

"Let the Good Work Go On"

From the Board of Trade and Industry to the Chamber of Commerce

by Maria C. Ward

In 2014, the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding. The original charter states, "The purpose of the corporation shall be to promote the commerce, trade, industry and public interest in the town of Falmouth and of the commonwealth; to acquire and disseminate business information; to establish and maintain uniformity of commercial usages; and to promote just and equitable principles of trade."

The corporation was subject to all general laws of duties, restrictions and liabilities. It had the power to make rules concerning the admission, suspension, and expulsion of members, that power vested in a board of twelve elected members and as many other officers as needed. It was authorized to hold "real and personal estate not exceeding fifty thousand dollars." This document was passed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives, led by speaker Grafton Cushing, on February 18, 1914. It passed the Senate on February 19, 1914. It was passed to be enacted and was signed by the President of the Senate, Calvin Coolidge, on February 25, 1914.

In February of 1896, the Board of Trade and Industry was organized, with the stated object "To promote the material interests of Falmouth" and with a medallion logo "ENOUGH FOR ALL" and the image of a herring and net.

Officers included Charles H. Washburn, President, Charles N. Thayer and William Hewins Esq.,

Vice Presidents, Harry V. Lawrence, Secretary, and Herbert F. Mitchell, Treasurer. Directors were Cranston F. Godfrey, Benjamin B. King, Prof. Seba A. Holton, Capt. Lewis H. Lawrence, Prof. Asa O. Stanger, George E. Dean, and Simon Hamlin. There were 100 original members including six Davises, five Swifts, four Lawrences, three each named Baker, Fish, Hamblin, Howes and Nye, and two named Cahoon and Nickerson.

The Board of Trade and Industry took seriously its task to promote Falmouth. Despite the relatively small size of the town, reported in the "Manual for General Court: State Census" in 1895, as 2655 residents, their efforts were comparable to those of much larger cities.

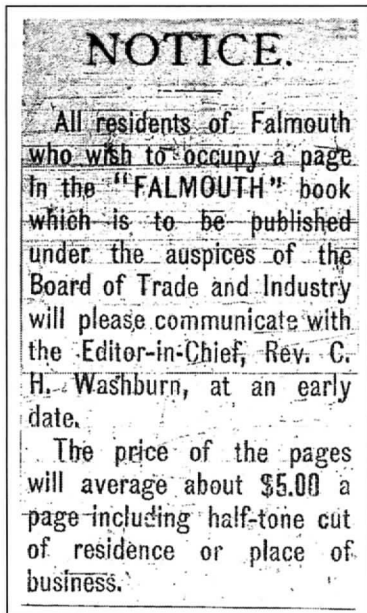
Marine Exhibition of 1896

Its first production was the Marine Exhibition of 1896 (although there is reference to a previous exhibit in *The Enterprise* of June 13, 1896). *The Enterprise* details preparations for the exhibit.

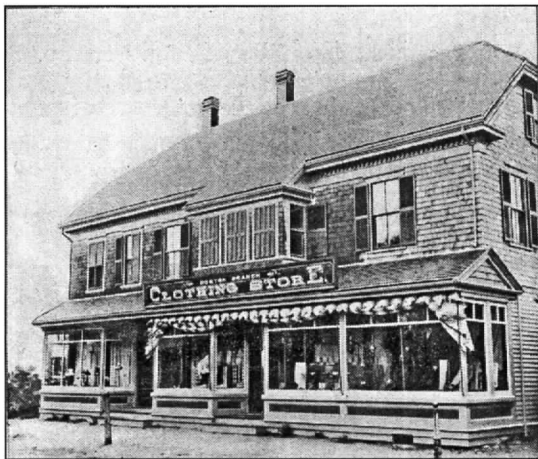
It was accompanied by a book most remembered by present day residents as "*Falmouth By the Sea*," reprinted in 1976, then simply named *Falmouth*.

According to the same *Enterprise* article:

The 'Falmouth Book' has been tried 'as by fire'. It was not found wanting. Work is progressing finely and will be out July 20th, sure. The edition is limited to 1000 copies. The Board of Trade will give away 100 copies



Advertisement for the "Falmouth" book that appeared in *The Enterprise* for a number of weeks preceding the 1896 exhibition.

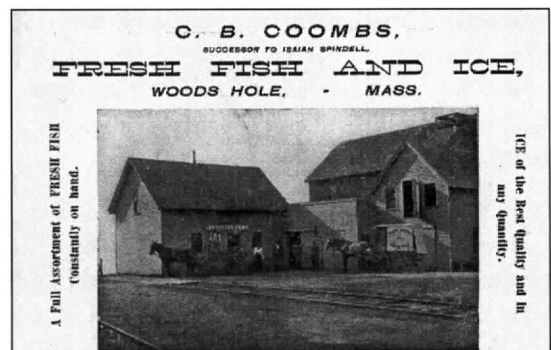


John Arenovski's Boston Branch Clothing Store on Main Street. The store evolved into Issokson's and remained in business until 1989. From the "Citizens Course of Lecture and Entertainment Programme: Season of 1897-98. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

and sell the remaining at 50 cents apiece. The book will cost \$1200. It has \$600 worth of half tones in it. It is thus easy to see that the Board of Trade is practically giving away the whole edition. If you want one or more it would be well to engage them at once. What could you buy at Xmas time for only 50 cents? Send a copy to the friend in the west.

All 1000 copies of the Falmouth Souvenir Book were given out. In 1897, the Board of Trade and Industry published a volume of photographs called "*Residential Falmouth*." Both books are still used as important snapshots of the town at that time.

As written in *The Enterprise* on June 27, 1896, a listing of outside ventures that took part in the Exhibition includes the Cunard Steamship Co. with a "generous interest," Enoch Morgan & Son of New York which sent 10,000 souvenirs, and The South Pacific Company of California sending a "large box of material for distribution." The Ocean Steamship of Savannah sent its "magnificent ship *Kansas City*." *The Enterprise* reported that "The Clyde Steamship matter for free distribution is on the way." Matter was the term used for our current handouts. "The Old Dominion S.S. Corp. say 'our matter is on the way'." Eben Pierce of New Bedford sends his World's Fair Exhibit of Whaling



Coombs Fish Market on the site that became Sam Cahoon's Fish Market. From the "Citizens Course of Lecture and Entertainment Programme: Season of 1897-98. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

Apparatus." In all, there were 38 companies and four salt companies participating. Included were Van Camp Packing Co., Pairpoint Manufacturing of New Bedford, Bliss Brothers of Boston, Armour & Company of Chicago, Walter Baker Chocolate Company, and American Net and Twine Company of Boston.

There were also 26 steamship companies in addition to the ones listed above. They included Hamburg-American, White Star, Netherlands, St. John and Halifax, Jamaica, Quebec, Fall River, Old Colony, and Southern Pacific.

To entice all ages to the exhibition, there was even a babies' reception Wednesday afternoon, July 22nd, at 3 o'clock.

And "the NY NH & HRR (New York, New Haven and Hartford Rail Road) have made special round trip rates" from Middleboro off Cape, the Cape, and Hyannis. Promoters advised residents to "bring a bag this year for samples. You recall the predicament you were in last year [as noted above]. Salt, Salt and no way of carrying it home."

Finally, even then security concerns were addressed. "Abundant police protection will be provided, but there is no reason to expect they will be needed except as ornament to the grounds. Roughs, rowdys (sic), and the 'chewing-gum' element will find nothing congenial at the Marine Exhibition."

Preparations for the big event were extensive. Twenty thousand feet of hemlock boards were used on the ground as floors (and advertised as for sale afterwards.) Prizes were offered for the best displays. For the brightest and most original booth, the award was upgraded from \$10.00 to two round trip tickets valued at \$16.00 between New York City and Jacksonville, Florida. For the most attractive booth, the prize was round trip tickets between Boston and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Both of these were by sail. After the exhibition, the brightest and

most original award went to Lawrence and Pierce; the most attractive was won by H.V. Lawrence.

Entertainment included a steam riding gallery (merry-go-round) operated in Fish Park, admission 10 cents. The location of Fish Park is elusive. Perhaps it refers to the Moses Fish House across the street from the Katharine Lee Bates House. However, in "Memories of Old Falmouth The Parsonage Childhood" by Ruth Washburn Sterling, the Minister's daughter, published by *The Falmouth Enterprise* on September 19, 1955, she describes the location for the marine exposition as three houses up from St. Barnabas, behind the Goodspeed property (next to the Crocker property.) Behind this house was pasture land "sweeping to the edge of Siders' Pond... In this field was held the Marine Exhibition, that gala affair managed by the Falmouth Board of Trade."

A sail around Lake 'Sider in the Diehmoor motor launch, named *Etta E.*, owned by Charles H. Eldred of Quissett, thirty-five feet over all with a 9 foot beam, cost 10 cents. It is advertised as a two mile ride, "invigorating, besides giving you a chance to see the town from the water."

Advertised enticements to attend included:

"You will probably have a chance to hear the Gramophone. It's a great talker."

"Bring the whole family. Ice water free."




The Goodspeed Home, on the right. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

The Board of Trade and Industry proclaimed the exhibition a grand success, even reiterating at their reorganization meeting in 1907 that, "One of the most stirring events that ever took place in Falmouth was the Marine Exhibition which was held in 1896, under the management of the Board of Trade."

But that was just one of its townwide efforts. Every year it featured a "Lecture and Entertainment Season" using the Redpath Bureau of Boston as a booking agent. In 1896-97 there were six offerings:

- Musical. 12/3/1896.
- Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee, Alabama. Subject: "The Past, Present, and Future of the Black Man." 12/11/1896.

Thursday Evening, December 17, 1896.



LECTURE.

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**BOOKER T. WASHINGTON,**

OF TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA.

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SUBJECT.—THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE
BLACK MAN.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON of the Tuskegee Institute, delivered an address the other day before the Faculty and students of Trinity College, Durham, N. C. This is the first instance on record of a Southern white college inviting a negro to deliver an address. Mr. Washington says that he and the half dozen colored people who accompanied him were treated with the greatest courtesy, and his address was received with marked enthusiasm. As he left the college grounds, the students assembled on the campus and gave him their college yell.—[*Boston Journal*, Nov. 13, 1896.]

Mr. Washington is the Fred Douglass of today. His Atlanta speech ranks with Lincoln's at Gettysburg. He is the only colored man upon whom Harvard College has conferred the degree of A. M.

This is a rare opportunity for the people of this vicinity.

From "Citizens Course of Lecture and Entertainment" Programme: Season 1896-97. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

•Illustrated lecture by Robarts Harper of London, England. Subject: "Round the World in a Man-O-War." 1/28/1897.

•Illustrated lecture by Prof. W.M.R. French of Chicago, Ill. Subject: "The Wit and Wisdom of the Crayon." 2/18/1897.

•Illustrated lecture by Prof. William R. Brooks of Geneva, N.Y. Subject: "The Wonders of the Heavens." 3/11/1897.

•A program featuring the Weber Male Quartet of Boston and a reading by Miss Frances Swift [a local poet]. 3/25/1897.

The price for tickets to all six programs (the Course) was one dollar; single admission was 25 cents. "High and Grammar School Scholars of the town entitled to a Course Ticket at half price, i.e. Fifty Cents." Programs with six evenings of entertainment spread out over the year, similar to the one above, were offered every year the Board of Trade existed.

In July and August of 1898, a 20th Century Land Transportation Exhibit was organized under the auspices of the Falmouth Board of Trade and Industry. In what resembles an advertising flier of its day, there is this description:

"Falmouth is situated on the N.Y., N.H., and H.R.R., 68 miles from Boston, and has 18 miles of Seashore. Summer Population (resident) 5,000. In close proximity to New Bedford, Cottage City, and Newport. Valuation \$6,519,308.00. Rate of taxation \$7.70. Attendance upon 1896 Marine Exhibit, 6,600. Expense of 1896 Exhibit, \$3,000."

Industrial & Food Fair

In the late 1890s, the Board of Trade and Industry also promoted an Industrial & Food Fair in the Town Hall for three days (Tuesday, Wednesday,

and Thursday) in April. As advertised, "FAIR OPENS at 8 o'clock TUESDAY EVENING. Doors open thereafter EACH AFTERNOON at 2 o'clock, and will remain open until 11 p.m." General admission, 'only' 10 cents."



Falmouth Town Hall on Main Street just west of the library, built in 1881, demolished in 1966. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

Exhibition spaces were marked off on the Town Hall floor and rented to local tradesmen "for exhibition and business purposes." Participating were 37 businesses and 17 outside parties. The local businessmen included grocers, clothiers, harness and carriage makers, artists, florists, bankers, jewelers, and merchants of dry goods, home furnishings, and grain. There was also a government post office display. Outside groups featured food packing, salt, and railroad supply.

A "Mammoth Exhibition Tent open to all" where "tradesmen will be glad to meet all their friends" listed 34 names.

The Food Fair portion of the exhibit was served in the Lower Hall of Town Hall, featuring "Diet of Home & Foreign Lands." Each evening had its specialty: New England and China on Tuesday, England and Italy on Wednesday, France and

Germany on Thursday. "Mementos of all these countries may be secured at the booths every evening."

There was also a cooking school for Ladies Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, admission 15 cents.

In order to spread the crowd throughout the three days "... we especially invite W. and N. Falmouth Tuesday evening, Waquoit and E. Falmouth Wednesday evening, Woods Hole Thursday evening." To entertain the crowds there were concerts by the Falmouth Cornet Band, 23 pieces, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, general admission "only" 10 cents.

According to *The Enterprise* of September 10, 1898, the Board of Trade and Industry sponsored the 2nd Annual Horticultural Exhibition on September 28, 29, 1898, in the Town Hall. (The Barnstable Fair that we are familiar with was having its 54th annual meeting for three days that year, August 30, 31, and September 1, sponsored by the Barnstable County Agricultural Society. It featured horse racing, ball games, trotting, and a stage show.)



The Falmouth Cornet Band, 23 pieces. Photo courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

The Horticultural Exhibition invited farmers from Hatchville, Waquoit, Quissett, and Teaticket offering premiums (prizes) of 50 cents or a dollar for the best fruits, vegetables, bread, butter, jellies and pickles, honey, poultry, and pigeons. There were also prizes of up to two dollars for fancy needlework and amateur art. "Get your lunch at Lawrence's lunch room across the street," urged one advertisement.

The October 1, 1898 *Enterprise* listed the winners including the biggest squash, grown by Aaron C. Fish of Quissett (111½ pounds) for a prize of two dollars. Other winners were the Beebe Farm, H.H. Fay, three Lawrences, and two Hatches.

Gosnold Tercentenary

Another major event involving the Board of Trade and Industry was the Gosnold Tercentenary, August 5 - 9, 1907. The events began on Monday, August 5th, with the Reverend Washburn officially welcoming "Bartholomew Gosnold" who landed in Woods Hole to great acclaim, pomp, and ceremony.

Previous to this event, a Mariners Memorial had been conceived by the Board which solicited no



Rev. C. H. Washburn welcoming "Gosnold" to Woods Hole, 1907. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.

more than 15 cents from the "Scholars of the Public Schools of Falmouth" who "will have the privilege of preserving their autographs within the monument." A copper box was placed within the Mariners Memorial on July 4, 1907. It contained a Holy Bible formerly owned by Mrs. Francis E. Swift, the Town Report of 1906, *The Enterprise*, names of the contributing children, a list of the Captains, and the Programme of the Day.

For the dedication of the memorial on Wednesday, August 7, a day of celebration was reported in *The Enterprise* on August 10, 1907. The governor, Curtis Guild Jr., arrived by train at 11:29 am. He attended a luncheon in the vestry of the First Congregational Church with 100 guests. At 1:00 pm there was a reception in the tabernacle (tent) erected for the event. At 2:00 pm a historical pageant marched around Surf Drive to the Memorial on the island at the intersection of Mill Road and Locust Street. The dedication, with William Hewins presiding as the President of the Board of



LION BRAND

Shirts and Collars

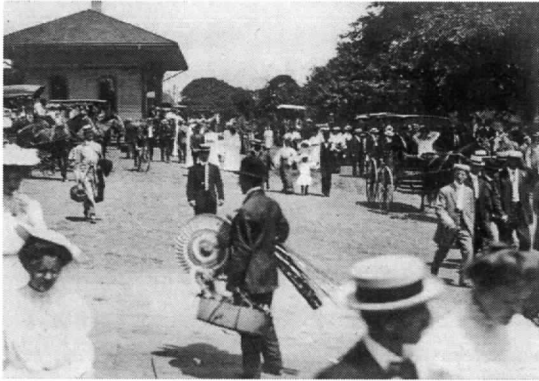
are made to fit each other
and are unequalled for
- - QUALITY. - -

FOR SALE AND RECOMMENDED BY

JOHN S. ARENOVSKI,

FALMOUTH, - - MASS.

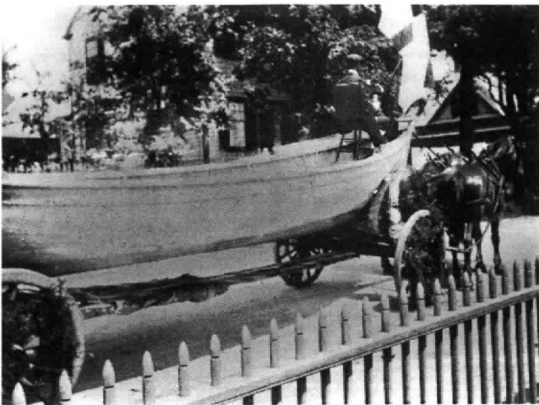
John Arenovski's ad from the program for the Gosnold Tercentenary, 1907. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.



The governor arriving at the railroad station, Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.



Reverend Charles H. Washburn, former chairman of the Board of Trade and Industry, dedicating the memorial, with William Hewins, his successor, behind him, 1907. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.



One of the floats in the historical pageant. Courtesy of the Falmouth Historical Society.



The inscription reads as follows: Dedicated by the Citizens and Public School Children of Falmouth in Loving Memory of Her Seamen, 1907. Photo by Stephen Chalmers.

Trade, was from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. And a concert in the tabernacle concluded the evening. This latter event occurred in the same field described by Ruth Washburn Sterling. The concert was "arranged as a Compliment to our Summer Company. First Number at 8 o'clock sharp. Carriages called at 10. Popular admission 25 cents. No seats reserved."

The rest of the week was devoted to the "Grand Tradesman Exhibit ... illustrating the Growth and Prosperity of Falmouth in 1907."

On Old Home Day, Thursday, August 8, the program featured organ recitals in both the First Congregational Church and St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in the morning and an Old Home Day Service and Country Circus in the Tabernacle at 2 pm. At 4 pm the Historical Room was open and there was a baseball game on the high school grounds. The evening ended with a band concert from 7-8 pm. Thursday receipts were over \$600.00.

Friday, August 9, was Automobile Day with a grand procession of cars in the morning and a racing contest in the afternoon. *The Enterprise* reported the "use of the Main Street straightaway and the Highway will be protected during the contest." The paper counted 31 cars that day, noting that one car had driven up from the west coast of Florida, 90 miles south of Tampa. "The machine made the run up without accident and has now started on the return trip."

The evening ended that day with a band concert, country circus, and finally a "Grand display of fireworks on the Lake."

The same *Enterprise* writes that, "If advertising is what the town wants, she has had it this week. The daily press from Maine to California has published the Gosnold Ter-Centenary and everyone knows that Falmouth has erected a monument to her seamen."

All of this was in the same year that saw a reorganization of the Board of Trade and Industry to "promote interests of the town and advertise attractions of this beautiful resort," with money available to advertise. The board members wanted to include all residents interested in "BETTER, BUSIER, BIGGER FALMOUTH." Membership was 50 cents a year. Organizing committee: G.M. Brown, C.S. Burgess, F.M. Hatch. Officers: President Wm. H. Hewins, Vice Presidents James Cameron and John H. Crocker, Sec'y H.V. Lawrence, and Treas. Fred T. Lawrence. Exec. Committee: F.M. Hatch, Simeon Hamlin, A.O. Stanger, Dr. G.M. Brown, Judah Nickerson, R.S. Nye, C.S. Burgess.

Charles S. Burgess, Editor and Proprietor of *The Enterprise*, in 1907 wrote, "If the present interest manifested in the Falmouth board of trade and industry continues, there can be no question but that the business of the town will grow and the summer contingent will be materially increased. So let the good work go on."

And so "the good work" did go on, as attested by the current celebration of the 100th anniversary of its successor, the Chamber of Commerce.

Sources and Acknowledgments:

Falmouth Historical Society Archives and Meg Costello.

The Falmouth Public Library reference desk librarians.

Jay Zavala, Falmouth Chamber of Commerce.

The Enterprise

Maria C. Ward has been a member of the *Spritsail* editorial board since 2005.