Falmouth’s First Summer Colony
The Casco Terrace & Amerescoggin Neighborhoods

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The Request

Property History Query

• A resident of the Amerescoggin neighborhood asked whether we could provide historical information about specific homes in the Amerescoggin and Casco Terrace neighborhoods to share with their new residents.

Routine Request

• We run the deeds to build the chain of ownership
• We use our genealogy toolkit to collect the stories of the people who lived there
• We overlay this with local history to provide context

Local History
• Context—Where historical societies excel!

Family History
• Stories of the people who lived on the property
• Standard genealogical research

Property History
• Stories of the land, its buildings, and its use
• More advanced genealogical research
Initial Results

Tracing the Deeds
• All three homes were relatively new (built around the turn of the last century)
• Before that, small farms

Homes are the tip of the iceberg
• Chapters in the evolution of Falmouth Foreside
• Agricultural → Summer Resort → Suburbia
• These two neighborhoods were at the nexus of that evolution
Our Focus

16 Acres on the Foreside

• Two adjoining neighborhoods north of Town Landing
  — Amerescoggin Road
  — Casco Terrace
• Separate histories, shared significance
Rustic Falmouth

Three mariners—three farms
- Isaac Sturdivant (1784-1858)
- Samuel Davis (1819-1880)
  - Later sold to Stackpole family (also mariners)
- Andrew Nelson (1795-1860)

Lots along the Foreside
- Originally 30 acres
  - Minimum size for a farm
- Many divided in half
  - 15 acres enough for a subsistence farm
  - Some halved again
- Popular with sea captains and craftsmen
Rusticators

Flocked to Maine in summer
  • Seeking fresh air, beautiful scenery, and a more “rustic” lifestyle
  • Began in the Gilded Age after artists painted alluring landscapes of Maine coast
  • Wealthy fled heat and bustle of cities
  • Built seasonal “cottages” along the coast

Expanded the market for seaside real estate

“Graunka”
Cottage of H.J. Brown built 1903
177 Foreside Road
Stackpole Farm

The Stackpoles

- **Samuel Stackpole (1811-1887)**
  - Sea captain of Yarmouth
  - Lived on the former Davis farm until his health failed

- **Frederick Stackpole (1844-1911)**
  - Samuel’s nephew, former sea captain, banker in Kansas
  - Purchased farm in 1882

- Published the first subdivision plan for a neighborhood along the Foreside
- Lots on lanes off Casco Terrace
- Oceanfront lots bordering common ground
Nelson Farm

Nelson Farm abutted Casco Terrace

- Inherited by Mary Elizabeth Wells (1833-1916)
- Carved out and sold individual lots
  - No subdivision plan

Nelson Farm Subdivided in 1924
The Auburn Colony

Joseph Chamberlin (1817-1901)
- Retired carpenter, building contractor, and cabinetmaker of Auburn
- Purchased first lot from Stackpole in 1881
- Purchased more from Stackpole in 1885
- Purchased land from Wells in 1888

The beginning of a summer colony surrounding the Common
- Summer cottages for families of Auburn
- No connection to the earlier Auburn Colony of Harpswell

View from the Common Today
Summer Colony Expands

Casco Terrace was the first summer colony and grew rapidly

• Cottages at the bay end of Amerescoggin followed soon thereafter
• Terrace Inn was built by a family who summered at Casco Terrace
Portland & Yarmouth Electric Railway Co.

- Opened trolley service through Falmouth in 1898
- Acquired by the Portland Railroad Co. the following year
- Made the Foresides accessible to all
- Trolley service was discontinued in 1933 having been displaced by automobiles
Recreational Parks

- Portland RR Co. established parks to attract riders
  - Riverton, Cape Cottage, and Underwood Spring
- Underwood Spring Park opened in 1899
  - Casino, open-air theater, and Japanese pavilion
  - 34½ acres including the former Underwood Farm
- Park closes in 1907
  - Casino and theater destroyed by fire; not rebuilt
  - Land purchased by a George Edwards in 1909
  - Publishes subdivision plan with lots on both sides of Amerescoggin Road
Underwood Spring

George Thornton Edwards (1868-1932)
- Real estate dealer of Portland
- Established Underwood Motor Camp on the site of the former casino
- Featured small cottages and tent sites

Mildred Prentice White (1887-1970)
- Purchased Underwood after Edward’s death
- Lots were sold over the years
- Park transformed into a seaside neighborhood
The Foreside Became a Resort

It happened with amazing speed

• Became unstoppable within two decades
• Brought a resort “venue,” a country club, and a yacht club to the Foreside
• Trickled down to middle and working classes
  ─ By 1919, roughly 40% of properties in Falmouth were owned by non-residents
  ─ Cottages and summer residences figured prominently
Suburbia

Another wave of change swept over the Foreside after WWII

- Summer cottages became year-round homes
- Lots consolidated and redivided for new homes

Falmouth Foreside today is blend

- Old farmhouses
- Cottages grand and modest
- New neighborhoods
- Country club and yacht club are thriving

We responded with an eight-page history

- Including information about who built the three homes