Five Founding Members of The Board of Trade and Industry

by Judith Stetson

“Let the good work go on” wrote Charles S. Burgess in 1907 about the achievements of the first years of the 1896 Falmouth Board of Trade and Industry. His enthusiasm was certainly justified, as Maria Ward demonstrated in the article we published in the Winter 2014 issue of Spritsail.

"John Arenovski has been in the retail clothing business since 1885. The ‘Boston Branch’ was established on October 12, 1892. Business increased from the start requiring much larger quarters than were afforded in the Clark store. A new block was erected by J. M. Winslow, with Mr. Arenovski’s convenience in view; but he had not been in the new store two years before another enlargement was necessary consequently a 500 feet sq. extension has been added to the original salesroom. The stock in trade of this enterprising house consists of everything found in a first class city clothing and gent’s furnishing store. The house makes a specialty of fair dealing and full value for the money. The correct business principles which have thus far characterized the ‘Boston Branch’ accounts largely for its unprecedented growth.” (Falmouth by the Sea.)

John S. Arenovski’s clothing store in 1900. From The Book of Falmouth.
The "N. B." below the hat in the lower right corner reads as follows: 'Previous to our moving our stock into our "addition" we offer extra inducements for the next two weeks.'

Despite the addition, Arenovski soon outgrew J. M. Winslow's block and moved into Walker's new block, on the corner of Walker Street, built by Dr. A. T. Walker to house his drug store.

Dr. Alex. T. Walker's new block on Main street will; when completed, be the most imposing block in town. It is rumored that the first floor will be occupied by a clothing firm.

In 1903 Dr. Walker leased Arenovski's space to a Boston merchant, apparently in anticipation of Arenovski's move into Hamlin's new block, which was not ready for occupancy. Arenovski made a temporary move into Crocker's new block on the western corner of Walker Street until the new Hamlin block was ready.

Falmouth Enterprise, 1896.

Falmouth Enterprise, 1898.
Arenovski was somewhat of an anomaly in Falmouth, being born in Russia in 1865 and naturalized in 1894. Nonetheless he was a force in Falmouth’s business, civic and social life. He was a steward in the Marine Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, a member of the Knights of Pythias, their Master of Finance in 1909, a founding member of the Rotary Club and a member of the Succanessett Club, whose purpose was Good-fellowship and Sociability. The membership was all male. They met in rooms over W. H. Hewins’ dry-goods store.
The business came to a sad end, one more victim of the Depression.

Arenovski’s business and home were subject to sale for unpaid taxes dating from 1932.

He subsequently managed a sporting goods store in Falmouth. He died in 1994.
Nathan Snow Ellis (1863-1947) was a contractor who did a lot of work on the town roads, according to Falmouth Annual Reports from 1883 - 1909. He was married to Rubietta Pierce Ellis, born in Truro in 1864, a descendant of Pilgrim Elder William Brewster. Ellis was active in town politics and held office. He was a Fire Ward in 1901 and subsequent years. He was elected Road Surveyor in 1902 and held the post until he was defeated in 1908. The count was 223 votes for Ellis, 325 for Thomas B. Landers.

Ellis was active in many other areas in Falmouth, on the Cape and in Boston.
The whaling ship *Commodore Morris* and the Falmouth captains who sailed her. From *Falmouth by the Sea*.

*Commodore Morris* was built in Woods Hole in 1841. The Falmouth Captains of record were Charles S. Downes, 1841-1845, Silas Jones Jr., 1845-1849, Lewis H. Lawrence, 1849-1858, and Silas Jones Jr., again, 1859-1864. Her last recorded voyage ended in 1884.

**Frederick T. Lawrence** and his brother, Augustus, were born aboard during Pacific whaling voyages.

"Captain Lewis H. Lawrence, my grandfather and the captain of the whaler *Commodore Morris*, retired from the sea in 1871 and entered business in his native town of Falmouth. In 1890 he built the Grain Mill on the west side of the railroad tracks, and a siding was constructed to bring freight cars to the mill. The main track continued to Woods Hole.... Frederick T. Lawrence returned home two years after attending Bryant-Stratton Business College.... The mill on Depot Avenue was operated by Augustus Lawrence. His brother ran the office and store on Main Street.... The railroad's platform extended to within 42 feet of the Lawrence Bros. mill. It was large enough to unload wagons, autos, cement and the annual circus. Later it was expanded east to an entrance off Palmer Avenue with the addition of three tracks."

(Frederick T. Lawrence, Jr. *The Book of Falmouth*)
“This well equipped grain store and elevator was built in 1890. The Brothers Augustus and Frederick T. (Lawrence) entered into partnership the same year. Furnished with all the latest appliances, including steam power for grinding, the Lawrence Brothers’ mill is unsurpassed. In connection with this depository they have recently bought out the down-town store (grain only) of S. L. Hamlin.” (Falmouth by the Sea.)

The building burned to the ground in 1988.

Frederick Lawrence was active in the business, political, and civic life of the town. He was elected Selectman three times, was a charter member of Falmouth Kiwanis, and a member of the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club.

The Lawrence brothers sold ice and salt from the Grain Mill, the ice likely coming from Capt. Lawrence’s Falmouth Ice Company which harvested ice from Shiverick’s Pond.
Dorothy Sandlin, who “joined her parents, Oscar H. and Nellie J. Lefevre in 1919”, wrote in 1986 about her childhood in the 20s, “Evenings we walked to the Teaticket Post Office...to get our mail from the Postmistress, Effie Fish, and from there to Herbert Lawrence’s Farm (now the new Super Stop and Shop area by the Jones’ Road lights) where we bought milk at 8 cents a quart from Miss Louise - often having to wait for the cows to be milked. That was fresh milk! I recall that occasionally cows wandered from their pasture in the Jericho area (by way of the cattle-crossing in Little Pond at the foot of Iroquois and Cedar Street) and came to graze on our lawn.”  (The Book of Falmouth)

Lawrence took over as town constable from his brother Chester before 1896. He served as Barnstable County Deputy Sheriff for many years and later became one of Falmouth’s first Chiefs of Police.  (Raleigh Costa The Book of Falmouth)

Lawrence was one of the directors of the Falmouth Gentlemen’s Driving Club formed in 1896.

In 1914 he became the first treasurer of the new Falmouth Board of Trade

“On January 30, 1912, A. E. Bragg was returning home from work at the Falmouth Mushroom Cellars between twelve and one o’clock at night when he saw a fire, but he could not locate the source of the blaze. Shortly after 1 a.m. the fire was also discovered by Louise Lawrence who notified her father, Herbert H. Lawrence, a member of Hose Company 1. When the Hose Company arrived, it was too late to save the school. The hose reel was run out and a stream of water turned on to the roof of the neighboring build-
ing, the grocery store and post office operated by Effie Fish. Fortunately the wind was blowing away from the building; it was raining, and the ground was covered with snow so the fire did not spread. Some people living within a stone's throw of the schoolhouse knew nothing of the fire until the next morning. A defective chimney had caused the fire. The School Committee held a special meeting on Tuesday evening, the day after the fire, and made arrangements for reopening the school. Permission was obtained from the Falmouth Fire Department to use the Teaticket Hose House pending the erection of a new schoolhouse. New desks were ordered the next morning from Boston, shipped the same day and arrived in Falmouth on Thursday. School opened exactly one week from the day of the fire.

"The new school was built on the same site as the old one even though all of the pupils at the time lived at the east end of the village. It was soon outgrown and an additional portable structure was put together on the site further east where a new Teaticket School was eventually built (1927), now used as the School Administration Building. That portable structure was always called the Chicken School by the children.

"Lawrence was interested in the Portuguese immigrants who had begun to settle in the area. He employed some of them on his farm. He urged all of these new Teaticket residents to become citizens of their adopted country, sponsoring many of them. It was not uncommon to see Deputy Sheriff Lawrence driving two or three candidates in his horse and buggy to the County Seat for their Citizenship Papers. Mr. Lawrence's daughter, Louise, spent many evening hours instructing prospective citizens in the basics of reading, writing, and the Constitution necessary to qualify for citizenship. Louise was remembered with gratitude." Raleigh Costa The Book of Falmouth.

In 1930 the Portuguese American Civic League of Massachusetts was organized to promote the civic, political, educational and social welfare of the Portuguese Americans. In 1933 a Falmouth Council was chartered and the new Teaticket School became its principal meeting place. One of the principal efforts of the Falmouth Council was to support naturalization classes which qualified many immigrants for citizenship. Their children were even more deeply affected by the Teaticket School and its teachers. Many of them spoke Portuguese at home, at the Teaticket School, they learned English, often becoming the first English speakers in their families.

(Raleigh Costa The Book of Falmouth)

The School Administration Building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

About the Author

Judith G. Stetson has contributed several articles to Spritsail over the years and has been one of its editors since the first issue in the summer of 1987.