

# THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

**Newsletter**

Vol. 9, No. 5



**FARM SLED**

**May 2023**

CONTINUED FROM APRIL 2023

## THE APRIL WHAT'Z IT REVEALED . . . . .

For those who said it is some sort of lamp, good start. But what sort of lamp – what is it called and what is it representative of?

Back in the neolithic Age (10,000-2,000 BC) stone age man in the area of Israel, developed a crude oil lamp made of pottery. Kudos to them because variations on this continued into colonial times and were continued by our ancestors. The What'z It lamps are cruise lamps and part of a class of oil lamps variously referred to as cruise or betty lamps. These were generally made of iron or brass and some showed great craftsmanship and design.

The first cruise lamp was a single dish –



This flat dish had a spout in which you could lay the wick and it would absorb the oil from the dish. The dish had a hook so it could be hung which made it suitable for reading by. A problem with this lamp was that excess oil from the wick would drip onto the surface below and create an unwanted mess. For those wondering

if this was not also a fire hazard, the answer is no. Lamp oil is not really very flammable – in fact if you knocked one over, the spilled oil would snuff out the wick.

The three lamps from the museum collection that were depicted in the What'z It last month were all cruise lamps. You can see here the similarity of one of the Museum's cruise lamps below, complete with hook for hanging and the spout for the wick.



This lamp was useful for providing a constant source of light in a particular area as it could be hung and left there. While this was handy one must remember that light from a candle or oil lamp was all the colonists had. At times they also needed to take the light with them from room to room and the lamp seen above was not easily carried from place to place. An iteration of this lamp was soon to follow. They simply replaced the hook with a curved handle that was easy to hold when carrying the lamp from place to place. This next What'z It lamp from the Museum collection is just such a lamp.

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# MAY THEME CROSSWORD

This is a coded puzzle - there are no clues. The answer words in the diagram are represented by numbers. Each number represents a different letter of the alphabet and all of the letters of the alphabet are used. When you are sure of a letter put it in the **Code Key Chart** and cross it off in the **Alphabet Box**. A group of letters has been inserted to start you off.

The theme words are in the yellow blocks.

13	21	10	17		22	16	21	8		21	20	22	12	18
21		21		20		25		12		17		10		22
19	21	18	22	9	6	8	10	17		14	2	7	4	22
W	A	T	E	R	J	U	M	P						
12		1		21		7		22		17		13		12
10	14	14	9	7	12	20		20	21	13	13	22	9	15
14				12		20				22		1		
19	7	26	3		26	13	7	10	21	2		14	7	13
22		8		6		22		22		15		13		22
9	8	11		21	16	16	7	20	12		23	21	9	10
		11		7				21		20				14
16	3	15	11	13	8	22		26	14	21	9	16	22	12
21		24		11		21		15		11		10		21
16	24	14	6	7		5	14	26	21	13	26	14	9	4
16		13		9		22		13		22		3		22
15	7	22	13	4		16	13	22	4		23	22	22	16

The **CODE KEY CHART** is on the next page

(3)

This month is an experiment in size. A number of folks have said they wish the puzzle was larger in order to make it easier to read the numbers and also to make it easier to fill in the squares if they print it out.



**CODE KEY CHART**

1	2	3	4	5	6 J	7	8 U	9 R	10 M	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 P	18 T	19 W	20	21 A	22 E	23	24	25	26

**ALPHABET**

<del>A</del>	B	C	D	<del>E</del>	F	G	H	I	<del>J</del>	K	L	<del>M</del>
N	O	<del>P</del>	Q	<del>R</del>	S	<del>T</del>	<del>U</del>	V	<del>W</del>	X	Y	Z

The answer appears on page #6.



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**OIL LAMPS –**

The cruise lamp with a handle:



While an answer to the need for light, these cruise lamps, still presented the problem of the excess oil dripping from the wick and making a mess on the surface below.

So the next iteration of the above cruise lamp was the double cruise lamp. This lamp had two dishes –



The bottom dish had a hook for hanging the same as the original cruise lamp. However, it also had a hook like projection on the hanging shaft on which a second dish could be hung. This second dish had a slotted hanger that would fit onto that hook like projection. The wick was placed in the top dish and hung out over the spout so that any drips would fall into the lower dish.

This style cruise lamp became known as a Phoebe Lamp. Don't ask, I have no idea who Phoebe was – perhaps one our enterprising readers can let us know.

While aspects of our ancestors' lives were crude by today's standards, many things were roughly made by hand and were rarely ornate. However, that does not mean that our ancestors did not, on occasion, enjoy owning a rather nice (but still functional) piece. Since the original cruise lamp was more or less permanently placed and thus on display, they started to be more carefully made and exhibit a degree of craftsmanship. Such an example was the third lamp in the last month's What'z It. Still a cruise lamp, still functional, but more ornate in appearance.



One side note is the name, "cruise lamp." Why cruise? It comes from the Scottish word "cruise" which means "a vessel for oil."

These lamps (the cruise and the Phoebe) smoked quite a bit, and one later design iteration helped to reduce the amount of smoke. This lamp became known as the Betty Lamp which comes from the German word "besser" which means "to make better." Which they certainly did by helping to reduce the amount of smoke and dripping of oil outside the lamp. The basic difference is a metal cover was added which confined the heat and decreased the smoke making the oil burn more efficiently which further reduced the smoke. Of even more importance was the addition of a wick holder inside the oil reservoir. This allowed the oil from the wick to run back into the lamp reservoir rather than drip off the wick outside the lamp.

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**OIL LAMPS –**



A BETTY LAMP

Unfortunately the Betty Lamp depicted here cannot be found in the museum, nor can any other Betty – we do not have one. The lamp at the left is a photo from a local collector.

Hint: If you have one in your attic or barn that you are willing to part with, please do not forget the Heritage Museum

The Betty Lamp did not replace the cruise lamp and both were common well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The term Betty Lamp has since become synonymous with both types.

One final note: Commonly used fuels were animal oil or grease which were readily available. Fish oil was seldom used as it gave poor light and was very smoky. The best light and least smoke and odor were obtained by using whale oil but it was very expensive.

Remember, if you run across a Betty Lamp in your attic or barn during this period of “spring cleaning”, we would be only too happy to give such a new home.

Folks today are none too happy with the cost of electricity. But really, would you be willing to give up modern day lighting and go back to the Betty Lamp??  $\Omega$

**FROM THE e-MAIL BAG**

In response to last month’s What’z It, we received a correct answer from a reader in Tucson, AZ. On a recent trip he encountered folks still using these lamps for light. He not only identified the lamps but provided a bit of info we could not find in researching the article. That being, what was the wick made of? Here is the reader’s answer based on his recent observation:

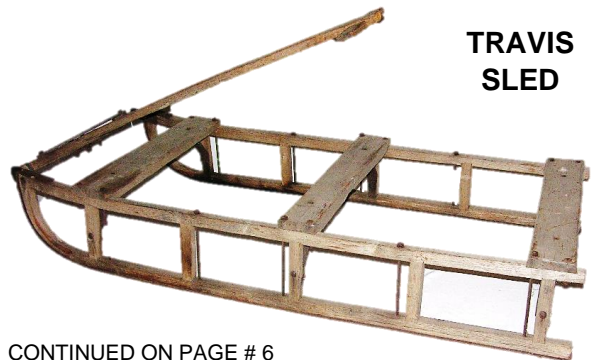
*“When visiting a remote ranch that was far from the electric wires I witnessed the use of Betty lamps as a real source of light. They were locally made, or across the border in Mexico, and made the home fat supply into useable lighting. Wick was raw cotton fiber twisted tight and dried. People were several generations in USA from Mexico with a well-kept but basic ranch for cattle.”*

So as Paul Harvey would say at the end of his newscast – “now you know the rest of the story.” First spoken by him on his radio news show in 1951. Seems like yesterday doesn’t it?  $\Omega$



**THE FARM SLED**

As difficult as life could be on a farm in colonial times, winter would only exacerbate the hardships. Snow or not, firewood had to be moved, milk, hay and feed, casks and crates - all had to be moved. What was needed was a sled. A children’s small sled was not up to the task and the narrow runners would dig into the snow. A bigger, stronger sled was needed.



**TRAVIS SLED**

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 6



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### THE FARM SLED

The Travis sled shown on Page #5 was the answer. Also known as a drag sled it was fashioned after the Native American Indian Travois Sled. The Travis sled is a working farm sled used to drag loads around the farm. They range in size from small sleds such as the one on Page #5 and pulled by man to larger, heavier ones including those sleds pulled by dogs or horses.



The sled depicted above is a Travis type sled that was recently donated to the museum following years of service at the Pettee family's Elm Farm on New Boston Road.

All the sleds shown here can be seen at the Francestown Heritage Museum along with a third variation of the sled shown below.



Remember, we open this year May 5<sup>th</sup> concurrent with the first Community Market of the season.



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### THE LIGHTER SIDE

- “I hate it when people act all intellectual and talk about Mozart, when they have never even seen one of his paintings.”

- Just once, I would like the prompt for user name and password to say “Close Enough”.

### PUZZLE SOLUTION

