

At 43, Captain James H. Fisher returns from sea to farm, having left at 18, and having survived 5 whaling ship disasters: 2 ships captured and burned by Confederate soldiers, and 3 crushed by Arctic ice. Sometime before 1900 he begins raising cranberries.

1893



## Sunnyside/Riverbend Timeline

by *Nannette Drake Oldenbourg*

Shubael Lawrence gets town meeting permission to operate fulling mill on the Coonamessett River. His mill softens wool shorn, spun and woven at many Falmouth homes. Eventually, the Lawrence family supports the first high school in Falmouth: Lawrence Academy.

1788



The village center of Hatchville boasts a church, a school, a tavern, a blacksmith shop and the Lawrence fulling mill. Hatchville is the agricultural mainstay of Falmouth. [Today only the East End Meeting House of 1795 remains of the original village buildings, and only the silo remains on the Sunnyside/Riverbend property.]

1800

1800

1820

1840

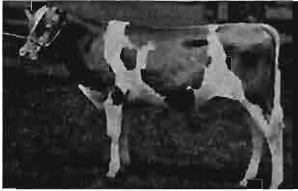
1860

1880

1900

Frank Williams establishes Sunnyside Farm, a small version of the huge Hatchville dairies nearby: Coonamessett Ranch, Brae Burn, Attamansitt and Kensington. Williams adorns the barn with a cow-shaped copper weathervane. He also owns a pasture across the street.

1920



Frank Williams has the silo built to store winter feed for the dairy cows. Ceramic silos were a great advancement from wooden silos because they didn't burn up when the feed inside fermented and reached dangerous temperatures. [Today silos, especially ceramic ones, are rare in Massachusetts because so many dairies have closed. The state has lost nearly 5,000 dairies since 1950.]

1921



Kay Kelley opens 50-dog kennel, naming it Riverbend. She rescued retired racing greyhounds, finding homes and families for 1,300 dogs.

1970



SUNNYSIDE/RIVERBEND 682 Sandwich Rd., Falmouth

1920

1940

1960

Silos are rare in Massachusetts because so many dairies have closed in the last sixty years. The state has lost nearly 5,000 dairies since 1950, according to John Nunes of the state Department of Agricultural Resources. Only 154 bovine dairies remain. Falmouth, which had nearly a dozen dairies in the first quarter of the 20th century, has none now. There are none on Cape Cod. The dairies closed because they could not compete with production in California, the Midwest, New York and Vermont. Today, only three percent of the milk sold in the state is produced here, Nunes said.

### *River Bend Kennel 1970 - 2010*

In 1970, Kay Kelley of Needham opened a dog kennel at River Bend, which her mother had purchased originally with plans for a horse farm that did not materialize. Ms. Kelley operated the kennel for 40 years. She renamed the property "River Bend" for the nearby bend in the river. She insulated the barn and converted it to a kennel for 50 dogs. During this time she also ran an adoption agency for retired racing greyhounds and placed about 1,300 in private homes. In 2010 Kelley closed the kennel, having sold the property to The 300 Committee land trust.

### References

- Falmouth Enterprise*, obituary of Frank Williams, Aug. 2, 1939.
- The Iowa Silo by Jay Davidson and Matthew King, Vol. 109 to 124, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Iowa Experiment Station, 1908.
- Falmouth Assessors records, 1920, 1921, 1927.
- Barnstable County Deeds: Fal. 2-85, 86, 90; 3-533, 537, 14-342, 82-114, 214-189.
- Shubael Lawrence will & Inventory, 9-2-41, Plymouth County Registry of Probate, Box 170, Docket 8, 12375, Mass. Archives, Boston.
- Federal census, 1830, 1840, Cape Cod Community College Nickerson Room Archives.
- Barnstable County Atlases for 1858 and 1880.
- MHC Falmouth Form B, 251.
- MHC Falmouth Form B, 257.
- March 18, 1788 Town Meeting, Falmouth Town Records, Vol. 2, Page 316, Town Clerk's office.
- Falmouth Historical Society, Capt. James H. Fisher file.
- Les Garrick's research on Hatchville history.

---

Ann Sears earned a masters degree in Historic Preservation from Goucher College. Her thesis was on "The Preservation of the Cranberry Bogs of Cape Cod as Rural Historic Landscapes." She co-authored with Nancy Kougeas a picture history of the town called Images of Falmouth. She wrote the Frederick K. Swift Diary article for the Winter 2005 issue of *Spritsail* and another article for *Spritsail* about the town's Old Burying Ground. A former newspaper reporter, she has lived in Falmouth since 1980. She served as the first executive director of the Falmouth Historical Society.