The Development of Falmouth as a Summer Resort 1850 – 1900

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This paper examines the development of Falmouth, Massachusetts as a summer resort in the second half of the nineteenth century. The author has several aims. The broadest of these is to assess the impact of tourism on the town in terms of its society, economy, land use patterns and architecture. More specifically considered is how, why and when people were attracted to Falmouth, what kind of houses they built and how well those houses have survived. To accomplish this end I have selected three areas which offer a contrast in philosophy, period, wealth and location: Falmouth Heights established in 1871, Chapoquoit in 1890, and Penzance Point in 1892. For each area I have examined four basic factors. First is the land itself: its previous use, how it was acquired, its layout and designer. Second is the sale of lots: how they were advertised, the rate of sales and building, their price, mortgages and general intent of the venture. Third is the architecture: house size, building materials, value, style, architect, fitness to climate and lifestyle, and relation to national trends. The final factor is the summer residents: their professions, winter residences, relation to each other and lifestyle. Studying a single town in detail may shed further light on the philosophies and concepts of the national trend toward suburban and resort living.

Throughout the nineteenth century, seaside towns were regarded with increasing favor as summer resorts for well-to-do city dwellers. Charles H. Sweetzer's *Book of Summer Resorts* published in 1868 describes some of the attractions of the seashore. "Bathing is of course the feature of the day and is attended with all its health giving and mirth producing concomitants. In the evening, strolls along the beach, or on the hotel piazzas offer attractions to those who do not care to join in the gay groups of dancers in the parlors. Occasional concerts of more than average merit are given by vocalists from the metropolis."[1] Sweetzer also makes it clear that accessibility and availability of accommodations are of more importance than any outstanding natural feature.[2]

Falmouth was a natural for development as a summer resort, boasting 67 miles of sheltered coastline which produce ideal conditions for boating and bathing. Furthermore, the townspeople had never considered the exposed coast suitable for residential building, so these prime areas lay open and ready for development. Falmouth was also an unspoiled country town divided into several villages each with its own unique character. In a word, it was quaint, and offered a complete contrast to the city.

All of these charms were noted as early as 1848 when an unidentified newspaper article now in the keeping of the Falmouth Historical Society appeared. The correspondent wrote: "Without much expectation of being able to impart to you or your readers any considerable share of that invigorating and healthful freshness which surrounds me at this present writing in this quiet town on this ancient promontory of Cape Cod, I have at least the satisfaction of feeling that this missive will remind you of green and shady nooks, solitary walks in the pine woodlands or, more to be

desired, frequent and extended sails across the blue expanse of waters with much dropping of clam snouts and fish hooks and many inquirings into the silent deeps.

"If these suggestions move you not, sitting in that arm-chair of yours with the thermometer at 99 degrees, Eve might have tempted you in vain with the apple of knowledge and pleasure and the world still remain unsinning.

"This town lies on a flat level of two or three miles in extent (the principal village) along the western shore of Vineyard Sound and contains a population of some 3,000, comprised chiefly of persons employed in the whale fishery or in schoonering, as the coasting business is sometimes termed. The town is one of the most pleasant on Cape Cod and presents attractions as a summer sea-shore residence which are not exceeded by those of any other place on the coast. . . Unhappily, at present, there are not hotel accommodations or if there are houses of public entertainment they are not of a character to afford suitable accommodations for families. The citizens of the place seem to be unconscious of the advantages which they possess. With an ample and comfortable public house and suitable conveniences for bathing, public attention would be at once directed towards them and I have no hesitation in declaring that floods of strangers would pour in upon them and their now quiet and almost deserted streets become enlivened and populous. . ."[3]

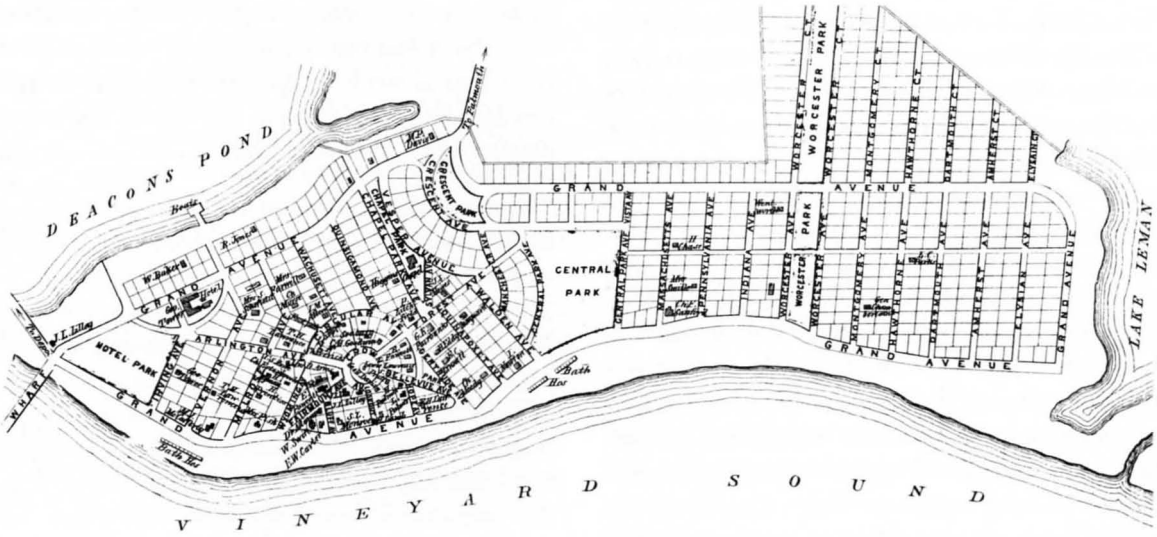
This and other similar articles appearing throughout the 1850s depicted Falmouth's future quite accurately. However at mid- century, only the very wealthy, with the money to build their own estates and provide their own transportation, could afford Falmouth. Several families like the Fays and Beebes did adopt Falmouth as their summer home in the 1850s and '60s but it did not truly become a resort town until the 1870s. Several factors conspired to cause this delay, one being the lack of direct rail service before 1872.

The economics of the town were becoming shaky in the 1870s. Its maritime base had been weakened by the shift from sea to rail for the transport of goods and by the devaluation of whale products. Its major land industry, salt making, had been completely wiped out by rising production costs and increased competition from salt mines in the Western states. Salt making had peaked in 1848, when 42 works covering much of the coast had produced 24,800 bushels of salt,[4] but the industry had run out of cheap firewood and had since been in steady decline until the last was sold to become, ironically enough, the town's first resort development – Falmouth Heights.

The events taking place on Martha's Vineyard, just three miles across Vineyard Sound, were the final and very important factors affecting the development. The Vineyard had been a recognized summer retreat since it hosted its first Methodist Camp Meeting in 1827. Through the years, its popularity increased and its religious character decreased in inverse proportion, until it had become the scene of wild land speculation in the late 1860s and early 1870s.[5] As Falmouth was the embarkation point for both vacationers and developers joining this stampede, it seemed only a matter of time before some developers decided to stay on the mainland.

Falmouth Heights

Such was the case. In 1870 a group of Worcester men headed for the Vineyard reassessed their plans and decided to stop in Falmouth. George E. Smith, Oscar F. Rawson, James E. Eastbrook, William T. Miles, James M. Schoefield and George Tower purchased the last salt works in town from George and Silas Davis in the fall of 1870 for $2,382.[6] Schoefield and Tower quickly dropped out of the partnership to be replaced by Thomas H. Lawrence, a Falmouth sea captain.[7]



Map of Falmouth Heights from the Barnstable County Atlas. 1880. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

The group incorporated itself as the Falmouth Heights Land and Wharf Co. on January 7, 1871, naming Smith as attorney and president.[8]

Although these men chose Falmouth over the Vineyard, they patterned their development on precedents set across the Sound. The very name, Falmouth Heights, echoes the myriad developments on the Vineyard, many of which were christened with the surname of Heights or Bluff to call up images of sweeping vistas and cool breezes.[9] Like the developers on the Vineyard, these men were out to make the most of their purchase. The land was divided into hundreds of tiny lots, but peace was insured through deed restrictions, and natural beauty was retained in several large open parks.

The developers' intent, which was to provide the greatest numbers with the greatest benefits at the greatest profit to themselves, is revealed in the deed restrictions. They require that dwellings will be set back at least ten feet from the avenues and five feet from the lots on either side; that only one dwelling with the necessary outbuildings will be constructed per lot; that neither spirituous, intoxicating nor malt liquors shall be made, sold or kept for sale on the granted premises; that no game of chance shall be played for money or any other consideration; and that no mechanical trade or manufacturing shall be carried on on the granted premises.[10] A lawsuit involving the Oak Bluffs Company in 1891 is especially revealing of the developers' original concept and since events in Falmouth so closely paralleled those on the Vineyard, I think that they can be used to shed light here too. The developers testified: "The idea was to employ a competent landscape artist, lay it out with every device that could attract a family of moderate means; first and foremost airspaces, parks etc., regulate lot titles prohibiting offensive trades, industries, rum shops etc., start by building immediately a few pretty cottages, and then spread broadcast over New England the attractions and promises of the enterprise. . . Nothing more important to their enterprise can be conceived of than to so lay out their land, marshal their lots, establish their parks, breathing spaces, avenues, etc. so as to assure a maximum of attractiveness."[11]

Beneath the rhetoric, one realizes first that the project is speculative – that the developers have no specific clients in mind, but are trying to produce a product attractive to a hypothetical customer. Second, that they are trying to keep costs down through miniaturization of both lots and houses. Third, that they are going after the largest possible market, the family of moderate means, the average American. Finally and possibly most important, one sees that the concept of a summer resort has still not fully evolved; the developers are applying the rules of city planning to the country. Their layout, despite its rural setting, is essentially that of a city: houses crowded close together with large public parks to relieve the congestion. And their restrictions mimic city ordinances, prohibiting industry and offensive trade. In 1871, the summer resort on Cape Cod at least, was really a resort in name and setting only. It was a garden city, allowing newly liberated city dwellers the illusion of country life without giving up the comforting familiarity of city bounds.

The man chosen to create on Falmouth Heights this miracle of maximum attraction for the multitudes with maximum profit for its owners was Elbridge Boyden, one of the most prominent Worcester architects. Boyden was born in 1810 and died in 1898. He had little formal education but, when 16 and apprenticed to Joel Stratton, an Athol house carpenter, he had an opportunity to study two books by Asher Benjamin and to learn to use Stratton's drawing instruments.[12] By the time he moved to Worcester in 1844 he was drawing his own plans and designing both public and private structures. Within a few years he was working throughout New England and as far away as Kansas, Oregon and Georgia.[13] His plans were also published

in national magazines and pattern books such as those by A.J. Bicknell.

The first plan for subdivision of the lots at Falmouth Heights, drawn up by the firm E. Boyden and Son, was filed at the Barnstable County Courthouse on January 1, 1871.[14] The design balances approximately 600 small lots with eight fairly large parks and follows the natural contours of the land. Its center is occupied appropriately enough by Central Park, the largest open area in the Heights. This park is vital to the design, as it provides a link between the hills to the west and the flat lands to the east, and also between picturesque and grid design. Observatory Hill, the highest point in Falmouth Heights, becomes the focal point of the western section as the hub of a half wheel whose axle is Crown Avenue, rim is Circular Avenue and spokes are Fairmont, Arlington, Byron, Forest and Bellevue avenues. The wheel opens on the waters of Vineyard Sound to provide more lots with an ocean view. The streets between Observatory Hill and Hotel Park to the west run perpendicular to Vineyard Sound and all their lots have water views. The streets behind the hill run down toward Deacon's Pond, (now Falmouth Harbor)[15] and for the most part lack views. The curving streets between the hill and Central Park define the boundary of the western section. The eastern section is laid out in a grid pattern centered on Worcester Park, a Commonwealth Avenue type of open park between one way streets. The design is concluded by three euphoniously named parks: Sleepy Hollow, Pavilion and Elysian Fields, and is set off from its environs by Grand Avenue which encloses it. The prospectus is embellished with three small model cottages, two with minimal Gothic trim and one with a mansard roof. Also illustrated are the proposed observatory, hotel and church.

A second plan published on April 1, 1873, revised the layout somewhat. Several lots in the western section were sacrificed to enlarge the Hotel Park, but the actual number of buildable lots was increased by

Craig House, later Oak Crest Inn, facing Crown Circle, Maplewood Cottage on right. Courtesy SPNEA.

decreasing their size and cutting up the three parks on the eastern end. The grid was extended beyond the confines of Grand Avenue and the two small streets chopping off the corners of Central Park were removed. The plan itself is much more elaborate than the earlier one, being intended to entice buyers and not to be filed in the courthouse. The three cottages, one of which Boyden had already built for himself, are larger and more fanciful than those shown in 1871. Contented families lounge in their wide open doors and their charm is enhanced by leafy shade trees. The church and observatory have lost their harsh verticality and the latter is shown crowded with people taking advantage of the view. The hotel is the same but is now shown with happy guests promenading on its porches.

Boyden was not previously noted as a landscape architect and it appears one must look to the Vineyard for the sources of this design, especially at Robert Morris Copeland's plans of 1866, 1867 and 1878 for the Oak Bluffs Sand and Wharf Co. The similarities between the plans for the two areas are striking. Copeland also divides his land into small lots and large parks, juxtaposes a curvilinear design with a grid section which includes a Commonwealth Avenue-type park, and encloses the entire area with Circuit Avenue. His plan also illustrates the same open fanciful cottages, a hotel, chapel and observatory. J.B. Jackson has suggested that Copeland also designed Falmouth Heights, but it seems unlikely that a landscape architect of his repute would use the same design for two areas or that he would allow another architect to put his signature to it.[16]

Sale of the lots on Falmouth Heights commenced in June of 1871, and by the year's end seven lots had been sold for $1,* six for $100, and 89 for $200 apiece.[17] Hotel Park had also been sold to George Tower for $9,000 yielding a total profit of $27,407 on the initial investment of $2,382.[18] Most of the buyers were from Worcester and its surrounding towns, with a few from Falmouth. It is clear that most of the early purchasers of lots were speculators as many bought more than one lot and few actually built upon their property. By 1888 only eleven of the lots sold in 1871 had been built upon[19] and by 1907 only eleven more had been added to their ranks.[20] During this first year, no lots were sold beyond the western section.

Sale of land continued throughout the winter of 1872 and business was brisk even though the lot price had been increased to $250: The developers sold 97 lots in 1872, many with mortgages.[21] Some of the previous year's buyers were doing well on resales, selling unimproved lots for $225-$275. Lot #1 Crown Avenue, which had had a house built on it, was resold for $950.[22] The company itself appears to have been directly responsible for much of the resale, using Charles W. Moody of Worcester as agent. A few of the resales were legitimate, but the bulk were to Moody who turned around and sold the lots right back to the company on the same day. The strategy seems to have been to take a $25-$75 loss on a few lots to keep up the faith in their resale value.

This tactic, along with the easy credit terms, made a success of Falmouth Heights' first two years, but could not combat the nationwide panic which struck in 1873 to be followed by years of depression. The sale of land declined sharply in 1873 and never recovered. Forty lots were sold in 1877.[23] The price remained at $250 throughout these years. Finally in 1878, the Falmouth Heights Land & Wharf Co. sold its rights in most of the lots to G. Edward Smith et. al., and

* Explanation of property sales for $1 as recorded at Registry of Deeds: It was almost universal, in deeds recorded up until 1930 on Cape Cod, and perhaps elsewhere, to list the purchase price as "$1 and other valuable considerations" instead of the actual price. This was with nosy neighbors and the town assessors in mind. The current statute requires "a recital of the full consideration thereof in dollars or the nature of other considerations. . ." (Source is Nathalie T. White, an expert at tracing deeds.)

Typical cottages and Central Park in Falmouth Heights during the horse and buggy days.
Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

the remainder to George Tower, perhaps to evade taxes.[24] The whole enterprise was dissolved ten years later on January 20, 1888 when "the rights and interests" in all the lots and all the parks were sold to Charles Goodwin of Falmouth for $1.[25]

The statistical evidence abstracted from the deeds comes to life in articles in the *Falmouth Chronicle* which clearly favored the new development. Articles from 1871 are not available, but on June 5, 1872, the paper noted that Tower's Hotel was open to the public, a 42 foot wharf was nearing completion, a 66 foot high observatory was about to be built by Samuel N. Davis, the South Dartmouth carpenter who had also superintended the building of the hotel, and several fine cottages were under construction, one by Elbridge Boyden, Esq.[26]

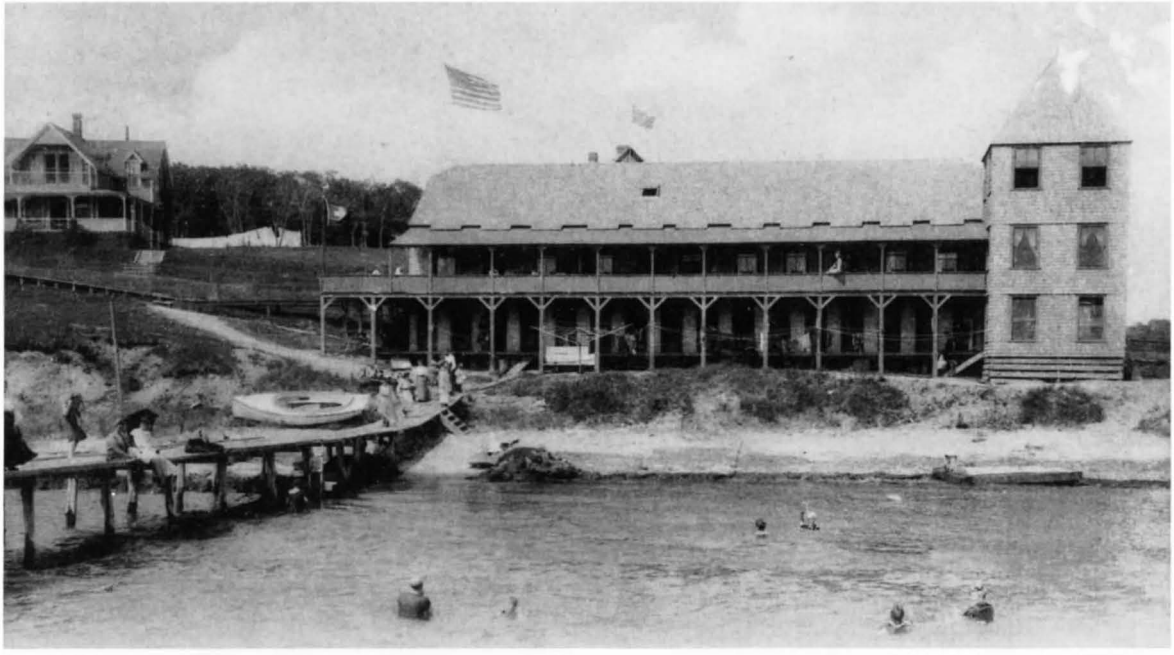
A few weeks later it was noted that "the Heights is assuming an attractive appearance – roads, avenues and parks are being put in the best condition and cottages are receiving finishing touches preparatory to occupancy. . . The wharf is complete and the Observatory is soon to be finished."[27] In August we learn that Tower's Hotel was crowded with visitors and that the cottages are all occupied.[28] Finally, "With the advent of September most of the visitors to this popular summer resort have taken their departure, although the hotel is still open and several of the cottages are yet occupied. We learn that the building of cottages and laying out of new avenues and parks will be resumed immediately and rapidly pushed during the fall and winter, preparatory to the large numbers expected here next season."[29]

The newspaper articles make it clear that the initial groundwork had been completed in 1871: the laying out of roads and parks, the construction of the hotel and perhaps of a few cottages. They also tell us that 1872 was a successful season and that there were great

expectations for 1873. Other articles demonstrate that the activities at Falmouth Heights had not gone unnoticed by other speculators and that competition was on its way. In September the paper says, "negotiations for the sale of real estate near the shore are going rapidly and parties are realizing good prices. . . Several gentlemen are having tracts of land surveyed and laid out into cottage lots for the purpose of putting them into the market. We would advise those wishing to purchase eligible sites near the sea to secure them at once."[30]

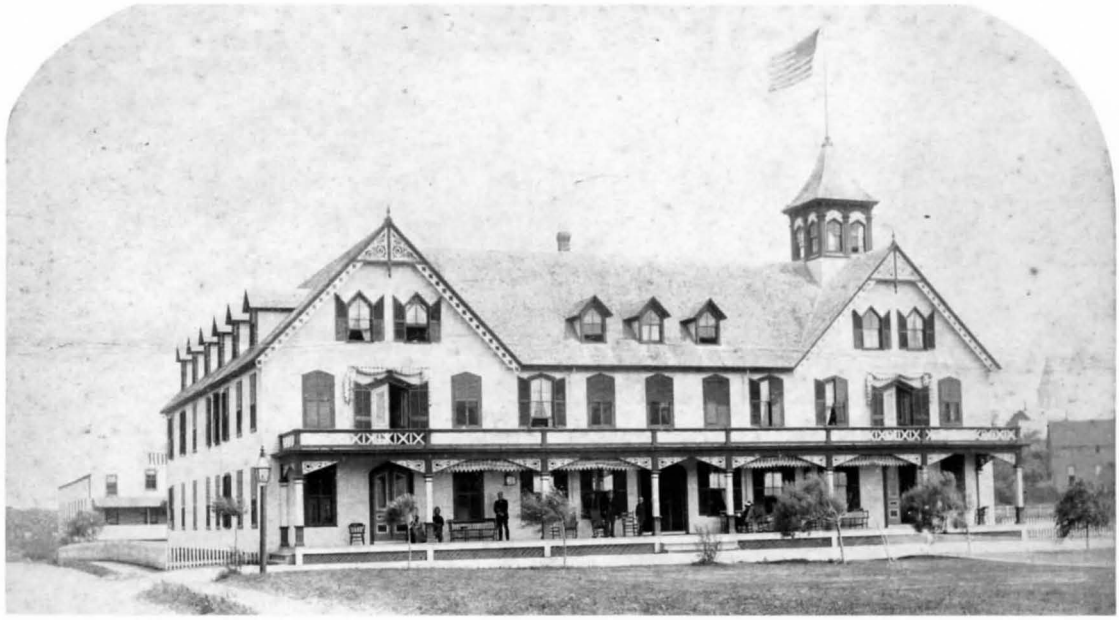
The paper also described an event of the utmost importance to Falmouth's success as a summer resort. In July of 1872 the Woods Hole branch of the Old Colony Railroad was completed, linking Falmouth and the Cape with the rest of the state, and superseding the old stagecoach line from Buzzards Bay.[31] Although the railroad was built primarily to serve the Pacific Guano Co. in Woods Hole, its effect on tourism was profound, for as Charles Sweetzer had noted in 1868, accessibility was of prime importance in the success of a summer resort.[32] An article reprinted from the *Boston Daily Advertiser* described the new line. "It passes through some of the most beautiful scenery of the state, skirting as it does the shores of Buzzard's Bay and from Falmouth to Wood's Hole it is built upon the beach so near the sea that one can almost jump into the water from the cars. . ."[33]

The architecture of Falmouth Heights supports the facts gleaned from deeds, atlases and newspapers. Few cottages typifying the origins of the area are to be seen today, and their small number is clustered around Observatory Hill bearing silent witness to three important historical facts. First, that the hill was considered to be the prime piece of real estate. Second, that the early sale of lots was mainly speculative and few were actually built upon. Third, that the initial period of

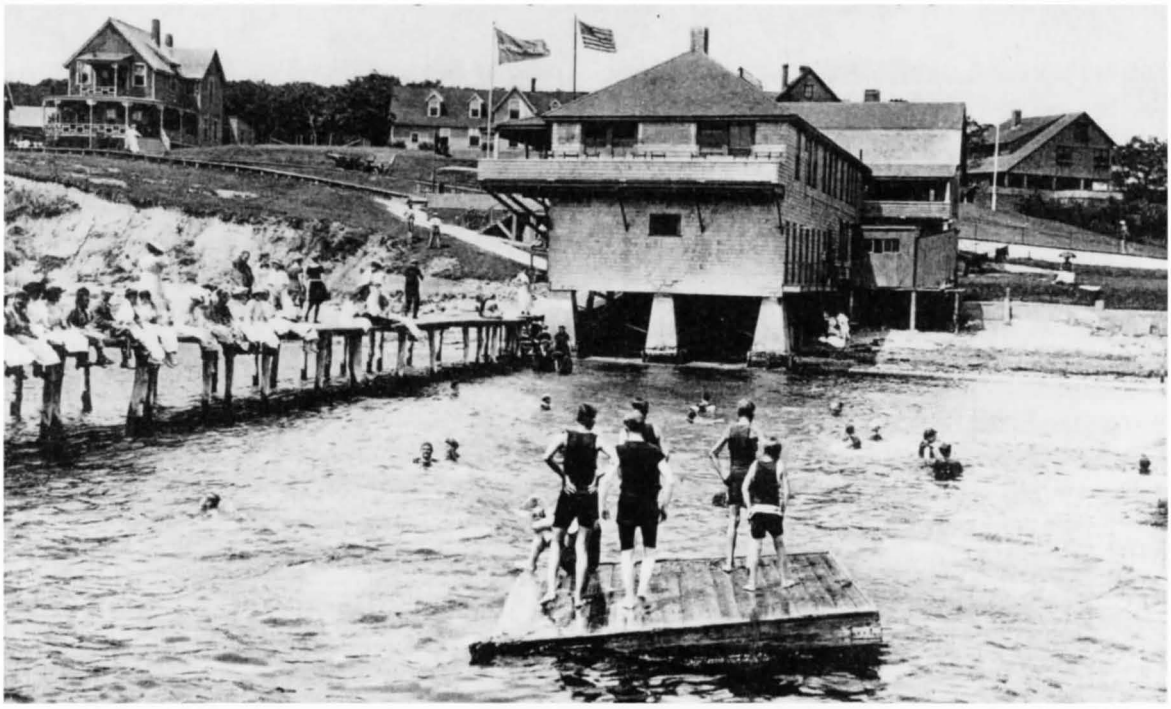


Falmouth Heights Casino and bathing place before fire destroyed original building in 1909.
Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

Union Chapel, built originally as an observatory in 1872, became an interdenominational chapel in 1891. Craig House, on right, later became Oak Crest Inn. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.



The Tower House, one of the major hotels during the "halcyon years" of Falmouth Heights, was torn down in the early 1960s and replaced by a motel. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.



Bathing scene and Cottage Club from the pier, Falmouth Heights. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

Board walk and cottages along the Bluffs, Falmouth Heights. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection

building was extremely brief. Today the area is dominated by large shingle style houses most of which were probably built after the land was sold to Charles Goodwin in 1888.

The most elaborate of the early cottages to be seen today is at #3 Crown Avenue. It is the one built by Elbridge Boyden and pictured on the plan of 1873. Despite its small size, its detail and complex plan make it unique. The cottage is Y shaped, with the stem forming an open hallway while the arms encompass the living quarters. Its front is shaded by an open porch. The gables are adorned with richly carved barge boards as are the dormers which pierce the steeply pitched roof. The intersection of the three arms is crowned by a picturesque cupola. The wide door and many windows are framed with Gothic moldings. This fanciful little confection, constructed in 1872 was sold to Susan L. Arms of Bellows Falls, Vt. on February 17, 1880 for $1,000.[34]

The other original cottages are based on a T-shaped plan whose cross forms the back of the house while the stem juts forward as an open living hall entered through a wide doorway. The stem is flanked by porches so that when one includes both interior and exterior spaces embraced by the house, its plan is essentially square. Even though these cottages, built for speculation, were cut from the same mold, they are saved from monotony by their imaginative detail and coloring schemes. Although they can hardly be called innovative,[35] they are suited to their situation as seasonal housing for summer visitors. They are miniaturized to fit their tiny lots and opened with windows, doors and porches to let in the summer

"This fanciful little confection" at #3 Crown Avenue was built in 1872 by Elbridge Boyden and sold in 1880 to Susan L. Arms of Bellows Falls, Vermont. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

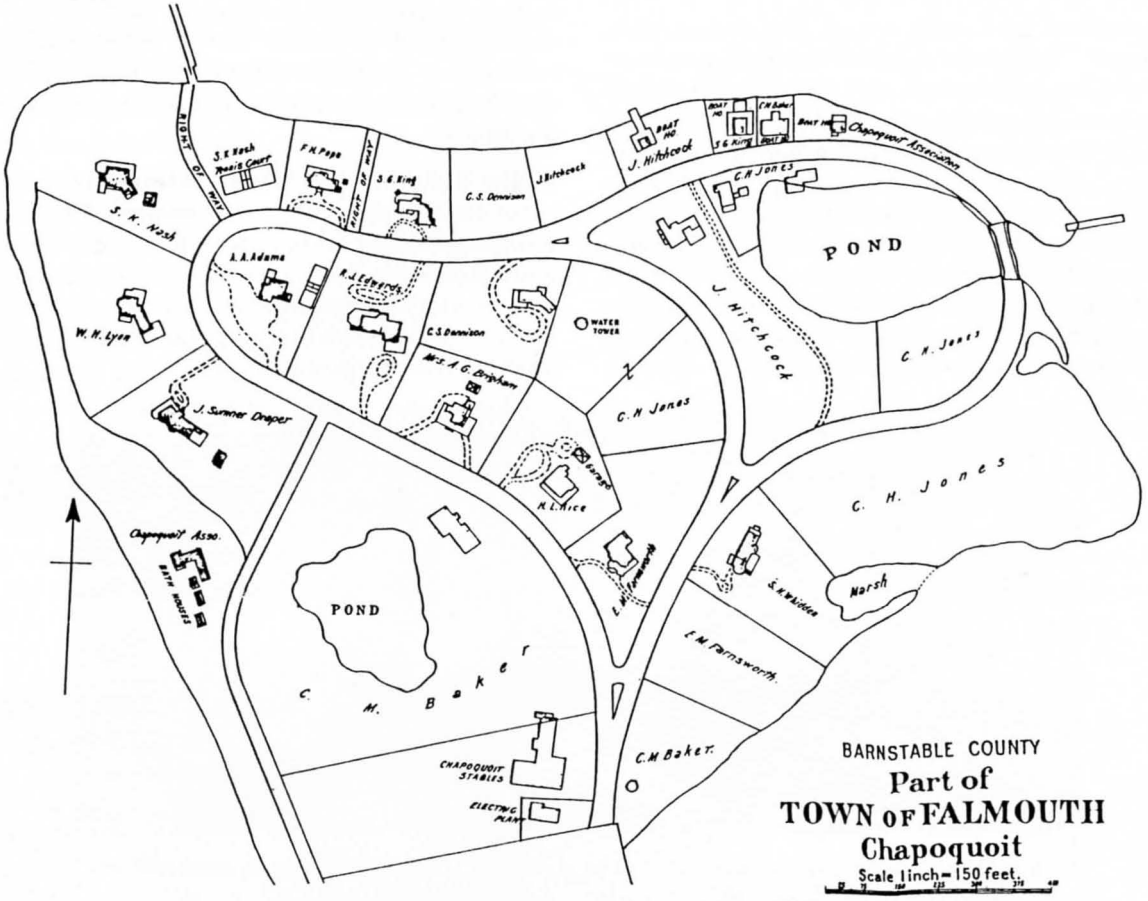
breezes, their tent-like structure reflecting the transient nature of their occupancy.

It is difficult to say much about the first residents of the Heights because so many of the early sales were speculative and because many of the cottages were built to be rented and not to be lived in by their owners. Probably most were from the Worcester area where the sales had been concentrated, for even by 1906 when the South Shore Blue Book was published the majority of families were from western Massachusetts. This publication lists 142 families at the Heights, four of which came from west of the Mississippi. Their professions ranged from congressman to undertaker to plumber.[36] The activities of the Heights residents were primarily strolls to admire the views, boating, bathing and picnics supplemented by occasional excursions to the Vineyard or Newport. Organized baseball games on Central Park became popular later in the century, as did bicycling and bowling. The hub of the original community was the Observatory where mail was distributed and news discussed.

Today Falmouth Heights is sadly deteriorated, especially the older remaining cottages. Boyden's cottage and perhaps a dozen others still stand in varying states of disrepair. Tower's Hotel has been replaced by a motel, and the Observatory was torn down in 1929 when the town took it by eminent domain for $1,000 to relieve traffic congestion.[37]

Board walk looking west along Grand Avenue, Falmouth Heights. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

Cottages at Worcester Park, Falmouth Heights. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.



Map of Chapoquoit Island from the Barnstable County Atlas, 1908. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Commission.

Chapoquoit

Chapoquoit offers a contrast to the Heights. Its history began in 1872 when Franklin King, a Dorchester chemist, bought for $950 two-thirds share in Hog Island from Joshua and Daniel Bowerman, local farmers who had used the island to fatten their hogs, and Nathaniel Coleman bought one-third share for $353.53.[38] Mr. King's intentions were noted in the July 13, 1872 issue of the *Falmouth Chronicle*. "The gentlemen who recently purchased Hog Island at West Falmouth are making improvements thereon which when completed will make this one of the most desirable summer resorts on the coast. From this location a fine view is had of all the sailing craft and steamers passing up and down Buzzard's Bay, to and from New Bedford. . . It is delightfully cool in summer with unsurpassed facilities for boating and bathing. We understand that some neat and pretty cottages will be erected next season, which will be for sale or to let."[39]

Although King had planned to compete with Falmouth Heights and other budding resorts in 1873, his plans were halted by the same depression of 1873 that ended prosperity for the Falmouth Heights Land & Wharf Co. The project was not to get off the ground until 1890, about the same time that Falmouth Heights was sold and building recommenced. During the intervening years, however, the concept of a summer resort had changed radically from that of a miniature town with closely spaced houses and large public parks, to one of an exclusive club with large private estates. Chapoquoit was not to be the site of "neat and pretty cottages for sale or let."

On June 9, 1889 Nathaniel Coleman sold his one-third share in Hog Island to Charles H. Jones of Whitman for $800.[40] That summer and fall Jones and King sought to convince the selectmen to connect Hog Island to the mainland by a bridge and road. They

Birds eye view of Chapoquoit and Snug Harbor looking east, West Falmouth, ca. 1893.
Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

finally succeeded by pledging to pay the $3,500 themselves if there was not $100,000 worth of taxable property within one year. They were successful, for the Town Report for the year ending December 31, 1890 notes that Charles H. Jones was paid $3,500 for making the road and bridge at West Falmouth, Chapoquoit, by contract.[41]

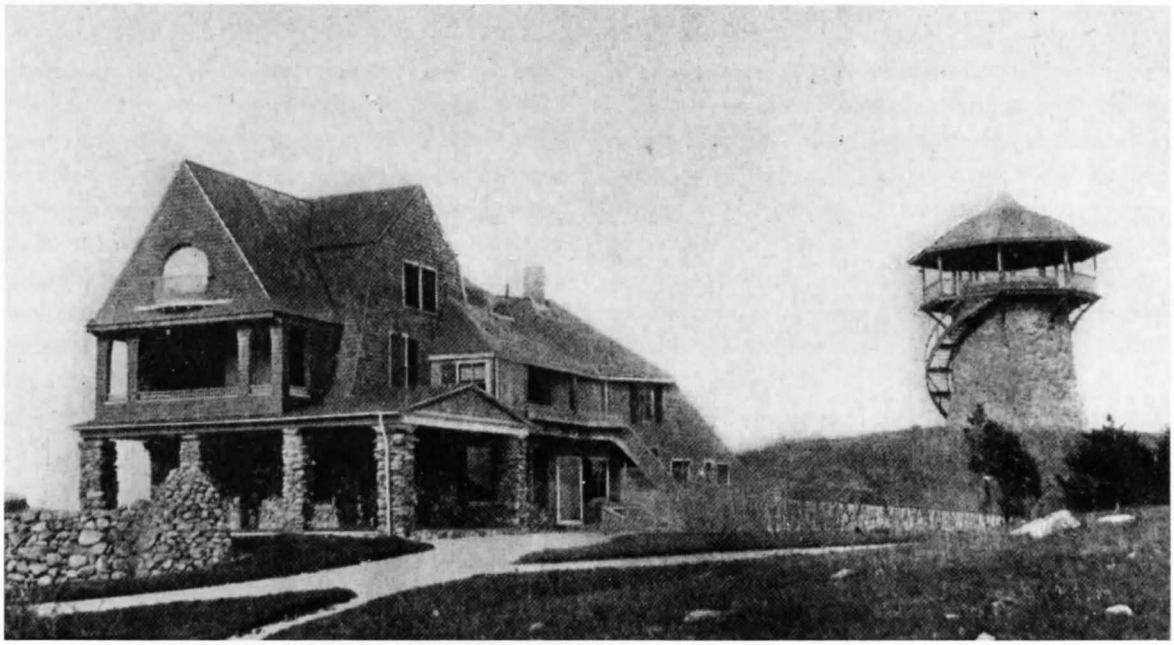
After successfully connecting Chapoquoit to the mainland, the next step was a plan for subdivision, drawn up in June 1890 by Harrison House, a certified engineer from North Hanover.[42] The plan divided the area into 38 large lots ranging from 14,525 sq. ft. to 68,700 sq. ft., with the average being about 38,000 sq. ft.[43] The dynamically curved road plan followed the natural contours of the island in such a way that by comparison even the western section of Falmouth Heights looks mechanical and contrived. Although House's name appears on all the plans I've seen, the name of Frederick Law Olmsted is tantalizingly associated with the area. Paul Jones, eldest son of Charles H. Jones, states that House did the preliminary surveying only and that his drawings were then turned over to Olmsted Bros. in Brookline to be landscaped. A short history of Chapoquoit further notes that the well known landscape architect planted the island with native materials such as rosa rugosa, sumac, bayberry and beach plums.[44]

Just as the large, well-placed lots represented a change from the Heights, so did the restrictions in the deeds that record their sale. At Chapoquoit the object was not as much to prohibit the evils of the city as to insure high quality. The deeded restrictions, to be in effect for 50 years, until January 1, 1940, provided that the land between the "edge of the Bank" and low water should be held in common as long as it shall not interfere with the rights of the proprietors to improve their property with boathouses, wharves etc. Further, the proprietors would not be responsible for maintenance or liability; sewers and drains should be constructed well below the low water mark to avoid offense; no stables except the one held in common on lot #23 could be constructed without permission; no more than one single family dwelling house could be constructed per lot, for a sum not less than $3,000 and no part of any dwelling could be used for business or other purpose which might impair the quiet and comfort of the area.[45]

Like the developers of the Heights, King and Jones wanted to bar any commercial activity from their community and although the Chapoquoit lots were large enough to preclude the need for parks, they recognized that the beaches, which are the most attractive feature of any seaside resort, should be held in common. What makes a world of difference between the two areas is that the Chapoquoit restrictions are exclusive and somewhat anti-speculative. The $3,000 minimum not only insured quality in the building (that amount would provide a large and comfortable house in those days), but indirectly discouraged land speculators.[46] It also limited the market for Chapoquoit to a certain economic level. King and Jones were not appealing to a mass audience, but rather to a select few.

The actual sale of the land and construction of houses backs up these points. First, King and Jones did not advertise their area, but sold lots only to personal friends who immediately assumed an interest in the development. This interest was formalized on January 2, 1889, when all property owners were made shareholders of a Declaration of Trust, entitling them to a say in the operation of Chapoquoit.[47] Second, the first two lots to be built upon were by King and Jones themselves, demonstrating that their intent was not to become rich through speculation, but to create an attractive summer colony for their families and friends.

The style of the dwellings marks a further departure from the concept of a summer resort held in the early 1870s. They are no longer small, fanciful and tentlike,



"Beachstone," one of the first two houses on Chapoquoit Island, was built for C.H. Jones in 1891. The water tower to the right was built in 1895 on the island's highest point. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

Samuel G. King bought this house (left center) in 1893. The third oldest house on Chapoquoit, it is completely clad in gray shingles. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

meant to be rented for a season and then left behind. Rather they are large, comfortable and meant to endure. Formally they are in the Shingle Style as defined by Vincent Scully, the mode then in vogue for seaside homes. Exteriors are asymmetrically varied, rough textured and built of natural materials, while interiors are open, spacious and informally comfortable. The design combines integrity of construction, simplicity and functional relationship to the site. An article entitled "Architecture at Seaside" which appeared in an 1895 issue of *American Architecture and Building News* described their fitness well. "The level horizon requires a long, low structure, sloping roofs, broad verandahs and above all plenty of space. People seek the seashore for rest generally, for health often and for a good time always. . .the broad roofs and verandahs suggest rest and protection from the sun, severe winds and heavy rains."[48] The architectural changes apparent between 1870 and 1890 were occasioned not only by taste, but also by realistic acceptance and knowledge of seaside weather. The houses at Chapoquoit reveal many of the best qualities of the shingle style: use of natural materials, interweaving of interior and exterior spaces, articulation of interior spaces, open planning and the ubiquitous use of the shingle.

In contrast to Falmouth Heights, building at Chapoquoit was slow but steady and kept pace with the sale of lots to upper middle class Boston businessmen. The first two houses, belonging to King and Jones, were constructed during the summer of 1891 as indicated in the Barnstable County deeds through liens filed against both men by Thomas B. Landers, Hiram C. Baker and Timothy C. Bourne, all local carpenters.[49] These men worked on both houses simultaneously through April, May and early June, then filed for payment on June 25, 1891. Paul Jones remembers that his father's house at least was not complete until the fall, so apparently the carpenters feared non-payment for some reason.

King's house, which he shared with his cousin F. Herbert Pope, a Boston jeweler,[50] is rather undistinguished, being a tall three story rectangle with a strong cross gable and steeply pitched gambrel roof. The entire house is shingled and a wide open verandah extends across the front. Jones' house is more interesting and complex in its interpretation of the shingle style. With the two shingled upper stories sitting atop an uncut granite base, the house looks to be firmly rooted in the ground from which it springs. Its gambrel roof sweeps out on the right side forming the roof of an open porch and is supported on rubble piers. A massive stone wall that sweeps out from the center of the house curves to the right, adding privacy and protection to the porch while helping to interweave interior and exterior spaces. The left ell angles back from the main mass and slopes down to the earth in lean-to fashion, recalling the colonial era. This house, designed by John William Beal of Boston,[51] forms a rugged and picturesque composition, well suited to its site and purpose in terms of both composition and materials. Its interest and dignity are achieved not through details but through the juxtaposition of mass, materials and texture.

Samuel G. King, son of Franklin, became the next resident of Chapoquoit. He purchased lot #26 with dwelling and furnishings on January 4, 1893 for $1., so this house was probably built in the summer of 1892.[52] It is completely clad in stained gray shingles, including the piers of the seaside porch, and one sees them forming a taut skin around the articulated interior volumes. The stairwell is revealed by a series of windows stepping upward across the front of the house over the entrance porch.

The next house to be built was probably on lot #11 which had been bought from King by Jones on November 5, 1892 for $1.[53] It was either started that fall or in the early spring of 1893 when Jones sold his first house on lot #17. Like the house on lot #17, this

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one has a granite rubble foundation, though of much more modest proportion. It is low and symmetrically organized along the lines of a traditional full Cape house: one and half stories, central door with flanking windows. What makes this house interesting is its right gable end which is extended to form an arch over the side wall. This device was quite popular in the area at the time, appearing on the North Falmouth Casino (later a Catholic Church and now residential housing), the West Falmouth Methodist Church, and carpenter Timothy Bourne's house in West Falmouth.

Jones sold his first house to Charles S. Dennison of Newtonville on May 15, 1893 for $1.[54] Dennison was president of the Dennison Tag Manufacturing Co. in Framingham and a personal friend of Jones.[55] Apparently Dennison ran into some financial difficulties, for on June 8 he sold the property back to Jones with the option to buy it back within one year for $4,260.[56] This transaction, taking the place of a formal mortgage between friends, is fortunate for it is one of the few indications of what land and buildings were initially worth on Chapoquoit. The debt was discharged on July 13[57] and on August 25, Dennison also bought lot #25[58] which was directly across the street, presumably for a boathouse, a dock, or to insure a water view.

Lot #21 was also sold on May 15, 1893, by both King and Jones to Walter G. Cotton of Brookline for $1.[59] Cotton was the president of the American Brass Tube Works[60] and a friend of King.[61] This house looks as though it were formed from three or four houses woven together so that its sharply juxtaposed volumes form an interesting if not entirely coherent whole. The front is a long, narrow rectangle with porch and cross gable. The left side, which is set back about one-third of the length of this main mass, slopes to the ground in a long easy curve exaggerating the colonial lean-to. The tight symmetrical order of the right side stands in sharp contrast to the freedom of the rest of the design. The second story and attic are gathered into a single ordering gable that overhangs the first story, forming a porch in the rear. This design cannot help but remind one of Bruce Price in projects such as the William Kent House of 1885 in Tuxedo Park. The

One of the most interesting houses on Chapoquoit was bought by Herbert Carruth, a builder and friend of Franklin King who sold him the property in 1894. Granite blocks make up the walls of the first story and the second and third are clad in flowing shingles. A porch across the rear provides sea breezes and a view of the Bay. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

The Robert J. Edwards house, built in the spring of 1894, is larger and more ornate than most on Chapoquoit. Its classical shell portico set on Doric columns is flanked by leaded stained glass windows, but the main body of the house is in the typical shingle style. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

house is entirely shingled and its only classical detail is an oval Adamesque window on the front.

There was one further transaction in 1893, when King sold lots #30 & #31 to the Reverend William H. Lyon of Boston for $1.[62] Lyon was pastor of King's Chapel and an in-law of the Dennisons.[63] This house has many of the same features as the others have: shingled surface, recessed and projecting porches and even an oval window like that on Cotton's house across the street. Its design is more awkward than most, however. Two main masses at a slight angle to each other are held together by a gabled stair tower, identified as such by its long arched window. However, because the tower does not project, the angle at which the roofs meet the tower is choppy.

On April 2, 1894, King sold lot #29, with the buildings thereon, to Annie Carruth, wife of Herbert, of Dorchester for $1.[64] Carruth was a builder and a friend of King's.[65] Paul Jones says Carruth built the house himself even though the deeds say that he bought the land with buildings on it. This house is one of the most interesting on the island. The first story is of unequally sized granite blocks which Paul Jones says were cut from a single boulder excavated on the site. The second story and attic are clad with flowing shingles seen to best advantage on the northwest end. The overhanging attic wall curves in to cradle two deeply set windows and is supported by four shingled brackets that curve up organically from the wall below. A porch extends across the rear of the house for enjoyment of the sea breezes and view as was typical of so many Chapoquoit houses. The porch is terminated at the north corner by a hexagonal tower. The Carruths were the only family admitted to Chapoquoit who had serious difficulty in financing their purchase, running through several mortgages and finally being forced to sell their property back to King on September 24, 1896, for $1.[66]

Lots #19 & #20 were sold two days later on April 4, 1894, to Robert J. Edwards of Boston for $1.[67] Edwards lived with his two sisters who were school

friends of Mrs. Jones at Norton.[68] The house, which was built sometime before June 11 when it was sold to Jacob Edwards,[69] is larger and more ornate than most on Chapoquoit. A classical shell portico set on double doric columns shelters the main entrance which is flanked by leaded and stained glass windows. Nevertheless, the main body of the house is asymmetrical, free and, of course, shingled.

On September 6, 1894, King sold lots #32 & #33 to Warren Bailey Potter Weeks of Boston for $1.[70] Weeks was involved in insurance and real estate,[71] and his wife and Mrs. Jones were friends.[72] The house built on these lots is perhaps the most sophisticated on the island, drawing heavily on McKim, Mead and White designs such as the John Codwin house of 1885. The organization of the Weeks' house is a successful version of that used for the Lyon house on lots #30 & #31. Here the central stair tower projects to form a logical and graceful termination for the eaves of the two main angled masses. Horizontality is emphasized by a flared overhanging roof, a molding between the two stories on the left, and a balustrade atop the one story porch on the right. This house, whose long, low spacious mass is clad with shingles and opened to its environment through porches and windows, typifies the best qualities of seaside resort architecture in the late nineteenth century. Although not confirmed, this house may well have been designed by Beal.

On September 6, 1894, King also sold lot #34 to Charles M. Baker of Brookline for $1.[73] Baker was a Boston banker[74] and a friend of Jones.[75] Baker proceeded to buy lots #36 & #37 on July 17, 1895, for $1.[76] On July 18 he bought lot #1, except for the pumping house and appliances of the Chapoquoit Water Co. which were located thereon, also for $1.[77] By 1907 Baker had also acquired control of lots #35 & #38, the area labeled "sand hills"[78] on House's plan and part of lot #25 for a boathouse.[79] His multi-purchases and failure to build a house right away brings the only hint of speculation into the early development of Chapoquoit. Even this does not smack of

The Warren Bailey Potter Weeks house built in 1895, with its long, low spacious mass clad with shingles and open to its environment through porches and windows, typifies the best qualities of seaside resort architecture in the late 19th century. Courtesy Ruth Andrews.

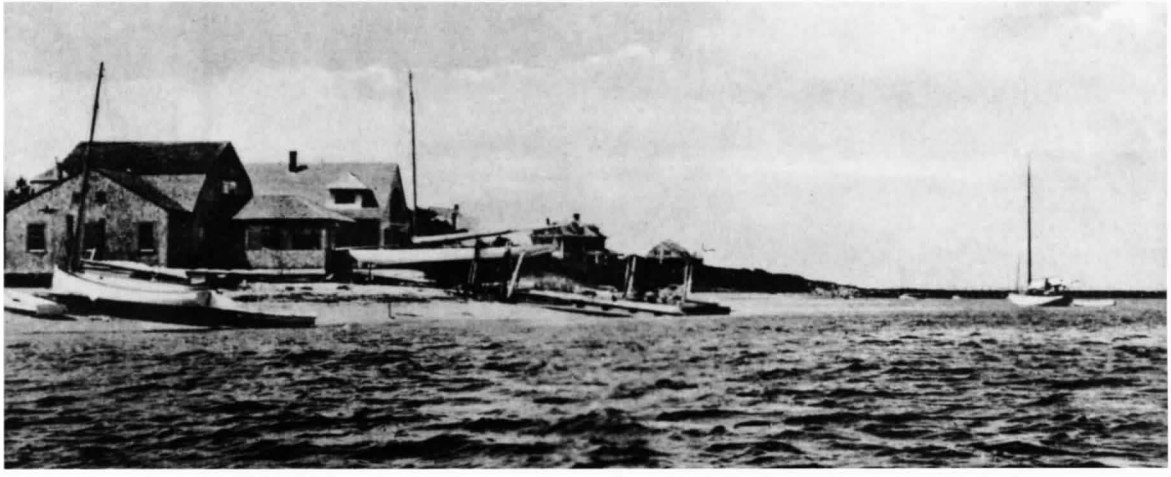
the "get rich quick" flavor of the sales at Falmouth Heights as he retained his property for many years and did build a house on lot #35 sometime before 1907.[80]

King sold lot #15 to William C. Codman of Brookline on November 13, 1894, for $1.[81] Codman was a realtor[82] and his wife was a friend of Mrs. Jones.[83] His house was constructed sometime before July 10, 1895 when he mortgaged his property to King for $6,000.[84] The house itself is a simple rectangle contained under a bracketed hip roof. A projecting front porch is contained within the body of the house on the south side and opened by three large shingled arches.

Two more sales complete the original development of Chapoquoit. The first was on July 27, 1895 when King sold lot #12 to Edward M. Farnsworth of Brookline for $1.[85] He was associated with Nichols and Farnsworth Shoe Findings Co.[86] and a cousin of King.[87] The primary interest in this house is the detail in its shingle work. Horizontality is emphasized somewhat by interspersing occasional rows of scalloped shingles. The windows have decorative scalloped heads, some of which are bowed out to form protective caps. Two scalloped layers appear in the porch eave, and diamond designs adorn the gables.

The final sale did not take place until February 27, 1902, when Jones sold lots #3 & #4 to Stephen H. Whidden of Dorchester.[88] Whidden was president of the East Boston Gas Co.[89] and a friend of King.[90] His house is one of the finest on the island with both massing and details working together to emphasize horizontality. First, the mass of the house is extended by placing verandahs on both of the short ends. On the north end the verandah is contained under the second story until it bows out in a huge arc to continue uncovered across the rear of the house. Six shingle layers around the base of the house also serve to emphasize the horizontal, while visually anchoring the house to the earth. A cream colored molding between first and second stories and an overhanging eave add to the horizontal appearance. Much of the simple open interior is paneled in cherry. This house was designed by Beal, and the architectural drawings were in the possession of the owner in 1975.

A few outbuildings complete the picture of Chapoquoit in the late nineteenth century. Most important is the water tower built in 1895.[91] It consists of a pink granite rubble base with a large round observatory platform and a crowning conical roof. Like the observatory at Falmouth Heights, it serves as a focal point for the development and stands on the island's highest point. There were also several playfully designed boathouses, now converted to homes: the club stable and the electric plant.



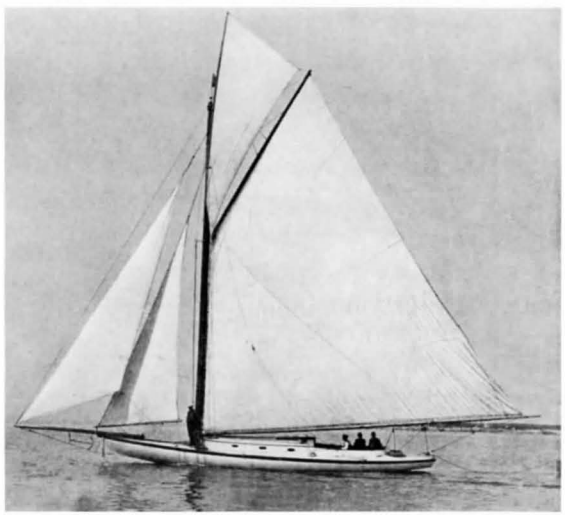
Boathouses on Chapoquoit Island, now converted into houses. Nina Heald Webber postcard collection.

Three bathhouses, with deeply overhanging roofs supported by branch-bristling cedar posts from which bathing garments were hung to dry, originally stood near the entrance until they were swept away in the hurricane of 1938. Each family had dressing rooms in these bathhouses and no one dressed for bathing at home. The bathhouses were particularly busy on Sunday morning when everyone gathered for a social bathing hour. At night the large club room in the casino was used for games, dances and plays. In addition to these pastimes, the principal activity of Chapoquoit was yachting, enhanced by the steady southwest breezes. The residents not only raced extensively but were also active in designing small yachts suited to the conditions of Buzzards Bay. They raced under the colors of the Beverly Yacht Club, which established a station in Buzzards Bay in 1895, until the Chapoquoit Yacht Club was formally organized in 1903 with 47 members.[92]

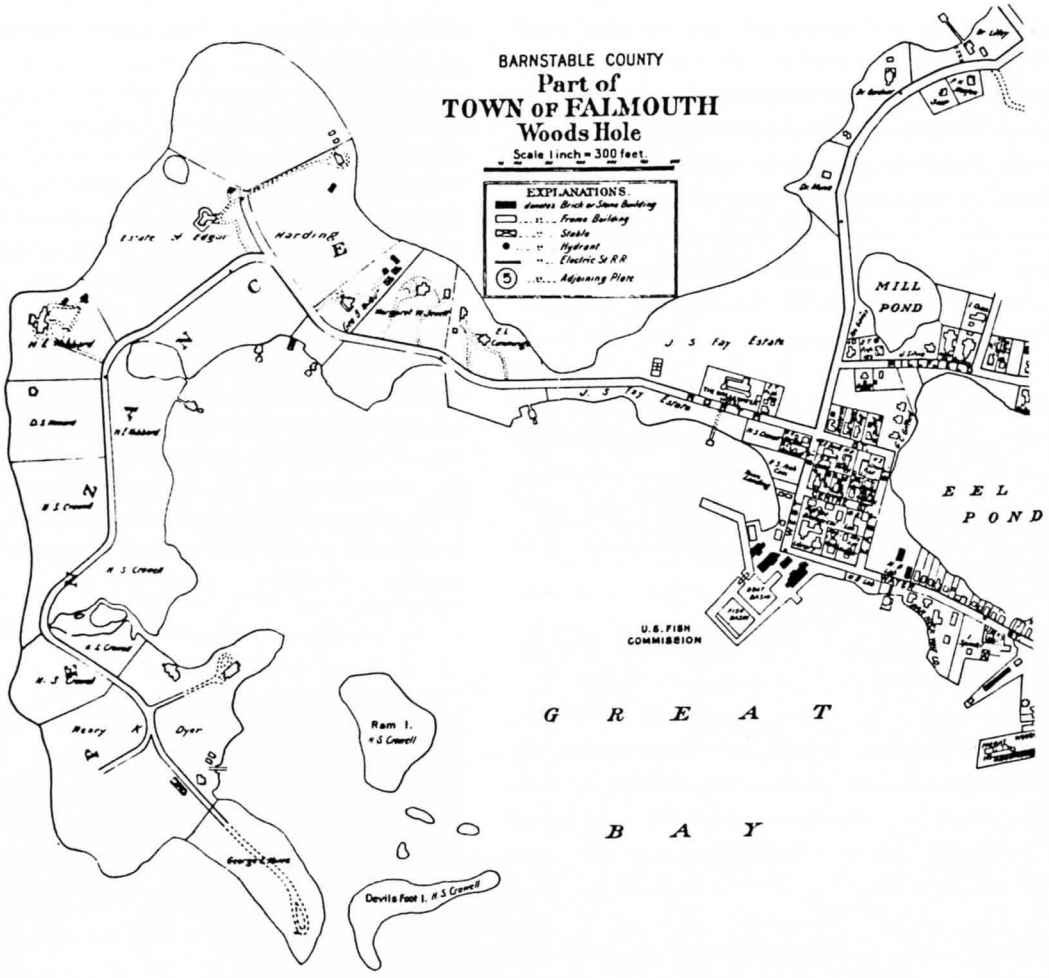
While their families enjoyed the summer days on Cape Cod, most of the men commuted daily to their Boston jobs.[93] They rode in comfort on the "Dude Train," an all parlor car subscription train which cost $1,000 per season. Operating from 1884 to 1918, it made the one and three-quarter hour trip once a day. Its passengers arrived at South Station at 9:30 a.m. and left at 3:30 p.m.[94]

A passage from *Residential Falmouth* describes the charms which drew these families to Chapoquoit. "The island of Chapoquoit is an illustration of the benefits of capital and cultivated taste applied to our New England communities. Known by the uneuphonic name of Hog Island from 1678, the improvements of a few practical businessmen soon made so distasteful a name incongruous. Bearing its original name, Chapoquoit, it is now the most aggressive portion of Falmouth. Electric lights, union stables and well constructed avenues make it the epitome of summer rest. It is one of the principal yachting centers on Buzzards Bay, the residents owning many fast boats of different classes."[95]

The close knit sense of community that has distinguished Chapoquoit since its inception surely encouraged the remarkable retention of its original character. The topography has changed only on the eastern end, where a tidal pond and creek were filled with mud dredged when West Falmouth harbor was enlarged and deepened. All of the original houses have survived with only a few minor alterations such as the enclosing of porches and addition of garages. Even the boathouses, stable and electric plant have survived although they have been converted to dwellings. Only the bath houses and casino were lost. Time has not stood still on Chapoquoit, but new construction has been in keeping with the old, employing the same natural materials[96] so that even a very modern house has not disrupted the homogeneity of the area. Chapoquoit remains today an extremely well preserved example of a well planned late nineteenth century resort.



The 30 foot sloop *Ashumet*, owned by Charles H. Jones, Sr. and called "The Champion of the Bay." From *Residential Falmouth*, p. 53. Courtesy WHHC.



Map of Penzance Point, Woods Hole, from the Barnstable County Atlas, 1908. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Commission.

Penzance Point

Penzance Point represents a complete transformation of the summer resort from that envisioned by the developers of Falmouth Heights. Instead of a strictly planned community for the many, Penzance grew as a loose collection of large estates for the wealthy few.

This luxury resort rose on the grounds of the bankrupt Pacific Guano Co. which had made fertilizer from Falmouth menhaden and guano from Pacific islands. The company was the result of a private association of the largest New York and Boston shipping merchants which had been incorporated in 1867 and was one of the major employers in the town until a debt of over $2,000,000 forced it to close in 1889.[97] On June 22, 1891 Charles E. Morrison and William E. Stowe, trustees of the firm, sold its land to William Davis of Boston subject to a $30,000 mortgage.[98] Then, on the same day, Davis transferred the land and mortgage to Horace S. Crowell of Newton, who was responsible for the development of Penzance Point.[99] Crowell also bought Ram and Devils Foot Islands from John M. Glidden, a trustee of the defunct firm.[100]

The first plan for the subdivision of Penzance Point was drawn up by Frederick O. Smith C.E. and filed at the Barnstable County Courthouse in September 1892.[101] The U-shaped neck of land was divided into 24 lots ranging from 1.5 to 9.43 acres, served by a single road running its length. The restrictions on the sale of these lots, which were to be in effect until January 1, 1905, were simple and to the point: only one dwelling house costing at least $5,000 plus outbuildings was to be built per lot, and the beaches were to be held in common.[102] Gone were the complex regulations governing the use of land at Falmouth Heights and even the hint that was included in the Chapoquoit deeds that any of the residents might want to use part of their property for business purposes. It was now assumed that people who bought summer resort property, especially expensive property, were trying to escape from everything with the taint of the city.

Another reason for the small number of restrictions may lie in the way that the land was sold. Most of the lots on the 1892 plan have the names of their future owners lightly penciled in, indicating that Crowell had made arrangements to sell his lots before he went to the expense of laying them out, and perhaps before he even bought the land. This cozy arrangement would allow the buyers to agree on rules of conduct in private and would certainly account for the fact that all the lots were sold for $1. Even with these prearranged sales, Crowell had trouble financing his project, and was forced to mortgage various parts of his buildings well into the twentieth century.

The houses at Penzance Point are large and imposing, as is to be expected with a minimum price tag of $5,000, which is over the median price quoted in contemporary builders guides.[103] Most are surrounded with outbuildings including stables and boathouses, and many have private tennis courts. They were constructed of the same natural materials as the Chapoquoit houses, but for the most part the materials were used less inventively and with more historicizing detail, as was becoming common practice at this time. The houses are further removed from the informality of the shingle style by the use of names which associate them with grand English manor houses.[104]

The first buyer was Edgar Harding of Cambridge who purchased four large lots on October 17, 1892.[105] Harding was treasurer of the Merchants Woolen Co. and part owner of the Harding, Colby Co.[106] The house which he constructed and christened "Weatherside" was a huge rambling gambrel-roofed structure, three stories in height, the first of which was protected by a verandah. The shingled mass was

"Weatherside," built by Edgar Harding in 1892, a huge, gambrel-roofed, three story structure, was demolished in 1948. From *Residential Falmouth*, p. 45 Courtesy WHHC.

"The Barnacles," built by Hermon E. Hibbard between 1892 and 1897, is a fine example of shingled horizontal flow, set off by two peak-roofed towers. From *Residential Falmouth*, p. 46. Courtesy WHHC.

"Stone Groton" built by Alexander M. Ferris between 1893 and 1897, receives its name from the beach stone walls of its first story. From *Residential Falmouth* p. 43. Courtesy WHHC.

"Izanough" sold by Alexander Ferris to George B. Wilbur in 1894 fits the Penzance style: three stories, gambrel roof, shingles, and verandah. From *Residential Falmouth*, p. 44. Courtesy WHHC.

accented by a few classical details such as alternating triangular and semi-circular pediments on the dormers and oval Adamesque windows. Unfortunately the house was demolished in 1948,[107] and is known only through a picture published in 1897, although its outbuildings still stand.

Hermon E. Hibbard bought two adjoining lots on the same day.[108] Hibbard lived in Newton and was associated with the Bryant and Stratton Commercial School, formerly known as Bryant, Stratton and Hibbard.[109] The house that he built and named "The Barnacles" is a beautiful example of shingled horizontal flow. Both roof and walls are clad with wood shingles forming a continuous skin over the surface. The central portion is set off by two peakroofed towers, the taller of which is pierced by a tall arched window and contains the stairs. The seaward side of the house is similarly divided into three portions, but by gables rather than by a projecting tower. The house, which faces the street obliquely, is sited dramatically on a knoll which sweeps down to the sea. "The Barnacles," like "Weatherside," was pictured in 1897 and so must have been built sometime between 1892 and 1897.

The next lots sold were to Alexander M. Ferris, a Newton stockbroker,[110] on August 24, 1893.[111] His house, like the others, is a large three story shingled gambrel roof structure, but is compacted rather than stretched horizontally. It receives its name, "Stone Groton," from the beach stone walls of its first story. The design is unified by the roof that embraces the upper two stories and then sweeps out to form the roof of the verandah. This house, too, is pictured in 1897 sitting on a hill, looking out to sea.

Ferris bought two more lots on November 10, 1893. These lots, which adjoined his other property, were sold for $8,000, the only instance of a sale by Crowell not being disguised by a $1 price tag.[112] Ferris, who had bought the lots subject to a mortgage, resold them on November 23, 1884, to George B. Wilbur of Boston, still subject to the mortgage.[113] The high price makes it almost certain that a house had been built on the property before Crowell sold it in 1893, although the deeds make no mention of it. This house, called "Izanough," fits the typical Penzance mold: three stories, gambrel roof, shingles and verandah.

The next lot was sold with buildings to Francis H. Learned of Boston on April 12, 1895.[114] This sale appears to have been a mere formality, for Learned, whose name had been penciled on that lot, resold it on the same day to Walter J. Brown of Weston for $8,000.[115] The following year Brown sold the

Elaborate boat house of the H.E. Hibbard residence "The Barnacles" with Woods Hole spritsail boats at float, ca. 1895. Courtesy *The Enterprise*.

property back to Crowell,[116] who promptly sold it to Henry K. Dyer of New York.[117] The house, called "The Anchorage," was also pictured in 1897. It differs from its neighbors in its almost Georgian Revival formality. The central portion of this symmetrically organized house was recessed with an enclosed porch in the second story, and was flanked by two shingled gables with full length bow windows. The shingles were painted yellow and the dark red hip roof was adorned with a Palladian pediment. "The Anchorage" burned down in February, 1936 and was rebuilt by its new owner in a more open, lighter style.

No further sales were made until June 13, 1900 when W. Harry Brown of Pittsburgh bought the two entrance lots for $1.[118] The house, called "Driftwood," was vertically and irregularly massed with many gables. It was entirely shingled except for its rubble granite base and chimney stacks and Tudor beam facades. "Driftwood" was torn down in 1984.

Penzance as a whole must have presented a picture of stark grandeur. Its entrance, which lies at sea level, is still almost bare of vegetation. The land takes on height and life until it reaches a tree-covered crest at the lots of Harding and Hibbard, then slowly sinks back down to the sea. The houses are sited dramatically, and all of the remaining original properties are visible from the entrance. The appearance of Penzance Point has changed quite dramatically since the early twentieth century when there were few trees to conceal the grand houses or soften the bare contours of the peninsula. Several of the early houses have disappeared and many new ones have been sandwiched in as the large estates were carved up. The wealthy resort life which reached a crescendo in the early twentieth century lingers on here, and its underpinnings, the idealization of turn of the century exurban living, remain strong.

"Driftwood" was built by W. Henry Brown in 1898. Vertically and irregularly massed, with many gables, it was shingled except for its rubble granite base, chimney stacks and Tudor beam facades. "Driftwood" was torn down in 1984. Agnes Dyer Warbasse photo album, ca. 1898. Courtesy WHHC.

Effect On Falmouth

Falmouth changed dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century as the influx of summer visitors expanded and stimulated its economy. Town reports and business directories show that many former seamen and farmers had become surveyors and carpenters,[119] while newspaper advertisements show that others had become merchants. The houses along Main Street were gradually replaced by shops selling such varied goods as clothing, jewelry, food, harnesses, etc. as the townspeople became more dependent on manufactured products. The town as a whole was altered physically as miles of new roads were built and the previously unoccupied coastline was covered with summer homes. The architectural taste of the community was also affected as modern houses of the type found in contemporary builders guides stood shoulder to shoulder with the older Georgian and Federal homes and the still older Cape Cod cottages.

Initially stimulated by the attentions of outsiders, Falmouth aggressively pursued its future as a resort town. Simeon D. Deyo, in his lengthy history of Barnstable County, noted this fact and a reason behind it. "That sensible practice, happily increasing among city people, of checking themselves each year in the rush and hurry of business, to take a vacation at the seaside, has already modified to a great extent, the resources and prospects of Cape Cod. . .This is especially true of Falmouth where several people of large means claim their residence. More than one-half the taxes of this town are paid by four such families."[120] Having noted the advantages that the resort business had brought to Falmouth, Deyo went on to describe one of the ways in which the town courted it. Liberal sums were expended annually by the several towns to improve the roads,[121] summer business increased almost in proportion. "Falmouth has thus far been the lead in this respect. . .[122] The prominence of this vicinity as a summer resort is steadily increasing and rapidly becoming the chief characteristic of the town."[123]

The people of the town also approved of their resort status, and one catches something of the local pride in Falmouth's rosy future in the many newspaper articles and several books devoted to the subject. Thomas J. McLane, writing for the Board of Trade in 1896, summed up contemporary feeling particularly well, on the subject of "Falmouth as a Summer Resort." "It is safe to say that in no place on the coast of Massachusetts can a finer view be had than that obtained at many points in Falmouth. . . No better boating and fishing can be found in the State, and the facilities for saltwater bathing are all that could be desired. No prettier drives, either through country roads or beach roads, can be wished for. Everything is on a generous scale. The town roads of Falmouth, kept in repair, and used as summer drives, equal about one hundred and fifty miles in length. More are being constructed. Our summer visitors and resident city people will endorse every claim of Falmouth to be a beautiful town. That we appreciate our visitors, is shown by our willingness to make such improvements as will conduce to their comfort. Falmouth lay quietly dozing by the sea, unknown to people who would gladly have availed themselves of the opportunity to visit and enjoy such a place. . . Here was everything needed to make a perfect summer home–fishing, boating, driving, with pleasant views; nothing was needed but that the old town should realize its advantages. . . Pastures were turned into lawns; wild woodland into well-kept grounds; beautiful shady avenues were constructed; money began to circulate; and the good old town awoke. Today, with its natural advantages, Falmouth should be, and is, in the front rank of summer resorts."[124]

Having reviewed with pride Falmouth's resort history, McLane went on to enumerate the benefits the town had reaped from its summer visitors.

"The earliest tax list available, which is of the year 1826 shows that the valuation of the town was $732,000, and the tax assessed was $2,800. The valuation increased only $500,000 in forty years; but from 1876-1896 the valuation increased to $6,500,000 and the taxes assessed were about $41,000 with a very low rate. . . Falmouth has been particularly fortunate, as a rule, in having as residents liberal people who are also wealthy. When wealth and liberality are combined, somebody is going to be benefited. For instance: Falmouth needed a park. . . One of our residents, Mr. J.S. Fay, saw the necessity and gave a beautiful tract of land bordering on one of the finest lakes within the limits of the town. . . At Penzance, Chapoquoit, Sippewissett, Megansett and Quissett, as well as in other parts of Falmouth, fine houses are being constantly added to swell the beauty as well as the valuation of the town."[125]

Not only had the town been transformed socially, economically and physically, but the force which had effected the changes had been changing as well. This was true not only of Falmouth but of the nation as a whole. Roger Hale Newton[126] divided the gradual change into six phases which are useful in understanding what happened in Falmouth. In the early nineteenth century, from 1800-30, the summer resort was primarily a health resort with life centering on a hotel and mineral springs. This was followed by a nostalgic period, 1830-65, during which the widening gap between urban and rural standards of living were romantically emphasized. After 1850 eclecticism crept into the resort architecture under the influence of pattern book writers like Downing.

Falmouth Heights falls into the fourth period, 1865-80, which was characterized by freedom, a fresh approach to nature and outdoor living, a conscious attempt to respond to the building site and to experiment with local materials, and an emphasis on informal family life. Already the industrial revolution had started to alienate city dwellers from the country. As we saw in the plan for the Heights, they did not know how to respond to a rural setting and ended up relying on city guidelines.

Chapoquoit, and to a certain extent Penzance Point, fall into the fifth category, 1880-1905. Newton calls this the "Golden Age" which brought the greatest freedom and originality in terms of plans, siting, use of materials and ideas of comfort. It was also the time when the resort came of age and cut its ties with the city. Coinciding with the post-bellum industrial bonanza, resort life became ever more lavish, and so was lifted beyond the grasp of the common man. Penzance, with its named estates and use of historicizing detail was also somewhat influenced by the sixth category, characterized by "Antiquarian Lust." By the turn of the century the freedom of the shingle style succumbed to a fascination with past styles, especially the classical, and where once originality had prevailed, slavish copying became the order of the day.

Falmouth presents, in microcosm, the architectural changes of the second half of the nineteenth century, not only in the three areas examined, but in the town as a whole. A drive around the town gives ample illustration of both the variety and quality of this architecture not only as practiced by the great architects of the period, like H.H. Richardson, W.R. Emerson and the firm of McKim, Mead and White, but also as it was interpreted by their rural followers.

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The West Falmouth windmill, built in 1787, with a turnstile at the end of the fence on the right, next to the gate. Photo by Baldwin Coolidge, ca. 1895. Courtesy WHHC.