

THE MYSTERY OF HISTORY — JUNE 3, 2019

WHAT'S IT?

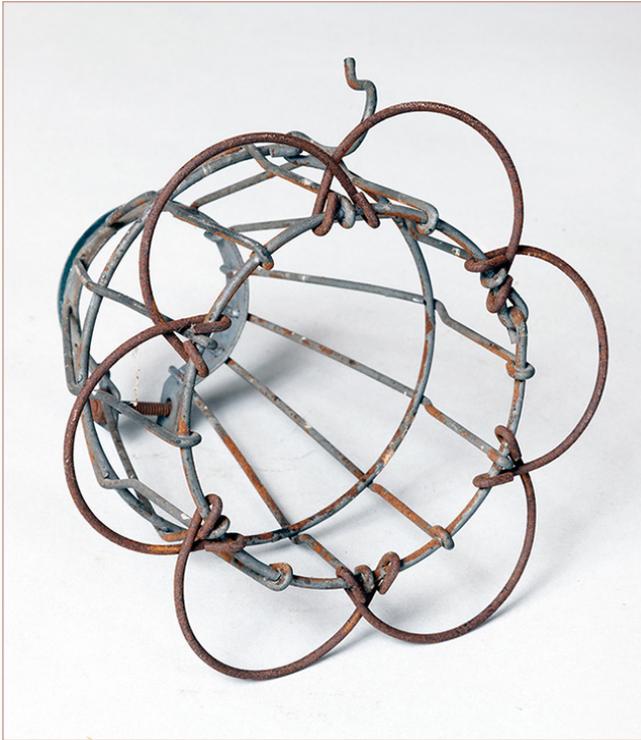


Fig. 1: View with large end opened. PHOTO: © 2018 Richard W. Black



Fig. 2: Side view. PHOTO: © 2018 Richard W. Black

ARTIFACT 19-04

SPECIFICATIONS:

Made of metal. Weight = 102.06kg (3.6oz.);

Height: Closed = 13.97cm (5.5in); Open = 10.16cm (4.0in)

Diameter: Large end = 8.89cm (3.5in); Small end, 4.76cm = (1.875in)

CLUES:

This artifact was discovered in a barn that was built in the 1870's.

QUESTIONS:

- What did this object do, and what was it used with?
- In what orientation was this object used and how do you know?
 - How and why does the large end open and close?
 - Do you see the hook, what was it for?

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WHAT'S IT?**ARTIFACT 19-04****ANSWER:**

It is a protection device for an incandescent light—or a light bulb cage if you like. Why would you have to cage a light bulb? Almost all barns had these light bulb shields around them to protect them from long-handled-tools and other gear you might be moving around in a barn. When these bulbs are hit, they don't just break, they shatter leaving tiny shards of glass all over floors, shelves, and whatever else would make a good landing place. Another problem with shattered light bulbs is the process of replacing what is left of the bulb with a new one. Besides the jagged glass, there might not be much to grab onto when attempting to unscrew the E26 metal bulb base from its possibly live electric socket—that could be a shocking experience! —AN

Thanks for participating in our “What's It?” guessing contest! Even with the busy summer vacation, those of **all ages** still had some great guesses for artifact 19-04!

Correct guesses:

Michael Bodziak: “I think it is a safety cage for a light bulb. The top opens so you can change burned out bulb.”

Nancy Breslawski points out another good reason to cage a light bulb: “Light bulb case? Put over a light fixture to prevent heat of bulb from getting too close to flammable stuff. Hook would attach to something to hold up light bulb.”

Alan Van Eecke: “Protective cage for a work light (bulb).”

Creative and plausible guesses (and new uses?):

Rhett Breslawski indicated it might be “A bird feeder to give [hold?] birds seed blocks.”

Timothy L. Dusen suggested it was “Used to hold a bottle in the barn for animals to get water.”

Marla Herzog thought this might be a “Turtle trap.”

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WHAT'S IT?**BACKGROUND**

“WHAT’S IT?” has been a feature of the BCM website since its inception in 2007. In 2017 Brockport Community Museum board member Archer “Buck” Noble, a Brockport Central School District teacher (now retired) developed “The Mystery of History” school project that encouraged fourth and fifth grade students to use observational and investigative techniques to help determine the type and use of different historic artifacts.

That project was introduced to the general public during a Brockport Community Museum outreach presence at the 2017 Brockport Sidewalk Sale. That success led to this collaboration between the Brockport Community Museum, Seymour Library and Brockport Central School District.

GET INVOLVED

- **Take your best guess** regarding the current artifact.
- **Do you have an artifact** you would like to know more about? Open your query to a larger audience.
- **Have a suggestion** about how we can improve this project?

If so...

Leave your contact information in “Ye old prediction box” near the exhibit display.

CREDITS*Museum project committee*

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Seymour Library

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