

# Justrite Parts-bin Lamps of the 1920s

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From 1911 to 1920 Augie Hansen, a Danish immigrant living in Chicago was chief lamp designer at Justrite Mfg. Co. His designs began with the horizontal tank lamp and later the elegant X-ray lamp. He created several modifications for the horizontal lamp that included the ribbed base with bottom-seam, the Jiffy container, the Spiral feed, the Duplex Feed, the Liberty Feed, and the gasketed water door. The Jiffy container, perhaps the most radical innovation, eliminated the screw-threads that join the water tank to the carbide chamber, and instead used a “helix locking device” requiring only a half-turn.



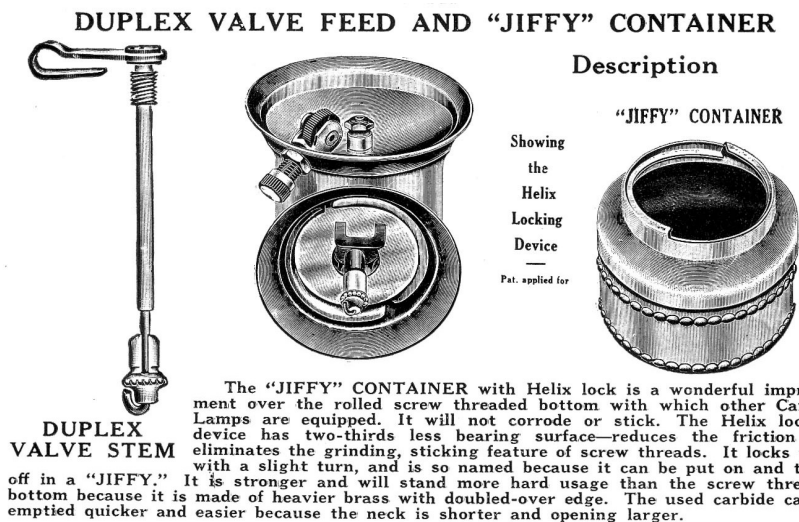
*The evolution of Hansen’s designs. Left: Hansen’s 1912 patent for the “horizontal” cap lamp that remained in Justrite’s lineup for three decades. Center: Hansen’s X-ray lamp (ca. 1918), designed near the end of his tenure with Justrite Mfg. Co. Right: The Hansen lamp (ca. 1925) manufactured from his own company, post-Justrite.*

Hansen left Justrite in 1920 to form his own company. His assistant William Frisbie filled the vacancy and immediately discontinued many of Hansen’s inventions. As a consequence, a quantity of stamped parts from the Hansen era lay in inventory. A number of these were assembled into unadvertised piecemeal lamps. These non-standard lamps are uncommon and fascinating.

The reused parts were:

1. Jiffy Container “helix locking device”
2. Jiffy Container water tank shells
3. X-ray reflectors
4. X-ray bases

## The Jiffy Container



*All Jiffy lamps with the "helix locking device" during the pre-1920 Hansen era contained the Duplex Valve Feed.*

The use of Jiffy Containers required a wider lamp neck to accommodate the "helix locking device." This can be recognized externally by the height at which the neck of the lamp joins the horizontally oriented tank cylinder. On standard (non-Jiffy) Justrite lamps the parabolic crease at this transition point does not encroach into the stamp mark. However, lamps with the Jiffy Container, which require a larger diameter neck, have a higher crease that touches the lower letters of the stamp mark. This observation allows one to recognize a Jiffy Container by simply viewing it from the side. Another feature associated with the Jiffy water tank shell is a raised surface on top of the tank with very fine water lever notches – distinctly different from other Justrites.<sup>1</sup> In summary, the water tank shells for Jiffy lamps have two specific features: a high parabolic crease and fine water lever notches on a raised surface.



*Left: Justrite Jiffy tank showing parabolic crease encroaching onto "OTHERS PENDING." Also note high shoulder beneath water lever. Right: Standard horizontal lamp with crease below stamp mark.*

## Examples of Parts-bin Lamps

Three horizontal Justrites that did not appear in catalogs or advertisements have been identified that combine parts from the pre-1920 Hansen era with Frisbie's post-1920 water feed. All of them include:

1. Jiffy tank shell
2. X-ray reflector

The lamp below uses the X-ray reflector and the Jiffy tank shell, but has a screw-threaded non-Jiffy base.



The next lamp shown has additional pre-1920 parts: the Jiffy “helix locking device,” and the X-ray style base (identified by ribs and the absence of a bottom seam). The bottom of the base does not have the “X-ray” stamp mark.



The final lamp uses a more standard Jiffy base (two rows of raised beads for gripping). It does not have the usual Jiffy stamp mark on the bottom.



Another lamp should be mentioned that is not technically a parts-bin piece: the post-1920 Justrite Jiffy. The lamp appears in almost every way to be a standard Jiffy lamp, with the simple exception of being outfitted with Frisbie's patented Polygon Feed in place of Hansen's Duplex Feed. The new feed dates the lamp's manufacture post-1920, yet the rest of the lamp's features (tank and base stampings) are classic pre-1920 Jiffy. Most if not all examples of this particular lamp are nickel-plated. It is entirely possible that existing complete Jiffy lamps had their Duplex Feeds removed and replaced with Frisbie's Polygon. A nickel-plated finish may have been applied to dress up the resoldering of the new feed or perhaps just to increase its sales appeal on a lamp thought to be dated.



Why were only some of Hansen's pre-1920 parts used? An overstock of parts is surely a factor, but many of his inventions never appeared on parts-bin lamps, including Spiral Feed, Duplex Feeds, and gasketed water doors.

#### End Notes

1. Late Spiral Feed lamps also have the raised shoulder with fine notches.