



## UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

from the archives of Museums on the Green

### Girl on the Go in 1920s Falmouth

by *Alice Andrews Miller (1913-1992)*

*Excerpted from her 1990 memoir "My Falmouth Reflections in the Mirror of My Memories."*

My family and I first came to Falmouth in 1918, after World War I. We were "Summer People."

What a chore it was to get here from Plainfield, New Jersey. We started on a train with steamer trunks, dogs, suitcases. Next came a trip on the Weehauken Ferry. The great beer wagons with their magnificent dray horses were a sight to behold.

Next we took a cab to New England Steamship or the Old Fall River Line, for a wonderful overnight ride on a boat. The arrival at New Bedford, the transfer to the *Nobska* or the *Uncatena* was fraught with anticipation of landing at Woods Hole.

The ride to Falmouth was far different from today. The route, Woods Hole Road, was made up of myriad, various and sundry curves. Twenty miles an hour was tops. Oh, that it were ever so today.

We arrived at Aunt Carrie's house on the corner of Main and Gifford St., where Acme Glass is now [1990]. When we settled in, mother always said, "I don't want to see you till Labor Day."



*Alice Miller, 19, at the Cleveland Horse Show, 1932.*

Transportation was never a worry for us kids in those days. We used either the horses from Uncle Hank's barn, my pony, or our own two feet.



*A Bit of Woods Hole Road near Falmouth, Mass.*

*Woods Hole Road, c.1910.*

It was nothing to walk to the Heights for a ballgame.

Whoever would imagine inviting your pony in for breakfast? Well, yours truly did quite frequently. Neddy waited patiently, reins over the back of my chair, till I finished, and we would be off to the four winds. We would ride the Beebe Woods trails, ending up at the top

of the Moors. We would gallop along the crest of the Moors, down the old beach road (Surf Drive), over to Shore Street and home.

One of the most distinguished things about Main Street was the abundance of large trees, full length. There were no curbstones or sidewalks then. Remember the lovely bandstand on the village green, and that beautiful watering trough at the head of the green that our horses never missed?

Behind the Old Town Hall were long sheds, lean-tos, where the Beebes as well as we girls used to tether our animals in big iron rings, then do whatever we had planned.

The roads off Route 28 were mostly dirt. Central Avenue, Maravista, how we enjoyed these stretches of open road at full gallop. Davisville was the only paved one. Lakeview, Jones Road, Gifford Street



*Town Hall, Falmouth, Mass.*

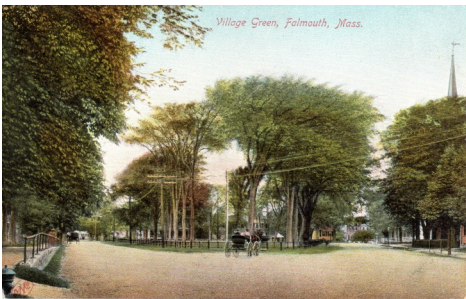
*Town Hall, c.1900, where Peg Noonan Park is today.*

beyond the barn, were all dirt.

Would you believe that at the corner of Jones Road and Palmer Avenue there was a dear old man with a sign marked STOP on one side and GO on the other with the appropriate red and green background. He sat under a big umbrella and trotted out when needed. He responded even to people on horseback. He was a character all right and we had such fun watching him do his duty.

When visitors came, Hyannis was the place to go for a day trip. Two and a half hours—that's how long it took [to get there by car]. This was due to the winding road between Falmouth and Hyannis, through Mashpee woods, down over wooden bridges, around blind curves.

To drive on Brick Kiln Road was an experience. It was dirt, naturally, and just like a roller coaster, up hill and down dale. It had immaculately tended vegetable and strawberry crops, owned by farmers who loved the land. Their love radiated through the produce—every bit from that land. You could see the earth reflected in the eyes and weather beaten faces of those who harvested the fields. What a study in character.



*Village Green, c1905, with horse fountain.*



*Policeman Norman Wright directing traffic in North Falmouth c1925.*

Our summer visits ceased around 1931. I went to school in Switzerland, then back to Cleveland to the Laurel School. Then I went up to the river, the St. Lawrence that is, with my aunt Mrs. Philip van Rensselaer Schuyler Church.

Upon my return to Falmouth in 1958, it was a revelation to see

the road opened up to Highfield and Tanglewood, by the depot. All of my early memories were of the big, thick, heavy chain that used to be strung across Depot Avenue between the stone posts . . . Do Not Enter.



*The Beebes maintained carriage lanes as well as trails through their woods, and allowed visitors to use them at designated times.*

I can't help thinking of how, long ago, it was comparable to a religious experience, a never to be forgotten one, to enter Beebe Woods at the old green gate [on Locust Street]. This was before the fire of 1947. It was like entering a house of God, a cathedral, the trees went up, up, up so high, so tall, so majestic, they enfolded you, put their arms around you. It took your breath away, a feeling of reverence.

Now here I am living in Beebe's Woods, in quiet, quaint, heaven-on-earth Falmouth.