

Letters

March 19, 1987

Dear Mr. Wright,

Thanks for the information about *The Sprintsail* and especially for the flattering remark that one of the two journals after which it will be modeled is our *Intelligencer*.

If I stumble upon any items of interest to your geography I certainly will pass it along to you.

The one item that is most dramatic in my mind as I write this is the fateful day when the locomotive that had been purchased to power the newly formed Martha's Vineyard Railroad arrived in Woods Hole for shipment to the Island. The handsome machine, no doubt, polished to perfection sat on a flatcar awaiting a barge or some such vessel. Two freight cars were being moved on the tracks to make up a train when they broke loose from the donkey engine (or whatever it was called), ran into the flatcar propelling it into the deadman (or whatever it is called) at the end of the track. The flatcar stopped, the engine didn't, and it went over the side into the ocean. Two days later, it was hauled out, dried and shipped here where it served well for 20 years or so. A memorable christening for an island locomotive!

Regards and congratulations and good luck!

Art Railton

Who can appreciate what you've started.

Arthur R. Railton is the editor of the Dukes County *Intelligencer*, journal of the Dukes County Historical Society.

History in Falmouth

Bruce Chalmers

As befits a three hundred year old town, Falmouth is well provided with history-oriented organizations. The oldest is the Falmouth Historical Society, founded in 1904. The Society owns the Julia Wood House, the Conant House and the Dudley Hallett Barn, all adjacent to the Village Green, as well as the Katharine Lee Bates House and the Memorial Park (maintained by the Falmouth Garden Club). The Society's museum displays Falmouth memorabilia; it has a substantial archival collection.

The Woods Hole Historical Collection, housed in its Bradley House Museum, is smaller. It specializes in permanent and seasonal exhibitions and archives relating to Woods Hole.

The West Falmouth Library and the North Falmouth Village Association's Historical Committee collect and preserve artifacts and documents of local historic interest.

The town also has two relevant official Commissions; the Historic Districts Commission, appointed in 1957, supervises the designation and maintenance of the town's Historic Districts, of which there are two, one in Falmouth Village and one in Woods Hole. The Falmouth Historical Commission formed in 1979 has much broader responsibilities:—"for the preservation, protection and development of the historical or archaeological assets of . . . the town," and shall "seek to co-ordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes. . . ." Its activities include the initial step in the approval of proposals for the selection of buildings for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. It is also the publisher of *The Book of Falmouth*.

No wonder there is sometimes some confusion as to who does what when it comes to history in Falmouth.