



## UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

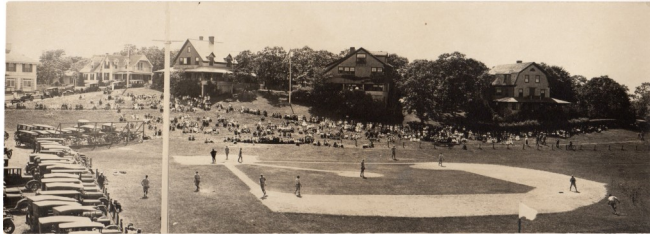
from the archives of Museums on the Green

### **Honey Fitz at the Heights**

*by Meg Costello*

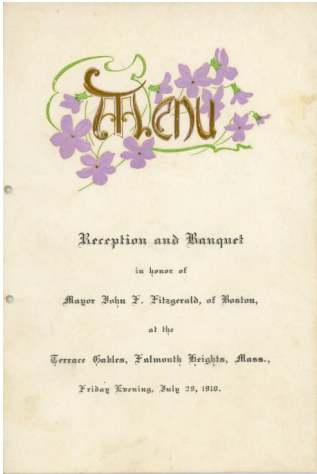
On July 29, 1910, a banquet was held at the Terrace Gables Hotel in honor of the sitting mayor of Boston, John (“Honey Fitz”) Fitzgerald. The mayor was spending his summer vacation in a rented house above the Falmouth Heights ballfield.

The Boston politico, who had already served as a state senator and U.S. Congressman, was thought to be harboring hopes of a run for governor.



If so, he would need to appeal to wide swathes of the state outside of the Democratic cities, and not least to solidly Republican Cape Cod. These electoral considerations may have played into his choice of Falmouth as a vacation destination that summer.

The Terrace Gables was the pre-eminent hotel in the Heights and one of the grandest in all of Falmouth. Its proprietors, Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Draper, were only too happy to stage an impressive affair for this important guest. Their menu for the Friday occasion respected Catholic dietary custom by showcasing a wide array of seafood. Paired with each course was a selection of alcoholic beverages that would have appealed to big city Democratic visitors, but might have brought a tear to the eye of local Prohibition supporters.



The meal began with a martini cocktail, sardine canapes, and clam chowder (the New York variety, oddly enough). It then progressed through courses of broiled bluefish with sauterne, broiled live lobsters served with pilsener beer, and soft shell crabs. Non-Catholics could opt for the fried chicken, Maryland style, with side dishes of green peas and French fried potatoes. Dessert choices included frozen pudding, macaroons, and fruit cake, with Pall Mall cigarettes, house brand ci-

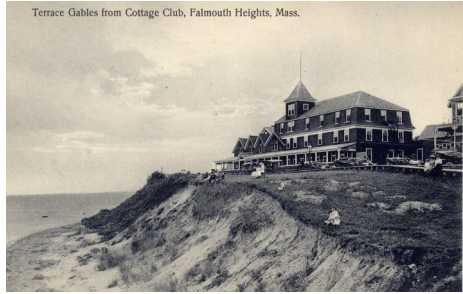
gars, and crème de menthe to cap off the feast.

Besides the Mayor himself, there were reportedly “35 gentlemen” as guests. The apparent lack of ladies may indicate that this reception was construed as a political event, not a social one: an opportunity for the men to network and strategize. A few women do appear on the list of entertainers. Miss Edith T. Gorrell sang “Until You Came,” while Misses Melley and Gorrell performed Offenbach’s Barcarolle. There were also two xylophone solos by a Mr. Gallagher.

The musical highlight of the evening, however, had to be the singing of “Sweet Adeline” by the guest of honor himself. Honey Fitz had adopted this recent (1903) vaudeville hit as his personal theme song. He let it be known that he expected to be asked to sing it wherever he went. A newspaper account declared that as the mayor’s voice wafted through the banquet hall, guests, orchestra members, and waiters all heartily joined in the chorus.

Some skeptics couldn’t be so easily charmed. One pointed out that “merry singing has nothing to do with statesmanship,” and wished that Honey Fitz would talk about issues such as “direct primaries, the tariff, the railroads, monopolies, factory reform, child labor, [and] campaign expenses.”

Those who were present took a softer view. They called the occasion a success, a “grand welcome to a distinguished man. All party lines were obliterated . . . good fellowship and brotherhood of man, mingled with mirth, music, song and speeches, made it a red letter night for Falmouth.” The mayor spoke enthusiastically about how Boston and Falmouth shared a common interest in making New England a center of trade. He concluded by thanking everyone “for the friendship formed tonight among new faces—it will endure.”



Fifty-one years later, when Honey Fitz’s grandson, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, became president, Falmouth people were proud to say that their town had once welcomed his notable ancestor, and sung a song of harmony with him.