Eveline Holland began drawing 'Lennox Lenos' in 1926 as part of a series of illustrations for a farm news handbook. As the character grew in popularity, Lennox estimated time to become "an identifiable with the name-air heating industry as fidelity, Kilowatt is with electricity." (Lennox News, 1929).

"Only Death Could Have Stopped Him"

Just as Lennox was about to become a household word from New York to Los Angeles, David Lennox died quietly in his home in Marshalltown in 1947 at the age of 92. The man who bought the company from Lennox in 1904 for $54,000 — D.W. Norris, still the company president — died in 1949 of a heart attack at the age of 73, while on a business trip to Columbus. "Only death could have stopped him," a family member said. Lennox factories throughout the nation stopped work briefly at the hour of his funeral service.

"When I came to Marshalltown," D.W. Norris had written in the Marshalltown newspaper a few months before his death, "I did not foresee automobiles, movies, radio, television, or paved roads. What will the people of this community accomplish during the next 50 years?"
For Lennox, the next 50 years were already beginning to take shape. John Norris, the M.I.T. graduate who introduced forced-air heating to American homes over his father’s early objections, became president. Under John Norris’ direction, Lennox embarked on its most ambitious program of innovation and expansion to date: between 1959 and 1960, Lennox would become an international name.

A Hot (and Cold) Future

An important factor in Lennox’ growth was its first national co-operative advertising campaign, launched in major city newspapers in 1949. “Many dealers report they have always had to first sell the prospect on who Lennox is,” stated an article in a special advertising issue of the Lennox News. “This co-operative advertising program will go a long way toward helping solve that problem.”

The first co-op campaign was a huge success, and the second campaign in 1950 was the first to feature a popular new character: ‘Lennie Lennox.’
"...I decided on a career in the heating industry. My dad arranged an interview in Marshalltown, Iowa with the Lennox treasurer, Ted Booth, who then brought in John Norris. John asked me what kind of work I'd like to do and I told him research and development. I was hired at $300 a month... I asked about housing in Marshalltown and Ted Booth told me about the Lennox Addition, which was funded by Lennox. The houses were brick with two bedrooms and were available to anyone, but Lennox employees received top priority. Ted said there was one left if I was interested. We drove out to the house, but Ted didn't have a key so we just looked in the windows. The house sold for $7,690 with zero to $790 down and $54 a month, so I snapped it up.

"The Lennox Addition nestled up to the east end of the factory complex in Marshalltown, so employees had two or three blocks to walk at most. The Marshalltown city bus ran by our house at the time, so getting into town wasn't a problem either.

"Of course, many of my neighbors were Lennox employees, but we also had an interesting mix of neighbors who were not connected with Lennox — scrap dealers and engineers from other industries in town. They were real handy to have around when we had special projects going that drew on their expertise and even their access to materials at special prices.

"Since all of the houses were new, there was little landscaping... we had one long backyard the length of our block. We set up croquet, volleyball and horseshoe games available to all the neighbors. One guy would go around the neighborhood with a can of beer in each hand, recruiting croquet players... my problem was the novice horseshoe players would more often ring my tomato plants than the horseshoe stake."

—a retired Lennox employee
Lennie was the brainchild of Lennox artist Ernie Hallard, who first drew the character in 1946 to illustrate furnace instructions and later adapted Lennie for use in advertisements, sales brochures, cut-out display sets, and even salt-and-pepper shakers. A 1950 Lennox News article hoped Lennie would become “as identifiable with warm-air heating as Reddy Kilowatt is with electricity.”

While the company moved toward developing a higher public profile, the Lennox research and development laboratory worked behind the scenes to continue developing groundbreaking products. John Norris' engineering background and instinctive genius for innovation made research and development a top company priority. A new lab was built in Marshalltown in 1950, almost three times the size of the previous lab.

An advertisement for the new Lennex CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING system, 1955. While many experts in the industry were skeptical of Lennox' move into the cooling business, the company scored an overnight success and continues today as a leader in the field.

**1950**
- Lennox develops its first residential perimeter heating system
- 1.5 million TV sets in use in US
- "Doomsday" begins rise in popularity

**1951**
- General MacArthur calls for use of nuclear weapons against North Korea and is relieved of command by Truman

**1952**
- Eisenhower elected President, promising to "go to Korea"
- Popular film: *The African Queen*, *An American in Paris*, *Strangers on a Train*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Plato's Passport*
- Lennox develops first residential central air conditioning system
- Lennox Industries—Canada established

*Eisenhower

*Version of the Bible, Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, and Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* published*
Lennox Research and Development, c. 1950

"The entire R&D lab consisted of thirteen people, and we had to provide our own hand tools. Only one guy in the lab had a complete set of tools. When he was transferred out of the lab, testing really slowed down until some of us finally bought our own. We often drew on the services of other departments such as the tin shop or body shop, since we didn't have our own model shop until years later.

"Occasionally someone from another department would ask us to do this or that and it could be disruptive to our main projects. John Norris Sr., the president and chief executive officer of Lennox at the time, instructed us not to do this. He told us to do it and ask the boss, but we didn't do it. We didn't do it."

"One day a worker was busy welding something when John Sr. stopped him and asked why. The worker raised his welding mask and turned to John and said, 'go to hell.' Then John remembered his instructions to us and had a big laugh...

"John could walk through the factory and call most of the employees by name. They all seemed to simply call him 'John.' He loved spending time with his wife and children. He was always friendly and pleasant and didn't stand much for formal bureaucracy. One day we were meeting with a group of engineers from another company where John walked in to hang up his coat in a nearby closet. I said, 'Hi John,' and was about to resume our meeting when one of our visitors said, 'When the president of our company walks into the room we all stand up.' 'That's bull,' snapped John. 'I'd rather see our people continue being productive.'"

"We frequently tested new equipment in our own houses. I spent many hours in John Sr.'s basement testing oil burners... one of the first perimeter heating systems was tested in my house. We had just installed new carpeting in my house, and my wife, told me that after cutting holes in her carpeting and tile, the system better work."

— a retired Lennox employee

Company president John Norris Sr. (with clipboard) below conduct an oil burner test at the Lennox N&D Laboratory, 1957. Beginning with his "secret" testing lab in the center of a Lennox warehouse in the early 1930s, Norris remained highly interested in product development.
Lennox developed the first residential perimeter heating distribution system in 1950. In 1952, Norris visited several air conditioning manufacturers to discuss the possibility of buying a compressor for use in designing its first residential central air conditioning system. Business associates advised him against the idea, claiming a furnace company did not have the experience or expertise to handle the new complexities of the cooling business. But Norris saw a bright future in residential cooling and led the drive to develop a 3-ton water-cooled air conditioner, which Lennox began to sell in 1952.

"Recent developments in the air conditioning industry indicate cooling will be just as much a part of homes in the near future as heating is now," Norris wrote in 1952. Only 12 months later he was writing, "Interest in residential air conditioning has skyrocketed so much this year that the entire refrigeration industry is sold out for the season and has been for some time... we are helping our refrigerator suppliers get the parts they need to make our assemblies."

1955
Lennox Furnace Company officially named Lennox Industries Inc.

African-American boycott segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama

Bill Haley's Rock 'n' Roll hit "Rock Around the Clock" is first rock hit

1956
Egypt occupies Suez Canal, precipitating international incident

Elvis Presley hits include "Blue Suede Shoes," "Hound Dog," and "Don't Be Cruel"

Oral polio vaccine is developed

Boxer Marciano retires undefeated as heavyweight champ

1957
USAF launches Sputnik 1 & 2, first artificial Earth satellites

Dr. Seuss' "The Cat in the Hat" is published

Gershwin sends troops to deter violence in Little Rock, Arkansas desegregation crisis

Ford introduces the Edsel

33-year-old Bobbie Plucker is U.S. chess champion

West Side Story and The Music Man are big hits on Broadway.
Sell Those Units! Sales Meetings in the 1950s

“Our sales meetings in those days were fabulous, inspirational, and great fun for everyone. I especially remember one in the Marshalltown coliseum. Each of the sales divisions came dressed in clothes befitting their area. Of course the Texans came dressed sporting cowboy attire, ten gallon hats, and loaded cap pistols. Those from Minnesota were decked out in Paul Bunyan gear... the St. Louis division wore gambler’s eye shades... Iowa salesmen wore hib overalls. During the banquet, the Texans weren’t satisfied with sitting on chairs — they ate from saddles which were mounted on sawhorses.

“The stage was filled with valuable merchandise, including major appliances. An auction was held for all of the merchandise and, as I recall, bidding was based on what percentage a salesman thought he could exceed his sales quota for the year. If he didn’t meet the bid, he had to pay for that percentage of the merchandise out of his own pocket. Some of the bidding was downright reckless, but some of the territory managers were feeling little pain.”

— a retired Lennox employee
"We Are Grateful Indeed"

Canada became a new market for Lennox in 1952 with the establishment of Lennox Industries (Canada) Ltd., with Ray C. Robbins as the general manager of the Toronto division.

By 1953 Canadian sales were so impressive, Lennox built a factory in Etobicoke, Toronto, Ontario to service all of Canada. "We are holding schools in Canada to teach Lennox principles just as we have for years in the United States," Norris wrote. A distribution center was opened in Calgary, Alberta in 1954.

On December 30, 1955, the company's name was officially changed from Lennox Furnace Company to Lennox Industries Inc.

The name change reflected the company's growth — not only into air conditioning, but also into agricultural equipment such as crop dryers and processors. By 1960, Lennox had established an International Division, with a facility in Basingstoke, England and sales offices and warehouses in Holland and Germany.

In terms of innovation and growth, the 1950s were almost overwhelming for Lennox. "We are grateful indeed," wrote John Norris in the early 1960s, "that in less than the span of one lifetime, this company — which had its start literally in the heart of an Iowa cornfield — has been privileged to grow up to serve so many people around the world."

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"No! It's too cold down there!"

Can your home pass the "Floor Comfort Test"?

Think this picture is too matched? Not necessarily. We have been in this business for many years and we know ошибки in a perfectly designed home. Floors are made of solid and stable materials. Your home CAN pass the "Floor Comfort" test if you use Lennox Air-Flo heating and cooling systems. Air is evenly distributed throughout the home. Heat, alone, is not enough for complete home comfort. While heating, the air may circulate, but does not lie in the corners. Drafts and cold spots are eliminated by careful, precise circulation of the air, keeping it comfortable.

Heat temperature. The air is filtered clean and is free from dusts.

Ask your certified Lennox dealer to show you the many PLUS advantages of Lennox air conditioning.

Write for your free copy of the valuable booklet, "How to Select Your Heating System." Address: Department 912-19, Lennox Industries, Inc.

HEAT, ALONE, IS NOT ENOUGH for complete home comfort!

More families buy Lennox Aire-Flo Heating

THE LENNOX FURNACE COMPANY

World leaders in the design and manufacture of space heating systems. Manufactured in Canada, England, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Mexico, Austria, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.
Prairie Schooners, Holiday Houses, and Other Diversions

When most people think of Lennox, they think of furnaces and air conditioners. But in the 1950’s Lennox also made a variety of other products. A retired Lennox engineer recalls some of them:

Prairie Schooner: "We mounted a heat exchanger, fan, and oil burner on a flat oil tank with wheels and put a casing on it. It kind of looked like a miniature Conestoga wagon, so we named it the Prairie Schooner. It was a popular way to spot heat at garages and building construction sites."

Holiday House: “Furnace and burner sales were highly seasonal, falling off during the summer. To help keep everyone busy during the summer, we designed, built, and sold Holiday Houses. The aluminum parts for these houses were made in the factory and assembled on site. They could be installed as a garage or a screened-in entertainment center."

Tobacco Drier: “Lennox management was convinced by one of our southern territory managers that we could penetrate the southern tobacco farming market with an improved tobacco drier. Later many of these units were used to provide warehouse heating to keep stored canned goods from freezing. It always amazed me how we would develop a product for one use and then some Lennox salesman would come along and find an entirely different use for it."

Oil Burner Demonstrator: “This was a spin-off of the tobacco drier, with the same pot and gun burner mounted on a small oil tank with two wheels and wheelbarrow-type handles. We rotated marshmallows over the demonstrator at sales and dealer meetings to show how our oil burners burned oil completely and cleanly."

Crop Drier: “An engineer brought expertise in both air handling and crop drying to Lennox, having worked for a crop drier manufacturer. As a kind of spin-off project from his blower performance evaluations, we began work on a crop drier. The result was the Lennox Cropmaster. Farmers were interested in crop drying because it wasted less grain than field drying. In fact, in the mid-1950’s, a whole division at Lennox — the Lennox Agricultural Division — focused on making grain and hay drying fans, crop dryers, and hay bines.”

Lennox’ entry into the lawn maintenance market was called the ‘Kittytrack’ and featured tracks in the place of wheels.

Nothing Else Like It!
Riding on a new wave of cool air, the Lennox successes of the 1950s continued into the 1960s.

"Lennox has come of age in the air conditioning industry," announced a 1961 Lennox News article.

Air conditioning sales for that year broke all previous records.

But sales were only half the story; the company made another major design breakthrough in 1964 with the Duracurve® heat exchanger. The Duracurve was recognized industry-wide as a major breakthrough in the search for answers to noise problems in gas furnaces. Lennox innovations continued in 1965 with the production of the first packaged direct multizone rooftop heating/cooling units. Originally designed for schools, the direct multizone systems (DMIS) proved to be flexible enough for offices, libraries, retail stores, factories, churches, and apartments as well.
First produced in 1964, the Lennox Duracurve® heat exchanger (left) eliminated the raise/sink effect common in gas furnaces. Above, a Lennox factory worker builds a Duracurve.

In the wake of such innovations as the Duracurve heat exchanger and DMS, the company's decision on September 14, 1985 to stop producing and selling coal furnace parts by the end of that year was barely noticed. But it marked the end of an era. Lennox coal furnaces had been produced and sold since Dave Lennox built the first one in 1895. New times were demanding new ideas, and the coal furnace could no longer play a part in the company's increasingly high-tech future.

In 1968, Ted Booth retired as secretary-treasurer. Many of his basic ideas for dealer-related accounting, credit, and time-payment programs are still in use today.

Richard Booth, Ted's son and a member of Lennox' credit management team since the 1950's, was promoted to secretary-treasurer.