The Mystic Light of the Aladdin Knights

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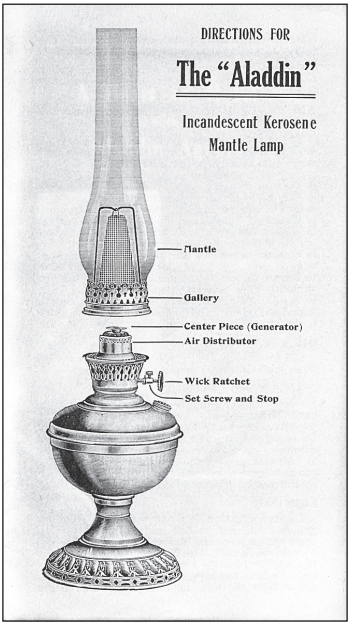
Instruction Booklets For Early "Mantle Lamp Company of America" Burners

Tom Small

The purpose of this article is to examine the early instruction booklets provided by the Mantle Lamp Company of America to its lighting customers in the earliest years of the company. The booklets were a necessary accompaniment because the kerosene mantle lamp much greater in complexity than common flat wick lamps or non-mantle center-draft lamps of the day. The helpful tips contained therein enabled the mantle lamp user to achieve the brightness claimed by the company.

The booklets discussed here range from the Practicus through Model 3. Each of these booklets consists of a single sheet of paper folded in half to make a four page booklet. The booklets are all close to the same size but not all are the exact same size. Most have an illustration on the cover, an identification of the lamp or burner and the company and branch offices (if any) listed on the last page. The two inside pages, pages 2 and 3, are all text directions which are continued onto page 4 of the folded booklet.

In the interest of conserving page space, we will not show the interior text pages but will instead concentrate on important details on the cover and last pages of these booklets.



Cover of Directions for Model 1.

Instruction Booklets . . .

and the mantle will soon become clear. If the light flickers when first turned up, unscrew the lower gallery a trifle and it will become steady at once. After the burner is properly heated, the light will be absolutely steady. If the little center piece should be pushed to one side, or too high, or too low, it will cause the light to burn red on one side. It must be in the center and at the proper height from the wick tube. Keep the lamp filled and the *wick clean. Remember, it will smoke if turned too high, or if there are any projections on the wick.* Use the brush to clean the wick. If the carbon is hard, remove it by the wire end of the brush. A *perfect surface* on the top of the wick gives *perfect results. Follow* the *directions carefully* and you will have the most *perfect light* you ever used. We warrant the *"Practicus"* if directions are followed.

The Western Lighting Co.

Distributers

116 West 13th St. *KANSAS CITY, MO.*

The "PRACTICUS" Incandescent Kerosene Burner.

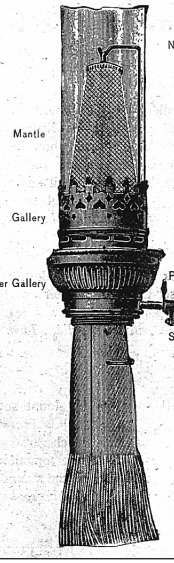


Fig. 1. Practicus burner directions, Western Lighting Co.

One of the earliest booklets explains the operation of the Practicus burner (Fig. 1). This booklet is noteworthy because it lists the predecessor, Western Lighting Company of Kansas City, MO., but also indicates the company name change in a red over-stamp on page 4 to the Mantle Lamp Company of America (MLCOA). The lack of an address on the over stamp may indicate that the name change had occurred but the company had not yet moved to Chicago.

and the mantle will soon become clear. If the light flickers when first turned up, unscrew the lower gallery a trifle and it will become steady at once. After the burner is properly heated, the light will be absolutely steady. If the little center piece should be pushed to one side, or too high, or too low, it will cause the light to burn red on one side. It must be in the center and at the proper height from the wick tube. Keep the lamp filled and the *wick clean. Remember, it will smoke if turned too high, or if there are any projections on the wick.* Use the brush to clean the wick. If the carbon is hard, remove it by the wire end of the brush. A *perfect surface* on the top of the wick gives *perfect results. Follow* the *directions carefully* and you will have the most *perfect light* you ever used. We warrant the *"Practicus"* if directions are followed.

The Mantle Lamp Co.

of America

56 Fifth Ave. *CHICAGO, ILL.*

The "PRACTICUS" Incandescent Kerosene Burner.

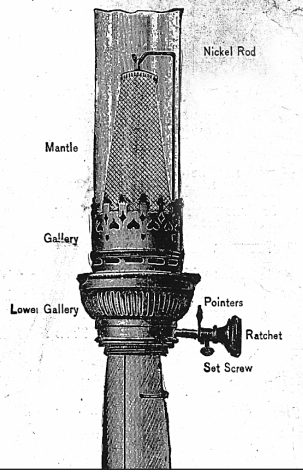
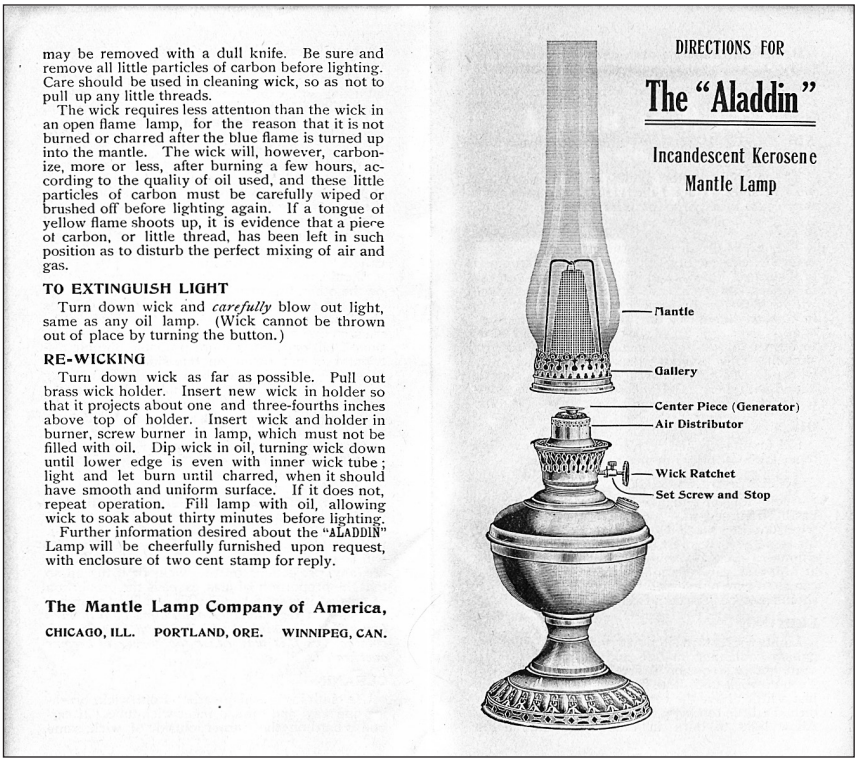


Fig. 2. Practicus burner directions, MLCOA.

A second early booklet (Fig. 2, page 7) is identical in content to the booklet in Figure 1 except that the company name and address in Figure 2 has been updated to reflect the move to Chicago. Notice that both booklets, Figure 1 and Figure 2, list only the headquarters office on page 4. Since it is likely that Johnson obtained his Practicus burners and chimneys from the Connecticut Trading Company in Clinton, CT, we are uncertain whether the content of the booklets, except for the company name, were standard issue for sellers of the Practicus burner. Copies of Practicus instruction booklets for other sellers, such as Connecticut Trading, have not surfaced thus far to enable us to answer that question. However, this same exact cut of the Practicus burner itself does appear on sales flyers for MLCOA and two other companies. Both Practicus booklets give a street address for the company office, an item that will disappear from the booklets described below.



may be removed with a dull knife. Be sure and remove all little particles of carbon before lighting. Care should be used in cleaning wick, so as not to pull up any little threads.

The wick requires less attention than the wick in an open flame lamp, for the reason that it is not burned or charred after the blue flame is turned up into the mantle. The wick will, however, carbonize, more or less, after burning a few hours, according to the quality of oil used, and these little particles of carbon must be carefully wiped or brushed off before lighting again. If a tongue of yellow flame shoots up, it is evidence that a piece of carbon, or little thread, has been left in such position as to disturb the perfect mixing of air and gas.

TO EXTINGUISH LIGHT

Turn down wick and *carefully* blow out light, same as any oil lamp. (Wick cannot be thrown out of place by turning the button.)

RE-WICKING

Turn down wick as far as possible. Pull out brass wick holder. Insert new wick in holder so that it projects about one and three-fourths inches above top of holder. Insert wick and holder in burner, screw burner in lamp, which must not be filled with oil. Dip wick in oil, turning wick down until lower edge is even with inner wick tube; light and let burn until charred, when it should have smooth and uniform surface. If it does not, repeat operation. Fill lamp with oil, allowing wick to soak about thirty minutes before lighting.

Further information desired about the "ALADDIN" Lamp will be cheerfully furnished upon request, with enclosure of two cent stamp for reply.

The Mantle Lamp Company of America,

CHICAGO, ILL. PORTLAND, ORE. WINNIPEG, CAN.

DIRECTIONS FOR

The "Aladdin"

Incandescent Kerosene Mantle Lamp

Mantle

Gallery

Center Piece (Generator)

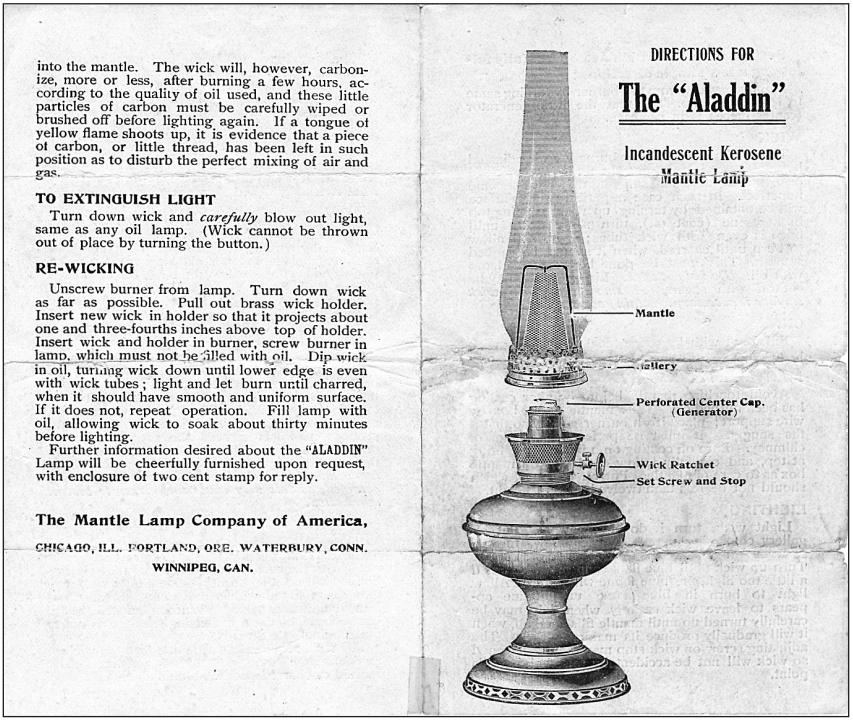
Air Distributor

Wick Ratchet

Set Screw and Stop

Fig. 3. Directions, Aladdin Model 1.

The instruction booklet for Aladdin Model 1 depicts a Wirth patented burner mounted on a Plume and Atwood 1.5 quart fount embossed foot lamp body (Fig. 3). Notice that the mantle frame shown is for a cap mantle, not the single wire type shown in the Wirth patent drawing (see Courter, ATMNL Revised, p. 47). Also notice that the ball chimney shown is the symmetrically shaped ball chimney which is slightly different from the earliest ball type chimneys with the #1 knob logo that have a sharper radius of curvature on the bottom side of the ball. The combination of the mantle frame and the symmetrical ball chimney may indicate that there is an earlier Model 1 instruction which we have not yet seen. Last, observe that two additional offices have been added to the company roster—Portland and Winnipeg.



into the mantle. The wick will, however, carbonize, more or less, after burning a few hours, according to the quality of oil used, and these little particles of carbon must be carefully wiped or brushed off before lighting again. If a tongue of yellow flame shoots up, it is evidence that a piece of carbon, or little thread, has been left in such position as to disturb the perfect mixing of air and gas.

TO EXTINGUISH LIGHT

Turn down wick and *carefully* blow out light, same as any oil lamp. (Wick cannot be thrown out of place by turning the button.)

RE-WICKING

Unscrew burner from lamp. Turn down wick as far as possible. Pull out brass wick holder. Insert new wick in holder so that it projects about one and three-fourths inches above top of holder. Insert wick and holder in burner, screw burner in lamp, which must not be filled with oil. Dip wick in oil, turning wick down until lower edge is even with wick tubes; light and let burn until charred, when it should have smooth and uniform surface. If it does not, repeat operation. Fill lamp with oil, allowing wick to soak about thirty minutes before lighting.

Further information desired about the "ALADDIN" Lamp will be cheerfully furnished upon request, with enclosure of two cent stamp for reply.

The Mantle Lamp Company of America,

CHICAGO, ILL. PORTLAND, ORE. WATERBURY, CONN.
WINNIPEG, CAN.

DIRECTIONS FOR

The "Aladdin"

Incandescent Kerosene
Mantle Lamp

Mantle

Gallery

Perforated Center Cap.
(Generator)

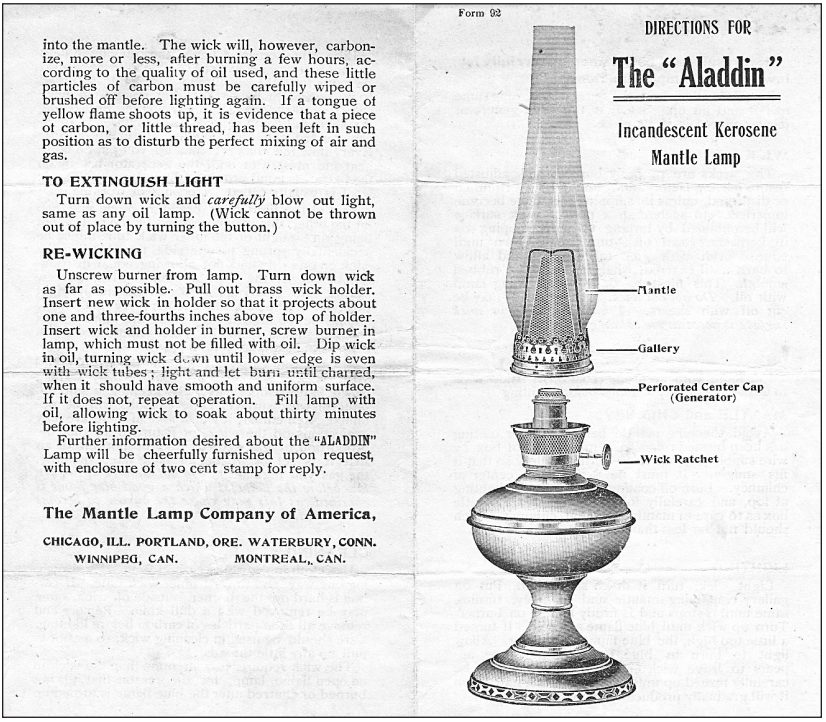
Wick Ratchet
Set Screw and Stop

Fig. 4. Directions Aladdin Early Model 2.

The Aladdin Model 2 instruction booklet shown in Figure 4 is one of three slightly different instruction booklets found thus far for that lamp model. Notice that a fourth office has been opened in Waterbury. The cut of the lamp shown differs in several respects from what has been found for Model 2 lamps. While the mantle is the cap mantle style, the chimney shape is not either of the typical ball chimney configurations described above of which many samples exist. While a thimble flame spreader is shown, the burner base is unlike any found thus far for Model 2. Last, the flat area below the chime on the lamp bowl is different from what has been found. The text on page 2 (not shown here) contains a short paragraph explaining how to adjust the set screw on the wick raiser shaft.

A second Aladdin Model 2 instruction booklet has recently surfaced. The single difference between this booklet and the booklet shown in Figure 4 is the addition on the cover of a form number in the top left hand corner of the front page. "Form 92" may indicate that the booklet dates from February 1909.

A third Aladdin Model 2 instruction booklet has been found that is for the late (or transition) Model 2 (Fig.5). This booklet also has the same form number of "92" and the same cut of the lamp as in the above two Model 2 booklets, but with one change. The set screw and stop and the accompanying label shown in the lamp pictured in the other two booklets has been edited out. Commensurate with this change, the short paragraph in the text on page 2 (not shown here) describing how to set the set screw has been excised. Notice that the top of the lamp bowl shows the exposed rolled threads that is associated with the early Aladdin Model 2 bowls, but in reality the late Model 2 bowls have the smooth collar like for Models 3 to 6. This booklet also lists a fifth company office in Montreal, Canada, that is absent form the early Model 2 booklet.



into the mantle. The wick will, however, carbonize, more or less, after burning a few hours, according to the quality of oil used, and these little particles of carbon must be carefully wiped or brushed off before lighting again. If a tongue of yellow flame shoots up, it is evidence that a piece of carbon, or little thread, has been left in such position as to disturb the perfect mixing of air and gas.

TO EXTINGUISH LIGHT

Turn down wick and *carefully* blow out light, same as any oil lamp. (Wick cannot be thrown out of place by turning the button.)

RE-WICKING

Unscrew burner from lamp. Turn down wick as far as possible. Pull out brass wick holder. Insert new wick in holder so that it projects about one and three-fourths inches above top of holder. Insert wick and holder in burner, screw burner in lamp, which must not be filled with oil. Dip wick in oil, turning wick down until lower edge is even with wick tubes; light and let burn until charred, when it should have smooth and uniform surface. If it does not, repeat operation. Fill lamp with oil, allowing wick to soak about thirty minutes before lighting.

Further information desired about the "ALADDIN" Lamp will be cheerfully furnished upon request, with enclosure of two cent stamp for reply.

The Mantle Lamp Company of America,

CHICAGO, ILL. PORTLAND, ORE. WATERBURY, CONN.
WINNIPEG, CAN. MONTREAL, CAN.

Form 92

DIRECTIONS FOR

The "Aladdin"

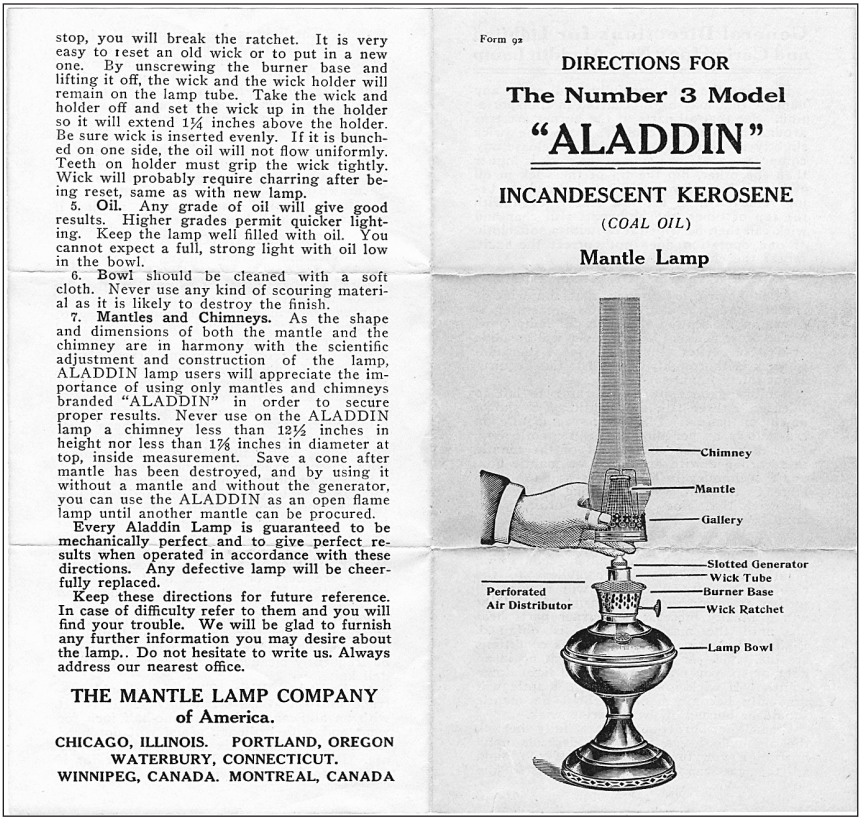
Incandescent Kerosene Mantle Lamp

Mantle
Gallery
Perforated Center Cap (Generator)
Wick Ratchet

Fig. 5. Directions Aladdin Late Model 2.

Fig. 6. Manila folder for directions.

A keen eye will detect that some booklets illustrated here show evidence of being folded. Some early Aladdins did come with their instruction booklets folded, the booklet then being inserted into a small manila envelope with a slot in its end that enabled the booklet and folder to be hung from the wick raiser knob (Fig. 6). Booklets shown here that were folded include both the Model 2s and the Model 3. The Practicus booklets, the Model 1 and the middle of the Model 2 booklets show no evidence of ever being folded. The Model 1 and the middle Model 2 booklets were in sales cases where there was apparently no need to hang the envelope. The booklets were just handed over to the new owner. The use of these envelopes to enclose the instruction booklets was continued through Model 4 and into Model 5. By the time of Model 6, booklets came with too many pages to easily fold. Instead the booklets were inserted into the copper plated match holder.



stop, you will break the ratchet. It is very easy to reset an old wick or to put in a new one. By unscrewing the burner base and lifting it off, the wick and the wick holder will remain on the lamp tube. Take the wick and holder off and set the wick up in the holder so it will extend 1¼ inches above the holder. Be sure wick is inserted evenly. If it is bunched on one side, the oil will not flow uniformly. Teeth on holder must grip the wick tightly. Wick will probably require charring after being reset, same as with new lamp.

5. **Oil.** Any grade of oil will give good results. Higher grades permit quicker lighting. Keep the lamp well filled with oil. You cannot expect a full, strong light with oil low in the bowl.

6. **Bowl** should be cleaned with a soft cloth. Never use any kind of scouring material as it is likely to destroy the finish.

7. **Mantles and Chimneys.** As the shape and dimensions of both the mantle and the chimney are in harmony with the scientific adjustment and construction of the lamp, ALADDIN lamp users will appreciate the importance of using only mantles and chimneys branded "ALADDIN" in order to secure proper results. Never use on the ALADDIN lamp a chimney less than 12½ inches in height nor less than 1⅞ inches in diameter at top, inside measurement. Save a cone after mantle has been destroyed, and by using it without a mantle and without the generator, you can use the ALADDIN as an open flame lamp until another mantle can be procured.

Every Aladdin Lamp is guaranteed to be mechanically perfect and to give perfect results when operated in accordance with these directions. Any defective lamp will be cheerfully replaced.

Keep these directions for future reference. In case of difficulty refer to them and you will find your trouble. We will be glad to furnish any further information you may desire about the lamp.. Do not hesitate to write us. Always address our nearest office.

THE MANTLE LAMP COMPANY of America.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. PORTLAND, OREGON
WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT.
WINNIPEG, CANADA. MONTREAL, CANADA

Form 92

DIRECTIONS FOR

The Number 3 Model

"ALADDIN"

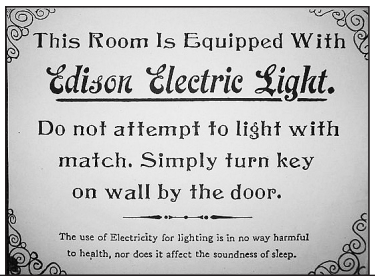
INCANDESCENT KEROSENE

(*COAL OIL*)

Mantle Lamp

Fig. 7. Directions Aladdin Model 3.

The last of the four page, single sheet set of directions is for Model 3 (Fig. 7). This booklet is the first to specifically identify the lamp the directions are for, just as the lamp itself is the first to be marked with the lamp model number. While directions for the earlier lamps described above tell the user to use kerosene or "oil," the Model 3 directions are the first to pointedly state to never use gasoline or alcohol. The directions on page two (not shown here) indicate how to install the "cone-cap" mantle. On page four, the directions tell the user to "save a cone after the mantle has been destroyed, and by using it without a mantle and without the generator, you can use the ALADDIN as an open flame lamp until another mantle can be procured." The Model 3 booklet is the first to fully spell out the names of the states or country where offices are located.



Paraprosdokian sentences

° I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.

° Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

° A bank is a place that will lend you money if you can prove that you don't need it.

° Evening news is where they begin with "Good evening" and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.