

## Sinumbra Oil Lamp



The word “Sinumbra” is Latin for “without shadow”; referring to the way that the lamp allowed the light to shine into a room. The light source is in the center of a circular tank that held the oil to be burned. In the beginning, whale oil would have been used in the lamp but eventually kerosene became more popular and replaced the use of whale oil.

The main idea was to have a “contrasting”/different type of light compared to the more elaborate Argand lamps that were around at the time. The problem with Argand lamps was that their ornate decoration [on the lamp stands] often created a shadow. In response, the Sinumbra lamp has a simpler, but still elegant, design that decreased the shadowing effect and allowed the light to shine more brightly.

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the use of gas lighting in homes became more popular and began to replace whale and kerosene oil lamps. Ultimately, both oil and gas fueled lamps were made obscure by the invention of electricity and the electric light bulb.