a tapered quart size tank in brass and aluminum.

The bottom line on pricing is always what the purchaser is willing to pay for the item. Taking the above factors into consideration, and using my philosophy as mentioned earlier "if you see it, buy it because you may never see one again".

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Thanks again to all that have contributed information for the newsletter. I appreciate your support and encouragement and will continue with 3 newsletters in '99. Have a great holiday and I'll see you next year.      **RON**

# CLASSIFIED ADS

**For Sale:** Clayton & Lambert #32, carries a 3-18-1902 patent on the pump. Quart size, air pump in the fuel tank, brass "Bishop" handle, and all metal in good condition. Make best offer. Terri Jo Daniels, 14026 Weir St., Omaha, NE, 68137-1538, (402) 896-0604

**For Sale:** Clayton & Lambert quart size, no missing parts, good condition, wooden "Bishop" handle. Make best offer. Larry Stefan, 5710 Apollo Dr., Lake View, NY, 14085-9637.

**For Sale:** Entire collection of 160 torches, all polished and lacquered, no duplicates, asking price, \$14,000.00 Canadian, Jim MacClean, Nova Scotia, Canada

**For Sale:**

- Detroit Torch Mfg. Co. patent 8/19/18, few dents, handle is wound spring material, bottom fill, T shaped pump handle, good condition, \$12.
- O. Bernz #87 quart size, wood handle, good condition, \$12.
- O. Bernz, #107 most of label intact, very good condition, \$16.
- Clayton & Lambert #158A, very good condition, T shaped pump handle, wood red handle with stamped metal bracket, \$14.
- O. Bernz, #200, pump handle marked with a C, \$14.
- Clayton & Lambert #158A, good condition, \$14.
- Clayton & Lambert #A7827, burner cover, very good condition, \$14.
- Clayton & Lambert #148, bottom fill, very good condition, \$16.
- Unmarked, maybe O. Bernz, top fill, burner cover, 5/51 stamped on handle, \$10.
- All nine pieces at \$125 plus S&H. Gordon Drummond, 4664 Roloson Rd., Corning, NY 14830, (607) 962-1657, email at [cgdrum@servtech.com](mailto:cgdrum@servtech.com)

**For Sale:** Turner Brass Works quart size, pistol grip handle of Bakelite, Label intact, pump in fuel tank, wind guard over burner, good condition. Make best offer. Stephen Baxter, 1521 Sioux Bayou Dr., Gautier, MS 39533

**For Sale:** Clayton & Lambert quart torch, with T handle pump in fuel tank, windscreen over burner. Also, C&L plumber's furnace complete with lead pot, in very good condition. Other assorted plumber tools. Make best offer for some or all. Bill Schroeder, 3217 E. Rene, Chillicothe, IL 61523, (309) 579-2184.

**For Sale:** O. Bernz and Clayton & Lambert quart size torches. Very good condition. Write for details. George Dick, 1670 SW 32<sup>nd</sup> Court, Miami, FL 33145.

**Wanted:** Instruction sheet for any Lenk alcohol torch. Phil Roach, Sunnyside, WA.

**Wanted:** A chrome plunger knob (air pump?) for a Turner Brass Works refrigerant leak-tester torch. Dave Schulte, Sperry, IA.

**Wanted:** A Scovill alcohol torch, either the ¼ or ½ pint size. Willing to purchase or trade. Richard Gjersee, Kent, WA.

**Wanted:** Interested in any blow torch manufactured in Mollala, Oregon. Also searching for a #49 "Super-Dreadnaught" furnace torch manufactured by P. Wall Mfg. Co. Mark Pedersen, OR.

**Wanted:** Would like at least one of everything! John Tingle-Bristol, England

The **CLASSIFIED ADS** is available at no charge to all members of the Blow Torch Collectors Association in good standing. Advertising for all non BTCA members is available on request. Contact Ron Carr, 3328 258<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Issaquah, WA 98029-9173. (425) 557-0634, or email at [swcv70e@prodigy.com](mailto:swcv70e@prodigy.com)

No. 626,723.

Patented June 13, 1899.

H. C. ROBERTS.  
ELECTRICIAN'S OR PLUMBER'S TORCH.

(Application filed Apr. 17, 1899.)

(No Model.)

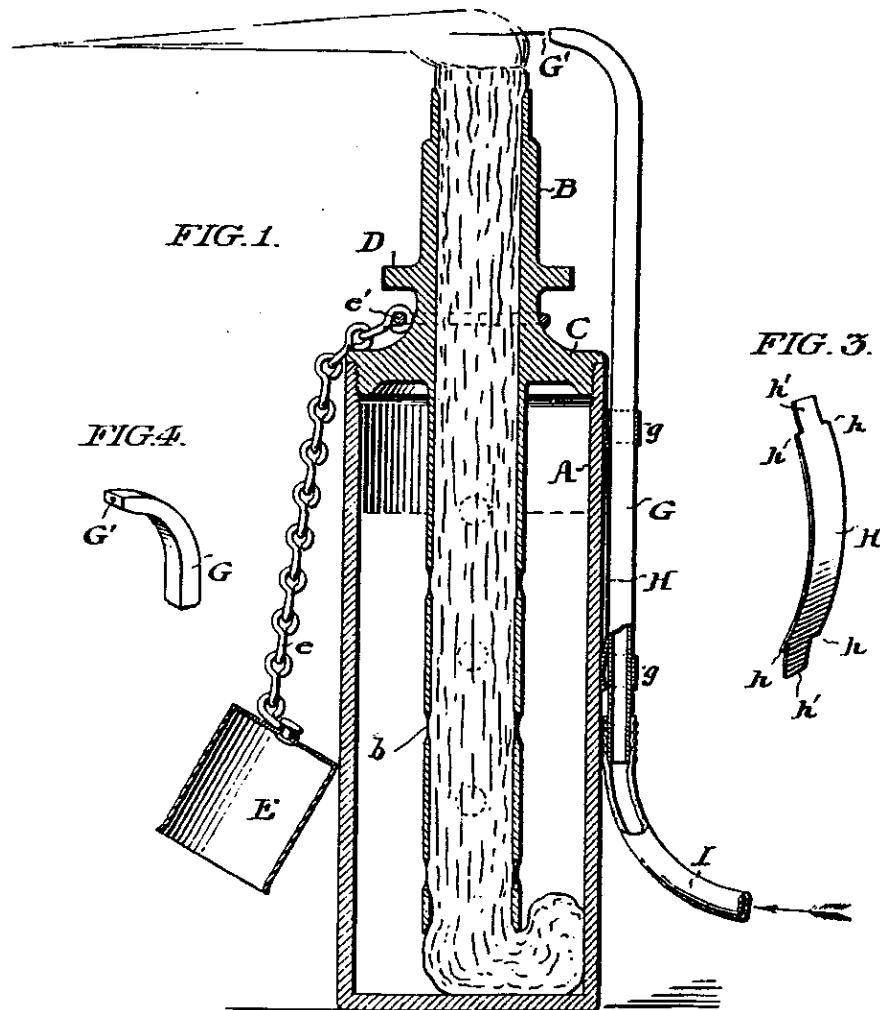
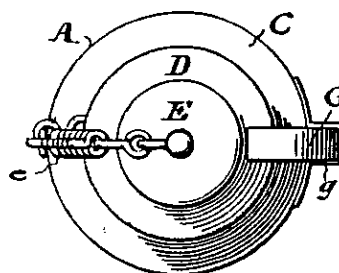


FIG. 2.



WITNESSES:

Arthur E. Paige  
Thos. K. Lancaster.

INVENTOR:

H. C. Roberts  
By his attorneys  
Wm C Shawbridge  
J. Norman Dixon