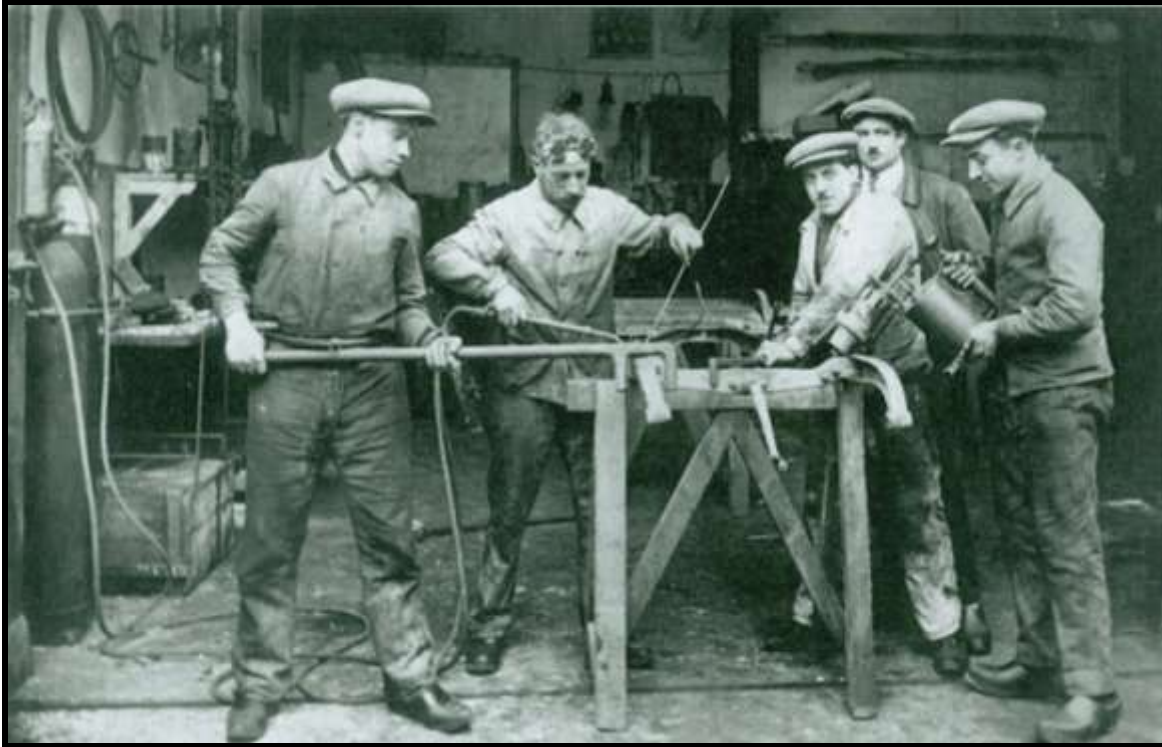
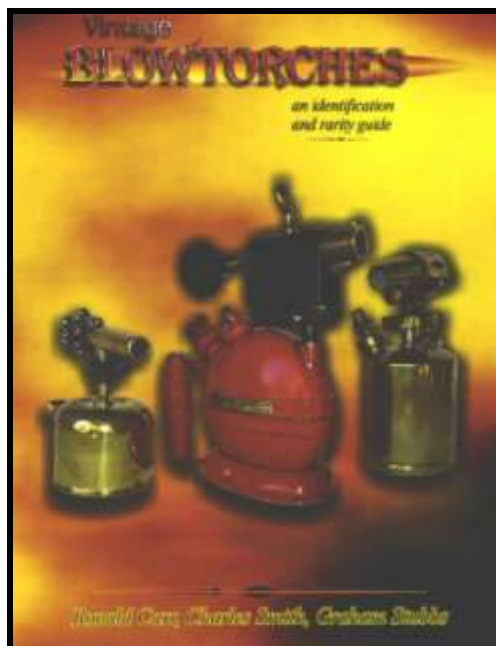


# THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION  
Issue #38 June 2007



The above poster is from the collection of Michel Duval.



See enclosed book order form  
and related stories.

# NEW MEMBERS

**Bob Thompson**, Mehoopany, Pennsylvania is a 3-year collector with a modest collection of torches and firepots. He finds most of his torches at auctions, yard sales, and flea markets, however, his favorite are the two that he inherited from his Dad...a C&L blow torch and an Otto Bernz plumber's firepot. Bob has refinished most of his brass torches and displays some of them on the fireplace mantel. He's never publicly displayed his torches, but plans on a display at an antique tractor club show in July.

**George E. M. Stevens III**, Lincoln, Nebraska is relatively new to blow torch collecting. His wife's grandfather left him an old Wall torch years ago, however, George only seriously started collecting torches about one year ago. Only a few of his collection of thirty are polished, and he does display them in his home. George also collects railroad oil cans, monkey wrenches, soldering irons, and smudge pots. George became a BTCA member as a result of purchasing the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book on eBay.

## WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!



## ☰ NOTES FROM ALL OVER ☰

Are you in need of a blow torch replacement part...and it is for a rare torch...and your odds of finding a replacement are slim to none.... well fear not...**John Tingle** to the rescue! John has located a small engineering firm in England (owned by Mike Russell) that is capable of turning out just about any part needed...and their charges are very reasonable. Interested individuals can contact Mr. Russell through John Tingle.

**Suezy Proctor** is now a Toastmasters International Director and recently had a discussion with a Program Director during a meeting in Kent, WA. Suezy always promotes her torch collecting since it is such an unusual hobby, and it is a great conversation topic. Suezy happened to mention the upcoming BTCA 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Mt. Vernon, WA and TV Toastmasters of Kent are interested in attending with filming and interviews for their programming.

We heard from **Keith Mahaffey** regarding Lloyd Weber's torch that was featured in newsletter #36, page 18. Keith also owns a Globe Light & Heat Co. GLOBE torch...with identical markings and features. It seems that the Globe Light & Heat Co. made many of this model considering all that we've seen.



Globe Light & Heat Co. torch  
Photo by Keith Mahaffey

Speaking of replacement parts...**John Jaress** recently machined a few replacement parts for one of his rare Globe blow torches. John indicated that he would consider making replacement parts for BTCA members in the near future since his retirement is around the corner and he'll need things to do in retirement. We'll keep you posted if and when John comes on line as a replacement source. John also sent in a photo of his Bernz no. 13 torch that was featured in newsletter no. 37. John's no. 13 is also missing the small removable handle.

NOTES CONT.

Perhaps John can start making replacement handles for no. 13's since most are missing from members torches.

An article in newsletter no. 37 regarding Zeidler torches prompted **Tom Bartlett** to contact us. Tom has what we consider to be a standard looking Zeidler torch, however, Tom's torch has something quite different stamped into the fuel tank...Mfg. by Zeidler Lamp & Brass Co. exclusively for the Marion Co., New York City. From the information, we can only assume that the Marion Co. sold the torch under their name. The Marion Co. was unknown to us and is not listed in the recently published *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book. Are there any other Zeidler torches out there stamped with Marion on it? Check yours out and please let us know.

**Graham Stubbs** sent in an amusing illustration of the Pink Panther holding a blow torch. It appears that literally everyone...including animals use blow torches!



The Pink Panther  
Illustration submitted by Graham Stubbs

**Clarence Goldberg** sent in photos of a MAHR JIFFY blow torch that was manufactured by the Diamond Iron Works. He received it from a friend so we assume it was a gift...nice gift since the torch appears to be in excellent condition!



Mahr JIFFY torch manufactured by Diamond Iron Works  
Photo by Clarence Goldberg



## BernzOmatic

We've been in contact with Bragg Swain, Marketing Manager, for the BernzOmatic Co. in Huntersville, NC. BernzOmatic is the successor company to the Otto Bernz Co. of Newark, NJ. Bragg has been tasked to procure as much history of the Otto Bernz Co. as well as set up a museum at their headquarters facility to include Otto Bernz items.

The Otto Bernz Co. is now known as BernzOmatic, A Newell/Rubbermaid Co....so they've gone through quite a few mergers. Through all of the Bernz mergers and acquisitions, most of the Bernz Company records and history were destroyed....and not one Bernz product was passed down through the mergers. Bragg did share with us a rare old photo of Otto Bernz.

Bragg's challenge is to acquire Bernz related items and literature, and display them in the company headquarters museum. Any items donated to the Bernz museum will be greatly appreciated...and, **your name and location will be prominently displayed along with your donated item.**

**BERNZOMATIC CONT.**

Please consider donating Bernz items, especially Bernz blow torches, and send your donations to:

**Bragg Swain**  
**BernzOmatic Co.**  
**8935 NorthPointe Executive Drive**  
**Huntersville, NC 28078**



Otto Bernz  
Photo from Bragg Swain, BernzOmatic Co.

Bragg will keep us posted on the Otto Bernz museum and will send photos on its progress. Bragg and BernzOmatic have provided give-a-ways for the upcoming BTCA 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Mt. Vernon, WA on September 15<sup>th</sup>.



**Details, details, details...** Charles Smith uncovered a bit of history on the Clayton & Lambert Co. The earlier company used the name Clayton, Lambert & Co. up until late March 1891. Sometime between March 21 and March 28, 1891 they officially changed their name to Clayton & Lambert Mfg. Co., just thought you should know.

## THE BLOWLAMP COLLECTOR

By Mike Preston

The following is an article printed in a recent British newsletter, *BLOWLAMP NEWS*:

It was a Friday morn; market day, like countless others and first “order of the day” was to stock up with comestibles for the week to come. Having dealt with sustenance for the inner man, it was now fun time. An hour or two trawling through table after table, displaying piles of pre-owned assorted impedimenta (alright...”junk”), seeking the odd “pearl” or two. A long forgotten object may trigger memories of youth or happier times, or there might be a real bargain. Male, female, teens to senior citizens; all shuffling from stall to stall searching for something special. Most pointing to an item and requesting a price with a flick of an eyebrow, while others bartered, Arab style, with the chap or chapess on the other side of the table.

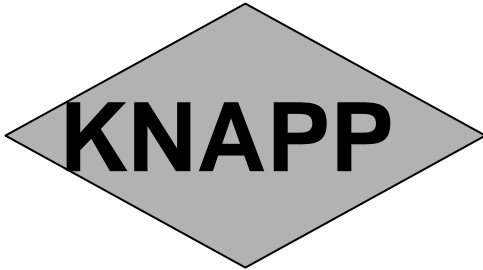
Most sorties were rewarded with a “find”, but this day was special. Through a gap between the tablecloth and ground was a box of freshly sawn wood. At first it seemed empty, but on closer inspection revealed two items huddled together in one corner, as if seeking shelter and mutual protection. Reaching to retrieve one of the objects, I sensed their desire to remain together and stood up with a blowlamp in each hand.

Tools have been my constant companions for several decades and I enjoy the feel of a quality item. These blowlamps have balance and fit my hands perfectly. They are not new and gleaming, but carry the patina of honest toil. In engine terms, they are nicely “run in”. Will I buy them...most certainly! Want to take them from me...be prepared to fight! This is not an example of a bygone memory, but a new source of pleasure. A functional device built to carry out a task by becoming an extension to the human limb. There have been many inventions over the centuries to aid our domination of the world. These gadgets are seen as a separate entity to be used, but not allowed to get too close, in the majority of cases that is. Socrates, in ancient Greece, had the wisdom to recognize the advantage of human/object integration and gave it a name...”ergonomics” FW Lanchester built cars to act as an extension of the human frame (and fashion) to aid control.

BLOWLAMP CONT.

But the humble blowlamp? A certain Mr. Royce, car builder to the elite, said "That which is well done, however humble, is noble." Heft a blowlamp in your hand and you are holding something very noble indeed.

We all indulge ourselves chocolate, malt whiskey, and many other desirables. Me? I am a blowlamp collector.



**Charles Smith** recently acquired an early blow torch that is similar to a Galloway Gas Fitters' Lamp but has some significant differences, including a "KNAPP" NY trade mark.



**KNAPP MFG. CO. TORCH**  
Photo by Charles Smith

Charles' photo looks very much like the Galloway illustration in the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book, page 192. This may also be the same Knapp Mfg. Co. as listed in the blow torch book on page 259. The Knapp Mfg. Co. torches on page 259 used the same diamond shaped emblem that is stamped into Charles' torch. Please contact us if you have a torch as in the photo with a KNAPP name and diamond emblem.



## Turner No. 141 Engine Heater

The 1939 catalog of the Turner Brass Works has the only illustration found to date of this massive vertical engine-heating blowtorch. The illustration, which is reproduced on page 402 in the *"Vintage Blowtorches"* book, shows a torch with an internal pump and with this description "The torch has a vertical burner which produces a large blast flame for pre-heating engine cylinders. The heavy bronze burner casting has a two-way port with double generating surface ...a spreader within the nozzle distributes the flame over a large area." The engine heater came in two versions, No. 141 with a half-gallon tank and No. 41 with a one-quart capacity.



**Turner No. 141 Engine Heater**  
Photo by Graham Stubbs

Collected by **Graham Stubbs**, is a variation of the No. 141 torch, shown in the photo on page 5, with an external pump located in the brass handle. The torch stands a little over 14 inches tall; the cast burner is 1¾ inches in diameter. The circular brass drip cup is 2¾ inches across.



Turner No. 141 Vertical Burner  
Photo by Graham Stubbs

As found, the torch had been crudely modified by cutting the fuel feed pipe and adding a 90 degree pipe fitting to point the burner sideways. Graham restored the vertical feed using a straight brass coupling.



## THE INDEX

**ATTENTION BOOK OWNERS....due to a printing error, all of the five-star ratings in the book, *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*, were listed as four stars along with all of the four-star items. If you purchased a book, we've included a correction sheet listing all of the five-star ratings with this newsletter that you can insert in the front of your index for future reference. We sincerely apologize for this inconvenience.**

**Remember....five-star items are known to exist, but as of this writing, no known item has surfaced....so please contact us if you are fortunate enough to own one of the five-star items....it would be considered very rare and may be a one-of-a-kind!**



## The Story of the Blow Torch Book *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*

By **Graham Stubbs**

In 1929, Dr. Henry Mercer, of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, paid for the printing of four hundred copies of his new book "Ancient Carpenters' Tools". Ahead of its time, it was for many years the only general work in English on the subject of hand tools. Four years later the Early American Industries Association, the EAIA, was founded "... to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea." Today there are hundreds of books available on collectible tools of almost every conceivable kind. The EAIA is still going strong, and there are now numerous regional and specialist organizations for the nation's hordes of tool collectors, many of whom specialize in collecting specific categories of tools.



Mercer Museum, Doylestown, PA  
Founded in 1916 by Dr. Henry Mercer

It was not until the 1970s, that brass blow torches started to attract the attention of collectors who were interested in a tool that had become obsolete in the years following World War II. Torches also appealed to decorators, who looked at the potential of the shiny brass object that could be used as an ornament ... or as a lamp base. However, there was no book available on this subject to describe and assist in identification of these unique tools. Collectors simply visited the flea markets, garage sales, and antique shops not quite knowing what they were finding, and whether the items were rare or common.

Compared with most of the other organizations for tool collectors, the Blow Torch Collectors Association, BTCA, had a relatively recent start, comprising the recipients of the newsletter "The Torch", which was started in 1995 by **Ron Carr**. He was an executive with General Electric's aircraft engine business, who had then been collecting torches for eight years. When he launched the newsletter, Ron was in touch with twenty-five other collectors, and he found enthusiastic support among the first recipients of the newsletter who expressed a willingness to share their information. These first contributors included individuals whose names would appear often in the pages of "The Torch", **Mark Pederson**, **Dick Sarpolus** and **Graham Stubbs**. Today BTCA has over 180 members, worldwide who receive "The Torch", published three times per year.

One of Ron's primary goals was the accumulation and dissemination of information about torches and related tools, and about the companies that manufactured them. **Mark Pederson** was a generous source of old catalog material, copies of Thomas Guide reference sheets, and lists of patents. Like Mark, Ron had a particular interest in torch related patents, and spent many hours in libraries accumulating patent copies. Looking back now, it seems that a comprehensive blow torch book was inevitable. Numerous BTCA members submitted copies of old catalogs and advertising material as well as photographs of unusual torches, and the files on the manufacturers grew exponentially. It was this willingness of many American collectors to share their information that ultimately made the preparation of a comprehensive book possible.

Three large manufacturers stood out as offering a larger variety of torch products over a long time span; they were Clayton & Lambert of Detroit, Michigan, Turner Brass Works of Chicago, Illinois and Otto Bernz Co. of Newark, New Jersey.

BTCA member **Graham Stubbs**, a torch collector since the late nineteen seventies, had a number of original Clayton & Lambert catalogs, and he prepared a nineteen page listing of Clayton & Lambert products for the newsletter using line drawing illustrations from the catalogs.

Issued in 1999, the listing was BTCA's first foray into the

compilation and indexing of a list of models from one maker. A similar listing for Turner Brass Works appeared in 2000, and an index to the first five years of "The Torch" followed. Ron and Graham started to talk about what a single comprehensive book might contain, and Ron drafted an outline.

In the year 2001 a listing for the Otto Bernz Company was published in "The Torch". The same year also saw the publication of a blow torch book in the USA, written by BTCA member **Dick Sarpolus**, with the title "Collecting Blowtorches". It contained many color photographs of collectible torches, provided an introduction to collecting, with chapters on such topics as how blowtorches operate, the cleaning, restoring and repairing of torches, how to find them, and their value. Sarpolus' book did not, however, set out to be the encyclopedic tome that Ron and Graham had in mind.

Using the same university library resources that he consulted professionally, another BTCA member, **Dr. Charles Smith**, a research micro paleontologist, surfaced a large quantity of advertising material related to torches from the Sears Roebuck Company, sold under brand names used by Sears such as Craftsman, Dunlap, Fulton, Hercules and Merit; Charles and Graham collaborated on another listing for the newsletter, issued in 2002. Using these same library resources, Charles then started to examine very early trade journals from the late 1800s...many that had advertisements for blowtorches and plumbers' firepots. Starting in 2003, Charles systematically reviewed every issue of the periodicals, and copied for his two colleagues each article related to blowtorches and firepots, and their makers. In this way the early history of the companies and their blowtorch products was described in successive issues of the newsletter.

In 2003, Charles and Graham officially became contributing editors of "The Torch", and the team was in place, which would eventually produce the book "*VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, An Identification and Rarity Guide*". Graham, with a professional interest in patents, expanded BTCA's list of torch-related patents to more than eight hundred by late 2004.

In 2005 the three would-be authors agreed that it was time to get serious about creating an authoritative book on American blowtorches. Listings of torches from several large manufacturers had now appeared in the newsletter, the files were bursting with information not yet disseminated to BTCA members, and Charles had the results of two years of diligent research on hand. They dusted off Ron's preliminary outline, and agreement was reached on the approach to the book and an outline.

The goal was to create an affordable book, which would help collectors identify blowtorches, with an indication of when they were offered for sale, and to provide information about the manufacturers. Because Canadian blowtorches closely resemble the American made tools, the book would include suppliers from that country too. It would be essential to provide illustrations, and these would come from catalogs and/or journal articles whenever possible. Photographs of actual torches would be used when no line drawings were available.

An introduction would include discussion about the beginning of torch collecting, and a short history of this class of tools. A listing of torches would constitute the main portion of the book, and would be organized alphabetically by manufacturer. The scope of the listing would be liquid-fueled blowtorches and related tools, including soldering iron heaters, self-heated soldering and branding irons and plumbers' firepots. The section for each manufacturer would include an introduction to that company, with the major makers being treated to several pages of historical coverage. The three men had considerable discussion about whether there should be an entire section of the book on patents. They agreed that patent illustrations would be used as needed to illustrate specific models. It was contemplated that there might be a later book dedicated to patented blowtorches. Finally, one of the most important elements of the book would be a comprehensive index, with cross-references to makes, model numbers and trade names.

At this stage of the planning, Graham estimated that the book would cover 260 plus manufacturers, and that without a section on patents; it would run about 250 to 300 pages!

A list of manufacturers was assembled, combining the list, which had been published from time to time in "The Torch", together with a list of makers that had been separately identified by Charles. Assignments for the writing of introductions for the various manufacturers were agreed. Assignments were also made to obtain photographs from BTCA members, of torches for which no illustrations were present in the files. The composite list of manufacturers was broadened to identify which of the three authors had agreed to do what, and the current status.

At the beginning of January 2006 Graham prepared a draft of the listing of makers beginning with the later "A", and he submitted it to his co-authors for review. In addition to validating the content and checking the grammar, the purpose of this first batch of twenty pages was to get agreement on issues such as layout, font selection and size, and grammatical style. This was when a fourth member of the team was co-opted. Ron's wife, Janet Carr, was appointed as the final word on grammar and English usage. She would ultimately review every last word of the book to achieve the standard of excellence that the authors desired, but were incapable of achieving on their own.

With agreement on the approach, Graham continued almost full time to compile the listing, working letter by letter. By July he reached the letter Q, and projected that the number of makers would be 325. In mid September, the first draft of the entire listing A through Z was completed, covering 457 pages, much more than the 250 to 300 pages that he had initially forecast. There was the all-important index and an introduction yet to be created; this book would be a monster at more than five hundred pages. The authors reviewed the practicality of getting such a large volume printed for a reasonable cost. Ron talked to the printers and came back with a green light to proceed. At the end of the month, the September draft, in the form of a single sided three ring binder, was taken to the BTCA annual meeting held in Portland, Oregon and shown to the attendees. The only question raised was "When can we have it?"

While many books about antiques include a price guide, the authors decided to avoid the trap of something that could quickly be out of date. Instead they agreed to incorporate a guide to rarity, using a one to five star rating.



BOOK CONT.

One star was for those torches considered by the authors to be the most common, and five stars were for the rarest. The three authors separately assessed the rarity value of each item listed in the index, then set up a conference call at a predetermined day and time. The conference call lasted hours, and during that time each index item was painstakingly discussed to achieve an agreement on its rarity. By November 2006, a draft of the index existed which also incorporated the rarity guide. The index itself occupied eighteen pages, with 2900 references and cross-references. December saw completion of the introduction to the book, including a short history of the tool. Graham reported that the book would be 484 pages, with 324 makers and brands. It would list 1150 separate blowtorch models and 250 other tools such as firepots and soldering iron heaters. Additions made during January 2007 brought the total page count to 506.

The final review of content of the book took the best part of a month, during which time Ron's son Michael, a professional graphic artist, created a cover design in flaming color to match the book's subject matter.

At the end of February 2007, the book was turned over to the printer for production of three hundred and fifty copies, not a lot different than Henry Mercer's order for his pioneering tool book more than seventy years earlier. (One copy of the book was purchased by BTCA member Suezy Proctor and was donated to the library at the Mercer's tool museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.)

There was one final task for the three authors. In order to promote advanced sales of the book, each copy was to have an original autograph by all three authors. The book covers were printed separately on heavy card stock that each measured 24 inches x 15 inches, and had to remain flat and in pristine condition. Two crates were carefully packed and the 60+ pounds were air freighted to the three authors for signatures....Charles in Alabama, Graham in California and Ron in Nevada. The covers were then returned to the printer for binding and final trim.

There was one more very large task for Ron, who undertook to mail every last one of the two hundred plus copies for which advance orders were received.

Initial feedback on the book has been overwhelming, and sales continue strong.



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**More details, details, details.....**Graham Stubbs also uncovered a bit of history on the founders of the Clayton & Lambert Co.

In an 1880 US census listing...Joshua Lambert is 44 and a butcher, John E. Lambert is 21 and a store clerk, and Charles R. Lambert is 20 and also a store clerk.

The three brothers along with J N Clayton went on to create a great company; the Clayton & Lambert Co....just thought you should know.



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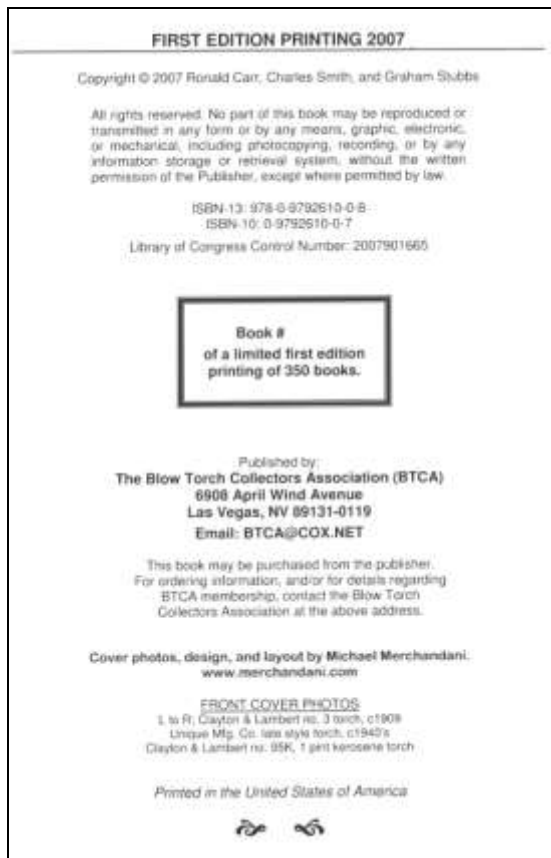
# THE BOOK

A big thank you to all BTCA members that purchased our book, *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, An Identification And Rarity Guide*. Ron, Graham, and Charles wish to thank you for making this project so successful! We've sold just over 230 books out of a limited first printing edition of 350 serialized and autographed books.

There are still a few BTCA members that initially indicated that they would purchase the book, but have not yet sent in their order form. We've included an additional order form for your convenience should you decide to place an order before the limited edition autographed copies are all sold. The autographed and serialized book offer will not be repeated after the first printing of 350 are all sold.

**THE BOOK CONT.**

There are approximately 120 autographed books remaining from the first printing...so don't delay in getting your autographed copy! Since the blow torch book is such a great reference, we'll be referring to it numerous times throughout this and future newsletters...so if you are without a book, you'll miss out on some of the information.



The inside front cover of the book, *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*



## Unique Mfg. Co. No. 0 Blow Torches

A favorite among blowtorch collectors, even though its fuel tank is not made from brass, is the distinctively shaped auto torch which is featured in the center of the front cover of the "*VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*" book.

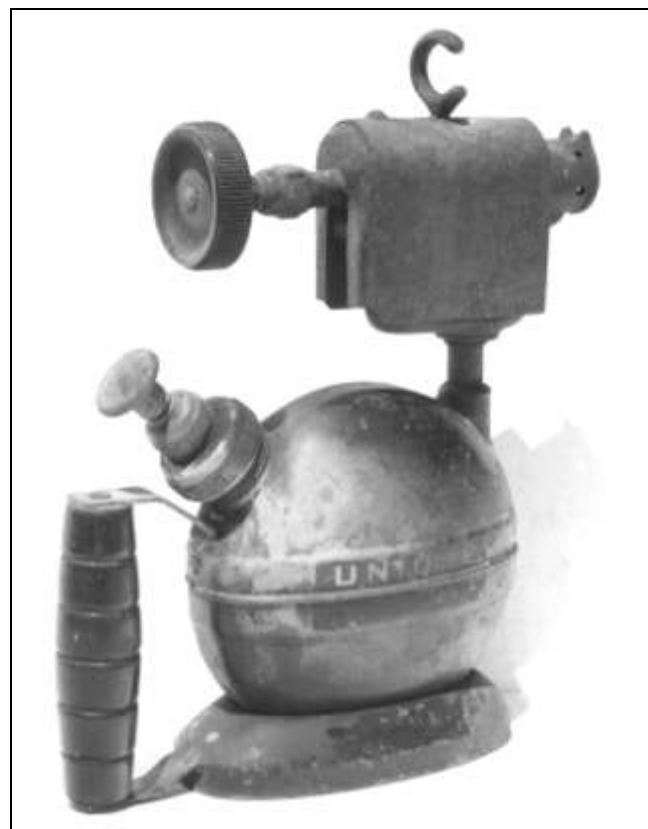
Usually found with some of its original bright red paint, it is what the name Unique Mfg. Co. of Chicago, IL is usually associated with. As the book points out, there are four known versions of this torch.

The earliest has a cast metal tank, a slanted handle integral with the cast tank, and it has the filler and pump combined together.

The second version is similar in arrangement, but with the fuel tank stamped from two pieces of sheet steel, and with a wooden handle supported on sheet metal supports.

The third in line also has the filler combined with the pump; however the handle is placed vertically.

The fourth and most commonly found version uses a separate filler cap. The last two versions also have tanks stamped from sheet metal.



Unique No. 0 Blow Torch  
Photo by Graham Stubbs

The Unique blow torch in the photo is from Graham Stubbs collection and is an example of the third version, with the combined pump and filler. A number of BTCA members have No. 0 Unique Mfg. Co. torches; very possibly some of them are the earlier and more rare versions.



☰ NOTES FROM ALL OVER 2 ☰

(These are last minute entries that did not make the NOTES FROM ALL OVER column.)

**William Kitazaki** sent in a great photo of a recently acquired Justrite soldering iron, no. 19, with the original box. Great find!



Justrite No. 19 Soldering Iron  
Photo by William Kitazaki

As a follow up to an earlier entry for **John Jaress**, the following photos illustrate the great machining capabilities that John has in making replacement parts. John's Globe torch was missing the pump plunger top piece and the air shutoff wing nut.

John was able to machine both parts from identical parts that were loaned to him by Ron Carr. Note the lettering that was reproduced in the top of the pump knob. Nice work John!



Wing Nut & Pump Cap Replacement Parts  
Photo by John Jaress

We also heard from **Paul Whiddett** that he also has an Otto Bernz no. 13 torch...and his does have the original handle.

We always hear from **Marnik Van Insberghe** on his buying and selling torches...if interested, he seems to have some for sale.

A few years ago **Ray Hyland** was given a flame gun, the only identifying mark being the word HAUCK cast into the body of the control valve. He had always assumed that it was made in the USA until recently, while rummaging through the shelves of a nearby antique centre he found the tank of another flame gun and this time it had a complete transfer or decal.



Hauck Flame Gun  
Photos by Ray Hyland

It states that it was made by "THE HAUCK FLAME GUN Co Ltd WISBECH, ENGLAND". As the HAUCK logo has the H and the K linked, he assumes there must be some link up with the Hauck Mfg Co of Brooklyn, NY. We also assume the same connection to the two companies. Listed in the blow torch book, *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* on page 205 is a reference to the A. E. Hauck Co. of Chemnitz, Germany...so Hauck most likely had many operations throughout Europe.

NOTES 2 CONT.

We heard from new member **Bob Thompson** and a Halstead "Spring-EEZ Oil Rifle" oiler that he recently acquired. It appears to be identical to the one featured in the blow torch book, *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* on page 202.



**Spring-EEZ Oiler**  
Photo by Bob Thompson

**Guy Gerard** sent in a photo of two Phoenix torches that appear to be in near perfect condition. We usually do not see Phoenix torches with the original soldering iron holder wire on the top of the burner head. Nice photo!



**No. 2 & No. 3 Phoenix torches**  
Photo by Guy Gerard



## National Safety Device Co. & Montgomery Wards

**Charles Smith** has uncovered a Montgomery Wards blow torch that is very similar to the no. 200 torch manufactured by the National Safety Device Co.

Since the fuel tank and handle assembly are nearly identical, without the aid of a label...the unsuspecting torch collector could easily mistake the Wards torch for a National Safety torch.



**National Safety Device No. 200**



**Montgomery Ward Torch**  
(Note windscreen and burner differences.)  
Photos by Charles Smith

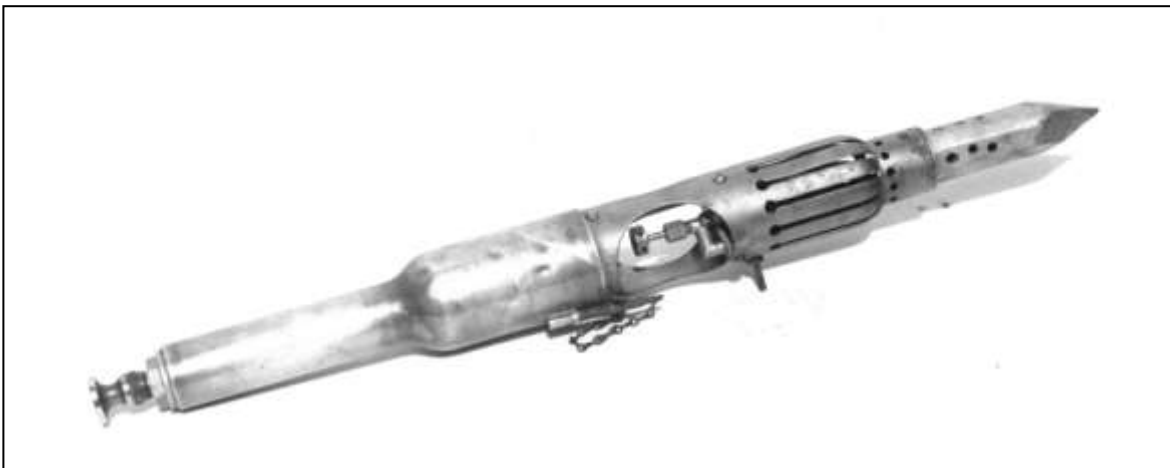
We would like to hear from you if you own a torch that has the same Ward's burner configuration.

# THE EUREKA

Article by **Graham Stubbs**

This self-heated soldering iron is puzzling as to its origin. The marking "THE EUREKA COPPER CO. NORTH EAST PA" is stamped on the copper soldering tip, but the design looks more European than American. Overall, the torch is twenty-two inches long and two and a quarter inches in diameter, and there are a number of distinctive features.

1. Elongated slots, each terminating in a round hole, surround an outer steel housing inside which is a cylindrical burner tube.
2. The diameter of the fuel tank narrows to an inch and a quarter at the end furthest from the burner, forming a handle.
3. The fuel valve adjustment knob is accessible through the side of the burner, and a small tool, which engages in holes in the circumference of the valve knob, is used to turn the knob. A clip to hold this adjustment tool is provided on the outside of the fuel tank.
4. As fuel passes to the burner, it is fed through a loop that is positioned close to the torch flame inside the outer housing. The function of this loop is clearly to pre-heat and partially vaporize the fuel as it flows to the burner orifice.
5. Two short legs are provided to support the tool in a recumbent position.



**Eureka Self-Heating Soldering Iron**  
Photo by Graham Stubbs



**Soldering Copper Point Details**  
Photo by Graham Stubbs



**Fuel Shut-off Details**  
Photo by Graham Stubbs

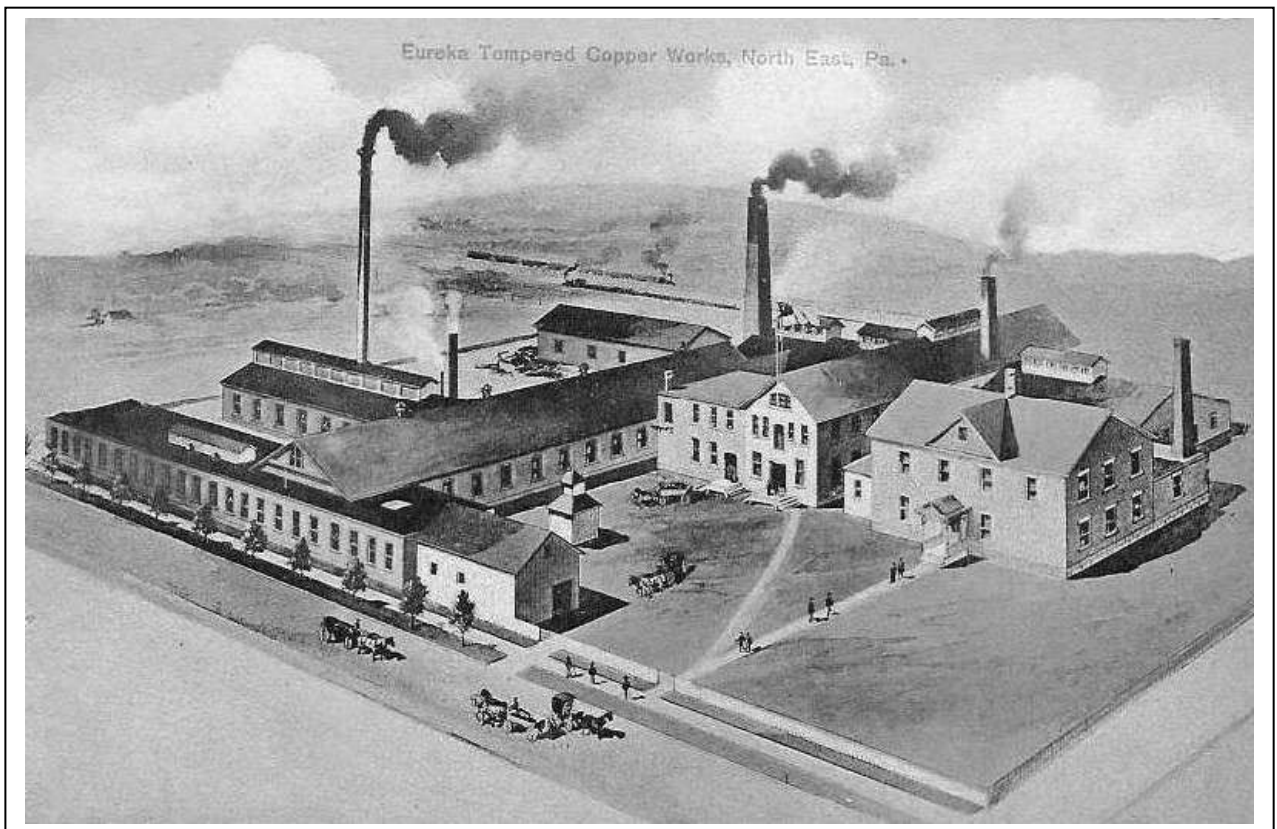
EUREKA CONT.

The Eureka design, with the elongated slots around the burner housing, resembles certain European blowtorches. I searched the excellent set of books published by the French collectors' group "Club des Amateurs d'Outils Anciens à Flamme", covering all the major European torch makers, but nowhere was there anything resembling this SHSI. Philippe Touillet's book of British blowlamps also yielded nothing.



Elongated Slots Close-up  
Photo by Graham Stubbs

Looking for a possible American origin, a web search revealed that there had been a Eureka Copper Company, in the town of North East located in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Old examples of soldering coppers have been seen with this maker's name stamped into the copper head. Today a successor to Eureka Copper exists in the town of North East named Eureka Electrical Products, Inc. No references to Eureka as a torch manufacturer have surfaced to date.



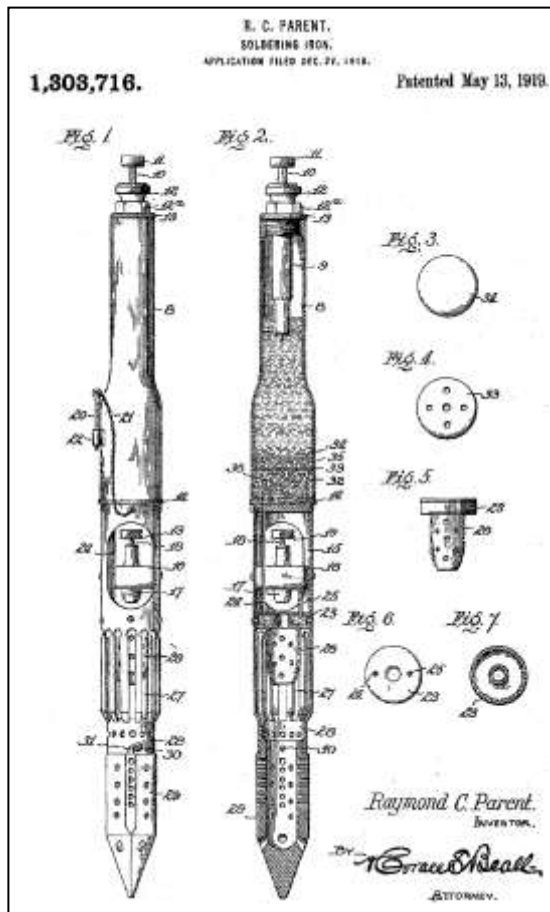
Eureka Tempered Copper Works, North East, PA  
Illustration submitted by Graham Stubbs

Next I turned to a search of US patents, of which BTCA has identified more than 800 describing blowtorches and related tools, starting from 1880. I had examined patent illustrations all the way up to 1919 when I saw the SHSI, or at least I thought I did.

EUREKA CONT.

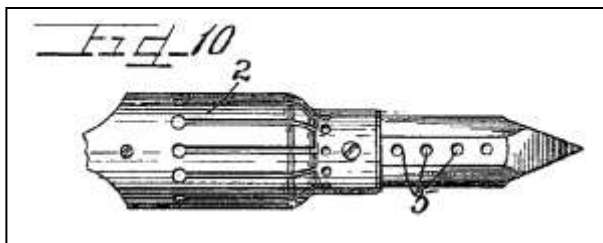
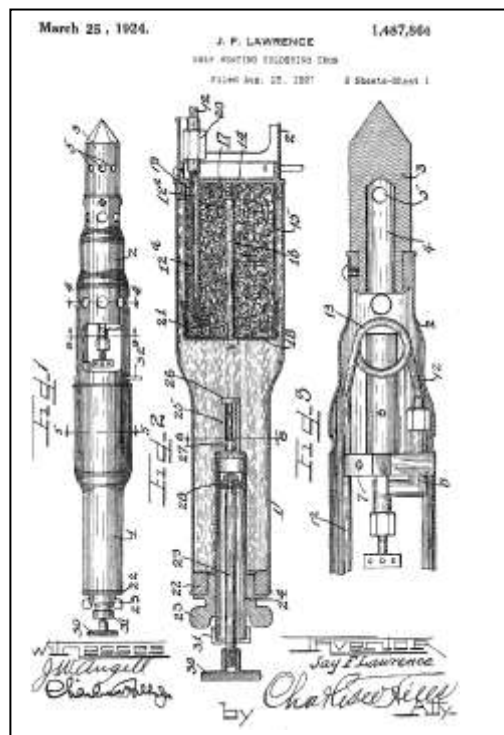
US patent 1,303,716 was awarded in 1919 to Raymond C. Parent of Crawfordville, Indiana. The drawing shows several of my torch's distinctive features. It has the narrowing of the fuel tank to form a handle and the valve knob set inside the outer burner housing and even the little adjuster tool and a clip to hold it. It also has the distinctive elongated slots in the outer housing.

However, the 1919 patent illustration does not include the pre-heating loop, nor does it have the little support feet. Additionally the burner shown in the patent drawing appears much shorter.



Continuing through the US patents, I came across US 1,487,864, awarded in 1924 to Jay F. Lawrence of Chicago, Illinois.

The cover drawing has all the features, including the support feet, except for the burner's slotted outer housing and the clip for the valve adjustment tool. The second page of this patent's illustrations shows an alternative design, complete with the burner slots. The illustrations of the US 1,487,864 patent are clearly an improvement over the patent of 1919.



The actual SHSI tool incorporates elements of both American patents. Neither patent lists a company to which it was assigned. My conclusion is that this SHSI is American made, quite probably by or for the Eureka Copper Company of North East, Pennsylvania. I would suggest listing Eureka as a torch manufacturer until other evidence surfaces.

So why has this interesting looking tool not shown up before? The answer probably lies in the dates of the patents, 1919 and 1924. In 1919, the Peterson Plummer Mfg. Co. introduced a SHSI named the EVER HOT, based on US patent 1,333,590, which was awarded to Claude M. Padgett in the same year. In 1920 the Products Corp. of Chicago, IL announced the EVER-HOT SHSI. A further transformation by 1922 resulted in the Everhot Mfg. Corp. of Maywood, IL. By 1925 Everhot was merged with the Combination Blow Torch Mfg. Co. of Chicago, IL which had a powerful patent portfolio. In this way Everhot Mfg. became a dominant supplier of self-heated soldering irons and branders.

Thus the SHSI, which was based on the 1919 Parent and 1924 Lawrence patents, was competing in exactly the same time frame with products from a powerful competitor. By comparison, the Everhot SHSI's were simpler and more robust in construction, and blow torch collectors have reported dozens of examples. The "EUREKA" SHSI described here is, to the author's knowledge, the first of its kind to come to light.



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## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BTCA CONVENTION

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual BTCA event to be held in Mt. Vernon, Washington during September 2007, and... **Jon** and **Judy Suta** are hosting the event. For those of you that remember and attended, Jon and Judy actually hosted the first two BTCA conventions at their home in Mt. Vernon in 1998 and 1999.

We've worked out the final details and have enclosed the travel & attendance information. Mark you calendars for the date of **Saturday, September 15, 2007**. Here's your opportunity to plan a vacation to the beautiful Pacific Northwest. It's a diverse area to see and lots of things to do, and if you have never visited the Pacific Northwest...take time to do it now! Come join us in the activity to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> annual gathering!

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# THE TORCH

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**THE PURPOSE** of BTCA is to preserve the history of blow torches and related equipment, to encourage the identification, classification, and exhibiting of such equipment, also to promote the study and better understanding of operation, purpose, and application.

Membership in BTCA is open to any person sharing its interests and purposes. For membership information, write to: Blow Torch Collectors Association, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131-0119, email to: BTCA@cox.net, or by phone: (702) 395-3114.

*THE TORCH* encourages contributions from anyone interested in our purpose. Articles can be submitted in any format and should include supportive literature whenever possible. All submittals should be sent to Ron Carr at the above address.

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