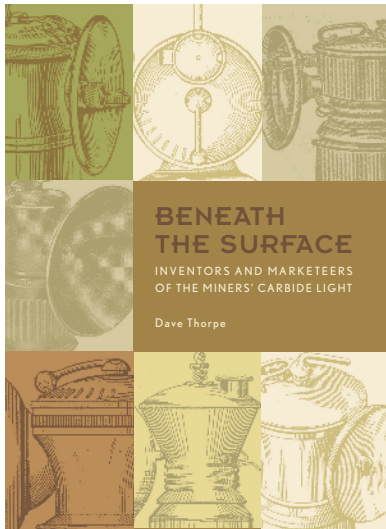


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Beneath the Surface:
Inventors and Marketeers
of the Miners' Carbide Light
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Beneath the Surface presents biographies of a rare breed of American entrepreneurs—those who developed the miners' carbide light, often in competition with one another. Their life stories, recorded here for the first time with supplementary appendices from local archives, capture America's emerging industrial age from the perspective of immigrant families, who began life in the New World as farmers, peddlers, businessmen, and also miners. This fascinating study shows how the inventors and marketeers of open-flame light varied as much as their individual backgrounds.

Frederic Baldwin, the father of the miners' carbide lamp, came from a family of jewelers in Newark, New Jersey. Living with his mother on Staten Island, he commuted to Manhattan to oversee development of an acetylene lamp intended to be light enough to wear on a worker's cap. In Scranton, Pennsylvania, where coal mining disasters were a way of life, Welsh immigrants Llewellyn Evans and William S. Hughes began their own competing lamp businesses to capitalize on the ongoing necessity for improving safety underground. In Chicago, Frederick Becker, a retail salesman, and Walther Raster, a prominent engineer, organized Justrite Mfg. Co., which produced more mine lamps than any other American company of its kind. The detailed lives of these characters, and their turn-of-the-century social setting, fill in a previously unexplored chapter of American history.

ENDORSEMENT

Just five year's after Dave Thorpe's exhaustive study, *Carbide Light: The Last Flame in American Mines*, comes his sequel, *Beneath the Surface*—a riveting work about the inventors and businessmen involved in the brief flowering of miners' carbide light, 1900–1930. Culling biographical and family history from rare national archives, Thorpe brings to life both the quirky individuals involved in mining inventions and the spirit and culture of a vanished industrial era unique to the United States. Of interest to collectors, American-history buffs, and curious readers, this lavishly illustrated history offers an array of Dickensian characters, whose stories unfold, beginning with youthful dreams that soon encounter the challenges and pitfalls of life. Thorpe's material goes beyond its historical record to become a fresco of universal human life. —Deric English, Boron, California

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Thorpe has been recognized in the United States for extreme underground exploration, including caves and abandoned mines. He grew up in rural Perkinsville, Vermont (population of 142), and after his medical internship in Washington, DC, began mapping unexplored caverns in West Virginia. While challenging high adventure, he also has devoted himself to researching the history of underground lighting. Thorpe now divides his time between Vermont and Phoenix, Arizona, where he practices anesthesiology.



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