



From the Collections

The Newsletter of the Falmouth Historical Society

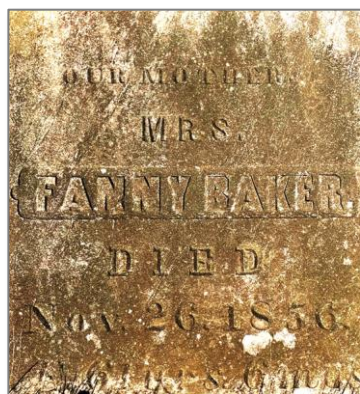
Spring 2023

Falmouth's Mystery Grave

An article in the March 1st issue of the Portland Press Herald told the story of how “Victorian era remains found in Sanford identified after 6-year search.”

Falmouth Historical Society has not faced anything nearly as dramatic as Sanford’s mystery grave, but we regularly receive queries about cemeteries.

Last year, a member of our community asked about a gravestone in Falmouth Community Park.



OUR MOTHER
MRS.
FANNY BAKER
DIED
Nov. 26, 1856
Æ 61 yrs 6 mos

Urban legend held that the knoll in the park was the final resting place for residents of the “Town Farm” which supposedly occupied the land where the Community Park is today.

New England towns established Alms Houses on Town Farms to provide for the indigent. A little digging through records revealed that Falmouth’s Town Farm was located on Woodville Road, far from the Community Park. Mrs. Baker was never a resident of the Alms House.

Fanny (Mountfort) Baker was born in 1795 to Richard and Ruth (Pettingill) Mountfort. She was the granddaughter of Edmund Mountfort Sr, a prominent and wealthy merchant of Portland. His

extensive land holdings included 37 acres on Munjoy Hill.

Fanny lived most of her life on or near the Mountfort homestead farm which comprised much of the land where the Community Park is today. Her family’s farmhouse, built around 1800, still stands at the end of Eureka Road

Fanny married Elijah Baker who lived just around the corner on Falmouth Road. Between 1816 and 1826, they had five children. Following the birth of their youngest child and the death of Elijah’s father, Elijah bolted with no intention of returning. He sold his interest in any real and personal property while living in Sidney in 1834. No mention was made of Fanny’s dower rights.

Written records do not tell us how Fanny, a mother with five children, coped after being abandoned. Her eldest brother, George, inherited the homestead farm where their mother was still living. By 1850, Fanny was living with a family near the farm. Three years later, a court determined that she was “non compos mentis.” She died in 1856.

There are more graves without visible headstones in what we now understand is the Mountfort family cemetery. It is likely that Fanny’s parents are also buried there. The identity of Falmouth’s “mystery grave” is no longer a mystery.

Falmouth Memorial Day Parade

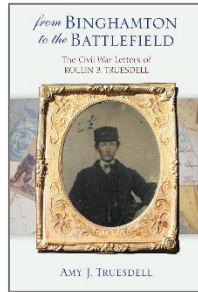
Show your support for your town’s historical society! Join us on Depot Road by Falmouth Memorial Library at 9:45 a.m. on Monday, May 29th, and help carry our banner in the parade!



The Civil War Letters of Rollin Truesdell

We are co-hosting a presentation by Maine author Amy Truesdell at Falmouth Memorial Library on Wed., May 24th, at 6:00 p.m.

The author will talk about her recently published book based on the many letters written by her second-great grandfather during his two years of military service in the Civil War.



Why would we be interested in the story of a soldier from a New York regiment? From August 1861 until May 1863, the 27th New York fought alongside the 5th Maine in battles after Bull Run until just before Gettysburg. The 5th Maine was formed early in the war, drawing its recruits from Portland and surrounding towns (including Falmouth). Truesdell's prolific letter-writing brings the shared experience of soldiers serving in those two regiments of the 2nd Brigade to life.

Museum & Barn Reopening Soon



The Falmouth Heritage Museum will be open to the public on most Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. beginning June 6th. If Tuesdays are not convenient, we are happy to open the Museum for an individual, family, or group.

Marion Perkins Memorial Scholarship

Marion (Quinby) and Gerald Perkins were children of farmers in rural Maine. They moved to Falmouth in the 1940s where all five of their children attended high school before going on to higher education—a remarkable achievement for a family of modest means. Marion Perkins served as town clerk and registrar of voters from 1963 to 1971. She was highly respected for her dedication, integrity, and compassion.

The four living Perkins children are giving back to the community where they grew up by jointly funding a scholarship for a deserving graduate of Falmouth High School.

Last year, the Marion Perkins scholarship of \$3,000 was awarded to Charlie Adams, an outstanding scholar and athlete. He is now in his first year at Northeastern pursuing a degree in civil engineering.



The recipient of this year's scholarship for \$5,000 (split across two years) will be announced in June.

The Perkins family has also been generous in supporting our Society. We work with Falmouth Schools as the nonprofit sponsor of the scholarship.

Society Website Passwords

A small but growing volume of information on the Society website (<https://thefhs.org>) is restricted to members. If you have not logged into the website recently, you may be asked to change your password. If you have questions, or difficulty signing in, please contact us at (207) 781-4727, or via email at info@thefhs.org.

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