

Silver Threads intro & Donald Fish. Submitted April 19, 2012.

## **Silver Threads.**

### ***“We’ve only just begun. . .”***

Welcome to the first “Threads,” a column created especially for people spending their golden years in Falmouth, written mostly by some of these same senior citizens. In the monthly articles ahead, you’ll read about a variety of subjects geared mostly to seniors, but we hope others will also enjoy them and find them helpful. We’ll explore ideas on entertaining visiting grandchildren; we’ll describe some good walks we’ve located around town; we’ll suggest some organizations that provide help and services for the elderly. We may even get introspective, and share how we feel about growing old in Falmouth.

We hope you will enjoy and find value in what we write, and we also hope you will contribute your own comments and suggestions. Tell us what else you’d like us to write about, and we’ll try to respond. You can contact us through the pointers listed at the bottom of the article.

Here’s an example of what you can expect from us in the months ahead.

### ***“Memories, of the way we were . . .”***

While discussing the plan for “Silver Threads” with Editor Bill Hough, we chanced to mention the wonderful pictures of Old Falmouth, published Tuesdays on the editorial page. We were very curious about who was Donald Fish, how did he have these pictures, and how did they get into the paper. Thinking you might be too, here’s what we learned a few days later from talking with Mr. Fish himself.

Donald Fish grew up in Falmouth, born into one of the Falmouth Fish families—“not the rich sea captain Fishes, the other side,” explains Donald with a smile. (When we discovered he was in school with my brother, I dropped the “Mr. Fish.”) He was in the class of ‘47, from the old Lawrence High School, the one whose ghost you can still feel at the end of the elm-shaded walkway to the Main Street library. He has lived in Falmouth village since 1945, in the same house where he grew up, a house built in the late 1920’s. It is here that he stores and maintains his collection of pictures of Old Falmouth.

While still a young man, Donald became interested in the history of Falmouth. In the 1950’s, as a hobby, he began collecting new and old pictures of our town. At first there were only postcards. A tourist destination like Falmouth generates a lot of postcards. As friends found out about his growing collection, they pointed him to additional sources. He has had access to many of the 5-by-8-inch glass plates taken by the old Daguerreotype cameras. He makes copies of these. Donald has made it a point to seek out a variety of pictures, from all parts of Falmouth. “Once a lady told me she had a picture taken from of an angle that looked down Walker Street, a shot I didn’t have. She offered to give it to me, but sadly never did. I still hope someday she’ll remember.” The people he mentions as helping him to find pictures feel like a step back in time itself: Charlotte Holden, the school nurse at what was then the Village School (now Mullen-Hall); Charlie Davis of the Davisville Davises; Flossie Richardson of the Elm Arch Inn.

Silver Threads, Neighborhood Falmouth column in Falmouth Enterprise. Monday, August 06, 2012

The collection of pictures, numbering “a thousand, two thousand. . .,” is mainly stored in books that are catalogued by section of town. We asked if we could see the collection, but were turned down. He explained that over the years many people have asked—too many to accommodate. He turns down everyone, so he won’t offend anyone.

Donald began sharing his pictures with everyone through the *Enterprise* in the 1980’s, when Jack Hough was editor. For him, it is a mission of love, and he enjoys the process of selecting just the right picture, for the season and to provide a variety that includes all the sections of town. “It is my legacy to the town of Falmouth. I want to share all my fond memories of growing up here”.

There are, of course, many places where one can find pictures of Old Falmouth. The reference librarian can point to many sources available in the town libraries. The Falmouth Historical Society and the Woods Hole Historical Collection and Museum have collections, as do the Woods Hole institutions. Donald’s goal of publishing his pictures one by one provides each its own special viewing—and provides us with the joy of anticipation. I know I look forward to seeing them, sometimes recognizing a building still there, or remembering one long gone. So, thanks to Donald Fish for sharing his pictures, and to the *Enterprise* for making them easy to view.

—Kay Paine

Neighborhood Falmouth is a non-profit, membership organization, operating since 2009 to help Falmouth seniors live safely and comfortably in their own homes. For more information on joining, volunteering, and donating, call 508-564-7543, or visit [www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org](http://www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org).