

The Candle Snuffer Story

I am an old candle snuffer. I am made of iron or steel and stamped into me is the word PATENT. There is no doubt that I am different from the other snuffers that lie beside me on the shelf. I'm sure that in my case different means better. I remember the day that a traveling peddler stopped at the Fox family home near the Stone Church at the village now called Palatine Church.

I cannot remember if the old village name of Foxes Mills was still commonly used when I first came here or if it was just Palatine. For nearly twenty years a new road, the Mohawk Turnpike had run by this place when I first came here. I believe the date of my arrival was about 1820. The Turnpike was crowded with all sorts of wheeled vehicles as people from the New England states pushed westward to new homes. With these travelers was a Yankee peddler, and I was included in his stock in trade. When the peddler pulled up in front of the long wooden house the family anxiously came out to see what new items were in the wagon. The peddler handed me to the lady of the house. The lady said: "This is different than any other snuffer I have ever seen. See that small door raises instead of coming out of the snuffer's side". How proud I was when the peddler told her how great my new feature was.

This is the latest patent from Old England. It was patented by a man named Samuel Hobday on October 12, 1818. The Fox family bought me that day. My existence has been so varied I hardly know where to proceed from here. I have watched the flickering candles during the winter and the summer, during peace and war, and through all of the joys and heartbreak that is human life. I snuffed out those candles not knowing what I would witness next. Oh! What changes I have seen. The years slipped by and new kinds of illumination were invented. Candles were not used much now and neither was I. I still had my usual place on the clock shelf. Then one day my owner, who had cherished me, picked me up and headed for the attic. I had company up there since all of the fireplace cooking utensils had been brought up there also. The new cook stove made them unnecessary just like me. For years I laid there in the dark. An old man came up one day to see if the chimney was still safe. He did not notice me there in the dust. He just accidentally pushed me toward the wall. Oh! I'm falling down, down between the partition walls. I'm not broken because the dust and cobwebs from the centuries cushion my fall. I lay there for many years. What is that loud noise? The wall around me is being torn down so this old house can be remodeled for the coming of a new family. I rolled out on the floor. Luckily I'm not broken. A man in dusty work clothes picked me up and put me in his pocket. Within a short time I was sold for a small sum to a man who admired me. He said I was an antique, whatever that is. At least I was again treasured. I even thought my days of being useful had all slipped away. Now I am in a collection of things from long ago. My owner had a meeting of something called the "Rushlight Club" where everyone was interested in old time lights. I'm right in my glory again. A member from far away California picked me up and said: "I know who patented that." Of course I already knew, but my owner did not. So on Sunday, October 11, 2009 my secret was revealed. I'm here in Stone Arabia, not far from where the peddler had brought me so long ago. I hope someone will treasure me in the future.

W. B. Stone Arabia

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