



## From the Collections

The Newsletter of the Falmouth Historical Society

Spring 2024

### Peering into the Mists of Time

As a town historical society, we “do history.” This includes local history, family history, and property history. Many assume that once we’ve written about the history of an event, people, or a place in our town, our job is done. Not quite.

Our files are filled with stories written decades ago, some of which were based on information we now know to be inaccurate. A Colonial Period home in Falmouth illustrates how new and online resources have improved our historical research.

While revising the Falmouth History Tours, we fact-checked information in our files about locations to be highlighted. Online resources provided fresh data adding to what we knew about our town’s oldest homes including one at 236 Foreside Road that had been known as the “Joseph Bucknam House.”



Town records tell us the house was built around 1740. Our research done a half century ago concluded that the house may have been built by Michael Knight. Researchers had pored through land records at the Cumberland County Registry of Deeds. They reviewed published and handwritten genealogies for information about families.

There was a big problem with their conclusion: Later research published by Maine Genealogical Society tells us that Michael Knight was not born until long after the house was built.

We had solid evidence the house had belonged to Joseph Bucknam whose first property was a postage stamp-sized lot sitting on the west side of Foreside Road “together with all the buildings and improvements thereon belonging.” Bucknam bought the homestead from Michael Knight in 1833 and later acquired adjoining tracts on both sides of Foreside Road. Bucknam was married to Margaret Knight.

We learned that Michael Knight inherited a share of the homestead from his father, William Knight of Falmouth. William was the son of Benjamin and Abigail Knight of Falmouth and was married to Sarah York. Michael bought out his siblings for the remaining shares.

We found no deeds in the Cumberland Registry recording William’s purchase of the property. We turned to York County for deeds prior to 1760 (when Cumberland and Lincoln Counties split off from York). Until recently, this meant a trip to the York Registry in Alfred. Now those records are online.

In 1743, William purchased five acres on Foreside Road (then known as “the road from Mussel Cove to North Yarmouth”) in “New Casco” from John York. Six years later, he obtained an adjacent 16 acres from Benjamin York, his father-in-law, plus another nine acres bringing his holdings to 30 acres and conferring a degree of social status upon the young shoemaker.

William’s in-laws included shipwrights possessing the skills and tools to help him build a home for his new bride. This story illustrates the close ties among the families of Colonial Falmouth.

New and online sources of information allowed us to correct the story: We now know the “William Knight House” at 236 Foreside Road was built about 1743.

## Falmouth Heritage Museum is Open



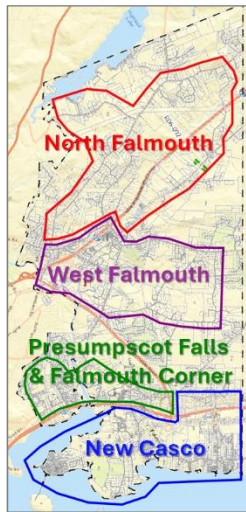
The Museum & Barn are open 9:00-3:00 on most Tuesdays from June 18<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup>, and by appointment.

## Falmouth History Tours

We are revising our historical tours of Falmouth. The new tours are centered around the five historical villages of Falmouth.

The first tour will explore the Village of New Casco.

Falmouth Parks & Community Programs has scheduled a bus tour for June 25<sup>th</sup>. The bus will be our time machine as it travels back in time so we can see Falmouth before the arrival of interstate highways, office buildings, strip malls, and most subdivisions. As we peel away modern Falmouth, we will see that much of historical Falmouth is still here, just waiting to be noticed.



## Other Upcoming Events

Weather permitting, visit our table at the polls and Falmouth Community Fest (Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, at Tidewater Farm) where our “history detectives” will be ready to answer your questions about the mysteries of Falmouth’s past.

## What Do We Do During Winter?

When the weather turns chilly and we close the Museum, our volunteers don’t sit back and relax. They are kept busy year-round.

Our Collections Committee spent the winter organizing historical material donated by Marge Merrill Devine. Our Local History Committee responded to a steady stream of queries from our community. Our Programs Committee supported Falmouth schools and prepared for events. If “doing history” sounds like fun, please call us at (207) 781-4727, or email us at [INFO@THEFHHS.ORG](mailto:INFO@THEFHHS.ORG).

## Retrospective

Memorial Day is when our nation honors and mourns those who died while serving in the US Armed Forces. Each year we post the story of a person from Falmouth in the Retrospectives section of our website. This year, we remember Erman Burke, a Marine corporal who was the only person from Falmouth killed in action during the Korean War.



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