

Dr. George H. Greene

by Maria C. Ward

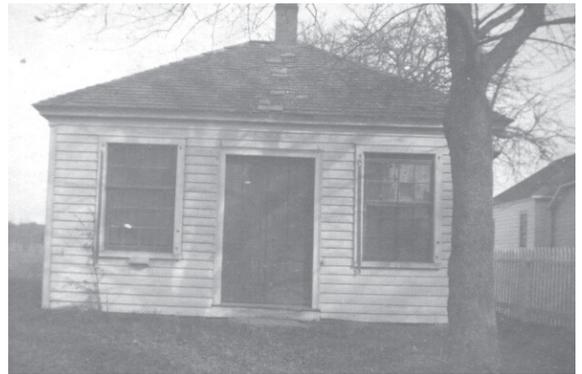
Dr. George Henry Greene was born on March 31, 1880, to Mr. and Mrs. William L. Greene. William Greene was born in Canada as was his wife. George was born in Wisconsin. Dr. Greene graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College. He assisted Falmouth dentist Dr. Godwin M. Brown for two summers before he was licensed to practice in Massachusetts in 1902. He then joined Dr. Brown on Depot Avenue. (*The Enterprise* noted, “Dr. Greene was fortunate in the sponsor of his introduction to Falmouth. Dr. Brown occupied [a] distinguished place in the community—he was the Dr. Greene of his day.”) Dr. Greene opened his own “dental rooms” and prepared to receive patrons in an office advertised in *The Enterprise*, June 3, 1905, as being in the “third building East of the New Grammar School.... Telephone 11-11.”



The new grammar school was built in 1904 in what is now Town Hall Square. The original village

school, attended by Katharine Lee Bates, became the Oddfellows Hall.

George’s father, William, was president of Woonsocket Napping Machinery Company. After George succeeded him as president, he was required to spend several days a month in Woonsocket.



The real estate office of E. E. C. Swift on Depot Avenue.
Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

His last office (which remains a dentist’s office to this day) was on Main Street. The building, originally a real estate office on Depot Avenue, was moved to the Celia F. Shiverick property between the bank and the Post Office. Dr. Greene applied to the Board of Appeals for a permit for a 17’ by 22’ addition in the rear to use as a dental office. *The Falmouth Enterprise* noted on December 29, 1927, Dr. Greene “made the old one-story building ... a quaint semi-colonial home for his dentist office.” Dr. and Mrs. Greene moved into the “old Shiverick House” on October 25, 1928.



INTERIOR VIEW OF OFFICE OF GEORGE H. GREENE, D.D.S. NEW DENTAL PARLORS OF MAIN ST., FALMOUTH, MASS

Presently owned by James Wall, D.D.S. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

Dr. Greene practiced dentistry in Falmouth for 58 years. In his 50th year of practice he was guest of honor at a dinner of the Cape Cod District Dental Society after being named the Massachusetts Dental Society's Dentist of the Year in Barnstable County.

Needless to say, dental practices had changed greatly over those 58 years. In 1957, during a power outage while Dr. Greene was working on a patient, he commented, "I could get out my old foot-power machine... the one I first started work with before we had electricity. Yes, I've still got it, I wouldn't ever part with it." But he did keep up-to-date on

dentistry. He was a member of the 1956 committee recommending fluoridation of the water.

On April 11, 1916, Dr. Greene married Kathryn Van Ausdol Swift, daughter of Eugene Edward Campbell Swift (referred to as E. E. C. Swift to distinguish him from the many Swifts in town history). Reverend Henry Herbert Smythe officiated. The wedding was at the bride's home at the corner of Main and Locust Streets. Kathryn Swift had graduated from Lawrence High School in 1900, attended the New England Conservatory of Music and Simmons College, and had worked at the Falmouth

National Bank, of which her great-grandfather Elijah Swift was a stockholder and first president.

Kathryn's home, at the corner of Main and Locust Streets (now One Main Street) was the Greenes' home for many years. In 1928, as noted, they moved to the "old Shiverick House." There Mrs. Greene carried on her father's real estate business and Dr. Greene continued in the renovated dental offices he had been using for some months. (A doctor new to the town bought the One Main Street house for his home and office.)



The old Shiverick house on Main Street.
Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

Under the Greenes' ownership, the "old Shiverick house" prospered and became the showplace we know today. One major change, of course, was the creation of Katharine Lee Bates Road, which required land taking between the house and Shiverick's Pond. Town meeting had approved the road's layout but the Greenes and three other neighbors sued the town, saying the land taking exceeded the layout by as much as 25 feet or more in some places. The suit asked that the taking be abandoned. It was not.

In the fall of 1960, Dr. Greene notified his patients that he would close his office for a week due to a leg

ailment, but in November he had to have his right leg amputated below the knee. He had a small sign reading "retired" placed beneath his office sign and closed his practice.

Dr. Greene was an early member of the Democratic party on Cape Cod. He was a charter member of the Falmouth Democratic town committee. In 1926, he and Mrs. Greene attended a Democratic rally at the Boston Arena where Governor Alfred E. Smith was the speaker.

In February of 1933, while they were on their annual winter trip to Florida, they learned President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt would speak in Miami (as he was on his way north from a fishing trip). Mrs. Greene wrote to her sister, Mrs. Charles E. Clapp, "We couldn't possibly miss anything like that so we stayed over [in Miami on the way to St. Petersburg] and were deeply rewarded last night by seeing and hearing the most deeply beloved man in the country. So magnanimous

in every way and a most magnetic personality." There Dr. and Mrs. Greene were witnesses to the attempted assassination of Franklin Roosevelt as a gunman fired bullets into the crowd around Roosevelt. (The mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak, was fatally wounded.)

"We were very early – three hours before the appointed time and found thousands ahead of us at the auditorium but we got fairly good seats and were glad we were no nearer the stage. As it was we were only fifty feet from the would-be assassin... who, thank God, missed his aim by an inch. The five revolver flashes were directly in front of us and

DR. GODWIN M. BROWN,
DENTIST,
MAIN ST., FALMOUTH, MASS.,
 (East of Episcopal Church,)
OFFICE HOURS: 10 A. M. TO 4 P. M.

Saturday, October 3, 1896

DR. GODWIN M. BROWN,
DENTIST,
 OFFICE AT RESIDENCE,
Cor. MAIN and LOCUST STS.
FALMOUTH, MASS.
OFFICE HOURS:
9 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 4 p. m.

Saturday, September 4, 1897

DR. GODWIN M. BROWN,
DENTIST,
OFFICE ON DEPOT AVENUE.
FALMOUTH, MASS.
OFFICE HOURS:
9 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 4 p. m.
SATURDAYS, from 10.30 a. m. to 4 p. m.

Saturday, November 15, 1902

DR. GEO. H. GREENE,
DENTIST,
 With Dr. G. M. Brown,
Falmouth, Mass.
OFFICE HOURS:
9 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 4 p. m.
SATURDAYS, from 10.30 a. m. to 4 p. m.

Saturday, December 13, 1902

DR. GEO. H. GREENE,
DENTIST,
 Office:—DEPOT AVENUE,
Falmouth, Mass.
OFFICE HOURS:
9 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 4 p. m.
SATURDAYS, from 10.30 a. m. to 4 p. m.
TELEPHONE 14-12.

Saturday, June 27, 1903

GEO. H. GREENE, D.D.S.
 Graduate of Philadelphia Dental College,
 Class of 1902.
 Office—Third Building East of
 New Grammar School,
FALMOUTH, MASS.
HOURS: 8-12 a. m.; 1-4 p. m.
SATURDAYS, from 10.30 a. m. to 4 p. m.
TELEPHONE. 46-4.

Saturday, October 14, 1911

Dr. Karl A. Bohaker, dentist, of Boston, will make regular visits to Falmouth in the absence of Dr. Godwin M. Brown. He will be at Dr. Brown's office on Main street Wednesday and Thursday of each week. Dr. Bohaker was in charge of Dr. Brown's practice during the latter's illness last summer.

Jan 10, 1914

DR. GODWIN M. BROWN,
DENTIST,
 Office opposite the Congrega-
 tional Church.
FALMOUTH, MASS.
OFFICE HOURS:
8 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 4 p. m.
SATURDAYS, from 10.30 a. m. to 4 p. m.
Telephone 31-3.

Saturday, May 23, 1914

Geo. H. Greené, D. D. S.
 Office:—Nearly opposite
 St. Barnabas' Memorial Church
FALMOUTH, MASS.
 Hours: 9 a. m.—12; 1-4 p. m.
 Telephone 35.

Saturday, May 7, 1927

The careers of Dr. Brown and Dr. Greene summed up in *Falmouth Enterprise* advertisements. Dr. Brown left Falmouth in 1912. He had a Boston dentist cover his practice. He did not advertise after May 23, 1914. *The Enterprise* reported in 1917, "Dr. Brown of Newton and Boston has been appointed chief dental surgeon at the Portable Hospital for soldiers and sailors at the Deaconess hospital, Brookline." Dr. Greene's last *Enterprise* ad appeared on April 2, 1931. Falmouth was woefully behind the times in numbering its houses. The 1961 Town Meeting appropriated \$1,200 for the purpose. In 1962 the Registrars of Voters complained that they needed house numbers for their voter lists.

the excitement which immediately followed is not soon forgotten.”

Dr. Greene’s public service in town was long and varied. As early as 1917, during World War One, he served on the Falmouth Public Safety Committee which dealt with fuel shortages and draft requirements. Of interest is the request from the committee that “merchants be asked to close their stores during the exercises” of drafted contingents assembling to leave. In August of 1919, he was there for a “Welcome Home” celebration for the “Boys” featuring a parade, tent music, baseball, banquet (Dr. Greene’s charge), fireworks, speaker and decorations. (Of note, both of these committees were chaired by George W. Jones.)

Town employees were required to retire at age 70, forcing Dr. Greene to give up his place on the Board of Registrars of Voters to which he had been appointed in 1911. (The Board met at his home after his leg operation.) As a member, he authored the plan dividing the town into precincts. Noting his local success, in 1947 Governor Bradford named Dr. Greene to a five-man committee to revise the districts for state representative.

Dr. Greene’s service to Masonry (Marine Lodge A. F. & A. M.) was a lifelong undertaking beginning in 1912 when he was elected an officer. At that time and for many years, the group held their usual banquet at the Elm Arch Inn. Dr. Greene was elected treasurer

in 1928, served as Worshipful Master in 1914 and was awarded the Joseph Warren medal in 1941 for distinguished service to the order. During that time, he headed the drive to raise money to build a new Falmouth Masonic Temple, completed in 1936. At the time of his death both a Masonic service and a memorial service were held, the latter at St. Barnabas where he had been a vestryman for many years.

Dr. Greene was a member of Boston’s Ancient & Honorable Artillery Company, a president of both the Rotary and the Succanessett Clubs, and vice-president of the Falmouth Historical Society. His hobby was vegetable gardening. He died November 19, 1964, at his home on Main Street.

Sources and Acknowledgments for the articles on George W. Jones and Dr. George H. Greene:

Falmouth Historical Society Archives and Meg Costello.

The Falmouth Public Library reference desk librarians.

The Falmouth Enterprise.

Maria C. Ward has been a member of the *Spritsail* editorial board since 2005.