
Letters

Nov. 26, 1987

Dear Mrs. Smith,

I've just completed reading *This New England, Falmouth, Massachusetts* in the December *Yankee* magazine. Reading it revived nostalgic memories of the 1940's when I was stationed at Camp Edwards. Falmouth became as a home town to me. Eastman's hardware store got most of my pay check as I was collecting hand tools then to satisfy my urge to do wood work. I still have most of them in a cabinet shop in northern Virginia, even after raising two sons who grew up using those same tools.

I was sent to Camp Edwards in 1944 to supervise the work of German POW's who had been taken in North Africa. Our job was to cut an estimated six million feet of hurricane timber (pine) that had been blown down. Actually we finally cut about six million feet, sawed it in four mills set up at Edwards.

The storm hit, I believe, around Chatham and blew trees down along Hyannis, Cotuit, Falmouth and on through to and including your own Woods Hole area. I remember having a crew cutting on a very nice estate in Woods Hole. We of course hauled all the logs to the four mills in camp.

My memories of the places, the prisoners, and other details grow dimmer with the years; but, having spoken their language at the time, I learned to know many of them as individuals and kept in touch with some of them for a while after the war. They thought so much of the Cape. I've often wondered how many may have returned with their families to visit the compound and surrounding areas. My first experience with them was a December day on Popponeset Beach with a foot of snow on the ground, cutting pine logs and burning the tops to keep warm.

For many years I had heard of the rapid growth taking place there on the Cape, and had been urged by close friends to not go to Cape Cod but to remember it as it was in those days of my youth. This advice was followed until I began running at 65 years of age. So now for the past three years, with a son, I've come to Falmouth to run the Road Race in August. It's great fun as I'm probably the most different runner there. To run the roads where we hauled logs years ago is a singular pleasure, and I can see and hear those POW's as though it were today.

Yes, Falmouth has changed, but it's good for me to have it to go back to once a year and relive my youth. Longfellow wrote my feelings about Falmouth 100 years ago in his poem *My Lost Youth*. That ties it all together. Maybe you've read it — if not you may like it. I presume it belongs on the shelf with your *The Book of Falmouth*.

I hope to view your book and possibly own a copy. I congratulate you on your effort to publish and pass on such a history. In our fast changing world it is an honorable deed to stop this old world for a moment lest those in the future may never know from whence we started.

Sincerely,

L.D. Wissinger
Front Royal, Virginia