

## Foley And Ruse

by the late Denis Alsford

[Ed. This is a condensed version of a comprehensive paper by the researchers in 1999]

Foley was an American and Ruse was a Canadian. They met in Toronto, probably at Ruse's place of business, in 1877, and struck up a friendship. Foley was an engineer and Ruse was a musician working as an agent for an organ and piano company. Within a short space of time, they patented a match magazine [the hardware for the pellets] and set up producing them, along with the matches...Foley supervising and engineering and Ruse providing the managerial skills. This, then, is the story of the rise and fall of the idea and company, pieced together from various sources.

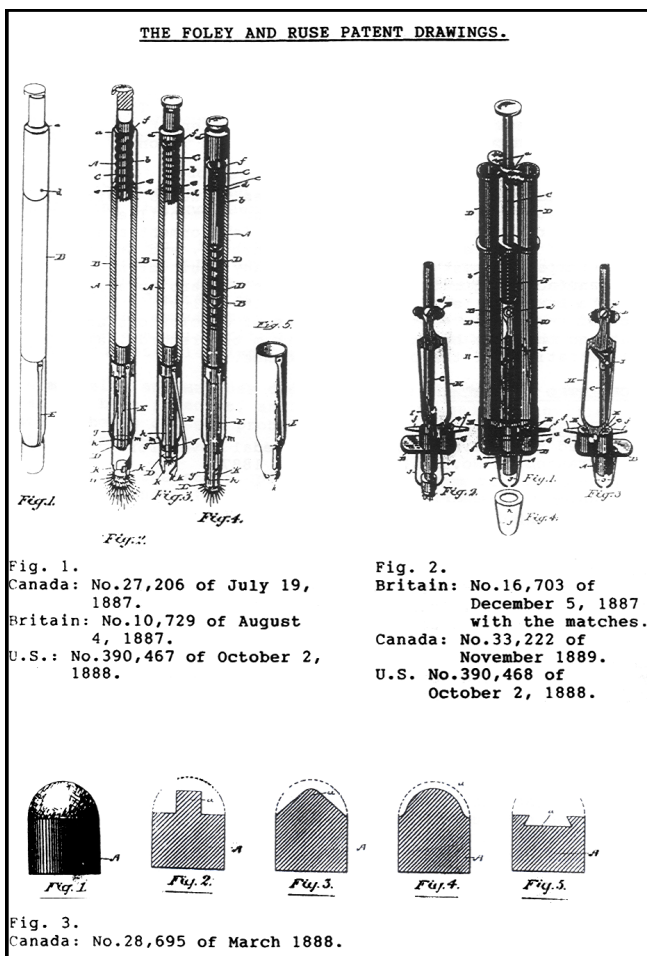
James Samuel Foley and Joseph Ruse patented a match magazine and a form of pellet match in 1887, the patents being taken out in Canada, Britain, and the United States. They had premises in Toronto, and factories produced their devices and matches in Davenport, IA, and Bowmanville, Ont.

From "Match Making In Town," *The Canadian Statesman*, December 14, 1887. "Mr. S. J. Foley, the inventor of the dust and mice preventer now used on the Dominion Organs, has recently bought and patented a new match, which promises to completely revolutionize match trade. The new article instead of having its combustible portion fixed on the end of a little stick has the igniting part attached to a small round piece of wood, the whole forming a little nub about the size of a pea only flat at one side. These little articles are placed in large numbers in a sort of holder which upon being pressed at one end shoots up the match and lights it. The flame is much brighter and steadier than the old match now in use and burns longer and from the small amount of wood used in its composition can be manufactured

much cheaper. The new match is at present being manufactured in Toronto by Prof. Jos. Ruse, but there is some talk of putting up a factory in Bowmanville and carrying on the manufacturing here, Councillor F. Mason and Mr. W. Ruse being the interested parties, we understand. We certainly hope they will carry forward their scheme and that they will be rewarded with every success in their enterprise. No doubt we shall be able to give fuller particulars at some future day. A match making institution has long been needed in Bowmanville."

From "Bowmanville Novelty Works. The Wonderful Magazine Lighter," *The Canadian Statesman*, October 24, 1888. "The writer had the privilege a short time ago of visiting the above works and of witnessing the lightening rapidity of manufacture of the Lighter, one of the most novel and ingenious, and at the same time one of the most useful inventions of the age.

Briefly, this Lighter of Magazine, proper, in its improved form, is about three inches long, three-



# Pellet Matches

and Edward Wright

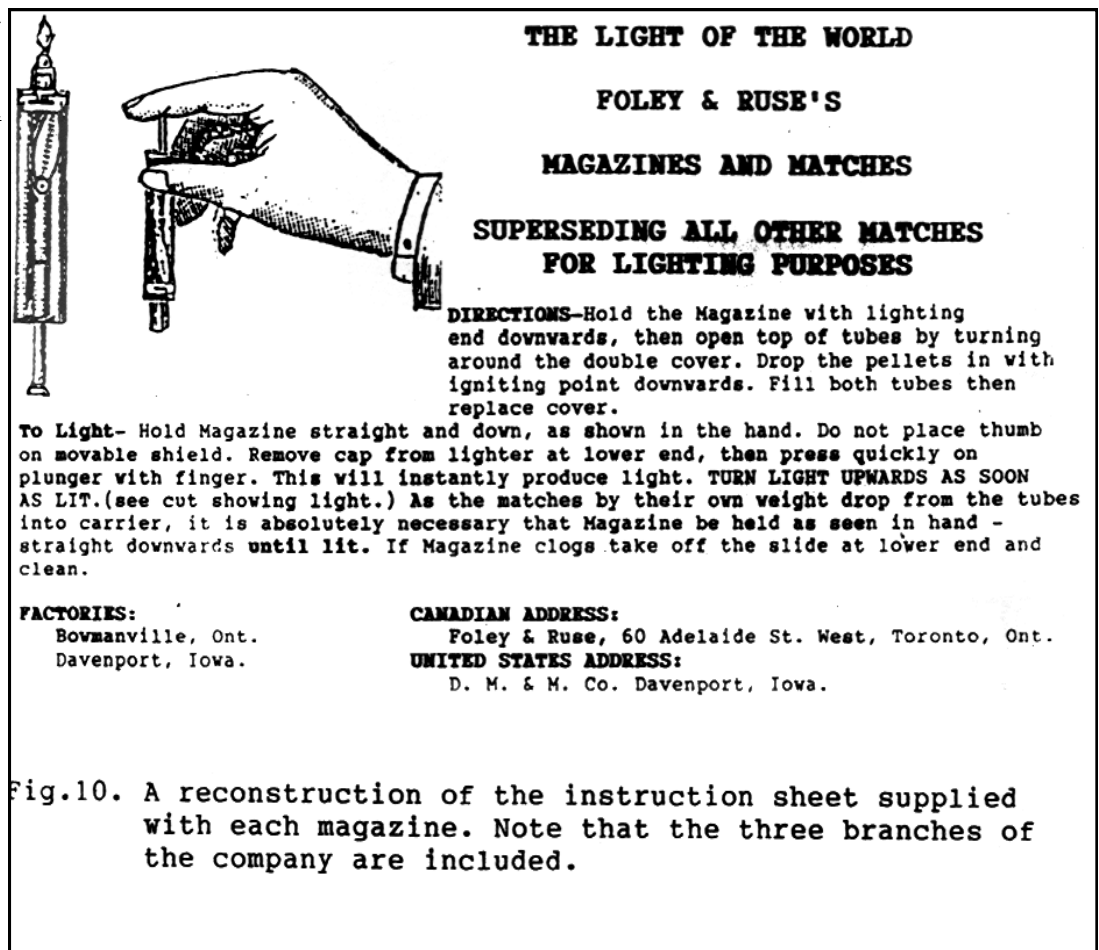
quarters of an inch wide, and probably a quarter of an inch thick, and consists of two barrels or tubes which hold the pellets or matches. Between these is the mechanism so constructed that a simple pressure of the finger on the push pin immediately lights one of the matches, which will burn slightly longer than an ordinary match, with a bright odorless flame...”

Foley and Ruse probably started their company in Toronto in late 1887, before the magazine and match patents had been granted; the davenport factory was probably financed by the three principals mentioned in the street directory, but run by Foley and Ruse and opened in mid-1888; and the Bowmanville factory was opened in April 1888, although it was owned by F. H. Mason and W. Ruse, probably under license, and not marketing the magazines and matches until October 1888.

The magazines and matches did not prove as popular as the duo had hoped and the factories were out of business by 1890, although the precise date is unknown.

From the evidence it may be surmised that Foley and Ruse were only in business from late 1887 until probably no later than sometime in 1890, and only in production about eighteen months. By the end of 1889 Foley had left for Britain, perhaps realizing that the magazine and matches were not going to be the success they had hoped for. The sale of the magazine and matches by George Zorn in c. 1892 was probably the remains of the unsold stock from Davenport. Zorn’s catalog shows at least two other items that were long out of production and from which he could make a handy profit, selling them at a low price, although there is no evidence of the price of these items available from other sources by which to make a comparison.

[Ed. Excellent research on an interesting topic.]



**THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**FOLEY & RUSE'S**

**MAGAZINES AND MATCHES**

**SUPERSEDING ALL OTHER MATCHES FOR LIGHTING PURPOSES**

**DIRECTIONS**—Hold the Magazine with lighting end downwards, then open top of tubes by turning around the double cover. Drop the pellets in with igniting point downwards. Fill both tubes then replace cover.

**To Light**— Hold Magazine straight and down, as shown in the hand. Do not place thumb on movable shield. Remove cap from lighter at lower end, then press quickly on plunger with finger. This will instantly produce light. **TURN LIGHT UPWARDS AS SOON AS LIT.** (see cut showing light.) As the matches by their own weight drop from the tubes into carrier, it is absolutely necessary that Magazine be held as seen in hand - straight downwards until lit. If Magazine clogs take off the slide at lower end and clean.

**FACTORIES:**  
Bowmanville, Ont.  
Davenport, Iowa.

**CANADIAN ADDRESS:**  
Foley & Ruse, 60 Adelaide St. West, Toronto, Ont.

**UNITED STATES ADDRESS:**  
D. M. & M. Co. Davenport, Iowa.

Fig.10. A reconstruction of the instruction sheet supplied with each magazine. Note that the three branches of the company are included.