

The 1858 Walling Map of Falmouth showing (on far left) the location of the J.G. Jones' house at the end of what is now Elm Road. Courtesy WHHC.

From the Archivists

Falmouth Historical Society

Harriet Quimby

Journals of George S. Jones, 1853-1857

Diaries are seldom found in family attics, and those that are discovered are usually destroyed either because they are too personal or lack general interest. George S. Jones' Journal 1855-1857 is not one of these. Recorded in two small booklets on the blue paper usually associated with whaling logs, this fifteen year old boy proves to be remarkably conscientious as he makes daily entries varying from two lines to two pages, about the weather, school, his family, and his village.

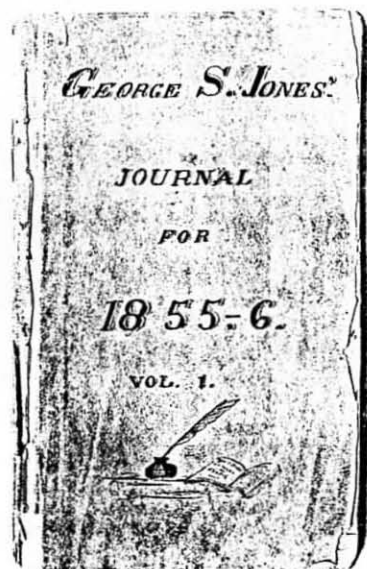
The family of John G. and Harriet P. Jones probably arrived in Falmouth from Foxboro during the 1840s or early 1850s. The births of five of their children are listed in the Falmouth vital records. However, a grand-daughter and the owner of the journal states that the diarist was born in Newton. Clues as to where they lived are provided in the journal as it mentions seeing ships in Vineyard Sound from the hill by the house. Also, we can tell it was an easy walk to the shore for fishing. The fact that it did not seem to be a problem to meet ships in Woods Hole hints that they must have been on the western side of the village. And on May 24, 1856, we may read,

At noon I made a kite and flew it. The string broke and it fell somewhere by the grave yard.

The 1858 Walling map shows that the family lived on what is now Elm Road, and this has been verified by

current research on Falmouth historical homes. The Joneses purchased their home in 1852.

The Falmouth Historical Society does not possess the original of these journals. They remain in the possession of a grand-daughter now living in Pennsylvania. The Society does, however, have a copy due to the generosity of the owner.



The cover of George S. Jones' Journal for 1855-56.
Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

From George Jones' diary the reader can learn a great deal about what kind of person he was, his sensitivity, his diligence, his humor, and his keen ability to observe. He begins:

Falmouth Sun Jan 28 1855

The day commenced fair but in the evening, it began to rain—The snow lies in patches on the ground—I went to meeting to day and went into the Sunday- school. Mr. Hooker preached.

Mon Jan 29 1855

In the morning it rained quite hard but towards noon it cleared up—The snow is nearly all gone—I went to school as usual to day—at night I brought home my skates which I bought a few days ago.

Tue Jan 30 1855

The day has been very pleasant—I went to school as usual to day—I have began to draw the ship of the line Pennsylvania—tonight I filed my skates and put them by till there comes some good skating.

and he continues

Wed Feb 7 1855

. . . I went to school to day as usual—spoke my piece this afternoon which was King Alphonso and Bernardon and wrote a composition "on the advantages derived from the invention of the steam engine."

During this year his attendance at Falmouth Academy was erratic, but he seemed to study at home for short periods of the time.

Wed Mar 28 1855

Commenced early in the morning to study greek during the forenoon learned to decline Equi to be made some paste and fixed my reader on the back in the afternoon I began a vessel which I intend rigging into a privateer brig study in the evening.

And, the next year he writes,

Tuesday May 20th (1856)

Early in the morning it rained quite hard but cleared off before I went to school. I was late again this morning, did not recite in Virgil. Studied some Spanish at noon I have before studied it some under Leonard and the other Spanish boys.

May 18, shortly before his sixteenth birthday, he writes, "Weather fine—did not go to meeting. Today I performed an operation which I shall ever remember with interest viz the amputation of sundry hairs which served adornment to my upper lip. Read some in the Greek testament." Shortly after this he tells, almost proudly, how poorly he behaved during a school meeting. He never indicates any interest in girls, although now and then he will say the name of a girl who attended school that day.

School did seem to be rather flexible for this student, at least. The students do appear serious about their work as shown in these entries from 1856.

Tuesday April 29

. . . After school Chas. Jenkins, Oliver Swift, John Dillingham, Andrew Shiverick, and myself who have united for the purpose of introducing debating into school instead of speaking met in the cabinet for the purpose of choosing a question etc. and finally voted to the following, "Resolved that the life and career of Oliver Cromwell deserve our approbation."

This appeared to be successful as later in the year another resolution centered on

Friday June 13th

There was a committee of five chosen to draw up a resolution concerning "the present state of slavery in the U.S. and the affairs of Kansas and the late outrage upon our senator Sumner. . ." I am on this committee. John Dillingham lent me his "French without a master" to day. Today is my 16th birthday.

And in summer prior to the July 18th closing they discussed on Wednesday, July 9th

"Resolved that the Moon is made of green cheese."

The next fall he did not attend school. He mentions that there was talk of sending him South, and he did not write in his journal. He did continue reading, however, and in December of 1856 he read evening after evening with apparent pleasure the Life of Lord Byron. By March 1857 he records "I wrote a sonnet today am taking a turn for poetry again. I must look out!"

The Meeting House is mentioned frequently, though usually just in the framework of whether he and the family attended on a Sunday. Because the school was located nearby, he writes in May 1856, "I went up in the meeting house belfry with Oliver Swift after school. I think I shall draw a view of the town from there sometime." One would suspect he never returned, for the next year he writes on March 31st, a Tuesday, "Went down to the village in the afternoon. They are taring out the "insides" of the old meeting house." And on Saturday, April 4th, he says, "they are raising the meeting house." And, for the records, he earlier notes,

Sun. Mar. 29th

Pleasant weather—Went to meeting all day—last time I shall ever go into that old meeting house. Saw Andrew

Shiverick and Oliver Swift—they have just come home from East Windsor Hill.

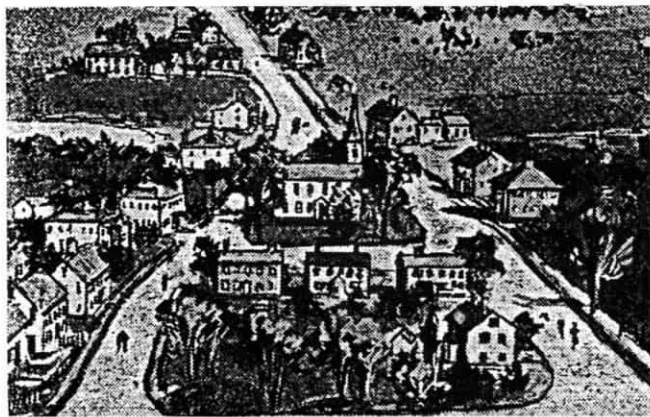
For the most part, his descriptions of the weather do not differ radically from what we experience on the Cape today. He writes of swimming for the first time in the season during the last week of May. And, like many boys today, he skipped Meeting on Sunday and went bathing with his Father. However, the winter of 1857 appeared to be a most difficult one.

Friday Jan 16th

Weather quite cold in the morning—In the afternoon went after load of wood with Father, with a small horse sled—got a very small load. He has the same sled to ride around town in being fantastically fixed up with a square box marked 1520! There has been a vessel frozen up in the Bay for several days past about 6 or 7 miles from Woods Hole. It takes the men about two hours to come ashore. It is in sight from our hill. The steamer has not run for more than a week.

Sun. Jan 25th

Weather very pleasant—Mary Ella is quite sick—Father went after the doctor about eight o'clock in the evening—I did not go as I was not very well. None of us are in the best of health. I did not go to meeting today. Read, etc. I have made up my mind absolutely not to spend another winter on "Cape Cod" any where but "Cape Cod" though I see by my last journal (Geo. S. Jones' Journal vol. 1st) that two years ago at this time



An early engraving of Falmouth Green showing the Meeting House on the Green before 1857 when the frame of the church was rolled north across the Green and placed in its present location.

From *Residential Falmouth*.
Courtesy Donald Fish.



Shiverick's Pond in Falmouth where George Jones often played with his friends Oliver Swift and Andrew Shiverick. From *Residential Falmouth*. Courtesy Donald Fish.

it was bare ground—rain storms etc. etc. how different from this winter—"lofty snow banks— snow storms and—degrees below zero" The rest of the family—i.e. Father—have come to the same determination as my self—to spend the winter here after farther South—Northern climate no go— catarrh— influenza sore throats—no good—worse than the yellow fever.

It is difficult to determine the father's occupation. We know that he made countless trips to Foxboro by horse or by a boat out of Woods Hole and thence a train that went from New Bedford at least as far as Mansfield in that period—or by stage coach. The father's family, including his mother, resided there. For example, in the Journal is written,

Saturday Jan 3d '57

It began snowing about 8 o'clock and continued all day. Father came home about two o'clock. He brought a large covered wagon from Foxboro to sell.

We also know that the father made lightning rods. His descendants say he was an electrician and this is corroborated by the census records. In 1856

Monday April 28th

... Mr. Donaldson came here to night to be electrified but father was not home. He went to Foxboro with the oxen last Tuesday.

Monday Sept 1st

I went over to Naushon with father to put a rod on Gov. Swain's house.

Thurs April 9th

... Father had a quantity of iron come by the Bride.

and,

Wed. April 22d

Not very pleasant weather. Staid at home and worked on the lightning rods—

and,

Thursday Sept 4th

Father went to N. Bedford to put in a rod.

Fishing proves to be a means of recreation as well as a source of income and family food. Eels were a particular favorite with this family. In 1857 George writes,

Tues. Feb. 3d.

... We had some eels for supper—those blessings of Cape Cod Who ever sees this book centuries from hence (for I doubt not it will last as long) if eels shall have fallen into disuse from being exterminated or from any other cause let them still be remembered—no one who had ever eaten eels would ever take up with anything else so long as he could get them—so much for eels.

Then during March he and his father go eeling most every day. For example, "Went eeling before breakfast and again after—got a large wash tub half full! Father also caught some." And three days later he writes, "I got returns from my eels by the boat \$3.50!! First speculation of the king!" Many times he goes to the Trunk River or Fresh Pond for blue fish, perch, and bass. He talks once about digging a bushel of clams, but he never mentions lobster.

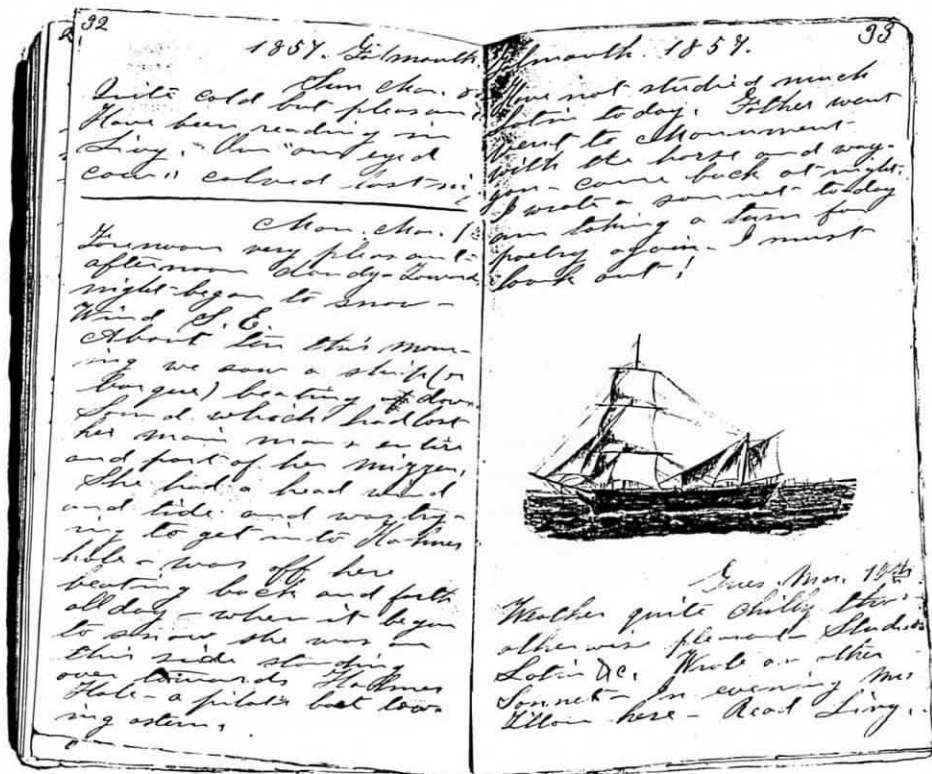
Even though he did not live directly on the shore, the sea was there for food, for recreation, and for transportation. He was aware of the shipping schedules out of Woods Hole and the activity in the Sound. Some

of his friends went whaling. When his cousin Frank was visiting him from Foxboro, he notes,

Saturday April 26th (1855)

The brig "Alexander Milliken". . . anchored off here yesterday came into the slip to discharge something this morning and went off about noon. I was very sorry that she went so soon as we intended to go down to the warfe to see her. Towards night we went down to the warfe and while there a sloop left for the Vineyard which was a great sight for Frank as he had never seen a vessel get under weigh before—thence we went to the Post Office and around home through town.

Whaling was still somewhat active and he mentions



Sketch from George Jones' Journal showing "ship (or barque) which had lost her mast entire and part of her mizzen." March 1, 1857. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

Saturday Aug 2d (1856)

. . . The whale ship "Hobomuk" which has been expected for some time came into Woods Hole this forenoon. She has 2800 barrells of oil

and the next week he says, on August 9th,

. . . a new schooner came into the wharf today noon owened in Falmouth—"The Isabell" I believe.

He frequently mentions the packet boat that goes to the Islands and to New Bedford. On one occasion he tells of a packet boat from West Falmouth that was headed for the Yarmouth Camp Meeting. Not all was calm on the Sound, however, as shown on

Monday Mar. 1st (1857)

Forenoon very pleasant and afternoon dandy—Toward night began to snow. Wind S.E. About ten this morning we saw a ship (or barque) beating down Sound which had lost her main mast entire and part of her mizzen. She had a head wind and was trying to get into Holmes Hole—was off here beating back and forth all day—when it began to snow she was on this side standing over towards Holmes Hole—a pilot's boat towing astern.

Interspersed in the notes are a number of fine drawings of unidentified ships.

George Jones was not always the model young man that he describes so ably as helping his father, meeting boats, studying, catching blue fish, or sitting up all night with a sick sister. He tires of writing, and his script becomes large, and he scrawls. He stops school and his journal for a short season. He becomes bored and writes "dull, dull, dull" for several days in a row. He enjoys playing marbles at school to the detriment of his school work and determines to stop. But he doesn't. Sometimes he wishes he were somewhere else.

In 1855 the students gathered together to persuade their teachers to plan an outing. On Wednesday, April 30th,

The scholars wished to have a holli-day tomorrow as it is the first of May but Mr. Clark said we had better wait till the season was more advanced and then perhaps to go Gay-Head. This was voted to by the scholars and I suppose we shall go before school is out.

And when June arrived, Mr. Clark kept his promise; he took 75 students to Gay Head in the "Bride." It obviously meant a great deal to George Jones as he headed his description of the day in careful calligraphy. His entry on Tuesday, June 24th, has a melodramatic tone.

Today we had our long expected and much wished for excursion to Gay Head; and as my adventures were intimately connected with those of the rest I shall try to give an account of the excursion as a whole. The time appointed for starting was six o'clock but owing to the delay which always accompany such excursions we did not get fairly under weigh till nearly seven.

The wind was quite light when we left the warf but it gradually increased till by the time we arrived off abreast the lighthouse there was a very respectable westerly breeze. We had all sail set and were going along finely with a fair prospect of arriving at the place of our destination by nine o'clock and were nearly off Tarpauling cove when the wind fell away to a calm. The boat was set ahead to tow but a breeze soon sprung up a little more to the southward. This lasted but a short time and soon died away. At length after the wind had sprung up several times and as often died away and mostly by the aid of the tide we had arrived within six or seven mile of Gay Head the wind subsided altogether and a dead calm ensued. This was about nine o'clock. Now indeed there began to be long faces on board the "Bride." While the Gay Head was apparently not more than half a mile distant we were becalmed and lay almost motionless upon the face of the water and moreover it was but about an hour before the tide would turn and in such a case without any wind our case would be hopeless

indeed. But while we were in this predicament our time was by no means lost but improved to the best advantage that any convenience as would allow. The boat which had been towing astern since we left the wharf was unfastened and several excursions were made in her. Others enjoyed themselves in singing etc. About half past nine a small streak of blue was visible upon the glassy horizon to the south-west which gradually increased in breadth, till about ten o'clock a smashing breeze reached us. What a change came over the faces of all. The boat which had for some time been towing us ahead was taken in, our sails filled and we again started on our way with renewed hopes and anticipations. The wind and tide were both ahead and it was not till one o'clock in the afternoon that after a trip of six hours we at length came to anchor under the lee of Gay Head.

We were all seventy-five in number landed at three boat loads and made the best of our way to the light house. There in the back yard we all assembled and previous to commencing operation took a good swig of cold water all around. There is a new light house in process of construction situated a few rods back of the old one, built of brick and iron; there was no sea wood as I could see about it but the floors and stairs were all of iron. The first place to which we went was the light-house. This is built of wood some where about fifty feet in height and has a revolving light. Mr. — the keeper of the house appeared to be a very pleasant man and showed us over the house.

The light which appeared to be a very powerful one is altogether too complicated for description.

From there we went to the cliffs and cliffs they were indeed. They remind one of the pictures which we see of the Alps, as by the action of the water of centuries working down their sides they have been worn away in places so as to leave the side studded with jagged peaks and deep ravines, but their principle feature and the one which gave them their name is their

variegated color including almost every shade from white to black.

There can be found the fossil remains of species of both vegetable animal kingdom though not in such quantities as formerly as a great many have been carried away. In the course of our rambles Mr. Clark found a large piece of petrified wood which when being broken disclosed the impression of several small leaves. This he saved of course. It was the only piece of petrification which we found but just before we came home the light house keeper gave him several curiosities of this kind.

After we had all enjoyed ourselves climbing up the cliffs, throwing down avalanches of clay from the top for about an hour we returned to the light house and after resting here a short time went to the shore where the boat was waiting to convey us on board the "Bride." All having got on board about half past three we bade a final adieu to Gay Head, weighted anchor and started for home.

When we first started several among them myself got into the boat which was towing astern and had a fine sail in that. On the way home we met five vessels which we heartily cheered. After a four hour sail we arrived at the warf without having met with any accident on the trip than the loss of one or two parasols and the destruction of many more.

We had a very fine time and all enjoyed them selves but if we had started on hour earlier it was the opinion of all that we should have got there by nine and have had a still better time. We had a tent on board which we were intending to set up on shore but we did not have time and were obliged to eat our dinners on board.

When we arrived at the warf we gave three cheers as when we left and were greeted in the same manner. Father met us at the warf. Soon after I got home and eat my supper I went to bed. Sophia sunburnt her face

very badly as she did not have her parasol. Henry went bluefishing to night and got two.

The next day he wrote, "Went to school but did not feel very bright. Was quite hoarse."

National holidays received quite a different emphasis from what we experience today. Never is there mention of Thanksgiving or Christmas in any of the journals. For instance, in 1856, the December entry reads simply,

Thursday 25th

Extremely cold weather. Got along by doing as little as possible though I had to keep doing about all the time. Went to the P.O. this afternoon—Received letter from Father with fifteen dollars to pay to E.H. Davis—borrowed—Saw Charley Jenkins. Read as usual in Lord Byron. Did not study much today.

But July 4th was different. George clearly expected the Fourth to be exciting and not as he described it in 1857.



Sat 4 of July

4th of July! As good a day as could be wished—cloudy but not rainy. I wanted to go to N. Bedford but could not. In the afternoon we had the horses and went to Woods Hole. A dull fourth, never will be caught so again no never.

Summer activities were predictable. There were the flower gardens to tend for his mother, the fruit trees, the crops for the farm animals, and vegetables for the

family. However, the 1850s did see the beginning of Falmouth as a summer resort, and his family entertained relatives just as we do today.

Mon. Aug 6th 1855

(Last Sat. uncle Edson Aunt Sarah aunt Lenora cousin Jane James Edson and his wife together with Frank and little Robert came here from Foxboro and I met them at Woods Hole.) Last night Frank and I determined to get up this morning at 3 o'clock and go



Early glass plate photograph of Little Harbor, Woods Hole taken from what is now the Church Street property of Geoffrey G. Whitney, Jr. Juniper Point across the harbor, with Nonamesett Island in the background. George Jones often traveled to Woods Hole with friends and relatives. Photo by T.W. Smillie, ca. 1860. Courtesy WHHC.

blue-fishing and made our arrangements accordingly but were prevented by its raining. We were not, however, to be put off so, but as it stoped raining in the morning concluded to go after breakfast though father told us to go to the pond and get some perch first. We were down fishing all the afternoon and had some fine sport catching herring though we caught no blue fish. When Mr. Young the fisherman came in we went down to the wharfe and got some scup and went home where we eat our dinner with an extremely good relish. In the afternoon we went down to the Island raking hay. After supper Frank and myself went down to Fresh pond-river to get some herring for blue fishing and were met there by father uncle Edson Augusta and Emily Petta (who has been here for about three weeks past) and they stoped to see us fish. Uncle Edson took one line and Frank and I took the other two. We had not been fishing long before I hauled in shark and as we had no more bites I thought it best to go to Salt-river. Father went home with the wagon but left Augusta and Emily to go with us. We had been on the fishing ground but a short time and had had but one or two bites before Frank hauled in a blue fish. The first fish I caught was a shark, after that I caught two blue fish. Uncle Edson did not catch any. Frank came home very tired and went directly to bed—James Edson went to Springfield this morning and so did not have the pleasure of catching a blue fish.

Friday Aug 10th

The day has not been as windy as we feared. This morning I carried uncle Edson aunt Sarah Frank Robert and Sophia to Woods Hole. Our family is now quite small only father mother Harriet Eliza and sis are left. We had some hay before the barn and some above the orchard which I worked on when I came home. We got some of it in at night.

And, of course, summer also has its share of mishaps, as seen

Saturday June 14 (1857)

Weather hot. I was to work about all day with Father and William Washburn planting corn in the lower field. We planted an acre. The bees swarmed about noon. Harriet Eliza is very badly she got poisoned by ivy while drying sassafras yesterday.

He cares enough about his sister to write the next two days, "Harriet Eliza is geting along pretty well though she is pretty well swelled up." and, "Harriet Eliza is geting along finely."

With our present day cameras and instant pictures readily available, we forget how difficult it must have been to achieve the group pictures we so cherish from the early days of photography. Ambrotypes were one of the earliest forms.

Wed May 27th 1857—Falmouth

. . . At noon four ambrotypes were taken of the Academy—the best one got broken—going to have another taken the next fair day.

Frid. May 29th

Another rainy day. Go to school as usual. No ambrotype.

Tuesday June 16th (1857)

Cloudy. I did not go to school today but staid at home and worked on the flower garden. Yesterday I carried Mother Sophie, Mary Ella and the baby down to the Ambrotypists to have sis's taken—he could not get a good one—

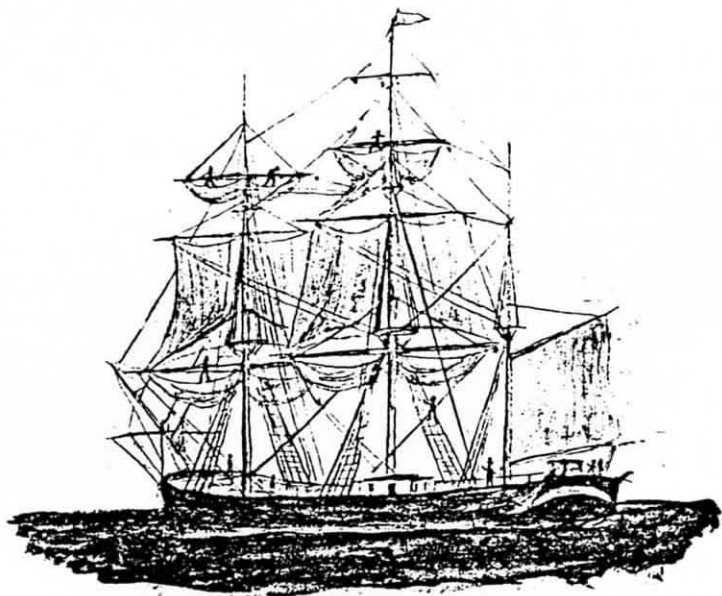
These Journals do not often mention the world outside that of the family, school and the nearby community. However, during that cold winter of 1857, there is an entry that touches on the Irish immigration and hints at the prejudice of that time.

Mon. Feb. 2d

Weather quite pleasant—some cold I believe. Father went to mill to day—got some eels! Heard that the ship off here is from Cork—full of paddies—short of

provisions—went to Woods Hole after some. One of the schooners I hear landed some people—who had been cast away on the south side of the Vineyard—last night six in number. They stoped with Mr. William (uncle "Bill") Davis last night—Had only save an valaise so goes report. A Barque anchored off near the ship towards night. Several vessels had been sailing in the Sound to-day—good deal of ice. I have divided my time today between studying spanish writing and tending the baby! good deal of the latter. Captain Tilton saw the capt. of that ship today—the paddies were singing all last night so joyful were they that they had got to "Amerecy"! . . .

Other news of the outside world was indicated when our journalist wrote on Thursday, March 12th (1857), "Heard Buchanan's inaugural address read to night."



Sketch from George Jones' Journal showing "barque anchored off here nearly all day." March 21, 1857. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

The conflict which we now call the Civil War or the War Between the States was not going well for the Union in the summer of 1862. On August 4, President Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers for nine months. Massachusetts was to provide 19,080 of these.

On September 19 George Seneca Jones, a Falmouth resident, then 22 and a student at Harvard, enlisted in Company F, Fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. By the time he was mustered out August 23, 1863, Private Jones and his company had trained at Camp Joe Hooker in Lakeville, traveled by steamer to New Orleans, taken part in the siege of Port Hudson on the Mississippi, stayed there as garrison, returned by railroad north to Cairo, Illinois, and thence east to Massachusetts and Camp Joe Hooker.

Fourteen of the regiment died of disease, four of battle wounds.

John T. Hough managed to trace, for a story in the *Falmouth Enterprise* on Friday, August 18, 1961, the further career of the young man whose diary gives a glimpse of the Falmouth of the 1850s. George S. Jones returned to Harvard after his nine months of Army duty, earned his degree, went to Philadelphia and entered the publishing business. He married, had three children, and died there in 1903.

In the right foreground is the boyhood home of George Jones, purchased by his parents in 1852. Built by Josiah Hallett, son-in-law of Jonathan Hatch, it was later turned to face the street and now sits on the corner of Elm and Nonquit Roads, north of the Moors tennis courts. Looking across Salt Pond to the Sound, one can see the old mill on Mill Road and the Emmons house. Photo is from a tinted postcard, ca. 1895. Courtesy Donald Fish.

