



UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

from the archives of Museums on the Green

Hurricanes, in Words and Pictures from the Archives

“ . . . David Kelley more than once recounted his experience of the ‘September Gale’ which took place on the 6th of that month in the year 1815, on his sixth birthday. He had come up from South Yarmouth with his parents to attend ‘Monthly Meeting.’ It was a very ‘yellow’ morning. People said something queer was going to happen that day. A strong gale blew up from the south-east till the tide in the Bay was rising, then the

gale swung around to the south west, and blew up such a volume of tide among the beach hills and over them into the harbor that it flooded the upland and road from near Theophilus Gifford's to the school-house near Charles Benson's and Chloe Tilton's, and washed a cart load of Theophilus's pumpkins up to that spot. Then the road [flooded] . . . making Joseph Baxter's house lot an island, filling up the cedar swamp and killing its trees with salt water. The air is said to have been whizzing with flying boards of the salt works. Great havoc was made all along the coast. In the afternoon the gale subsided, the sun shone out, the tide receded, and little David Kelley went with his uncle Theophilus to help him gather up the cart load of aforesaid pumpkins.”

From John Hoag Dillingham's "Traditions and Narratives of West Falmouth," compiled in 1909

“[Davisville, Sept. 15, 1944] Friday p.m.

Dear Mrs. Pratt:

The street has suffered far far more than [in 1938]. There are about a dozen big trees uprooted from here to the Menauhant Rd. Mr. Edgar Baker's workshop gone. Mr. Fortardo's barn collapsed killing his cow. Ten Acre lost about twenty trees—their service yard blew away—many shingles off. Mr. Otis Baker had both cars smashed when his barn roof caved in, & I guess the Casino has been badly smashed again. The carnage at Colonial Village is terrific. All the people were ordered out of there, and also



The Wellsmere Inn on Menauhant Rd. after the Hurricane of 1944. Twenty guests were rescued by the Falmouth Fire Dept.



Bridge on Chapoquoit Road, 1938.

from Menauhant & Maravista by the Coast Guard. We managed to get down to where the Men. Bridge used to be. It is now up in the woods back of Drapers. The streets in all directions except to the P.O. are not passable & we have no electricity, mail, papers, or telephone. . . . Phil B. just came over & says that boats on the pond have been damaged & washed up in the woods.

If you have ever heard four express trains rushing head on at each other at 75 miles an hour—that's it! I rushed from door to door with every crash until 2 o'clock this morning. Everyone asked me to spend last night with them, but I couldn't be traitor to my house so stayed alone & prayed—well I think I did—but I was certainly scared—and when my chrome stove pipe began to play tunes like a harp, I thought perhaps it was tutoring me for an angelic role. Well we are lucky I guess. If anyone intends to come down from your house, I'd be glad to give them a bed & what board I can get. Hope your Larchmont house is safe & you are all well.

Yours,
Grace C. Oliver



Top row: Locust St., with Wood Lumber on left, 1938.

Middle row: (l) Falmouth Harbor during Hurricane Donna, 1960. (r) Train tracks damaged by Hurricane Carol, 1954.



Bottom row: (l) Road along the beach to Menauhant, 1944. (r) Old Silver Beach Bathing Pavilion, 1938.

