

The Enlightenment

Judith G. Stetson

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.

Standard Oil Company was giving readers of The Enterprise a different message.



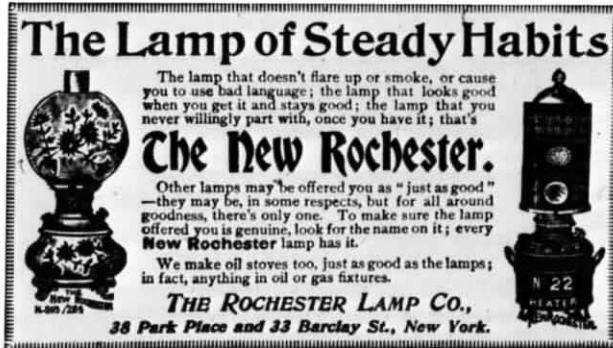
**Don't
Cast
Reflections**

on the burner when the lamp smokes and smells. Put the blame where it belongs—on the oil. So long as you use inferior oil you'll have lamp troubles. When you're tired of them, get our

**Centennial
Water White
Oil**

The oil that burns with a beautiful high candle power flame, without smoke or smell. Costs less than many inferior oils.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY



The Lamp of Steady Habits

The lamp that doesn't flare up or smoke, or cause you to use bad language; the lamp that looks good when you get it and stays good; the lamp that you never willingly part with, once you have it; that's

The New Rochester.

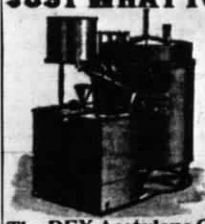
Other lamps may be offered you as "just as good"—they may be, in some respects, but for all around goodness, there's only one. To make sure the lamp offered you is genuine, look for the name on it; every **New Rochester** lamp has it.

We make oil stoves too, just as good as the lamps; in fact, anything in oil or gas fixtures.

THE ROCHESTER LAMP CO.,
38 Park Place and 33 Barclay St., New York.

Advertisements for one acetylene gas generator implicitly condemned all others as dirty, dangerous and inconvenient.

JUST WHAT YOU WANT: "The REX."



The most Practical Acetylene Gas Generator on the market. Compact, Durable, Automatic, all its working parts in plain view. Can be recharged at any time. **ABSOLUTELY SAFE.** Positively no escape of gas. No pipes to get stopped up by sediment. Easily cleaned. Send for circulars and list of prices and addresses of persons using the Rex in your locality, to

The REX Acetylene Generator Co., Binghamton, N. Y.
The Board of Fire Underwriter's endorse THE REX.

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.

ELECTRIC LIGHTS

AUGUST FIRST

at the latest, is the date we are planning to start our service in Falmouth Village and Heights, extending to the remainder of the town as rapidly as possible. We earnestly solicit prospective patrons to get their wires in, soon as possible in order to have this safe, perfect, brilliant light, at the first opportunity. Customers will be connected in the order of their application.

Please cut out the following application and mail it at once if you want light.

Buzzards Bay Electric Co.,

EUGENE CARPENTER, TREAS.,

FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS.

..... 1909.

BUZZARDS BAY ELECTRIC CO.,

I would like to have your service connected with my premises on Street, Village.

I shall want 48 C. P. 32 C. P. and 20 C. P. Tungsten lamps, and probably will burn until P. M., and all night.

(Signature)

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 *Sprintsail* editorial board.

ELECTRICITY

THE CHEAPEST LIGHT

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.

Number of lights and candle power	Monthly cost of Electricity to operate
1 20 C. P. or 2 10 C. P.	\$.75
1 20 C. P. and 2 10 C. P.	1.25
1 20 C. P. and 3 8 C. P.	1.35
1 20 C. P. and 4 8 C. P.	1.55
1 20 C. P. and 4 10 C. P.	1.75

For further information call, write or 'phone us.

BUZZARDS BAY ELECTRIC COMPANY.

Henry H. Taylor, Supt.

Falmouth, Mass.

J. D. DICKSON, Electrical Contractor.

ELECTRIC WIRING OF OLD RESIDENCES A SPECIALTY
ORDERS PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.

ALL WORK GUARANTEED.

HEADQUARTERS AT

Swift's Garage, Falmouth.

Telephone 62-6.