

THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
Issue #63 December 2015



From left to right, a Hauck No. 14, an a Hauck No. 15, fully restored. See page 4 for additional information.
From the collection of **Mike Gratz**.



From the collection of **Joe Koscieiniak**.

NEW MEMBERS

P. Ansell of Thorpe le Soken, Essex, England

Richard Bosley of Willis, Texas

Timothy Drinkard of Big Spring, Texas

Clive M. Finch, (AKA Twizzle) of Kinson, Bournemouth, Dorsetshire, England has been collecting vintage brass tools for over forty years, and since retirement is now collecting a lot more blow lamps. Most of his lamps are British or European with a few American and Canadian added for an international flavor. Most all of his lamp collection has been restored and proudly displayed around his home.

Lee Gomolchak of Monument, Colorado.

Joe Koscieiniak of Severn, Maryland recently started his collection and is new to torch collecting. As a child he remembers how fascinated he was seeing his Grandfather fire up his blow torch. Fast forward sixty years and while picking up a load of mulch at a farmer's stand, he spotted two torches for sale. He purchased both, restored one of them with help from various Internet sites, and after he saw the finished product he was hooked! Joe has since posted a photo of his restored torch on his Facebook page.

Diane Wallom of Galt, California.

Jeff Wiggers of Oxford, Michigan.

WELCOME ABOARD!



NOTES FROM ALL OVER



One of our Down Under members, **Les Taylor**, sent in a great photo of his German-built Lanz Bulldog tractor. He is holding the blow lamp used to start the tractor.

The Lanz Bulldog had its own very distinctive design and was in production for more than thirty years after it was released in 1938. The large single-cylinder tractors were exported throughout the world and there are still thousands of surviving examples in the hands of tractor enthusiasts like Les. The Bulldog's two-stroke



The Bulldog's two-stroke diesel engine required the use of a blow lamp to heat a hot bulb at the front to ignite the crude oil.

When the Bulldog was running, the slow-revving engine produced a distinctive thumping sound. There were two large flywheels on each side of the engine, and because of the lack of balance inherent in the single-cylinder design, the tractor tended to “bounce” in its tires when not moving, almost as if it was jogging on the spot. This was one of its many intriguing and endearing characteristics along with its inexpensive and reliable performance once you got it started! Les’ tractor dates to circa 1954. There is a small opening on the side of the tractor where the starting blow lamp is stored.



We received an interesting photo from **Dick Bernard**, a creative art piece that will, most likely, not be displayed at the New York Museum of Modern Art or in the Louvre in Paris. You should visit our BTCA website to view the “tomato man” in living color. Dick advised us that he’s moving south and will liquidate his thirty-year entire collection. See the Classified Ads section for more details.

Ed Franklin Jr. gave us an education on the nomenclature for pressure lantern fuel tanks. Ed sent in an article on a Wall Auto Torch that was featured on page 5 of The Torch, issue No. 61. We thought he used the word “font” when referring to the location of a name etched into the fuel tank. We assumed he erred and we changed the word to “front”. According to Ed, in the world of pressure lanterns, fuel tanks are referred to as a “font” or “fount”. In the blow torch world, it is still a fuel tank.

Chris Terrell, (not a BTCA member) contacted us regarding a Clayton & Lambert blow torch he recently purchased at an estate sale. The torch came in its original box, it is new...never used, and came complete with a warranty card, instruction sheet, and soldering iron hook. There are two unusual things about this torch, the box is marked 144A-1 and the torch is stamped 144A-2. We have illustrations of model Nos. 144 and 144A, but no 144A-1 or -2. Chris’ torch looks very similar to the model 144A shown in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES, page134, with minor differences.



Are there any BTCA members that have a No. 144A-1 or -2 torch in their collection? Send us photos and we will post them on the BTCA website.



A MAN AND HIS ~~SCULPTURES~~ RESTORATIONS, PART VI

By **Mike Gratz**

Editor's comments: This is the sixth torch "sculpture" that Mike Gratz has, in this case, performed a major restoration. Due to the poor condition of the torches, many parts needed to be reproduced or replaced from other similar torches. We determined that they are Hauck kerosene torches that date to circa 1910.

The No. 14 torch has a capacity of one-half gallon, would consume one-half pint of fuel per hour, and had a flame length of twelve inches. The No. 15 torch has a capacity of one gallon, consumed two pints of fuel per hour, and had a flame length of fourteen inches. Both torches were especially suited for straightening and brazing of safety grab irons and hand holds on freight cars. Both safety devices were commonly bent while in service, and with the incredible twelve to fourteen inch flame from the torches, the devices could easily be bent back into their original shape.

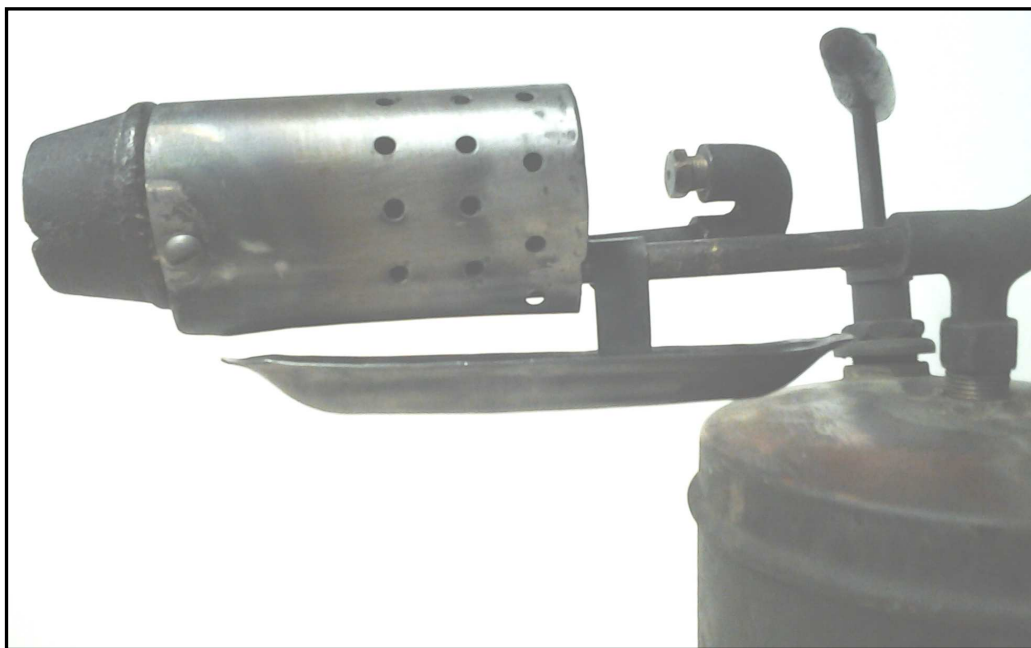
The Hauck Mfg. Co. started in New York in 1888 and manufactured a variety of blow torches, soldering irons, and lead-melting furnaces used in the construction and railroad industry. While Hauck did produce one-quart torches, a vast majority were in the one to five gallon capacity. The Hauck Mfg. Co. is still in business today manufacturing industrial burners for global combustion applications...check them out on the Internet.



"I acquired a Hauck No. 14 and 15, both with brass fuel tanks, and both requiring significant restoration. The No. 14, shown above on the left, was missing the original burner assembly and ignition pan and had an "added" bottom soldered to the fuel tank. I de-soldered the added bottom and flair from the tank bottom. After removing the huge mass of solder from the flair, I found the flair was significantly cracked and bent. I replicated the geometry of the bottom flair by fabricating a pattern in wood. I used the wood pattern to hammer and spin out the dents and return the flair to its original shape. The restored flair was then soldering back on to the fuel tank."

"The No. 14 torch was also missing the original burner assembly. The original torch was provided with a burner consisting of a bronze generator and nozzle with a steel sheet metal windscreen. It also included the canoe-shaped sheet metal ignition pan. Since I owned a later version No. 14 with a steel fuel tank, but it had the correct burner assembly that I needed, I simply cannibalized it for the restoration project."

“The threads on the valve stem were twisted off on the No. 14 torch I machined a “snout” on the tip of a ¼-20 brass bolt and the same diameter hole was drilled into the valve stem. The bolt was then brazed onto the stem and cut to length. The No. 14 torch was now ready to be polished.”



The No. 15 torch with the replacement windscreen installed.

“The No. 15 torch was acquired without a windscreen and ignition pan. The rest of the torch was in fairly good condition. I fabricated a windscreen from sheet metal to fit the nozzle using design cues from the No. 14 torch windscreen, see above photo. The ignition pan had to be fabricated and the size was scaled to the No. 14 torch, also in the above photo. I made a metal form and the ignition pan was replicated by pressing a flat piece of sheet metal into the metal form. The No. 15 torch was now ready to be polished.”

“I de-soldered the top handle supports on both torches to facilitate cleaning and polishing. All of the remaining components were disassembled down to their simplest form. Everything was cleaned and buffed to a high luster. The windscreens, ignition pans, and knobs were all painted with flat black paint to duplicate, what I believe was, their original color.”

“After consulting with other BTCA members, it was decided that my No. 15 torch is much older than the No. 15 torch shown on page 207 in VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES since my torch has a three-piece brass fuel tank, while the page 207 illustration has a two-piece design. I would be interested to hear if any BTCA members have a No. 15 or 16 brass fuel tank torch. I can be reached at 772-546-4567 or at MGRATZ@BELLSOUTH.NET.”



CONFUSED ABOUT BRASS?

There is much confusion regarding the type of metal used in many of the early blow torches. The question is...is it copper, brass, bronze, or what? Hopefully this will help clear up some of the confusion. It is assumed that the torch manufacturers experimented with various alloys or were forced to utilize what was economically available on the market. Most all non-ferrous blow torches were manufactured using brass as the base metal.

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc, and the ratio of copper to zinc may be varied to control both the color and the malleability of the resultant alloy. An alloy of 80% copper and 20% zinc is very soft and has a golden red color. A 60/40 copper-zinc ratio results in a yellow metal that is still malleable, while alloys with less than 50% copper are white and become increasingly brittle. Most blow torch fuel tanks, air pumps & pump supports were manufactured from the 60/40 alloy, while most of the burner heads were cast from an alloy closer to the 80/20 mixture. I'm sure there were many exceptions, and the alloy used would depend on the type of construction and how/where the part or parts were to be utilized. Other views and comments are welcomed.



TED'S CORNER



BTCA member **Ted Maire** is an avid torch collector, but also an experienced restoration expert. Ted's restoration tips provide helpful suggestions to those many members that do restoration work on blow torches and other similar items. We always welcome feedback and would like to hear from members regarding these restoration tips....please let us know what you think. Have a restoration problem, contact us and let Ted provide a solution.

In the world of collecting, there are many different philosophies as to whether or not an item should be restored or left in its original "as found" condition. The rules for some are more clear cut than others. Coins, for example, should never be cleaned. They should be left totally untouched. Antique furniture may be carefully cleaned of dust and loose dirt but never thoroughly cleaned or refinished. Paintings can be cleaned and repaired where necessary.

In other collectibles, the rules are not as clearly defined. Car collecting has changed over the years. Many years ago there were two perspectives on car collecting. One was that the car should be in original condition and remain relatively untouched. The second was that a car should be totally restored to look as it did when new. In most cases the restoration made it look better than when it was new. Today the trend seems to be more toward customization and modification of original cars.

There are no clear guidelines for blow torches. It is all a matter of personal choice and personal taste. I'm sure many collectors got into collecting torches because they liked the look of polished brass, copper, and bronze. I know I did. However, I still like the look of a torch in very good original condition.

I have restored many torches in my life. In some cases there was a decision to be made as to whether or not I should do a restoration on a particular torch. In most cases, the decision was clear. I only collect auto torches and the tanks tend to get beat up and many times are bulged out like a balloon. The photo to the right is a Clayton & Lambert No. 48 auto torch. This torch was in excellent used condition and retained most of the original label on the front of the tank as well as almost all the original finish. This torch would look very pretty if it was polished but it's rare that you find a torch manufactured prior to 1925 in this condition. I lightly cleaned the torch and did not polish it.

In many cases, such as the Russell torch, shown on the next page on the left, the decision is clear. There would be no way to remove all the excess solder and still retain a consistent patina. A restoration was clearly in order. In some cases the decision is a bit more complicated. The picture on the next page on the right is a torch manufactured by Klein and owned by **Graham Stubbs**. It is actually in decent "as found" condition. At first glance, there would seem to be nothing unusual about this torch. Closer examination would reveal that the tank is made of copper and there are engravings on the pump knob



and the button on the top of the tank. Had these features not existed, there probably would have been no motivation to restore this seemingly typical looking torch.



The restoration of the Klein torch, shown below on the right, demonstrates a dramatic difference and in my opinion, makes it a much more desirable torch. Details that were once buried under a significant amount of corrosion are now clearly visible (below).



Ultimately the decision is yours since I do not believe that it is black and white. I don't think every torch should be polished and I also don't believe every torch should be left untouched. The decision is that of the owner and determined by their preferences. I believe the true value of a torch is placed on it by its owner. I don't think too many of us consider the resale value of our collections.

I also don't believe that restoration does any damage to the value of a torch. It may actually add value. I would caution you, however, that a torch is in its original condition only once. Any alteration or polishing changes that status since a torch cannot be un-restored. There is value to un-restored torches. I find both restored and un-restored torches aesthetically pleasing and therein resides their value to me.

Visit our website, VINTAGEBLOWTORCES.COM to view the above torches refinished by Ted in "living color" since this newsletter will be posted in color.

THE HISTORY & MYSTERY OF THE ASHTON MFG. CO.

By **Graham Stubbs**

The Ashton Mfg. Co. of Newark, NJ was referred to "*as something of a mystery*" on page twenty three in *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES*. In *MORE VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* on page ten we added a note about Ashton's acquisition by Clayton & Lambert in 1927. That was the extent of our information on Ashton.

Ashton Mfg. Co. Early History

The earliest Ashton catalog we have is dated February 14, 1910. (It's imprinted "Manufactured for Mallery Mill Supply Co. of Macon, Georgia. It was not unusual for catalogs to carry the name of a distributor). The features of the torches in the catalog are very similar to those of C&L torches of the same period.

A Google search revealed that The Ashton Mfg. Co. was incorporated on August 9, 1909 by John B. Kerr, an agent, at 15 Alling St. Newark, NJ with \$10,000 of capital stock authorized, with a par value at \$10 per share. The address was changed on September 29, 1909. (A later address was 184 Emmet St., Newark, NJ.) The capital stock was increased to \$100,000 on December 1, 1909. What is particularly interesting is that Ashton was incorporated in August 1909, and five months later issued a catalog offering twenty two torches and firepots. That is quite an accomplishment for a five month old company.

Industry yearbooks listed the officers of the company as: E.B. Kerr, President, C.J. Kerr Vice president, and J.B. Kerr Treasurer, Secretary, and General Manager.

Finding the Kerr's in genealogy records turned out to be tortuous. I found no trace of C.J. Kerr in census records. The only E.B. Kerr I could find was Eva B. Kerr, John Kerr's wife. Marriage records from Illinois have John in 1904 marrying Eva Baroline Olsen, daughter of an Ole Olsen and Barolina Forgeson. In the 1920 census John Kerr was listed living in East Orange, NJ, age 52 with wife Eva, son John age 14, son Ashton age 12 and daughter Mary age 8. In 1925, Eva B Kerr arrived in Quebec, Canada from Liverpool, England with son John B Kerr. Their US address was given as: Burns Ave, Detroit, Michigan.

To summarize, so far:

1. The Ashton Mfg. Co. was formed in 1909 with \$100,000 of capital and was offering a pretty complete line of torches and firepots within a few months, with a catalog booklet of the same style as C&L. The products have the same features as C&L and a C&L patent number is marked on some of them.
2. Ashton seems to have been formed with C&L's assistance to extend C&L's business both geographically and with perceived variations of products. I would not be surprised if C&L put in substantial funds, and sold to Ashton some of the tooled parts to get the company going.
3. Of the three Ashton officers, I believe that the President was Mrs. Eva Kerr. John Kerr was treasurer, secretary and GM. As for C.J. Kerr, there is more, so read on.
4. The company name "Ashton" is the same as John and Eva's second child, Ashton Kerr.
5. By 1925, John Kerr and family were in Detroit, home of the Clayton & Lambert Company.
6. I looked for another connection between the Kerr name and C&L. In 1921, a Robert Kerr was elected an officer of C&L and made 2nd Vice president.
7. Robert Kerr in the 1920 census for Detroit was 64 years old, born in New York State, married to a Carolyn J. Kerr. (Remember C.J. Kerr, VP of Ashton?). In the 1910 census, Robert is listed as a salesman, brass industry; and living with him and his wife was Mary, his sister.
8. Research in Ancestry.com revealed that Robert Kerr and John B. Kerr were brothers, sons of Michael Kerr and Lydia.
9. In the 1875 New York State census, in Jackson, Washington County, NY were the Kerr's (misspelled Karr in the state census): Michael Karr age 47, Lydia age 40, Mary age 12, Robert (the future C&L VP) age 10, John B age 7, Edwin age 5, Elizabeth (Michael's Aunt) age 90 AND ... Mary Ashton, Lydia's mother, age 79.

10. So Lydia's maiden name was.....(major drum roll).....ASHTON!

11. One can only assume that the Ashton Mfg. Company was named for the mother of Robert Kerr and his brother John B. Kerr, the two men who came up with the Ashton Mfg. scheme!

And now a curve-ball!

Just when I thought I had it all figured out, I received an interesting email from **Michel Duval**:

"I purchased a 1910 Ashton catalog on eBay. There are some models that I did not find in your two blow torch reference books: No. 40, No. 41, No. 42, and No. 46 (only a photo for the No. 46)."

The odd things about these models are that they are shown only on pages inserted into the little Ashton catalog booklet, and are not individually dated. None of them appear in any of our other Ashton literature.

The No. 40 has an outboard shut-off valve. So too does No. 46. No other Ashton torches have this.

The No. 42 carries an SI holder, similar to that patented by Bernz. (Actually it's formed in two pieces whereas the Bernz patent specifies only one piece of sheet metal.). The top of the pump / handle looks similar to the White Mfg. models, and is unlike other Ashton models.

The Nos. 42 and 46 both have diamond-shaped labels, unlike any other Ashton torches.

The No. 46 illustration matches the photo of a torch in **Ron Carr's** collection (MVB Page 11).

So having solved the mystery of Ashton's origins, we are left with another puzzle. What were the other company relationships that resulted in these four Ashton torches that don't seem to have originated with Clayton & Lambert?



TRADE MARK
The No. 40 Reliable Red Hot Torch

The No. 40 Reliable "Red-Hot" Torch is made to supply the demand for a first class torch that fills from the top, and we market it at a price within the reach of all. This torch is furnished with the ordinary type of pump with air valve screw at the base. The tank is made of heavy seamless drawn brass and mounted with round type of burner which produces a pointed blue flame of intense heat.

For those requiring a torch of this type we guarantee it to give you splendid service and satisfaction.

Include them in your order, you will be pleased.

Price \$2.50 net

ASHTON MFG. CO., Newark, N. J.




TRADE MARK
The No. 41 Reliable Red Hot Torch

The No. 41 Reliable "Red-Hot" Torch is made same as the No. 40, except it is furnished with hook and support for holding a soldering copper, a convenience very much appreciated by the repair man. The tank is made of heavy seamless drawn brass with brass bottom. The burner is made of special generator metal and produces a strong pointed blue flame intensely hot. All parts are interchangeable. Each torch is tested with air and gasoline burning.

Sold under maker's guarantee. Try them—you will be pleased.

Price \$2.75 net

ASHTON MFG. CO., Newark, N. J.



TRADE MARK
No. 42 Red-Hot Torch

This soldering iron attachment is supplied with each No. 42 torch without extra charge.

As we have received some demand for a cheap quart size Torch with detachable soldering iron attachment, we offer our patrons our No. 42 torch which is fitted with air valve screw, with stuffing box, on the lower pump bracket for closing off the air. The burner is made of our best burner metal and produces a clear blue flame. The tank is made of seamless brass, highly polished. While this torch is not as good as our higher grade torches in our opinion, it is made strong and durable and sold under the makers' guarantee. Send for sample.

This torch is supplied with our name and torch number on pump thumb piece and like all of our torches bears our name on the tank, as we are not ashamed to have our trade know that it is of our manufacture.

Price, \$2.25 Net.

ASHTON MFG. CO., Newark, N. J.



TRADE MARK
No. 46 Red-Hot Torch

This soldering iron attachment is supplied with each No. 46 torch without extra charge.

Our No. 46 torch is similar to No. 42 except that it is pint size. It is furnished with detachable soldering iron attachment, equipped with air valve screw and stuffing box on the lower pump bracket, extending straight out instead of down underneath the pump. The burner is made of our best burner metal and produces a strong flame. The tank is made of seamless brass, highly polished, and holds one pint of gasoline. This is the best torch of its class, but most of our patrons prefer our higher grade torches as they produce more heat and while they cost more they last longer and are cheaper in the end.

This torch is supplied with our name and torch number on pump thumb piece, and like all of our torches bears our name on the tank, as we are not ashamed to have our trade know that it is of our manufacture.

Price, \$1.75 Net

ASHTON MFG. CO., Newark, N. J.

I discussed with **Ted Maire** the physical differences between torches made by Ashton and by Clayton & Lambert. After examining examples of auto torches in his collection (Ted specializes in this category) he prepared a detailed comparison. His conclusion is that component parts used by the two companies are largely interchangeable. Ted's assessment further confirms my findings that Ashton and Clayton & Lambert were directly connected.



BTCA NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE STATUS

The Blow Torch Collectors Association was formed in early 1995 as a small group of torch collectors with a common interest. Because there was so much communicating between those few members, it was decided to launch a newsletter in March 1995, THE TORCH, so that all members could enjoy the information. Information poured in at an incredible rate and we were nearly overwhelmed with data for the publication. Over the years that information and participation from our members has slowed substantially, to the point that it has become difficult to produce a meaningful newsletter on a regular basis. This is the reason that we are concentrating our efforts on the BTCA website where we can publish information as and when it becomes available, without the limitations of the printed format.

The BTCA website (www.vintageblowtorches.com) will, over time, be expanded to surpass the benefits we have all enjoyed with THE TORCH. Our website will eventually boast the following features:

- There is no charge for access to the BTCA website. Much of the site is accessible to the general public. A BTCA Members Only section is reserved for features that include current articles, a chat room, and information about members. There is NO annual membership fee for members.
- For entry into the BTCA Members Section, your email address will serve as your user name and your password is **btca4321**. (Remember; use lower case letters for your password.) **(For members who do not have an email address, an individual user name and password will be provided. You will need to contact us for this information.)**
- We have a photo gallery that will allow members to post photos of their torches.
- There will be available ALL past newsletters, issue #50 and above already listed, many in color.
- We will continue with Ted's Corner with restoration articles, including those that have already appeared in THE TORCH.
- The IN THE TORCH LIGHT interviews will continue with willing members.
- There will be a CLASSIFIED ADS section.
- We will include articles submitted by members.
- There will be a chat room for members to ask questions, talk about their collections, or seek out other members that share similar interests.
- There are links to other blowtorch collector organizations, and other related organizations.
- We will include a section listing new torches not included in the two reference books.
- The Members Section will also feature a membership roster.
- An index to most all past issues of THE TORCH is already on the website.

From our records, we know that a vast majority of our members have email addresses, and those that do not have a computer may have access to the Internet through friends or family.

Those members that do not fall into those two categories have other options. Public libraries all provide free computer access to the Internet. There are Senior Centers that not only provide free computer access, but also will provide instructions or help accessing the Internet. Ask your grandkids for help....they all know more about computers and the Internet than all of us put together!

This is our last printed newsletter. You should check the membership roster that is included with this newsletter to verify your email address on file. This is the email address we will use to allow you access to the member's only section on the BTCA website. If you have changed your email address from what is listed in the membership roster, please send us your current email address to BTCA@COX.NET.

Graham Stubbs is working very hard to make this transition to our website as easy as possible. Please help us by supporting the site, and providing your comments and suggestions. Organizations like ours cannot exist without the participation and inputs from members like you.

Norvell-Shapleigh and Shapleigh Auto Torches

By Ted Maire

Shapleigh Hardware was one of the major retailers that sold blow torches. Shapleigh was in business from the mid-1800s until the mid-1900s. They sold torches both under the original manufacturer's name and their own private label brand name "Norleigh Diamond".



This brand name was used for all kinds of products. A quick search in eBay using "Norleigh Diamond" as the key words may result in finding a saddle, a lantern, scissors, an oil can, or a blow torch. The name was used much in the same way J.C. Higgins was used by Sears for guns and bicycles when I was a boy in the 1950s.

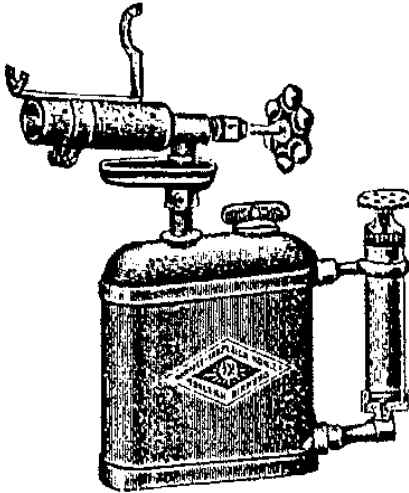
Shapleigh underwent several name changes throughout their existence. Between the years of 1901 through 1918, Shapleigh was renamed "Norvell-Shapleigh". During those years torches were labeled "Norvell-Shapleigh" instead

of simply "Shapleigh". In the picture above, the Norvell Shapleigh label has only one "L" in the name Norvell. This was probably done to save space. The label also indicates "St Louis" as their location. Probably one of the first Norvell-Shapleigh auto torches ever produced appears in *Vintage Blowtorches* on page 368 (pictured below) as a catalog No. NDA. I assume the NDA stands for Norleigh Diamond

Auto. It is clearly an early Bernz model No. 6 and is probably the same torch that appears in the Bernz section of *More Vintage Blowtorches* on page 18 in a c1907 advertisement. The Shapleigh label appears to be the only difference between the two torches. The Shapleigh ad is believed to be from a 1916 catalog.

I recently purchased two Norvell-Shapleigh auto torches that dated from around 1913 (next page). Both were manufactured by Bernz. I discovered quickly that these Norvell-Shapleigh auto torches are highly sought after by Shapleigh collectors. I found that Norvell-Shapleigh auto torches can be valued at four to five times the amount of its standard Bernz counterpart. Shapleigh-labeled auto torches, which came later, can be valued only slightly higher than their Bernz counterpart.

There does not seem to be any discernible difference between the selling prices of a canister style Shapleigh torch versus a similar Bernz torch. Shapleigh tool collectors greatly outnumber blow torch collectors so there is significantly more competition for the more desirable torches.



FLAT AUTO TORCHES

Largely Used by Automobilists and Electricians in Narrow Places; Bottom Support Prevents Tipping.

Each
No. NDA—Capacity One Pint; Polished Seamless Brass Tank and Handle; Bronze Metal Burner; Air Pump in Handle; Needle Point Valve; Height Over All 8 inches; Size of Body 6x2 1/4 in.; Weight Each 5 lbs. ... \$9.20

One in a Wood Box

The torch shown on the left is based on a Bernz model No. 5 and the one on the right is based on a Bernz model No. 6. The torch on the right is slightly earlier than the one on the left. It has the pins in the top and bottom casting as well as the stem style (instead of cup shaped) lower pump support. The pump knob of the torch on the right is not stamped with a "6". It does, however, have a patent date of April 19, 1910 (pictured below) stamped on the pump cylinder. This patent date refers to the steel soldering iron attachment. This torch is also stamped "NDA" on the lower support. The torch on the left is not stamped on the pump knob with the model number and has the patent date for the pump assembly on the pump cylinder. It would seem that all versions of Bernz auto torches sold as either Norvell-Shapleigh or Shapleigh were listed as catalog No. NDA.

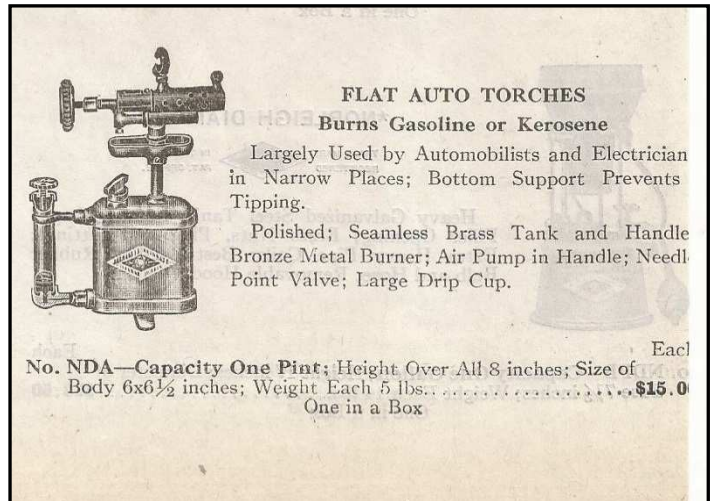


After 1918 the labels on torches did not include the Norvell name or the St Louis location. The company was simply named "Shapleigh Hardware". Comparisons between Bernz catalogs and Shapleigh catalogs would indicate that there were significant time differences between when a model was listed in a Bernz catalog and when that same model was listed in a Shapleigh catalog. In some cases it may have been several years. This would indicate that Bernz may have been selling its "old stock" to Shapleigh in order to make room for newer models.



The torch on the left is an early auto torch made by Bernz. This version is slightly later than the one in the catalog ad pictured earlier in this article. There are only minor differences between the two torches. This torch predates the Norvell-Shapleigh torches pictured on the previous page. I totally expected that this torch would have a "Norvell-Shapleigh" label but it does not. It has the later version label (post 1918). I'm not sure how long Bernz continued to manufacture this simple burner style torch. I would doubt that standard production went past 1913 but it is impossible to know. If true, that would indicate that this torch would have been at least five years old when it was marketed by Shapleigh.

The later model torch shown below on the left is very similar to the torch appearing in a 1923 Shapleigh catalog shown below on the right. The only apparent difference is that the catalog picture version does not have the embossed diamond on the sides of the tank. Since this torch has the Shapleigh label instead of the Norvell-Shapleigh label, it must post date 1918. I have, however, seen this version in a Shapleigh Collectors price guide listed as a Norvell-Shapleigh. This version of the Bernz No. 6 auto torch must have been available both prior to and after 1918. It would, therefore, be possible to find this same torch with a Norvell-Shapleigh label.



This torch has had the Bernz logo information ground off of the right side of the burner. This seems to be typical of Shapleigh/Bernz auto torches (see the photo below on the left).



This later model # 6 Bernz is also listed as model No. NDA in a 1923 Shapleigh catalog. The catalog version is very similar to my torch. It's difficult to tell, but it appears that the catalog torch may have a removable bronze rear soldering iron hook. The hook on my torch is fixed and part of the casting. This torch is exactly the same as the Bernz auto torch, shown on page 19 of *More Vintage Blowtorches* in a c1918 Bernz catalog ad, except for the Shapleigh label.



Shapleigh also marketed a Bernz model No. 6 with the tool kit built into the tank. I was not able to find a catalog ad for this model and it is unlisted in BTCA publications. I was, however, lucky enough to find the torch, as shown on the right. I can only assume that it was also listed as No. NDA. This torch is probably from the late 1920s or early 1930s. It was manufactured in Newark, NJ and predates 1936 since we know that Bernz moved to Rochester, NY in 1936.

There were significant differences between the tool kit model No. 6 torches manufactured in Newark NJ, and those manufactured in Rochester, NY. The torch to the left shows the Shapleigh version of this more unusual Bernz model No. 6. When I disassembled this torch I found there to be absolutely no differences between the components of this torch compared to a standard production tool kit model No. 6 manufactured in Newark, NJ.

There were only two differences noted in this Shapleigh torch. The first was the "Shapleigh Hardware Norleigh Diamond" soldered-on label on the front of the tank (below right). The second difference is that typically along the bottom of the right side of the burner, where the pre-heat chamber is, the words "OTTO BERNZ CO" are embossed in large letters. This lettering is missing from the Shapleigh torch. The lettering appears to have been ground off (see picture below left) just as it was on the torch mentioned previously. The area that once displayed the lettering is a bit rough and wavy. I am sure the lettering was not removed during the casting process.

chamber is, the words "OTTO BERNZ CO" are embossed in large letters. This lettering is missing from the Shapleigh torch. The lettering appears to have been ground off (see picture below left) just as it was on the torch mentioned previously. The area that once displayed the lettering is a bit rough and wavy. I am sure the lettering was not removed during the casting process.



Even though Shapleigh had the Bernz lettering ground off of the burner and a Shapleigh label added, the torch still retained other Bernz identifiers. The picture to the left shows the pump knob and it is clearly marked with a "6". This is a standard Bernz pump knob.

The tool kit compartment included with this torch retained the original Bernz tools.



The brass holder is also marked with "OTTO BERNZ CO NEWARK, NJ" as shown above right.

I believe the No. 6 torch shown on the previous page was modified after it had been completely assembled using standard Bernz components. I also believe that this was the standard way that Shapleigh and Bernz did business together. They did not special order torches made to their own specifications except perhaps under extraordinary circumstances. I am only aware of one canister style torch that was ordered to Shapleigh's specifications. I believe it is possible for any early Bernz auto torch to have a Shapleigh or Norvell-Shapleigh counterpart. I also believe that they would all have a catalog identifier of "No. NDA".



Burns Gasoline Only

Used by Automobile Mechanics and Linemen to Get in Narrow, Tight Places; A Convenient Torch to Carry in Tool Kit; Provided with Swivel Base Attachment to Prevent Tipping; Soldering

Iron Holder; Capacity 1 Pint; Polished; Seamless Brass Tank and Handle; Height Over All, 8½ inches; Size of Tank, ¾x5 inches.

Each
No. 41—Weight Each, 4 lbs. \$8.50
One in a Carton

Shapleigh also marketed an American Stove model No. 41 auto torch as shown on the left from a 1929 Shapleigh catalog. For some reason, Shapleigh retained the Model No. 41 identifier. This torch is unlisted in the two BTCA reference books. The Shapleigh No. 41 differs from the standard American Stove Vesuvius Model 41. The burner on the Shapleigh version has three holes in the burner whereas the standard American Stove has four. The burner also differs from the American stove model No. 41 with plain sides as shown on page 21 of *Vintage Blowtorches*. The filler plug is also a different style. It should be noted that the burner and filler plug on the Shapleigh No. 41 are standard American Stove parts and can be found on canister style torches. The last obvious difference is the soldered-on Shapleigh label.

To the right is an example of a restored Shapleigh No. 41 torch. As mentioned previously, this torch does have different components than the standard American Stove model 41. On a standard American stove model 41, the only identifying marks are on the pump knob.

On the torch shown at right, there was no attempt to hide or erase the origin of this torch. The pump knob retains the American Stove information (see picture on next page). This is very similar to a Bernz torch mentioned earlier that retained the model No. 6 stamped on the pump knob. What is unusual is that the Bernz No. 6 torch was given a Shapleigh catalog identifier of "NDA" whereas the American Stove torch was given a catalog identifier of "No. 41".





Shown at left is a Shapleigh No. 200 canister-style torch that was also manufactured by American Stove and distributed by Shapleigh. In the same catalog that the No. 41 appeared, there was an ad for this No. 200 canister torch.

The photo below on the right shows the top of the pump knob for my Shapleigh No. 200 torch which clearly indicates that it was made by American Stove and is their model No. 38. Shapleigh listed this one-quart torch as a No. 200 (see the ad below on the right). I'm assuming that Shapleigh reassigned the torch to model No. 200 since Clayton & Lambert model Nos. 32 and 38 were also listed in that same catalog (shown below on the left). The No. 150 in the ad on the right is an American Stove model 35 (it is a 1½ pint torch, with a steel tank, no soldering iron holder, and no illustration). Note that the No. 200 has the same burner as the No. 38. This is not the burner shown for the American Stove model No. 38 in *Vintage Blowtorches* on page 21. Unlike the No. 41, the No. 200 has a paper label that somehow survived and is mostly intact. You can clearly see the label on the front of the fuel tank, shown on the left photo.



I have seen many American Stove torches of the same model number that had different burners and filler plugs. There is not a lot of literature on these torches so it is very difficult to determine what happened when. Even though the burners and filler plugs are the same on the Shapleigh No. 38 and No. 200, I don't believe it had anything to do with them both being Shapleigh torches.

CLAYTON & LAMBERT



Burns Gasoline Only

Polished Seamless Brass Tank; Black Japanned Heavy Steel Cushion Band at Bottom of Tank; Soldered Concave Bottom; Black Japanned Shaped Wood Handle; Aluminum Handle Bracket; Cast Brass Burner; Air Pumps in Tank; Cast Iron Drip Cup and Pipe; Removable Solder Iron Holder on Burner.

Nos.	Capacity	Ht. Over Diam.,		Wt. Ea.,	Each
		All, ins.	ins.		
32	1 Qt.	11	5¾	5½	\$10.80 18.00
33	1 Pt	10¾	4¾	3½	10.20 17.00

One in a Box



Burns Gasoline Only

Oxidized Steel Body; Reinforced Top and Bottom; Pump in Handle; Hook and Rests on Top of Burner for Holding Soldering Iron. Throws a Very Strong and Powerful Blue Flame.

No. 200 Has a Soldering Iron Holder, While No. 150 is Without One.

Nos.	Capacity,	Hgt. Over Diam. Base,		Wt. Ea.,	Each
		Pts.	All, ins.		
150	1½	11¾	5¾	2¾	\$7.20
200	2	11¾	5¾	3¼	8.00

One in a Box

The torch in the Shapleigh No 41 ad, shown on page 15, as well as the torch itself, differs slightly from my American Stove model No. 41 pictured on the right. The pump knob for this torch is shown below.

Both the burner and filler plug are different. Other than the labels, the only differences appear to be the components used. These components may have been standard components for that time period.

It is clear that the Norvell-Shapleigh and Shapleigh labeled torches mentioned in this article are manufactured by Bernz and American Stove. These are standard production models that were modified after they were assembled. Some maker's marks may have been removed and the Shapleigh Norleigh Diamond label was added. It may have been the choice of the originating manufacturer to remove or not remove these identifying markings or it may have been at Shapleigh's request. Unfortunately, there is no way of telling.



It appears that Bernz may have channeled their obsolete inventory to Shapleigh. It also seems that they may have sold their older models to Shapleigh when a new model was issued. There were many large hardware retailers that sold blow torches and we can only assume that each one had their own unique way of doing business with the various torch manufacturers

This may be a good time to rediscover your collection. These torches are very attractive and more valuable than the typical auto torch. A simple brass label soldered onto the front of these torches can make a big difference. Whether it is a Shapleigh label or a Norvell-Shapleigh label makes a significant difference. Let us know what you find.

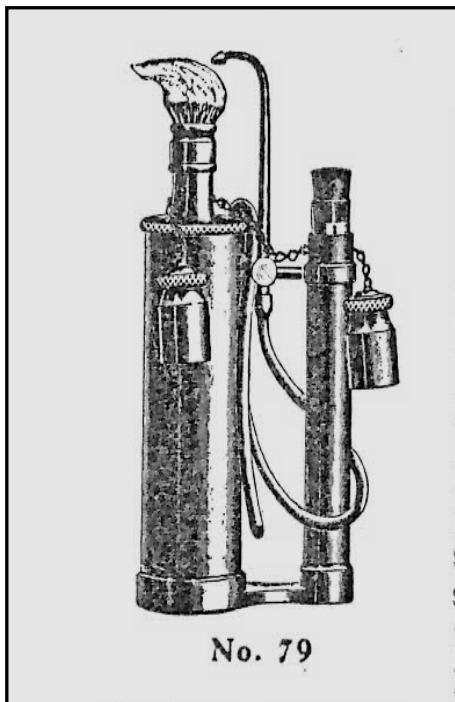
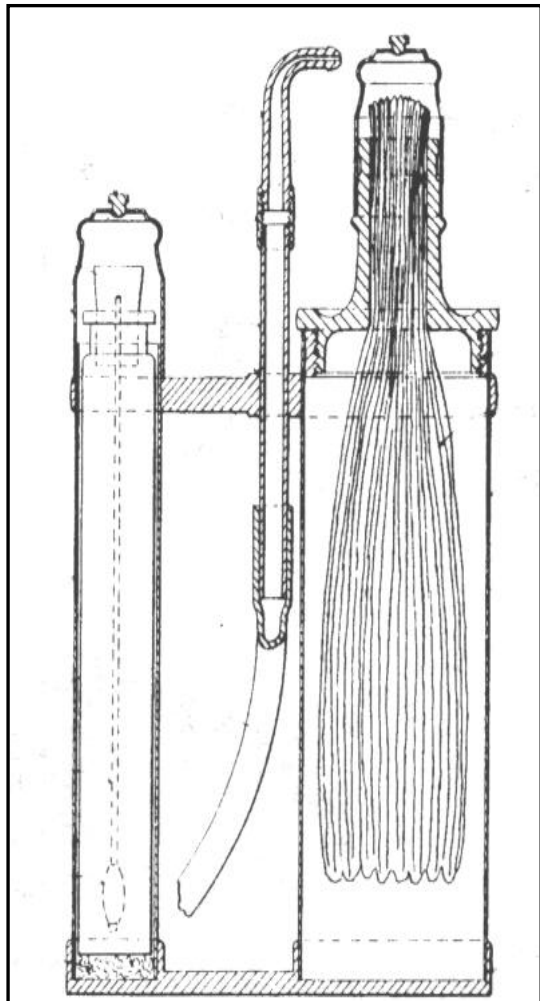


THE WILLSON TORCH

Back in early 1895, Russell A. Willson came upon an idea to combine a soldering torch, an acid bottle (contained an acid-based soldering flux), and a blowpipe into one unique package that was most convenient and easy to use. One can only guess that Mr. Willson had experienced the disappointment of not having soldering acid available when needed for a soldering task, and that experience may have spurred him on to his invention. According to the inventor; *"by placing the acid bottle in the handle of the lamp, it does away with the necessity of carrying an extra bottle, to spill or break. When you have this torch you always have the acid bottle."*

While the idea was unique, the items assembled were not. The soldering torch and the blow pipe were certainly not new to the industry, and neither was the soldering acid. But the combination was new and certainly a most useful arrangement...and as the inventor described it, "also ornamental".

The brass acid bottle compartment included a small glass vial, and a small piece of cotton was placed in the bottom of the brass cylinder to prevent the bottle from being smashed against the brass bottom. The glass vial was capped with a simple cork, and inserted into the inside center of the cork was a small rod that had a swab at its end. When in use, the cork was removed and a small amount of soldering acid was applied to the area being soldered. The brass cylinder that contained the acid bottle included a screw-on protective cover and a chain to prevent loss.



Willson was awarded his patent on June 18, 1895; see patent illustration to the right. While it is known that the Willson torch was manufactured, it is unknown who manufactured it. There is only one known reference to the Willson torch and that is in a Turner Brass Works blow torch catalog dated 1905, see the catalog illustration on the left.

The 1905 Turner catalog lists the torch as a Turner No. 79, Willson Alcohol Blow Pipe and Soldering Torch. Since it is referred

to as a Willson torch with no mention of Turner, it can only be assumed that Turner never purchased the patent, however, Turner could have been the manufacturer that produced it on behalf of Willson. Another torch mystery yet to be solved!

The photo to the right is a Willson torch from the collection of **Charles Smith**. This photo plus other versions of the Willson torch can be seen on page 255 of *More Vintage Blowtorches*.

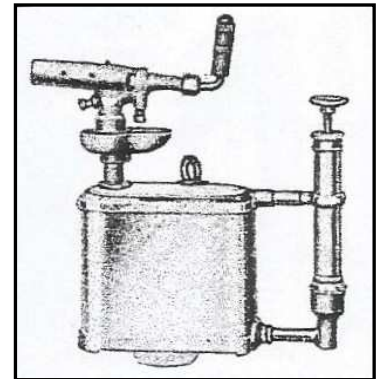
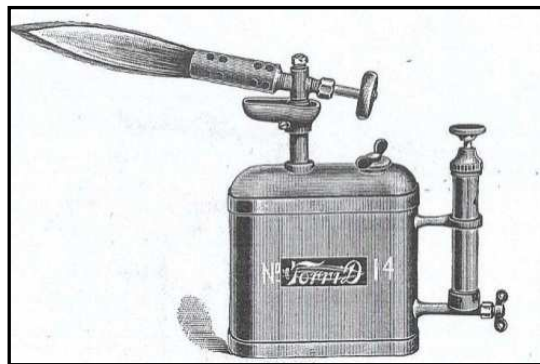
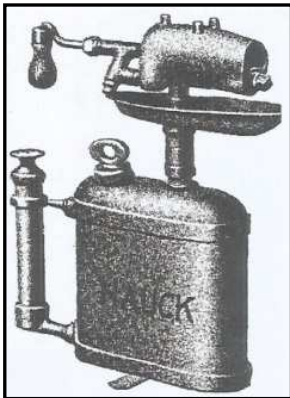


CLASSIFIED ADS

Wanted: Charles Smith is interested in purchasing little Eolipyles, or self-acting torches (see pages 288-290 in *More Vintage Blowtorches*). Please contact Charles at ccsmith2@charter.net, or 205-333-9606.

Wanted: Ted Maire is interested in purchasing the auto torches pictured below or any other unusual auto torches. I will pay top price for these torches plus postage. If so desired, I am also willing to swap some rare and valuable torches for these auto torches. Please email pictures to me at tedamaire@aol.com. You can also call, text, or send photos to my cell phone (201) 452-8368. Or contact me at my home phone: (201) 652-6718.

For Sale: Dick Bernard is relocating south to a warmer climate and is in the process of selling his collection. Interested members can contact him at gauthier281@charter.net or 413-323-5747.



Editor's Notes

It is December 31st and I am just finishing up with the December 2015 newsletter. As I say goodbye to 2015, I will also be saying goodbye to twenty-one years of BTCA printed newsletters since this is our last printed issue. I would like to thank all who have contributed stories, photos, cartoons, and comments for the sixty-three issues of THE TORCH. I would especially like to thank **Graham Stubbs, Ted Maire, and Charles Smith** for their tremendous input and support, without which we would not have published sixty-three newsletters.

A special thanks goes out to the following members that continually contributed financially way above the norm: **Dick Bernard, John Dorffeld, Larry Fields, Bob Fitchhorn, Wendel Fritz, Bobby Hartness, Ned Maire, Ted Maire, Charles Smith, John Tingle, Lloyd Weber, and Ed Weinert.** Simple words cannot describe the appreciation I have for **Gary Fye** and the huge amount of financial support he provided...thank you Gary.

Over the past twenty-one years we have seen many members go by the wayside for various reasons, however, out of the original fifteen members that started it all in 1995, thirteen are still with us: **John Forhan, Leon Hall, Glenn Harrison, Dave Kolb, Larry Parker, Mark Pedersen, Dick Sarpolus, Gary Stelmach, Graham Stubbs, Jon Suta, Mike Thornhill, Chuck Tobin, and Me.**

Lastly, I would especially like to thank **Janet Carr** for her proofreading sixty-three newsletters. She uncovered more of my mistakes than you can imagine! As I say goodbye to 2015 and THE TORCH, I look forward to our BTCA website and the expanded features that it will provide to all of our members. The website is way above what THE TORCH was capable of providing. I encourage each of you to use our website; you will not be disappointed with its features and capabilities. For starters, check out this newsletter in color on our website.



From the collection of **Michel Duval**

Back Row:

Peerblow PEERLESS No. 14A (page 323, *Vintage Blowtorches*)

FARWELL, OZMUN, KIRK, & Co. (page 122, *More Vintage Blowtorches*)

A.E. LOVETT Co. Vertical Torch (page 285, *Vintage Blowtorches*)

Front Row:

ALEX ROWLAND "BLASTO" (page 214, *More Vintage Blowtorches*)

QUICK MEAL Paint Burner (page 337, *Vintage Blowtorches*)

BOLTE Co. (page 75, *Vintage Blowtorches*)

THE TORCH

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Editor
Contributing Editor

**Ronald M. Carr
Graham Stubbs**

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 BTCA at the above address.

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