The Story
In 1916 William Clough, in partnership with Walter Pillsbury, opened a hardware business in the Clough & Pillsbury building in downtown Rumford. A biography of Pillsbury described the business as giving, “the best of service to the community because of its complete assortment of commodities and the efficiency and integrity of its business principles.”

One of the few planned company towns in Maine, Rumford boasted a commercial district along the Androscoggin River designed by the Rumford Falls Power Company. The three-story Clough & Pillsbury Building is wood-frame with a brick façade. The storefront is graced with a leaded prismatic glass transom with “Clough & Pillsbury” inset in colored glass. While currently vacant, the building has housed Sherwin-Williams and a thrift store. The upper floors still retain several historic hardware displays and inventory, including cutlery, stoves, tinware, paints, fishing tackle and sporting goods.

The Threat
The Town of Rumford took ownership of the property through tax foreclosure in 2009 and unfortunately it remains vacant. During one winter several years ago, a snow plow struck a back corner of the building causing minor damage and allowing water to infiltrate the basement. There has been some interest in the building, but there is also talk of demolition. If this building comes down it will remove the opportunity for more commercial and residential development in downtown and leave a gaping hole in the historic streetscape.

The Solution
Secure a commitment from a developer to rehabilitate this vital structure so it can once again contribute to Rumford’s economic future. Much of the original detailing remains intact throughout the building, most notably on the upper floors. If used as a commercial storefront with upper floor residential apartments that contribute to the National Register district, work could even be eligible for state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.