

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

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Beyond the Shame: The Lighting Legacy of Elias J. Hale

by Thomas E. Diosy

Many familiar with the history of Dover-Foxcroft know the history of Judge Hale and his defalcation of the town of Foxcroft during the second half of the 19th century. [Editor's Note: For those who don't know the story of Judge Hale, see page 10]. Far fewer people know of Hale's ground-breaking inventions at the dawning of the kerosene era in North America. For kerosene lighting collectors, this is one of the most interesting periods of lighting history, and Hale was in the middle of it. Sadly, the failure of his enterprise had everything to do with his long-term embezzlement and, ultimately, his suicide. Yet he left behind a legacy of unique lighting inventions that helped define the future of lighting in America.



Elias J. Hale, ca. 1885. Courtesy of Iris Buzzell whose grandmother worked for the Hales.

Elias Jones Hale was born in Portsmouth, Maine on January 24, 1822. His family moved to Foxcroft in 1830. His father, Captain John Hale, ran a packet shipping business between Boston, Portland, and Bangor. He and his wife, Mary Jones Hale, became respected citizens of Foxcroft. Elias had a sister Mary J., and a brother Augustus M., who played a major role in his life. During his early adulthood, Elias helped establish the first mill of what would become Mayo & Sons (the Moosehead Manufacturing Company). In 1849 he traveled to the west coast with Augustus and traded goods between San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands for a year. Upon their return to Foxcroft, the brothers started a business in spirituous liquors and in 1854 built the Hale Block next to Mayo's Mill. There Elias ran a general store through 1858, also renting out space to other businesses. That same year he married his second wife, Mary Sarah Chandler, who later became aunt and surrogate mother to Dr. Mary Chandler Lowell.

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It was in 1858 at the age of 36 that Elias obtained his first lighting patent. By this time he had already embarked on a long and diverse political career; but with this first patent, Elias would initiate a parallel career as a lighting entrepreneur. His primary interest was in lamp burner technology. The distinguishing feature of his first burner patent (No. 20,641) was a wick tube that moved up and down with the thumbwheel, while the wick remained stationary. In a way this mimicked the same principle for flame regulation used in the rosin burners of the time, but transformed them to a simpler flat wick design and greatly simplified the method of adjustment. (See Pg. 8).

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society	
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New Members

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Cynthia Freeman-Cyr	Maine
Marian Perkins	Maine
Jean Meguire	Maine
Virginia Swayne	N. Carolina
Barbara Pray	Arizona
Anita Wilson	Virginia
Steve Jackman	Mass.
Marc Chasse	Maine
Tonya McLachlan	Colorado

Deceased Members

The Society sends its condolences to the families of the following deceased members:

Velma Johnston Helen Taylor
Dot Greenlaw

These ladies were generous with their time and support for the Society and we will miss them all. (For an excerpt from the eulogy for Dot Greenlaw, see page 4). If you know of any deceased members, please let the editor know so we can recognize them in a future issue.

Sponsors

The Society is pleased to welcome 2 new business sponsors and one patron to our list of supporters. As you patronize these local businesses, please thank them for their financial support to the Historical Society.

Business Patron

Dover Auto Parts

New Sponsors:

McKusick Petroleum

Mallett Real Estate Agency

Existing Sponsors:

Drs. Daniel Steinke & Hillary Caruso

Webber Hardware

Rowell's Garage

Lary Funeral Home

Dr. Ellen Anderson

The Green Door Gallery

The Piscataquis Observer

Finest Kind Tree Farm

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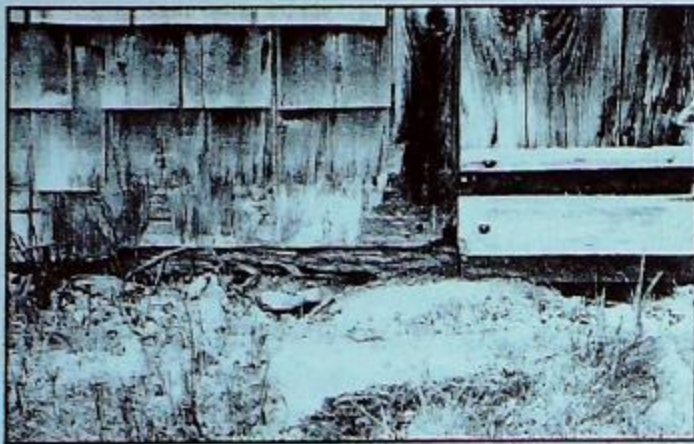
Brothers Chevrolet

Webber Oil

Foxcroft Veterinary Services

Thank you for your continuing support! For information on the Business Patrons & Sponsors program please contact Carmen Smith at 564-2178.

Houston, We Have A Problem!



Rotting sills and the damage created by poor drainage is clearly shown in this photo by Jack Battick.

As your treasurer, every time a bill comes along I wince. You can ask my fellow members of the Executive Committee. But the bills do come and I do everything possible to either arbitrate or find other ways to economize. You can ask my fellow members of the Executive Committee that, too.

Our treasury suffered quite a bit with the expenditures encountered during the facelifting of the Observer Building Museum downtown. It's indeed a wonderfully beautiful building now. One you'd be proud to say you supported with your dues and donations.

However, and here comes the rub, the **Blacksmith Shop Museum is under attack!** The north side of the roof needs replacing, the sills are slowly rotting away, and the treasury is a mere \$6,900 (\$2,000 of which is a generous grant from the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation to act as seed money for the work on the Blacksmith Shop). Most of what we have in the treasury is dedicated to insurances, fuel, lights, and phone. These are bills that keep coming and will as long as we wish to maintain our exceptional buildings. In order to repair the sills, we must remove all the artifacts from the Blacksmith Shop and place them into a rental trailer for the duration of the needed repairs to

the building's sills.

At the same time the Observer Building Museum has a chimney in bad need of repair, as pointed out by our insurance agent. This will cost approximately \$2,000. Replacement of the sills and the roof at the Blacksmith shop will cost in the vicinity of \$8,000. These much-needed repairs will set your museums in fine fettle for some time to come.

As a State Representative, in my off times, I hate to ask my constituents for a raise in taxes. I'll do anything to avoid doing that. However, there comes a time when there's just no other way. I shall fight the Executive Committee to prevent a raise in your dues, but I am coming to you for anything you can spare as a donation. Keeping in mind that these are your buildings and you have trusted us to maintain them, you will find us very judicious when it comes to caring for our museums. Also, please keep in mind that any donation can be deducted from your federal income taxes.

This particular letter is hard for me to write. But there's just no other way than to ask for your generosity in helping to keep our buildings in good repair for generations to come. Your grandchildren and your grandchildren's grandchildren will thank you for your efforts.

Thank you very much for your concern in this matter.

Sincerely,

James D. Annis, Treasurer, DFHS



Where we started. The Blacksmith Shop prior to restoration.

Farewell to Dot



Dot Greenlaw and "friend". Photo taken 1971.
Piscataquis Observer Collection, DFHS.

Dorothy Ford Greenlaw died Dec. 28, 2006 at the Hibbard Nursing Home. Below excerpts from the touching eulogy given by Judge Kevin Stitham.

.... When Dot retired from teaching in 1971 she had taught for 48 years in the schools of Maine, most all of them as a kindergarten teacher in the primary schools of Dover-Foxcroft. I first saw Miss Greenlaw on my first day of school in September 1957. Two lines formed up that day in front of the yellow kindergarten door and one in front of the red kindergarten door at the brand-spanking new Morton Elementary School.... I looked over in the other line to see Jim Brown standing in front of the yellow door and in front of him was the smiling Ms. Greenlaw - but the most amazing thing was that she was only 4 feet tall!

One can learn a lot about Dot not from reading what her obituary says, but what it does *not* say. Dot was very insistent that her age not be given,

nor did she want her date of birth given to allow the math to take place. So all one learns is *when* she died (she couldn't figure out a way to leave that detail out). You see Dot always simply didn't want people to know her business, and she was feisty enough to make us all toe the line on that point....

But....when she made it to 100.... and was presented with the Boston Post Cane and heard all the congratulations and well wishes of her many friends, deep down she began to think it was indeed something special to be Dover-Foxcroft's oldest citizen.... she clearly enjoyed the well deserved attention it brought. I run a bit more of a risk by making it clear that she was born on April 5, 1905.... turned out she lived 101 years, 8 months, and 28 days.

I can tell you that Dot was always kid's size right up through the time shortly before her death when I held her arm and we walked down the corridors at Hibbard Nursing home. That's what was so comforting about Dot to all of her friends, she was always kid's size. She was one of those rare people who never seemed to grow older. We all changed, we got taller, bigger, older, fell in love, fell out of love, moved away, moved back, moved away, came back to visit, changed jobs, lost jobs, got divorced, got remarried, lost loved ones, had babies, had children marry, had children have children, but there was always Dot, just the same, always the kindergarten teacher, always more interested in our lives than her own, always ready to greet us with a smile and a knowing nod, and always a little feisty. And she never stopped teaching, she taught us about independence and sticking to your guns and about giving of yourself not for any credit but just because. Our community is less for her passing but ever so much more for our memories of her.

Editor's Note: We regret that space did not allow us to print the full eulogy. A copy, however, will be added to the Society's archives.

Historical Society News



Sylvia Dean (l) and Sharon Phillips are already hard at work on this year's Attic Sale to be held June 2. With spring-cleaning just around the corner they want to remind you to be sure to donate any unwanted treasures. To make a donation, contact Sylvia at 876-3663, or Sharon at 564-7251. Workers on the day of the sale are also needed. Be sure to mark your calendar!

Homecoming

This year's Homecoming will be extra special. Watch for the DFHS entries in the parade and be sure to visit the Observer Building after the parade ends. We'll have new exhibits, a great "photo opportunity", and a chance to meet the "farmer's wife" (yep, she really *was* a farmer's wife) to learn how life was in the "old" days! Hosts are always needed for that day so if you can help for a time, please let Mary Annis know (564-0820).

Dues, Dues, Dues

It's that time again. The Society's fiscal year begins April 1st so if you haven't already renewed your membership it's time to send \$5 per person. There's a form on page 11 to make sending your dues easier or if you'd rather not cut up your *Conserver*, just send the check to

DF Historical Society, 151 Lawrence St, Dover-Foxcroft, Me 04426. Donations & gift memberships are always welcome.

Special Summer Programs

In addition to our regular program schedule (announced on page 11) we'll be offering 4 extra special programs this summer. While some dates are still not firm as we go to press we'll give you a peek at what's coming:

A Bus Tour of Main Street with Lou Stevens who'll share historical memories. There will be a fee for this to cover costs of the driver. The bus is being donated by our generous sponsor, Rowell's Garage. Watch our website and the local media for announcements of how to sign up for this one! It's sure to sell out.

Civil War Supper. July 7, Congregational Church. Fee. Come join us and meet VP and Mrs. Hannibal Hamlin, and other special guests, perhaps even President Lincoln himself. After the supper, we'll offer a brief program and a Civil War sing-a-long with Eric Boothroyd. There will be two seatings for the supper.

The Farmer's Wife. *Who is she?* On August 4th she'll be riding in the parade, along with the Farmer and the Blacksmith, then be available at the museum where you can ask her about making butter, living without electricity, quilting, or other questions about a woman's life on a rural Maine farm. Don't miss her - you'll be sorry if you do!

From Sheep To Shawl: Cathy Cook will be with us to take us on a journey from shearing the sheep to spinning a shawl (no new fashioned gadgets allowed). This promises to be an educational and fun program - bring the kids.

We hope you'll make DFHS a part of your summer calendar.

More on the Elevator Accident

The feature piece on the elevator accident at Brown Mill in our last *Conserver* elicited several memories from our members. Below is a sampling:

Madelyn C. Betts recalls that she was on her honeymoon in Portland when her husband Earl spotted the article on the elevator accident and they learned of the deaths and injuries.

One woman, in labor at the hospital, saw her physician called away to assist with the injured. Her baby was delivered by one of the town's former military medics, Orville Lanpher.

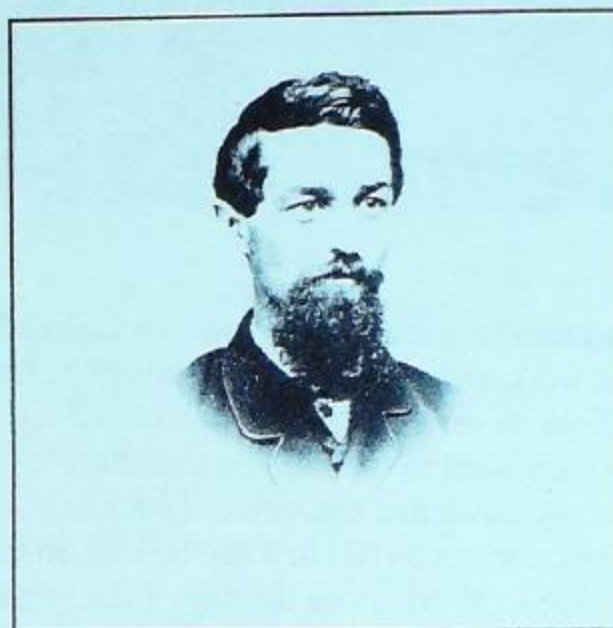
Helen Hussey Deag wrote that she remembers the accident clearly and that one of her classmates, Janice Collins (not "Mima" as reported in the paper) was among the injured. The editor remembers Janice from Grange meetings. She was very pretty and always limped badly.

Charlotte Harrington e-mailed that one of the injured women, Thelma Huff Trottier became her mother-in-law several years after the accident. Thelma had suffered a badly fractured spine, crushed ankles and feet in the fall. She spent many months in physical rehabilitation and ever after walked with difficulty. She refused to give up, however, and went on to be the proprietor of "The Kitchen" a popular restaurant on Main Street. Her home made bread and doughnuts were a calling card. She was the mother of 6 children and died in 1986 at the age of 72.

Finally, Carmen Smith remembers that her aunt Nina Woods, also an inspector at Brown Mill, was about to enter the elevator that day when she realized she'd forgotten something. Telling the others that she'd be "right up" she didn't get onboard, a lucky moment that saved her serious injury and perhaps her life.

More On The Lander Family

We thought you'd like to see the faces behind the letter featured in our last *Conserver*. Madelyn C. Betts remembers being told by Francis Peaks that the Landers family had a business on Main Street near the home of Francis Peaks (now the courthouse annex).



John "Enoch" Lander, ca. 1860. Photo courtesy of Madelyn C. Betts



Fanny Lander "Frankie". Photo courtesy of Madelyn C. Betts.

Donors of Blacksmith Shop Windows

Below is the list of those members and friends who donated replacement windows to the Blacksmith Shop museum in 2006. The windows are installed and the memorial plaques will be in place this season. The list is in alphabetical order:

Jim & Mary Annis. In Memory of Sue & Lou Annis.
Jack & Nancy Battick. In Memory of Anthony & Elthea Klimavicz.
Madelyn C. Betts. In Memory of George W. Ballard.
Berta Fitzgerald. In Memory of Hattie J. Washburn.
Gilman Glover. In Memory of Sally Gellerson Glover Bartram.
Charlotte T. Harrington. In Memory of William (Bill) & Charlotte Harrington Hayes.
Edie Hussey. (Sharing a window with the Batticks).
M. Parkman. In Memory of Fred Washburn. The Piscataquis Observer.
Julia Shamback. In Memory of Dr. Leo & Hilda Just Robbins.
John E. Wiles. In Memory of John A. & Gertrude (Dunham) Wiles.
Helen Zilinski.

If you have questions about the plaques or memorials please contact Jim Annis (564-0820) or Dave Lockwood (564-8618).

Editor's Corner

This time of year is always frustrating. There's a hint of spring in the air one day, a winter storm the next. For those who love winter sports there's the rush to get in as many days outside as possible. For those of us who are anxious for spring and warmer temperatures each snowflake is a setback.

At the Society we are planning summer programs and exhibits, continuing to catalog, working on necessary projects, and looking forward to seeing all of you come this summer. We're also putting together a special exhibit on the schools of DF for the annual Expo in Guilford the end of March (the exhibit will be on display at the Observer Building Museum this summer). And then there's the *Conserver*.

As always I'm looking for new material for future issues of the *Conserver*. If you have a piece or photo you'd like to share with your fellow members, please send it along to: Nancy Battick, 308 Foxcroft Center Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. I'm about to change e-mail providers so please send e-mail to dfhistory@yahoo.com.

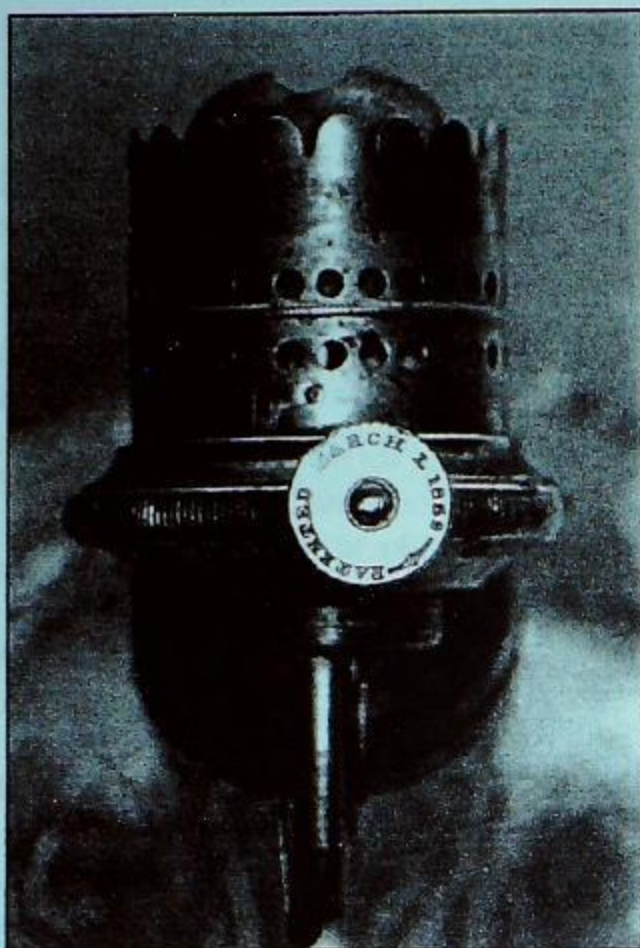
Once more a tip of the Editor's hat to the contributors this issue: Tom Diosy, Jim Annis, Mary Annis, and all those who shared memories of the elevator accident.

Nancy Klimavicz Battick

Our Website

The Society's website is a special place for members and visitors. You can find it online at (www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs). The site is expanding slowly, but steadily. We have plans to add more photos to our gallery, special photo exhibits, some archival material, and anything else that you feel would be of interest and value. Be sure to check us out from time to time and let us know what you think. And, if you have some items for the site or ideas for what would be good to add, please let our webmaster Dale Mower (dale@mower-family.com) know or you can send items to 185 Norfolk Street, Bangor, ME 04401 or to the Historical Society itself for forwarding to Dale.

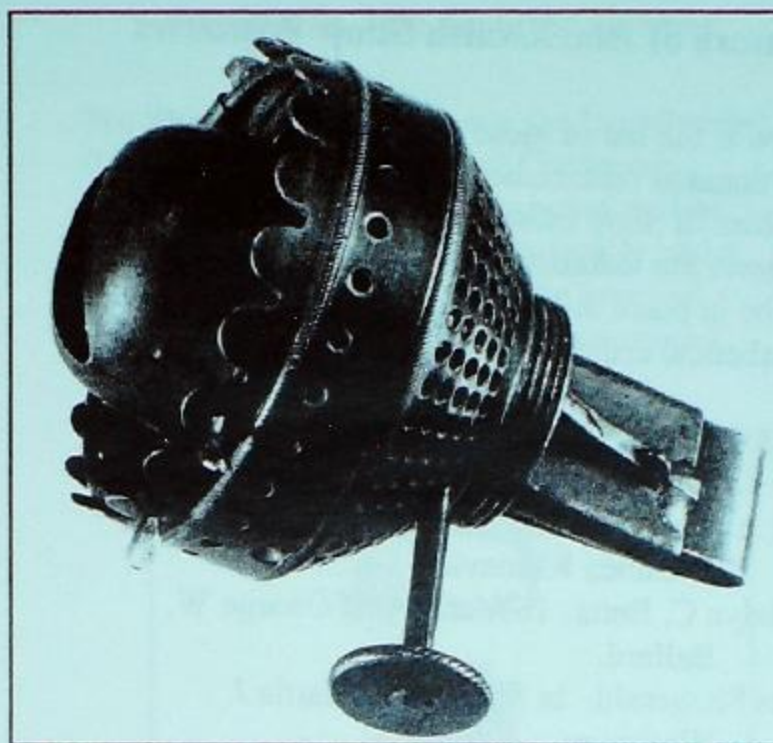
On behalf of all of us we want to thank Dale for his efforts in making our website so great.



Example of a first generation Hale burner using the "Vienna" burner form. Courtesy of Larry DeCan.

Elias began manufacturing his first generation Hale burner at the foundry (later the Piscataquis Iron Foundry) in Foxcroft, owned and operated by Chandlers, Brown & Co. They would manufacture Hale's lighting products in the so-called "Lamp Factory" for the next 10 years. One of the owners of the foundry, Charles H. Chandler (no relation to Emily) was a machinist by trade and teamed up with Elias on a patent improvement to his burner (pat. No. 23,085). Four more patents would follow in 1860, culminating in the most recognizable product from the Hale enterprise today, the *second* generation Hale burner.

Elias also patented a unique chimney for his first generation burner. In pat. No. 25,406, the glass for the chimney was in two separate pieces, joined together by a connector band that had vent holes around it. These holes

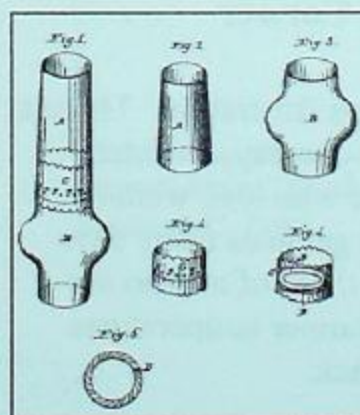


The second generation Hale burner was the result of an evolutionary development in burner technology, encompassing no less than six separate patents. Photo courtesy of the author.

admitted air during the burning process to prevent smoking of the chimney, at any height of flame used.

In 1861 Elias patented his first lantern (Pat. No. 31, 713). It had a unique "foraminous" cone top. The odd term meant that the multitudinous vent holes were punched from the inside, splaying the brass outward, much like an old punched tin grater used in the kitchens of the time. This was

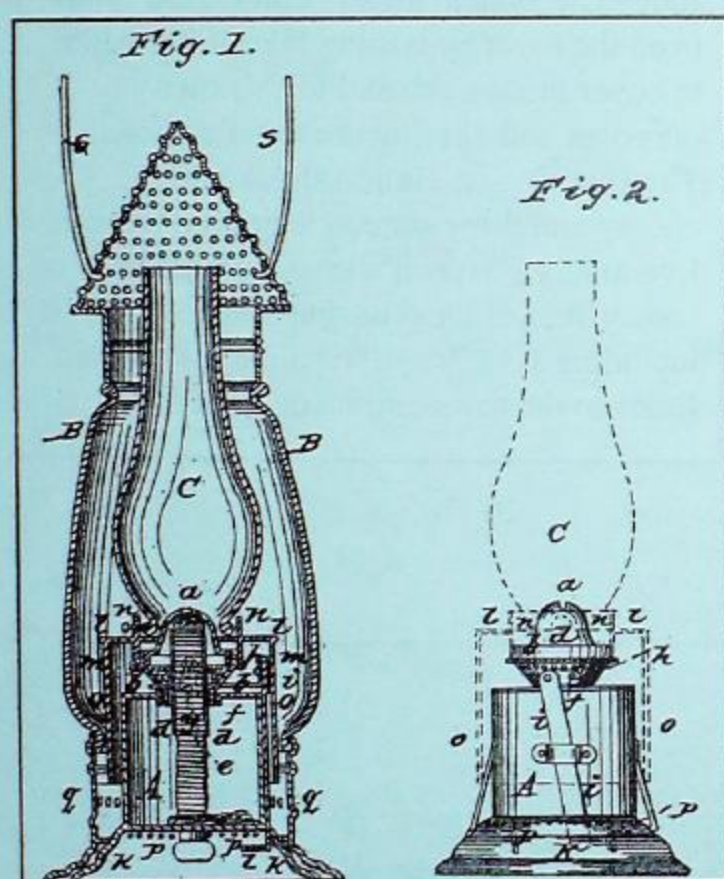
to prevent flickering or smoking from the movement of air around the lantern. There was also a very practical feature in the design that allowed the flame to be adjusted outside of the lantern,



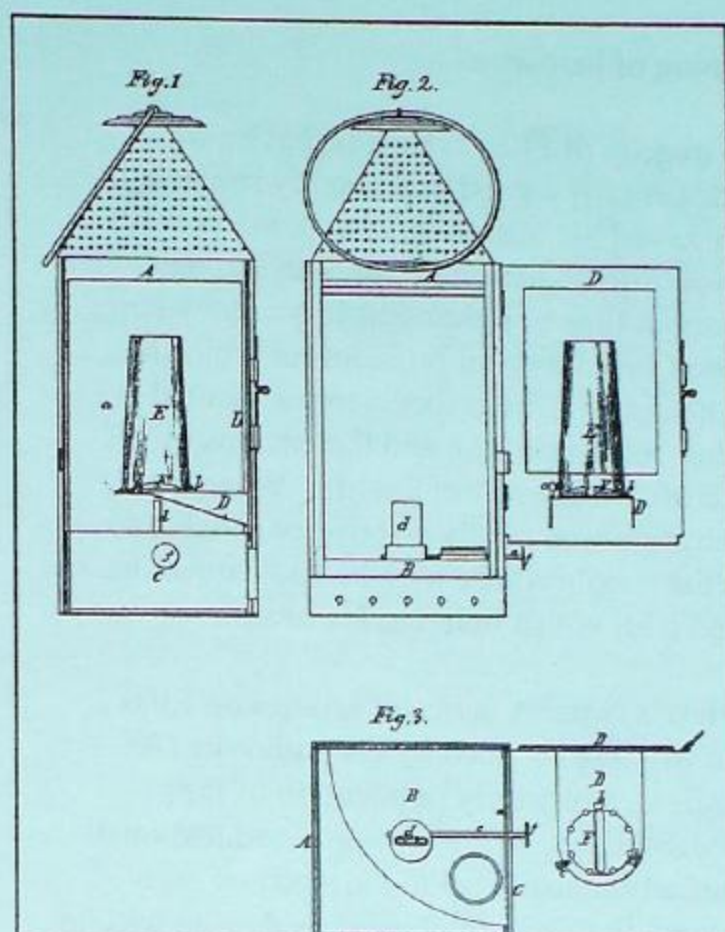
Drawing from Hale's patent No. 25,406 for a smokeless lamp chimney.

without having to remove the font. Taken for granted today, this idea was quite new in the early lanterns of 1861.

Although a new burner came out of the enterprise in 1862, called the "American" burner, it would be another 7 years before Elias would receive his next patent. Much of this time was consumed by his political career that included two terms (1864-65) as State Senator from Piscataquis County. In 1868, a new lantern was introduced called the "Rex" lantern. This is believed to be the lantern for which Elias was awarded Patent No. 79,569. Its unique feature was a pair of swinging doors that had the top and bottom elements of the lamp mounted to them. This greatly facilitated the servicing of the lamp components for lighting, trimming, and filling. It also featured a foraminous cone top similar to Hale's first lantern.



Drawing from Hale's Patent No. 31, 713 for a lantern with wind-resistant features. Although not one of the formal patent claims, it also utilized an external flame adjustment mechanism, shown in the second figure.



Drawing from Hale's Patent No. 79,569 believed to be his "Rex" lantern.

By May of 1868, Chandlers, Brown & Co., sold their foundry and related assets to a group of businessmen, including J. G. Mayo and his son. In their public notices and advertisements, they assured that they would continue to manufacture the cast iron products made by the previous owners, but made no reference to brass products or the burner business that was once carried on at the Lamp Factory. Other than what Hale may have done with transferal of his patent rights, this seems to mark the end of the lamp and burner business for Elias J. Hale. Where the *Piscataquis Observer* had written numerous small articles about his business and products for 10 years, no further mention of them is made after 1868.

Elias may have sold his patent rights to another concern, as was rumored on the street at the time of his death (*Piscataquis Observer*, April 11, 1895). In any case, he continued to invent new improvements in lighting, earning 7 more patents between 1871-1886. This, however, marks the final end to Hale's inventions that began at the

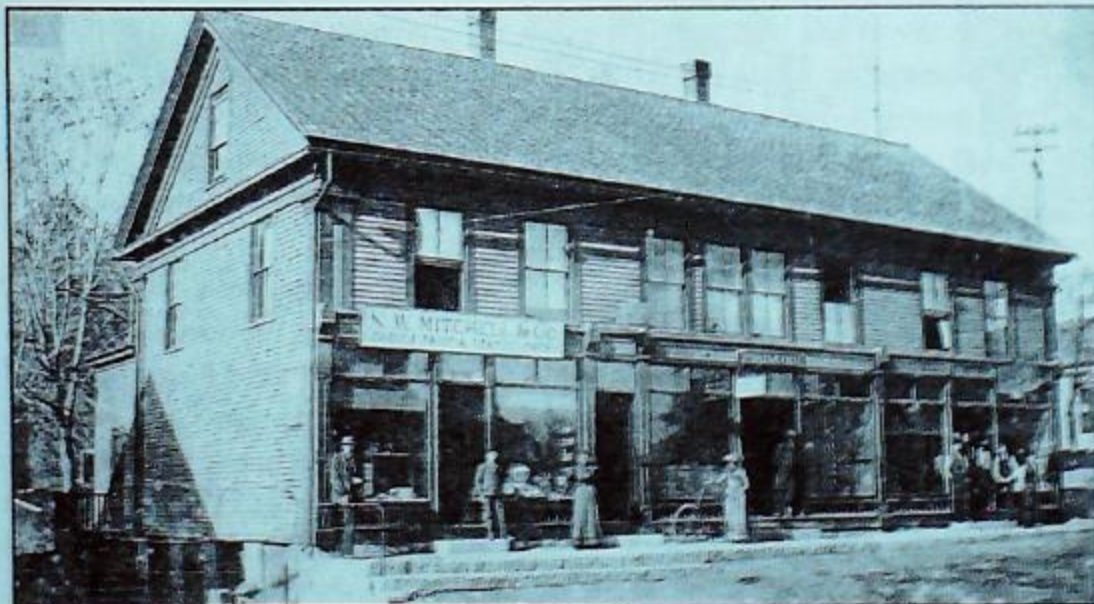
dawning of kerosene.

The tragedy of Elias J. Hale is that he was fundamentally a good man, highly respected, who served his community in countless ways. He was also an important innovator at an important time in lighting history. But when trapped by a financial problem for which he had no solution, he resorted to a scheme that further entrapped him, and the citizens of Foxcroft, for the rest of his life. When his defalcation was finally discovered, unable to face the people whose trust he had earned, he ended it all with a bullet to his head.

Author's Note: A series of articles on Elias J. Hale will be published by the author in *The Rushlight*, a quarterly publication of the Rushlight Club, Inc., a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study of early lighting. In this series a great deal more will be related about Hale, his inventions, and the people and places of Dover-Foxcroft that played a role in his life. Additionally, it is the author's intent to provide the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society with a portfolio of much of the information amassed during a 2 year research project on Elias J. Hale, with the hope that it will provide a valuable resource for future work. In the meantime, any additional information from members on Hale or his products would be gratefully appreciated. The author can be contacted at diosv@rochester.rr.com or by contacting the DF Historical Society, 308 Foxcroft Center Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426.

The Scandal of Judge Elias Hale

On March 28, 1895, the clerk of Judge Hale, long time Treasurer of the town of Foxcroft, Judge of Probate Court, and state representative, was sent by his employer on some errands. When the clerk returned he discovered the body of the Judge, an obvious suicide. The horror of the suicide of one of Foxcroft's most prominent individuals shocked the entire county and led to headlines in the *Piscataquis Observer* and general mourning. It was later revealed that Judge Hale had met with the Chairman of the Town's Board of Selectmen about 2 hours before his suicide. The Chairman demanded the Judge bring his books and list of town note holders to the Board. Subsequent examination of the books revealed that the Judge had systematically embezzled funds from the town by issuing false town bonds to cover money he used for his own purposes and altering the town's books. The stunning revelation shocked the county and drew statewide press coverage. Eventually Foxcroft's taxpayers and a consortium of local businessmen, including J. G. Mayo repaid the swindled funds to the town and its debtors.



The Hale Building, ca. 1880 on Monument Square. Now the Charlotte White Center. DFHS Collection.

Message From Mary

Here we are at the spring issue already! We've been busy at the Observer Building Museum cataloging photos and textiles and other items which have so generously appeared.

It's been a hard winter as we have lost three members who were always there to help: Velma Johnston, Helen Taylor, and our oldest member, Dot Greenlaw at age 101.

As president I would like to say a few words about Dot. From the first day I began my journey as your president in 1995, Dot has been there. Always with ideas, words of encouragement, giving of her time, talents, and treasures. She attended our meetings faithfully and had a seat of honor in the front row. Up until last summer she was at the museum on Homecoming Day meeting and greeting all especially her former students. She was an awesome friend of the Society and we will surely miss her.

Check out our activities scheduled for this year. It will be busy but fun. Try and join us.

Mary Annis, President

Schedule of Regular Meetings & Programs

All meetings held at 7 p.m. at the meeting room at Thayer Parkway.

- April 4. Annual Meeting. Program: "Hands On History/Photo Identification"
- May 9. "Don't Fence Me In". German POWs come back to Maine to visit Camp Houlton.
- June 6. "Incidents at the Race Track". Lou Stevens, presenter.
- September 5. "Disease, Death and Doctors". With an emphasis on the 1918-19 influenza pandemic. Jack Battick, presenter.
- October 3. "Old Photos of Dover & Foxcroft in the Maine State Archives". Earle Shettleworth, Jr., Commissioner of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, presenter.

Membership Application & Donation Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/City: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Annual Dues (\$5.00 per person):\$ _____ Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Mail to: 151 Lawrence Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover April to April. If you are giving a gift membership, please include the name and address and we'll gladly notify the recipient of your gift.

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The Piscataquis Iron Foundry during high water, taken from the Dover side of the river by D.C. Dinsmore, ca. 1869. From a period stereo view in the Madelyn Betts Collection, courtesy of Madelyn Betts. See story page 1.