
From the Archivists

The Falmouth Historical Society

Dorothy S. Svenning

One is impressed when contemplating the enormous task which faced the founders of the Falmouth Historical Society when, at the beginning of the century, they acquired vast amounts of letters, business records and other manuscripts. The acquisition was a remarkable achievement, due to the trustworthy character of the men who served the Society then. The conscientious care of dedicated people since then has encouraged the continued donation of important family papers.

The initial catalog of holdings, done by the Rev. Henry H. Smythe, has eased the job of researchers for many years. The guide to holdings compiled by Charlotte S. Price in 1983 expanded the scope of his work. Due to the number of names of others who contributed significantly to the refinement of the collection, some who deserve much credit for work done in the past will not be listed.

However, dedicated members continue to improve the collection.

The archivist is responsible for procedures in entering new acquisitions, preserving materials in the collection and assisting researchers. Indispensable volunteers provide specialized information for researchers as the collection grows.

Florence Fitts is identifying and cataloging an extensive collection of photographs. Julia Hallett is providing a subject file, cross referenced to the collection file. Arnold Dyer is adding historical notes and specific location identification to homes shown in *Residential Falmouth*, a book published by the Board of Industry of Falmouth in 1897. Elizabeth Phelps was recently recruited to catalog the Socie-

ty's collection of newspapers of the mid 19th century, now on microfilm at the Falmouth Public Library. Mary Rogers maintains an up-to-date clipping file. Bea Parker encapsulates fragile documents. Other material is preserved with acid proof paper and cartons in a dehumidified vault.

While one is absorbed with the management and care of things of the past, the goal toward which we strive is the current and future use of the collection, as did all those who led the way. Current use indicates a great interest in looking at the past. Researchers of the future will have a wider view.

This is an example of the research done by Arnold Dyer on old houses in the photographic file of the Falmouth Historical Society.

This is the Laura T. Ripka 56 acre estate located on the south side of Woods Hole road in Quissett. Joseph Story Fay gave the land to Andrew Ripka who had married Mr. Fay's niece, Laura Greenough. The house was designed by Frank Hill Smith and built by Mr. Ripka in the 1880s.

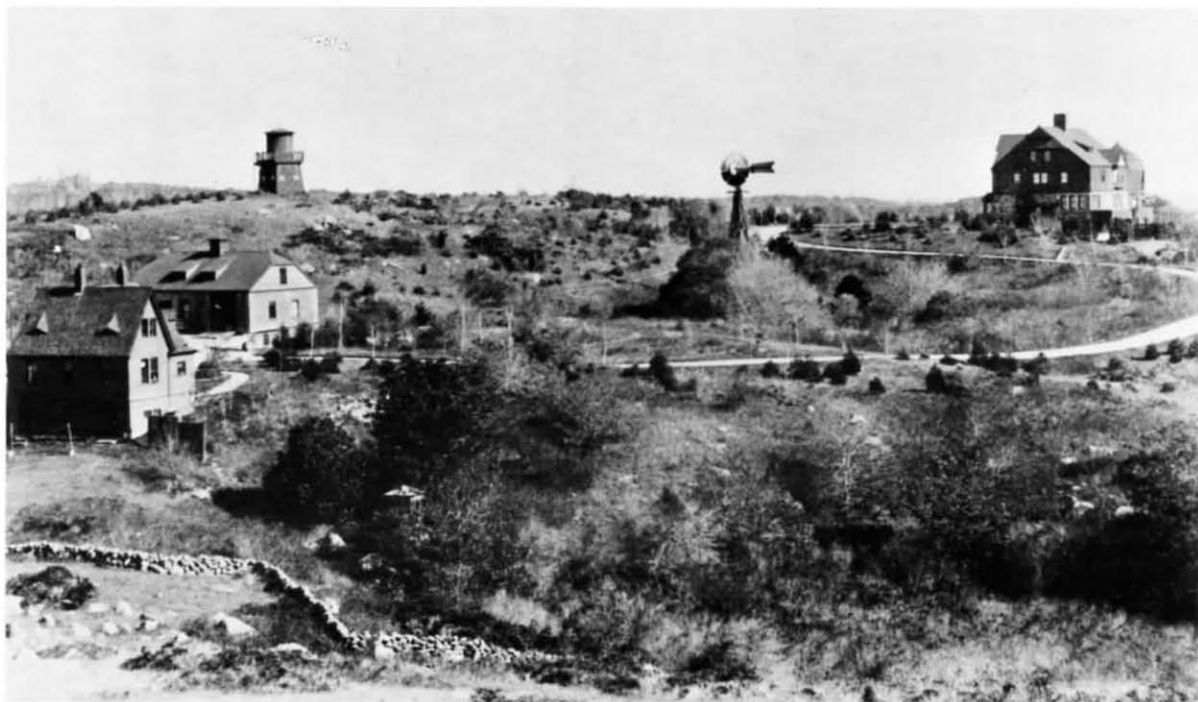
The entire property was sold to James T. Johnstone whose family occupied it for about fifty years as a summer home-stead which they called Cumloden.

Subsequent to the death of Mr. Johnstone in 1963, the caretaker's house and barn were sold to Dr. and

Mrs. Charles D. Hollister who occupy the property today. The barn has been torn down.

The main house and remaining property were sold to Selma Damon who subdivided the land and built roads for the new development called Cumloden. The house was then sold to Thomas G. Ratcliffe whose family had long been summer residents of Woods Hole. Mr. Ratcliffe left the house and its contents to the Woods Hole Library when he died in 1981.

Mr. and Mrs. Eric Turkington bought the house in 1984 and occupy it today.



Sandwich Archives

Barbara Gill

The Sandwich Archives is located at 145 Main Street, in the Town Hall Annex. The 1976 annual town meeting voted the creation of an Archives and Historical Center Committee and the Archives came into being. The main thrust for the first ten years was the publication of "Sandwich, A Cape Cod Town" by Russell A. Lovell, Jr., the first archivist. This was released in 1984. Also in the process of publication are the vital records of Sandwich which were compiled during this period. This work will include town records, church records, Bible records, and vital records from newspapers.

The Archives has a small library with concentration on local history and genealogy. There are also files on Sandwich history and families available to researchers. We also have a microfilm collection of local newspapers from 1826 to 1978, and a file of recent Sandwich newspapers.

We have an extensive photograph collection documenting Sandwich and its people through the years. It continues to grow through the generous donations of people who give their photographs for preservation or allow us to copy them for our files. Photocopies are available to researchers.

The Archives also houses, in addition to town records, those from the private sector, including wills, deeds, diaries, ledgers, and correspondence. These materials have been generously donated by those wanting them to be available for study and preserved.

Among the town records of interest to historians are the files of the Sandwich Historical Commission's assets inventory of historic buildings and sites in Sandwich. Each asset, be it building, cemetery, marker of area of historic significance, has a file with descriptive and historical materials.

The Archives is fortunate to have among its donations the diary of Benjamin Percival (1752-1817) which covers the period from 1777 to 1817, giving a glimpse of rural life in Sandwich during the period. Percival was a farmer living in South Sandwich and much of the diary is concerned with the day-to-day work on the farm. He includes many references to the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the spread of Sandwich people and his family members to Berkshire County, moving an old Percival house from Ashumet to South Sandwich and moving into the "new old" house. He served as Selectman for the Town of Sandwich from 1797 to 1816, and Representative from 1806 to 1812. The diary has added much information of genealogical interest. One hundred and twenty death records which were not recorded in the town record books and smaller numbers of births and marriages have been added through this diary.

Page of the Benjamin Percival (1752-1817) Diary in which the purchase of the "old house" is described. The house was purchased from Capt. Simeon Fish of Sandwich who had power of attor-

ney to sell the house from Phineas Fish, son of Samuel Fish, deceased, of Falmouth. The deed for this sale is in the Smith Collection at Sturgis Library in Barnstable, MA.

Snow Storm } Jan'y 21th 1782 it has been a Snow Storm yesterday and to Day the Snow fell about knee Deep was a very Cold Storm

Cold Day } wednesday Jan'y 30th it has been an Excessive Cold Day to day have been a Sledding hay from the farm aliter Mr. Lawrence has been us have been Sledding hay three Days

wet weather } Thursday April 25th 1782 we have had a Long spell of dry weather and warm untill about a week past the wind got about W and has held in that point Ever since and been stormy it has rained some 6 day for six days past to Day the Sun shined some it is fast Day to Day we have pretty much done plow

Sheep } Monday May 6th have Shear'd our Sheep to Day I had 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ Pounds of wool of 18 Sheep I have 6 Lambs and I have one yearling Sheep I suppose to be with Lam I have 3 wethers 2 year old I have famous yearling wethers we have in the whole 49 old Sheep and 24 Lambs by one Laird

mov'd } Friday June 21st 1782 Last Saturday we began to pull Down our old house at Shumlet (which we bought lately of Capt. Fish and gave 60 Dollars for) and yesterday we moved it and to Day we raised it in what we call the old orchard it is very hot weather and very Dry time

began to mow } Tuesday July 30th have began to mow to Day it has been an Excessive Dry time we had a little Rain last week it has not been Rain Enough for Pasture since Planting time