

The Falmouth Historical Society Annual Meeting

~~Falmouth Town Hall~~ and Online via Zoom
January 18, 2023

This was supposed to be a hybrid meeting. Everything was set up in the Council Chambers at Falmouth Town Hall for the first in-person annual meeting in three years. Due to a misunderstanding, we were unable to get into Town Hall after-hours. We hastily pivoted to an online-only meeting from another location and are glad that so many were able to join us via Zoom.

*The presentation slides are posted on the Society website at:
[https://thefhs.org/FHS 2023 Annual Meeting Slides.pdf](https://thefhs.org/FHS%202023%20Annual%20Meeting%20Slides.pdf).*

David Farnham, president, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He announced there would be a short business meeting, as required by the bylaws, followed by two presentations illustrating what the Society is doing.

All officers and directors were present in-person or online. A quorum of the membership was present.

Secretary's report

Suzanne Farnham, secretary, noted that the minutes for last year's annual meeting were approved by the board so we would dispense with the reading.

Members of the Society and community are urged to attend board meetings; the calendar is posted on the Society website. The board and committees meet regularly using Zoom.

Minutes, along with reports and presentation slides, for annual meeting and board meetings are posted online at the Society website under the "Documents" tab. For those thinking about becoming more involved, that's where you can learn more about what the Society is doing.

The Society's membership continues to grow slowly but steadily. There are 105 members including four corporate sponsors. Membership increased by 15% during the past year.

Treasurer's Report

David, as interim treasurer, presented the Society's financial condition on a single slide containing four charts. A detailed, eight-page financial report is posted on the Society website page for the annual meeting.

The summary shows that the Society is solvent, it stuck to its budget during 2022 (except for the sump pump calamity), and its income exceeded expenses.

The detailed report explains that \$5,000 of income was in a restricted grant for educational scholarships, \$8,391 of income was in a bequest from the late Hannah Russell that was transferred to the Maine Community Foundation to replenish the endowment, and much of the growth in long-term assets was the \$184,000 increase in land and buildings due to revaluation.

Those are large sums for a small nonprofit whose operating budget was only \$9,900. A closer examination of the financial report shows that the Society skates along the line between being in the red or black. At present, income is tracking with projections while expenses are \$800 above the budget (due to the sump issue), leaving the Society slightly in the red.

Carol Kauffman is recruiting volunteers for the audit committee.

Committee Reports

The Society has a committee structure to make it easier for volunteers to connect with their areas of interest.

Programs. Sally Farneth, director and chair of the Education Committee, reminded us that the Society has three program areas:

- Collections where we preserve the heritage of our town,
- Research where we discover lost and forgotten stories about our town, and
- Education where we tell the story of our town.

Sally reported that the Society works closely with Falmouth Schools to support history education. The current project will help teachers tell the story of the Aucocisco Band of Wabanaki who lived here before the arrival of English settlers.

Thanks to the generosity of the Perkins Family, last year the Society sponsored a \$3,000 scholarship for a deserving graduate from Falmouth High School. This year's scholarship will be \$5,000. The four Perkins siblings, the living children of Marion Perkins, Falmouth's town clerk in the 1960s, are all graduates of Falmouth High.

During 2022, the Society participated in eight public events beyond the Museum. Five were in-person and three were hybrid (in-person and online). We gave four public presentations related to the history of our town. At three events, our volunteers manned tables where people of Falmouth could bring questions about the people, places, and events in our town over the past four centuries.

Museum Operations. Betsy Jo Whitcomb, director and chair of the Museum Operations and Exhibits Committee, reported that the Museum and Barn were re-opened in May in time for Falmouth School second graders to come for a visit. They learned what life was like for children their age two centuries ago.

The Museum was open to the public on Tuesdays (and by appointment) from early June until the weather turned chilly in October. Over the course of an 18-week season, there were 155 visitors to the Museum. It hummed with activity while volunteers caught up on accessioning and other Society business.

Collections. Ron Scorsone, director and chair of the Collections Committee, reported that donations of artifacts, documents, and books returned to pre-pandemic levels. Volunteers were able to process the backlog of donations from the previous year. Some included entire boxes of historical documents.

All but the most recent acquisitions have been transcribed from ledgers and index cards into the Museum's catalog database which now lists 1,163 artifacts, books, documents, and photographs.

Last summer, Dan Rabinowitz of Falmouth Boy Scout Troop 93 gave the catalog a big boost as part of his Eagle Scout project. He went through the Museum and Barn, room by room, creating a spreadsheet listing every artifact along with identifying information and its location. He also photographed every artifact. This winter, volunteers will merge the inventory and photographs into the database making it easier for members of the community to discover items of interest in our collections. It will also make it easier for our docents to locate those items.

The catalog is a work in progress. It is accessible online at the Society website under the "Museum" tab. The online catalog is hosted by PastPerfect (along with those of many other museums in Maine).

Local History. David observed that in an all-volunteer Society, volunteers wear many hats. He is also co-chair of the Local History Committee. David reminded us that the 2022 annual meeting highlighted expansion of the Society's website with information about the history of Falmouth and Ancient Falmouth. The website

didn't grow much over the summer and there is a substantial backlog of material to add this winter. The research aids are accessible online at the Society website under the "Research" tab. The collection of Falmouth Historical Maps is a favorite of many online visitors. Last spring, the Society gave a presentation on the "Maps of Falmouth" at Falmouth Memorial Library; links to the slides and speaker's notes are on the home page of the Society's website.

The volume of requests from the community grew by more than 25% in 2022. These came from people researching the history of their families or property; from businesses and government organizations with questions about historical significance; from teachers and students wanting to know more about local history, and even a few from the authors and the press.

Many responses to those requests are Falmouth's version of "Finding Your Roots." We answer the question. We also tell the requestor how and where we found the answer, along with local historical context needed to understand the answer. When we have the time, these responses will be added to the "Members Only – Local Research" section of the Society website.

Communications. Last year we acknowledged that we weren't meeting expectations to keep our members and the community informed.

Members told us they wanted to receive a newsletter in their mailbox. The newsletter is now published and mailed quarterly.

For those of who prefer online communications, the website is kept up to date. Better use will be made of email and Facebook. This is an area where a tech-savvy volunteer is needed!

Merchandise. Sue, as chair of the Merchandise Committee, announced that the new edition of The Falmouth Cookbook is done! Four years ago, as the inventory of the 2004 edition ran low, The Society contacted the publisher about printing more copies. They wanted an up-front payment nearly equal to the Society's annual budget. We decided to self-publish. This gave us an opportunity to give the cookbook a fresh look and format. It took a committee of volunteers three years of hard work to assemble and edit the cookbook. Every recipe is a favorite of a family of Falmouth. Two volumes. 390 pages. 261 recipes. Feedback on the appearance, utility, and content of the new cookbook has been very positive.

Last year, the Society sold \$1,316 in merchandise. Our challenge is making it easier for people to purchase books and Falmouth-themed items. The Falmouth Heritage Bookstore is now open for business on the Society website under the

“Museum” tab. Today, merchandise is available for pickup in Falmouth. Next month, we expect to have mail order delivery.

Buildings & Grounds. Ron, as chair the Building and Grounds Committee, reported that last year was dominated by a single issue: the sump pump.

From the time the Museum was moved to its present location, it has experienced multiple episodes of the sump overflowing. Last spring, there was a catastrophic failure of the pump and its circuit breaker. The sump overflowed. ServiceMaster brought in their heavy-duty pumps to get it under control. Cleaning and sanitizing the basement was a major undertaking.

The Museum now has the most powerful pump available. A wireless sensor was installed to alert us when an overflow is likely. A larger evacuation hose will be installed to increase our pumping capacity. We are taking steps to prepare for contingencies. Keeping water out of the Museum basement has been expensive and time-consuming.

As planned, the Museum’s septic was pumped last fall. The town is running a new sewer line down the side of woods road in front of the Museum. When completed, we will be required to switch from septic to sewer.

Special thanks went to Rich and Sue who keep the Museum’s lawn and gardens looking nice.

Technology. Ron, as a co-chair of the Technology Committee, reported that access to the Society website had grown by another 20% over the previous year.

Not surprisingly, the website draws the largest number of its visitors from Falmouth, Portland, and neighboring communities. Nor is it a surprise that Falmouth history and the new research materials are the topics of greatest interest.

For a small nonprofit, the Society has a surprisingly large following on Facebook. Even more to our surprise, there are half as many followers from that “other” Falmouth on Cape Cod than followers in our hometown. Based on questions received, many of them don’t realize the Falmouth Historical Society they are following is 150 miles away to the north.

President’s Report

Volunteers. The Society’s tempo of activity has returned to pre-pandemic levels. We have undertaken substantial new efforts, but our pool of volunteers has not grown to match the expanded workload.

It has become a zero-sum game. For us to do more in one area, we must do less in another.

The Board of Directors sees this as an obstacle to returning our Society to full health. We want the Society to do more. This requires more volunteers than we have today. Volunteers are drawn from our membership. We attract more members through events and by getting out the word about all the cool stuff we're doing.

That's what we've been doing with the resources we have. We need more to do more! We've been working on a list of "want ads" for volunteers. It includes almost every skill imaginable. If you have spare time to give to a worthy nonprofit, we can use your help. Handy with tools? There is no shortage of items needing attention in an early 19th century "fixer-upper." Do you know your way around a P&L and balance sheet? We can use help with finances. Did you ever work in a library? We've got one that needs some TLC. Have you been researching your family tree? Join our squad of history detectives. Are you good at organizing things or activities? That's what we do.

Please contact us via email, or by leaving voicemail at the Museum. We need your help!

Finances. Unlike most other town historical societies in the area, we receive almost no financial support from the town. Most of our income is from dues and donations, and that money pays for operating the Museum and Barn. Our income covers the routine bills. Minor calamities—such as the sump pump failure—set us back. We are unprepared for major expenses like those we will be facing soon.

We were shocked to learn that converting from septic to sewer costs more than our annual budget. It looks as if we may have to paint the barn. We're looking at some other upkeep issues.

When faced with major upkeep projects, we first turn to local businesses and service organizations to see whether they can help with material or skilled labor. Several have been very generous.

For major expenses such as these, we will pursue a grant once we have definitized the scope and cost.

Accomplishments. As president, I continue to be amazed by how much our small but sturdy band of volunteers has been able to accomplish.

The committee reports show that we are delivering what our community expects from its town historical society. We're doing it well. We're doing it with limited resources.

Looking back at annual meetings over the past several years, you will see that we've gotten a little bit stronger, and we've accomplished a bit more in each succeeding year. This wouldn't have happened without the support of our members and our community.

Thank you for helping us preserve your town's heritage and tell its story.

New Business

There being no new business, the annual meeting of the membership was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Howe Farnham
Secretary

The business portion of the meeting was followed by two presentations illustrating the Society's research into local history.

We say our research is "community-directed." Most of it is done in response to requests from the community. We received at least 54 requests last year and currently have a backlog of four.

The requests come from everywhere imaginable. From students and teachers with questions about local history. From state and town government wanting to know if there is anything historical or historic about a building or land. From local businesses such as realtors who want to know if there is anything interesting about an old home they are listing. From other nonprofits—we fielded queries from the Library and Land Trust last year. Homeowners want to know more about their homes, and genealogists seek help with their family history. We even receive queries about local history from authors and the press.

We picked out two we felt had broad interest. One delves into the history of two neighborhoods on the Foreside. The other reconstructs the narrative for a family's distant ancestors—and shows how we peer into the mists of time.

Falmouth's First Summer Colony

The Casco Terrace & Amerescoggin Neighborhoods

The extension of trolley service from Portland to Falmouth Foreside in 1899 transformed the Foreside into a resort for nearby city dwellers. The Casco Terrace and Amerescoggin neighborhoods became the first summer colonies along the Foreside. This put the benefits of "rusticating" within the grasp of the middle class. A local resident asked if we could help them share this history with new families moving into the neighborhoods. The presentation tells the complicated story of how small farms and homes of sea captains became summer playgrounds for families ranging from Portland to Auburn.

An Early Falmouth Family

Our First Experience with Genealogical Tourism

A family researching their genealogy learned they were descended from Anthony Brackett, an early settler of Colonial Falmouth. They planned a trip from Wisconsin to see where their ancestors had lived and contacted us for more information. This was our first experience with "genealogical tourism." We provided them with details about their family along with a self-guided tour of sites in the area associated with their family. The presentation shares what we learned and the challenges we overcame while reconstructing the narrative for a family of Colonial Falmouth.

The annual meeting of The Falmouth Historical Society finished at 8:20 p.m.

Falmouth Historical Society Annual Meeting

FHS Presents! — Falmouth's First Summer Colony *The Casco Terrace & Amerescoggin Neighborhoods*

Online via Zoom—January 18, 2023

The accompanying slides are posted on the Society website at:

[https://thefhs.org/resources/Documents/FHS Presents-An Early Falmouth Family Slides.pdf](https://thefhs.org/resources/Documents/FHS%20Presents-An%20Early%20Falmouth%20Family%20Slides.pdf).

David Farnham shared what the Society uncovered while researching three homes on Falmouth Foreside in response to a query from the community.

We received a routine request to research the history of two homes on the Foreside. We added the requestor's home to make it three.

Our methodology is simple.

1. We follow the trail of deeds to build the skeleton of homeowners.
2. We point our genealogy radar gun at each of those families to gather their stories. This put flesh onto the skeleton.
3. We add local history which puts more flesh on those dry old bones.

This is how we bring the story of a home back to life.

We did this for the three homes.

All were relatively new by Falmouth standards. Digging back into the 19th century, it was farmland.

Our first reaction was... they are going to be disappointed. This is, well, boring.

We had missed the point. The story was all about the fact the homes were relatively new. They were just the tip of the iceberg. The story was in the land beneath those homes. The land told the story of how that part of Falmouth evolved from an agricultural community to a summer resort. These two neighborhoods were at the heart of the story.

We are looking at 16 acres on the Foreside between Foreside Road and Casco Bay, and between the homes on the south side of Casco Terrace to those on the north side of Amerescoggin Road.

Each of those two roads has its distinct neighborhood, homeowner's association, and history. There are no lanes connecting those roads, but they are connected in their role in the transformation of the Foreside.

Looking back 165 years at the land now occupied by those two neighborhoods, we find them spread across three farms—all of which belonged to sea captains. When these seafarers died, the farms stayed in the families except for the Davis Farm which was sold to the Stackpoles, a family of mariners from Thomaston.

If you follow the trail back into the 18th century, the lots along the Foreside were 30 acres, the minimum size for farming. Over the years many were divided in half. Back then, nearly everyone in Falmouth was a farmer regardless of their primary occupation. Those 15 acres would support a subsistence farm that put food on the table. Some of those lots were split again. They were popular among sea captains and craftsmen such as blacksmiths.

The Gilded Age saw the emergence of Maine as a destination for “summer people.” You can blame Hudson River School artists such as Frederic Church whose paintings were visual advertisements for the Maine coast.

At first it was the super-rich who came on their yachts. Expansion of passenger rail service in Maine opened the door to the “merely” wealthy who built grand summer residences, and then the middle class who built seasonal cottages.

Landowners with seaside property began thinking of how they could turn a hardscrabble farm into hard cash.

In Falmouth, the first summer colony was established on the Stackpole (formerly Davis) Farm which ended up in the hands of Frederick Stackpole, another sea captain.

Frederick had moved to Kansas—which makes us wonder about his time at sea—and become a banker.

He immediately subdivided the 7½ acres into 85 postage-stamp sized lots (averaging about a twelfth of an acre). The lane running along the southern side was named “Casco Terrace.”

The waterfront lots would have cheek-to-jowl cottages facing Casco Bay across a common.

On the southern side of Casco Terrace was the Nelson Farm, now owned by the Nelson’s daughter. She didn’t create a subdivision plan but, as opportunities arose, she sold lots along Casco Terrace.

Here enters a retired general contractor who lived in Auburn named Joseph Chamberlin.

He built cottages on lots around that common purchased from both Stackpole and Wells. This was the beginning of the “Auburn Colony,” the first such seasonal community in Falmouth.

If you Google “Auburn Colony,” you will learn about an earlier, larger, and much better known summer community on Harpswell. We aren’t aware of any connection between the two. Both were established by people of Auburn, Maine, who found the sea breezes of Casco Bay preferable to the heat and bustle of a mill town on the Androscoggin.

The summer colony grew so quickly, it appeared on a map only a few years later. Casco Terrace is just steep enough that cottages built up the slope towards Foreside Road had water views and the ability to catch those cooling sea breezes.

One family with ties to Auburn that had been summering at Casco Terrace built the Terrace Inn which remains as the largest building in the neighborhood.

If Rusticators lit the flame, trolleys poured on the gasoline.

Electrification came in 1889 at the Smelt Hill Dam on the Presumpscot River in Falmouth, the first hydroelectric dam in Maine. Electricity allowed the replacement of the old horsecars with trolleys and led to the expansion of trolley service to the communities in the hinterlands such as Falmouth.

Trolley service from Portland, through Falmouth, to Yarmouth opened in 1898. Suddenly, the middle and working classes had convenient, inexpensive access to the Foreside.

To build ridership, the Portland Railroad Company built elaborate recreational parks at three spots by the water: one was Underwood Spring Park which opened in 1899.

The park featured a casino (a place for fine dining and entertainment), an open-air theater, a Japanese pavilion, a spectacular electric fountain, and scenic walkways.

The 34½-acre park was built on the former Underwood Farm.

During its heyday, the park was a major attraction—what today we would call a “venue.”

Then disaster struck in 1907. Fire destroyed the casino and fire. The owners decided not to rebuild.

The land, the spring, and the few remaining buildings were sold to George Edwards. He promptly published a subdivision plan. The strip of land on the southern side of the property was separated from the rest of the park by the spring (which was still producing bottled water). Through the middle of this strip ran Amerescoggin Road with lots on both sides.

George Edwards was a wheeler-and-dealer. He was involved in the establishment of Underwood Spring Park. Decline in demand for bottled water shut down the bottling operation around 1920.

Appealing to the more rustic group of rusticators, Edwards opened a motor camp on the site of the former casino. The camp made use of the former park’s remaining recreational facilities.

The motor camp was purchased by Mildred Prentice White after Edward’s death. (Side note: She was a very interesting woman whose life would make a fascinating research topic.)

Year after year, as lots were sold, the motor camp eventually became a residential community. The Amerescoggin Neighborhood is part of that community, but it also has a lot in common with the neighboring Casco Terrace.

We have focused on those two neighborhoods because they were the first summer colony. Other neighborhoods followed at amazing speed.

In addition to cottages for the middle-class and even working-class, grander summer Residences for the wealthy popped up along the shore. The Portland Yacht and Country Clubs moved to Falmouth.

A quick scan of town records in 1919 revealed more than 150 cottages and at least 20 summer residences. For every “Cottage,” there were several “Cottage Lots.”

The Foreside had become a resort community.

The Foreside weathered the Great Depression and WWII, but the postwar building boom transformed farmland and cottage communities into year-round residential neighborhoods.

The new homes didn’t obliterate the cottages. Among the new neighborhoods, hallmarks from the past remain. There are the Yacht and Country Clubs. Many of the grand summer residences remain as do the cottages.

Quite a few old farmhouses remain as well. The four buildings on the corner of Falmouth and Town Landing Roads date to the 19th century. Next to Town Landing Market is a farmhouse built in the 18th century. This is Falmouth where we are surrounded by history if we only take the time to notice.

As for the request, we responded with the history of the neighborhoods along with details about the families who built those three homes. We’re your town historical society. That’s what we do.

Falmouth Historical Society Annual Meeting

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Betsy Jo Whitcomb and Sue Farnham shared what they learned and the challenges they overcame while reconstructing the narrative for a family of Colonial Falmouth.

We receive requests in-person, over the phone, by postal mail, and through social media, but the most common way we get queries is via email. All told, we receive and respond to about five each month.

This request arrived via email from a family in Wisconsin who had been researching their family tree. They were seeking help to plan a visit to the land of their ancestors. They were genealogical tourists! This was a first for us.

There are ten towns named “Falmouth” in the world. Only three have historical societies: Maine, Massachusetts, and Cornwall (England.) Most of the requests we receive are meant for us, but we get a few that should have gone to that “other” Falmouth on Cape Cod. Sometimes, we even get a request intended for our namesake in England.

The first thing we do is determine whether the request was really meant for us.

For questions involving family history, we begin with a search on Ancestry.com. The email provided names and lifespans for a married couple. Just like you see on shows like “Who Do You Think You Are?” we entered the data and clicked “Search.” Heading the list of hits was a family tree.

Only the lazy and inexperienced researcher accepts online trees without question, but we were simply looking for confirmation that this couple had a tie to Falmouth, Maine. They did.

This tree had sources and, at the top of the list, was a published genealogy which we had seen before. It has a lot of information about the Bracketts who settled at Falmouth in the mid-17th century. A good sign.

Rather than take that online tree at face value, we consulted other references.

When researching Colonial Falmouth, we begin with Willis' History of Portland. William Willis was a lawyer, a historian, and a politician. He was experienced in winnowing out the truth. His prominence gave him access to records and people before their stories were lost to time or fire.

The two families mentioned in the email were prominent in Colonial Falmouth. We found plenty of information about them in Willis. They were also covered in a pair of century-old published genealogies: one for the Bracketts and another for the Cox family.

Where do you find these books? In libraries, of course.

Those of you who have been researching your family history for many years recall the days when "research" was synonymous with long hours in a hard chair at libraries such as Maine Historical's Brown Library in Portland, or the New England Historic Genealogy Society's library in Boston.

That's not what we did. We turned to the Internet and digital libraries.

You can use a broad search to discover published genealogies. Once you have a title, search for that, but append "archive.org" at the end of the search. From the family tree on Ancestry, we already had the title of the Brackett genealogy. Steering the search to archive.org (The Internet Archive), we found digitized copies in public the domain available for online viewing, searching, and downloading. You can build your own digital library of PDFs.

There are a several historical societies in the greater Portland area. Is Falmouth Historical a good match or should we refer the requestor to another?

We searched the books by Willis, Brackett, and Cox. We found the couple mentioned by the prospective tourists. Their ancestors lived on Portland's peninsula (then called "Falmouth Neck") and Back Cove for many years in Falmouth before the other towns split off. We routinely handle requests for Colonial Falmouth.

We describe our approach to research as the "three-legged stool." Usually, requests are seeking information about one of three categories: family history, property history, or local history. Our research focuses on that category but draws upon all three to build a complete narrative.

This request was different. They wanted us to blend all three into a complete narrative with an emphasis on places and things they could see.

A self-guided tour seemed like a perfect solution.

We had family trees. We had family stories. We had (of course) local history to provide context. All we had to do is dump all of that into blender and push the "Start" button. This would be a piece of cake. Or so we thought.

One part we had sitting on the shelf: the timeline for early Falmouth. The full list is more detailed and includes the break-up of Falmouth into six towns along with other colonial conflicts.

When researching early Falmouth, local history takes center stage. If an ancestor was supposedly born at Falmouth in 1695 (during King William's War), either the date is wrong, or it is a different Falmouth—there were no English settlers living here in 1695.

These events left their mark on the Brackett and Cox families.

But first, we validated the family trees. We corrected some errors that had been propagated through online trees.

Our goal was identifying the ancestors to be highlighted in our narrative. Many of the dates in published genealogies should have been prefixed with "about" but that didn't affect the story.

Now we had the "Who." Next came the "What and When."

We pulled the story of the Bracketts from Willis' "History of Portland" and Brackett's "Bracket Genealogy."

Anthony Brackett of Portsmouth was the immigrant for this line. Anthony and his wife were killed at his farm during King William's War.

His son, Anthony Brackett, was living at Falmouth by 1662—soon after Massachusetts annexed that part of Maine and established the town of Falmouth. Anthony's home was a 400-acre farm on Back Cove. Anthony and his family were taken prisoner during King Philip's War but escaped. His brother Thomas was killed. Anthony was killed defending his farm during King William's War. The following year saw his son Seth killed and son Anthony captured (but later escaped). Many inhabitants of Falmouth were massacred, and buildings razed.

After a short interval, the peace was shattered by Queen Anne's War. Anthony's son, Zachariah, didn't return to Falmouth until 1715 when took possession of the farm. Life in Falmouth was still unsettled. His family joined him in four years later but they were forced to seek refuge at a garrison on the peninsula during an outbreak of trouble with Native People in 1722. Sometime after 1740, Zachariah sold the farm and moved to Ipswich where he spent his remaining years.

His son, Joshua, was born into strife and spent much of his life serving as a soldier in one war after another. While he was away, his family lived in a home rented from the Bramhalls at the present-day location of the Congress Square Park in Portland. His wife's family, John and Tabitha Cox, lived down the hill toward the Fore River on what is now York Street. Joshua later acquired land on the Presumpscot River near the location of Riverton Park.

Falmouth was on the frontier as well as the front line in conflicts spanning a century—profoundly shaping the narrative for the Bracketts.

We pulled the story of the Cox family from Willis' "History of Portland" and Cox's "Cox Family in America."

William Cox of Pemaquid was the immigrant for this line. He was living at Pemaquid in 1625—five years after Plymouth and seven years before Falmouth. How did he end up living on a remote spot of the Maine Coast?

William Cox appears to have come from a family of mariners in Bristol, England. During the decades before the Popham Colony and Plymouth, mariners would sail from Bristol to the Maine Coast where they would fish and trade with the Native People. They would often set up on offshore islands where they cured the cod before returning to England.

There was a stockade and trading post at Pemaquid—then called Jamestown—by 1633. Archeological evidence suggests that Bristol merchants maintained a fishing and trading center at Pemaquid with a resident agent as early as 1600.

The Cox family fled Pemaquid during King Philip's War. William's grandson, John Cox, returned to Maine in 1729, choosing Falmouth as a more stable place to live than Midcoast. Alas, he was killed on a military mission to Pemaquid during King George's War.

That gave us the "What and When." Next came the "Where."

Placing these families and events on modern maps proved more difficult than expected. Colonial maps show a skinnier peninsula and a larger Back Cove due to subsequent landfill. Landmarks disappeared or moved. This is where local knowledge—best acquired on foot—becomes crucial.

These were prominent families in Colonial Falmouth. Their homes are shown on maps prepared by Willis and Brackett during their research. We used atlases from later periods to pinpoint the locations on current maps. In some cases, we followed the deeds to confirm that we had the correct site.

Anthony Brackett of Falmouth's farm on Back Cove was immense: $\frac{5}{8}$ of a square mile and probably including Deering Oaks Park. The farmhouse where he lived and died was located near the Hannaford supermarket. Zachariah built a new farmhouse up the hill on land now part of the University of Southern Maine campus. This later became the home of Henry Deering, the "Merchant Prince of Portland."

We also identified the homes of some other ancestors on Falmouth Foreside.

For most queries, we are presented with a problem along with whatever information the requestor has. We do the research and provide the response. This project was more interactive with emails flying back and forth between

Wisconsin and Maine. We sent them a link to the Brackett Genealogy with pointers to the sections dealing with their line. There was so much detailed material, we suggested that they download the book because it could serve as a guide on their tour.

We sent our “tourists” a five-page, self-guided tour of places to visit and things to do. The guide was filled with weblinks to get directions and more information.

We scheduled a time for them to visit the Falmouth Heritage Museum.

We suggested that they register in advance with Maine Historical for a guided walking tour.

We recommended sites for local sightseeing and dining.

The scope of this project was broad as we swept together all manner of information to tell the story of this family’s ancestors in Colonial Falmouth.

We began with much more genealogical and historical information than usual. We even had information about their property although geolocating their homes on modern maps was complicated.

Our “tourists” reported that they had a good time and appreciated the research we had done for them.

On a more gruesome note, one of our volunteers commented that he had often walked across ground that must have been soaked with the blood of Bracketts.

As for our “history detectives,” this project was fun. By constructing a more complete narrative, we brought events that took place centuries ago back to life. We put names and events on places we often see in our daily travels around “Colonial Falmouth.”