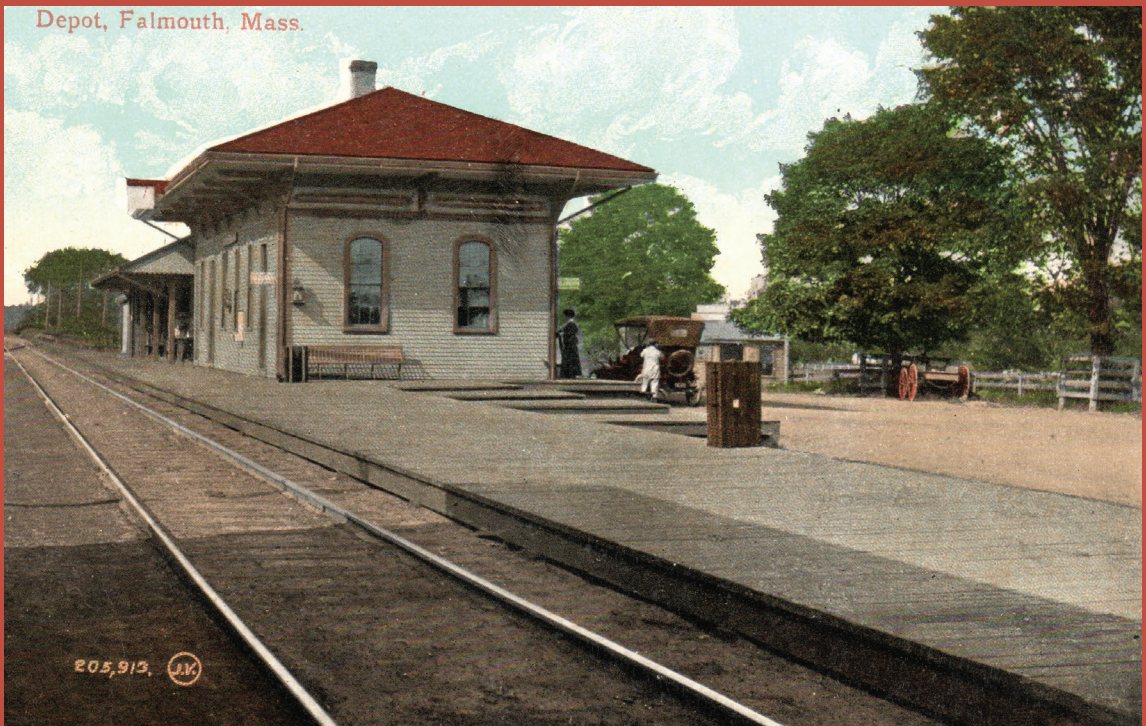




# Sailsail

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**On the Front Cover:** The original Falmouth Station, built in 1872 and used for more than forty years.  
Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

**On the Back Cover:** The Dr. James M. Watson home at Watson's Corner. Photo by Susan Fletcher Witzell.



Left: Margaret Gifford portrays Katharine Lee Bates on the 2007 parade float of the Falmouth Historical Society. Photo by Leonard Miele. Right: The Dr. Francis Wicks House, at the northwest corner of the Village Green, adorned with bunting for the Christmas season. Photo by Leonard Miele.



Falmouth's Village Green decorated with Christmas lights in 1998. Photo by Kathy Sharp Frisbee.







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## WOODS HOLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

*A lively small museum with changing exhibits and  
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## From the Editors

The opening article in this 2019 Winter issue of *Spritsail* recounts how the coming of the railroad to Falmouth and Woods Hole after the Civil War impacted agriculture, commerce, and tourism in the area. Paul Dreyer also traces the history of the Falmouth train station on Depot Avenue and how its restoration has benefitted the town and her many visitors.

Susan Witzell presents a biographical sketch of James and Kate Watson and their civic contributions to Falmouth at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Today we would call them a “power couple.” Dr. Watson was active in church and town activities, and Kate Watson was one of the town’s prominent musicians as well as an early curator of the Falmouth Historical Society.

San Lyman evokes living in Woods Hole during the 1950s and 1960s. She presents her reminiscences in a nostalgic pictorial essay.

Janet Gardner traces the Christmas traditions that have evolved in Falmouth over the past 100 years. She describes the holiday events on the Village Green, the neighborhood celebrations throughout the town, and the growth of the annual holiday parade.

### WINTER HAIKUS

---

The white winter moon  
Stuns the cold earth with silence.  
Our pond shines silver.

---

Crow lands on white branch.  
Black wings make a snow shower.  
The pine tree glistens.

Olivann Hobbie

# The Railroad Comes to Falmouth

*By Paul C. Dryer*

## Cape Cod Central Railroad

The first New England railroads, a trio of lines radiating from Boston to Lowell, Worcester, and Providence, were completed in 1835, and rail service reached Plymouth in 1845. A line from Middleborough to Wareham and then to Sandwich was completed in May 1848. Cape Cod did not get a railroad connection until the Old Colony Railroad completed its line to Wareham and Sandwich. In 1854 the line was extended to Barnstable, Yarmouth, and then the port of Hyannis, where steamers docked for trips to the islands. Tracks were extended to Wellfleet in January 1871 and to Provincetown in July 1873.

This expansion in southeastern Massachusetts should be viewed against the rapid industrialization of the U.S. after 1865, with earlier efforts marking incremental progress in the use of the railroad to further economic growth. The railroad age had started in the 1830s in Great Britain, when lines were laid to haul both passengers and freight (often ore from mines). But even earlier, in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1826, the Granite Railroad used three horse-pulled wagons riding on iron-covered wooden rails to haul stone from a quarry to a dock at Boston Harbor. After the Civil War, every town wanted to be connected

to the railroad. In the 1880s seventy-one thousand miles of track were laid, most of it west of the Mississippi, a boom enabled in part by the federal land grants offered in the 1862 Morrill Act that established Land Grant Colleges in the states. The taking, or granting, of land for railroad right-of-way was central to the growth of the many lines that crisscrossed the Northeast and the Midwest.



Railroad yard, Woods Hole, March 11, 1902. Photo by Baldwin Coolidge. Courtesy Woods Hole Historical Museum.

Joseph Story Fay, a prosperous Boston merchant, was the first of the summer visitors and one of the most generous. He had purchased a large farm in Woods Hole in 1850, when Falmouth and Woods Hole were still



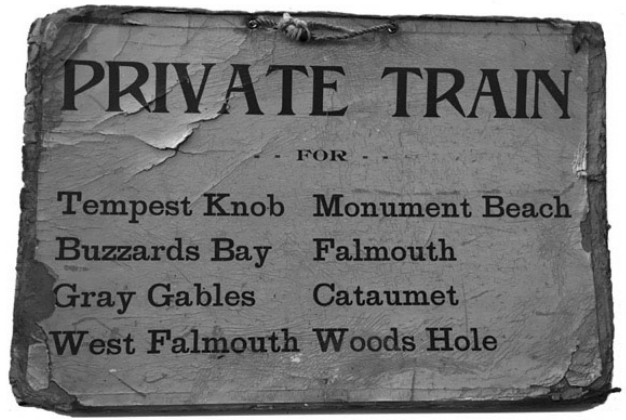
served by stage lines with four horses on each stage. Recognizing the importance of bringing the railroad to Woods Hole, he gave a strip of land wide enough to serve as a right-of-way from Oyster Pond to Woods Hole.

In 1861 a group of businessmen in Falmouth petitioned the legislature to grant a charter for a line from Cohasset Narrows (Buzzards Bay) to Woods Hole, and approval was given on April 11, 1861. The next day, the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, and construction was postponed. In 1864 a new name, The Cape Cod Central Railroad, was approved by the legislature, but the first train arrived in Falmouth and Woods Hole only on July 18, 1872. This new line was 17.5 miles from Cohasset Narrows, with stations at North Falmouth, West Falmouth, Falmouth, and Woods Hole.

### Tourism Impacts

The impact of the railroad was felt immediately in the area: a small agrarian community and dying maritime economy was transformed into a summer resort area as well as a business center. The ferries to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket were moved here from Hyannis. In 1872 the Island Home met the first train, and for many decades Woods Hole offered the shortest route to the islands. In the first season over 1,000 people per day rode the train to Woods Hole.

The Martha's Vineyard Railroad was a 3-foot (914 mm) narrow gauge railroad on the island of Martha's Vineyard. It was built in 1874 to



The station stops for the private train. Courtesy of the Bourne Historical Society.

connect the Oak Bluffs wharf with the section of Edgartown known as Katama. However, the line closed in 1896.

Large estates were built in Falmouth, and summer tourists were attracted to the beaches and temperate climate of the shore and islands. Families from New York and other parts of New England used the railroad for their summer visits to Falmouth and Martha's Vineyard. The building of large hotels to accommodate families that stayed for several weeks and often returned each summer dates from this time (see *Spritsail*, Summer 2019).

### Business Impacts

Freight trains were also central to this period of intense railway activity. The Falmouth Station was a very active spot in town with the freight yards often filled with freight cars. Many businesses were dependent on the railroad, including Falmouth Coal Co., Lawrence Grain

Co., and Wood Lumber Co. Every evening Sam Cahoon sent carloads of iced fresh fish from Woods Hole to Boston and New York. Strawberry growers in East Falmouth sent carloads of iced fresh strawberries to Boston, where they became a welcome addition to urban markets and a major source of revenue for local growers.

In 1890 Captain Lewis H. Lawrence built a grain mill on the west side of the railroad tracks and a railroad siding was constructed to bring freight cars to the mill. Frederick T. Lawrence, Jr., the grandson of Captain Lawrence, described this siding in *The Book of Falmouth* (p. 79):

The railroad's freight platform extended to within 42 feet of the Lawrence Bros. mill. It was large enough to unload wagons, autos, cement and the annual circus. Later it was expanded east to an entrance off Palmer Avenue with the addition of three tracks.

The Pacific Guano Company on Long Neck, now Penzance Point, in Woods Hole was an initial beneficiary of the railroad. The company produced fertilizer for almost 25 years, processing guano from islands in the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico with fish meal made from locally caught fish. In 1872 it produced and shipped out by rail 16,000 tons of fertilizer. The processing plant closed in 1889, primarily because inorganic fertilizers took over the market.

Another beneficiary of the railroad extension was the Falmouth Coal Company. Wilbur Dyer came from Westfield, Maine to Falmouth in 1912 as the railroad station master, and he later established the Falmouth Coal Company. His son, Arnold, notes that when the family arrived both the old and new stations were still standing; the older building was later demolished. Wilbur Dyer bought the two independent coal companies which owned the land behind the *Enterprise* office, where there were coal bins and later oil tanks alongside a rail siding. Arnold's grandson, Wilbur (Bill) Dyer, continues with the fourth generation of the business as the Falmouth Energy Company.

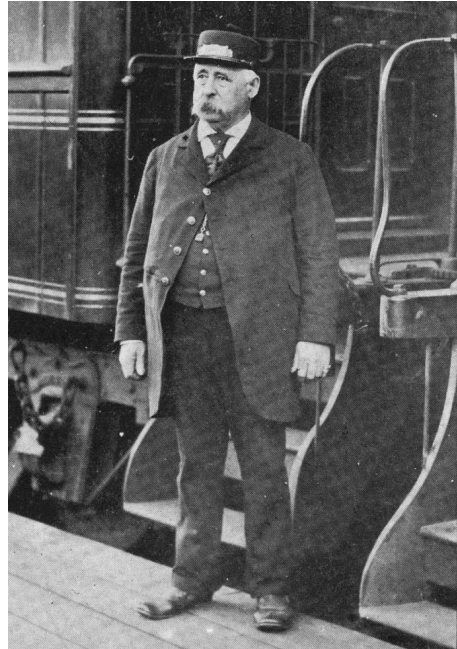
### The Flying Dude

In 1884 several industrialists asked the Old Colony Railroad to offer a private train by subscription from Boston to Falmouth and Woods Hole. The inaugural trip of The Flying Dude left Boston at 3:10 p.m. on June 13, 1884, and arrived in Woods Hole at 4:50 p.m. in time for the 5:00 p.m. ferry to Martha's Vineyard. For thirty-two years there were



The Dude Train. Photo by Baldwin Coolidge. Courtesy Historic New England.

enough paying passengers for this railroad service to run from June to early October each year. Though subscription trains had become common in this age of industrial barons, the Dude was described in a 1904 *Enterprise* article as "the finest train in New England." Conductor Augustus Messer was a dignified presence on the Dude from 1890 to 1904, and spent thirty-two years on the Boston to Woods Hole run. He was familiar with all the passengers, including President Grover Cleveland, who would alight at the Gray Gables Station, near the Summer White House in Bourne. In June 1904 Conductor Messer started his first run of the season, but suffered a stroke from which he never recovered. The Flying Dude made its last trip on October 2, 1916.



Augustus Messer. Courtesy Woods Hole Historical Museum.

## Get Me to the Church on Time

On July 1, 1904, at Monday noon in St. Barnabas Church, the wedding of Mary Emmons and John Parkinson, Jr. was solemnized. The young couple are "society leaders in the summer set of Falmouth and Buzzards Bay," in the words of *The Enterprise*. A special train from Boston brought many of the two hundred guests, including "the fashionable set summering along the bay shore." The train left the city at 9:25 Monday morning, arriving in Falmouth at 11:45, when the guests were met by carriages to take them to the church.

While the wedding guests enjoyed a wedding breakfast at the home of the bride's father, the "bride and groom took their departure on the 2:27 train for Boston," continuing on to New York before departing for a honeymoon in Europe.

— Olivann Hobbie



## The Railroad Bridges and the Cape Cod Canal

The Cape Cod Canal was opened in 1914. Its construction between 1909 and 1911 necessitated a major relocation of the tracks between Buzzards Bay and Sagamore as well as a bridge to carry the Cape Cod railroad across the canal at Buzzards Bay. The present vertical lift bridge opened in 1935; until 1955, its span of 544 feet made it the world's longest vertical lift bridge.

### Other Impacts

The hurricane on September 21, 1938, was a devastating event for Falmouth train service as more than four miles of rail were washed out. There was extensive damage to the Woods Hole railroad yard, many of the railroad cars, and the electrical system. Service was restored later that year, and regular passenger service continued to Falmouth and Woods Hole until June 30, 1959.

In 1940, the U.S. Army leased Camp Edwards as a training facility as part of its mobilization strategy for World War II. A railroad spur was built from the North Falmouth Station to transport construction materials to Camp Edwards to build barracks and other buildings for over 30,000 men. Over 18,000 employees worked three shifts, completing 30 buildings a day for a period of 25 days until January 1941. This impressive feat served as a prototype for other camps built during World War II. During the war, the camp functioned as a departure point for troops as well as a training ground for anti-aircraft units.

## Falmouth Station

The original Falmouth Station was built in 1872 of wood and provided service for more than forty years. In 1913 a new "fancy" brick station was constructed with stone cornices, a red tiled floor and an iron and glass canopy.



The refurbished Falmouth Station, built in 1913-1914, with stone cornices, a red tiled floor, and an iron and glass canopy. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

However, after the construction of the interstate highways in the 1950s and the increasing use of cars and buses to get to Falmouth and Woods Hole, rail service declined to the point that the station was scheduled to be razed. A group of concerned citizens petitioned that the station be saved. The restoration of the Falmouth Station, completed in 1989 with funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, included improved facilities, a ticket area, and exterior landscaping.

The most recent refurbishment was completed in 2017 under the auspices of the Economic



### Station Heater

The original Falmouth station, built in 1872, was a wooden structure heated by a large cast iron station heater. This heater, built in 1868 in Boston, was used in the Station until 1914, when a new station was built of brick. The Station Heater was stored in the carpenter's shop of the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Woods Hole for more than 50 years until the shop was rebuilt. At that time, it was moved by Elwood Eastman and stored for almost another 50 years in the basement of Eastman's Hardware, now Ace Hardware, in Falmouth Village. Elwood's son, Charles E. Eastman, from West Falmouth, offered the heater to the rehabilitated station in 2017 and provided details of the history of this 150-year-old cast-iron heater.

Photo by Paul Dryer.

Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (which owns the property and leases it to EDIC). The Station serves Peter Pan Bus Lines (with service from Woods Hole and Falmouth to Boston, Logan Airport, Providence and New York City); the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, with service from Woods Hole to Falmouth and other towns on the Cape; the seasonal Trolley to Woods Hole; and the local taxi companies.

The celebrated Shining Sea Bikeway crosses Depot Avenue, a name reflected in the section of track still at the site. The Bikeway, built on the old railroad right-of-way in the 1970s and running for more than ten miles from Woods Hole to North Falmouth, attracts many visitors. These bikers and walkers of all ages can stop for refreshment, lunch or breakfast, and a short rest at the handsomely restored station. Each October, participants in the Cape Cod Marathon use the Bikeway for a few of their 26.2 miles.

Falmouth Station continues to be a major entry point to the town. Residents, public and private sectors, and town and state officials showed enormous interest in preserving this historic building for the town. Falmouth and her visitors have greatly benefitted from their success.

**About the Author:** Paul Dryer, an environmental engineer, worked as a consultant for 40 years in planning and implementing environmental and water resource management programs in the United States, Latin America, the Mideast, Central Asia, and the Far East. He is currently a member of the Falmouth Planning Board and the Coastal Resiliency Action Committee.

References: Archives, Falmouth Historical Society and Woods Hole Historical Museum; Choate, Philip H. "Woods Hole Branch" Cape Rail Dispatch, 2005; Droege, John A., *Passenger Terminals and Trains*, 1969; Eldrege, Andrew T., *Railroads of Cape Cod and the Islands*, 2003; Farson, Robert H., *Cape Cod Railroads*, 1990; Fisher, Charles E., *The Story of the Old Colony Railroad*, 1919; Karr, Ronald Dale, *The Rail Lines of Southern New England: A Handbook of Railroad History*, 1995; Smith, Mary Lou, ed., *The Book of Falmouth*, 1986; Smith, Mary Lou, ed., *Woods Hole Reflections*, 1983; Wolmar, Christian, *The Great Railroad Revolution: The History of Trains in America*, 2012.

# Watson's Corner

*By Susan Fletcher Witzell*

Watson's Corner is one of the busiest intersections in Falmouth. It is the three-way junction of North Main Street, Locust Street, and West Main Street. One road leads north as North Main Street-Palmer Avenue, one leads east to the Falmouth Village Green, and the third road, Locust Street, leads south to Woods Hole. Who were the Watsons? And why is this corner named "Watson's Corner"?



Watson's Corner. Photo by Susan Fletcher Witzell.

On the northeast corner of the intersection is a large Victorian house painted rusty red and trimmed with buff. The house displays the varied textures of clapboard, fancy shingles, false half-timbering, and a rear

salt-box roof line associated with the Queen Anne style of the late 19th century. At a late date for this style, it was built in 1896 by Dr. James Maurice Watson; it is his family name that is attached to the corner intersection.

Dr. Watson was one of three prominent doctors in Falmouth from the 1880s to the 1930s. The other two were Dr. Lombard C. Jones, a veterinarian, and Dr. Alexander T. Walker.

All three contributed to the professional and civic life of Falmouth. James Maurice Watson, born in East Sangerville, Maine on January 16, 1860, was a graduate of Foxcroft Academy (Foxcroft, Maine) and of Maine Central Institute (Pittsfield, Maine) in 1883.

Dr. Watson first came to Falmouth in January 1884 to begin the study of medicine with Dr. Walker. At the same time he taught school in West Falmouth. He was paid \$120 for

teaching nine and three-fifths weeks in the winter term of 1884 and \$150 for teaching twelve weeks in the spring of 1884. By 1888 he had earned medical degrees from the University of the City of New York and from the New York Homeopathic Medical College.





Like other local doctors, Dr. Watson had a pharmacy as well as a medical practice. A photo of the store at the corner of what is now Water Street and Luscombe Avenue in Woods Hole shows the old flat-roofed Nickerson store repurposed as a pharmacy. This was the first pharmacy in Woods Hole, beginning a long tradition of pharmacies in that location. Photo ca. 1880s, courtesy Woods Hole Historical Museum.

The Falmouth Town Report for 1891 listed the marriage of James Maurice Watson and Kate Franklin Jones, both of Falmouth, on October 14th. They were married at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church by the Reverend H.H. Smythe. The groom was 31 and the bride was 28. Eventually they would have three children: Maurice Franklin Watson, Camilla Watson, and Katherine Watson. Kate was the daughter of Captain Benjamin Franklin Jones, a Civil War hero, and the granddaughter of Silas Jones, the captain of two of the Swift whaling ships. She was the sister of George Washington Jones, a longtime postmaster of Falmouth. They were raised in the house at 16 Main Street, where in earlier years Katharine Lee Bates lived.

*The Falmouth Enterprise*, from its earliest years, had a weekly column reporting the social ac-

tivities of residents, highlights of their children's births, parties, weddings, visits to their relatives, and major events in their lives. In the 1890s, this was called "Falmouth Locals." In February 1896 there was a Grand Leap Year Ball given by the ladies of Falmouth. "Falmouth Locals" reported that "promptly at 8:30 the merry company headed by Dr. and Mrs. J.M. Watson formed into a grand march around the hall...the dancing continued until 1 o'clock when all departed to their homes, well pleased with the Leap Year Ball of 1896."

In the May 23, 1896, issue of *The Falmouth Enterprise*, it was reported that the sills and joists of Dr. Watson's new house were laid. By July 11, the house was nearing completion, but notices of other work on the house were still being printed till the end of 1896. During the construction

of the house, the Watsons lived at the former Oliver Swift house near the First Congregational Church on the north side of the Village Green (currently number 54 Main, functioning as the rectory of the Congregational Church).

The Watson house at the corner also had a large barn and stable behind it on North Main Street. Later he expanded his large house and its parlor to the east by adding an extension and enclosing part of the "piazza" (as porches were called at the time). In August 1896, "Falmouth Locals" reported that Dr. Watson's horse, standing in front of the home and attached to the doctor's buggy, panicked and ran "at a lively pace" toward the railroad station. The buggy collided with a post and was demolished. The article does not say if the horse was injured. In 1911, Dr. Watson purchased a Model 14 Buick motorcar. No more buggies and panicking horses to deal with!



In 1896 Dr. James M. Watson built his 3-story house, fronted by a large "piazza" overlooking Watson's Corner. An imposing barn and stable can be seen behind the house. Courtesy Donald W. Fish.

During the 1890s and early 1900s, Dr. Watson was mentioned frequently in the "Falmouth Locals" column. He was one of the founders in 1896 of the Gentleman's Driving Club for trotting horse races. Although it was later called Trotting Park in Teaticket, the club lasted only a half dozen years. At this time Dr. Watson was a warden of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church and served on its music committee. He had been one of the original founders of the church.

From 1906 Dr. Watson was the Falmouth school physician. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts had just enacted a law requiring children to be properly vaccinated. The October 6, 1906, *The Enterprise* stated: "don't be alarmed if he comes to your house prepared to vaccinate your children. As it is required by law." In May 1908 he was named Forest Warden for the Town of Falmouth and was chosen as the Board of Health physician in 1910. Among his other Town positions, he was also an Overseer of the Poor.

In the reticent manner of the period, "Falmouth Locals" on June 6, 1914, reported that Dr. J.M. Watson was "confined to his house by illness." In reality he had had a stroke. Dr. Watson died a day later on June 7 at the age of 54. He was much beloved in Falmouth and there was great shock at the news of his death. This beautiful obituary was written by the Reverend H.H. Smythe, the rector of St. Barnabas:

"On Sunday last the news of his sudden death spread rapidly through the Community as its members were gathering in the churches. The consciousness of its loss was instant and un-

VOL. 1, NO. 15 FALMOUTH, MASS. JUNE 17, 1886. PRICE 3 CENTS.		
<b>SHAW, BROWN &amp; CO.</b> <b>Fine Tailoring</b> At Reasonable Prices. 433 WASHINGTON ST. (Cor. of Water St.) BOSTON, - - - MASS. <small>Serves by permission to Lewis F. Clarke.</small> Rev. 277	<b>S.L. Hamlin,</b> Dealer in <b>Groceries</b> <b>PROVISIONS,</b> <b>Crain of all kinds,</b> <b>Oak &amp; Pine</b> <b>WOOD,</b> <b>Hardware,</b> All kinds of	<b>PURDUM</b> And <b>LOOK.</b> <b>Woods Holl.</b> Dealers in <b>FINE GROCERIES</b> -AND- <b>PROVISIONS.</b> A full line of the best <b>CANNED GOODS.</b> <i>Fine Butcher a Specialty.</i> <i>These have also the best food</i> <b>CIGAR IN THE WORLD.</b> Also a full line of imported cigars. <i>Give them a Call.</i>
<b>The</b> <b>Halmonly Agent.</b> <b>Lewis F. Clarke.</b> EDITOR AND PUBLISHER. Terms, \$1.00 per year In Advance.	<b>AGRICULTURAL</b> <b>Implements,</b> Also a full line of <b>Grass &amp; Garden</b> <b>Seeds.</b> Agent for the <b>CLIMAX HARROW &amp; TIGER</b> <b>RAKE.</b>	<b>Burgess Bros.</b> <b>JUST RECEIVED.</b> A fine assortment of <b>FANCY GROCERIES</b> And <b>CANNED GOODS.</b> Including <i>Richardson and Robbin's</i> <i>Rolled Tongue, Durkee's</i> <i>Salad Dressing, Olives, Ca-</i> <i>pers, Richardson's Sweet</i> <i>Corn, Rae's Olive Oil, P &amp;</i> <i>C Sardines, Condensed</i> <i>Milk, Canned Chicken, Tur-</i> <i>key, Lobster, Salmon, Cros</i> <i>and Blackwell's Pickles,</i> <i>Worcestershire Sauce, Lem-</i> <i>on and Lime Juice, Maccar-</i> <i>oni, Boneless Ham, Break-</i> <i>fast Bacon, etc &amp; etc.</i>
<b>J. M. WATSON, M.D.</b> Physician and Surgeon. Woods Holl Mass.	<b>Stationery.</b> Having enlarged my stock of <b>STATIONERY</b> I am now prepared to fur- nish my customers with all the latest and most fashion- able styles, at the lowest cash prices. Lewis F. Clarke.	
<b>MRS. N. E. MAYHEW,</b> <b>Dressmaker &amp;</b> <b>Milliner.</b> FALMOUTH, MASS. Please call and examine our \$5 & 50 cent Counter of straw Hats & Bon- nets & r. one week only.		
<b>Auction!</b> Will be sold at public auction on Saturday June 24th, the lumber used in the construction of the seats and tables at the Bi-Centennial, on the grounds where the tent was located. Per Order of the Committee. Falmouth June 17th. 1886.		

These advertisements appeared in *The Enterprise* in 1886. Note that the location of Dr. Watson's medical practice is located in "Woods Holl." Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

mistakable. Probably no one in the entire community had touched, so closely and so personally, so large a number of people for so long a period of time as has Dr. Watson.

"Dr. Watson was a true physician. He possessed warm sympathies and was quick to respond to the call of suffering. Wherever he went, he went with an open heart and open hand. He gave himself, his sympathy, his skill, his judgment ungrudgingly to all. Perhaps one of the finest things one can say of him is he will be missed by the poor. His home was always an open house, with a generous welcome to young and old. This was the natural expression of the happy life within. There are few happier homes than was his. He was a kind husband and father, a loyal friend, a beloved physician, a Christian gentleman, a true lover of men."

In November 1914, five months after Dr. Watson's death, the Probate Court in Barnstable appointed Kate Watson guardian of her minor children Maurice, Camilla, and Katherine. Like her husband, Kate was devoted to her family and was an active contributor to the Falmouth community. She was one of the early members of the Falmouth Historical Society, becoming its curator in 1904. It was noted that her long association with the town and its families aided her



skill in collecting information and preserving important records and artifacts. She obviously acted as archivist as well as curator for the Society since they observed that "the collecting, arranging and recording of gifts and their history required no small outlay of time and effort." As a founding director of the Falmouth Nursing Association in 1916, she originated the very popular annual nursing fete on the Village Green, and was a member of the Falmouth School Committee during the 1920s.

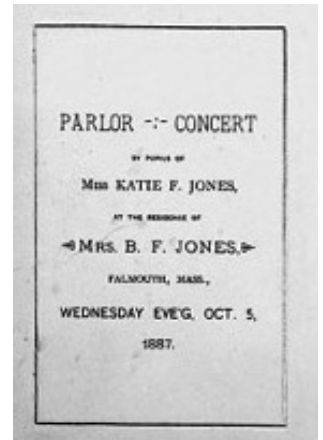
At the same time she continued to devote herself to music, always a focus of her life. She had studied piano and organ at the New En-



Kate Watson saved this theater souvenir after seeing Edwin Booth in 1885. He played the title character in "Don Caesar De Bazan," adapted from a French romantic drama. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

gland Conservatory of Music as a pupil of Carl Zeerhan, a noted organist. Kate was an accomplished musician and before her marriage had a number of piano students. Her mother's home during the 1880s was the site of recitals: guests were invited to the home of Mrs. B.F. Jones to hear the performances of the students of her daughter Kate Jones. In 1888 she attended the Southeastern Massachusetts Music Festival in Taunton where "The Messiah" was performed as well as musical programs of violin, piano, and voice. She went to the First Cape Cod Music Festival in 1889 where "Emmanuel" was presented.

Kate was the first organist of the new St. Barnabas Church,



This is a program of a parlor concert presented by Kate Watson's students in 1897 that she saved in her scrapbook. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

### Kate Watson's Grandfather

One of the first entries in Kate Watson's scrapbook was a newspaper account of a dramatic incident involving her grandfather Silas Jones. In October 1835, Silas Jones survived an attack of Pacific islanders from Nemarik, an atoll in the Marshall Islands halfway between Hawaii and the Philippines, on the whaler *Awashonks*. Silas Jones was only 20 years old, serving as the ship's third mate and most junior officer. The attack killed the captain of the *Awashonks*, Prince Coffin, and all the mates except Jones, who then became her captain and took the ship back to Hawaii, an arduous 50-day passage. Later in life he would be known as the captain of the Swifts' vessel *Commodore Morris*.

which opened in 1890, and later occasionally substituted for the regular organist. Kate's scrapbook contains newspaper clippings, invitations, images and photo cards of actors, musicians and composers, and many musical programs of opera, musicals, plays, and orchestral performances dating from 1882 to the 1920s. The earliest programs are from Omaha, Nebraska, featuring the Boston Ideal Opera Company; New York's "new" Metropolitan Opera House where she saw Lillian Russell in *La Cigale*; Madison Square Garden; the Academy of Music and Broadway theaters where she saw operas, operettas, and several performances by a Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra.

Kate Watson died on August 15, 1930. Her home, the barn, and the stable have become rental apartments. Although the house has been handsomely painted in fairly authentic Victorian colors, from older photos it is clear that the current colors are not the original ones. In any case, the exterior of the Watson house is in a

remarkable state of preservation and of a style seen in only a few other houses in Falmouth.

It is fitting that Dr. James Watson and his wife, Kate, a couple so devoted to the well-being of Falmouth, should still be remembered by the name Watson's Corner.

**About the Author:** Susan Fletcher Witzell was born in New York City, grew up in Summit, New Jersey, and moved to Woods Hole in 1972. Her background is in art, architectural history and photography, as well as book editing and design. Since 1992 she has been involved with the Woods Hole Historical Museum, where she is currently the Archivist.

Sources: *Falmouth Enterprise* digital database, Falmouth Public Library; Falmouth Historical Society, Watson Collection; *Spritsail*, Volume 4, Number 1 ("Falmouth's Village Green"); *Spritsail*, Volume 12, Number 1 ("Swift Family Whaling"); *The Book of Falmouth*.

My grateful thanks to Meg Costello and Brian Nickerson, Falmouth Historical Society; Bill Hough, *Falmouth Enterprise*; and Donald Fish.



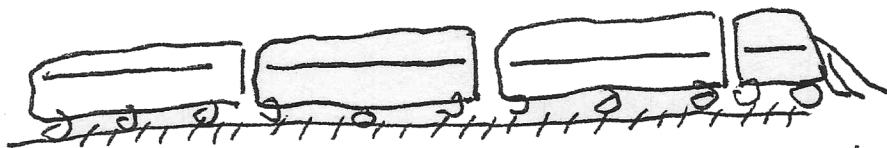
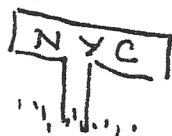
Watson house side view showing Queen Anne style asymmetrical window placement, varied textures of clapboards, shingles, and half-timbering. Photo by Susan Fletcher Witzell.

Then and Now.

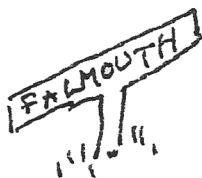
by Sam Lyman

Think back to Woods Hole in the fifties and sixties. If you can't, I'll help.

You could hop a train to Boston or New York. Imagine!



Or, if you didn't want to go to Boston or New York, but simply stay in Woods Hole? Impossible now. You have to go to Falmouth for absolutely everything.



Back then all you needed for day-to-day existence was here, right in Woods Hole.

### A List

bookstore	beauty parlor	laundromat
hardware store	barbershop	drug store
gas station	art gallery	fish market
print shop	real estate business	* liquor store
* bank	* grocery	* ice cream store
bakery	* clothing store	
* still available		

So— you could fill up your car with gas and put air in your tires. Yippee!!

You could get a haircut or a perm.

A new hammer. A paperback or the

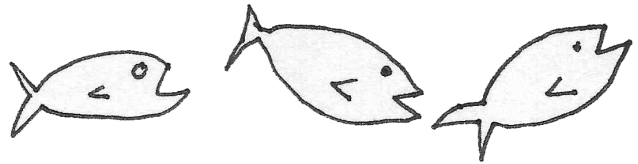
best seller of the day.

fresh-baked bread





You could get terrific fresh-caught fish any day. Sam Cahoon's Fish Market. What a loss.



The drug store was my fave. Ed Jaskun's. First it was near the Captain Kidd but then moved to Coffee Obsession's present spot. I loved it. There was a long counter seating local fishermen - and a spittoon was placed at the end. You had to be careful not to get in harm's way. Plus you could read the latest magazines until caught. And get cosmetics or prescriptions. A colorful place.



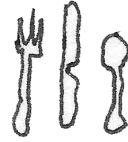
Another thing: There were doctors - even a dentist in Woods Hole. Doctors would actually come to your house to treat you. They gave you your medicine. No going to The pharmacy sick-as-a-dog to pick up your prescription. The current System seems barbaric to me. [GRRRR.]

Thank heaven we still have the Woods Hole Market. Back then it was part of Ten Acre. The proprietor was Louis Tsiknas I remember Louis filling orders for Naushton clientele. Delicious expensive viands spirited over in the mahogany Naushton launch.



Currently the concentration is on food.

We have magical dining experiences here now. Replacing the old Lee Side is Quicks Hole Tavern with sparkling innovative and delicious meals.



Landfall has expanded from a dory bar to resplendent space with waterfront views. The Captain Kidd has also been enlarged and renovated to acclaim. Across the street in place of the Fishmonger is Water Street Kitchen with a wonderful bar and superb restaurant. For daytime experience Pie in the Sky, Coffee Obsession, Quicks Hole Tacqueria and now Jimmy's Classic Eats.



yum-yum.

So. If you left Woods Hole way back then and returned now, you would be relieved. Looking down Water Street the village appears exactly the same. The same dear Woods Hole you knew so long ago.

And wasn't there a tugging in the back of your head - all the time while away, a voice which said  
 — go back to Woods Hole ?

Despite having to go to Falmouth for practically everything, you SQUARE your SHOULDERS. You say "It is WORTH it." Woods Hole is where I need to be. Woods Hole is home.



About the Author: San Lyman grew up in New York City, went to college in Pennsylvania and came to Woods Hole in the fifties. She currently lives gleefully on Millfield Street.



# 100 Years of a Beloved Holiday Tradition

By Janet Gardner

In the winter of 1919, with the country still reeling from the recently ended Great War, a small group of Falmouth residents imagined a new way to lift the spirits of the town—the erecting and lighting of a community Christmas tree on the Village Green. The idea was proposed at a Board of Trade meeting on December 4 of that year, leaving just twenty days to organize the event. *The Enterprise* report of that BOT meeting assured readers that, “It was proposed to make this affair a strictly non-sectarian festival” adding that “all the churches including the Roman [Catholic] church [would] be invited to participate in the festivities.”

And participate, they did. Within a week details were falling into place. The Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole donated the tree. The lighting was scheduled for nine o’clock on Christmas Eve, and a rehearsal had been arranged to practice the carol singing and the procession from St. Barnabas Church to the Village Green. Immediately before the lighting, a cornetist would play “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” from the steeple of the Congregational Church. These details were published in the December 13 edition of *The Enterprise*, noting that “the innovation appears to meet with general approbation.” By December 20, the newspaper had dubbed the community tree a “beautiful custom” and was encouraging the entire community to participate, hoping



The Village Green, ca. 1950. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

“it will prove so successful that it will be made a feature for future holiday festivities.”

Unfortunately, the weather chose not to cooperate with these quickly-but-carefully laid plans, as a major winter storm brought wind, snow, and ice to Southern Massachusetts. In true New England fashion, however, the organizers of the tree lighting were not to be stopped by a mere blizzard.

*The Enterprise* reported:

The Community Tree was held on Christmas Eve in spite of the inclemency of the weather. The program was carried out as arranged, with the exception that some of the carols were omitted. A good-sized crowd was present, although the number would have been much larger had people been sure the exercises were to be held. Where the weather was so unpleasant many thought that the program would be postponed, but the committee decided it was best to carry out the arrangements as planned. . . . The Christmas Tree with its colored electric lights made a very pretty picture, but it was not to be compared with the beautiful spectacle it presented on Christmas night when its branches were covered with snow. It was a sight well worth seeing.

The people of Falmouth apparently agreed with this assessment. The new tradition not only took hold, but each new generation has continued to bring its own particular flair (and sometimes its own challenges) to the lighting of the Village Green.

Twenty-five years after that first lighting, in 1944, a community tree could no longer be considered an "innovation." By that year, an official Christmas Tree Lighting Committee was listed in the *Falmouth Annual Report*, and multiple other community trees were to be found in addition to the official Falmouth town version. A tree for North Falmouth children was sponsored jointly by the Thursday Club

and the Know Your Neighbor Club. Several churches—including St. Barnabas, First Methodist Church, and the Church of the Messiah—had their own trees and held services including lighting ceremonies. The tree at the Megansett Grange held joke gifts. Though World War II was in full swing by then, *The Falmouth Enterprise* of December 1, 1944 reassured citizens who might have been concerned about shortages:

**"There will be Christmas trees for everybody this year and furthermore they will not be subject to war-time controls . . . "**

Owing to the war, the decision was made to move the official Falmouth community tree from the Village Green to the USO Clubhouse on East Main Street, which has since become the Gus Cauty Community Center. The USO Club opened in 1942, "to offer a home-like atmosphere to all the soldiers who seek recreation there." Community members were encouraged to donate small gifts to the servicemen who frequented the USO, including books, cigarettes, and playing cards as well as monetary donations to support the best gift imaginable for service members far from home: long distance telephone calls to their homes.

Times change. Twenty-five years later, when another new generation celebrated the holidays in 1969, the community was apparently not so unified in its love of Christmas pageantry. The festivities started off on a high note on December 7, with the now-annual parade welcoming Santa Claus to town and culminat-

ing in the traditional lighting of decorations on the Village Green. By now these decorations included trees along Main Street as well. *The Falmouth Enterprise* noted that the parade and lighting served as the "official pronouncement that Falmouth Stores are ready to help everyone get ready for a Merry Christmas."

Less than two weeks later, though, both spirits and lights were dimmed when vandals began attacking the town's holiday displays. More than 100 bulbs were either broken or stolen from the pole on the Green and trees along the street, and wires were broken, leaving several formerly lighted trees in darkness. One tree was torn down and thrown on the ground in front of the fire station. By December 23, the vandalism spree had spread to both public and private displays from Woods Hole to Teaticket. The front page of the paper just two days before Christmas included a headline reading "Whole Strings of Bulbs Stolen from Yule Display." There were even some dark rumblings that the traditional lighting might be cancelled in coming years, as it was becoming "very difficult for the town to maintain the holiday decorations."

Fortunately, the allure of the festive lights outweighed the fear of future vandalism, and the tradition lived on and even grew in the coming years.

The Falmouth Coal Company's Gulf Station at the corner of East Main Street and Scranton Avenue decorated with laurel roping for Christmas, ca. 1933-34. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

Another twenty-five years later, in 1994, the quickly organized tree lighting ceremony of 1919 had evolved into a multi-day Christmas by the Sea event similar to what today's Falmouth residents know as Holidays by the Sea. *The Enterprise* published a schedule of four days' worth of festivities, beginning on Thursday, December 1, with events including a Christmas Tea at The Marlborough Bed and Breakfast on Woods Hole Road and a Fashion Show at the Coonamessett Inn. Friday included Holly Days at Ashumet Holly & Wildlife Sanctuary, a "Proper English Tea" at the Palmer House Inn, and a Deck the Halls Festival at Falmouth Academy. On Saturday, various churches, hotels, and restaurants held their own celebrations, while Santa sailed into Falmouth Harbor, Woods Hole Community Association hosted its Renaissance Faire, and of course the Village Green lit up to the sound of community caroling. Sunday brought the parade on the year's theme "A Victorian Christmas" as well as a contest for the best-decorated windows for a downtown business.



Unlike the storm that dampened spirits and attendance in 1919, temperatures in the mid-fifties allowed “the largest crowd in recent years” to enjoy the events in “light jackets and shirtsleeves,” according to *The Enterprise*. The Chamber of Commerce estimated that there were around 60,000 spectators for the parade. Members of Falmouth Health and Fitness won first place in the adult walking category of the parade, as their members “stopped occasionally to do step aerobics along the way.” The grand prize went to a float by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program at St. Anthony’s Church, featuring “children snuggling under a giant quilt that covered the flatbed, with dancing sugar plums and a guardian angel above.” The window-decorating contest was won by Ivies Flowers Gardens & Gifts.

On Saturday, December 7, 2019, the carol singing and lighting of the Village Green was a highpoint in a whole suite of beloved traditions that now make up the Falmouth Holidays by the Sea Weekend. Highlights again included Santa sailing into Falmouth Harbor, the Downtown Holiday Stroll, the annual 5K

Jingle Jog and Kids’ Elf Run, and (according to the Chamber of Commerce) “the biggest small-town Christmas parade in all Southeast New England.”

As the tradition continues to develop in the coming years, those lights on the Green may seem to shine just a little brighter when you recall a bit of the hundred-year history that brought them to you.



Photos, left to right: Tamsen George and Grant Willis wear Victorian garb at the holiday parade in 2006. The famous Clydesdale horses during the holiday parade, ca. 2000. Courtesy Falmouth Museums on the Green.

### About the Author

A long-ago North Falmouth summer child, Janet Gardner has lived full-time in Falmouth since 2005. She writes both fiction and nonfiction and works at the Falmouth Public Library.