
Merchant on Main Street

Hollis Lovell

“Wasn’t Falmouth a pretty town?”, an old friend asked me last summer. She had originally vacationed here with her family from Cincinnati about 1917. Falmouth was a pretty town—the best kind of place, seashore and country combined. You could go a long, long way to find a better one. Even Main Street was pretty—from Watson’s corner all the way through the village to the Falmouth Heights corner. There were hitching posts in convenient spots for the many horses and buggies which came to town from farms in Hatchville, Waquoit and Davisville. It was a postcard New England town. American Elms shaded the Main Street on both sides, keeping the stores reasonably cool in the summer. Ten Acre, our family store, was one of those.

My first recollection of Falmouth was about 1910. We were summer people at Menauhant—came down about the end of June on the train from the old South Station in Boston. Confusion and chaos reigned while we were getting our baggage sorted out and loaded onto the livery coach. We made a stop on Main Street as was customary and several people went into the stores to buy supplies. S.L. Hamlin, Grocer, was probably one of the stores.

At the end of Main Street, down past Sabens Hand Laundry and an old cemetery, we turned left at the Falmouth Heights corner. How many of you remember

that beautiful old barn on the left about where the Pancake House is to-day? It had a genuine antique cow weather vane at the top. For years afterwards antique collectors tried to buy it but it remained there in good hands for some time. This was the dairy farm owned by Dorothy Davis. The present name of Davis Straits, where all the shops and traffic are today, comes from that old dairy farm. This was the main road going down Cape, now Route 28, but it was nice with elm trees on each side. The road rambled through the area called Teaticket, then on to East Falmouth with scattered old houses either side of the road, on to Waquoit, and then finally down through Cotuit to the small village of Hyannis.

Falmouth was not only a pretty town then, it was prestigious. Anyone living here, whether year round or just in the summer, would probably say, “Yes, we live in Falmouth, Cape Cod—it is a wonderful place.” It made you feel good to say this. I do not believe a few people I knew so well and admired would object to my use of their names in this article. Mr. and Mrs. James Marshall could say “Oh, about Quissett—why there is no place just like Quissett anywhere.” And one of the West Falmouth Joneses could say, “Well, it’s got everything we want. Where else? We love the place.” And then in town, Milford Lawrence and Nate Ellis were both Falmouth boys who were brought up here

and proud of their town. Prestige—that was Falmouth and the people hoped it would never change.

It was into this pleasing atmosphere that Ten Acre entered in the nineteen twenties. First as a real estate office, then shortly afterwards as an S. S. Pierce Company store, and in two or three years as a conglomerate complex carrying Spode china, Reed and Barton silver, Navajo rugs, doughnuts, theater tickets, ship models and antique furniture.

The real estate beginning did not last long. My father, along with some others, could see nothing but a glorious future for Menauhant. They had bought quite a tract of scrub oak and pine land from the George Tobey family in East Falmouth. Menauhant was a fine narrow peninsula—flat easy land with salt water on three sides. But although they were right about the future, their timing was none too good. Mrs. Kathryn Swift Greene, Falmouth's leading real estate lady, suggested that this group, the so-called Menauhant Land Trust, take an office in town on Main Street. They could then show all their colored maps, plot plans and various items they had collected at times off the beach. But the office cubby hole they expected turned out to be an entire store.

Many changes were going on along Main Street during these years. Dr. and Mrs. Weeks put up the Weeks block about 1924, then the Eastman block came, then the Elm Arch Inn was moved and later on the Methodist Church also was moved. Where the old Issoksons' store has been was the old Empire Theater and across Main Street the new Elizabeth Theater was being built. These are only just a few of the many changes.

In a short time the first store called Ten Acre became an S. S. Pierce Store. Real estate was pushed to a corner in the rear. From the very beginning Ten Acre was different. The customary alignment of shelves in the back and along the sides with counters in front of shelves where the customer stood on one side and the

clerk on the other side—all this was completely absent. We had tables with open displays. No one had ever before seen an arrangement just like ours. My father seemed disappointed in the real estate end and asked W. A. Tobey to build 24 tables for us. They were good solid pieces of furniture. All nice and new, made from Florida cypress wood. The general idea was when cartons, boxes and crates were unpacked to pile everything on the tables which we would sort out later. It was a novel idea and it worked out pretty well for a time—new customers seemed to like it. They drifted into the store. They all liked my father—he was always a good talker and they talked and talked. Sumner Crosby, president then of the Falmouth National Bank, would come in with his wife after banking hours and talk, then Dr. and Mrs. George Greene, and they would talk some more, and also summer people like Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Carey of Quissett—they got along just fine. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall came, so did Dr. Lombard Jones from Waquoit. And what did they talk about? I can tell you: always “the Good Old Days.” Everything was so much better then.

This was the time of the Beebes—Frank Beebe of Highfield and E. Pierson Beebe from Shore Street. If you didn't know the Beebes personally, you did recognize their automobiles—two of the country's finest, Pierce Arrows. Frank's bright blue one and his brother's equally bright red one were familiar sights on the Main Street. Although his household shopped with us I cannot recall ever seeing Pierson Beebe in the store. But Frank Beebe came in often to talk with my father and not about the Good Old Days.

Mr. Beebe liked pears—everyone in town had probably heard this—but he was never satisfied with the pears that were grown for him up at Highfield. Did my father know anyone who did know something about growing pears? It seemed that Mr. Beebe had an old Boston friend—a Mr. Hovey who had managed to grow a most delicious variety which either he or one of his family named Dana Hovey. Mr. Beebe liked it very much and



Hollis Lovell on hood of Ten Acre's Model T Ford delivery wagon. Note crank under radiator. Ca. 1921. Courtesy Hollis Lovell.

could not understand why he could not have them in Falmouth. My father had never heard of Mr. Hovey and his pears, but he did get in touch with an old friend in Faneuil Hall Market—a Ben Tyler who owned one of the stalls in the main market. Ben Tyler knew all about Dana Hovey pears, a number of his customers still grew them in their backyards around Boston. He would be delighted to see what he could do. Mr. Beebe was very grateful and thanked my father properly. I honestly do not know what became of all this, but maybe a year ago in September we were looking around in West Falmouth and happened to come across a new

kind of pear tree. I recognized it as an unusual variety. Later on in October we were back there again but the pear tree had been picked and except for a few on the ground none remained. In the meantime, we have come to recognize the Dana Hovey pear. It is a splendid fruit and, like Mr. Frank Beebe, I can vouch for its importance.

You realize how much has changed when you begin to write about the customer of the 1920 period compared with the customer of today. When Mrs. Henry Fay opened her large house on Nobska Point for the summer, she instructed her cook Annie to stock up as

usual. This always meant a barrel of King Arthur white flour, 196 pounds, a half barrel of granulated white sugar, about 190 pounds, a case of S. S. Pierce Red Label tomatoes, and so on right down the list. June was a dreadful month for all our truck drivers—everything was not only heavy but it often had to be delivered up a long flight of back door steps into the kitchen. Every household had its own ideas where things should go in the kitchen and pantry and that became the driver's job as well. Even a sack or bag of flour weighed twenty-four and a half pounds. A case of Canada Dry Ginger Ale, 48 bottles, was not easy to get up twenty back door steps. There was another matter that was troublesome. In those days households were large and they had a lot of help—not only a cook or two, but some had a butler and a waitress. We always tried to please all of them but sometimes the cook might say "Put it in there" and the waitress would say "No, you don't—that's my pantry," and then the butler would enter with his instructions.

But our troubles were light compared with those of the ice man. There were usually two of our delivery boys handling the groceries and struggling up all those steps, but the ice man was on his own with a 40 or 50 pound block of ice on his back. The kitchen or pantry ice box was always in an awkward or out-of-the-way place so that the fellow with the ice had to back in and somehow place the ice block exactly where it was wanted.

It must have been about 1925 when we were able to buy one pound rolls of Holland butter. Nothing before then was prepackaged. Butter came to us in 30 or 40 pound wooden tubs which we put in the bottom of our dairy refrigerator. When the customer ordered whatever she wanted, one pound or two or five, she knew we could not cut exactly that amount. But we did become fairly well skilled at this and would not miss by more than a few ounces.

There is another matter. Not only did people stock up, but they ordered mainly by measures. Today you order

two pounds or five pounds of potatoes. Back then you ordered strictly by the peck (fifteen pounds). Or peas—nobody ever said "I'll take two pounds of peas and four bananas." You bought six or seven pounds of peas, half a peck, and bananas always came by the dozen, or in many cases, a hand of bananas. The bananas did not come then as they do today—conveniently all cut up. Bananas came to the store in very heavy bunches. They were strung up somewhere in the back room on heavy manila ropes hanging from the ceiling rafters. We would try to cut exactly a half dozen or a dozen, but often times the customer would take the whole hand.

During the 1920s Ten Acre had added several other stores in the same block, in fact at one time I believe we had almost all the space down to the Malchman Department Store—now the Puritan Clothing Store. Not only were there great changes on Main Street but all over town. In Hatchville, Charles R. Crane of Woods Hole was building up Coonamessett Ranch, about 13,000 acres, known to be the largest farm operation east of the Mississippi River. Mr. Crane had engaged Wilfrid Wheeler, an agriculturalist from Concord, as his general manager. He could not have made a better choice. Mr. Wheeler had been Secretary of Agriculture here in Massachusetts when we were something of an agricultural state. This is all part of the Ten Acre story as Mr. Wheeler was an old friend of my father and wanted us to sell his Coonamessett Ranch fresh vegetables at the store.

Falmouth was a strawberry town. The strawberry growers were all in what was called "The Eastward." The farmers in East Falmouth, Davisville Road, Menauhant Road and Sandwich Road in particular were growing a strawberry called the Echo. Now the Echo had its merits. It had given Falmouth its agricultural reputation. It was a small berry, it had an excellent flavor and was great for shortcakes and crushed sauces. But it was a nightmare to pick. The

growers were paying pickers from New Bedford two cents a quart box. Wilfrid Wheeler could see no future for the Echo and introduced a new much larger berry called the Howard 17. This quickly became the mainstay of the strawberry growers. They forgot the Echo with few regrets. I will say this, however. If you have ever had the opportunity to pick real wild strawberries out in an old abandoned field or woods and ate those berries with all that wonderful flavor, the Echo was the nearest to those wild berries I have ever tasted. But the Echo berry was not popular with the Ten Acre customer. And the customers' help did not like them any better. They took too much time to handle. They were cheap, however—maybe 25 cents a full quart. What we did have, but they were far more expensive, was a dark red Marshall strawberry. Very sweet. The only trouble was that the Marshall was simply sparsely productive, growers could not afford to grow them. Mr. Wheeler claimed it was on account of the light sandy soil on the Cape and that all of us had better begin to like his Howard 17. Later the Wheelers moved over to Ashumet Farm and started to develop all sorts of new flowers, vegetables and melons. They grew a melon that ripened right around Labor Day. We called it the Wheeler Melon. Everyone liked it—it was delicious. And another thing—I believe it was the first time a truly vine-ripened melon had ever been sold in Falmouth. In almost everyone's kitchen in those days you could find hard green melons—Honey Dew, Cantaloupes, Persian melons—on window sills or almost any warm spot, trying in vain to ripen.

At the same time we entered the fruit and vegetable business we also got into fresh flowers. The Wheelers were developing a strain of delphinium, they had a whole field of them—all colors—beautiful tall stems and all about three or four feet high. Everyone went crazy about them.

I will be a little ahead of my story perhaps but this is where it belongs. The Crane family was introducing

real live theater to Falmouth. In the early days, Lillian Gish, star of that wonderful movie *Birth Of A Nation*, was in town at the Cranes' invitation. People wanted to meet her and formed a reception committee. They elected to present Miss Gish with a lovely bouquet, which they did to much applause and enthusiasm. The bouquet was a mixed one of about five stems of Wheeler delphiniums—each one at least three to four feet tall. Miss Gish was always gracious but she said afterwards that for once she did not know what to do or what to say. I don't believe she had ever seen delphiniums before—certainly not the Wheeler variety, almost as tall as she was. Anyway, Miss Gish smiled and smiled—everyone clapped and clapped—and Miss Gish struggled with her awkward bouquet.

This seems to be good place to bring in more about the theater and its importance with Ten Acre. Charles Leatherbee, the eldest son of Mrs. Frances Crane, was starting the University Players, a group of highly talented young people including Henry Fonda, Margaret Sullavan, Betty Fenner, and Joshua Logan. The Cranes, with Charlie Leatherbee, built a new summer theater at Old Silver Beach in a beautiful location about where the Sea Crest Resort is today. They needed publicity—it was a brand new venture and Charlie Leatherbee and his group were confident the theater would be a success, provided they got off to a good start. As an old friend he came to me and asked whether there was any way they could sell tickets at Ten Acre without having to pay any rent. He came at a bad time because we were again tearing out the front of the store and it was all in a mess. The only spot available, and not a very good one, was out in the rear room—next to what remained of the Menauhant Real Estate office. It wasn't much but it did have something in its favor. For a relatively small business Ten Acre attracted a fairly large group of customers. It was said that almost everyone came into Ten Acre to buy something. The new theater set-up was also right next to one of our back doors and parking lot—as many people came in the

back as the front. So the theater agency got started and they really sold tickets there. Frequent visits by some of their stars like Margaret Sullavan and Henry Fonda helped, as people were anxious to meet them. All of this went quite well for a while but as we became busier with store business and needed the space it was mutually agreed to move the theater office out front.

The real reason we were making so many alterations was to make space for a brand new doughnut machine someone had sold us. There must be a number of people in Falmouth today who will remember our doughnuts. They came out of the machine piping hot—and most people bought six at a time, ate them right in the store and then bought six or 12 more to take home. We had a number of different mixes and flavors and toppings, but the old original cinnamon sugar doughnut was always the most popular. This was where the theater office was moved to. It became a perfect natural. The theater attendant selling tickets would help out with the doughnut machine and when the ticket sellers left for a short time we learned how to sell theater tickets for them. It got so that when the University Players advertised they mentioned in their ad that tickets could be purchased downtown at Ten Acre right next to the doughnut machine.

When we were adding more room and had taken over three more stores we also leased the entire back shop area of the former S.L. Hamlin store. There were several old buildings there—some say they went back to right after the Civil War—maybe 1870. If they were old so was everything in them old. Until we came along it is safe to say that almost nothing had been done to clean up there since they were built. Remember back in those times a great many things were shipped in barrels. And those back rooms were stacked with them. Not just for flour and sugar, which Ten Acre still carried, but old barrels for pickles, for salt pork, crackers, vinegar, apples, potatoes, and even sweet potatoes. I can remember we received sweet potatoes

until 1925 in barrels weighing about 150 pounds, including several pounds of dusty South Carolina soil where sweet potatoes do best.

When the old rear rooms had been finally emptied of all the old barrels and we had thoroughly cleaned up the mess, it was decided to put a kitchen in the section where the molasses barrels were kept. I like to put this in as it was told to me when I was young by Ed Hamlin. He told us when we complained so often about the weight of the barrels that it was too bad we were not around 35 or 40 years earlier, that those extra heavy sticky molasses barrels had seen a lot of service in their day. Mr. Hamlin said “You people have it easy—people don’t buy much molasses today and it all comes in glass jars or tins for you. When we sold molasses the lady would come in with several empty glass jars, usually old quart preserving jars. We carried three kinds of molasses; light New Orleans molasses, a medium weight one from Puerto Rico, and the most popular one of all was the dark gingerbread molasses from Barbados.” Then he showed us that attached to each barrel was a spigot. You filled each bottle as the customer required—maybe from all three barrels—turn on the spigot—turn it off. Some molasses spilled onto the floor but that didn’t matter. It had been doing that for 50 years.

It was in that area—it took a week or more just to sand the floor—that we elected to put in a kitchen. Ten Acre always had good help. They could fix things like leaky pipes, tear down old partitions, do all the painting, most of the plumbing. Some were of the old school—fix it yourself, no matter how. Just fix it. It was then not surprising to discover we had at least two superb cooks in our organization. They were very enthusiastic about the kitchen and what we could make there—all in a modest way. We had any number of ideas. Ten Acre had been building up for several years connections with the fast growing interest in yachts—boating, boating parties, beach picnics and even take-home foods. In order to get some of the new boating trade we knew we



The barn in this picture stood on the ground where the Moors Association tennis courts are today. This was a part of a tract of land bought by Joseph Story Fay a few years after the Civil War. He leased all of this to Mr. and Mrs. John Wray, who developed a dairy business. Ten Acre bought milk and cream from the Wrays during the 1921-1925 period. In 1924 the entire property was sold to a group of three men calling themselves the Falmouth Associates. This was the start of a new development called the Moors. Courtesy Hollis Lovell.

had to act fast and offer more than just the regular staples which a dozen other stores could do.

Once again I must deviate a bit but this is still an important part of the whole picture. We were doing a considerable amount of shopping down the Cape for the store. We bought fresh asparagus at Eastham which we sold for 25 cents a pound bunch. We made two good connections at Wellfleet for real beach plum jelly—not the sort that was half or more just apple, but mostly real beach plum. We bought fresh turkey and turkey broilers from an old friend, Peter Cook of Quail Hollow Farm in Sandwich. Mrs. Cook made a delicious lemon bread which was very popular. We found Hope Ingersoll at her Grazing Fields Farm in

Bourne and bought her fresh eggs daily. Then there were two outstanding duck farms, Clear Lake Duck Farm at Marstons Mills and Mayo's Duck Farm in Orleans. Now Mayo's not only sold ducks but they also made duck sandwiches and they were good—so good that people for miles came to buy them. Like our doughnuts, you could buy a duck sandwich there, eat it, admire the scenery, and then buy some more to take home. Going down the Cape in those years was fun—not much traffic—a great place for antique-minded people and folks like ourselves.

This was the start of our idea to make extra fine and different kinds of sandwiches for the people on boats. We had a good oven, a good cook and plenty of people to make up lunches and picnic baskets. So we started to make fresh duck sandwiches in Falmouth. As they worked out well, we next tried fresh crabmeat sandwiches. There were plenty of blue claw crabs around. Any number of people went crabbing and clamming. They were happy to bring in extra crabs and clams to us for clam chowder and also for clam broth which was delicious. When we could we made our sandwiches with Mrs. Fuller's bread. Mrs. Fuller lived in East Falmouth on the corner of John Parker Road and the Main Road, now Route 28. She made only two kinds—oatmeal and white, but even summer people who had cooks and did a good deal of baking at home were happy to buy her bread. The only trouble was her output was limited and she had other customers to take care of. We made a rather feeble attempt at baking our own bread but we didn't do it very well. All this time we were selling Sheehan's bread in the store. It was good bread, always fresh, and the Sheehan bakery was conveniently located just up the street from us. Someone said "Why don't you try using Sheehan's bread for your sandwiches? They will deliver it to you right out of the oven." It proved to be a good suggestion and the sandwiches added another attraction for the store.

We were learning that the more different items we carried the more people would hear about us. This was true. Almost everyone around Falmouth came into Ten Acre for something. Once we found out what a customer wanted we put it in stock. If Carter Whitcomb from Cotuit came into the store looking for a couple of boxes of ivory Renaissance candles, we had them; and when Mrs. Kenneth Phillips from Oyster Harbors wanted us to order some fresh caviar for a party of hers, we had it. On one occasion a Mr. McCurdy in Quissett had run out of his favorite brand of cigars or something had happened to them. When could Ten Acre get some more? He had to have them. This was fairly early in the morning and not an unusual problem for us. We simply called S. S. Pierce and told them we badly needed a box of a certain kind of cigar, something like Cuban Belindas, and could they please get a special messenger on the next train to Falmouth with the cigars. At that time there were frequent trains and the messenger could make the mid-morning trains, arrange to meet one of our people with the cigars, and everyone was happy. On a previous mission we had another messenger from S. S. Pierce bringing down a bottle of perfume, an unusual request. When summer people arrived here for the season it was customary for us to give out a good many of S. S. Pierce's summer catalogues called "The Epicure." It was full of about everything in the food line that anyone would want. Ten Acre tried to carry as many of these items as we had space for. But we did not have a perfume department. A new customer at Woods Hole, an Englishwoman named Mrs. Willard Straight, was intrigued with the Epicure catalog and did a considerable amount of ordering from it. We always encouraged Woods Hole customers to call us early as they always wanted a mid-morning delivery. Mrs. Straight was most cooperative—but there was one morning, and it was early enough when she called, and ordered a bottle of perfume. It was in the catalog, she said. We told her we did not carry perfume but would

get it for her from S. S. Pierce in a day or so. That did not please Mrs. Straight in any way. She had to have it now—today. She couldn't stand to wait for it. So again we used the messenger business—expensive, yes, but that did not matter with some people in those days. They demanded all kinds of service and they did very well in receiving it.

By no means do I wish to convey the impression that everything went well at Ten Acre. It didn't. Someone had sold us on the idea of a chicken machine. Roast your own chicken in the store—just like you make doughnuts. The idea may have had some merit and it fitted in well with the Ten Acre philosophy "Try it out here today—if it doesn't work in this place move it tomorrow." But nobody connected with the store had any use for the chicken machine. It was summer and hot enough without that thing to worry about. As we had just previously given up on somebody's idea of making our own salt water taffy, the chicken machine was just too much. The doughnut machine was fine, and selling theater tickets went well enough but only in the summer season. We enjoyed the theater group and the number of friends they attracted to the store. They also became great doughnut customers. Unfortunately, the original playhouse had a bad fire, Charlie Leatherbee became ill, and the operation was closed down.

Although the kitchen idea had started out doing very well it was not long before even that was beginning to be a problem. Too many Ten Acre employees and some of their friends found it easy and pleasant to wander out there where they did not belong. First the duck sandwiches and then the crabmeat sandwiches had a way of disappearing too fast without ever having been sold. The duck sandwiches, while not quite up to the Mayo standard, were good. Nowhere else could you find fresh crabmeat sandwiches like ours. We hated to do it but we just had to close down the whole kitchen operation, to the disgust of many Ten Acre personnel.

All in all, in spite of our experiments and our moving so much, it was a pleasure to do business with the summer people of those days. They had it good too. Just think of the conveniences that came their way. We mentioned the ice man who filled their ice boxes and chipped off smaller pieces of ice for smaller containers. Then there was the milk man, a most important person. He not only delivered daily your regular order of milk and cream but he often had fresh eggs and chickens. Some of you will remember all of this, when Cape Cod and Falmouth in particular had not only all those strawberry farms but also several real fine dairy farms. I believe I can think of at least five or six in Hatchville alone.

It is another story and cannot be explained here, but by the time we had the so-called number three store completed we had a stock of antique Harvard Shaker furniture, rugs from Asia, Navajo Indian rugs, ship models, more antiques, and some Sandwich glass. We were also agents for Reed and Barton silver, Spode china, and I believe for the Ellis Silver company in New York. This was all my father's doing and he seemed to thrive on it. There were, however, other opinions including one very justifiable one from S. S. Pierce company. "That's no way to run a food store."

Fortunately, it must have been maybe 1926-1927, we had a most unusual customer, a Mrs. Dillon from the Fitchburg-Princeton area who had a large summer home up near the Fassetts in West Falmouth. She was the most enthusiastic complete buyer we had ever known. "I'll take this and these, and how many of those Indian rugs do you have? I'll take them." It went like that. She bought all the Navajo rugs—she took all we had of one pattern of Spode china, Buttercup. We had a few good Sandwich glass pieces—Daisy and Buttons. Mrs. Dillon took them all and instructed us to find more. The Harvard Shaker furniture was genuine—and she recognized it. She took all of it. Now this is pretty much the way it went. Some of us were almost praying she would clean up everything, especially the ship

models, which were a nuisance to keep clean, but she had no use for them. She said they were just so-so and also some of the other rugs. Ten Acre never before made a sale like this one, or for that matter afterwards.

My father was upset and felt badly about selling all the Navajo rugs. He had in his earlier days been somewhat of a traveler. He had been in Turkey, I believe in Cairo, and there bought the rugs that Mrs. Dillon didn't much care for. But he had made a special trip on the Santa Fe Railroad to Gallup, New Mexico, to look at some Navajo rugs someone had told him about. It turned out that it wasn't Gallup, New Mexico at all but a place called Window Rock just over the border in Arizona. It was there he found what he liked and came back to Falmouth with several rolls of Navajo rugs plus a good deal of Indian pottery. It was true that the Oriental rugs did not sell well at all—there was no place to display them so they remained under a couple of tables and became a regular nuisance. In Arizona the Indian Agency had instructed father on the treatment of Navajo rugs. "Don't put them on the floor like a regular carpet—they are ornamental and should be hung on a wall." Which we did—all along one entire wall and they were beautiful. No question that a few people recognized them for being particularly good rugs. It was about then that Mrs. Dillon came along.

The business we really excelled in was cashing checks. It was easy for customers to do then at Ten Acre and going to the bank simply took too long—sometimes you would have to wait and there might be other complications. None whatsoever with my father. He kept a large roll of bills in his right hand trouser pocket—he said it made him feel good. Most of the checks customers came in with were of small to medium amounts—ten dollars, twenty-five, sometimes fifty. We did, however, have a few regulars who generally needed a hundred dollars or more. Mrs. Arthur Baker of West Falmouth was one of those. Mrs. Baker was a most loyal Ten Acre customer and friend

and along with her daughter Esther had been cashing checks with my father for several years. It happened that one day Mrs. Baker needed to go into the Falmouth National Bank to see Mr. George Dean. While talking with Mr. Dean he noticed she had a check in her hand which she had a habit of waving around. So he finally interrupted her and said "Do you want to deposit that check or do you want us to cash it for you?" Whereupon she said "Oh no. Don't you bother. I always cash checks down at Ten Acre and that is where I am going next." Mr. Dean said "Mrs. Baker, let me tell you one thing. This bank has a lot more money than Ten Acre has." Mrs. Baker, with Esther, left in a hurry—right to Ten Acre to find my father. She was much upset and needed to see him privately at once. "Oh Mr. Lovell, I hope it isn't true. Please tell me it isn't, but we just left the bank and Mr. Dean tells me that you are in financial difficulties here." My father must have thought something like this, "When wasn't Ten Acre in financial difficulties for most of the years! Everybody charging, no one paying,"—but he did it very well. He took his usual roll out of his pocket and smiled at Mrs. Baker and simply said "Mrs. Baker, how much do you need today—I think we will be able to do this. Say hello to Mr. Dean for me, will you please."

The folks kept coming into the store all during the 1920s—still the old complaints; where was the baking powder—"It was here last week, now what have you done with it?" Other stores were opening up on Main Street. Amazing changes were taking place. Mr. and Mrs. George A. Hough from New Bedford had purchased the Falmouth Enterprise. A weekly newspaper strictly about Falmouth which everyone in town read. Mr. and Mrs. Hough became familiar favorite visitors with my father. They got along just fine. The old Enterprise as I recall was owned and operated by Charles Burgess—and for a time edited by Dorothy Wayman. The Houghs, young and ambitious, had many ideas for the Enterprise. The old location you

would be hard put to find today. This is all from memory, but I can see a small block of stores and offices down where the so-called Collins block is today—about opposite Eastman's Hardware store. One small office was shared by Mr. William Hewins, long the town clerk, and Mr. John P. Sylvia, a fine-looking pleasant man, town counsel for Falmouth. The old Enterprise was tucked into that limited space when Mr. Burgess owned it.

There was one thing besides quality that Ten Acre excelled in. It was good service. If Mrs. Harold Keith in Quissett decided at quarter of six that she needed an extra head of lettuce she would think nothing of calling us at that time, and we delivered it. Likewise, Mrs. Murray Crane at the entrance to Penzance could say to her kitchen staff, "Call Ten Acre and tell them I have two extra guests and we need two more of the same kind of lamb chops they sent this morning." It was just



Model T Ford station wagon used for Ten Acre deliveries with Hollis Lovell in straw hat at the wheel and his friend W. Carl Davis, younger son of W. C. Davis of Davis Furniture Store, in jacket and bow tie. Ca. 1921. Courtesy Hollis Lovell.

part of the business in those days. Summer people expected and demanded extra favors—it wasn't just Ten Acre but all the other stores.

All through the summers we had learned it was wise to have an extra truck available and a driver until 7 in the evening. I believe we kept two on Saturday nights. There were many special trips which we were prepared for, but one time there was an urgent call from the Bartow household out on Penzance Point. Mr. Bartow needed to see young Mr. Lovell at once. Very important. It seemed Mr. Bartow had a camp somewhere down South where he went hunting every autumn. He did not like the food there at all. He did like the food the Bartows got from us in Falmouth. There was no reason he said why we couldn't ship down to him an order with the things he liked. The list included two inch strip sirloin steaks, double thick kidney lamb chops, a five pound tub of butter and more on the same idea. Just how he thought we could take care of this he didn't say. He did mention dry ice. Where do you find dry ice in Falmouth? You didn't. You go to Hyannis and look for it at some almost unknown freezer place. He had the dates and the order all typed out for us. Send it to Francis D. Bartow, care of O. L. Dugans, Yemassee, South Carolina. To this day I remember that. And I do remember Mr.

Bartow—great man—he was so confident we could do it. It finally worked out all right but it was a tough one to handle. In fact it went on for several years. What did Mr. O. L. Dugans do with all this when it arrived? He had what they called a spring house—cool to cold—and kept the steaks in there.

And this is the way Ten Acre went. I have not always kept within the years 1921-1929—a few skips now and then—but this is a visual account of some of the doings along Main Street back in the, relatively speaking, early days.

My friend, Arnold Dyer, who worked at Ten Acre a few summers back in the twenties, has filled me in with some of the details here. For the life of me I could not recall which of the Pierce Arrows belonged to which Beebe. But Arnold knew. The blue one was Frank's—the red one belonged to E. Pierson on Shore Street. And incidentally Arnold sold one of the ship models from Store Number Three after Mrs. Dillon had passed them by.

Hollis Lovell retired from Ten Acre in 1960. He and his wife, Ermine, organized Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries in 1970 and he has been treasurer for 20 years. In 1979 they rallied community support to purchase the 40 acre Bourne Farm in West Falmouth. The house and barn have been restored and the land brought back to productivity. The farm has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.