

[Landmarks and Local Characters]

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2 Typed [??]

Francis Donovan Thomaston, Conn. Friday, Jan. 6 '39 Landmarks and Local Characters.

"This," says Mr. Botsford [?] holding up a short mahogany rod furled [??] to within a few inches of one end in red, white and [?] blue ribbons, "has been in our family [?] since [R??] Revolutionary days. My grandmother called it a ['marshal?] stick.' That stick was used to drill troops on [the??] the green in [Roxbury?] by an ancestor of mine who was in thxe [the?] Revolutionary army. My grandmother said he used [?] to set up on his horse and direct the men with this [?] stick. But you don't have to put that in the paper. "I got to thinkin' about [h?] history after you'd left yesterday, and the [??] thought come to me that this is the best way to [hand?] it down. I mean for [?] some old feller like [m?] myself with a good memory to pass it on like I'm [??] doin' with you. That's why I got that old stick out [to?] show you. That's one of the things. "If I was twenty or [thirtyx?] thirty years younger I'd like to take you around through [?] some of the country around here that I walked [?] through with my father as a boy. That's how I got my [knowledge?] of lots of interestin' things. It was passed [on to?] me like that. Now I ought to pass it [?] on. "Lots of things will be forgotten. Lots of old landmarks will disappear and folks won't [know?] anything about them in a few years. Like the road [?] leadin' up to the airport in Plymouth. It was [called?] One Pine road, when I was a boy. But there wasn't any pine there. My father told me 2 there was one once, though- a [big?] thick pine, standin' up against the sky, so's you [could?] see it for miles. After it went, they still called it One Pine [r?] road. Now nobody calls it that any more, its forgotten.

"Did you know we're [?] [livin'?] in the Boulder Belt? You find those big old [bould?] boulders down a narrow strip in New England. Left [?] by the glacier. Look at the Gaskins

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up back of the [?] cemetery. Ever think about how that big pile of rocks [?] got flung down there, one on top of the other? Glacier [?] must have left them there. They was named for an [?] old feller by the name of Gaskin who used to have a [?] cabin up in there, so they tell me.

“It's somethin' to [thin??] think about ain't it, all that stuff. You ever [rexa?] read where they found the bones of mammoths and [oth?] other animals deep down in the ground, up in [?] Siberia? What do you think about that? The way I [?] figure, the world was changed, swift and complete, [?] maybe by flood, the way it says in the Bible, forty [?] days of rain.

“Change—it's changin' [?] all the while. You never realize it till you [?] get my age and stop to think of things that are [g?] gone. And the things that changed, and disappeared in the [l?] lifetime of my father before me.

“Did you know that this [?] was minin' country once? In my father's [?] lifetime there was lead mines around here. [?] And when I was a young man I knew where they all [?] were, the scars in the 3 ground.

“And my father showed me [a?] the entrance to a tunnel once, right where the Waterbury [road?] runs now, down past the Spruces. Told me the story of it, too. Seems [there?] was a feller worked in the shop, had a bug on minin'. He [?] was convinced there was silver in the ground around [h?] here. So [?] he spent all his spare time diggin' this tunnel. [Used?] to dig [??] nights until bedtime. One [time?] the fellers in the shop played a trick on him. They [?] took some of those old three cent silver pieces [and?] ground 'em up and sprinkled the dust around where he [was?] diggin'. He thought sure he'd [found?] silver. When he found [?] out he'd been tricked, he went crazy. But I guess [he was?] a little crazy to start with.

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“That tunnel's all [?] overgrown with brush now, doubt if I could find it. And there [?] was other places, too I bet will be forgotten in a [?] few years. Not many know how to get to [Candlerock cave?].

“Ever go over there? Ever [see?] Leatherman's cave? Ever notice that little [?] gravestone, just [?] off the old road, and the ruins of a house? Old woman used to live there by the name of Marks. She had a [?] house was kind of a [curiosity?]. She collected [?] snake skins, and queer things from the woods and [?] made curios out of them. Charged you a nickel or a dime [to?] go through her house. Her husband used to work in [?] the shop. He had a long white beard and they called [caxll?] him Santa Claus. And once somebody [?] left a little girl baby on their verandy. [?] Old Lady Marks took 4 that kid and raised it? [?] Know what she called it? June—that was the month it [?] was left there— June Left Verandy . It come out [afterwards?] whose kid it was. The parents wasn't married.

“All those old landmarks—[all?] this old history about Thomaston, will be forgotten soon. [Maybe?] it ain't interestin' to most folks. It ought to interest [Thomaston?] people anyway.

“The things that have [h?] happened in my lifetime—What if you had to go back to the [da?] days—the way people lived when I was born. Back to [?] kerosene oil lamps and wood stoves and horses [for?] for transportation. Think of the changes, the [?] inventions. The bicycle, the automobile, [the airplane?], the telephone, the radio, electric lights and [?] electric service of all kinds.

“Why'd it all come so quick? [Who?] knows. I think the education of the people had somethin' to do with it.

“There's my radio. I get a [?] lot of enjoyment out of that. I often think [?] how my father and my mother would've [enj?] enjoyed it. News is what I like best. Then I [got?] a couple of sketches I always listen to. I never [?] miss the Lone Ranger, and Gang Busters. I used to

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[?] listen to Amos 'n' Andy, but I got kind of tired of them. I got a [?] record here of all the stations I've got on [?] that set. More than 75 of them.

“Every afternoon I look in the [?] paper and see what's on for the night, then I know [?] just what I'm goin' to listen to. Do I think [?] it'll ever replace 5 newspapers? No sir, I do not.

“I like to read the paper. I'd do more readin'—I used to do a lot of it. [?] Only my eyes won't stand it. My eyes ain't as good as they used to be.”