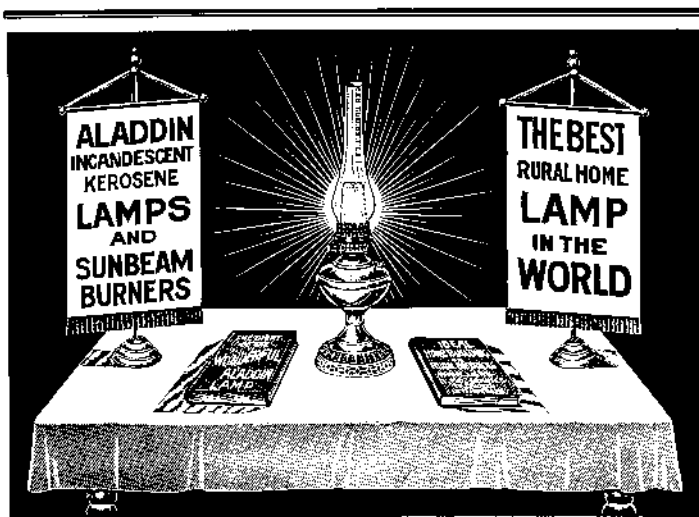


A Brief—

# History of Aladdin® Lamps

J. W. Courter



**THE MANTLE LAMP COMPANY OF AMERICA**

CHICAGO, U. S. A.

Branch Offices:

Waterbury, Conn.

Portland, Ore.

Montreal, Can.

Winnipeg, Can.



**Victor S. Johnson, 1882-1943, photographed at work in 1924. Johnson named the Aladdin lamp and founded the company that made it world-famous.**

"Nearly a century ago, a very small boy on a Nebraska farm read and re-read the *Arabian Nights* story of Aladdin in a room of darkness but for the flickering yellow light of an open flame "coal oil lamp." Several years later that boy, grown to manhood, found a lamp that erased the darkness with a soft white light and it was only natural that he named the lamp "Aladdin." An appropriate name, indeed, for this revolutionary boon to rural America seemed nothing short of magical in the intensity of its light.

"For those who lit the lamp, trimmed its wick and cleaned its chimney, or just enjoyed its friendly glow, the Aladdin lamp recalls many memories of golden childhood. It made learning possible for many boys and girls; made it possible for them to acquire knowledge that helped them realize their dreams and aspirations.

"Later, Aladdin brought this white light to every kind of habitat in every corner of the globe. For many, it has been the only light of their entire life. Even when electricity comes, there are a loyal few who profess to use the electric light only "to find the match" to light their Aladdin."

V. S. Johnson, Jr.



**Aladdin Model #1**

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J. W. Courter is professor emeritus, University of Illinois. His avocation is collecting and studying oil lamps. He writes and publishes books about Aladdin lamps.

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# Very Brief History

Victor Johnson founded the Mantle Lamp Company of America in Chicago in 1908 and imported the Practicus incandescent burner from Germany. He obtained the Aladdin trademark in 1908 and sold the first model of the American-made Aladdin lamp in 1909. In 1926 Johnson bought the Lippincott Glass factory in Alexandria, Indiana to make glass lamps, chimneys and shades, changing the name to Aladdin Industries.

Agents were recruited to sell lamps throughout the country and farm land. They demonstrated the Aladdin and often left the lamp in the home for an overnight trial. The agent arranged for local merchants to stock supplies. In 1928 the company turned solely to franchise dealers—some 15,000 in the early 1930s. The company advertised extensively in newspapers and through radio. Smilin Ed McConnell was so popular that he became the "Aladdin lamp man."

In 1949 the company moved their central office from Chicago to Nashville, Tennessee, the home of Aladdin Industries' today.

Aladdin lamps were made in the USA until 1963, after which brass lamps were imported from England. Only the glass lamps continued to be made in the USA. Since 1977 the Aladdin burners have been manufactured in Hong Kong while the fonts are made in the USA and England. Chimneys, wicks and mantles are made in other countries today.

In 1999 Aladdin Industries sold the lamp division to collector/investors who named their company Aladdin Mantle Lamp Company, located in Clarksville, Tennessee.

**Colorful Short Lincoln Drape Aladdin lamps are available from the Aladdin Mantle Lamp Company today.**



Watson hardware store, Golconda, Illinois, 1937.



# "Wireless"

## *World's Finest Non-Electric Lamp*

Excerpts from 1930s advertising brochures—The Aladdin Mantle Lamp is one of the greatest and most practical inventions of the century. It is an outstanding achievement of science in connection with artificial lighting. It has gone a long, long way toward solving the lighting problem for rural homes, with its abundance of soft, mellow, modern, white light. Aladdin light makes evening reading, writing or sewing a pleasure.

The Aladdin is simple—anyone can operate it. It lights and is put out just like the ordinary kerosene wick lamp. It costs very little to operate. It burns common kerosene (coal oil). The average consumption is a single gallon to 50 hours of service. It is safe—cannot explode.

Today over 7,000,000 persons enjoy the blessings and comfort of the Aladdin lamp.

**Indeed!** The Aladdin lamp was developed through application of scientific principles:

Ami Argand, 1750-1803, invented the principle of center draft whereby air is provided inside a tubular wick to the flame of a lamp. Argand's "air lamps" became known as "Argand lamps," which he first patented in England in 1784.

Dr. Auer von Welsbach, 1858-1929, an Austrian chemist, invented the incandescent gas mantle in 1885, a huge improvement in the history of artificial lighting.

The early technology of adapting the mantle to oil lamps was developed in Germany. Beginning in the early 1900s companies in the United States recognized the tremendous advantage of these improved lights. The Aladdin lamp became the world-wide leader in non-pressure incandescent lamps during the next 50 years.

The principle of the Aladdin burner is to produce a blue flame (virtually 100 % combustion) for maximum heat output. This heat causes the mantle to incandesce due to its unique chemical composition and properties. The Aladdin emits approximately 2500 BTUs of heat per hour.

The Aladdin lamp emits 60 candlepower of white light—No pumping—No noise—No smoke—No odor—No Danger.

The Aladdin lamp is the only lamp of this type manufactured today. *An Aladdin lamp ready to light in case of emergency power outage provides much comfort in the household that plans ahead.*



# Aladdin Kerosene Lamps Sold in the USA from 1909 to Present

Aladdins have been made as table lamps, hanging lamps, floor lamps, wall or bracket lamps and later, caboose lamps. The company designed their lamps to use in most any indoor location.

The early lamps (Models 1 through 12) were made primarily of brass and nickel plated. Models 1-12 are center-draft lamps. Subsequent models use side-draft burners which cannot be used in the earlier lamps. The side-draft burner permitted the company to make glass fonts and beginning in the 1930s glass lamps were made in many attractive colors and patterns.

The model of each lamp is designated on the wick raising knob (except Models 1-4). Models changed as improvements were made due to new patents, or changes in the operating mechanism. Many of the models look very similar in outer appearance. Some parts are interchangeable while many are not.

The following models are a challenge to collect. Some are very common (Models 6, 11, 12 for example) while others are quite hard to find (Models 1, 3, 10 for example).



S-2301 (2001)

## Model                      Years Sold

1 .....	May 1909—August 1910
2 .....	September 1910—December 1910
3 .....	January 1911—August 1912
4 .....	September 1912—August 1913
5 .....	September 1913—August 1914
6 .....	September 1914—July 1917
7 .....	August 1917—July 1919
8 .....	August 1919—August 1920
9 .....	August 1920—August 1922
10 .....	May 1921—August 1922
11 .....	September 1922—May 1928
12 .....	May 1928—April 1935
A .....	May 1932—December 1932
B .....	February 1933—September 1955
C .....	October 1955—April 1963
21C .....	May 1963—December 1969
23 .....	December 1969—Present



Model numbers of Aladdin lamps are found on the wick knob.

# Aladdins Around The World

The Mantle Lamp Company of America was originally organized to import and sell foreign-made kerosene burners and mantles for American-made lamps. The Aladdin lamp became the ultimate development in incandescent kerosene lighting and the company soon became known around the globe for its famous lamp. The company was a major exporter of lamps, and other products by the 1950s. Aladdin Industries Inc. sold goods in more than 125 countries through Aladdin Consumer Products (thermos wares, lunch boxes, heaters and lamps), Aladdin Electronics, and Aladdin Synergetics (Institutional food service systems).

Aladdin lamps were manufactured in England, Australia and Brazil:

## England

Sales were established in England in 1919, importing directly from the USA. Manufacturing of the following models began there in 1933:

Model 14	1933-1953
Model 21	1953-1963
Model 21C	1963-1969
Model 23	1969-1977

Today Aladdin UK imports lamps and burners from Hong Kong.



UK Models 12 & 14.

## Australia

Sales were established in 1923 with burners and lamps imported from the USA and later UK. Unique Bakelite lamp bodies were made in Australia during the 1940s and 1950s (below right).

## Brazil

Glass and aluminum lamps, and some burners, were made in Brazil for South America and export to the USA in the 1970s.

L to R:  
Model C, USA  
Model C, Brazil.



# Aladdin Electric Lamps

1930 to 1956

By the 1930s it was obvious that the days for essential use of the kerosene lamp were numbered. Colorful glass lamps made in Alexandria, Indiana increased sales and led to development of the Aladdin electric lamp. During the next 15 years the company created unique electric lamps in "Deco" designs, developed colorful paper shades and became established as a leading manufacturer of boudoir, table and floor lamps.

Aladdin electric lamps are not only collectible today but they also are restored to enhance the home decor for collectors who enjoy the unique designs created in the 1930s, 1940s or 1950s.

The company ceased production of electric lamps due to severe competition after WW II. Instead Aladdin expanded sales of character lunch boxes and thermos bottles for school children.

The Aladdin Mantle Lamp Company has recreated many of the old-time paper shades which give new life to Aladdin electric lamps.



G-24 (1940)



G-130 (1939)

G-190 (1940)

G-314 (1947)

# Discover the *Magic of Aladdin*

**Aladdin lamps are practical & functional today**

- Ideal for your cottage or cabin.
- Emergency light, where you need it; when you need it.
- Peace of mind with an Aladdin ready to light.
- Use for ambiance, enjoyment.

**Nostalgia**

- Restore grandmother's old lamp.
- Enhance your home decor.
- Collect many styles and types.

**Knowledge**

- Study the development of incandescent lighting. Learn about Victorian and early electric lighting.



## Sources to Help You

**Books**

*Aladdin—The Magic Name in Lamps*, hardbound, 304 pages, complete history of the Mantle Lamp Company of America and the world-famous Aladdin kerosene lamp. \$39.95 plus \$7 P& H.

*Aladdin Electric Lamps*, softbound, 229 pages, complete history of Aladdin Industries and Aladdin electric lamps. \$24.95 plus \$5 P & H.

*Aladdin Collectors Manual & Price Guide, Kerosene Mantle Lamps*, 48 pages. \$8.95.

*Aladdin Electric Lamps Collectors Manual & Price Guide*, 48 pages. \$8.95.

**Books available from the author**—J. W. Courter, 3935 Kelley Rd., Kevil, KY 42053. Large books autographed to you. Courter also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter—*The Mystic Light of the Aladdin Knights*. Send for free list of books and brochure on Aladdin collecting.

**World Wide Web Sites**

[www.aladdinknights.org](http://www.aladdinknights.org)

[www.aladdincollectors.org](http://www.aladdincollectors.org)

[www.aladdinlamps.com](http://www.aladdinlamps.com)

**Free catalog of new Aladdin lamps, shades and accessories for old and new lamps:**

Aladdin Mantle Lamp Company, 681 International Blvd.,  
Clarksville, TN 37210. Voice: 800-457-5267; Fax: 931-647-4517.  
email: [sales@aladdinlamps.com](mailto:sales@aladdinlamps.com)