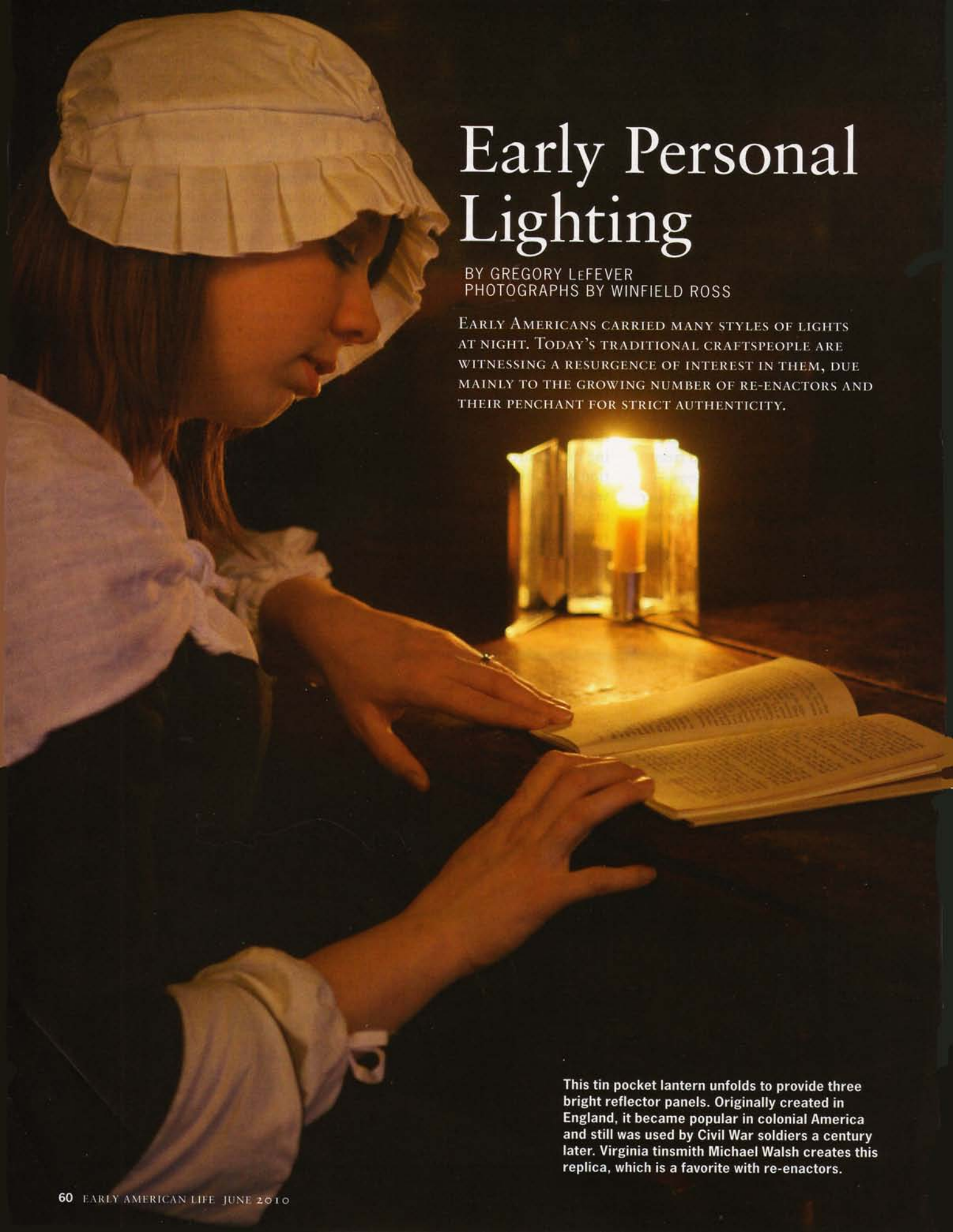


Early Personal Lighting

BY GREGORY LEFEVER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WINFIELD ROSS

EARLY AMERICANS CARRIED MANY STYLES OF LIGHTS AT NIGHT. TODAY'S TRADITIONAL CRAFTSPEOPLE ARE WITNESSING A RESURGENCE OF INTEREST IN THEM, DUE MAINLY TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF RE-ENACTORS AND THEIR PENCHANT FOR STRICT AUTHENTICITY.

This tin pocket lantern unfolds to provide three bright reflector panels. Originally created in England, it became popular in colonial America and still was used by Civil War soldiers a century later. Virginia tinsmith Michael Walsh creates this replica, which is a favorite with re-enactors.

Before electric bulbs caged the flame, only fire lit nighttime early America. The orange flickers thrown by hearths, lamps, and candles stretched the hours after sunset for the simplest chores, reading, games, even just walking.

The last made special demands on illuminating fire—it had to be portable, easy to carry, bright enough to avoid stepping on the cat or into a rabbit hole, and safe enough to keep burns at bay and the fire brigade away.

The range of pre-electric portable lighting spanned the entire range of social and economic strata and all the materials available when wood, glass, and iron made high technology. Farmers and other common folk used chambersticks, lanterns, and lamps of wood, tin, iron, and pewter, while affluent colonists relied on lights of silver, brass, and glass.

Function, available materials, and matters of wealth determined the lights' basic forms, but tinsmiths, pewterers, blacksmiths, glass-blowers, and other artisans added their own stylistic twists to the lights they created. All depended on the same small range of fuels—a smoky progression from animal and vegetable fats to whale oil and finally to kerosene—which changed surprising slowly from the early 1600s until the eve of the Civil War in the late 1850s.

Emigrants who left medieval Europe to a promising new continent in the early 1600s carried lighting you might find in an ancient castle or tavern—torches and cressets (iron cages mounted on poles and holding burning wood knots). Those closest to the coast might carry small iron dishes of fish oil equipped with soggy wicks and an unmistakable smell.

Decades would pass before livestock herds grew large enough to slaughter so their fat could be rendered into smoky tallow candles suitable for lanterns and chambersticks. As the 1600s ended, some colonists learned to make stronger and more pleasingly fragrant candles from bayberry wax and beeswax.

Tinsmith James Glynn creates a reproduction of the famed Old North Church lantern, left, with a dark finish. The tin "scoop" light by Michael Walsh makes an effective portable light because it projects light forward while being carried. In the foreground is a "save-all" tin light by Karen Hurd, designed to use every last nub of precious wax.

By the mid-1700s, American whalers were gathering spermaceti oil from the heads of whales to provide brightly burning oil for lamps of iron, pewter, and glass, as well as greatly improved candles. For a century, clean-burning and nearly odorless whale oil remained the fuel of choice, even as the slaughter of the ocean leviathans pushed whalers farther out to sea and prices up the spectrum.

In 1857 the discovery of kerosene made all previous fuels commercially inferior, obsolete.

Today several factors are driving a revival of colonial-era personal lighting. Candles have long added warmth and intimacy to dining, celebrations, and séances that the bright, steady glow of electricity cannot match. Lamps of various sorts add a personal touch to colonial decorating. Now a new interest in reviving pre-electric personal lighting is rising with the popularity of Revolutionary-era re-enactments.

Although reproduction early American lighting had been mostly confined to stationary forms such as sconces, chandeliers, tabletop candlesticks, and the occasional lantern, living-history enthusiasts are putting portable lighting devices back to work.

We talked with some of today's traditional makers of early lighting, who provided a wealth of information on the history of these lights and offered many insights and tips for using or simply displaying them.

COLONIAL FLASHLIGHTS

The lantern—a (mostly) non-flammable box that kept the fire of a candle safely contained—was essential to rural settlers striding into the darkness to tend livestock as well as to urban dwellers trying to see their way along rutted streets. "They were colonial flashlights," explained Ohio tinsmith Robin Hood.

The earliest colonists made do with the materials at hand even though lanterns of pierced tin and those with dim, translucent panes of thinly shaved cow horn and mica let little of the candle's glow emerge. With the importing of malleable metals such as tin and brass, American lanterns became more durable, and as glass became more affordable, they got brighter.

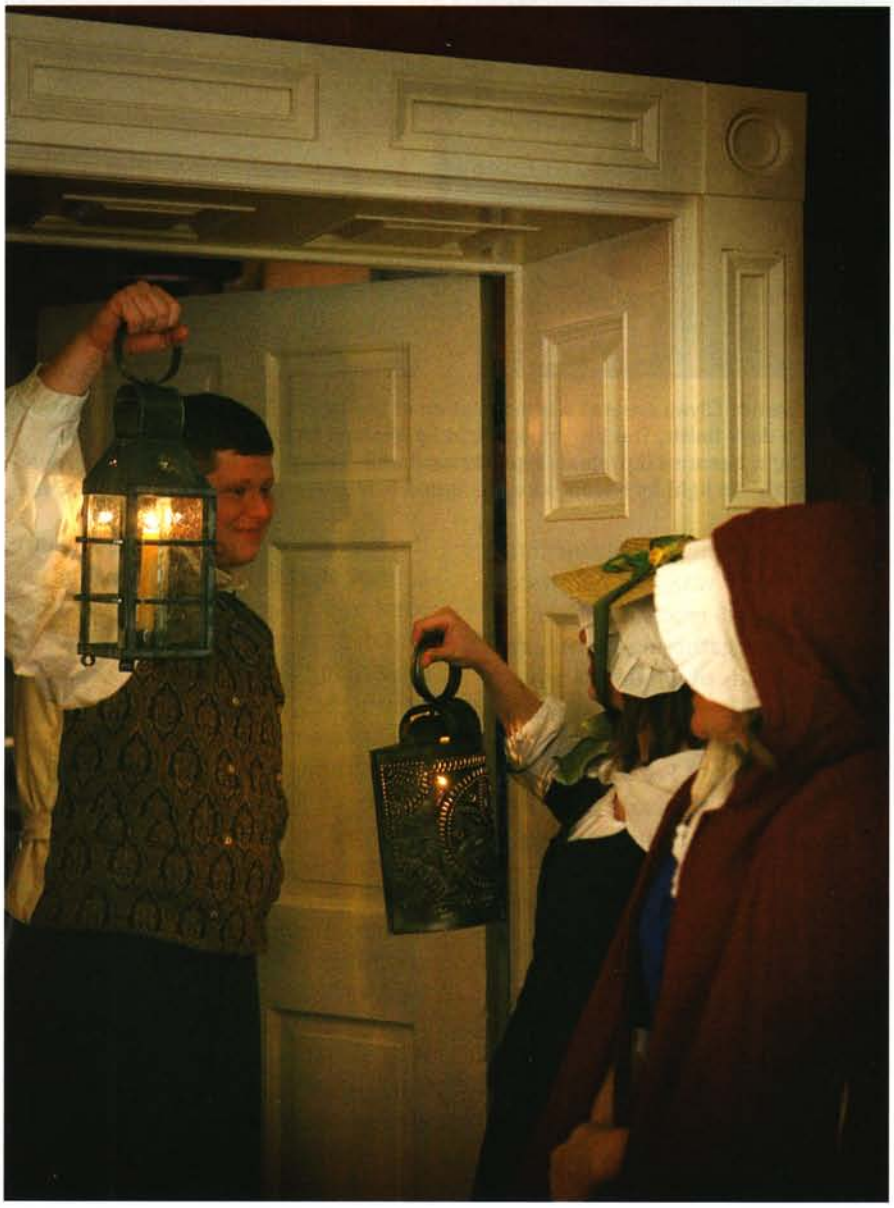
One style of lantern that has come to symbolize early America's rural heritage is the pierced-tin lantern commonly carried into barns and stables. Its rounded or flat tin panels shielded the candle flame from the surrounding tinder, while flickering candlelight escaped through elaborately situated punched holes in the tin.

"Most of the lanterns in that day were considered very utilitarian pieces for everyday use," noted Marcia Giordano, who produces tinware with her husband, Carl. "But if you look at them, you can see the genius of those early tinsmiths in the designs of the pieces. Even though they were probably making the same thing over and over and over again, there's tremendous creativity that shows up in them. Take the diamond-patterned pierced lanterns, for instance—these are just beautiful pieces."

While the Giordanos create the familiar cylindrical model of pierced-tin lantern with the cone-shaped top, Hood is intrigued by flat-panel pierced-tin lanterns of the later 1700s, many of them influenced by Pennsylvania Germans. "These were the transitional pierced-tin lanterns, going from the standard round pierced barn lantern to the square lantern," he explained. "When tinsmiths began putting more glass in their lanterns, they changed them by necessity to square-sided."

Probably the most famous lantern in American history was a square-sided model the poet Longfellow immortalized in *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 1861, in his "One if by land, two if by sea" reference in "Paul Revere's Ride" (which is a fictional tale). Virginia tinsmith James Glynn and his wife, Joyce, make a faithful reproduction of the lantern from Boston's Old North Church, based on Glynn's examination of one of the originals, measuring six inches square and sixteen inches tall, on display in the Concord Antiquarian Museum. "The original is black with age, and we age the tin on ours to make it look like old pewter, very dark and almost black," Glynn said.

Lantern-light has penetrated the night since Roman times in many shapes and sizes, and Virginia tinsmith Michael Walsh has hammered out perhaps today's widest selection of reproduction historical lanterns.



An innkeeper might have greeted guests holding a glass-paned lantern popular in the late 1700s. Tinsmith Michael Walsh reproduces it based on one originally made in Philadelphia. The woman's pierced-tin lantern by tinsmith Robin Hood is an elaborate half-round model popular with Pennsylvania Germans during the same period. The rounded shape focused the light, but with only a single pane of glass, it cost less to make.

The mistress of the house opens the door to her arriving guest holding a pewter chamberstick by Thomas and Patricia Hooper. Jonathan Gibson's reproduction of a version by Massachusetts pewter and silver-plate manufacturer Roswell Gleason stands ready on the table to light the visitor's way.

With a lifelong fondness for nautical paraphernalia and all things old, he produces, for example, an 18th-Century ship's lantern with mica panes as well as several styles of land-bound colonial lanterns. A colonial re-enactor himself, Walsh also makes a pocket-size lantern popular with both Revolutionary and Civil War re-enactors.

"The earliest ones in this style were made in England in the 1700s, but by the 1800s they were being copied here," Walsh said of the roughly three-by-five-inch device that opens to provide a candleholder and three reflecting panels. "It was a travel light, something you could put in your pocket or haversack and not have to carry a large lantern. A lot of re-enactor soldiers like them because they're small but give off enough light to light up an entire wedge tent."

A common-sense necessity—although quite rare among today's reproduction tinware—is the little "save-all" produced by Pennsylvania tinsmith Karen Hurd. With it, people could utilize the stubs of several candles to still provide light, an economical act in an era when candles were both costly and labor-intensive to produce.

ESSENTIAL CHAMBERSTICKS

As with other forms of portable lighting in early America, the chamberstick—a term associated with candleholders designed for carrying from room to room—appeared in innumerable designs in materials ranging from wood, pewter, and tin to brass, silver, and glass. Dating back at least to the early 1600s, chambersticks typically have a loop attached to their drip-pan to function as a handle.

Tin chambersticks feature tubular candle holders—sometimes with slide ejectors for removing candle stubs—large drip pans or conical bases for stability, and handles for carrying. Pewter chambersticks, on the other hand, were produced in molds as early as the middle ages and later spun on lathes beginning in the 1830s.

"Pewter was emblematic of the emerging middle class in America," explained Patricia Hooper, who with her husband, Thomas, operates ALS Pewter Foundry in Louisiana, Missouri. "It was a giant leap above clay or wood, but much less expensive than silver. It was almost always functional and never just decorative. Tin was more utilitarian, and pewter was a step above that.

"If you're making a tin chamberstick, you're rolling the sheet stock and soldering up the edge, and it can be as long or as short as you want it to be," Hooper continued.

This style of lantern lighted the way for sailors as well as landlubbers in the era before glass panes. This lantern by tinsmith Michael Walsh contains panes made of the mineral mica, popular because it proved stronger than shaved cow's horn, which often buckled from heat.

Tall candlesticks projected light farther but increased the potential for tipping and fire, especially with lightweight holders. Tinsmiths compensated by making the pans extra wide and sometimes weighting them with sand to add stability. The boys are holding "frying pan" candlesticks by Carl and Marcia Giordano, front, and Karen Hurd.

As the American whaling industry grew in the 18th Century, so did the use of whale oil for lighting. It burned brighter than most candles, with less smoke, and supplies became plentiful through the mid-19th Century. This pewter oil lamp reproduced by Thomas Hooper at ALS Pewter Foundry is a classic style.

"It's going to be lighter than pewter, more portable, and less valuable, which is why the early pioneers were more likely to pack tinware instead of pewter. And that's one of the reasons we have so few examples of early pewter west of the Mississippi—it was too heavy and too valuable to take with you."

A lighter-weight pewter chamberstick is the elegant three-inch "R. Gleason Chamberstick" New Hampshire pewterer Jonathan Gibson re-creates as a faithful adaptation of a popular piece made in the 1820s by Roswell Gleason (1799-1887), legendary pewter and silverplate manufacturer in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Gibson, a second-generation pewterer, also reproduces one of early America's most "personal" of lamps, called the "sparking" or "courting" lamp. The original 1840s lamp—also referred to as a tavern lamp—was manufactured by the firm of Capen & Molineux in New York City and utilized camphene, a brightly burning oil that, unfortunately, also was quite explosive.

"Pewter was widely used for numerous household items because it was sturdy and durable," Gibson said. "The Capen & Molineux model is a fluid lamp, not a whale-oil lamp, which meant the wick was suspended higher because camphene was much more volatile than whale oil."

Sparking lamps became popular in the early 1800s for monitoring the length of time a suitor could visit the object of his affections. The young man could remain on the young woman's premises for as long as the designated lamp remained lit. "As a sparking lamp, this one is fairly large," Gibson noted of the four-inch lamp. "Some sparking lamps were as small as thimbles, so

if the folks didn't like the gentleman who came a'courting, they'd pull out the small lamp. And when his thimbleful of fuel was gone, he was out the front door."

A 'BETTER' LAMP

Although the sparking lamp might be a witty twist on the oil lamp concept, the true heritage of these often smelly, often dangerous, yet extremely functional lights is the most venerable of all personal lighting devices. Originating some 6,000 years ago, oil lamps were still in use in America until the mid-1800s.

In Europe, oil lamps had evolved from baked clay fixtures fueled by olive oil to far more durable wrought-iron vessels in the Middle Ages. By the time the first Europeans sailed to America, the most popular lamp was a crude iron device called a "crusie" lamp—derived from the Scottish word describing a vessel for oil—consisting of a reservoir for holding tallow, lard, or fish oil, plus a wick of twisted cotton that draped over the edge of the lamp. Usually a nail-like device called a "wick pick" was attached to the lamp for adjusting the position of the wick.

The much-improved Betty lamp arrived in America with the first German settlers in Pennsylvania. It capitalized on the crusie lamp's strengths but bettered it by enlarging the oil reservoir, providing a safer channel for the wick, and covering the reservoir with a hinged lid. The name "Betty" likely originates from the German *besser*, for "better." (Another theory attributes the name to the German *Bette*, meaning bed, since this dripless lamp often lit one's way to the bedchamber.)

Some Betty lamps were tin, but most were iron vessels hammered into form by blacksmiths. David Fisher, who operates Fisher Forge in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, specializes in reproducing Betty lamps and similar historic oil lamps that originated in early Pennsylvania.

As an expert on their use, Fisher offered some important advice about Betty lamps: "The only time you can advance the wick is when the tallow is soft," he explained. "Before you'd light it, you would preheat the lamp before it got dark outside by setting it by the fireplace or on the edge of the cookstove. If you just tried to light the wick, the flame from the wick would never melt down the mass of tallow that's in the lamp. So you'd warm it up and let the tallow liquify before lighting it, then the heat from the wick would keep it liquefied the rest of the night."

Fisher warns that some reproduction Betty lamps being sold today are made of tin, and preheating them could be dangerous. "Some people making reproductions out there are just using regular solder like you'd use for plumbing," he said. "If somebody knows how to use the lamp and heats it up in advance, depending on how they heat it, the solder can soften and the lamp will fall apart. The hot oil will spill out, which could be a real problem."

Fisher also creates a line of much rarer personal lamps, often called bucket or gallows lamps. They feature an upright tube with a bucket at the top of the tube containing the oil through which the wick is suspended. The key innovation of these lamps is that the bucket pivots so that it always remains level—a valuable feature when carrying the lamp or setting it on uneven surfaces.

"The concept on these lamps is the same as with a Betty lamp, filled

The bucket lamp reproduced by blacksmith David Fisher is based on a Philadelphia model in a private collection. The "bucket" containing the fuel pivots so that the lamp itself always remains level while being carried or when setting on an uneven surface.

with rendered tallow and with a wick," Fisher said. "But the bucket lamps were a lot safer to carry—Betty lamps were free-swinging and your hand would be right above the flame. With the bucket lamp, you're better protected."

THE RISE OF GLASS

Fragile, expensive glass lighting fixtures rarely appeared in colonial America. Not until the 19th Century did glass lighting fixtures—both free-blown and molded—become commonplace. Living quarters had by then become more comfortable, and the growing use of whale oil as a lighting fuel found glass to be a suitable, safe, and decorative vessel.

John Shelton of Williamsburg, Virginia, is one of the country's leading traditional glass-blowers, concentrating on 17th- and 18th-Century glassware. Among his broad selection of colonial-era jars, pitchers, bottles, bowls, and vases, he offers a few glass chambersticks.

"They're from authentic designs of the period and, like all of my glass, they're hand-blown," Shelton said. They reflect patterns popular from the colonial period until the late 1820s, when pressed glass became commercially available.

DAVID FISHER

Some say necessity is the mother of invention, and in the 1980s when David Fisher needed an iron fireplace crane for an early Pennsylvania stone farmhouse he was restoring, he decided to learn blacksmithing and make the crane himself. Blacksmithing quickly evolved from a hobby to a business, Fisher Forge, founded in 1992 in the foothills of Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Today, Fisher produces reproduction antique lamps, cooking utensils, an array of door and cabinet hardware, gates and fencing, even replacement antique auto parts. His lighting pieces get top billing on his web site, a well-deserved distinction because of the unusual styles and historical accuracy of Fisher's pieces.

"As far as my lamps, they're all reproductions of actual pieces," Fisher said from his home in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. His lighting specialties include several renditions of Betty lamps as well as other iron, steel, and bronze lamps popular in the 18th and 19th Centuries. He bases his reproductions on early lamps he has seen in private collections, museums, and those that have come into his shop for repairs.

A particular inspiration for Fisher is the surviving work of Peter Derr, a well-known blacksmith who worked in Pennsylvania's Lebanon Valley from the 1830s to 1860s. "Today, authenticated Peter Derr lamps can bring $6,000 to $8,000 at a public sale," he said. (Fisher noted that he marks his reproductions to discourage people from misrepresenting them as surviving Derr items.)

Fisher's lighting devices are available directly from Fisher and generally cost between $140 and $200.

This pierced-tin lantern is the work of Carl and Marcia Giordano. The diamond pattern is unusual for the intricacy of its design and the amount of piercing required to produce it.

The house- or innkeeper might assemble a selection of chambersticks for arriving guests to use when they retired for the night, although in the 18th Century only affluent colonists used glass for lighting fixtures because of its expense. Glass-blower John Shelton bases his glass versions on 18th-Century designs. In front is a tavern lamp reproduced by pewterer Jonathan Gibson.

CARL AND MARCIA GIORDANO

Carl and Marcia Giordano had been married only a couple of years in 1970 when they first visited Colonial Williamsburg and were immediately smitten with the 18th Century. "We saw a lot of early tin lanterns in Williamsburg and I longed to have one," Marcia recalled. "So I kept telling Carl, 'I'll bet you could make one of those'."

Make one he did. In the years since then, the Giordanos have produced innumerable tin lighting devices and other utilitarian tinware. Their creations have appeared in historically notable films including *Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World*, the HBO miniseries *John Adams*, the more whimsical *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies, and at historical sites from the reproduction 18th-Century tall ship *Friendship* at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site to the White House Christmas tree.

The Giordanos' method of creating tinware has grown to include both husband and wife, with Marcia soldering the pieces as Carl forms them. "It's a system we've worked out so we can produce pieces a lot faster," Marcia explained from the couple's workshop in Wadsworth, Ohio. "This wasn't our intent in the beginning, but it's the way the process has evolved."

Because of the historical accuracy of their tin lighting devices and other tin items, the Giordanos have found an eager market with the re-enactment community. Lanterns and candlesticks are popular, but much of the Giordanos' re-enactment business comes from selling their tin pots, plates, bowls, and canteens.

The Giordanos' personal lighting devices are priced from about $15 for night lights to $125 for lanterns. "If someone's looking for something in particular or wants a custom design, if he or she can refer us to a photograph or a book, we can work with that," Carl noted.

JAMES AND JOYCE GLYNN

Some years ago, tinsmithing was to be Jim Glynn's hobby, a refuge from the pressures of corporate life. Instead, it grew into a complete lifestyle

TWO SIDES OF FIRE

Early American personal lighting devices relied on fire to perform their purpose, yet fire also posed one of the greatest dangers to the home.

"People back then were in constant fear of fire in the house, and having lit candles around was definitely a safety hazard," said tinsmith Carl Giordano. "The problem was, they needed light, and a tall candlestick will distribute light over a wider area simply because it's taller. But it's more dangerous because it's more top heavy and could more easily tip over."

A solution that also explains the shape of some early tin candleholders and chambersticks involved widening the drip pan. "One tall chamberstick we reproduce has a very large pan—about six inches in diameter—which indicates people probably filled the pan with sand to make it heavier and less likely to tip over. We also have another tall candlestick where sand was put right into the base. Using sand not only weighted these things down but also put sand within easy reach in case you needed it to put out a small fire."

Giordano's wife, Marcia, who also works on the couple's tinware, noted that the pierced-tin lantern was probably the safest personal lighting fixture in colonial times because the flame was not exposed. "You have this lace-like illumination that didn't give off much light," she said, "but if it tipped over, there was no glass to break, which made it safer."

But for lanterns to be effective, they needed to stay lit. Robin Hood explained that the pierced-tin lantern was known for the resilience of its flame, even in windy conditions. "People think because the lantern is full of holes it's going to blow out. And I explain that these guys weren't dumb—fire was a luxury and these lanterns had to be windproof."

The lanterns were almost always pierced outward, Hood explained, so the protruding prongs would deflect any wind. "I've seen bad reproductions of these lanterns where they're punched inward because they don't want to have anything sharp to the touch," he said. "But that's not correct." He noted that the same technique was used on pie safes in which designs in the tin panels were punched outward to discourage bugs from crawling into the pie safe.

"To prove my point about the flame," Hood noted, "I've put a lit candle in a pierced-tin lantern and shut its door, and then put a $20 bill beside the lantern, and I'll say, 'You can have this $20 bill if you can put this lantern out—blow on it, swing it around, whatever. If you can blow out the candle without opening the door, you can have the $20. I've never lost yet."

change for him and his wife, Joyce.

Glynn had done well for himself as a banker in Detroit. To inject some relaxation into his life, he took a tinsmithing course at nearby Greenfield Village and loved it. But then the Glynns moved east when he took a position in New York City's banking community. He commuted back and forth to home in Connecticut—as he puts it, "the complete rat race." To regain some sanity, he took refresher courses in tinsmithing.

"Here I was, working for a New York City bank and then at about the age of fifty-five made a complete change," Glynn recalled. He quit his corporate job and with Joyce—a quilter of many years—opened a tinsmith shop in Wilton, Connecticut. They eventually left Connecticut and set up shop in Locust Grove, Virginia.

For more than thirty years, Glynn has focused his tinsmithing on lighting fixtures, producing a broad selection of lamps, lanterns, sconces, chandeliers, and night lights. "The piercing of our tin is all done by my wife," Glynn explained. "It's funny because I was piercing tin one day and she said, 'You know, I could do that. I'm always working with these designs on the quilts I'm making.' So she starts doing it and I thought, 'Oh, wow!' I mean there are machines out there that pierce tin, but ours is pierced faithfully. She does all the fancy work, and I put it together when she finishes."

Prices range from about $40 for candleholders to $160 for higher-end lanterns, such as the replica Old North Church lantern. The Glynns still attend a few shows but sell primarily from their web site.

ROBIN HOOD

Robin Hood began tinsmithing in the early 1980s when an antiques collector friend gave him an early pierced-tin lantern Hood had been eyeing and suggested he try to make one. "I didn't know a thing about tinsmithing, never soldered anything in my life, but it took off like a passion," Hood recalled. "I guess there are a lot of mysteries in life as

This tavern lamp by pewterer Jonathan Gibson is based on an 1840s model manufactured in New York City. The original was fueled by camphene, a highly volatile resin-based oil that produced a mellow light.

to why you choose things and why things choose you."

Now living in Rockbridge, Ohio, Hood had married young, had three children in quick succession, and was working in a factory when he decided to pursue tinsmithing. "I wasn't taught by anyone," he said. "I'm out here in the middle of southern Ohio and it just came by revelation. I'd see in a museum a seam on a lantern and I'd think about it, meditate on it, sometimes take a walk through the woods and all of a sudden the idea would come to me as to how it was done."

He took a gamble and quit his factory job—"I'd been basically praying every day to find a way out of there"—and was unexpectedly offered an opportunity to wholesale his tinware. "It's almost a mystery and sounds like a made-up story, but once I began to commit myself to this journey into tinsmithing, tools began to come out of the woodwork," he recalled.

"People would give me tools they'd had in an attic or somewhere, and I made a number of my own tools based on what I needed them to do. Later, when I finally got my

hands on some books about tinsmithing, I found that the tools I'd created out of my head were almost identical to the original old tools, and I'd had no idea.

"I've studied the art of tinsmithing as well as the mechanics of tinsmithing, and I try to combine both," he said. "I love the beauty of the old pieces, the way those tinsmiths might do scrollwork or maybe the way they finished off a vent on a lantern. They added beauty to it instead of settling for just some crude lighting device. For most people in the colonial days, there wasn't a lot of beauty, so these tinsmiths did what they could to add a bit of functional beauty to people's lives. And that's what I try to do."

Hood produces lanterns, table lamps, sconces, chandeliers, and folk art in tin and copper for collectors, restoration projects, and numerous other customers. People can find his tinware on his web site and at selected shows. Prices range from $80 for a small piece to more than $600 for a Great Hall Lantern, with most lanterns running between $150 and $200.

MICHAEL WALSH

Michael Walsh is one of those people who has lived and breathed history most of his life. "I always wanted to make things the early way, the way the settlers did, the way the early craftsmen did," Walsh said recently from his 1750 log home in Dayton, in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

With tinsmithing, a pierced-tin lantern in his mother-in-law's home served as the catalyst. "I'd walked by that lantern for years and never paid a bit of attention to it until one day it just caught my eye," he said. "I studied it and wondered if I could make that." Information on tinsmithing in the 1980s was scarce, but Walsh found a reference to a tinsmith named Phil Kelly in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who agreed to teach Walsh on weekends.

Walsh has now been a full-time tinsmith for twenty-three years. The main part of his business is early American tin lighting, including sconces, chandeliers, and other period-inspired hanging lights, tabletop lights, and an extensive line of lanterns in many period styles.

He also creates a popular line of tinware for living-history enthusiasts, geared mostly toward Revolutionary re-enactors but with some items suitable for Civil War events as well. Included are several roasters and tin ovens, cups and tankards—such as Walsh's pieces used in the movie *Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World*—mess kits, wash pans, and buckets, among other pieces.

Walsh is a member of the 7th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, and he and his wife, Debby, frequently participate in 18th Century re-enactments. The Walshes sell through gifts shops, museum visitor centers, 18th-Century market fairs, and shows at places such as Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, and Fort Frederick, as well as from their home by appointment or via their web site. ★

Gregory LeFever is a contributing editor to *Early American Life*.

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Pennsylvania blacksmith David Fisher creates an unusual line of oil lamps, including a Betty lamp with a decorative rooster on its base, another Betty lamp patterned after one by Peter Derr, and a steel gallows lamp. All are based on Pennsylvania lamps from the 1830s. Hanging above Fisher's pieces is a rush lamp, a wood-burning device often used in the early colonial period.