Shedding Some Light On Lantern History

Early lanterns were not decorative at all, but rather utilitarian only. They were primarily square shaped and their designs very plain. The only reason for their existence was to shield the flame of the candle from extinguishing due to wind or breeze. Most early lanterns were rudimentarily designed, and made from sheet iron or tinplate. These were cheap metals and it was rare to find any lanterns made from anything more costly. During the American Revolution, fore example, the more expensive pewter and brass needed to be kept for the forging of guns and molded into ammunition. To use these high-end metals for lanterns was considered a waste.Early colonists simply retired to bed when the sun went down or lighted a fire for visibility as well as warmth. The first lantern was actually referred to as a lanthorne. Unlike those early years, today's lanterns are not only used for added visibility but for dcor as well.Lanterns hanging in doorways were the only lighting on city streets in the United States a couple of centuries ago. Few towns had any other sort of lighting on its streets. Boston started public lighting during the first years of the eighteenth century. These weren't lanterns initially but iron baskets or cressets that would hang from poles. Fuel came from pine knots. These were found only at busy cross roads and night watch men tended these, keeping ***Power Washing Pros of Commack*** them lit. Shortly after towns and cities began to pass legislation that required every sixth home to post a lantern or torch outside deck and patio cleaning Commack for street and sidewalk illumination.Post lanterns became a prominent part of 1770's Boston. These were generally lit with whale oil. Benjamin Franklin was responsible for the initiation of public lighting in Philadelphia. This took place with the 1751 lantern introduction. The resourceful Franklin realized that two tubes of wick that burned next to each other produced more light than two separate lanterns. He also studied the effect of camphene as a lantern fuel. This turpentine and alcohol combination, though it gave off a considerably brighter light, was very flammable and dangerous.Gas lanterns came about around 1800, although Europe and most specifically London made the switch to gas lanterns before the United States did so. Paris was lit by gas lanterns as of 1818.Gas lantern lights were greatly enhanced several times thanks to important discoveries such as the invention of fan shaped gas lantern tubes, a gas an air mixture before lighting the lantern, and a metallic oxide mantle made of cloth to surround the lantern flame.

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