Dim and guttering, smoking and smelling, the lights on Cape Cod for most of the 19th century differed little from those used thousands of years earlier in ancient Greece. Welcome improvements had been made in lamp burners and chimneys in the early 19th century, but the primary fuel for the lamps was still animal and vegetable fats as it had been for most of recorded history. Whale oil and spermaceti candles were a new source of very high quality illumination, but were too expensive for ordinary use.

The fossil fuel era changed Cape Cod as rapidly and as profoundly as it changed the rest of the country. By 1900, acetylene gas and petroleum products lit many homes in Falmouth. These new illuminants expanded both time and space for the new activities of an industrializing society.

The Enterprise carried many advertisements for acetylene gas generators, for oil lamps, and for the oil to fill those lamps in 1900. But the ads themselves indicate that not all was well with these new sources of light.
Advertisements for one acetylene gas generator implicitly condemned all others as dirty, dangerous and inconvenient.

An alternative form of lighting was clearly needed. In 1902, The Enterprise offered one:

**A Safe Light**

A safe light for going about with where there are inflammable materials, as into a storeroom, may be made as follows: Take a long bottle of pale glass and put into it a piece of phosphorus the size of a pea. Upon this pour pure olive oil heated to the boiling point until the bottle is about one-third full and cork tightly. When light is needed, take the cork out and allow the air to enter, subsequently recorking. The empty space in the bottle will then become luminous and give quite an effective light. If it becomes dim, it can easily be revived by uncorking the bottle for a few seconds. One bottle will last a whole winter. Small bottles may also be prepared in this way and carried in the pocket.

People knew that electric light was on the way even as they coped with improperly refined oil, trimmed wicks and washed lamp chimneys. "The Sippewissett" had opened in 1900, an enormous new hotel on the shores of Buzzards Bay that offered "All modern conveniences, including inside bath rooms, electric lights, telephone..."

In 1904, the acetylene gas plant went bankrupt and was auctioned. Lamp oil was still causing enough trouble for Stelley’s Grocery in Falmouth to carry Prof. Curtis’ Gas Extractor and Oil Purifier which "prevents lamps from exploding, kerosene from smelling and smoking. Will produce a light equal to gas with any ordinary lamp. Each box contains a sufficient quantity for 10 gals. oil. Price 10 cents a box."

**ELECTRIC LIGHTING** was offered to readers of The Enterprise on April 10, 1909:

We have decided to go ahead and supply electricity in the town of Falmouth; but, as matters at Wareham have not yet been settled, the exact methods cannot be determined. In order that we may properly lay out our lines and system of distribution, we solicit your patronage and inquiries. Next week we will print an application blank, with full instructions for filling out. Pending the establishment of our local office, all communications should be addressed to Eugene Carpenter, Treas., Newton, Massachusetts.

Buzzards Bay Electric Company soon began running a weekly advertisement with an application form to sign up for electricity. On June 26, 1909, the first advertisement from a local electrical contractor appeared just below the application form.
On July 10, J. D. Dickson, Electrical Contractor, took the strategic space below the Buzzards Bay Electric Company’s application form. David Quinn joined the new field in February 1910, offering “Electric wiring securely and neatly installed. Specifications and illuminating advice given on request.” David Quinn was the manager of Eastern Electric Co. in Falmouth.

With electricity running along the streets and electric wiring running through the houses, only one more thing was necessary for electric lights. On September 4, 1909, W. C. Davis, the proprietor of the Falmouth Furniture & Carpet Store, proudly announced to readers of The Enterprise that he had ELECTRIC FIXTURES and Shades in great variety of styles.

The Buzzards Bay Electric Company hired Henry H. Taylor to be the superintendent of its Falmouth plant. On October 30, 1909, he went after new customers with the following advertisement in The Enterprise:

Falmouth was about to be electrified.

Judith G. Stetson is a member of the Spritsail editorial board.
Electric light has always been known as the best, safest, cleanest, and most convenient form of illumination; but the expense has kept many from using it.

Recent discoveries have so reduced the cost that anyone can now afford to light his home by this method.

The combination of lamps and cost of operation below will convince the most skeptical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of lights and candle power</th>
<th>Monthly cost of electricity to operate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 20 C. P. or 2 10 C. P.</td>
<td>$ .75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 20 C. P. and 2 10 C. P.</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 20 C. P. and 3 8 C. P.</td>
<td>$1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 20 C. P. and 4 8 C. P.</td>
<td>$1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 20 C. P. and 4 10 C. P.</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information call, write or ’phone us.

BUZZARDS BAY ELECTRIC COMPANY.
Henry H. Taylor, Supt.
Falmouth, Mass.