

## Letters

Dear Mary Lou:

I just received the Winter 2005 issue of the *Spritsail* and think you did a marvelous job with the Dr. Oliver Strong letter... The pictures and the map of Penzance really add to Strong's account as well as illustrate the power of the storm itself.

I felt I should write to clear up a bit of confusion regarding family relationships stemming from my first letter. Neither Dorianne Mebane nor I are related to Dr. Oliver Strong. We are both descended from Franklin Atwood Park (1868-1938) and Mary Fairbanks (Bosworth) Park (1867-1939), neighbors of the Strongs on Penzance.

My grandmother was Marjorie Lincoln (Park) Swope (1906-1995), wife of Gerard Swope, Jr. (1905-1979), and daughter of Franklin and Mary Park. It was after her death that my uncle first discovered the copy of Dr. Strong's account in her files. (Dr. Strong must have sent someone in the family a copy of the letter.)

My grandmother's younger brother was Franklin Atwood Park, Jr. (1909-1981), who was Dorianne Mebane's grandfather. The photographs accompanying the article were most likely taken either by or for him, which is why they focus on damage done to the Park property.

Just wanted to set the record straight. I'm glad the article turned out so well.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Swope  
Wayland, MA

Dear Mary Lou,

The account in the winter, 2005 *Spritsail* (vol. 19, #1) by Dr. Oliver Strong brought back vivid memories. I'm sure there are pictures as well, taken with my Kodak box camera on September 22, 1938 – but they are in one of many decaying black albums in the house in Woods Hole.

I was 9 years old in September, 1938, and when the wind rose, my mother and I had been brought up to join my grandmother (Mrs. Seward Prosser) in the "Big House" (formally known as "Weatherside"). I remember leaning at a great angle into the wind on the front porch with no support, and I remember also watching the tennis house from our tennis court on the Buzzards Bay side sail across the Bay, propelled by the SE wind, while the water continued to rise over the backstops of the tennis court (rose 20 feet in 20 minutes). Pretty soon the whole rocky shore of our "beach" on the Bay side had a clay-colored half-moon extending out to sea, as the tennis court was churned into froth.

More germane to Dr. Strong's story, I was the one who came upon Mr. Briggs – quite inadvertently – the next day. I was down on the harbor side of Penzance near our boathouse where the wind had deposited a enormous tangle of docks, boats, dingys, and debris. Jumping off one of the floats, I landed on a body – and was promptly led away. But I learned later that the body was that of Mr. Briggs, caught and drowned by the surging sea from the Buzzards Bay side, and then blown by the SE wind onto our beach. The water had risen so high that the docks, such as the Drapers', had floated off the top of their piles and sailed downwind, as we watched during the storm, to our beach.

The only boats still in the harbor the next day were two Herreshoff class S boats – that of the Clowes and my mother's – and the large, black Gloucester fisherman turned yacht, the "Roseaway," which ran her diesel

engine all night. It was onto the Clowes' S boat that Bob Borden (mentioned in your story) pulled himself as he was being swept out to Vineyard Sound from the Yacht Club, and woke up the next morning to find himself still on a mooring!

There is a good deal more I can recall, and perhaps document with little black and white Brownie pictures. But this is sufficient for the present. Thanks for printing the story, and even more for the continuing quality of *Spritsail*. I was glad to see that it received favorable mention, together with *The Book of Falmouth*, in George Colt's *The Big House*.

With our best wishes to you and Paul,

Prosser Gifford  
Washington, DC

Dear Ann Sears,

How surprised I was to see my grandfather and grandmother (Zana and Fred Swift) and my mother (Phoebe Swift) in the *Spritsail* with that wonderful account of the growth of the cranberry business.

It is one of my great disappointments not to have known my grandfather – as I was born five years after he died. I have pictures, poems and a few of his love letters (when courting Zana) in his flowing script.

He played violin at dances, town meetings, plays, and church socials. I still have his violin.

Phoebe (my mom) on piano and I with his violin used to play short pieces at ladies clubs when I was in Lawrence High School – class of '51) (The high school was torn down the next year – I was always glad I went to that old building with the warped wooden stairs – what a firetrap that was, though.) We had a Steinway grand piano which Mother played very well as she used to play for the chorus and orchestra at Wheaton College. We had many laughs over my mistakes with new pieces – particularly the Bach exercises. I took lessons from Miss Helen McKenzie of Woods Hole who was also a biology teacher at the high school. I stopped playing after high school – probably would have kept on if Grampa Swift had been around.

I learned a great deal from your article as the cranberry business was before my time – also contacted Bill Swift, my cousin, and your source of the diary. We will get together soon and reminisce and compare memorabilia.

Thank you for this wonderful legacy –

Brenda Rodenhizer  
West Falmouth, MA

P.S. Concerning the story on the '38 hurricane: My first recollection as a 5 year old was being blown down Chapoquoit Beach – Mother screaming and my father running and picking me up and carrying me to the car to hurry home.

To the editor:

Please be advised of two minor corrections to the article Ann Sears wrote on the Frederick K. Swift Diary:

1. First line in second paragraph on page 2: Zana Tobey was the granddaughter of an East Falmouth whaling captain, not the daughter of one. Her grandfather was Capt. John Tobey who was written up by Neil Good in *The Book of Falmouth* on page 184-187. He had 4 children, John A. Tobey, George N. Tobey, Henrietta Tobey and Ella Tobey. Zana Tobey was John A. Tobey's oldest daughter.

2. The unknown man in the photo in page 6 is Zana's father, John A. Tobey. My wife is a granddaughter of Zana's brother, William A. Tobey. I hope the above information is helpful.

Regards,

Glenn D. Nasman