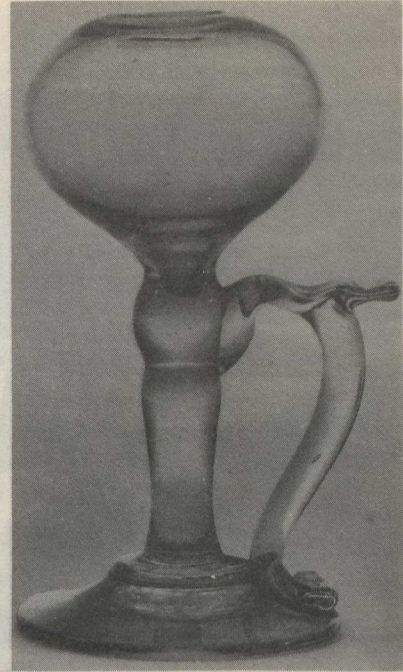


Kinnear lamp

OLD LAMPS
ILLUMINATE
CANADA'S PAST



Whale oil hand-lamp



Crusie or Crasset lamp

Photos courtesy of the
National Museums of Canada

Thirty antique lamps dating from the early days of British North America, will be displayed in five Maritime centres during the next six months. They are part of a collection of over 350 lamps possessed by the History Division of the National Museum of Man (one of the National Museums of Canada), which is considered to be the best in the country.

The first showing was held at the DesBrisay Museum at Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. From there the exhibition moved to the Confederation Art Gallery and Museum at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, from where it will go to the Miners' Museum at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, and will finish its tour in Newfoundland on November 1.

Lard, tallow, whale-oil and fish-oil were the common fuels for lighting the long cold winter nights in the years before 1846, when the kerosene lamp came into use. In its turn, the kerosene lamp became obsolete with the general employment of cheap electricity.

The lamps in the National Museum display can

be classified under three general headings: *imitation* – traditional European forms; *experimentation* – models designed for the investigation of burners and fuels; and *specialization* – the diverse form of kerosene burner.

The *imitation* category includes the Rush lamp, in which a tong grips the burning pitch of a rush inserted in tallow at an angle of 45 degrees. There was also the Betty lamp, an early type said to be of United Empire Loyalist origin.

One of the lamps featured in the *experimentation* category is the Kinnear lamp, a model that employs the principle of heat conduction. Copper wire extends from the small wick-slot to the bottom of the lamp and activates the lard.

In the *specialization* class, a great variety of burners is featured: the Macy burner, the Collins burner and the Victor burner, to name a few, each having a special feature. There was also a corresponding diversification of lamp-bodies, with three main types: the composite table-lamp: the all-glass table lamp: and the glass hand-lamp.