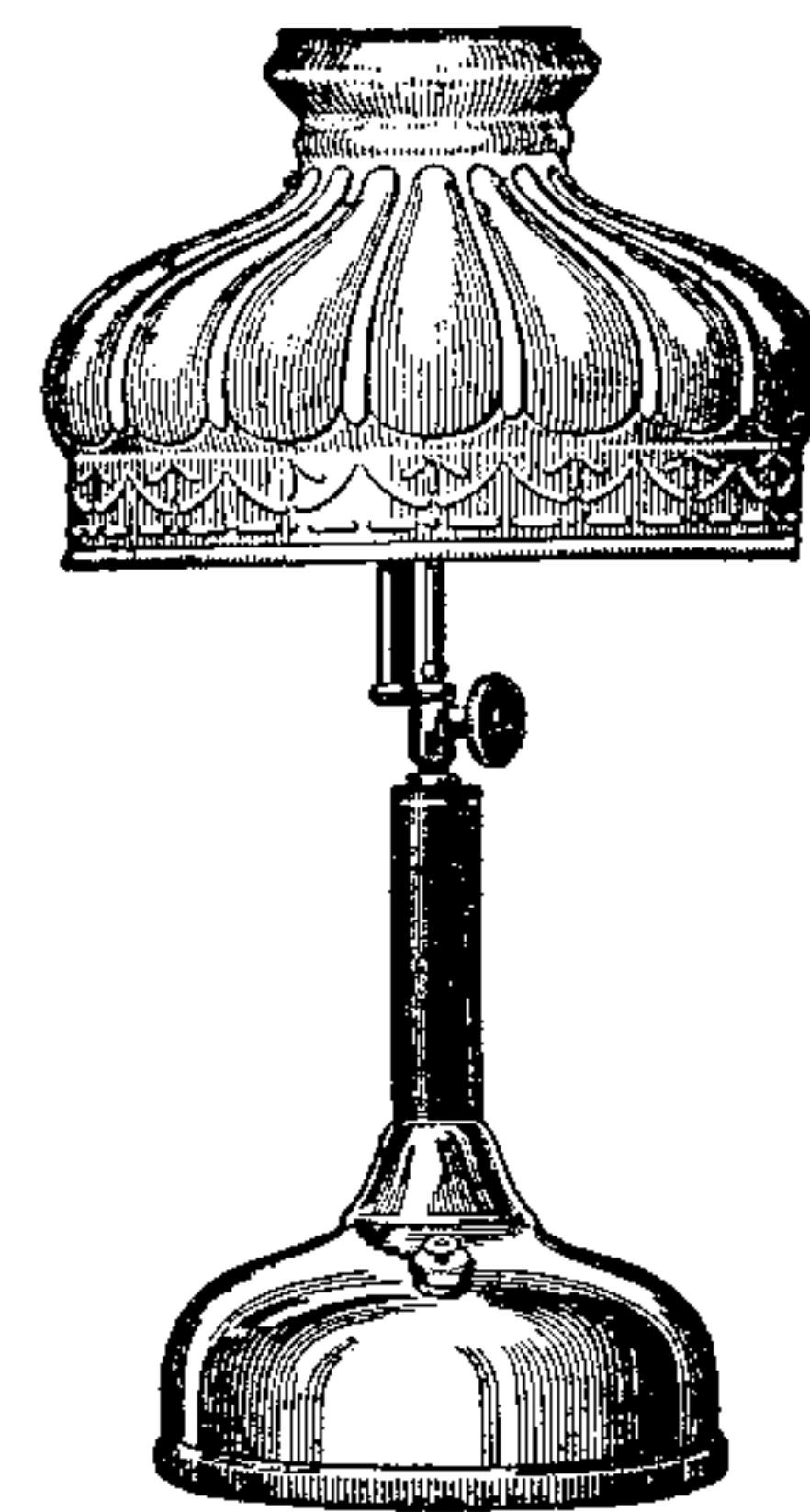


Gas from Gasoline

the story of a pioneering American who wouldn't wait for electricity to spin its magic web.



The early years of the Twentieth Century were a time of monumental progress. It was a period that saw the mechanization of the nation. The automobile supplanted the horse and buggy. The Wright Brothers proved man could fly. Electricity was raising the standard of living for millions of urban families.

Less dramatic than the automobile, the airplane and Edison's incandescent lamps, but an important part of the parade of progress, were hydrocarbon-fueled pressure appliances for lighting, cooking, heating and ironing.

Not content with the coal oil lamps and lanterns of the 1800s, W.C. Coleman was among the foremost pioneers in the development of illuminating devices that brought safe and dependable light to homes beyond the reach of the electric "high lines."

Coleman's patented lamps made their own gas from ordinary motor fuel. Because the heart of the Coleman lamp was a gasoline burner, it was only natural that the burner would invade the domain of the coal and wood cooking and heating stoves of the time.

Who first surrounded the burner with a sturdy metal frame and called it a stove is not recorded. Coleman is believed to have entered the stove field about 1910. The request for the burner came from a barber whose shop was lighted by Mr. Coleman's hanging lamps. If the lamps could light the shop why couldn't similar burners be used to heat water for shaving?

The ambitious young inventor responded to the challenge. The barber was happy with his burner. So was a restaurant owner who ordered a two-burner gasoline hot plate to supplement his big kitchen range.

The demand grew and, in 1911, a corner of the Coleman factory was set aside for the manufacture of hot plates.

The success of the company's venture into the lamp and lantern business consumed much of its energy and capital. There wasn't enough left over to set up a stove works. So, Coleman contracted with the National Stove Company of Lorain, Ohio, for several models of cook stoves and ranges. These were sold under the tradename

"Insurance." The line also included steel ovens, water heaters, urn burners and utility burners. All burned "white gas" under pressure.

By 1921 Coleman was ready to design and make its own stoves. The emphasis was on portability, and the Coleman Handy Gas Plant proved an ideal solution to many heating needs on the farm and in small commercial establishments.

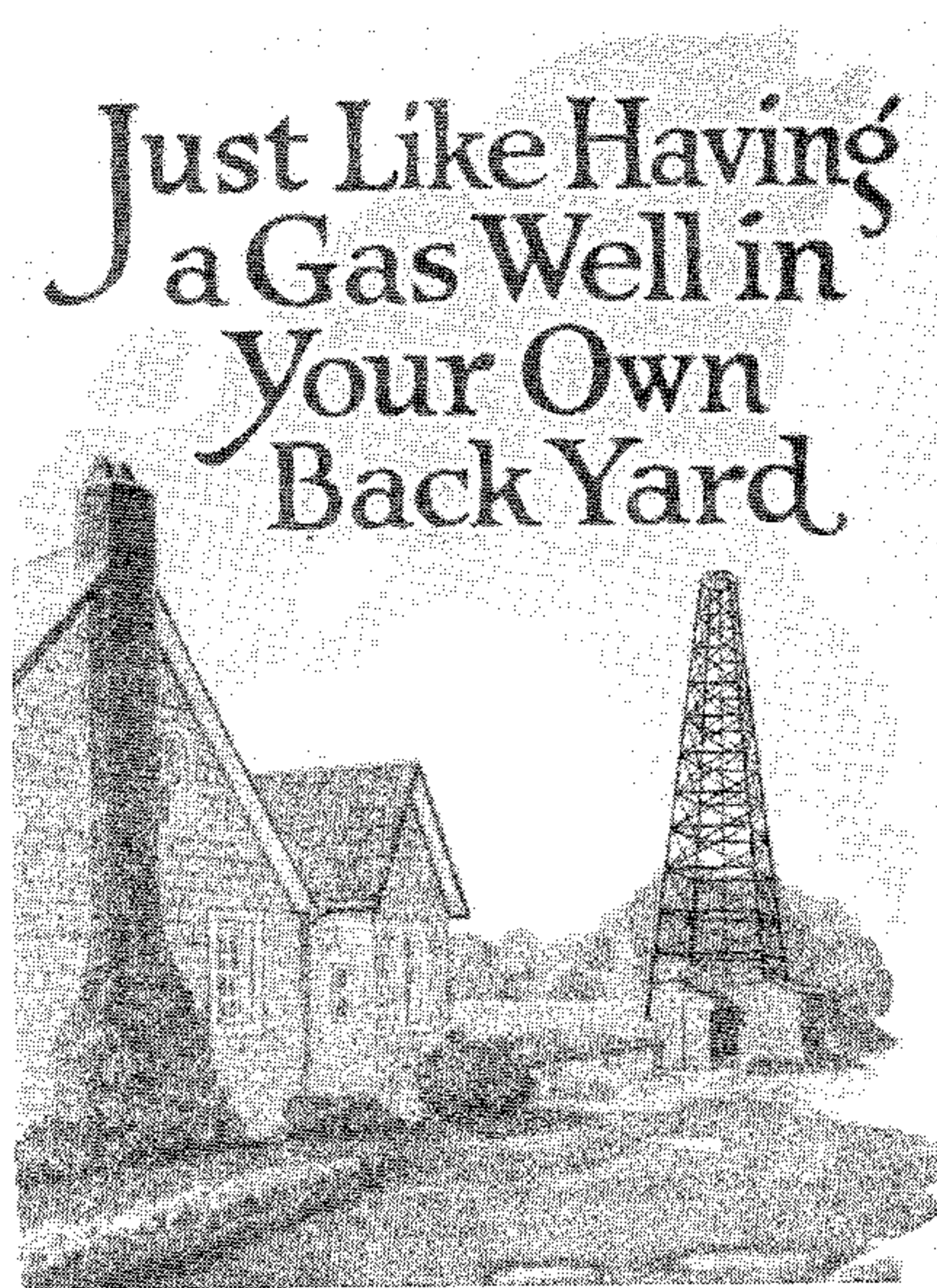
Close behind the Handy Gas Plant in popularity were the Coleman urn burners.

By 1922 the "Coleman Cooker" ranges had replaced the "Insurance" models. The new line featured a burner which was claimed to be two to three times hotter than ordinary gas stove burners as well as being cleaner and faster than the oil-burning wick-type stoves of the period.

Although the emergence of the Coleman Cookers was a breakthrough, the development of the Coleman two-burner camp stove was destined to rival the success of the company's lamps and lanterns.

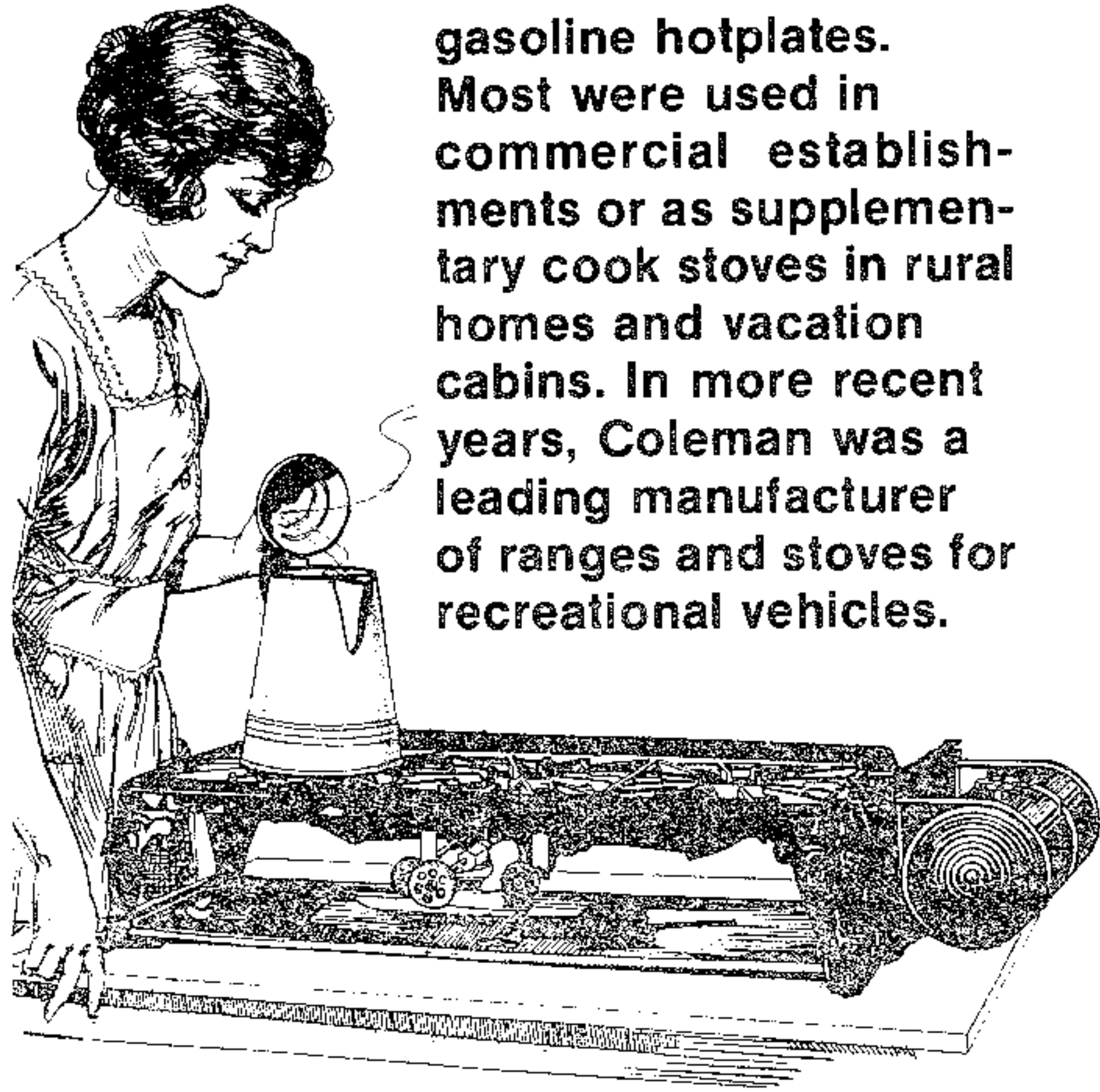
The first camp stoves, appropriately designated Model No. 1, appeared in 1923. While not the first camp stove to reach the marketplace, it soon gained a dominant position. The Model 1A followed close on the heels of the No. 1 and, from that time on, there was a succession of models admirably suited to the needs and pocketbooks of campers and picnickers.

Today, some of the camp stoves made 50 years or more ago are still in active service.



As gas and electric service spread throughout the land, farm and suburban families beyond their reach turned to gasoline as a means of release from the inconveniences of wood and coal for heating, cooking, ironing and lighting. A page from a Coleman circular of the 1920s suggested that using Coleman products was like having a gas well in the back yard.

Fig. 4 — Beginning about 1910, Coleman made 1- and 2-burner gasoline hotplates. Most were used in commercial establishments or as supplementary cook stoves in rural homes and vacation cabins. In more recent years, Coleman was a leading manufacturer of ranges and stoves for recreational vehicles.



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By the late 1920s, the Coleman Cookers gave way to the Coleman Air-O-Gas ranges with improved design, more modern styling and easier operation. The Air-O-Gas ranges were proclaimed as "the equivalent of gas cooking conveniences enjoyed in the city homes where either natural or artificial gas is available."

The progression of new and improved gas appliances continued all during the 'twenties and 'thirties. There were Coleman water heaters, radiant heaters and self-heating irons. All operated on the principal of making their own gas from ordinary "white" gasoline.

The farm and small town markets continued to absorb the vast majority of Coleman products and these markets were supplemented by an active demand in Canada and foreign countries for the modern sight and labor saving appliances.

Some Coleman products attained their greatest acceptance during the 1930s and again immediately following World War II. In this group were the Coleman Instant-Lite ranges, self-heating irons, Coleman camp stoves, and various utility stoves.

During these years, rural electrification was just getting underway. LP-gas was rapidly becoming a popular fuel for cooking and, at the same time, the catalytic cracking process was changing the kinds of gasoline available to the motorist and

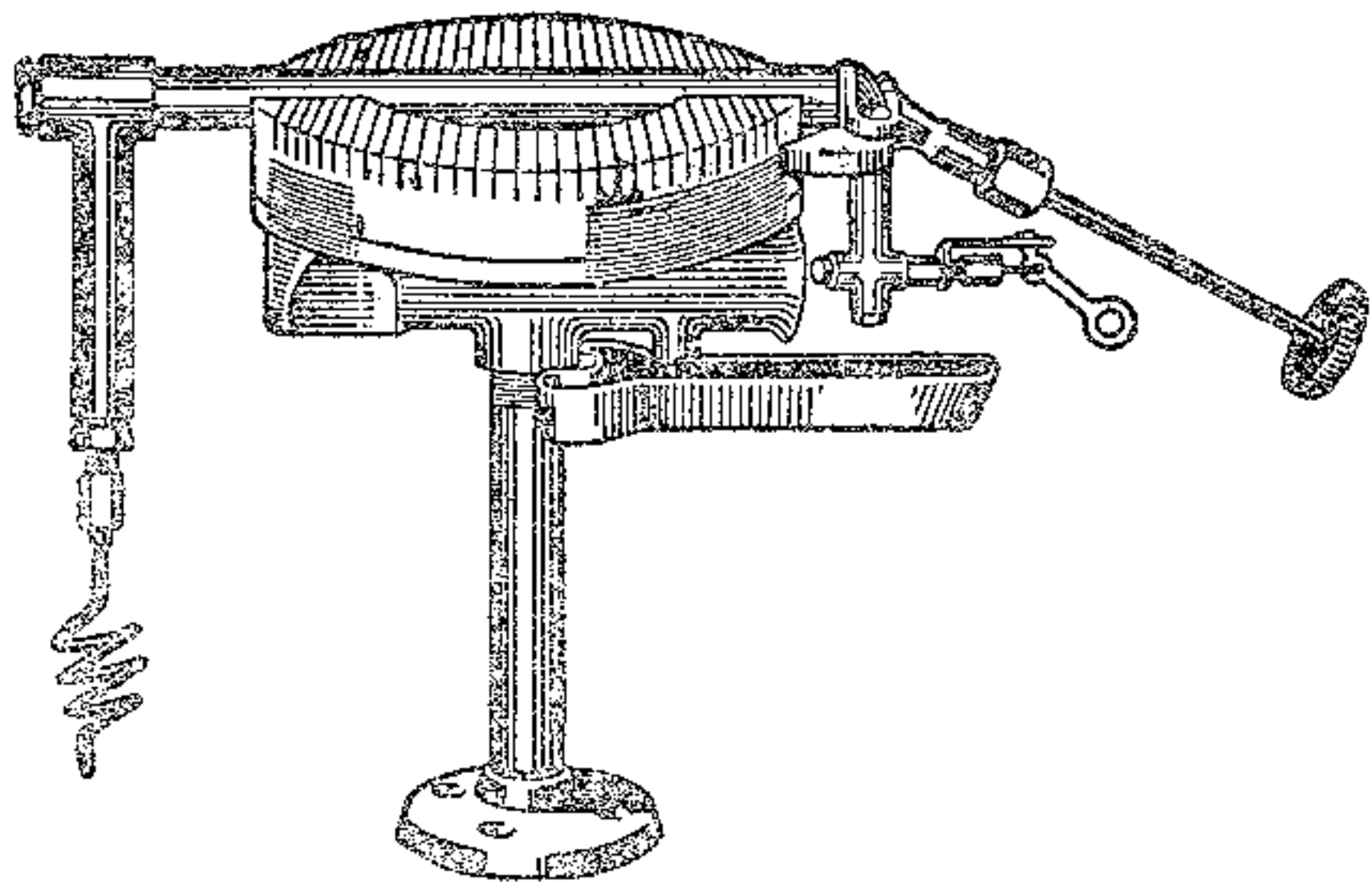


Fig. 5 — Coleman urn burners (1920-1950) were popular with restaurant owners, concession operators and street vendors. Many applications were possible.

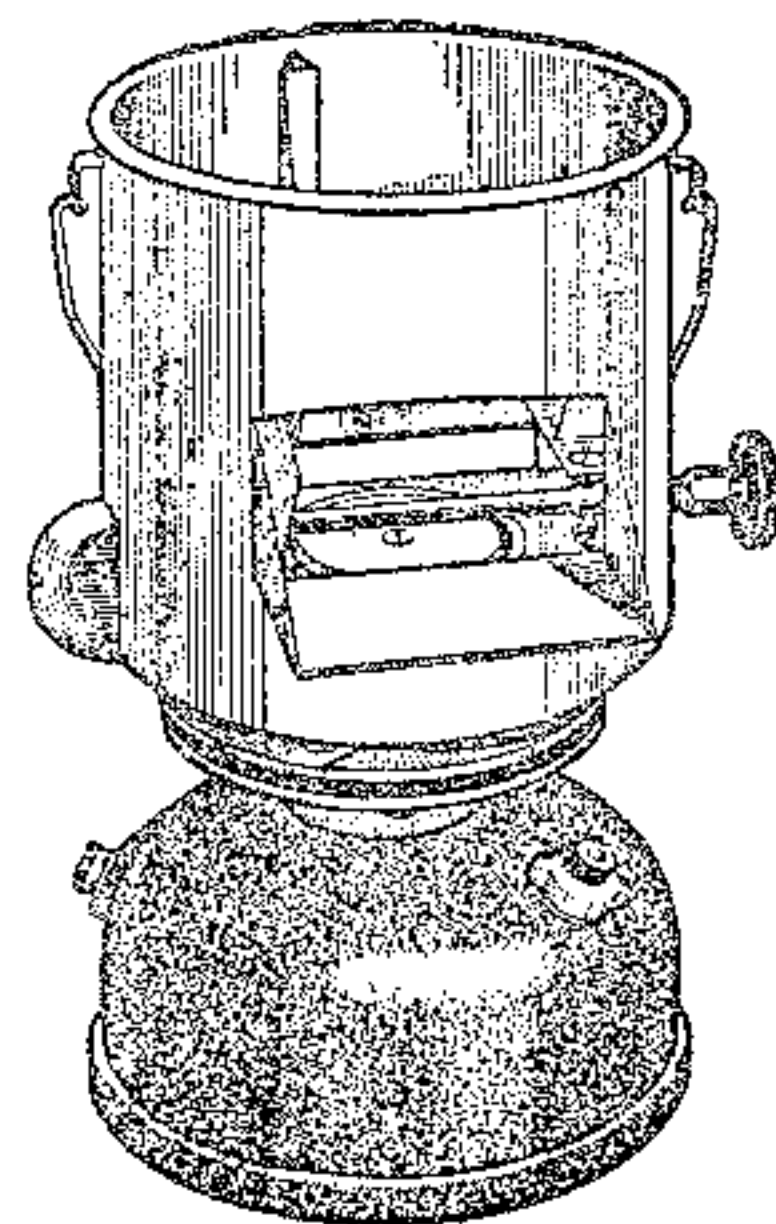


Fig. 8 — Utility Burner with drum heater was made in the '20s and '30s for plumbers, tinsmiths and sheet metal workers. Utility stoves eventually became popular with sportsmen.

Fig. 10 — Model 480 "Hot Ray" with aluminum reflector was used as a spot heater, health lamp or for light cooking purposes.

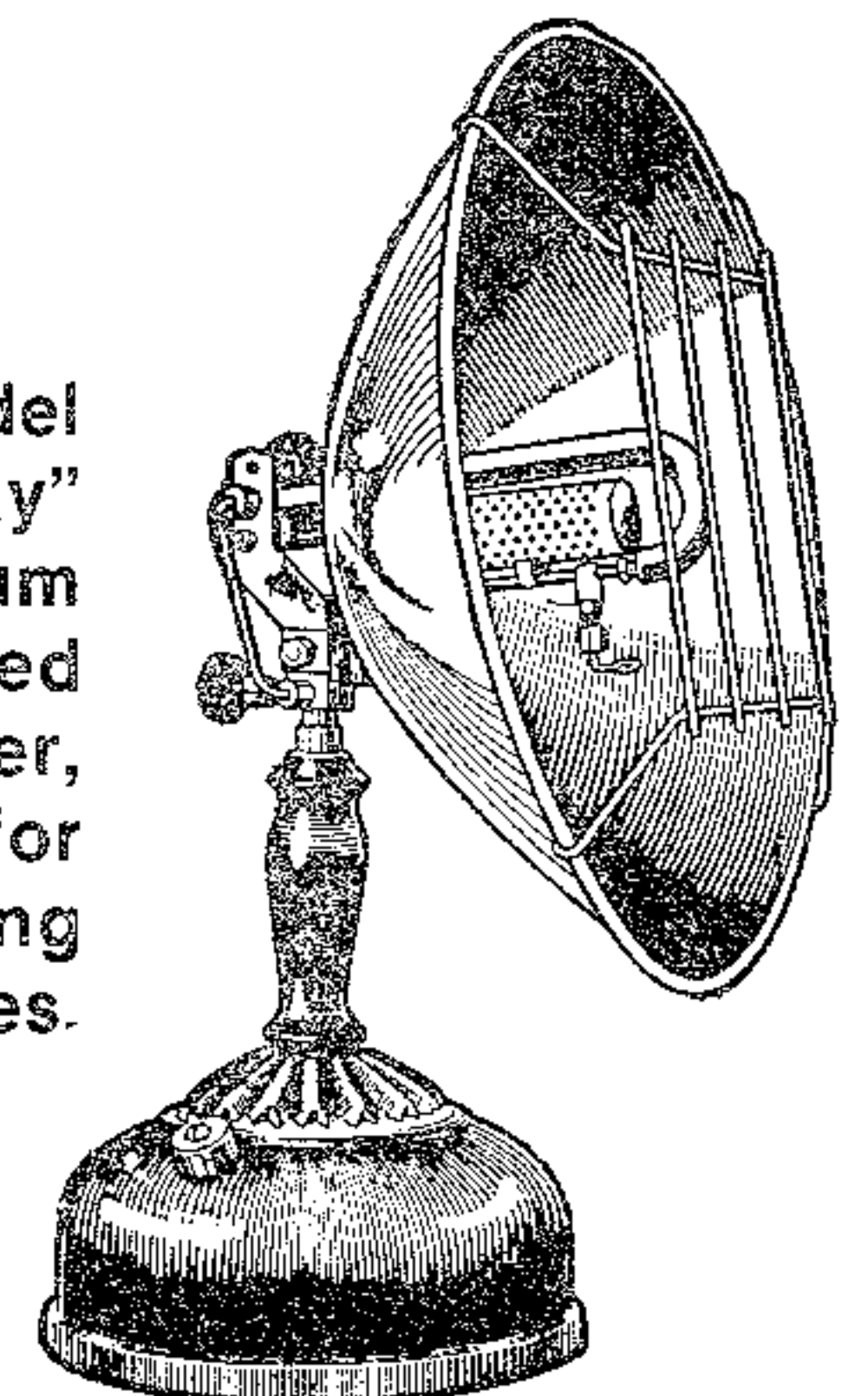


Fig. 6 — Handy Gas Plant was introduced in 1921. Production continued for the next 40 years. There were several models the most popular being the Nos. 457 and 460. Both were powerful and versatile.

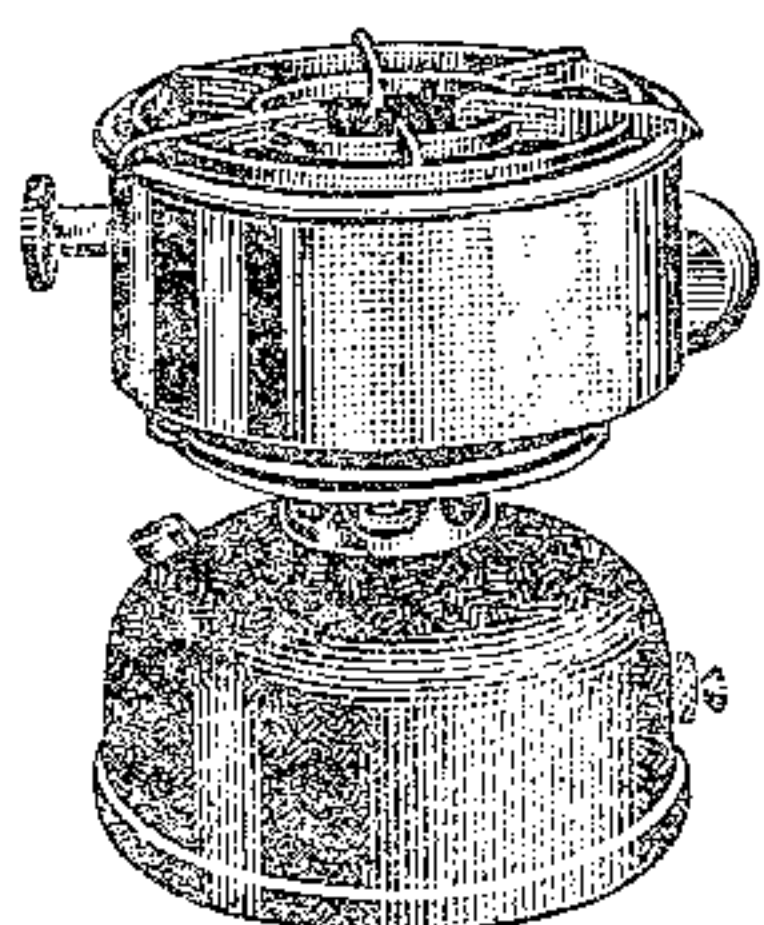
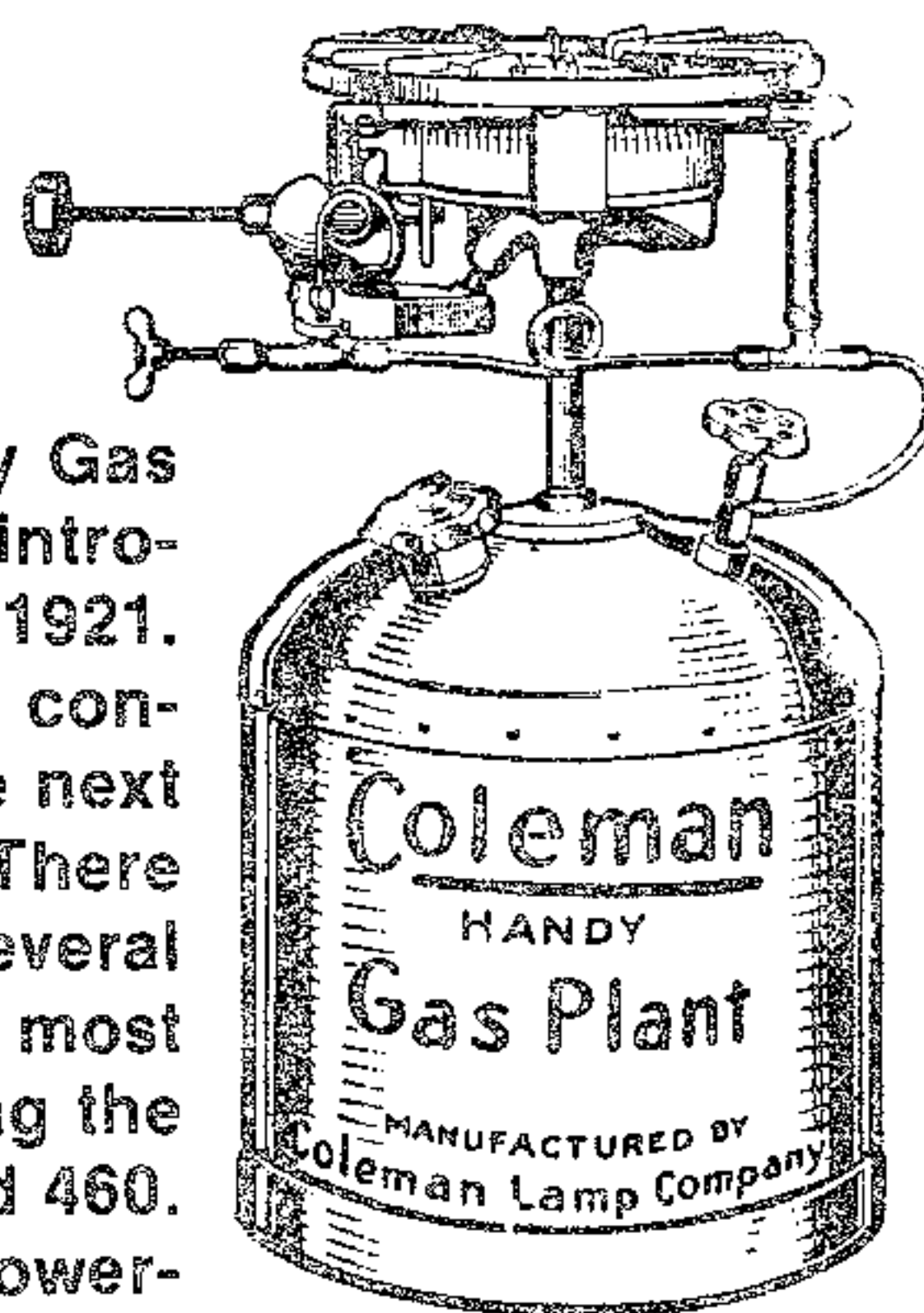


Fig. 7 — Utility Burner was the name of this little heater. Only 9 in. tall and 9 1/4 in. in diameter, it held 3 pts. of fuel and would burn several hours.

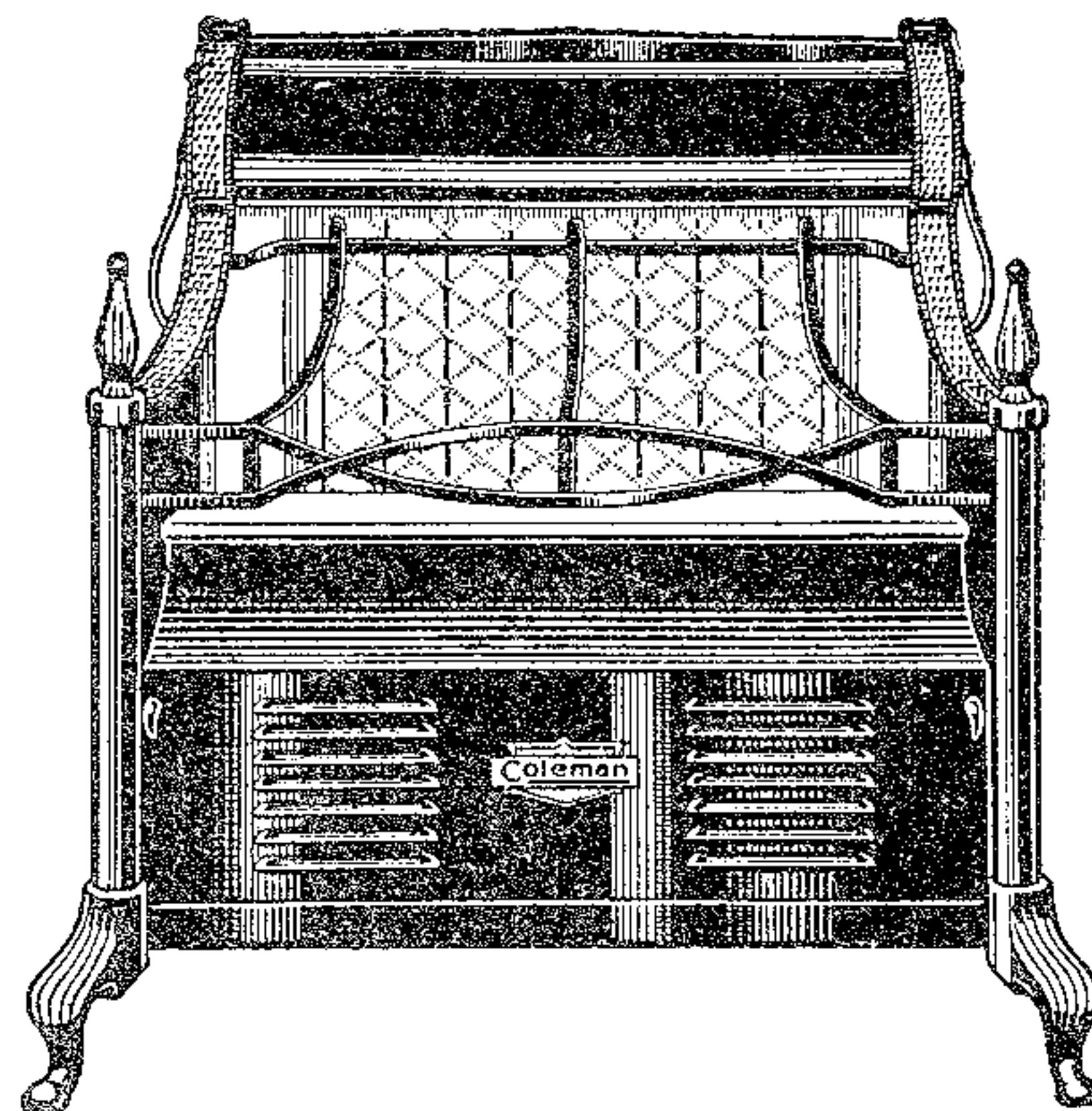


Fig. 9 — Coleman Radiant Heaters came in during middle 1920s, remained in production about 15 years. Their cheery glow, generous heat and portability made them popular before electricity and LP-gas for heating were readily available.

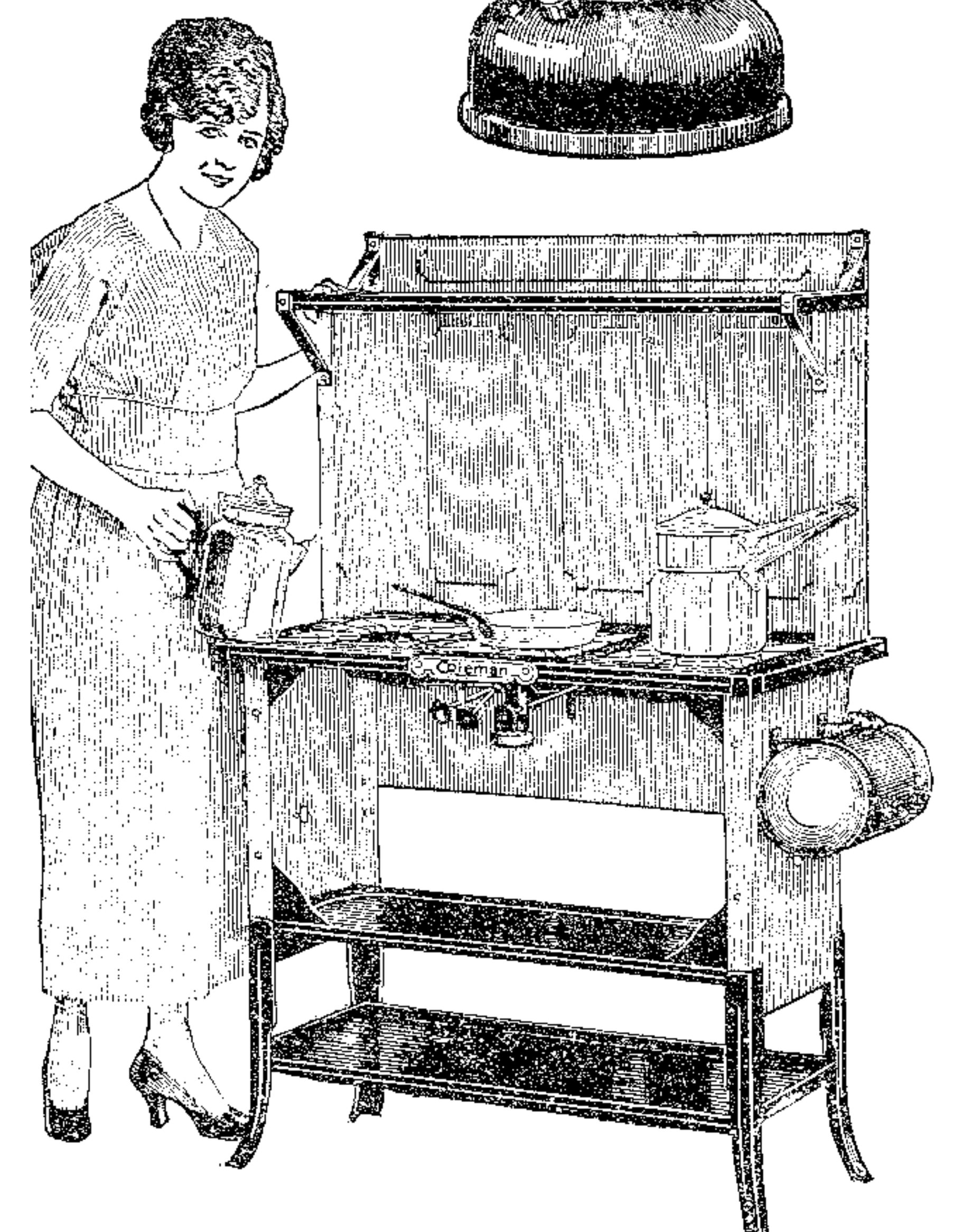


Fig. 11 — Coleman Cookers was name given to gas pressure stoves, ranges and hotplates made between 1922 and 1926. There were many models to fill varied cooking needs. All made their own gas from ordinary motor fuel.

homeowner. Long before this combination of developments could exert its full impact on the traditional markets for Coleman gasoline-fueled products, the company was developing new products. These changes included a line of deluxe electrical appliances for the home and gas floor furnaces and oil-burning circulating heaters. The oil and gas heating products brought the company safely through the long depression and sharpened its ability to cope with changing times.

But the need for gasoline-fueled pressurized appliances was far from ended. The war years saw Coleman produce more than a million gas lanterns and another million specially-designed gasoline stoves for the Armed Forces.

Following the war, Coleman resumed production of ranges, hot plates, lamps, lanterns, irons, and various models of portable stoves. But there was a change in emphasis. Now the ranges were primarily designed for use in vacation cottages and recreational vehicles. There also was greater interest in the fast-growing leisuretime markets made up of vast numbers of campers, picnickers, motorists, hikers, boaters, hunters and fishermen.

By the mid-fifties, production of irons, table lamps, cooking ranges and utility heaters had ended, but the slack was more than taken up by an ever-increasing output of lanterns, camp stoves, catalytic heaters and entirely new lines of products designed specifically for the burgeoning recreation markets.

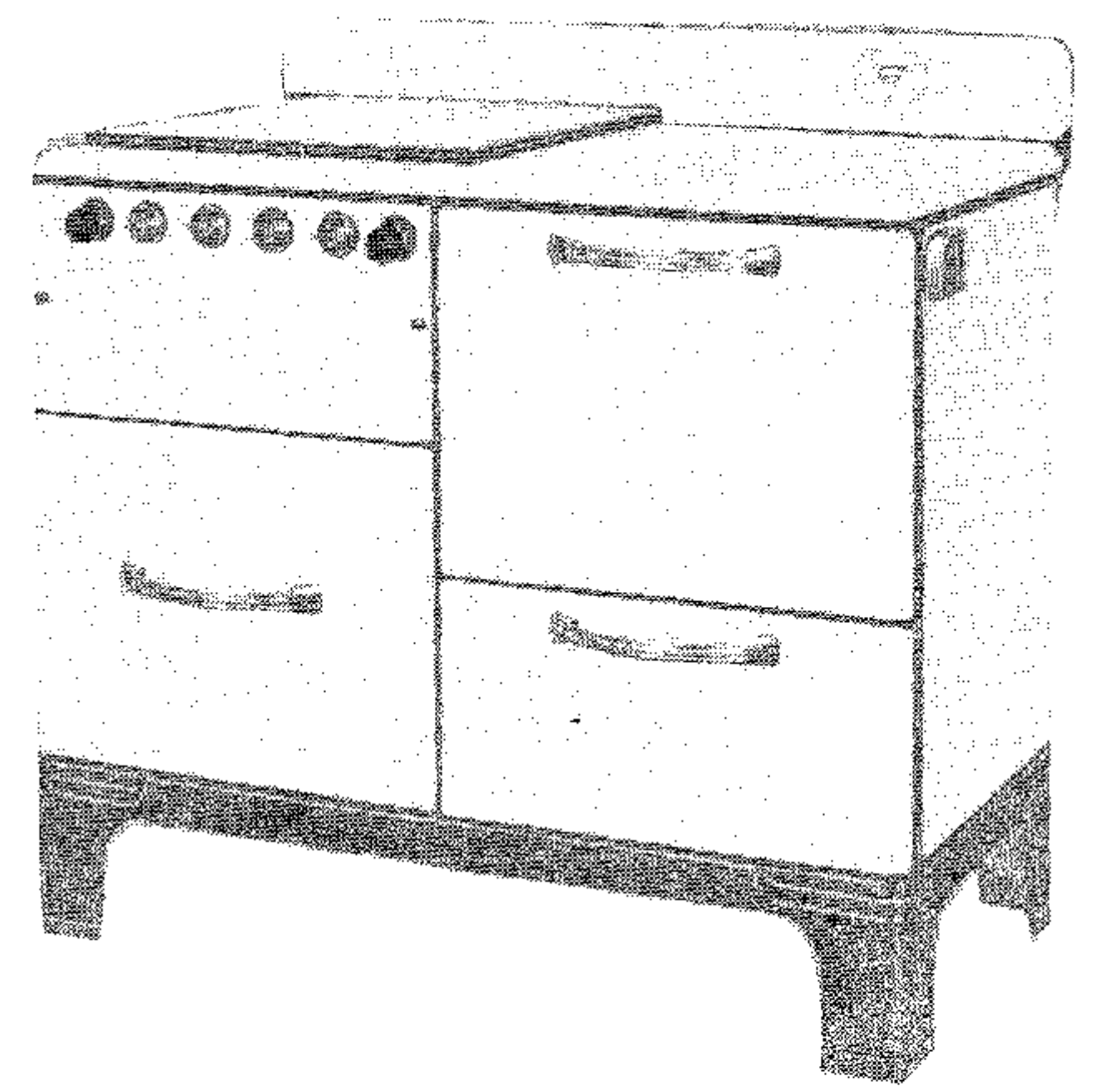


Fig. 15 — Air-O-Gas ranges, cookstoves and hotplates were updated versions of the Coleman Cookers (Figs. 11, 12 and 13) but were easier to light and were offered in a wider choice of sizes, finishes and convenience features. Most carried three-digit model numbers in the 100, 200, 300 and 600 series. Instant-Lite and Safety models (see Fig. 15) made during the early 1930s and World War II, featured concealed fuel tanks, insulated ovens and in-a-drawer broilers. Models for use with bottled gas (LP-gas) had no gasoline tank.

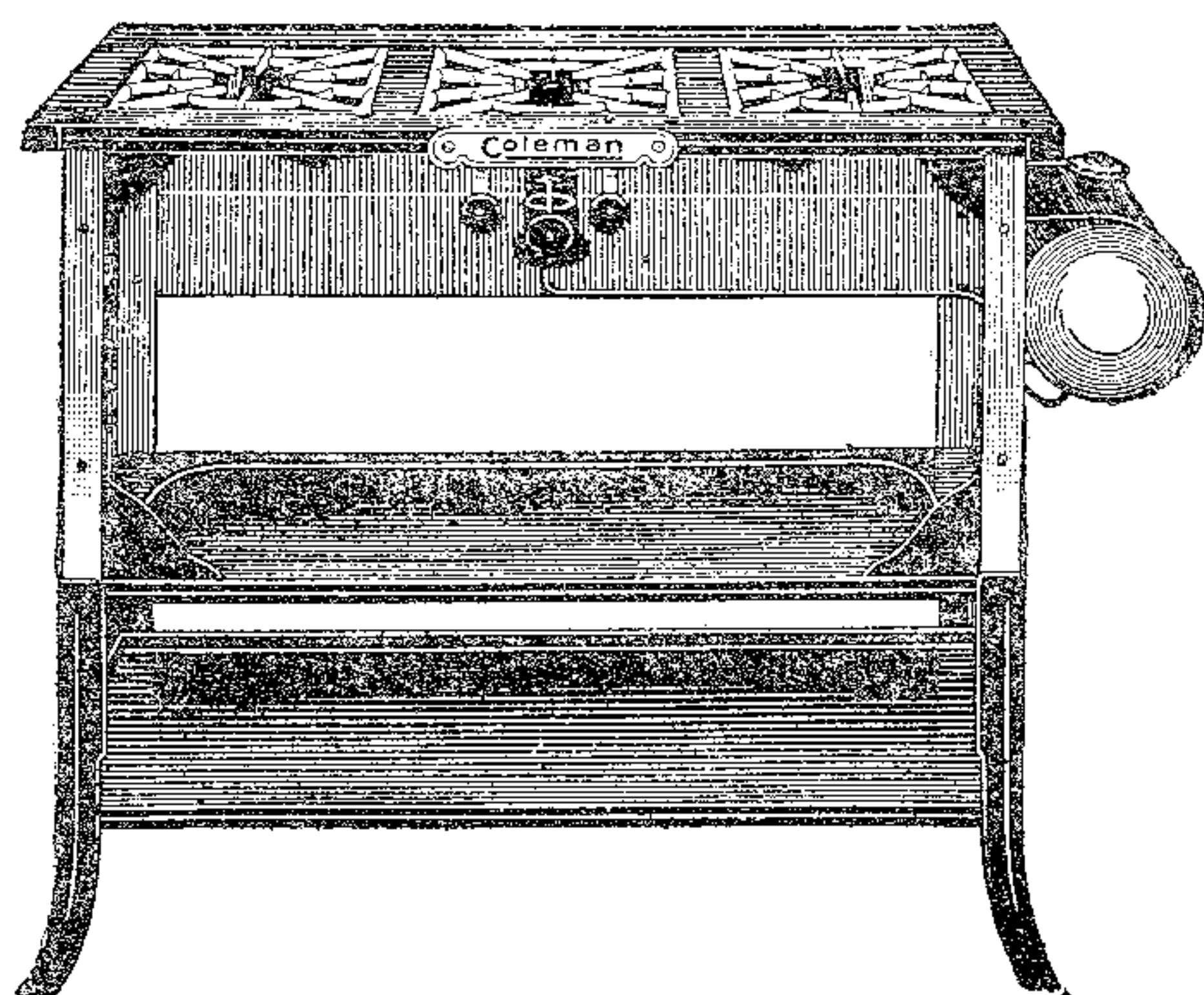


Fig. 12 — Cookers in 2- and 3-burner sizes were frequently found on back porches where they were used for canning in-season fruits and vegetables.

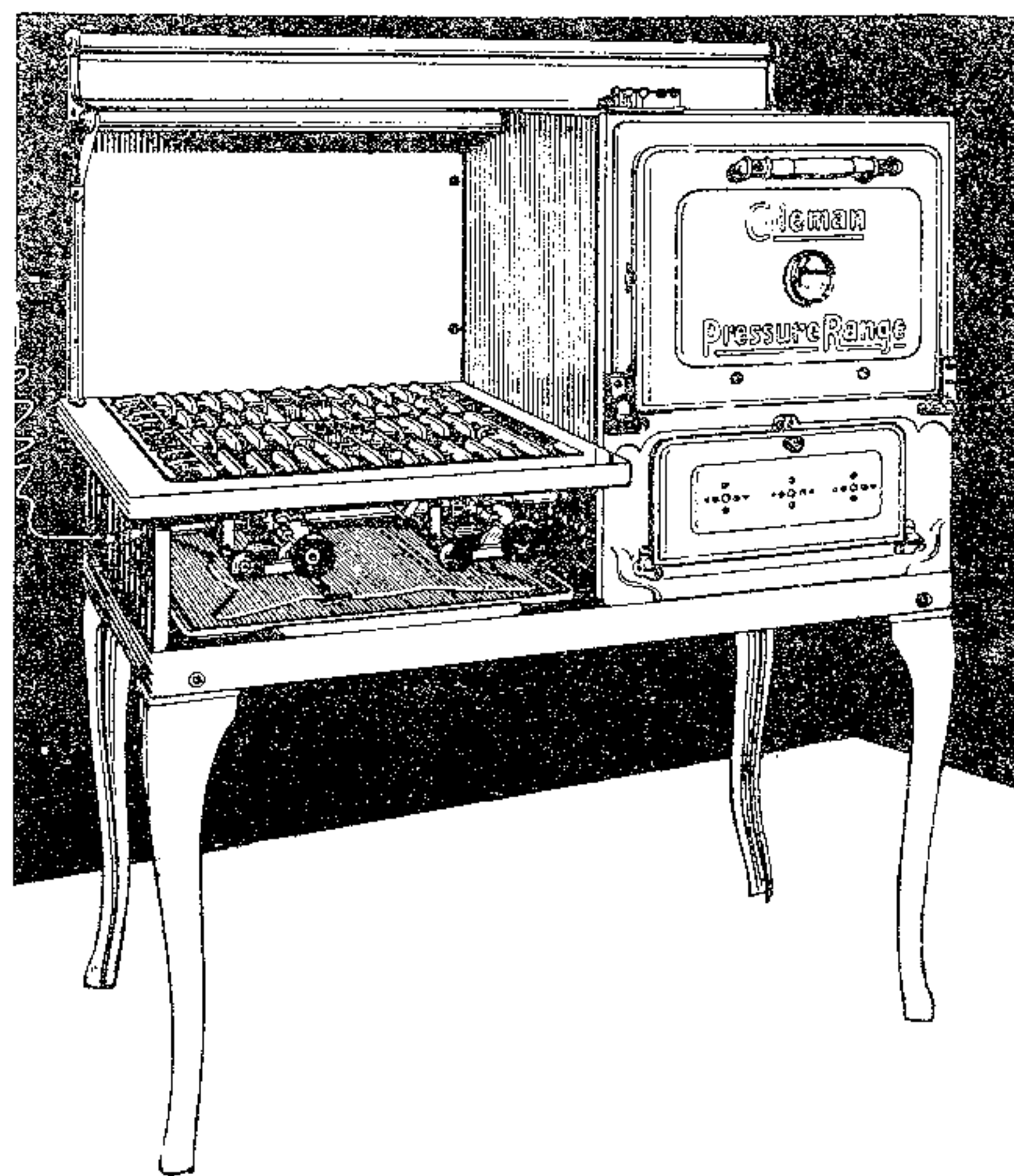


Fig. 13 — This deluxe model Coleman Cooker with "instant light preheater" pointed the way to a succession of Coleman Air-O-Gas and Instant-Gas ranges made between 1926 and 1940. Models for use with LP-gas also were made during mid- and late 1930s.

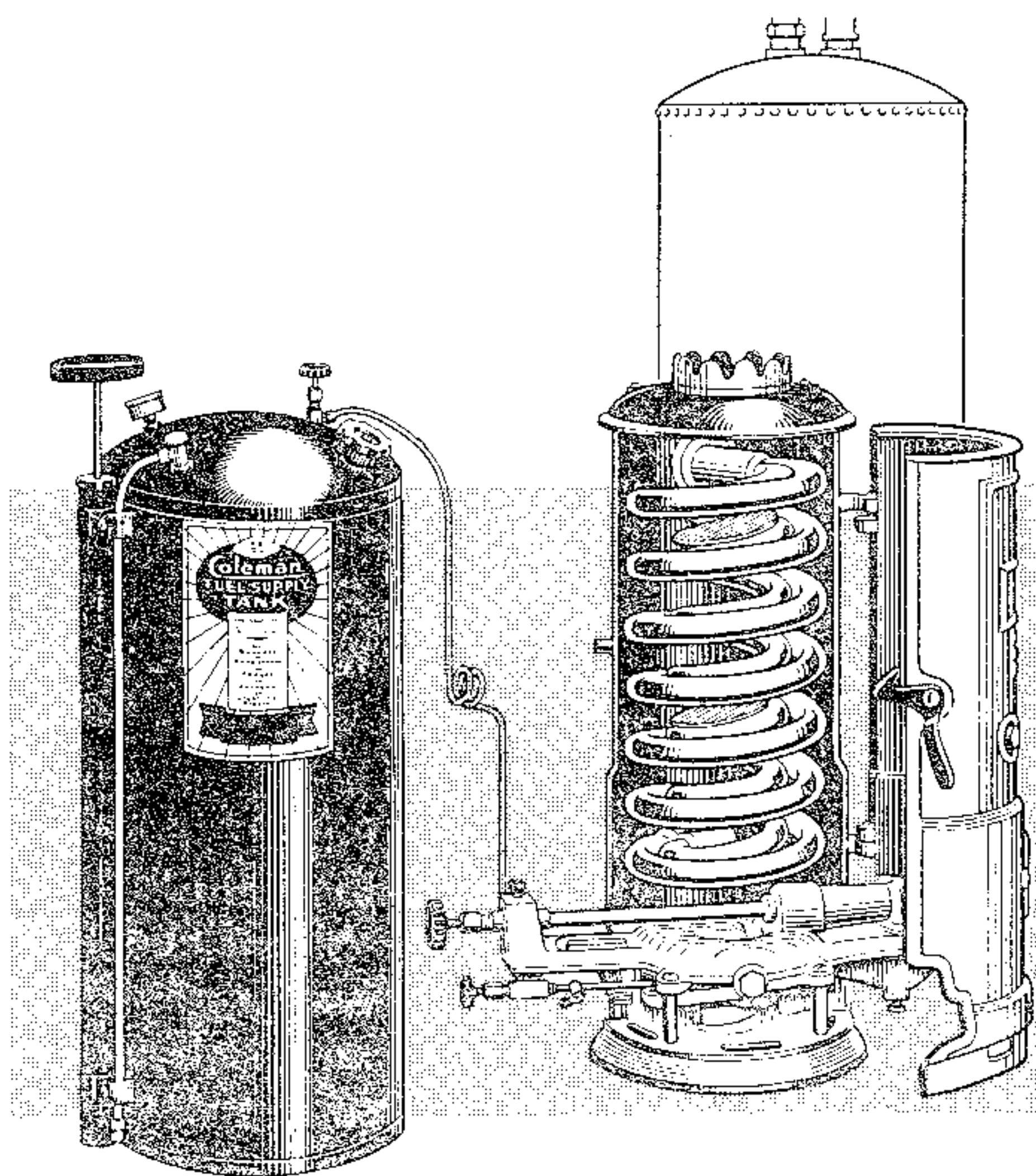


Fig. 14 — Another successful application of Coleman burners was beneath the "side arm" water heaters widely used in the years prior to World War II. The burner and coil were attached to the water storage tank. Fuel supply and pump were placed outside and could also be used to fuel kitchen range and other Coleman pressurized appliances.

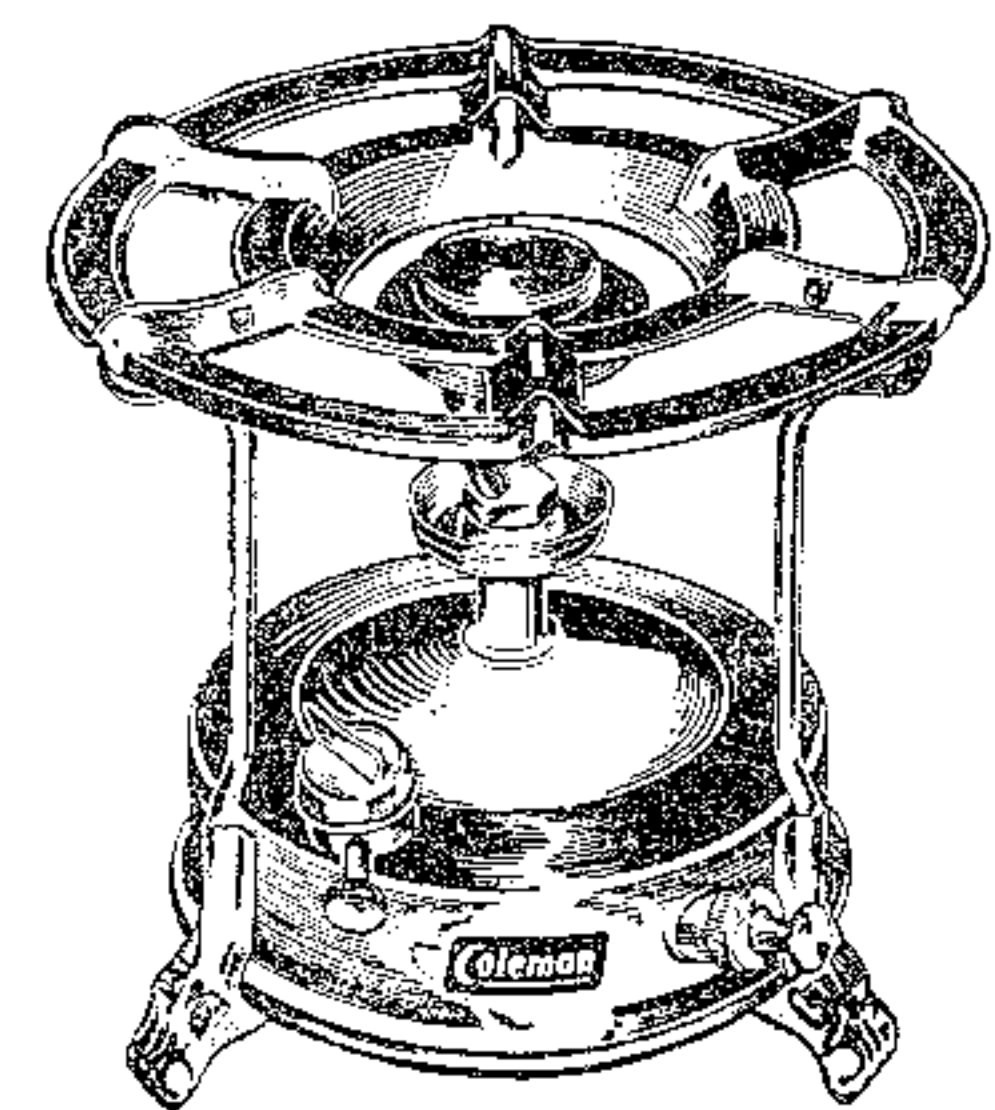


Fig. 16 — The Solus stove was made in the U.S. for a short time during the late 1940s. It was a low-priced single burner stove that burned kerosene after being preheated with alcohol. The Solus was made of brass and was 9 inches high; 8½ inches in diameter, and weighed 2½ pounds. Similar stoves, made in Europe, had been used on fishing boats, trawlers, barges and on docks for over 50 years.

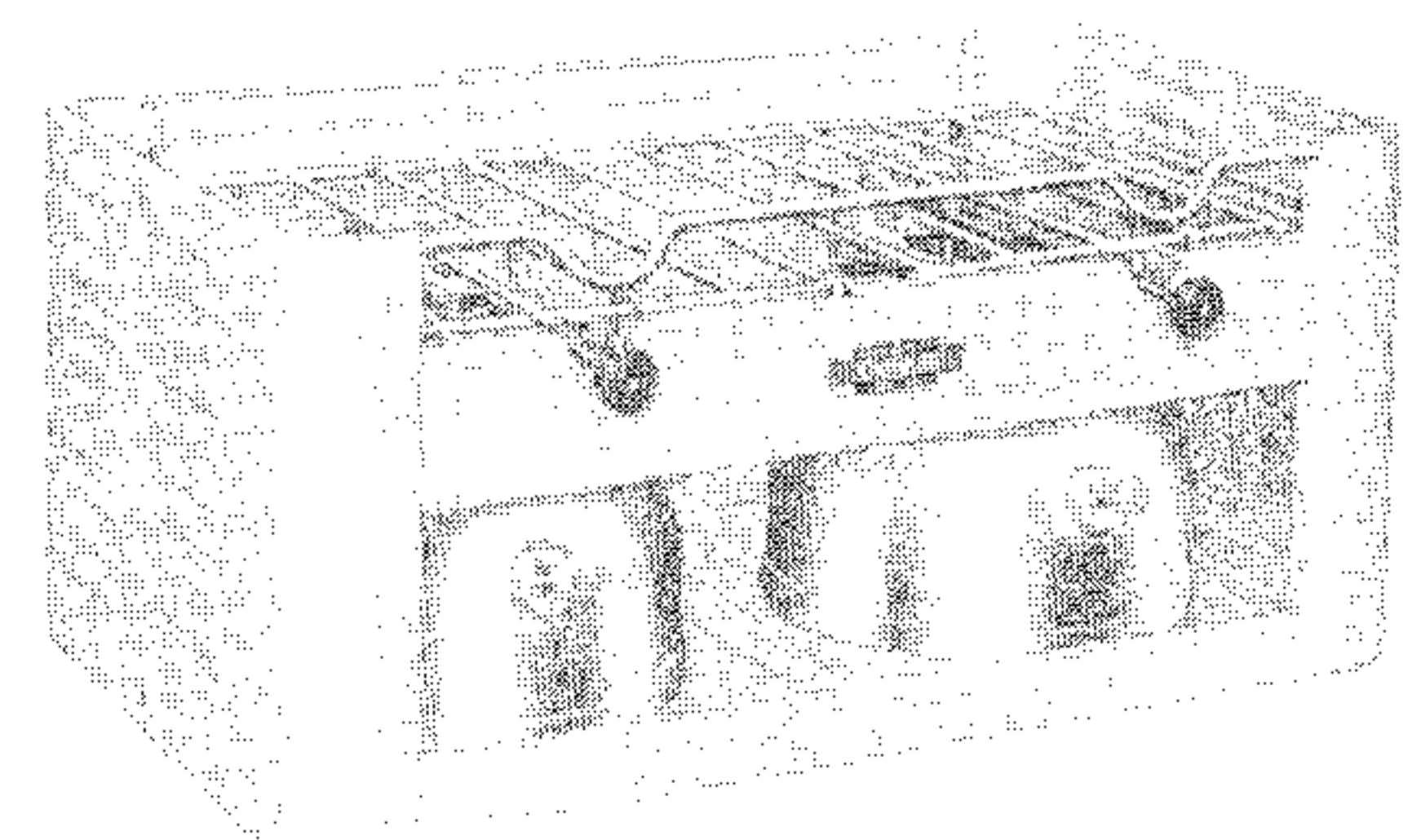


Fig. 17 — Another Coleman-made product introduced in the late 1940s was the two-burner Marine Stove. It was designed for use in boat galleys and was available in a choice of kerosene or alcohol burning models. Each burner produced 7,500 Btu/hr and could be removed from the aluminum frame and used as an individual cooking unit.

