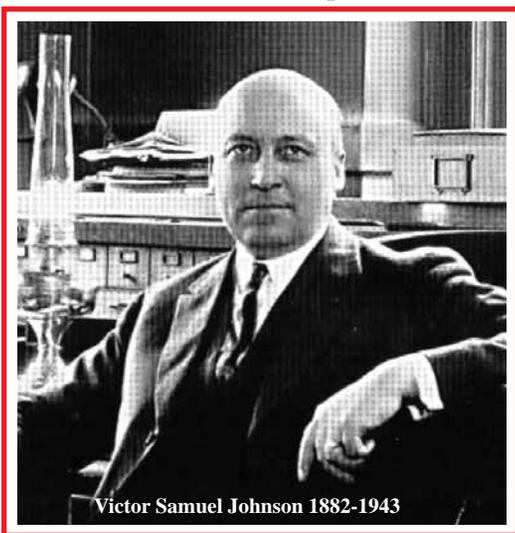


Honoring Victor Samuel Johnson
*and his gift to the world of the
 Magical Aladdin Kerosene
 Mantle Lamp*



Victor Samuel Johnson 1882-1943

The **Aladdin Lamp Kidron, Ohio Exhibit** honors Victor Samuel Johnson and his creation and development of the *Magical Aladdin Kerosene Mantle Lamp*.

Exhibit also traces the early history of the **Mantle Lamp Company of America** located in Chicago to later days in Alexandria, Indiana, where Aladdin produced their most beautiful glass creations.

Victor Johnson, born to Swedish immigrant parents, remembered, as a Nebraska farm boy, reading and re-reading the story about Aladdin and his magical lamp. This young boy studied his lessons by the dim yellow flame of an old fashioned kerosene lamp and he never forgot.

Years later, as a salesman for an Iowa soap company, Victor Johnson saw a light that would change his life and millions more forever. That light was a German imported lamp that produced many times the light of the lamp that he studied by during his boyhood. Johnson was so impressed by this new bright light that he eventually formed **The Mantle Lamp Company of America** to bring this marvelous technology to rural areas, where electricity was mostly absent. Naturally he branded his lamp “**Aladdin**,” because its light was indeed magical.

Johnson’s new company sold their first **Aladdin Kerosene Mantle Lamp** (Model No 1) in 1909. Sales were brisk and quickly surpassed expectations. Over the next 20 years, Models 2 thru 12 followed with major patented improvements that made Johnson’s Aladdin lamp the best selling mantle lamp in America.

In 1909, an ordinary flat wick kerosene lamp could be purchased for 25 cents at a local hardware store. However, an Aladdin mantle lamp cost \$4.50 or 18 times more. It was a price that few could afford. But Johnson was a marketing genius and to beat the high price of his Aladdin lamp he resorted to “*men with rigs*” that sold his lamps door to door. A proven technique was to leave the Aladdin lamp overnight so that potential customers would fall in love with the bright white light, which many did.

With changes in the wind, during the early 1930’s, Johnson switched his marketing from “*men with rigs*” to selling through hardware and general merchandise type stores. He was a great believer in advertising and flooded farm and rural newspapers and magazines with Aladdin lamp ads. Radio was just beginning and, again, Johnson exploited the airwaves with Aladdin lamp advertising. At one point Aladdin was spending 20% (*unbelievable by today’s standards*) of their total sales revenue on advertising.

Johnson was a visionary. Understanding that the high initial

price of his all brass lamps was limiting sales, he looked for a solution to reduce prices. He found it in **GLASS**.

In 1926, Johnson purchased the Lippincott Glass factory in Alexandria, Indiana and began producing glass lamps that were much lower in manufacturing costs, which allowed him to reduce consumer retail prices from \$10.00 to less than \$5.00. *That amount of price reduction is just amazing by any of today’s standards.*

Beginning in the early 1930’s and 40’s, Johnson created an entire spectrum of new, colorful glass lamps, which were crowned with his fabulous Model ‘B’ Aladdin incandescent mantle burner. Many collectors consider the **Model ‘B’** burner to be the **best of ‘em all**.

In addition to kerosene mantle lamps, Johnson’s factory in Indiana produced an extensive array of electric lamps tailored to mid-America tastes. Alexandria production also included vacuum bottles, stoves, lanterns, lunch boxes and speciality glassware branded **Velvex by Aladdin**, as well as, **Alacite by Aladdin**. These very limited glassware editions are highly collectible today.

As a lasting testament to their wonderful non-electric bright light, Aladdin kerosene incandescent mantle lamps are still being manufactured and sold today.

Lehman’s, right here in Kidron, Ohio, is the largest Aladdin dealer in North America.

Lehman’s offers a wide assortment of table, hanging and wall Aladdin models to satisfy almost any requirement.

After your **Aladdin Exhibit** tour, please be sure to visit Lehman’s lamp department. No doubt, you will find it rewarding.



Above is shown an Old Aladdin Advertisement. Ca. 1934