



The Mystic Light of the Aladdin Knights

Volume 13, Number 1

Mystic Light

January 1985

ALADDIN IN CANADA

(By one of the Old Boys)

by Charles Alain

When I joined The Mantle Lamp Co. of America Inc. on September 1st 1913, I was given to understand that our parent Company started their Canadian activities in 1910 by establishing two Branches—namely one in Winnipeg on Bannantyne Ave. and the other in Montreal, on Notre-Dame St. West, near Chaboillez Square.

A Mr. Gardner was the first Winnipeg Manager until 1929 at which time the Winnipeg Branch became a warehouse only; in other words, goods from Plume & Atwood, Chicago and later from Alexandria, Indiana were shipped direct to Winnipeg as formerly but all clerical work was done at the Toronto Office (as we moved from Montreal to Toronto in 1927—Street Address 405 Logan Ave.) and all orders were mailed to Aladdin lamp distributors and other lamp users, as at that time the Western jobbers were handling the supplies only. Mr. Flemming who was formerly Assistant Manager, was put in charge of the warehouse.

The Winnipeg Warehouse was definitely closed in 1931, as the Management decided that it was to our advantage to operate in Canada under one roof only. Incidentally, in those days, we were not selling in the Canadian North West that is the Yukon Territory, as this was under the jurisdiction of our Chicago Office.

The first Montreal Manager was a Mr. Arsenault. The Company moved to new quarters at 246 Craig St. West in 1912. The Manager then was Mr. W.G. Weaver. He was succeeded in 1916 by Mr. J.S. Baker who remained with us until 1924 when he was sent to Sydney, Australia to open a new branch. I was then put in charge as acting Manager until 1945 when the Company started their manufacturing activities. Mr. Carl Bramming and Mr. T. Blain of our parent Company came to Toronto to assist our recently appointed Factory Superintendent, Mr. A.L. Kingdon. Our new address 1244 Dufferin St.

In 1946 we had the pleasure to welcome our parent Company President, Mr. V.S. Johnson, Jr. on his first visit to the Canadian Branch shortly after returning to civil life after serving his country in World War II.

It was in 1930 that our Sales Method was changed from "Mail Order" to established Merchants only on a Franchise basis. We dropped the Franchise in 1933 and since then Aladdin products are sold through established Merchants, Wholesalers and Department Stores.

As we needed larger quarters to operate more effectively, we moved to 1401 The Queensway in 1950.



Going back to the early years, no doubt the Company started in Canada in a very modest way. I was told that one day in 1910, at the Montreal Office, a lamp shipment was expected. The staff which consisted of the Manager, the Shipper and one office girl were anxiously waiting. After a delay due to clearance at Customs, the shipment finally arrived. It consisted of one case containing 50 lamps. The \$64.00 dollar question was to get the lamps to an upper floor in the Shipping room. The case was put on the man-powered elevator and they started to pull the big cable until the sweating exercise was rewarded by the arriving of the case at destination.

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LIGHT BEAMS

Thank you for your letters and Christmas cards. It is always nice to hear from you and also to receive a vote of confidence (your renewals) as well as your questions about Aladdin lamps. At the present time I cannot answer everyone directly so please have patience. The following may be of interest to you:

Q. How many ruby short Lincoln Drape shelf lamps were made? **A.** 144.

Q. Will you reprint the first two volumes of the hard-bound Mystic Lights? **A.** No, I have run out of the extra copies and duplicating them is too expensive. I will make more Volume III when time is available.

Q. We received a membership card when we joined but not upon renewal. Did you forget us? **A.** No, I send only one card at the time you first join. That card is numbered and dated. Your number is also on your mailing label along with your month to receive renewal notices — M (March) and S (September). If you lose a card you may request a new one.

Q. We get our newsletter later than everyone else. Can you mail sooner? **A.** No, we mail on a three day schedule determined by study of the time delivery takes to different sections of the country. The delays are caused at distribution points, especially for distant rural areas.

Q. What were the Majestic Pins listed in the Gathering expenses? **A.** The expenses for pins were for gold and silver Majestic lamp pins given in recognition for leadership to run the Gathering. They are especially made for us and are not available for purchase.

Q. When are renewals due? **A.** Renewals are due two times each year — in May and in November. These are two six month periods and each Knight's renewal comes due on which ever is the closest month when you join. Renewals are sent in the March and September issues. We cannot keep track of renewals on a monthly basis. Everyone receives at least six issues per year.

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Mark your calendars — May 3 & 4, 1985 for the Southwest Aladdin Knights to meet in Shreveport, Louisiana. Barbara and Harry McKenzie have lots of fun and activities planned.

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OOPS WE GOOFED

We appreciate all the donors for the annual raffle. We omitted the following from the report in the last newsletter:

101 Mirror won by Irvin Pogue donated by Don and Wilma Cox.

103 Lamp shade won by Brent McKinley donated by Dorothy Gooch.

Again, we thank everyone for the contributions which add to the success of the Gathering.

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Diane Carey sends a reminder that she needs the quilt squares returned by February 1, 1985. She will appreciate your help to keep on schedule.

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Welcome to the following new Aladdin Knights: Anthony Koefler, WI; Paul Verble, TN; Harold Gray, OK; Everett Gordon, CA; Donald Rediske, WA; Robert Robinson, MD; Milton Lucius, CA; Robert Bonner, IL; Tommy Smith, TX; Charles Holmes, TX; Danny Inlow, GA; Paul Dorff, WI; Gordon Rudolph, ND; A.C. Jones, PA; L.J. Stehberger, WI; Jim Tellner, MI; Larry Searfoss, OH; Mr. & Mrs. R.K. Svaleson, IA; Donald

Retzlaff, MD; Bob Gidney, TX; Larry Roberts, IA; John Perro, MN; William Van Cleve, CA; and Homer Fountaine, CA.

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Mary and I thank you for your thoughts, cards and letters during this Christmas season. We wish you all a prosperous and joyous New Year.

Jr Courter
The Bright Knight 

ALADDIN IN CANADA

Continued from Page 1

Through all the "Mail Order" years, business was obtained by means of a very extensive Advertising Campaign covering all leading farm papers, newspapers with a rural circulation and other periodicals soliciting inquiries for a lamp on a "10 Day Free Trial".

When we started selling Aladdin kerosene mantle lamps to established Merchants on a franchise basis, the radio became our main advertising medium; Aladdin programs featuring folk singer, E. McConnell were on the air once a week on many Canadian Stations (for over 20 years) bringing the Aladdin message to millions of our listeners.

The number of inquiries received each year, in response to our "10 Day Free Trial Offer" were far beyond our expectations. At this point, I believe it is "a propos" to recall a conversation which took place in the Manager's office in 1913. He was telling his Assistant (Mr. Bouffard) that at the rate Aladdin kerosene lamps were sold in Canada, the potentiality would be reached in 4 or 5 years at the most, and that it would be advisable for them to keep that in mind and soon start planning for their future. How wrong they were, as since that time millions of Aladdin kerosene mantle lamps were sold in Canada and the U.S.A.—and there is still a demand for them.

Still on the subject of the trial lamp offer, the lamp was shipped a day or so after the order was received. The party was then advised that the trial lamp was on its way to him and also that we were happy to give him the opportunity to judge for himself as to the merits of the wonderful Aladdin lamp. A follow-up letter would be mailed at the end of the trial period, offering the prospective customer to obtain the trial lamp free by sending his order for 3 lamps. In the large majority of cases the order would come in with remittance attached. A large percentage of the 3 lamp buyers were developed into 12 or more lamp purchasers.

Free lamps were given with orders as follows:

3 lamp order ----- 1 free Lamp

The Mystic Light of the Aladdin Knights is published every other month as a medium of exchange for collectors of Aladdin memorabilia. Our purpose is to preserve information on kerosene lighting which played an important role in the development of rural America as well as early electric lighting by Aladdin.

Subscription and knighthood is \$15 per year. Collectors may correspond with the editor by writing to J.W. Courter, Editor, Mystic Light, Simpson, IL 62985.

Grateful acknowledgement is given Aladdin Industries, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, for their permission to publish certain information and photographs in this letter.

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6 lamp order -----	2 free Lamps
12 lamp order -----	4 free Lamps
24 lamp order -----	8 free Lamps
36 lamp order -----	12 free Lamps

On a 12 lamp order or more, the buyer would get an engraved certificate appointing him as the Aladdin distributor in his locality for one month. Of course, it was necessary to place an additional order to obtain a renewal.

As Aladdin kerosene lamps were then sold by farmers, the increasing demand for lamps created a problem regarding replacement parts to lamp users. We solved the problem by requesting the Aladdin distributor to give us the name of the logical merchant who would be willing to handle Aladdin supplies for the convenience of Aladdin lamp users in his locality. With this information, we took the matter up with the merchant, emphasizing that this was a rapidly growing line already bringing substantial profits to other merchants, as well as additional profits derived from other lines, because while at their store purchasing Aladdin supplies, lamp users would, in many instances, buy other merchandise. A suggested original order was for 3 doz. mantles, 1 doz. chimneys and ½ doz. wicks; and 4 free mantles were added to the order. The Aladdin Distributor was given a free lamp for his co-operation in the matter.

At the time of his appointment, the Aladdin Distributor was given a booklet entitled "HOW TO SELL ALADDIN LAMPS". The suggestion to him was to always keep a good supply of Aladdin lamps on trial as more lamps on trial meant more sales. Almost invariably the lamp was sold at the second visit.

We were continually receiving unsolicited testimonials which were used to great advantage in all our advertising campaigns.

I believe I should mention that up to 1913 there was another item we sold in Canada, in addition to Aladdin lamps and supplies, and that is a special burner called "Sunbeam" which was adaptable to the old fashion glass table and fount kerosene lamps.

A "Mail Order" business involves a voluminous correspondence; this was no problem to us, as we had a paragraph book covering all imaginable sales suggestions, complaints and collection. In addition we had a complete selection of collection letters.

In 1937 we started the assembly of electric table and floor lamps as well as Whip-o-lite paper shades.

Since the "Mail Order" days, many other Aladdin products have been sold in Canada, here are a few of them—Aladdin Blue Flame Heaters, Aladdin electric converters, Caboose lamps, and now our most important product, Aladdin vacuum bottles.

Incidentally, the business derived from Aladdin Caboose Lamps (which were introduced in Canada several years ago) has been and is still gratifying.

In 1950 the name of The Mantle Lamp Co. Inc. was changed to Aladdin Industries Ltd. and then again the name was changed this time to Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd. in 1953 when we obtained a Canadian charter, with Mr. A.L. Kingdon as President and the undersigned as Secretary Treasurer. At the time of my retirement in 1957, I was succeeded by Mr. H.J. Humphrey.

We started manufacturing Aladdin vacuum bottles in Canada in 1951, and by continually improving our product, we have built up such a business to justify our idea of a new building. The new premises were officially opened on Nov. 2, 1961. The opening ceremony was performed jointly by Mr. John Hamilton, VP for the constituency of York West, and

by the president of our parent Company, Mr. V.S. Johnson, Jr.

This beautiful and most modern building is equipped with the latest vacuum bottle manufacturing facilities. The location 657 Dixon Road at Highway 27, Rexdale, Ontario.

I cannot leave this opportunity go by without paying a special tribute to a man who is largely responsible for the achievement of the Canadian Company in the manufacturing field. Since 1945 up to my retirement I had the pleasure of working closely with this man, and I will say that his untiring effort as well as his determination to face the many problems arising from such a venture is indeed commendable. Yes, I mean our president, Mr. A.L. Kingdon.

It would be a regrettable omission not to mention in my Aladdin "memoirs" the name of an employee who has faithfully served our Company since 1921, Mr. T. Sarrazin, our shipper. Incidentally, I hired this shy frenchman who was then 21 years old.

In conclusion, I feel sure that if the late Mr. V.S. Johnson, Sr. were living, he would certainly be very proud of the Company he founded 54 years ago.

Editor's Note: Mr. Alain passed away at age 94 in 1982.



Charles Alain Of Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd. Receives Forty Year Pin.

From ALADDINEWS, March 31, 1955



Mr. Charles Alain is shown on the left being presented his forty year service pin by Mr. Les Kingdon, President of the Canadian operations.

There are many of us who know very little of the various branch operations.

In Canada the Company has operated a branch for the last 43 years, which by the way was the first opened outside of the United States.

It was on Sept. 24th, 1913 that Charlie joined the old Mantle Lamp Co. of America, with the Canadian branch then located in Montreal.

Charlie is a real storehouse of historical knowledge of the Company and its products. He has been very proud of his association with our organization and many of his friends refer to him as "Mr. Aladdin."

In 1927 the Canadian Company moved from Montreal to Toronto. Charlie moved his family, who had been schooled in french only, to Toronto and the problems of a new language makes for many amusing stories.

In addition to a very deep interest in Aladdin, Charlie finds time to engage in many fishing trips. This he enters with great enthusiasm but, like all good fishermen the best stories concern the one which got away.

Charlie has served the Company faithfully for the past 42 years. We take this opportunity to extend best wishes to the man with the greatest number of years of service with our entire organization.



Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd. Prepares for Second Fifty Years With New Offices and Plant

(Press release dated November 2, 1961)

The new premises of Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd., at Toronto will house the most modern vacuum bottle manufacturing facilities on the North American continent.

This may have been news to the majority of guests attending the official opening held by Aladdin on November 2. But to A.L. Kingdon, president of the company since 1953, the features that will make the plant unique in the industry represent merely the latest additions to a long list of "firsts" chalked up by Aladdin.

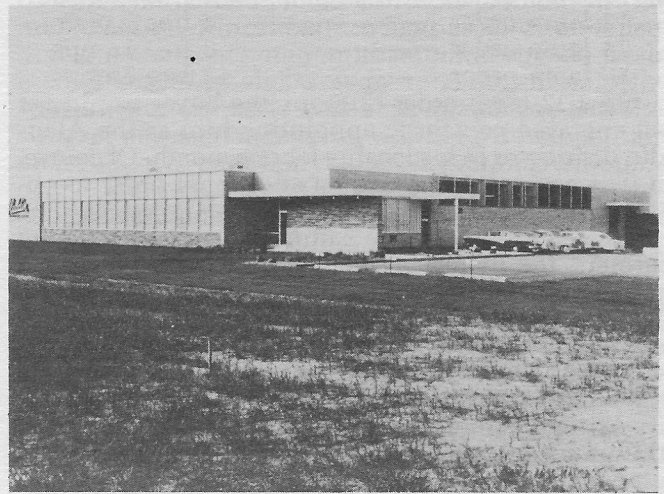
Aladdin has been a familiar name to Canadians since 1910. That was the year the company started selling the "white light" kerosene lamp researched and developed by Victor S. Johnson, father of the current president of the parent U.S. company. Aladdin began in Canada as a mail-order house at Montreal. The imaginative use of selling techniques, standard in mail order selling today but new 50 years ago, soon was selling Aladdin lamps to every part of Canada.

In 1927, the company undertook its first major expansion by combining its Montreal operations and Winnipeg warehouse in one site at Toronto and organizing a national distribution system through wholesalers and dealers.

It was also about this time that Aladdin became one of the pioneers in the use of the new medium of radio for advertising. It was the beginning of an unique association. At one time Aladdin was probably the largest single radio sponsor in the U.S. and Canada, and for 23 years that sponsorship was given to folk singer, Ed McConnell, who became the voice of Aladdin to millions of loyal listeners.

When the company started the assembly of electric table lamps in Canada in 1937, it did not mean the complete passing of the kerosene lamp. As recently as 1945, when the company established its first manufacturing facilities at Toronto, it was for the production of both kerosene lamps and a complete range of electric lamps. Even now, to many Canadians, Aladdin is still the name on the kerosene lamp that is their sole source of illumination and Aladdin kerosene caboose lamps are still standard equipment for Canadian railroads.

The evolution from kerosene to electric lamps was logical. In 1950, however, Aladdin entered a completely new market when the company set up facilities for the manufacture of vacuumware to give Canadians the first made-in-Canada vacuum bottle.



The new plant and offices of Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd., situated at Toronto on Highway 27 north of Dixon Road, Rexdale. The plant will give Canada the most modern vacuum bottle manufacturing facilities on the North American continent and will be in full production before the end of the year.

The vacuumware industry at that time was dormant. Vacuum bottles were designed for the working man and reflected this in a "no nonsense" approach to design and styling, which had remained static for years. Like Henry Ford's Model T, vacuum bottles were available in any colour you wanted as long as it was black. The two-wall glass container was fragile and easily shattered. The metal jacket tended to rust, either from leakage resulting from wearing of the cork stopper, or from rinsing when cleaning.

The Aladdin parent company had extensive experience in vacuumware manufacture and this was drawn upon to develop a vacuum bottle for the Canadian market that was more attractive and more efficient in use.

These basic objectives have resulted in an impressive list of "firsts" for Aladdin. In fact, when all major developments in the vacuum bottle industry for the past 25 years are itemized, it is noticeable that the majority of them have come from Aladdin within the last ten years.

These include, to mention a few of the outstanding ones, the replacement of unsanitary corks by plastic stoppers; the development of wide mouth bottles; the Quik Lok cup and collar; a non-drip pouring lip; and the Lox-On stopper.

Aladdin also worked, and is still working, with the world's largest glass producer in developing glass parts with maximum resistance to breakage.

The success of constant Aladdin research and development was made dramatically evident in 1954. After two years of research, the company produced the **only** vacuum bottle which met the rigid requirement of the Canadian Army for use in Arctic warfare. Yet, the bottle accepted was actually the lowest-priced bottle manufactured by Aladdin, using a specially-developed stopper and cup to withstand temperatures of minus eighty-five degrees!

Parallel with this program of functional improvement, Aladdin was also creating a variety of new styles and designs to improve the appearance of vacuum bottles. School kits decorated with cartoon characters opened a hitherto untapped market among lunch-carrying students. Colour was used extensively on all

vacuum bottles, including plaid designs and figure illustrations such as anglers. Aladdin also made the first major change in the traditional workman's lunch box with the introduction of an all-aluminum kit.

Perhaps as important as these innovations to the success of Aladdin is the vigorous merchandising program the company initiated. Ten years ago, in retail outlets, vacuum bottles tended to be a behind-the-counter or under-the-shelf item. The fragility of vacuum bottles made handling by customers undesirable because of the risk of breakage. This, combined with the lack of style or eye-appeal, made the vacuum bottle a slow-moving, "sell only if asked for" product.

The improvements in the strength and efficiency of Aladdin bottles and the added glamour of colour, style variety and modern design sparked a new approach to vacuum bottle selling.

Aladdin decided to get vacuum bottles off the shelf and, literally into the hands of shoppers. A "self-serve" floor display rack was designed in 1956, in which, for the first time, customers were exposed to the wide and colourful range of Aladdin vacuum bottles. Attractive sleeve labels on each vacuum bottle "sold" the product and its uses, as well as providing a price tag for the dealer.

The marketing climate for such aggressive merchandising was favourable. The post war baby boom sent school attendances to record highs, and nutrition-conscious modern mothers appreciated the necessity of a vacuum bottle kit for lunch-carrying pupils.

The trend to outdoor meals, either patio or picnic, encouraged the multiple purchase of vacuum bottles for carrying both foods and liquids. Workmen also began carrying two vacuum bottles, a widemouth that made a luncheon stew, pork & beans, spaghetti or similar foods convenient to carry and easy to eat anywhere.

The response to the 10-year Aladdin program of product development and merchandising has been such that it was necessary to expand manufacturing facilities in 1957, at which time the company was able to produce in Canada all the components for which raw materials are available.

Today, less than four years later, increasing demand for Aladdin vacuum bottles has required the construction of a completely new plant to boost production.

The Toronto plant represents not only the collective international experience of Aladdin Industries in vacuum bottle manufacture but the personal inspection by A.L. Kingdon of vacuum bottle manufacturing plants throughout Europe and Asia.

The findings are incorporated into a plant that utilizes the most advanced production design, techniques and equipment. Some of the equipment is completely original, combining the desirable features found in the best and most recent technological developments in the industry.

Since entering the vacuum bottle field ten years ago, Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd., has consistently set the product trend for the entire industry.

With the completion of the new plant, President A.L. Kingdon is confident that Aladdin had taken an equally commanding leadership in vacuum bottle manufacturing that will make the company the pacesetter for many years to come.

Editor's Note: The above information was released upon the opening of an impressive new plant at Rexdale, near Toronto, in 1961. Aladdin Canada moved from the Rexdale location to 245 Edward St., Aurora, Ontario on January 6, 1975. The Aurora facility was

closed November 30, 1984. Aladdin manufacturing or assembly operations are no longer carried out in Canada. A new master distributor has been arranged to handle the distribution and sales of Aladdin products in Canada. The distributor is York Thermal-Vac of Canada LTD, 34 Doncaster Ave., Thornhill, Ontario, Canada L3T 1L3.

The following people contributed to the stories on Aladdin Canada found in the newsletter: Tom Lees, Charles Alain, E.T. Haynes and Karl Gehlmann.

ALADDIN "FIRSTS" IN THE VACUUM BOTTLE INDUSTRY

Centre Tubulated Filler.....	1930
Seamless Filler.....	1930
Decorated Character Kits.....	1950
Elimination of Corks.....	1951
Popular-Priced Wide Mouth.....	1952
Decorative Characterization of Bottles.....	1953
Aluminum Workman's Kit.....	1954
Quik-Lok Cup and Collar.....	1954
Non-Drip Pouring Lip.....	1954
117 Merchandising Display.....	1956
Lox-On Stopper.....	1957
Wide Mouth Vacuum Pitcher.....	1958
Merchandise Labels.....	1959
Dura Clad Plastic Jacket (Bottles Completely Corrosion Proof).....	1960
One-Piece Lox-On Stopper.....	1961



ALAIN OF CANADA RETIRES AFTER 44 YEARS SERVICE From ALADDINEWS, August 2, 1957

Mr. Charles Alain retired from Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd., on May 3, 1957 after 44 years of service, thus being the oldest employee in years of service in the entire Aladdin group.

Many are the stories that could be recounted of the early days of his association with the Company, then located in Montreal. At that time it was customary to purchase lamp chimneys, shades, etc. from Europe and these arrived in exceptionally large crates which had to be taken up to the second floor without the use of equipment as we have today. Not only did Mr. Alain assist in this task, but also undertook many other duties from shipping right through to the busy "mail order" department of those days, which in kerosene lamp field, did so much to establish the name of Aladdin.

In Canada, both the English and French languages are spoken, with business conducted in both tongues. With an excellent French background, Mr. Alain was invaluable over the years in translations, correspondence, etc.

In 1927 the Aladdin organization moved to Toronto, and Mr. Alain with a family of five children, speaking only the French language, moved to what must have seemed like another country.

Following the death of Mr. Frank Reid, in 1933, Mr. Alain assumed the management of the Canadian operation. In 1953, when Aladdin Industries (Canada) Ltd. was organized, Mr. Alain became Secretary-Treasurer, which position he held at his retirement.

Best wishes for Aladdin people at Nashville to Mr. & Mrs. Alain, for good health and happiness in abundance.

