

UNTOLD TALES OF FALMOUTH

from the archives of Museums on the Green

Indispensable Sources, Part Three

Residential Falmouth

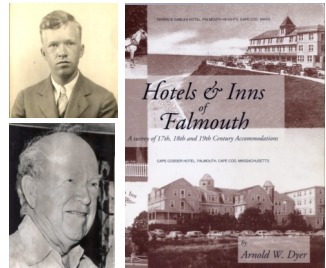
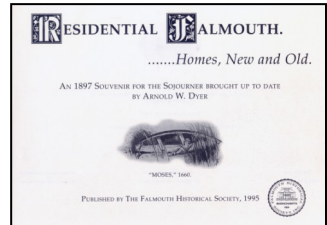
Hotels and Inns of Falmouth

For those curious about the older buildings around town, I previously recommended the state historic register as an indispensable source. Two other works, while not as comprehensive, still offer such important insights into Falmouth's architectural past that they have earned a place on our "go-to" bookshelf.

Residential Falmouth was first published in 1897 by the Board of Industry, a forerunner to the Chamber of Commerce, and it was born of the civic pride sweeping through the town at that time. The book's preface straightforwardly states its purpose: "to picture some of the homes and landscapes of Fair Falmouth-by-the-Sea." Almost half the structures covered in *Residential Falmouth* were no longer standing by the time the historic register was compiled in the late 1980s. Others had been remodeled beyond recognition. Thus, the book fills in some crucial blank spots where the historic register is silent. In 1995, the historical society (now Museums on the Green) issued a reprint of *Residential Falmouth* with updated text by Arnold Dyer. His revisions often note when and how a building was demolished, and what stood in its place in the 1990s.

For example, in the pages of *Residential Falmouth*, you can find a photograph (ca. 1897) of the Shiverick Homestead, one of the town's earliest homes, built around 1690 and now lost. Dyer's text traces its history from Shiverick family home, to Beebe real estate investment, to ice cream parlor, to its demolition in 1924—after which it was replaced by today's Main Street post office.

Many of the book's entries depict the homes of wealthy summer residents, such as John Dwight, CEO of Arm and Hammer, who lived and entertained in splendor at the



Arnold Dyer (1906-1996) owned the Falmouth Coal Company and twice served as historical society president. He remembered seeing many of the landmarks mentioned in the two books he produced. He is shown above at age 23 and age 73.

corner of Mill Road and Surf Drive. The hurricane of '38 dealt his house a staggering blow; the hurricane of '44 finished it off. Now the site of a town parking lot, all that remains of Dwight's home is the stone wall still visible around the lot's boundary.

Forty-two homes are covered in the book, along with other points of interest such as Penzance Point, Oyster Pond, Glidden Tower, and the mill at Waquoit.

Probably inspired by his work on *Residential Falmouth*, Arnold Dyer went on to produce another indispensable source, *Hotels and Inns of Falmouth*. Using the same format as the earlier book, Dyer focused on 17th, 18th, and 19th century accommodations, from the Gifford Tavern that once overlooked the Old Stone Dock, to the Silver Beach Hotel (demolished 1957), and the Terrace Gables (still standing, now condos). Most of



Top: Shiverick Homestead on Main St., demolished 1924.

Middle: Dwight summer residence at Mill Rd. and Surf Drive, destroyed by the hurricane of 1944.

Bottom: Craig Hotel, later called Oak Crest Hotel, on Falmouth Heights. Demolished 1978.

the 31 establishments he describes are gone, but reminders still linger. Consider the Oak Crest Inn, which once stood atop the Heights. Dyer relates how in 1910 Joseph P. Kennedy was a guest there, and presumably found his way down the hill to socialize with Rose Fitzgerald and her family, who were renting the Gargan home on Forest Avenue. The hotel was demolished in 1978, but its name was retained by Oak Crest Park.

Hotels and Inns of Falmouth is quite helpful in answering certain questions of perennial interest. Why is the Coonamessett Inn not near Coonamessett Pond? What was the Nimrod Club? How many separate Elm Arch Inns were there? Variations on these questions have been directed to the research department, more than once. Consulting *Hotels and Inns* generally clears things up to everyone's satisfaction.

Residential Falmouth (1897 edition, without Dyer's text) and *Hotels and Inns of Falmouth* have been digitized. For a limited time, you can browse through them on our [archives](#) page. Printed copies (including Dyer's 1993 revisions) are available at the public library, and can be purchased at our museum gift shop.

Meg Castello