

The Story of Falmouth

SELF-GUIDED HISTORY TOUR

Courtesy of



1. Wilson Tavern—The Wilson Tavern on Blackstrap Road was built in 1752 and was a stage stop on the route between Portland and Lewiston. Today it is a private home.

2. Norton Farm—Norton Farm, on Blackstrap Road, built in 1742, was originally a tavern on the road between Portland and Lewiston. From 1946 to 1976, the farm was home to the Hurricane Ski Slope.

3. West Falmouth Grange and Knights of Pythias Hall—Located on Falmouth Road just before the intersection of Gray and Mountain Road, the West Falmouth Grange and Knights of Pythias Hall was built in 1898. Two Falmouth fraternal organizations held meetings as well as plays, suppers, musical programs, and fairs here.

4. Huston School/Winn Road Fire Station—Huston School was built in 1925 on the corner of Falmouth and Winn Roads where previous schools have stood since the 1780s. It was named for Stephen G. Huston, chairman of Falmouth's school board. In 1980, the school board voted to close the Huston school, which was demolished to make room for the newly constructed West Falmouth Fire Station.

5. Town Hall—It is not clear when Falmouth's first Town Hall was constructed, but in 1850 it was described in town reports as "badly in need of repairs." The current Town Hall at 271 Falmouth Road was built in 1899 and the second story added in 1927.

6. Presumpscot Falls Park—Presumpscot Falls Park overlooks the Presumpscot River on Allen Avenue Extension. As many as one thousand Wabanaki made their home in a village called Ashamahaga, at the falls of the river. Early Europeans also settled along the river, building mills and later shipyards. The river served as a power source leading to other manufacturing interests including the Smelt Hill Power Station, the first hydroelectric plant in Maine.

7. Pleasant Hill Chapel—The Pleasant Hill Chapel, on Pleasant Hill Road, was built in 1879. In 1936 the building was turned over to the Pleasant Hill Chapel Association which held events, socials and other entertainment here. In 1999, Portland Landmarks awarded Louise and Howard Rieche an award for their work in preserving the historic character and detail of the building, which is now a private residence.

8. Graves School—Graves School on Pleasant Hill Road was built in 1880 and named for Crispus Graves who willed money to the school district. It had four grades on each level and was a school until 1947. It was converted to a residence in the 1970s. The bell, purchased from the Sears and Roebuck catalog around 1911, and paid for by student-raised funds, still hangs in the bell tower.

9. Plummer Building—Falmouth High School, designed by Portland architect John P. Thomas, was built in 1931 on the corner of Middle and Lunt Roads. In 1965, the building was converted into an elementary school and renamed for the former maintenance supervisor, Sampson D. Plummer. It was used as an elementary school until 2011. The building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was converted into senior housing in 2017.

10. Oak Grove Academy/Odd Fellows Lodge—Oak Grove Academy was Falmouth's first high school, built in 1833 and open until the early 1850s. It was moved to its current location on Checkerberry Lane (backing onto Middle Road) by a massive production involving townspeople and 75 yoke of oxen. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization, purchased the building for use as its lodge in 1885. Today it is a private residence.

11. Old D.W. Lunt School—Best seen from Middle Road, this former two-room elementary school was built in 1867 and named for the former superintendent of schools. Now a private garage, the drive and parking area were once the school's large playground. A new Lunt School was built on Lunt Road in 1867.

WANT MORE FALMOUTH HISTORY?

There are many more historic sites in Falmouth.

Sign up for a guided historical tour with the Falmouth Historical Society and Falmouth Community Programs in 2018.

Info: www.falmouthme.org/parks-and-community-programs
or www.thefhs.org

Falmouth is still home to many historic sites and buildings. Use this handy self-guided tour to navigate some of them.

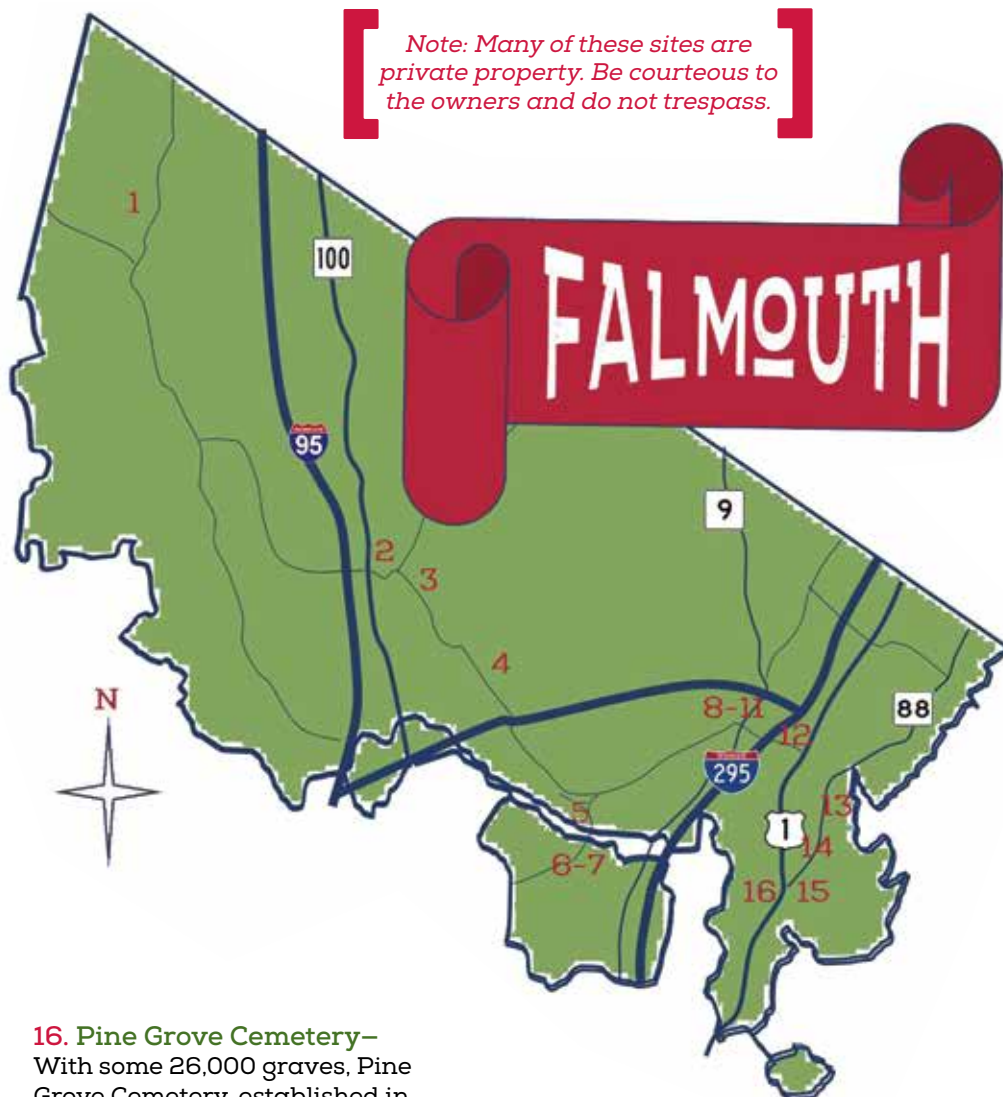
Note: Many of these sites are private property. Be courteous to the owners and do not trespass.

12. Bucknam Tavern—The Bucknam Tavern on Middle Road was built in 1776 on what was called Kings Highway and served as a post office, inn, and a stop on the stage route between Portsmouth and Bangor.

13. American Legion, Legion Fields, and Veterans War Memorial—Falmouth's American Legion post #164 was established in 1946. The post building on Depot Road was built in the 1950s. In 1957, the Legion provided approximately 27 acres for the creation of sports fields for community use. The Veterans War Memorial was dedicated on November 11, 2014.

14. Mussel Cove Park—Mussel Cove off Old Mill Road was a site for several of Falmouth's earliest mills, including grain and lumber. Samuel Bucknam had a mill here as early as 1710. Establishing a mill site was a priority for early settlers. Mills were necessary to hew rough timber into planking for construction and shipbuilding. As a result, the number of mills per town was well regulated and mill owners occupied lucrative positions.

15. Pine Grove School—Pine Grove School was built on Route 88 in 1916, but was destroyed by fire just days before it opened. The new one-room school opened in 1917. The grounds surrounding the building were deeded to the Town in 1924 and became Pine Grove Park. In 1941 two classrooms were added. The building served as a school until 1977. Today it operates as a pre-school.



16. Pine Grove Cemetery—With some 26,000 graves, Pine Grove Cemetery, established in 1885 on Foreside Road near St. Mary's Church, is the largest of Falmouth's cemeteries. In the original section of the cemetery are stones dating back to the eighteenth century, including Nathaniel Jones, who died in 1745, and is listed as the oldest recorded occupant of the cemetery. Falmouth's first minister, Rev. Ebenezer Williams, who died in 1799, is also buried here. The cemetery is also the final resting place of several Civil War veterans. Across Route 88 is a World War I Soldiers Memorial dedicated to those who died serving in that conflict.

17. Gilsland Farm—For thousands of years before European settlement, the lands around Gilsland Farm were home to Wabanakis and their ancestors. In the mid-1800s, Silas Noyes bought the property and built a red, wood-framed house, which still stands today. In 1911, David Moulton purchased the property as a summer retreat and raised Jersey Cattle here. Between 1974 and 1994, Maine Audubon acquired the property through a series of gifts from Moulton's descendants.