

Letters

To the Editor of *Sprintsail*,

Thank you for sending the impressive issue of *Sprintsail* of Summer, '95. It was by chance that we read about it in *The Enterprise* on a visit. My husband was delighted to see in "Curtain Rising" a photo of a production on which he'd worked in '54 "Mr. Roberts", but more remarkably, my 84-year-old mother, Susan Gill Dunn, who spotted the article on her first visit to Falmouth in years, was the young actress who was to have played opposite Henry Fonda until the love-sick actor asked her to step aside for Margaret Sullavan. (I didn't actually believe this until Fonda's autobiography came out.) My mother loved the article.

Sincerely,
Holly Grinnell
(Mrs. Alexander Grinnell)

To the Editor of *Sprintsail*,

I have some information that could be supplementary to two articles that appeared in the summer edition of *Sprintsail*.

In the article "Curtain Rising," DeWitt Jones mentions eleven groups, mostly summer theater groups. An additional group, that was active mainly in the off seasons in the 1930's was the Calico Players. This troupe was an amateur group, made up of primarily Woods Hole and Falmouth residents. As I recall, most of their productions were performed at Woods Hole Community Hall.

Also, in the Jones article the origin of the Falmouth Playhouse was mentioned. This building was built by the Crane family, who also owned Coonamessett Inn, as a night club called Coonamessett Club. During its first summer, it featured several big bands, including Vaughn Munroe. Another band, that appeared more than once, was the Boston based band of Mal Hallett. For those of us who were thrilled by the big bands of summer, the diet was sparser in the winter. The club was open only on the weekends. The band was Charlie St. Clair from New Bedford.

In the article "Hurricane Wedding," the Church of Messiah organist was mentioned. At that time (1954), the regular organist at that church was my mother, Ellen F. Griffin (Mrs. George A.). She lived at 10 Quissett Avenue.

Bob Griffin

Dear Ms. Witzell:

I very much enjoyed your piece in the most recent *Spritsail* about the history of the Quisset Harbor House. In it you refer to the association between two Colonels from Arkansas, James M. Lewis and Abraham H. Ryan, and "wonder whether it was not Col. James M. Lewis who brought his friend Col. Ryan to Quisset . . ."

I am writing to suggest that it is not clear who brought whom to Quisset since both had strong Quisset connections.

Col. Ryan's wife, Emma Amelia Hitch Harris Ryan, was my Great Grandmother. She was born in Fairhaven in 1847, the daughter of Charles Hitch, a sailmaker and shipowner. She was first married to Charles Morgan Harris of New Orleans and had two children by him, my grandmother, Maria Louise Harris Marshall, and her brother, Henry Harris. After the death of Emma's first husband, she married Col. Ryan and they had one child, Emita Ryan Fort.

Charles Hitch's sister, Mary Delano Hitch, married Samuel Palmer Davis of Falmouth. Charles Hitch's brother Obed Freeman Hitch, married Susan M. Davis of Falmouth. The Davis family were landowners in Quisset. In fact, Samuel Palmer Davis' son, Francis Palmer Davis, Emma Ryan's first cousin, ran the general store at Quisset Four Corners. And the farm between Woods Hole Road and Quisset Avenue that my Grandmother, Maria Louise Harris Marshall, and Grandfather eventually acquired was purchased by them from Lemuel Davis, the brother of Susan Davis Hitch.

The foregoing is only an unimportant sidelight to your history of the early days of the Harbor House. However, I find it interesting that two Arkansas colonels shortly after the Civil War apparently found that they had a common connection to Quisset and acted on it.

Sincerely,
Samuel G. King

To the editors:

With this letter I resign from the editorial board of *Spritsail*, effective as soon as the winter 1996 issue is in the mail.

I leave with strong and mixed feelings. It has been a great run, with the best of colleagues. Together we have created an important new voice for the history of our community, one which hews to the high standards of *Woods Hole Reflections* and the *Book of Falmouth*. I take great pride in having been part of *Spritsail* from the beginning and I have enjoyed and benefited richly from working with each of you.

But I feel deeply that it is time to move on. For one thing, I am absent during the critical time each year when the summer issue is coming together. I am not pulling my weight. Furthermore I believe in movement and change and I am sure that our journal will benefit from an occasional new member with fresh enthusiasm and perspective.

With all best wishes to *Spritsail* and to each of you personally.

Red

From the editors:

Spritsail was the brainchild of Redwood Wright, and he has been Chair of the editorial board since the first issue came off the press in the summer of 1987. We thank him for his leadership, his enthusiastic support and his friendship. We will miss him. Judith Stetson will take his place as Chair of the Editorial Board of *Spritsail*, and she will ably guide us into the future. Our new editorial board member will be Eric Edwards.